

## The Relationship Of Academic Self-Concept To Motivation To Learn Among Fourth-Year Middle School Students In El Oued – Algeria

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### Abstract:

The current study aims to explore the relationship, if any, between the academic self-concept and its connection to learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students. The study utilized the Academic Self-Concept Scale by Fatima Ghalem and the Learning Motivation Scale by Youssef Qatami. The sample consisted of 100 students, divided equally between 50 males and 50 females. The study employed the descriptive correlational method, deemed appropriate for the subject matter and study variables. The results indicated the following: a statistically significant relationship exists between academic self-concept and learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students in El Oued. Furthermore, there were statistically significant gender differences in academic self-concept, but no statistically significant gender differences in learning motivation.

**Keywords:** academic self-concept, learning motivation.

### 1. Introduction:

Advanced societies aim through research and studies to provide a true understanding of the nature of the self and how to manage it, whether between parents and children or between teachers and learners, by reducing negatives and enhancing positives. Thus, a true and conscious understanding of the self offers the reader a new and clear perspective on how to approach proper and comprehensive upbringing. Thinkers have long focused on studying and interpreting motivation, with increased attention to it after psychology became independent from natural sciences and philosophy, due to its importance in assessing human behavior. Motivation is considered the driving desire within the learner to achieve their goals; it directs their attention and continuously fuels their interest and vitality to reach the objective. It is an essential condition for the learner to achieve major educational goals, whether in academic achievement (cognitive aspect), in the formation of values and attitudes (affective aspect), or in the development of various skills (psychomotor aspect).

### 2. Problem Statement:

Numerous studies have addressed the subject of motivation. For example, the study by Tehami Sheherazade (2018-2019), titled "Academic Adjustment and Its Relationship with Learning Motivation among First-Year High School Students," involved a sample of 64 students, and the results indicated "a statistically significant correlation between academic adjustment and learning motivation among first-year high school students." Another study by Samia Malik and Lezhari Hamidani (2019-2020), titled "Learning Motivation and Its Relationship with Academic Achievement in English among Second-Year High School Students," involved 60 students and found that the relationship between English achievement and motivation was negative and low. Burke, cited in Najdawi (1991), stated that the concept of academic self is important because it aligns with one of the student's internal factors that have a significant impact on their motivation and adjustment to the school and classroom environment. Therefore, students' awareness of themselves and their perception of their academic performance helps in planning appropriate programs for them. The concept of academic self refers to an individual's self-concept in the academic school context. This concept also depends on the individual's awareness of their abilities and academic potential and how these impact their school motivation. Many studies have focused on the academic self-concept, such as the study by Amani Saeed Zakaria Jalghoum (2018), titled "Educational Competencies and Academic Self-Concept among Science Teachers for the Basic Stage from the Perspective of Teachers in the Jenin Governorate." The study found a strong positive correlation between the level of basic stage science teachers' educational competencies and their academic self-concept. Thus, the current study seeks to understand the relationship between academic self-concept and learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students in El Oued, Algeria, by addressing the following questions:

- Is there a statistically significant relationship between academic self-concept and learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students?
- Are there statistically significant differences between males and females in both academic self-concept and learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students?

### 3. Research Hypotheses:

Based on previous studies and the theoretical framework, the research hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

- There is a statistically significant relationship between academic self-concept and learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students.
- There are statistically significant gender differences in academic self-concept among 4th-year middle school students.
- There are statistically significant gender differences in learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students.

### 4. Study Objectives:

- Investigate the relationship and its nature between academic self-concept and learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students.
- Identify gender differences in academic self-concept.
- Identify gender differences in learning motivation.
- Highlight the importance of academic self-concept and its relationship to learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students.

### 5. Study Significance:

- Emphasize the importance of academic self-concept and its contribution to increasing students' motivation to learn.
- Raise awareness among teachers about the significance of academic self-concept in the teaching field.
- Inform educational practitioners of the necessity to stimulate learners' motivation.
- The results of this study may help solve some issues related to academic self-concept and low motivation towards learning among 4th-year middle school students.

### 6. Operational Definitions of Study Variables:

- **Academic Self-Concept:** It refers to the student's evaluation of their personal and academic abilities (both internal and external) in achieving academic success and excellence, as well as how they compare their performance with their peers in the same class and academic level. It is measured by the score the student receives on the Academic Self-Concept Scale by Fatima Ghalem (2014).
- **Learning Motivation:** It is the student's evaluation of their response to five dimensions (enthusiasm, group participation, effectiveness, interest in school activities, and compliance). In this study, it is measured by the score the students (sample members) receive on the Learning Motivation Scale by Youssef Qatami (2014).

### 7. Study Limitations:

- **Temporal Limitations:** This research was conducted during the 2023-2024 academic year.
- **Spatial Limitations:** The study was limited to several middle schools in the city of El Oued.
- **Human Limitations:** The research included a simple random sample of 100 4th-year middle school students.

### Theoretical Framework:

#### 8. Concept of Academic Self:

The self-theory emphasizes the importance of academic self-concept as a motivator, as it determines the learner's awareness of their abilities and increases their focus on the subject matter, thus improving achievement. Psychologists use the term academic self-concept to refer to an abstract concept involving the learner's thoughts and feelings about their mental and cognitive characteristics, as well as their beliefs, values, convictions, and past experiences (Noufal, 1998).

Shavelson et al. (1976) define academic self-concept as the learner's perception of their academic abilities in specific classroom subjects and how they define and describe those abilities. Abu Jadu (1998) defines it as the individual's attitudes and feelings towards achievement in particular subjects they learn or the individual's self-report of their grades and high test scores. Liu and Wang (2005) define it as students' perceptions of their academic competence, commitment, engagement, and interest in schoolwork.

Hall and Lindzey (1978) believe that academic self-concept involves two aspects:

- The self as a subject, where the learner refers to their knowledge, abilities, and intelligence.
- The academic self-concept as a process, which suggests that the self includes a set of active and aware cognitive processes like memory and thinking.

Educational implications of academic self-concept show that it relates to the student's perception of their ability to learn certain academic behaviors (Noufal, 1998), which affects the student's self-concept. It is, therefore, essential for teachers to focus on the positive aspects of students more than the negative and to avoid forming preconceived negative ideas about a student and treating them accordingly (Awaidat, 1989).

Studies show that individuals with a narrow self-concept tend to fail more often and have a limited cognitive field, whereas those with a broad self-concept have a wider cognitive field and clearer experiences. Learners with high academic ability tend to have a positive sense of self-worth compared to those with low academic ability, who tend to have a negative sense of self-worth. This indicates that academic achievement is a behavior influenced by the learner's self-concept (Aikens, 2001).

## **9. Definition of Learning Motivation:**

### **A. American Psychological Association (APA) Definition:**

Motivation is the process that initiates, guides, and sustains physical and mental activity, involving mechanisms related to the preference for one activity over another while maintaining consistent vigor and vitality in response. The definition emphasizes the selection and direction of preferred activities and the continuous and renewed response with strength and vitality.

### **B. Naifa Qatami Definition:**

It is an internal state that drives the learner to seek any means to acquire the tools and materials that create an environment conducive to adaptation and happiness, avoiding failure (Qatami, 2004). This definition focuses on motivation as an internal process that pushes the learner to find an environment that allows them to achieve happiness and success in the learning situation and to persist in it.

### **C. Vieu (1995) Definition:**

In his book "Motivation in the School Context," Vieu defines learning motivation as a dynamic state rooted in the student's self-perception and environment, which drives them to engage in and commit to activities and persevere in order to achieve a goal (Sbar, 2018). This definition generally emphasizes the role of internal motivations and personal factors in motivating students to engage in and pursue learning activities.

## **10. Research Methodology:**

Given that this study focuses on understanding academic self-concept and its relationship to learning motivation, the appropriate method is the descriptive correlational method. This approach aims to determine the current state of the phenomena by describing, analyzing, and studying the relationships between them as they exist in reality.

## **11. Study Sample:**

The study sample consisted of 4th-year middle school students from Zoghib Mohamed Taher and Al-Arqat Al-Kilani middle schools in El Oued, with a total of 100 students (both males and females). This sample size is suitable for the study as it exceeds the minimum required for representing the population. The students were selected through simple random sampling.

## **12. Data Collection Tools and Their Psychometric Properties:**

### **First: Academic Self-Concept Scale:**

This study relied on the Academic Self-Concept Scale, a questionnaire developed by Fatima Ghalem (2014). It consists of 38 items formulated in a way that aligns with the study topic, offering three response options: *often*, *sometimes*, and *never*.

The scale's validity and reliability were confirmed by calculating internal consistency, with correlation coefficients between the two dimensions and the overall score ranging from 0.77 to 0.82, ensuring a high degree of validity. The discriminatory validity was also assessed, yielding a *t*-test value of ( $t = 16.34$ ), indicating its ability to differentiate effectively. The calculated reliability coefficients using Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale were 0.72, and for split-half reliability (adjusted using the Spearman-Brown formula), they were 0.79.

### **Second: Learning Motivation Scale:**

Developed by Youssef Qatami from the University of Jordan in 1989, this scale was based on the School Learning Motivation Scale by Kozek, Entwistle, and Russell (1988).

#### **• Components of the scale and scoring:**

The Learning Motivation Scale comprises 36 declarative statements, both positive and negative, distributed across five dimensions:

❖ Enthusiasm

- ❖ Group participation
- ❖ Effectiveness
- ❖ Interest in school activities
- ❖ Compliance

**• Psychometric Properties of the Scale:**

Internal consistency was used to calculate the scale's validity, with correlation coefficients between individual items and the overall score ranging from 0.32 to 0.95, confirming a high level of validity. The reliability coefficients using Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale reached 0.97.

**13. Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Results:**

**13.1 Presentation and Analysis of the First Hypothesis Result:**

The first hypothesis states: "There is a statistically significant relationship between academic self-concept and learning motivation among 4th-year middle school students in El Oued."

To test and examine this hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The following table illustrates the obtained results:

**Table (01): Shows the correlation coefficient between academic self-concept and learning motivation.**

Variable	Sample	"R" Value	Significance Level (Sig)
Academic Self-Concept	100	0.79	0.01
Motivation for Learning	100	/	/

The table shows a statistically significant correlation between academic self-concept and motivation for learning, with the correlation coefficient estimated at (0.79), which is a significant value at the significance level of (0.01). This is a positive correlation, meaning that the stronger and more positive the academic self-concept, the higher and stronger the students' motivation for learning.

The study's results can be interpreted as showing a correlation between academic self-concept and motivation for learning among the sample participants. This suggests that academic self-concept has an influence on the motivation to learn. Therefore, it can be said that a student who values their academic self highly has strong motivation for learning. This result can be attributed to the impact of the educational environment, teaching methods, or assessment techniques that influence students' motivation.

This result aligns with the findings of Hamri Sarah's (2012) study, which also revealed a positive correlation between self-esteem and motivation for achievement, as well as the study by Lakhdar Sheeba (2015), which demonstrated a statistically significant positive correlation between self-esteem and motivation for learning. However, this result differs from the study by Mamouni Asmaa and Boufadi Halima (2020), which found no correlation between the two variables.

It is important to consider these results when designing and implementing educational programs, as we should strive to motivate students more and enhance their learning motivation by providing a supportive and stimulating educational environment that meets their needs and aspirations. Additionally, methods to enhance academic self-concept and link it to learning motivation can be explored through the use of innovative and interactive teaching strategies that stimulate critical thinking and encourage inquiry and discovery.

**13-2. Presentation and Analysis of the Second Hypothesis Result and Its Interpretation:**

The second hypothesis states: There are statistically significant differences between genders in academic self-concept. In order to test and examine this hypothesis, the "T-Test" was used, and the following table illustrates the results obtained:

**Table (02): Illustrates the differences between genders in academic self-concept.**

Gender	Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance (Sig)
Male	50	102.79	8.68	4.91	98	0.001
Female	50	93.56	10.00			

The results recorded in the table above indicate statistically significant differences between the mean responses of the study sample in academic self-concept among fourth-year middle school students in El Oued, attributed to the gender variable. Based on the calculated (T) value, which reached (4.91), and the significance level of (0.001), this value is

statistically significant. From this, we conclude that there are statistically significant differences between the genders in academic self-concept, with the difference favoring males.

This can be interpreted as both males and females having different responses in academic self-concept, meaning that the latter is influenced by the gender variable. This could be because students of both genders do not have similar perceptions of themselves academically. In the current sample, males had a stronger and more positive sense of academic self-concept than females.

The results of this study align with the findings of Al-Khayyat's (2017) study, which also found statistically significant differences in academic self-concept attributed to the gender variable.

However, the results of the current study differ from the findings of Khalil (2019), Abdelhadi Swalha and Mohammed Swalha (2018), and Ghalem (2015), which found no statistically significant differences in academic self-concept attributed to the gender variable.

**12-3. Presentation and Analysis of the Third Hypothesis Result and Its Interpretation:**

The third hypothesis states: There are statistically significant differences between genders in motivation for learning. To test and examine this hypothesis, the "T-Test" was used, and the following table illustrates the results obtained:

**Table (03): Illustrates the differences between genders in motivation for learning.**

Gender	Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance (Sig)
Male	50	88.10	6.71	1.33	98	0.18
Female	50	86.43	5.77			

The table above shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean responses of the study sample in motivation for learning among fourth-year middle school students in El Oued, attributed to the gender variable. Based on the calculated (T) value, which reached (1.33), and the significance level of (0.18), this value is not statistically significant. From this, we conclude that there are no statistically significant differences between the genders in motivation for learning.

This can be interpreted as both males and females having similar responses in motivation for learning, meaning that motivation is not influenced by the gender variable. This may also be due to the similarity in environmental conditions related to the academic climate that middle school students share, as the schooling conditions remain uniform and similar.

The results of this study align with the findings of Shaima Mekirihi's (2018) study, which concluded that there were no differences in learning motivation according to the gender variable, as well as the study by Rabab Bassi and Samihah Mahmoudi (2020), which also found no statistically significant differences in learning motivation based on gender. However, the results of this study differ from those of Hamri Sarah's (2012) study, which found statistically significant differences between the genders in motivation for learning, and Yusuf Qatami's (1993) study, which indicated that the gender variable had a statistically significant effect on learning motivation.

This suggests that the level of learning motivation among students is similar, given the equal application of teaching strategies to both genders. Motivation is a critical factor in explaining behavior, as no behavior occurs without motivation behind it. It plays a decisive role in learning, whether internal or external. Among the factors that may explain the lack of gender differences in motivation are family and personal factors experienced by both genders.

**Conclusion:**

The results of this study indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between academic self-concept and motivation for learning among fourth-year middle school students. This means that students' perceptions of themselves as academic learners are linked to their motivation for learning.

In addition, the study found statistically significant differences in academic self-concept between genders, favoring males. This suggests that students' academic self-concept is significantly influenced by their gender.

Furthermore, no statistically significant differences were found between genders in their motivation for learning, indicating that the level of learning motivation among students is not significantly affected by gender.

These are the results reached by the study based on the available data, theoretical concepts, and the reviewed previous studies. It is important to note that these results depend on the studied sample and may only be generalizable to that specific group. Further research may be needed to confirm the validity of these results and their generalizability to other samples and groups of students.

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