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Gender Differences In The Academic Self-Concept And Self-Efficacy Of Adolescents

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Abstract

Self-concept and self-efficacy are two of the foremost important motivational predictors of educational outcomes. As most research has studied these constructs separately, little is understood about their differential relations to see ability, opportunities to find out in classrooms, and academic outcomes. This study aimed at exploring the relationship of Academic self-concept and Self-efficacy of adolescents and to find out the differences in these two variables with respect to their gender. The objective was to find out the differences in Self-efficacy and Academic Self-concept with respect to gender. The data analysis revealed no significant differences in Self-efficacy and academic self-concept of students with respect to their gender.

Keywords: Academic Self-concept, Self-efficacy, Adolescents.

Introduction

One's overall perceptions, beliefs, judgments, and feelings are referred to as a sense of self. Answering questions such as: 'How does one describe yourself? Are you a good test taker? Are you good at sports? Do you like to be around others?' all tell you something about yourself. Encompassed in the construct of a sense of self are self-concept and self-efficacy. Self-concept is the core of human personality. It refers to the totality of people's perception of their physical, social, and academic competence. It is the set of perceptions that the person has about himself, the set of characteristics, attributes, qualities, deficiencies, capacities limits, values, and relationships that the topic knows to be descriptive of him.

Academic Self-Concept (ASC) refers to "the personal beliefs someone develops about their academic abilities or skills". A person's ASC develops with mental and physical growth and begins to develop in early childhood. Parenting styles and early educators have an influence on academic self-concept. "Self-concept is a crucial construct in development psychology and education and had multidimensional construct, one general facet, and a number of other specific facets, one among which is 'academic self-concept'"

Most folks would agree that adolescence may be a stage with important changes (social, physical, and emotional) that have a long-lasting effect on an individual's entire life. Examples include achieving identity (e.g moral, rational and sexual), independence (e.g permission for driving, or taking other decisions), and developing interdependent peer and romantic relationships. It is also the stage when conflicts start emerging with parents and other social elements (e.g authorities, peers); some examples might include - the urge to be popular among peers, competing in academics or sports, creating unrealistic unachievable goals, and perfectionism. An important factor during this stage that affects one's development is self-efficacy (belief in one's ability towards a specific task/domain). Adolescents with low self-efficacy are known to develop behavioral and emotional problems in later stages of life. Coexisting psychological issues, if any, might complicate the situation and such individuals might result in developing complex psychological disorders, getting emotionally abused (bullied), being overly conscious, inability to regulate their emotions, and at times even unable to communicate their feelings and needs during later parts of the lives.

Statement of the Problem

A Study of the gender differences in Academic Self-Concept and Self-Efficacy of Adolescents.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the Academic Self-concept of adolescents based on their gender.
2. To compare the Academic Self-concept of adolescents based on their gender
3. To study the Self-efficacy of adolescents based on their gender.
4. To compare the Self-efficacy of adolescents based on their gender.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the Academic Self-concept of adolescents based on their gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the Self-efficacy of adolescents based on their gender.

Operational Definitions

1. Academic Self-Concept

Academic self-concept refers to the relatively stable idea possessed by a student supported a mixture of judgments by self and significant others (parents, teachers, and peers), concerning his/her behavior, strengths, and weaknesses in the academic domain.

2. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to a student's convictions and confidence about his/her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to excel in his/her studies and thereby achieve success at the Board examination.

3. Adolescent

A young person in the process of developing from a child into an adult.

Methodology

The descriptive, survey and causal-comparative methods were used for the present study.

Sample

The sample for the present study was 116 adolescents (61 girls and 55 boys) students studying in std 9 in SSC board school in Mumbai.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used. The sample for the present study consists of 116 students of standard IX from greater Mumbai schools. (61 females, 55 males)

Tools

1. Academic Self-Concept Scale by D'souza, G. (2006)

The reliability coefficient obtained for internal consistency of the tutorial Self-Concept Scale was 0.977. The coefficient of stability obtained for test-retest reliability of the scale was 0.8869. This is a semantic differential rating scale that measures 26 dimensions of behavior which in comparison with internal and external frames of reference provides a clear estimate of the students' self-perceptions of their activity, evaluation, and potency in the academic domain.

2. Self-Efficacy Rating Scale by D'souza, G. (2006)

The reliability coefficient obtained for internal consistency of the Self-Efficacy Scale was 0.8923. The coefficient of stability obtained for test-retest reliability of the scale was 0.7737. It comprised of a four-point Likert type scale which included nine dimensions of self-efficacy, namely, perseverance strategies, cognitive strategies, resource management strategies, self-regulated learning, ability to meet parental expectations, self-assertiveness, social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, and enlisting parental support. The scale included 25 negatively worded items and 26 positively worded items.

Analysis of data: Following descriptive and inferential analysis techniques were used in the study

- Descriptive statistical analysis- Measure of Central Tendency, Measures of Normality, Measures of Deviation and Graphical Representation
- Inferential statistics- t-test

Findings and Discussion

Table 1

t-ratio for the gender differences in the Self-efficacy of the Adolescents.

Variable	Group	N	df	Mean	SD	t-ratio	p-value	Level of Significance
Self-efficacy	Females	61	114	157.46	14.60	1.98	0.08	NS
	Males	55		152.31	16.59			

From the above table, it can be seen that the t-ratio for gender differences is not significant ($p > 0.05$), therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the Self-efficacy of the adolescents on the basis of gender.

There are no significant gender differences in the self-efficacy of the adolescents This could be due to the role played by their family in developing their self-efficacy. Families of both the gender must be playing an effective role in developing their self-efficacy. There could be no gender differences made by the family members. It indicates equal opportunities, encouragement, and motivation by the family in

developing

self-efficacy.

The school being a co-education school could be playing an equal role in the self-efficacy of the students. No discrimination for the curricular and co-curricular activities on the basis of gender could be one of the important factors for such finding. Unbiased attitude and outlook of teachers in the school, equal opportunities for both the gender, and respect for both the gender could be some of the factors contributing to this finding

Table 2

t-ratio for the gender differences in the Academic Self-concept of the Adolescents.

Variable	Group	N	df	Mean	SD	t-ratio	p-value
Academic Self-concept	Females	61	114	142.77	20.82	1.98	0.97
	Males	55		142.87	21.12		

From the above table, it can be seen that the t-ratio for gender differences in Academic Self-concept of adolescents is not significant ($p > 0.05$), therefore the null hypothesis is accepted. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the Academic Self-concept of the adolescents on the basis of gender.

There are no significant gender differences in the Academic Self-concept of the adolescents. This could be due to the equal efforts put in by both the gender in the academic activities. The role played by the teachers w.r.t. the encouragement, motivation, and opportunities could be a contributing factor in the academic self-concept of the students. Students being studying in the co-education school could be bringing in healthy competition between both the gender. Expectations from the teachers, family, and society from both the gender could be an important factor in the finding. The positive association between family environment and self-efficacy could also be a contributing factor. (Mishra and Shanwal, 2018) Self-efficacy of women, which is an important variable for women's academic performance and perseverance could be a reason for no gender differences in Self-efficacy. (Varma, R. 2010) Teacher-student relationships could be influencing students' self-efficacy. (Peditzi and Marcello 2018)

Conclusion

People's beliefs about their efficacy are often developed by four main sources of influence. The most effective way of making a robust sense of efficacy is thru mastery experiences. Successes build a strong belief in one's personal efficacy. Failures undermine it, especially if failures occur before a way of efficacy is firmly established. If people experience only easy successes, they are available to

expect quick results and are easily discouraged by failure. A resilient sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort. Some setbacks and difficulties in human pursuits serve a useful purpose in teaching that success usually requires sustained effort. After people become convinced, they need what it takes to succeed, they persevere within the face of adversity and quickly rebound from setbacks. By sticking it out through tough times, they emerge stronger from adversity.

The second way of making and strengthening self-beliefs of efficacy is thru the vicarious experiences provided by social models. Seeing people almost like oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities required to succeed. By an equivalent token, observing others' fail despite high effort lowers observers' judgments of their own efficacy and undermines their efforts. The impact of modeling on perceived self-efficacy is strongly influenced by perceived similarity to the models. The greater the assumed similarity the more persuasive are the models' successes and failures. If people see the models as very different from themselves their perceived self-efficacy isn't much influenced by the models' behavior and therefore the results it produces.

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