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Self-Concept: Evidence of Students in Araling Panlipunan of Junior High School Students in Sulangon District, Schools Division of Dapitan City

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to determine the self-concept of Junior High School students in Araling Panlipunan in the Sulangon District, Schools Division of Dapitan City, during the School Year 2023–2024. A descriptive survey research design was employed, involving 220 respondents. Data were analyzed using frequency count percentage, weighted mean, standard deviation, and the Kruskal–Wallis H-Test, with JAMOVI as the statistical software. Results showed that almost half of the respondents were female, most were aged 13–16 years, they were fairly distributed across different grade levels, and the majority had a family income of ₱10,000 or below. The overall level of self-concept was *moderate.* A significant difference in self-concept was found when respondents were grouped according to gender, but no significant differences were observed when grouped according to age, grade level, or family income. Based on these findings, it is recommended that the Department of Education (DepEd) top officials, through the Human Resource and Development Division at various governance levels, use the study's results as valuable input for training and development programs aimed at enhancing learners' self-concept. School heads are encouraged to consider these findings when providing technical assistance to teachers, while teachers may use them as a resource for reflection to improve lesson delivery and foster students' self-concept.

KEYWORDS: Demographic profile, self-concept, Junior High School students, Dapitan City, Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

Understanding differences in self-concept among Junior High School students necessitates close attention to key demographic variables such as gender, age, and socio-economic status. Research from the Philippines shows that female students often report higher academic self-concept in certain subjects, while males may show stronger self-concept in others (Pedro, Enriquez, & Santos, 2019). Age-related trends also emerge—in international studies, younger adolescents (ages 12–13) often have more positive self-concept trajectories compared to older peers experiencing academic pressure (Kim & Park, 2021). Socio-economic background plays a consistent role, with students from lower-income households sometimes demonstrating lower global and academic self-concept (Lopez, Hernandez, & Cruz, 2020). These findings underscore the importance of exploring how demographic characteristics shape self-concept, particularly in local contexts like Dapitan City.

The construct of self-concept is multifaceted, encompassing academic, social, emotional, and physical domains, each potentially influenced by demographic factors. In the Philippine context, scale-development studies have validated culturally appropriate tools that capture these domains among adolescents (Garcia, Medina, & Panganiban, 2018). Comparative studies in nearby regions—such as Zamboanga del Norte and neighboring provinces—reveal that female JHS students tend to score higher on social self-concept, whereas academic self-concept differences across genders can be subject-dependent (Torres, Valdez, & Aquino, 2022). Additionally, research suggests that older students (14–16 years old) report declining self-concept in academic domains, likely tied to curriculum demands (Salazar, Reyes, & Mariano, 2017). Together, these works point to domain-specific and demographic-specific patterns that need local validation in Dapitan City.

Dapitan City's schooling environment between 2016 and 2025—shaped by rural-urban characteristics, variable household incomes, and shifting educational modes during the pandemic—provides a unique backdrop for examining demographic differences in self-concept. Local statistics indicate a diverse mix of socio-economic profiles across barangays, with many households classified as low-income and differing levels of parental education (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020; DepEd Division of Dapitan City, n.d.; CityPopulation, 2024). However, few studies in Dapitan or similar component cities have examined

how these demographic factors distinctly affect overall or domain-specific self-concept among junior high learners. Most existing Philippine literature focuses either on scale validation or regional aggregates rather than city-level demographic disparities (Garcia et al., 2018; Torres et al., 2022; Salazar et al., 2017).

There is a noticeable research gap in spite of more general regional findings: no study has explicitly examined the ways in which demographic characteristics (gender, age, and family income) affect junior high school pupils' self-concept in Dapitan City between 2016 and 2025. Important background information is provided by national demographic statistics and educational records, but there are no localized studies that connect student-level demographics with patterns of self-concept. Closing this gap will provide specific insights for Dapitan educators and politicians, enabling more adaptable teaching methods and student assistance for a range of demographic groups.

II. LITERATURE

Self-concept

The foundation of human personality is one's self-concept. It refers to the entirety of people's opinions of their academic, social, and physical proficiency. It is the person's self-perceptions, the collection of traits, qualities, and limitations, as well as the values and relationships that the subject is aware are indicative of him (Rady et al., 2016). The significant improvement of the unique proportional influence of self-concept and self-esteem on students' academic performance indicates that when students invest effort in their daily learning activities, they are more likely to assimilate the material taught, ultimately improving their academic outcomes (Laryea et al., 2014). Self-concept plays a crucial role in academic performance, influencing how students perceive themselves and approach their studies. A strong self-image often leads to greater engagement and resilience in the face of challenges. When students believe in their abilities, they are more likely to participate actively in their education and confront obstacles with confidence. Conversely, a negative self-view can hinder academic progress and diminish motivation (Yussif, 2024).

Self-concept is defined as an individual's cognitive appraisal of their own expectations, descriptions, and prescriptions. Self-concept refers to a person's assessment of his or her own strengths and limitations. Self-concept consists of three aspects: self-image (what one is), ideal self (what one aspires to be), and self-esteem (how one perceives the gap between their current and desired self) (Emmanuel et al., 2014). Academic self-concept refers to students' attitudes, perceptions, and enjoyment of school-related subjects or lectures. During childhood and adolescence, pupils' self-perception is crucial for adjusting to school and focusing on academics (Jaiswal & Choudhuri, 2017). Self-concept and achievement are related and are reciprocal. It has been found that psychological factors like self-concept play a major role in determining the academic achievement of students (Chamundeshwari Kumari, 2013).

Self-concept is the foundation of human personality. It relates to people's overall perceptions of their physical, social, and academic competence. Personal identity refers to a person's perceptions of themselves, including their characteristics, attributes, qualities, limitations, values, and relationships that they believe describe them (Rady, Kabeer, & El-Nady, 2016). Self-concept can be defined as a perception that every person has of himself or herself. Personality development includes understanding one's identity and place in the world. Self-concept is defined as a set of perceptions or reference points that the subject has about himself, including characteristics, attributes, qualities and deficiencies, capacities and limitations, values, and relationships that the individual recognizes as descriptive of himself and perceives as data about his identity (Laryea et al., 2014).

Demographic Profile

Adolescent self-concept shows systematic differences by **s**ex and age, with patterns that vary by domain (academic, social, physical) and cultural context. Large cross-national surveys during the COVID-19 era found gendered differences in psychosocial outcomes—female adolescents reported greater school-related stress and emotional difficulties that can negatively affect self-evaluations, while gender gaps in specific self-concept domains depend on social and cultural norms (Wang et al., 2021). Developmental and longitudinal work indicates that self-concept changes nonlinearly across adolescence: some domains decline during school transitions or with increasing academic pressure, and age-related trajectories differ between boys and girls (van der Cruijsen et al., 2023). Neuroscience-informed reviews emphasize adolescence as a sensitive period for self-concept development, shaped by maturational and social factors that interact with sex and age to produce differing self-views across cohorts (Crone, Van Drunen, & Van Drunen, 2024).

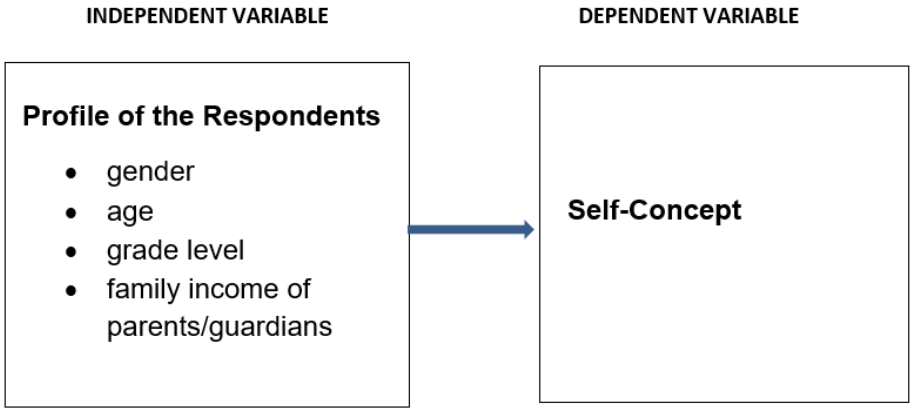
Household economic resources also shape adolescents' self-concept, both directly and through mediators such as parental support, learning opportunities, and psychosocial resources. Life-course analyses show that cumulative exposure to low family income is associated with lower subjective well-being and self-evaluation in adolescence, suggesting long-term effects of early economic disadvantage on self-concept (Gariepy et al., 2017). Empirical studies in East Asian contexts find that objective and

subjective family socioeconomic status predict learning engagement and psychosocial assets (e.g., resilience, future orientation), which in turn support stronger academic and global self-concept (Chen, Jiang, & Liu, 2021). Recent work further indicates that family SES influences adolescent self-esteem and self-concept both directly and indirectly via psychosocial mediators (e.g., perceived social standing, school resources), underscoring the importance of accounting for family income when examining demographic differences in self-concept (Li, Xiao, & Song, 2024).

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is illustrated in the figure below. **Part I** presents the respondents' demographic profile, categorized by gender, age, grade level, and family income. **Part II** focuses on the dependent variable—self-concept—which is measured using twenty-nine (29) validated items.



Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to examine the demographic profile of Junior High School students and its influence on their self-concept in *Araling Panlipunan* in the Sulangon District, Schools Division of Dapitan City, during the School Year 2023–2024.Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
   - 1.1 gender;
   - 1.2 age;
   - 1.3 grade level;
   - 1.4 family income of parents/guardians?
2. What is the respondents' perceived level of self-concept?
3. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' level of self-concept when analyzed according to profile?

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the respondents' level of self-concept when analyzed according to profile.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed survey and descriptive research methods. The survey method was used to collect data on self-concept through a structured questionnaire. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) define a survey as a research method for gathering data from a predefined group of respondents to obtain information and insights on various topics of interest. Similarly, Check and Schutt (2012), as cited by Bongcawel (2024), describe it as a method of collecting information from a sample of individuals based on their responses to specific questions.

The target population consisted of 505 Grade 8, 9, and 10 Junior High School students enrolled in *Araling Panlipunan* in the Sulangon District, Schools Division of Dapitan City, during the School Year 2023–2024. Using the Raosoft sample size calculator, a sample of 220 students was determined. Simple proportionate sampling by lottery was applied to distribute the sample across grade levels. Finally, simple random sampling was employed to ensure each student had an equal chance of being selected.

Research Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study comprised two parts. **Part I** gathered the respondents' demographic profile, including gender, age, grade level, and parents'/guardians' family income. **Part II** measured self-concept using twenty-nine (29) items adapted from Tus (2020).

Statistical Treatment of the Data

Presented below are the statistical tools utilized in the treatment and analysis of the data gathered.

Frequency Counting and Percent. They are used to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, grade level, and family income.

Weighted Mean. This is used to quantify the respondents' ratings on the self-concept. Presented below is the scoring guide in giving qualitative descriptions and interpretation of the responses of the items in self-concept.

Self-Concept

Scale	Range of Values	Description	Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Agree	High
3	2.61-3.40	Neutral	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Disagree	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Standard Deviation. This is used to determine the homogeneity and heterogeneity of the respondents' scores where SD ≤ 3 is homogenous and SD > 3 is heterogeneous (Aiken & Susane, 1991; Refugio et al., 2019).

Kruskal-Wallis H-Test. This is used to test the difference in self-concept, self-esteem and academic performance when respondents are grouped in terms of gender, age, grade level, and family income.

Data presentation and analysis

The data are presented following the statement of the problems of the current study. The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.3 gender;
1.4 age;
1.3 grade level;
1.4 family income of parents/guardians?

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	84	38.18
Female	103	46.82
LGBTQ+	33	15.00
Total	**220**	**100.00**

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of gender. The data avers that 46.82% of the respondents are females, 38.18% are males, and 15% declared to be LGBTQ+. This means that almost half of the grade 8 to 10 learners in Sulangon District, Schools Division of Dapitan City are females. The current finding is consistent with Dajuela et al. (2024) study, which indicated that the majority of the respondents are females.

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
12 years old & below	1	0.46
13-16 years old	212	96.36
17 years old & above	7	3.18
Total	**220**	**100.00**

Table 2 manifests the profile of the respondents in terms of age. The result states that a majority (96.36%) of the respondents are 13-16 years old, 3.18% are 17 years old and above, and 0.46% are 12 years old and below. This finding can be attributed to the Kindergarten and K to 12 Laws which require a Filipino child to be in the kindergarten at the age of 5 years old. Thus, when this learner reaches grades 8 to 10, he/she will be 13-16 years old. The present finding is consistent with Dajuela et al. (2024) study, which revealed that the most represented are between 14-16 years old (73.0 %) and the least represented are those over 17 years old (1.7%).

Table 3. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Grade Level

Grade Level	Frequency	Percent
Grade 8	66	30.00
Grade 9	71	32.27
Grade 10	83	37.73
Total	**220**	**100.00**

Portrayed in Table 3 is the profile of the respondents in terms of grade level. The outcome claims that 37.73% are grade 10, 32.27% are grade 9, and 30% are grade 8. This finding indicates that the respondents are almost equally distributed to grade levels. This finding can be associated with the sampling technique employed, which is stratified or proportional sampling. The recent finding is consistent with Dajuela et al. (2024) study, which showed that that the majority of the respondents are grade 10 (34.1%).

Table 4. Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Family Income

Family Income	Frequency	Percent
5,000 & below	79	35.91
5,001-10,000	50	22.73
10,001-15,000	29	13.18
15,001-20,000	26	11.82
20,001 & above	36	16.36
Total	**220**	**100.00**

Table 4 displays the profile of the respondents in terms of family income. The output shows that 35.91% of the respondents have family incomes of 5,000 and below, 22.73% within 5,001-10,000, 16.36% 20,001 and above, 13.18% 10,001-15,000, and 11.82% 15,001-20,000. This finding implies that the majority (58.64%) of the respondents have family income of 10,000 and below. The latest finding contradicts Casas (2023) study, which suggested that majority of Grade 12 students in Maguikay National High School belong to low-income (but not poor) family earners that have a total salary between P9,000 to P19,000 pesos monthly.

2. What is the respondents' perceived level of self-concept?

Level of Self-Concept

Table 5. Respondents' Perceived Level of Self-Concept

Self-Concept	AWV	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. I am too often afraid.	2.96	1.14	Neutral	Moderate
2. I am good-looking.	3.38	1.14	Neutral	Moderate
3. I often get into trouble.	2.21	1.16	Disagree	Low
4. I feel left out of things.	2.89	1.09	Neutral	Moderate
5. I am good at my schoolwork.	3.38	1.07	Neutral	Moderate
6. I cry easily.	3.18	1.44	Neutral	Moderate
7. I have a pleasant face.	2.98	1.12	Neutral	Moderate
8. I get into a lot of fights.	1.93	1.19	Disagree	Low
9. I am among the last to be chosen for games.	2.80	1.20	Neutral	Moderate
10. I am unhappy.	2.47	1.29	Disagree	Low
11. My classmates in school think I have good ideas.	3.41	1.15	Agree	High
12. I am nervous.	2.97	1.30	Neutral	Moderate
13. I have nice hair.	3.15	1.26	Neutral	Moderate
14. In school I am a dreamer.	3.24	1.30	Neutral	Moderate
15. My classmates make fun of me.	3.15	1.39	Neutral	Moderate
16. I am cheerful.	3.62	1.11	Neutral	Moderate
17. I can give a good report in front of the class.	3.03	1.04	Neutral	Moderate
18. I get nervous when the teacher calls on me.	3.45	1.30	Agree	High
19. My looks bother me.	3.08	1.33	Neutral	Moderate
20. I do many bad things.	2.48	1.25	Disagree	Low
21. It is hard for me to make friends.	2.62	1.34	Neutral	Moderate
22. I am lucky.	3.19	1.23	Neutral	Moderate
23. I am an important member of my class.	2.90	1.18	Neutral	Moderate
24. I am shy.	3.18	1.43	Neutral	Moderate
25. I am strong.	3.60	1.15	Agree	High
26. I behave badly at home.	2.73	1.25	Neutral	Moderate
27. In games and sports, I watch instead of playing.	3.26	1.41	Neutral	Moderate
28. I am often sad.	2.72	1.15	Neutral	Moderate
29. I forget what I learned.	3.17	1.24	Neutral	Moderate
Overall	**3.00**	**0.88**	**Neutral**	**Moderate**

Table 5 reflects the respondents' perceived level of self-concept. As reflected in the table, the respondents agree that they think they have good ideas and are strong. They are neutral if they are often afraid, good-looking, feel left out of things, good in their schoolwork, cry easily, have a pleasant face, are among the last to be chosen for games, nervous, have nice hair, dreamers, make fun with classmates, cheerful, can give a good report in front of the class, their looks bother them, hard for them to make friends, lucky, important members of the class, shy, behave badly at home, watch games and sports instead of playing, often sad, and forget what they learn. The respondents disagree that they often get into trouble, get into a lot of fights, are unhappy, and do many bad things. Overall, the respondents perceived their self-concept as moderate. This finding signifies that the respondents are still immature and need proper guidance from their parents and teachers. The emerging finding agrees with Tus (2020) study, which concluded that most students generally exhibited a relatively average level of self-concept.

3. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' level of self-concept when analyzed according to profile?

Table 6. Test of Difference in the Perceived Level of Respondents' Self-Concept

Profile	H-Value	p-value	Interpretation
Gender	6.968	0.031	Significant
Age	4.476	0.107	Not Significant
Grade Level	4.985	0.083	Not Significant
Family Income	3.360	0.500	Not Significant

Table 6 reveals the test of difference in the perceived level of respondents' self-concept when the respondents are grouped in terms of profile. Utilizing the Kruskal-Wallis H Test, the outcome affirms that there is a significant difference in the perceived level of respondents' level of self-concept when they are grouped in terms of gender. Thus, the null hypothesis for this variable is rejected. This finding means that the respondents' perception of self-concept is significantly affected by their gender. This further means that how male, female, and LGBTQ+ respondents perceived self-concept significantly differ. However, there is no significant difference in the perceived self-concept when they are grouped in terms of age, grade level, and family income. Thus, the null hypotheses for these variables are not rejected. This finding entails that the respondents have the same perception of self-concept regardless of profile. This finding further entails that the respondents' perception is not significantly affected by their profile. The recent finding contradicts Igbo et al. (2015) study, which showed that gender stereotype has significant influence on students' self-concept and academic performance in favor of the male students. These findings contradict Balba & Caingcoy (2021) study, which revealed that increased gender and age was associated with self-concept. Further indicated that the current finding contradicts Villas (2019) study**,** which showed that grade level was associated with self-concept. Moreover, the current finding is supported by Tortor et al. (2020) study**,** which suggested that financial status was not associated with self-concept.

V. DISCUSSION

The results revealed that the respondents exhibited a moderate level of self-concept and self-esteem, suggesting a balanced but improvable perception of themselves. A significant difference in self-concept was found when grouped according to gender, indicating that male and female students may perceive themselves differently in the context of learning *Araling Panlipunan*. In contrast, no significant differences emerged when respondents were grouped by age, grade level, or family income, implying that these factors did not substantially influence their self-concept. These findings highlight the need for gender-responsive interventions to further enhance students' self-concept.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the respondents demonstrated a moderate level of self-concept. Gender was found to significantly influence self-concept, while age, grade level, and family income showed no significant impact. These findings underscore the importance of considering gender differences in initiatives aimed at improving students' self-concept.

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