

AGENCY AND THE SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BAMENDA, CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effects of agency on the self-development of adolescents in the University of Bamenda, Cameroon. Indicators of agency considered were forethought, self-reactiveness, self-reflectiveness, self-esteem and self-efficacy and were tested against the self-development of adolescents. The survey design was used and the sample was made up of 382 including 158 males and 224 female adolescent students purposively selected across four Faculties of the University of Bamenda. Data were collected with a questionnaire and subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics. The Spearman's rho correlation was used to test the explanatory power of agency over self-development. Findings showed that descriptively, adolescents were endowed with forethought (91.5%), self-reactiveness (90%), self-reflectiveness (82.5%), self-esteem (91%) and self-efficacy (91%); and that there was a significant relationship between these agentic characteristics and self-development with an overall 88.8% explanatory power. From the findings self-esteem was the highest predictor of self-development ($r=0.604$; $P=0.000$) followed by self-efficacy ($r=0.568$; $P=0.000$) next by, self-reflectiveness ($r=0.493$; $P=0.000$), then self-reactiveness ($r=0.481$; $P=0.000$) and finally, forethought ($r=0.434$; $P=0.000$). These findings showed that agency is an intrinsic and instrumental part of one's own wellbeing and directs one's movement towards personal developmental pursuits. Hence with agency adolescents have the capacity to choose and execute actions that direct them towards desired and valued futures in a way that is not fully determined by external factors and conditions other than their self-understanding and reasoning about themselves and the futures they wish to attain.

Keywords: Adolescents, agency, forethought, self-reactiveness, self-reflectiveness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-development.