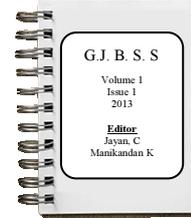Guru Journal of Behavioral and Social Sciences

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Self-Esteem among Upper Primary School students in Kerala

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Abstract

Satisfaction of self-esteem need leads to the feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness. These feelings in turn give raise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends. This study tries to find out the extent of self esteem among upper primary school students of Kerala and tests whether significant mean difference exist in subgroups based on gender, type of management of school and locality of school. Result revealed that upper primary school students have Self-Esteem only at a moderate level and there is significant difference in Self-Esteem of boys and girls and students of Government and Aided schools as well as that of students of Rural and Urban area.   © 2013 Guru Journal Behavioral and Social Sciences

Modern society is very complex and competitive in nature. It makes excessive demand upon its individual. Different groups with different moral standard and different cultural background create different notions of what is right and what is wrong. In the midst of these varying notions the child gets confused and fails to find out the right way of social behavior.

All people (with a few pathological exceptions) have a need or desire for a stable, firmly based, usually high evaluation of themselves, for self-respect or Self-Esteem, and for esteem of others. These needs may therefore be classified in to two subsidiary sets. These are, first, the desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), the second being Status- fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity or appreciation (Maslow, 1970)

Satisfaction of self-esteem need leads to the feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world. But thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, of weakness and of helplessness. These feelings in turn give raise to either basic discouragement or else compensatory or neurotic trends.

According to Rodriguez (2012) the unifactor variable self esteem has three stages, 1) Self-Concept: It is the opinion or impression that the people have themselves their 'identity which develops through the years. Self-concept is a cognitive perceptions and attitudes that people have about them. The self concept is a multidimensional and every one of its dimensions has different roles. A person can be classified as a husband or wife, as a leader, as a parent and friend, etc, these different aspects describe the total personality. The factors that determine the self-concept are attitude or motivation, the body scheme, the aptitude and the external evaluation.

2) Self-Respect: Respecting yourself is essential if you wish to live in harmony with yourself and with others. Respect for oneself is displayed in the following forms. i) Attending and satisfying your own needs and values, ii) Expressing and managing and forming feelings and emotions without harming or blaming anyone and iii) Looking for and valuing everything that makes one feel proud of themselves. Generally when someone starts disrespecting somebody it

is usually because they do not respect themselves. In this case the individuals should start looking at why he is acting in this way. Maslow claims "We can only respect, give and love others when we have respected, given and loved ourselves" without a doubt, deep human relationships are established on respect and Self-Esteem strengthen when we learn to respect ourselves and

3) Self-Knowledge: Know yourself- This is the best advice that has been around for centuries. Therefore, you can only love what you know, if you do not know yourself very well. It is difficult to love yourself. Some questions which people find difficult to answers are: who am I?, Why do I react like this? What made me feel like that etc., if we cannot answer these questions, we do not know ourselves well enough. It is said that when we learn everything about ourselves, then we can live, we cannot live with something or with someone we do not know; nor can we apply capacities, resources or unknown skills. Knowing oneself not only positively affects his Self-Esteem but it also affects his relationship with others, the understanding of the world, the universe.

The International Encyclopedia of Education (1994) states a Self-Esteem theory under the heading of social psychological theories of teaching. Students who are confused as to who they are or who lack confidence in themselves hesitate to attempt difficult and challenging learning tasks. Teachers make their jobs easier in many ways by helping students gain a clear and positive sense of identity and Self-esteem. Every student needs to acquire the same over time, no matters what else has changed in one's life and environment. A person is not born with sense of self. It is during the first two or three years that a kind of crude- self- awareness develops such as being able to make distinction between what is part of his body and what is part of something else. It takes many years of maturation before full adult self-awareness comes in to being. As people develop self awareness they formulate a self conception and develop process through which they derive conclusion about their self-worth. Self Esteem and self identity develop primarily from relationships with other people, including working with others to achieve challenging goals, being known liked and respected by others and knowing others well enough to identify similarities and differences. The more teachers involve students in joint project and allow personal and supportive relationships to develop, the more positive will be students' self identity and Self-Esteem.

Self-Esteem may also be approached from a social learning perspective that emphasizes student's perceived competence and self efficacy which influence the student's choice of tasks willingness to invest effort in task accomplishment, and persistence in the face of subsequent failure perceived. Competence is heavily influenced by initial encounter with novel task or new subject. Individual who experience initial success or failure in some new undertaking tend to infer that they posses relatively high or low aptitude/ competence in that area. Once formed, these beliefs in one's competence are resistant to change. The implication for teaching is that at the beginning of each new class, students should be given success experiences in ways that leads then to believe they have an aptitude for the subject area.

Prema and Raja (2005) have commented that Self-Esteem exerts a powerful influence on people's acceptations, their judgments about themselves and others, and their behavior. People with high Self-Esteem are willing to test the validity of their inferences about themselves. Having a high level of self acceptance, they tend to be accepting of others including those with different opinion and enjoy satisfying relationships with other people. As a result people with high Self-Esteem generally enjoy a great deal of self confidence and have a realistic assessment of their strengths and weakness. In contrast, people with low Self Esteem are generally less willing to put their ideas about themselves to the test and are never really convinced of their own self assessment.

According to proponents of self-theory such as Carl Rogers and others a high degree of self-acceptance and Self-Esteem is important to our well being and social relationship. A high

level of self acceptance helps us to live spontaneously and to be more accepting of others. Low Self-Esteem makes us more guarded and more critical of others.

Self-Esteem is not something one is born with or without, rather it is largely an acquired trait that he can improve. Self esteem is influenced by other people's reaction, but the final authority of one's own self-worth is the individual himself. Researches show that children as well as youth are having less confidence in themselves resulting poor performance and value deterioration (Prema & Raja, 2005). To realize their own potentialities and to get a bright future, their abilities and emotions are to be properly channelized and developed.

Education should be imparted according to the needs and ability of the children. It is the responsibility of the educators as well as the system to identify what the learners are actually capable of and what they need further for their advancement. Education should improvise the existing good qualities of children and correct all the imperfection in him. It is education that makes every individual the proponent of noble character, ideal behavior and corrects thoughts. He should know about himself and his innate abilities, only such a student could with stand the multifarious demands of the society.

Self Esteem helps a person feel good about him, feel competent and anticipate success. Self Esteem emerges with in a child in the age of ten. Studies revealed that Self Esteem is positively related to psychological wellbeing of the people (Kisku & Sasikala, 2011).

It is very important to know the extent of self esteem among students at a tender period itself and find out the needy people for whom special attempts are to be implemented. It is the duty of the parents and teachers to provide a congenial environment for the development of a feeling of self worth among the future citizens which will help them meet the negative experiences of life positively. It will be beneficial to the society and the education system if the level of self esteem among learners at the stage of pre-adolescence is identified so that necessary steps can be taken to improve the same.

Objectives

1. To find out the extent of Self-Esteem among upper primary school students.
2. To find out whether there is significant gender difference in Self Esteem among upper primary school students.
3. To find out whether there is significant locale difference in Self Esteem among upper primary school students
4. To find out whether there is significant difference in the mean score of self esteem among upper primary school students studying in the aided and government schools.

Hypotheses

1. There is significant mean difference in Self-Esteem between subgroups based on Gender.
2. There is significant mean difference in Self-Esteem between subgroups based on Locale.
3. There is significant mean difference in Self-Esteem between subgroups based on Type of management.

Method

Participants

The population under study is upper primry school students of Kerala state. The study was envisaged on a sample of 500 students of standard VII drawn from 13 schools of Kozhikode, Malappuram, Kannur, and Wayanad revenue districts of Kerala. The sample was selected using the stratified sampling technique with the strata as gender, locale and type of management of the school.

Instruments

1. **Self Esteem Inventory**: The variable Self-Esteem was measured using 'Self-Esteem Inventory' developed by Soumya and Vijayakumari (2012). It consists of 19 items with

two possible responses 'agree' and 'disagree'. For a positive statement score provided was '1' for agree and '0' for disagree. For a negative statement score provided was '1' for disagree and '0' for agree. The test-retest reliability co-efficient is .67 showing that inventory can be considered as a reliable one. The inventory is valid to measure the Self-Esteem of students as it was prepared based on theoretical knowledge. The criterion related validity coefficient   is .74 the external criterion being scores on the self-esteem inventory prepared by Manikandan (2003).

2. **Personal Data Sheet:** The relevant information like gender of the pupil, locality of the school, type of management of the school were collected through a personal data sheet.

Procedure

As a prior condition of the administration of the tools, the investigator explained the basic aspects relating to the tools and made them acquainted with the procedure. The respondents were assured of the maintenance of confidentiality of their responses. The response sheets were scored according to the scoring scheme prepared. The scores on Self-Esteem of 500 pupils were consolidated in such a way that data can be analyzed with the help of computer. Statistical techniques like one sample t-test, 99 percent confidence interval for Mean, and test of significance mean difference for large independent groups were used according to the objectives of the study and the hypotheses to be tested.

Results and Discussion

The mean score obtained for the total sample is 13.18 with standard deviation 3.27. When tested for significance it was found to be greater than the middle value on the inventory (The critical ratio being 25.21). The 99 percent confidence interval for the mean score of self esteem for the population is (12.80, 13.56). Hence it can be inferred that the population has a moderate level of self esteem as the population mean will be between 12,80 and 13.56 with a probability of .99..

In order to check whether there exist significant mean difference in Self-Esteem between the subgroups based on gender, locale and type of management test of significance of difference between means for large independent samples was used. The details of mean comparison of Self Esteem of Boys and Girls, Government and Aided school students and Rural and Urban school students are given in table 1.

Table 1

Mean Comparison of Self Esteem of sub groups based on Gender, Type of management and Locale.

Group	Mean	SD	N	't'
Boys	13.68	3.31	236	3.29**
Girls	12.73	3.18	264	
Govt.	13.55	3.31	200	2.08*
Aided	12.93	3.23	300	
Urban	13.66	3.42	308	4.20**
Rural	12.41	2.87	192	

*p≤ .05, **p≤ .01

A table 1 show that the critical ratio (t value) obtained for the variable Self-Esteem between boys and girls is 3.29. As the calculated value is greater than the tabled value for significance at .01 level, the means of the two groups, boys and girls differ significantly in their Self-Esteem. A close observation of the mean scores suggests that boys are higher in their self

esteem than the girls. This significant difference observed in the self esteem of boys and girls may be due the cultural practices of the society which give priority to boys than girls. This result of significant gender difference in self esteem is concomitant with that of Kling, Kristen and Shibley (1999) but against that of George and Bindhu (2011) and Ranganathan (2008) whose samples were teachers and student teachers respectively.

The 't' value obtained for the variable Self-Esteem in the case of subsamples based on Type of management is 2.08 which is greater than 1.96, the required value of 't' for significance at .05 level. This suggests that the students of Govt. and Aided upper primary schools differ significantly in their Self Esteem.

Mean scores on Self-Esteem indicate that the Govt. School students are higher in Self-Esteem than the aided school students. It indicates a possibility of difference in experience received by students in Government and Aided schools which foster self esteem of the learners.

The value of critical ratio is 4.20 which is greater than 2.58, the required value of 't' for significance at .01 level indicating a significant difference in the self esteem of rural and urban school students. Mean scores of Self-Esteem indicate that the students in Urban area is higher in Self-Esteem than the students in rural area suggesting a possibility of better experiences and opportunities for urban students for the development of their self esteem compared to that of students in rural area.

Conclusion

The study revealed that upper primary school students have Self-Esteem only at a moderate level and there is significant difference in Self-Esteem of boys and girls and students of Government and Aided schools as well as that of students of Rural and Urban area.

The findings of the study and conclusions drawn helped the investigator to suggest some measures to increase Self-Esteem among upper primary school students. Result of the study reveals that the upper primary school students' posses only a moderate level of Self-Esteem. To increase Self-Esteem among students, teachers should ensure the feeling of success among students through participation in academic activities and through the participation in extracurricular activities including NCC, NSS, JRC, Scout and Guides etc. The study revealed that boys and girls differ in their Self-Esteem and girls have comparatively low Self-Esteem. This put forwards some questions towards the society and its practices about the gender equity. Though gender equity is ensured in the Constitution of India and all other legal agendas, what the girl children receive is far away from the expected. In class rooms, teachers should make sure the equal participation of girls and boys in all curricular and co-curricular activities. In family also girl children should be given equal opportunities as boys get so that they can improve their Self-Esteem. The period of early adolescence is crucial in the emotional development of children and parents should be given awareness programmes on development of Self-Esteem among their wards.

Students of rural area are found to have comparatively low Self-Esteem than urban students. To improve Self-Esteem of students in rural area BRC and Director of District Education should take initiatives to conduct camps, exhibitions, workshops and personality development programmes. Aided school students show low Self-Esteem compared to Government school students. The Aided school authorities should make sure the existence of cordial relationship between students and teachers, reduce stress among them and arrange peaceful and interactive atmosphere in the school.

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