

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF LD STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPTS WITH SOME BACKGROUND VARIABLES

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Several studies compared the self-concept of students with and without learning disabilities (LD). Results suggest that LD students generally have lower academic self-concept compared to typically developing peers. At the same time, LD seems to have less effect on non-academic components of self-perceptions (Zeke, 2004). More recently, research is conducted to define those factors that contribute to social-emotional resilience in individuals with LD. These studies usually regard high academic and general self-concepts as protective factors that promote resilience (e.g. Shany, Wiener & Assido, 2012; Haft, Myers & Hoeft, 2016). In order to better understand which factors contribute to maintaining good self-perceptions, our study aimed at investigating the effects of some background variables on the academic and general components of LD students' self-concepts. Relations with some individual variables (gender, grade level), family background variables (parents' education, SES) and school variables (grades, evaluation practices) were explored. A total of 121 randomly chosen Hungarian students participated in our study from grades 6, 8 and 10. All students had an LD diagnosis issued by an expert panel. To investigate the different dimensions of self-concept, we used the Hungarian adaptation of the Self-Description Questionnaire-I (SDQ-I; Marsh, 1992; Szenczi & Józsa, 2008). SDQ assesses four areas of nonacademic self-concept (Physical abilities, Physical appearance, Social with peers, Social with parents), three areas of academic self-concept (Reading, Math and General School) as well as general self. For the purposes of this study, we used the academic scales and the general self scale. The instrument was computerized so that it could be used with individuals with reading difficulties. Reliabilities of the scales were high, ranging between .83 and .94. Background questionnaires were administered to the teachers. Results confirmed that LD students' general school self-concepts are lower than their general self-concept ( $t=29,75, p<0,01$ ). Although students with LD perceive their difficulties at school, their general self-concept is rather high. Boys' mathematics self-concept is significantly better than that of girls ( $t=2,37, p=0,02$ ). In the other components of the self-concept no gender differences were found. There is a significant decline in general school self-concept from grade 6 to grade 8, while other facets of the self are rather stable. From among the investigated family background variables, none has an effect on LD students' self-concepts. School variables, however, proved to be more important. Exemption from evaluation, for example, has a marked negative effect on the corresponding academic self-concept. Our study contributes to the growing knowledge on what influences the self-concepts of students with LD. Results highlight some important factors that need to be considered in order to enhance the self-perceptions of students struggling at school.

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