

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SELF-CONCEPT AMONG SCHOOL GOING ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT

Self-concept is one of the oldest and important constructs in social sciences. Self-concept in children and adolescents require an environment that provides freedom to explore and experiment also providing protection from danger. Earlier research has discussed the importance and benefit of self-concept in educational settings and has led to studies examining the role of self-concept in school performance. There is scarce information in the general setting therefore, this study will look for the existence of differences in self-concept of the boys and girls among school going adolescents in Indian setting. Female students scored lower on physical self-concept than male students, but higher on temperamental self-concept.

Keywords : self-concept, development, school going adolescents

INTRODUCTION

The term self-concept is considered as the significant development in the paradigm of social sciences. Earlier the concept of self – esteem was considered as the uni dimensional design, but as the studies are being evolved the new literature sees self – concept as multi-dimensional design, which comment on how an individual perceives himself. In other words, we can say that self concept in the own analysis of person's own personality, his behaviour. It comprises of a generalized view of their social acceptance, and their personal feelings about themselves.^[1] It also relates to the firm and ordered set of perception and

thought, that an individual holds of himself. The self-concept comprises three main elements :^[2,3]

1. The identity of the subject or self-image, referred to as the perceptions of him/herself;
2. Self-esteem, which is related to the value individuals attach to the particular manner in which they see themselves;
3. A behavior component, reflecting how self-concept influences and formulates the individual's behavior.

Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton's hierarchical model of self-concept^[4] paved way for a new way of thinking which comprises of theorizing and investigating self-concept. So, in broader term it can be understood that the person's self-concept is the result of his comprehensive interpretation of his own environment. Evaluation and reinforcement plays a vital role in developing and alteration of

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an individual's self-concept. The alteration of self-concept takes place with the development of an individual from childhood to adulthood, it becomes more diverse, broader and multi-dimensional. If we talk of children's personality development, self-concept plays a very important role. Every time their self-concept is affected, when they interact, they gain new experience from the outer world. According to Woolfolk^[2], Self-concept is defined as the value that an individual places on his or her own characteristics, qualities, abilities, and actions. Self-concept as well as social and emotional development of a gifted children is a large domain to flourish and a comprehensive researches is needed in this area. Baumrind^[5] describes development of self-concept of children and adolescents require an environment that provides the freedom to explore and experiment and protection from danger. Studies have explored that individual having a high self-concept is often much more confident, more precise and accurate in his work as well as in other domains of life.^[3] Therefore, the factor which plays a vital role in the development of self-concept is a much needed area of research. However there has been several researches conducted which highlights the importance of self-concept in school setting and its role in academic performance.

In the past various studies conducted on the self-concept of children and adolescents have provided evidence of a steady decline in self-concept during preadolescence and early adolescent years, after which a leveling out of self-concept is observed during late adolescence.^[6-8] These findings are in accordance with scientific literature on child development, which suggests that young children have consistently high, less differentiated self-concepts which may be unrealistic and relatively independent of external criteria. As children grow older, their self-concepts become more differentiated and more correlated with external criteria, such as with information about their actual skills and abilities and with information from significant others. The decline of self-concept in preadolescence and early adolescence was observed in measures of

general self-concept as well as in self-perceptions of ability in specific areas, such as physical ability and mathematical ability. This decline has been seen in both boys and girls. However, especially where self-perceptions of mathematical ability are concerned, researchers have reported a sooner and larger drop in girls when compared to boys. There have also been studies suggesting a sex difference in self-perceptions of physical abilities favoring boys and of reading abilities favoring girls. However, these differences were very small.^[9-10] Therefore, this study was planned to look the self-concept of the boys and girls among school going adolescents in Indian setting

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study was to determine the existence of differences in self-concept of school going adolescent boys and girls.

HYPOTHESIS

There was no significant difference in self-concept of boys and girls among school going adolescents in Ranchi.

MATERIALS & METHOD

DESIGN

Present study was a cross-sectional and school based one and aimed to determine the existence of differences in self-concept of school going adolescent boys and girls. This study was done at government & convent school of adjoining areas of the Ranchi district Jharkhand, India. The samples of the study were recruited through simplerandom sampling. In this study age of the adolescent were taken 13-18 years in both groups. Education & family income were matched in the both groups.

PARTICIPANTS

The samples consisted of 200 children among which 100 boys and 100 girls were included from the

(government & convent) school of adjoining areas of the Ranchi district Jharkhand, India.

PROCEDURE

Written informed consent was taken from the parents of school going adolescent students of both groups and necessary data instruments i.e. specially designed socio-demographic data sheet and Self-Concept Questionnaire^[11] were applied on the boys and girls.

MEASURES

The measure used in the present study included Socio-demographic data sheet and Self-Concept Questionnaire.^[11] Self-concept of subjects in both groups was evaluated using the SCQ. The self-Concept inventory provides six separate dimensions of self-concept, viz., Physical, Social, Intellectual, Moral, Educational and Temperamental self-Concept. It also gives a total self-concept score. The inventory contains 48 items. Each dimension contains eight items. Each item is provided with five alternatives. Responses are obtained on the test booklet itself. Validity of scale is 0.8 and reliability is 0.9; Age range—14 to 17 yrs.

STATISTICAL ANALYSES

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to describe sample characteristics. Inferential statistics like the Chi-square, t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to compare the self-concept of the students of the two groups.

RESULTS

The Table-1 and 1.1 shows the comparison of two groups (boys and girls) in different socio-demographic parameters. After data analysis it was noted that both these groups were comparable to each other and there was no difference between them in

any socio-demographic parameter. Results indicated that majority of the respondents were from low socio-economic status, belonged to nuclear families, urban background and Hindu religion. Findings also revealed that most of the fathers and mothers were educated up to 6 to 12 standard and majority of the fathers were more employed and mother were more unemployed in the both groups. Findings also indicated that age of the adolescents (15.32 ± 1.37 & 15.21 ± 1.15 years) was found similar in both the groups. Similarly, no significant difference was seen in the father's age (43.63 ± 4.90 & 43.63 ± 5.68 years) in both groups. But age of the mother of the adolescent (40.01 ± 4.78 & 38.73 ± 5.35 years) was seen high in boys than adolescent girls' group.

Table 2 explains comparison of self-concept of the school going adolescent of both groups. Significant difference was seen on physical self-concept in the boys (18.68 ± 3.54) as compared to the girls (17.06 ± 3.50). However significant difference was also seen in high level of Temperamental (18.54 ± 4.97 & 16.17 ± 4.09) in the girls as compare to the boys. No significant difference was found in other domains of self-concept questionnaire between boys and girls.

Table 3 indicates class wise comparison of self-concept of the school going adolescent of the Boys group. No significant difference was found in the self-concept of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th standard students of adolescent boys. But trend relation was seen in the domains of physical and social self-concept questionnaire among 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th standard students of adolescent boys.

Table 4 indicates class wise comparison of self-concept of the school going adolescent of the girls group. Significant difference was seen on Intellectual and moral self-concept among 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th standard students of adolescent girls. However, no significant difference was found in other domains of self-concept questionnaire among of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th standard students of adolescent girls.

Table - 1 : Socio-demographic background of school going adolescents and their parents

Variables		GROUPS		χ^2 / Fisher Exact test	df	p
		Boys n=100(%)	Girls n=100 (%)			
Education of the adolescents	Standard 9 th	33 (33)	24 (24)	2.169	3	0.555
	Standard 10 th	25 (25)	28 (28)			
	Standard 11 th	20 (20)	25 (25)			
	Standard 12 th	22 (22)	23 (23)			
Socio economic status	Low	37 (37)	45 (45)	3.107	2	0.215
	Middle	36 (36)	38 (38)			
	High	27 (27)	17 (17)			
Family Income	<10000	29 (29)	34 (34)	1.185	2	0.573
	10001-20000	34 (34)	36 (36)			
	>20001	34 (34)	30 (30)			
Type of family	Joint	23 (73.3)	19 (26.7)	0.484	1	0.603
	Nuclear	77 (45.9)	81 (54.1)			
Domicile	Rural	7 (7)	11 (11)	1.114	2	0.540
	Urban	87 (87)	82 (82)			
	Semi urban	6 (6)	7 (7)			
Religion	Hindu	70 (70)	82 (82)	4.114	2	0.253
	Muslim	15 (15)	9 (9)			
	Christian	15 (15)	9 (9)			
Education of the Father	Up to primary	18 (18)	16 (16)	2.127	2	0.362
	6 th to 12 th	48 (48)	40 (40)			
	Above graduation	34 (34)	44 (44)			
Occupation the Father	Employed	94 (95)	94 (94)	0.000	1	1.000
	Unemployed	6 (4)	6 (6)			
Education of the Mother	Up to primary	24 (24)	29 (29)	0.818	2	0.672
	6 th to 12 th	60 (60)	54 (54)			
	Above graduation	16 (16)	17 (17)			
Occupation of the Mother	Employed	28 (28)	21 (21)	2.427	1	0.253
	Unemployed	71 (71)	79 (79)			

Table - 1.1 : Socio-demographic variables of school going adolescents and their parents

Variables	GROUPS		t	df	p
	Boys Mean±SD (n=100)	Girls Mean±SD (n=100)			
Age of the adolescents (year)	15.32 ± 1.37	15.21 ± 1.15	0.613	198	0.540
Age of the father (year)	43.63 ± 4.90	43.63 ± 5.68	0.000	198	1.000
Age of the mother (year)	40.01 ± 4.78	38.73 ± 5.35	1.782	198	0.076

Table - 2 : Comparison of self-concept of the school going adolescents of both groups

Variables (Self Concept Questionnaire)	GROUPS		t	df	p
	Boys (n=100) Mean ± SD	Girls (n=100) Mean ± SD			
Physical	18.68 ± 3.54	17.06 ± 3.50	-3.252	198	0.001***
Social	17.62 ± 3.85	17.65 ± 3.14	-.060	198	0.952
Temperamental	16.17 ± 4.09	18.54 ± 4.97	-3.679	198	0.001***
Educational	18.44 ± 5.28	17.86 ± 6.40	0.699	198	0.486
Moral	16.76 ± 3.52	16.36 ± 3.11	0.850	198	0.396
Intellectual	20.17 ± 3.61	19.53 ± 3.77	1.224	198	0.222

***P<0.001

Table - 3 : Class wise comparison of self-concept of the school going adolescents of the Boys group

Variables (Self Concept Questionnaire)	GROUPS				F (df-3,96)	p
	9 th (n=33)	10 th (n=25)	11 th (n=20)	12 th (n=22)		
Physical	17.96 ± 3.62	17.92 ± 3.59	18.95 ± 2.74	20.36 ± 3.61	2.644	.054
Social	18.27 ± 3.89	16.40 ± 3.97	16.60 ± 2.81	18.95 ± 4.05	2.617	.055
Temperamental	16.36 ± 4.70	14.64 ± 3.21	17.70 ± 4.36	16.22 ± 3.32	2.203	.093
Educational	18.21 ± 6.12	19.40 ± 6.56	17.70 ± 3.67	18.36 ± 3.37	0.420	.739
Moral	15.90 ± 3.87	16.68 ± 3.50	16.60 ± 2.60	18.27 ± 3.45	2.075	.109
Intellectual	19.06 ± 3.43	20.40 ± 4.56	21.45 ± 2.30	20.40 ± 3.38	1.992	.120

Table - 4 : Class wise comparison of self-concept of the school going adolescents of the Girls group

Variables (Self Concept Questionnaire)	GROUPS				F (df-3,96)	p	Post-Hoc
	9 th (a) (n=24)	10 th (b) (n=28)	11 th (c) (n=25)	12 th (d) (n=23)			
Physical	17.16 ± 3.22	16.78 ± 3.53	17.48 ± 4.00	16.82 ± 3.33	0.214	.887	-
Social	16.91 ± 2.79	18.00 ± 3.34	17.20 ± 2.90	18.47 ± 3.42	1.264	.291	-
Temperamental	17.45 ± 5.66	17.82 ± 5.27	19.72 ± 3.64	19.26 ± 5.02	1.209	.311	-
Educational	17.91 ± 7.46	16.92 ± 6.05	19.76 ± 7.41	16.86 ± 3.87	1.119	.345	-
Moral	14.70 ± 4.23	16.64 ± 3.02	16.64 ± 2.49	17.43 ± 1.61	3.553	.017**	a,b,c<d b=c
Intellectual	17.66 ± 4.09	20.53 ± 3.59	19.96 ± 4.04	19.78 ± 2.74	2.914	.038*	a<b b>c c>d a<d

**P<0.01, *P<0.05

DISCUSSION

The present study was carried out on total 200 students [100 boys and 100 girls]. Both the groups were appropriately matched on the various socio-demographic parameters. This study was carried out in government and convent schools of Ranchi, the capital city of the state of Jharkhand. The main purpose of the present study was to determine differences in self-concept in boys and girls among school going adolescents. Age of adolescents was kept as 13-18 years in both the groups. Both the groups (boys and girls) were matched especially in education & family income which has been a major strength of the present study. Self-concept is cited as individual's perception or opinions of himself and herself. It refers to those perceptions, belief, feelings, attitudes, and values, which the individual perceives about his or her own capacities, and his or her status in the outer world. It is evident that self-concept has been influenced by one's physical self, personal appearance, and grooming by abilities and disposition, values, beliefs and aspirations.

Before discussion of the findings in the light of the above mentioned objectives, a general discussion of methodology, socio-demographic variables of the sample and so forth is needed. The present study included boys and girls of school going adolescents while most of the previous studies have taken similar sample.^[12] In the present study simple random sampling technique was used and 200 adolescents were taken. However in the past other authors used purposive sampling technique for their research.^[13-14] The age range of the adolescents of both groups (boys and girls) was 13-18 years. Adolescents with any co-morbidities like major psychiatric illness, substance abuse and comorbid general medical illness were excluded in the study. The mean ages of the adolescent boys and girls was found to be 15.32 ± 1.37 and 15.21 ± 1.13 years respectively. Past studies observed similar findings in terms of mean ages of adolescents in India.^[13]

In the present study, self-concept questionnaire was used to assess various personal attributes,

development and intellectual ability in school going adolescents (boys and females) and it was found that previous studies with similar sample used the same scale.^[15] Findings of present study indicates that, boys are having better self-concept in "physical" than girls. The results of the present study were in agreement with past research findings. In the past studies suggested that these differences were most notable in the areas of physical appearance, where boys appear to have higher levels of self-concept than girls.^[16] Although it is evident that adolescence, girls tend to be less satisfied with their physical appearance than boys; research has been inconsistent in finding significant differences in satisfaction with physical appearance between girls and boys.^[17]

Present study finding also reveals that the temperament self-concept appears to be significantly higher in the girls as compared to boys of the school going adolescents. In the past a study done by Timmers et al^[14] found that the strength of association between temperament self-concept and overall self-concept in girls is much higher than the association found in boys. Interestingly, the strength of association between personal self-concept and overall self-concept in boys is much higher than girls. It might be that in our society, girls appear to be more self-conscious, more concerned with others' opinions about them, more eager to avoid behavior eliciting negative reactions than boys.

Finding of present study did not reveal significant differences in self concept among 9th, 10th, 11th and 12 standard school going adolescent boys. Finding of previous study found similar kind of findings.^[18] Boys might be expected to become independent, ambitious, competitive, self-reliant, and achievement oriented as per their requirement. Boys are more assertive and independent and they have the motive to express power from the early adolescent. Finding of present study revealed significant difference in moral and intellectual domains of self concept among 9th, 10th, 11th and 12 standard school going adolescent girls. In adolescent girls, interpersonal success acquires

prime importance. Girls prefer collaboration, consultation and negotiation rather than the more masculine tradition of competition, individual achievement and demands. This lead to pleasure and self-satisfaction by contributing to others' well-being which increases their moral and intellectual self-concept. This finding is consistent with research conducted by previous authors.^[19-20]

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Result of the present study findings concluded that boys are having high level of physical self-concept as compared to girls and girls perceived high level of temperament self-concept than boys of school going adolescents. Findings say that as the age increases the degree of morality and intellectual self-concept also increases. Self-concept is a dominant element in personality pattern; therefore, the measurement of self-concept becomes essential. Therefore findings of present study give the tentative guideline for comprehensive psychosocial intervention of school counselors and school personnel. But at the same time it is required to increase the self-concept of both the groups of the gender specific population of school going adolescents.

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