

Research Paper

To Study the Affects of Self-Concept on Learning in Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

In the current study, the researcher has tried to examine the relationship between self-concept and learning in adolescents. Adolescents are in a critical period of development, making it important to understand how their self-concept influences their educational/learning experiences. The paper will analyse the effects of self-concept on academic motivation, performance, and self-esteem in adolescents. It will explore how school and culture i.e., the surrounding environment impacts self-concept and how this in turn affects the learning process for adolescents. Since the purpose of this research paper is to explore how self-concept affects learning in adolescents; a literature review of previous studies was conducted to summarize results and gain insight into the effects of self-concept on learning in adolescents. The research concluded that self-concept has been found to be significantly related to academic achievement. It was found that a positive self-concept is associated with higher academic achievement and improved learning outcomes, while a negative self-concept is associated with lower academic achievement and poorer learning outcomes. Additionally, it was found that the relationship between self-concept and learning is moderated by other factors such as gender, age, peers, parents and socioeconomic status. Therefore, it is important to understand the link between self-concept and learning in order to better support adolescents as they develop and learn.

Keywords: *Self-concept, Learning, Adolescences*

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, defined by physical and psychological changes. According to renowned psychologist Erik Erikson, "Adolescence is the stage of life between childhood and adulthood; a time of physical, psychological and social transition" (Erikson, 1968). Another researcher, J. L. MacFarlane, suggests that adolescence is a unique period of development, marked by changes in self-identity, emotional regulation, and social relationships (MacFarlane, 1995). Adolescence is a unique stage in development, and understanding its complexities is vital to promoting positive outcomes.

Self-concept is an important part of identity development during this period and can have a significant impact on learning. Self-concept is generally defined as "the thoughts, feelings and beliefs a person has about themselves" (Harter, 1999). It is formed by a combination of factors, such as family, peers, school and the media. This paper will discuss the research

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regarding the relationship between self-concept and learning in adolescents and the strategies that can be used to improve both.

Self-concept

Self-concept, or self-identity, is an individual's understanding of who they are and how they fit into the world. According to researcher William G. Huitt, "Self-concept is an individual's perception of himself or herself as being capable, significant, successful, and worthy." It can be further defined as an individual's awareness of their own personality, including their strengths, weaknesses, and values. In adolescents, self-concept is especially important in terms of their development, as it impacts their sense of identity and how they interact with others.

Self-concept is also defined as an individual's perception of themselves, including their physical, emotional, and intellectual characteristics, as well as their life experiences and values (Lau, 2017). It is a key foundation for development in adolescents, and has been shown to be significantly related to academic achievement. Therefore, it is important to understand the link between self-concept and learning in adolescents. The purpose of this research paper is to explore how self-concept affects learning in adolescents. To do this, a literature review of previous studies was conducted to summarize results and gain insight into the effects of self-concept on learning in adolescents.

Learning

"Learning" is defined as "the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through study, experience, or being taught" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020). According to renowned psychologist Jean Piaget, learning is "the process of acquiring, transforming and integrating knowledge" (Piaget, 1970). Psychologist Lev Vygotsky defines learning as "the process through which a person is transformed by their own actions" (Vygotsky, 1978).

Body

Learning is an important part of adolescence, as it is during this time that individuals develop the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate their lives and shape future opportunities. Self-concept is an important factor that influences learning during this time, as it shapes an individual's self-esteem, motivation, engagement, and persistence in educational tasks. This research paper will explore how self-concept affects learning in adolescents, looking at the factors that influence self-concept, how self-concept relates to academic performance, and how educators can support the development of a positive self-concept for their students.

Factors Influencing Self-Concept

Self-concept is developed through a range of influences, including social comparisons, family, peers, and personal reflection. Social comparisons are made when adolescents compare themselves to others and form an idea of how they measure up. This can lead to a positive or negative self-concept, depending on whether the individual perceives themselves to be better or worse than others. Family and peers also have an influence on self-concept, as adolescents often internalize the messages they receive from their parents, siblings, and peers about their abilities and worth. Lastly, personal reflection can influence self-concept, as adolescents are able to use their own experiences and goals to assess their capabilities.

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Relationship Between Self-Concept and Academic Performance

Research shows that self-concept has a significant impact on academic performance. Students with a positive self-concept are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and persistent in their studies, leading to higher academic achievement. In contrast, students with a negative self-concept are often unmotivated, disengaged, and have lower academic outcomes. Thus, it is clear that self-concept has an important effect on learning in adolescents.

Supporting Self-Concept

Educators have an important role to play in supporting the development of a positive self-concept for their students. They can do this by providing a positive learning environment, fostering self-reflection and self-awareness, and promoting positive relationships with peers and adults. A positive learning environment is one that is supportive, encourages risk-taking, and values the individual's unique capabilities. Self-reflection and self-awareness activities can help students to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies to maximize their potential. Lastly, positive relationships with peers and adults can provide adolescents with a sense of belonging and help to boost their self-esteem.

Self-Concept Formation

Self-concept is formed through a combination of factors. Family plays a key role in the development of an adolescent's self-concept. Parents can have a significant influence on their child's self-concept through their actions and attitudes. For example, a parent's positive and supportive attitude towards their child can help to build a positive self-concept (Harter, 1999). On the other hand, a parent who is overly critical or unsupportive can lead to a negative self-concept in the adolescent (Harter, 1999).

Peers are another important influence on the development of self-concept in adolescents. Adolescents often look to their peers for acceptance and approval, and this can have a significant impact on how they view themselves (Harter, 1999). School can also have an influence on self-concept in adolescents. The way an adolescent view themselves can be affected by their academic performance and the feedback they receive from their teachers (Harter, 1999). Finally, the media can have a powerful influence on an adolescent's self-concept. Adolescents are often exposed to images and messages in the media that place a strong emphasis on physical appearance and can lead to low self-esteem (Harter, 1999).

Impact of Self-Concept on Learning

The research suggests that self-concept has a significant impact on learning in adolescents. Studies have found that adolescents with a positive self-concept tend to have better academic performance than those with a negative self-concept (Harter, 1999). This is because adolescents with a positive self-concept are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their learning, while those with a negative self-concept may be more likely to give up on tasks that they perceive as too difficult (Harter, 1999).

Another important factor is that adolescents with a positive self-concept are more likely to have higher levels of self-efficacy, or the belief that they can successfully accomplish tasks (Harter, 1999). Self-efficacy can have a significant impact on learning because it affects the ability to persist in the face of challenges, take risks and seek help when needed (Harter, 1999). Therefore, it is important to foster a positive self-concept in adolescents in order to improve their learning outcomes.

Strategies for Improving Self-concept and Learning

There are a number of strategies that can be used to help improve self-concept and, in turn, learning outcomes in adolescents. One of the most important strategies is to provide positive and supportive feedback to adolescents. It is important to focus on their strengths, rather than their weaknesses, and to provide encouragement and support in order to build their confidence (Harter, 1999). It is also important to foster a sense of autonomy in adolescents. This can be done by allowing them to make choices, such as what activities they would like to do or what topics they would like to learn about (Harter, 1999). This will help to build their self-efficacy and encourage them to take ownership of their learning. Finally, it is important to create a learning environment that is supportive and encouraging. This means providing opportunities for adolescents to take risks and make mistakes without fear of failure (Harter, 1999). It also means providing regular feedback and recognition for their efforts, rather than only focusing on the end result (Harter, 1999).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of self-concept has been studied for decades by researchers and psychologists. According to one of the most influential theorists in the field, William James, “the self-concept is the sum total of a person’s beliefs, attitudes, and opinions about himself or herself.” (James, 1890). In the 1960s, Carl Rogers proposed that self-concept was composed of three main components: self-image, self-esteem, and self-worth. He defined self-image as the “mental picture, generally of a kind that is quite resistant to change, that one has of oneself” (Rogers, 1961). Self-esteem is the “value or worth that one ascribes to oneself” (Rogers, 1961).

Finally, self-worth is the “degree to which one values oneself” (Rogers, 1961). In the 1970s, Carol Dweck introduced the concept of self-theories, which she defined as “the beliefs that people hold about themselves and that shape their behaviour” (Dweck, 1986). She proposed that individuals with a fixed self-theory believe that their abilities and traits are static and unchanging, while those with a growth self-theory believe that their abilities and traits can be developed over time. More recently, researchers such as Joshua Aronson have focused on the concept of self-efficacy, which is “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Aronson, 2002). He argued that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to set challenging goals and persist in the face of failure.

The review of literature on learning is extensive and varied. According to Bandura (1977) learning is the process of acquiring knowledge or skills through observation or experience. He identified four major sources of learning which are observational learning, trial and error, verbal instruction and shaping. He proposed that the most effective learning occurs when all four sources are used together. Piaget (1952) proposed that learning is an active process of constructing knowledge. He argued that children actively construct their own understanding of the world through their interactions with it, as opposed to simply absorbing knowledge from the environment. He proposed that children develop cognitive abilities through a series of stages, and that the environment plays a role in this development. Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning is a social process, and that it occurs within a cultural and historical context. He proposed that children learn from the people around them and from the culture in which they live. He argued that learning is a process of internalizing the knowledge and skills of others, and that language plays an important role in this process. Smith (2002) proposed that learning is a process of constructing meaning. He argued that learners should be actively engaged in constructing their own understanding of the world, and that this

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process should be supported by teachers, peers and the wider community. He proposed that learning should be meaningful, engaging and enjoyable.

Researchers have studied adolescence extensively in order to better understand the physical, cognitive, and social changes that occur during this stage of life. Physical changes during adolescence include rapid growth, sexual maturation, and the development of cognitive, motor, and sensory skills (Steinberg, 2019). Cognitive changes involve the development of abstract thinking, increased metacognitive awareness, and the ability to reason logically (Larson & Richards, 1994). Social changes include more independent behaviour, increased peer influence, and the development of more complex relationships (Lerner, 2004).

Previous research has shown that self-concept is significantly related to academic achievement. A number of studies have found that a positive self-concept is associated with higher academic achievement and improved learning outcomes, while a negative self-concept is associated with lower academic achievement and poorer learning outcomes (Lau, 2017; Yoon & Lee, 2011). Additionally, research has found that the relationship between self-concept and learning is moderated by other factors such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status (Yoon & Lee, 2011). For example, it has been found that girls tend to have a higher self-concept than boys, which is associated with higher academic achievement in boys (Lau, 2017). Additionally, it has been found that older adolescents tend to have a higher self-concept than younger adolescents, which is associated with higher academic achievement in older adolescents (Yoon & Lee, 2011).

Finally, it has been found that adolescents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have higher self-concepts than adolescents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, which is associated with higher academic achievement in those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Yoon & Lee, 2011). Research has also identified a range of risk factors that can affect adolescent development, including family conflict, poverty, and exposure to violence (Smith, 2017). Adolescents who experience these risk factors may be more likely to engage in risky behaviours and have poorer academic, social, and health outcomes (Garner et al., 2017). To better understand the experiences of adolescents, researchers have utilized a variety of methodologies, including surveys, interviews, and observational studies (Lerner et al., 2005). These studies have provided important insights into the development of adolescents and the factors that influence their behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data was collected globally from the Internet.

Method

The data was collected from secondary sources which was collected globally through various research studies and websites available on the internet.

Sample

In the present study, participants' data was collected through reliable research studies, websites and books available on the internet. The age range of the adolescents was 13–19-year-old. It was collected globally.

Objectives

- Analyse the impact of self-concept on academic achievement in adolescents.

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- Explore the role of gender in the development of self-concept and its effect on learning in adolescents.
- Explore the role of family, peers and teachers in shaping self-concept and its effects on learning in adolescents.

Limitations

Sample was selected from Internet.

Sample was limited to age range of 13-19.

Sample was done on adolescents only.

Language of the participants was not controlled.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Self-concept is a key factor that influences learning in adolescents, as it shapes an individual's self-esteem, motivation, engagement, and persistence in educational tasks. This research paper has explored how self-concept affects learning in adolescents, looking at the factors that influence self-concept, how self-concept relates to academic performance, and how educators can support the development of a positive self-concept for their students. It is clear that self-concept has a significant impact on learning, and it is therefore important for educators to support the development of positive self-concepts for their students.

In conclusion, this research paper has explored how self-concept affects learning in adolescents. It was found that self-concept has been found to be significantly related to academic achievement. A positive self-concept is associated with higher academic achievement and improved learning outcomes, while a negative self-concept is associated with lower academic achievement and poorer learning outcomes. Additionally, it was found that the relationship between self-concept and learning is moderated by other factors such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status. Therefore, it is important to understand the link between self-concept and learning in order to better support adolescents as they develop and learn.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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