

Self-esteem and Academic Achievement of Adolescents

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The present study was undertaken to investigate the self-esteem and academic achievement of urban and rural adolescents, and to examine the gender differences in self-esteem and academic achievement. The sample of this study consisted of 400 adolescents (200 urban and 200 rural) from Varanasi District. The boys and girls (aged 12 to 14) were equally distributed among the urban and rural sample. Self-esteem was measured by Self-esteem questionnaire and academic achievement was measured by academic school records. The findings indicated that there were no significant differences with regard to self-esteem of rural and urban adolescents. There were significant differences with regard to academic achievement of rural and urban adolescents. Urban adolescents scored higher in academic achievement as compared to rural adolescents. Boys would score significant higher on self-esteem as compared to girls. Significant gender differences were found in academic achievement. Girls were significantly higher on academic achievement as compared to boys.

Self-esteem continues to be one of the most commonly researched concepts in social psychology (Baumeister, 1993; Wells & Marwell, 1976; Wylie, 1979). Teachers, administrators and parents are commonly concerned about students' self-esteem. Its significance is often exaggerated to the extent that low self-esteem is viewed as the cause of all evil and high self-esteem as the cause of all good (Manning, Bear & Minke, 2006). Self-esteem is associated with depression, anxiety, motivation and general satisfaction with one's life (Harter, 1986; Rosenberg, 1986). Given these associations, children and adolescents who lack self-esteem may be more dependent on their parents and have lower academic and vocational goals. Moreover, the belief is widespread that raising an individual's self-esteem (especially that of a child or adolescent) would be beneficial for both the individual and society as a whole.

Self-esteem can be defined as an individual's attitude about him or herself, involving self-evaluation along a positive-negative dimension (Baron & Byrne, 1991). Most generally self-esteem refers to an individual's overall positive evaluation of the self (Rosenberg, 1990; Rosenberg, Carmi, & Carrie, 1995). It is composed of two distinct dimensions, competence and worth. The competence dimension (efficacy based self-esteem) refers to the degree to which people see themselves as capable and efficacious. The worth dimensions (worth based self-esteem) refer to the degree to which individuals feel they are the persons to be valued. In the words of Nathaniel Branden, (1992) self-esteem is the disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and as worthy of happiness. Similarly, Reasoner (2005), has defined self-esteem as the experience of being

capable of meeting life challenges and being worthy of happiness.

Academic achievement is considered as a key criterion to judge one's total potentialities and capabilities. Therefore it is more pressing for the individuals/ students to have high academic achievement. The term achievement refers to the degree or the level of success attained in some specific school tasks especially scholastic performance, in this sense academic achievement means the attained ability to perform school tasks, which can be general or specific to a given subject matter. Academic achievement could be defined as self-perception and self-evaluation of one's objective academic success. Academic achievement generally indicates the learning outcomes of pupil. Achievement of those learning outcomes requires a series of planned and organized experiences. Good (1973), has defined, academic achievement as knowledge attitude or skill developed in the school subject usually designed by test scores or by marks assigned by teacher or by both. Consequently, academic achievement could be defined as self perception and self evaluation of one's objective success.

During the last three decades, the general trend in the research literature suggests that certain types of socio-cultural environments are generally associated with lower level of aspiration, language deficiencies and minimal occupational and social adjustment. DuBois, Burk, Braston, Swenson, Tevendale and Hardesty (2002) revealed that environment has been shown to play important role in determining trajectories of adolescent's self-esteem. Researchers have noted the particular vulnerabilities of rural youth, who tended to more isolated and have to fewer educational, recreational and other public health resources (Apostol & Bilden, 1991; Markstrom, Marshall & Tryon, 2000; Hurray & Keller, 1991). In addition, relative to urban and suburban communities, rural settings are characterized by greater isolation, fewer

educational and public health resources, and higher levels of poverty (Apostol & Bilden, 1991; Markstrom, Marshall & Tryon, 2000; Hurray & Keller, 1991). This, in turn, may lead lower aspiration, self-esteem, self-concept and fewer opportunities for success (Housley, Martin McCoy & Greenhouse, 1987; Markstrom et al. 2000). Devi and Prashani (2004) reported that pupils staying in rural area generally suffer from social and cultural deprivation in comparison with urban pupils. There are indications from research that the environment plays a determining role student in self-esteem. Student come from urban environment are found to be superior as compared to the students from the urban environments. The important social changes in the adolescents included increased peer group influence, more mature patterns of social behavior new social groupings and social acceptance. For the proper development of child, organized and effective environment in the family and his social world are pre-requisites. An absence of these means in deprived environment affects their mental health.

The relationship of socio-cultural environments of students and academic achievement has been explored by many researchers. Joshi (1988) found that rural and urban students do not differ in academic achievement whereas Grewal and Singh (1987) found rural students significantly higher on the level of academic performance. In Singh's (1970) study, significantly larger percentage of low achievers came from rural area. The figure being of low achievers 62.11 as against 46.5 percent for high achievers. Again 51.35 percent high achievers belonged to cities as against 37.89 percent of low achievers. Roscigno, and Crowley (2001) note that the academic performance of rural children typically lags behind that of urban and suburban children. This claim has been borne out the more recent work suggesting that contextual factors can contribute to low esteem and poor academic performance.

Gender can also affect the level of self-esteem and academic achievement. Girls experience low self-esteem as compared to boys (Carlson, Uppal & Prosser 2000; DuBois et al., 2002). O'Brien (1991) examined sex difference in self-esteem and reported that men scored significantly higher in global self-esteem than women. A majority of other researchers (Kelikangas-Jarvimen, 1990, Sekaran, 1983) have also observed that male students' scored higher on the self-esteem than female students. Kling, Hyde, Showers and Buswell (1999) and Rabbins et al. (2002) have also reported that adolescent boys have higher self-esteem than adolescent girls.

In the terms of academic achievement girls were better than boys. Dornbusch et al. (1987) reported that girls students tended to get higher grades than Boys. Tinku and Biswas (1994) found that girls are more involved in their studies than boys and get more marks.

Objectives:

- i. To examine the gender differences in self-esteem.
- ii. To examine the gender differences in academic achievement
- iii. To study the self-esteem of adolescents in rural and urban areas.
- iv. To find out the differences in academic achievement of rural and urban adolescents.

Hypotheses:

- i. Girls would have higher level of academic achievement than boys.
- ii. Boys would have higher level of self-esteem than girls.
- iii. Urban adolescents would have higher level of self-esteem than rural adolescents.
- iv. Urban adolescents would have high level of academic achievement than rural adolescents.

Method

Sample:

The study was conducted on 200 urban adolescents (100 boys and 100 girls) and 200 rural adolescents (100 boys and 100 girls) of Varanasi district aged 12 to 14 years studying in 8th, 9th & 10th, grades. 2 (urban and rural area) x 2 (boys and girls) factorial design was used.

Measures:

The Rosenberg self-esteem questionnaire (Rosenberg, 1965): The scale consists of ten items. Half of the items are positively worded and half of those were negatively worded. The positive and negative items were presented in random order to reduce the effect of respondent set. The items were scored on a four point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. All items were only related to the self acceptance aspect of self-esteem and not with any others. Rosenberg (1965) reported 0.92 reproducibility coefficient for his scale. The Rosenberg self-esteem questionnaire has adapted for Indian population (Prashant & Arora 1988) taking into consideration the basic technical requirements. All items were translated into Hindi. Back translation was done by bilinguals and was found to be similar to the original set of items. The Hindi version was then administered on an Indian sample (100) the coefficient of reproducibility was checked for the Indian version and was found to be 0.89. High score on the scale indicates high self-esteem, coefficient of test retest reliability was found to be 0.80. Validity was checked by correlating the test with Beck Depression Inventory and it was found to be 0.45.

Academic achievement: The marks of students in the two previous annual school examinations were obtained from the school records to get an index of academic achievement.

Results:

The self-esteem and academic achievement scores of adolescents of rural and urban area are presented and discussed.

Table 1: Mean, SD, of academic achievement and self-esteem of urban and rural boys (n=100) and girls (n=100)

Resi	gender	Mean	SD
Academic achievement			
Urban	Boys	610.25	105.18
	Girls	645.29	97.90
	Total	627.77	102.86
Rural	Boys	568.18	95.95
	Girls	622.89	86.68
	Total	595.53	95.24
Total	Boys	589.21	102.61
	Girls	634.09	92.91
	Total	611.65	100.30
Self-esteem			
Urban	Boys	20.26	4.04
	Girls	20.07	4.98
	Total	20.16	4.52
Rural	Boys	21.85	4.66
	Girls	19.04	3.85
	Total	20.44	4.49
Total	Boys	21.05	4.43
	Girls	19.55	4.47
	Total	20.30	4.50

The obtained value of $F=21.55$ are found to be significant at .001 levels (df 1 and 396). It shows that gender has significant effect on academic achievement. At the look of means of two groups indicates that mean score of girls ($M=634.09$) is higher than the mean scores of boys ($M=589.21$). It means girls have higher level of academic achievement than boys. Thus our hypothesis that girls would have high level of academic achievement than boys has been accepted.

F ratio for gender on self-esteem is found to be 11.56 which is significant of 0.01 levels (df 1 and 396). At the look of means of two groups indicates that mean score of boys ($M=21.05$) is higher than the mean scores of girls ($M=19.55$). It means boys have higher level of academic achievement than girls.

Hence our hypothesis that boys have higher level of self-esteem than girls has been accepted.

The obtained value of $F=11.12$ are found to be significant at .05 levels (df 1 and 396). It shows that area has significant effect on academic achievement. At the look of means of two groups indicates that mean score of urban adolescents ($M=627.77$) is higher than the mean scores of rural adolescents ($M=595.53$). It means urban adolescents have higher level of academic achievement than rural adolescents. Thus our hypothesis that urban adolescents would have high level of academic achievement has been accepted.

F ratio for area on self-esteem is found to be .403 which is not significant of any level of df 1 and 396. Thus it can be concluded that as far as self-esteem is concerned, area does not play any role. Hence our hypothesis that urban adolescent has higher level of self-esteem than rural adolescents stands rejected.

The F ratio for gender X area interaction came out to be 1.03 which is not significant at any level of confidence for df 1 and 396. It indicates that difference between means of boys and girls urban area is not significantly different from the difference between means of boys and girls for rural adolescents on the variable of academic achievement.

It may be observed that F ratio for interaction between gender and area came out to be 8.82 ($p<0.05$) which is found significant for df 1 and 396. This indicates that the difference between males and females is not independent on the levels of area, equivalently, the difference between urban and rural area effect is not independent on the level of sex. In other words, different levels of sex and area interact significantly in determining self-esteem.

Discussion

The study indicates that the main effect of gender was found significant, revealing that male and female adolescents are significantly different as far as academic achievement are

concerned. Female adolescents were found significantly superior on academic achievement than male adolescents. The research literature reveals that sex differences have been studied by many researchers in academic achievement of school going adolescents, but there is no unanimity in the findings. Dornbusch et al. (1987) reported that girls students tended to get higher grades than Boys. Tinku and Biswas (1994) found that girls are more involved in their studies than boys and get more marks. Eccles (2002) reported to their studies that young women have slightly higher grades than young men.

The main effect of gender was found significant, indicating that male and female adolescents are significantly different as far as self-esteem are concerned. Male adolescents were found significantly superior on self-esteem than female adolescents. Our finding collaborate the earlier findings suggested that boys scored higher scores as compared to Girls. O'Brien (1998) examined sex difference in self-esteem and reported that men scored significantly higher in global self-esteem than woman. A majority of other researchers (Kelikangas-Jarvimen, 1990, Sekaran, 1983) have also observed that male student scored higher on the self-esteem than female students. Kling, Hyde, Showers & Buswell (1999) and Rabbins et al., (2002) have also reported that adolescent s' boys have higher self-esteem than adolescents' girls.

The second main effect of area was found significant showing that there is significant differences among urban and rural area of adolescents on academic achievement urban adolescents have higher level of academic achievement than rural adolescents. The results are in line of Singh's (1970) view that the low achievers cover significantly larger percentage belongs to rural area. Roscigno, and Crowley (2001) note that the academic performance of rural children typically lags behind that of urban and suburban children.

The main effect of area was not found significant. It indicates that there are no differences among urban and rural area of adolescents on self-esteem among urban and rural adolescents. It is due to the fact that both urban and rural sample are derived from same school and due to modernization the differences are not existed in this sample.

Conclusion

From the above results we can conclude that no significant differences were found with regard to self-esteem of urban and rural adolescents; significant differences were found in academic achievement between urban and rural adolescents such as urban adolescents significantly higher on academic achievement than rural adolescents; significant differences were found with regard to self-esteem between male and female. Male adolescents scored significantly higher on self-esteem than female adolescents; and significant differences existed in academic achievement between male and females. Females were found better than males.

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Received: 05 April, 2009

Revision Received: 29 July, 2009

Accepted: 29 September, 2009

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