

# Self-concept of Elementary School Students in Relation to their Social Competence

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## ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at exploring the relationship between self-concept and social competence of elementary school students. The research population was male and female elementary students of Panipat city. The subjects selected through random sampling method including 120 students (60 male and 60 female students). Data was collected by using standardized tools i.e. Social Competence Scale by Shukla & Shukla (1992) and Self-concept Rating Scale by Deo (1998). The results of the study are; most of the students are having below average level of self-concept, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of self-concept of girls and boys, most of the boys are having average level of social competence but most of the girls are having below average level of social competence. To study the relationship between self-concept and social competence of elementary school students, product moment correlation was calculated. The result indicates that there is no significant relationship between self-concept and social competence.

**Keywords:** Self-concept, social competence, elementary school students

Elementary education is the fundamental right of all people, irrespective of their gender, sect, religion or any other denomination (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). One of the major goals of education is to develop social skills among students. Social skills are most often thought of as a set of skills that allow us to communicate, relate and socialize with others. Self-concept and Social Competence are related concepts, they differ in some aspects. Social competence represents the ability to deal successfully with different social demands, to react appropriately, and to integrate social skills in different social situations and contexts (Spence, 2003).

According to Cook *et al.* (2008), person's social competence is derived from judgments of others. They judge whether a person has performed a social task competently or not. Children who have low social competence may experience some difficulties in everyday life such as rejection by peers, academic

failure, loneliness, social dissatisfaction etc. (Parker, Asher & Maag, 2005).

Self-concept plays a main role in social relationship, peer relationship and compatibility with the life events and behavior problems (Ybrandt 2008). The students who possess positive self-concept have a higher social and emotional compatibility (Nasir & Lin, 2012). Children with increased self-concept may not experience the incidents of bullying behaviour of their peer groups, since these children are able to effectively generate correct assessments of self, using internal knowledge rather than allowing themselves to become diminished by other's negative assessments (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001). Therefore, the major elements that provide a base for learning and adjust in difficult situations are positive self-esteem and self-concept (Roberts, 2002). Houck (1999) examined the relationship between social competence and self-concept, evaluating the ability of social competence

to predict subsequent self-concept and the ability of self-concept to predict later social competence. Results of the study showed that there is a temporal relationship between early social competence and later self-concept. The present study was aimed at providing a greater understanding of relationship between social competence and self-concept of elementary school students and serving as a preliminary step towards their positive social growth and overall academic success.

### Objectives of the Study

The study was carried out with the following objectives:

1. To study the self-concept of elementary school students of Panipat district.
2. To compare the self-concept of boys and girls of elementary schools of Panipat district.
3. To study the social competence of elementary school students of Panipat district.
4. To compare the social competence of boys and girls of elementary schools of Panipat district.
5. To study the relationship between self-concept and social competence of elementary school students of Panipat district.

### Hypotheses of the Study

To achieve the objectives of the study, following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There exists a significant difference between the mean scores of self-concept of boys and girls of elementary schools of Panipat district.
2. There exists a significant difference between the mean scores of social competence of boys and girls of elementary schools of Panipat district.
3. There exists a significant relationship between self-concept and social competence of elementary school students of Panipat district.

### Population and Sample

The population of the present study consisted of the students studying in Class VII in Government and Private schools of Panipat district. At the first stage of sampling, two government schools and two

private schools were selected randomly. A sample of 120 students (60 boys & 60 girls) was chosen from four schools by using random technique of sampling at the second stage.

### Tool Used

The investigator used Self-Concept Rating Scale by Deo (1998) to measure the self-concept of the students. Social Competence Scale (SCS) by Shukla and Shukla (1992) was used to measure the pro-social attitude, social competition, social leadership, social tolerance and social maturity of the children.

### Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The results of the present study are analyzed in the following three sections:

- ◆ Section I: Self-Concept of Elementary School Students
- ◆ Section II: Social Competence of Elementary School Students
- ◆ Section III: Relationship between Self-Concept and Social Competence of Elementary School Students

#### Section I: Self-Concept of Elementary School Students

The self-concept of the elementary school students was assessed on the basis of three dimensions: level of perceived self-concept, level of ideal self-concept and level of social self-concept. The findings of this section are tabulated to show the percentage of frequency.

Table 1 shows the levels of self-concept of elementary school students on three dimensions: perceived, ideal and social. None of the students possess above average, high and very high level of self-concept. Most of the students are having below average level of self-concept.

Only 25.83% students are possessing average level of perceived self-concept, 20% and 3.33% students possess low level and very low level respectively on this dimension of self-concept. Very few elementary school students (5.84%) are having average level, 37.5% students possess low level and 8.33% have very low level of ideal self-concept. On social dimension 39.17% students are having average level, 13.33% students possess low level and 1.67% students have very low level of self-concept.

**Table 1:** Level of Self-concept of Elementary School Students

Dimension of Self-Concept	N	Very High	High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Low	Very Low
Perceived	120	—	—	—	25.83%	50.84%	20%	3.33%
Ideal	120	—	—	—	5.84%	48.33%	37.5%	8.33%
Social	120	—	—	—	39.17%	45.83%	13.33%	1.67%

**Table 2:** Significant Difference between the Mean Scores of Self-Concept of Boys and Girls of Elementary Schools

Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Boys	60	97.64	20.66	0.242	Not significant
Girls	60	98.96	22.59		

Table 2 shows that though the mean scores of self-concept of girls (M = 98.96) seem to be higher than the mean scores of boys (M = 97.64) but the t-value i.e. 0.242 indicates the difference between the mean scores of self-concept of boys and girls is not statistically significant at any level of significance. Therefore, the formulated hypothesis no. 1 that there exists a significant difference in the self-concept of boys and girls is rejected.

### Section II: Social Competence of Elementary School Students

Social competence of elementary school students was assessed on the following dimensions of social competence scale: pro-social attitude, social competition, social leadership, social tolerance and social maturity of the children.

**Table 3:** Level of Social Competence of Elementary Students

Group	No. of Students	Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low
Boys	60	Nil	25%	36.67%	28.33%	10%
Girls	60	3.33%	18.33%	26.67%	41.67%	10%

Table 3 estimates the percentage of children (boys & girls) who exhibited the levels of social competence-very high, high, average, low and very low at the elementary stage. The data indicate that many boys i.e. 36.67% have average level of social competence on while a much smaller number of them i.e. 10%

have very low level. None of them exhibit very high level of social competence. On the other hand, most of the girls (41.67%) have low level of social competence and only 3.3% of girls exhibit very high level of social competence.

**Table 4:** Significant Difference between the Mean Scores of Social Competence of Boys and Girls of Elementary Schools

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of significance
Boys	60	171.46	12.22	0.166	Not significant
Girls	60	170.38	12.13		

Table 4 shows that the mean score of social competence of boys (M = 171.46) is higher than the mean score of girls (M = 170.38) but the t-value i.e. 0.166 indicates that the difference between the mean scores of social competence of boys and girls is not statistically significant at any level of significance. Therefore, the formulated hypothesis no. 2 that there exists a significant difference in the social competence of boys and girls is rejected.

### Section III: Relationship between Self-Concept and Social Competence of Elementary School Students

**Table 5:** Correlation between Self-Concept and Social Competence of Elementary School Students

Variable	No. of students	Correlation	Level of significance
Social competence	120	0.021	Not significant
Self-concept	120		

The results from the table no. 5 shows that there is a weak, positive and insignificant relationship between the self-concept and social competence of

elementary school students that is  $r = 0.021$ . Hence, the formulated hypothesis no. 3 that there exists a significant relationship between social competence and self-concept of elementary school students is rejected.

## DISCUSSION

Development of self-concept and social competence at elementary stage is important because of its constructive role in shaping adjustment abilities in later stages of life (Mason, 2009). The present research shows that the difference between the boys' and girls' self-concept is not significant. This result is not in congruence with the findings of the studies conducted by (Maddux & Brewer, 2005; Marcic & Kobal, 2011). Several studies attribute the gender differences and self-concept to the gender stereotypes (Fox, 2000); (Crocker, Eklund, & Kowalski, 2000). In the current study, gender differences are not found to be statistically significant on social competence. The result is not consistent with the results of some previous studies where girls are, on average, known to be more socially competent than boys (Vahedi, *et al.*, 2012; Qin & Yong, 2002; Denham *et al.*, 2003). Correlational analysis of the data in the present study indicates that there is no significant relationship between children's self-concept and social competence. However the results of this section of the study are also not in congruence with the results of the various studies done with this objective in mind (Lisboa & Leiria, 2013; Houck, 1999).

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