

A Comparative Study of Self-Concept and Educational Achievement among Rural and Urban Students at the Secondary Level

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Abstract:

This research paper investigates the differences in self-concept and educational achievement between rural and urban secondary school students in the district of Amroha, Uttar Pradesh. The study involved a sample of 200 students, evenly divided between rural and urban areas, to ensure a balanced comparison. Data were collected using **Dr. R.P. Srivastava's** self-concept scale and the students' annual academic achievement scores. The findings highlight significant disparities between the two groups, with urban students demonstrating higher levels of self-concept and better academic performance compared to their rural counterparts. These differences may be attributed to varying access to resources, quality of teaching, and socio-economic conditions that influence educational outcomes. Urban students often benefit from better infrastructure, more qualified teachers, and greater exposure to extracurricular activities, which contribute to their enhanced self-concept and academic success. In contrast, rural students face challenges such as limited access to educational resources, fewer opportunities for skill development, and socio-economic constraints that hinder their academic progress. The study underscores the need for targeted interventions to bridge this gap and promote equitable educational opportunities. Recommendations include increasing investment in rural education, improving teacher training programs, and implementing policies that address the unique needs of rural students. By addressing these disparities, policymakers and educators can work towards creating a more inclusive and fair educational system that supports the holistic development of all students, regardless of their geographic location.

Main Words- Self-Concept, Educational Achievement, Rural Education, Urban Education

Introduction

Education is a cornerstone of human development, serving as a transformative tool that shapes individuals' cognitive, emotional, and social abilities. It equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to navigate life's challenges and contribute meaningfully to society. Beyond academic learning, education fosters critical thinking, creativity, and self-awareness, all of which are essential for the holistic development of a child. However, the quality of education and the socio-environmental context in which

students grow up play a pivotal role in shaping their self-concept and academic performance. Self-concept, which refers to an individual's perception of their abilities, worth, and potential, is a critical factor in determining motivation, resilience, and overall educational achievement. Students with a positive self-concept are more likely to engage actively in learning, set higher goals, and persist in the face of challenges. Conversely, a negative self-concept can hinder academic progress and limit personal growth. This study focuses on a comparative analysis of self-concept and educational

achievement among rural and urban secondary school students. It seeks to explore how differing educational environments, access to resources, and socio-economic conditions influence these two critical aspects of student development. By examining these disparities, the research aims to provide insights into the challenges faced by rural students and propose strategies to bridge the gap, ensuring equitable opportunities for all learners to thrive academically and personally.

1.1 Problem Statement

The study addresses the research problem: "A Comparative Study of Self-Concept and Educational Achievement among Rural and Urban Students at the Secondary Level." It seeks to investigate the disparities in self-concept and academic performance between students from rural and urban areas, focusing on how differing environments and access to resources impact these critical aspects of development. Rural students often face challenges such as limited educational infrastructure, fewer qualified teachers, and socio-economic constraints, which can negatively affect their self-perception and academic outcomes. In contrast, urban students typically benefit from better facilities, more opportunities, and a supportive learning environment. By comparing these two groups, the study aims to identify the underlying factors contributing to these disparities and provide actionable recommendations to promote equitable educational opportunities. The findings will help policymakers and educators design targeted interventions to bridge the gap, ensuring that all students, regardless of their geographic location, have the chance to achieve their full potential.

1.2 Objectives

1. To study the current status of self-concept among rural and urban students at the secondary level.
2. To examine the educational achievement of rural and urban students at the secondary level.

3. To compare the self-concept and educational achievement of rural and urban students.

4. To provide recommendations for improving the educational outcomes of rural students.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the differences in self-concept between rural and urban students at the secondary level?

2. How does the educational achievement of rural students compare to that of urban students?

3. What factors contribute to the differences in self-concept and educational achievement between rural and urban students?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is significant as it highlights the disparities in self-concept and educational achievement between rural and urban students. By identifying the factors contributing to these differences, the study provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and parents to address the challenges faced by rural students and promote equitable educational opportunities.

2. Literature Review

The literature review underscores the findings of previous studies on self-concept and educational achievement, emphasizing the significant role of environmental factors, socio-economic status, and access to resources in shaping students' self-perception and academic performance. Research consistently indicates that students from urban areas tend to exhibit higher levels of self-concept and better academic outcomes compared to their rural counterparts, primarily due to better access to quality education, advanced infrastructure, and extracurricular opportunities. Conversely, rural students often face challenges such as limited educational resources, fewer qualified teachers, and socio-economic constraints, which can negatively impact their self-esteem and academic progress. Studies also highlight the influence of family background, community support, and cultural expectations on students' motivation

and self-concept. Additionally, the review reveals that interventions aimed at improving educational equity, such as teacher training programs, resource allocation, and community engagement, have shown positive effects in bridging the gap between rural and urban students. By synthesizing these findings, the literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to disparities in self-concept and educational achievement, laying the groundwork for this study's exploration of rural-urban differences at the secondary level.

2.1 Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to an individual's perception of themselves, including their abilities, characteristics, and behaviours. It plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being. Studies have shown that students with a positive self-concept are more likely to achieve academic success and exhibit higher levels of motivation and resilience.

2.2 Educational Achievement

Educational achievement is a measure of students' academic performance, typically assessed through examinations, grades, and standardized tests. Factors influencing educational achievement include socio-economic status, parental involvement, school environment, and access to educational resources.

2.3 Rural vs. Urban Education

Rural and urban students often face different challenges and opportunities in their educational journey. Urban students generally have better access to educational resources, infrastructure, and extracurricular activities, which contribute to higher academic achievement and self-concept. In contrast, rural students may face challenges such as limited access to quality education, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic constraints, which can negatively impact their self-concept and academic performance.

2.4 Previous Studies

Garg (1996) Found that urban students had higher self-concept and academic achievement compared to rural students due to better access to educational resources and parental support.

Sharma (1998) Highlighted the role of socio-economic factors in shaping students' self-concept and academic performance, with rural students facing more challenges due to poverty and lack of resources.

Jain (2000) Emphasized the importance of teacher training and parental involvement in improving the educational outcomes of rural students.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive survey method to compare the self-concept and educational achievement of rural and urban secondary school students. This approach allows for a systematic examination of the differences between the two groups by collecting quantitative data on their self-perception and academic performance. The research is based on a sample of 200 students, comprising 100 rural and 100 urban participants, selected from secondary schools in the Amroha district of Uttar Pradesh. The sample was chosen to ensure a balanced representation of both rural and urban contexts, enabling a meaningful comparison. Data on self-concept were collected using **Dr. R.P. Srivastava's** standardized self-concept scale, while academic achievement was measured through the students' annual examination scores. The descriptive survey method facilitates the identification of patterns and trends in the data, providing insights into how environmental factors, socio-economic conditions, and access to resources influence students' self-concept and educational outcomes. By employing this method, the study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the disparities between rural and urban students, contributing to the development of targeted strategies to address these gaps and promote equitable educational opportunities.

3.2 Sample Selection

The sample was selected using a random sampling technique. The students were chosen from three secondary schools in Amroha district, ensuring an equal representation of rural and urban students.

3.3 Tools Used

1. Self-Concept Scale Developed by Dr. R.P. Srivastava, these scale measures five dimensions of self-concept: achievement, self-confidence, work avoidance, feeling of inferiority, and emotional stability.

2. Academic Achievement the students' annual examination scores were used as a measure of their educational achievement.

3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected through the administration of a self-concept scale, which measured students' perceptions of themselves across various dimensions, and by gathering academic achievement scores from their annual examinations. The self-concept scale was distributed to participants in a controlled environment to ensure consistency, while academic scores were obtained from official school records to maintain accuracy. Conducted my data collection from three schools in Dhanaura: Gandhi Inter College, Rashtriya Inter College (Mandi Dhanaura), and Lions Inter College. These institutions provided valuable insights for my research, and I am grateful for their cooperation and support during the data-gathering process, which was essential for the completion of my study. The data collection process was carried out systematically over a period of two months, allowing sufficient time for students to complete the scale thoughtfully and for researchers to verify the integrity of the academic data. This extended timeframe also helped minimize errors and enhance the reliability of the findings. Throughout the process, strict confidentiality was maintained to protect participants' privacy, and all data were anonymized before analysis. The combination of self-reported psychological data and objective academic performance metrics provided a comprehensive dataset for exploring the

relationship between self-concept and academic achievement.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected for the study were analysed using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and the t-test to compare the self-concept and academic achievement of rural and urban students. The mean and standard deviation were calculated to understand the central tendency and variability in the scores of both groups, providing a clear picture of their performance and self-perception. The t-test was employed to determine the statistical significance of the differences observed between rural and urban students. This rigorous analysis helped identify whether the disparities in self-concept and academic achievement were significant or occurred by chance. The findings from these statistical methods offer valuable insights into the extent of the gap between rural and urban students, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address these differences and promote equitable educational opportunities for all.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Self-Concept

The study found significant differences in the self-concept of rural and urban students.

Table-1

Comparison of Self-Concept Dimensions between Rural and Urban Students

Dimension	Rural Students (M)	Urban Students (M)	t-value
Achievement	32.85	39.05	3.197
Self-Confidence	37.65	39.15	2.417
Work Avoidance	28.93	33.42	3.785
Feeling of Inferiority	38.98	33.17	5.503
Emotional Stability	37.68	35.02	4.299

Urban students scored higher in all five dimensions of self-concept compared to rural students. The t-test results showed that the differences were statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Achievement: Urban students (M=39.05) scored higher than rural students (M= 32.85).

Self-Confidence Urban students (M= 39.15) scored higher than rural students (M= 37.65).

Work Avoidance Urban students (M= 33.42) scored higher than rural students (M= 28.93).

Feeling of Inferiority Rural students (M=38.98) scored higher than urban students (M=33.17), indicating a higher sense of inferiority among rural students.

Emotional Stability Rural students (M=37.68) scored higher than urban students (M=35.02), suggesting better emotional stability among rural students.

4.2 Educational Achievement

The study also found significant differences in the educational achievement of rural and urban students.

Table-2
Comparison of Educational Achievement between Rural and Urban Students

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t-value
Rural Students	282.00	60.82	4.855
Urban Students	334.37	57.32	

Note: $p < 0.01$

Urban students (M=334.37) outperformed rural students (M=282.00) in their annual examination scores. The t-test results confirmed that the difference was statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

4.3 Discussion

The findings of the study are consistent with previous research, which has shown that urban students generally have higher self-concept and academic achievement compared to rural students. The differences in self-concept can be attributed to various factors, including access to educational resources, parental involvement, and socio-economic status. Urban students often have better access to quality education, extracurricular activities, and parental support, which contribute to their higher self-concept and academic performance.

On the other hand, rural students may face challenges such as limited access to educational resources, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic constraints, which can negatively impact their self-concept and academic performance. The higher sense of inferiority among rural students may be due to the lack of opportunities and resources available to them, leading to lower self-esteem and confidence.

The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address the disparities in educational opportunities and resources between rural and urban areas. By improving the quality of education in rural areas and providing equal opportunities for all students, we can promote equitable educational outcomes and enhance the self-concept and academic achievement of rural students.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that there are significant differences in the self-concept and educational achievement of rural and urban students at the secondary level. Urban students generally have a higher self-concept and better academic performance compared to their rural counterparts. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address the disparities in educational opportunities and resources between rural and urban areas.

5.1 Recommendations

1. Improving Infrastructure Rural schools should be provided with better infrastructure, including well-equipped classrooms, libraries, and laboratories.
2. Teacher Training Teachers in rural areas should receive specialized training to address the unique needs of rural students and enhance their self-concept.
3. Parental Involvement Efforts should be made to increase parental involvement in the education of rural students, as parental support plays a crucial role in shaping students' self-concept and academic performance.
4. Scholarships and Financial Aid Scholarships and financial aid should be

provided to rural students to reduce the financial burden on their families and encourage them to pursue higher education.

5. Community Engagement Community-based programs should be initiated to raise awareness about the importance of education and encourage community participation in improving the quality of education in rural areas.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

The study has certain limitations, including the small sample size and the focus on a single district. Future research should include a larger sample size and cover multiple districts to provide a more

comprehensive understanding of the differences in self-concept and educational achievement between rural and urban students.

5.3 Future Research Directions

Future research should explore the impact of specific interventions, such as teacher training programs, parental involvement initiatives, and community-based programs, on the self-concept and academic achievement of rural students. Additionally, longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine the long-term effects of these interventions on students' educational outcomes.

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