

SELF ESTEEM AND ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENT TEACHERS

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Abstract

Learning is growth - intellectual, physical, psychological, social, spiritual and combinations of those. In every aspect of this learning process, there is the potential to damage, maintain or increase self-esteem. Self-esteem in most students 'mirrors' the appraisals of others, in particular parents and teachers. Theorists have often drawn a distinction between self-concept, the totality of self-knowledge that one possesses about oneself, and self-esteem, which is considered the evaluative component of the self-concept. Teacher's views clearly affect learner's achievements. Positive appraisals over an extended time tend to increase the level of learning. Prolonged or consistent negative appraisals tend to lower learning achievement. Students tend to perform in accordance with teacher expectations and treatment - self-fulfilling prophecy (Loomans & Loomans 1994). As teachers, we can be instrumental in creating a classroom environment which nurtures and supports students developing self-esteem. This can be achieved by modeling to students that mistakes are part of the learning process for both children and adults. It is important to empower and develop the skills of students to assess their achievements in a positive productive manner. This creates autonomous learners. Students need to be encouraged to develop support systems both within and outside of the classroom so that they feel confident to take risks in their learning. Generally the academic scores of the teachers are considered to judge their efficiency and effectiveness. But, the personality variables are not considered in academics thereby questioning the importance given to academic scores. On the basis of this, the investigator has taken this study to find out the self esteem of secondary student teachers in relation to their achievement. In the present study, the investigator found the relationship between self esteem and achievement of secondary student teachers. Survey method was implemented in this study. Self esteem questionnaire of Pope et al (1988) was the tool used. University examination marks were taken as achievement. The statistical techniques employed were t-test and correlation. Findings of the study reveal that no significant correlation existed between self esteem and achievement of secondary student teachers. Educational implications were derived based on the findings.

Key Words: *Self Esteem, Self Concept, Self-knowledge Self Worth, Achievement and Prospective Teachers.*

Introduction

Self-esteem has become a household word. Teachers, parents, and others have focussed efforts on boosting self-esteem, on the assumption that high self-esteem will cause many positive outcomes. Appraisal of the effects of self-esteem is complicated by several factors. Because many people with high self-esteem exaggerate their successes and good traits, we emphasize objective measures of outcomes. High self-esteem is also a heterogeneous category, encompassing people who frankly accept their good qualities along with narcissistic, defensive, and conceited individuals.

Self Esteem

Self-esteem is the sum and substance of one's feelings and thoughts about who we are and as such is of great importance. It is the foundation that we build the rest of us on. Self-esteem, or one's sense of worth, is often fragile and sensitive to events that happen on

a day-to-day basis. It is critical for individuals to think about and be able to take advantage of strengths and for learning from mistakes. Healthy self-esteem is an essential component for learning. Regardless of age, the self-esteem of a learner facilitates or inhibits learning (Solomon 1992). By adulthood self-esteem has changed from a mostly reactive phenomenon to one that can be consciously acted upon to either increase or decrease feelings of self worth. As adults we are confronted by many situations that affect our levels of self-esteem. Epstein (1979 cited in Mruk: 1995) has extensively researched those situations that most typically affect self-esteem in adulthood. By strengthening the self-esteem of the students through teachers acting as role models and organisation of workshops, we can boost up the Achievement.

Self-esteem is a psychological trait related to a person's image of self-value and self confidence in total aspects of human activity (Rosenberg, 1965). Studies all over the world have associated self-esteem with human health and psychological well-being. This effect may be interpreted through the scope of resources increase and active coping against life's problems. High self-esteem is considered a fundamental aspect of personal well-being, happiness and adjustment (Brown, 1993). Individuals with higher self-esteem are more satisfied with their lives, have fewer interpersonal problems, achieve at a higher and more consistent level, and are less susceptible to psychological problems and physical illness (Brown, 1993) than those with lower self-esteem.

The concept of self-esteem has elicited a large body of theoretical accounts and empirical research (Baumeister, 1998). More recent definitions of self-esteem emphasize the fact that self-esteem should be distinguished from other components of the self-concept (such as self-knowledge and self-efficacy), insofar as self-esteem represents the affective, or evaluative, component of the self-concept; it signifies how people feel about themselves (Leary & Baumeister, 2000). This affective self-evaluation is subjective at its core and is not based on specific behaviors (Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001).

Objectives of the Study

The study has been conducted on the basis of the following objectives.

1. To find out the significant difference, if any, in the self esteem of prospective teachers with regard to select personal, familial, and institutional variables.
2. To find out the significant difference, if any, in the academic achievement of prospective teachers with regard to the personal, familial, and institutional variables.
3. To find the significant correlation, if any, between self esteem and academic achievement of prospective teachers.

Hypotheses Formulated

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were framed.

1. There exists no significant difference in the self esteem of prospective teachers with regard to the personal, familial, and institutional variables.

2. There exists no significant difference in the academic achievement of prospective teachers with regard to the personal, familial, and institutional variables.
3. There is no significant correlation between self esteem and academic achievement of prospective teachers.

The *personal variables* selected are Order of Birth, Number of Siblings, Marital Status, Optional Subject, and Educational Qualification; the *familial variables* are Father's Occupation, Mother's Occupation, Family Status and Monthly Income; the *institutional variables* are Type of Administration, Type of School and Medium of Instruction.

Method Adopted

Normative Survey method was adopted for the present study.

Sample

The study was conducted on a sample of 200 prospective teachers under Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, Chennai selected on the basis of stratified random sampling technique. Consideration was offered to factors like Order of Birth, Number of Siblings, Marital Status, Optional Subject, Educational Qualification, Father's Occupation, Mother's Occupation, Family Status, Monthly Income, Type of Administration, Type of School and Medium of Instruction while selecting the sample.

Tools Used

The tool used for the present study was self esteem questionnaire developed by Pope *et al* (1988). University examination achievement scores were taken in to account for academic achievement.

Analysis of Data

Pearson product moment correlation and t-test were applied for analysing the data. t- test was used to find out the significant difference between the variables and correlation was used to find out the relationship between the variables.

Table - 1 t- Test for the Self Esteem of Prospective Teachers with Regard to the Background Variables

Group	Variable		N	Mean	S.D	t-value	P value
Personal Variables	Order of Birth	1 st or 2 nd	128	32.430	5.0082	-	0.734
		Above 2 nd	137	32.197	4.6634	0.340	
	Number of Siblings	Up to 2	63	33.206	4.8232	-	0.161
		3 and above	72	32.667	4.2060	1.406	
	Marital Status	Married	59	32.881	4.6464	0.708	0.480
		Unmarried	87	32.362	4.7664		
	Optional Subject	Science	113	32.124	4.132	-	0.183
		Art	87	33.023	5.3808	1.337	
	Educational Qualification	UG	129	32.783	5.1066	1.081	0.281
		PG	71	32.028	3.9278		

Familial Variables	Father's Occupation	Employed	40	33.475	3.0800	1.440	0.151
		Unemployed	160	32.275	5.0332		
	Mother's Occupation	Employed	40	66.805	10.279	0.779	0.437
		Unemployed	160	67.651	4.580		
	Family Status	Nuclear	132	32.023	4.5742	-	0.040*
		Joint	68	33.471	4.9004		
Monthly Income	Below Rs.10000	96	33.052	4.0272	1.550	0.123	
	Above Rs.10000	104	32.019	5.2602			
Institutional Variables	Type of Administration	Autocratic	42	31.833	5.3279	-	0.294
		Democratic	158	32.696	4.5536		
	Type of School	Government	74	31.662	4.5157	-	0.050
		Private	126	33.016	4.7916		
	Medium of Instruction	Tamil	168	32.321	4.5086	-	0.185
		English	32	33.531	5.7079		

* Significant at 5% level.

Table -2 t- Test for the Academic Achievement of Prospective Teachers with Regard to the Background Variables

Group	Variable	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	P value	
Personal Variables	Order of Birth	Up to 2	128	67.267	6.876	0.658	0.511
		Above 2	72	67.862	4.531		
	Number of Siblings	Up to 2	137	67.233	6.837	0.845	0.399
		Above 2	63	68.022	4.203		
	Marital Status	Married	59	68.256	3.835	1.157	0.249
		Unmarried	141	67.157	6.853		
Optional Subject	Science	113	67.515	7.447	0.088	0.930	
	Art	87	67.438	3.839			
Educational Qualification	UG	129	66.302	6.752	3.790	0.000**	
	PG	71	69.625	4.031			
Familial Variables	Father's Occupation	Employed	62	67.806	9.112	0.501	0.617
		Unemployed	138	67.366	4.189		
	Mother's Occupation	Employed	40	66.805	10.279	0.779	0.437
		Unemployed	160	67.651	4.580		
	Family Status	Nuclear	132	68.288	4.656	2.630	0.009*
		Joint	68	65.916	8.091		
Monthly Income	Below Rs.5000	96	66.501	7.408	2.194	0.029*	
	Above Rs.5000	104	68.387	4.502			
Institutional Variables	Type of Administration	Autocratic	42	67.679	3.189	0.234	0.815
		Democratic	158	67.429	6.706		
	Type of School	Government	74	65.778	8.253	3.074	0.002**
		Private	126	68.482	4.163		
	Medium of Instruction	Tamil	168	67.294	6.294	0.991	0.323
		English	32	68.466	5.165		

** Significant at 1% level.

* Significant at 5% level.

Table - 3 Correlation between Self Esteem and Academic Achievement

Variable	N	r	P value	Remarks
Self Esteem	200	-0.101	0.154	No Correlation
Academic Achievement	200			

1.
 - a) There was no significant difference in the self esteem of prospective teachers with regard Optional Subject, Educational Qualification, Marital Status, Father's Occupation, Mother's Occupation, Monthly Income and Type of School.
 - b) There was significant difference in the self esteem of prospective teachers with regard to Family Status. The mean scores show that the prospective teachers coming from Joint Family had more self esteem than prospective teachers coming from Nuclear Family.
2.
 - a) There was no significant difference in the academic achievement of prospective teachers with regard to Optional Subject, Marital Status, Mother's Occupation, Monthly Income, Educational Qualification, Family Status, Type of Administration, Type of School and Medium of Instruction.
 - b) There was significant difference in the academic achievement of prospective teachers with regard to Educational Qualification. The mean scores show that the Educational Qualification - PG had more emotional maturity than Educational Qualification - UG.
 - c) There was significant difference in the academic achievement of prospective teachers with regard to Family Status. The mean scores show that the Family Status - nuclear had more emotional maturity than Family Status - joint.
 - d) There was significant difference in the academic achievement of prospective teachers with regard to Monthly Income. The mean scores show that the Monthly Income - above Rs. 5000 had more emotional maturity than Monthly Income - below Rs. 5000.
 - e) There was significant difference in the academic achievement of prospective teachers with regard to Type of School. The mean scores show that the Type of School - private had more emotional maturity than Type of School - government.
3. There was significant correlation between self Esteem and academic achievement of prospective teachers.

Educational Implications of the Study

The modest correlation between self-esteem and performance do not indicate that high self-esteem leads to good performance. Instead, high self-esteem is partly the result of good school performance. Efforts to boost the self-esteem of student teachers have not been shown to improve academic performance and may sometimes be counterproductive. Stress management techniques in addition to reducing stress, improve self-esteem.

Also meditation helps students to improve their self-esteem. Transcendental meditation reduces stress and improves attention resulting in enhanced academic performance. So student teachers shall be given training in the above said practices. Yogic practices like asana, pranayama, and vedic chanting may improve adjustment among chronically stressed and disadvantaged students by enhancing self-esteem. Thus student teachers shall be acquainted with Yoga. Moreover, self-enhancing humor which is utilized to maintain self-esteem shall be given preference in their training. Universities may pay particular attention to the distress of students during the initial transition period to Training Colleges. Students who lack the protective resources provided by positive personality features and experience distress, have an especially strong need for support to increase their self-esteem. Universities can provide counseling services and workshops to student teachers. Further, universities may help transitional students maintain or develop optimism, hope, happiness and heighten their self-esteem since these characteristics may be especially beneficial for first-year college students as they struggle to deal with an array of stressful situations during their adjustment to life as a student teacher.

Initially, at biological level, low self-esteem increases cortisol levels and provokes dysfunction of HPA axis indicating the link with stress. Then, we notice that early stress in life, reduces the self-esteem of children making them vulnerable to develop depression in the future. Moreover, studies show that self-esteem is associated directly and indirectly to the development of depression. Specifically, low self-esteem combined with stress can be a risk factor for developing depression. Furthermore, self-esteem plays an important role in stress experienced by students. In particular, students with high self-esteem can efficiently manage stress and therefore have better academic performance. Finally, there are many stress management techniques that improve people's self-esteem for example yoga, meditation, humor, mindfulness and counselling. Therefore, we conclude that techniques of stress management can improve people's self-esteem, which can be as a buffer against psychological disorders plus improving both personal and professional quality of life.

Conclusion

People high in self-esteem claim to be more likable and attractive, to have better relationships, and to make better impressions on others than people with low self-esteem, but objective measures disconfirm most of these beliefs. Narcissists are charming at first but tend to alienate others eventually. Self-esteem has not been shown to predict the quality or duration of relationships. High self-esteem makes people more willing to speak up in groups and to criticize the group's approach. Leadership does not stem directly from self-esteem, but self-esteem may have indirect effects. Low self-esteem is more likely than high to lead to depression under some circumstances. Relative to people with low self-esteem, those with high self-esteem show stronger in-group favoritism, which may increase prejudice and discrimination. Thus it is the need of the hour to develop the self-

esteem of student teachers so that they may play their role as effective teachers in their career.

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