



SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Dr. Raj Bala

Assistant Professor

Pratap College of Education, Jundla, Karnal, Haryana, India

Abstract

Self-esteem refers to the perception and evaluation individuals develop about themselves over time. It represents the values, beliefs, and attitudes individuals hold regarding their abilities and personal worth. Students with high self-esteem generally exhibit greater confidence, emotional stability, and the ability to cope with academic challenges effectively. Conversely, low self-esteem may lead to feelings of inadequacy and poor academic engagement. Academic achievement represents the level of success students attain in educational settings and plays a significant role in shaping their future educational and career opportunities. The present study aims to examine the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among secondary school students. The objectives of the study include examining gender differences in self-esteem and academic achievement and exploring the relationship between these two variables. The study adopted a descriptive survey method. A sample of 120 students from government and private secondary schools of Karnal district in Haryana was selected using a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and students' academic records. The findings indicate a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, suggesting that students with higher self-esteem tend to perform better academically.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Academic Achievement, Secondary School Students, Personality Development, Education

Introduction

Human behavior is a complex phenomenon and understanding it has long been a central concern of scholars. In earlier times, philosophers attempted to explain human behavior through speculative reasoning. Gradually, psychology emerged as a scientific discipline focusing on empirical observation and systematic investigation of human behavior.

Self-esteem is an important psychological construct that reflects the evaluation individuals make about their own worth and capabilities. It represents how individuals perceive themselves and their abilities in various domains of life. Self-esteem is closely associated with personal beliefs about skills, abilities, and social relationships. According to Murphy, Stosny, and Morrel (2005), self-esteem can be viewed as a global indicator of self-evaluation involving cognitive judgments about self-worth and emotional reactions toward oneself. Similarly, Wang and Ollendick (2001) state that self-esteem involves an individual's evaluation of oneself followed by emotional responses to that evaluation.

In educational settings, self-esteem plays a significant role in shaping students' motivation, confidence, and academic performance. Students with positive self-esteem are more likely to participate actively in classroom activities, take academic risks, and cope effectively with academic challenges.

Positive Effects of Self-Esteem



Self-esteem is closely related to the concepts of self-image and self-concept. A positive self-view is essential for psychological well-being and personal growth. High self-esteem contributes to happiness, emotional stability, and effective coping mechanisms.

As early as 1890, **William James** emphasized the significance of self-esteem in psychological well-being. Individuals with high self-esteem are better able to manage stressful situations, develop meaningful relationships, and regulate their behavior toward achieving goals. Research by Di Paula and Campbell (2002) also indicates that individuals with higher self-esteem demonstrate greater self-regulation and goal-directed behavior.

Negative Effects of Low Self-Esteem

Low self-esteem often results in feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and dissatisfaction with life. Individuals with low self-esteem tend to develop negative attitudes toward themselves and their surroundings (Ha, 2006). According to Mackinnon (2015), individuals with low self-esteem frequently perceive themselves as inadequate and may develop pessimistic attitudes toward life.

Low self-esteem has also been associated with psychological problems such as depression, aggression, and reduced ability to cope with challenges. Research indicates that adolescents with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to emotional and behavioral problems (Stavropoulos et al., 2015).

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement refers to the level of performance students attain in educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities. It represents the extent to which students achieve educational goals and learning outcomes. Academic achievement can be measured through various indicators including examination scores, grades, standardized test results, and educational qualifications.

Indicators such as Grade Point Average (GPA) and standardized assessments play a crucial role in determining students' educational progression and future career opportunities. Academic achievement therefore not only influences individual success but also contributes to the social and economic development of a nation.

Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement

Self-esteem and academic achievement are closely interconnected variables that influence students' overall development. Academic self-esteem refers to an individual's perception of his or her competence in academic activities and the confidence to overcome educational challenges.

Students with high self-esteem generally demonstrate greater motivation, persistence, and resilience in academic tasks. In contrast, students with low self-esteem may experience anxiety, lack of confidence, and fear of failure, which can negatively affect their academic performance.

The investigator observed that many adolescents experience academic difficulties due to factors such as parental expectations, sibling comparisons, and lack of confidence. Therefore, understanding the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement is essential for improving students' educational outcomes.



Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the significant difference between boys and girls in relation to self-esteem among secondary school students.
 2. To examine the significant difference between government and private school students in relation to self-esteem.
 3. To examine the significant difference between boys and girls in relation to academic achievement.
 4. To examine the significant difference between government and private school students in relation to academic achievement.
 5. To examine the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among secondary school students.
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Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in relation to self-esteem among secondary school students.
 2. There is no significant difference between government and private school students in relation to self-esteem.
 3. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in relation to academic achievement.
 4. There is no significant difference between government and private school students in relation to academic achievement.
 5. There is no significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among secondary school students.
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Methodology

The present study adopted the **normative survey method**. The sample consisted of **120 secondary school students** selected from government and private schools of **Karnal district, Haryana** using a **simple random sampling technique**.

Tools of Data Collection

The following tools were used for data collection:

1. **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale** to measure students' level of self-esteem.
 2. **Academic Achievement Records**, measured through the total marks obtained by students in their previous class examinations.
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Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

Comparison of Self-Esteem between Boys and Girls



Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Boys	60	21.45	3.12	1.21	Not Significant
Girls	60	22.18	3.05		

Interpretation:

The results indicate that there is **no significant difference between boys and girls in relation to self-esteem.**

Table 2

Comparison of Academic Achievement between Boys and Girls

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Result
Boys	60	68.40	8.50	2.01	Significant
Girls	60	71.20	7.90		

Interpretation:

The findings show a **significant difference between boys and girls in academic achievement**, with girls performing slightly better.

Table 3

Correlation between Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement

Variables	Correlation (r)	Result
Self-Esteem & Academic Achievement	0.46	Positive Correlation

Interpretation:

The correlation coefficient indicates a **moderate positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement.**

Major Findings

1. There is no significant difference between boys and girls regarding self-esteem.
 2. A significant difference exists between boys and girls in academic achievement.
 3. Students with higher self-esteem tend to perform better academically.
 4. A positive relationship exists between self-esteem and academic achievement among secondary school students.
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Educational Implications

1. Teachers should encourage students and provide constructive feedback to strengthen their self-confidence.
 2. Schools should organize counselling programs and personality development activities to enhance students' self-esteem.
 3. Parents should avoid negative comparisons and unrealistic expectations from children.
 4. A supportive classroom environment can significantly improve both self-esteem and academic performance.
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Conclusion

Self-esteem plays a crucial role in determining students' academic success and overall personality development. Students with higher self-esteem tend to demonstrate greater confidence, motivation, and resilience in their academic activities. The findings of the present study reveal a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among secondary school students. Therefore, teachers, parents, and educational institutions should work collaboratively to nurture healthy self-esteem among students to promote better academic outcomes and holistic development.

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