

# Gerard Robertson

---

Major: Psychology and Philosophy  
University: St. John's University in New York  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kevin Cokley  
Mentor Department: Educational, School, and Counseling  
Psychology  
Funded by: Summer Pre-Graduate Research Experience for Students  
in the Humanities

## **A study of academic self- concept, academic motivation, and self- esteem: Their relationship to academic achievement in college students**

Gerard Robertson and Kevin Cokley

This study examined the reliability of the Academic Motivation Scale in a group of 263 undergraduate students enrolled in undergraduate psychology classes at a large Midwestern public university. Ethnicity, sex, age, and class status (i.e., year in college) differences in academic self- concept were investigated as well as factors that predict academic self- concept. Participants completed the Academic Self- Concept Scale, Academic Motivation Scale, and the Rosenberg Self- Esteem Scale. This study also examines construct comparison to test for any differences in the levels of motivation, and self-esteem as it relates to GPA between African American and European American college students. While it was found that African American students are highly motivated and have a higher academic self- concept when compared to European Americans, this does not seem to be related to how African Americans perform academically. Analyses revealed that among African American students and European American students, the relationship between academic self- concept and GPA showed a slight difference. However, reported self- esteem for both ethnic groups was relatively similar. Self-determination theory has been introduced as an additional motivational framework to understand African American students' motivation relative to European American students.