

DIFERENCIAS EN EL AUTOCONCEPTO POR SEXO EN LA ADOLESCENCIA: CONSTRUCCIÓN Y VALIDACIÓN DE UN INSTRUMENTO

DIFFERENCES BY GENDER ON SELF-CONCEPT IN ADOLESCENCE: CONSTRUCTION AND VALIDATION OF AN INSTRUMENT

Priscila Guido García*, Alejandro Mújica Sarmiento** y Rodolfo Gutiérrez Martínez***
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México.

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RESUMEN

La presente investigación tuvo como objetivos construir una escala para medir y evaluar el autoconcepto de los(as) adolescentes, así como determinar diferencias en la estructura de este constructo en relación al sexo de los(as) participantes. La muestra estuvo conformada por 450 estudiantes de tres escuelas de nivel medio superior de la Ciudad de México ($M_{EDAD} = 16.65$ años). Se elaboraron reactivos tipo Likert para cuatro dimensiones del autoconcepto (social, físico, deportivo y académico). Los resultados evidenciaron que la Escala Tetradimensional de Autoconcepto para Adolescentes (ETAA) es un instrumento de medición con propiedades psicométricas aceptables. Se presentaron diferencias respecto al sexo de los(as) participantes únicamente en la dimensión deportiva, así como en la ponderación de los factores en la estructura del autoconcepto. Derivado de los resultados, se propone el diseño de programas de intervención creados para la mejora y reforzamiento del autoconcepto, atendiendo las necesidades particulares de los(as) adolescentes.

Palabras clave: Adolescentes, autoconcepto, confiabilidad, medición, validez.

ABSTRACT

This study aims was to construct a scale to measure and evaluate the self-concept of adolescents and to determine differences in the structure of this construct in relation to sex of participants. The sample consisted of 450 students from three high schools in Mexico City (Mean= 16.65 years). Likert items were developed for four dimensions of self-concept (social, physical, athletic and academic). The results showed that four-dimensional Self-concept Scale for Adolescents (ETAA, by its Spanish acronym) is a measuring instrument with acceptable psychometric properties. There were differences regarding gender the participants only in sports dimension and the weighting of the factors in the structure of the self-concept. Derived from the results we propose the design of intervention programs created for the improvement and strengthening of self-concept, addressing the special needs of adolescents.

Key words: Adolescents, Measurement, Reliability, Self-concept, Validity

Introduction

If we think about how we see ourselves and how others see us, we would understand that often these images reflect the activities we do every day. It is common to find situations where a person is perceived as capable, intelligent, persistent, autonomous, independent, etc., usually reaches its goals successfully. By contrast, when an individual is assumed

insecure, incompetent, dependent, etc., probably does not have the security and confidence to achieve its goals successfully.

Under this idea, people guide or regulate their behavior, among other things, the perception of themselves that have formed throughout their life. This notion is reflected mainly in the psychosocial variable called self - concept. It is in

* guidopris@hotmail.com

** mujicabat@yahoo.com.mx

*** rodolfo@unam.mx.

1909 with William James, considered a pioneer in the study of this topic, when estimated as a central psychological construct that would provide the basis for the sense of personal identity. For this author, the self-concept is the sum of everything that an individual can call itself; and included as part of the construct and without distinction, body appearance, the immediate family, the house and, in varying degrees of importance, objects and properties that an individual has accumulated throughout his life. In short, it focused on the addition of elements estimated as itself, without considering social issues.

It was in the definition proposed by Purkey (1970) which showed the first conceptualizations of the construct considering the social environment. In this sense, Lewin (1948) and Sheriff and Sheriff (1969) emphasize the role of social context, particularly the reference group on self-concept.

For Purkey (1970), self-concept is a complex and dynamic system of beliefs, each one with its own value, which an individual maintains about himself on his environment. Sets various properties that characterize this psychosocial variable: a) it is formed from many beliefs about himself, b) every belief system has its own positive or negative value, c) the success or failure is widespread, so that failure in an important skill, reduce the consideration of other seemingly unrelated skills, and conversely, success in an important area enhances the value of other personal characteristics, d) it is distinguished by the order and harmony between the elements which constitute it e) is a single reality, there are not two people who hold the same set of beliefs f) it is a dynamic reality, while save some stability over time, it is in constant changes caused by the transition from the context social framework. Consequently, it is considered as malleable character.

For this author, when a new element of self-concept is presented as relevant and consistent with those in the system, it easily assimilated. If the concept is not relevant, it is ignored and; if it is inconsistent, it is rejected. The person with high self-concept in an important dimension of personality, he must suffer many experiences of failure to change that image.

The self-concept is a reality learned, is acquired and modified through social exchanges. It is organized through three levels: *I known* (what the individual perceives as himself), *the other I* (what others think of him) and *the ideal self* (what he/she would be). According to Markus and Wurf (1987), there must be harmony at least two of the three elements that constitute the self - concept, as if they were discrepant, could cause a state of cognitive disequilibrium. For example, Higgins, Klein and Straumen (1985) argue that the discrepancy between the I known (current) and the ideal is associated with depression, while a discrepancy between the I known and the Other I (what I should be or what others believe it should be) is related to anxiety. The harmony between the constituent elements of self-concept not only allows people to form an image of themselves, but fails to provide a sense of identity.

According to La Rosa and Diaz-Loving (1991), the conceptualization of the self is not only an explanatory role of psychological processes, but it is necessary for understanding the behavior.

Until before the early 1990s, research on self-concept showed a large number of inconsistencies that were attributed to the lack of conceptual clarification and methodological rigor (Balaguer & Pastor, 2001). Most of them came from one - dimensional models that prevented an accurate analysis. Therefore, it undertaken the implementation of studies under a multidimensional approach, which is based on the notion that self-concept should be measured and evaluated through several dimensions corresponding to the domains of social life.

Investigations have been conducted on self-concept, generally are classified into categories such as: a) education (Feinholz, 1994), b) performance and special educational needs (Garcia Gomez 1999), c) social integration, family and affective relationships (Valle, Gonzalez, Nuñez & Gonzalez - Pineda, 1998), d) and vocational school choice (Lucas & Carbonero, 1999), e) programs for the promotion of self-concept from the physical-sports area (Zulaika, 1999) f) construction of measuring instruments (Andrade Palos & Pick de Weiss, 1986).

* guidopr@hotmai.com

** mujicabat@yahoo.com.mx

*** rodolfo@unam.mx.

Although the self-concept is a psychosocial variable that has been explored in many investigations, prevail the need for their approach with different approaches, for example, in the construction, adaptation and validation of scales, designed expressly for use in Mexican population and in studies that present differences by sex, because, in research such as Andrade Palos and Pick de Weiss (1986), the results point to possible discrepancies in the composition and weighting of self-concept between men and women.

Thus, this research has the following objectives: 1) building a scale with acceptable psychometric properties to measure and evaluate the self-concept in adolescents of the sample and 2) determine whether there are differences in the structure of this construct considering the sex of participants.

Method

Type of study

Correlational.

Design

Non-experimental cross.

Participants

The nonrandom sample consisted of 450 students (238 men and 212 women) from three senior high schools in Mexico City, with an average age of 16.65 years and a standard deviation of 1.46. The choice of schools was determined by the disposal of these institutions to participate in the study.

Inclusion criteria

Students (women and men) between an age range from 15 to 17 years of senior high schools in Mexico City.

Operational definition of self - concept

Participants responses to the Tetra - dimensional Scale of Self-Concept for Adolescents (ETAA). The score of the four subscales (social, physical, athletic and academic) ranged from 5 to 20 points.

Instrument

The Tetra-dimensional Scale of Self-Concept for Adolescents (ETAA, Likert-type scale) consisted of 23 items produced by themselves classified into 4 sub-areas (social, physical, athletic and academic), based on the Self Description Questionnaire (Marsh, 1992, Self Description Questionnaire, SDQ II), with response options 4 (totally true) to 1 (completely false). Also included is a section of socio - demographic data (age, sex, hobbies, average family income, etc.).

Procedure

Likert-type items were developed for the four subscales of self - concept following the criteria suggested by DeVellis (1991), John and Benet - Martinez (2000) and Sloan (2006.). After a validation procedure inter-judge (researchers from School of Psychology, UNAM), reagents were selected for the final estimates of the scale, these were organized considering the feasibility of their order of appearance in the questionnaire and were refined details of presentation and format it. Was then piloted the questionnaire with 10 students from high school in eastern Mexico City.

With prior approval of institution's director, we applied the questionnaire in captive population within the premises of the institution. Group level was stressed anonymity and confidentiality of information obtained.

Analysis

We made a factorial analysis of principal components analysis and varimax rotation (orthogonal) to get evidence of validity of the scale. The reliability analysis was made using Cronbach's alpha to determine the rates of internal consistency. The Pearson correlation, in order to determine the relationships between the dimensions of self-concept. We conducted a Student t test to establish differences by sex.

Results

The psychometric process reagents and purification of factors was performed under the following criteria: a) item-total correlations $\geq .30$, b) factor loading $\geq .40$, c) eigen

* guidopris@hotmail.com

** mujicabat@yahoo.com.mx

*** rodolfo@unam.mx.

value (eigen value) ≥ 1 and d) alpha Cronbach's coefficient $\geq .65$.

The factor analysis showed 4 factors that converged in 6 iterations and accounted for 63.36% of the variance. The total self-concept scale (twenty reagents) had a consistency index of .91. The first factor known as physical self-concept (five items) showed an alpha Cronbach rate of .91 and an eigenvalue of 6.61, the second called sport self-concept (five items), presented an index of .89 and an eigenvalue of 2.26, the third called academic self-concept (six items), showed an index of .84 and an eigenvalue of 2.06, finally, the factor called social self-concept (four items) presented an index of internal consistency of .73 and an eigenvalue of 1.71. The factors were interpreted as follows Table 1.

Table 1

Interpretation of factors shown by factor analysis

Factor	Beliefs, ideas and images teenagers have about...
Physical	Their body, face and physical attractiveness in relation to the opposite sex
Sport	Their skills and abilities to perform physical exercises and sports activities.
Academic	sTheir capacities and intellectual skills in relation to school performance.
Social	lPerception their friends have about them.

Next, Table 2 presents descriptive statistics showing the dimensions of the scale and factorial structure.

Table 2

Factor Analysis of Self-Concept Scale for Adolescents dimensional (ETAA, n = 450)

Factor	Reactive	Factorial
PHYSICAL		
Alfa	0.91	Soy una persona atractiva 0.87
Auto value	6.61	Tengo un rostro atractivo 0.83
Variance	17.46	Soy atractivo(a) para las personas del sexo opuesto 0.82
Media	2.82	La mayoría de la gente cree que soy una persona atractiva 0.80
DE	0.62	Tengo un cuerpo agradable 0.72
SPORT		
Alfa	0.89	Soy hábil para hacer sentadillas, lagartijas, abdominales 0.84
Auto value	2.26	Soy malo(a) para la mayoría de las actividades deportivas 0.80
Variance	17.8	Resisto fácilmente hacer ejercicios intensos 0.79
Media	2.74	Tengo buena condición física 0.76
DE	0.7	Soy bueno(a) en los deportes porque mi cuerpo es fuerte 0.74
ACADEMIC		
Alfa	0.84	Aprendo fácilmente los temas de la mayoría de las materias 0.79
Auto value	2.06	Soy bueno(a) en la mayoría de las materias de la casa 0.77
Variance	16	Soy hábil para entender lo que explican los(as) maestros(as) 0.75
Media	2.99	Me considero un buen(a) estudiante 0.66
DE	0.47	Me considero una persona inteligente 0.64
		Soy bueno(a) para resolver problemas complicados 0.60
SOCIAL		
Alfa	0.73	Soy aceptado(a) entre mis compañeros(as) 0.81
Auto value	1.71	Mis compañeros me estiman por ser como soy 0.73
Variance	12.1	Le caigo bien a la mayoría de mis compañeros(as) 0.67
Media	3.2	Para mis amigos(as) soy simpático(a) 0.66
DE	0.44	

* guidopr@hotmai.com

** mujicabat@yahoo.com.mx

*** rodolfo@unam.mx.

Subsequently, we performed Pearson correlation analysis between the 4 factors to determine the relationship between them (see Table 3).

Table 3*Correlations between factor*

FACTOR	Physical	Academic	Sport	Social
Physical	1			
Academic	.41**	1		
Sport	.40**	.35**	1	
Social	.31**	.35**	.29**	1

** p < 0.01

As shown in the table above, there is a significant positive correlation between all the factors that make up the scale. It should be noted that correlations are highest between academic self-concept, physical and athletic.

In making the comparison between levels of self-concept factors and sex of the (as) participants, only

significant differences in size sport where men scored higher on this factor (M = 3.03) than women (M = 2.43) t (448) 9.63, p < .01 (see Table 4).

Table 4*Differences of self-concept related to sex of adolescents*

Factor	Sexo	N	Media	DE	t	gl	p
Physical	Male	238	2.79	0.61	-1.15	446	0.25
	Female	210	2.86	0.62			
Sport	Male	238	3.03	0.63	9.63	448	.00**
	Female	212	2.43	0.63			
Academic	Male	238	3.03	0.48	1.49	448	0.14
	Female	212	2.96	0.46			
Social	Male	238	3.22	0.42	0.48	448	0.64
	Female	212	3.20	0.44			

** p < .01

Finally, corroborating the existence of significant differences, there were two factor analyses of principal

Table 5*Factorial structure of ETAA- Women (n=212)*

Factor		Reactive	Factorial
PHYSICAL			
Alfa	0.91	Soy una persona atractiva	0.89
Auto value	5.99	Soy atractivo(a) para las personas del sexo opuesto	0.83
Variance	20.63	Tengo un rostro atractivo	0.82
Media	2.86	Tengo un cuerpo agradable	0.77
DE	0.62	La mayoría de la gente cree que soy una persona atractiva	0.76
SPORT			
Alfa	0.84	Soy hábil para hacer sentadillas, lagartijas, abdominales	0.81
Auto value	2.00	Soy malo(a) para la mayoría de las actividades deportivas	0.76
Variance	16.85	Resisto fácilmente hacer ejercicios intensos	0.72
Media	2.43	Tengo buena condición física	0.72
DE	0.63	Soy bueno(a) en los deportes porque mi cuerpo es fuerte	0.70
ACADEMIC			
Alfa	0.80	Soy bueno(a) en la mayoría de las materias de la escuela	0.76
Auto value	1.82	Me considero una persona inteligente	0.72
Variance	13.49	Me considero un buen(a) estudiante	0.71
Media	3.20	Soy bueno(a) para resolver problemas complicados	0.67
DE	0.44		
SOCIAL			
Alfa	0.77	Soy aceptado(a) entre mis compañeros(as)	0.80
Auto value	1.53	Mis compañeros me estiman por ser como soy	0.73
Variance	12.12	Le caigo bien a la mayoría de mis compañeros(as)	0.71
Media	2.96	Para mis amigos(as) soy simpático(a)	0.64
DE	0.46		

* guidopris@hotmail.com

** mujicabat@yahoo.com.mx

*** rodolfo@unam.mx.

components with varimax rotation (orthogonal) to know the structure and organization of self - concept, about sex of the participants. In the case of women, there were 4 factors (18 reagents) that accounted for 63.11% of the total variance and consistency index showed an alpha Cronbach of .89 (see Table 5).

The first factor (physical self, five items) showed a Cronbach alpha rate of .91 and an eigenvalue of 5.99, the second (self - concept sporty, five items), presented an index of .84 and an eigenvalue of 2.00, the third (academic self-concept, four items) presented an index of .80 and an eigenvalue of 1.82 and finally, the social self-concept factor (four items) presented an index of internal consistency of .77 and an eigenvalue of 1.53.

Now, for men there were 4 factors (20 reagents) that explained for 62.92% of the total variance and there presented an alpha of .91 (see Table 6).

The first factor (academic self-concept, six items) showed a Cronbach alpha rate of .83 and an eigenvalue of 7.03, the second (physical self, five items), presented an index of .91 and an eigenvalue of 2.37, the third (self - concept sporty five reagents) presented an index of .88 and an eigenvalue of 1.66 and finally the social self - concept factor (four items) presented an index of internal consistency of .73 and an eigenvalue of 1.51.

Table 6
Structure factor of ETAA - men (n=238)

Factor		Reactive	Factorial
ACADEMIC			
Alfa	0.83	Aprendo fácilmente los temas de la mayoría de las materias	0.79
Auto value	7.03	Soy bueno(a) en la mayoría de las materias de la casa	0.76
Variance	17.4	Soy hábil para entender lo que explican los(as) maestros(as)	0.76
Media	3.03	Me considero un buen(a) estudiante	0.71
DE	0.48	Me considero una persona inteligente	0.67
		Soy bueno(a) para resolver problemas complicados	0.60
PHYSICAL			
Alfa	0.91	Soy una persona atractiva	0.83
Auto value	2.37	Tengo un rostro atractivo	0.81
Variance	17.01	Soy atractivo(a) para las personas del sexo opuesto	0.78
Media	2.79	La mayoría de la gente cree que por una persona atractiva	0.78
DE	0.61	Tengo un cuerpo agradable	0.65
SPORT			
Alfa	0.88	Soy hábil para hacer sentadillas, lagartijas, abdominales	0.81
Auto value	1.66	Resisto fácilmente hacer ejercicios intensos	0.80
Variance	16.94	Tengo buena condición física	0.79
Media	3.03	Soy bueno(a) en los deportes porque mi cuerpo es fuerte	0.75
DE	0.63	Soy malo(a) para la mayoría de las actividades deportivas	0.66
SOCIAL			
Alfa	0.73	Soy aceptado(a) entre mis compañeros(as)	0.81
Auto value	1.51	Mis compañeros me estiman por ser como soy	0.69
Variance	11.56	Para mis amigos(as) soy simpático(a)	0.65
Media	3.22	Le caigo bien a la mayoría de mis compañeros(as)	0.63
DE	0.42		

* guidopris@hotmail.com

** mujicabat@yahoo.com.mx

*** rodolfo@unam.mx.

Discussion

Regarding the first objective, the construction and validation of four-dimensional Self-Concept Scale for Adolescents (ETAA, finally composed of 20 items), the results of analysis showed acceptable psychometric properties. The ETAA showed structural validity by analysis; it means, the grouping of most of the items was as expected theoretically. The four dimensions (physical, academic, athletic and social) had scores above the theoretical mean of 2.5 (minimum 1 - maximum 4) and low standard deviations (44-70). These data indicate that (as) adolescents in the sample had a self-concept in four significantly positive expressions. Particularly, the social dimension had the highest levels. Thus, the participants were considered socially adapted, recognized by their peers and were confident in their ability to relate to (as) others. With respect to reliability testing, the four factors showed acceptable levels of internal consistency (77-91). Comparing with results of previous studies (Guido & Contreras-Ibáñez, 2005; Mujica, Guido & Gloria, 2006) where the scale was applied to a sample of self - concept similar internal consistency levels were significantly increased in this study. The physical self subscale increased from .72 to .91, the academic self - concept subscale from .72 to .80, the sport self - concept subscale from .69 to .88, and finally, the social self - concept subscale to .66 77.

As we saw, the correlation between the four factors was positive and significant, then, as any of the subscale scores increases, the others follow the same trend and vice versa. It is noteworthy that the highest correlations were between sports dimensions, physical and academic. These results suggest that, in the cognitive structure of self - concept participants, there is a strong positive relationship between the mental representation of your body and the perception of their skills and school skills. In studies like that of Padilla, Garcia and Suarez (2010) found that the physical dimension showed the strongest relationship with the other. According

to the authors, this dimension plays a key role in building the self - image adolescents.

Regarding the second objective, in fact statistically significant differences were found only in the sport self-concept factor. As expected, men tend to taste better in this dimension, we assume best athletes, stronger, more athletic, more able to exercise and sports activities than women. In the same vein, Moreno and Cervello (2005) conducted a study whose aim was to determine the relationship of self - concept and implementation of exercise activities in adolescents. The results showed that those who engaged in regular physical activity, demonstrating a physical and athletic self - concept significantly more positive than those who did not. They also found that high self - concept who experienced in these areas, most often carried out such activities. It is therefore understandable that women in the sample tended to value their physical and sporting more negatively than men, less frequently when performing physical activities.

Regarding the factorial structure of the ETAA considering the sex of the participants, it was found for women that the first component was the physical, so, it was the main factor that explained their concept of themselves , followed by sports, academic and social. For men, the factor that explained the concept of themselves, was the academic, followed by physical, social and sports. Supporting these results, Garcia and Musitu (2001) suggest that the pattern of evolution of self-image is different in men and women, particularly in terms of physicality.

In conclusion, the process performed psychometric analysis yielded the ETAA a measuring instrument valid, reliable and responsive to the specific characteristics young as those in this study. In this way, you get a more accurate design and adapt to allow intervention programs created for the improvement and strengthening of self - concept, addressing the needs of this sector of the population.

* guidopris@hotmail.com

** mujicabat@yahoo.com.mx

*** rodolfo@unam.mx.

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* Doctorante de la Facultad de Psicología de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

** Doctorante de la Facultad de Psicología de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

*** Doctor en Psicología, Docente-Investigador de la Facultad de Psicología de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

* guidopris@hotmail.com

** mujicabat@yahoo.com.mx

*** rodolfo@unam.mx.

* guidopris@hotmail.com
** mujicabat@yahoo.com.mx
*** rodolfo@unam.mx

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