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Positive self-concept predicts youth staying in school longer in India

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ABSTRACT

Research based on youth in the United States and Europe has established the importance of noncognitive skills for successful transitions to adulthood. The influence of noncognitive skills may vary by social and economic contexts, though, and nine in ten youth worldwide live in developing countries where noncognitive skills have not been rigorously studied. I specifically examine the role that self-concept plays in predicting education/work status in the transition to adulthood among youth in Andhra Pradesh, India. Using data from the Young Lives study, I investigate the measurement properties of positive self-concept and use structural equation modeling to examine whether this competence in early adolescence (age 11-12) predicts whether youth (age 18-19) are in school, work, both, or are not currently in education, employment, or training (NEET). Findings suggest that positive self-concept is associated with youth staying in school rather than working, and young women staying in school rather than being NEET, and its effect size is comparable to those of cognitive skills. The present study contributes to the field's understanding of a noncognitive skill, self-concept, in a new setting and points to

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