An Exploratory Study on the Social Cognitions of High School Freshmen Students’ Social Skills, Peer Popularity and School Self-Efficacy

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The developmental period of the high school years is characterized by the eminence of social cognitions in driving behaviors. Students’ beliefs about their social skills, peer popularity, and school efficacy (one’s self-confidence in school) are critical in promoting educational success. This study is informed by social cognitive theory, which highlights the way individuals learn behaviors through observing others in their social contexts. The study explores the social cognitions of a cohort of 9th grade students (n=218) in a semi-urban high school in Central Illinois. Data was collected and compared at two time points in 9th grade: semester 1 and 2. Preliminary findings revealed social skills beliefs are not significantly correlated with school self-efficacy or peer popularity at semester 1. However, at semester 2, social skills mindsets are positively correlated with school self-efficacy (r = 0.421, p ≤ 0.001) and peer popularity (r = 0.225, p ≤ 0.001). Findings suggest students’ beliefs in the importance of their social skills is not significant for the beginning transition into high school. However, toward the end of their freshmen year, students become aware of the importance of their social skills in increasing their beliefs about peer popularity and school self-efficacy.
An Exploratory Study of Social Skills, Peer Popularity

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Introduction

Social skills are important during the transition into high school. The high school years are characterized by the emergence of new cognitions, such as students’ beliefs about the importance of school and their peers, in driving behaviors.

No study focused on the relations among perceived importance of social skills, beliefs about school and peer popularity and peer popularity.

Data

Data is based on a cohort of 9th grade students (n=218) in a semi-urban high school in Central Illinois. Data was collected in both sem 1 and 2.
References


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Analysis

Mean scores of Social Skills Perceptions, School Self-Efficacy, Scales: 50% Reduced Lunch, female: 46.8%, male: 53.2% Special Education: 8.3%

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ay “please” when mportant, critical) 701) ner students in 
cnool, I am: (Least Popular, Fairly Popular, Average Popular, Very Popular, Most Popular)

School Self-Efficacy (S1 α=.853, S2 α=.768)
7 Questions e.g., : I will graduate high school (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree)
Self-Efficacy, Peer Popularity were compared at Semester 1 and 2

**Pearson correlation** were conducted to understand their relations at Semester 1 and 2