

THE INFLUENCE OF AGE AND GENDER ON THE SELF-CONCEPT OF
ADOLESCENTS IN PRETORIA

By

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DEDICATION

I, Lerato Raboshakga, hereby declare that this research is a result of my own work and execution, and that to the best of my knowledge I have acknowledged all sources contained herein. This dissertation has been submitted to the University of Pretoria in partial fulfilment of the degree, Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology, and has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other institution.

Signed

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving family for their continued encouragement which has led to the completion of this research project.

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a crucial period of transition from childhood to adulthood, in which significant changes occur in various domains, including physical and hormonal changes as a result of puberty, cognitive changes in understanding how they and others think, as well as socioemotional changes in which adolescents assume new roles connected to their environment. Amongst all the perceptions we experience throughout our lifespan, none have higher meaning than those we internalise concerning our own personal being and our perception of who we are, and where we belong in this world. Self-concept is significant in unravelling how individuals become what or who they are, how individuals change over time as well as their decision-making processes. This study used a cross-sectional research design to explore the influence age and gender have on the global and domain specific self-concept of adolescents in Pretoria. The final sample consisted of 145 black adolescent boys and girls from two schools in the Pretoria area. The main findings suggest that younger adolescents have a higher global self-concept compared to older adolescents, and also scored higher than older adolescents in the social and physical self-concept. The findings further showed a pattern of increase in the global, emotional and social self-concept during early adolescence, a decline during middle adolescence and an increase during late adolescence. With regards to gender, findings indicate that girls scored higher in emotional self-concept compared to their male counterparts. Based on the findings of this study, implications for practice and recommendations are noted.

Key words: Self-concept, Adolescent, Age, Gender, Pretoria, South Africa.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTON

This chapter provides a general introduction into the current study. A brief discussion on the self-concept of adolescents is presented. This is followed by the research problem, aim, objectives and hypotheses that will guide the current study. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the justification of the study.

1.1. Introduction

Self-concept is a complex, intricate and multi-faceted aspect of an individual's personality and has been given ample attention in both psychological theories and empirical research (Baldwin & Hoffmann, 2002; Byrne & Shavelson, 1996; Marsh, 1989; Piers & Herzberg, 2002; Rogers, 1959; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982). Self-concept, according to Byrne (1988), refers to the perception an individual has about him/herself, regarding numerous characteristics, including academic success, physical self-image, peer as well as parental relationships, values, goals, and general self-esteem. Despite decades of research dedicated to the self-concept construct, its development over time as well as the factors that influence it have been elusive. It has been argued by some researchers, for example, that the environment in which a child is raised shapes the child's self-concept, personality and lifestyle in important ways (Chang, 2007), while other studies asserted that mass media (Chaplin & John, 2007) and peer relationships (Greene & Banerjee, 2008; Krcmar, Giles, & Helme, 2008) have the greatest influence on self-concept. Defining oneself during adolescence may therefore be a difficult task as there are many influences on identity formation during this significant period of transition (Rosenberg, 1979).

Adolescents face a multitude of changes during their development that may have an influence on how they view themselves. These changes include simultaneous physical as well as emotional development, the transition from more familiar to new school settings, as well as the commencement of adolescence (Parker, 2010). High school can be viewed as a particularly challenging period for adolescents, as they transition from a more nurturing primary school environment into a new environment requiring them to navigate new relationships as well as familiarise themselves with the changing school standards (Parker, 2010). During this time, young adolescents begin to evaluate themselves as well as their perceived abilities thoroughly by means of both personal self-reflections and strong social comparisons (Rice & Dolgin, 2005). Self-concept is significant in unravelling how individuals become what or who they are, how individuals change over time as well as their decision-making processes (Burns, 1982; Lawrence, 1996). Therefore, non-supportive and uncontainng environments may lead to the formation of inconsistent self-perceptions and evaluations that may in turn result in the development of unhealthy and distorted self-conceptions. Alternatively, consistent supportive interactions may facilitate the development of healthy normal self-conceptions as well as greater prospects for success (Marsh & Craven, 2008).

Amongst all the perceptions we experience throughout our lifespan, according to Purkey (1988), none have higher meaning than those we internalise concerning our own personal being and our perception of who we are, and where we belong in this world. This is due to the significant influence of self-concept on personality formation (Clark, Clemes & Bean, 2000) which, once formed, has a significant influence on the individual's behaviour and way of relating to others (Purkey, 1988).

1.2. Research Problem

Adolescence remains a crucial period of the evolution from childhood to adulthood, in which significant changes occur in various domains (Sanders, 2013). During this period as teenagers continue to grow and mature, they experience physical changes as a result of puberty, cognitive changes in understanding how they and others think, as well as socioemotional changes in which adolescents assume new roles connected to their environment (Bharathi & Sreedevi, 2016). Age and gender may therefore affect how adolescents manage these different experiences at different stages of development. This is partly due to the adolescents' level of cognitive maturity as well as perceived gender-linked stereotypes which are known to guide behaviour (Perry & Pauletti, 2011). This study will therefore examine the influence of age and gender on the self-concept of adolescents in Pretoria.

Human behaviour is influenced by various social forces, which exist in the form of social relationships, religious as well as economic and other institutions (Thio, 2008). Parents are responsible for the socialisation of their children by creating a social structure in which the child can interact with others. It is through these interactions that self-concept is developed (Turner, 2006). Self-concept is considered to be developmental as it gradually becomes differentiated as the individual progresses from infancy to adulthood (Harter, 1999). With increasing age, children come into contact with a broader range of people and environments. They are exposed to new experiences, successes, failures, and reactions from other people that allow them to evaluate their behaviours within each new environment (Bracken & Crain, 1994). These experiences serve as a catalyst for the transformation in attitudes, behaviours and interpersonal relationships, therefore influencing self-concept (Frydenberg, 1997; Harter, 1990).

According to researchers, adolescent self-concept changes in structure and in content as individuals grow and mature (Baldwin & Hoffman, 2002; Bracken & Crain, 1994). Structurally, self-concept becomes more distinguished and organized, which may increase adolescents' ability to use more intricate, abstract and psychological self-descriptions. Furthermore, adolescents' evaluative aspect of self-concept, self-esteem, also evolves throughout these years. Their well-organized self-characterization and heightened self-esteem are significant in that they provide the cognitive basis for the construction of a well-integrated identity (Bracken & Crain, 1994).

Studies have related a high self-concept with positive social development, which includes positive peer relationships and overall happiness (Khan, Gagne, Yang, & Shapka, 2016; Kozina, 2017; Marsh & Craven, 2008), academic achievement (Marsh & Yeung, 1997; Preckel, Niepel, Schneider, & Brunner, 2013; Sánchez & Roda, 2007) as well as physical health (Benyamini, Leventhal, & Leventhal, 2004; Suchert, Hanewinkel, Isensee, 2016). The importance of accurately understanding the development of self-concept among boys and girls across different ages is crucial due to the significance self-concept has on the level of satisfaction in one's life (Marsh & Craven, 2008). Additionally, according to Dailey (2009), psychological development is particularly crucial during the adolescent periods because personality, self-esteem and self-concept are significant outcomes of this period.

The literature on the self-concept of adolescents has a long history among Western researchers. Due to existing socio-cultural differences, findings from these studies cannot necessarily be generalized to adolescents in the South African context. Local studies on self-concept mostly investigate self-concept in relation to parenting and socio-economic status, and are not readily available, with some now dated exceptions being Mboya (1995), Choko (2004)

and Magano (2004). This research will therefore explore the relationship of age and gender to the self-concept of adolescents in the South African context.

1.3. Aim of the Study

The primary aim of the study is to explicate the relationship of age and gender, respectively, to the self-concept of adolescents based in Pretoria.

1.4. Objectives

1.4.1. To determine the relationship between age and self-concept.

1.4.2. To determine the relationship between gender and self-concept.

1.4.3. To explore the various domains of self-concept through the self-concept assessment (Piers-Harris 2).

1.5. Hypotheses

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses will be tested:

Hypothesis 1: Younger adolescents hold a more positive self-concept than older adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: Boys have a higher self-concept than girls.

1.6. Justification of the Study

The relationship between age, gender and adolescent self-concept is important to understand because self-concept is considered to be a critical component of an individual's psychological and socioemotional adjustment throughout the lifespan (Bracken & Crain, 1994). Although self-concept is an important research topic, there are important factors that are often overlooked. Research has found that individual background factors, such as age and gender, have significant influences on the developmental courses of adolescent self-concept (DuBois et al, 2002). This study therefore aims to investigate self-concept in relation to these demographic factors within the context of Pretoria, South Africa.

While there is a considerably great body of research that has investigated self-concept, much of this has approached self-concept as a unidimensional construct, rather than as multidimensional, which has led to a limited view thereof (Leminen, 2002; Marx & Winne, 1980; Mullis, Mullis & Normandin, 1992; Zeleke, 2004). Although literature on the multidimensionality of self-concept is growing (Kozina, 2017; Marsh & Craven, 2008; Sánchez & Roda, 2007; Sarsani, 2007; Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976), much of the research is located internationally, with only a handful of studies having been conducted in African contexts (Magano, 2004; Makhubu, 2014; Marjoribanks & Mboya, 2001; Rebelo, 2004). The present study will therefore take a multidimensional approach to self-concept by investigating the different domains of self-concept to provide a more distinguished representation than studies based on a unidimensional view of self-concept. The premise for this approach is based on the idea that individuals naturally appraise the self differently in diverse areas, providing a profile of their perceived sense of competence across pertinent areas (Harter, 1999; Tubić & Dordić, 2015). Furthermore, searching databases such as Sabinet, Ebscohost and SAGE etc. for studies focusing on the trajectory of self-concept in relation to age and gender in South African yielded few limited search results. Most of the existing South African literature is now limited (Makhubu, 2014), outdated (Mboya, 1999) and investigates self-concept in relation to parenting and other factors. (Choko, 2004; Magano, 2004; Mboya, 1995). This research therefore endeavors to address this gap in the South African literature on self-concept in adolescence. Furthermore, recommendations will be made for further research as well as practice regarding the influence of age and gender on the self-concept of adolescents.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of relevant literature related to the current study. The focus is on self-concept as a construct, its different domains and its development throughout the adolescent period. The factors that influence the development of self-concept are also discussed, as well as theories and studies that provide insight into this phenomenon. Lastly, the theoretical framework chosen for the current study is discussed.

2.1. Defining Self-Concept

Self-concept and its development over time has received ample attention in psychological theories and empirical research (Baldwin & Hoffmann, 2002; Bracken, 1992; Byrne & Shavelson, 1996; Harter, 1990; Marsh & Craven, 1997, 2006; Rogers, 1959; Shavelson et al, 1976). It is a complex construct that has received various definitions over the decades. Despite the abundance of empirical research focusing on it, there is no consensus on a singular definition for the construct, which may be due to the different theoretical perspectives that have been used in elucidating self-concept. Additionally, the difficulty in defining self-concept singularly reflects the fact that it is not a unitary construct, which supports the exploration of self-concept as multidimensional.

Prominent self-concept researchers, Shavelson et al (1976, p. 97), define self-concept as “the perception that each person has about themselves, formed from experiences and relationships with the environment, where significant people play an important role”. Hamacheck (1981) defines self-concept as the set of insights and perceptions that individuals have about themselves; the set of potentials and deficiencies, characteristics, abilities and limits, beliefs and values, and the interpersonal relationships that individuals attribute to be a part of themselves and as information regarding their identity (as cited in Sangeeta & Sumitra,

2012). Alternatively, Rice and Dolgin (2005) have defined self-concept as the overall representation of the manner in which an individual understands or perceives him/herself, his/her personal qualities as well as one's perception of how other people perceive him/her. From these above-mentioned definitions, self-concept is observed to be a collection of positive or negative beliefs, within differentiated aspects, about the self, which are accumulated through one's personal experience. Additionally, it entails how one thinks about him/herself in relation to the environment in which they may be located, where significant people's evaluations play a key role. This study will, however, use the definition of self-concept proposed by Sternke (2010, p.15), who defines the construct as "an individual's general composite or collective views of him or herself across multidimensional sets of domain specific perceptions, based on self-knowledge and evaluation of value or worth of one's own capabilities formed through experiences with and interpretations of the environment."

Despite the lack of consensus regarding a singular definition of self-concept, it is agreed amongst researchers that self-concept entails the perception an individual has about him/herself in a variety of domains and is influenced by a collection of experiences in one's immediate environment (Makhubu, 2014). These perceptions are highly influenced by reinforcements and evaluations from significant societal members from an early age, as well as an individual's own personal ascriptions for their own behaviour (Shavelson et al, 1976).

In the existing literature, terms such as "self-concept", "self-esteem", "self-perceptions", "self-worth", "self-regard", "self-efficacy", and "self-image" are often used to refer to one's feelings and perceptions related to the self (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2001; Sternke, 2010). Of these constructs, self-concept and self-esteem have often been used interchangeably (Marsh & Craven, 2008; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). According to Rice and Dolgin (2005), however, self-esteem is an aspect of self-concept that is concerned with a person's sense of

personal value or sense of self-worth. While self-concept is considered to be a more cognitive process of self-appraisal (Houck & Spegman, 1999), self-esteem is considered as the more affective component of the self as it entails how one feels about who he/she is (Mruk, 2006). Kerig, Ludlow and Wenar (2012) describe self-concept as comprising of two components, namely, the content of self-concept ('What am I like?') and self-esteem ('Do I like who I am?') and can involve both positive and/or negative aspects. Self-esteem, according to Battle (1982), is the perception an individual has about his or her own worth (as cited in Bracken, 1996). It is an evaluative component of self-concept and can be another means of viewing self-concept such that a high self-esteem is more likely to lead to a positive self-concept while, conversely, a low self-esteem is more likely to lead to a negative self-concept.

2.2. The Development of Self-Concept

Self-concept, as a component of personality, develops as adolescents begin to view themselves as unique. An adolescent's self-concept is acquired through learning, as a result of experience with society and the people in it (Purkey & Stanley, 1991; Rodd, 1997). Self-concept is formed as a consequence of children developing and gaining experience through life and attributing meaning to multiple circumstances. Growth and maturity enhance the complexity of a child's self-concept whereby they are eventually able to integrate perceptions of their capabilities (Rice & Dolgin, 2005). Self-concept is therefore a critical component in identity formation which is a significant outcome of adolescence.

Historically, research (e.g., Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003; Marx & Winne 1980; Rosenberg, 1979) has adopted a unidimensional approach to self-concept, viewing it as a representative of a general view of the self rather than conceptualizing it as comprising different facets (Marsh & Craven, 2008). According to Karteroliotis (2008), however, insufficient evidence exists to support the view of a singular, unidimensional self-

concept. Shavelson et al (1976), following a widespread review of the theoretical and empirical literature on self-concept, developed an alternative theoretical model which departs from the initial unidimensional conceptualization of self-concept. Their model proposes a that self-concept consists of seven characteristics: it is organized, multidimensional, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative, and differentiable from other constructs (Crain & Bracken, 1994), such as self-perceptions, self-worth, self-regard, self-efficacy, and self-image (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2001; Sternke, 2010).

Shavelson et al (1976) posited that there exists a general (global) self-concept at the peak of the hierarchy, followed by more specific academic, social, emotional and physical self-concept domains. The academic self-concept can further be divided into subject specific categories, such as, sciences, social studies, mathematics, reading, and so forth. (Parker, 2010). The social self-concept comprises of subdivisions of peer and family self-concept, and the physical self-concept is further divided into physical appearance and physical ability self-concept (Karteroliotis, 2008). Shavelson et al (1976) noted that their proposed domains reflected a feasible depiction of the hierarchical model of self-concept and that the number of domains was not absolute. They asserted that their emphasis was not on the number of the domains of self-concept, but rather on the multidimensionality of the construct.

The global self-concept is determined by the measure of significance that an individual assigns to the specific domains (Sánchez & Roda, 2007; Sarsani, 2007). Global self-concept is defined as the positive or negative attitude or perception about oneself in entirety (Marsh & Craven, 2008; Wolff, 2000). It has been described as fairly stable as it gives consistency to one's personality (Purkey, 1988), although some researchers suggest that it changes gradually as our environments change (Baldwin & Hoffmann, 2002; Shavelson & Bolus, 1981). The specific domains of self-concept are more susceptible to change as they are influenced by self-evaluations, ideas and beliefs, contextual experiences as well as assessments by significant

others (Baldwin & Hoffmann, 2002; Shavelson & Bolus, 1981). Thus, an individual can have a high self-concept in certain domains and alternatively a low self-concept in other domains (Hadley, Hair, & Moore, 2008).

Harter (1999) suggested that competence in the domain-specific self-concept that are valued more by significant others, such as parents and peers, may have a particularly significant influence on the global self-concept. He stated that parents and peers often differ in what they value, suggesting that parents advocate for academic competence and behavioural conduct, whereas peers often focus more on physical and social acumen. Given that peers become increasingly important, developmentally, during adolescence, physical and social self-concept may come correspondingly more to the fore for adolescents therefore potentially playing a larger role in influencing global self-concept at this stage. Previous research on self-concept among different age groups has established that competence in areas that are considered important by individuals themselves is associated with a higher overall self-esteem as opposed to competence in domains considered insignificant (Pawlik & Rosenzweig, 2000). Therefore, it is likely that what significant others and the individuals themselves consider important influences self-concept in varying ways and at different points in time. Thus, if individuals are able to discern between the domains that they value and those that are valued more by their significant others, they can form more accurate global self-concept (Harter, 1999). Although self-concept is regarded as stable, it is nonetheless susceptible to shifts due to changes at the lower levels of the hierarchy, where the domains become more specific (Agrawal & Teotia, 2015). Furthermore, the different aspects of self-concept evolve with age and experience upon exposure to changing environments; self-concept may therefore shift as a function of age, context, experience or other temporal factors.

The multidimensional model of self-concept proposed by Shavelson and colleagues has provided a template for further research on the self-concept construct. In line with this, other

researchers (i.e. Bracken, 1996; Byrne, 1988; Byrne & Shavelson, 1996; Harter, 1996, 1999; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985; Shavelson & Marsh, 1986) have continued to argue for a multidimensional approach to self-concept (Karteroliotis, 2008). There is now a universal consensus among researchers that self-concept is multidimensional and dynamic, and is comprised of a global self-concept, also referred to as self-esteem, and specific domains of self-concept, which represent content in self-concept (Marsh & Craven, 2008; Sánchez & Roda, 2007; Sarsani, 2007). Marsh and Craven (1977) have contended that “specific domains of self-concept allow for a more thorough understanding of the self across contexts, are better able to predict behaviour; better measure for the efficacy of treatment interventions and, provide the best context for integration with other constructs than any global measure of self-concept” (as cited in Marsh, et al, 2005, p. 4). Their argument for a multidimensional approach to self-concept expands the field for researchers to obtain a more holistic view of adolescents’ personal and social selves, while possibly also elucidating their strengths and weakness in different domains. Furthermore, Karteroliotis (2008) postulates that the significant insights gained by researchers will enable them to make recommendations towards the advancement of interventions aimed at enhancing self-concept with the ultimate goal of maximising human potential. For the purposes of the present study, the researcher undertook a multidimensional approach to self-concept as proposed by Shavelson et al (1976).

Sánchez and Roda (2007) assert that the significance of self-concept comes from its prominent role in the formation of one’s personality. Self-concept contributes to various components of a person’s life throughout the lifespan (Sternke, 2010). It plays an imperative role in the development of a person because the way in which an individual perceives him/herself (i.e. self-concept) shapes his/her behavioural patterns (Sarsani, 2007). According to Choko (2004), the manner in which an individual should behave is determined by self-

concept which serves to guide behaviour and enables individuals to adopt particular roles in life and adapt to their environment successfully.

The self-concept construct is also crucial to psychological wellbeing because people who are confident in their capabilities and how they feel about themselves demonstrate increased effectiveness compared to those with low self-concept (Marsh & Craven, 2008). This effectiveness, according to Harter (1999) involves triumph in completing several developmental tasks. This includes academic activities, improved ability to partake in critical thinking, effective problem solving as well as the capacity to contribute to healthy social interactions with others through the exploration and performance of various societal roles (Harter, 1999).

According to Hadley et al (2008), problems and challenges can negatively impact self-concept, and conversely a negative self-concept can also result in problems and difficulties. Individuals with a negative self-concept are generally anxious, vulnerable, lonely and experience difficulties in completing tasks and achieving goals (Burns, 1982; Hadley, et al, 2008; Marsh, & Hau, 2004) Furthermore, these individuals display maladaptive behaviours and emotions and often struggle to resolve issues as they may experience emotional states of uncertainty, lack of competence and inferiority. Alternatively, studies have shown that positive self-concept have been related to positive social development, which includes positive peer relationships and overall happiness (Clark et al, 2000; Marsh & Craven, 2008), academic achievement (Marsh & Yeung, 1997; Sánchez & Roda, 2007) as well as physical health (Benyamini, et al, 2004). Therefore, self-concept may be a significant determinant of psychological wellbeing that has been demonstrated to impact various crucial wellbeing outcomes and can be thought of as influential in the attainment of full human potential (Marsh & Craven, 2008).

2.3. Domain-specific Self-concept

2.3.1. Academic Self-Concept

Academic achievement, according to Sangeeta and Sumitra (2012), is considered to be amid the most challenging cognitive and motivational tasks that adolescents face. Academic competence is significant considering that the school/college/university results obtained influence reactions and appraisals by others (based on positive or negative performance) as well as adolescents' future aspirations (Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012). This suggests that one's level of academic performance may impact self-concept, which may determine how one interacts with others and may also determine how others respond in turn. Furthermore, academic achievement is crucial in how adolescents learn about and explore their abilities and competencies, which greatly influences career aspirations (Mtemeri, 2017).

Despite the abundance of studies investigating the relationship between self-concept and academic success, there are still discrepancies in the description of the association of these variables (Sánchez & Roda, 2007). Some researchers argue that although self-concept is commonly positively correlated with academic performance, self-concept seems to be a consequence of, rather than a precursor to, high achievement (Mboya, 1999). Tajfel and Turner (1986) asserted that this view can be elucidated by the influence of appraisal by significant others or by means of social comparison theory. This suggests that how significant others perceive and respond to one's academic achievements affects how competent an individual feels and, to an extent, performs with regard to this domain. Alternatively, other theorists such as Bandura (1986), and Eccles and Wigfield (1995, 2002) in their theories of motivation argued that individuals' achievement-related behaviours, namely determination, choice and performance are mediated by their conceptions about their own capabilities as well as value-related beliefs. Therefore, in light of this view, other researchers assert that self-concept and academic achievement have a causal and reciprocal relationship (Marsh & Craven, 1997,

2006), suggesting that an increase in self-concept can cause an increase in academic achievement and vice versa. Sangeeta and Sumitra (2012) suggest that as adolescents develop a sense of self-esteem and increased personal control as a result of academic achievement, their ultimate level of achievement is significantly enhanced. This suggests that enhancing the academic skills of learners can potentially facilitate an increase in their academic self-concept rather than the other way round.

The shifts in academic self-concept throughout adolescence have been attributed to the view that growing adolescents re-evaluate their academic capabilities during this period (Parker, 2010). Harter, Whitesell and Kowalski (1992) believe that these re-evaluations are due to changes in peer groups, teachers, parental support as well as motivational constructs associated with the shift from primary school to high school. Entry into high school and the associated increasing focus on future career prospects may also play a role in how adolescents engage their academic competencies, which may depart from primary levels of education where the so-called 'stakes' are not perceived to be as high. During this time of re-evaluation adolescents are possibly vulnerable to positive and negative impacts on their academic self-concept through social comparisons (Eccles & Midgley, 1989).

In a longitudinal study by Chapman, Tummer and Prochnow (2000), a low academic self-concept was identified in learners who displayed poor academic performance. Additionally, adolescents found to have a low academic self-concept had lower reading abilities compared to those with higher academic self-concept. Furthermore, Chapman et al (2000) suggested that negative academic self-concept, over a prolonged period, will inhibit adolescents' capacities to learn and that negative experiences during the influential years of the adolescent period may potentially negatively influence future aspiration choices.

2.3.2. Social Self-Concept

Social self-concept refers to the perception individuals have regarding their role in social interactions (Kozina, 2017). It entails forming and maintaining social relationships, such as friendships, and establishing rapport, and principal qualities for forming personal relationships, such as admiration, respect and cheerfulness. Social self-concept is a vital concept as it influences the interactions adolescents have with societal members, their tactics in conflict resolution, as well as their adaptation to social contexts (Peetsma et al, 2005).

In an attempt to understand adolescent development, specifically the social aspect, Holmeck and Shapera (1999), found that family, peer groups, schools as well as other societal members serve as the interpersonal context in which adolescents develop (as cited in Wolfe & Mash, 2005). According to Hovelmeier (1991), the home environment serves as the foundation for the formation of the social self-concept. Significant others, specifically family, form the core of interpersonal relationships. It is through these relations with the family that children develop character traits and gain the confidence and ability to engage well with others (Hovelmeier, 1991).

Although parents remain important throughout their children's development, socially, friendships become progressively important (Baron, 2002). Adolescents spend the majority of their time at school and, as a result, their experiences in the school context play an increasingly significant role in their social development (Baron, 2002). Adolescents gain increased knowledge through cooperation and working together to solve problems in the school setting which allows them to practice their social skills. This further aids them in forming and maintaining friendships, which become significant during the adolescence period due to adolescents' needs to belong in their quest to form an identity (Baron, 2002). During adolescence, most adolescents become part of wider social networks which consist of friends as well as acquaintances, primarily with members of the same gender, but also with members

of the opposite gender. According to Baron (2005), girls tend to have larger networks compared to boys, and with increasing age, these networks become smaller, which is a trend that continues throughout the lifespan.

Social self-concept has been found to significantly affect adolescents' global self-concept (Burrichter & Walden, 2006; Harter, 1999) because according to Hamacheck (1975), being liked and accepted becomes increasingly important during adolescence. In his study Hamacheck (1975) found that adolescents who experienced acceptance from others exhibited a more favorable perception of themselves compared to adolescents who felt rejected. Furthermore, better relationships with parents, teachers and peers were found in adolescents who felt better affiliated in their environments (Hamacheck, 1975).

According to Steinberg (2005), biological transitions also have an influence on adolescents' social self-concept. Research has shown for example, that both age and gender have an influence on social self-concept. Ullman and Tartar (2001) found that young adolescents place more value on social interpersonal relations, whereas older adolescents value psychological processes such as self-introspection and the beliefs and reflections thereof which, according to Thom et al (1998), makes them more self-aware. In terms of gender, Ullman and Tartar (2001) found that girls valued close relationships with significant others, whereas males valued friendship for the purpose of excitement of competitive behaviours and its instrumentality in achieving their goals. These findings suggest that social self-concept develops gradually as a function of age and gender.

Adolescents encounter certain conflicts throughout their social interactions, which, According to Ponton (1997), involve risk-taking. The results from this study suggest that adolescents form friendships based on common characteristics, which may lead to healthy or unhealthy risk-taking behaviours. The study concluded that the conflicts, challenges and risks

that adolescents encounter during their social interactions shape them in achieving self-awareness and ultimately influences their social self-concept. A positive social self-concept has been associated with psychosocial adjustment and satisfaction, competence in academic achievement, being valued and accepted by peers and teachers, and leads to prosocial behavior (Kozina, 2017). Adolescents with positive social self-concept are those that realize their potential and gain insight into their individual identities (Rosenberg, 1979). They gain this through positive appraisals from societal members and conforming to societal norms and standards. Alternatively, a negative social self-concept has been found to lead to delinquent and aggressive behaviour, and symptoms of depression (Kozina, 2017). James (1910) further asserts that negative social self-concept affect adolescents' social roles as well as their mental and emotional functioning. This can be worsened by negative reactions, statements, behaviours and attitudes by societal members as a result of disapproval for one's attitudes and behaviour.

2.3.3. Emotional Self-Concept

Emotional self-concept is vulnerable during adolescence and refers to adolescents' perceptions of emotional states as well as their emotional and behavioural responses to specific situations (Kozina, 2017). Steinberg (2005) proposed that this stage of affective development is a critical period that entails both opportunities and risks, which occur during the reorganization of the regulatory systems such as body systems during puberty, abilities to feel, think and do as well as social information processing. Brain development facilitates behavioural patterns and self-control which, according to Steinberg (2005), can potentially be reorganized through different nurturing experiences such as physical affection, validation of feelings and so forth. Baumeister and Vohs (2003) suggested that self-control, also referred to as self-regulation, entails the attainment of both resources and efficient skills to regulate

internal emotional processes and behavioural reactions, which leads to the formation of emotional self-concept.

Parents play a significant role in the emotional development of their offspring. The parent-child relationship is developed through the attachment between parent and child (Lian & Han, n.d). According to John Bowlby's attachment theory, the manner in which infants become emotionally attached to their parents influences their socioemotional development and in turn the emotional self-concept (Antonucci, Akiyama, & Takahashi, 2004, as cited in Popov & Ilesanmi, 2015). This theory has been further supported by other studies (Brown & Dutton, 1995; Cohen & Rice, 1997). Children develop internal representations of relationships based on the interactions with their primary caregivers, which they use in maintaining other relationships (Popov, & Ilesanmi, 2015). The caregiver's reactions and responses to the young child as well as the caregiver's ability to provide the child with a comforting and secure environment from which to learn is therefore crucial (Antonucci et al, 2004, as cited in Popov & Ilesanmi, 2015). As children develop, continued positive parental involvement heightens the emotional self-concept of children (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2001). Buri, Kirchner and Walsh (1987) found that parents who are affectionate, supportive and positively evaluate their children provide them with feelings of worth and value, which are the foundations of self-esteem and, in turn, emotional self-concept. Therefore, the emotional climate a child experiences in the home environment from infancy equips him/her with the necessary skills to adequately interact with others and react appropriately to situations

Emotional self-concept has been positively associated with social affiliation, discipline and peer acceptance based on similarities (Kozina, 2017). Negative emotional self-concept, however, have been associated with anxiety, symptoms of depression, substance abuse, as well as lack of social affiliation (Kozina, 2017). A study by Todorović (2002) proposed that adolescents with a high emotional self-concept are confident and trusting of others.

Alternatively, those with lower emotional self-concept often experience internal conflicts due to stressful situations, which may lead to dissatisfaction with oneself, deflated confidence and low self-control.

Other investigations on emotional self-concept focus on adolescents' levels of anxiety, conflict and depression (Parker, 2010). Field, Diego, and Sanders (2001), for example, investigated adolescents exhibiting depressive symptoms. Their study found that the adolescents who were depressed had lower emotional self-concept, were significantly unhappy, had poorer peer relationships and performed poorer academically compared to their non-depressed counterparts. In Barber and Olsen's (2004) study, they found that adolescents' levels of depression increased following the transition from Grade 6 to Grade 7. Based on their findings, they recommended that alterations in the school's social context could have negatively impacted the learners' emotional self-concept. These studies suggest that emotional self-concept may potentially influence one's psychological wellbeing, which in turn has a significant impact on adolescents' motivation to contribute meaningfully in other aspects of their lives. Additionally, significant life events, such as adjusting to new environments and situations can illicit negative or positive emotional responses, which in turn may influence emotional self-concept.

2.3.4. Physical Self-Concept

Physical self-concept refers to individuals' perceptions of their physical appearance (Kozina, 2017). A high physical self-concept is positively linked to physical health, discipline, motivation, as well as inclusion in the social and educational contexts (Kozina, 2017). Conversely, a negative physical self-concept has been linked to organizational difficulties in the school context, anxiety and peer relational difficulties (Kozina, 2017).

During physical development, girls encounter puberty approximately eighteen months to two years prior to boys, which explains the differences in their biological changes between and within age groups (Santroc, 2006; Steinberg, 2005). The physical self-concept is unstable during the adolescence period due to the biological changes that occur as a result of pubertal maturation as well as the psychological and social influences of the opinions from others (Tubić & Dordić, 2015). Adolescents become increasingly concerned about how they look in comparison to others and how others view them, which influences their body image and sense of worth. Williams and Currie (2000) assert that males' and females' physical and socioemotional variations can explain the differences in their self-concept and self-images, although they may be the same chronological age. Research has shown physical self-concept to decline during early adolescence (Marsh, 1998; Parker, 2010), which has been associated with the various physical changes which occur during the puberty stage of adolescence and that peers' opinions may also have more of an impact at this stage (Parker, 2010).

Early and late maturities during the adolescent period have positive and negative consequences across genders which ultimately may affect self-conceptions (Baron, 2002; Williams & Currie, 2000). Researchers have proposed that early physical maturity in boys may increase their physical self-concept (Folk, Pedersen, & Cullari, 1993; Harter, 2006). Ge et al (2003) argue that early-onset puberty in boys heightens their motivation to take part in physical and social activities. They further gain popularity, which heightens their social status among peers and popularity among females, thereby increasing self-image resulting in a higher physical self-concept. However, early maturation in males has also been found to have negative effects on self-concept. Another study by Ge, Conger and Elder (2001) found depressive symptoms and/or maladaptive behavioural concerns in some early maturing males, which were attributed to the secretion of the male hormone androgen (Brooks-Gunn, 1988). Regarding late maturation in males, Ge et al (2001) further found that males who experience late pubertal

changes displayed feelings of inferiority and hostile behaviour, which lead to negative self-concept, self-image and self-esteem due to unpopularity and social rejection. Although numerous studies have suggested that males have a higher physical self-concept compared to their female counterparts, their concerns about becoming more muscular may lead to risky behaviour such as eating disorders, the consumption of steroids and compulsive body building (Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2001). This can ultimately lead to negative self-concept in boys.

Females were found to exhibit poorer physical self-concept due to early pubertal changes (Folk et al, 1993; Harter, 2006). Baron (2002) attributed this to the fact that most early maturing girls are taller than their contemporaries and are frequently taller than boys their own age. They may also receive unwanted sexual advances from older individuals due to their increased sexual attractiveness. Harter (2006) suggests that adolescent girls are more likely to view themselves as physically inferior compared to other girls or fashion models and become preoccupied with what they perceive to be males' preferred physique in a girl. This may lead to a negative physical self-concept due to their dissatisfaction with their bodies. Body dissatisfaction is identified as a health risk for eating disorders, self-mutilation, and unhealthy dieting or other means in order to become the thin ideal (Ruble & Martin, 2002). A positive physical self-concept has been found in girls who perceive themselves as athletic and have fewer body image concerns (Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2001). Gaining more insight into the role of physical self-concept is crucial because of the impact perceptions of attractiveness may have on both males' and females' general sense of self, particularly during adolescence when peer feedback becomes more important (Hay & Ashman, 2003).

2.4. Self-Concept and Parenting

Parents mould and shape their children through their significant influence on socialization (Baumrind, 1971), through which, children gain the necessary experience

required for future life challenges (Smith, 2007). A significant role that parents play is through their parenting styles, which are defined as “a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent’s behaviours are expressed” (Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p.488). Parenting styles and behaviour are considered as vital determinants of various aspects of children’s development such as academic achievement, cognitive development, social competence, behavioural outcomes and psychological wellbeing (Chen, Dong & Zhou, 1997; Collins et al, 2000; Dekovic & Meeus, 1997; Gadeyne, Ghesquiere, & Onghena, 2004; Terry, 2004). Therefore, the manner in which parents raise their children is very important as it may determine who their children become.

Throughout adolescence, parent-child relationships are modified in various significant ways. While parents and the family remain significant, during adolescence peers become increasingly important in facilitating self-development. Separation from parents and family is therefore a necessary component of this developmental phase while proximity to peers increases. According to the viewpoint of attachment theory however, relationships with attachment figures continue to be highly influential in virtually all aspects of an individual’s life throughout the lifespan (Parker & Benson, 2004; Simons, Paternite, & Shore, 2001). Thus, even though the proximity to the family may reduce during adolescence, the internalisation of secure family relationships based on earlier experiences results in greater adjustment and easier separation from the family during this time.

Baumrind (1967) identified three styles of parenting, namely, authoritative, authoritarian as well as permissive parenting, which provide an extensive framework for the examination and understanding of parent-child relationships. Following a review of Baumrind’s work, Maccoby and Martin (1983) proposed a fourth parenting style which they termed neglectful. Further empirical support of the neglectful parenting style was provided by

Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg and Dornbusch (1991). Different parents employ different parenting styles when raising their children.

Authoritative parents value the child's independent self-will, within clear limits, as well as conformity to rules (Baumrind, 1967, 1991; Terry, 2004). Furthermore, authoritative parents set high but attainable goals for their children, while availing themselves as a source of support for their children to achieve those goals. Adolescents raised by authoritative parents are generally confident, disciplined, independent and responsible and have a higher global self-concept (Chang, 2007; Hong, Long, & Rahman, 2015; Steinberg et al, 1992).

Authoritarian parents restrict children's autonomy and require their children to be receptive to parental demands without question. They display low affection, exert high control over their children and use strict, absolute standards to evaluate their behaviour (Colpan, Hastings, Lalace-Seguin & Moulton, 2002; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Adolescents raised by authoritarian parents are socially withdrawn, dependent, and unreliable and often present with maladaptive behaviour (Baumrind, 1967; Lightfoot, Cole, & Cole, 2009).

Permissive parents set few rules for their children with the absence of any control, giving way to their children's impulses, desires and behaviours (Baumrind, 1991). These parents avoid conflict by ignoring misconduct, have minimal or no expectations for their children and engage with their children on a friendship level rather than a parent-child level with restricted limits (Berg, 2011; Rossman & Rea, 2005). Permissive parenting styles have been linked to adolescents who are impulsive, egocentric, immature and have difficulty forming relationships (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992).

Neglectful parents, also referred to as uninvolved parents, are disengaged, do not set rules or standards for their children to abide by nor do they show interest in their children's

behaviour, whether good or bad (Karavasilis, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 2003; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Adolescents raised by neglectful parents have been found to be overly independent, lack social competence in various areas, struggle to distinguish between right and wrong and have difficulties with academic competence as well as behaviour (Terry, 2004).

Research investigating the relationship between parenting styles and self-concept is well documented (Driscoll, 2013; Gota, 2012; Hickman & Crossland, 2005; Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter & Keehn, 2007; Rossman & Rea, 2005; Steinberg, Elmen & Mounts, 1989). DeRoma, Lassiter and Davis (2004) postulate that positive outcomes in adolescents are enhanced when parents engage adolescents to be more involved in decision making. In support of this, it has been shown that adolescents whose parents are warm (accepting), firm and democratic perform better in school, are more independent, report less psychological difficulties and are less delinquent (Lamborn et al, 1991) which results in higher self-concept.

A series of studies conducted in North America on the relationship between parenting styles and the academic achievement of adolescents have revealed that adolescents whose parents are authoritative consistently perform better academically than those reared by authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parents and ultimately displayed higher academic self-concept (Chao, 2001; Glasgow et al, 1997; Steinberg et al, 1994). In Kenya, a similar study by Ogwari (2011) revealed that girls raised by authoritative parents displayed higher global self-concept and had performed better academically compared to those exposed to other parenting styles, reiterating similar findings from Western contexts, and thus also indicating the possible cross-cultural relevance of parenting styles.

Other studies have found that both the authoritative and permissive parenting styles resulted in high self-concept among adolescents, while the authoritarian parenting style was found to have a significant negative correlation with the self-concept of adolescents (Driscoll,

2013; Hong et al, 2015; Kwan, 2004; Martínez, García, & Yubero, 2007). There are, however, studies that have linked the permissive parenting style with negative self-concept (Hickman, Bartholomae, & McKenry, 2000), while other studies found no significant results for permissive parenting styles (Wolff, 2000). The authoritative parenting style, however, has consistently been associated with a high self-concept, which demonstrates that a combination of high warmth, involvement and acceptance as well as high strictness is the ideal model of parental socialization (Martínez et al, 2007). Therefore, children who receive ‘good enough’ parenting will most likely be successful and competent. Alternatively, children who do not are more likely to demonstrate low self-worth and depression, and may experience other psychological problems (Laible et al, 2004).

2.5. Self-Concept and Age

As children traverse adolescence, they are exposed to various challenges and opportunities (Sternke, 2010). This is in accordance with Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, which proposes that individuals come across developmental tasks throughout the lifespan that in which they encounter particular crises which need to be resolved (Baron, 2002). The successful transition of each developmental stage of the lifespan depends on the successful resolution of previous crises. Erikson suggested that one cannot advance to the subsequent developmental stage unless a crisis is resolved, of which the resolution can either be positive or negative (Schultz & Schultz, 2005). Furthermore, the resolution of each developmental crisis depends on the interaction of the individual’s personal characteristics, as well as environmental influences (Thompson, 1995).

In his theory, Erikson identified adolescence as the fifth stage of psychosocial development, in which adolescents go through the identity versus role confusion stage (Santroc, 2006). During this stage, adolescents are on a quest to develop a coherent sense of

self and a personal identity, asking themselves, “Who am I?”, “What am I really like?”, “What do I want to become?” (Baron, 2002). They therefore explore their independence by experimenting with different roles, activities and behaviours. According to Baron (2002), adolescents explore various possible social selves, that is, different types of personalities they may adopt as their own.

The successful resolution of this stage results in a coherent self-concept and identity, feelings of autonomy and control, some measure of stability and empowerment towards academic achievement (Karteroliotis, 2008). Alternatively, adolescents who fail to successfully transition during this stage remain insecure and confused about themselves and the future, resulting in incoherent self-concept (Hardman, 2012). Marcia (1966) further asserts that the successful resolution of this stage is significant in adolescent development in that individuals will be better able to plan their adult lives and ultimately achieve personal happiness.

As children grow and mature, their self-concept steadily increases in complexity to a point where they begin to organise discernments of their own capabilities. Steinberg and Morris (2000) stated that self-concept is stable during adolescence but increases slightly over time. Global self-concept has been reported to be stable, however, research has shown that it may be susceptible to alter as adolescents transition from primary to high school (Barber & Olsen, 2004; Zanobini & Usai, 2002). Harter (1990) suggested that the number and content of domain-specific self-concept increase with age, as a result of social experiences as well cognitive maturation. These changes however, do not trail an absolute pattern as demonstrated by research, which has shown inconsistent findings in regards to self-concept and age (Parker, 2010).

Adolescence is comprised of three phases, namely, early adolescence (ages 12 to 14 years), middle adolescence (ages 15 to 16 years) and late adolescence (ages 18 to 20 years)

(Baron, 2002). During early adolescence, adolescents evaluate and describe themselves in relation to normative standards, social comparisons and behaviours (Damon & Hart, 1988). During middle adolescence, adolescents begin to recognize inconsistencies in their self-descriptions as they explore different roles and increase in their intellectual capacities (Clarke-Stewart, Friedman & Koch, 1985). During late adolescence, self-concept is grounded more in personal beliefs and standards (Damon & Hart, 1988) as adolescents resolve the discrepancies in how they describe themselves and how they view themselves (Clarke-Stewart, et al, 1985). Harter (1999, p. 17), explained that this is due to young adolescents' "lack of ability to engage in social comparison, to construct a discrepancy between real and ideal self-images and to recognize both positive and negative self-attributes". As adolescents grow, they develop the capacity to better comprehend how others view them, which allows them to better differentiate between their efforts and capabilities. According to Harter (1999), this results in their self-concept becoming more accurate.

Harter (2006) postulated that cognitive development influences two characteristics of the structure of the self, namely, differentiation and integration. During differentiation, developing cognitive abilities provide the capacity for the individual to form self-evaluations across several areas, which are considered multiple selves within diverse contexts. During integration, the individual is then able to conceive a higher order generalization, which is the global self-concept (Harter, 2006). Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory proposes that human beings navigate through a sequential and predictable series of changes (Baron, 2002). Central to Piaget's theory is the idea of constructivism, that is, by interacting with the world, children construct their knowledge of it. Children build this knowledge through two basic processes as proposed by Piaget, namely, assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1990). Assimilation entails the incorporation of new knowledge into one's existing mental frameworks referred to as schemas (Wadsworth, 2004). Accommodation refers to the

modification of one's mental frameworks, as a result of the accumulation of new knowledge and experiences (Wadsworth, 2004). As adolescents are exposed to different environments such as high school, for example, they gain new insights as they make sense of their new environments (Siegler, DeLoache & Eisenberg, 2003). As they continue to grow and develop, as a result of newer experiences, they are able to modify their already existing knowledge and therefore make more accurate conclusions about themselves, therefore influencing the self-concept.

Earlier research has shown overall declines in global self-concept amongst younger adolescents transitioning from primary school to high school (Seidman et al, 1994; Simmons, Burgerson, Carlton-Ford, & Blyth, 1987). The reasons for this decline, according to researchers, may be due to contextual changes, maturation in physical and cognitive domains, as well as developing self-analysis abilities (Eccles et al, 1989; Simmons et al, 1987; Twenge & Campbell, 2001; Zanobini & Usai, 2002). Additionally, Harter (2006) attributed drops in global and domain-specific self-concept to the significant influence of social comparisons and feedback. Furthermore, in their study, Barber and Olsen (2004) hypothesized that the change may be due to a change from more personalized family pods during the first years of middle school to more departmentalized and structured environments as adolescents enter high school.

In contrast, a South African study by Makhubu (2014) revealed that younger children have more positive self-concept compared to older children, which could be attributed to the social and academic pressures of the higher grades in high school which may have suppressed the generational increase in positive self-concept (Twenge & Campbell, 2008). These findings were supported by a study by Choi (2005), who also found global self-concept to increase as children transitioned from primary school to high school. Other studies have found self-concept to increase during middle and late adolescent years (Hadley, et al, 2008; Pullmann, Allik, & Realo, 2009). Harter (1999) argued that as adolescents grow older, increasing autonomy

motivates them to participate in activities they are competent in, while increased cognitive maturity enables them to behave in socially acceptable ways. Other studies however, have shown no systematic increases or decreases in self-concept among the different ages, however it has been noted that change does occur due to significant developmental stages (i.e. puberty) (Mboya, 1999; Twenge & Campbell, 2001; Östgård-Ybrandt & Armelius, 2003). These findings therefore suggest that the developmental stage, rather than age, has an impact on self-concept.

2.6. Self-Concept and Gender

Children acquire knowledge about their gender identity, that is, understanding the fact that one is male or female, through learning (Luecke, 2011), which is emphasized significantly by Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory (Baron, 2002). According to this theory, children learn gender stereotypes and gender roles, that is, behaving as they are expected to behave as boys and girls (Baron, 2002) by imitating the behaviours exhibited by models, which can be same-sex parents and societal members they perceive as being similar to themselves (Perry & Bussey, 1979). Self-concept is known to be significantly influenced by interactions with significant others within one's immediate environment as well as social comparisons. Therefore, it can be said that an individual's experience of his/her immediate environment and the evaluation and interpretation of such experiences significantly influences the development of one's self-concept.

Cognitive Development Theory posits that steady cognitive growth increases children's understanding of their gender (Baron, 2002). The idea is that as children acquire a concept of the self they can identify themselves consistently as either a girl or a boy, and therefore display gender constancy, that is, a comprehensive understanding of their gender identity centered on a clear distinction between males and females (Luecke, 2011). As children gradually develop

cognitively, they form an idea of gender stability, realizing that their gender is stable over time. Children come to increasingly understand that they belong to one sex or the other and attempt to adopt roles they perceive as being consistent with this identity (Baron, 2002), which ultimately affects the formation of the self-concept.

Much research has been conducted on gender differences in relation to self-concept, but results have been inconsistent across studies. Most studies to date have shown that boys possess a higher self-concept compared to girls (Marsh & Hattie, 1996; Sankar & Reddy, 2014; Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012) while other studies have shown the opposite pattern (Choko, 2004; Tyagi & Kaur, 2001). Still, other studies, however, have suggested that no significant differences in self-concept exist between girls and boys (Mboya, 1999; Makhubu, 2014; Sankar & Reddy, 2014; Östgård-Ybrandt & Armelius, 2003). Additionally, other studies suggested that gender differences in self-concept are more domain specific (Marsh, 1989).

Some researchers propose that the differences in self-concept between girls and boys are partly due to gender-linked beliefs and partially due to cultural gender stereotypes regarding children's competencies which manifest through the way children are socialized by their parents (Bleidorn et al, 2013; Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012). In their study, Sangeeta and Sumitra (2012) discuss gender-linked beliefs and cultural stereotypes in India. They suggested that girls and boys have different beliefs about their strengths, therefore their self-esteem is derived from different sources. According to the researchers, women in Indian societies are evaluated based on their physical attractiveness, and less on intelligence and academic achievement (Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012).

Literature on gender stereotyping in Western cultures has shown that males are socialized to be more masculine (power assertive and physically competitive) compared to females, who are socialized to be more nurturing and sympathetic in their person qualities

(Gebauer, Wagner, Sedikides, & Neberich, 2013). Other studies have also shown that mothers tend to strengthen their emotional intimacy more with their daughters compared to their sons (Endendijk, Groeneveld, Kakermans-Kranenburg, & Mesman, 2016; Lamb & Lewis, 2010; Milevsky et al, 2007), while fathers promote masculine, academic and intellectual abilities more in their sons (Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Paloma et al, 2015; Power & Shanks, 1989). A South African study on adolescence by Gaganakis (2003) found girls to be associated with being more emotional, nurturing and pleasure seeking, while boys were alternatively associated with being more assertive, independent and competitive. Therefore, according to Manning (2007), the extent to which children endorse cultural stereotypes regarding performance in each domain-specific self-concept determines the degree in which girls and boys apply themselves in different activities. These findings suggest that the child's gender may have a moderating effect on the differential role of parents in the socialization of their children as parents promote different attributes in their children based on their gender. Therefore, it can be argued that beliefs related to gender are a significant determinant of how individuals perceive themselves, as beliefs about one's competence affects performance in different activities and, in turn, their self-concept. Additionally, individuals are more likely to participate in different activities when they are confident in their abilities and are alternatively less likely to participate in activities when they are less or not confident in their abilities, thus having an impact on their self-concept.

Evidence suggests that boys develop their self-concept from individuation (i.e. feeling unique compared to others), while girls develop self-concept from their social connection with others (Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012). In support of this view, Cross and Madson (1997) argued in their research that males and females define themselves differently, which is evident in many of the differences observable in their behaviour. They assert that males uphold an autonomous sense of self which is detached from others while females preserve a co-dependent self-concept

whereby others are integrated into the self. Timmers, Fischer and Manstead (1998) further assert that girls tend to exhibit emotions that strengthen their relational bonds and inhibit emotions and behaviours that could impair these relationships. Therefore, boys are expected to describe themselves in line with their individuation from others (accentuating individual qualities and skills) and girls are prone to describe themselves in line with their connections to others (accentuating interpersonal roles and relationships) (Cross & Madson, 1997).

The findings of older studies by Monge (1973), and similarly by Dusek & Flaherty (1981) found that gender-related differences were found on specific domains of self-concept, which were consistent with gender stereotypes (e.g. increased sociability and nurturance in girls compared to boys, and higher achievement in boys compared to girls). This is consistent with a study by Andrew (2002), which revealed that boys obtained a lower social self-concept compared to girls. The study further found that the girls' global self-concept was influenced more by the physical and social self-concept, whereas the global self-concept of boys was influenced more by personal self will. Regarding physical self-concept, these findings are in contrast to previous studies which found male adolescents to have higher appraisals for athletic competence and physical appearance (Klomsten, Skaalvik, & Espnes, 2004), while female adolescents had higher behavioural and social self-concept (Harter, 1985; Marsh, 1989). Maccoboy and Jacklin (1974) also found boys to score higher than girls in the physical domain, suggesting that due to the physical changes incurred during puberty, males performed better in activities that required physical strength and power than their female counterparts. In another study, Burns (1982) found that girls generally had a lower global self-concept than their male counterparts, however in the academic domain, girls scored higher than boys. This was further supported by a study by Kumar, Behmani and Singh (2016).

The findings are in support of Marsh's (1989) hypothesis that gender differences in self-concept are domain-specific, rather than global. This, therefore, may have methodological implications and might explain why there have been discrepant findings because depending on what is measured, and how, results may vary. If global self-concept is measured, there may be no difference, but if domain-specific self-concept is measured, differences may become apparent. Thus, how self-concept is measured and operationalized (i.e. global versus domain-specific) plays an important role in whether gender differences become evident, or not.

2.7. Theoretical Point of Departure: Carl Rogers's Humanistic Theory (Self Theory of Personality)

Rogers's (1974) theory states that human beings show many positive characteristics and go on to become fully functional persons throughout their lifespan (Baron, 2002). He believed that human beings have one basic purpose, which is the propensity to self-actualize, that is, to realize one's full potential and to be autonomous (McLeod, 2014). Central to Rogers's personality theory is the self or self-concept, which is who we really are as a person. The self-concept is defined as the organized and consistent collection of perceptions and beliefs about oneself (McLeod, 2014). It is the propensity of the individual to behave in ways which actualize themselves and lead to their differentiation (Kozina, 2017; Nik & Mustafa, 2015). Furthermore, a collection of experiences, accordingly, are distinguished and signified in conscious awareness as experiences of the self, which are integrated to form the individual's self-concept (Nik & Mustafa, 2015). The self is therefore who we truly are as a person, represents our innermost personality, and can be related to the soul (Baron, 2002; McLeod, 2014).

Rogers suggested that people are innately good and creative and that healthy individuals are those who are able to successfully adapt experiences into their self-structure (Cervone & Pervin, 2008). He believed that individuals turn out to be destructive only as a result of a poor

self-concept which supersedes the valuing process (McLeod, 2014). According to this theory, self-concept is influenced by the individual's life experiences, and an individual's interpretations of those experiences. Therefore, childhood experiences and the evaluation by key societal members are the two key sources that influence our self-concept (Burns, 1979, as cited in Wolff, 2000).

Rogers explained self-concept to be comprised of three components, namely *self-esteem (self-worth)*, the *real self (self-image)* and the *ideal self*. Self-esteem (self-worth), according to Rogers, comprises of what we think about ourselves and is formed through the interactions between a child and their caregivers (McLeod, 2014). Rogers proposed that a child has two primitive needs, the need for positive regard from others as well as positive self-regard (Pescitelli, 1996). He asserted that the most significant component of the child's experience is that they are shown love and acceptance by their parents and significant others. Such experiences lead to the reinforcement of behaviour that is consistent with the child's self-concept (Maddi, 1996). For Rogers, a person with a high self-worth is confident, feels positive about him/herself, deals with life's challenges, can accept failure and discontent, and is open when interacting with others (McLeod, 2014). Distortions in self-concept are common, as some people are raised in an environment of conditional regard, that is, they discover that figures such as their parents will approve of them only when they behave in certain ways and express certain feelings (Baron, 2002). This results in individuals repressing various impulses and feelings, therefore resulting in distorted self-concept. An individual with a decreased self-worth may therefore avoid challenges in life, not be able to accept the hardships in life at times and be guarded and defensive during interactions with others.

The real self (self-image) is how we view ourselves, which is crucial for psychological wellbeing and entails the characteristics we believe we possess (Nik & Mustafa, 2015). Self-image has a direct effect on how people feel, think and behave in their environment. Rogers

(1954) stated that the ‘real self’ is activated by the actualizing tendency, is driven by individual values and desires and obtains positive regard from others and self-regard. Rogers believed that we all own a real self, which is related to our inner personality (Grice, 2007).

The ideal self represents the person we aim to become (McLeod, 2014). It is comprised of our personal goals and motivations and is dynamic in that it often changes. The ideal self we strive for in our childhood does not equate to the ideal self we strive for initially in our teenage years and beyond (McLeod, 2014). Rogers asserted that the ideal self represents an idealized image that has been significantly influenced by what we have learned and experienced over time (Nik & Mustafa, 2015). Therefore, the self evolves as a result of external influences. The self internalizes values that are learned from others; a conclusion of all that we perceive we should be, and that we perceive others think we should be. Internalizing the values others possess is not a conscious choice, but rather, a process of osmosis, that is, internalizing these values unconsciously (Kozina, 2017).

Rogers (1959) postulated that as individuals we want to feel, conduct ourselves and experience in ways that are in tune with our self-image and that mirror the ideal person we would like to be. To self-actualize, Rogers believed that an individual ought to experience a state of congruence, which occurs when an individual’s ideal self is congruent with their self-image (McLeod, 2014). A state of incongruence is experienced when the totality of one’s personal experience is deemed unacceptable to them, causing it to be distorted in one’s self-image. It is rare to reach a state of congruence in entirety, as every person experiences some degree of incongruence. The development of congruence is also highly influenced by unconditional positive regard. The closer one’s self-image and ideal-self are to one another, the more congruent one becomes and the higher one’s sense of self-worth (Craven et al, 2016).

The literature has established that self-concept is formed through a gradual learning process as a result of one's experiences and interpretation of those experiences. A large body of research has provided evidence of the multifaceted nature of self-concept, with a focus on its significant characteristics. The literature has also demonstrated the significant influence the specific domains of self-concept have on each other as well on the global self-concept. Central to the development of self-concept is the influence that significant others as well as other societal members such as peers and teachers play through their evaluation and judgements. This relationship was demonstrated in Rogers's humanistic theory in which he emphasized the interaction one has with one's own environment in forming a concept of the self. Thus, one's self-concept reflects the relationships and evaluations of one's own environment. Therefore, a warm, supportive and accepting environment that promotes autonomy is noted to promote more positive and congruent self-concept.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology undertaken in the current study. The research design, sampling method, measurement instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis as well as the ethical considerations will be discussed below.

3.1. Research design

Quantitative research aims to generate knowledge and objectively answer questions regarding relationships between measured variables among the sample population, with the purpose being to explain, predict and control certain phenomena (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Researchers therefore segregate the variables they choose to study, control for extraneous variables, utilize a standardized process to collect numerical data and utilize statistical processes to analyze and draw conclusions from the data.

The present study used an exploratory quantitative cross-sectional study design, which set out to explore, measure and compare several variables, namely adolescents' self-concept, and its relation to age and gender at one point in time (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011). This method serves to determine whether a specific problem exists within a group of participants and to what extent. The advantage of this design is that it is easier and cost efficient to conduct as data collection takes place during a limited time period, therefore dropout of participants is limited (De Vos, et al, 2011). Self-concept was the dependent variable and age and gender were the independent variables.

A quantitative approach was chosen to conduct this research because it allows for the comparisons between variables, as well as to establish whether relationships exist between the

above-mentioned variables as stated by the study's objectives. This study therefore undertook an exploratory rather than a confirmatory approach.

3.2. Sampling

The target population for this study was adolescents from Pretoria. Two high schools (one suburban and one township) were identified as recruitment sites for the current study. Schools were chosen using non-probability convenience sampling, where schools were selected based on availability and accessibility to the researcher. The researcher chose schools in Pretoria East and Mamelodi due to the researcher's familiarity with and accessibility to both environments. This sampling method is the most commonly used method of sampling in behavioural psychology (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009; Tyrer & Heyman, 2016). Although this sampling method is easy and cost effective (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005), according to Gravetter and Forzano (2009), it is considered to be a weaker sampling method due to the convenient selection of participants or sites and due to the researcher having no control of the process, potentially resulting in a biased sample that may not entirely be representative of the population. However, Gravetter and Forzano (2009) further state that a large sample size limits the potential effect of inaccuracy, therefore allowing for a reasonably accurate reflection of reality of the given population.

Adolescents within each school were chosen using non-probability purposive sampling, which selects a sample based on factors that contain the most characteristic traits of the population which are best suited for the study (Grinnel & Unrau, 2008, as cited in De Vos, et al, 2011). Only the learners within the age range of 14 to 18 years could take part in the study due to the study focusing on adolescents as well as due to the instrument used. All participants were also required to be competent in English. The final sample consisted of 145 adolescent boys and girls between the ages 14 to 18 years. Of the 145 adolescents who participated in the

current study, 122 (84.1%) were from Pretoria East and 23 (15.9%) were from Mamelodi. The majority of the participants (91; 62.8%) were male and 54 (37.2%) were female. The original sample consisted of 165 participants, however questionnaires that were incomplete (n= 11) and questionnaires completed by learners falling out of the age range of 14 to 18 years (n=9) were not included in the study, thus impacting the boy-girl ratio in the study.

Once permission to conduct the study was granted by the Gauteng Department of Education, the Humanities Faculty Research Ethics Committee and the principals of each of the schools involved, teachers in each grade were asked to provide a list of all the learners. The researcher randomly selected learners from the list within the desired age categories who met the inclusion criteria. Information sheets were distributed to the learners and their parents to provide information about the study and obtain permission for participation in the study. Signed permission letters from parents for learner participation were returned to school by the learners and collected by the researcher. Thereafter, informed assent was obtained from the respective learners who indicated their interest in participating. Only cases where both assent from the adolescent and permission from the parent were obtained were eligible for participation in the study.

3.3. Measurement instruments

3.3.1. Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition

(Piers-Harris 2)

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition (Piers-Harris 2- see Appendix C) is among the most commonly used measures of psychological health in children and adolescents (Parker, 2010) and assesses self-concept in individuals aged 7 to 18 years, with at least Grade 2 reading level (Piers & Herzberg, 2002). It is comprised of 60 items assessing 6 subscales, namely, physical appearance and attributes (11 items, alphas ranged from .65-.80),

intellectual and school status (16 items, alphas ranged from .72-.82), happiness and satisfaction (10 items, alphas ranged from .71-.82), freedom from anxiety (14 items, alphas ranged from .77-.84), behavioural adjustment (14 items, alphas ranged from .75-.84) and popularity (12 items, alphas ranged from .60-.80). These figures demonstrate a good internal consistency (Piers & Herzberg, 2002). Items are responded to in a “yes” or “no” manner (Puckett, 2008). The Piers-Harris 2 provides a total score that reflects overall self-concept, as well as subscale scores that allow for a more detailed interpretation of specific domains, which are represented by the subscales (Parker, 2010). The Piers-Harris 2 further provides a demographic section which includes age, gender and race. It was not possible to collect further demographic information due to the reluctance of parents to complete and return demographic questionnaires.

Given that the present study investigates self-concept as a multidimensional construct as proposed by Shavelson et al (1976), the data from the intellectual and school status (INT) subscale will be interpreted as forming the academic self-concept, the behavioural adjustment (BEH) and popularity (POP) subscales will form the social self-concept, the freedom from anxiety (FRE) and happiness and satisfaction (HAP) subscales will be interpreted as emotional self-concept and, lastly, the physical attributes and appearance (PHY) subscale will form the physical self-concept.

3.4. Data Collection Procedures

In order to maximize time and efficiency, all questionnaires were administered in group format at the respective schools in a venue that was negotiated with the school principal by the researcher. A list of possible assessment times and dates (over a 5-day period in each school) was circulated and learners chose their assessment slot according to their availability. The times were arranged outside of official school hours so as to minimize disruption to the school day.

On the day of each assessment, the researcher again briefed participants about the purpose of the study. Participants were then given appropriate instructions for filling in the questionnaire by hand. They were encouraged to answer questions objectively and individually and without discussing the responses with the other participants. The researcher was present at each of the assessments in case of any queries. All interactions were in English. The completed questionnaires were collected by the researcher on the days they were completed.

3.5. Data Analysis

After all the questionnaires were collected, data was captured into and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations were computed and used to describe the body of data. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was subsequently used to compare self-concept in relation to demographic factors such as age and gender in order to elucidate the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), ANCOVA is used when the research hypothesis differentiates among means while controlling for the effects of a variable(s) which are correlated with the dependent variable, which is self-concept. Furthermore, reliability analysis was carried via Cronbach's Alpha coefficients which were computed for the principal measurement instrument in order to test for its internal consistency in the current context.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Approval from the provincial Department of Education in Gauteng to conduct the study was obtained by the researcher (see Appendix F). Furthermore, ethics approval was granted by the Humanities Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria (GW20170725HS). With permission from the identified schools, the researcher disseminated information sheets to the participants, which highlighted the nature of the study, assured

confidentiality as well as the free will of the participant to participate or decline participation. Confidentiality was maintained by assigning participants with unique numbers. These numbers were used to label the completed questionnaires during the data entry process. As such, no names or specific identifying particulars appeared on the questionnaires or were entered into the dataset thereby eliminating the possibility of linking the responses to any specific participant. Although other participants would have been aware of who participated in the study during their assessment period due to the group format of the data collection process, the information provided by the participants on questionnaires was not disclosed, therefore maintaining confidentiality. Participants were assured that no reference would be made to any specific participant in the research outputs following from the study as all conclusions drawn were based on aggregated data. The voluntary nature of participation was also stressed for participants who were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point should they wish to do so and without any negative consequences. Participants were assured that the study was completely independent of school, that the school would have no access to the data, and that their decision to participate, not participate, or withdraw would have no impact (either positive or negative) on school-related matters.

Respondents were given detailed instructions by the researcher regarding how to respond to the questionnaire. Respondents were also given the opportunity to clarify or obtain any information regarding the study, including misconceptions, results and conclusions of the study from the researcher at any stage of the research process. All participants were made aware that they would be able to request the findings of the study upon its completion, by contacting the researcher. The researcher was freely available in the event that any participant was in need of debriefing. If participants required any further psychological assistance as a result of their participation in the study, the researcher made arrangements to refer participants to the Itsoseng Clinic in Mamelodi and/or the South African Depression and

Anxiety Group (SADAG) which both provide a free counselling service; none of the participants in the study were in need of this service, however.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the current study. This study investigated the relationship of age and gender to the self-concept of adolescents in Pretoria. The results of the current study will be presented by initially reporting on the demographics of the study sample. This will be followed by a report on the internal consistency of the instrument used. Thereafter, descriptive statistics such as means and deviations will be discussed, and finally the results of the hypothesis testing will be presented.

4.1. The Demographics of the Sample

The population of the study consisted of learners from two different high schools in Pretoria. The total pooled sample (N) consisted of 145 learners. The majority of the participants, 91 (62.8%), were male, while 54 (37.2%) were female. The ages of the participants ranged from 14 to 18 years, in which 34 (23.5%) were aged 14, 37 (25.5%) were aged 15, 38 (26.2%) were aged 16, 28 (19.3%) were aged 17 and 8 (5.5%) were aged 18, with a mean age of 15.58 years (SD = 4.16). All the participants, 145 (100%), identified as black (African). The demographic characteristics of the study sample are represented in Table 4.1 below. The characteristics include the age, gender and race of the adolescents.

Table 4.1: *Demographic description of the participants*

Variables	N	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	91	62.8
Female	54	37.2
Age		
14	34	23.5
15	37	25.5
16	38	26.2
17	28	19.3
18	8	5.5
	Mean	Std Dev
	15.58	4.16
Race		
Black	145	100

4.2. Internal Consistency

The current study made use of the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition (Piers-Harris 2). This scale provides a brief, self-report assessment of self-concept in children as well as adolescents. The reliability (internal consistency) of this scale was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Table 4.2 reflects the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the overall Piers-Harris 2 as well as for each subscale.

Table 4.2: *Internal Consistency of the Piers-Harris 2*

Measure	Domains	N (Items)	Alpha
Piers-Harris 2	Total (TOT)	60	.83
	Behavioural Adjustment (BEH)	14	.70
	Intellectual and School Status (INT)	16	.59
	Physical Appearance and Attributes (PHY)	11	.64
	Freedom of Anxiety (FRE)	14	.75
	Popularity (POP)	12	.60
	Happiness and Satisfaction (HAP)	10	.67

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients that are .70 and above, according to Anastasi (1982), are considered as acceptable while those above .60 are considered moderately acceptable. In the current study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the Piers-Harris 2 were .83 for the total score, .70 for behavioural adjustment, .59 for intellectual and school status, .64 for physical appearance and attributes, .75 for freedom of anxiety, .60 for popularity and .67 for happiness and satisfaction. Only the total, behavioural adjustment and freedom of anxiety subscales reached the acceptable level of reliability, as suggested by Anastasi (1982). Thus, the internal consistency of the Piers-Harris 2 in this context can therefore be regarded as acceptable, however subscales falling under the moderately acceptable threshold should be interpreted with caution.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

The means and standard deviations for the self-concept of adolescents are presented in Table 4.3. These include the six domains and the total score of the Piers-Harris 2. Adolescents

generally scored higher in the behavioural adjustment ($M=11.68$, $SD=2.130$) and intellectual and school status subscales compared to the other subscales ($M=11.70$, $SD=2.340$), obtaining a minimum score of 2 on both subscales and a maximum score of 14 and 16 respectively. Adolescents scored lower on the popularity ($M=7.95$, $SD=2.222$) subscale compared to the other subscales, obtaining a minimum score of 2 and a maximum score of 12.

Table 4.3: *Means and Standard Deviations of the Self-concept of Adolescents*

Measure	Domain	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Piers-Harris 2	BEH	11.68	2.130	2	14
	INT	11.70	2.340	2	16
	PHY	8.35	1.967	0	11
	FRE	9.42	2.990	2	14
	POP	7.95	2.222	2	12
	HAP	8.99	1.488	0	12
	TOT	44.60	7.045	21	58

4.4. Multivariate Analysis.

In order to test whether there is a difference between the categories of age and gender in relation to self-concept, ANCOVA procedures were conducted. The Bonferroni correction was performed to adjust for multiple comparisons for age groups. The partial eta squared η^2 as measure of effect size was used to quantify the size of the difference between the groups. The results are presented in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 below.

4.4.1. Self-Concept and Age

Hypothesis 1 predicted that younger adolescents hold a more positive self-concept than older adolescents. In this study adolescence was categorized into three stages as proposed by

Baron (2005): early adolescence, ages 12 to 14 years; middle adolescence, ages 15 to 17 years and late adolescence, ages 18 to 20 years.

The findings, as shown in Table 4.4, indicated that there was a significant difference between the global self-concept of the younger adolescents compared to the older adolescents ($p < 0.05$), representing medium effect size $\eta^2 = 0.053$. The self-concept of the younger adolescents was higher on the total score (global self-concept) ($M = 47.49$, $S.E = 1.197$) as compared to the other age groups. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

The findings also indicate a significant difference between the behavioural adjustment (social self-concept) ($M = 12.28$, $S.E = .362$; $p < 0.05$), representing medium effect size $\eta^2 = 0.025$, and physical appearance and attributes (physical self-concept) ($M = 8.97$, $S.E = .336$; $p < 0.05$), representing small effect size $\eta^2 = 0.010$, subscales of younger adolescents compared to older adolescents. Generally, younger adolescents scored higher than their older counterparts on most subscales of the Piers-Harris 2 although the difference is only statistically significant for the behavioural adjustment (social self-concept), physical appearance and attributes (physical self-concept) and the total score (global self-concept). Furthermore, the findings indicate a pattern of higher performance in the total score, and within the freedom from anxiety (emotional self-concept) and popularity (social self-concept) subscales during early adolescence, a decline during middle adolescence and then an increase again in late adolescence although this is not statistically significant.

Table 4.4: *Univariate Tests for Age*

Dependent Variable	Age 14		Ages 15-17		Age 18		df	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
	M (S.E)	N	M (S.E)	N	M (S.E)	N				
BEH	12.28 (.362)	34	11.39 (.210)	103	11.29 (.740)	8	2	3.262	0.041	0.025
INT	12.02 (.404)	34	11.50 (.235)	103	11.29 (.825)	8	2	0.782	0.459	0.019
PHY	8.97 (.336)	34	8.08 (.195)	103	8.33 (.689)	8	2	3.439	0.035	0.010
FRE	10.41 (.488)	34	9.35 (.284)	103	10.75 (.998)	8	2	1.514	0.224	0.106
POP	8.69 (.380)	34	7.65 (.221)	103	8.88 (.775)	8	2	2.53	0.083	0.000
HAP	9.36 (.256)	34	8.81 (.149)	103	8.96 (.522)	8	2	2.315	0.103	0.014
TOT	47.49 (1.197)		43.89 (.818)		44.88 (1.152)		2	3.897	0.023	

Note: * $p < 0.05$;

$\eta^2 \leq 0.01$: *small effect*

$0.01 < \eta^2 \leq 0.13$: *medium effect*

$0.13 < \eta^2 \leq 0.26$: *large effect*

4.4.2. Self-Concept and Gender

Hypothesis 2 predicted that boys will have a higher self-concept than girls. The findings, as shown in Table 4.5 below, indicated that there was no significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between the total score (global self-concept) of boys and girls. Girls scored significantly higher compared to boys in the freedom of anxiety (emotional self-concept) subscale ($M=10.76$, $S. E= 0.393$), representing medium effect size $\eta^2=0.106$. Boys scored higher than the girls in the majority of the subscales, however the differences did not reach statistical significance. The hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Table 4.5: *Univariate Tests for Gender*

Dependent Variable	Male M(SD)	N	Female M(SD)	N	df	F	P(Sig.)	Partial Eta Squared
BEH	11.95(1.80)	91	11.24(2.56)	54	1	3.28	0.072	0.025
INT	11.95(2.22)	91	11.28(2.50)	54	1	2.80	0.097	0.019
PHY	8.51(1.82)	91	8.09(2.19)	54	1	1.67	0.199	0.010
FRE	8.69(2.96)	91	10.65(2.56)	54	1	16.18	0.000	0.106
POP	7.93(2.08)	91	7.98(2.47)	54	1	0.046	0.830	0.000
HAP	9.13(1.32)	91	8.76(1.73)	54	1	2.31	0.131	0.014
TOT	44.66(6.53)	91	44.50(7.90)	54	1	0.003	0.955	

*Note: *p < 0.05*

$\eta^2 \leq 0.01$: *small effect*

$0.01 < \eta^2 \leq 0.13$: *medium effect*

$0.13 < \eta^2 \leq 0.26$: *large effect*

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of the current study in relation to the literature that was reviewed. The primary aim of this study was to determine whether age and gender have an influence on the self-concept of adolescents. The study further aimed to explore the various domains of self-concept through the Piers-Harris 2. The results will be presented according to the hypotheses that were formed.

5.1. The relationship between Self-concept and Age

Adolescents between ages 14 years to 18 years participated in the current study. Adolescence is a period characterized by significant changes such as rapid physical growth as well as cognitive and socioemotional changes (Baron, 2002). Literature generally considers global self-concept to be a stable construct (Baldwin & Hoffmann, 2002; Shavelson & Bolus, 1982), however due to the significant changes that occur during the critical stage of adolescence, one's self-concept can become vulnerable to change.

The results of previous studies suggest that there are age-related differences with regards to global self-concept and domain-specific self-concept (Harter 1999; Parker, 2010; Pawlik & Rosenzweig, 2000; Shavelson & Bolus, 1981). The findings of the current study indeed demonstrated a relationship between self-concept and age for the participants. Specifically, the findings depicted that younger adolescents have a higher global self-concept compared to older adolescents as well as generally higher scores within the respective domains. These findings are consistent with studies by Choi (2004) and Makhubu (2014). Younger adolescents in the current study were also found to have higher social and physical self-concept, which is consistent with the findings reported by Ullman and Tartar (2001) and Choi (2004), respectively.

With increasing age, domain-specific self-concept become increasingly differentiated. The current study further showed fluctuations in the emotional and social self-concept which were higher during early adolescence (age 14), declined during middle adolescence (ages 15 to 17) and increased again during late adolescence (age 18). These results reflect the vulnerability and variability of the specific domains of self-concept as reported in the literature. Research suggests that emotional and social self-concept have a significant impact on global self-concept (Burricher & Walden, 2006). Harter (1999) suggested that younger adolescents may be inclined to overestimate their level of competence due to the lack of cognitive maturity to critically assess their own capabilities and to integrate feedback from others, which changes over time. This is reflected by the declines in the global and domain-specific self-concept during the middle adolescent period in the current study. Literature also pointed out that such drops could be attributed to significant dependence on social comparisons and feedback, which allows for more accurate self-evaluations about one's abilities (Harter, 2006). It can therefore be hypothesized, based on the literature and current results, that drops in global and domain-specific self-concept as adolescents continue to develop occur as a result of the accumulation and processing of new information. Additionally, this self-introspection allows for more accurate identification of one's personal strengths and weaknesses, therefore resulting in increases in global and domain-specific self-concept.

Cognitive development theory suggests that children are active thinkers and they consistently attempt to construct more accurate understandings of the world they find themselves in. As discussed in the literature, the construction of this understanding occurs through the processes of assimilation and accommodation (Baron, 2002). Based on the findings of the current study, there is evidence that supports this theory due to the patterns of changes in global and domain specific self-concept among the different stages of adolescence observed. In accordance with this theory, adolescents' newfound advanced thinking may be logical,

however at times inaccurate due to younger adolescents lacking sufficient experience or information to form more accurate theories and conclusions about their abilities and experiences. The fluctuations in self-concept across the different ages support the possible adjustment of adolescents' mental frameworks as new knowledge and experiences were accumulated (Wadsworth, 2004) which may in turn assist them in modifying their already existing knowledge and thus forming more accurate conclusions about themselves (Siegler, DeLoache & Eisenberg, 2003). This may account for the high global and domain specific self-concept in younger adolescents.

According to Rogers, the real self, which is how we perceive ourselves, is activated by the actualizing tendency and is further influenced by external forces (Kozina, 2017; Nik & Mustafa, 2015). Additionally, the ideal self, which is who we endeavor to become, is dynamic as it frequently changes as a result of personal development and experiences. A state of incongruence occurs when who we are is not congruent with who we want to become (McLeod, 2014) therefore causing a distortion in the self-concept. Therefore, the results of the study are consistent with Rogers's theory in that the fluctuations in the adolescents' domain-specific self-concept may have been as a result of distortions in their self-concept as a result of a state of incongruence. This distortion according to Rogers's theory, may be due to the dynamic nature of the ideal self and adolescents' attempt to integrate the changing ideal self into the real self, therefore forming a congruent self-concept.

Another possible explanation for the decline in self-concept during middle adolescence and an increase during late adolescence could be that during middle adolescence, as cognitive maturity develops, adolescents begin to recognize the discrepancies in their sense of self through the exploration of different roles, suggesting that they become more aware of their abilities. The discrepancies observed during middle adolescence become resolved in late

adolescence due to increased cognitive maturity to form more accurate self-concept as they develop a cognitive framework for understanding themselves (Clarke-Stewart et al, 1985). In line with cognitive development theory, this therefore suggests that the adaptation to this new way of thinking occurs in a gradual manner, which is evident in the current results.

The findings in this current study also demonstrate the self-reconstructive process in which adolescents become more capable of making accurate conclusions and managing developmental tasks more accurately, which ultimately strengthens their self-concept. While adolescents make self-evaluations pertaining to their perceived abilities via personal reflections as well as social comparisons (Rice & Dolgin, 2005), it can be hypothesized that through experimentation with different roles and activities by these adolescents, they are better able to integrate societal influence while equally maintaining personal continuity. The patterns of change in the global and domain-specific self-concept demonstrates a reformulation of what children have been in the past and a shift into who they have and still are to become.

Global self-concept has been described as generally stable, however the changes that occur during adolescence as a result of physical and cognitive maturation can cause a vulnerability to change. The findings of the current study depict the differentiation of global and domain-specific self-concept as adolescents grow older. As adolescents continue to mature, explore different roles, take into account reinforcements and feedback from others and embrace as well as adjust to newer environments, they become more self-aware and therefore form more accurate conclusions about their capabilities and shortfalls. Therefore, knowledge, through self-discovery as well as the influence from others, experience and adaptation to new and changing environments is crucial in the formation of one's sense of self.

5.2. The relationship between Self-concept and Gender

Previous results regarding the relationship between self-concept and gender have been inconsistent. Most of the literature has found boys to have a higher global self-concept compared to their female counterparts (Marsh & Hattie, 1996; Sankar & Reddy, 2014; Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012). The results of the current study are not in agreement with these previous findings as they indicate that there are no significant differences in the global self-concept of boys and girls. The results are, however, consistent with the research findings of local studies by Mboya (1999) and Makhubu (2014) as well as an international study by Östgård-Ybrandt and Armelius (2003) who have also found non-significant gender differences with regards to global self-concept.

Literature has suggested that girls place more value on emotional, intimate relationships with significant others, while boys prefer friendships for their competitive nature (Gaganakis, 2003; Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012). Although children are socialized primarily by their parents and also become influenced by broader society around them, the cognitive frameworks which guide their behaviours reflect their integration of the social information they received as a result of different experiences. Cognitive Development Theory proposes that children acquire a concept of self as a result of cognitive growth and maturity, which then leads them to displaying behaviours that are consistent with that sense of self (Baron, 2002). Adolescents therefore ultimately display behaviours which are more consistent with their own cognitions. It can therefore be said that the gender stereotypes that children learn from their environment become part of their cognitive frameworks which ultimately influence how adolescents develop and regulate their sense of self. Thus, as adolescents continue to develop a gender identity, they become encouraged to emulate the gender stereotypes they have learned and inhabited as relating to them.

The current study corroborated the existing literature as it further found girls to score significantly higher in the freedom of anxiety subscale compared to boys, suggesting that girls have a higher emotional self-concept compared to their male counterparts. These findings therefore suggest that gender did not have an influence on the global self-concept, but rather on the different domains as proposed by Marsh (1989) and are also in agreement with research conducted on gender stereotypes regarding girls (Gaganakis, 2003; Gebauer et al, 2013; Lamb & Lewis, 2010; Milevsky et al, 2007). A higher emotional self-concept in girls supports the contention that girls' self-concept is more interdependent, where intimate relationships with others are significant (Cross & Madson, 1997; Timmers et al, 1998; Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012). The results also confirm the results of previous studies by Monge (1973), and Dusek and Flaherty (1981) who found gender-related differences on domain-specific self-concept, specifically the emotional, social as well as physical domains.

Research has suggested that mothers are prone to invest in their emotional bonds more with their daughters (Endendijk, Groeneveld, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Mesman, 2016; Lamb & Lewis, 2010; Milevsky et al, 2007), while fathers are more likely to encourage more masculine and cognitive abilities in their sons (Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Paloma et al, 2015; Power & Shanks, 1989). Rogers's Self Theory of Personality suggests that children unconsciously internalize values and experiences learned from others (Kozina, 2017). The findings of the current study suggest that adolescents seem to be attuned to the diverse characteristics of socialization, and that girls in particular are more attuned to the socialization of emotions, which according to literature are more socialized by the maternal figure. Therefore, the manner in which parents socialize their children ultimately influences the domain-specific self-concept that boys and girls identify more with.

The results of the current study further show that boys scored higher than girls in the majority of the subscales, however these findings were not statistically significant. Research

has suggested that boys are socialized by their fathers to be more masculine and achieve higher academically (Akhter, Hanif, Tariq, & Atta, 2011; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974), while girls were associated with being more pleasure seeking, nurturing and emotional (Endendijk et al, 2017; Gaganakis, 2003). Studies by Burns (1982) and Kumar et al, (2016) however, found girls to score higher than boys in the academic domain, which contradicts previous findings. The current study found no significant differences between boys and girls in the academic domain. Although cultural stereotypes and gender-linked beliefs have been shown to influence domain-specific self-concept (Bleidorn et al, 2013; Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012), Manning (2007) argues that girls and boys apply themselves differently in various activities depending on the extent to which they endorse cultural stereotypes. Additionally, individuals are more likely to participate in different activities when they are confident in their abilities and are alternatively less likely to participate in activities when they are less or not confident in their abilities, thus having an impact on their self-concept. This could possibly explain the non-significant differences in the academic self-concept of boys and girls in the study, suggesting that the level of perceived competence, rather than gender-linked beliefs had an influence on the academic achievement of adolescents.

Researchers have proposed that domain-specific-self-concept ultimately determine one's global self-concept. Additionally, both males and females vary in their roles and behaviour due to cultural stereotypes which significantly influence how they define themselves differently. Such gender-related differences can therefore be observed in the domain-specific self-concept, which are affected by the measure of significance they attach to them. The non-significant findings of the current study regarding gender differences in the different domains further suggest that domain-specific self-concept are also influenced by one's age and perceived level of competence as adolescents encounter different experiences at different ages, which ultimately influence their self-concept. Thus, it can be said that one's self-concept is

derived from different sources. Therefore, differences are observed more in the domain-specific self-concept as opposed to the global self-concept itself.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Conclusion

The study of self-concept as a construct has received noteworthy attention in the existing literature. Self-concept is considered crucial in human development due to its significant contribution to various facets throughout the lifespan (Sternke, 2010). Previous research on self-concept has focused on the various influences on self-concept including parenting, socioeconomic status and so forth. Despite the plethora of literature that assesses various influences on self-concept, other influences on self-concept, such as age and gender require further attention because they have been shown to determine the trajectories in adolescent self-concept. The different domains of self-concept are also important to explore due to their contribution towards a more detailed understanding of the self across various contexts. The current study therefore set out to investigate the influence of age and gender on the self-concept of adolescents, using a multidimensional approach to self-concept.

The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional design, in which data was captured from a sample of adolescents in Pretoria. Self-concept was measured using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (Piers-Harris 2). Using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to test the hypotheses, results indicated that age has an influence on global and domain specific self-concept. Particularly, results showed that younger adolescents have a higher global, social and physical self-concept compared to older adolescents. Self-concept patterns among the adolescents showed an increase in early adolescence, a decrease in middle adolescence and an increase in late adolescence with respect to the global, physical, social and emotional self-concept. The current study further revealed that gender has an influence on certain domain-

specific self-concept but not on the global self-concept of boys and girls. Girls showed a higher self-concept in the emotional domain compared to boys.

6.2. Implications for Practice

The results of the current study elucidate the importance of self-concept during adolescence, which represents a significantly sensitive period of human development. The results highlight that as adolescents navigate through physical, cognitive and socioemotional changes, their age and gender is shown to impact how they deal with these changes at different stages due to increased maturity and gender-linked stereotypes which guide their behaviour (Perry & Pauletti, 2011).

The results of this study suggest an increase in self-concept among young adolescents, a decrease during middle adolescence and an increase again in late adolescence. Literature suggests that as children grow older and encounter different people and experiences, their attitudes, behaviours and relationships change and this in turn influences their self-concept (Harter, 1990). In forming a self-concept, adolescents' evaluation of their sense of self and perceived abilities in several different areas is not only influenced by their own personal perceptions, but by reinforcements and appraisals from significant others. It is known that parents are primarily responsible for the socialization of their children and that peers, school and broader society serve as crucial agents for the development of self-concept. Therefore, the stability, love and warmth in the environment that parents provide, as well as the continued positive support from the school environment can significantly enhance self-concept even in the event of challenges. Thus, findings may provide further guidelines for future preventative educational and parenting programs that are aimed at enhancing the development of positive self-concept.

As children grow and mature, their self-concept steadily increases in complexity to a point where they begin to organise perceptions of their own abilities. Due to ongoing differentiation of the domain-specific self-concept during the adolescent period, it is crucial to gain a thorough understanding of the trends in self-concept across the different ages. Adolescents that realize their potentials and gain awareness of their personal attributes form more accurate and healthier self-concept (Marsh & Craven, 2008). The vulnerability of domain-specific changes in self-concept which is reflected in the current study stresses the importance of reinforcement of adolescents' strengths and encouragement to tackle their personal limitations through the support of parents and teachers and interventions aimed at catering to the adolescent's needs.

Marsh and Craven (1997) argue that "specific domains of self-concept allow for a more thorough understanding of the self across contexts; are better able to predict behaviour; better measure for the efficacy of treatment interventions and provide the best context for integration with other constructs than any global measure of self-concept" (as cited in Marsh et al, 2005, p. 4). These findings suggest methodological implications because how self-concept is measured and operationalized (i.e. global versus domain-specific) is significant in determining which differences will be observed with regards to gender.

The literature on the association between self-concept and gender has yielded inconsistent results. No differences were found to exist between boys and girls regarding their global self-concept, however, in the emotional domain, girls scored higher than boys. The literature suggests that the different domains of self-concept seem to have an influence on one another as when an individual feels incompetent in an area they deem important, it may affect motivation to perform efficiently in other areas as well (Marsh & Craven, 2008). Gender-linked stereotypes have been shown to have an influence on the beliefs that boys and girls have regarding their personal abilities (Sangeeta & Sumitra, 2012), which in turn determine how

adolescents perceive themselves. Therefore, understanding the cultural context may help predict, as well as provide the possible reasons for the variances in self-concept between boys and girls of different cultures, thus contributing to cultural sensitivity and incorporation in psychological theory.

Psychological wellbeing during the adolescent period has been described as critical to performance because efficiency is observed more in adolescents who are more confident in themselves and their abilities compared to those with lower self-concept (Marsh & Craven, 2008). Therefore, accurately understanding the developmental patterns of self-concept among boys and girls of different ages is of significant importance because self-concept impacts various critical developmental outcomes such as psychological and socioemotional adjustment.

6.3. Limitations

Various limitations were identified in the current study, which may have had an influence on the interpretation of the results.

- The sample size of 145 participants in this study limits generalizability of the findings. Additionally, adolescents aged 18 represented a significantly small percentage of the overall sample, therefore also limiting the generalizability of the findings in that age group. Furthermore, there may be limited applicability of the results to females as the study sample consisted of mostly males.
- Both schools that were used in this study were from different geographical areas, one from a township and one from an suburban area. Due to the smaller sample from the township compared to the suburban area, the data obtained may not be sufficiently equivalent, therefore impacting its appropriateness for pooling. Additionally, the data could not be compared across different socioeconomic strata.

- The age groups examined in the study were aimed to represent early adolescence (12-14 years), middle adolescence (15-17 years) and late adolescence (18-20 years). However, the current study only used 14-year-olds and 18-year-olds to represent young and late adolescence, respectively. Additionally, the total group size for each of these age categories was significantly lower compared to the sample for middle adolescence. Therefore, the results obtained in this study may not provide meaningful conclusions regarding early and late adolescence.
- The study compared variables using only observed mean scores, which may limit the justification of the analysis due to the omission of more extensive statistical analyses such as those elucidating measurement invariance across the focal groups.
- Only the Piers Harris 2 as a data collection method was used in the study, which may restrict the attainment of further information for the purposes of this study. An additional method of data collection, such as a semi-structured questionnaire or interviews could have gathered further information such as the relationships one has with parents, peers and the school environment. This information could have been useful for the current study as such relationships have been shown to significantly influence self-concept.
- The sampling method used in the study affected the ratio of the age range of the participants, therefore not all the adolescents in each age group was adequately represented.
- The participants' emotional states among other factors could have affected the manner in which they responded to the questionnaire.

6.4. Recommendations

- Future studies could focus on using a larger sample size as well as a more diverse population which could be more representative of the general population. Furthermore, it is recommended that future studies employ a stratified sampling technique to ensure

comparable group sizes for the relevant age groups, and to ensure relatively equal numbers across the schools included, in order to facilitate pooling and meaningful comparison.

- It is recommended that future research on self-concept involve parents and teachers as significant factors affecting the self-concept of adolescents in order to explore the influence parents and teachers have on the perceptions children have about themselves.
- Future research could employ more comprehensive data collection methods in order to gain more insight into the factors that have an impact on adolescent self-concept as well as a more inclusive sampling method in order to make broader generalizations of the population.

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APPENDIX A: Information Sheet and Informed Consent for Adolescents



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Department of Psychology

Dear Learner,

My name is Lerato Raboshakga. I am a Clinical Psychology Masters student at the University of Pretoria. As part of the Masters course we are required to complete a research project. The title of my research is *The Influence of Age and Gender on the Self-Concept of Adolescents in Pretoria*. My research aims to determine whether the age and gender has an influence on the development of self-concept in adolescents.

For my research project, I would like to invite adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 years to fill out a questionnaire which consists of questions relating to self-concept and should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The information gathered from the above-mentioned questionnaire is required in order for me to complete my research. I therefore invite you to take part in my study.

To ensure confidentiality, a number will be assigned to each learner, where each questionnaire will not be identified as belonging to any specific participant. The information provided will not be disclosed to any of the teachers and will be kept confidential and will only be accessed by me and my research supervisor at the university. The information will then be archived and possibly used for future research.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate in the study. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part in the study. Should you decline participation or withdraw from participation, this will not

affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. There are no perceived risks or guaranteed benefits to you by participating in this study. Your contribution will be invaluable.

Please feel free to ask any questions before, during or after the study by contacting me, Lerato, at 072 582 9574 or emailing me at salphiraboshakga@gmail.com. Alternatively, you may contact my supervisor, Mr Ahmed Mohamed at 012 420 4006 or email ahmed.mohamed@up.ac.za should you have any concerns or queries.

Sincerely yours,

Lerato Raboshakga

(Masters Researcher)

University of Pretoria

salphiraboshakga@gmail.com

0725829574

Mr Ahmed Mohamed

(Research Supervisor)

University of Pretoria

ahmed.mohamed@up.ac.za

012 420 4006

Declaration by participant

I hereby agree to take part in a research study entitled (*The Influence of Age and Gender on the Self-concept of Adolescents in Pretoria*).

I declare that:

- I have read or had read to me this information and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2017.

Declaration by parent

I (Parent/Caregiver) hereby give permission for
my

child to take part in the research study.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2017.

.....
Signature of participant/caregiver

APPENDIX B: Information Sheet and Informed Consent for School



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Department of Psychology

Dear School Head,

My name is Lerato Raboshakga. I am a Clinical Psychology Masters student at the University of Pretoria. As part of the Masters course we are required to complete a research project. The title of my research is *The Influence of Age and Gender on the Self-Concept of Adolescents in Pretoria*. My research aims to determine whether the age and gender has an influence on the development of self-concept in adolescents

For my research project, I would like to invite adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 years to fill out a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of questions relating to self-concept and should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The information gathered from the above-mentioned questionnaire is required in order for me to complete my research. I therefore invite you to take part in my study.

The learners will be provided with information about the study and a request for assent to participate, as well as permission from their parents for them to take part in the study. Should the learners agree to take part in the study, I would like to them to fill out the questionnaire at the school after school hours in order to not interfere with academic activities. A list of possible times and dates for the completion of the questionnaires will be circulated the learners will be able to pick the date which suits them best. I will avail myself on each date in order to clarify or provide any information regarding the study. To ensure confidentiality, a number will be assigned to each learner, where each questionnaire will not be identified as belonging to any

specific participant. The information provided will not be disclosed to any of the teachers and will be kept confidential and will only be accessed by me and my research supervisor at the university. The information will then be archived and possibly used for future research.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and learners, as well as the school are free to decline to participate in the study. Also learners and the school are free to withdraw from the study at any point. Should learners and the school decline participation or withdraw from participation, this will not affect them negatively in any way whatsoever. Your contribution will be invaluable.

Please feel free to ask any questions before, during or after the study by contacting me, Lerato, at 072 582 9574 or emailing me at salphiraboshakga@gmail.com. Alternatively, you may contact my supervisor, Mr Ahmed Mohamed at 012 420 4006 or email ahmed.mohamed@up.ac.za should you have any concerns or queries.

If you are interested in the results of the study, the abridged findings will be made available to your office for the interested parents and learners to access once the research has been completed.

Sincerely yours,

Lerato Raboshakga

(Masters Researcher)

University of Pretoria

salphiraboshakga@gmail.com

0725829574

Mr Ahmed Mohamed

(Research Supervisor)

University of Pretoria

ahmed.mohamed@up.ac.za

012 420 4006

Declaration by School Head

I hereby give permission for the learners at my school to take part in a research study entitled (*The Influence of Age and Gender on the Self-concept of Adolescents*).

I declare that:

- I have read or had read to me this information and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.

I hereby give permission for all interested learners to use the school premises to take part in the research study.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 2017.

.....
Signature of School Head

.....
Signature of witness



Official School Stamp

APPENDIX C: Sample Items for the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Second Edition (Piers–Harris 2)

Piers-Harris 2 Domains	Sample Questions
Behavioural Adjustment (BEH)	I am well-behaved at school. I do many bad things.
Intellectual and School Status (INT)	I am smart. I am slow in finishing my homework.
Physical Appearance and Attributes (PHY)	I have a pleasant face. My looks bother me.
Freedom of Anxiety (FRE)	I am nervous. I worry a lot.
Popularity (POP)	It is hard for me to make friends. I have many friends.
Happiness and Satisfaction (HAP)	I am a happy person. I am unhappy.

APPENDIX D: RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL FOR AMMENDMENT



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Research Ethics Committee

26 June 2018

Dear Ms Raboshakga

Project: The influence of age and gender on the self-concept of adolescents in Pretoria
Researcher: L Raboshakga
Supervisor: Mr AR Mohamed
Department: Psychology
Reference number: 12187462 (GW20170725HS)

Thank you for the application to amend the existing protocol that was approved by the Committee on 14 August 2017.

I have pleasure in informing you that the amendment was **approved** the Research Ethics Committee at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 26 June 2018. Urther data collection may commence (where necessary).

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the revised proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

FR

Prof Maxi Schoeman
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate and Research Ethics
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

cc: Mr AR Mohamed (Supervisor)
Prof T Guse (HoD)

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotho

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof MME Schoeman (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Mr A Bizos; Dr L Blokland; Dr K Booyens; Dr A-M de Beer; Ms A dos Santos; Dr R Fasselt; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr W Kelleher; Mr A Mohamed; Dr C Puttergill; Dr D Reyburn; Dr M Soer; Prof E Taljard; Prof V Thebe; Ms B Tsebe; Ms D Mokalapa