INFLUENCE OF SELF-ESTEEM IN CHILDREN ATTENDING 6TH GRADE ACCORDING TO THE GENDER VARIABLE

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Abstract. This paper's intention is to highlight the importance of self-esteem in the personal development and how it influences all aspects. Therefore, a data collection has been made regarding the concept, its types, which aspects influence it, how we can improve it, its influence in the classroom and the role of the teacher in the students' self-esteem. The aim of this work is to verify the influence of self-esteem in children's school performance, the extent to which the personality can influence the learning of each individual and the role of the teacher in building and improving the self-esteem. The study was conducted with a sample of 50 sixth grade students of a school in Madrid. The instrument used was the *Autoconcepto AF-5* questionnaire that contains thirty questions and evaluates five scopes: the academic, social, emotional, and the physical one. The methodology is quantitative, descriptive and non-experimental. The most important conclusions were that self-esteem affects the child's school performance, parents and teachers play a fundamental role in its development and teachers should enhance the positive qualities of their students so that they develop a positive self-esteem that allows them to grow into whole and happy adults.
Keywords: Self-esteem, self-concept, academic performance, gender.

INFLUENCIA DE LA AUTOESTIMA EN NIÑOS DE 6º DE PRIMARIA SEGÚN LA VARIABLE GÉNERO

Resumen. Con la elaboración de este trabajo se pretende dar una visión de la importancia que tiene la autoestima en el desarrollo de las personas y cómo ésta influye en todos los aspectos. Así se ha realizado un recorrido por el concepto, los tipos qué podemos encontrar, qué aspectos influyen en ella, cómo podemos mejorarla, su influencia en el aula y qué papel juega el maestro en la autoestima de sus alumnos. El fin de este trabajo es comprobar la influencia que tiene la autoestima en el rendimiento escolar de los niños, hasta qué grado puede influir en el aprendizaje la personalidad de cada individuo y el papel que tiene el maestro en la construcción y

mejora de ésta. El estudio se realizó con una muestra de cincuenta alumnos de sexto curso de Educación Primaria de un colegio de Madrid capital. El instrumento utilizado fue el cuestionario de Autoconcepto AF-5 que contiene una batería de treinta preguntas y evalúa cinco dimensiones (Académico/Laboral, Social, Emocional, Familiar y Física). El tipo de metodología es cuantitativa, descriptiva no experimental. Las conclusiones más importantes a las que se llegaron fueron que la autoestima influye en el rendimiento escolar del niño, padres y profesores juegan un papel fundamental en el desarrollo de ésta y los maestros deben potenciar las cualidades positivas de sus alumnos para desarrollar una autoestima positiva que les permita crecer como personas completas y felices.

Palabras clave: autoestima, autoconcepto, rendimiento académico, género.

Introduction

In an increasingly competitive and individualistic world it is of the utmost importance to know the influence that self-esteem has on the classroom. To do this, from an early age it is very important to educate and motivate students so that in spite of not being perfect and not standing out in their daily activities, they know that they are unique, which is why they should esteem themselves from a tender age.

For all these reasons, parents, educators and teachers play a key role in the development of children' self-esteem.

When a child has enough self-esteem, the child is motivated with any ongoing activities and is not afraid to make mistakes because the child is aware that mistakes are a part of learning, this will be a student with good self-esteem prepared to overcome any challenge.

Therefore, it is necessary for our students to have a self-esteem an as great as possible and to this end, it will be required to know them well and let them express themselves freely so as not to make false value judgments and fall into the famous Pygmalion effect.

At present, children spend more time in school, so teachers have a very important role because not only are we mere information transmitters, but we also have a fundamental role in teaching students emotional education.

Children's feelings about themselves are created from their relationships with others and the messages they receive in different everyday situations, influencing their school performance to a greater or lesser extent. The students' personal problems will also have a negative impact on their learning processes, so constant communication between teachers and families is essential.

The self-esteem

Depending on the author or the information source, different definitions for self-esteem can be found:

"Positive self-esteem is the fundamental requirement for a full life." (Branden, 1991, p. 9).

Self-esteem is the self-trust and self-respect and shows the value judgments we do about ourselves to cope with everyday challenges.

Also García; Cermeño & Fernández (1991, p.10) define it as "the way we perceive, think, feel and behave about and with ourselves. It is how we are used to cope with ourselves and evaluate our own identity".

Thus, self-esteem refers to an attitude toward oneself, generated in the interaction with others, which includes the perception, esteem and concept that everyone has of oneself and implies an adequate development of the identity process, of knowing and appreciating

oneself, of the feeling of safety and the sense of belonging, of the domain of certain social and familiar communication skills and of the feeling of being useful and valuable for the others.

"The self-esteem constitutes the core of the personality" (Rogers, 1994. p 11)

"The self-esteem influences the self-regulation of the conduct, mediating in the decision-making process, influencing the choice of objectives and the establishment of plans of action" (Markus & Kunda, 1986, p. 11).

Self-esteem is the valuation that each person has of oneself, it is our own assessment or judgment of our way of being, our actions, our psychological and physical traits. All these characteristics determine our lives.

Factors that influence the self-esteem

The family's influence

The external influences that we receive from a tender age are essential for building a proper self-esteem. Data show that in domestic violence situations both victim and aggressor had low self-esteem.

There are families, teachers, and other agents who despise the child, humiliate, laugh at child when the child asks for help, feels sick or is afraid, etc. These actions are offset by other opposite like make the child feel loved, intelligent, good, which cause the child to be greatly confused, which negatively influences in the child's development.

People who receive this type of education, when they become adults, shall transmit this same message to people that are more vulnerable both physically and psychologically. The most widespread violence is the emotional one, children who suffer this type of intimidation often feel frustrated, suffering in silence keeping it to themselves.

It is for this reason that families unconsciously damage the self-esteem of the individual. The problem lies in those who were educated in this way and follow the same pattern.

Communication's influence

Communication has a strong relationship with self-esteem, depending on how you say it, an information will have a positive or negative effect. Imposing an idea to others in order to achieve something, dominating a situation or people is the most common behavior in violent people which have a serious communication problem.

Society's influence

The society we live in has a very important role in people's development, for basing on culture, families adopt different ways to transmit it to their members and influence the personality, according to certain social models. The image is constructed from the outside to the inside, from what those who are around us think about us. This causes people with a high social position to have a low self-esteem. The standards on which they people base in order to evaluate themselves are cultural and are established by social models that determine our image toward others.

School's influence

It is essential that teachers know which values they want to pass on to their students and if they are able to transmit them.

In the process of self-awareness, the teacher can benefit or affect the students. Therefore, it is essential that our students feel good in their own skins.

The academic failure contributes to undermining self-esteem. Teachers should know what is the development stage of each one of their students as to adapt to them and contribute to their academic and professional training.

It has to be kept in mind that each student has a three-dimensional picture:

- The first dimension is the picture of oneself.

- The second dimension is the opinion of oneself in relation to everyone else's.

- The third dimension is the picture of oneself and how the person would like it to be.

It is therefore essential that the time students are in school they learn who they want to be according to their characteristics.

To be a good teacher, the following needs to be taken into account:

- Create an environment in the classroom where the student feels comfortable and useful.

- Recognize and value the strengths of each student.

- Be aware of the feelings that attending school creates in the students.

The role of the teacher in the self-esteem

It is key to implement the emotional education from a tender age.

At present, teachers are not only mere information transmitters, but they also have a role in emotional education.

The child's feelings toward oneself will influence the personal learning. The non-solved children's personal problems will consequently negatively affect their learning

The teacher becomes a key reference throughout the school life of the child. And the teacher does so by giving the students a learning environment adapted to their capabilities. Therefore, it is essential that parents have a close relationship with the teacher about the child's educational process, establishing some guidelines for joint action.

The expectations of the teacher about the students are essential to the strengthening of the student's self-esteem. Any teacher who does not trust the student will hardly provide the student with opportunities to demonstrate the personal skills, which will make that the child continues to be a bad student. Otherwise, the student who is trusted and motivated will experience a full development.

Hence the importance of knowing the faculty and build a student's positive image, making the student feel accepted.

The social learning are those that occur inside and outside the school, which bring respect for the person and the rest, helps them solve conflicts and get along better with others.

Teachers believe that children should accept themselves and others so that their knowledge is more useful and efficient, and when this is the case, they may face their own limitations and the knowledge they acquire will have greater value.

After several interviews with more than fifty teachers, it was concluded that as children respected themselves, they improved their skills and academic results, in relation with their gained confidence.

Rodríguez Espinar (1986, p.28) stated that in the teaching-learning processes with a high incidence of school performance, and that this is subject to change and modifiable, to some extent, by the educational action, we can understand the interest in the educational

framework raises the issue and the attitudes of the teacher that help students achieve a positive self-concept and a high level of self-esteem.

The concept that develops the personal capacity, the appreciation on the personal qualities and attitudes is built basing on the own experiences and the interaction with others. In particular importance, what is significant for students is what their teachers are.

"Various research show that some teacher behaviors and attitudes have a favorable impact on the self-esteem of the students" (Machargo, 1991, p. 28).

Self-esteem is built when the teacher promotes the active participation, cooperation and a climate of trust in the classroom, in which the protagonist is the student, being able to express, and make mistakes without any fear.

Saura (1996) says that without the intention to be exhaustive, below are a series of attitudes and behaviors on the part of the teacher who, in our view, are particularly suitable to educate the self-esteem of students:

- Know and accept students the way they are, treat them like they are unique, important and worthy of attention, with unconditional respect.

- Call students by their names.

- Praise in a realistic way, without flattery, and make their positive attitudes clear to the rest of the classmates.

- Avoid unnecessary comparisons.

- Make more emphasis on positive goals to ensure that defects or failures are corrected.

- Help the student to be inwardly satisfied with and praise the student before others when appropriate.

- Offer, along with the criticism, alternatives and positive assessment.

- Do not be catastrophic, as this generates feelings of guilt.

- Be patient and tolerant and respectful to all students.

- Create an atmosphere of trust and peace of mind, free of aggressiveness and hostility.

- Do not use fear as a resource, for it always promotes insecurity to a lesser or greater extent.

- Do not ridicule the student because this affects the shyness and triggers feelings of inferiority.

- Stimulate, understand, promote, encourage and motivate to the extent possible.

- Show solidarity and empathy, not compassion nor pity.

- Help students consider reasonable and realistic goals.

- Make a realistic, positive and flexible assessment helping students to evaluate themselves in the same way.

- Be welcoming and open to dialog.

- Ensure that students are at least moderately satisfied with themselves, recognize their qualities and good work, as well as those of others.

- Know how to combine understanding and firmness, patience and requirement harmoniously.

Teachers should be alert to discover the opportunities that make the student self-improvement within the group.

The teacher must guide the student toward maturity, ease that students make their own decisions in accordance with their needs and abilities.

Method

In the present study, the objective is to determine if the various components of the academic, social, emotional, and physical self-concept are related to the academic performance and how these self-concepts and performance are related to other variables such as gender and age in sixth grade.

The study follows the descriptive method, performing a comparative analysis based on the data collected.

The overall objective is complemented with the specific objectives that are listed below.

Research's objectives

Check the possible relationship or association degree among the various dimensions of the academic, social, emotional, familiar and physical self-concept and the gender variable in 6th grade in a public school in the province of Madrid.

Hypothesis:

In accordance with the set goals, the following hypothesis are found:

H1. The academic self-concept in 6th grade is higher in girls than in boys.

H2. The social self-concept in 6th grade is higher in girls than in boys.

H3. The emotional self-concept in 6th grade is higher in girls than in boys.

H4. The familiar self-concept in 6th grade is higher in girls than in boys.

H5. The physical self-concept in 6th grade is higher in boys than in girls.

Population and sample

The sample of the research was of 50 participants from a Public Preschool and Elementary Education School of Madrid, 28 boys and 22 girls, aged between 11 and 13. It is of vital importance to say that the sample includes 19 students who have retaken 6th grade, 17 boys and 2 girls.

Techniques and tools

In order to conduct the research, the *Autoconcepto Forma 5* has been used (see Annex 1), whose authors are Garcia and Musitu (2001). This questionnaire measures five basic dimensions of self-concept in children and adolescents: the academic, social, emotional, and physical self-concepts. Each of the dimensions consists of 6 items. Individuals must answer using a scale of 1 to 99 points, where 1 means they completely disagree and 99 means they totally agree.

Below is a definition of the self-concept's 5 dimensions:

Academic self-concept. It refers to the perception that the subject has about the quality of his performance, as a student or as a worker. It focuses on two aspects: the first relating to the feeling that is generated in the student or worker about the personal performance through the teacher or the boss (a good student, a good worker...), and the second relating to specific qualities that are especially valued in that context (intelligence, habit of work...).

Social self-concept. The perception that the individual has of his competence in the social relations. It includes two aspects: one referred to the subject's social network and his ease or difficulty to maintain it or expand it; the other aspects is related to some important qualities in interpersonal relations (being friendly and cheerful).

Emotional self-concept. It is the understanding that the subject has of his emotional state and his responses to specific situations, with a certain degree of commitment and involvement in his daily life. It allows to differentiate between two aspects: the first refers to the general perception about one's own emotional state (I am easily frightened, I am nervous), and the second focused on the emotional self-evaluation in specific situations (when they ask me something or talk to me) in which the other person has higher rank (a teacher, a boss...).

Familiar self-concept. It is the perception of the subject of his engagement, participation and integration in the family environment. This dimension encompasses two aspects. The first of them is specifically linked to the trust and affection of the parents. The second is related to four variables of the family and the home.

Physical self-concept. It refers to the perception of the subject of his physical appearance and physical condition. This dimension includes two complementary aspects. One refers to practicing sports in the social, physical and skill components. Another ones is related to the physical aspect.

Procedure

We went to the school to conduct the investigation, with the previous authorization of the management team. We conducted the F- 5 questionnaire to students of the two 6th grade classrooms, in the early hours of the morning.

Prior to its implementation, we made a brief explanation of how to rate the different sentences from 0 to 99 points, for this reason, we draw a thermometer on the blackboard so that they could have an idea of how to rate the sentences in the most adjusted way, there were several group examples to ensure that the tool was correctly answered individually.

Results

Academic/working self-concept

In the first place, with regard to the results obtained once analyzed the labor dimension of academic self-concept, we stress that there are important differences in the group and gender (see Table 1 and 2 and Figure 1). As we can observe, the boys and girls of the sample group show parallel lines in their academic self-concept, which allows to analyze the sample as a whole and we find that the lowest percentile is 6.2 and 6.7 the highest percentile, being 6.45 the total sample average.

If we analyze the sample by gender, we can observe in the girls the lowest percentile is 6.3 and 6.7 the highest, being 6.55 the average. With respect to the boys, the lowest percentile is 6.2 while the highest is 6.5 with a 6.35 average.

Table 1
Academic/Working self-concept percentile according to gender

Academic self-concept	Girls	Boys	Group
	6.7+	6.5+	6.7 +
	6.3 -	6.2-.	6.2 -
	6.55 average	6.35 average	6.45 average

Note: own source

Table 2
Academic/Working self-concept percentage according to gender

| Academic self-concept	Girls	Boys
+50%	74%	66%
-50%	26%	34%
Total	100%	100%

Note: own source
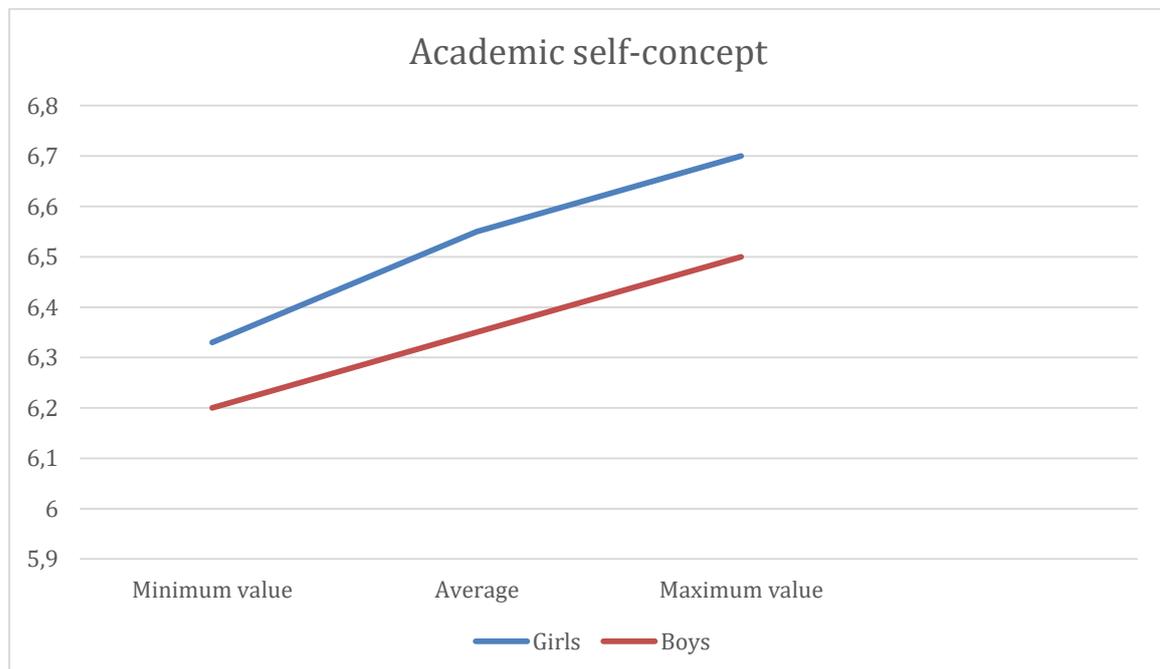
Figure 1. Academic/working self-concept

After the analysis of the sample group jointly and by gender we can find differences between boys and girls. We can conclude that girls in the sample have a higher average in comparison with boys in the academic/working self-concept, additionally, in this group there is a considerable difference as there is a large group of grade repeaters (17 boys and 2 girls).

Social self-concept

With regard to the analysis of the sample group corresponding to the social self-concept, differences in the group and gender can be observed (see Table 3 and 4 and Figure 2). As we can observe the boys and girls of the sample group do not follow parallel lines in their social self-concept, which allows to analyze the sample as a whole and we find that the lowest percentile is 7.0 and 7.26 the highest, being 7.13 the total sample average.

If we analyze the sample by gender, we can observe that in the girls, the lowest percentile is 7.1 and the highest is 7.22, which results in a 7.16 average. Regarding boys, the lowest percentile is 7.0 while the highest is 7.26 with a 7.13 average.

Table 3
Social self-concept percentile according to gender

Social self-concept:	Girls	Boys	Group
	7.22+	7.26+	7.26+
	7.1-.	7.0-.	7.0-.
	7.16 average	7.13 average	7.13 average

Note. Own source.

Table 4
Social self-concept percentage according to the gender

Social self-concept:	Girls	Boys
+50%	89%	83%
-50%	11%	17%
Total	100%	100%

Note. Own source.
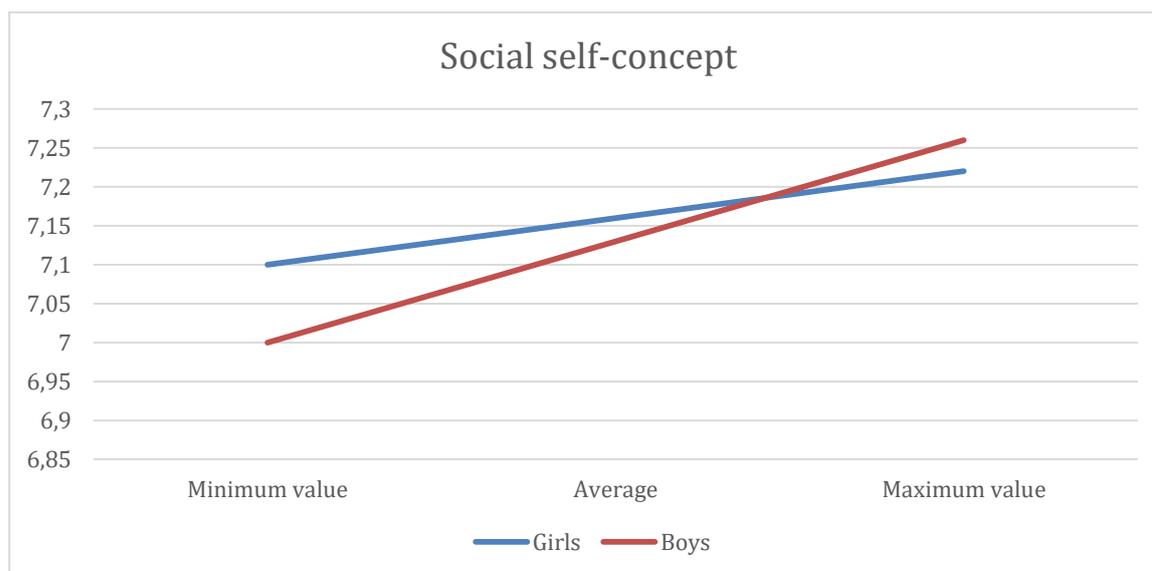
Figure 2. Social self-concept:

Once the analysis of our sample is made jointly and by gender, we can see that there are no significant differences between boys and girls. We can conclude that for both girls and boys their social component is similar and constant and there is no relevant differences.

Emotional self-concept

With regard to the analysis of the sample group corresponding to the emotional self-concept, differences in the group and gender can be observed (see Table 3.0, 3.1 and Figure 3). As we can observe, the profiles of the boys and girls of the group are not parallel in their emotional self-concept, which allows to analyze the sample as a whole and we find that the lowest percentile is 4.75 and 5.74 the highest percentile, being 5.24 the total sample average.

If we analyze the sample by gender, we can observe that in the girls, the lowest percentile is 4.65 and the highest is 5.46, which results in a 5.05 average. Regarding boys, the lowest percentile is 4.97 while the highest is 5.74, being 5.35 the average in boys.

Table 5
Emotional self-concept percentile according to gender

Emotional self-concept	Girls	Boys	Group
	5.46+	5.74+	5.74+
	4.65-.	4.97-.	4.75-.
	5.05 average	5.35 average	5.24 average

Note: Own source.

Table 6
Emotional self-concept percentage according to the gender

Emotional self-concept	Girls	Boys
+50%	79%	82%
-50%	21%	18%
Total	100%	100%

Note: Own source.

Emotional self-concept

Figure 3. Emotional self-concept

After the analysis of the sample group jointly and by gender we can find significant differences between boys and girls. We can conclude that the boys in the sample have a higher average than girls regarding the emotional self-concept.

Familiar self-concept.

With regard to the analysis of the sample group corresponding to the familiar self-concept, there are no significant differences in the group and gender (see Table 4.0, 4.1 and Figure 4). As we can see the results of boys and girls are parallel regarding their familiar self-concept. If we look at the sample jointly, we note that the lowest percentile is 7.88 while the top percentile is 8.22, being 8.05 the average. If we analyze the sample by gender, we can observe that in the girls, the lowest percentile is 7.88 and the highest is 8.22, which results in a 8.05 average. On the contrary, for the boys, the lowest percentile is 7.90 while the highest is 8.21 with a 8.05 average.

Table 7
Familiar self-concept percentile according to gender

Familiar self-concept	Girls	Boys	Group
	8.22+	8.21+	8.22+
	7.88-.	7.90-.	7.88 -
	8.05 average	8.05 average	8.05 average

Note: Own source.

Table 8
Familiar self-concept percentage according to the gender

| Familiar self-concept	Girls	Boys
+50%	93	92
-50%	7%	8%
Total	100%	100%

Note: Own source.
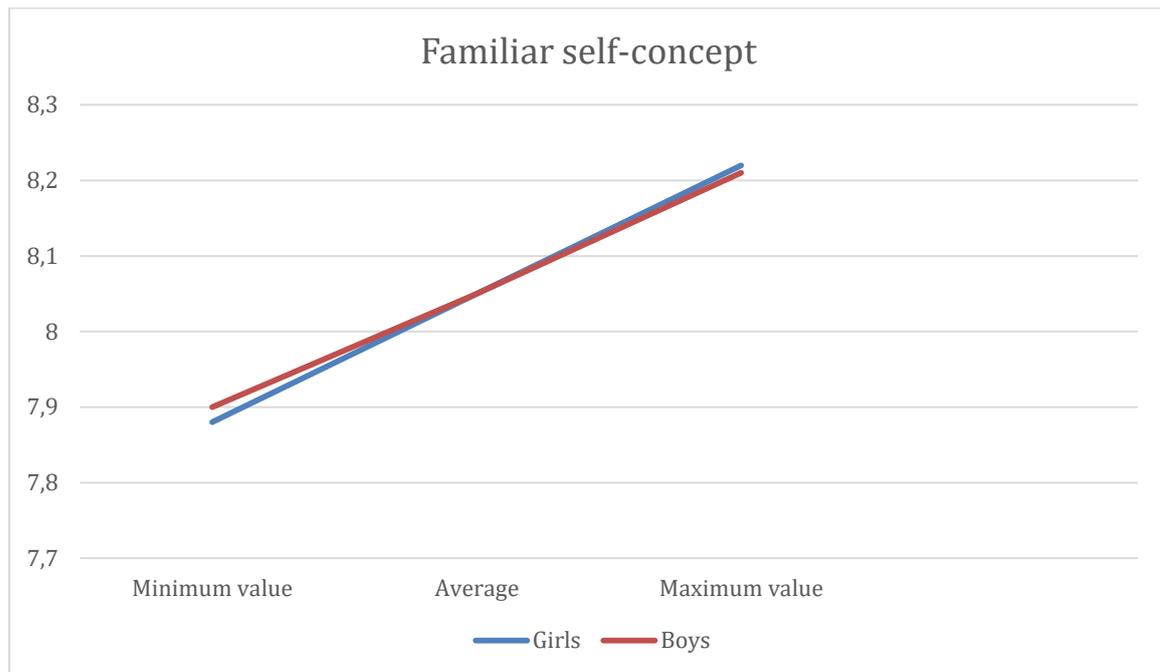
Figure 4. Familiar self-concept

After the analysis of the data we can see that there are no major differences between the two genders, in both the result is similar and continuous.

Physical self-concept

Finally, regarding the physical self-concept, we can observe large differences between the two genders (see Table 5.0 and 5.1 and Figure 5). As we can see the results between boys and girls about their physical selves are revealing.

By observing the sample in a comprehensive manner, we note that the lowest percentile is 5.98 while the top percentile is 6.20, with a 6.09 average. In terms of gender analysis we can see that the lowest percentile in girls is 5.98 while the highest is 6.12 with a 6.05 average, with respect to the boys, the lowest percentile is 5.99 while the highest is 6.20 with a 6.09 average.

Table 9
Physical self-concept percentile according to gender

Physical self-concept	Girls	Boys	Group
	6.12+	6.20+	5.98+

5.98-.	5.99-.	6.20-.
6.05 average	6.09 average	6.09 average

Note: Own source.

Table 10
Physical self-concept percentage according to the gender

| Physical self-concept	Girls	Boys
+50%	82%	87%
-50%	18%	13%
Total	100%	100%

Note: Own source.
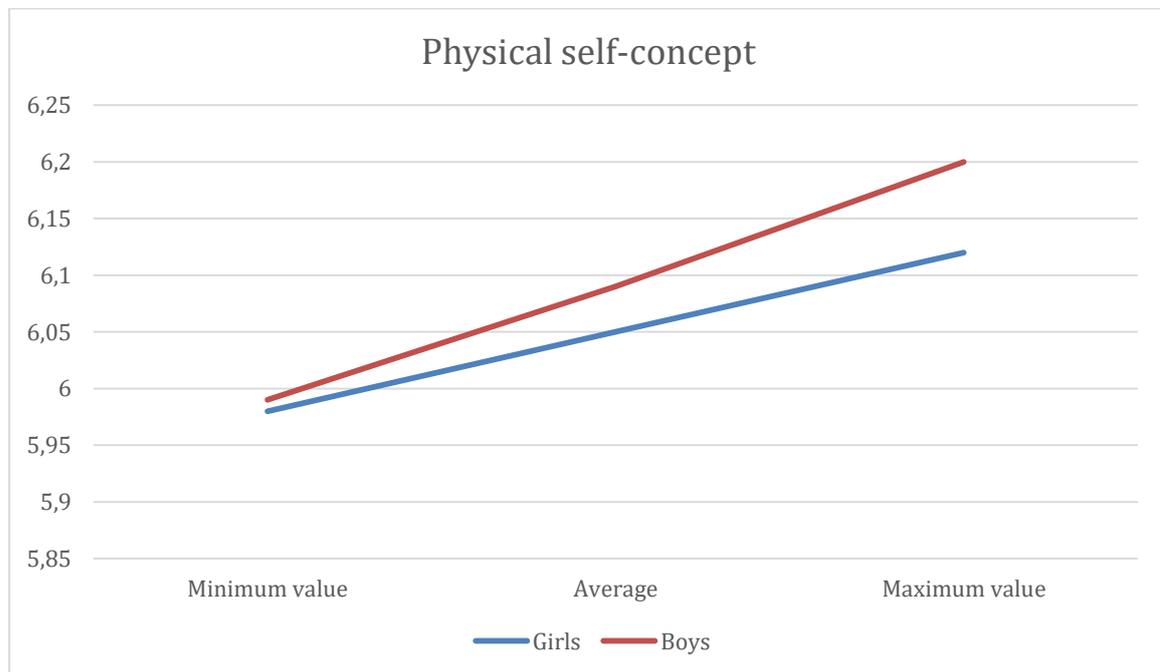
Figure 5. Physical self-concept

Once the analysis is made, we can conclude that there are large differences between the two genders, that is, a greater physical self-concept can be appreciated in the boys group in comparison with the girls group.

Discussion and conclusions

After analyzing the data related to self-concept's five aspects (Academic/Working, Social, Emotional, and Physical) using the *Autoconcepto AF-5* questionnaire and focusing on the academic aspect, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The personality of the individual also affects the self-esteem, if it is an individual with an outgoing personality, although that person has a low academic performance, he will not deem so as a negative aspect, but as an aspect that should be improved from a positive vision.

On the other hand, if a student is more introverted and shy, the student can think of the personal academic performance as a negative aspect so this can adversely influence the student's self-esteem.

For this reason, the teacher plays a fundamental role in the self-esteem of their students, it is essential to educate the self-esteem of people from a tender age, so the school plays a major role in this area.

When a student has a high self-esteem, the student is motivated and has no fear of failure, the student learns best and optimistically faces the everyday challenges.

Many teachers have demonstrated with their experiences that conflict of feelings prevented the learning and so have shown how, when this issue is resolved, the students sensibly increased learning.

When a conflict is resolved, children have a better acceptance of themselves and of others, but this does not indicate that all the difficulties have been resolved.

For this reason, the teacher must find the strategies needed to create a respectful climate in the classroom, a climate in which everyone feels supported and to do so as to be able to get to know the students and feel valued and respected by the group regardless of the grades and that such academic qualifications influence the person's global view.

Teachers have a major responsibility to help children to accept themselves as well as others. Nevertheless, the teacher should not do this work alone, but with resources such as the children themselves, their parents and qualified staff.

Once the study was finished, the following conclusions were drawn:

H1. The academic self-concept in 6th grade is higher in girls than in boys. That is confirmed, this result coincides with the one carried out by Gorostegui, E. & Dorr, A.

H2. The social self-concept in 6th grade is higher in girls than in boys. That result is confirmed.

H3. The physical self-concept in 6th grade is higher in boys than in girls. That result is confirmed, it coincides with the one carried out by Amezcua, J & Pichardo, M.

H4. The familiar self-concept in 6th grade is higher in girls than in boys. That result is confirmed, it coincides with the one carried out by Amezcua, J & Pichardo, M.

H5. The physical self-concept in 6th grade is higher in boys than in girls. That result is confirmed, it coincides with the one carried out by Amezcua, J & Pichardo, M.

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