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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SELF CONCEPT OF RURAL AND URBAN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF KASHMIR DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

The self-concept of a person plays very significant role in his personality development. Self-concept is what we think about ourselves and how we evaluate our abilities and potential. The purpose of this study was to examine the self-concept rural and urban higher secondary school students of Kashmir division. The sample for the study consisted of 100 higher secondary school students (50 Rural, 50 Urban). The data was collected by using Sagar and Sharma Self concept Inventory Scale. The collected data was statistically analyzed and interpreted and it was found that urban higher secondary school students have high overall self-concept and high concept of ideal self than rural higher secondary school students. However both the groups of students have similar concept of real-self.

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INTRODUCTION

The self-concept is the accumulation of knowledge about the self, such as beliefs regarding personality traits, physical characteristics, abilities, values, goals, and roles. Beginning in infancy, children acquire and organize information about them as a way to enable them to understand the relation between the self and their social world. This developmental process is a direct consequence of children's emerging cognitive skills and their social relationships with both family and peers. During early childhood, children's self-concepts are less differentiated and are centered on concrete characteristics, such as physical attributes, possessions, and skills. During middle childhood, the self-concept becomes more integrated and differentiated as the child engages in social comparison and more clearly perceives the self as consisting of internal, psychological characteristics. Throughout later childhood and adolescence, the self-concept becomes more abstract, complex, and hierarchically organized into cognitive mental representations or self-schemas, which direct the processing of self-relevant information. Lewis (1990) suggests that development of a concept of self has two aspects: -

The Existential Self

This is the most basic part of the self-scheme or self-concept; the sense of being separate and distinct from others and the awareness of the constancy of the self" (Bee, 1992). The child realizes that they exist as a separate entity from others and that they continue to exist over time and space. According to Lewis awareness of the existential self begins as young as two to three months old and arises in part due to the relation the child has with the world. For example, the child smiles and someone smiles back, or the child touches a mobile and sees it move.

The Categorical Self

Having realized that he or she exists as a separate experiencing being, the child next becomes aware that he or she is also an object in the

world. Just as other objects including people have properties that can be experienced (big, small, red, smooth and so on) so the child is becoming aware of him or herself as an object which can be experienced and which has properties. The self too can be put into categories such as age, gender, size or skill. Two of the first categories to be applied are age ("I am 3") and gender ("I am a girl"). In early childhood the categories children apply to themselves are very concrete (e.g. hair color, height and favorite things). Later, self-description also begins to include reference to internal psychological traits, comparative evaluations and to how others see them. Generally, self-concept is a person's combined view of one's self (Doherty, 2011). Self-concept 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 (Yahaya and Ramli, 2009). In the other words, self-concepts are cognitive structures that can include content, attitudes or evaluative judgments and are used to make sense of the world, focus attention on one's goals and protect one's sense of basic worth (Oyserman and Markus, 1998). Franken (1994) states that "there is a great deal of research which shows that the self-concept is, perhaps, the basis for all motivated behavior. It is the self-concept that gives rise to possible selves and it is possible selves that create the motivation for behavior."

Real and ideal self

According to humanist psychologists, such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, humans have an inherent drive to know and express the self, resulting in the development of a self-concept (an idea of who they are) and an ideal self (an idea of who they want to be). Self concept is our idea or picture of ourselves often in relation to others. This is because how we act and communicate with others is closely related to this. If you have a high level of self-concept, you will need to have a positive view of yourself and vice versa. A negative self view will lower your self esteem because you will focus on your failings and insecurities, leading to a low level of self confidence. Body image and self image are closely related to the

concept of self. Our concept is the idea you have of yourself. It is the way you see yourself, which may be completely different to how others see you. Our ideal self is the personality we would like to be. It is our goals and ambitions and is dynamic in nature. Our ideal self will be forever changing. For example, the ideal self we imagine in childhood will not be the same in our late teens or adulthood. Humanistic psychotherapy can help many people uncover their ideal self, and so become more psychologically healthy. The term self-concept is a general term used to refer to how someone thinks about or perceives themselves. The self concept is how we think about and evaluate ourselves. To be aware of oneself is to have a concept of oneself. Baumeister (1999) provides the following self concept definition: "the individual's belief about himself or herself, including the person's attributes and who and what the self is".

Development of Self-Concept

Students frequently display a decline in self-concept during elementary school and the transition to middle level. This decrease represents an adaptive reaction to the overly positive self-perceptions that are characteristic of childhood. Young children tend to overestimate their competence because they lack the cognitive maturity to critically evaluate their abilities and to integrate information from multiple sources. As students develop, they better understand how others view their skills and better distinguish between their efforts and abilities. As a result, their self-perceptions become increasingly accurate (Harter, 1999). As students transition from middle level to high school, their self-concept gradually grows. Increasing freedom allows adolescents greater opportunities to participate in activities in which they are competent, and increased perspective-taking abilities enable them to garner more support from others by behaving in more socially acceptable ways (Harter, 1999).

Need and Importance of Self – Concept

During the recent years a great deal of emphasis has been placed on importance of self-concept. Promoting high self-concept is essential because it is related to academic and social life. Psychological health is not possible unless the essential core of the person is fundamentally accepted, loved and respected by others and by his or her self. High self-concept allows people to face life with more confidence, benevolence and optimism, and thus easily reach their goals and self-actualization. It allows a person to be more ambitious, but not with respect to possessions or success, but with respect to what they can experience emotionally, creatively and spiritually. To develop high self-concept is to increase the capacity to be happy. Self concept may make people convinced that they deserve happiness. Understanding this is fundamental and universally beneficial, since the development of positive self-concept increases the capacity to treat other people with respect, benevolence and goodwill, thus favoring rich interpersonal relationships and avoiding destructive ones. Leonard *et al.* (1997) introduced the self concept as a source of motivated behavior. Our work and organizational experience constitutes an important domain of our lives. It partially answers the question of "who we are" and thus constitutes an indispensable part of our overall self-concept, depending on the meaning of work to our whole "self". We define this sub-domain self-concept developed around people's work and organizational experiences as workplace self-concept (Leonard, *et al.*, 1997). Since self-concept has profound effect on the over-all behavior of students whether rural or urban. Self concept of a student is the reflection of his/her inner and outer characteristics. Self-concept is a great source of prediction for social and vocational success of an individual. Since higher secondary stage is crucial stage in the social and vocational development of a student. So to study self-concept of rural and urban higher secondary school students is of paramount importance.

Statement of the Problem

The problem selected for the present study reads as under:

"Self-concept of Rural and Urban Higher Secondary School Students of Kashmir Division"

Objectives of the Study

Following objectives have been formulated for the present study:

- To study the self-concept of rural and urban higher secondary school students of Kashmir division.
- To compare rural and urban higher secondary school students of Kashmir division with reference to dimension real self of self-concept.
- To compare rural and urban higher secondary school students of Kashmir division with reference to dimension ideal self of self-concept.

Hypotheses

Keeping in view the above mentioned objectives following null hypotheses have been framed for the present study:

- Rural and urban higher secondary school students of Kashmir division do not differ significantly on overall self-concept.
- Rural and urban higher secondary school students of Kashmir division do not differ significantly on dimension real-self of self concept.
- Rural and urban higher secondary school students of Kashmir division do not differ significantly on dimension ideal-self of self-concept.

Design of the Study

Sample

The sample for the proposed study was randomly drawn from different higher secondary schools of district Budgam (Rural) and district Srinagar (Urban). The sample consisted of 100 students, 50 from district Budgam and 50 from district Srinagar.

Tool

The data was collected with the help of Sagar and Sharma "Self – Concept Inventory". The inventory has two dimensions. These dimensions are "I am" (Real Self) and "I would be" (Ideal Self).

Procedure

The sample was collected on the basis of random sampling technique. Sagar and Sharma Self-concept Inventory was administered to collect the data from rural and urban higher secondary school students of district Budgam (Rural) and district Srinagar (Urban).

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data was analyzed by applying Mean, S.D and t-test, in order to find the significance of differences in the mean scores of rural and urban higher secondary school students on the dimensions of self-concept.

Analyses and Interpretation of Data

The data collected through the administration of Sagar and Sharma Self-concept Inventory was statistically analyzed by applying t-test. The analyses and interpretation of data was arranged in a tabular form in the following manner:

Table 1. Mean comparison of rural and urban higher secondary schools students on overall self-concept: (N = 50 in each group).

Group	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of Significance
Rural Higher Secondary School Students	446.3	62.14	2.45	Sig. at 0.05 Level
Urban Higher Secondary School Students	476.2	59.36		

The pursual of the above table shows the mean comparison of rural and urban higher secondary school students on over all self concept. It is evident from the above Table that the two groups differ significantly at 0.05 level. The calculated t-value (2.45) exceeds the table value 1.98, which clearly reveals that the urban higher secondary students have higher overall self-concept than the rural higher secondary school students.

Table 2. Mean comparison of rural and urban higher secondary schools students on dimension real-self of self concept: (N = 50 in each group).

Group	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of Significance
Rural Higher Secondary School Students	226.3	37.23	1.10	Not significant.
Urban Higher Secondary School Students	233.7	32.31		

The pursual of the above Table shows the mean comparison of rural and urban higher secondary school students on the dimension real self of self-concept. It is evident from the above table that the two groups do not differ significantly which means that both the groups of students have similar concept of real self.

Table 3. Mean comparison of rural and urban higher secondary schools students on dimension ideal-self of self concept: (N = 50 in each group).

Group	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of Significance
Rural Higher Secondary School Students	220.3	21.84	4.50	Sig. at 0.01 Level
Urban Higher Secondary School Students	242.5	27.22		

The pursual of the above Table shows the mean comparison of rural and urban higher secondary school students on dimension ideal self of self-concept. It is evident from the above table that the two groups differ significantly at 0.01 level. The calculated t-value (4.50) exceeds the Table value 2.68, which clearly reveals that the urban higher secondary students have higher ideal-self than the rural higher secondary school students.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from the study:

- Urban higher secondary students have high overall self-concept than rural higher secondary school students.
- Urban and rural higher secondary school students have similar concept of real-self.
- Urban higher secondary school students have high concept of ideal-self than rural higher secondary school students.

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