

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT  
OF ACADEMIC ABILITY AND ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES OF SECONDARY  
LEVEL SCHOOL CHILDREN IN SRI LANKA AND  
THE FRAME OF REFERENCE EFFECTS ON IT**

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### Abstract

The present study investigated the relationship between self-concept of academic ability and academic achievement measures of Sri Lankan secondary level school children and the frame of reference effect on this relationship. Accordingly the main objective of the present study was to find out the relationship between prior academic achievement measures and subsequent self-concept of academic ability of Sri Lankan secondary level school children and to find out how the different frames of reference used by students to evaluate their academic achievement measures mediate this relationship. The study was expected to reveal the psychological influence that academic achievement has specially the influence on the formation of self-concept of academic ability which is considered to be an important educational outcome and an important factor that contributes to the other desirable educational outcomes.

For the investigation basically the correlational research method was applied. For the sample, 1928 secondary level school children from 31 Sinhala medium government schools in the Southern province of Sri Lanka were selected. The stratified random cluster sample method was adapted to select them. Data collection was conducted at two stages. First, School Based Assessment measures and year end test marks of year 2001 were collected as academic achievement measures. Then the self-concept of academic ability scale developed by the present investigator was administered during January 2002, to collect self-concept of academic ability measures.

Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient, specially partial correlation coefficient was calculated between self-concept of academic ability and the value of

academic achievement measures which were determined by comparing academic achievement measures with the following frames of reference:

1. The academic achievement measures of other students
2. Expected achievement level or criterion levels
3. The past academic achievement level
4. The achievement level of other subject areas

The finding shows a significant and high correlation between self-concept of academic ability and academic achievement measures when the value of academic achievement measures were determined by comparing them with criterion levels. The correlation between self-concept of academic ability and norm referenced value of academic achievement measures is low and for some subject areas it is not significant. The results do not show a significant correlation between self-concept of academic ability and academic achievement measures when the value of academic achievement measures were determined by comparing them with previous achievement levels and achievement levels of other subject areas. This pattern can be seen for both school based assessment measures and year end test marks. However, the correlation between self-concept of academic ability and school based assessment measures tend to be lower than the correlation between self-concept of academic ability and year end test marks. School type or gender do not seem to be factors effecting the correlation but grade level has some effect on the correlation between the two variables. For higher grade levels the correlation seems to be higher. Another important finding is that for practical subject areas the correlation between the two variables is lower and it is higher for more





theoretical subject areas. The findings show a high influence of academic achievement measures on the formation of self-concept of academic ability.

Recommendations are made on ways and means to enhance the self-concept of academic ability of students. Specially it is recommended to use different types of assessment methods rather than formal tests, and different frames of reference rather than expected achievement levels (criterion levels) for evaluating students' abilities. The need to raise the validity and reliability of academic achievement measures which may avoid the formation of unrealistic academic self-conceptions is also recommended.