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Self-Concept of Ability and Parental/Teachers' Beliefs in Reading and Dictation

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Abstract

The study aimed to examine whether and the extent to which children's self-concept of ability is predicted by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs. Next, this study aimed to investigate whether and the extent to which children's dictation performance in their native language is predicted by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability. Finally, the study investigated whether and to what extent children's reading performance in their native language is predicted by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability. A total of 89 Iranian Persian-speaking elementary school fourth-graders, along with their parents and teachers, took part in the study. Five instruments were used in the study: two tests measuring the students' reading and dictation levels in their native language, one questionnaire assessing the children's reading and dictation-related self-concept of ability, and two questionnaires assessing the teachers' and parents' beliefs regarding reading and dictation level of children. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression were run to analyze the data. The findings indicate that children's self-concept of ability is affected by parental and teacher's beliefs. Moreover, the results showed that children's dictation performance is affected by their gender, self-concept of ability, parental and teacher's beliefs. Finally, the study showed that children's reading performance is affected by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs. Overall, the findings of the present study

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highlight the importance of children's self-concept of ability and teachers and parents' awareness of how their beliefs benefit students' attainment and development of self-concept of ability.

Keywords: Children's self-concept of ability, parental beliefs, teachers' beliefs, reading, dictation

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1. Introduction

The interconnectedness between self-concept of academic ability and academic accomplishment has long been the theme of considerable attention and speculation in educational psychology (e.g., Bandura, 1986; Byrne, 1984; Covington & Omelich 1979; Parsons et al., 1982; Pesu & Aunola, 2016). As guided by attribution theory (Weiner et al., 1971), children's achievement behaviors are directed by perceptions of their ability and these conceptions are based on explications about the causes of success and failure. Children with diverse perceptions manifest various levels of cognitive, social, and emotional involvement in school (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003).

On the other hand, parents' and teachers' beliefs have been perceived as major variables in influencing the development of students' self-concept of ability (e.g., Bohlmann & Weinstein, 2013; McGrath & Repetti, 2000; Pesu et al., 2016; Tiedemann, 2000). Teacher expectancy or belief has been recognized as a major variable in influencing the development of students' expectations (Brophy, 1983) and parental beliefs have been found to be associated with children's achievement-related beliefs and motivation (e.g., Frome & Eccles, 1998; Pesu et al., 2018; Stevenson & Newman, 1986). Despite the existence of prolific research probing the effects of parents' and teachers' beliefs on the progression of children's self-concept of ability in a variety of subjects such as mathematics, few studies have examined the extent to which parents' and teachers' beliefs about children's abilities predict the development of their self-concept and English language proficiency. Moreover, most of the previous research on children's self-concept of ability has been conducted in the ESL context (e.g., Bohlmann & Weinstein, 2013; Blumenfeld et al., 1982; McGrath & Repetti, 2000). The present study aims to shed light on the relationship between parental and teachers' beliefs about children's abilities, children's self-concept of ability and their reading and dictation performance in their native language.

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2. Literature Review

2.1 Self-Concept of Ability

Coopersmith and Feldman (1974) regarded self-concept as attitudes, and perceptions that the person has about himself. Shavelson et al. (1976) defined self-concept as how an individual makes sense of himself as a result of experiencing with and interpreting one's environment. Shavelson et al. (1976) emphasized that self-concept of ability as a competency that resides within an individual, but as a useful construct that justifies and predicts how a person acts. Therefore, it is considered as a mediating variable that facilitates the attainment of other desired outcomes, such as persistence and achievement in school (Marsh et al., 1992). Additionally, self-concept is affected by such factors as others' evaluations, reinforcements and attributions for ones' own behavior as self-perceptions influence how children act, and in turn these acts affects the perceptions that they form about themselves (Chen et al., 2013; Marsh & Craven, 2006). They are crucial as both an attainment and an intervening variable that helps to explicate other attainments. Therefore, academic self-concept, for example, may mediate the effect of an academic intervention intended to boost academic attainment.

Eccles et al. (1983) posited an expectancy-value framework for academic attainment and explored it in light of students' achievement of math. They conceptualized and evaluated expectancies for success as children's perceptions of the way they will perform well in future tasks, either in the imminent or longer term future. Ability beliefs are acknowledged as the individual's beliefs about his or her present level of ability at a particular task. Thus, a distinction should be made between expectancies for success and ability beliefs that focus on current ability and expectancies that concentrate on the future (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Eccles et al., 1983). Expectancies are assumed to directly impact attainments in a wide range of academic domains, including performance (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Vasalampi et al., 2019). Moreover, beliefs about one's competence and the associated difficulty of a task are perceived as mediating factors that influence expectancies (Eccles et

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al., 1982). In this regard, previous research has shown that there is a tight connection between these constructs (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; Eccles et al., 1983).

Children's attitudes about their academic outcomes and behaviors have been recognized to affect their academic functioning. Children with a positive self-concept of ability are expected to succeed, seek challenges, and are perseverant when facing obstacles and do well at school (Aunola, et al., 2003; Chapman & Tunmer, 1997). However, those who are scared of failure, avoid taking risks and facing dilemmas, and are not insistent in learning situations show low attainment (Carr et al., 1991; Midgley & Urdan, 1995; Nurmi, et al., 1995; Zuckerman, et al., 1998). Moreover, previous studies show that the interplay between self-concept and children's achievement varies from a high negative interrelationship to perfect positive association (Hansford & Hattie, 1982). The connection between self-concept about given subjects (e.g., mathematics self-concept) and associated functioning (mathematics performance) is more powerful than that between ones' academic perception and academic attainment, which, instead, is stronger than that between general self-concept and achievement (Marsh et al., 1988, 1992). In sum, self-concept of ability becomes more empirically predictive of outcomes, the more it is perceived and measured (Pajares & Schunk, 2001).

2.2 Parents' and Teachers' Roles in Relation to Self-Concept of Ability

Previous studies have suggested that both parents' and teachers' beliefs relate to students' perceptions of ability (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Frome & Eccles, 1998; Gniewosz et al., 2012; Pesu et al., 2016; Putnick et al., 2020). It has been proposed that evaluations by significant others and reinforcements of as well as attributions for children's behavior can affect their self-concepts constitution in interaction with their setting (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Eccles et al., 1983; Gniewosz et al., 2014; Shavelson et al., 1976). Research that focused on exploring parents' beliefs about their children's abilities have revealed that parents are accurate at assessing their

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children's general abilities and their attitudes influence children's performance in school. For example, parents' beliefs have been found to be related with both children's mathematical and reading performance (Entwisle & Alexander, 1990; Entwisle & Baker, 1983; Galper et al., 1997; Hess et al., 1984; Pesu et al., 2018), and also their beliefs about academic attainment and motivations (Parsons et al., 1982; Stevenson & Newman, 1986; Frome & Eccles, 1998).

Other studies have concentrated on the connection between parents' beliefs for their children's educational outcome and academic performance (Halle et al., 1997; Gill & Reynolds, 1999; Goldenberg et al., 2001). The results, however, are incompatible. For instance, Halle et al. (1997) suggested that parental expectations predict children's performance after controlling for earlier achievement. Examining sixth-grade children, Goldenberg et al. (2001), in contrast, highlighted that children's achievement prognosticates parental expectations, whereas parents' expectations have no significant impact on children's outcome in the long run. Studies on parents' beliefs have also analyzed gender differences in parents' beliefs (Gunderson et al., 2012; Pesu et al., 2016; Pesu, 2018; Tiedemann, 2000). For example, it was suggested that parents tend to consider mathematics more difficult for girls than boys (Eccles & Jacobs, 1987; Gunderson et al., 2012) and it has been maintained that girls' parents tend to overestimate, whereas boys' parents are more likely to underestimate their children's ability in their native language (Gniewosz et al., 2014). In addition, Mejía-Rodríguez et al. (2020) found that girls not only had lower academic self-concept compared with boys, but they also had better performance in language achievement than boys.

Teachers' beliefs and expectations have also been recognized to influence students' self-perceptions. For example, Madon et al. (2001) highlighted the association between teachers' expectations of students' abilities and students' perceptions of their abilities in mathematics (e.g., Madon et al., 2001). Moreover, the results yielded that teachers' positive beliefs predict positive shifts in students' self-perceptions of mathematics. Brattesani et al. (1984), instead, suggested that

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there is a positive link between teachers' expectations and those of students and their performance in reading among. Moreover, it has been found that teachers' assessment plays a larger role in children's general self-concept than parents' perceptions (Spinath & Spinath, 2005). It has been maintained that there is a strong association between teacher assessments of student's performance and objective measures of school performance (e.g., Hoge & Coladarci, 1989).

Considering the potential effects of both teacher beliefs and parents' expectations take a leading role in children's achievement and self-concept development, it is crucial to investigate these variables for children. Though the number of studies which have examined the effects of parents' and teachers' beliefs on the development of children's perception of their competence is considerable, research focused on the role of both teachers' and parents' roles is rare (e.g., Pesu & Aunola, 2016). Moreover, most of the previous research has focused on the relationship between teachers' or parents' beliefs and children's self-concept of math (Marsh et al., 1988) and few studies have examined the extent to which both parents' and teachers' beliefs about children's abilities predict the development of children's self-concept and language proficiency. Additionally, although many studies have examined students' self-concept of ability, few efforts have been made to examine these among younger students (e.g., Pesu & Aunola, 2016; Wigfield et al., 1997). Finally, studies on self-concept and mother tongue are rare or even non-existent. The purposes of the present study are three-fold. First, the study aims at examining whether and to what extent children's self-concept of ability is predicted by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs. Second, this study aims at investigating whether and to what extent children's dictation performance is predicted by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability. Finally, the study investigates whether and to what extent children's reading performance is predicted by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability.

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3. Material and Methods

3.1 Participants

150 Iranian elementary school children's parents, whose mother tongue was Persian, were contacted, asking whether they were interested to take part in the study. They were told about the overall objectives of the project. They were also asked to give information about their age, level of education, and the number of children they had. Those parents who responded and gave their written consent, were recruited for participation in the study. Accordingly, a total of 89 Iranian Persian-speaking elementary school fourth-graders, along with their parents and teachers agreed to take part in the study. The children included 60 males (67%) and 29 females (33%). They all had 10 years of age. Their parents' age ranged from 30 to 45. The parents all had a bachelor's degree at least. Their families were all nuclear; 72% had only one child and 28% of the families had two children. The children's teachers were 83% males and 17% females. Their age ranged from 30 to 35; they were bachelor or master's degree holders and their teaching experience ranged from 9 to 14 years.

3.2 Instruments

Five instruments were used in the study. They were all in Persian. These included two tests measuring the students' reading and dictation levels in their native language, one questionnaire assessing the children's reading and dictation-related self-concept of ability, and two questionnaires assessing the teachers' and parents' beliefs regarding the reading and dictation level of children. The reading test consisted of five paragraphs totaling 384 words. The test required the students to read out the text. The purpose of the test was to measure the students' ability to read written information. The dictation test comprised 50 words which were read aloud to the students. They were supposed to write down what they heard. The test was first read without breaks, then in words, and finally without breaks again. Both tests

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were developed by experienced fourth-grade teachers. Cronbach alpha of the reading and dictation tests with 20 respondents were found to be 0.68 and 0.72, respectively.

The reading and dictation-related self-concept of ability questionnaire was borrowed from Eccles et al. (1983). The questionnaire asked the children 'How good are you at reading in Persian?' and 'How good are you at dictation in Persian?' and asked the participants to rate their reading and dictation abilities based on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = 'poorly', 5 = 'very well'). Cronbach alpha of the questionnaire was 0.60.

The two questionnaires assessing the teachers' and parents' beliefs regarding reading and dictation level of children were also based on Eccles et al. (1983) and Wigfield et al.'s (1997) scales. Both teachers' and parents' versions asked 'How well do you think your student/child is doing in reading in Persian?' and 'How well do you think your student/child is doing in dictation in Persian?' and rated the teachers' and parents' beliefs regarding the children's reading and dictation abilities based on a five-point Likert-scale (1 = 'poorly', 5 = 'very well'). Cronbach alpha reliabilities of the questionnaires were found to be 0.54 and 0.66, respectively.

3.3 Procedure

After the children were selected for inclusion in the study, they were asked to respond to items in the reading and dictation related self-concept of ability questionnaire. Afterwards, they were asked to sit for the reading and dictation tests. Next, their parents and teachers were asked to fill out the parents' and teachers' beliefs regarding reading and dictation level of children questionnaires, respectively.

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3.4 Statistical Analysis

The statistical analyses run in this study included descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression. 15 correlations were run to measure the strength of associations between variables of the study using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software (Version 26). From these, five were Point-biserial correlations between gender on the one hand, and self-concept of ability, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, reading performance, and dictation performance on the other; 10 were Pearson correlations between parental beliefs and dictation, parental beliefs and reading, parental beliefs and self-concept of ability, parental beliefs and teachers' beliefs, reading and dictation, self-concept of ability and dictation, self-concept of ability and reading, teachers' beliefs and dictation, teachers' beliefs and reading, teachers' beliefs and self-concept of ability.

Additionally, three multiple regressions were performed. One multiple regression involved self-concept of ability as the outcome variable and gender, parental beliefs, and teacher's beliefs as predictor variables. The purpose of this test was to see to what extent the self-concept of ability of children can be predicted based on their gender, their parental beliefs, and teacher's beliefs. Another multiple regression took dictation as the outcome variable, and gender, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability as predictor variables. The purpose of this test was to examine to what extent the performance of children in Persian dictation can be predicted based on their gender, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability. The last multiple regression test involved reading as the outcome variable, and gender, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability as predictor variables. This test was aimed to examine to what extent the performance of children in Persian reading can be predicted based on their gender, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, and their self-concept of ability.

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4. Results

Table 1 presents the results of descriptive statistics, Pearson and Point-biserial correlations. The means (M), standard deviations (SD), and correlations of the variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Correlations, Means (M), and Standard Deviations (SD)

	Variables	Self-concept	Parental beliefs	Teacher beliefs	Reading score	Dictation score	Gender
1	Self-concept		0.613	0.601	0.493	0.608	-0.174
2	Parental beliefs			0.778	0.671	0.701	-0.080
3	Teacher beliefs				0.693	0.729	-0.080
4	Reading					0.781	0.088
5	Dictation						0.044
6	Gender						
M		3.95	3.80	4	18.92	37.71	
SD		0.65	0.82	0.90	1.75	2.33	

As can be seen in Table 1, the correlations show positive associations between parental beliefs and dictation, parental beliefs and reading, parental beliefs and self-concept of ability, parental beliefs and teachers' beliefs, reading and dictation, self-concept of ability and dictation, self-concept of ability and reading, teachers' beliefs and dictation, teachers' beliefs and reading, teachers' beliefs and self-concept of ability, gender and reading, gender and dictation. This justifies further analyses to see 1) to what extent children's self-concept of ability can be predicted based on their gender, parental beliefs, and teacher's beliefs; 2) to what extent children's performance in dictation can be predicted based on their gender, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, and their self-concept of ability; and 3) to what extent children's performance in reading can be predicted based on their gender, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, and their self-concept of ability. The following three subsections present the findings of these tests.

4.1 Self-Concept of Ability

In order to see the extent to which the self-concept of ability of children can be predicted based on their gender, their parental beliefs, and teacher's beliefs, a multiple regression analysis was run. Before running the test, the data was checked for the eight assumptions of multiple regressions. These include: (1) The dependent variable is either interval or ratio; (2) There are two or more continuous or categorical independent variables; (3) The observations are independent; (4) There is a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables; The data shows (5) homoscedasticity and (6) multicollinearity; (7) There are no significant outliers; And (8) the residuals are approximately normally distributed. This subsection is dedicated to the results of multiple regression. Table 2 presents the Model Summary.

Table 2
Model Summary for Self-Concept of Ability as Dependent Variable

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.654	.427	.407	.50217

As Table 2 shows, the multiple correlation coefficient (R=0.654) indicates a good level of prediction. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R Square=0.427) shows that the children's gender, their parental and teacher's beliefs explain 42.7% of the variability of children's self-concept of ability. The small difference between R Square and Adjusted R Square (0.427 and 0.407) indicates that children's self-concept of ability is predicted by their gender, parental, and teacher's beliefs. Table 3 presents the ANOVA table for children's self-concept of ability as outcome variable.

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Table 3
ANOVA for Self-Concept of Ability as Dependent Variable

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.806	3	5.269	20.893	.000
	Residual	21.183	84	.252		
	Total	36.989	87			

As Table 3 shows, gender, parental beliefs, and teacher's beliefs statistically significantly predict children's self-concept of ability (F (3, 84) = 20.893, p < .0005). That is, the regression model is a good fit of the data. Table 4 presents the Coefficients for children's self-concept of ability as the dependent variable.

Table 4
Coefficients for Children's Self-Concept of Ability as Dependent

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1(Constant)	2.070	.270		7.661	.000	1.532	2.607
Gender	-.156	.114	-.113	-1.366	.176	-.384	.071
Teacher	.224	.094	.313	2.383	.019	.037	.412
Parents	.282	.104	.358	2.721	.008	.076	.488

According to Table 4, except for gender (p = 0.176), both parental (p = 0.008) and teacher's beliefs (p = 0.019) are statistically significant. That is, except for

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gender, both parental and teacher's beliefs added statistically significantly to the prediction of children's self-concept of ability.

4.2 Dictation Performance

To examine the extent to which children's dictation performance can be predicted based on their gender, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability, a multiple regression analysis was run. Table 5 presents the Model Summary.

Table 5
Model Summary for Dictation as dependent variable

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.789	.622	.604	1.47235

As Table 5 shows, the multiple correlation coefficient (R = 0.789) indicates a good level of prediction. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R Square = 0.622) shows that the children's gender, their parental and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability explain 62.2% of the variability of children's dictation performance. The small difference between R Square and Adjusted R Square (0.622 and 0.604) indicates well children's dictation performance is predicted by their gender, parental, and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability. Table 6 presents the ANOVA table for children's dictation performance as the outcome variable.

Table 6
ANOVA for Dictation as Dependent Variable

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	295.969	4	73.992	34.132	.000
	Residual	179.928	83	2.168		
	Total	475.898	87			

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As Table 6 shows, gender, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability statistically significantly predict children's dictation performance (F (4, 83) = 34.132, $p < .0005$). That is, the regression model is a good fit of the data. Table 7 presents the Coefficients for children's dictation performance as dependent variable.

Table 7
Coefficients for Children's Dictation as Dependent

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1(Constant)	27.233	1.032		26.380	.000	25.180	29.286
Gender	.707	.339	.143	2.083	.040	.032	1.382
Self	.839	.320	.234	2.624	.010	.203	1.476
Teacher	1.012	.285	.394	3.547	.001	.444	1.579
Parents	.750	.317	.266	2.368	.020	.120	1.380

According to Table 7, gender (p = 0.040), parental (p = 0.020) and teacher's beliefs (p = 0.001), and self-concept of ability (p = 0.010) are statistically significant. That is, gender, parental and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability added statistically significantly to the prediction of children's dictation performance.

4.3 Reading Performance

In order to investigate the extent to which the performance of children in Persian reading can be predicted based on their gender, parental beliefs, teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability, a multiple regression analysis was run. Table 8 presents the Model Summary.

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Table 8
Model Summary for Reading as Dependent Variable

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.743	.553	.531	1.19846

As Table 8 shows, the multiple correlation coefficient (R = 0.743) indicates a good level of prediction. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R Square = 0.553) shows that the children's gender, their parental and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability explain 55.3% of the variability of children's reading performance. The small difference between R Square and Adjusted R Square (0.553 and 0.551) indicates well children's reading performance is predicted by their gender, parental, and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability. Table 9 presents the ANOVA table for children's reading performance as outcome variable.

Table 9
ANOVA for Reading as Dependent Variable

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	147.229	4	36.807	25.626	.000
	Residual	119.214	83	1.436		
	Total	266.443	87			

As Table 9 shows, gender, parental beliefs, and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability statistically significantly predict children's dictation performance (F (4, 83) = 25.626, p < .0005). That is, the regression model is a good fit of the data. Table 10 presents the Coefficients for children's reading performance as dependent variable.

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Table 10
Coefficients for Children's Reading as Dependent

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1(Constant)	12.140	.840		14.448	.000	10.469	13.812
Gender	.615	.276	.166	2.228	.029	.066	1.165
Self	.213	.260	.079	.817	.416	-.305	.731
Teacher	.788	.232	.409	3.393	.001	.326	1.250
Parents	.677	.258	.321	2.626	.010	.164	1.190

According to Table 10, except for self-concept of ability ($p = 0.416$), gender ($p = 0.029$), parental ($p = 0.010$) and teacher's beliefs ($p = 0.001$) are statistically significant. That is, gender, parental and teacher's beliefs added statistically significantly to the prediction of children's reading performance.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study examined whether and the extent to which children's self-concept of ability is predicted by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs. In this regard, the results showed that children's self-concept of ability is affected by parental and teacher's beliefs. This is in line with the findings of previous studies (e.g., Bohlmann & Weinstein, 2013; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Frome & Eccles, 1998; Gniewosz et al., 2012; McGrath & Repetti, 2000; Pesu et al., 2016, 2018; Putnick et al., 2020; Shaver & Walls, 1998; Tiedemann, 2000) which found teachers' and parents' beliefs about children's abilities are positively correlated with children's self-concept of ability. Additionally, this study investigated whether and to what extent children's dictation performance is predicted by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability. In this respect, the results showed that

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gender, parental and teachers' beliefs, and children's self-concept of ability significantly predict their dictation performance (cf. Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Entwisle & Alexander, 1990; Pesu et al., 2018; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

Finally, the present study investigated whether and to what extent children's reading performance is predicted by their gender, parental and teacher's beliefs, and self-concept of ability. In this regard, the results showed that children's reading performance is predicted by their gender, parental, and teacher's beliefs (cf. Brattesani et al., 1984; Gniewosz et al., 2014; Mejía-Rodríguez et al., 2020; Pesu et al., 2016; Putnick et al., 2020).

Concerning the role of gender, the results of this study showed that children's gender predicts their performance in reading and dictation. This suggests an explanation that gender has an effect on the connection between parental and teachers' beliefs about children's abilities and their performance in reading and dictation. This is consistent with the results of previous studies such as Parsons et al. (1982) and Frome and Eccles (1998). Moreover, the study showed that gender does not predict children's self-concept of ability development. This finding is in line with the results of the study by Pesu et al. (2016) where no effect was found for the child's gender on the development of children's self-concept in reading. Also, this is similar to a previous study which found no difference in the associations of parental causal attributions with children's self-concept of math ability between parents of boys and parents of girls (Rytkönen et al., 2007; Pesu et al., 2016). This implies that students' academic self-concept declines as they grow older and they embark on comparing their academic attainment to their peers which is consistent with the findings of Mejía-Rodríguez et al. (2020).

As could be expected from the results of previous studies (e.g., Parsons et al., 1982; Frome & Eccles, 1998; Pesu et al., 2016), the results of the present study showed that children's abilities are positively correlated with their self-concept of ability in dictation and reading performance, parental and teachers' beliefs. Concerning the role of teachers' beliefs, it was found that the higher the teachers'

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beliefs are, the higher the students' self-concept of ability and their related ability performances become. Therefore, the results of this study are in line with the results of previous studies which confirmed the positive relationship between teachers' beliefs, learners' development of self-concept, and their abilities (e.g., Blumenfeld et al., 1982; Brattesani et al., 1984; Hoge & Coladarci, 1989; Madon et al., 2001; Spinath & Spinath, 2005). One possible explanation for this result could be that teachers' beliefs have an impact on the children' self-concept of ability and their self-concept influences their ability, consequently (e.g., Eccles et al., 1983; Gniewosz et al., 2014).

Concerning the role of parental beliefs in children's development of self-concept and different ability-related performances, the results of this study showed that parental beliefs predict children's self-concept of ability, dictation and reading performance. This is in line with the findings of previous research (e.g., Frome & Eccles, 1998; Gniewosz et al., 2012, 2014, Pesu et al., 2018) and confirms that parental beliefs act as a determinant factor (e.g., Parsons et al., 1982; Frome & Eccles, 1998) and positively predict children's self-concept of ability in reading and dictation performance. On the other hand, this result contradicts that of the study by Pesu et al. (2016) in which parents' beliefs do not predict children's self-concept of mathematics and reading ability development. The reason why parental beliefs affect children's self-concept of ability, reading, and dictation is that parents can support their children with positive feedback regarding their academic performance or help them do their academic tasks (Gniewosz et al., 2014).

Furthermore, studies suggest that children's self-concepts are formed in interaction with their environment, and are, in turn, influenced by evaluations by significant others and by reinforcements of, and attributions for, their behavior (e.g., Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Eccles et al., 1983; Gniewosz et al., 2014; Shavelson et al., 1976). Hence, the beliefs of significant others such as parents about their children's self-concept of ability in specific subjects shape their children' achievement-related perceptions and motivation (e.g., Frome & Eccles, 1998; Pesu, et al., 2018) and

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affect their ability-related performances accordingly (e.g., Gniewosz et al., 2012; Gunderson et al., 2012; Pesu, 2018).

Concerning the role of self-concept of ability in different ability-related performances, it is important to note Shavelson et al.'s (1976) emphasis that self-concept of ability is not just an internal entity, but a hypothetical construct which mediates the attainment of other outcomes (Marsh et al., 1992). According to Bong and Skaalvik (2003), children with different self-beliefs show different levels of cognitive, social, and emotional engagement in school. As attribution theory suggests, children's achievement behaviors are mediated by ability perceptions and these perceptions are based on explanations about the causes of success and failure (Weiner et al., 1971). Also, according to Pajares and Schunk (2001), the more specifically self-concept of ability is conceived and assessed, the more it becomes predictive of achievement outcomes. As the results showed, self-concept of ability affects dictation but not reading. This is in keeping with the fact that self-concept of ability plays different roles in different abilities. The diverse results of previous studies show that the association between self-concept of ability and children's achievement varies from a strong negative correlation to nearly perfect positive association (Hansford & Hattie, 1982).

Altogether, the findings of the present study highlight the importance of children's self-concept of ability and teachers and parents' awareness of how their beliefs benefit students' attainment and development of self-concept of ability. Yet, this needs to be treated with caution, given the fact that the study was limited in a number of ways. This study used questionnaires to assess the children's reading and dictation related self-concept of ability, and the teachers' and parents' beliefs regarding reading and dictation level of children. Thus using qualitative methods might be useful to examine the phenomenon in its natural setting and in depth, for example, semi-structured interviews can provide deeper and more credible data. Additionally, this study was limited by the lack of age groups as it only included fourth grade elementary school students. An exploration of different age groups

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varying from first grade to fifth grade elementary students would be helpful in illuminating the reciprocal interplay between teachers' and parents' beliefs as well as students' self-concept of their achievement. Another limitation of this study was in terms of participants' gender. Out of 89 students, only 29 were female which is not representative. Finally, the research context for this study was an educational setting in Iran. In this regard, the integral and divergent role that teachers' and parents' beliefs may play in shaping students' self-concept of abilities in various educational contexts and cultures demands further research. Given the important role of children's self-concept of ability, and their parental and teachers' beliefs in children's abilities and attainments, further investigations of such issues need to address these limitations.

The present study has some implications that are worth noting. First, the findings indicate that teachers' beliefs can play a pivotal role in the process of developing children's self-concept of their academic attainment especially at elementary levels. Thus the results can be used in teacher education programs to raise teachers' awareness of how their beliefs benefit students' learning as well as pedagogical performance. Moreover, as Chen et al. (2013) suggest, teachers should attend to improving elementary school students' academic skills to boost their academic self-concepts and impact on upcoming academic attainment. The results also suggest the link between parents' beliefs and students' self-concept should be taken into consideration and it is essential that parents be informed about their critical role in constitution of elementary students' academic self-concept of ability as well as enhancing children's scores in different academic subjects. The present study also highlights the necessity for further examination of how the relationship between parents' and teachers' beliefs about students' academic success in different domains varies.

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