



**SOCIAL BONDS AND SELF PERCEPTION: EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND SELF CONCEPT IN YOUTH**

¹Namya Sisodia, Bachelors In Arts, Applied Psychology, Amity Institute Of Psychology And Allied Sciences, Noida, India

namya0613@gmail.com

²Dr. Shivani Bhambri, Assistant Professor, Amity Institute Of Psychology And Allied Sciences, Noida, India

sbhambri@amity.edu

Abstract

The study aimed to investigate the correlation between social connectedness and self-concept among youth. The primary aim was to explore the correlation between these two psychological constructs and to discern whether social connectedness and self-concept are positively correlated with each other. A total sample size of 152 participants, aged between 15- 25 years was collected. The sample was chosen using random sampling. The data analysis revealed a significant correlation coefficient of ($r=.029$), indicating a positive correlation between social connectedness and self-concept in youth. This outcome suggests that higher levels of social connectedness is associated with higher levels of self-concept. These findings provide valuable

insights into the importance of fostering and enhancing social connectedness among young individuals as a potential strategy for mitigating self-concept.

Keywords: *Social connectedness, self-concept, self-esteem, youth*

Introduction

Social connectedness plays a crucial role in shaping one's self-concept. It provides validation and feedback, which can strengthen confidence and self-esteem. Comparing oneself to others in social circles can inspire self-improvement, while negative comparisons can lead to feelings of inadequacy and lower self-esteem. A positive self-concept relies on strong acceptance and belonging, which is provided by strong social ties. Social roles, such as friends, family members, and co-workers, also influence our self-concept. Success in these roles can improve our sense of purpose and competence. The development of one's self-concept is influenced by social interactions and relationships, which offer validation and feedback. An individual's self-perceptions, self-esteem, and general self-concept can be influenced by how others see them and react to them.

A good self-concept and sense of identity can be fostered by feeling welcomed and belonging to social groupings. Social behaviour, interpersonal connections, and the capacity to form connections with others can all be impacted by an individual's self-concept. Confident and positive individuals are more inclined to communicate and build lasting relationships. However, those with fragile or negative self-concepts may struggle to make and maintain social bonds. The feedback loop between self-concept and social connectedness can reinforce each other, with strong social ties helping to develop a more positive self-concept. Conversely, a lack of social ties or bad experiences can result in a more negative self-concept, making it harder to make new social connections in the future.

Paiva et al., (2021) examined the individual and combined effects of social connectedness and social engagement on cognition. The researchers found that higher levels of social engagement and social connectedness are linked to better cognition. Additionally, individuals with prominent levels of both social engagement and social connectedness demonstrate the highest cognitive scores. Social connectedness and a positive self-concept are correlated with better psychological well-being, higher self-esteem, and more life satisfaction. Negative self-concept and a lack of social connection can exacerbate psychiatric conditions like anxiety, despair, and low self-worth. Interventions targeting enhancing one's sense of self or social connectedness can be beneficial for overall mental health and wellbeing.

Social Connectedness

Individuals experienced a sense of closeness and connection when they engage in social activities. There are relationships exchanges and supportive connections that people have within their social networks and groups that define their nature. One's sense of social belonging is the way in which they feel connected to social networks and networks. As, a vital component of psychological health, it has been linked to various benefits.

On the other hand, the feeling of belonging is the recognition that one is a respected and accepted member of societal or organizational groups. In the concept of supportive connections, the ability to have reliable friends who can provide moral emotional and practical support defines the ability. Interpersonal relationships are a key factor in maintaining sociability. A strong relationship with family and romantic partners can increase acceptance and connection. The connections provide companionship, mental stability, and a sense of responsibility to others. Having a network of support is one of the most important factors in feeling socially connected.

Begun et al., (2018) explored the relationship between social connectedness, self-efficacy, and mental health within the homeless youth population. It suggested that both social connectedness and self-efficacy are beneficial protective factors. However, social connectedness has a more significant role, especially in mitigating complex challenges. Individuals who can help you with practical needs like running errands during illness or providing emotional support during difficult times or simply offering wise words give you a sense of comfort and closeness. Secondly, the social integration and social connectivity have correlation. According to research, the social integration process is a measure of how much a person is actively involved in multiple social circles and activities. If a person continues to participate in social relationships and maintain their current relationships, then they seem more connected to others. When social relationships begin to consolidate, the person's sense of belonging and the number of people around them who he can trust increases. This means that if a person feels connected, then the activity should continue and maintain a close space.

According to the study conducted by Henderson and Guy (2016), the results indicated that students who show improvements in their sense of social connectedness tend to have better relationships with their teachers and a reduced likelihood of facing additional suspension. Dang (2014) studied how social connectedness and self-esteem impact resilience among homeless youth who have experienced maltreatment and founded that homeless youth with stronger social connectedness and higher self-esteem tended to report lower levels of psychological distress. Even after accounting for other factors, self-esteem remained a significant predictor of better mental health.

Self- Concept

Self-concept is how you see yourself. It includes one's thoughts and feelings about their strengths and weaknesses, appearance, values, and goals. A key concept in psychology is self-concept, sometimes referred to as self-schema or self-identity. It is the internal representation of who they are, made up of a variety of ideas about their traits, experiences, values, and identity. It involves developing cognizant view of persons values, beliefs, feelings, abilities, intellectual, capacity, educational status, socio-economic status, emotional that make part of his/her traits and characteristics (Abdinoor & Ibrahim, 2019).

Self-concept can change over time as one experience new things and learns more about themselves. It is important to have a positive self-concept because it can affect how the way they feel about themselves and how one interacts with others. So, it is important to understand what self-concept is and how it can impact their life. Self-concept is not fixed and can change over time. It is based on past experiences, present circumstances, and future aspirations. When one has a positive self-concept, individual tend to feel confident, happy, and content with who they are. On the other hand, a negative self-concept can lead to self-doubt, low self-esteem, and feelings of worthlessness.

Batool, Ajmal and Abid (2018) investigated the relationship between self-esteem and self-concept in youth. They found that there is a slightly significant positive correlation between self-concept and self-esteem among university students. Additionally, there was a significant difference in self-concept scores, but not in self-esteem scores. It was concluded that there is a positive relationship between self-concept and self-esteem. Self-concept is shaped by several factors, including individual's upbringing, culture, society, and subjective experiences. It can also be influenced by how others perceive them and the feedback an individual receives from them.

To have a healthy self-concept, it is important to practice self-compassion, self-awareness, and self-acceptance. Parts of the self-concept include self-image (One's perception of their abilities, personality, and physical attractiveness), Self-esteem (The evaluative aspect of self-concept that expresses a person's total sense of acceptance and worth in themselves) and Self-knowledge (The mental aspect comprising a person's attitudes, beliefs, and ideas about themselves). Self-concept can be formed through the early interactions with peers, caretakers, and the environment help shape a child's early self-concept, Sociocultural elements like family, culture, and society norms have an impact on it and important life events, other people's opinions, and self-analysis all influence how a person's self-concept forms and changes over time.

Rationale of the Study

Examining the relationship between social connectedness and self-concept among youth is crucial to understand the influence of the bonds formed between peers, family members and community in the shaping their self-concept. This study seeks to explore the intricacies of this dynamic, specifically investigating how social connectedness influences self-perception among the youth. The relevance of this study is underscored by the increasing prevalence of mental health issues and identity crises among adolescents, conditions that are often linked to their social environments and how they perceive themselves within these contexts. Studies have showed that strong bonds can enhance self-concept and overall mental well-being.

Conversely, poor social connectedness is often associated with a range of psychological distresses, including low self-esteem and identity confusion. Through this study, one can gain insight on how to guide parents, educators, and policymakers in creating supportive social

frameworks that encourage positive self-development among adolescents. This study is timely and essential, particularly in an era where digital interactions are supplementing traditional social constructs, thereby redefining the very fabric of social connectedness.

Research Gap

Despite research on the effects of social relationships on psychological well-being, there remains a notable gap in understanding how different types of social bonds (such as familial ties, friendships, and romantic relationships) distinctly influence the self-concept among youth. Additionally, while existing studies have often focused on the quantity of social interactions, less attention has been given to the quality of these interactions and how they shape self-perception in diverse socio-demographic groups. The dynamic nature of self-concept calls for more longitudinal studies to track changes over time in relation to evolving social networks. There is also a lack of comprehensive research exploring the moderating role of digital social connections, which are increasingly prevalent among youth, on the relationship between real-world social connectedness and self-perception. This gap is significant, given the rising influence of social media on young people's social and psychological development. Furthermore, not much study has been done on how interpersonal bonds in culture and community affect the formation of an individual self-concept. Developing thorough interventions and support plans suited to the requirements of young adults requires addressing these gaps.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine the correlation between social connectedness and self-concept among youth.

Hypothesis

There will be a significant positive correlation between social connectedness and self-concept among youth.

Sample

A total sample size of 152 participants, aged between 15- 25 years were collected from NCR, Delhi.

Measures

The following scales were used to measure social connectedness and self-concept among young adults. The measures used were reliable and valid.

- **Social Connectedness:** It was developed by Lee and Robbins (1995). Social connectedness questionnaire assesses individuals' perceived connectedness with others. It consists of 20 items measuring various aspects of social interaction, support, and belongingness, with respondents rating their agreement or frequency of experiences on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6. It aims to gauge an individual's sense of belonging, integration, and social support within their social networks.

- **Self-Concept:** Goñi, Madariaga, Axpe & Goñi (2011) developed the Personal Self-Concept Questionnaire (PSQ). The goal of the research was to develop a more concise measure that accurately captured the essence of total self-concept. There are 18 statements in the questionnaire, broken down into 4 subcategories: Self-satisfaction, Independence, Sincerity Sentimental self-perception. Participants rate the assertions on a scale of one to five, where one represents "Totally Disagree" and five represents "Totally Agree."

Procedure

The participants were briefed on the research's purpose and completed the questionnaires in an offline setting. Each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardized psychological tests were administered to them.

Analysis Of Data

Results

TABLE 1

N, Mean and Standard Deviation

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
ID	152	76.50	44.023
gender	152	1.72	.452
Social Connectedness	152	78.22	15.372
Self-concept	152	58.64	6.056
Valid N (listwise)	152		

TABLE 2*Correlations between social connectedness and self-concept*

		Social Connectedness	Self-concept	gender
Social Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	1	.029	-.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.722	.646
	N	152	152	152
Self-Concept	Pearson Correlation	.029	1	.178*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.722		.028
	N	152	152	152
gender	Pearson Correlation	-.038	.178*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.646	.028	
	N	152	152	152

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion Of Results

The aim of the research was to examine the relationship between social connectedness and self-concept among youth. It was revealed that there is a positive correlation between social connectedness and self-concept among youth, with a correlation coefficient of ($r=.029$). This indicates that as social connectedness increases, so does level of self-concept also increase among young individuals. It proves our hypothesis that there will be a positive correlation between social connectedness and self-concept among youth. The results revealed a positive correlation ($r=.029$) between social connectedness and self-concept among youth. Though, the results revealed a weak positive correlation ($r=.029$) between these two constructs, suggesting a minimal or negligible association between social connectedness and self-concept in the

sample. The positive correlation emphasizes the importance of social relationships in influencing youth's self-concept.

A significant identity development and formation of social connections are the major characteristics of youth. Youth's affiliation to supportive social environments may lead to high social well-being and positive attitude towards oneself. On the other side if young people feel socially isolated or neglected it can result in negative self-evaluations and low self-esteem. At this point in life, they are creating their identities; therefore, a bigger part of their own concept is derived from their own interpersonal links/personal contacts with others around them (Erikson, 1968). Sociability inclusion by friends as well as broader networks may contribute to develop one's self-worth positively. Otherwise, feeling socially excluded or rejected among peers will result into negative evaluations and reduced self-confidence (Leary, 2005). Moreover, the modest correlation coefficient implies that while there is a statistically significant relationship between social connectedness and self-concept, other factors may also contribute to individuals' self-perception. These could include personal experiences, cultural influences, and individual differences in coping mechanisms and resilience (Baumeister, 1999; Harter, 1999).

Future studies could benefit from employing more nuanced measures that explore different dimensions of social connection (e.g., quality of friendships, family support) and self-concept (e.g., academic self-concept, social self-concept). It is important to recognize the constraints of the present investigation, nevertheless. First off, it is impossible to prove a causal relationship between social connectivity and self-concept because of the correlational character of the research methodology. Subsequent investigations utilizing experimental or longitudinal methods may offer more profound understandings of the direction of interaction between these factors. Furthermore, because the study's primary focus was children, it's possible that the conclusions don't apply to other demographics or age groups. Future research might examine

how social connectivity and self-concept relate to one another in various cultural contexts and developmental stages.

Conclusion

The study was aimed to explore the relationship between social connectedness and self-concept among youth. A total sample of 152 participants were collected in age 15-25 years of age. A positive correlation between social connectedness and self-concept among youth, with a correlation coefficient of .029 was founded. This states that nurturing strong social relationships is crucial for fostering positive self-perception among young individuals. As youth navigate the difficulties of identity formation and social integration, efforts to promote a sense of belonging and connection within social networks may have far-reaching implications for their overall well-being.

Limitation

However, this research cannot prove cause and effect, and the tools used to assess social bonding and self-views may not wholly capture youth's complex experiences. Furthermore, while social connectedness shapes self-concept, other unexplored factors could also notably influence self-perception, like personal journeys, cultural backgrounds, and individuals' coping abilities and resilience.

Future Recommendation

In addition, further research is necessary to explore potential moderating factors such as gender, age, cultural background, and personality traits which may impact the correlation

between social connectedness and self-concept. This could facilitate the development of targeted interventions that cater to different sub-groups of youth.

REFERENCES

- Abdinoor, N. M., & Ibrahim, M. B. (2019). Evaluating Self-Concept, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy and Parental Support As Predictors Career Maturity of Senior Secondary Students From Low Income Environment. *European Journal of Education Studies*.
- Ajmal, A., Batool, A., Abid, S., & Iqbal, H. (2018). Self-concept and self-esteem among adults. *Peshawar Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences (PJPBS)*, 4(2), 237-246.
- Baumeister, R. F. (1999). The nature and structure of the self: An overview. *The self in social psychology*, 1-20.
- Begun, S., Bender, K. A., Brown, S. M., Barman-Adhikari, A., & Ferguson, K. (2018). Social connectedness, self-efficacy, and mental health outcomes among homeless youth: Prioritizing approaches to service provision in a time of limited agency resources. *Youth & Society*, 50(7), 989-1014.
- Choi, S., Williams, D., & Kim, H. (2020). A snap of your true self: How self-presentation and temporal affordance influence self-concept on social media. *New Media & Society*, 1461444820977199.
- Dang, M. T. (2014). Social connectedness and self-esteem: Predictors of resilience in mental health among maltreated homeless youth. *Issues in mental health nursing*, 35(3), 212-219.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). Identity: Youth and crisis. W.W. Norton & Company
- Fatima, M., Niazi, S., & Ghayas, S. (2017). Relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety: Role of social connectedness as a mediator. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 15(2), 12-17.

- Henderson, D. X., & Guy, B. (2017). Social connectedness and its implication on student–teacher relationships and suspension. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 61(1), 39-47.
- Leary, M. R. (2005). Sociometer theory and the pursuit of relational value: Getting to the root of self-esteem. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 16(1), 75-111.
- Paiva, A. F., Cunha, C., Voss, G., & Matos, A. D. (2023). The interrelationship between social connectedness and social engagement and its relation with cognition: A study using SHARE data. *Ageing & Society*, 43(8), 1735-1753.
- Peters, S., Van der Crujisen, R., Van der Aar, L. P. E., Spaans, J. P., Becht, A. I., & Crone, E. A. (2021). Social media use and the not-so-imaginary audience: Behavioral and neural mechanisms underlying the influence on self-concept. *Developmental cognitive neuroscience*, 48, 100921.
- Roney, C., & Soicher, H. M. (2022). Work and well-being: collective and individual self-concept, job commitment, citizenship behavior, and autonomy as predictors of overall life satisfaction. *The journal of social psychology*, 162(4), 423-434.
- Servidio, R., Sinatra, M., Griffiths, M. D., & Monacis, L. (2021). Social comparison orientation and fear of missing out as mediators between self-concept clarity and problematic smartphone use. *Addictive Behaviors*, 122, 107014.