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Role of self-esteem and personality type on academic achievement and happiness of adolescents

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of self-esteem and personality type on the academic achievement and happiness of adolescents. A 2*2 factorial design was used with two levels of self-esteem (high and low) and two levels of personality type (Type-A and Type-B). The sample of the study included a total of 120 students studying in +2 science colleges. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale, Are you type-A Questionnaire, and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire were used as instruments for collecting data. The academic achievement of students was assessed by obtaining their last examination marks (in terms of percentage). Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. It was found that self-esteem and personality type have significant impacts on the academic achievement and happiness of adolescents. The interaction effect between self-esteem and personality types on academic achievement and happiness was not found to be significant.

Keywords: Self-esteem, personality type, academic achievement, happiness of adolescents

Introduction

Mental health and happiness are concerned with an individual's emotional and psychological states. Health is defined beyond the absence of diseases or illnesses. It includes the presence of positive states associated with feeling happy, being in positive relationships with others, engaging in different activities, having positive self-esteem, etc. It also includes the ability to relax and get involved in group activities, community participation, and belonging. Happiness plays a pivotal role in the healthy mental and physical development of the person. Although it is significant to every individual at every stage of life, it becomes a matter of great attention and concern, particularly during the adolescence stage. Adolescence is accompanied by an aggregate of several physical, psychological and emotional changes, which gets affected by factors like parental expectation, search for self and social identity, peer-group influence, etc. The conflicts within self and with others make it a period of *storm and stress* for the adolescent. All these factors significantly affect an adolescent's happiness and well-being.

In the present world, there are too much of parental expectations on adolescents. Constant stress, anxiety, uncertainty regarding the future, and peer pressure ultimately affect their self-esteem, which in turn affects the happiness and achievements of adolescents. Self-esteem can be defined as a person's overall attitude towards self, including his/ her evaluation of self and competence along many of the dimensions of behavior and performance (Baron and Byrne, 1991)^[2]. It defines one's personal self-evaluation of the abilities, competence, mastery, social skills, and also one's expectations of future results. It is closely associated with self-consciousness (Gecas, 1991)^[5]. Adolescents develop a sense of high self-esteem when they judge their abilities to excel and prosper in several dimensions relevant to their own self, such as academics, sports, social relationships, etc. It also depends on the outcomes of a challenge or problem that they face and to which they try to cope rather than avoid. Adolescents who face a stressful event and use all their coping mechanisms are in a better place to deal with situations in a more realistic and practical way than those who avoid or escape from the situation. This significantly affects their evaluation of their potential strengths and abilities, which directly enhances their self-esteem and self-competence. Those adolescents who have healthy relationships with their friends, family members, and also perform effectively in school and college.

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On the other hand, those adolescents who have low self-esteem lack the confidence to deal with a situation, have poor social relationships and face mental health challenges like loneliness and depression (Marsh, 1989) [7].

Another significant factor that influences the overall health and development of the individual is one's personality type. Personality type can be defined as the relatively stable and enduring patterns of the unique characteristics and behavioural traits of an individual.

It is relatively stable and defines how a person responds and behaves to any situation based on his personality traits and characteristics. Personality types are related to one's health and well-being (Goodwin & Friedman, 2006) [6]. Many studies have found a significant relationship between personality types and happiness and well-being. Although research studies have found complex relationships between personality types and happiness, the Big-Five Personality Model in the 1980s defined two traits that were significantly related to happiness and well-being- extraversion and neuroticism.

A person high in extraversion is talkative, outgoing, and has good social relationships with others. A person high in neuroticism is characterized as being anxious, irritable, and showing various negative emotions. Notably, extraversion is found to be positively related to happiness, and neuroticism is found to be negatively related to happiness. There have been several research studies and one of the significant studies was conducted by DeNeve and Cooper (1998) [4]. They found that four of the five traits significantly affect the happiness and well-being of a person and they are emotional stability, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness. A significant struggle marked during adolescence arises from the constant pressure and parental expectation to excel in academics.

Academic performance is related to a person's achievement and performance results that evaluates the degree of accomplishment of a desired goal or outcome of behavioural and conceptual learning and activities mostly conducted and observed in instructional settings, such as educational institutions, schools, colleges, universities, etc.

Educational institutions mostly assess the cognitive abilities of a person mostly across several subject domains involving critical thinking and analysis or based on the acquisition of skills and conceptual knowledge in a certain intellectual domain or subject area like science, mathematics, literature, etc. Therefore, academic achievement should be considered to be a multifaceted construct that comprises different domains of learning.

Many studies have found that self-esteem is positively related to the academic and scholarly achievements of adolescents with high self-esteem accounting for higher academic achievement among adolescents and vice versa (Owen, 1992; Altermatt & Pomerantz, 2003) [8, 1]. Significant mediating variables were found to be related to academic performance and self-esteem, such as parent-adolescent relationships and peer-relationship (Altermatt & Pomerantz, 2003; Steinberg, 1990) [1, 9].

The present study was conducted to examine how self-esteem and personality type are related to academic achievement and happiness of adolescents, particularly in a district like Dhenkanal, Odisha, where very limited research works have been done to explore the correlates of happiness and mental health.

Objectives

1. To examine the effects of self-esteem on academic performance and happiness of adolescents.
2. To examine the effect of personality type on academic performance and happiness of adolescents.
3. To study if there is an interaction effect of self-esteem and personality type on academic performance and happiness of adolescents.

Research design

To study the effect of self-esteem and personality type on academic achievement and happiness of adolescents, a 2*2 factorial design was used with two levels of self-esteem (high and low) and two levels of personality type (Type A and Type B). A total of 120 students studying in +2 science colleges in the Dhenkanal district of Odisha were selected as the sample of the study. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, 'Are you type-A' questionnaire, and Oxford Happiness Scale were used for the research. Two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test and analyze the results.

Sample

The present study was conducted on a sample of 120 participants studying in +2 science colleges of Dhenkanal Autonomous College and Government Women's College under C.H.S.E., Odisha.

Tools

Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)- Developed by sociologist Dr. Morris Rosenberg (1965), this 10-item scale is used to measure the self-esteem of a person by taking into account both positive and negative feelings about the self. It uses a 4-Point Likert Scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. There are five negative items (no. 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9) that are reverse scored. The total score of the scale is calculated by adding all the scores on the positive and negative items. The higher the total score, the higher the self-esteem of the person. The test-retest reliability ranges from 0.82 to 0.88.

"Are You A Type A?" (Robbins, 1998)- This questionnaire consists of 7 items rated on an 8-Point Scale. A participant is asked to answer with the number on the scale that best suits his behavior on a particular trait. All the scores on the items are summed up and multiplied by 3 to obtain the total personality points. A total score of less than 99 is categorized as Type B Personality and a total score of more than 99 is categorized as Type A Personality.

The Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Argyle and Hills, 2007)- Developed by psychologists Michael Argyle and Peter Hills (2007), this test consists of 29 items on a 6-Point rating scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 6 for strongly agree. Out of the 29 items, 12 items (no. 1, 5, 6, 10, 13, 14, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28 and 29) are reverse scored. The higher the score on the test, the greater the happiness of the subject.

Academic Achievement- The student's last examination score (percentage) was collected as the measure of academic achievement.

Procedure

To carry out the study on adolescents, two colleges were contacted in the Dhenkanal district of Odisha. The principals of these colleges were contacted and informed about the aims of the present research study. After selecting

the subjects from the different departments (by using the attendance registers) of the college and after the establishment of rapport, their consent for participation in research was taken. All the data were collected from 120 subjects by administering all the instruments of the study. Two-way ANOVA was used to test the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Data were scored and analyzed by using appropriate statistical tests using SPSS software.

Results

Table 1: ANOVA on academic achievement scores of the subjects

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F
Self-esteem	112.13	1	112.13	6.38*
Personality type	644.03	1	644.03	36.69*
Self-esteem* personality type	30.00	1	30.00	.19
Error	2035.80	116	17.55	

* $p < 0.05$

Table-1 indicates that there is a significant main effect of self-esteem on academic achievement of adolescents, $F(1,116)=6.38$, $p=.000$ ($p < 0.05$). And also there was a significant effect of personality type on academic achievement of adolescents, $F(1,116)=36.69$, $p < 0.001$. The self-esteem x personality type interaction effect is not found to be significant, $F(1,116)=2.82$, $p=.002$ ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2: Mean and SD of Self-esteem score of the subjects

Personality type	Self-esteem				Combined	
	High		Low		Mean	SD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Type- A	15.53	3.94	16.46	4.92	16.00	4.44
Type- B	19.16	4.11	22.10	3.66	20.63	4.13
Combined	17.35	4.39	19.28	5.15	18.31	4.86

Table-2 indicates the Mean and SD score of high self-esteem and low self-esteem subjects and also subjects in type-A and type-B. A comparison of academic achievement mean scores of subjects indicates that persons with high self-esteem ($M=19.28$) have higher academic achievement than low esteem people ($M=17.35$). On the other hand, the academic achievement score of adolescents in type-B personality ($M=20.63$) is higher than the academic achievement score of students in type- A group ($M=16.00$).

Table-3: ANOVA performed on the Happiness scores of the subjects

Source	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F
Self esteem	12.87	1	12.87	27.91*
Personality type	61.33	1	61.33	132.96*
Self-esteem * personality type	1.13	1	1.13	2.45
Error	53.50	116	.461	

* $p < 0.05$

Table-3 indicates that there is a significant main effect of self-esteem on the happiness of adolescents, $F(1,116)=27.91$, $p=.021$ ($p < 0.05$). As well as there is a significant effect of personality type on happiness of adolescents, $F(1,116)=132.96$, $p < 0.001$. The self esteem * personality type interaction effect is not found to be significant, $F(1,116)=2.452$, ($p=.004$) $p > 0.05$.

Table-4: Mean and SD of Happiness score of the subjects

Personality Type	Self-esteem				Combined	
	High		Low		Mean	SD
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Type A	4.18	.93	3.33	.85	3.76	.98
Type B	2.56	.34	2.10	.35	2.33	.41
Combined	3.37	1.07	2.72	.90	3.04	1.04

Results in Table-4 indicate the mean and standard deviation scores of high and low self-esteem adolescents and also personality type A and Type B. The comparison of mean scores reveals that high self-esteem subjects ($M=3.37$) have higher Happiness scores compared to the low self-esteem subjects ($M=2.72$). On the other hand, the Happiness score of adolescents in Type A personality ($M=3.76$) is higher than the Happiness score of Type B group ($M=2.33$).

Discussion

Adolescence is a crucial period of human development as several factors affect one’s identity, values, self-growth, social relationships, etc. The present study was conducted to examine the effects of self-esteem and personality types on the academic achievement and happiness of adolescents. Conducted on a sample of 120 students, the study used a 2*2 factorial design to examine the effects. Two-way ANOVA was used to examine the effects of the independent variables (self-esteem and personality types) on the dependent variables (academic achievement and happiness). From the result table 1, it can be found that self-esteem and personality types significantly affect the academic achievement of adolescents. The interaction effect of personality types and self-esteem on academic achievement was not found to be significant. Hence, the main effects of self-esteem and personality types were established. From table 2, the means and standard deviation scores of self-esteem and personality types can be found out. As it can be seen from the table, persons with higher self-esteem perform significantly better as compared to those who have lower self-esteem. Also, it was found that the academic achievement of Type-B students was significantly higher than the academic performance of Type-A students. From table-3, it can be seen that self-esteem and personality types are significantly related to the happiness of adolescents. The interaction effect of self-esteem and personality types on happiness was not found to be significant. Hence, the main effects of self-esteem and personality types were established. Results in table-4 state the mean and standard deviation of self-esteem and personality types. The comparison between the means reveals that people who are high in self-esteem experience greater happiness as compared to those with low self-esteem. Also, adolescents with Type-A personality were found to be happier as compared to those with Type-B personality. The results of the study are significant as they provide strong evidence of the roles of self-esteem and personality types on the academic performance and happiness of adolescents. This provides a clear idea that the academic performance and happiness of students can be enhanced by facilitating an environment where their self-esteem is significantly enhanced. Teachers and academicians need to work on strategies to boost the self-esteem of the students and help them in developing a healthy personality type that allows them to effectively deal with any situation.

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