Self-Concept among Muslim Undergraduate Students towards Higher Education: A Study of Darbhanga, India

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Submission: December 20, 2016; Published: February 06, 2017

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Abstract

These days, changing environment especially social environment where each and every individual irrespective of sex, caste, creed and religion have come to know about the importance of education and its relevance to fight the evils of society. Therefore, the present study was aimed at studying the self-concept among Muslim undergraduate students towards higher education with special reference to Darbhanga, India. In this district near about 35% of populations belongs to Muslim minority, hence, for the present study, total sample consisted of two hundred undergraduates (N=200) comprising boys (n=100) and girls (n=100) which were randomly selected from different departments of Millat College. Darbhanga where more than three thousands Muslim minority students are engaged in learning processes. The information collected through interview method using self-concept inventory. The data were tabulated and analyzed according to procedures of the inventory. Obtained results revealed the fact that Muslim girls have their higher degree of self-concept towards higher education in comparison to Muslim boy students, although, both the group has shown positive inclination towards higher education. Finally results have been discussed in detail by giving probable reasons in the light of exigency of situations prevailing in India so far as quality of education is concerned.

Keywords: Self-Concept; Muslim; Undergraduate; Students; Higher Education

Introduction

India is undergoing the rapid changing environment especially social environment where each and every individual irrespective of sex, caste, creed and religion have come to know about the importance of education and its relevance to fight the evils of society. Indian youth’s especially undergraduate student is faced with the challenge of choosing careers more wisely, particularly because decisions involve early planning for specialization and training. Undergraduate students particularly Muslim students are plagued by the process of career exploration, lack of confidence uncertainty about an occupation, self-assessment and lack of knowledge of work. In India, these days, the ratio of Muslim girls and boys in different schools, colleges and universities (private and government) are being observed near about 15% of the total populations of Muslims youngsters. The observed data shows that still Muslim world are not in the position to compete in the world of work yet. Sachar committee of India reported in 2006 that the condition of Muslims in India is very poor even in comparison to SC/ST. We can understand the positions of Muslim students in India so, Muslim social scientists and other social reformers are duty bound to look in to the matter concerned. Thus, the present study was aimed at studying the self-concept among undergraduate students towards higher education of Darbhanga district of India.

Self-concept is one of the important dimensions of personality which gives direction to one’s whole life. Self-concept refers to the experience of one’s own being. It includes what people come to know about themselves through experience, reflection, and feedback from others. Basically, self-concept is an organized cognitive structure comprising a set of attitudes and beliefs that cut across all facets of experience and action, organizing and tying together the variety of specific habits, abilities, outlooks, ideas, and feelings that a person displays. In our opinion self-concept is a central theme around which a large number of the major aspects of personality are organized. On
It is important to mention here that, one’s self-concept plays very well and college to turn out excellent talents and better performances. Providing a new educational form and approach for the schools and intellectual potentials as well as affective performance. They can maximize outcomes because they know what they can and cannot do”. Krol et al. [2] conceded that, as an element of the self-concept, self-esteem - usually described as self-acceptance or overall affective evaluation of one’s worth - has been found to be associated with both physical and psychological health.

Brigham [3] found and showed in his study that academic self-concept was more effective than was academic achievement in differentiating between low-track and high-track students, whereas Hamachek [4] also asserted that self-concept and school achievement are related. Similarly, various researches have been carried out but none is available on the problem as formulated i.e. the self-concept among Muslim undergraduate students towards higher education with particular reference Darbhanga district, India. Hence we can say that the present study on the phenomenon in relation to higher education is of utmost value and it will fill the void of knowledge in the area concerned.

Additionally, it is to point out here that in the growth of human being, the phase of ‘adolescence’ is a very critical and important. Most of the physiological, psychological, and social changes occur during this period of life. The period can be seen as the time of struggle to find some identity and meaning in lives. More pressure at this stage leads to poor well-being among adolescents in general and students in particular. In this fast hi-tech scenario, there is need to enhance the level of comfort, happiness and well-being among by the means of education especially higher education. There is a long history of interest in how different psychological, physical and social factors affect psychological well-being [5-9]. In recent years, psychological researchers have shown increasing interests in the psychological well-being of school students and have carried out many valuable discussions on this issue. The significance of such researches lies in that they are conducive to acquiring a thorough knowledge of school and college going students’ psychological feature, which in turn helps to educate them according to their talents, to prevent them from unhealthy behaviors, and to bring out their physical and intellectual potentials as well as affective performance.

It is not only beneficial to students’ development, but also provides a new educational form and approach for the schools and college to turn out excellent talents and better performances. It is important to mention here that, one’s self-concept plays very significant role in the determination of psychological well-being. Self-concept, the students’ view of him/herself towards higher education especially in Darbhanga, India may be a particularly important behavior either healthy or unhealthy, because it entails the ways in which the students perceives her/his own actions [10]. Self-concept is especially relevant during the period of school and college when student often self-criticism and turmoil in terms of self-concept [11,12]. Therefore, this problem is undertaken in deliberation to study the self-concept among Muslim undergraduate students towards higher education with particular reference Darbhanga district, India.

**Objective of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to assess whether girls and boys will differ in their self-concept and if they did who have a higher self-concept towards higher education. It is because of the fact that in all societies of the world girls and boys are treated differently. They receive different kind of social feedback thus, there may be different expectations and these expectations are supposed to shape the self-concept among boys and girls towards higher education as [13] referred to self-concept as the “key stone personality”. Thus, self-concept appears to be a comprehensive and exhaustive area which can represent the personality as whole towards higher education at large. Recognizing its broader coverage than any other trait of personality self-concept has been chosen as one of the possible dimensions which give direction to the whole life. Self-concept importance stems from its influence over the quality of a person's behavior and his method of adjustment to life and situation. Therefore, in the light of this objective the following hypothesis was formulated:

1. There will be no significance of difference between boys and girls in their self-concept as a whole and its dimensions towards higher education.

**Methodology**

**Sample**

The present study was conducted on two hundred undergraduate students (N=200) comprising Girls (n=100) and boys (n=100), randomly collected from the different departments of Millat College, Darbhanga - a well-known city of Bihar, India.

**Tools used**

a. Self-Concept Scale: In order to assess self-concept of college students, a scale developed by [14] has been used. This questionnaire comprised of 80 items. In this scale there were 6-dimensions: Behavior, Intellectual and school status, physical appearance and attributes, anxiety, popularity, happiness and satisfaction. Each item was measured on Zero-point scale viz., ‘Yes’ ( ) ‘No’ ( ). In the scale there are 14 lie items to detect whether the children and adolescents have filled it accurately or not. 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 favorable self-concept. This self-concept scale is quite reliable as the test-retest and split half reliability coefficients are .88 and .79 respectively.

b. Biographical Information Blank (BIB): Biographical blank was also prepared for interpreting the results. It includes: sex, qualification, religion, area of locality, family income, father’s qualification, mother’s qualification, family structure, etc.

**Procedure**

Before giving the above schedules, respondents were deliberated about the importance of higher education then thereafter measures were given to each student to complete in all respect. They were also assured that the information provided by them would be kept strictly confidential and will be used research purposes only. Having collected the data, the data were tabulated for giving statistical treatment. Finally, the obtained results presented in table and discussed in detail.

**Results and Discussion**

In quest of obtaining the results, descriptive analysis was done by computing mean, SD, and t-test to see if there was any significant difference in obtained scores of the two groups. From the table-1, it is apparently clear that in the present sample there is a highly significant difference in the mean values of total self-concept as boys had higher self-concept mean score with an SD (64.25 and 13.23) than girls (57.98 and 10.09). Hence, the difference between boys and girls has been found statistically as t-value is significant at .05 level of confidence. Thus, the null hypothesis that there will be no significance of difference between boys and girls in their self-concept stands rejected. The results seem to be logical that boys and girls do differ in their self-concept towards higher education, although, boys have higher self-concept than girls. It is important to be mentioned here that one of the possible reasons for the present study is likely to be (Table 1) “Gender Bias”. It is because of the fact that in our traditional society especially in Muslim community boys are still given greater exposure and more positive feedback in the socialization process.

In addition to the above result, it is also important to point out the area-wise analysis which shows that out of six dimensions of self-concept, only in four areas there are significant differences between boys and girls. In the dimensions of self-concept, ‘Behavior’, ‘Physical Appearance and Attributes’, ‘Anxiety’ and ‘Happiness and Satisfaction’ boys have higher self-concept score so that in these areas of self-concept significance of difference have been found (Table 1), although, in all dimensions boys’ self-concept scores have also been found higher than girls. However, in the area of ‘Intellectual and College Status, and ‘Popularity’ no significance difference is found between boys and girls perceived reactions on their self-concept towards higher education. The trend of the results shows greater societal pressure on boys to perform well in their career and to be a provider for their family and it seems that this is not essentially associated with the girls.

**Table 1:** Mean, SD and t of dimensions of Self-Concept Scores among Muslim Boys and Girls Undergraduate Students.

| Dimensions of Self-Concept | Boys (n=100) | Girls (n=100) | t   | p  |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|-----|----|
|                          | Mean        | S.D           | Mean| S.D|
| Behavior                 | 14.05       | 1.96          | 12.76| 2.09| 4.48| 0.01|
| Intellectual and College Status | 14.35      | 3.07          | 13.50| 3.28| 1.88| NS   |
| Physical Appearance and Attributes | 9.04     | 2.86          | 8.04 | 2.63| 2.56| 0.05|
| Anxiety                  | 10.63       | 2.05          | 8.56 | 2.13| 6.97| 0.01|
| Popularity               | 8.62        | 2.14          | 8.63 | 2.11| 0.11| NS   |
| Happiness and satisfaction| 7.56        | 1.18          | 6.74 | 1.38| 24.62| 0.01|
| Self-Concept (Total)     | 64.25       | 13.23         | 58.23| 10.09| 2.15| 0.05|
In fact being less ambitious is considered to be feminine in Indian society especially in Muslim world. Hence it can be said that in spite of expansion of education among girls, societal expectations from have not changed much. They are still projected primarily as mothers and caregivers and this reflects in girls’ self-perception too. The reasons are that socialization and education reinforce each other. The aspirations of young girls are unrelated to their actual intellectual and cognitive abilities as [1] stated 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 that create motivation for behavior. In the dimension of self-concept, ‘physical appearance and attributes’ boys’ self-concept score is higher than the girls.

It depicts the clear cut picture that boys are more confident regarding their looks and qualities whereas girls are more conscious and critical in their physical appearance because there is societal pressure that a girl must look beautiful. Hence it seems that girls are getting more education in numbers only for their survival in their life endeavor; although both boys and girls have also been found significant on the sub-dimension of self-concept i.e. ‘happiness and satisfaction’. It is undoubtedly fact that in this transformational society of the world of work girls need more positive social feedback in order to enhance their self-concept, and to develop a self-image which is more important for healthy environment in different areas of education especially in higher education.

**Conclusion and Suggestion**

In the light of the results and discussion the following conclusions are drawn:

a. Significance of difference has been found between the group of boys and girls in their self-concept.

b. Out of six dimensions of self-concept, four dimensions, namely, ‘Behavior’, ‘Physical Appearance and Attributes’, ‘Anxiety’, and ‘Happiness and Satisfaction’ have been found significant between boys and girls.

c. Boys have shown higher degree of self-concept in comparison to girls, although both the group has shown positive inclination towards higher education.

d. On the basis of observation, it is important to be mentioned here that the present era is considered as the era of modernization based on hi-info-tech so that girls must be given priority in different areas of education to be empowered because they need positive social feedback in order to enhance their self-concept, and to develop a self-image which is the need of hour for maintaining quality of dignity in their life endeavor by the means of higher education which is more important for making healthy environment for nation’s building. Finally, it is suggested that a larger and varied cross-cultural sample is needed for further research on the direction opted by the present investigator which will help in making strategies for the promotion of society in general and Muslim world in particular.

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