Verbal self-concept and academic performance: Gender differences in its causal relation

Cristiana Antunes¹ & Anne Marie Fontaine²
¹University of Trás-os-Montes-e-Alto- Douro, Portugal
²University of Porto, Portugal
marina.fontaine@ua.pt

Verbal self-concept is the subjective feeling and belief about one’s competencies in reading, writing and general work in language domain (Marshall, 1989). Girls tend to reveal higher verbal self-concept than boys as well as higher academic performance in language and both variables are strongly correlated. Research findings in the causal relation between self-concept and academic performance assign that, in general, it’s the performance that influences academic self-concept. However, some studies sustain that age or gender can moderate the causal effects, revealing the influence of academic self-concept on later academic performance. This study aimed to observe gender differences in the causal relation between verbal academic self-concept and academic performance. The first two cohorts were composed of 192 girls and 139 boys, attending 6th and 8th grades in the first time and the last two cohorts were composed by 181 girls and 125 boys attending 9th and 10th grades in the first testing. Subjects were tested three times during three years. SEM was used to test models of causal relation. The results revealed that for girls, the models that fitted data better were those with no causal effects. However, for younger boys, performance in Portuguese language had an effect on later verbal self-concept, while for older boys (attending 9th and 10th grades in time 1), it was observed the influence of self-concept on later performance. Results are discussed on the basis of gender differential learning expectancies and on the possible motivational properties of verbal self-concept for boys attending later school years.

Keywords: verbal self-concept, academic performance, gender differences

The developmental dynamics between task motivation, self-concept of ability, and academic performance

Jasna Vlajcar, Ante Toljati, Kaia Aunola, & Jari-Erik Nurmio
University of Jyväskylä, Finland
jasna.vlajcar@psyk.jyu.fi

Previous research has shown that students’ motivation, academic performance and beliefs of their own abilities are associated with each other. Highly motivated students with positive beliefs about their own abilities show high effort and engage-