



A study on the Self esteem of Adolescent College students

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

Mental health has been associated with self esteem and it has been found that self esteem is associated with various disorders like depression and anxiety. Self esteem has consequences not only on the behaviour of the adolescents but also on the health related behaviour of the adolescents. The adolescence is a crucial period in the development of self esteem and it depends on the perceived competence and the experience of social support from family, peers and others. The present study has tried to identify the factors influencing the level of Self Esteem of adolescent college students purposively chosen for the study. The sample (n-284) was collected from a University and the data was tested using ANOVA and 't' test. The results show that the birth order has a significant effect over their self esteem.

Introduction

The transition from childhood to adolescence is characterized by the need to establish an identity that calls for autonomy and independence from parents, as suggested in the Eriksonian crisis of 'identity versus identity confusion. Resolution of the crisis results in developing a sense of self in relation to others and to one's own internal thoughts and desires.

Self-esteem has well-known consequences not only on current physical and mental health and health-related behaviour, but also on future health and health-related behaviour during adulthood. In addition, to be able to change the consequences of self-esteem on future health and health-related behaviour, it is important to be aware of possible correlates and associations of low or high self esteem which are crucial during the developmental stage of adolescence. According to Harter, the development and maintenance of self-esteem in childhood and adolescence is influenced by two important factors: perceived competence in areas of importance and the experience of social support.

Mental health has been reported to be associated with self esteem in the past. Several studies have been conducted in this field, and associations have been found between self esteem and depression and between self-esteem and anxiety. Self-esteem has been also reported to be related to eating disorders and aggression (Stice et al., 2002, Donellan et al., 2005, Baumeister et al., 1996). However, the relationship between self-esteem and aggression is currently being debated by researchers. Some authors argue that low self-esteem is related to aggression, whereas others indicate that high self-esteem is linked to aggression (Donellan et al., 2005, Baumeister et al., 1996). Surprisingly, less attention has been paid to the connection between personality dimensions and self-esteem itself, though it could be hypothesized that consistent personality traits might influence the way people perceive and evaluate themselves (Veselska et al., 2009).

Family, peers and significant others play a major role in the development of an adolescent's self-esteem. The family in particular, as the primary environment at this period of life, provides an important background for developing and creating the initial sense of oneself. Previous studies have found a positive relationship between supporting family relationships and self-esteem (Sweeting & West, 1995; Barrera & Jones, 1992). On the other hand, a lack of support or a dysfunctional family environment has been described as a contributor to maladjustment, behavioural problems and drug abuse (Wentzel, 1994; McKay et al., 1991). In addition, support

from peer groups and significant others, like teachers, could positively or negatively influence the development of one's self-esteem. The question remains regarding how social support from family, friends and significant others contribute along with other self-esteem factors (e.g. personality, mental health) to the association between socio-economic status and self-esteem.

The global evaluative dimension of the self is self-esteem. Traditionally, self-esteem has been viewed as global, unidirectional and independent of sources of influence like individual and contextual factors, particularly the impact of relationships with significant others. However, previous studies have emphasized that secure attachment to parents may buffer emotional distress, facilitate social competence and enhance self-esteem. Pubertal changes have been implicated in girls having a lower self-esteem than boys, which reaches a low point between ages 12-13 years. The perception of being an incompetent or rejected person may manifest into feelings of loneliness. Previous literatures suggests that due to gender stereotypes boys report a higher sense of self-worth, but feel lonelier and rejected as compared to girls. Research conducted in the Indian context suggests that socio-emotional problems like loneliness, adjustment difficulties with parents and interpersonal conflicts are relatively common in adolescence, and may contribute to impaired feelings of self-esteem.

Objectives of the study

- To study the socio-demographic profile of the adolescent college students.
- To study the level of Self Esteem of the adolescents.
- To analyze the factors facilitating the Self Esteem of adolescent college students.

Research Design

The research design used for the study is Descriptive design. This study describes the socio demographic profile of the adolescents selected for the study. It also describes the self esteem of the adolescent college students.

The universe comprised of the students belonging to the institution had around 1400 students who are in the adolescent age group.

Sampling

The researcher used Non Probability Sampling Design and collected data by Purposive sampling method. The students were selected for the study keeping the criteria of their age

from seventeen to nineteen years. The educational institution in which the study was conducted had around 1400 students in the prescribed age group and finally the sample worked out to 284 respondents.

Tools of data collection

The following items are included in the Questionnaire.

- Socio-economic Profile of the respondents
- Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (1965)

Analysis of Data

The collected data was coded using SPSS and simple percentiles, ANOVA and t' tests were applied to identify the socio demographic factors influencing the self esteem of the adolescent college students.

Table :1 Level of Self Esteem of the Adolescent college students

S.No	Self Esteem of the respondents	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Low self esteem	95	33.5
2	Average	178	62.7
3	high self esteem	11	3.9
	Total	284	100.0

Table :2 Factors influencing level of Self Esteem of the adolescent college students

S.No	Personal factors	Test applied	Significance level
1	Gender	't' test	NS
2	Domicile	't' test	NS
3	Course studying	ANOVA	NS
4	Type of family	't' test	NS
5	Number of siblings	ANOVA	NS
6	Order of birth	ANOVA	*
7	Education status of the mother	ANOVA	NS
8	Education status of the adolescent college student's father	ANOVA	NS
9	Income of the mothers' of the adolescent college students	ANOVA	NS
10	Income of the father	ANOVA	NS
11	Leadership in any association, clubs or formal groups	't' test	NS
12			
13	Physical appearance	ANOVA	NS
14	Parenting style	ANOVA	NS
15	Number of close friends	't' test	NS
16	Soft skill grading	't' test	NS

*- Significant at 5% level
 **- Significant at 1% level

The table 1 shows that majority of the respondents have average self esteem which is a significant feature of the Indian adolescents. In India parents do not release the reins of control over their children even after adulthood which might have led to the adolescents showing average self esteem.

The table 2 indicates that the birth order of the respondents has a significant influence over their self esteem. Though various socio demographic variables were analyzed with the level of self esteem only the order of birth of the respondents

was found to be significantly related.

Table :3 Multiple Regression analysis for predictor variables of Self Esteem

S.No	Items	B	STD.Error	't' value	Significance
1	Gender of the respondents	-.040	.085	-.466	NS
2	Place of residence of the respondents	-.063	.076	-.823	NS
3	Course studying	.092	.046	1.989	*
4	Family type of the respondents	-.070	.091	-.767	NS
5	No. of siblings	-.005	.035	-.147	NS
6	Order of birth of the respondents	-.016	.048	-.337	NS

Discussion

Self Esteem develops as a result of familial and social factors (Harter, 1990; Colarossi & Eccles, 2000).The support of the family and the siblings also play a vital role in the adolescent development. In a family of more than two children there is a possibility of the eldest child receiving more attention than the others and the youngest child also claiming more attention from the mothers.

It is noted in the present study that the adolescents who are third in the order of birth are having more self esteem than others.A study (Social Research Project Competition 2003-2004) has shown that the first born and the last born in three children families are having medium self esteem.

Parents may treat firstborn children differently than younger children by investing more faith in the first child. Older siblings tend to exhibit personality traits that differ from the younger siblings, i.e. higher self-esteem (Wilson & Edington, 1981). The present study also shows significant difference in the mean of the first and third born than among the other respondents.

However the multiple regression analysis shows that the course studied (Engineering) by the respondents has a significant influence over their self esteem.

The students studying professional courses feel a sense of importance because even the society and those around them promote the idea that the professional courses are the best. This sample of the study has students from arts and science, polytechnic courses and engineering courses. The findings are consistent with that of O'Hare (1995) who found that women who enter engineering have reported high level of confidence and self esteem.

Conclusion

Self esteem is an important construct that is often related to academic achievement, social functioning and psychopathology in adolescents. The development of self esteem interventions targeting the children and adolescents is a complex process. The interventions should be developed in close collaboration with program developers, social scientists and users.

The findings of the present study indicate that adolescent students with professional course background have positive feelings of self esteem. This implies that the adolescents pursuing non professional courses lag behind in self esteem. The Arts and Science College administrators have to understand this and encourage their students towards feeling of self worth and self esteem. Conducting frequent literary programs and having schemes for development of soft skills by the management of these institutions may enhance the adolescent students' self esteem. The administrators of such

educational institutions have to empower students for the development of their self esteem which will help in developing their Personality. Such of these activities may develop the student youth of our country as they are supposed to the future citizens of the nation.

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