

WOMEN'S SELF-CONCEPT AT A COEDUCATIONAL UNIVERSITY:
PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand how self-concept, including physical, social, and emotional factors, translates to perceived academic success for women in the college environment. The researcher hypothesized as positive self-concept increases, academic success also increases. Data were analyzed with regards to the experience of these women as it relates to their gendered experience. Quantitative analysis of 46 women at one Midwestern university provided a variety of data about the relationships of perceived academic success, in the form of reported GPA and academic performance, to self-esteem, body esteem, social environment, expectation scales. While most tests did not produce significant results ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed test), perceived academic performance compared to reported GPA and expectations compared to academic performance were significant. However, women still struggle with having positive self-concept in the college environment. Many respondents expressed concerns about physical appearance and acceptance from their peer group. These women are combating these negative feelings on a daily basis as they attend class and work to be academically successful. Further research about self-concept and academic success should be conducted at an all-women's institution. This additional layer of research would be used to quantitatively compare the two populations and would provide a more accurate picture of the experience of women in higher education.