DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACADEMIC SELF CONCEPT FOR ADOLESCENTS (ASCA) SCALE

CONSTRUCCIÓN DE UNA ESCALA DE AUTOCONCEPTO ACADÉMICO PARA ADOLESCENTES (AAPA)

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Abstract

Academic self-concept is the perception that a student has about his/her own academic abilities, constitutes one of the most relevant variables in the academic world, because of its influence on learning and cognitive functioning. Self-concept is a general assessment; nevertheless the current measurement instruments used for this construct are specific rather than general. Thus the purpose of this study was to construct and validate an academic self-concept scale with global dimensions, focused on teenager students. In its first stage, an open questions survey was designed to be applied with the intent of knowing the academic activities inside and outside the school. Afterwards, a closed questions survey was applied to a sampling consisting of 347 students ranging 14 to 18 years old from a public high school, east of México City. After obtaining the internal consistency and the items differentiation, a factorial analysis with orthogonal rotation was developed. The results grouped 16 items in 4 factors: self-regulation, general intellectual abilities, motivation and creativity. The scale shows 44.72% of a varying with a global Cronbach Alpha of .828. The present study contributes with an innovative scale with appropriate psychometric features, which globally assesses the academic self-concept.
Key words: Academic self-concept, self-regulation, motivation, creativity, school achievement.

Resumen

El autoconcepto académico es la percepción que un estudiante tiene sobre sus habilidades académicas, constituye una de las variables más relevantes dentro del escenario escolar, pues incide significativamente en el funcionamiento cognoscitivo y en el aprendizaje. El autoconcepto es una valoración global, no obstante, los instrumentos actuales que evalúan este constructo no cumplen con dicha característica, miden dimensiones específicas. De aquí que el propósito del presente estudio fue construir y validar una escala de autoconcepto académico con dimensiones globales para estudiantes adolescentes. En un primer momento se desarrolló un cuestionario de preguntas abiertas con la finalidad de conocer las actividades académicas dentro y fuera de la escuela. Posteriormente se elaboró un cuestionario cerrado. Éste último se aplicó a una muestra de 347 estudiantes de entre 14 y 18 años de edad, de un bachillerato público del oriente de la Ciudad de México. Después de obtener la consistencia interna y la discriminación de reactivos, se realizó un análisis factorial con rotación ortogonal. Los resultados agruparon 16 reactivos en 4 factores: autorregulación, aptitudes intelectuales generales, motivación y creatividad. La escala explica el 44.72% de la varianza, con un alpha de Cronbach global de .828. El presente trabajo aporta una escala renovadora con propiedades psicométricas adecuadas, que evalúa de forma global el autoconcepto académico.
Palabras clave: Autoconcepto académico, autorregulación, motivación, creatividad, logro académico.

Introduction

Academic self-concept is the perception and evaluation that a student has or does about his or her academic abilities (Marsh & Rhonda, 2002). This self-concept is one of the most important variables in the academic domain, due to its significant influence on appropriate cognitive functioning (Santana, Feliciano, & Jiménez, 2009). It directly affects learning processes (Vidals, 2005), academic achievement, and expectations of students (Henson & Heller, 2000). Additionally, it helps to create various cognitive and self-regulative strategies (Zimmerman, 2000), which reflect on academic performance (Campo-Arias *et al.*, 2005; Schunk, Printrich, & Meece, 2008).

Academic self-concept is multidimensional (Shavelson, Hubner, & Staton, 1976). Many studies consider each academic subject area as a dimension, e.g., history, science, mathematics, spanish (Marsh, 1993; Shavelson *et al.*, 1976). However, most research focuses only on spanish and mathematics, setting other taken subjects aside (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985; Plucker & Stocking, 2001). This causes some problems associated with evaluation and self-concept, especially when viewed in adolescents.

First, as individuals grow, the number of dimensions they can handle increases (Campo-Arias *et al.*, 2005; González-Pineda, Núñez, & Valle, 2002; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985); therefore, if only two dimensions are used, evaluation is not thorough. Similarly, it is important to note that each dimension of academic self-concept has a different value and when dimensions are clustered together, a compensation effect among them is shown. Low self-concept in a subject area is compensated for by high self-concept in another one (González-Pineda, Núñez, González-Pumariega, & García, 1997; Marsh, 1993; Shavelson *et al.*, 1976). In consequence, as self-concept is being studied in mathematics and spanish subject areas exclusively, then not only may collected data be biased but the possibilities of discovering potentially compensated dimensions, if any, for these two subject areas are lost.

Bandura (1987) states that self-concept is a global assessment. Nevertheless, currently a strong relation between self-concept in one dimension and its specific subject area can be seen, which indicates that evaluation depends on specific situations (Shavelson *et al.*, 1976). It is clear that, on the one hand, the aim of obtaining a global assessment is not achieved and, on the other hand, the relation between self-concept and academic performance cannot be very close if both constructs are to be differentiated from one another (Palacios & Zabala, 2007).