

# Impact of self concept on self image development



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**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to verify whether Academic performance of students is a suitable mediator between self concept of the students and the self image of the students in the current Indian education context. The study thus presented will study the mediation effect on the self image and the corresponding factors.

**Design/Methodology/Approach** – The research was based on a questionnaire comprising of the items for the variable in the model (self image and self concept), which was adopted from earlier researches and given to the respondents. The respondents comprised of students from Indian cities of Jamshedpur and Deoghar and contained both boys and girls. The results of these questionnaires were analyzed using the concepts of mediation and the relationship was arrived upon using SPSS tool.

## **Findings**

**Research Limitations/Implications** – The limitation with the study is limited research on the self image, self concept of the students in Indian scenario. This limits the search for a suitable scale for these variable and hence there is a possibility that the results from the adopted scales may not give the desired and accurate results. Also, the survey being filled by students a risk of social bias also comes up where the students might fill what is expected of them rather than what they actually feel about the questions.

**Practical Implications** – This study is aimed to arriving at the applicability for academic performance of students as a mediating construct for improving the self image of the primary students in India and this study can be used by policy makers as well as educationists all over the country to analyze the

current education scenario in the primary education field. The outcome of the study will help the above mentioned authorities to rethink and redesign the educational methodologies and curriculum to suit the Indian students and improve the educational structure of the location.

Originality/Value – The research paper presents a holistic view of academic performance as a mediating construct for self image of a student on which brief research was held in western context but has been untouched in the Indian scenario. With the humungous focus of Indians on academics and very little focus on the overall personality development of students, this research provides a fresh outlook as how a student is defined on the basis of his academics in India in a more rigorous manner vis-a-vis the students in western countries.

Another value creation is the recreation of a hindi based questionnaire on self concept and self image that can be used for young students in the farfetched locations in our country where students are still uncomfortable in using the English language.

Keywords – Self Image, Self Concept, Academic Performance, Student Demographics, Primary schools, India, Jamshedpur Schools, Deogarh Schools, Education, Students, Peer study, Self Schema

Paper – Research Paper

## **Introduction**

This research paper aims to understand the relation of the phenomenon of self concept on the enhancement of self image in the context of primary

students. This study attempts at judging the above relation to understand the reasons of primary school dropping out for students who have a negative self concept of themselves in view of better ability of their peers.

This study attempts to establish causality between the constructs of Self concept and Self image through the mediating construct of academic performance. This study also tends to theoretically explore why students at the primary level are experiencing peer pressure and how this is effecting their academic perception at school. The inferences about the relation between these constructs can then be used to understand why students at such small level fail to perform on the conventional standards of academic performance when others similarly positioned can do the same.

The basis for this research is the research done on the three constructs self concept, self image and academic performance in the western context. The education system in India and in west has stark differences and the study out rightly reveals them. A holistic development perspective is seen in the students in the western countries and thus the self image and self concept of the students are only briefly related with the academic performances of the students. However in Indian context, academic performance is the major driver of the self image of the students and only a little focus is given to the overall personality development of a student. The study also looks at a moderating variable which is student demographics which is considered as different schools for the purview of our study. It is seen that the students' school and environment is a major driver of their academic performance, self concept and thus a significant shaper of the self image.

The long term impacts of this study can be used for better understanding of government initiatives such as Sarva Shiksha Abhayan which is seeing huge dropouts even after huge funding in schemes such as Midday meal which are being used to attract students. More than that, the academicians and education reformers all over the country can understand the whole need of a holistic personality development of the Indian primary students and the way education is treated in our country can be restructure for the same.

## **Literature Review and Hypothesis**

### **Self Concept**

Self concept of students is a widely researched subject with inputs both in the empirical and clinical research. According to research it can be understood as the way children think about themselves in the relation to their attributes and abilities (Meggert, 2004). Children who are blessed with a high degree of self concept are known to approach the tasks needed to be done by them with greater confidence, than students who possess lesser self confidence (Meggert, 2004). The persistence of such effects can have adverse effects on the ability development of students in the future years. Researchers have linked disorders like alcoholism, depression, eating problems later on in life (Harter & Marold, 1994; Harter & Monsour, 1992).

Self-concept holds its origins in the attributes they have and the roles they are expected to play which have to be understood in the case of children. It is explained by one researcher as “ the cognitive representation an individual has of him- or herself” (Taylor, Davis-Kean, and Malanchuk (2007) p 131)

Various dimensions are encapsulated in Self concept majorly including

(1) Physical, (2) Academic, and (3) Social (Huitt).

Physical attributes and abilities (how we look like & perform) affect our physical self concept; performance in school is a measure of academic self concept; and how well we relate to our peers defines our social self concept. Self-report measures are a good access to self- concept (Trautwein, Ludtke, Köller, & Baumert, 2006) and thus this concept is generally a person's wholesome view of himself. Cultural and biological factors usually shape the child's self concept through interactions with the environment (Piers & Herzberg, 2002). Several research studies (e. g., Tymms, 2001; Zeidner & Schleyer, 1999) have also indicated that the achievement of others in his school has strong impact on his self concept.

One's behavior is strongly influenced by self- concept. It is the way or manner in which the individual reacts to his own set of beliefs and learned values . Actually in a sense the way we react to ourselves Symonds (1951).

He spells out four aspects of self:

(i) A person's perception of himself/herself

(ii) What does he/ she think about themselves

(iii) In what way do they value themselves

(iv) In what ways do they look to enhance or defend themselves in their actions

## **Self concept as a construct**

Children's perceptions of their abilities affect their values, self-regard, and beliefs about their competence to achieve personal and academic goals (self-efficacy; Bandura, 1986). For the purpose of our study the self concept will be one which is latently or consciously perceived by the student. This is usually developed in the growth stage (0-14) of a student through association and identification with key figures in family, school and community and through exposure to and experience with tasks, objects and ideas. This study attempts to measure what the respondent set believe their perception of themselves to be. This is especially significant for a country like India where inclusive education is not given as high an importance as it is given in a country like America. For children this could translate in a sense more towards a feeling of having or not having adequate faith in their abilities or dreams as at this stage the question of peer appraisal or status in society is not thought upon as deeply as it looked upon in the subsequent stages in life. Hence it is imperative at this stage for educationists to understand how and why the buildup of a positive self concept can be beneficial for students.

## **Self Image**

A person's self image is the mental picture, which is quite resistant to change, that depicts not only details that are potentially available to objective investigation by others (height, weight, hair color, gender, I. Q. score, etc.), but also items that have been learned by that person about himself or herself, either from personal experiences or by internalizing the judgments of others. A more technical term for self image that is commonly

used by social and cognitive psychologists is self-schema. Like any schema, self-schemas store information and influence the way we think and remember[1].

People tend to associate the development of self image with a desire towards attainment of certain goals or attributes that should be achieved and then retained. These are primarily not related to the ego but are certainly motivated by a desire for better self cognition.

Goals people seek to construct, maintain, and defend positive self-views are known Self-image goals (Crocker & Canevello, 2008), often to gain or obtain something for the self (Schlenker, 2003). People have self-image goals for many walks of life, including those of academics (e. g., getting others to see one as smart and competent) and friendships (e. g., getting others to see one's desirable qualities).

It is these aspects of academic self image attainment that is developed very early in the formative years and is the basis of this study i. e. understanding how kids have a perceived view of themselves, factors that influence these.

The primary influencer of this image can be the academic curriculum with which the student copes there are very few things that change as the student grows up. Apart from the possible influence of the changing school curriculum upon the student's academic self-image, there ought to be very few factors for the image to change between the 9th and 12th grades. The school itself represents a stable academic environment. The relative socio-economic position of most students is unlikely to change significantly. Even intelligence, for this age group, is a relatively firm characteristic. As S. A.

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Kendrick has in his studies observed that : “ Virtually all the controversy over fixed intelligence focuses upon the very early years. At the high school ages, growth curves tend to be quite flat and tend to normalize around previous levels and tests (which are usually verbal tests) correlate very highly with them-selves over a period of one or several years.”

Hence it becomes very essential to take steps early on in the student’s life that will make it helpful for educationists to take steps early on.

## **Academic Performance**

Researchers have provided evidence that students’ personal epistemology, their beliefs about knowledge and knowing can influence their learning, problem solving, intensity of mental effort,

and academic success (Greene, Azevedo and Torney-Purta 2010).

According to general perception of Academic Performance, it can be used to measure the observable impartation of knowledge, skills, concepts and understanding and ideas [Tuckman 1975]. Hence it can be said that the academic performance is the outcome of learning which provides subject mastery at the end of the process.

The grade acquired on a particular course is an indicator of a candidate’s ability, content mastery, and the skill in applying knowledge acquired to a particular situation. This is the reason why a student’s academic performance is judged by his performance in examinations. Success in examinations being a critical indicator of the extent of students’ benefit from a course of study [Wiseman, 1961]. Fishman (1962) notes that all British

studies heavily rely on examination performance. This primarily has been the basis on which the performance has been measured by the western countries.

However, in a Jamaican study, it was found that, even though exams are not a perfect measure of educational success, they are an important indicator of Jamaica's educational system and thus can not be ignored.[Harrison, 1974].

Thus, to be an authentic measure of academic performance, an examination should be covering individual's academic ability, and skills in applying practical abilities.

Although basic sensory awareness naturally is a normal condition, good intellectual skills have to be learnt, (Joan Freeman, 1993). This can be achieved by directive learning, like estimating distances, distinguishing and identifying shapes etc. It is possible for all the sense to develop into intellectual skill.

It is through skills such as reading, and listening that an individual acquires information (Lindgren, 1976). Wright (1987) agreed with Lindgren when he stated that, for beginners it is important to be accurate about facts and information concerning their tasks. Thus, the pedagogy followed in Indian schools, of classroom learning, combined with self readings, home assignments etc. Which are tested by an examination covering the learnings through the aforementioned has been taken as a parameter to measure academic performance. For the purpose of ease, the average grades have been taken.

## **Hypothesis Construction**

### **Hypothesis 1**

#### **H1: Self concept of a student is positively related to the self image of a student**

##### **SC ‘ ’ SI ‘ ’**

By self is generally meant the conscious realized reflection of one's own being or identity, as an object that is differentiated from the environment or the other. There are a variety of ways to think about the self. Two of the most widely used terms are self-concept and self-image also used as esteem in a lot of studies. Self-concept is the cognitive or thinking aspect of self (related to one's self-image) and generally 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” (Purkey, 1988).

Self image is an affective part of ourselves and generally refers to how we feel our value our self worth. A large amount of data suggests that one's world view or paradigm provides a general framework in which we consider the possibilities of things. This is one of the big issues that face the children and youth of today (Huitt, 2004).

Franken (1994) suggests that self-concept is related to self-image in that “ people who have good self-esteem have a clearly differentiated self-concept.... When people know themselves they can maximize outcomes because they know what they can and cannot do” (p. 439). It would seem,

then, that in one the outworn cliché of “ Know thyself” impacts the evaluation of a person’s self image.

Hence it can be said that the objective of this study is also to support the hypothesis that an understanding of and a better evaluation of self concept will lead to a better evaluation of a student’s self- image.

## **Hypothesis 2**

### **H2: Self Concept is positively related to the Academic Performance of a Student**

#### **SC ↔ AP**

It had been the aim of educational psychology to find different relationships, which can be categorized as associative and predictive, which exist between academic performance and self concept.(Gonzalez-Pianda, Nunez, Gonzalez-Pumariega, Alvarez, Roces, Garcia, 2000; Nunez, Gonzalez-Pianda, Garcia, Roces, Alvarez, Gonzalez 1998). However, there are many studies that find these relationships, like, many studies that support the idea that positive self-concept and academic achievement are closely interlinked (Beck, 1984; Purkey, 1970). Fitts (1972) goes on to suggest that people with better self concept are able to use their intellectual capabilities more effectively. Byrne (1984) has emphasized that interest in the self-concept’s relation to academic performance originates from the credo that academic self-concept has motivational properties in a way that changes in academic self-concept will give way to changes in subsequent academic achievement, in a direct correlation. Sanchez and Roda(2004) have concluded that, despite the plethora of academic studies on relationship between academic performance and self-concept, the direction between the two remains to be conclusively

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established. There have been various studies to establish this relationship either ways. The experience of academic success or failure has a significant role in affecting a pupil's self concept and self image more than vice-versa, which would be evaluated by significant others, or by social comparison theory(Tajfel and Turner, 1986). While attempts at reverse relationship establishment also have been there. Like, say self-concept is deterministic of the level of academic achievement, self-concept can also be influenced by significant others, including teacher(Pygmalion Principle), one can infer that it would be possible to increase academic performance levels by optimizing levels of self-concept (Sanchez and Roda, 2004)

But the research of Sanchez and Roda has mainly been constricted to the Spanish scenario, and studies in other parts of the world, researchers still are to find a conclusive causal relationship between the two. E. g. studies by Bridgemann & Shipman, 1978; Caslyn, 1974; Diesterhaft & Gerken, 1983; Rogers, Smith, & Coleman, 1978; Wattenberg & Clifford, 1964; Williams, 1973) concerning self-concept and academic achievement, the causal relation between these two constructs has yet to be clearly defined(Pottebaum, Kieth, Ehly, 1986). Schreirer and Kraut ( 1979 ) suggested that evidence found earlier, which related self-concept to academic performance was one major force for educators to drive massive compensatory intervention programs in the 1960's.

However, the relation between Academic performance and Self-Concept remains a chicken-egg relationship(De Fraine et al., 2007; Valentine & Dubois, 2005), we can conclusively say that the correlation between the two is highly positive, as established by the studies (Byrne, 1996; Marsh & <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-self-concept-on-self-image-development/>

Craven, 2005; Marsh & Craven, 2006; Marsh et al., 2005; Marsh & O'Mara, 2008; Skaalvik, 1997; Valentine & Dubois, 2005; Valentine, Dubois & Cooper, 2004) and also concluded by the studies of Yoon, Eccles and Wigfield, 1996.

Our Hypothesis aims to test the same correlation in the Indian Scenario.

## **Hypothesis 3**

### **H3: Academic Performance of a student is positively related to the self image of a student**

#### **AP ↔ SI**

According to (Walter Adams – Academic Self-Image as a Strong Determinant of College Entrance) we know that when students choose a higher curriculum apart from the effect of curriculum itself on academic self image, there is little reason for the image to change between the 9th to 12th grades. The school is a stable environment too also the socio economic status of students is unlikely to change hence it can be safely said that the academic self image developed from earlier peer relative performance will be a key to this decision of evaluation on self- image for the kind of curriculum adopted. Hence we can say that a high academic performance will lead to higher self image as the student will have belief in his past performance.

The above studies though exemplifying college behavior can be taken for children as it can be seen that the self image of a student is generally developed in the formative years and hence academic ability will also precede it.

Lot of studies have shown that academic achievement to show a positive correlation to self- esteem (Bankston & Zhou, 2002; Lockett & Harrell, 2003; <https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-self-concept-on-self-image-development/>

Ross & Broh, 2000; Schmidt & Padilla, 2003; Verkuyten & Brug, 2002; Wong & Watkins, 2001). Some studies have used esteem as a direct consequence and the two have been interchangeably.

The major issue is, therefore, the direction of the relationship and the strength: which thing affects which does general or academic or subject-specific self-concept produce achievement or does achievement produce these various measures of self-concept. Gage and Berliner (1992) state “ the evidence is accumulating, however, to indicate that levels of success in school , particularly over a time span of some years, predicts level of regard of self and one’s own ability (Bridgeman & Shipman, 1978; Kifer, 1975); whereas level of self-esteem does not predict level of school achievement because other causal factors have an overbearing on the school performance. The implication is that teachers need to concentrate on the academic successes and failures of their students which will in turn automatically improve their self concept. It is thus well established that the student’s history of success and failure that gives them the information with which to assess themselves”

Hence for the purpose of this study we purport the hypothesis that Academic Performance of a student is positively related to the self image of a student.

## Hypothesis 4

**H4: Self concept of a student is positively related to the self image of a student, which is mediated by academic performance of a student**

**SC  $\hat{+}$   $\hat{+}$ ' AP  $\hat{+}$   $\hat{+}$ ' SI  $\hat{+}$ '**

In our previous hypotheses, we propose to establish a positive correlation between Self concept-Academic Performance; Academic Performance-Self Image; and Self concept-Self image, which, in our research has been restricted to being tested in the Indian 2-tier city scenario, but otherwise, their positive correlation have been seen through various researches and studies across the globe, which have been cited accordingly.

But the fourth hypothesis aims to test the mediation effect of academic performance upon the positive correlation between self-concept and self-image. In other words, a positively correlated academic performance to self-concept is how much responsible for the positive correlation of self-image and self-concept. There is a dearth of research on this topic which neither establishes the associative or predictive relation between the three constructs. Our study, however, refrains from testing any causal relationship (predictive) and only concentrates on the associativity between them.

Reasons for the same can be attributed to the lack of time and resources to establish a predictive relation.

The basis for taking purporting such a hypothesis is that, although high level of academic performance leads to positive self-concept and self-image, self-concept is a better predictor of being a low track or high track student, James (1980) proposes the presence of an intervening variable between self-

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concept and self-image as the personal expectation one has of himself. We extend the same logic and want to check the same for Academic performance i. e. if it is the mediating variable, and if so, to what extent.

Thus, we summarize this hypothesis as, Academic Performance is positively correlated with self-concept, which is also positively correlated with self-image, and this has to some extent a role in the correlation between self-concept and self-image.

## **Objectives/Research Questions Proposed**

The research questions proposed are given in the appendix to measure each of the variables in the research design. The constructs are measured in a four point (Self- Image) and a three point (Self-concept) Likert scale.

Academic performance is taken as a measure of the final school results.

The scales that have been used in the study have also been out in the appendix and a translation of the same in hindi was administered to the students. Hence this study is using the existing studies made comprehensible to the Indian subjects.

## **Research Design**

### **Measures**

#### **Self Concept**

For measuring self concept, the refined version of the scale developed by Pter Tymms, CEM Centre, School of Education, University of Durham, UK and Children's Self-Concept Scale developed by S P Ahluwalia (1986). The questionnaire will be modified to suit the level of children to whom it will be

administered irrespective of the moderating variable, which is school in our research study.

## **Self Image**

For measuring self image, the refined version of the scale developed by Barry Zimmerman and Anastasia Kitsantas, City University of New York, USA to measure academic self concept of students. The modification will be done by altering the level to school children as the mentioned scale was designed for college students.

## **Academic Performance**

Academic performance of students will be measured on the scale of their annual/semester exams, and class participation adjudged by teachers.

## **Methods**

The research is to set up a base for a better education structure for the primary education in the Indian context. Thus it is best to use exploration as it will help to develop concepts more clearly. We would need to do an exploration on the hypotheses that have mentioned above to find out the impact of self concept on academic performance and self image.

In this research, it is imperative to take data from communication study as it deals with behavior of students, their inclination towards academics, their views about themselves and their peers.

This is near impossible to be monitored or observed. As far as the communication study is concerned it will be done through interviews and questionnaire surveys.

The scope of the data collection is limited to Jamshedpur schools and because we have schools and student demographics as one of the mediating constructs, we will need to do the survey on three different schools in Jamshedpur. These schools will be Loyola, Kerala Samaj and a government school to cover all variety of schools in the city and in each of the three schools the survey will be done on all variety of students from class 1 to class 5. The sample size will be around 50 from each school. These students will be from different family background, with varying mental aptitude and it is assumed that their attitudes toward education, schools, peers and themselves would be different.

The students will only be grouped as per their school so that the school construct can be taken care of and respective relationship between the school and student's self-image can be set.

The four hypotheses that are considered in this research imply that the research aims at setting a correlation between various constructs mentioned in the research. The correlation between the self image, academic performance and self concept are causal in nature. The research through the hypotheses will also help to determine if the relationships are symmetric, reciprocal or asymmetric in nature.

The study is statistical in nature and not done as a case research as it aims at covering a varied breadth of students and not specific cases. Thus it is imperative to look at statistics to be able to generalize to a major extent the results of the approach.

## Results and Analysis

Reliability Test: First, the responses were tested for their reliability by determining Croabach Alpha values for the entire survey as well as separately for the three types of schools, i. e. considering the moderating variable. The results obtained are shown as below.

Consolidated

Convent

Neighborhood

Govt. School

Cronbach Alpha

Self Image (23)

0. 742

0. 795

0. 72

0. 747

Self Concept (16)

0. 906

0. 718

0. 892

0. 814

The data was tested by regression analysis to determine the beta coefficients for the entire survey as well as for each type of school i. e. considering the moderating variables. The values of beta and the corresponding significance values helped us testifying the hypotheses. The results obtained are shown as below.

## **Analysis**

### **H1: SC $\hat{\rightarrow}$ SI $\hat{\rightarrow}$**

Verdict – Hypothesis holds true. The result shows that the beta value of impact of Self Concept on Self Image is 0. 274 which implies that even though there is positive correlation, the impact is minimal; the same is also supported by small value of R<sup>2</sup>. The interpretation of the situation tells us that the self concept of students affect their self image which is a very plausible explanation considering the growing competition among children. Children have begun seeing themselves (self image) with respect to what others (their peers) think about them (self concept). However, the high value of significance (0. 3% alpha) shows that the confidence interval of the data obtained lies well within high probability zone.

### **H2: SC $\hat{\rightarrow}$ AP $\hat{\rightarrow}$**

Verdict – Hypothesis holds true. The result shows that the beta value of impact of Self Concept on Academic Performance is 0. 735, which implies that academic performance of a student is highly affected by their perception of self concept. This result can again be attributed to the fact of growing competition among children and also push from parents to perform

well in the academics. Every parents want their children to be topper of the school. Hence, the performance of the children is highly affected by how much their parents, their teachers, and their peers believe in them. The result is also supported by the regression coefficient of value 0. 541 and the high value of significance (0% alpha) implies that the data collected lies entirely within 100% confidence interval.

### **H3: AP $\hat{\rightarrow}$ SI $\hat{\rightarrow}$**

Verdict – Hypothesis holds true. The result shows that the beta value of impact of academic performance is 0. 078 which is very low and implies that even though the hypothesis holds true, the impact is very less, i. e. students self image is affected very less by their respective academic performances, possibly because children often believe in living in the wonderland. Also, support from their close peer group irrespective of their performances boosts their self image. The poor relationship between academic performance and self image is supported by very low value of regression coefficient (0. 006) of the collected data. Further, the significance of the collected data is also low, i. e. the confidence interval of only 60% (value of alpha is 0. 4).

### **H4: SC $\hat{\rightarrow}$ AP $\hat{\rightarrow}$ SI $\hat{\rightarrow}$**

Verdict – Hypothesis holds true. Positive value of beta for Self Concept and high significance of the collected data lying in 100% confidence interval justifies that the impact of self concept of students on self image is through their respective academic performance is high (beta is 0. 725). However, regression coefficient is low (0. 248) which might be due to large variation in the type of respondents (different types of school were targeted). Since, the beta