

SELF-CONCEPT IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

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. Parental upbringing, continuous failure, depression and internal self-critic are factors that influence the development of one's self-concept. A positive self-concept can be developed through behave objectively in knowing oneself, always appreciate oneself, be friend to oneself and always have a positive and rational thinking. Educational psychology can be referred to a distinct scientific discipline within psychology that includes both method of study and a resulting knowledge base. It is believed that the development of student's self-concept depends on the focus of educators in educational psychology in classroom practice. Educational psychology provides important background knowledge that pre-service and in-service educators can use as the foundation for professional practice. A positive self-concept can contribute to good academic achievement by student's optimistic personal expectations about himself or herself.

A. DEFINITION OF SELF-CONCEPT AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

There are a variety of ways to think about the self. The most widely used term is self-concept and generally 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.

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”

We develop and maintain our self-concept through the process of taking action and then reflecting on what we have done and what others tell us about what we have done. We reflect on what we have done and can do in comparison to our expectations and the expectations of others and to the characteristics and accomplishments of others. That is, self-concept is not innate, but is developed by the individual through interaction with the environment and reflecting on that interaction.

There are a several different components of self-concept: physical, academic, social, and transpersonal. The physical aspect of self-concept relates to that which is concrete: what we look like, our sex, height, weight, etc.; what kind of clothes we wear; what kind of car we drive; what kind of home we live in; and so forth. Our academic self-concept relates to how well we do in school or how well we learn. There are two levels: a general academic self-concept of how good we are overall and a set of specific content-related self-concepts that describe how good we are in math, science, language arts, social science, etc. The social self-concept describes how we relate to other people and the

transpersonal self-concept describes how we relate to the supernatural or unknowns.

Educational Psychology is a combination or overlapping of two separate fields of study. The first is psychology, which can be defined as the scientific study of the mind and behavior (or behavior and mental processes) especially as it relates to individual human beings. Note that it is the scientific study of mind or mental processes (covert or internal) as well as behavior (overt or external). People who study psychological phenomena are not necessarily limited to the study of human beings. (a large body of research relating to animals has been developed) Nor are they limited to only studying individuals. However, when studying groups of individuals, the focus is generally on how individuals perform within the group rather than the study of the group as a whole. Scientists who study animals and people in terms of group and institutional-behavior generally align themselves with sociology while individuals who focus on human culture and belief systems generally align themselves with anthropology.

B. COMPONENTS OF SELF-CONCEPT

This dynamic aspect of self-concept (and, by corollary, self-esteem) is important because it indicates that it can be modified or changed. Franken (1994) states

“there is a growing body of research which indicates that it is possible to change the self-concept. Self-change is not something that people can will but rather it depends on the process of self-reflection. Through self-reflection, people often come to view themselves in a new, more powerful way, and it is through this new, more powerful way of viewing the self that people can develop possible selves” (Franken, R. 1994. p. 443).

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The relationship of self-concept to school achievement is very specific. General self-concept and non-academic aspects of self-concept are not related to academic work; general academic achievement measures are related moderately to academic success. Specific measures of subject-related self-concepts are highly related to success in that content area.

If academic achievement leads to self-concept, but self-concept is a better predictor of being a low-track or high-track student, it would appear that there is some intervening variable. It's mean the intervening variable is personal expectations.

Gage and Berliner (1992), the research on the relationship between self-concept and school achievement suggests that measures of general or even academic self-concept are not significantly related to school achievement. It is at the level of very specific subjects (e.g., reading, mathematics, science) that there is a relationship between self-concept and academic success. This suggests that success in a particular subject area is not really changing one's self-concept but rather is impacting one's expectation about future success based on one's past experience.

There is much discussion about what young people should do in their childhood and youth to prepare them for success in adulthood. Once we have determined the desired end results or the prerequisites for success, we need to

determine the means or the conditions by which those can be brought about. Education and schooling are two terms that are often associated with these conditions.

C. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SELF-CONCEPT

The development of self-concept is through the learning process since childhood. A child surrounding, experiences and the style of parental upbringing also contribute a significant influence towards the development of self-concept. A child evaluate who they are through the response of their parents in every action that taken. If a child live in a confused and negative parental upbringing, as a result this child tend to develop negative self-concept. Negative parental upbringing can be shown through beating without mercy, neglecting, paying less attention, unfairness, humiliating and unsatisfactory towards their child's attitude. When this occurs, they will assume these as a punishment caused by their fault or stupid ness. On the contrary, a positive parental upbringing will develop a positive self-concept.

Self-concept is something very dynamic that can change from time to time. Some aspects of self-concept remain for a long period but others can turn the opposite way in few seconds.

There are factors that influence the process of the development of self-concept. The style of parental upbringing that has been mentioned before is a significant factor. Positive parental upbringing and attitude read by their children can develop a positive thinking and self-appreciation to themselves. Negative parental attitude create the assumption that a child is not appreciated and loved by their parent because of his self-weakness.

The second factor is continuous failure in a child life. In this case, failure can be defined as unsuccessfully to please their parent or themselves. A continuous failure in a child life making him feels that they are useless. Gradually, negative self-concept is developed in this child. On the other hand, a positive self-concept is developed if a child sees failure is an opportunity for him to improve himself in every aspect of decision-making.

The next factor is depression. People who suffer from depression tend to think and respond negatively towards everything including evaluating themselves. They are wondering whether they can survive throughout their life. They can be super sensitive to what other people say about them or act towards them.

Last but not least, internal self-critic is another factor that influences the process of the development of self-concept. We cannot deny that internal self-critic is needed to evaluate every action and decision that we take in our life. Internal self-critic functions as a regulator in every action taken and how we behave so that we can be accepted by the society around us and can adapt well within the society.

D. DEVELOPING A POSITIVE SELF-CONCEPT

As mentioned before that self-concept is something very dynamic, there are few steps that can be taken to have a positive self-concept.

First, we must behave objectively in knowing ourselves. No matter how small the achievement or positive experience that we possess it must be appreciated. We must try to enhance our talent and self-potential. As it says, 'You can't be all things to all people, you can't do all things at once, and you just do the best you could in every way.'

Secondly, we must know and always appreciate ourselves. There is no other person that can appreciate us more than ourselves. People who know how to appreciate themselves are the ones that can see all the good and positive things within them and other people. So, if we can appreciate other people, we also can appreciate ourselves.

Thirdly, never be an enemy to us. People tend to blame themselves when conflicts arise between ideal expectations and the real self. When we become the enemy to ourselves, we can hardly see the good and positive side of ourselves. Gradually, they are mentally exhausted, frustrated and develop a negative self-concept.

The final step is to have a positive and rational thinking. The Buddha says, 'We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world.' How powerful is our mind! The power of our thoughts depends a lot on how we think. If we can develop positive and rational thoughts, we are developing a positive self-concept. A positive self-concept person usually is a winner but a negative self-concept person is always a loser.

E. CONCLUSION :

As a conclusion, self-concept is very important and essential in developing a child personality. Parents have to consider various factors that influence the development of more positive self-concept. These factors are style of parental upbringing, continuous failure, depression and internal self-critic. At school, the development of student's self-concept depends on the focus of educators in educational psychology in classroom practice. A positive self-concept creates a positive classroom-learning environment that believed can contribute to good academic achievement by students.

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