

RELATING ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT WITH SELF-HANDICAPPING OF STUDENTS OF NINTH GRADE: A STUDY OF SOUTH INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the existing study is to find out the relationship between Academic Self-Concept, and Self-Handicapping of ninth grade students. Method of the study was Survey, and multistage cluster sampling technique was used for the study; 204 secondary school students, from seven government schools of Thiruvananthapuram educational sub-district of Kerala, South India, were used sample of the study. Academic Self-Concept Scale and Self-Handicapping scales were used to collect data. The results show that there is a statistically significant correlation between the variables ($p < 0.01$). Thus it is interpreted there is a significant negative correlation between the variables Academic Self-Concept and Self-Handicapping. That is, an increase/positive variation in Academic Self-Concept will make a corresponding decrease/variation in Self-Handicapping of students from ninth grades, and vice-versa.

Keywords: Academic Self-Concept, Self-Handicapping, School Students from South India

INTRODUCTION

An important aim of teaching learning is maintaining healthy and positive self-concept among students (Marsh & Craven, 1997). Over the past years, educational research focuses on students' Self-Concept and related psychological dimensions. Many researchers showed that positive self-concept can promote students' academic and social outcomes like other correlates, such as academic achievement (Marsh, 1990c; Marsh & Martin, 2011; Marsh, et al., 2005, Parker, et al., 2012), and school adjustment (Chen et al., 2004; Haynes, 1990).

Earlier Self- concept was considered as a unitary concept as it was not well studied and outlined (Rosenberg, 1965), but later it was considered multidimensional. One of the widely used models of self-concept was proposed by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976), in this

model self-concept was theorized as a multidimensional and hierarchically structure. In this structure, global self-concept, is referred to an individual' global self-perception, was at the apex of the structure. Global self-concept was divided into two terms: academic self- concept, and nonacademic self-concept. Furthermore, academic self-concept was found to be divided into subject-specific, and other academic components. Non-academic self-concept is divided into social, emotional, and physical self-concepts (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). James (1983) noted that self-esteem was a global construct affected by individuals' presumed abilities and actual accomplishments.

Academic self-concept is one of the core components of self-concept (Shavelson at al., 1976), which refers to an individual's knowledge and perceptions about his or her academic ability (Marsh & Seaton, 2013). Academic self-concept was further divided into more subject-specific components: English, history, math, and science self-concept. Based on the Shavelson Model, Byrne and Gavin (1996) collected data of global, academic, math, and English self-concept from 252 Grade 3 students, 290 Grade 7 students, and 335 Grade 11 students, and identified a hierarchical and multidimensional structure of academic self-concept through adolescence. Similarly, Byrne and Gavin (1996) revealed that levels of correlation coefficients between the 4 self-Concept components increased from pre adolescence to early adolescence, and it is decreased to late adolescence, furthermore the study did not provide confirmation or evidence supporting increasing differential structure of academic self-concept with age.

Researches across the globe have concluded that the academic self-concept is related to desirable educational actions, such as course selection (Marsh & Yeung, 1997b), interest (Trautwein, et al., 2006), homework effort (Trautwein, et al., 2006), and educational aspiration (Marsh, 1991). Nevertheless, such relationships have not been reported with nonacademic self-concept like, social, emotional, and physical (Marsh & Hau, 2003).

Berglas and Jones (1978) describe Self-Handicapping as a protective mechanism in which people seek or create obstacles that interfere with their performance. At the same time, Kelly (1972) argued that Self handicappers exploit on the attribution principles of discounting and augmentation. In addition to this, Snyder& Smith (1982) argued that anticipated threats to Self Esteem, more specifically uncertainty about one's ability appear to motivated enactment of Self-Handicapping strategies. Similarly, Self-Handicapping also include Self presentational concerns (Kolditz & Arkin 1982).

Studies expose that Self-Handicapping strategies are employed to manipulate the impressions of others in various situations (Midgley, Arunkumar, & Urdan, 1996). These proactive strategies increase the opportunity to externalize failure and internalize success

(Berglas & Jones, 1978) so that the evaluations are clouded, masking self-handicappers' actual abilities (Berglas & Baumeister, 1993).

It is thus identified that Academic Self-Concept plays an important role in the students learning, school environment, school behavior, and Academic performance. On the other hand Self-Handicapping is a cause for inadequate mental health, reduced academic performance, and poor school environment. Thus, there is need of studying the relationship between the selected variables, i.e., Academic Self-Concept and Self-Handicapping in Indian context. Researchers could not come across any such studies, reported in any form in of the existing literature.

In the present study the following concerns are to be addressed,

Do the secondary school students have a better level of Academic Self-Concept?

Do they have any kind of self-handicapping with regard to their learning and formal education?

Is there any relationship between Academic Self-Concept and Self-Handicapping?

METHOD

Participants

A sample of 204 ninth graders from the selected secondary schools of South India (i.e., from seven government schools in Thiruvananthapuram south educational sub-district of Kerala) were selected using multistage cluster sampling. 84 of them were male and 120 were female. Age of the participants ranged from 13 years to 15 years with an average of 13.67 years. The consent from the students and parents were also gathered.

Measures

1- Academic Self-Concept Scale:

Academic Self-Concept scale (Babu M, and Sajith, 2017), comprises of 56 self-descriptive statements formatted on 5-point Likert scale with an end point designations strongly Agree (5) and Strongly Disagree (1), the scores reverse in the case of negatively stated statements. The reliability was obtained using Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.87 and using split

half method was 0.67. Content validity was confirmed by Educational Psychology experts. Possible scores for the Academic Self-Concept range from 56 to 280.

2- Self-Handicapping Scale:

The authors developed the scale and validated it accordingly. The reliability was obtained using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=0.81$ and split half (Spearman Brown = 0.84). Cross validity was 0.30 and concurrent validity was , obtained by correlating the scores with another set of scores collected by administering Self-Handicapping Scale of Rhodewalt. F, 1990. The scale was devised in Likert format with 20 statements, where Strongly Agree carried 5 score and Strongly Disagree carries 1 score. The range of the score was from 20 to 100.

PROCEDURE

The authors met the heads of the schools and had discussion with them to get a formal approval. The investigators went to school and with the help of the principals and senior teachers found out the cluster class unit. A social rapport was made with the participating students by explaining the aims of the study. Each statement was explained by the researchers in simple language using appropriate example.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics were calculated to find out the level of Academic Self-Concept, and Self-Handicapping.

Table 1. *The descriptive statistical scores of Academic Self-Concept*

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Academic Self-Concept	204	183.12	1.532	21.88	478.794	0.538	0.089

It is clear from the table 1, arithmetic mean and standard deviation of Academic Self-Concept of secondary school students are 183.12 and 21.88 respectively. It is interpreted that they have **superior academic Self-Handicapping** as per the qualitative norms of the scale.

Table 2. *The number and percentage of students in different levels of Academic Self-Concept*

Sl. No.	Level of Academic Self-Concept	Number	Percent (%)
1	Superior Academic Self-Concept	152	74.51
2	Moderate Academic Self-Concept	52	25.49
3	Low Academic Self-Concept	0	0
Total		204	100%

The table 2 indicates that 25.49% of the total Secondary School students have moderate level of Academic Self-Concept. At the same time, 74.51% of them have superior level of Academic Self-Concept. A figure has also been given.

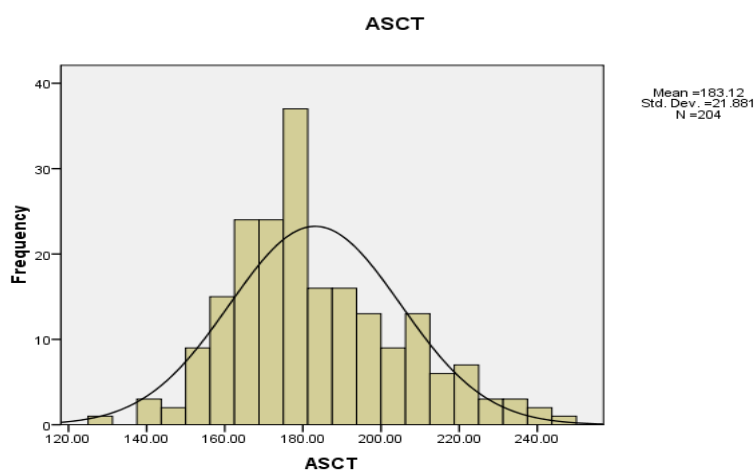


Fig 1. Histogram with Normal Curve- Academic Self-Concept

Table 3. The descriptive statistical scores such as Mean, standard error of mean, standard deviation, variance, skewness, and kurtosis

Variable	Mean	Std. Error of Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-Handicapping	204 54.9902	0.93552	13.36195	178.542	-0.218	-0.279

It is evident that mean and standard deviation of Self-Handicapping of secondary school students are 54.99 and 13.36 respectively. It is thus interpreted that they have an average level of Self-Handicapping as per the qualitative norms of the scale.

Table 4. The number and percentage of students in different levels of Self-Handicapping

SL.NO	Level of Slef-Handicapping	Number	Percent (%)
1	Severe Self-Handicapping	47	23.04
2	Moderate Self-Handicapping	137	67.16
3	Low Self-Handicapping	20	9.80
	Total	204	100%

It is clear from the given table 4, 67.16% of the total respondents fall in moderate Self-Handicapping category while 9.8% of them are in low Self-Handicapping level. A pie diagram showing the classification is given below.

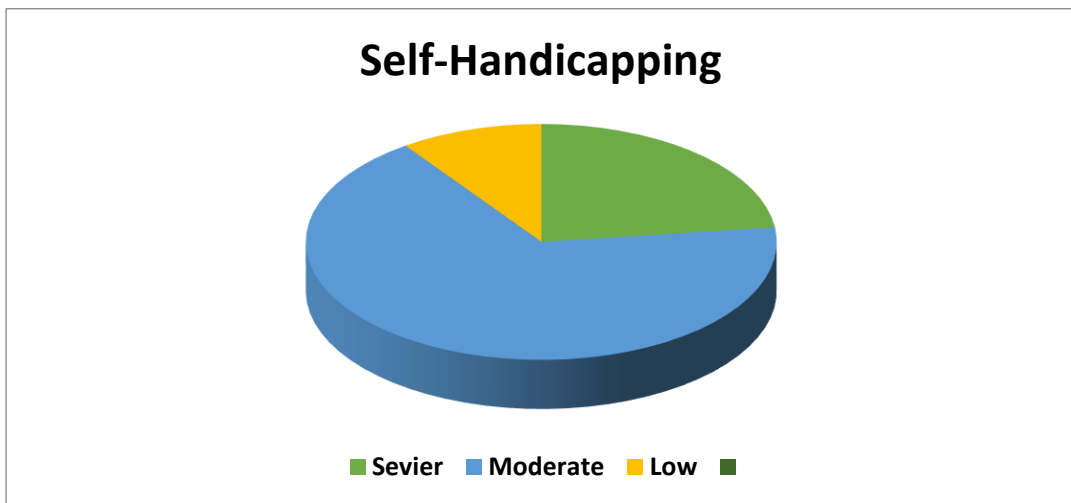


Fig.2 Pie diagram of level of Self-Handicapping of secondary school students

The following figure shows that the distribution of the Self-Handicapping Score of secondary school students.

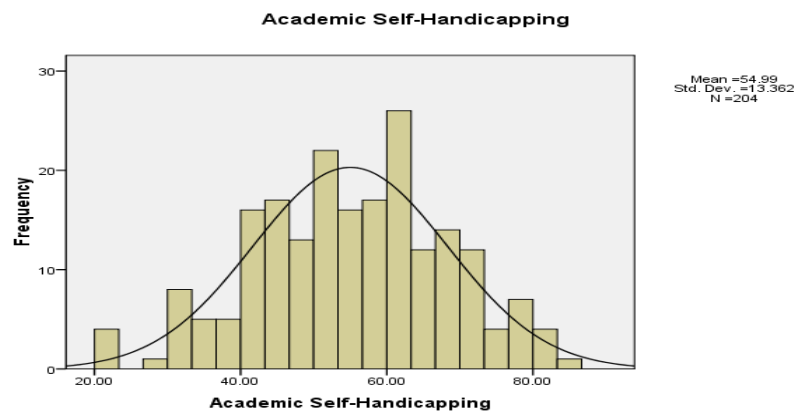


Figure: 3

Fig.3. Histogram with Normal Probability Curve- Self-Handicapping

CORRELATION

Pearson product moment correlation is calculated to find out the relationship between Academic Self-Concept and Self-Handicapping of secondary school students are given below.

Table 5. Correlation between Academic Self-Concept and Self-Handicapping

Variables	Self-Handicapping	Remarks
Academic Self-Concept	-.502**	P<0.01

The product moment correlation coefficient between the scores of Academic Self-Concept and Self-Handicapping is found out as moderate negative ($r=-0.50$, $p<0.01$). The correlation coefficient is statistically significant at 0.01 level. Thus it is interpreted there is a significant negative correlation between the variables Academic Self-Concept and Self-Handicapping. That is, an increase/positive variation in Academic Self-Concept will make a corresponding decrease in Self-Handicapping and vice-versa.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Academic Self-Concept plays an important role in academic and adjustment related outcomes among adolescents. The finding of the study shows that secondary school students have a superior level of Academic Self-Concept. This finding is supported by result of Sajith (2017). The results of the study is supported by studies those found out a higher level of academic self-concept among students (Dickhauser,2005; Lyon,1993; Marsh, 1986, 1990; Plucker & stocking,2001; Valentine, and DuBios,& cooper,2004). In one way or the other, the successful completion of the tasks undertaken is important to everyone in their various course of action. Sometimes, one's own actions can turn out to be barriers in the path fulfill these tasks. Self-Handicapping strategies are employed to manipulate the impressions of others (Midgley, Arunkumar, & Urdan, 1996). These proactive strategies increase the opportunity to externalize failure and internalize success (Berglas & Jones, 1978) so that the evaluations are clouded, masking self-handicappers' actual abilities (Berglas & Baumeister, 1993). In the present study it is found that secondary school students have a moderate level of Self-Handicapping

The study shows that there is a negative relationship between the variables Academic Self-Concept and Self-Handicapping which opposes the positive relation as reported by Thomas & Gadbois (2007). The challenges for all the teachers are to help adolescents to develop positive images of them. There are potential implications for educational practice that drawn from the findings in this present study. When developing interventions, educators and researchers should be aware that simply enhancing students' academic self-concept and in reducing their mind set for self-handicapping. Teachers, School authorities and parents are the responsible for the Academic Self-Concept of the students. In the present study, it is proven that the secondary school students have proper academic self-concept. It may not be the situation of the entire classrooms of India. And hence, the tips and strategies of behavior management should be consider while curriculum framing. Teacher education can be enriched with strategy development for such behavioral and psychological concerns of students. Teachers, parents, and school authorities should have awareness on this matter and they have to help the learners positively to support in their removal of self-handicapping nature of behavioural strategy. The students, they have to be given sufficient orientation on the issues of self-handicapping. A culture of academics with scheduled activities has to be developed among students. Especially, adolescent is a stage of stress and strain; its complications may lead to pessimism, withdrawal, stubborn nature, false pride, etc., which may be leads to Self-Handicapping. Teachers should allow students to think independently and appreciate their responses; need to give feedback of their achievement. And curriculum should framed for cognitive development way.

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