
A Study on the Level of Self Esteem of Students with Low Academic Performance

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Abstract: *Self-esteem has long been considered an essential component of good mental health. It is a widely used concept both in popular language and in psychology. It refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, praises, or likes him or herself (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1991). The investigator personally is interested to work with teenagers and had come across some children, who found it difficult to cope with academics due to problems like comparison between the siblings and too much expectation from the parents.*

Objectives of the Study were to understand the Socio-Economic background of Respondents, to assess the level of self esteem of the Respondents, to assess the co-relation between Self-Esteem and Academic Performance and to assess the level of Self-Esteem and Academic Performance between boys and Girls. The research design of the study is descriptive in nature. The aim is to study the level of self esteem of the students with low academic performance. The Universe of the study includes, students (aged 13-15) studying in High school in the district of Serchhip and Aizawl in Mizoram and Dimapur in Nagaland and have achieved low marks (below 60%) and failed in one or more subjects would be the population for the present study. The sample would be selected from 3 private schools (15 each). The Simple Random sampling techniques of probability sampling would be used to draw out the sample. The Researcher will concentrate on collecting primary data by questionnaire methods. Keeping in mind the observation as a supportive tool while meeting them and seeing their progress reports. The secondary data will be obtained from the books, magazines, reports, school records and websites. The following tools will be used to measure the variables

Vast Majority of 75.6 percent of the total respondents do have high self esteem. The reason could be the environment where they are grown, their friends circle and also other opportunities to shine.

Parents' income impact on self esteem via academic performance: It is argued that social class is mediated in a cultural level, which in turn determines family expectation, values and attitudes regarding education. Pearson's correlation test was applied for the above variables. There is no significant relationship between Self-esteem and Academic Performance of the Respondents.

Key Words: *Self Esteem, Academic Performance, Parents' Income.*

Introduction

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has long been considered an essential component of good mental health. It is a widely used concept both in popular language and in psychology. It refers to an individual's sense of his or her value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, praises, or likes him or herself (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1991). Self-esteem is a set of attitudes and beliefs that a person brings with him or herself when facing the world. During childhood, if individual's feelings are respected, thoughts are valued and abilities recognized then self esteem strengthens. When feelings are trampled upon, thoughts belittled and abilities criticized then the individuals self esteem remains at a low point of development and is therefore weak. During the course of time, an individual faces many life situations. Depending upon the success or failure and one's reaction to every significant situation in life, self-esteem grows stronger or gets considerably weakened. Self-esteem is described as the evaluation that one makes about oneself, based on one's self-worth. Increases and decreases in self-esteem generally bring strong emotional reactions.

Theories of Self Esteem

There are many theories about self esteem. These include Maslow's Theory of needs, Carl Rogers Theory of personal development and Bednar and Peterson's Theory of self esteem among others. However, this study will use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to investigate the effects of self esteem on academic performance.

Theories of Needs

According to Maslow's Theory of needs, people are motivated to seek personal goals that make their lives rewarding and meaningful. (Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* 2nd ed., Harper and Row, 1970). The

law contends that human beings have wants and rarely reach a state of complete satisfaction. He stated that all human beings have needs that are innate and are systematically arranged in ascending (order) hierarchy of priority. Satisfaction of one need creates another need that commands the person's attention and efforts. The basic assumption in Maslow's Theory is that the lower order pre-potent needs must be relatively satisfied before the person can become aware of or motivated by higher order needs. Physiological needs should be satisfied first followed by safety and Security needs, love and belonging needs. Self-esteem needs are 4th in the hierarchy. Maslow divided it into self respect and respect for others. To Maslow, satisfaction of self-esteem needs generate feelings and attitudes of self confidence, self worth, capacity and the feeling of being useful and necessary in the world. Frustration of these needs lead to feelings and attitudes of inferiority, ineffectiveness, weakness, passivity and dependency. These negative self perceptions give rise to basic discouragements, a sense of futility and hopelessness in dealing with life's demands and low evaluation of self vis-à-vis others.

Alexander (2001), the founder of the Self-Esteem Network in Britain, views self-esteem as a syndrome, as a set of indicators for mental well-being. The core of self-esteem is an "unconditional appreciation of oneself" meaning an appreciation of both an individual's positive and negative potential in its fullest sense. Alexander also distinguishes between 'trait' self-esteem which reflects confidence or ability in a particular area, such as work or sport, and 'global' self-esteem which is the intrinsic worthiness regardless of what particular abilities or qualities an individual may possess.

Erickson (1968) specifically identified academic achievement as a vital component in forming a healthy self-image. Academic self-esteem is operationally defined as the evaluative appraisal of the experience of being capable of meeting academic challenges and being worthy of happiness.

Review of Literature

The Review of literature examines factors associated with self-esteem and academic performance. These reviews of literature has helped the researcher to further identify some of the variables and factors which are conceptually and practically important for the study. It is a body of text that aims to review the critical points of current knowledge including substantive findings as well as theoretical and methodological contribution to a particular topic. Literature reviews are secondary sources.

Studies done by (Haarer, 1964; Jones and Grieneekz, 1970; Lamy, 1965; Morse, 1963; Smith, 1969; Wattenberg and Clifford, 1964) show that self-esteem influences academic performance. Research done by (Morse, 1963; Smith, 1969; Wattenberg and Clifford, 1964) shows that self-esteem is a better predictor of academic success than measured intelligence.

A study was done by Della Marks (2011) on self-esteem and academic achievement in 3 English medium schools in Mangalore on students of 9th standard between the age group of 14-15 years. The study shows that the majority (75%) of the respondents are having an average level of self-esteem.

The present study aims at searching and defining the existence and extent of any prevailing relationship between self esteem and academic performance. The scope of the present study is in the fact that it aims to explore self esteem level among adolescents in relation to academic performance.

Methodology

Methodology includes the Research Design, Operational Definition, Sampling Technique used and Method of Data Collection. It also puts forth the skeleton of the entire research study. The aim of this chapter is to present a description of methods followed for the study and it gives a clear idea to the readers about the scope of the study.

Significance of the Study

Self-esteem and academic performance are important for the holistic development of the students. The investigator personally is interested to work with teenagers and had come across some children who are finding difficult in academic performance due to problems like comparison between the siblings and too much expectation from the parents. So the researcher felt that this study will help in the better understanding of low academic performers and in the future to plan out some programmes for such adolescents.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the Socio-Economic background of Respondents.
2. To assess the level of self esteem of the Respondents.
3. To assess the co-relation between Self-Esteem and Academic Performance.
4. To assess the the level of Self-Esteem and Academic Performance between boys and Girls.

Operational Definition of the Terms

Self Esteem

The term self-esteem comes from a Greek word meaning “reverence for self”. The “self” part of self esteem pertains to the values, beliefs and attitudes that we hold about ourselves. The “esteem” part of self esteem describes the value and worth that one gives oneself.

Academic Performance

In the present study, the word academic performance is used to denote the performance of the students on academic tests and examinations expressed in marks.

The Research Design

This study also tries to know what could be the reason for low academic performance in spite of having high self esteem. The research design of the study would be descriptive in nature. It aims at studying the level of self esteem of the students with low academic performance.

Universe

The students (aged 13-15) studying in High school in the district of Serchhip and Aizawl in Mizoram and Dimapur in Nagaland and have achieved low marks (below 60%) and failed in one or more subjects would be the population for the present study.

Sample size

The sample would be selected from 3 private schools (15 each). The Simple Random Sampling Techniques of Probability Sampling would be used to draw out the sample. The sample is selected from the population which will include equal number of boys and girls.

Tools of Data Collection

The Researcher collected primary data by questionnaire method. Keeping in mind the observation as a supportive tool while meeting them and seeing their progress reports. The secondary data will be obtained from the books, magazines, reports, school records and websites.

The following Tools are Used to Measure the Variables

1. Socio-Demographic Profile.
2. HARE Self Esteem Scale (1987).
3. Academic Performance from their Progress Report.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher approached the headmaster/headmistress of the schools chosen, and explained the importance of this Research. The researcher made a list of students with low academic performance. The researcher gave the instructions to the participants and helped them to fill the self esteem scales and the socio demographic profile.

Data Analysis

The purpose of the analysis is to use data as a model, to study the relationship between variables. After collecting the data according to the aim and objectives of the study, it was edited by Using SPSS vs20 coded and analyzed using tables and charts with percentages.

Limitation of the Study

1. Due to time constrains the sample size was restricted to only 90 adolescents, thus not giving much scope for generalization.
2. As the study focused mainly on Self-esteem and Academic performance it did not give a holistic picture as other factors were not considered.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Age of the Respondents

Among the total Respondents more than half the size 56.7 percent belongs to the age group of 14-15 years among that 28.9 percent are male and 27.8 percent are female participants.

Gender of the Respondents

As the sample was chosen purposefully, there is an equal number of male and female respondents (45 each).

Place of Residence of the Respondents

Majority of 69 percent of the respondents live in the urban area.

Size of the Family

A majority of 60 percent of the respondents' family have 4-7 members.

Type of Family of the Respondents

A majority of 68.9 percent of the total respondents are living in the urban area, among that 42.2 percent are living in a nuclear family.

Education of Paternal and Maternal Parent

From the study it is clear that majority of the respondents parents have completed their high schooling. This means their parents are educated.

Religion of the Respondents

Vast majority of 86.7 percent of the respondents belong to the faith of Christianity, since majority of the people of that place practice Christian Faith among that 45.6 percent are females and 41.1 percent are males.

Economic Condition

Occupation of the Father and Occupation of the Mother

More than half that is 58.9 percent of mothers are home makers. Regarding the occupation of the father, 34.4 percent are a government employee which includes Police, Teachers, Engineers, and Security Guards, working in the Public Welfare Departments, Commanders and Armies.

Monthly Income of the Family Vs Self Esteem Score

Parents income impact on self esteem via academic performance: It is argued that social class is mediated in a cultural level, which in turn determines family expectation, values and attitudes regarding education. In other words, motivation to succeed depends more on the parents' level of learning than on their level of income (Lorente, 1990). Other studies indicated that the most influential family components on performance are not socio-cultural or economic, but rather those pertaining to the affective or psychological dimensions: that is, although good academic preparation is provided by the parent, and a positive cultural environment, favor scholastic performance, it is the affective and rational variables which stands out the most as factors that contributes to better performance. In the present study a 35.6 percent

of the total respondents each have the monthly income of below 10,000 Rupees and in between Rupees 10,000 to 20,000. There is no significant relationship between the two variables. So the above studies contradict my study.

Self Esteem and Academic Performance

Self Esteem

Vast Majority of 75.6 percent of the total respondents do have high self esteem. The reason could be the environment where they are grown, their friends' circle and also other opportunities to shine.

Gender of the Respondents and Self Esteem Score

Pearson's correlation test was applied for the above variables. Since the level of significance is .054, which is more than 0.05. There is no significant relationship between the two variables. There is also a strong empirical evidence indicating differences in the conceptualization of self and academic performances according to sex and age (Awad, 2007, Thomson and Zand, 2007, Tolman et al, 2008). There is a significant Gender difference in the level of self esteem and this has been proved.

Academic Performance and Self Esteem Score

Pearson's correlation test was applied for the above variables. There is no significant relationship between Self-esteem and Academic Performance of the Respondents. So the above table clearly shows that 50 percent of the students who have high self-esteem have low academic performance. Thus it is obvious that in spite of having high self esteem academic performance is still low. So in the hypotheses there is a significant correlation between Self Esteem and Academic Achievement of the students and do not correlate in the present study.

Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from the major findings of the study where the researcher found that there is a gender difference where the female respondents have more self esteem than male respondents. But there is no significant correlation between the self esteem and academic performance of the respondents. Besides, the educational system of the country, the child's psychological environment-their family, peers, teachers are of utmost

importance in determining the adolescent's performance at school/college. While the college's influence on the adolescents performance has been acknowledged, almost all the studies and practical experiences substantiate the fact that parents, friends and significant people can make a world of difference on an adolescents life, in academic performance and personality.

Implications for the Social Work Practitioners

1. Interaction programme for Parents-Teachers to help the adolescents to increase their self esteem and academic performance.
2. An effective Interaction practice need to be organized to help the adolescents to improve their self esteem and academic performance.

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