



RESEARCH ARTICLE

DIMENSIONS OF SELF-CONCEPT AND ITS GENDER DIFFERENCES IN YOUNG STUDENTS OF PSYCHOLOGY AT THE AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF CAMPECHE

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ABSTRACT

Self-concept can be defined as a set of perceptions that the subject has about himself, perceptions from the private experiences of each individual, and from the consideration and testimony he receives from significant people who are close to He: family, school, same (Calleja, 2005). A social order of representations around gender allows individuals to perceive themselves and others by virtue of concepts and stereotypes endowed with a certain degree of consistency. It is evident that the attitude that has towards itself has a powerful influence in the adjustment, personal well-being and its professional development; Thus constituting a frame of reference through which the individual interacts with the world, which affects his way of thinking, feeling and behaving. It has been proven that the person who has a realistic, integrated, extensive and adapted self-concept generally behaves in a healthy, trusting and constructive way, because he feels less threatened by difficult tasks, people and situations, he relates better, he perceives Reality more correctly and is more respectful of herself and others. Therefore, the objective of this study is to know the dimensions of self-concept and the gender differences existing among new students in the Degree in Psychology of the Autonomous University of Campeche, Mexico. The method used was a descriptive, non-experimental study, since there was no active manipulation of any variable, but rather observed these variables as they occur naturally, without intervening in their development. We worked with a sample of 127 students of new admission to the Degree in Psychology, denominated basic area in the Autonomous University of Campeche. It is made up of 81 (64%) women and 46 (36%) men, between 18 and 21 years old, of low socioeconomic level. They were applied as instrument, the questionnaire of Self-concept form 5 (AF5), by Musitu and García (2001). The results obtained from the group of 46 men (36%) in the averages of the self-concept dimensions were: academic work (average 55.13), social (average 77.95), emotional (average 59.21), family (average 35.37), and physical (60.94); And in the group of 81 (64%) women, presented the following averages: academic work (average 52.64), social (average 41.05), emotional (average 54.64), family (average 63.78) and physical (mean 56.68). Because we can conclude that there are significant differences between genders in two of the dimensions of self-concept valued as men obtain higher levels of physical self-concept and women stand out in family self-concept. Men have a much higher perception of themselves in social self-concept than women, among the possible explanations of the differences is the construction of gender in society where differential expectations are especially accentuated. In contrast to previous data, women reach higher levels of family self-concept than men, we may think that there is a different treatment received from parents, in the sense that the behavior of women within the household can meet the expectations of parents. There are no significant gender differences in emotional self-concept, physical self-concept, psychological self-concept, and global self-concept. We can conclude that gender theory explains that because women's undervalued position in the historical, economic, socio-political and cultural context is the reason why women present lower levels of self-concept than their male counterparts.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study delves into the analysis of gender differences regarding levels and factors of self-concept. At the same time, it is an approximation to understand how the construction of gender is intimately related to cultural and identity aspects that may or may not facilitate academic

achievement. Throughout history, the term self-concept, in general, has been given, and still given, different interpretations, without sometimes being able to delimit with precision and clarity the terms and areas that are handled. Self-knowledge in itself is a theory, it is what the person believes of himself and feels about himself, although what he creates and feels does not correspond with reality and, as a function of it,

behaves. Hence most authors interpret self-concept globally, as an integrated set of factors or attitudes related to the self, which would be: cognitive (thoughts), affective (feelings) and conative (behaviors); That of considering them individually, perhaps, could be identified as follows: the first factor as self-concept proper, the second as self-esteem and the third as self-efficacy (Ramírez Salguero, 1997). It is important to emphasize that self-concept functions as a mediator in the process of social information, since the concept of self is involved in all aspects of the social information process. Self-concept is not innate, but is built and defined throughout development by the influence of different experiences, which the individual has in their relationship with the social, school, family, etc. environment. But at the same time, it is also the result of the achievements and failures experienced. The main sources that affect the formation of the attitudes towards itself are: the feed-back of the significant ones; Successes and failures; Social comparison and attributions about the causes of behavior. Self-concept is a reality learned, acquired and modified through social exchanges. It is organized through three levels: the known Self (what the individual perceives to be himself), the other Self (what others think of him) and the ideal Self (what I wish to be). According to Markus and Wurf (1987), there must be harmony in at least two of the three elements that constitute self-concept, since if they were discrepant, they could cause a state of cognitive imbalance. The harmony between the constituent elements of self-concept not only allows people to form an image of themselves, but also to establish a sense of identity. Consequently, self-concept is a reflection of one's perceptions of how it appears before others; Is the process that people follow to get to know each other, so it is done through a cognitive process. The only way to get to know yourself is through the process of leaving yourself and seeing yourself from the point of view of others. Axpe and Uralde (2008) point out that it was from the 1980s onwards with the study by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) that self-concept is considered from a multidimensional and hierarchical perspective, according to Which the general self-concept would be structured in several domains (academic, personal, social and physical) each of which would be divided into more specific dimensions. Nowadays, the multidimensional nature of self-concept is proven, that is, self-concept is a constructor with several dimensions, that is, it has a general evaluation of oneself, but at the same time different specific self-evaluations and the factors that influence each one of them. they. In addition, it was a construct with a hierarchical organization from a general dimension, being that the dimensions are related, according to the model of Marsh and Shavelson (1995), validated by Byrne and Shavelson (1986) and reviewed by Marsh (2005).

### **Non-Academic Aspect**

**Physical Dimension:** Physical appearance - Physical skills.

**Social Dimension:** Assessment received (external source) - Relationships between equals and significant others  
Competition in highly valued domains - Social Skills

**Psychological Dimension:** Expectations - Provisions and personal control (internal source) Attributions

Family dimension  
Academic Aspects  
Verbal Dimension

Understanding - Expression

Logical-Mathematical Dimension

The study of gender differences in self-concept within the multidimensional perspective has gained considerable interest in recent decades. The results of these studies, most of them conclude that there are clear gender differences in self-concept. Some authors argue that gender differences can be confusing, especially when several measures of self-concept are transformed into a global self-concept through the sum of the same or when the instruments favor children; In addition, considers that they may be due to gender stereotypes. In recent research on the influence of gender on the levels of self-concept and self-esteem, he states that in some previous studies the results had been quite contradictory. However, it suggests that the most consistent differences were found in areas such as ability or physical appearance, where men showed higher levels than women. Examining age and gender differences in global, academic, physical, and social self-concept in a group of students aged 12 to 18 years, we found results that indicated significant differences with respect to gender. Males scored significantly higher on global and physical self-concepts while girls scored significantly higher on social self-concept. No differences were found between boys and girls regarding academic self-concept. On the contrary, others found significant differences between the sexes in academic self-concept and educational aspirations, so that girls presented lower levels than their male counterparts. Gabelko (1997)

Padilla Carmona, M., García Gómez, S. and Suárez Ortega, M. (2008) their results show that subjects have a positive self-concept not only in general but also in the facets considered. Gender differences are appreciated, although not all are significant. Thus, the boys stand out in the emotional, physical, social and global self-concept, whereas the girls do it in the familiar and academic planes. In terms of relationships. Among the variables involved, it is emphasized that the physical self-concept is the facet that has a higher correlation with the global and academic self-concept, indicating the relevance that the physical image has in the construction of identity. In the face of future research, the need to deepen the evolution of gender differences in relation to self-concept from preadolescence to adulthood is suggested. In Mexico, Salum-Fares, et al. (2012) explored the existence of significant differences in levels of general self-concept and its dimensions (academic, social, emotional, family and physical) among students from public and private schools, using AF5 Self-Concept Questionnaire Form 5 (García y Musitu, 2001). The results obtained indicated that, overall, students' scores on the general self-concept scale were higher in the male gender than in the female. And there were only significant differences in male physical self-concept. The research questions that emerged were: What are the dimensions of self-concept that predominate in the university according to gender? Are there gender differences in autoconcepto? Therefore, the present study aims to know the dimensions of self-concept and gender differences among new students in the Degree in Psychology of the Universidad Autónoma de Campeche, Mexico. At the same time, it is an approximation to understand how The construction of the genre is intimately related to cultural and identity aspects that may or may not facilitate achievement in the academic field. The hypothesis proposed here proves in this research that there are significant differences of gender in the dimensions of self-concept and in global self-concept.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic variables of the sample**

Subjects	Gender		Age		Civil Status				Occupation							
	Female		Male		Female		Male		single		married		Est. / Est/Emp			
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
127	81	64	46	36	18	2/12	19	1/12	124	98	3	2	118	93	9	7

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Due to the characteristics of the sample and the objective of the research, this is a descriptive, non-experimental study, since there was no active manipulation of any variable, but rather observed these variables as they occur naturally, without intervening in its development. The sample of the study was formed by 127 students of new entrance to the Degree in Psychology of the Autonomous University of Campeche. The sample consisted of 81 (64%) women and 46 (36%) men, aged between 18 and 21 years, with the mean age of women being 18 years, 2 months and mean age of Men 19 years, 1 month; Low socio-economic level; Of civil status 124 (98%) are 3 unmarried, 3 (2%) are married and, finally, 127 students (93%) are only students and have no occupation, also 12 (7%) are employees / students. The variables used in this research were considered as dependent variable global self-concept, Academic self-concept, Social Autoconcept, Family Self-concept, Physical self-concept and Emotional / Psychological self-concept; And as independent variable was the genus (See table 1). In order to measure self - concept, the Self - Concept Questionnaire Form - 5 (AF5), made by Musitu and García (2001), was used as instrument. In line with Shavelson's (1996) multidimensional self-concept theoretical model, who describes, among other characteristics, hierarchical organization from a general dimension. It consists of 30 items with no time limit, although the normal is between 8 and 15 minutes, approximately, for its realization, and its application extends from childhood to adulthood. It addresses the study of self-concept from a multidimensional perspective and evaluates 5 basic dimensions of self-concept, obtaining independent scores on five factors: Academic Autoconcepto that refers to the subject's perception of the quality of his or her performance as a student or [as a worker , Social Self-concept that measures the perception that the subject has about their competence in social relations, Physical Self-concept which refers to the perception of the subject of his physical appearance and physical condition, Emotional Self-concept is the perception that Has the subject about their emotional state and their responses to specific situations, with a certain degree of commitment and involvement in their daily life, Family Self-concept that is the perception that has the subject of their involvement, participation and integration in the family environment. Each dimension is measured with 6 items, which allows to measure with a single instrument the main dimensions of self-concept (Grandmontagne and Fernández, 2004).

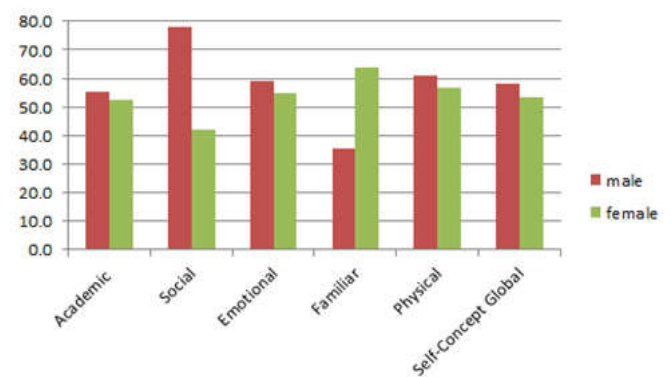
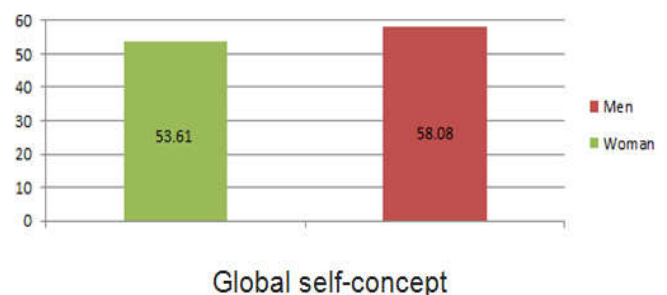
In addition to adding a global self-concept index that represents the sum of the scores of the five dimensions of the self-concept. We applied to the 127 new students of the degree in Psychology the Self - Concept Questionnaire Form - 5 (AF5) of Musitu and García (2001), to the total sample of students, was qualified and for the analysis of the data was performed A test of difference of means to contrast the hypotheses raised was determined a level of significance of 0.05.

## RESULTS

The results of the self-concept and the differences of the means of self-concept in relation to gender are presented below. Table 2 and graph 1 show the averages of the dimensions of self-concept. In the group of 46 men (34%), the means were: academic self-concept at work (mean 55.12), social self-concept (mean 77.94), emotional self-concept (mean 59.21), family self-concept (mean 35.37) and physical self-concept Mean 60.94). In the group of 81 women (64%), the means presented were: academic self-concept at work (mean 52.64), social self-concept (mean 41.95), emotional self-concept (mean 54.64), family self-concept (mean 63.78) and self-concept Physical (mean 56.68).

**Table 2. Statistical values of the dimensions of self-concept between the women and men group**

Variables	Group	N	Media	Estandar Deviation
Self-Concept Academic Work	female	76	52.6444	22.5550
	male	51	55.1251	19.7374
Social	female	76	41.9556	24.2178
	male	51	77.9459	15.6807
Emotional	female	76	54.6444	22.8819
	male	51	59.2162	23.2834
Familiar	female	76	63.7889	24.2522
	male	51	35.3784	20.7690
Physical	female	76	56.6889	26.8465
	male	51	60.9459	25.8306
Self-Concept Global	female	76	53.6189	15.1358
	male	51	58.0838	11.3411

**Graphic 1. Values of the means of self-concept dimensions for the group of men and women****Graphic 2. Values of measures of global self-concept for the group of men and women**

The difference of means of the dimensions in the men and women groups, there are statistically significant differences ( $p < .05$ ) found that men have a greater Social self-concept ( $t = 10.168$ ;  $sig. = .000$ ). The difference in means is statistically significant in women in the family self-concept ( $t = 6.243$ ;  $sig. = .000$ ). In graph 2, it shows the results with respect to the average of the score of the global self-concept obtained, in the group of the men a mean was obtained 58.08, and the group of the women obtained an average of 53.61. We can observe that the differences of the means are similar in their composition so it is not statistically significant the differences of the means. ( $P > 0.05$ ) as well as in the dimensions of academic self-concept, physical self-concept and emotional self-concept.

## DISCUSSION

First of all, the hypothesis raised in the research is verified, since there are significant differences in the dimensions of self-concept. Men have a much higher perception of themselves in social self-concept than women, among the possible explanations of the differences is the construction of gender in society where, above all, differential expectations are accentuated together with their ability to relate with each other and establish social relationships. In contrast to previous data, women reach higher levels of family self-concept than men, we may think that there is a different treatment received from parents, in the sense that the behavior of women within the household can meet the expectations of the parents; It is the girls who feel more integrated, spend more time with the family and more support in activities at the family level. This result coincides with the one made by Amezcua and Pichardo (2000), in which the group of girls reaches higher levels of family self-concept. This same author comments on how important it would be to analyze why the family self-concept tends to be higher in the girls when, in the other facets considered, the boys have higher scores. As Amezcua and Pichardo (2000) suggest, the differences could be justified by the different treatment received from the parents. However, there are also studies that contradict these data and are the results of some studies reviewed by Wilgenbusch and Merrell (1999), where children obtain significantly higher levels in self-concept or relationship with parents than girls. There are no significant gender differences in physical, academic, emotional and global self-concept, however, men score higher than women. Both girls and boys have a good perception of academic performance, an adequate image of themselves as to their appearance and physical constitution.

Their overall scores of both sexes present differences between girls and boys, a difference that is not statistically significant. Coinciding with the work of Rodríguez (1982) where there are no significant differences in global self-concept between boys and girls. According to Salum-Fares (2012), the scope of results may indicate trends in culturally determined beliefs and self-perceptions by gender. It could indirectly suggest how women perceive themselves in relation to their male counterparts, the effect of the advances women have experienced in the decade in relation to status and social position. In contrast to investigations that establish differences in favor of boys in global self-concept, consistent with the results obtained in multiple investigations (Bracken, 1992, Miller, 1979, Orenstein 1994, Rothenberg 1997, Wilgenbusch and Merrell, 1999), where girls achieve significantly lower levels of male self-concept in global self-concept, especially since adolescence where a decline in their image begins, which

may be due to factors related to gender stereotypes (Crain, 1996; 1989). The fact that women have lower levels of self-concept than their male counterparts is explained by gender theory because of women's undervalued position in the historical, economic and socio-political context. Amezcua, J.A and Pichandro, M. (2000), states that it is easier to modify the facts of nature (biological) than those of culture. That is, it is easier to rid the woman of the "natural" need to breastfeed, than to get the husband to give the bottle. The transformation of socio-cultural facts is often much more arduous than that of natural events; However, ideology assimilates the biological to the immutable (which does not change) and the sociocultural to the transformable. From social psychology, explanatory models of the observed differences emerge, while the importance of self-concept in the social performance, status and psychosocial well-being of men and women, and the existence of a self-perpetuating dynamics of differences are highlighted. I would add the sociocultural level of the place where he took the student who is a province where the macho image still prevails. The results obtained in this research opens new perspectives of study focused on dimensions of the self-concept that until they had not received enough attention in the level of Higher Education. Confirming that although there were no significant differences in global self-concept, if it existed in its dimensions of social self-concept in male and female self-concept in female.

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