

SELF – CONCEPT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WOMEN IN DIFFERENT PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

DR.S.ANITHA DEVI

Associate.Professor & Head,
Department of Management Studies
Tellakulla Jallayya Polisetty Somasundaram College
(T.J.P.S College), Guntur.
Email id :anithatl @rediffmail.com

S.SRIDEVI

Department of Management Studies,
Andhra Mahila Sabha P.G College,
Hyderabad.

T.N.NIRMALA RANI

Tellakulla Jallayya Polisetty Somasundaram College
T.J.P.S College (P.G.Courses), Guntur.
Email id : nirmala_333@yahoo.com

Abstract

The present study aims at studying the level of self-concept among professional women. It also aims at studying the correlation between various demographic variable like age, experience and income on self-concept. A total sample of 180 women professionals belonging to six different occupations from the twin cities of Hyderabad & Secunderabad were chosen for the present study. They were in the age groups of 25 to 45 years & above with experience ranging from 2 years to 18 years & above and income ranging from Rs. 15000 to 40000 and above. The self-concept scale developed by Mukta Rani Rastogi was administered individually to each of the subjects. Data was analyzed according to the scoring given in the scales and correlation coefficients were computed to study the effect of self-concept on various demographic variables. The results showed that professional women experienced significantly greater self concept and self concept increases with age, experience and has no correlation with income.

Key words: *self-concept ,professional women ,six different occupations, self concept scale,*

Introduction

Personality causes reflect the dynamics of an individual's self-perception and characteristic attitudes and behaviors. A variety of personality characteristics have been found to be associated with the career development of women. Self-concept is one of the most popular ideas in psychological literature. Unfortunately, self-concept is also an illusive and often poorly defined construct. Reviews of literature have found at least 15 different "self" terms

used by various authors (Strein, 1993). Terms such as "self-concept," "self-esteem," "self-worth," "self-acceptance," and so on are often used interchangeably and inconsistently, when they may relate to different ideas about how people view themselves.

Rogers (1951) defined the self-concept as "an organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissible to awareness. It is composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities: the percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and to the environment; the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences and object; and the goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive or negative valence.

Self – concept is operationally defined as a measure of the evaluation which the individual make and customarily maintains with regards to himself, it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successfully and worthy (Cooper, Smith 1959,67). The awareness of self comes through the gradual process of adaptation to the environment. (Piaget, 1969). Today, our self-concept, i.e. our knowledge, assumptions, and feelings about us, is central to most of the mental processes.

According to Markus (1977), information concerning oneself is processed in terms of its relevance to one's self-schemata. Self-schemata are defined as cognitive structures embodying networks of meaning associated with particular attributes that together coalesces to form the self-concept.

Review of Literature

Mc David and Harari (1968), "self represents the summation of what he/she is behaviorally, and thus it represents the object of perception that he/she is. Rosenberg (1979) coined the term 'psychological centrality', the importance that an individual attaches to a particular domain or activity that will affect the individual's self-esteem.

The results of various studies on self-concept show that there were important differences due to gender. Young women scored lower than young men, when their self-confidence and acceptance of physical self-image decreases (Orenstien, 1994; Marssh and Hattie, 1996 and Oliva, 1999). Harter, Bresnick; Bouchy and Whitesell (1997) concluded that young women find it difficult to create a stable self-image, and therefore tend to have difficulties during the process. Similarly, Rothemberg (1997) indicated that women were more at risk of suffering from depression than young men.

Rothemburg (1997) also noted found that women scored higher on personal identity, physical and family and social self-concept.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study therefore made an attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

- Do Professional Women have a high or low degree of self-concept?
- Do women employed in different occupational groups differ in self-concept levels experienced?
- Does the level of self concept vary along with the demographics?

Sample Description

The overall sample chosen for the present study consists of career women. From this universe, the sample was first stratified on the basis of different occupational groups employing women. Out of these various occupations, six occupations were chosen for the present study. The total sample for the study thus consisted of 180 women belonging to six different occupational groups, residing in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. A total of 30 women from each of the six occupational groups were chosen for the study. These occupations were Banking, Teaching, Science & Technology, Administrators, Self Employed and Doctors.

Tools Employed

Self Concept Scale developed by Mukta Rani Rastogi has been used in the present study. This scale consists of ten constructs covering three dimensions of Self-concept i.e., Perceptual, Conceptual and the Attitudinal dimensions.

Thus, the ten constructs are - Health, Abilities, Self-Confidence, Self-Acceptance, Worthiness, Present Past Future, and Belief in Convictions, Shame & Guilt, Sociability and Emotional Maturity.

Scoring: The scale consists of 51 statements, divided into ten constructs. The respondent is provided with 5 response alternatives to give their response and therefore a score of 1-5 may be obtained for each item. Positive items are scored 5 to 1 for responses (SA, A, UD, DA, SDA) and negative items are scored 1 to 5 for the same response alternatives.

The greater the score, the greater the self-concept of an individual.

Reliability: Reliability of the scale by split-half method following Spearman Brown prophecy formula was found to be 0.87.

Validity: Content validity was established on the basis of the ratings by experts.

Data Analysis

The Data Analysis was conducted in three stages. They were:

Descriptive Analysis: Means and Standard Deviations were computed for the scale used in the study.

Associative Analysis: Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was computed to study the association between self – concept and various demographic variables.

Findings and Discussions

The responses of the subjects to the self-concept scale are discussed in this section.

- To discriminate between the individuals with high and low self-concept the method of extreme group analysis was applied. The total sample was ranked according to the scores obtained. The top 27% of these subjects ranging 143-156 comprised the high

self-concept group and the low 27% of the individuals ranging 109-122 comprised the low self- concept group.

- Majority of the sample has moderate to high level self-concept.
- From table 1, it is evident that a very small percentage of the sample (6.66%) have low self-concept and 20% of the sample has high self-concept.
- Majority of the sample has moderate to high level self-concept. An examination of table 2. shows that the distribution of the sample in low self –concept level is as follows. i.e., 6.6% in Banking, 13.33% in Science & Technology, and 10% each in Self-employed and Doctors. There are no subjects in the low self-concept level among Teaching and Administrators. The percentage of high level self-concept is 10% in Banking, 20% in Teaching, 43.33 % in Science & Technology, 0 % in Administrators, 26.66% in Self-employed and 20% in Doctors.
- Professional people have good self-esteem as a result they have a clearly differentiated self-concept. They know themselves better and they can maximize outcomes because they know what they can and cannot do. The disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with the challenges of life is found among most of the career women. Hence, professional people experience moderate to high level self-concept.
- From table 3 it is evident that the mean value for Abilities, Worthiness, Health & Sex appropriateness dimensions are high which shows that people with positive attitude towards their abilities and worthiness and a good health contribute to greater self concept. The mean values for Beliefs & Convictions, Emotional Maturity, Shame & Guilt dimensions are low which means that professional women are less influenced by these dimensions. As all these women are in reputed professions they have less feelings of inadequacy, shame and guilt and they are more mature and confident, which leads to greater self-concept.
- The ANOVA results pertaining to the differences among women in different professional groups on self-concept (table 4) shows that there is no significant variation in the self-concept levels among the six professional groups. The results of ANOVA are not significant ($F=0.8587$) , which shows that the six groups do not differ among themselves.

Does The Level of Self-Concept Vary Along With Demographic Variables?

- The correlation value of self-concept and age is not found to be significant, which indicates that there is no relationship between self-concept and age. But it appears that the negative ‘r ‘ value indicates that the older the people the greater the self-concept (Table 5).
- Self-concept is significantly and positively correlated with experience which shows that the greater the number of years of service the higher the self-concept i.e., older people have high self-concept compared to younger people.(Table 6)
- Self-concept is not statistically significant with income which shows that there is no relationship between self-concept and income. (Table 7)
- Greater self-concept with age & experience may be due to the fact that having higher length of service, they are generally in higher cadre where they have the authority,

responsibility and managerial support and high participation in decision making leading to high self-concept.

Implications and Suggestions

While the findings may not be readily generalizable to all categories of women, they are nevertheless applicable to individuals working in occupations with profiles similar to those in the present study. Thus, the findings of the study help us to identify a few implications.

Individuals must develop a positive attitude towards life i.e., build on their self-concept and develop greater belief in their own capacity, that one can / is in control of one's destiny. This is one of the most important factors contributing to a healthy personality. Well-organized holiday and recreational programs may be helpful to reduce stress to a large extent. It may be worthwhile to arrange for preventive counseling sessions for individuals experiencing low self-concept. The individual demographics versus self-concept relationships are very useful in identifying individual's having low self-concept. This information can be utilized to identify stress prone people.

List of Tables

Table 1. Distribution of The Total Sample On The Self-Concept Scale.

Self-concept scale	Low Score(109-122)	High Score (143-156)
Sample size	12	36
Percentage	6.66%	20%

Table 2. Distribution of The Total Sample On The Self-Concept Scale For All The Six Occupations.

Sample size	Ban	Tea	Sc & Tech	Admn	Se-emp	Doc
Low Score (109-122)	2	0	4	0	3	3
High Score (143-156)	3	6	13	0	8	6

Table 3. Means And Standard Deviations For The 10 Constructs of Self-Concept Scale For The Total Sample.

Constructs	Means	SD
Health & Sex app	8.67	9.33
Abilities	10.42	12.06
Se – Conf	5.87	7.21
Se – Acc	5.26	5.84
Worthiness	9.24	11.1
Pr- Pa- Fu	6.14	7.25
Be – Conv	3.68	3.99
Sh & Guilt	4.89	5.24
Sociability	4.78	5.03
Emo-Mat	4.86	6.36

Table 4. Analysis of Variance between Various Professional Groups On Self-Concept Scale.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Sum of Squares	F- Value
Total ss	15578.2	179		
Between Prof	375.13	5	75.027	0.8587
Error	15203.07	174	87.374	

Table 5. Correlation Between Self-concept and Age.

Variable Name	Correlation value
Self-concept	-0.044

Table 6. Correlation Between Self-Concept And Experience.

Variable Name	Correlation value
Self-concept	0.27*

*Significant at 0.01 level

Table 7. Correlation Between Self-concept and Income.

Variable Name	Correlation value
Self-concept	0.144

References

- Coopersmith S., “ A Method for Determining Self-Esteem. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 1959.
- Coopersmith S., “ The Antecents of Self-Esteem”, San Fransico : Freeman, 1967.
- Markus H., “Self-schemata and Processing Information About the Self”, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 35, 63-78, 1977.
- McDavid J.W., and Harari H., “Social Psychology: Individual’s, Groups and Societies”. Haorper and Row, 1968.
- Mukta Rani Rastogi, Agra Psychological Research Cell, Agra.
- Piaget J., “The Intellectual Development of the Adolescent”, Incoplan & Lebovici,E(d) Adolescence, psychological Perceptive, Basic Books, New York, 1969.
- Rogers C.R., “Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications and Theory’, Boston: Houghton- Mifflin Co., 1951.
- Rosenberg M., “Conceiving the Self.” New York: Basic Books, 1979.
- Strein W., “Advances in Research on Academic sSelf-Concept: Implications for School Psychology”, School Psychology Review, 22, 273-284, 1993.