

Abstract

The reading and writing aspects of literacy acquisition are fundamental to every child and adolescent's learning and academic achievement as a student. Nevertheless, students who are with high reading difficulty exhibit noticeable difficulties in these two aspects. Although students' high reading difficulty is usually associated with academic underachievement, lower academic self-esteem, and lower teacher expectancy, whether changes in academic self-esteem and teacher expectancy could have a pronounced boost to their academic achievement remains unclear. To address this, data were collected by questionnaires from 63 secondary two to four students and their corresponding six Chinese teachers in Hong Kong. Data analyses revealed no significant difference in academic self-esteem levels between students with high reading difficulty and students without high reading difficulty. While enhancing students' academic self-esteem might not boost students' academic achievement, raising teacher expectancy could potentially boost students' academic achievement, regardless of their existing reading difficulty levels. Teachers are therefore encouraged to enhance students' academic achievement by elevating their expectations on their students through the development of a growth mindset.

Keywords: reading difficulty, academic achievement, self-esteem, teacher expectancy, growth mindset