

## Self-Concept and Achievement Motivation of Adolescents: A Relationship

<sup>1</sup>Renu Gulati, <sup>2</sup>Veenu Wadhwa, and <sup>3</sup>Reema Lamba

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Human Development and Childhood Studies, Institute of Home Economics, University of Delhi, India

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Human Development and Childhood Studies, Institute of Home Economics, University of Delhi, India

<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Human Development and Family Empowerment, Aditi Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi, India

---

### ARTICLE DETAILS

#### Article History

Published Online: 15 March 2019

#### Keywords

Self-concept, motivation, child development, adolescence

#### Corresponding Author(s)

Email: [drrenugulati@gmail.com](mailto:drrenugulati@gmail.com)

[veenu.15@gmail.com](mailto:veenu.15@gmail.com)

[reemalamba73@gmail.com](mailto:reemalamba73@gmail.com)

---

### ABSTRACT

*Self-Concept and achievement motivation are important aspects of child development. Both these seem to have an impact on the academic performance of adolescents. Around 200 adolescents, aged 14-17 years, were studied to examine their self-concept and achievement motivation. The influence of both these independent variables on the dependent variable - academic performance was studied using a set of standard questionnaires for self-concept and achievement motivation. The sample belonged to the same socio-economic and educational background. No gender differences in adolescent self-concept and achievement motivation were found. The correlation between self-concept and achievement motivation was found to be significant. The effect of self-concept and achievement motivation on academic performance was significant with self-concept having a greater influence on the outcome.*

---

### Introduction

#### Adolescence

The period of adolescence is the stage of life that begins at puberty and carries on to adulthood. An age ranges from about 10-18 years. This stage is characterized by physical and physiological changes, emergence of sexual feelings, construction of identity and the ability to think abstractly. It is a transitional stage generally regarded as a stressful period.

As adolescents transition through this phase, and are developing a sense of self, they are often faced with many decisions that appear to be difficult. Making academic choices, choosing friends, unraveling issues of sexuality, and peer pressures are some of the situations that adolescents may find themselves in. Adolescence as a stage is full of tremendous challenges that require adjustment to the remarkable changes in appearance, the nature, the family dynamics and the peer group.

#### Self-Concept

Self-concept is an individual's understanding of his/her characteristics, qualities and abilities. It has been put forth as a complex, multilayered pattern of principles, attitudes and /or philosophies held by a person about himself/ herself (Chan, 2002; Woolfolk, 2001). Some theorists state that self-concept initiates the thought of the possible self and it creates the motivation for behavior. It is the way one views him/herself as well as ones thoughts and opinions, feelings and behaviors (Saraswat and Gaur,1981). According to Ahluwalia (1999) self-concept is an extensive area that characterizes the personality and gives direction to life. The importance of self- concept has been reiterated in the academic settings and especially during

the adolescent years and has been the focus of the present paper.

#### Achievement Motivation and Academic Achievement

Motivation is refers to a process that guides, encourages and drills an individual to carry on in a particular direction. It incites, focuses and supports behavior. Learning and maturation are very strongly connected with each other. According to Abraham Maslow, only once the primary needs are fulfilled, can the individual concentrate on the higher needs in the pyramid like intellectual achievement. Motivating students to learn is an issue that always requires attention. Motivating students towards success is a challenge as well. Motivation is greatly appreciated; it produces significant responses according to Deci and Ryan (2000). The attitude is used in collaboration with motivation with a direction towards achieving self-concept, or the way one thinks of the self as performing a task successfully. Academic achievement gets enhanced if the self-concept is positive as it enhances the motivation to achieve.

When a student strives towards the achievement of academic success, it can be associated with achievement motivation (Amalaha, 1975; Moen and Doyle, 1977). According to Slavin (2006), motivation constantly pushes us to keep performing, and helps in determining the direction for the future. Research study by Blank (1997) has stated that students having a high achievement motivation had a higher probability for academic achievement. Achievement motivation has been pointed as self-determination to succeed in academic work (Gesinde, 2000). Several other studies (Kushman et al. 2000; Broussard and Garrison, 2004; Skaalvik, S. Skaalvik, 2004) have also reported a positive correlation between factors namely motivation and academic accomplishment. Other

factors such as gender, social class or ethnicity have also been identified that have an influence on self-concept in adolescents. If we understand this in context of educational set up, academic achievement is often put forth as the most important goal of education. Parental education and/or occupation and home environment often play a significant role in this (Bala, 2011, Muola, 2010).

### Academic Self-Concept

Self-concept has been defined as a person's perception about his/herself. It has been referred to as the confidence a person has about him/herself in being able to accomplish a given task. According to Chowdhary and Pati (1997) in elementary years of upbringing whenever the caregiver accepts and approves the child's performance, it encourages in the child respect for one self and instills in him/her confidence to do a particular task. A review of literature (Abouserie, 1995; Tella 2007; Chowdhury & Pati, 1997) shows a moderate to high relation of self-concept to academic performance.

Research by Tella (2007) on academic achievement and learning outcomes in mathematics among secondary school students pointed that students with higher motivation performed better academically than students with lesser motivation. It was highlighted that how a student approaches to study often can be related to the personality traits and achievement motivation specifically.

Based on this literature review, the present study focuses on studying the relationship between the self-concept and achievement motivation and relate it to their academic achievement. The data was collected from around 200 adolescents in the age group of 14-17. The parents of the adolescents had a similar socio-economic background and the educational status and levels were similar too and were residing in urban areas.

The tools used in the study for assessing achievement motivation were "Achievement Motivation Scale by Deo-Mohan (1985) which contained 50 items to assess academic, general field and social interests.

Self-Concept Questionnaire by Rajkumar Saraswat (1981) was used. It covered six dimensions of self-concept, namely physical, social, moral, temperamental, educational and intellectual. The tool has operationally defined these as:

- Physical: The persons view of their physical self, physical appearance etc.
- Social: Individual's perception of self-worth in social interactions
- Temperamental: Individuals' prevailing emotional state or a particular kind of emotional reaction
- Educational: Individual's understanding of the self in relation to school, teachers and other school related activities.
- Moral: Individuals' assessment of their morality; right and wrong actions.
- Intellectual: Individuals' cognizance of their capacity to solve problems etc.

The inventory contained 48 items; eight across each dimension.

The academic performance was assessed by marks obtained by each student who was part of the sample in the final examination of their respective classes.

### Results

The independent variables, self-concept and achievement motivation, were studied to find out their effect on and relationship with the dependent variable, academic performance. 86 boys and 86 girls, a total of 172 adolescents between the age group of 14-17 were studied.

It was found that there were no differences in gender with regards to self-concept except across the physical factor. No gender differences emerged when achievement motivation was viewed.

From the study, it emerged that there are various factors that have an influence on total self-concept. From the analysis, it emerged, that the temperamental factor has the maximum influence on the total self-concept of the adolescents but factors like educational and moral also have an influence on the self-concept.

**Table 1: Percentage of each of the factors on self-concept**

Physical	11%
Social	9%
Temperamental	49%
Educational	25%
Moral	11%
Intellectual	2%

There was a significant relationship between self-concept and achievement motivation of the students. Other correlational studies between achievement and self-concept have also identified that they do have an influence over each other. Most similar studies (Lawrence,A. & Vimala,A ,2013; Chetri,S.,2014; Nwankwo et.al, 2013) reported a relationship between these two variables. Study by Marsh (1992) showed that change in self-concept was associated with change in academic achievement.

It was also found that the independent variables, self-concept and achievement motivation, had a very strong influence on the dependent variable, academic performance. This impact aligned with expectations as well. That is, there was a significant correlation between self-concept and achievement motivation and academic performance. Of the two, self-concept had a greater effect on academic achievement.

Through several studies, Boggiano (1992) revealed that achievement motivation positively influenced academic performance. A study by Abouserie (2006) advocates that students' self-esteem and achievement motivation have a substantial impact on their attitudes and the methods they use to study and learn. Academic achievement and its relationship with achievement motivation and self-concept were also examined (Awan, Naz and Noureen, 2011). The results presented the fact that achievement motivation and self-concept are significantly related to academic achievement.

## Conclusion

The period of adolescence is viewed as having numerous developmental issues and concerns. These issues are constantly a concern for parents. One of the concerns the adolescents have has to do with academic performance. The motivational levels of the student also have an influence on this.

One can appreciate the relevance of the study as it becomes evident for the parents and teachers to understand the adolescents better at a very important phase of their life, when they are preparing for their careers. Knowing the passions of the students and their interests would help in guiding the adolescents in achieving their goals.

The findings of the study indicate that the self-concept, achievement motivation and academic performance of an adolescent are closely related. A clear relationship emerged between the two independent variables – self-concept and achievement motivation and the dependent variable of academic performance.

The present study provides an understanding of the course of action that can be used to guide adolescents through their difficulties. It provides parents and teachers with a tool to adequately assess the capability of the adolescents and view the positive and negative traits which may be supporting or hindering their progress academically.

The study proves that self-concept and achievement motivation have a highly significant impact on academic performance. This could be used to predict the performance of students.

More importantly, the recommendations that would emerge from the study would guide parents in understanding their adolescent better. If both the variables of self-concept and achievement motivation were assessed and evaluated at intervals, it would help parents and teachers in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the adolescent over the period of time and the right kind of guidance could be provided to the adolescent to be able to achieve academic success which is an inherent desire of all students.

## References

1. Abouserie, R. (1995). Self-esteem and achievement motivation as determinants of students' approaches to studying. *Studies in higher education*, 20(1), 19-26.
2. Agu, S. A., Nwankwo, B. E., Obi, T. C., Aboh, J. U., & Anike, R. U. (2013). Influence of religion on the development of self-concept in adolescents. *International Journal of Humanity and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 46.
3. Ahluwalia, S.P. (1999) Manual for Children's Self Concept Scale, National Psychological Corporation, Agra
4. Amalaha, B. M. (1975) Academic Achievement Motivation Ibo fifth formers, Dissertation Abstracts International. 36(1): 123- A.
5. Awan, R. U. N., Noreen, G., & Naz, A. (2011). A Study of Relationship between Achievement Motivation, Self Concept and Achievement in English and Mathematics at Secondary Level. *International education studies*, 4(3), 72-79.
6. Bala, S. (2011) Influence of parental education and Parental Occupation on Academic Achievement of Students. *International Referred Research Journal*, 3,0.
7. Bhardwaj, C. A Study of Self-Concept and Achievement Motivation of Adolescent Students and their Impact on Academic Achievement. Unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation.
8. Boggiano, A. K., Flink, C., Main, D. S., Barrett, M., & Katz, P. (1992). Children's achievement-related behaviors: The role of extrinsic and intrinsic motivational orientations.
9. Chan D.W. (2002) Perceived Domain Specific Competence and Global Self Worth of Primary Students in Hong Kong. *School Psychology International*, 23,3, 355-368.
10. Chetri, S. (2014). Achievement motivation of adolescents and its relationship with academic achievement. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 3(6), 8-15.
11. Chowdhury, A., & Pati, C. (1997) Effect of Selected Family Variables on Social Preference, Academic Achievement and Self-Concept of elementary School Children, *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 137: 1, 133-143.
12. Deci E.L. & Ryan, R. M. (2000) The "What" and "Why" of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior, *Psychological Inquiry*, 11:4, 227-268, DOI: 10.1207/S15327965PLI1104\_01
13. Deo, P. & Mohan, A. (1985). Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation Scale (Ach). Agra: National Psychological Corporation.
14. Gesinde, A.M. (2000) Motivation in Z.A.A. Omideyi (ed). *Fundamentals of Guidance and Counselling*, Kanead Publishers; Ibadan.
15. Kushman, J.W., Seiber, C., Harold, K.P. (2007) This is not the place for me: School Drop-out. *American Counselling Association*, 471-507.
16. Lawrence, A. S., & Vimala, A. (2013). Self-Concept and Achievement Motivation of High School Students. *Online Submission*, 1(1), 141-146.
17. Marsh, H. W. (1992). Content specificity of relations between academic achievement and academic self-concept. *Journal of educational psychology*, 84(1), 35.
18. Muola, J. M. (2010) A study of the relationship between academic achievement motivation and home environment among standard eight pupils. *Educational Research and Reviews*, Vol. 5 (5), 213-217.
19. Woolfolk, A (2001) *Educational Psychology*, Boston, University Press: Allyn and Bacon
20. Saraswath R. K. & Gaur, J.S. (1981). Approaches for measurement of Self-Concept: An Introduction, *Indian Educational Review*, 16 (3), 114-119.
21. Skaalvik, S., Skaalvik, E.M. (2004) Gender Differences in Math and Verbal Self-Concept, Performance Expectations and Motivation. *Sex Role: A Journal of Research*.
22. Slavin, R. (2006) *Educational Psychology 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*, Boston: Pearson/ Allyn & Bacon
23. Tella, A. (2007). The impact of motivation on student's academic achievement and learning outcomes in mathematics among secondary school students in Nigeria. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, 3(2), 149-156.