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Parental Influence as Predictor of Self Concept among Undergraduate Students in Lira University: A Mixed-Methods Study

Steven Ojok & Imelda Kemeza
Department of Educational Foundations and Psychology
Mbarara University of Science & Technology, Uganda
Email: ojoksteven21@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study explored parental influence on self-concept among undergraduate students in Lira University, Lira City West Division, Lira City using a mixed-methods approach. Guided by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, the research employed a correlational research design to assess the degree and nature of parental involvement in shaping students' self-concept. Quantitative data were gathered from 370 students using structured questionnaires and analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data from 30 selected participants were thematically analysed. The correlation results indicate that there is a high positive and statistically significant linear relationship (r = .604**, p > .000) between parental influence and self-concept among undergraduate students in Lira University, Lira City West Division, Lira City. A supportive and engaging parent plays a crucial role in fostering a stronger sense of self-worth, self-image, self confidence and self-esteem. Therefore, Parents should be sensitized about the importance of emotional and moral support by engaging in open conversations that support students' interests, talents, and long-term goals rather than imposing career choice.*

Keywords: *Parental influence, Career choice, Undergraduate students, Social Cognitive Theory, Mixed method*

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1. Introduction

Self-concept refers to how a person understands and perceives self in a broad sense. It includes one's personal judgments, beliefs about what they are capable of, and the impressions they think others hold about them, formed through life experiences and interactions with the environment (Fernández-Bustos, 2019). It also involves both physical and psychological attributes that shape a person's behavior, especially in relation to how they adapt and respond to other people (Lumbantoruan & Raharjo, 2019).

The family and parents in particular, constitutes the child's first educational environment. Parents introduce children to basic communication, essential life skills, social interaction, and religious practices. As a small social system, the family includes leaders and members, each with defined roles and responsibilities. Because parents differ in how they raise their children, these differences insert various parental influences (Kuppens, 2019).

Students often experience a decline in self-concept during primary school and the transition to secondary school and later the University, and this process is significantly influenced by parental involvement. In early childhood, children tend to hold positive views of their abilities, partly shaped by parental feedback and encouragement (Maureen, 2007). However, as they grow older, they begin to notice discrepancies between parental praise and real-world feedback from peers, teachers, and experiences. Parents who provide balanced support recognising both effort and actual ability can help children adjust more positively to self-worth, self-identity and eventually self-confidence. As children mature and become more aware of how their parents evaluate them, their self-perceptions gradually become more realistic and grounded (Harter, 1999).

The role of parental influence is best understood through Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that behaviour is shaped through dynamic interactions between personal factors, behavioural patterns, and environmental contexts (Bandura, 2001). Parents, as a core environmental factor, contribute to their children's self-worth, self-confidence, self-perception and self-identity which contribute to the general understanding of the children's self-image through modelling and verbal persuasion.

However, few studies have systematically examined how parents influence self-concept of students among undergraduate students in Lira University. This study fills the gap by using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the influence of parental involvement, expectations, socioeconomic status and education background in building the self-awareness of students.

1.1 Research Objectives

The study was divided into general objective which generalized the interest or the aim of the study and the specific objectives, i.e., the breakdown of the main objectives into achievable units.

1.1.1 Specific Objectives

For the achievement of the main objective, therefore the study was guided by the subsequent research objective;

To examine the effect of parental influence on the self concept of undergraduate students in Lira University.

1.2 Research Question

The study answered the research question below;

What are the effects of parental influence on self-concept of the Undergraduates in Lira University?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework: Social Cognitive Theory

According to Bandura (1986, 2001), human functioning is the product of the dynamic interplay among personal, behavioural, and environmental determinants. Within this framework, parents play a critical environmental role by serving as models, providing feedback, and shaping career self-efficacy.

2.2 Parental Influence on Self Concept of Undergraduate Students

Most theorists believe that the quality of parent child relation is linked to differences in self-descriptive and self-evaluative behaviors among children. Family atmosphere is likely to be the place of respect, appreciation, warmth and acceptance. When children enjoy warm positive parenting, parental encouragement for good performance it fosters achievement which builds self-image or the general self-concept in children. In the same line of thought Khaleque (2012) postulates that perceived parental warmth has a strong relationship with psychological adjustment and personality traits such as hostility and aggression, independence, positive self-esteem and positive self-adequacy.

Parental attitudes have a strong impact on children's self-development. When the parents are very indulgent, the child tends to become selfish and demanding and so expects constant attention, affection and service from others. Over-indulgent or over-controlling parenting leads to children developing unrealistic self-concepts and self-esteem, which lead to adjustment problems (Berk, 2008)

Parent child attachment is one factor in the psychological wellbeing of an individual (Love & Murdock, 2004). Children with poor attachments to their parents, have adjustment problems, are aggressive in nature, and have poor social skills. The role of parental attachment and peer influence on psychological health is primarily mediated by self-esteem which is an element of self-concept (Wilkinson, 2004). Strong parent-child attachment results in high independence self-awareness among children (McCormick & Kennedy 1994).

Cynthia (2007) reviewed the impact of family dynamics more specifically parental variables on self-concept. The study showed that Self-concept is a critical factor in helping one solve problems and to become fully functioning members of society. Most of the studies indicate that the family plays an important factor in establishing self-esteem. Here, parents are found to

influence their children not only by what they are and what they believe, but also by what they do in the growing stages of development. A child's sense of positive self-worth contributes to the child's well-being. The protection of self-concept is one of the central developmental tasks in childhood.

Parental involvement is a necessary impetus for child upbringing. Jeynes (2008) examined the importance of parental involvement in a child's training in relation to a child's self-concept and academic achievement. The author found out that parental involvement had a positive impact on a child's academic achievement across diverse populations of children. The author also revealed that children who received proper parenting excel both in developing positive self-concept and achieving high academically. This positive relationship between parental influence and the self-concept creates a wide sense of self awareness of the students.

Wairimu, Macharia and Muiru (2016) examined the relationship between parental involvement and the self-esteem of adolescents in Kenya. The study based on the Self-Determination Theory and Baumrind theory which emphasized establishing the relationship between competence, relatedness and development of self-esteem among adolescents and the relationship between parental involvement with respect to autonomy given to adolescents. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, data was collected from over 200 participants suggesting that a relationship does exist between self-esteem among adolescents and parental involvement in school. The study suggests that when the family supports a student's basic psychological need for autonomy, competence and relatedness it is likely to host positive outcomes since the support from parents helped the child to recognize the self-worth, abilities and mental competencies.

Rahmawati and Pudjiastuti (2018) state that there are three factors that influence a person's self-concept, namely parents, peers, and society. According to Subaryana (2015) self-concept is divided into two, namely positive and negative self-concepts. Positive self-concept is a positive self-evaluation such as positive self-esteem. Negative self-concept is a negative self-evaluation such as feelings of inferiority, self-hatred, and the absence of self-acceptance and feelings of self-respect. Therefore, overly controlling or indifferent parenting may struggle to form a strong, positive self-concept. Thus, the role of parents in fostering a healthy and robust sense of self-esteem in children cannot be understated (Brummelman & Sedikides, 2020). This is because children who receive consistent encouragement and emotional security from their parents are better equipped to handle social and academic challenges (Elshanum, 2024)

Subianto in (Vona. Affida & Aviory. Koryna, 2020) showed that a family is the first and main education for the child. Therefore, it is the main door path to a person's activities (Krauss, 2020). In the family, parents are the individuals who educate children and such has a great influence on shaping the child's self-concept (Curran, 2018). This educational attitude is called parenting.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized a correlation study design to determine the relationship between Parental Influence on selfconcept. Quantitative data provided measurable patterns of parental influence, while qualitative data explored lived experiences and nuanced perceptions.

3.2 Sampling Technique

The researcher collected quantitative data from 370 undergraduate students in Lira University. Stratified random sampling was employed to select subgroups based on academic year and faculty, including first-year, second year, and third-year students. From these strata, first-year students constituted the selected subgroup for the study.

For the qualitative phase, the researcher used a simple random sampling technique to select 30 participants from the total sample. This approach ensured diversity in gender and academic programs, thereby enhancing the representativeness of the qualitative data. The use of both stratified and simple random sampling allowed the researcher to minimize selection bias and to ensure that the sample reflected the heterogeneity of the university population.

3.2.1 Pilot Testing Procedures

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was carried out to evaluate the suitability, clarity, and reliability of the research instrument. The pilot study involved 50 undergraduate students of Lira University from across all years of study. However, there was low response rate from the final year students.

The pilot study assessed clarity and wording of items where questions were reviewed for comprehension, flow, and ease of response. Ambiguous items were rephrased to ensure respondents could interpret them correctly. Relevance to objectives was done where each item was evaluated against the study objectives (parental influence and selfconcept) to ensure content validity.

3.3 Instruments and Data Collection

The researcher employed self-administered questionnaire to collect data. A questionnaire based on Likert scale was administered to the respondents (students) through hand distribution.

In the first section, demographic information was collected, which included age, gender, course name, year of study, current CGPA, and the number of siblings and relatives dependent on the family. It further gathered data on parents' marital status, father's and mother's highest educational levels, family socioeconomic status, and parents' occupations.

In the second section, students' self-concept questionnaire adopted from (Mukta, 1979) was used to collect data on students' self-concept. This had 51 items with 5 Likert scale ranging from 1-5 where; 1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= undecided 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree with minimum range of 51 and maximum of 255.

Reliability of a Cronbach's alpha of 0.868 indicated high internal reliability of the instrument. A structured questionnaire assessed parental influence in terms of socio-economic status, support, occupation and parent child relationship.

The researcher collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with 30 undergraduate students. Each interview lasted approximately 35 to 40 minutes. The researcher recorded the interviews using a digital audio device and transcribed them verbatim. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained ethical approval from MUST-REC.

These interviews followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for establishing trustworthiness. To ensure credibility, the researcher engaged participants over an extended period and conducted member checks, allowing participants to review and validate their responses. To establish dependability, the researcher maintained an audit trail documenting the processes of data collection, transcription, and analysis. Peer debriefing with research supervisors supported confirmability by minimizing researcher bias and validating coding decisions. The researcher enhanced transferability by providing thick descriptions of the research context and participants' demographic characteristics, allowing readers to assess the applicability of findings to similar contexts.

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represents the phenomena under study. The pilot study was used to identify those items that could be misunderstood, and such items were modified accordingly, thus this helped to increase the face validity (Wilkinson, 1991). Expert opinions, literature searches, and pre-testing of open-ended questions helped to establish content validity (Wilkinson, 1991). The researcher prepared the instruments in close consultation with his supervisors, whose expert judgment improved content validity. For this study, face validity, content validity, and construct validity were evaluated.

Face validity was evaluated through expert judgment. The instruments were reviewed by the research supervisor of the department of Educational Psychology. This expert evaluated whether each item appropriately reflected the construct it aimed to measure. Based on the suggestions, adjustments were made for clarity, question order, and language simplicity to ensure the instruments were suitable for undergraduate respondents.

Content validity was evaluated by aligning each questionnaire and interview item with the study objectives and theoretical framework of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986). The items were a 4-point and 5-point relevance scale to ensure that the content coverage of the instruments was both sufficient and relevant to the constructs under investigation.

Construct validity was assessed through a pilot study involving 50 undergraduate students from a nearby institution with similar demographic and academic profiles. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed to determine whether items grouped appropriately under their respective constructs.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Clearance was attained from the Mbarara University Research Ethics Committee, MUST-REC. Then, an introductory letter was issued from the Dean of Faculty of Science MUST. This enabled the researcher to gain permission to carry out research. Permission was granted by the City Education Officer and then from Lira University Vice Chancellor. The participants were briefed by the researcher on the purpose of the study to encourage their participation. Informed consent was issued to the participants before participating in the study. This was done by enabling each participant to sign informed consent form to ensure that they were not coerced into the study but rather participated willingly. Self-administered questionnaires with serial numbers for future reference were issued to the participants and it contained a preamble explaining the purpose of the study. The participants were informed of their rights and obligations and then guided on how to fill the questionnaire considering all ethical issues. For instance, the researcher emphasized highest level of confidentiality that the information provided were strictly considered for academic purposes only. Respect

for the Participants' privacy was abided by when they were guided not to indicate their names on the questionnaires. Participation in this research was completely voluntary. Therefore, the participants had the right to participate, refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any stage in case one felt that he or she could not continue in the participation for the reasons best known to him or her. The researcher was present when the respondents were filling the questionnaire to rectify any issues and concerns that would come up. Considerable time was given to participants to fill the questionnaire after which they were collected and screened to check for any unanswered items. The questionnaires with incomplete items were eliminated and the rest considered for data analysis.

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis

The collected data was entered into SPSS version 26 for Windows for statistical processing. Descriptive statistic was used to measure percentile and correlation coefficient (in order to show the magnitude of the relationship among variables in the study) was calculated. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to test relationships between variables and their significance, and the results were presented in tables and figures. Regression analysis was also used to test for the mediating effect of self-concept between independent variable (family influence) and dependent variable (career choice).

The researcher recorded the interviewer using audio recorder, the recorded data was then transcribed and coded by identifying ideas that related to research questions and objectives. The coded data was categorized before a theme was formed out of it.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured voluntary participation by allowing the participants freely opt in or out of the study at any point in time without being prejudiced. Secondly, the researcher ensured that the purpose, benefits, risks, and funding behind were known to the participants before they agreed or declined to join. For the purpose of anonymity, the researcher ensured that identities of the participants were hidden by not requiring them to state their names and but employed the use of codes the differentiate on participant from another. The researcher enabled confidentiality by ensuring that information from the participant was kept hidden from everyone else. This was done through anonymizing personally identifiable data so that it wouldn't be linked to other data by anyone else and through use of computer password. Potential for harm, the researcher ensured that the physical, social and psychological and all other types of harm were kept to an absolute minimum as far as results communication were concern, the researcher also ensured that the dissertation was free from plagiarism and the results accurately presented.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This study considered age, gender, year of study, cumulative grade point average, name of the course taken, number of siblings and relatives who depend on their parents as the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The respondents were also required to fill in information regarding their parents, which included; the marital status, level of education achieved, the socio-economic status and their occupations. To analyze this data, frequencies and percentages were used and the results are shown in tables below;

Table 1 Show the Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Bio data of the respondents	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender			
Male	194	52.4	52.4
Female	176	47.6	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
Age Bracket			

(20-25)	325	87.8	87.8
(26-30)	45	12.2	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
CGPA Range			
2.89 below	10	2.7	2.7
2.99 to 3.59	86	23.2	25.9
3.6 to 4.39	228	61.6	87.6
4.4 or higher	46	12.4	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
Courses			
BMS	63	17	17
BBA	57	15.4	32.4
BSE	110	29.7	62.2
BMW	30	8.1	70.3
BCPP	31	8.4	78.6
BPA	25	6.8	85.4
BCS	31	8.4	93.8
BPH	23	6.2	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
Siblings			
None	62	16.8	16.8
Below 3 (few)	184	49.7	66.5
Above 3 (many)	124	33.5	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
Relatives			
None	168	45.4	45.4
Below 3 (few)	174	47	92.4
More than 3 (Many)	28	7.6	100
Total	**370**	**100**	

Source: ***Primary Data, 2025***

The Table 1 above shows a fairly balanced gender distribution, with a slight male dominance of 52.4% (194) to 47.6% (176) female. A significant majority (87.8%) of the respondents is between 20 and 25 years old compared to 12.2% (45) in the age bracket between 26-30 years old hence suggesting that most respondents are in their early university years of study. The majority (61.6%) of students have a CGPA between 3.6 and 4.39, indicating strong academic performance. Only a small percentage (2.7%) has a CGPA below 2.89, showing that most students are academically competent. The most common course is BSE (Bachelor of Science in Education), which has 29.7% of respondents. The least common course is BPH (Bachelor of Public Health), accounting for 6.2%. This distribution suggests that students are more inclined towards professional teaching programs. 49.7% of respondents have less than three siblings, while 33.5% have more than three. 45.4% reported having no close relatives, whereas 47.0% have fewer than three. This suggests that many students come from small to medium-sized families, which may influence their career aspirations and choices.

In conclusion, the demographic data provided a useful profile of the respondents, showing a young, academically competent group with balanced gender representation and a diverse course selection. In addition, family structure and social environment have also been presented as seen in the distribution of siblings and relatives of the respondents.

4.2 Demographic Characteristic of Respondents' Parents

The biodata provides insight into the background characteristics of the respondents' parents, including their marital status, income level, occupation, and education level as presented in the table below;

Table 2 Show the Demographic Characteristic of Respondents' Parents

Bio data of respondents' parents	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Marital status			
Married/ living together	289	78.1	78.1
Divorced	51	13.8	91.9
Widowed	30	8.1	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
Level of Income			
Low income	200	54	54
Middle income	145	39.2	93.3
High income	25	6.8	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
Occupation of the father			
Professional occupation	158	42.7	42.7
Non-professional occupation	88	23.8	66.5
Others	124	33.5	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
Occupation of the mother			
Professional occupation	107	28.9	28.9
Non-professional occupation	77	20.8	49.7
Others	186	50.3	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
Educational level of the Father's respondent			
Less than high school diploma	110	29.7	29.7
High school diploma	68	18.4	48.1
Some college education	58	15.7	63.8
Bachelor's degree	112	30.3	94.1
Master's degree	20	5.4	99.5
Doctorate	2	0.5	100
Total	**370**	**100**	
Educational level of Respondent's mother			
Less than high school diploma	160	43.2	43.2
High school diploma	72	19.5	62.7
Some college education	69	18.6	81.4
Bachelor's degree	58	15.7	97
Master's degree	9	2.4	99.5
Doctorate	2	0.5	100
Total	**370**	**100**	

Source: ***Primary Data, 2025***

In table 2 above, the majority of respondents' parents (78.1%) are married or living together, suggesting a stable family structure for most students. A smaller proportion (13.8%) is divorced, while 8.1% are widowed. This distribution indicates that most students come from households with two parents, which may play a role in parental influence on career choices. More than half of the respondents' parents (54%) belong to the low-income group, indicating financial constraints for many students. 39.2% belong to the middle-income group, while only 6.8% are in the high-income category. This suggests that financial limitations may impact students' career choices, as higher-income families might have more resources to support diverse career options.

42.7% of fathers are in professional occupations (for example doctors, engineers, teachers), 23.8% hold non-professional jobs (for example clerical work or manual Labor), 33.5% fall into the "others" category, possibly self-employed or unemployed. Fewer mothers are in professional occupations (28.9%) compared to fathers, 20.8% are in non-professional roles, while a majority (50.3%) fall under "others", likely homemakers or self-employed. This suggests that traditional gender roles may still be influencing the career choices of students, as mothers are unemployed or doing informal jobs. 30.3% of fathers have a bachelor's degree, the highest proportion among education levels. 29.7% did not complete high school, showing a significant educational gap. Only 5.4% hold a master's degree, and 0.5% has a doctorate. A higher percentage of mothers (43.2%) did not complete high school, which is more than the fathers' percentage (29.7%). Fewer mothers hold a bachelor's degree (15.7%) or a master's degree (2.4%) compared to fathers. This suggests that fathers generally have higher educational attainment than mothers, which may influence the level of academic support given to students.

In conclusion, the bio-data of respondents' parents revealed important socio-economic and educational patterns that can impact students' career choices on the account of, parental education, occupation and financial challenges played a significant role in shaping students' career choices.

4.3 Results

The Table 3 Below Shows the Descriptive Statistics of Parental Influence on Career Choice among Undergraduate Students in Lira University.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parental Influence	370	1.00	4.08	2.6803	0.42935
Students' Self Concept	370	1.00	4.94	3.3409	0.54554

Source: ***Primary Data, 2025***

The table 3 above provided descriptive statistics for parental influence and students' self-concept based on a sample of 370 participants. The results indicated that the mean score for parental influence was M = 2.68, SD = 0.43. Students' self-concept had a higher mean of M = 3.34, SD = 0.55. These results suggest that students generally reported a moderate level of parental influence and a moderately positive self-concept.

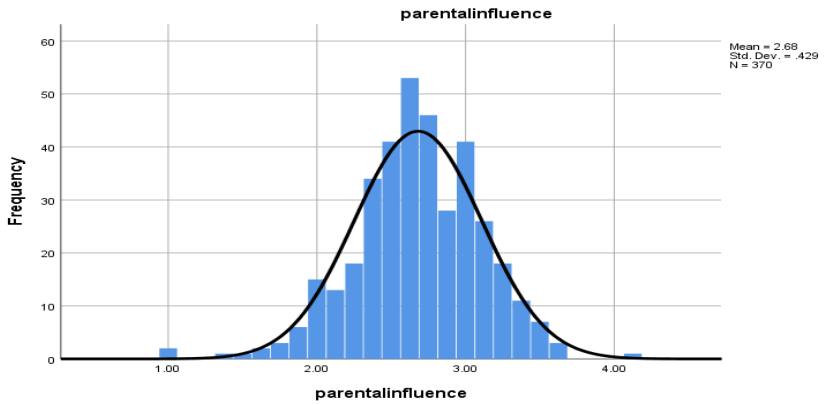


Figure 1 Showing Histogram on Parental Influence on Self-Concept among Undergraduate Students

The histogram appears normally distributed with a slight skew. The peak is around 2.5-3.0, suggesting most students reported moderate parental influence. Few students reported very low (1.0) or very high influence (above 4.0) with most values clustering around the mean (2.68). This suggests that parental

influence is fairly consistent among students, with few extreme values.

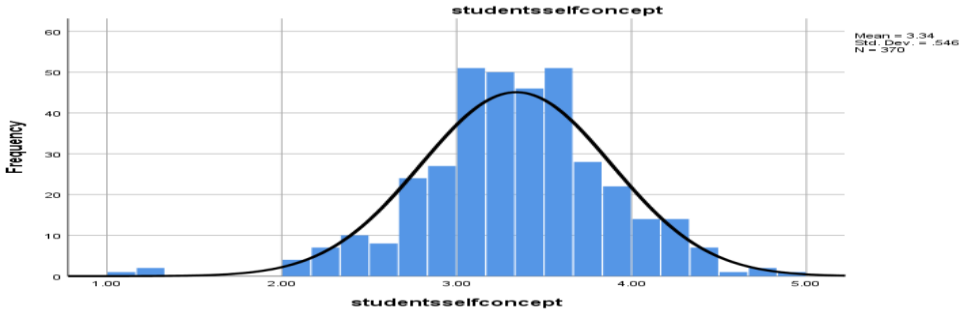


Figure 2 Showing Histogram Showing the Distribution of Students' Self-concept among Undergraduate Students in Lira University.

The distribution is approximately normal with a higher mean (3.34). Most students have a self-concept rating around 3.0-3.5. The curve is slightly wider, meaning more variation in students' self-perception. This indicates that most students perceive themselves positively, though some variability is present.

Therefore, the histograms confirmed that the variables are fairly normally distributed, which supports the validity of further correlation and regression analyses

4.4 Quantitative Findings

This study employed quantitative data analysis on the relationships between Parental Influence and Student's Self-Concept. By using statistical techniques like descriptive statistics and correlation. The study aimed at understanding the extent to which parental influence impacts students' self-concept.

Tests for normality were conducted on both variables. Histograms with overlaid normal curves showed that scores for parental influence and student's self-concept were approximately normally distributed, with no evidence of significant skewness or outliers. Therefore, a Pearson correlation coefficient was performed to examine the relationship between parental influence and self-concept of Undergraduate Students in Lira University, Lira City West Division, Lira City and this yielded the results shown in table below;

Table 4 Below Shows the Pearson Correlations Results on Parental Influence and students' Self-Concept of Undergraduate Students

		Parental Influence	**Student's Self-Concept**
Parental Influence	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	**370**	
Student's Self-Concept	Pearson Correlation	.604**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	**370**	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: ***Primary Data, 2025***

Inferring from table 4 above, the correlation results indicate that there's a high positive and statistically significant linear relationship (r = .604**, p > .000) between parental influence and self-concept among undergraduate students in Lira University, Lira City West Division, Lira City. Hence, the null hypothesis has been rejected because the correlation coefficient differs significantly from zero thus this can be concluded that there's direct positive relationship between parental influence and self-concept of undergraduate students in

Lira University, Lira City West Division, Lira City. The result is described as a positive relationship between parental influence and student's self-concept. This shows that as parental influence increases, its effects on student's self-concept also increase. Therefore, supportive and engaged parenting plays a crucial role in fostering a positive self-image in students. Parents who actively participate in their children's lives, offer consistent encouragement, and cultivate a nurturing home environment could contribute significantly to their children developing a stronger sense of self-worth and confidence and self-esteem.

4.5 Qualitative Findings

The study indicates that parents contributed to the student's self-concept both directly and indirectly. This according to the analysis was informing of parental support, parental control and parents' inability to show concern by their ways of laxity and reluctance in demonstrating parental responsibility.

To explore how parental influences shapes students' self-concept, participants were asked; there are times when you became frustrated and you almost lost self-confidence, so how did your parents help you to overcome that?

Students who had supportive parents encountered emotional, financial, and moral support because of that, they were able to develop a strong self-concept, which enabled them to make independent career choices. In the same line of analysis, a number of respondents reported that when faced with personal problems which couldn't allow them to reach a decision, their parents could help them to think critically of the possible solutions to the problems. This increased their confidence level and self-motivation, hence the above proves that supportive parents helped their children to make realistic independent choices of their career. One of the respondents in the category of student shared;

> *Normally we are friendly with the parents. So, when it is a burning issue, normally, they just give advice like that. Maybe you just stay. They can just say that is how the world is, therefore helping us to adopt and develop the ability to overcome challenging situations. (Participant 28, personal communication, November 26, 2024).*

To explore how parental influences shapes students' self-concept, participants were asked; "Please tell me about your parents. Are they strict on you? Are they too lenient?" These questions served to uncover how students perceive their parents' involvement in their personal lives, and how this involvement influenced their sense of identity, autonomy, and self-worth as young adults. The response revealed varying degree of parental control, hence one of the students shared; *"Yes, they're strict in a way that they want to, like when I'm alone, they want to know the type of friends I have, where I move, where I go to, those things. But they're not strict in the extent of restricting me from doing most of the things."* (Participant 14, personal communication, November 2024)

Contrary to the above, participants recognized their parents' concern, especially when unsupervised, but did not feel constrained in a way that hindered their personal growth. Such monitoring, when balanced, can instill a sense of accountability and guidance, which may positively shape self-concept, in contrast, another student expressed a different experience; *"My parents are very strict. They always want to know everything, who I am with, what I am doing, even what time I sleep. Sometimes it makes me feel like I can't make my own decisions"* (Participant 19, personal communication, November 2024).

Therefore, students with controlling parents had weaker self-concept because their reasoning, understanding, interactions were limited to parental expectations which disadvantaged their personal interest because midst such, they struggled with self-doubt, stress, or pressure from family expectations since such parental expectations were in collision with their personal thoughts and feelings hence low self-concept. In contrast, another student expressed a different experience: *"My parents are very strict. They always want to know everyone that I'm with, what I am doing, even what time I sleep. Sometimes it makes me feel like I can't make my own decisions.* (Participant 9, personal communication, November 2024) yet again another student, described the opposite; *"My parents trust me. They don't ask too many questions. They only get involved when I ask for advice. It makes me feel like they believe in me."* (Participant 23, personal communication, November 2025).

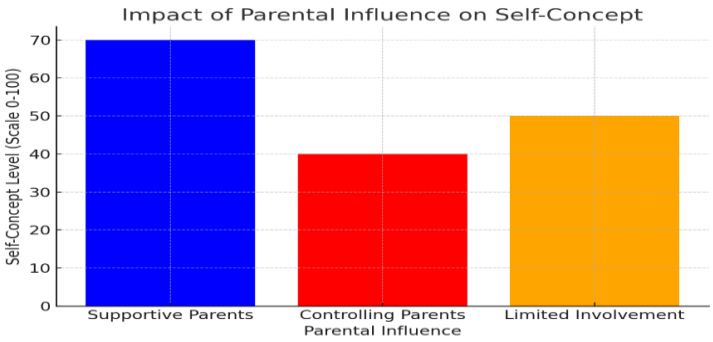
This means that parental control appears more intrusive, which potentially leads to reduced autonomy and a dependent self-concept, this is consequential as it enables the student feels less confident in their own judgment. However, low parental control, paired with high trust, can enhance self-esteem and independence thus helping the student develop a strong, confident self-concept.

Impact of Parental Influence on Self-Concept

The bar chart presented illustrates the impact of different types of parental influence on the self-concept levels of undergraduate students at Lira University. The data is based on a qualititative analysis using a self-concept scale ranging from 0 to 100.

A Bar graph showing the relationship between Parental Influence and Self Concept

A Bar graph showing the relationship between parental influence and Students' self-concept



This graph shows how different levels of parental influence affect a student's self-concept. Supportive parents are associated with the highest self-concept levels (around 70), indicating that students who receive consistent emotional, moral, and financial support tend to develop a strong sense of identity and confidence. Controlling parents correspond to the lowest self-concept levels (around 45), showing that authoritarian parenting may suppress students' autonomy and self-worth. Limited involvement shows a moderate self-concept level (around 55), suggesting that while students may face uncertainty, some still develop independence and resilience in shaping their self-concept.

4.3 Discussion

The study examined the extent to which parents can influence the self-concept of Undergraduate Students in Lira University, Lira City West Division, Lira City. The results of this study indicate that parental influence plays a significant role in shaping the self-concept of undergraduate students in Lira University. The quantitative findings revealed a strong positive correlation between parental influence and self-concept ($r = 0.604^{**}$, $p < .000$), suggesting that students who perceive their parents as supportive and involved are more likely to develop a positive self-concept. This is consistent with previous studies which have emphasized the central role of parental behaviors in children's self-concept development. This is in line with the study conducted earlier by Khaleque (2012) and a number of other researchers whose' scholarly works have been discussed here in this chapter. Khaleque (2012) findings broadly acknowledges the family atmosphere as an environment where respect, appreciation, warmth and acceptance are encountered especially when parents support their children to solve their personal challenges.

In the qualitative findings, students who described their parents as emotionally, morally, and financially supportive exhibited a higher level of confidence, motivation, and independence in making personal and academic decisions. One participant shared: *"Normally we are friendly with parents. So, when it is a burning issue, normally, they just give advice like that. Maybe you just stay. They can just say that is how the world is, therefore helping us to adopt and develop the ability to overcome challenging situations."* (Participant 28, personal communication, November 26, 2024).

This kind of parental support was critical in helping students overcome frustrations, rebuild self-confidence, and enhance their sense of self-worth. These findings align with Khaleque (2012), who emphasized that perceived parental warmth is strongly associated with positive psychological adjustment, including traits such as positive self-esteem, independence, and self-adequacy.

Similarly, Jeynes (2008) observed that parental involvement in a child's life has a significant impact on the child's self-concept and academic achievement, especially when parents meet their children's emotional and psychological needs. This supports the view that the family, and particularly the parents, are central to a child's development of self-worth and competence, a view echoed in Cynthia (2007) and Wairimu et al. (2016).

However, the findings also revealed that over-controlling or intrusive parental behaviors may negatively affect students' self-concept. Several participants reported that their parents exercised high levels of control over their daily activities, decision-making, and social interactions. One student explained, *"My parents are very strict. They always want to know everything, who I am with, what I am doing, even what time I sleep. Sometimes it makes me feel like I can't make my own decisions.* (Participant 19, personal communication, November 2024).

This sense of over-monitoring appeared to hinder the development of autonomy and led to lower self-confidence. These findings are consistent with Berk (2008), who argued that over-indulgent or over-controlling parenting styles often result in unrealistic

self-concepts, low self-esteem, and adjustment problems. In contrast, a more balanced and trusting parental approach was associated with higher self-concept, as reflected in another participant's response, *"My parents trust me. They don't ask too many questions. They only get involved when I ask for advice. It makes me feel like they believe in me."* (Participant 14, personal communication, November 2024)

Such responses suggest that supportive parenting fosters a strong sense of self-efficacy, autonomy, and confidence in decision-making. This is in line with Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which asserts that self-concept and behavior are shaped through social reinforcement, modelling, and encouragement from important persons especially parents.

Moreover, the students' perception of parental involvement varied from active support to neglect or emotional distance. While some students reported active involvement and encouragement, others highlighted their parents' lack of concern or engagement, which contributed to a lower sense of self-worth and greater emotional vulnerability. This aligns with the work of Love & Murdock (2004) and Wilkinson (2004), who found that poor parent-child attachment can lead to social withdrawal, aggression, and poor emotional regulation, all of which are closely tied to diminished self-concept.

The findings are also consistent with Rahmawati and Pudjiastuti (2018) and Subaryana (2015), who emphasized that parents are one of the primary agents in shaping either a positive or negative self-concept. Students whose parents demonstrated warmth, guidance, and responsiveness generally developed a positive self-image, while those with harsh, neglectful, or overly strict parenting tended to struggle with self-doubt, anxiety, or low self-esteem.

Overall, both qualitative and quantitative findings consistently underscore that parental influence whether through verbal affirmations, involvement, expectations, or emotional availability plays a decisive role in shaping students' self-concept. These influences subsequently affect how students perceive their abilities and make career-related decisions, making it evident that the formation of self-concept is not an isolated cognitive process, but a deeply social one embedded in family dynamics.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that parental influence is a key determinant of students' self-concept of undergraduate students in Lira University. Parental influence is not uniform. It ranges from supportive to controlling, passive to disengaged, and each type uniquely shapes a student's trajectory. Parental emotional support and educational guidance foster positive self-concept, which enhances career decision-making. Students' ability to view themselves is shaped through parent-child interactions. Parents' Socio-economic status plays a dual role by indirectly shaping confidence and ambition of a student. Therefore, understanding the specific nature of parental influence is crucial in tailoring interventions with the aim of improving students' self-concept.

5.2 Recommendations

The objective was to examine the effects of parental influence on self-concept of undergraduate students in Lira University. Quantitative results indicated parental influence was significantly associated with high self-concept. Qualitative narratives further highlighted that encouragement, trust, and open communication from parents fostered positive self-concept. Conversely, students with absent or controlling parents frequently reported low self-worth and indecision about their abilities thus this called for the following recommendations;

1. Parents should be sensitized about the importance of emotional and moral support, not just financial provision, in shaping their children's academic self-concept and career aspirations. Adding on, parents should be encouraged to engage in open conversations that support students' interests, talents, and long-term goals rather than imposing career choice.

2. Mental health support should be extended to students facing financial stress, parental pressure, or self-doubt need mental health support through peer counselling programs. Similarly, self-concept development programs should be carried out by schools by offering self-confidence and motivation workshops to help students understand their strengths.

3. Enhancing students' self-concept and decision-making skills. Schools and families should provide opportunities for students to develop self-awareness, confidence, and decision-making skills. Similarly, extracurricular activities, leadership programs, and mentorship initiatives should be emphasized to help students build a strong self-concept.

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