

## Significance of Self Concept Among the Adolescent School Students

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### Abstract :

Adolescents are vulnerable to a series of psychosocial stressors that are not usually identified or treated. They may experience multiple losses, and usually there are limited resources available to help them deal with these losses and their repercussions. Self-concept reflects how an adolescent evaluates himself or herself in domains in which he or she considers success important. Problems and difficulties can lower self-concept; but low self-concept can also cause problems. An adolescent can have a positive self-concept in some domains and a negative self-concept in others. This study aims to study the level of self-concept among adolescents studying in Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Samayanallur, Madurai district. The total sample for the study comprised of 50 adolescent girls and boys studying in Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Samayanallur selected from the universe of 367. Simple Random sampling method was adopted in the present study. This study on the self concept of school going adolescents is a descriptive study and was conducted in Madurai district among 50 adolescents in the age group of 10-19 years. An interview schedule and the Adolescents Self Concept Short Scale were the tools administered in this study to collect data. The findings of this research will be discussed in the main paper. This research it is evident that more research has to be done to further analyze the factors contributing to the self concept of adolescents.

**Key words:** Self concept, Adolescents and role of social workers.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the period of heightened sensitivity for rapid learning and of critical acquisitions which determine the general style of adult life. Adolescents with high self concept are considered to achieve high academic achievements which will provide their identity in the society, get good career opportunities, get acceptance from peer, parents and teachers, develop leadership qualities, and enhance their life skills etc. As a child goes through adolescence, he or she is subjected to many different challenges, stressors, and opportunities. An important factor in handling these challenges is a positive self-concept. Through adolescence, schools should be preparing students to become comfortable part of the general

population, easily adjusting to their surroundings. Students with learning

disabilities struggle with self-concept and self esteem, which in turn can lead to adjustment difficulties, substance abuse, depression and suicide ideation (Saghatoleslami, 2005). As student's transition from middle level to high school their self-concept gradually grows. Increasing freedom allows adolescents greater opportunities to participate, in activities in which they are competent and increased perspective – taking abilities enable them to garner more support from others by having in more socially acceptable ways (Harter 1999). Self-concept is frequently positively correlated with academic performance, but it appears to be consequence rather than a cause of

high achievement (Bavmeister et al., 2003). This suggests that increasing student's academic skills is a more effective means to boost their self-concept than vice versa. Self-concept is defined as the value that an individual places on his or her own characteristics, qualities, abilities, and actions (Woolfolk 2001). Self-concept is not innate, but is developed or constructed by the individual through interaction with the environment and reflecting on that interaction. This aspect of self-concept is important because it indicates that it can be modified or changed (Franken, 1994). The way an individual views himself accounts to a large extent for his success. An adolescent who has an adequate self-concept is likely to follow the problem solving approach and tends to be spontaneous, creative, original and have high self esteem. He trusts himself and has good academic achievement motivation and is free to accept others without any negative feelings. Negative self-concept in adolescence has been associated with various maladaptive behavioral and emotional problems. Problems and difficulties can lower self-concept; but low self-concept can also cause problems and they may lose motivation in learning. Building confidence in adolescents is one of the most important steps educators and parents can take to ensure an atmosphere for learning. The need to carry out a comprehensive education in schools that addresses the promotion of not only academic but also personal and social competences must be discussed. Hence, the present study was taken up to find out self-concept of adolescents in Madurai district.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Herrera, Al-Lal and Mohamed (2020)** analyzed the academic achievement, as well as the self-concept, personality and emotional intelligence, according to gender and cultural origin of the participants (European vs. Amazigh). A sample consisting of 407 students enrolled

in the last 2 years of Primary Education were utilized for the study. By gender, 192 were boys (47.2%) and 215 girls (52.8%), with an average age of 10.74 years old. By cultural group, 142 were of European origin (34.9%) and 265 of Amazigh origin (65.1%). The academic achievements were evaluated from the grades obtained in three school subjects: Natural Sciences, Spanish Language and Literature, and Mathematics. Based on the objectives the grades in the subject of Spanish Language and Literature varied depending on the gender of the students. Likewise, differences were found in self-concept, personality, and emotional intelligence according to gender. Also, the physical self-concept varied according to the cultural group. **Palomino (2017)** analyzed the self concept in students with compensatory education needs for developing mindfulness –based Psychoeducational. As such, mindfulness is a learning experience that entails significant emotional well-being, learning, and physical and mental health benefits for those who engage in this practice. The study analyzed perceptions of self-concept in students with compensatory education needs at primary school level ( $n = 26$ ); this descriptive–correlational study was conducted by means of the “Multidimensional Self-Concept scale.” The respondents reported positive levels of self-concept in peer relations, physical appearance and physical ability, and academic self-concept in mathematics.

**Duraku and Hoxha (2018)** examined the self-esteem, study skills, self-concept, social support, psychological distress, and coping mechanism effects on test anxiety and academic performance among university and high school students. A series of validated measures were administered to 284 Kosovar students, most of who were in college (60.3%). Social support resulted as protective factors for test anxiety. Better study skills, self-concept, and psychological distress

were indicative of higher test anxiety. Higher levels of self-esteem were associated with higher student success. **Bharathi and Sreedevi (2016)** studied the self-concept among the adolescents. Self-concept scale of Saraswathi (1984) was used to analyze the self-concept of 40 adolescents of twin cities of Hyderabad, Telangana State. The findings of the study revealed that higher percentage of adolescents had above average levels of self-concept in dimension of temperamental (85%), intellectual (77.5%), physical (60%) and social (52.5%). About 47.5 percent of adolescents equally had high and above average self-concept in education. And 57.5 percent of adolescents had high moral self concept. Adolescents overall Self-concept was found as 27.5 percent in high and 72.5 percent have above average. Hence, the study may help the teachers and parents to maintain the optimum level of self-concept of adolescents.

**Khan and Alam (2015)** found in their study that academic stress and self-concept of government high school students in Aligarh, shows that statistically significant negative correlation between academic stress and self-concept. Private school students are significantly better on moral self concept and temperamental self-concept. Private and government high school students are significantly differed only on one dimension of academic stress i.e. inadequate academic environment in the college. Kaur and Singh (2014), in their research paper on self-concept of school students found no significant difference between male and female students as well as students of govt. and private school; but differences are significant on the basis of location of schools of the school students. The rural school students have better self-concept than those of urban schools. Students of three levels of self-concept i.e. high, average and low differ with each other on all aspects of emotional intelligence. And

the students with high level of self-concept are more emotionally intelligent than those of low self-concept. So there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and self-concept. Jain (2012) found in their study that low and high groups of academic achievement did not show any remarkable difference with regard to six areas of self-concept. It was also observed that high academic achievers had positive attitude towards their school, teachers and extra-curricular activities, and further that total self-concept and academic performance are good predictors of general performance and thereby are established the association and prediction between self-concept and academic performance. Ghazvini (2011) studied the relationship between the academic self-concept and academic performance, the finding showed a close relationship between academic self-concept and measures of academic performance. Academic self-concept powerfully and positive predicts general performance in literature and mathematics. It is necessary to give adequate and sufficient attention to self-concept and teachers should be offered methodological guidance in order to work on these throughout the educational process. Tarquin et al. (2008) studied the relationship among previous experiences of student alienation and various aspects of self concept. Students were asked to report on their worst experience in school, symptoms they had following their worst experience, and overall feelings about themselves. Results also revealed a moderate negative correlation between self-concept and student alienation.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The researcher has attempted to study the level of self concept among school going adolescents in Madurai district. The objectives of study were to observe the various aspects of self-concept in their personal, familial, social and adolescent life and to assess the extent of self-concept

among adolescent school going as per their socio-economic characteristics. The researcher had adopted descriptive research design for the present study in order to describe the level of self concept among school going adolescents in Madurai district. The universe of the study comprises of adolescent girls and boys' studying in Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Samayanallur and the total strength is 367. The population of the study is being a finite one. The lists of the students were obtained from the respective schools which served as the sampling frame. The simple random sampling method was applied. The researcher has used standardized tool for collecting the data for the present study the first part of the questionnaire included the questions pertaining to personal and academic related matters. The Self- concept of adolescents were collected by using Adolescents' Self-concept Short Scale (Veiga & Domingues, 2012) which has 30 items with six factors e.g behaviour, anxiety, intellectual status, popularity, physical appearance and happiness. The scores obtained were subject to statistical treatment using proper statistical techniques. The results obtained are interpreted and discussed in the light of problem factors to make the result meaningful.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A sizeable number of the respondents (36%) are in the age of 15 and 28% of the respondents are in the age of 14 years. More than half of the respondents (54 %) are female and 46 percentage of the

respondents are male. Majority of the respondents (64%) have one sibling, 26 per cent of the respondents have 2 siblings. Majority of the respondents (74%) are from nuclear family, 26 percentage of the respondents are hailing from joint family system. Great majority of the respondents (88%) are living with their parents, 8 percentage of them are semi orphans and 4 percentage are orphans. Majority of the respondents (64%) have basic education in English medium and 36 percentage of the respondents from Tamil medium. Vast majority of the respondents (88%) reported that their family monthly income falls between Rs. 15,001 to Rs. 30,000. We can understand from the study that, little more than half of the respondents (52%) reported that they are studying 10<sup>th</sup> standard and 48 percentage of them are studying higher secondary. Majority of the respondents (70%) have reported that they do not have any health issues and only 30 percentage of the respondents are having health issues. It is also found that there is no significant association between the respondent years of stay in the Institution and the Self Concept. There is a significant association between the respondent's interest in sports and the Self Concept and it is clear that sport activity improves the self concept of students and it refreshes them. There is no significant association between the respondent's health issues; opinion on development needed in school, challenges faced in the school, respondent's food habit and self concept. There is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents, birth order, varied classes studied and their perceived levels of self concept.

**Table – 1: Distribution of Respondents by their perceived levels of Self-Concept**

Sl. No.	Variables	Frequency (n=50)	Percentage
1	<b>Anxiety</b>		
	Low	21	42.0
	Moderate	11	22.0
	High	18	36.0

2	<b>Physical Appearance</b>		
	Low	12	24.0
	Moderate	23	46.0
	High	15	30.0
3	<b>Behaviour</b>		
	Low	24	48.0
	Moderate	14	28.0
	High	12	24.0
4	<b>Popularity</b>		
	Low	12	24.0
	Moderate	26	52.0
	High	12	24.0
5	<b>Happiness</b>		
	Low	15	30.0
	Moderate	21	42.0
	High	14	28.0
6	<b>Intellectual Status</b>		
	Low	14	28.0
	Moderate	21	42.0
	High	15	30.0
8	<b>Overall Self Concept</b>		
	Low	13	26.0
	Moderate	23	46.0
	High	14	28.0

It is evident from table 1, less than half of the respondents (46%) have moderate level of self concept whereas more or less equal number of respondents has low and high level of self concept. With regard to its sub-dimensions less than half of the respondents have perceived low levels of anxiety (42%), behaviour (48%) and moderate levels in physical appearance (46%), popularity (52%), happiness (42%) and intellectual status (42%). Awareness must be created among the students community regarding self and importance of self concept to have a better standard of living. They should concentrate on developing self-concept tools for promoting students mental health and their personality during adolescence. Based on the investigation from the present study, the majority of the rural students possess a moderate level of self-concept and some of them possess a low self concept. So the necessary steps to be taken by the policy makers to improve the level of self concept.

So human mind has something vital to do with human emotions and importance should be given to self-concept to control our emotions with the mind. But their emotions need to be understood, taught, trained and controlled by the mind. The self concept moves beyond the intelligence to a higher state of consciousness, guided by what one senses, feels and intuit, and one's heart.

### SUGGESTIONS

Self-concept reflects how an adolescent evaluates himself or herself in domains in which he or she considers success important. Problems and difficulties can lower self-concept; but low self-concept can also cause problems. An adolescent can have a positive self-concept in some domains and a negative self-concept in others. Research also suggests that each individual has global self-concept that reflects how the individual evaluates his or

her self-worth as a whole. It is evident that the desirable needs of the hour that as teenage adolescence students should have proper emotional development to rightly use their human emotions. The role of social worker is to generate awareness on self concept and its importance in the academic performance and the psychological wellbeing among adolescents. . The social work academic institutions play a pivotal role in the areas of research oriented interventions for the welfare of the rural school going adolescents. Hence, social work methods must be applied at school level to deal with various problems of school students.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

We would like to conclude the present study that the school going adolescents are capable to assess their own personal worth or competencies on basis of internal and external evidences for the development of the society. In India, lot of research works have been done for general category of students' especially in Madurai city but not in the rural areas; very little research work has been done. The present study contributes to review of literature in the field of adolescent mental health in special reference to self concept. The present study also found that majority of the rural students possess a moderate level of self-concept and some of them possess a low self concept. Necessary steps have to be taken by the policy makers and social work academic institutions in the areas of research oriented interventions for the welfare of the rural school going adolescents.

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