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***The Impact of Academic Development Structures on Self-Perception:
Honors vs Non-Honors University Students***

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the
Department of Psychology.

By
Beatrice Bean

Under the mentorship of Dr. Nicolette Rickert

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study was to determine if there were variations in the self-perceptions of honors and non-honors collegiate students in areas of academic and non-academic self-concept. This research was important as it provides emphasis on an understudied population as well as gathers a deeper understanding of intricacies related to self-concept by incorporating comprehensive investigative measures. A sample of 236 students (72.6% female, 65.7% White, ages 18-51) took an online survey consisting of questions related to self-concept. By utilizing a series of two-tailed, independent samples t-tests we examined the differences between student self-perceptions of self-concept. Results indicated that honors students had statistically significantly higher academic self-concepts than non-honors students. Both groups of students scored similarly across social self-concepts, however, non-honors students had higher perceptions of their physical self-concepts. These findings will provide new insights into how honors enrollment impacts the formation of self-image.

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The Impact of Academic Development Structures on Self-Perception: Honors vs Non-honors University Students

Since the late 1990s, there have been trends of universities introducing honors programs in efforts to attract higher achieving students, most of whom have already spent the majority of their adolescent schooling in these advanced academic tracks (Fischer, 1996). Participation in honors programming at the collegiate level promotes higher academic achievement (e.g., GPA), retention rates to junior and senior year, and on-time graduation (Bowman & Culver, 2018). Success in collegiate honors programs can also predict future career competence and achievement. In a study of university alumni two to 10 years post-grad, it was found that in comparison to non-honors alumni, honors alumni who graduated with significantly higher GPAs were more likely to pursue careers in scientific research and had a higher perceived engagement in their occupations (Kool et al., 2016).

The differences between honors and non-honors students' self-concepts specifically are of interest because of the impact such an academic division can have on students in their formation of self-image and self-perception. Involvement in honors, accelerated, or gifted programs puts students on a fundamentally different academic track than their peers. Students in honors programming typically experience higher teacher-to-student ratios as well as involvement in a community of high-achieving peers (Fisher, 1996; Kool et al., 2017). When looking at adolescents, this separation of students into academic groups can impact the development of self-image through labeling. For students in 4th through 6th grade, identification, or labeling, as a gifted student can

contribute to a positive social self-concept (Bain & Bell, 2004; Hoge & Renzulli, 1993). However, this labeling process can also have potentially negative consequences by placing higher expectations on honors adolescents, leading to feelings of failure or inadequacy when expectations are not met (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993).

The purpose of the current study was to determine if there are any differences in the self-perceptions of honors students (e.g., labeled gifted, high achieving) in comparison to non-honors students. Comparing the self-perceptions of honors and non-honors students is understudied at the collegiate level which is why the following literature review also draws on research from younger age groups (e.g., Kool et al., 2017; Wolfensberger, 2012). This review of current research focuses on academic and non-academic self-concepts in school-aged individuals ranging from elementary to undergraduate students in college programs.

Self-Concept

An individual's self-concept is the image they have of themselves and is composed of the attitudes, feelings, and knowledge that they hold about their own abilities, talents, physical appearance, and social acceptability (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993). Self-concept is observed across different domains where the perception of an individual can be measured in varying capacities, such as Neeman and Harter's (1986, 2012) 13 domains: creativity, intellectual ability, scholastic competence, job competence, athletic competence, appearance, romantic relationships, social acceptance, close friendships, parent relationships, humor, morality, and global self-worth. These self-perceptions are formed through an individual's experiences, interactions, and interpretations with their

environment and the people in it (Shavelson et al., 1976). The combination of self-perceptions across different domains then forms an individual's general self-concept.

To simplify the individual self-concept, Shavelson et al. (1976) organized self-concept into the “academic” and “non-academic” self-concepts. Under their model, academic self-concept consists of four subareas: English, History, Math, and Science. Non-academic self-concept is divided into Social Self-Concept, Emotional Self-Concept, and Physical Self-Concept. The current study utilized the structural divide between academic and non-academic self-concepts as well as the recognition of separate social and physical self-concepts to organize Neeman and Harter's (1986, 2012) Self-Perception Profile for College Students and the related literature (see Figure 1).

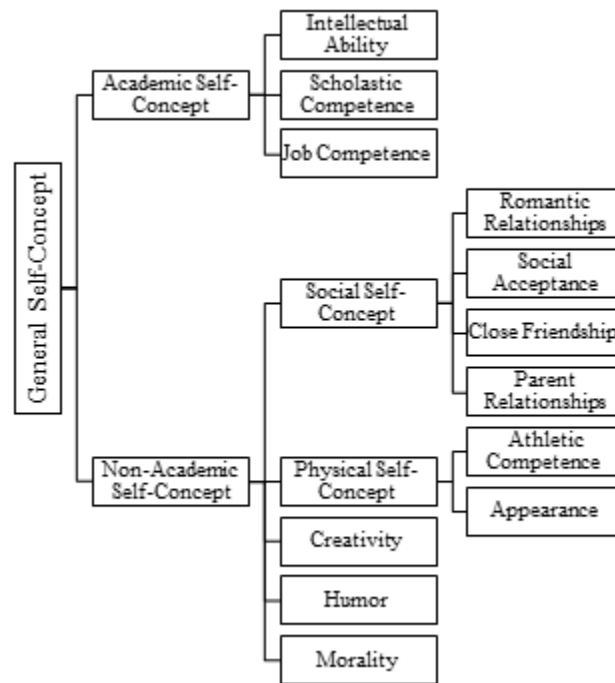


Figure 1. Self-Concept Model adapted from the Shavelston et al (1976) self-concept structure and Neeman and Harter's (1986, 2012) Self-Perception Profile for College Students.

Neeman and Harter (1986, 2012) identify and describe 12 specific domains and one general domain of self-concept (i.e., Global Self-Worth) in their scale structure for the self-concept of university students. The three domains relating to academic self-concept that they include are intellectual ability, scholastic competence, and job competence. Intellectual ability refers to the individual's general intellectual competence in comparison with other students. Scholastic competence targets the specifics of coursework and whether or not the individual feels as if they are mastering the contents of the course and the work associated with it. Job competence includes students' feelings of pride, confidence, and satisfaction in their own work.

In addition to academic self-concepts, this measure also captures the non-academic self-concept, with four domains describing social self-concepts (i.e., Romantic Relationships, Social Acceptance, Close Friendships, and Parent Relationships), two domains describing the physical self-concept (i.e., Athletic Competence and Appearance), and lastly domains covering creativity, humor, and morality. Neeman and Harter (1986, 2012) measure romantic relationships by asking about an individual's feelings concerning their own romantic appeal as well as their abilities to develop new romantic relationships. Social acceptance is described as the satisfaction the individual feels in their social skills and their ability to form friendships. Also relating to relationships, the close friendship domain addresses whether or not the individual has the ability to make close friends, and if they get lonely without close friendships. The parent relationships domain focuses on how well the individual feels they get along with their parents as well as the comfort level and behaviors surrounding interactions with their parents.

With regard to physical self-concept, the appearance domain targets an individual's feelings of their own physical attractiveness as well as their satisfaction in the way they look. Unlike appearance, athletic competence targets the ability side of physical self-concept by measuring whether or not the individual feels they perform well in tasks involving physical activities and sports. Creativity measures the individual's perception regarding their creative and innovative abilities. Humor focuses on the ability for an individual to take a joke from friends and have positive reactions, such as being able to laugh at themselves. Finally, morality is in regards to whether or not the individual feels that their behavior is moral (Neeman & Harter, 1986, 2012).

When studying self-perceptions, one domain is not representative of an individual's entire self-concept. In a study of 680 university students, Briganti et al. (2019) expanded on these ideas of self-concept through an analysis of the interconnections between each individual domain of self-worth. Looking at both academic and non-academic self-concepts, they discovered that self-worth is a heterogeneous system, meaning each domain carries a different weight and develops different connections with other domains in the individual's system of self-worth. This, in contrast to a homogenous system, demonstrates that self-perception is not equal across all domains; therefore, each individual domain is important to analyze. Collecting data from various domains relating to both academic and non-academic self-concepts will allow for the most accurate picture of how an individual perceives themselves.

General Self-Concept

Current research examines the self-concept of students in two main areas: Their perceptions in areas relating to academic competence (e.g., mathematics, intelligence,

achievement) and perceptions in areas relating to non-academic competence (e.g., parent relationships, physical appearance). General self-concept, or global self-worth, combines both academic and non-academic self-concepts to gather a holistic measure of self-perceptions (Neeman & Harter, 1986, 2012; Shavelson et al., 1976). When observing comprehensive measures of self-concept, such as total or general self-concept, there have been mixed findings. Studies looking at general self-concept have found that gifted students in elementary and middle school report higher self-description scores than students identified as non-gifted (Bain & Bell, 2004; Košir et al., 2016). Hoogeveen et al. (2009) contradict these findings as they found no difference in the ratings of general and total self-concept between groups of gifted and non-gifted middle school students. Due to the complex nature of self-concept, it is likely that these various findings can be attributed to the broad overlook of a concept that encompasses many complicated and intricate domains. However, despite the mixed research about the individual perceptions of general self-concept between honors and non-honors students, the literature supports that overall self-esteem is shaped to some degree by the self-perceptions in both academic and non-academic domains (Baudson et al., 2016; Briganti et al., 2019).

Academic Self-Concept

Studies asking gifted and non-gifted students directly about their perceived academic competence have been consistent across all age groups, finding that students labeled as gifted have higher academic self-concepts in comparison to their non-gifted peers (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Košir et al., 2016; McCoach & Siegle, 2003; Lister & Roberts, 2011; Rinn, 2007; Ritchotte et al., 2016; Shechtman & Silektor, 2012). Specifically in the academic areas of mathematics, science, and overall perceptions of

school, gifted middle and high school students have more positive self-concepts than their peers (Hoogeveen et al., 2009; Wirthwein et al., 2019). These results persist even when gifted 11th and 12th-grade students were asked to compare themselves directly against their non-gifted peers: Gifted students rated themselves as being more intelligent (Wirthwein et al., 2019). These differences are also found throughout all grade-school levels. A meta-analysis of the literature found that differences in the academic self-concepts of gifted and non-gifted students increase with age and grade level (Lister & Roberts, 2011). This could be related to increases in social awareness and the ability to self-evaluate that develop throughout adolescence (Lister & Roberts, 2011). As adolescents become more aware of their own abilities, they can become better at judging how they compare to their peers or the academic goals set at the classroom and institutional levels.

This relationship between age and academics becomes less consistent when looking at collegiate populations. When asking about academic measures such as perceived academic ability, motivation, creativity, and intellectual curiosity, Kool et al. (2017) found no statistically significant differences between college students who were and were not enrolled in a university honors program. This finding could be due to there being fewer discrepancies in self-perceptions of more abstract academic concepts (e.g., motivation) in comparison to measures directly related to academics like mathematical or scientific abilities. Another consideration is how the college population as a whole might share common academic self-perceptions regardless of the honors statuses due to shared academic drives to pursue higher educational qualifications. These similarities in collegiate populations could also explain some of the disparities in studies observing the

long-term effects of these differing academic self-perceptions. Withwein et al. (2019) found that gifted high school students close to graduation had higher hopes for success and lower fear of failure than their non-gifted peers; however, in a study of first and second-year college students, Rinn (2007) found that both honors and non-honors students had similar career aspirations when looking towards their futures. Although these two studies had participants close in age, the similar positive concepts on ambition and career outlook from both honors and non-honors populations of university students could also be related to the professional goals associated with pursuing a degree of higher education.

One more direct approach is to focus on academic self-perception in the context of achievement. Studies focusing on the relationship between academic self-perceptions and measures of academic achievement have consistently found strong correlations between the two. Across honors and non-honors high school student populations, academic self-perception is positively correlated with GPA (McCoach & Siegle, 2003). Gifted students of all academic levels report higher grades and GPAs than non-gifted peers, therefore, increasing the likelihood of developing confidence in their own scholastic abilities (Košir et al., 2016; McCoach & Siegle, 2003; Rinn, 2007; Wirthwein et al., 2019). Although non-honors students can still be high achieving, the increased rates of honors academic achievement could account for the disparities between the two groups when measuring self-perception. Despite some mixed findings of academic self-concept concerning careers and other abstract academic variables, most literature supports that regardless of age, honors students have higher measures of academic

achievement and perceptions of academic self-concept in comparison to their non-honors peers.

Non-Academic Self-Concept

The non-academic self-concept is divided into five subareas: social self-concept, physical self-concept, creativity, humor, and morality (see Figure 1). Most of the research comparing honors and non-honors students' self-concepts have been explored through measures relating to the social and physical aspects of the non-academic self-concept. These areas capture the self-perceptions of student abilities relating to making friends, being accepted by their peers, having close family ties, their own physical appearance, as well as their physical abilities. Research on the differences between honors and non-honors students on creativity, humor, and morality remains largely unexplored. Given this, the review of literature focuses on the social and physical self-concepts, therefore providing the basis for the current study to explore and then expand on the non-academic self-concepts of this student demographic.

Social Self-Concept

Beliefs about gifted students used to be primarily negative, concluding that involvement in gifted programs can harm emotional and social development. However, Withwein et al. (2019) found that gifted high school students possess no personality-related anomalies in comparison to non-gifted peers, and they even score higher on scales relating to openness for new experiences. Research supports these positive outlooks and has consistently found that gifted and non-gifted students in elementary and high school have no differences in social self-concept scores and both

perceive themselves to be socially well adjusted (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Košir et al., 2016).

There are conflicting findings regarding specific domains of the social self-concept such as the perceived social competence in peer relationships between gifted and non-gifted students. Some research supports that gifted and non-gifted elementary students share similar scores in their social self-perceptions of social acceptance and relationships with their peers (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Košir et al., 2016). Tendencies for gifted students to report higher social self-description scores than their non-gifted peers as well as experience an increase in school belonging could be a result of honors courses increasing their academic identity (Bain & Bell, 2004; Legette & Kurtz-Costes, 2021). Other research has found that in same-sex peer relationships specifically, gifted students have a more negative self-perception than their peers (Hoogeveen et al., 2009). This study by Hoogeveen et al (2009), however, focused specifically on gifted middle school students who have been accelerated to a higher grade level, therefore, these negative social perceptions could be attributed to age differences between the gifted student and their peers rather than academic giftedness alone. Looking at gender, Košir et al., (2016) found that in elementary populations, gifted boys had higher self-concepts for peer relations in comparison to non-gifted boys, and gifted girls had lower self-concepts for peer relations in comparison to non-gifted girls. Another factor to consider is that these self-perceptions may not be accurate depictions of the extent to which students excel in these areas of social interaction and development. Studies have demonstrated disparities between social self-perceptions and third-party observations by teachers reporting the social behaviors of their students (Bain & Bell, 2004; Košir et al., 2016). While the

students may be feeling inadequate when comparing their social abilities or acceptance levels with peers, there were no obvious differences noted when teachers were asked to measure their social skills.

Relationships with parental or guardian figures at home are another important aspect of the social self-concept as these family relationships are some of the first, and most consistent, social interactions throughout childhood and adolescence. Perceived relationships with parents contribute to the self-esteem of both gifted and non-gifted students and studies have demonstrated that the strength of these relationships does not differ between these two groups (Bain & Bell, 2004; Baudson et al., 2016).

Physical Self-Concept

There have been conflicting findings regarding the physical self-concepts of gifted and non-identified gifted students as well. Similar to the contrasts between teacher ratings and student self-perceptions of social acceptance, observations also contrasted the physical self-perceptions of gifted students in Korean high school students (Song & Ahn, 2014). While there are no measurable physical differences between gifted students and non-gifted students, Song and Ahn (2014) found that gifted students rated their appearance, muscle strength, health, and sports self-concept lower than non-gifted students. These findings demonstrate that these disparities in physical self-concepts are purely related to individuals' perceptions of themselves, not objective physical differences. Studies, including meta-analyses, looking at appearance and athletic self-competence as a broader construct produced similar findings, with gifted students consistently scoring lower on physical self-concept than their non-gifted peers (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Lister & Roberts, 2011; Shechtman & Silektor, 2012). The findings of

Bain and Bell (2004), however, are inconsistent with the other literature studying elementary and middle school age groups finding that gifted students have higher self-description scores for both physical appearance and ability. While most literature supports there being no holistic difference between the non-academic self-concepts of students, there are conflicting findings regarding the perceptions of specific subareas of non-academic self-concept, such as with peer relationships and physical appearance or ability.

Overall, results have been mixed when looking at differences between honors and non-honors student self-perceptions. Self-concept is complex and can be impacted by a variety of factors including the methods and scope of which these studies are collecting and inquiring about self-concept. The methods by which gifted students are identified have also been inconsistent and can create issues when these specific groups are focused on. Studies on giftedness are hard to conceptualize and compare because of the variance in how giftedness is defined and measured (i.e., IQ tests, standardized tests, curricular tracking, subjective criteria; Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Legette & Kurtz-Costes, 2021; Lister & Roberts, 2011). When looking at the collegiate level, comparisons between honors and non-honors students are understudied (Kool et al., 2017; Wolfensberger, 2012). Studies that do include this cohort are also not in-depth and focus on either academic or social measures of self-concept.

Current Study

The current study sought to fill some of the literature gaps by examining these two understudied groups of college students (honors and non-honors students) and following a more comprehensive investigation including multiple domains that measure

academic and non-academic self-concepts. The hypothesized relationships were based on the findings of the existing academic literature described above. The first research question was: Do students enrolled in a collegiate honors program have different academic self-perception scores (i.e., Intellectual Ability, Scholastic Competence, and Job Competence) than non-honors university students? It was hypothesized that students in the honors program would have higher academic self-perception scores than non-honors university students (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Lister & Roberts, 2011). The second research question asked: Do students enrolled in a collegiate honors program have different non-academic self-perception scores (i.e., Social and Physical) than non-honors university students? It was hypothesized that honors program and non-honors students would share similar social self-perception scores (i.e., Romantic Relationships, Social Acceptance, Close Friendships, and Parent Relationships), but honors program students would have lower physical self-perceptions (i.e., Athletic Competence, Appearance; Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Lister & Roberts, 2011; Shechtman & Silektor, 2012). Given the lack of research between honors and non-honors students' creativity, humor, and morality self-concepts, the current study explored the differences between these groups of students with no specific hypotheses.

Method

Participants

There were 339 university students recruited to participate in the study. The valid sample size included 236 individuals who provided informed consent, indicated they were 18 or older, and fully completed the survey. The sample was comprised of 64 (27%) males and 172 (72.6%) females. There were 155 (65.7%) participants who identified as

White, 50 (21.2%) who identified as Black, 14 (5.9%) Hispanic, 4 (1.7%) Asian or Pacific Islander, 2 (0.8%) who did not respond, and 11 (4.7%) who described themselves as bi-racial (i.e., afro Latina, Hispanic-black, etc.). The ages of the participants were typical of a university student sample ($M=20.59$; $SD=4.89$) and ranged from 18 to 51. The 94 (39.8%) participants who identified as freshmen made up the largest portion of participants, followed by 69 (29.2%) sophomores, 43 (18.2%) juniors, and 30 (12.7%) seniors. Nearly three-fourths of the sample (72%) reported having honors course experience sometime within their educational career (i.e., elementary, middle, high school, and college). There were 49 (20.8%) participants from the honors college and 186 (78.8%) participants from the non-honors student body. One participant (0.08%) did not self-identify honor status and was excluded from group comparison analyses.

Measures

Participants completed the study through a Qualtrics survey form on their personal laptop, tablet, mobile phone, desktop, or another available electronic device. The survey consisted of questions regarding the participant's demographics (e.g., age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, year in college, honors status, years in advanced academic programming (i.e., AP/IB/Honors courses, etc.)) and their self-perceptions of academic and non-academic concepts.

We used the 54 items from Neeman and Harter's Self-Perception Profile for College Students (1986; 2012) to measure self-concept in the study. This scale was created to target college students specifically since the population is understudied in much of the literature surrounding self-concept. This measure, as well as similar self-perception profiles developed by Harter that target other age groups (e.g., Profile for

Children, Profile for Adults, etc.), is a reliable and valid measure of self-concept (Harter, 1982; Muris et al., 2003; Rinn & Cunningham, 2008; Wichstraum, 1995). The Self-Perception Profile for College Students has four items dedicated to each of the 12 specific domains (i.e., Creativity [$\alpha=.81$], Intellectual Ability [$\alpha=.81$], Scholastic Competence [$\alpha=.75$], Job Competence [$\alpha=.70$], Athletic Competence [$\alpha=.86$], Appearance [$\alpha=.85$], Romantic Relationships [$\alpha=.84$], Social Acceptance [$\alpha=.78$], Close Friendships [$\alpha=.80$], Parent Relationships [$\alpha=.84$], Finding Humor in One's Life/Humor [$\alpha=.77$], and Morality [$\alpha=.74$]) and six items on Global Self-Worth ($\alpha=.86$).

The questions in the profile followed a structured alternative format, which reduces the frequency and tendency for participants to give socially desirable answers (Harter, 1982; Neeman & Harter, 1986; 2012). With the structured alternative format, participants were given descriptions of two types of students (e.g., Some students like the kind of person they are BUT Other students wish that they were different) with four options to select which student seems the most similar to them by indicating whether option one or two is “really true for me” or “sort of true for me” (see Figure 2).

Really True for me	Sort of True for me				Sort of True for me	Really True for me
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some students like the kind of person they are	BUT	Other students wish that they were different	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 2. Structured alternative format question copied with permission from Neeman and Harter (1986; 2012).

Procedure

All participants were volunteers from the honors and non-honors student populations at Georgia Southern University and were recruited through email invitations, SONA, and verbal invitations that were given out during student organization meetings. The principal investigator distributed the Qualtrics survey form through a link for participants to complete on their own. Upon clicking the link, participants were directed to the informed consent form. Consent to participate was indicated by the selection of the answer choice conveying that by proceeding to the next page of the survey, the participant is giving their informed consent. Once agreeing to the informed consent, the participant completed the survey questions and was directed to a debriefing page with a list of resources they could access with any questions or concerns regarding the study. Participants received .5 SONA credits for participating in the study.

Results

Preliminary statistical analyses were conducted to examine the mean and standard deviation of domain variables as well as the correlations between all variables. The average self-perception score for students was above the 4-point scale midpoint in all domains except for athletic competence ($M=1.97-3.31$). Across the study sample, morality, parent relationships, humor, and job competence were the areas where students had the highest levels of self-perception (see Table 2). Almost all domains were statistically significantly and positively correlated to each other ($r= 0.08-0.65$; see Table 1). Correlations were not statistically significant between parent relationships and creativity ($r=.05, p=.20$), parent relationships and athletic competence ($r=.13, p=.054$), and appearance and morality ($r=.12, p=.08$).

Table 1*Correlations among Domains of Self-perception*

Domain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. IA	-												
2. SC	.65**	-											
3. JC	.60**	.60**	-										
4. RR	.28**	.29**	.29**	-									
5. SA	.38**	.29**	.46**	.483**	-								
6. CF	.24**	.22**	.27**	.302**	.60**	-							
7. PR	.28**	.36**	.32**	.199**	.28**	.20**	-						
8. ATC	.29**	.20**	.27**	.307**	.43**	.40**	.13	-					
9. AP	.48**	.35**	.37**	.377**	.46**	.33**	.16*	.38**	-				
10. CR	.44**	.29**	.37**	.318**	.41**	.26**	.08	.29**	.39**	-			
11. HU	.25**	.13*	.33**	.337**	.35**	.28**	.29**	.26**	.19**	.27**	-		
12. MO	.31**	.31**	.40**	.200**	.22**	.15*	.31**	.13*	.12	.21**	.27**	-	
13. GSW	.61**	.58**	.63**	.419**	.60**	.42**	.44**	.38**	.58**	.46**	.32**	.44**	-

Notes. IA=Intellectual Ability. SC=Scholastic Competence. JC=Job Competence. RR=Romantic Relationships. SA=Social Acceptance. CF=Close Friendships. PR=Parent Relationships. ATC=Athletic Competence. AP=Appearance. CR=Creativity. HU=Humor. MO=Morality. GSW=Global Self-Worth.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 2*Differences between Domains of Self-perception*

	Sample	H	NH	df	t	Cohen's D
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)			
ASC	2.85(0.63)	3.08(0.64)	2.78(0.61)	226	3.01**	0.48
IA	2.79(0.79)	3.01(0.81)	2.72(0.77)	230	2.28*	0.36
SC	2.82(0.69)	3.21(0.61)	2.71(0.67)	229	4.79***	0.79
JC	2.92(0.71)	3.01(0.77)	2.89(0.69)	231	1.00	0.16
SSC	2.75(0.62)	2.65(0.55)	2.78(0.64)	229	-1.22	-0.21
RR	2.52(0.93)	2.35(0.96)	2.55(0.92)	231	-1.32	-0.21
SA	2.55(0.87)	2.34(0.92)	2.60(0.85)	231	-1.83	-0.29
CF	2.79(0.85)	2.66(0.89)	2.82(0.83)	232	-1.23	-0.19
PR	3.17(0.85)	3.31(0.83)	3.13(0.85)	231	1.36	0.22
PSC	2.38(0.75)	2.19(0.71)	2.42(0.74)	230	-1.93	-0.31
ATC	2.36(0.91)	1.97(0.85)	2.46(0.90)	232	-3.43***	-0.56
AP	2.40(0.88)	2.42(0.93)	2.39(0.87)	230	0.19	0.03
CR	2.52(0.78)	2.41(0.89)	2.54(0.75)	231	-1.00	-0.15
HU	3.13(0.71)	3.04(0.84)	3.16(0.68)	230	-1.05	-0.16
MO	3.18(0.67)	3.26(0.76)	3.15(0.64)	229	0.95	0.15
GSW	2.78(0.75)	2.69(0.82)	2.80(0.72)	231	-0.92	-0.14
GPA	3.22(0.82)	3.67(0.70)	3.10(0.80)	218	4.49***	0.76

Notes. *M* and *SD* represent mean and standard deviation. H and NH are used to indicate honors and non-honors status, respectively. ASC=Academic Self-Concept. IA=Intellectual Ability. SC=Scholastic Competence. JC=Job Competence. SSC=Social Self-Concept. RR=Romantic Relationships. SA=Social Acceptance. CF=Close Friendships. PR=Parent Relationships. PSC= Physical Self-Concept. ATC=Athletic Competence. AP=Appearance. CR=Creativity. HU=Humor. MO=Morality. GSW=Global Self-Worth. GPA=Grade Point Average.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Academic Self-Concept

The first research question examined if students enrolled in a collegiate honors program had different academic self-perception scores (i.e., Intellectual Ability, Scholastic Competence, and Job Competence) than non-honors university students. A series of two-tailed, independent samples t-tests were conducted to analyze this data (see Table 2). As expected, students who identified themselves as members of the honors college ($M=3.08$, $SD=0.64$) had statistically significantly higher academic self-concepts than students not in the honors college ($M=2.78$, $SD=0.61$), $t(228)=3.01$, $p<.01$. Within the academic self-concept variable, honors students ($M=3.00$, $SD=0.81$) had statistically significantly higher scores in intellectual ability than non-honors students ($M=2.72$, $SD=.77$), $t(232)=2.28$, $p<.05$. Honors students ($M=3.21$, $SD=0.61$) also had statistically significantly higher scholastic competence self-concepts than non-honors students ($M=2.71$, $SD=0.68$), $t(231)=4.79$, $p<.001$. However, when looking at job competence, honors students ($M=3.01$, $SD=0.77$) and non-honors students ($M=2.89$, $SD=0.69$) scored similarly, $t(233)=1.00$, $p=0.32$. Regarding academic achievement, honors students ($M=3.67$, $SD=0.70$) reported statistically significantly higher GPAs than non-honors students ($M=3.10$, $SD=0.80$), $t(218)=4.49$, $p<.001$.

Non-Academic Self-Concept

The second research question asked: Do students enrolled in a collegiate honors program have different non-academic self-perception scores (i.e., Social and Physical) than non-honors university students? A series of two-tailed, independent samples t-tests were conducted to analyze this data (see Table 2). As predicted, honors college students ($M=2.65$, $SD=0.55$) and non-honors students ($M=2.78$, $SD=0.64$) scored similarly in

domains relating to social self-concept, $t(231)=-1.22, p=0.22$. Although not statistically significant, non-honors students scored higher than honors students in all domains of social self-concept except for parent relationships.

Regarding physical self-concept, it is worth noting the difference between these types of students was trending toward significant. Non-honors students ($M=2.42, SD=0.74$) scored higher in physical self-concept than honors students ($M=2.19; SD=0.71$), $t(232)=-1.93, p=.06$, though this difference was only marginally significant. Students from the honors college ($M=2.42, SD=0.93$) and non-honors students ($M=2.40, SD=0.87$) had similar perceptions of their appearances, $t(232)=0.19, p=0.85$. Yet, looking specifically at the athletic competence domain, non-honors students ($M=2.46, SD=.90$) scored statistically significantly higher than honors students ($M=1.97, SD=.85$) $t(234)=-3.43, p<.001$.

Given the lack of research between honors and non-honors students' creativity, humor, and morality self-concepts, the current study explored the differences between these groups of students with no specific hypotheses. A series of two-tailed, independent samples t-tests were performed to analyze this data (see Table 2). There were no statistically significant differences found between honors and non-honors students in the areas of creativity, humor, and mortality self-concept. Descriptively, honors students scored slightly higher on morality self-concept in comparison to non-honors students, however, non-honors students scored slightly higher in areas of humor and creativity than the honors students.

Discussion

In this study, we investigated the presence of variations in the self-perceptions of honors and non-honors college students in areas of academic and non-academic self-concept. While the literature surrounding self-concept during development supports that differences in academic self-concepts increase with age and grade level, much of this research excludes college students and measures of non-academic self-concepts (Lister & Roberts, 2011). Furthermore, the few studies that examine college students have produced conflicting findings (Kool et al., 2017; Rin, 2007). We aimed to fill the gaps in the current literature by focusing on honors and non-honors undergraduate students and gathering a deeper understanding of self-concept in this understudied population.

First, results support that honors undergraduate students have higher academic achievement and self-concepts than students not enrolled in a collegiate honors program. Regarding academic achievement, honors students in our sample had statistically significantly higher GPAs than non-honors students which affirms the findings of Kool et al. (2016) and Rinn (2007). While research has provided strong support for honors students having higher academic self-concepts than non-honors students in younger age groups, only one study observing college students has produced this finding (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Kosir et al., 2016; Rinn, 2007). The results of our study complement this literature in confirming that honors students have higher academic self-concepts than non-honors students. This was true when looking at academic self-concept and its domains of scholastic competence and intellectual ability. Surprisingly, there was no statistically significant difference between students in regard to job competence, which was also one of the highest-scoring domains across both groups. This result may be

explained by the sample source and demographics: College students are all pursuing higher education which is likely related to career aspirations. Rinn (2007) found that honors and non-honors university students had no statistically significant differences in their career aspirations as well. Furthermore, our sample consisted of only students over the age of 18, allowing for more time for students to have similar employment experiences. These high levels of self-perception in job competence can be looked at as an indicator of university success and that students will be entering the workforce feeling prepared to make positive contributions to society.

Second, our results confirmed our hypothesis that honors and non-honors students would share similar social self-concepts (i.e., Romantic Relationships, Social Acceptance, Close Friendships, and Parent Relationships). While there was no statistically significant difference between these two groups in the domain of social self-concept, it is worth noting that overall, self-concepts of parent relationships were the second highest domain category. Research has indicated that forms of parent support are important for adjustment in emerging adulthood and college-aged students and can be positively connected to most domains of self-concept (Alegre & Benson, 2019; Briganti et al., 2019). Considering over half of our study sample consisted of underclassmen (i.e., freshmen and sophomores), high perceptions of parent relationships can be a positive indicator for successful college transitions.

Regarding physical self-concepts, previous literature focusing on younger students has found that honors students consistently scored lower in athletic competence and appearance self-concepts than non-honors students (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Lister & Roberts, 2011; Shechtman & Silektor, 2012; Song & Ahn, 2014). Our results only found

a marginally significant difference between honors and non-honors undergraduate students' physical self-concepts with virtually no differences between appearance self-concepts. However, when focusing specifically on athletic competence, non-honors students reported statistically significantly higher levels of self-concept.

In our exploratory analyses of creativity, humor, and morality self-concepts, there were no statistically discernible differences between honors and non-honors students. Therefore, our results contribute to the literature of mixed findings in terms of differences between honors and non-honors students on non-academic self-concept domains (e.g., Bain & Bell, 2004; Shechtman & Silektor, 2012; Song & Ahn, 2014).

Limitations and Future Directions

While this is one of the few studies looking at differences in self-concepts between collegiate honors and non-honors students, there are a few recommendations for future research on this topic. First, the sampling method used in this study was convenience sampling. Recruitment for the study was conducted primarily through the SONA survey platform and psychology classes. Due to this sampling method, the non-honors group was much larger than the honors group. Additionally, our sample was mostly female and White. These characteristics potentially limit the ability for our study results to generalize. Future researchers should strive to obtain a more diverse and representative sample of the general college student population and across honors and non-honors classifications. Second, the sample for this study is from only one university and the honors college within it. Honors programs across the country have varying structures and requirements for students to follow. Future research should look at

multiple universities and the requirements of their honors programs to determine if differences between honors programs play a role in self-concept formation.

While there is an abundance of literature examining differences in the self-concepts of primary education students, research has neglected to focus on the university populations despite their rising numbers (Fischer, 1996). This could be because of perceived similarities between groups at this age level as demonstrated by Kool et al. (2017). However, other research indicates that there are inherent differences in collegiate honors academic structures such as students in honors programming experiencing higher teacher-to-student ratios as well as involvement in a community of high-achieving peers (Fisher, 1996; Kool et al., 2017). Although we found that there are some statistically significant differences between these groups at this age level, future research should keep focusing on this age group and determine if our findings can replicate.

Furthermore, our study measured self-concept at only one point in time. Future studies should also incorporate longitudinal designs, such as the study of honors alumni by Kool et al. (2016), and determine whether academic and non-academic domains of self-concept remain stable long term. Similarly, longitudinal studies would also be beneficial for observing formations of self-concept across development from childhood to emerging adulthood. Without longitudinal studies, it is unclear whether the cause of these differences between honors and non-honors students is due to honors college enrollment or if early educational experiences (e.g., tracking in primary and secondary schools) contribute more to the formation of self-concepts.

Lastly, future research should consider more complex interconnections between these domains of self-concept. Network theory, as proposed by Briganti et al. (2019),

supports that contingencies of self-worth are all a part of an interacting system of psychological constructs that mutually influence each other. This mutual influence can be observed by measuring the intercorrelations between domains of the self-concept and calculating their expected impact. Relationships between these domains are important to understand as many, specifically self-concepts involving social relations and physical appearances, can have huge impacts on the entire network of self-esteem.

Implications

This study increases our understanding of the academic and non-academic self-concepts of university students and how these self-concepts can differ between students by collegiate academic structure (i.e., honors vs. non-honors). The results of our research indicate positive connections between honors college enrollment, academic achievement, and academic self-perceptions. Universities should take into consideration the positive associations between honors programs and the self-perceptions and achievements of their alumni when creating a learning environment for students. If the structure of these programs is a predictor of academic competence and extrinsic success for alumni, perhaps students not enrolled in honors programs can experience similar benefits from resources like smaller class sizes and an enhanced sense of community with peers.

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