SELF-ESTEEM, DEPRESSION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF IX STANDARD STUDENTS

By
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Abstract

Depression is a serious health problem that affects people of all ages including children and adolescents. Depression changes the person’s normal mood. Social, occupational, educational are important functioning must also be negatively impaired by the change in mood. The adolescent has higher incidence of depression, which points to lack of self-esteem. So self-esteem has also been closely linked to depression. Hence, in the present study an attempt was made to find out the significant relationship between Self esteem, Depression and its influence on the academic achievement of the IXth standard students. The normative survey method was employed and a sample of 450 secondary school students studying 9th standard was selected from 8 schools in Madurai district by adopting random sampling technique.

Self esteem Scale – Standardized tool developed by Rosenberg (1986) and Depression Scale – Constructed and standardized by the investigator were used for the present study. From the statistical analysis, it is found that there is a negative and medium correlation between depression and self esteem and the Academic Achievement is positively correlated with Self Esteem but negatively correlated with Depression.

Key words: Self esteem Depression and Academic Achievement.

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Self-esteem is a major key to success in life. The self-esteem is extremely important to the happiness and success of children and teenagers. But now a day’s most of adolescents suffer from depression symptoms such as persistent sadness, falling academic performance and lack of interest in previously enjoyable task. Depression in adolescents usually involves more social and interpersonal difficulties which directly leads to self-esteem problems. Many researches indicates that behaviors are not the result of low self-esteem, but rather than the result of social rejection which leads to low self-esteem. In other words, self-esteem does not cause a person to behave a particular way; it is the result of poor social relationships.

Self-esteem has been defined as it is an on-going process that comes from connecting with our soul and spiritual potential through self-acceptance, meditation, prayer, release, communing with nature and/or requesting strength from our high power, source, spirit or god. (Warschaw 2006)

Depression (Jhon M. Grohol, 2004) is the persistent experience of a sad or irritable mood and the loss of interest or pleasure in nearly all activities.

There is a strong correlation between a person’s emotional reactions and their involvement in social relationships. Therefore, to increase one’s self-esteem, one need to improve one’s standing in interpersonal relationships rather than trying to fix some perception about them. Research has shown that it doesn’t have to be the actual rejection of a person by a social situation. It can simply be the imagined or anticipated rejection,(At last, 1995). New research indicates that the behaviors are not the results of low self-esteem, but rather the result of social rejection which leads to low self-esteem. In other words, self-esteem does not cause a person to behave a particular way; it is the result of poor social relationships, (New Model, 1995; Rao, 1994). Depression and self-esteem may be viewed as a vicious cycle. The inability to relate positively in social situations may lead to low self-esteem which leads to depression. The depression then leads to further inability to relate with others or be fully accepted in social groups which then adds to the feelings of low self-esteem, (Davila, et.al., 1995). This research opens a new area of study into the relationship between depressed people and their environment. Following Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) notion of the mesosystem model of interactions, the relationships between an individual and the various environments of influence, must be considered just as important as the individual’s self. Since poor interpersonal problem solving skills lead to higher levels of depression, which in turn leads to more interpersonal difficulties,
one may argue that teaching problem solving skills is the intervention solution. However, there does not appear to be a relationship between adolescent cognitive problem solving abilities and interpersonal skills. Therefore, one could conclude that it is not that adolescents do not know how to solve problem but they lack the desire or willingness to use those interpersonal skills (Davila, et. al, 1995). Feldman and Elliot (1990) reported that there is a direct relationship between the perception of social success and self-esteem. This success may include confidence in appearance, academic ability, athletic ability, and social belonging. Self-esteem is then, a barometer of how well one is doing socially. It monitors the acceptance level of the people and groups in the surrounding environment. Similar to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Human, et. al., 1994), this new theory supports the idea that people seek a certain amount of social acceptance and belonging which will take precedence over other factors such as self-actualization (New model, 1995; At last, 1995). Other factors effect depression and other affective adolescent problems. Parental influences on self-esteem are reported by Feldman and Elliot (1990) who find that parents who model openness and acceptance of new ideas can have a positive effect on their child’s self-esteem. Other parental factors include encouragement for children to form their own viewpoints, as well as a secure family relationship to form a basis for exploration. Transition from elementary to junior, high school or form junior high to senior high increases feeling of low self-esteem. Students who do not make such a change in school have a reduced incidence of low self-esteem. Unfortunately, some students, particularly females, do not recover from this low self image in later adolescence, (Feldman & Elliot, 1990). Competition is a popular blame agent for low self-esteem. It is easy for an adolescent to interpret a competitive loss with failure, thereby damaging self-esteem. Not only does competition damage self-esteem, it hinders interpersonal relationships. Instead of being a demonstration of strength and confidence, competition is a show of insecurity (Kohn, 1993). Competition may be viewed as a disservice by educators who should be improving the adolescent’s ability to relate well with others. Instead, this spirit of competition held in many school activities serves to block healthy communication. Regarding competition in schools, Kohn writes, “Kids face it all the time in an award assembly, an event usually held in school auditoriums that instantly transforms most people present into losers” (p.1). Competition implies comparisons which should be eliminated from parenting for the sake of self-esteem, according to Evitt (1990). Rather than make comparisons between children, which makes the child feel inferior, parents should acknowledge
and encourage the natural differences found in individuals. Self-esteem has also been linked to problem solving skills. Lochman, et.al, (1993), studied the relationship aggressive adolescent boys and the social problems solving skills. The study was based on the idea that exhibited behaviors are the result of a person’s goals and their expectation that their behavior will lead to that goal. Goals set by socially unpopular adolescents tend to focus on non-social goals involving peer relations. As might be expected, aggressive adolescents value dominance and revenge over affiliation. These adolescents had a higher incidence of depression, which points to lack of self-esteem. Interestingly, while popular students were very clear in their goals of affiliation, non-popular students were unclear in their goals. While unpopular students ranked dominance and revenge higher, they also indicated a significant value for affiliation. This leads researchers to conclude that aggressive or unpopular children have greater internal conflict than popular children. This creates difficulty in social negotiations, leading to low self-esteem, leading to depression. These researchers (Lochman, et. al., 1993) suggest that intervention should include helping problematic adolescents find more socially acceptable strategies for problem solving which will enable them to reach their personal goals.

**Operational Definition of the Terms:**

**SELF-ESTEEM** - The experience of being capable of meeting life’s challenges and being worthy of happiness.

**DEPRESSION** - is an illness that causes a disturbance in an individual’s emotions and feelings, what is referred to as mood.

**Variables included in the Study**

- Gender
- School Kind
- School Locality
- Medium of Instruction
- Family Type
Extra-curricular activities involvement

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the significant interrelationship among Self-esteem, Depression and Academic Achievement of IX standard students.

2. To find out the significant difference in Self esteem in terms of gender, school kind, school locality, medium of instruction, Family Type and Extracurricular activities involvement.

3. To find out the significant difference in Depression in terms of gender, kind of school, school locality, medium of instruction, Family Type and Extracurricular activities involvement.

**Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant inter relationship among Self-esteem, Depression and Academic Achievement of IX standard students.

2. There is no significant difference in Self-esteem in terms of gender, school kind, school locality, medium of instruction, Family Type and Extracurricular activities involvement.

3. There is no significant difference in Depression in terms of gender, kind of school, school locality, medium of instruction, Family Type and Extracurricular activities involvement.
Methodology

Method of the study

The method adopted in the present study is normative survey method.

Sample

The sample of 450 IX standard students was selected from 8 schools in Madurai district with adequate representation given to categories like sex, kind of school, locality of the school and medium of instruction.

Tools used for the study

1. Self esteem Scale – Standardized tool developed by Rosenberg (1986).
2. Depression Scale – Constructed and standardized by the investigator

Statistical Techniques Used

1. Mean
2. Standard Deviation
3. ‘t’ test
4. Pearson’s product moment Correlation

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant inter relationship among Self-esteem, Depression and Academic Achievement of IX standard students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Self Esteem</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Esteem</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table shows the inter relationship among Self esteem, Depression and Achievement of IXth standard students. The table suggests a negative and medium correlation between depression and self esteem ($-0.497, p < 01$) with high self esteem associated with a lower level of depression. Furthermore, the table further suggested a positive and high correlation between Self esteem and Achievement ($r=.862, p<01$) with a high level of Self esteem associated with a high level of Achievement. Additionally the table suggested a negative and high correlation between Depression and Achievement ($r=-0.765, p<01$) with low level of depression associated with high levels of Achievement. Hence the hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:**
There is no significant difference in Self-esteem in terms of gender, school kind, school locality, medium of instruction, Family Type and Extracurricular activities involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>28.23</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Kind</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>27.79</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aided</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>29.96</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Locality</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>27.71</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>29.74</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium of Instruction</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>26.59</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>28.91</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table shows that the test of significant difference in Self esteem in terms of gender, School Kind, School Locality, Medium of Instruction, Family Type and Extra curricular Activities. Since the calculated ‘t’ value is greater than the table value at 5% level of significance for the all the variables except the variables Gender and Family Type, the hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis 3:**
There is no significant difference in Depression in terms of gender, kind of school, school locality, medium of instruction, Family Type and Extracurricular activities involvement.
The above table shows that the test of significant difference in Depression in terms of gender, School Kind, School Locality, Medium of Instruction, Family Type and Extracurricular Activities. The calculated ‘t’ value is greater than the table value at 5% level of significance for the three variables Viz., Gender, Medium of Instruction and Extracurricular and the calculated ‘t’ value is less than the table value at 5% level of significance for the three variables Viz., School Kind, School Locality and Family Type. Hence the hypothesis is rejected.

**Findings and Interpretation**

In consonance with the first objective of the study, the study confirms the pattern of relationship between the variables.

There is a negative and medium correlation between depression and self esteem (-0.497, p < 01) with High self esteem associated with a lower level of depression. It is also found that there is a positive and high correlation between Self esteem and Achievement (r=.862, p < 01) with a high level of Self esteem associated with a high level of Achievement. It is also observed from the finding that there is a negative and high correlation between Depression and Achievement (r=-0.765, p < 01) with low level of depression associated with high levels of Achievement.

In line with the second objective of the study, significant differences in self-esteem with respect to their personal variables were examined. From the finding it is observed that

- Aided school students are having high self esteem than the government school students
- Rural school students are having high self esteem than the urban school students
- The students those who are studying through Tamil medium are having high self esteem than their counterparts.
- The students those who are participating in extracurricular activities are having high self esteem than their counterparts.
The variables Gender and Family type have no influence on self esteem.

In line with the third objective of the study, significant differences in Depression with respect to their personal variables were examined. From the findings, it is observed that

- Male students are having high depression than the female students
- Tamil medium students are having high depression than the English medium students
- The students those who are not participating in extracurricular activities are having high level of depression than their counterparts.

The variables School kind, School locality and Family type have no influence on depression.

**Conclusion**

Self-esteem as a personal trait that can be improved by any person willing to commit the task of positive development and the concept of oneself and to accept oneself as one is. The suicide rates for adolescence has increased more than 20% of adolescence in the general population have emotional problems and one-third of adolescents attending psychiatric clinics suffer from depression. To effectively target adolescent depression, schools need to target Self-esteem. The approach to improving Self-esteem should be different from the traditional view of individualized pep talks. Self-esteem can only be improved when the environment in which the person lives improves - - improvement, in terms of interpersonal skill and social acceptance. The Educational Institution should take the necessary steps to enhance the Self-esteem among students.

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