



RELATIONSHIP OF SELF-ESTEEM WITH SHYNESS, PERSONALITY AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS

Lancy D'Souza¹, Gururaj B.Urs² & C. Ramaswamy³

Abstract

This study reports relationship of self-esteem on variables of shyness, personality and academic achievement in high school students. In the present study, Coopersmith's Self Esteem Inventory, Crozier's Shyness Scale, Eysenck's Personality Inventory (EPI) and academic achievement scores were employed to find out the influence of self-esteem on the above-mentioned variables. Two hundred and twenty high school students served as subjects. Results revealed that self-esteem is found to be negatively influenced by shyness, and extraversion-introversion dimension of EPI. Academic achievement and self-esteem are found to be highly correlated positively. Strategies for building self-esteem in the classroom are also discussed.

Key Words: Self-esteem, Shyness, Personality, Academic Scores & High school students.

1,3 Dept. of Psychology, Maharaja's College, University of Mysore, Mysore -570 005. India.

2 Dept. of Social Work, University of Mysore, Manasagangothri, Mysore - 570 006. India. Reprint requests to: Dr. Lancy D'Souza, Dept. of Psychology, Maharaja's College, University of Mysore; Mysore -570 005. India. Email: lancy@37.com or lancyd@zeenext.com

Introduction

The term 'self-esteem' refers to the evaluation a person makes and customarily maintains with regard to oneself. 'Self-esteem' expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent, to which a person believes oneself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, a person's self-esteem is a judgement of worthiness that is expressed by the attitudes one holds towards the self. It is a subjective experience conveyed to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behaviour (Coopersmith, 1986).

The achievement of a favourable attitude toward oneself has been regarded as important by a number of personality theorists - Rogers, Murphy, Horney and Adler - but few have made direct studies of its effects. Many clinicians and social psychologists also share this belief in the importance of self-esteem. This belief is suggestive than definitive, as most statements concerning the importance of self-esteem tend to be relatively general in nature, as they rarely perceive the specific behaviours to which self-esteem is effectively contributing determinant of personality.

Self-esteem usually begins at a very early age; it is more of learning/conditioning where the growing child is exposed to various day-to-day events. If the child evaluates and tries solving the problem/event positively/optimistically, he/she will not face much difficulty in solving the problems he/she faces later on. On the other hand, if early experiences are perceived as negative, insolvable/intolerable, the child may experience psychological distress, while trying to solve problems later on also. Along with this, problem solving, communicating, decision-making, social skills, family interactional patterns and family environment play an important role. This in turn helps the person to cope and adjust with the demands of day-to-day events, provided he/she has a positive outlook.

Clinical studies repeatedly demonstrate that failures and other conditions that threaten to expose personal inadequacies are probably the major cause of anxiety. Anxiety and self-esteem are closely related; if it is threat that releases anxiety, as appears theoretically essential, it is the person's self esteem that is being threatened. The more unstable the subject's self-esteem, the lower the curiosity/interest, preferences for challenge and anger (Waschull & Kernis, 1996). Self-evaluation of scholastic competence mediates the effects of both stability and level of self-esteem. This study is an attempt to investigate to find the effect of self-esteem on the shyness, personality and academic achievements of High school children

Method

Sample

A total of 220 students served as subjects for the present study. The sample was selected from the 8th, 9th and 10th standard students of the Hardwick High School, Mysore. The students were selected both from English and Kannada medium classes. Stratified Random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Their age varied from 11 to 18 years.

Research Tools

1. *Self-esteem Questionnaire*

To find out the level of self-esteem in school children, the inventory developed by Stanley Coopersmith (1986) was employed. Specifically the school short form was used. The school form was developed based on an item analysis of the school Form and includes the Twenty-five School Form items that showed the highest item total score correlation. The school short form does not allow differentiation by subscale and the lie scale items are not included. The total score correlation of the school form with the school short form is .86. This consists of 25 items, both negative (17) and positive items (8), where the subject has to read the statement and he/she has to tick mark the answer in one of the boxes mentioned as "like me" or "unlike me". The reliability and validity of the test were found to be high (Coopersmith, 1986).

2. *Shyness Questionnaire*

This questionnaire was developed by Crozier (1995) of University College of Cardiff. It consists of 26 items and requires the subject to indicate his/her response by ticking 'YES', 'NO' OR 'DON'T KNOW'. The items of the questionnaire are based on situations or interactions like performing in front of the class, being made fun of, being told off, having one's photograph taken, novel situations involving teachers, school-friends interaction and so on. Of the 26 items, shyness is indicated by a 'YES' response for 21 items and a 'NO' response for 5 items. Item analysis of the scale using SPSS program resulted in Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.817.

3. *Eysenck Personality Inventory*

This inventory consists of 57 questions, of which 24 questions measure Extraversion-Introversion dimension, 24 questions measure Neuroticism-Emotional Stability dimension, and 9 questions detect tendency to give socially pleasing answers [lie scale]. The subject has to answer each question by indicating his/her responses as 'Yes' or 'No' for each question. This is a widely used test for measuring personality dimensions of the individuals (Nataraj, 1993).

4. *Academic scores:*

These are scores secured by the students in their Final Examination of the previous year, which is out of a total of 600 marks. These scores have been taken from the class teachers/ office records concerned.

Procedure

The tests were administered to the subjects in groups of 5-10 subjects per group. Data collection was done in 2 sessions and each session lasted for 60-80 minutes. In the first session, rapport was established with the subjects and they were asked to introduce themselves. The purpose of the study was made clear to them. Then they were administered the Shyness and Self-esteem Questionnaires. They were given appropriate instructions and the questionnaires were read out to them. They were asked to indicate their responses in the respective sheets given to them. Whenever they had doubt in understanding questions, the test administrator made those questions very clear to them in their local language. In the second session, the subjects were administered the Eysenck's personality Inventory and they were asked to indicate their responses in the scoring sheet given to them.

Scoring

For the Shyness Questionnaire, items worded in the direction of shyness, responses were scored 2 for 'YES', 1 for 'DON'T KNOW', and 0 for 'NO'. Scores were reversed for the items worded in the opposite direction.

For the Self-esteem Inventory, items worded in the direction of self-esteem, responses were scored 1 for 'like me' and 0 (zero) for 'unlike me'. Scores were reversed for the items worded in the opposite direction.

Statistical Analysis

To find out the influence of self-esteem on the variables mentioned earlier, Pearson's product correlation between self esteem and the variables like shyness, age, extraversion -introversion dimension, neuroticism dimension scores of Eysenck's Personality Inventory and academic scores were calculated separately using SPSS (Windows Version 7.5) Statistical Package.

Results and discussion

Table 1 shows results of Product moment correlation of Self-esteem with other variables like shyness, extraversion-introversion dimension, neuroticism and academic scores.

Table 1

Results of Product moment correlation of self-esteem with other variables

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Df	Significance Level (P)
Self-esteem - Shyness	-0.394***	218	0.000
Self-esteem-Extroversion-Introversion	-0.140*	218	0.037
Self-esteem-Neuroticism	0.038	218	0.578
Self-esteem-Academic Achievement	0.335***	218	0.000

* Significant at 0.05 level ** Sig. at 0.01 level *** Sig. at 0.001 level

From Table 1 it is clear that self-esteem is significantly and negatively related to shyness scores, age and E-I scores of EPI. Self-esteem is found to be positively related to academic achievement scores. Self-esteem and neuroticism scores are found to be independent of each other.

The results of the present study are very much in agreement with the studies done earlier. Shyness evokes negative effect, which leads to sadness, unhappiness and fearfulness, and tendency to describe oneself as 'shy-natured' is associated with low global self esteem and with feelings of low self worth in several domains of the self (Crozier, 1995). Low self-esteem indicates high shyness and less academic achievement (Rafi, 1998). In a study by Steinhausen and Juzi (1996) on Elective Mutism, revealed that this illness (EM) typically started at Preschool age, was more common in girls and seen in all social strata. Shyness and

internalising behaviour problem were the most common personality features observed and co-morbid diagnoses were quite frequent. A study by Au & Watkins (1997) reveals that learned hopelessness and academic self esteem are distinct constructs which play separate mediational roles between prior academic failure and academic achievement.

Helping to build self-esteem in students include, providing tutorial and counselling programs can make students strive towards increasing their self esteem as well as improving their academic achievements and their class room behaviours. Also a classroom environment, which provides feed back and helps children learn how to seek and use feedback encourages autonomy and initiative. Study by Baharudin and Luster (1998), revealed that mothers who provided better quality home environments had higher levels of education, intelligence and self-esteem. Peer tutoring outside the classroom also increases self-esteem and academic self-confidence (Bagley & Mallick, 1996). Also home-school empowerment program is found to reduce the low self-esteem (Flores, Lorion, & Jakob, 1997).

To conclude, some of the specific techniques for building self-esteem include:

- Accept feelings as real and support their healthy expression.
- Realize individual differences in coping.
- Avoid sudden, drastic changes.
- Provide a model of effectiveness.
- Help children develop constructive ways of dealing with difficulty.
- Maintain self respect while increasing coping strengths.
- Promote parental education and cooperation in developing coping strengths.

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