

THE SELF-CONCEPT OF STUDENTS WITH DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Background and Purpose: Self-concept significantly influences adolescents' behavioural development, with studies showing a complex association between disciplinary problems and students' self-perceptions. Despite extensive research, a comprehensive synthesis remains limited.

Methodology: This systematic review, guided by PRISMA 2020, examined empirical studies published between 2017 and 2025 from Scopus and Web of Science.

Findings: Using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), 36 studies were analysed, revealing five main themes and 19 subthemes: (1) disciplinary problems diminish self-concept through negative and reciprocal effects; (2) academic and family-related behaviours most strongly affect self-concept dimensions; (3) physical self-concept often remains resilient despite other declines; (4) multiple self-concept dimensions experience overall deterioration; and (5) self-concept tends to worsen progressively over time.

Contributions: The review emphasizes the multidimensional and dynamic relationship between self-concept and disciplinary behaviours among adolescents across cultural contexts. These findings underscore the importance of developing targeted interventions that strengthen vulnerable self-concept domains while utilizing resilient aspects to better support at-risk students through evidence-based educational and counselling strategies.

Keywords: Self-concept, behaviour, disciplinary problems, adolescents, systematic review.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is often described as a critical developmental stage in which young people experience rapid physical, emotional, and social changes. During this period, adolescents are highly sensitive to external influences such as peers, family, media, and school environments. These influences can sometimes lead them to engage in disciplinary problems which is in conflict with established norms and rules. Globally, disciplinary issues among students have become a major concern, with studies reporting increases in behaviours such as absenteeism, classroom disruption, bullying, and aggression. In Malaysia, similar trends are evident, as national reports and educational surveys highlight rising cases of disciplinary infractions among secondary school students.

Past research has consistently shown that disciplinary issues are not uncommon in academic settings and are shaped by multiple interrelated factors, including family background, peer pressure, school climate, and individual psychological characteristics. One of the psychological aspects frequently linked to student misbehaviour is self-concept, the way students perceive and evaluate themselves. Self-concept is our personal view of ourselves regarding our characteristics, abilities, or behaviours. According to Anak Guntol and Mydin Kutty (2020), self-concept plays an important role in influencing the formation and development of behaviour for all age groups of society, especially during teenagers. This is because, at this stage they are still in the phase of getting to know themselves through various physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes that will later help shape their behaviour (Palminteri et al., 2016).

For students who have a high self-concept, they are found to be able to make comparisons whether to do things that violate school discipline or vice versa (Talib & Mydin Kutty, 2022). Meanwhile, students who have a low self-concept are often associated with poor emotional control and tend to engage in problematic behaviour (Lichner et al., 2021; Martin & Maheswari, 2022). The issue of low or negative self-concept among students is important to be giving attention to because a student with a high self-concept, will be able to compare whether to do moral or immoral things, thus reducing the student's involvement in disciplinary problems (Abd Radzak et al., 2023). Disciplinary problems refer to any student misbehaviour that is contrary to society's norms such as criminal behaviour, impolite behaviour, neglecting personal cleanliness, truancy, damaging property, dishonesty and obscene behaviour. Although there are many studies had shown that student with negative or low self-concept will engage more in disciplinary issues in schools (Talib & Mydin Kutty, 2022; Abd Radzak et al., 2023), there are still insufficient number of scholars who reviewed systematically the existing studies regarding self-concept of student who conducted disciplinary problems in school.

The present paper attempt to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by developing a systematic literature review on the self-concept of student with disciplinary problems. The finding of this review will help other researcher to identify which domain of self-concept is heavily influenced by student misbehaviour and helps to implement a suitable intervention according to each self-concept domain.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review protocol - PRISMA

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to gather empirical information on the relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescents' self-concept. Throughout the review process, PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) were followed. These recommendations provide a framework to ensure that the review was transparent, consistent and methodologically thorough (Page et al., 2021).

PRISMA 2020 has replaced the earlier model by Moher et al. (2009). According to Chuong and Maat (2024), PRISMA new version offers improved and updated methods for identifying, selecting, appraising, and synthesizing relevant literature.

2.2 Formulation of Research Questions

The research questions for this study were formulated using SPIDER (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research type). According to Shaffril (2020), SPIDER is a tool which is well-suited for reviews involving mixed-method empirical studies. The sample in this review includes adolescents involved in disciplinary behaviours. The phenomenon of interest focuses on the relationship between disciplinary behaviours and self-concept. The design includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches, reflecting the diversity of methods used across the selected studies. The evaluation concerns how adolescents' self-concept is reported, whether as an overall construct or across specific dimensions. Meanwhile, the research type includes empirical studies that investigate the relationship between disciplinary problems and adolescent self-concept. The following research questions were developed using this framework:

- RQ1. What is the relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescents' overall self-concept levels?
- RQ2. How are different types of disciplinary behaviours associated with specific dimensions of adolescent self-concept?
- RQ3. What patterns of self-concept are observed across dimensions among adolescents involved in disciplinary behaviours?

2.3 Systematic Searching Strategies

The process of conducting this systematic literature review followed three main stages: identification, screening, and eligibility, in line with PRISMA 2020 guidelines.

2.3.1 Identification

In these stages, keywords and related terms were developed based on the research topic, including "self-concept," "disciplinary behaviours," and "adolescents." By consulting to previous studies and thesaurus dictionary, we were able to build synonyms and keyword combinations. These keywords were used to develop a search string tailored for two primary databases: Scopus and Web of Science. These databases were selected due to their extensive indexing of peer-reviewed and empirical educational and psychological research. The complete search strings for both databases are presented in (Table 1) with a total of 2,756 articles were retrieved in this first stage.

Table 1: The search string

Database	Search string
Scopus	TITLE (("self-image" OR "self-concept" OR "self-perception")) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (("student" OR "adolescen*") AND ("behaviour" OR "disciplin* problem"))
WoS	AB= (("self-image" OR "self-concept" OR "self-perception") AND ("student" OR "adolescen*") AND ("behaviour" OR "disciplinary problem"))

2.3.2 Screening

In the second stage, 2,756 articles were screened based on several inclusion and exclusion criteria (Refer to Table 2). This phase aimed to select studies that aligned with the research questions, specifically those examining the relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescents' self-concept. Duplicate records were removed using automated tool, resulting in a reduced pool of articles. During the initial screening process, the titles and abstracts were reviewed to eliminate studies unrelated to the target population, topic, or lacking empirical findings. Only empirical journal articles published between 2017 and 2025, in English or Bahasa Melayu, and involving adolescents aged 10 to 19, were retained for full-text assessment.

Table 2: The inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Literature type	Journal articles (empirical research only)	Conference proceedings, review articles, books, book chapters
Language	English, Bahasa Melayu	Other language
Timeline	Between 2017 and 2025	<2017
Population	Adolescents (aged 10-19 years)	Children under 10, adults over 19
Focus/Topic	Studies on disciplinary behaviour and self-concept	Studies unrelated to disciplinary behaviour or self-concept

2.3.3 Eligibility

So far, 48 articles have been considered for eligibility. At this stage, we checked the titles, abstracts, and full texts of all the articles to make sure they fit our inclusion criteria. This led to the exclusion of one article for lack of focus on self-concept and eight articles that failed to address disciplinary issues. The remaining 39 articles were then reviewed for methodological quality through a quality appraisal process (MMAT). Three articles were excluded due to low methodology quality. In the end, a total of 36 articles were deemed eligible and included in the final synthesis. Figure 1 (PRISMA Flowchart) shows the whole screening and eligibility process.

2.4 Quality Appraisal

The selected articles research methods were assessed using Hong et al. (2018)'s Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT). This tool is chosen by the authors because of its capabilities to evaluate various research designs such as qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. An initial screening phase involved two general MMAT questions to determine eligibility for full evaluation. Following this, each article was assessed using five core criteria relevant to its methodological design (refer Table 3). The corresponding author and a co-author independently evaluated all articles by rating each item as "Yes," "No," or "Can't tell," based on the checklist. The articles will be included if they met at least three out of the five criteria.

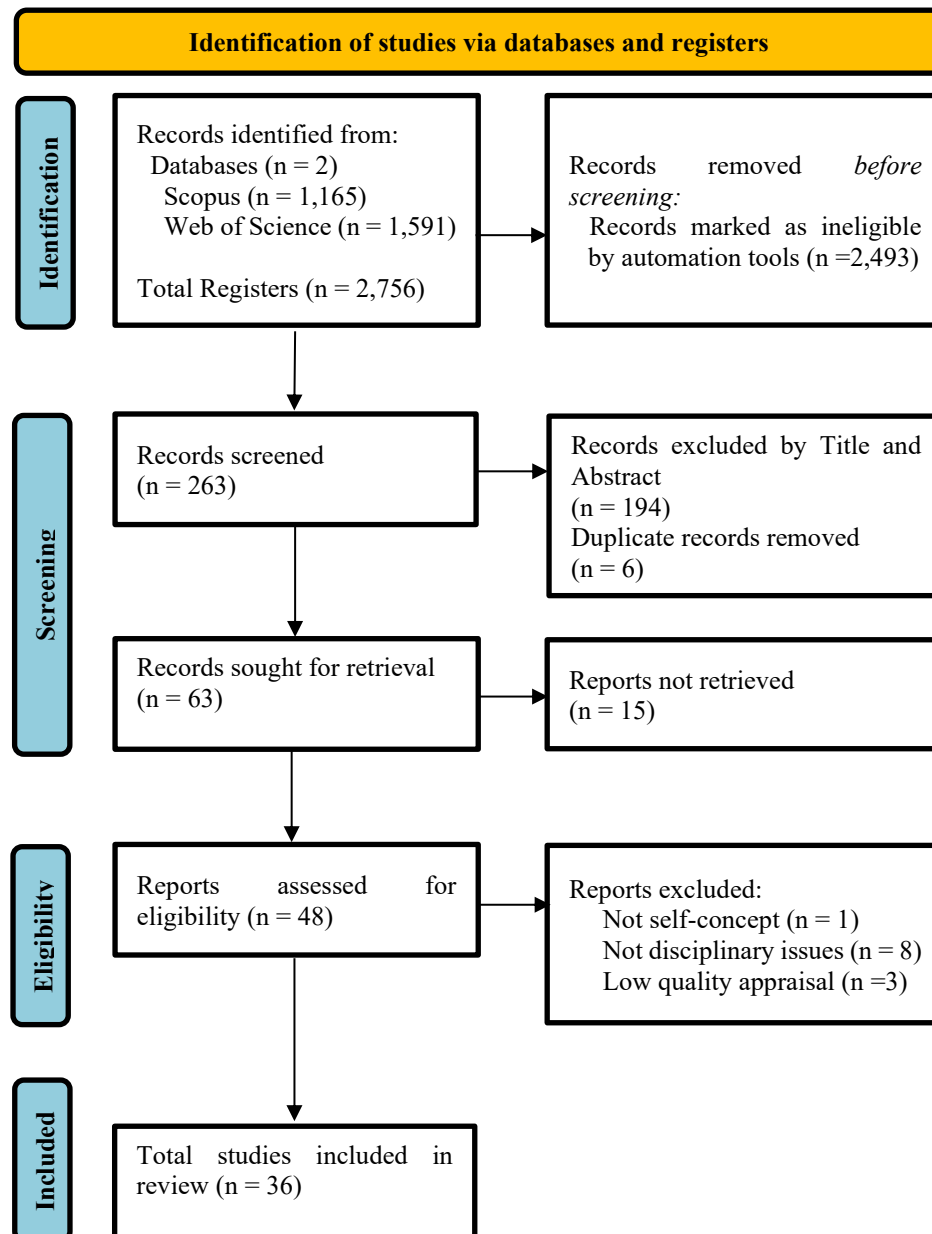


Figure 1: Flowchart of the document selection process (adapted from Page et al., 2021)

Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved by consensus. At the end of the process, all 36 studies met the minimum criteria for quality appraisal methodological design (refer Table 3). The corresponding author and a co-author independently evaluated all articles by rating each item as "Yes," "No," or "Can't tell," based on the checklist. The articles will be included if they met at least three out of the five criteria. Any discrepancies were discussed and resolved by consensus. At the end of the process, all 36 studies met the minimum criteria for quality appraisal. 16 studies fulfilled all five criteria, meanwhile 15 studies met four, and another five studies met at least three criteria. This shows that 85% of the included studies met 4 or more of the 5 quality criteria, indicating overall good methodological quality in the systematic review. The detailed results of the appraisal are summarised in Table 4.

2.5 Data Extraction and Analysis

A thematic analysis was used to analyse all selected studies and combine findings from different research designs. This approach is suitable for integrative reviews that include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005; Flemming et al., 2019). The analysis followed the steps outlined by Kiger and Varpio (2020) and Braun and Clarke (2021). To begin, researchers will read each of the 36 articles several times to fully understand their key findings. We then proceeded to make the first codes by finding and labelling parts of the data that were important to the research question. The inductive nature of these codes was generated from the data itself, without drawing on any prior hypothesis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Next, the researchers put similar codes together to form broader categories and find patterns across studies. This procedure yielded nineteen sub themes from five main themes, which captured the key findings from all included studies. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure it accurately represented the data and the research objectives.

Table 3: MMAT quality assessment (QA) criteria by study design (Hong et al., 2018)

Research Design	Quality Assessment Criteria
Qualitative (QL)	QA1: Appropriateness of qualitative methodology for addressing the research question QA2: Adequacy of data collection methods employed QA3: Appropriate derivation of findings from collected data QA4: Sufficient evidence supporting interpretation of results QA5: Coherence between data sources, collection methods, analysis, and interpretation
Quantitative Descriptive (QN DC)	QA1: Appropriateness of sampling strategy for the research question QA2: Sample representativeness of the target population QA3: Suitability of measurement instruments QA4: Minimal risk of nonresponse bias QA5: Appropriateness of statistical analysis methods
Quantitative Non-randomized (QN NR)	QA1: Participant representativeness of the target population QA2: Appropriate measurement of outcomes and interventions/exposures QA3: Completeness of outcome data collection QA4: Adequate consideration and control of confounding variables QA5: Appropriate intervention delivery or exposure occurrence
Mixed Methods (MX)	QA1: Sufficient justification for using mixed methods design QA2: Effective integration of study components to address research objectives QA3: Appropriate interpretation of combined qualitative and quantitative findings QA4: Adequate acknowledgment and explanation of discrepancies between results QA5: Adherence to quality standards specific to each methodological component

Table 4: Result of the quality assessment

No.	Study	Research Design	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	Number of criteria fulfilled	Inclusion in the review
1	Usán & Salavera (2017)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
2	Kruczek (2017)	QN (NR)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
3	Morgado & Vale Dias (2017)	QN (DC)	√	X	√	√	√	4/5	√
4	Dudovitz, Chung, et al. (2017)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
5	Dudovitz, Perez-Aguilar, et al. (2017)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
6	Palacios-Garay & Coveñas-Lalupú (2019)	QN (DC)	√	C	√	C	√	3/5	√
7	Gonzálvez et al. (2019)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
8	Cañas et al. (2019)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
9	Estevez et al. (2019)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
10	Levey et al. (2019)	QN (NR)	√	√	C	C	√	3/5	√
11	Schultz & Corte (2020)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
12	Hernández et al. (2020)	QN (NR)	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
13	Juliana & Mohamad (2020)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
14	Bibi et al. (2021)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
15	Tharshini et al. (2021)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
16	Cruz-Manrique et al. (2021)	QN (NR)	X	√	C	√	√	3/5	√
17	Tarasova (2021)	MM	√	√	√	X	√	3/5	√
18	Merianos et al. (2021)	QN (DC)	√	C	√	C	√	3/5	√
19	Pratiwi & Widyarini (2021)	QN (NR)	C	√	√	X	√	3/5	√
20	Dullas et al. (2021)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
21	Zhu & Shek (2021)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
22	Kariuki & Mwangi (2022)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
23	Climent-Galarza et al. (2022)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
24	Tastekin & Bayhan (2022)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	X	√	4/5	√

25	Mohamed et al. (2022)	QN (NR)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
26	Melguizo-Ibáñez et al. (2023)	QN (DC)	√	C	√	√	√	4/5	√
27	Matos et al. (2023)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
28	Galán-Arroyo et al. (2023)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
29	Zai et al. (2023)	QN (DC)	√	C	√	X	√	3/5	√
30	Cuadros & Berger (2022)	QL	√	√	√	√	√	5/5	√
31	Abd Radzak et al. (2023)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
32	Villarejo et al. (2024)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
33	Li et al. (2024)	QN (DC)	C	√	√	√	√	4/5	√
34	Arifain et al. (2024)	QN (DC)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
35	Abd Radzak et al. (2024)	QN (NR)	√	√	√	C	√	4/5	√
36	Verissimo et al. (2025)	QN (DC)	√	C	√	C	√	3/5	√

Note: *QA* = Quality Assessment, *QN (NR)* = Quantitative Non-randomised, *QN (DC)* = Quantitative Descriptive, *QL* = Qualitative, *MM* = Mixed-Methods, *C* = Can't tell, *X* = No

3.0 ANALYSIS

3.1 Background of the Selected Articles

This thorough literature review features 36 research articles from different countries across the world. With a total of eight articles, Spain was the country which contributed the most. Malaysia came in second with four articles. Meanwhile Portugal and the United States each conducted three articles. Two articles came from Indonesia, while single articles originated from Poland, Peru, the Netherlands, Russia, Pakistan, Hong Kong, China, India, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, Chile, Kenya, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, Estonia, and Mexico. The diverse geographical distribution reflects global research attention toward disciplinary behaviours and adolescent self-concept (Refer to Figure 2).

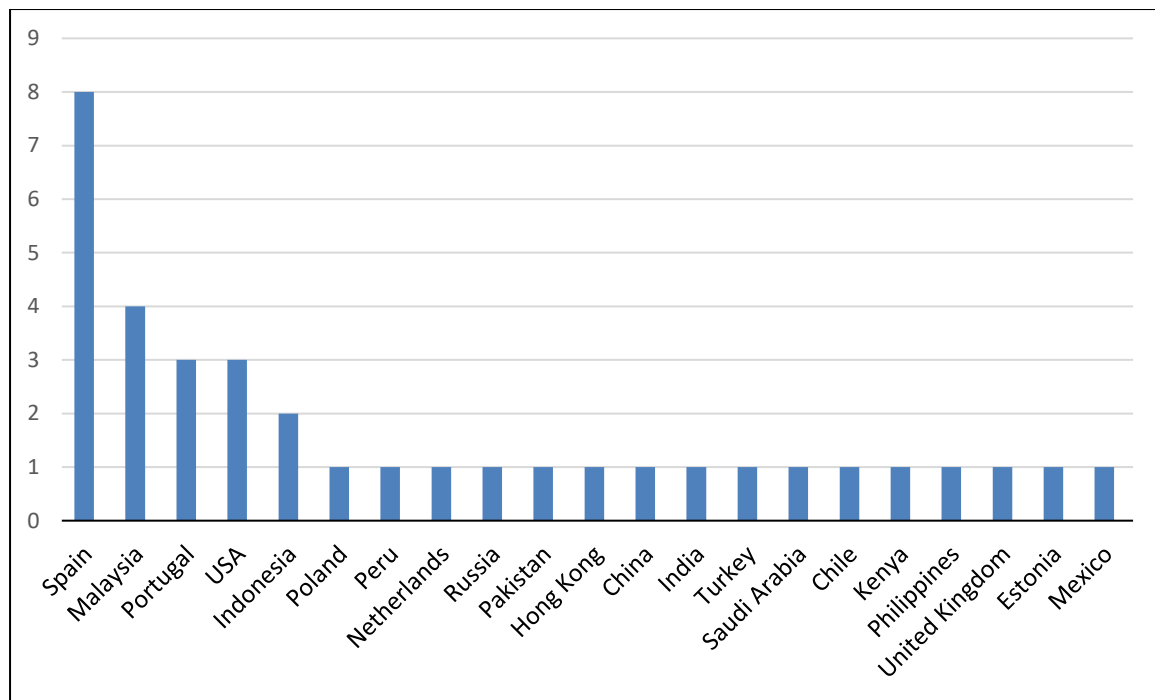


Figure 2: Total number of articles according to country

The majority of articles (30 out of 36) used quantitative methods such as cross-sectional, correlational, or descriptive. Four articles used qualitative methods, meanwhile two articles adopted mixed-methods approaches.

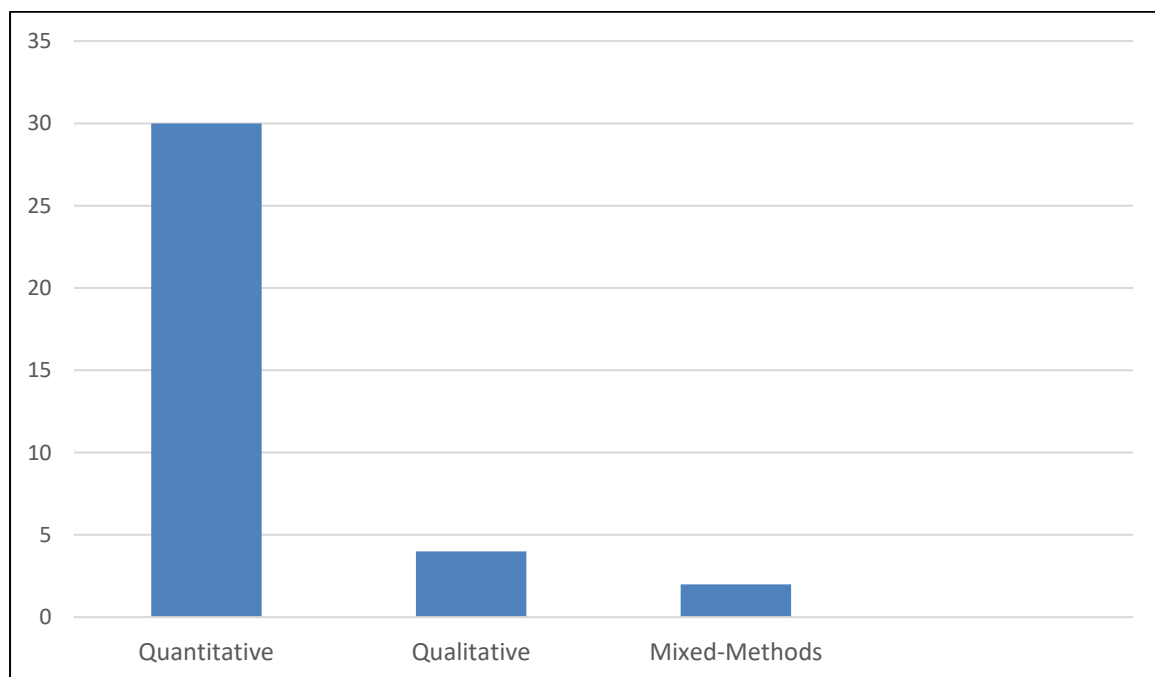


Figure 3: Research design of selected articles

According to the publication year, all articles were published between 2017 and 2025. Six articles were published in both 2021 and 2023, making them the most prominent years. Following this, there were five articles in 2022, four in 2020 and 2019 each, three in 2017 and two in 2018. Three articles were published in 2024, and one was published in early 2025. This distribution shows that academic interest in the topic has grown, especially in the last five years.

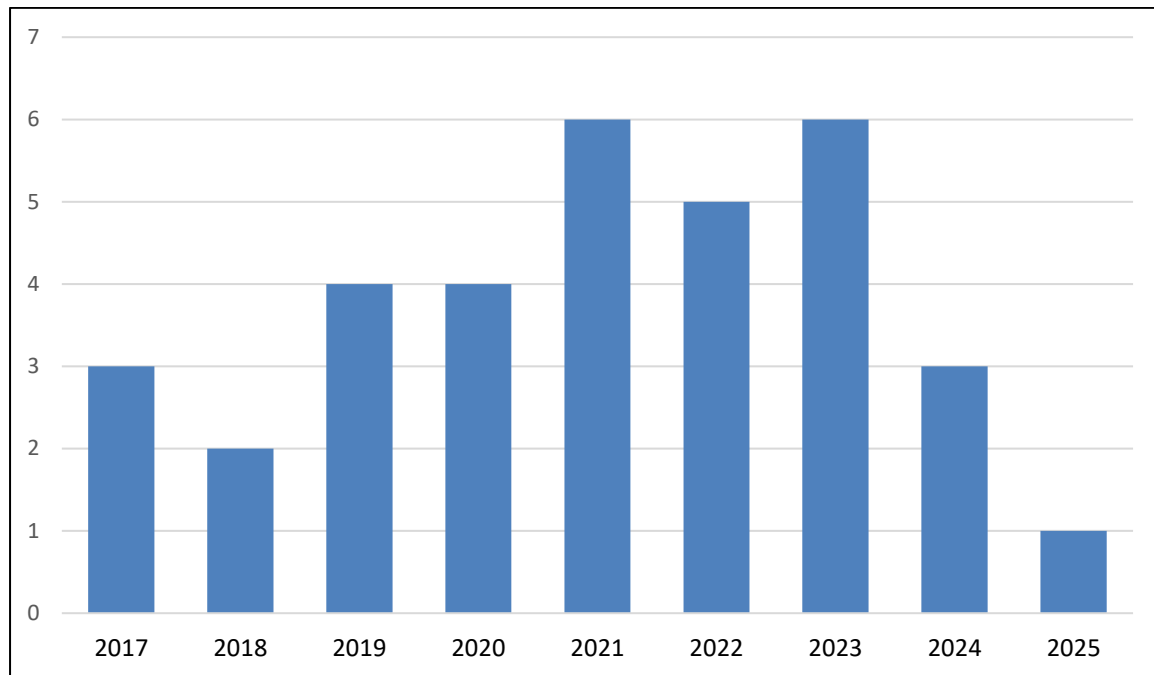


Figure 4: Publication years of selected articles

3.2 The Emerging Themes

Thematic analysis of 36 selected empirical articles revealed five main themes that describe the relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescent self-concept: (1) Disciplinary Problems Reduce Self-Concept, (2) Behaviour Specific Impact on Self-Concept Dimensions, (3) Resilience in Specific Self-Concept Dimensions, (4) Widespread Impact across Multiple Self-Concept Dimensions, and (5) Progression of Self-Concept Problems.

These five themes were further organized into 19 sub-themes: Strong Negative Correlations (SNC), Bidirectional Effects (BE), Academic Self-Concept (ASC), Social Self-Concept (SSC), Physical Self-Concept (PSC), Behavioural Self-Concept (BSC), Emotional Self-Concept (ESC), Family Self-Concept (FSC), Moral Self-Concept (MSC), Global Self-Concept (GSC), Physical Concept Preservation (PCP), Social Domain Variability (SDV), Emotional Complexity Patterns (ECP), Global Deterioration Patterns (GDP), Hierarchical Impact Intensity (HII), Compensatory Preservation Mechanisms (CPM), Progressive Deterioration Cycles (PDC), Early Identification Markers (EIM), and Intervention Responsiveness Potential (IRP).

These themes and sub-themes directly addressed the three research questions of this review: (1) what is the relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescents' overall self-concept levels? (2) How are different types of disciplinary behaviours associated with specific dimensions of adolescent self-concept? And (3) what patterns of self-concept are observed across dimensions among adolescents involved in disciplinary behaviours? (Refer to Table 5).

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 Disciplinary Problems Reduce Self-Concept

A consistent negative relationship between adolescents' involvement in disciplinary behaviours and their levels of self-concept is evident across the reviewed studies. To answer

research question 1 (*what is the relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescents' overall self-concept levels?*), two subthemes emerged from this theme which is: Strong Negative Correlations and Bidirectional Effects. Each subtheme highlights how disciplinary behaviours and self-concept are linked, either through a unidirectional association or a reciprocal relationship.

4.1.1 Strong Negative Correlations

This subtheme showed a strong negative relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescent self-concept across different populations and settings. Many studies found that the more adolescents engage in problematic behaviours, the more their self-concept in domains such as academics, emotions, family, and social tends to decline (Tarasova, 2021; Zhu & Shek, 2021; Cruz-Manrique et al., 2021; Melguizo-Ibáñez et al., 2023). For example, Tarasova (2021) and Estévez et al. (2019) found that students who acted violently may have negative academic or family self-concept. This finding suggests that such behaviours usually reflect the struggles that they experienced within themselves. As noted by Abd Radzak et al. (2023) and Villarejo et al. (2024), improving adolescents' self-concepts is just as important as fixing the behaviour itself.

Table 5: The themes and the subthemes

Author/Theme	Disciplinary Problems Reduce Self-Concept	Behaviour Specific Impact on Self-Concept Dimensions										Resilience in Specific Self-Concept Dimensions			Widespread Impact across Multiple Self-Concept Dimensions			Progression of Self-Concept Problems		
		SNC	BE	ASC	SCC	PSC	BSC	ESC	FSC	MSC	GSC	PCP	SDV	ECP	GDP	HII	CPM	PDC	EIM	IRP
Usán & Salavera (2017)	√				√															
Kruczek (2017)	√	√		√		√	√			√					√	√				
Morgado & Vale Dias (2017)	√		√		√	√	√			√					√	√				
Dudovitz, Chung, et al. (2017)	√	√	√			√														
Dudovitz, Perez-Aguilar, et al. (2017)	√		√			√														√
Estévez et al. (2019)	√		√						√			√	√						√	
Palacios-Garay & Coveñas-Lalupú (2019)	√		√	√	√		√	√						√	√					
Cañas et al. (2019)	√		√	√	√				√				√		√	√				

Note. Strong Negative Correlations (SNC), Bidirectional Effects (BE), Academic Self-Concept (ASC), Social Self-Concept (SSC), Physical Self-Concept (PSC), Behavioural Self-Concept (BSC), Emotional Self-Concept (ESC), Family Self-Concept (FSC), Moral Self-Concept (MSC), Global Self-Concept (GSC), Physical Concept Preservation (PCP), Social Domain Variability (SDV), Emotional Complexity Patterns (ECP), Global Deterioration Patterns (GDP), Hierarchical Impact Intensity (HII), Compensatory Preservation Mechanisms (CPM), Progressive Deterioration Cycles (PDC), Early Identification Markers (EIM), and Intervention Responsiveness Potential (IRP).

Table 5: (Continued)

Author/Theme	Disciplinary Problems Reduce Self-Concept	Behaviour Specific Impact on Self-Concept Dimensions									Resilience in Specific Self-Concept Dimensions			Widespread Impact across Multiple Self-Concept Dimensions			Progression of Self-Concept Problems			
		SNC	BE	ASC	SCC	PSC	BSC	ESC	FSC	MSC	GSC	PCP	SDV	ECP	GDP	HII	CPM	PDC	EIM	IRP
González et al. (2019)	√		√	√	√		√	√	√	√				√	√					
Levey et al. (2019)	√	√								√									√	
Hernández et al. (2020)	√								√											
Juliana & Mohamad (2020)	√		√	√	√		√		√	√				√				√		
Schultz & Corte (2020)	√	√				√			√										√	
Dullas et al. (2021)	√					√			√										√	√
Pratiwi & Widyarini (2021)	√									√				√					√	√
Merianos et al. (2021)	√	√		√			√			√				√						

Note. Strong Negative Correlations (SNC), Bidirectional Effects (BE), Academic Self-Concept (ASC), Social Self-Concept (SSC), Physical Self-Concept (PSC), Behavioural Self-Concept (BSC), Emotional Self-Concept (ESC), Family Self-Concept (FSC), Moral Self-Concept (MSC), Global Self-Concept (GSC), Physical Concept Preservation (PCP), Social Domain Variability (SDV), Emotional Complexity Patterns (ECP), Global Deterioration Patterns (GDP), Hierarchical Impact Intensity (HII), Compensatory Preservation Mechanisms (CPM), Progressive Deterioration Cycles (PDC), Early Identification Markers (EIM), and Intervention Responsiveness Potential (IRP).

Table 5: (Continued)

Author/Theme	Disciplinary Problems Reduce Self-Concept	Behaviour Specific Impact on Self-Concept Dimensions										Resilience in Specific Self-Concept Dimensions			Widespread Impact across Multiple Self-Concept Dimensions			Progression of Self-Concept Problems	
		SNC	BE	ASC	SSC	PSC	BSC	ESC	FSC	MSC	GSC	PCP	SDV	ECP	GDP	HII	CPM	PDC	EIM
Kariuki & Mwangi (2022)	√		√	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√
Matos et al. (2023)	√	√	√	√			√			√				√			√		√
Tastekin & Bayhan (2022)	√	√				√	√			√				√	√				√
Zai et al. (2023)	√		√	√	√		√		√	√		√		√	√				
Galán-Arroyo et al. (2023)	√		√	√	√		√	√		√		√	√	√	√				
Melguizo-Ibáñez et al. (2023)	√									√									
Abd Radzak et al. (2023)	√									√				√	√				
Arifain et al. (2024)			√	√	√				√	√	√	√			√	√			
Villarejo et al. (2024)	√						√	√		√		√		√	√				

Note. Strong Negative Correlations (SNC), Bidirectional Effects (BE), Academic Self-Concept (ASC), Social Self-Concept (SSC), Physical Self-Concept (PSC), Behavioural Self-Concept (BSC), Emotional Self-Concept (ESC), Family Self-Concept (FSC), Moral Self-Concept (MSC), Global Self-Concept (GSC), Physical Concept Preservation (PCP), Social Domain Variability (SDV), Emotional Complexity Patterns (ECP), Global Deterioration Patterns (GDP), Hierarchical Impact Intensity (HII), Compensatory Preservation Mechanisms (CPM), Progressive Deterioration Cycles (PDC), Early Identification Markers (EIM), and Intervention Responsiveness Potential (IRP).

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		SNC	BE	ASC	SSC	PSC	BSC	ESC	FSC	MSC	GSC	PCP	SDV	ECP	GDP	HII	CPM	PDC	EIM	IRP
Abd Radzak et al. (2024)	√	√									√				√				√	√
Li et al. (2024)	√	√									√				√			√	√	√
Verissimo et al. (2025)	√	√		√	√	√	√				√	√	√		√	√			√	√

Note. Strong Negative Correlations (SNC), Bidirectional Effects (BE), Academic Self-Concept (ASC), Social Self-Concept (SSC), Physical Self-Concept (PSC), Behavioural Self-Concept (BSC), Emotional Self-Concept (ESC), Family Self-Concept (FSC), Moral Self-Concept (MSC), Global Self-Concept (GSC), Physical Concept Preservation (PCP), Social Domain Variability (SDV), Emotional Complexity Patterns (ECP), Global Deterioration Patterns (GDP), Hierarchical Impact Intensity (HII), Compensatory Preservation Mechanisms (CPM), Progressive Deterioration Cycles (PDC), Early Identification Markers (EIM), and Intervention Responsiveness Potential (IRP).

Evidence from several studies further confirms that this negative relationship exists across various backgrounds and behaviours. For instance, low self-concept was found among juvenile offenders and adolescents placed in rehabilitation institutions (Juliana & Mohamad, 2020; Mohamed et al., 2022). Similar finding was also observed among regular school students especially those involved in cyberbullying (Cañas et al., 2019; Taştekin & Bayhan, 2022), and substance use (Usán & Salavera, 2017; Merianos et al., 2021). However, Cuadros and Berger (2022) argue that the relationship between student's disciplinary problem and negative self-concept are more complex than that. According to their finding, adolescents with behavioural issues may showed both negative and positive in different domains simultaneously. This suggest that their self-concept is not uniformly negative across all areas. Nevertheless, the overall evidence points to a strong connection between behavioural problems and poor self-concept across more than 30 studies. This highlights the need for interventions that build both positive behaviour and self-concept in adolescents.

4.1.2 Bidirectional Effects

This subtheme highlights strong support for a bidirectional relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescent self-concept. Several studies showed that low self-concept not only results from disciplinary issues but also contributes to the development of such behaviours (Kruczek, 2017; Levey et al., 2019; Zhu & Shek, 2021). For example, adolescents with a negative self-concept were more likely to engage in aggression or delinquency later on. This suggests a cycle where poor self-concept leads to behaviour problems, which then further weaken their self-concept more. The pattern was especially clear in family self-concept. According to Zhu and Shek (2021), initial behaviour problems were shown to damage and weaken family relationships, which then lead to further misconduct. Some studies also showed how negative labels, such as being called "a troublemaker" or feeling "strange," were internalized through repeated behavioural incidents. Matos et al. (2023) and Cuadros and Berger (2022) suggest that these labels solidified negative self-concept among adolescents over time.

Other studies also revealed how this cycle of influence operates across different contexts and behaviour types. In cyberbullying, adolescents with low self-concept were more likely to become victims or bullies. Their involvement in these behaviours then further damaged how they viewed themselves (Taştekin & Bayhan, 2022; Veríssimo et al., 2025). Among those exposed to deviant peer groups, the influence worked both ways. Peer behaviour shaped self-concept, while low self-concept increased the risk of academic burnout and risky behaviours (Li et al., 2024; Dudovitz, Chung, et al., 2017). A similar finding can be found among those who engaged in substance use, where constant self-comparison and negative self-perception predicted their behavioural choices. In turn, those behaviours may reinforced poor self-concept among adolescent (Merianos et al., 2021). These studies support the idea that behavioural problems and self-concept form a vicious cycle. Therefore, interventions should not treat self-concept and behaviour as a separate issue. Both need to be addressed in order to break the cycle and support healthier development (Abd Radzak et al., 2024; Tharshini et al., 2021; Schultz & Corte, 2020).

4.2 Behaviour Specific Impact on Self-Concept Dimensions

In contrast to general patterns explored earlier, this theme focuses on how specific disciplinary behaviours are affecting to particular self-concept dimensions to answer research question two. Research shows that different types of disciplinary behaviours have different effects on adolescent's self-concept. Instead of a general decline, these behaviours are linked to impairments in distinct domains of self-concept. This pattern highlights the multifaceted nature

of self-concept and the importance of evaluating each domain separately. Accordingly, eight subthemes were identified and each corresponding to a self-concept dimension commonly affected in adolescents with behavioural issues.

4.2.1 Academic Self-Concept

The findings from this review show that academic self-concept is one of the most negatively affected domains among adolescents involved in disciplinary behaviours. Studies shows that students engaged in aggression, substance use, bullying or school refusal tend to view themselves as having lower academic competence. According to research conducted by Cañas et al. (2019) and Cruz-Manrique et al. (2021), adolescents that engage in cyberbullies or acted violently usually lack self-confidence in their academic ability and felt excluded from their school environment. This tendency is also found among juvenile offenders and adolescents raised in authoritarian parenting. Many of these groups view themselves as lacking academic giftedness or any special talent in school. Such perceptions will eventually indicate serious declines in their academic self-concept (Juliana & Mohamad, 2020; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Arifain et al., 2024). In some cases, this pattern was particularly strong among female offenders and students subjected to negative labelling from teachers, which contributed to school disengagement and loss of motivation (Matos et al., 2023; Galán-Arroyo et al., 2023).

Furthermore, academic self-concept may serve as a protective factor. Research indicates that the influence of behavioural challenges on academic self-concept differs across individuals (Dudovitz, Perez-Aguilar, et al., 2017; Morgado & Vale Dias, 2017). For instance, some adolescents may avoid risky behaviours to protect their academic self-image, while others remained to have a positive academic self-concept despite engaging in risky behaviour. Parenting style and school environment were also found to influence this relationship. Adolescents with supportive families or positive school experiences tended to have stronger academic self-concept and lower levels of misconduct (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022; Tharshini et al., 2021). However, student with antisocial behaviour or chronic underachievement may experience a diminish self-belief toward their academic capabilities because lack of supported from the environments they lived in (Tarasova, 2021; Palacios-Garay & Coveñas-Lalupú, 2019; Zai et al., 2023).

4.2.2 Social Self-Concept

Research consistently shows a strong link between disciplinary behaviours and negative social self-concept in adolescents. Those with conduct disorders often struggle to maintain friendships, feel less socially competent, and report low self-worth, social withdrawal, and difficulty forming meaningful relationships (Kruczek, 2017; Mohamed et al., 2022; Juliana & Mohamad, 2020). Similar patterns are seen in school refusers, who display reduced confidence in peer interactions (Gonzálvez et al., 2019), and in victims of cyberbullying, whose social self-concept is lower than that of offenders or uninvolved peers (Cañas et al., 2019). Tarasova (2021) observed that adolescents who show hostile behaviours often struggle with communication, creating a cycle in which poor self-concepts further damage their social relationships. Other research has examined how environmental and cognitive factors shape social self-concept in adolescents with behavioural issues.

Matos et al. (2023) found that adolescents in stigmatized neighbourhoods often absorbed unfavourable social identities due to prejudice and exclusion. On the cognitive side, Bibi et al. (2021) showed that those who used euphemistic language to justify their misbehaviour had significantly lower social self-concept. These studies indicate that environmental stigma and cognitive justification can both weaken adolescent self-concept. Peer influence and comparison were also important. Adolescents with substance-using friends

orthose trying to imitate others were more likely to compare themselves socially, affecting their self-concept (Merianos et al., 2021). While some studies reported moderate levels of social self-concept despite delinquency (Arifain et al., 2024), others found surprising trends where bullying behaviour was tied to higher feelings of popularity and status (Veríssimo et al., 2025). Overall, the findings underscore the complexity of the relationship between disciplinary behaviours and social self-concept. This suggest that experiences of rejection, stigma, and peer dynamics all shape how adolescents see themselves socially (Galán-Arroyo et al., 2023; Zai et al., 2023; Palacios-Garay & Coveñas-Lalupú, 2019; Tharshini et al., 2021).

4.2.3 Physical Self-Concept

Most studies show that student's physical self-concept is usually less affected by their disciplinary problems compared with other self-concept domains. Some even maintained a stable or positive physical self-concept despite engaging in disciplinary behaviours. Both studies from Estévez et al. (2019) and Zai et al. (2023), found that physical self-concept is less affected compared to other dimensions, such as academic and family self-concept. Institutionalised adolescents in Kariuki and Mwangi's (2022) study also reported to have a high score in physical appearance. The author indicated that there is a possible coping mechanisms or identity preservation strategies that the adolescent might have. Galán-Arroyo et al. (2023) also found no significant associations between bullying and low physical self-concept among boys within his study. However, there is no denying that disciplinary problems can still affect some aspects of physical self-concept. Even the perpetrators also experienced notable physical self-concept decline, even though it is not that low compared to the cyberbullying victims (Cañas et al., 2019).

Study conducted by Usán and Salavera (2017) reported that only lower perceived competence was significantly associated with behavioural problems, while aspects such as attractiveness and strength remained unaffected. According to their study, adolescent student-athletes with low confidence in their competency as an athlete were more likely to engage in substance use. Although Usan and Salvera's (2017) study indicates that attractiveness does not reduce a person's physical self-concept, other studies suggest otherwise. For example, adolescents with school refusal behaviours were found to score lower in both appearance and physical abilities (González et al., 2019). Similar findings were reported by Juliana and Mohamad (2020) and Mohamed et al. (2022), who noted that adolescents with behavioural problems often felt physically inadequate and insecure about their bodies. These studies suggest that disciplinary problems may diminish adolescent's physical self-concept, especially in environment where appearance and physical abilities are closely judged. These contrasting findings suggest that the impact of disciplinary behaviours on physical self-concept is not uniform but depends on behavioural context, role (perpetrator vs victim), and protective factors like sports participation or peer support (Palacios-Garay & Coveñas-Lalupú, 2019; Tharshini et al., 2021).

4.2.4 Behavioural Self-Concept

Adolescents who engage in serious disciplinary behaviours often develop negative self-perceptions regarding their conduct and prosocial competencies (Kariuki & Mwangi, 2022; Kruczek, 2017). In this context, behavioural self-concept is particularly vulnerable as adolescents who view themselves as "rule-breakers" showing heightened risk for persistent problem behaviours (Dudovitz, Chung, et al., 2017; Dudovitz, Perez-Aguilar, et al., 2017). Poor behavioural self-perceptions such as seeing oneself as uncooperative or unkind are strongly linked to greater involvement in disciplinary problems (Dullas et al., 2021; Veríssimo et al., 2025). Over the time, these behaviours can become integrated into adolescents' sense of

self, making them see such misbehaviour as a normal or defining part of who they are. This process strengthens the likelihood that the problematic behaviours will continue and makes them more difficult to change (Schultz & Corte, 2020).

At the same time, many adolescents remain cognitively aware that their behaviour deviates from social expectations. While such awareness can make them more receptive to interventions that promote alignment between conduct and internal standards (Tarasova, 2021), it often fails to drive change on its own. Instead, recognition of maladjustment without adequate support may intensify feelings of shame and erode self-concept, thereby perpetuating cycles of misconduct (Morgado & Vale Dias, 2017; Tarasova, 2021).

4.2.5 Emotional Self-Concept

Emotional self-concept also emerged as a vulnerable domain among adolescents with disciplinary problems, though the degree of impact varied across studies. Some researchers reported strong negative effects. For example, Palacios-Garay and Coveñas-Lalupú (2019) and Mohamed et al. (2022) identified emotional self-concept as one of the most affected dimensions, marked by low self-confidence and reduced emotional regulation. Similarly, González et al. (2019) found that adolescents who refused school reported to have a low emotional stability, and Juliana and Mohamad (2020) noted that adolescents with behavioural problems often described themselves in emotionally negative terms. Kruczek (2017) further highlighted poor anger regulation as a key emotional deficit in girls with conduct disorders. These findings suggest that emotional struggles, such as fear, anxiety, irritability, and poor impulse control, often accompany disciplinary issues and contribute to negative emotional self-perceptions.

However, other studies presented more complex or even conflicting patterns. Morgado and Vale Dias (2017) found that emotional self-concept showed only weak associations with antisocial behaviour. Conversely, studies by Zai et al. (2023) and Villarejo et al. (2024) showed that emotional regulation was significantly compromised in adolescents with externalizing behaviours. Some findings, like those by Galán-Arroyo et al. (2023), even reported unexpected positive associations between emotional self-concept and bullying involvement. Meanwhile, Matos et al. (2023) and Merianos et al. (2021) highlighted the influence of the received social support and own interpersonal comparisons may help in shaping one's emotional self-concept. This suggests that the impact of student own misbehaviour is different towards their individual emotional self-concept. Despite some inconsistencies, the overall evidence supports the view that emotional self-concept particularly emotional regulation and self-assurance is often decline in adolescents with disciplinary problems.

4.2.6 Family Self-Concept

Family self-concept emerged as a consistently affected domain among adolescents involved in disciplinary problems. Multiple studies, including Estévez et al. (2019), Palacios-Garay and Coveñas-Lalupú (2019), and Cruz-Manrique et al. (2021), reported that antisocial behaviours were associated with negative perceptions of family integration and lack of emotional connectedness. Adolescents involved in cyberbullying, whether as aggressors or victims, demonstrated a compromised family self-concept. This indicate that family dynamics may both influence and be influenced by behavioural issues (Cañas et al., 2019). Similarly, González et al. (2019) found that adolescents with school refusal behaviours perceived weaker relationships with their parents, while Tarasova (2021) described that there are patterns of conditional acceptance in families of adolescents with disciplinary problems. These findings highlight how negative experiences within the family system may contribute to or worsen behavioural difficulties during adolescence.

Further supporting this, studies by Dullas et al. (2021) and Zhu and Shek (2021) emphasized that adolescents with low family satisfaction or deteriorating parent-child relationships were more likely to exhibit deviant behaviours. Villarejo et al. (2024) also identified family self-concept as the most impacted domain among adolescents with externalizing behaviours. While Galán-Arroyo et al. (2023) also found consistent associations between bullying and weakened family relationship perceptions, study by Arifain et al. (2024) offered a contrasting view. Despite behavioural challenges, some adolescents retained relatively positive perceptions of their family roles which is quite interesting. Overall, the findings suggest that family self-concept plays a dual role serving both as a protective factor when strong, and a vulnerability when disrupted, demonstrating its central importance in understanding and addressing adolescent disciplinary issues.

4.2.7 Moral Self-Concept

Moral self-concept refers to how adolescents perceive their own values, sense of right and wrong, and adherence to ethical standards. Moral self-concept emerged as one of the most impaired domains among adolescents with disciplinary problems. Studies by González et al. (2019) and Zai et al. (2023) found that adolescents who engaged in school refusal or displayed delinquent tendencies reported lower perceptions of honesty and integrity. This suggests that behavioural problems may be closely tied to a weakened sense of moral character. Similarly, Arifain et al. (2024) found that adolescents involved in disciplinary incidents had low evaluations of their moral standards, indicating that negative behaviours may erode their ethical self-perception over time.

Qualitative findings provided deeper insight into this dimension. Juliana and Mohamad (2020) reported that adolescents expressed deep feelings of guilt and shame, with some viewing themselves as sinful or burdensome to their families. These adolescents described carrying the emotional weight of broken trust, indicating how moral self-concept is tied to family and cultural expectations. Other studies found that youth often described themselves using negative moral labels such as “bad” or “in trouble” (e.g., Schultz & Corte, 2020), showing how repeated involvement in conduct problems may lead to the internalization of negative moral identities. These findings highlight how disciplinary issues not only reflect behavioural challenges but also shape how adolescents view their own moral worth.

4.2.8 Global Self-Concept

In the previous sections, self-concept was discussed according to different domains. However, there are also few researchers that perceived self-concept as unidimensional where they measure self-concept as a whole without separating into specific domains. Global self-concept, which reflects an adolescent's overall self-worth and self-image, was consistently found to be negatively affected by disciplinary problems. Adolescents with conduct disorder or school refusal behaviours reported to have lower self-esteem, reduced self-acceptance, and less clarity in their self-perceptions (González et al., 2019; Kruczek, 2017; Levey et al., 2019). These youths often saw themselves as far from their ideal selves and expressed negative self-evaluations across multiple life areas (Juliana & Mohamad, 2020). Several studies found that adolescents who internalized negative labels such as “bad” or “unworthy” were more likely to experience diminished global self-worth. This suggest that behavioural problems can lead to a general deterioration of self-perception beyond specific domains (Morgado & Vale Dias, 2017; Matos et al., 2023; Mohamed et al., 2022). Similarly, school-based misconduct, cyberbullying, and substance use were also associated with having unstable or unclear global self-concept. This supporting the view that broad disruptions to identity may underlie repeated disciplinary behaviours (Taştekin & Bayhan, 2022; Dudovitz, Chung, et al., 2017).

Importantly, several studies demonstrated that not all student with disciplinary problems experienced global self-concept decline in the same way. While most adolescents with behavioural issues reported low overall self-esteem, some showed mixed or ambivalent self-perceptions. This mean that they saw themselves as having both problematic and good traits at the same time (Cuadros & Berger, 2022). Studies also shows that global self-concept can act as a protective or risk factor between school, peer factors and their behavioural outcomes (Abd Radzak et al., 2024; Climent-Galarza et al., 2022). More importantly, positive changes in global self-concept were seen after teens received intervention, showing that self-concept can be changed and is an important target when addressing teen behaviour problems (Pratiwi & Widyarini, 2021). Collectively, findings from studies using the global approach emphasize that overall self-concept is an important foundation that shapes teens' behaviour and emotional strength. However, as shown by the mixed findings through domain-specific analyses, both global and multidimensional approaches offer complementary insights and should be given attention in assessment and intervention strategies.

4.3 Resilience in Specific Self-Concept Dimensions

While many studies highlighted the negative impact of disciplinary behaviours on various self-concept dimensions, a smaller group of findings revealed patterns of resilience. In some cases, adolescents involved in misbehaviour maintained positive self-perceptions in specific areas despite difficulties in others. This theme explores how certain self-concept dimensions remain intact or are affected differently depending on the type of disciplinary behaviour and the context in which it occurs (RQ3). Three subthemes were identified to represent these patterns: Physical Concept Preservation, Social Domain Variability, and Emotional Complexity Patterns.

4.3.1 Physical Concept Preservation

While many aspects of self-concept tend to decline in adolescents with disciplinary problems, physical self-concept often remains relatively intact. Arifain et al. (2024) suggest that juvenile delinquents may have a certain degree of resilience as they rated their physical self-concept higher than other domains, such as academic and moral self-concept. Similarly, Galán-Arroyo et al. (2023) observed that adolescents involved in aggressive behaviour maintained moderate to high perceptions of their physical appearance and capabilities compared to family and academic self-concept. This preservation may be shaped by peer validation, confidence in their physical strength and attractiveness, or the use of physical traits to gain social status (Galán-Arroyo et al., 2023; Arifain et al., 2024). These findings indicate that having a high self-concept in certain domain, do not guaranteed the student possibilities to not engage in committing disciplinary behaviour. On the contrary, in this context, having a high physical self-concept can further engaged their misbehaviour.

4.3.2 Social Domain Variability

Unlike the consistently low scores observed in academic or behavioural self-concept, findings on social self-concept reveal greater variability across contexts. Several studies reported that adolescents involved in bullying or disciplinary problems experienced diminished social self-concept due to peer rejection, weak interpersonal bonds, and low trust in peers (Cañas et al., 2019; Estévez et al., 2019; Zai et al., 2023; Villarejo et al., 2024). These adolescents often viewed themselves as socially inadequate or isolated, contributing to further relational conflict. However, other studies revealed the opposite trend. Some adolescents engaged in aggressive behaviours perceived themselves as socially dominant or popular, resulting in moderate to high social self-concept (Galán-Arroyo et al., 2023; Veríssimo et al., 2025).

In such contexts, aggressive behaviour may be linked to social validation, especially when it enhances peer influence or group status. Additionally, Estévez et al. (2019) highlighted differences between traditional and cyber aggression, showing that different modes of behavioural expression carry distinct implications for social self-perception. Together, these findings suggest that social self-concept is not uniformly compromised by behavioural issues but instead shaped by factors such as peer dynamics, gender, cultural norms, and the adolescent's interpretation of their social role. As such, it may represent both a point of vulnerability and a potential area of resilience, depending on context.

4.3.3 Emotional Complexity Patterns

Adolescents with disciplinary problems often experience emotional instability. Cuadros and Berger (2022) reported that participants described having extreme mood swings. One student said they felt “super bipolar” due to constant changes in emotion. This reflects poor emotional regulation and confusion about emotional identity. Juliana and Mohamad (2020) also found that these students described themselves as irritable, self-centred, and guilty. Kruczek (2017) highlighted similar issues, especially in anger control. These findings suggest that emotional self-concept is often weak in this group. Many of these adolescent's struggle with managing their emotions, leading to negative self-perceptions. Emotional regulation difficulties are a core issue in their behavioural problems. These patterns call for interventions that focus on emotional awareness and control.

However, not all findings show emotional self-concept as entirely weak. Galán-Arroyo et al. (2023) found a positive link between emotional self-concept and bullying behaviour. This means some adolescents involved in bullying may still see themselves as emotionally strong. This may be due to overconfidence or how they interpret emotional strength in peer settings. Kariuki and Mwangi (2022) also found mixed patterns. While many students reported fear and nervousness, they still described themselves as happy. These results show that emotional self-concept in this group is complex as it includes both vulnerability and signs of resilience.

4.4 Widespread Impact across Multiple Self-Concept Dimensions

This theme explores how adolescents with disciplinary behaviours experience changes across several self-concept dimensions simultaneously. Rather than affecting just one area, such as academic or social self-concept, some studies found that misbehaviour is linked to broad declines in multiple domains. Other studies showed more complex patterns, where some dimensions were more affected than others, or where certain self-concept areas remained intact despite difficulties elsewhere. To explain these patterns, three subthemes were developed: Global Deterioration Patterns, Hierarchical Impact Intensity, and Compensatory Preservation Mechanisms.

4.4.1 Global Deterioration Patterns

A consistent theme across the literature is the widespread deterioration of self-concept among adolescents with disciplinary problems. Kruczek (2017) found that girls with conduct disorder showed lower self-perceptions across creativity, leadership, and ego states. Similarly, Morgado and Vale Dias (2017) observed significant negative correlations across multiple self-concept domains, including global, academic, physical, and emotional. These findings suggest that behavioural issues do not affect isolated areas but instead cause cascading effects across various domains of self-concept. Cañas et al. (2019) and González et al. (2019) reported that both cyberbullies and school refusers experienced low self-concept scores across family, academic, and emotional domains. Juliana and Mohamad (2020) also documented that juvenile

offenders showed negative views in all domains, such as physical appearance, morality, academics, and social interaction.

More recent studies continue to support this global impact pattern. Tarasova (2021) found that 30% of adolescents with behavioural problems experienced self-concept deficits across multiple domains. Bibi et al. (2021) and Cruz-Manrique et al. (2021) showed that school violence and cognitive distortions were linked to declines in social, family, and emotional self-concepts. Mohamed et al. (2022), Abd Radzak et al. (2023), and Villarejo et al. (2024) confirmed that adolescents with externalizing behaviours consistently recorded lower self-concept across all measured domains. Veríssimo et al. (2025) and Merianos et al. (2021) further highlighted that both victims and those with high peer comparison tendencies experienced broad self-concept deterioration. These findings suggest that the impact of disciplinary problems towards self-concept is related to each other. The lasting damaged on how the adolescent's view themselves require interventions that address self-concept holistically not just within isolated domains.

4.4.2 Hierarchical Impact Intensity

Many studies revealed that disciplinary behaviours affect self-concept dimensions with varying intensity. Kruczek (2017) found that while global and social self-concepts were significantly impaired among girls with conduct disorder, other domains showed less damage. Morgado and Vale Dias (2017) identified behavioural self-concept as most affected, followed by global, academic, physical, and emotional dimensions. Similarly, Estévez et al. (2019) and Cruz-Manrique et al. (2021) reported that academic and family self-concept suffered greater impacts than physical self-concept. This suggests that academic and relational aspects of self-concept are more vulnerable to behavioural issues, while physical self-concept tends to be preserved.

Other studies confirmed this hierarchy of vulnerability. Cañas et al. (2019) and González et al. (2019) reported that cyberbullying and school refusal had greater impacts on emotional, social, and family self-concepts, with smaller effects on academic and physical domains. Tarasova (2021) found that communication-related self-concept was the most affected, followed by academic and behavioural domains. Zai et al. (2023), Arifain et al. (2024), and Villarejo et al. (2024) also observed similar patterns, with moral, family, and academic self-concepts experiencing the greatest deterioration. In contrast, physical and social domains were less affected. These hierarchical patterns suggest when supporting adolescents with disciplinary problems, interventions should prioritize the most vulnerable domains, particularly moral, family, academic self-concept, while also attending to other domains.

4.4.3 Compensatory Preservation Mechanisms

Some adolescents appear to protect their self-worth through compensatory strategies. For instance, Cuadros and Berger (2022) found that aggressive-popular adolescents often maintained a sense of superiority. They made statements like “I know I am better than them,” suggesting they relied on social dominance to preserve self-regard. This coping strategy may shield them from complete self-concept deterioration, though it risks reinforcing antisocial behaviour and avoiding self-reflection. Similarly, Arifain et al. (2024) reported a pattern of higher self-concept scores in physical ($M=2.88$) and family ($M=2.43$) domains, despite low scores in moral and academic areas. This pattern suggests that adolescents may preserve self-worth by focusing on domains less affected by their behaviour. These compensatory mechanisms can function as psychological buffers, allowing some self-concept dimensions to remain intact even as others decline.

4.5 Progression of Self-Concept Problems

This final theme highlights how self-concept issues can grow and change throughout adolescence. This theme provides broader insights into how disciplinary behaviours shape self-concept across the time. Rather than viewing these issues as fixed or isolated, the findings suggest a gradual progression. Self-concept problems may begin early, worsen with repeated negative behaviours, and eventually affect multiple areas. This developmental process is explored through three subthemes: (1) Progressive Deterioration Cycles, (2) Early Identification Markers, and (3) Intervention Responsiveness Potential. These subthemes illustrate how early signs of low self-concept can escalate and how timely support may prevent long-term impacts.

4.5.1 Progressive Deterioration Cycles

Studies show that adolescents with behavioural problems often experience ongoing declines in self-concept, forming cycles that worsen over time. Juliana and Mohamad (2020) found participants expressing deep pessimism, viewing themselves as burdens with no future due to past misconduct. Zhu and Shek (2021) similarly observed a negative spiral in which delinquency increased, while parental control declined. This shows how behavioural and relational issues reinforce each other. Climent-Galarza et al. (2022) confirmed that the link between poor self-concept and behavioural problems persists into adulthood, suggesting long-term psychological consequences.

Other studies also reinforce this pattern. Kariuki and Mwangi (2022) found that longer rehabilitation correlated with weaker behavioural improvements, challenging the effectiveness of punitive measures. Matos et al. (2023) noted that repeated labelling by teachers led students to internalize failure, worsening both conduct and self-perception. Li et al. (2024) highlighted cyclical links between academic burnout and low self-evaluation, where deviant peer influence triggered a progressive decline. Together, these findings suggest that without targeted intervention, behavioural issues and negative self-concept can become self-sustaining and increasingly difficult to reverse.

4.5.2 Early Identification Markers

Research highlights several self-concept indicators that can serve as early warning signs for disciplinary problems. For instance, Levey et al. (2019) found that low self-concept clarity at age 13 predicted higher levels of delinquency and increased susceptibility to negative peer influence throughout adolescence. Similarly, Dullas et al. (2021) identified traits like low agreeableness and reduced family satisfaction as early risk factors. These findings are consistent with Tarasova (2021), who reported that 17–38% of students consistently showed self-concept vulnerabilities linked to behaviour problems across both qualitative and quantitative measures. Such evidence supports the use of personality traits, family dynamics, and self-concept clarity as screening tools for early intervention.

Other studies show that early behavioural difficulties often trigger future self-concept deterioration. Zhu and Shek (2021) observed that baseline delinquency predicted later declines in family cohesion and emotional adjustment. Taştekin and Bayhan (2022) found that behavioural-compliance and happiness-satisfaction self-concept dimensions were strong predictors of cyberbullying involvement. Likewise, Abd Radzak et al. (2024) reported that poor self-concept was common among students neglected by peers, families, and teachers. Peer influence also plays a key role; Li et al. (2024) demonstrated that deviant peer affiliation predicted self-concept problems within six months. Schultz and Corte (2020) further emphasized that children who used more negative self-descriptions between ages 9 and 12 were

more likely to show early conduct issues and alcohol use. Collectively, these findings show that monitoring early self-concept patterns can help prevent long-term behavioural difficulties.

4.5.3 Intervention Responsiveness Potential

Research highlights strong potential for interventions to reshape self-concept and reduce disciplinary behaviours. Dudovitz, Perez-Aguilar, et al. (2017) emphasized that when adolescents recognize a gap between their actual behaviour and desired self-image, this cognitive dissonance can motivate change. Mohamed et al. (2022) found that cognitive-behavioural therapy not only reduced aggression but also improved self-concept, showing that structured therapeutic approaches can modify both behaviour and self-perception. Similarly, Pratiwi and Widayarni (2021) reported that 88% of their participants showed self-concept improvement, especially when supported by external factors like family and peer relationships. These findings suggest that adolescent self-concept, even when severely affected, can be changed and improve to well-designed interventions.

Several studies point to specific mechanisms that enhance intervention outcomes. Dullas et al. (2021) linked higher family satisfaction to lower deviant behaviour, highlighting the value of family-focused therapy. Tharshini et al. (2021) showed that social support interventions significantly influenced self-concept ($\beta = 0.440$). This supporting the idea that relational support can promotes changes. Kariuki and Mwangi (2022) find a varied motivation patterns among adolescent and suggest that responsiveness depends on whether their motivations are internal or external. Internal motivation may bring more benefit than external. Meanwhile, Matos et al. (2023) and Verissimo et al. (2025) stressed the importance of caring, respectful relationships and socio-emotional skill programs in promoting positive self-concept and reducing bullying. Studies by Abd Radzak et al. (2024) and Li et al. (2024) further confirmed that self-concept acts as a mediator in behavioural outcomes, meaning strengthening self-concept could interrupt negative behavioural cycles before they escalate.

In conclusion, effective interventions share a few similarities. It includes social and family support systems, encourage intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation, focus on self-concept as a change lever, and develop socio-emotional skills within supportive relationship. Therefore, it is clear that coordinated and multi-level interventions are necessary to address disciplinary behaviours and self-concept rather than a standalone strategy.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review examined the relationship between disciplinary behaviours and self-concept among adolescents, addressing three research questions: (1) the overall relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescent self-concept, (2) associations between specific types of disciplinary behaviours and dimensions of self-concept, and (3) patterns of self-concept across dimensions among adolescents involved in disciplinary behaviours. The review synthesized findings from 36 studies published between 2017 until 2025, revealing several critical insights. First, disciplinary problems consistently demonstrated significant negative associations with adolescent self-concept, with evidence of bidirectional effects wherein low self-concept both contributes to and results from disciplinary involvement (RQ1). Second, different types of disciplinary behaviours showed distinct patterns of association with specific self-concept dimensions, with academic misconduct primarily affecting academic self-concept, while behaviours such as bullying and aggression showed complex relationships with social and family self-concept (RQ2). Third, adolescents involved in disciplinary behaviours exhibited varying self-concept profiles, with family and academic self-concept dimensions most consistently affected, though global self-concept remained vulnerable across diverse problem behaviours (RQ3).

This review makes several important contributions to the literature. First, it provides comprehensive evidence for the multidimensional nature of the relationship between disciplinary problems and self-concept, moving beyond simplistic unidirectional models. The identification of bidirectional effects underscores that self-concept is not merely a consequence of disciplinary problems but also a contributing factor, with implications for prevention and intervention timing. Second, by systematically mapping specific disciplinary behaviours to particular self-concept dimensions, this review advances understanding of the mechanisms through which different types of misconduct affect adolescent development. The finding that certain behaviours (e.g., substance abuse) impact multiple self-concept dimensions simultaneously highlight the pervasive developmental consequences of serious disciplinary involvement. Third, the synthesis of both unidimensional (global) and multidimensional conceptualizations of self-concept clarifies ongoing theoretical debates in the field, demonstrating that both approaches yield valuable but complementary insights. The review reveals that while global self-concept measures capture overall self-worth decline, domain-specific assessments uncover important nuances in how adolescents experience self-concept erosion.

Fourth, the review identifies several unique patterns with important implications. Disciplinary problems can simultaneously affect multiple self-concept domains, with severity of impact corresponding to seriousness of the misconduct. Adolescents with disciplinary problems who experience diminished self-concept during their teenage years are at heightened risk of carrying these negative self-perceptions into adulthood if it is remain unaddressed (Climent-Galarza et al., 2022). Fifth, another finding to be highlight is early adolescence (around age 13) as a critical intervention window for primary prevention rather than reactive intervention. Levey et al. (2019) found that low self-concept clarity at age 13 predicted higher levels of delinquency and increased susceptibility to negative peer influence throughout adolescence. This finding suggests that assessing and strengthening self-concept proactively at this developmental stage can prevent both the emergence of disciplinary problems and vulnerability to negative peer influence. Additionally, the review reveals that some adolescents employ compensatory cognitive strategies to protect self-concept through mechanism such as selective self-evaluation to validate their current behaviour. While these strategies may temporarily buffer against self-concept decline, the likelihood that the problematic behaviours will continue and makes them more difficult to change (Schultz & Corte, 2020).

Several limitations warrant acknowledgment. The predominance of cross-sectional designs (30 out of 36 studies) limits causal inferences about the temporal relationship between self-concept and disciplinary behaviours. The cultural diversity of studies, while enhancing global relevance, introduces potential confounding variables related to different educational systems and disciplinary practices. Additionally, the lack of standardized self-concept measures across studies hampers direct comparison of effect sizes and domain-specific impacts. Based on these patterns, three priority research directions emerge for future scholars. First and most urgently, longitudinal studies are needed to establish causal pathways and temporal sequences between self-concept deterioration and behavioural escalation, building on preliminary work by Zhu and Shek (2021).

Second, intervention research targeting specific self-concept domains requires immediate attention, as only Mohamed et al. (2022) and Kariuki and Mwangi (2022) examined intervention effectiveness among the 36 studies reviewed. Scholars should develop and test targeted interventions for academic and family domains, which emerged as most vulnerable (Arifain et al., 2024; Abd Radzak et al., 2023). Third, mixed-methods approaches should be prioritized to understand the complex psychological processes underlying compensatory mechanisms and resilience patterns (Galán-Arroyo et al., 2023; Veríssimo et al., 2025), as only Tarasova (2021) employed such designs in this review.

This systematic review provides the first comprehensive synthesis of literature examining the multidimensional relationship between disciplinary behaviours and adolescent self-concept. The identification of specific patterns, resilience mechanisms, and progressive deterioration cycles offers a foundation for developing more nuanced, evidence-based interventions that address both behavioural symptoms and underlying self-concept vulnerabilities. As educational systems worldwide grapple with increasing disciplinary challenges, understanding and addressing the self-concept dimensions that both contribute to and result from student misbehaviour becomes crucial for promoting positive developmental outcomes and reducing the cycle of academic and behavioural difficulties among at-risk adolescents.

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