



Differences in Self Concept of Adolescents from Urban and Rural Haryana

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Abstract

In simplest words, self- concept is a person's idea of himself, how he sees himself. Self-concept is related to many different aspects of life as it is determined by many factors and in turn determines many factors. The present experiment was conducted in Haryana state to study the differences between self-concept of rural and urban adolescents. A total number of 100 adolescents, 50 from urban and 50 from rural areas, were assessed for their self-concept using Children's Self Concept Scale devised by S.P. Ahluwalia (1980). Results showed that thirty two percent of total respondents were first born. More than half of the respondents came from medium sized, nuclear families. Majority (72%) of rural adolescents were having good self-concept as compared to 56% of their urban counterparts. There were no significant differences in self-concept of rural and urban adolescents except for Intellectual and School Status aspect where the mean scores were 11.6 ± 2.14 and 10.3 ± 2.33 respectively for rural and urban adolescents and the calculated 't' value was 2.788*. It can be concluded that rural adolescents have a better self-concept than their urban counterparts.

Keywords: Rural, Urban, Adolescents, Self -Concept

Introduction

Self concept is what one thinks of oneself, the image of self in one's own eyes.

Baumeister (1999) defined self concept as, "The individual's belief about himself or herself, including the person's attributes and who and what the self is."

Self-concept is generally thought of as our individual perceptions of our behavior, abilities, and unique characteristics—a mental picture of who you are as a person. (Bailey, 2003) For example, beliefs such as "I am a good friend" or "I am a kind person" are part of an overall self-concept.

According to Hurlock self-concept is the composition of the picture of self-perception, that perception it is belief, feelings, and attitudes about the values that are recognized by the individual as his traits. Hurlock explained that the composition of self-concept is formed from a variety of experiences in stages, the meaning that the composition is formed from experience since the children as a basic element.

There are many theories about what exactly self-concept is and how it develops. Generally, theorists agree on the following points:

- On the broadest level, self-concept is the overall idea we have about who we are and includes cognitive and affective judgments about ourselves.



- Self-concept is multi-dimensional, incorporating our views of ourselves in terms of several different aspects e.g. social, religious, spiritual, physical, emotional
- It is learned, not inherent.
- It is influenced by biological and environmental factors, but social interaction plays a big role as well.
- Self-concept develops through childhood and early adulthood when it is more easily changed or updated.
- It can be changed in later years, but it is more of an uphill battle since people have established ideas about who they are.

Domains and dimensions of self-concept

Psychologist Dr. Bruce A. Bracken (1992) suggested that there are six specific domains related to self-concept:

- Social: the ability to interact with others
- Competence: the ability to meet basic needs
- Affect: the awareness of emotional states
- Physical: feelings about looks, health, physical condition, and overall appearance
- Academic: success or failure in school
- Family: how well one functions within the family unit

There are some overarching dimensions that researchers understand with the self-concept puzzle. These dimensions include:

- Self-esteem
- Self-worth
- Self-image
- Ideal self
- Identities or roles
- Personal traits and qualities (Elliot, 1984; Gecas, 1982)

Factors influencing self-concept

As self-concept is not inherent and is shaped by the environment, a number of factors like culture, gender, economic status, home environment etc. may be responsible for its formation.

An individual's self-concept undergoes notable changes during development, evolving from a structure in which diverse dominions of experience are distinguished to another stage in which the fundamental aspects are integration and high-level abstractions.

While examining self-concept during adolescence, Clark (1994) provided some support for the argument that the combination of hierarchical statuses, school grouping patterns and tracking may have adverse effects on the development of adolescent students' self-concepts.

Majority of research on cultural differences in self-concept is focused on the comparison between Asian and Western culture. The former, collectivistic and vertical societies (high power distance), report higher belief in cognitive-behavioral consistency, share more belief related to dependent affiliation, but also agree more with belief related to achievement, self-direction and distinctiveness motivation (Smith and Bond, 1998).



By contrast, subjects from Western culture, vertical individualistic societies, report higher agreement with need for uniqueness and higher level of behavioral flexibility. Some authors state that such characteristics of individuals from Western culture are due to a higher importance of positive self-representation (Worchel et al, 1998)

While one study (Cathcart & Gumpert, 1986) argues that mass media has the greatest effect on self-concept, another (Rill, Baiocchi, Hopper, Denker, & Olson, 2009) suggests that peer interaction is the most significant contributing factor to affecting self-concept, while another (Lanza-Kaduce & Webb, 1992) claims that the messages received from the family have the greatest bearing on self-concept

In summary, the development of the self-concept during the life span of an individual is subjected to multiple factors of influence.

Materials and Methods

Sample

The study was carried out on hundred adolescents in the age range of 15-19 years in Haryana state. Fifty of them were from rural area studying in GGSSS Sindhvi Khera, Jind and rest fifty were from urban area studying in Government Senior Secondary School, Model Town, Hisar.

Variables

Self-concept of the adolescent was the dependent variable while place of residence was the independent variable.

Tools

A self-structured questionnaire was used to gather information regarding socio-personal variables while to assess the self- concept of the adolescents' Children's Self Concept Scale devised by S.P. Ahluwalia (1980) was used. The scale consists of six sub scales viz. Behaviour, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity and Happiness and Satisfaction. The scale items are scored in a positive or negative direction to reflect the evaluation dimension. A high score on the scale is presumed to indicate a favourable self-concept. The maximum score for the total self-concept scale can be 78 whereas minimum score can be zero.

Method

Adolescent students were approached at their respective schools. After explaining the purpose of the study to them in a group, they were asked to fill two questionnaires. First one was the self-structured questionnaire for gathering their background information and the second one (Children's Self Concept Scale) was for assessing their self-concept. Both questionnaires were in Hindi language as these children were from rural background and were studying in Hindi medium.

Results and Discussion

Socio-personal profile of adolescents

Table 1 elucidates the socio -personal profile of respondents and results depict that majority of the respondents were in the age range of 15-16 years irrespective of area. The sample consisted of both boys (44%) and girls (56%). Thirty two percent of total respondents were first born. More than half of the respondents came from medium sized, nuclear families. Monthly family income of 68% respondents was up to Rs 10000 /. Half of the fathers were in labourer while one fourth were in service. Majority of the mothers were home-makers. Half of fathers were educated only up to matric. One third of mothers (36%) were illiterate while an equal number were educated only up to matric.



Table 1: Socio-personal profile of respondents

Variable	Rural (n=50)		Urban (n=50)		Total (N=100)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Age						
15-16 yrs.	31	62.0	35	70.0	66	66.0
17-19 yrs.	19	38.0	15	30.0	34	34.0
Gender						
Male	19	38.0	25	50.0	44	44.0
Female	31	62.0	25	50.0	56	56.0
Ordinal Position						
1	22	44.0	10	20.0	32	32.0
2	10	20.0	18	36.0	28	28.0
3	11	22.0	10	20.0	21	21.0
4	7	14.0	11	22.0	18	18.0
5	0	0.0	1	2.0	1	1.0
No. of Siblings						
1	0	0.0	1	2.0	1	1.0
2	10	20.0	11	22.0	21	21.0
3	18	36.0	15	30.0	33	33.0
4	22	44.0	22	44.0	44	44.0
5	0	0.0	1	2.0	1	1.0
Family Size						
Small (1-4 members)	12	24.0	14	28.0	26	26.0
Medium (5-7 members)	31	62.0	27	54.0	58	58.0
Large (8 or more members)	7	14.0	9	18.0	16	16.0
Family Type						
Nuclear	36	72.0	26	52.0	62	62.0
Joint	14	28.0	24	48.0	38	38.0
Monthly Family Income (in Rs.)						
Up to 10000	37	74.0	31	62.0	68	68.0
10001-20000	10	20.0	13	26.0	23	23.0
20001-30000	2	4.0	5	10.0	7	7.0
Above 30000	1	2.0	1	2.0	2	2.0
Father's Occupation						
Service	6	12.0	19	38.0	25	25.0
Self Employed	6	12.0	8	16.0	14	14.0
Farmer	10	20.0	0	0.0	10	10.0
Labourer	28	56.0	23	46.0	51	51.0
Mother's Occupation						
Service	1	2.0	12	24.0	13	13.0
Homemaker	49	98.0	38	76.0	87	87.0



Father's Education						
Illiterate	6	12.0	9	18.0	15	15.0
Up to Primary	7	14.0	9	18.0	16	16.0
Up to Matric	30	60.0	25	50.0	55	55.0
Senior Secondary	6	12.0	6	12.0	12	12.0
Graduate	0	0.0	1	2.0	1	1.0
Post Graduate	1	2.0	0	0.0	1	1.0
Mother's education						
Illiterate	17	34.0	19	38.0	36	36.0
Up to Primary	13	26.0	9	18.0	22	22.0
Up to Matric	16	32.0	20	40.0	36	36.0
Senior Secondary	3	6.0	2	4.0	5	5.0
Post Graduate	1	2.0	0	0.0	1	1.0

Self-concept of rural and urban adolescents

Table 2 shows that none of the respondent had a poor self-concept. Approximately two third adolescents had good self-concept while the rest one third had average self-concept. Majority (72%) of rural adolescents were having good self-concept as compared to 56% of their urban counterparts. It is clear that rural adolescents were doing better than their urban counterparts which may be due to less complex life in rural areas. It could also be so because those who reach the higher classes in school in rural areas are supposedly doing well than their rural peers who have dropped out of school due to academic failures, poverty or some other such reasons which is very common.

Table 2: Self Concept of Rural and Urban Adolescents

Self-Concept	Rural (n=50)		Urban (n=50)		Total (N=100)	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Poor (0-26)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average (27-52)	14	28.0	22	44.0	36	36.0
Good (53-78)	36	72.0	28	56.0	64	64.0

Table 3 reveals that there were no significant differences in self-concept of rural and urban adolescents except for Intellectual and School Status aspect where the mean scores were 11.6 ± 2.14 and 10.3 ± 2.33 respectively for rural and urban adolescents. The calculated 't' value was 2.788 which portrays the significant differences in mean scores of urban and rural respondents. It means rural adolescents were having significantly higher self concept on Intellectual and School Status than their urban counterparts. This can be attributed to the relatively less academic pressures at school for rural adolescents as these pressures are much higher in urban areas especially for the adolescent years of life as these coincide with the years of board exams, coaching classes and entrance tests.



Table 3: Mean Differences in Self Concept of Rural and Urban Adolescents

Aspects of Self Concept	Rural (n=50)		Urban (n=50)		t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Behaviour	11.74	1.73	11.54	2.06	.525
Intellectual and School Status	11.6	2.32	10.3	2.33	2.788*
Physical Appearance and Attributes	9.54	2.14	9.06	2.03	1.147
Anxiety	9.34	2.24	8.76	2.47	1.226
Popularity	9.08	2.08	8.38	1.83	1.779
Happiness and Satisfaction	5.22	1.26	5.46	0.90	1.089

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Relationship of personal variables with self-concept

As it can be seen from table 4, self-concept was positively and insignificantly correlated with ordinal position, number of siblings and father's education. There was no significant relationship of self-concept with any of the personal variable of rural as well as urban adolescents.

Table 4: Correlation between Personal Variables and Self Concept

Personal Variables	Self Concept		
	Rural (n=50)	Urban (n=50)	Total (N=100)
	r	r	r
Ordinal Position	.091	.062	.041
No. of Siblings	.020	.010	.016
Family Size	-.027	-.176	-.100
Family Income	-.089	-.010	-.075
Father's Education	.019	.021	.026
Mother's Education	-.144	-.050	-.106



Conclusion

Self-concept is of great importance as it can change the way one thinks, act, behave and achieve. In other words, it can shape one's life. Adolescents living in rural areas are at an advantage when it comes to self-concept. They lead a simple life which becomes a blessing in disguise as they are away from severe pressures of school and society and enjoy a better concept of self.

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