

Research Paper :

## Impact of friendship patterns on self-concept of urban adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to assess the impact of friendship patterns on self-concept of urban adolescents (14-17 years). The study was based upon a sample of 200 adolescents (100 boys and 100 girls) drawn equally from four randomly selected schools of Ludhiana city. The results revealed that in males the dimensions of friendship like acceptance and respect were positively significantly correlated to the social domain of self-concept as well as the total self-concept. But, overall friendship was not significantly related to self-concept. In females, overall friendship showed a significant positive correlation with total self-concept. Adolescence is the period of psychological and social transition between childhood and adulthood, when a child moves from dependency to independency in his behaviour. The time is identified with dramatic changes in the body, along with developments in a person's psychology and academic career (Soundar, 2005). Friends in adolescence play a very important role in shaping the behaviour of a person. Teenagers stress on two characteristics of friendship. The first and most important is intimacy. Adolescents seek psychological closeness and mutual understanding from their friends. Secondly, teenagers want their friends to be loyal. A capacity to form close, intimate friendship during adolescence is related to overall social and emotional adjustment and competence. Sharing of confidence and emotional support seem to be more vital to female friendship than to male friendship during adolescence and throughout life (Papalia, 2001). High psycho-socially mature boys are more self-confident, more individualistic; their friendships are more intimate and also show greater empathy towards their parents. On the other hand, psycho-socially mature girls express themselves freely, are less self-conscious and focussed more on discovering who they are (Josselson, 1994).

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Self-concept is the totality of a complex, organised and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinion that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence (Purkey, 1988). The importance of self-concept is that it determines behaviour; it has a selective effect on perceptions. Once established, the self-concept thereafter provides a screen through which everything else is seen, heard, evaluated and understood. Development of self-concept depends on many factors. But some researches put forth experimental evidences which suggest that, "someone's perception, that he or she has a personal identity or 'self' appears to be inherent biological potentialities to the extent that human may share this capacity with other species. However, development of this potentiality depends on a certain amount of social experience with other members of society (Gallup, 1970).

The self-concept plays a critical role in general psychological adjustment among adolescents. With regard to sex differences both girls and boys show very similar patterns of development, however, girls do experience somewhat more intense and prolonged disturbance on the self-concept in early adolescence. The important social

changes in adolescence include increased peer group influence, more mature patterns of social behaviour, new social groupings and social acceptance.

With the arrival of adolescence, several new dimensions of self-concept are added *i.e.* close friendships, romantic appeal and job competence. Furthermore, adolescents rely on parents, teachers and friends for the validation of their self-concept. Adolescents are very pre-occupied with being liked and viewed positively by others. Close friends assist each other in exploring options by providing emotional support and role models of identity development (Josselson, 1994). Therefore, the present study intends to assess the impact of friendship patterns on self-concept of urban adolescents.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted on urban adolescents, drawn from four government Senior Secondary (co-educational) schools randomly selected from Ludhiana city. The sample consisted of 200 adolescents (100 girls and 100 boys) in the age range of 14-17 years from middle socio-economic strata, belonging to nuclear and intact