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SELF-ESTEEM AS A FUNCTION OF SEX, INTELLIGENCE, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

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Abstract

Two hundred and sixteen subjects were administered state self-esteem scale by Heatherton and Polivy. Influence of sex, intelligence and socio-economic status was examined in the study. It was hypothesized that males develop significantly better self-esteem than females; the subjects with HIQ have significantly better self-esteem than LIQ subjects; and the subjects coming from HSES develop significantly better self-esteem than the subjects coming from LSES background. A 2×2×2 factorial design was used. Data were treated by three-way ANOVA. Results supported the last two hypotheses. Hypotheses related to sex remained unsatiated.

Introduction

Self, self-concept and self-esteem attracted the attention of psychologists since the last fifty years. Previously, only global self-esteem was measured. But since the last two decades psychologists insist that instead of explicit approach, implicit approach needs to be used in measuring self-esteem. In implicit approach, along with global self-esteem, its components are also approach. Such scales are also constructed which measure different components of self-esteem and global self-esteem also. Global self-esteem has special significance in the life of every individual as it colours our feelings about our traits and abilities, and colours our memories and thoughts (Myers, 1996). Self-esteem also helps in maintaining positive emotions (Smith & Petty, 1995).

Crocker & Wolfe (2001) stated that if we see ourselves as attractive, athletic, and smart and destined to be rich and loved, we are most likely to have high self-esteem. "One person may have self-esteem that is highly contingent – on doing well in school and physically attractive, whereas another may have self-esteem that is contingent on being loved by God and adhering to moral standards". Thus the first person will feel high self-esteem when made to feel smart and good and loving, the second person when made to feel moral (See Myers, 2011).

Sex difference with regards to self-esteem was studied in different category of people. Men generally have higher self-esteem than women do, although the difference is not large. Major et al. (1999) found that the self-esteem difference between men and women was less among those in the professional class and greatest among those in the middle and lower class. Orth, Trzesniewski & Robins (2010) found that those women who have attained culturally desirable positions suffer less self-esteem loss than those who are more likely to experience the greatest devaluation. In fact, higher education is associated with better self-esteem in women across the lifespan.

Women's self-esteem is influenced primarily by their perception of their sense of interdependence and connection with others. In contrast, men's self-esteem stems from their assessment of their unique characteristics and abilities, traits that help them distinguish themselves from other people (Gentile et al. 2009). Girls' self-esteem was

significantly lower than boys' self-esteem and that girls rated their relationship as stronger, more interpersonally rewarding and more stressful than boys did (Thomus & Daubman, 2001).

In India, most of the minority groups are disadvantaged in terms of education, occupation, and income. Due to their low social, educational and economic standard they are more likely to develop poor self-esteem compared to those who belonged to high socio-economic status. Crossman (2017) found that in general those with higher socio-economic status have a higher self-esteem than those with a lower socio-economic status. One of the major factors of the socio-economic status that affects self-esteem is family's income among individuals. Members of racial, religious, and ethnic minorities may have special issues related to self-esteem. Because of prejudice, minority group members are likely to see a negative image of themselves reflected in appraisals by members of other groups (Poster & Washington, 1993).

Research studies also show that self-esteem is also influenced by intelligence (See Bachman & O'Malley, 1997; Maruyama & others, 1981). Present study is designed to examine the effect of sex, intelligence, and socio-economic status (SES) on the development of global self-esteem.

Aim of the study

Main aim of the study is to evaluate the role of sex, intelligence and SES on the global self-concept of undergraduate students.

Hypotheses

- Males have significantly better self-esteem than females.
- The subjects having high intelligence develop significantly better self-esteem than the subjects having low intelligence.
- The subjects coming from high socio-economic status background (HSES) develop significantly better self-esteem than the subjects coming from low socio-economic status background (LSES).

Sample

Total sample consists of 216 subjects. Their age range was 19 to 21 years. Educational status was undergraduate. Male female ratio was 1:1.

Tools Used for Data Collection

State Self Esteem Scale -

The scale was constructed by Heatherton and Polivy. It consists of 20 statements. Each statement is provided with five alternatives. The authors have given several reliability indexes.

Culture Fair Test of Intelligence -

The test was constructed and standardized by Cattell. There are four scales of which form A Scale 3 was used. Problems given in the test are based on series, classifications, matrices and conditions. The subject has to complete the test within twelve and half minutes. Several reliability and validity indexes are given by the author. High reliability coefficient is 0.87 and concrete validity is 0.77.

Socio-economic Status Scale -

The scale was constructed by Janbandhu. It was revised in 2018 by Janbandhu and Shubhra Nandi. It consists of 14 questions, which demand factual information about

social, economic and educational standards of family members and family. Test-retest reliability of the scale was 0.83.

Procedure of Data Collection

The subjects were invited in small groups. Their seating arrangement was made in a classroom. After establishing rapport, the test and scales were administered, following the instructions laid down by the respective authors.

Results and Discussion

Means and standard deviations obtained by the eight classified groups on self esteem measure are given in the following table.

Table 1: Means and standard deviations obtained by classified groups on self esteem

Groups		**A1B1 C1**	**A1B1 C2**	**A1B2 C1**	**A1B2 C2**	**A2B1 C1**	**A2B1 C2**	**A2B2 C1**	**A2B2C 2**
Self-esteem	$\bar{X}$	79.37	73.48	69.93	65.81	79.48	73.93	69.85	65.22
	S	8.57	5.58	6.06	4.46	6.15	5.41	4.41	4.29

A1 = Males, A2 = Females, B1 = HIQ, B2 = LIQ, C1 = HSES, C2 = LSES

From the mean values it is clear that the groups differ remarkably from each other. The highest mean value was obtained by group A2B1C1 ($\bar{\bar{X}}$ = 79.48 ± 6.15). The lowest mean was obtained by groups A2B2C2 ($\bar{X}$ = 65.22 ± 4.29). Difference in the highest and lowest mean is large. So, there is every possibility that the groups might differ from each other significantly. To search whether the broad groups differ significantly or not, the data were treated by three-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Table 2: Summary of three-way ANOVA for self-esteem measure

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F
A: Sex	0.04	1	0.04	0.00
B: Intelligence	4240.04	1	4240.04	127.49**
C: Socio-Economic Status	1375.12	1	1375.12	41.35**
A×B:	5.04	1	5.04	0.15
A×C:	0.12	1	0.12	0.00
B×C:	24.67	1	24.67	0.74
A×B×C:	2.45	1	2.45	0.07
Within	6917.63	208	33.26	
Total	12565.11	215		

**Significant at 0.01 level

Summary of ANOVA shows that males and females failed to differ significantly from each other. Main effect A which represents sex brought out non-significant results ($F = 0.00$, $df = 1$ & 208, $p > 0.05$).

The subjects with high intelligence (HIQ) developed significantly better self-esteem than the subjects with low intelligence (LIQ). Main effect B which represents intelligence yielded significant results ($F = 127.49$, df 1 & 208, $p < 0.01$). Mean values obtained by HIQ subjects are larger than the means obtained by LIQ subjects. These results are in line with the assumption of the study.

Socio-economic status (SES) had played an important role in developing self-esteem. Main effect C which denotes SES brought out significant results ($F = 41.35$, df 1 & 208, $p < 0.01$). From the mean values it is clear that the HSES subjects developed significantly better self-esteem than the LSES subjects.

All the three two-factor interaction effects as well as three factor interaction effects were non-significant. They suggest that main factors intelligence and socio-economic status functioned independently while developing self-esteem. Even sex failed to function in collaboration with other factors.

Now-a-days, due to education, modernization and technological advancements, gap between males and females is reducing rapidly. Probably due to this fact, significant sex difference was not found in self-esteem. In India, bridging the SES gap and gap in intelligence is a very difficult task. Both these seem to influence the development of self-esteem in every culture. On the basis of results, following conclusions were drawn.

- Males and females developed more or less similar self-esteem.
- The subjects with HIQ developed significantly better self-esteem than the subjects with LIQ.
- The subjects coming from HSES background developed significantly better self-esteem than the subjects coming from LSES background.

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[Reference not found – Myers, 2011; Crossman , 2017; Porter & Washington, 1993]