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Self-esteem and academic achievement in senior secondary school students: A study in District Kurukshetra

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Abstract
Self esteem is how a person feels about themselves and the feeling of pride they have in their self. Most children self esteem is based on their interactions with others and the environment that surrounds them. When they have a low self esteem this will also put a lot of pressure on their parents as well because most won't know what to do or how to react to this. If a student has a low self esteem this could affect their life and simple task they do everyday especially in school and with their school work. It's good to feel good about yourself but the bad thing is that this could make you over confident.
In the present paper an attempt has been made to examine the relationship between self esteem and academic achievement and to find a positive correlation between them.

Keywords: self esteem, academic achievement, learning, pressure, motivation, performance.

Introduction

Self-esteem is a term used in psychology to describe someone's level of confidence and respect for themselves. Pride, shame and dignity are some of the emotions self-esteem encompasses. In 1943, Abraham Maslow, an American psychologist created the Maslow's hierarchy of needs; it was composed of physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualization, physiological being the most basic needs. He believed that psychological health is not possible unless people accepted, loved and respected you and if you didn't accept yourself.

Self esteem is one of the strongest research topics in psychology. Research has documented the important role of high self-esteem which plays in academic achievement, social and personal responsibility. Self esteem is the one key ingredient that affects the level of proficiency in all fields of endeavor. Self-esteem has been correlated to job success, school achievement, interpersonal compatibility, and general happiness. Self esteem can be broadly defined as the overall evaluation of oneself in either a positive or negative way. It indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself or herself to be competent and worth of living. Simply put, self esteem is essentially one's feeling of self-competence and self-worth. Self-esteem construct is recognized today to be a major factor in learning outcomes. Research has consistently shown a positive correlation between how people value themselves and the level of their academic attainments. Those who feel confident, generally achieve more, while those who lack confidence in themselves achieve less.

The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement has received much attention. Many researchers have investigated the relationship between self esteem and academic achievement and found that high self esteem facilitates academic achievement but a limited correlation was revealed between self-esteem and academic achievement. Several studies have attempted recently to investigate the direct relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement.

In a study by Pullmann & Allik (2008) [13] it is found that low general self-esteem does not necessarily signal a poor academic achievement. Their result shows that low (not high) general self-esteem is a significant predictor of superior school performance.

Marsh & O'Mara (2008) [10] have suggested from their research findings that prior self-esteem has small positive effect on subsequent educational attainment.

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However, there are some researchers who have also found no significant causal influence between self-esteem and academic achievement.

Bachman & O'Malley (1977) [1] examined longitudinal data utilizing a priori model relating self-esteem and achievement that focused on the influence of self-esteem at high school on the educational achievement of young males. High school self-esteem was found to exert no significant casual influence on educational achievement.

The study done by Maruyama *et al.* (1981) [11] reveal the fact that there is no significant relationship existed between self-esteem and achievement. Analyzed data was longitudinal, thereby allowing better specification of interrelations between self-esteem and achievement. The study reveals that self-esteem and achievement were not "causally" related to each other.

Objective of the Study

- The major objective of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement.

Problem and Hypothesis of the Study

The problem undertaken in the present study is to examine whether subjects show significant correlation between their self-esteem measures and academic achievement.

Hypothesis (H₁): The subjects will show positive correlation between self-esteem measures and academic achievement.

Hypothesis (H₀): The subjects will not show positive correlation between self-esteem measures and academic achievement.

Research Methodology

The decision of about the methods to be employed for accomplishment of aims and objectives of research depends upon the nature of problem selected and kinds of data required or necessary. Following is the research methodology for the research undertaken.

Sample

A sample of 200 Senior Secondary schools students has been taken from 20 randomly selected schools in Kurukshetra District. Their age ranged from 16 to 19 years.

Tool Used

In order to provide a better estimate of true association between self-esteem and academic achievement following tools have used:

1. **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES):** Items of the RSES were answered on a 4 point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

4	Strongly Agree
3	Agree
2	Disagree
1	Strongly Disagree

2. Average of Last Two Academic Results: For the purpose of this study, academic achievement was measured through the average percentage of the last two academic sessions' results.

Result & Discussion

Following are the results of the study:

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

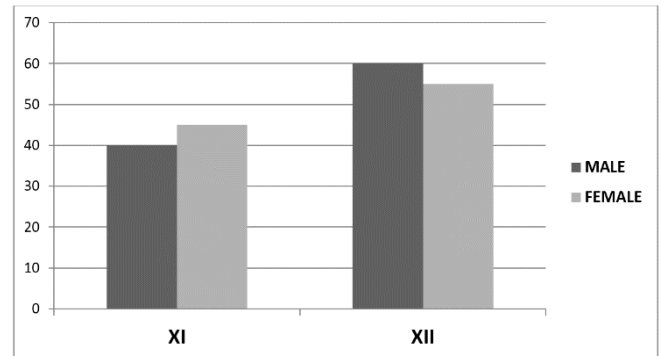| Class	Male	Female
XI	40	45
XII	60	55
Total	100	100

Fig 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table and figure 1 show the demographic profile of the respondents. 40 male respondents and 45 female respondents were selected from class XI. Likewise 60 male respondents and 55 female respondents were selected from class XII for the undertaken study.

Table 2: Self Esteem & Academic Achievement Correlation in Sr. Sec. School Students

Measure	N	Mean	t value	df	Level of Significance
Self esteem	200	24.63	6.8	118	Significant at 0.01 level
Average Academic Score	200	78.84			

It is found in the study that average self-esteem score of the respondents is 24.63, whereas the average academic achievement score is 78.84. The coefficient of correlation is 0.622. It is significant at 0.01 significance level as t=6.8, P<0.01 for 118 degree of freedom. This significant t provides empirical ground to believe that the self-esteem is positively correlated with academic achievement in senior secondary students. The finding of the present study is statistically significant because it support and prove the hypothesis that the subjects will show positive correlation between self-esteem measures and academic achievement.

The significant findings are also in accordance with Covington. To quote Covington (1989) *"as the level of the self-esteem increase, so do achievement scores and as the self esteem decreases, so does achievement".* There are numerous studies which show a positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement. To name, some are, Brookover, Thomas and Patterson (1964), Campbell (1967), Irwin (1967), Lawrence (1981), Piers & Harris (1964), & Purkey (1970) [14].

However, correlation does not imply causation. There is considerable disagreement among experts as to which come first, high self-esteem or academic achievement. It also appears that the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance is bidirectional. That means self esteem and academic achievement influence each other.

Conclusion

Several studies show that self esteem influences academic performance. Research has shown that self-esteem is a better predictor of academic success than measured intelligence. Research aside, common sense dictates that our thoughts influence our feelings and behaviour. Our behaviour consequently influences our performance.

To conclude we can say that life is essentially a self fulfilling prophecy. Common sense also dictates that a student who has self-doubt and lacks self acceptance is unlikely to attain academic excellence. How can a student establish challenging goals if he or she lacks a sense of self-competence and self-efficacy? How a student can concentrate fully on studies if he or she lacks self approval? Indeed, the research studies have shown that underachievers are generally less confident, ambitious, self accepting and there is a lack of sense of personal worth and growth.

Thus, the present work of research provides a strong and empirical ground to confirm that there is a positive correlation between self esteem and academic achievement.

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