



FINDING LINK BETWEEN SELF CONCEPT OF COLLEGE STUDENTS AND THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Self concept is the totality of one's perceptions about his/her physical, social and academic competence. The present study was proposed with the aim to find out the link between self concept of college students and their academic achievements. A sample of 180 students was gathered through appropriate sampling technique. A simple self administered questionnaire was utilized to as data collection tool. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the findings of study.

INTRODUCTION

Self-concept is a multi-dimensional construct that refers to an individual's perception of "self" in relation to any number of characteristics, such as academics (and non academics), gender roles and sexuality, racial identity, and many others. It is more general than self-esteem, which is the purely evaluative element of the self-concept (Fleming, 1984). The self-concept is composed of relatively permanent self-assessments, such as personality attributes, knowledge of one's skills and abilities, one's occupation and hobbies, and awareness of one's physical attributes. Nevertheless, a person's self-concept may change with time, possibly going through turbulent periods of identity crisis and

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reassessment (Markus, 1986). Self-concept is the image individuals have of their attributes, abilities, attitudes, feelings and so on. The formation of self-concept is a cognitive act that requires self-assessment and is differentiated across a range of activities. Individuals' self-concepts are susceptible to change through experiences and are influenced by comparison and feedback from others, including family, friends, and teachers (Woolfolk, 2005). The self-concept is not restricted to the present. It includes past selves and future selves. Future selves or "possible selves" represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming. They correspond to hopes, fears, standards, goals, and threats. Possible selves may function as incentives for future behavior and they also provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self (Blamey, 1995).

Self Concept and Academic Achievement of the Students

Self-concept can be defined as how a person thinks about him/herself in different areas of his or her life. More specifically, academic self-concept refers to a student's perceptions of his or her academic abilities (House, 1992; Meinefeld, 1988). Orientation means a consistency in perception, cognitive representation and abstract valuation. When we think of the concept a person holds about themselves, we mainly think about the personal knowledge that this person has. This personal knowledge which can be understood as a part of the subjective knowledge is called belief. It is believed that cognitions (beliefs) are closely connected to feelings (emotional descriptions of meaning, valuations and judgments). It is also believed that cognition and feelings have a relationship to a distinct readiness (or intention) to action. The subjective knowledge about strong points may be connected with emotions like pride, self-satisfaction, calmness while the subjective knowledge about weak points may be connected with emotions like shame, dissatisfaction and motivation. Furthermore, the subjective knowledge about strong points and the feeling of self satisfaction may lead to a tendency in action planning to practice this schema again and again or to assimilate similar situations or to generalize the schema like a tendency to a mathematical action. Self concept towards mathematics is an attitude structure. It consists of the subjective knowledge (beliefs, cognition), the emotions, evaluations and intentions of action about oneself related to mathematics and mathematics education (Pehkonen, 1995; Grigutsch, 2006).

Relationships among academic self-concept, academic achievement, and persistence with self-attribution, study habits, and perceived school environment found that academic self-concept, academic achievement, and persistence are related significantly to academic self-concept and academic achievement. It has long been a theme in education that a student needs a good academic self-concept in order to be successful academically. To achieve this success, schools can impact their students' academic self-concept by developing an organized, orderly, supportive environment. Classroom teachers should teach students good student habits and self management skills together with appropriate self-attribution strategies. This would result in the teacher using some teaching strategies that would influence students' persistence and academic self-concept that will in turn promote academic achievement (Gordon, 1997). Because of the reciprocal nature of human motivation and behavior, it is unlikely that such a question can be resolved. He went further to say

that it is impossible to develop better understandings of the conditions under which self-efficacy beliefs operate as causal factors through their influence on choice, effort and persistence in human functioning (Pajares, 1996).

Schunk, (1996) conducted a study and in that study it was stated that fourth grade students learning six mathematics fractional skills were conditioned to either a mastery goal orientation or a performance goal orientation. Before each of the six lessons, the teacher varied the instructions such that the mastery condition were informed to try and *learn* how to solve the fraction problems, while the performance condition were informed to try and *solve* the fraction problems. After six days of conditioning, the students were asked to judge their ability to solve mathematics fraction problems. Students conditioned to the mastery goal orientation reported higher self-efficacy and correctly solved more problems than did the students conditioned to the performance goal orientation. These results assume that the goal pursued by a student affects important educational outcomes including students' self-efficacy and performance attainment.

In a rapidly changing world, the cultivation of an all-round personality, sensitive an open to problems in his environment, is not only important, but is also urgent. A special care and personalized support system is therefore, impetrative to nourish the potentialities of adolescent. So, for positive self-concept development among adolescents, it is suggested that during adolescence, self is being crystallized; it is also going through a period of revision and refinement. So, parents, teachers and other professionals, who care enough to make a difference, can, through the medium of a meaningful relationship, be significant and positive forces in helping adolescents grow in healthy and self-actualizing ways. Parents should respect the child's efforts and let them know that you have confidence in their ability to do well. It has been found that optimal self-concept development takes place in an atmosphere of acceptance that allows the adolescent autonomy and the opportunity to learn competencies (Litovsky and Dusck 1985).

It has been a theme in education that a student needs good academic self-concept in order to be successful academically. To achieve this success, schools can impact their students' academic self-concept by developing an organized, orderly and supportive environment. Classroom teachers should teach students' good study habits and self-management skills together with appropriate self-attribution strategies. The findings of the present study highlight the importance of promoting a positive self-concept in every aspect in various psychosocial contexts. In nutshell, it may be said that to nurture adolescent's potential, intervention efforts need to be made not only in enhancing their self concept, but also in promoting conducive home environment. Furthermore, it becomes the duty of the teachers to assist children who come from disadvantaged home environments by applying various intervention strategies to foster positive self concepts among such adolescents. Positive self concepts are key factors for successful learning, general behavioral patterns and high participation in school activities. Upgrading of educators is also recommended so that they are fully equipped to assist a learner who is from a deprived home environment (Jagpreet Kaur, J 2009).

Self-concept refers to the totality of a complex, organized, and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence. Parental upbringing, continuous failure, depression and internal self-critic are factors that influence the development of one's self-concept. A positive self-concept can be developed through behave objectively in knowing oneself, always appreciate oneself, be friend to oneself and always have a positive and rational thinking. Educational psychology can be referred to a distinct scientific discipline within psychology that includes both method of study and a resulting knowledge base. It is believed that the development of student's self-concept depends on the focus of educators in educational psychology in classroom practice. Educational psychology provides important background knowledge that pre-service and in-service educators can use as the foundation for professional practice. A positive self concept can contribute to good academic achievement by student's optimistic personal expectations about himself or herself (Yahaya, et al 2009).

“There is a great deal of research which shows that the self-concept is, perhaps, the basis for all motivated behavior. It is the self-concept that gives rise to possible selves, and it is possible selves that create the motivation for behavior” We develop and maintain our self-concept through the process of taking action and then reflecting on what we have done and what others tell us about what we have done. We reflect on what we have done and can do in comparison to our expectations and the expectations of others and to the characteristics and accomplishments of others. That is, self-concept is not innate, but is developed by the individual through interaction with the environment and reflecting on that interaction. There are a several different components of self-concept: physical, academic, social, and transpersonal. The physical aspect of self-concept relates to that which is concrete: what we look like, our sex, height, weight, etc.; what kind of clothes we wear; what kind of car we drive; what kind of home we live in; and so forth. Our academic self-concept relates to how well we do in school or how well we learn. There are two levels: a general academic self-concept of how good we are overall and a set of specific content-related self-concepts that describe how good we are in math, science, language arts, social science, etc. The social self-concept describes how we relate to other people and the transpersonal self-concept describes how we relate to the supernatural or unknowns (Azizi et al, 2005).

There is a continuous flow between the self and the stream of experiences involved in the process of living and learning in school. He further stated that a student perceives, interprets, accepts, rejects, or resists what he/she encounters at school in the light of the way he/she sees himself/herself as a person generally and as a student. He then concluded that there is a mounting body of evidence to suggest that a student's performance in an academic setting is influenced, in both subtle and obvious ways, by his/her concept of self (Hamacheck, 1971).

If students are indeed distinguishing between how they perform in College and how easily they learn new things, practitioners in the field of education should pay attention to both areas of student affect. Student self-concept was more closely linked to the future educational aspirations of students in this study which implies a need for the development of skills to help students be

successful in school-related tasks, such as organization, time management, and study skills, in addition to the regular curriculum. Learner self-concept was more closely linked to ability among the IB student which may indicate that the ability to learn is considered by students to be a more innate quality, such as general ability, than linked to skills for success in a specifically school environment. Student self-concept, on the other hand, was more closely linked to achievement all three populations. Learner self-concept may be a measure that is more closely tied to how a student views his or her innate ability to learn, while student self concept may be a measure of how a student views his or her skills at being successful in school. Since student self-concept was more closely linked with future goals, if practitioners are concerned about the educational attainment of high ability students, they should focus on ways to increase students' confidence in their ability to be successful in school. Teachers might include instruction on specific study skills and the tacit knowledge that contributes to school success. Administrators might develop specific programs for at-risk high ability students, and school counselors could work with these students in a more intense fashion (Wilson, 2008).

Self Concept Cycle

A person's self concept is developed early in life and affects his functions in the environment. Children's self-concept is developed through this thought that what are the feelings of the people about them who are important in their lives. This is best expressed in the self-concept cycle:

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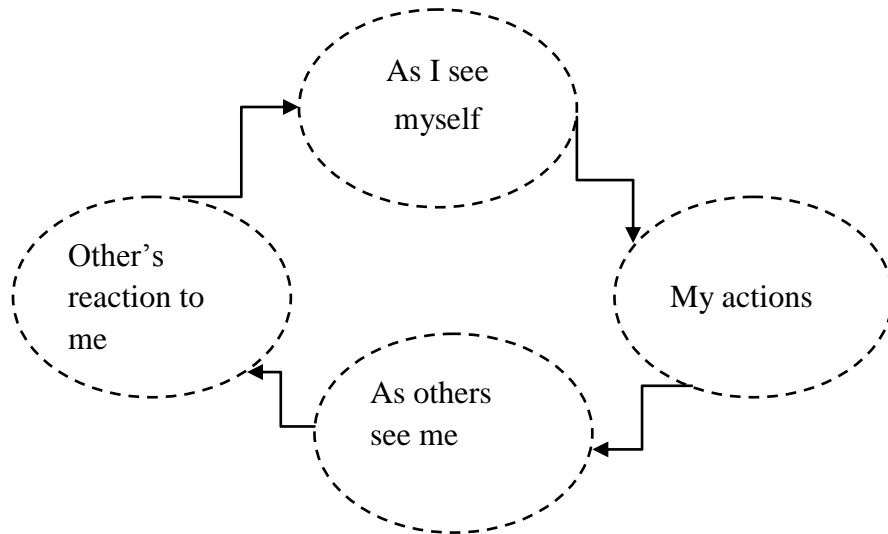
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Self concept cycle is similar to a theory which explains construction of self image through social interaction. Back in 1800s, Charles Horton Cooley (1864-1929) a symbolic interactionist who taught at the University of Michigan concluded this unique aspect of “humanness” is socially created. He said that our sense of self develops from interaction with others. Cooley coined the term *looking glass self* to describe the process by which a sense of self develops. He summarized this idea in following couplet:

Looking-glass self contains three elements:

1. We imagine how we appear to those around us.
2. We interpret others’ reaction.
3. We develop a self-concept.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The major objective of the study was to gauge the association between self concept and academic achievement of students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological techniques and ways of analyzing the observations play a significant role in social research. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1981)"The scientific methodology is a system of explicit rules and procedures upon which research is based and against which the claims for knowledge are evaluated". According to Young (1959), social research is the systematic method of discovering new facts, or verifying old facts, their sequences, interrelationship, causal

explanation and the natural laws which govern them. The major objective of this chapter, therefore, is to explain various tools and techniques employed for the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data, relating to present topic under study. Dixon and Mary (1957) said that; "Any set of the individuals/objects having common observable characteristics constitute a population/universe". We can say that; it is that area where you are going to conduct the research. The present study was conducted in City Jaranwala. There are a number of colleges for boys and girls but in the present study. Two colleges were selected for data collection (Government College Jaranwala and Punjab College Jaranwala). From each College, 60 respondents were selected randomly for interview. "It is the actual set/list of units from which a sample has been drawn." The sampling frame of the present study was the list of all students of three selected colleges. "Sampling is a technique which is used in almost every field in order to collect information." Three Colleges were selected randomly at first stage. Afterward from every college 60 respondents were selected randomly at second level. I have used "*Simple random sampling*" technique in the selection of respondents. It is economical to conduct a study on sample rather than to study the entire universe According to Good and Hatt (1952), "A sample refers to small representation of the universe/population." The sample of present study was consisted of 180 respondents (60 from each College). According to Chaudhry (1984), "the most important part of statistically work is perhaps data collection". The Data were collected in 30 days by the researcher himself in a face to face situation. All the respondents were interviewed personally and data were recorded on a data collection tool explained in proceeding section. In this study the data were collected with the help of interviewing schedule. An interview schedule consists of set of questions which were asked to the respondents and the answers were recorded by the researcher in the face to face situation. Pre-testing was done to see the workability of the interview schedule. The pre-testing was conducted in the same universe. The researcher took 10 respondents for pre-testing. In the light of the findings of the pre-testing certain changes were incorporated as well as some deletion were made to enhance the workability and flow of the tool. Very few questions were modified after the pre-testing. In this way final questionnaire was composed. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis of data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were carried out. Human behavior is so complex and cannot be treated under controlled conditions as the happenings of physical sciences. It also depends upon the researcher's efforts and experience to get reliable and correct information by observing and creating atmosphere of harmony, technically called "rapport". The researcher spent 30 days in the field for the purpose of data collection. During the research work and interviewing, many difficulties were faced by the researcher.

MAIN FINDINGS

A huge portion 91.67 percent of the respondents belonged to the age group of 16-20 years. 58.33 percent respondents were male and 41.67 percent respondents were female. 30 percent households had Rs. 5001-10000 monthly income, 26.67 percent of the households had Rs. 10001-15000 monthly income. A majority 61.67 percent of the respondents was living in the extended family. A major portion 46.67 percent of respondents had above 7-9 members in their household while other

13.33 percent of respondents had above 10 members in their household. 50.0 percent of the respondent's educational level was intermediate and 50.0 percent of the respondent's educational level was Graduate. All of the respondents (100 percent) were Muslims. A majority 81.67 percent of the respondents was unmarried. A huge majority 83.33 percent of the respondents said that they took interest in studies while other 16.67 percent of the respondents said that they did not take interest in studies. A majority 72.0 percent of the respondents said that they took interest in studies at college level to some extent. A large majority 83.33 percent of the respondents said that academic achievement was based on self concept. There is a mounting body of evidence to suggest that a student's performance in an academic setting is influenced, in both subtle and obvious ways, by his/her concept of self (Hamacheck, 1971). A greater number 56.0 percent of the respondents said that to great extent academic achievement was based on self concept. These findings can be supported by previous researches (Sohail et al., 2012; Gordon, 1997). Only 26.67 percent of the respondents thought that studies help them for better socialization, 35.0 percent of the respondents thought that studies help them for personality building. A majority 53.33 percent of the respondents said that it was easy to achieve goals at college level. A majority 55.83 percent of the respondents said that they did not thought like this in the past. A large majority 75 percent of the respondents said that they were enjoying studies at college. A huge majority 88.33 percent of the respondents were satisfied being at college. Only 43.39 percent of the respondents were satisfied to great extent, 40.56 percent of the respondents were satisfied to some extent. A huge majority 80 percent of the respondents felt that college was a safe and healthy place to study. A large majority 88.33 percent of the respondents said that college led students towards positive attitude. Allwright (1989) saw classroom behavior and perception (both teachers' and learners') as relating to the social and pedagogical pressures present in the classroom. A huge majority 78.33 percent of the respondents agreed that college atmosphere helped to build strong self concept. A large majority 77.50 percent of the respondents thought that college was a source of capacity building for students. Only 1.67 percent of the respondents said that staff's behavior was negative while other 63.33 percent of the respondents believe the staff's behavior was normal with them. A large majority 80.0 respondents believed that behavior of the staff led them towards academic achievement. The findings are consistent with Gordon (1997).

CONCLUSION

This study has revealed a key point fulfilling major objective of study. From descriptive statistics, it was found that self concept of student influence students' academic performance. The observed relationship between academic self concept and academic performance revealed that those students, who contain positive self concept, perform better as compared to those who don't have positive self concept.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Treat each student's ideas with respect and help them treat others with respect.

- Identify and recognize each student's strengths. Every level of the Foods Curriculum has activities that help youth recognize their self worth uniqueness. As student do these activities, make a conscious effort to reinforce those unique qualities.
- Listen to your ears and your heart. Use facial expressions, eye contact, and body language that says, "I'm listening, because I know it is important to you."
- Help students learn how to use self-praise. Self-praise is not bragging. It's comparing your own accomplishments to your past performance. Look at these two examples; Bragging: "I can run faster than anybody else in our group!" Self-praise: "I feel very good about my running skills. I'm improving each day."
- Set an example by saying nice things about yourself.
- Help student realize that they have control over what gets done. Work with them to develop a time management plan
- Encourage student to only take on what they can reasonably accomplish. Don't let them set themselves up for failure by taking on more than they can complete.
- Encourage student to break down large project goals into smaller steps.

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