

Available online at <http://www.ijims.com>

ISSN: 2348 – 0343

## **Relationship between Self-concept and Academic Achievement among the Secondary School Students of Dhaka City**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to investigate whether self-concept has any significant relationship with academic achievement of the secondary school students. In order to achieve this end, 92 secondary school students were chosen conveniently from different schools in Dhaka city. The Bangla version of the Piers Harris Children's self-concept scale was used in this study. Results indicated that self-concept was only slightly positively associated with academic achievement of the students which referred that standardized coefficients was not significant. Standardized  $\alpha$  values illustrated that self-concept was not a predictor of academic achievement of the students. Adjusted  $R^2$  in the model explained that there is no significant variation in academic achievement due to self-concept of the students.

**Keywords:** Self-concept, academic achievement, secondary school students

### **Introduction**

Since the dawn of human civilization, People started to think about themselves. Greek philosopher Socrates mentioned "know thyself". Human being has a natural tendency to know himself. After birth, every person tries not only to know the world and environment around him but also tries to know himself. Self- concept is important in our life because our self-assessments, such as personality attributes, knowledge of skills and abilities, our occupation and hobbies and awareness of our physical attributes are usually developed on the basis of self-concept (Afrose & Ahmed, 1998). Self-concept refers to "the composite of ideas, feelings, and attitudes people have about themselves". Self-concept can also be considered as our effort to explain ourselves to ourselves. In every phase of our life, our self-perceptions vary from situation to situation (Woolfolk, 1998). Self-concept may be defined as the organized internal or personal idea one has about his/her own characteristics. These characteristics include physical features, gender, behavioral tendencies, emotional disposition, abilities, interests and goals. In other words, it is a detailed personal assessment of the whole person (Afrose & Ahmed 1998).

A person's self-concept may change with time, possibly going through turbulent periods of identity crisis and reassessment. Besides, the self-concept involves not only past selves but also the 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. (Haque & Rana 2010). The concept of self is essential to any account of man's social nature on the socialization process. Human beings characteristically act with self-awareness, exercise self-control, exhibit conscience and guilt, and in the great crises of life make decisions with reference to some imagery of what they are, what they have been, and what they hope to be. A person's self is the combination of the individual beliefs, goals, values, interests and dispositions. Self-concept is one's sense of the self as a separate individual who possesses a unique set of characteristics.

There are several components of self-concept such as physical, academic, social, transpersonal etc. The physical aspect of self-concept relates to that which is concrete: What we look like, our sex, height, weight etc. What type of clothes we wear, what type 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. Two levels of academic self-concept are general academic self-concept and self-concepts in specific content related areas such as Math, Science, Language, Arts 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. Carl Rogers (1959) believes that the self concept has three different components: The view you have of yourself (Self image), how much value you place on yourself (Self esteem or self-worth), what you wish you were really like (Ideal self).

The relation between self-concept and academic achievement has often been studied but the casual relation between these two constructs is still unclear. Fromm (1947) said that peers and adults as transmitters of society played a central role in shaping the Childs self-concept. It encourages or restricts one's efforts and the child achieves self-fulfillment to agree that one is able to create loving, trusting relationships with those around them. Byrne (1988) showed that academic self-concept was more effective than was academic achievement in differentiating between low-track and high-track students. Hamachek (1995) asserts that self-concept and school achievement are related. The major issue is the direction of relationship: does self-concept produce achievement or does achievement produce self-concept? Gage and Berliner (1992) conducted a research on the relationship between self-concept and school achievement. The finding suggested that measures of general or even academic self-concept are not significantly related to school achievement. It is at the level of very specific subjects (Reading, Math's, and Science) that there is a relationship between self-concept and academic success. The present study is a humble effort to understand the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement among the secondary school students of Dhaka city. The study results are likely to be significant for teachers, parents and society at large in order to promote higher self-concept and academic achievement among the students. It was hypothesized that higher self-concept will foster higher academic achievement and lower self-concept will foster lower academic achievement among the secondary school students.

## Method

### *Participants*

The study comprised of 92 secondary school students from different high schools in Dhaka city. The participant's age ranges from 13 to 16 years of age who studied in class nine and ten. Among the 92 participants, 44 were boys and 48 were girls.

### *Instruments*

#### *Piers Harris Children's self-concept scale:*

The Bangla version of the Piers Harris Children's self-concept scale (Begum & Haque 1976) was used in this study. This scale was administered to measure self-concept of students who studied in class nine and ten. The scale, a paper and pencil type consisted of 80 dichotomous (Yes/No) items. Substantial evidence of the construct validity is reported in the Manual for Piers Harris Children's self-concept scale (Piers & Harris, 1969). The reliability of the Bangla Version of the piers Harris Children's self-concept scale was highly co-related with the original Scale. A high positive correlation ( $R=.98$ ;  $P<.05$ ) was found between the Bangla version and original scale by Haque and Islam (1996).

#### *Academic Achievement:*

The academic achievement of the participants was measured by considering the Junior School Certificate (JSC) result of the students of class nine and ten.

### *Procedure*

Standard data collection procedure was followed in this study. At first, I gave a written as well as verbal instruction to the participant. Their task was that they had to give a tick mark on "yes" option of question if they think that, it was true for them. And gave a tick mark on "no" option of question if they think that, it was not true for them. They should not give tick mark on both options. They were also instructed that there were no right or wrong answer in this questionnaire; they should express whatever they think about themselves. I assured them that their answers would be kept confidential. At the end, they were thanked for their sincere co-operation.

## Results

The results of analyses indicated that there was no significant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. The correlation and regression are shown in the following tables and graphs:

Table 1

### **The correlation between self-concept and academic achievement of the secondary school students**

Self-concept Of the student	<i>R</i>	Significant level ( $\alpha$ )
Academic achievement Of the student	.025	.05 ( <i>Two-tailed</i> )

N=92 ( $p<.811$ )

Table 1 shows that the correlation between Self-concept and academic achievement is .025 ( $p < .811$ ) which is not significant at .05 level.

Table 2

**Regression of self-concept and academic achievement of the secondary school students**

Predictor variable	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	P
	B	SE	$\beta$	
(Constant)	4.405	.295		.000
Self-concept of the students	.001	.005	.025	.811

Adjusted  $R^2 = -.010$  ( $F_{1,90} = .057$ ,  $p < .811$ )

Negative values of adjusted  $R^2$  in the above table illustrates that there is no significant variation in academic achievement due to self-concept of the model.

**Discussion**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate whether self-concept has any significant relationship with academic achievement among the secondary school students. In order to achieve this end, the study was conducted on 92 secondary school students in Dhaka city. Among them 44 were boys and 48 were girls. For conduction of the study, the Bangla version of the Piers-Harris Children's self-concept scale was used. Data were collected from almost 16 secondary schools to make it more representative. Obtained results indicated that the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement was not significant which further illustrates that the proposed hypothesis is disconfirmed. The result in table 1 implied that the two variables (self-concept and academic achievement) were not correlated and they were largely independent from each other. The Pearson product moment correlation between self concept and academic achievement was found only .025 that was not significant at .05 levels. These research findings were in agreement with some of the earlier studies that measures of general or even academic self-concept are not significantly related to school achievement (Gage and Berliner 1992). But these results contradict a large number of previous research findings that there exists a significant positive correlation between self-concept and academic achievement (Sripek and Hoffman, 1980; Schempp, 1981; Begum and Haque, 1976). From the present result, it could be inferred that a student can have high academic achievement with having a low self-concept about them. Similarly, a student can have high self-concept with having a low academic achievement. Academic achievement of the students affected by large number factors or variables for example socio-economic status, personality of the student, Self-esteem, Parental education, peer group, school status etc. Self-concept is only a single variable affecting the academic achievement of the students. And it is possible that a student has poor self-concept with having a high socio-economic status, high parental education etc. So, it's not surprising that a student has high academic achievement with having a poor self-concept and also low academic achievement with having a very high self-concept about them. There are three factors which definitely influence the degree to which a student form self-concept about them. These are: Their own prior behaviors and performance, behaviors of other individuals toward them, expectations that others hold for their future performance. From these factors it can be inferred that a student's parental behavior and expectations influence lot to form positive self-concept among their child. Parental behavior and expectations toward their child depends largely on parenting style that the parents follow to mould their children's behavior. It has been shown that in a country like Bangladesh, parents typically follow undemocratic or authoritarian style. As authoritarian parents' value control, unquestioning obedience, and they are more detached and less worm than other parents. So, their children are withdrawn and develop negative self-concept about them. But their children's academic success still may be high because they constantly give pressure and even corporal punishment to their child to improve their grades. So, in Bangladesh, it is very possible that student's self-concept may have no relationship with their academic achievement.

Standardized  $\alpha$  values ( $\alpha = .025$ ,  $P < .811$ ) indicated that the self-concept of the students was not a high predictor of academic achievement of the students. Results stated that a change of 1 unit standard deviations in self-concept resulted in a change of only .025 standard deviations in academic achievement of the students. Self-

concept was only slightly associated with academic achievement of the students which referred that standardized coefficients was not significant. Adjusted  $R^2$  (-.010) implied that there was no significant variation in academic achievement due to self-concept, meaning that the overall model was not significant. As we know that when there is no significant relationship between two variables, the value of adjusted  $R^2$  close to zero. Sometimes negative value may also be found for adjusted  $R^2$ . The value of adjusted  $R^2$  increases when the number of variables increased. Here, the number of variable is only one and may be that is the reason for negative values of adjusted  $R^2$ .

The limitations of the present study were that the sample size was too small and the participants were selected from Dhaka city only. Further studies with improved methodology and larger sample are suggested for reducing any possible bias. As parents and significant others behavior is important for developing positive self-concept of the child, they should be aware about the importance of positive self-concept in our life. As self-concept is learned and not innate, everybody should try to develop positive self-concept about them.

### Conclusion

Present study was conducted to investigate whether there is any relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of the secondary school students. It was found that there is no significant relationship between these two variables. Academic achievement of the secondary school students may be determined by other factors rather than self-concept. Further research with large samples is suggested to confirm this issue.

### Acknowledgements

Present researcher is grateful to the participants of this research and prof. Dr. Shamim F. Karim for her help.

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