



SELF-CONCEPT OF ADOLESCENTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

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Abstract

Adolescence, the transitional period between childhood and adulthood is marked by changes in the body, mind and social relationships. As adolescents confront these challenging years, they establish a self-concept; that is some sense of who they are. A strong self-concept, especially among girls, appears to be a key factor in developing good mental and physical health. Equally important is the positive impact of emotional support for all adolescents- boys and girls (Park,2003). Self-concept is a central concept in psychology (Harter, 1983). One way to measure adolescent growth is through the level of the self-concept, which indicates how worthy individuals believe they are. Self-concept has been viewed in the present study as one's knowledge about one's own self in the form of an organized cognitive structure that takes into account a set of attitudes, beliefs and values. It is regarded in the form of perceptual, conceptual and attitudinal components and it is regarded as a component of personality of 'how I see myself', self-esteem, self-confidence and self-contentment. The present study is a noble attempt to find out the differences in social and emotional adjustment and self-concept of adolescents with sex and type of school variation and the relationship, if any, between self-concept and social and emotional adjustment, also if there exist significant differences in the high, average and low self-concept groups with respect to their social and emotional adjustment.

Key words: *adolescents, self-concept, social, emotional, adjustment*



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Introduction:

The level of self-concept has been found to be stable, and to affect such growth parameters as behavioural adjustment, emotional well-being (**Bandura, 1978; Dweck and Elliott, 1983; Eccles, Adler and Meece, 1984; Epstein, 1973; Sullivan, 1953**), school achievement (**Assor and Connell, 1991; Marsh, 1990**), social involvement (**Rosenberg, 1991**) and cognitive functioning (**Markus, 1977**). The present study conceives of self-concept as an internal, hierarchically organized, multidimensional system. The organization of the self-concept reveals whether, to what extent, and how a person is affected by the social and

emotional adjustment. A study by **Nihiral et.al (1985)** has revealed significant influences of changes in home environment on social adjustment in adolescents. Also self-esteem is closely related to high cohesion independence and low conflict in the family (**Hirsch and Moos, 1985**). Both these studies reveal that self-concept and social and emotional adjustment are related to each other.

Objective of the Study:

The objectives of the study are stated as follows-

1. To assess the self-concept of adolescents in relation to gender and school management variation and prepare a profile of them.
2. To ascertain the level of social and emotional adjustment of adolescents in relation to gender and management variation.
3. To find out gender and type of school management differences in self-concept and social and emotional adjustment problems of adolescents.
4. To find out relationship between self-concept and social and emotional adjustment problems of adolescents.
5. To study the high, average, low self-concept of adolescents with respect to their social adjustment and emotional adjustment problems.

Hypothesis of the study:

The hypotheses of the study have been spelt out independently in null form as follows:

Ho₁: There does not exist significant difference in the self-concept of adolescents in relation to gender variation.

Ho₂: There does not exist significant difference in social and emotional adjustment problems between boys and girls.

Ho₃: There does not exist significant difference in the self-concept of students of private and government schools.

Ho₄: There does not exist significant difference in the social and emotional adjustment of adolescents in relation to type of school variation.

Ho₅: There is no significant relationship between self-concept and social and emotional adjustment problems.

Ho₆: The high, average and low self-concept groups of adolescents do not significantly differ with respect to their social and emotional adjustment problems.

Scope and delimitation of the study:

The scope of the study confines to 100 adolescents belonging to class X of five different schools of Siliguri city of Darjeeling District in West Bengal. The study is delimited to 100 students only.

The Method of the Study:

The study was conducted in accordance with the following procedure:-

The Design:

The study design was a correlational study of descriptive design. It was an ex-post-facto study for the fact that self-concept and social and emotional adjustment have been studied as they are.

The sample:

The sample for the investigation comprises of 100 adolescents studying in class X in five different schools of Siliguri city. The random sampling procedure had been adopted and the sample was divided under contrasts of sex and type of school management.

Tools:

The following tools were used for the study-

- (i) Dr. S.P. Ahluwalia's Children Self-concept Scale (1986) to measure Self-concept.
- (ii) Prof. A.K.P. Sinha and Prof. R.P. Singh's Adjustment Inventory for College Students (1984) to measure social and emotional adjustment.

Techniques of Analysis:

Techniques of analysis for the present investigation includes for collection of data, scoring, interpretation of scores in relation to the objectives stated and hypothesis formulated. Collection of data in regards to the self-concept was done through administration of Ahluwalia's Children's Self-concept Scale (1986) and social and emotional adjustment was done through administration of Sinha and Singh's Adjustment Inventory for College Students (1984) in the form of questionnaires. Responses were collected in the space given besides the statements in the same sheets for self-concept scale and in the circles given in separate sheets for adjustment inventory. For scoring, procedure as mentioned in the test manuals had been followed. For interpretation of scores both descriptive and inferential statistics (t-test, chi-square test of independence , Pearson's Product Moment Method) had been used.

The findings:

1. There exist significant differences in the social adjustment of students in relation to sex but not in relation to type of schools and is in conformity with the findings of **Kamala (1988)** , **Raja Rani (1995)** and **Patri (2008)**.

2. There exist no significant differences in the emotional adjustment of adolescents in relation to sex but significant difference was observed in relation to type of school and is in conformity with the findings of **Patri (2008)**, **Sarsani (2007)** and **Surekha (1993)**.
3. There exist significant differences in the social and emotional adjustment of adolescents in relation to sex and type of school variations and is in conformity with the findings of **Raja Rani (1995)**.
4. No significant differences in the level of self-concept was observed in case of sex in conformity with the findings of **Kale (1982)**, **Vinod (1993)** and **Rani (1995)** but significant differences was observed in case of type of school variation in conformity with that of **Dambudzo (2005)**.
5. Significant negative relationship was observed between social and emotional adjustment and self-concept of the adolescents in case of the total sample as well as sex and school wise and is in conformity with the findings of **Arul (1972)**, **Gupta (1989)**, **Purkey (1970)**, **Alexander and Rajendran (1992)**.
6. The test of significance of difference between the frequencies of adolescents on high, average and low social and emotional adjustment and that of high, average and low self-concept for the total sample yielded a significant relationship showing that high, average and low social and emotional adjustment differentiated with high, average and low self-concept significantly and is in conformity with the findings of **Patri (2008)** and **Sarsani (2007)**.

Conclusion:

An overview of how children and adolescents construct a sense of themselves as individuals has been presented. This considered aspects of the self-concept. The adjustment of adolescents is determined by their gender, the class in which they are studying, the medium of instruction adopted in their schools, the type of management of the school and their parents' education and occupation. Factors influencing the self-concept have been shown to comprise of social and cognitive issues, the former being deemed to be most significant. The present study has shown a significant relationship between self-concept and social and emotional adjustment of adolescents. Good adjustment leads to a better self-concept which is only positive.

The social influence on the self-concept, as well as research findings which indicate a relationship between specific self-concept and achievement, suggest that school-based intervention programmes may be beneficial in improving the academic performance of

students of low self-concept. Likewise, the role of the parents in the individual's educational development must not be undervalued.

Educational Implications:

Self-concept is a developmental aspect of personality and it could be improved through improvement in academic achievement (**Kamat, 1985**). Also enhancement of self-concept and achievement motivation is possible as a result of a psychologically meaningful education programme (**Olivia, 1985**).

Varshney (1984) investigated the effects of psychological adjustment on behavior development of adolescent girls. The results suggested the need for the introduction of sex education in schools.

For the progress of any nation, and also for the holistic development of the personality of the adolescents, it is necessary that they have to be adjusted within their homes, schools, in society and have good mental health. The present study will be useful to the teachers, counselors and parents to design their learning activities and environments in such a way that it will lead to adjustment of the adolescents in different areas. While working in schools, social workers can formulate adequate intervention strategies. Parent –teacher associations lead to proper handling of the adolescents.

The results of this analysis have implications for families and for professionals who work with adolescents. While parents, educators and practitioners are undoubtedly aware of the immediate effects of adolescent self-concept, they may be less cognizant of the longer term. The findings of the analysis would suggest the maximization of emotional support resources during adolescence as an intervention strategy, with special attention to the groups most likely to have a weak self-concept.

In addition, the beneficial effects produced by a good level of self-concept have been substantiated. In studies (**Hay, Ashman and Van- Kraayenoord, 1998**) where subjects with a high self-concept were compared with other subjects with low self-concept, teacher reports show that they consider the high self-concept students as more popular, cooperative, persistent in class work, with lower anxiety levels, more supportive families and higher expectations of future success.

The better a student is adjusted and the better he/she feels about his or herself, the better a student will perform. The self-concept theory should be a very important tool used in the educational process.

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