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## ENHANCEMENT OF SELF CONCEPT USING LIFE SKILLS APPROACH

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### Abstract:

*Psychology is concerned with the behaviour and experience of human beings. Human have always, been fascinated by the mind. Yet, the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry only started studying the mind or cognition about 100 years ago. The universe of the mind is still a dark, vast, unexplored place. It mystifies us. Yet, it is a religion of great promise. If we could learn to develop our values, master basic psychological principles, and increase our self-awareness and motivation, great strides might be made in self-control or self-actualization.*

### Keywords:

Psychology, actualization, behaviour and experience.

### INTRODUCTION

Many wise people have thought that it would be much more lasting and meaningful to change a person's basic self-concept or personality than to try to modify thousands of his/her specific, isolated overt behaviours and superficial emotions. Some theorists think that our own mental image (or of our potential) must change first, then the behaviour will change; others think it works in the opposite direction, i.e. behaviour changes first, then the self-concept. Psychoanalysts, cognitive psychologists, behavioural psychologists, and others will, no doubt, continue this debate.

When minds study themselves or each other, a number of paradoxes appear; While we know much about our mental processes, there is far more we don't know, and, as individuals, there are some things about our minds we don't seem to want to know. Likewise, while the brain is fantastic sensing, remembering. Thinking, problem-solving machine, it still, without our awareness, makes many foolish mistakes and, certain individuals seem to want to make mistakes.

### THE CONCEPT OF SELF

Only we know who we are- what we have intended to do and actually done, what we have thought and felt, and what we have hoped for life. Our "self" is a life-long accumulation of impressions. How we see and evaluate our "selves" and others' selves has a tremendous impact on self-acceptance, self-control, and acceptance of others. But psychology has no clear-cut definition of the self-concept (Campbell, 1976). Examples: Is most of the self hidden (the ice-g self) as Freud suggested? Does our self include the dark and shadowy but "natural instincts", such as greed, hostility, and sex, or does the self constantly fight these basic instincts? Does the self include "human nature", such as infatuation, nurturing, game playing, and Jung's archetypes, or are these "needs and impulses" separate from our "self"? Is the self basically good (Maslow's "Pollyanna" self) and yearning for personal growth once the basic needs are met? Is the healthy, fully functioning self accepting and reflective of all your feelings, urges, thoughts and experiences, including the organisms striving to be all it can be (Roger's authentic self)? Or, is the self persecuted and constantly being judged against one's own ideal standards which are separate from the self? Is the self merely an illusion

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because there is nothing there except a conditioning machine, as Skinner suggested, or layers of roles or masks used to manipulate others, Goffman suggests? Is the self primarily Mead's "mirror" reflecting our interpretation of the reactions of others to us? The self is seen in many ways.

It is probable that the concept of self, emerges from the developing individual's interactions with social and physical world, rather than from some innate or genetically programme determinant. Different theorists have described this variously.

Research findings reveal that the self becomes increasingly differentiated with age. Contradictions and conflicts within the self are lowest in early adolescence. During adolescence youth develops the ability to compare- but not resolve- contradictory self- attributes. In later adolescents, the capacity to coordinate, resolve and normalize contradictory attributes emerges, reducing the experiencing of conflict over what type of self the person really wants to be. (Harter and Monsour, 1992).

Today, our self-concept, i.e. our knowledge, assumptions, and feelings about ourselves, is central to most of the mental processes. This is self-awareness is one of the most important concepts in psychology. We know that each person's self-concept is different from all others. But, surprisingly, there is no general agreement about the general structure or content of the self-concept. Some adages suggest that you have one true self or authentic self, such as in the saying "just be yourself". The true self maybe similar to your preferred identity or your best self. This tidy, unified, relatively stable positive description of the self doesn't fit the reality most of us experience. We seem to have a self with many parts. Some we like and some we don't.

## LIFE SKILLS AND ADOLESCENCE

Through a continuous processes, the maximum and critical development of life skills occurs during childhood and adolescence.

In childhood, Life skills are often modelled on parents and other significant adults. The child is more passive in learning the skills. Skills to be exercised are comparatively less and restricted to family and school situations.

During adolescents, life skills' training is more active process. The adolescent has he intellectual maturity to assess situation, assess the various aspects of the situation, challenge the prescription of others, develop a repertoire of skills, make a choice of his/her own and later come to conclusion about the skill and its execution.

Despite superior intellectual abilities, the adolescents' behaviour is often colored by emotions rather than rationality. There is an emotional heightening, which the youth has to contend with, but more often than not, is unaware of it. Frequently the adolescent is in an emotional fix of wanting to be guided by parents, yet to be free from them and more aligned to the peers. The adolescent also has the need to exercise skills to indicate and establish individuality and independence. This becomes complex as the adolescent has more situations to contend with. Many critical issues reach their culmination at this stage- puberty, dealing with sexuality and gender issues, tackling emotional upheaval, finishing basic schooling and the need to make future educational or career choices, facing responsibilities as an individual, etc. Hence, life skills development takes a ubiquitous relevance at the adolescent stage. This development is difficult and stormy, yet critical.

## WHY LIFE SKILLS APPROACH

World Health Organization has advocated the development of life skills in order to promote psychosocial competence. Psychosocial competence is a person's ability to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is a person's ability to maintain a state of well being, and to demonstrate this in adaptive and positive behaviour while interacting with others, in his/her culture and environment.

Psychological competence has an important role to play in the promotion of health, in terms of physical, mental and social well-being. Enhancement of psychological competence could make an important contribution to well being of individuals, especially, where health problems are related to behaviour, and where the behaviour is related to an inability to deal effectively with stress and pressures in life.

The most direct interventions for the promotion of psychosocial competence are those, which the person's coping resources and personal and social competencies. In school- based programmes for children and adolescents, the teaching of life-skills in a supportive learning environment can do this (WHO, 1994).

### PRESENT STUDY

#### AIM:

- To assess the self- concept of young adolescent boys and girls.
- To develop an intervention programme in order to enhance the self concept.
- To study the gender differences in self- concept.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- To assess the self- concept of young adolescent boys and girls.
- To study the efficiency of intervention programme in enhancing self- concept.
- To investigate the gender differences in self- concept.

#### HYPOTHESIS:

- The intervention programme will be effective in enhancing the self-concept.
- There will not be any gender difference in self- concept scores.
- There will be no significant difference in self- concept scores between the experimental and control group during pre- assessment.
- There will be significant difference in self- concept scores between the experimental and control group during post assessment.
- There will be significant difference between pre and post self- concept scores of the experimental group.
- There will be no significant difference between the pre and post self- concept scores of control group.

#### VARIABLES:

- Independent variable
- Intervention
- Dependent variable
- Self- concept

#### OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

##### SELF CONCEPT:

Self- concept is the cognitive or thinking aspect of self (related to one's self- image) 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" (Purkey, 1988)

##### Life skills-

"Life skills are living skills or abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life". (WHO, 1997)

##### DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLES:

The study sample was chosen from Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, Baglur. The sample comprised of 106 students among the age group of 12 and 14. Both boys and girls were included. Students from above 14 years and below 12 years were not considered.

##### DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT TOOL(S):

##### •CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPT SCALE (CSCS)-

This tool was developed by Dr. S. P. Ahluwalia. The variables included are Behaviour, Intellectual and School status, Physical appearance and Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity, Happiness and Satisfaction. The test consists of 80 items which covers all the aspects mentioned above. The test retest

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reliability is 0.88.

### PROCEDURE:

#### Phase I-

The CSCS was administered to all the 106 students between the age group of 12 and 14. The instruction for the test was given to the sample by the research investigator and the doubts were clarified before they started filling in the responses. When there was a difficulty in understanding the statements, they were explained individually.

#### Phase II-

- 42 students were found to be low in self- concept and were chosen for further study.
- They were divided into experimental and control group.
- There were 21 each in experimental and control group.
- Students in the experimental group were given an intervention programme.
- Students in the control group were not given an intervention programme.

#### Phase III-

The CSCS was administered to both the experimental as well as the control group after 10 days, to assess the success of the programme. The obtained data was scored and statistically analysed keeping in view the aims, objectives and hypothesis of the study.

The intervention programme consisted of the following activities:

| Session No. | Activity  | Rationale   |
|-------------|---|---|
| 1.          | Introduction and Ice breaker, Formation of group.   | Getting to know one another and rapport building.   |
| 2.          | Problem solving Activities                          | To consider alternatives in distressing and demanding situations  |
| 3.          | Assertiveness Training                              | To help students deal assertively in situations, so that they can fulfil their desires without hurting the feelings of others |
| 4.          | Concentration techniques (Study skills)             | To facilitate the students to focus their attention and then practice it later.   |
| 5.          | Memory improvement Techniques.                      | To facilitate the students to help improve their memory.  |
| 6.          | Interpersonal Relations                             | To indicate the trust and confidence is essential for a relationship to be successful.  |
| 7.          | Time management Principles and preparing a calendar | To help students to use prioritization.   |
| 8.          | Who am I?   | To discuss the strengths and weakness and become aware of the realistic aspects of self.                                      |
| 9.          | Anger management                                    | To facilitate recognition of anger, ways of coping and ways of expression without aggression.                                 |
| 10.         | Feedback and Questions                              | To know that all the students understood and followed the activities well.  |

## ENHANCEMENT OF SELF CONCEPT USING LIFE SKILLS APPROACH

The aim of the present study was to find out the effect of intervention to enhance the self- concept of the adolescents through Life Skills Approach those who were in the age group of 12 and 14. The samples were drawn randomly from various schools in Bangalore and it was structured to determine the effect of an intervention program intended to enhance the self-concept, evaluate the same and assess the effectiveness of intervention program in self concept. The study was conducted in three phases.

In the First phase 206 students who fell under the required age group were administered the Children's Self Concept Scale (CSCS) to determine the level of self concept. The scores obtained were tabulated and analysed and students those who were found low on self concept were taken up for the intervention.

In the Second phase, the subjects low on self concept were divided into experimental and control groups. Further, the said students formed a group of 82 out of which 46 were girls and 36 boys. Randomly, 23 girls and 18 boys. Thus, a total of 41 each were divided into experimental and control group. The experimental group was subjected to an intervention program over a period of six weeks (3 days a week) with each session lasting for an hour. The intervention program consisted of problem solving activities, assertiveness training, concentration techniques and memory improvement techniques. Obviously, the control group was not considered for the intervention program.

In the Third phase, the post assessment was conducted by again using the same Children's Self Concept Scale for both the control and the experimental group together to assess the effectiveness of the intervention program on self-concept.

The scores obtained were analysed by using 't' test and interpreted to verify the major hypothesis of the present study which was formulated as the 'intervention program enhances the self concept of the experimental group'. The major findings of the study revealed that the mean for before intervention was 33.95 and SD being 5.36. On the contrary, for after intervention, the mean obtained was 5.36 and SD was 10.46. The obtained 't' value was 2.85 which was found significant at 0.01 level. Thus the study showed that the intervention program was effective in enhancing the self concept.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

### Summary

The present study was designed to enhance the self concept of the adolescents through the life skills approach among the age group of 12 and 14, in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. It was structured to determine the effect of an intervention program intended to enhance self- concept, evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention programme and to study the gender differences in self- concept. The study was conducted in three phases. In the first phase 106 students who fall under the required age group were administered the children's self- concept scale (CSCS), to determine the level of self- concept. These scores were then tabulated and analysed and students low on self- concept were taken up for the intervention.

In the second phase the students were divided into experimental and control groups. Randomly 8 boys and 13 girls, a total of 21 each were divide into experimental and control group. The experimental group was subjected to an intervention program over a period of 10 days (3 days a week) with each session lasting for an hour. The intervention programme considered of problem solving activities, assertiveness training, concentration techniques- (study skills), and memory improvement techniques. The control group was not considered for the intervention programme.

In the third phase the post was conducted using children's self concept scale for both the control and experimental group together to assess the effectiveness of the intervention programme on self concept. The scores obtained from the post- assessment were analysed statistically and interpreted accordingly to verify the hypotheses. Thus the study shows intervention programme was effective in enhancing the self concept.

### CONCLUSIONS

The first hypotheses stating that the intervention programme will be effective in enhancing the self- concept is accepted.

The hypotheses stating that there will not be any gender difference in self- concept scores are accepted.

The third hypothesis stating that there will be no significant difference in self- concept scores between the experimental and control group during pre- assessment is accepted.

The fourth hypothesis stating that there will be significant difference in self- concept scores between the experimental and control group post- assessment is rejected.

The hypothesis stating that there will be significant difference between pre and post self- concept scores of

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the experimental group in accepted.

The sixth hypothesis stating that there will be no significant difference between the pre and post self-concept scores of control group is accepted.



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