Gender and Economic Status Effect on Self-Esteem among College Students

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of the present study was to find out the impact of gender difference in self-esteem between college students and to study the economic status difference in self-esteem among college students. The sample consisted of 60 college students 30 boys (15 were high economic status and 15 were low economic status) and 30 girls (15 were high economic status and 15 were low economic status) college student were selected randomly from various arts college of Rajkot city in Gujarat. Heatherton, T. F. & Polivy, J. (1991) the data was analyzed in terms of mean, SD, and t-test. The result of t-test revealed significant difference in self-esteem between boys and girls college student as compared to girls boys have healthy self-esteem. Result also revealed that students having high economic status were healthy self-esteem than students having low economic status.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Gender, Economic status.

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is a term used in psychology to reflect a person's overall emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. Self-esteem is the perception of one's feeling, thoughts about themselves – how it looks, feels, and moves. It is somewhat based on their daily experiences. Well being and self-esteem both are important for one's. The grade you get an exam, how your friends treat you, as well as ups and downs in a romantic relationship, this all can have temporary impact on your wellbeing. Self esteem relates to how a person thinks and feels about his or her own worth. Body image also refers to the way we see our worth and the way we think that others see our own worth.

On the other hand, high self-esteem consists of the positive thoughts and feelings you have about yourself. In addition, it affects how you think, act, and fell about others, as well as how successful you are in life. The acquisition of high self-esteem involves you becoming the person you want to be, enjoying others more fully, and offering more of yourself to the world. High self-esteem is not competitive or comparative, but it is the state where a person is at peace with-

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- herself or himself. High self-esteem correlates highly with self-reported happiness; whether this is a causal relationship has not been established. Additionally, self-esteem has been found to be related to forgiveness in close relationships, in that people with high self-esteem will be more forgiving than people with low self-esteem.

People with high self-esteem are more likely to minimize the consequences of risky behavior rationalizing risky behavior convincing them that the behavior will not cause harm to themselves or others. This may contribute to behaviors like drinking, taking drugs and engaging in early sexual intercourse as well as other risk taking behaviors. People with high self-esteem consider themselves worthy. They do not pretend them self to be perfect, recognize their limitations, and improve themselves.

Gender has been reported to have an influence on developing self-esteem during adolescence. Boys are more likely to have high self-esteem at this stage of life than girls (McMullin & Cairney, 2004; Robins et al., 2002; Kling, Hyde, Showers & Buswell, 1999). Previous studies also show socioeconomic status to be significantly related to self-esteem. In general, those with higher socioeconomic status report higher self-esteem than those with lower socioeconomic status (Rhodes, Roffman, Reddy & Fredriksen, 2004; Francis & Jones, 1996). Among socioeconomic factors, family income seems to be most related to self-esteem among adolescents (Birndorf et al., 2005). Self-esteem is something that many people struggle with at some point during their lifetime. Self-esteem is defined as the complication of feelings about ourselves that guides our behavior, influences our attitudes, and drives our motivation (Dedmond, 11). Adolescence especially is a period in life with rapid changes that affect self-esteem, shifting expectations, changing roles, and complex relationships (Block, 909).Looking at this aspect the present study was carried out with following objectives:

1. To find out the difference in body image between adult gym users and non-gym users.
2. To study the difference in body image between adult men and women.

METHOD

Participants:

The participants consisted of 60 college students 30 boys (15 were high economic status high than 25,000rs per month and 15 were low economic status low than 25,000rs per month) and 30 girls (15 were high economic status high than 25,000rs per month and 15 were low economic status low than 25,000rs per month) college student were selected randomly from various arts college of Rajkot city in Gujarat. Only F.Y.B.A students were selected

Instruments:

The following tools were employed in the present study:

Personal Data Sheet:

Personal data sheet was prepared to collect some personal information such as age, sex, monthly income etc.

Self Esteem Scale:

Self Esteem Scale constructed by Heatherton, T. F. & Polivy, J. (1991) was used to collect information on this matter. A 20-item scale which measures a participant's self-esteem. The 20 items are subdivided into 3 components of self-esteem: (1) performance self-esteem, social self esteem, and appearance self-esteem. All items are answered using a 5-point scale (1= not at all, 2= a little bit, 3= somewhat, 4= very much, 5= extremely). **Scoring:** Items 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 are reverse-scored. Sum scores from all items and keep scale as a continuous measure of state self esteem. The subcomponents are scored as follows: Performance Self-esteem items: 1, 4, 5, 9, 14, 18, and 19. Social Self-esteem items: 2, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20. Appearance Self-esteem items: 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, 16. The author of this scale reported satisfactory level of reliability and validity.

Procedure:

Participants were contacted individually at their place of living and at their place of workout i.e. gym. Respondents were clearly informed about the purpose of the study. After establishing the rapport with the participants, he/she was asked to understand the general instructions, however the instructions for specific tests were provided separately. When the subjects were comfortable with instructions and ready for testing, questionnaires were given. She/he was asked to answer each and every item of all the administered questionnaires and was ensured that the responses given by him/her would be kept confidential.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

In order to the test hypotheses framed with reference to objective of the study data were analyzed using t-test. When the statistical analysis regarding the impact of gender on self-esteem among college student was carried out interesting results were obtained. These result are presented in table no.1

Table 1: Means, SDs and t-values of body image with reference to gender:

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-value
Boy college students	30	38.23	11.55	09.22**
Girls college students	30	29.01	09.34	

**p<.01, *p<.05, NS= Not significant

Table 1 Indicates that boy had higher mean (M=38.23) for self-esteem than girl college students (M=29.01). It saws that boy had higher self-esteem than girls; the t-value for the significance of difference between mean scores is 09.22, which is significant at 0.01 level.

Results of a few studies are in support of current result as they revealed gender differences in self-esteem. Generally we all know that girls are shyer than boys. Being shy can be a problem for students especially for girl's self-esteem because they may not have enough confidence to see themselves in a positive light. Shyness can be associated with a range of socio-emotional difficulties including poor peer relationships and loneliness (Hughes 213). There is some indication that shy children have greater difficulties in school compared to those students who do not appear to be shy. Some of the difficulties shy students may experience are trouble with school adjustment, forming positive relationships, and having a high sensitivity to less positive classroom climates (Hughes 213).

Table 2: Means, SDs and t-values of body image with reference to economic status.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-value
High economic status	30	40.00	18.51	03.78**
Low economic status	30	27.24	04.45	

**p<.01, *p<.05, NS= Not significant

Table 2 Indicates that students having high economic status had higher mean (M=40.00) for self-esteem than students having low economic status (M=27.24). It saws that students having high economic status had higher self-esteem than students having low economic status; the t-value for the significance of difference between mean scores is 03.78, which is significant at 0.01 levels.

Results of a few studies are in support of current result as they revealed economic status differences in self-esteem. (Riuz, Roosa & Gonzales, 2002; Bergman & Scott, 2001;Robins et al., 2001; Pullman & Allik, 2000) Economic position has a clear impact on developing self-esteem, especially for college students, who are the important stage of adolescence. Our findings imply that lower economic status is an indicator of lower feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. Adolescents of low economic status seem to be a more vulnerable group in the comparison to their peers of higher economic status.

CONCLUSION:

Thus, results of the present study portrayed that boy student and having high economic status student were higher self-esteem than girls and having low economic status student. School and classroom settings can be a factor in building a students' self-perception or esteem since this is where children make most of their peer connections. Creating positive school atmospheres, where students can connect with others, will help them become successful, self-confident students (Caselman, 369).

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