

Original Research Article

## **The Relationship between Self-Esteem and Students' Academic Achievement and Some Parental Demographic Factors**

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**Abstract:** Self-esteem is each person's belief about his value and importance. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic achievement and some parental demographic factors. This is a descriptive-analytic study which was conducted on 60 female high school students who were 17-14 years old, in two schools in Region III Education Service Center. Those students whose Coppersmith Self-Esteem Test score was lower than 25.4 were enrolled in this study. Data collection was done by applying demographic information questionnaire and Coppersmith Self-Esteem scale. The relationship between age, parental age, economic status and educational achievement and self-esteem was assessed. Finally, data were analyzed by in SPSS software, using correlation test and ANOVA. Data analysis reported  $15.75 \pm 0.94$  as the mean age of this study population. Demonstrate the correlation coefficient Pearson test a significant relationship in the variables of self-esteem with the student's age ( $r=0.256, p=0.048$ ) and academic achievement ( $p=0.000$ ). However, no significant correlation was observed with the paternal age ( $r=-0.156, p=0.234$ ), maternal age ( $r=0.129, p=0.327$ ), and economic status ( $p=0.634$ ). Results showed the subjects had low self-esteem; despite had a high motivation for academic achievement. It is necessary, further educators and parent's attention to the adolescents' Self-esteem improvement which can lead to more mental health and education and employee efficiency.

**Keywords:** Self-Esteem, Students, Academic Achievement

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

Puberty includes acquisition of fertility as well as mental abilities and corporeal dynamic changes. The rapid phases of internal and external changes imply puberty as a fairly short adventurous event which can bring about a kind of chaos, disorganization, lack of quality, phobia, and mostly undesirable health and social behaviors [1]. Puberty is one of the most important periods of life because of its deep physiological, physical and psychological developments.

Mental development is another notable aspect of puberty. Self-concept is one of its components. This is one's mental imagery of himself, all his emotions, beliefs and values along with the "I". Self-concept isn't an innate feature, but it is a social phenomenon which

can occur as a result of interaction with others [2]. Youth is known as one of the most critical periods of life for its self-concept development [3]. Self-esteem is one's self-concept integral dimensions, and refers to the judgment of oneself about his worthiness or worthlessness, self-acceptance or non-acceptance as well as an attitude toward the self. In fact, one might not see himself as others see him [4]. Self-esteem is one of the human life necessities, and most experts consider it as the main factor in social - emotional adaptation.

Student's low self-esteem leads to educational decline, loneliness, substance abuse, reality avoidance, self-destructive behavior [5]. Self-esteem reflects a person's overall subjective emotional evaluation of his or her own worth which refers to self-confidence in his thinking skills, his rights for success, happiness and

one's need or desire expression, coping with challenges, feeling competent, and enjoying the results of his own efforts [6]. Some scholars consider self-esteem as a cultural protection against anxiety. High self-esteem causes high expectations [7-8].

Studies show that people with high self-esteem are much more confident than those with lower self-esteem, and thus easily reach their goals and self-actualization [9]. Self-esteem has social, academic, physical, family and general dimensions. In regard to academic dimensions, if a student knows himself consistent with desired self-esteem criteria and satisfies his own academic achievement standards, it has a strong academic effect on his individual self-esteem [10]. Students with higher self-esteem have a better educational status [11]. Their self-esteem scores have been used as an academic success predictor [12].

One of the adolescent's problems in mental health field is low self-esteem [13]. In one study 87.4% young people were with low self-esteem and the need for high self-esteem was the most important psychological needs [14]. Influencing factors on self-esteem in adolescents include biological, psychological, environmental, cultural and family factors, besides interpersonal experiences [15]. On the importance of having a positive self-image and self-esteem to provide proper mental health and natural adolescence development, we attempted to perform this study to determine whether there can be a relationship between the adolescents' high school female students' self-esteem and their parent's demographic characteristics, their economic status and academic achievement.

Also, due to the fact that little research has been conducted to describe the subject on high school students in Shiraz city, this study aimed to determine the adolescents' self-esteem and its associated factors in some adolescent high schools for female students in Shiraz.

#### **METHOD:**

This is a cross-sectional survey and descriptive-analytic study on all 14-17 year-old female student's statistical population studying in two schools in Shiraz Region III Education Service Center. Sampling in the first stage was based on cluster sampling. 2 schools were selected as a cluster Region III Education Service Center. In the second stage in each cluster, the girls were selected through simple purposive sampling. According to a pilot sample of students with low self-esteem with average  $35 \pm 4.76$  and Considering the power of 80% and 90% ,The

study sample confidence level consisted of 60 female high school students who were eligible with the following characteristics: female students, aged 17-14 years, with Coppersmith self-esteem test score less than 25.4, and no physical and psychological disease or mental retardation.

Data were collected and examined using demographic information scale and Coppersmith Self-Esteem scale. It includes 58 items, in which 8 items are lie detector, and the rest of the 50 items include 4 subscales of family (parents) self-esteem subscale, educational subscale (school), general self-esteem, and social self-esteem. Each item is scored on a 0-1 scale. Cooper Smith's self-esteem inventory scores' range is 0-50. Scores above 26 indicate high levels of self-esteem and those below 26 indicate lower self-esteem. One point is considered for each question, so total self-esteem score for each student is 50 Items [16].

Cooper Smith prepared self-esteem inventory with revisions on Diamond and Rogers's scale (16) in 1967 [17]. The total Cronbach's Alfa coefficient was 0.88 in Gullon and Herz's study, and five-week test-retest correlation was reported 0.88 as its reliability [18]. The reliability and validity of the Persian version of Cooper smith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSSEI) were obtained 0.84 and 0.85, respectively [19]. To explore the relationship between self-esteem with student's demographic characteristics such as age, parent's education, age and academic achievement, we applied Chi square test. Finally, data were analyzed using SPSS software. Self-esteem and academic achievement divided to 3 groups. Classified them according suggestion statistical supervisor and frequency and the maximum and minimum numbers and scores of each variables for academic achievement was (Low = Less than 13 score, Medium = 13-15 score, High = 15 to top) or self esteem was (extremely low=15-18, very low=19-22, low=23-26).

#### **Ethical Consideration**

All the participants were given an explanation about the objective of the study and their right to participate or not to participate in the study. Written consent form was given before completing the questionnaires. Personal information of the participants was kept confidential (even their name and surname were not mentioned in the questionnaires). The research institutes involved in the study were assured that information and study results would not be made available to any organization or person.

**RESULTS:**

Data analysis reported 15.75±0.94 as the mean age of this study population. The least frequency was for the age 17 (33.18%) and the most one for 16 (70.31%), respectively. Mean paternal age was 49.34±5.93 and for maternal age it was 41.74±4.56 (table1). Findings indicated that most frequency for self-esteem (50%) was in the range 19-22. (table2). Results showed demonstrated no significant relationship between self-esteem with the student's age (p = 0.089). Also, no significant correlation was observed in the paternal age (p=0.367), maternal age (p=0.287) (table3).

In terms of economic issues, 43.4% of our study cases were estimated to have an income between 200-499 thousand Tooman and just 5 percent earned above 1 million Tooman; 31 participants (51.7%) were paid in average. No correlation was found between the students' self-esteem and economic status (p = 0.634) (Table 4). No significant relationship between self-esteem and economic level (p=0.090) (table 5). Also, a significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement (p=0.000) (Table 6).

**Table1: Frequency of mean and standard deviation age of the study population**

Age of students	N(%)
14	13(21.6)
15	17(28.3)
16	19(31.7)
17	11(18.33)
Total	60(100)
Mean±SD	15.75±0.94

**Table2: frequency, mean and standard deviation scores of self-esteem in the population under study**

Self-esteem score	N (%)
15-18*	15(25)
19-22**	30(50)
23-26***	15(25)
Total	60(100)
Mean ± SD	20.2±0.45

\*extremely low, \*\* very low, \*\*\* low

**Table 3: the relationship between demographic variables and self-esteem in the population under study**

Demographic	self-esteem score	15-18	19-22	23-26	total	pv
Student age(year)		N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	N(%)	P=.089*
	15<	5( 8.3 )	7(11.7 )	1( 1.7 )	13( 21.7 )	
	16<	4( 6.7 )	9( 15 )	4(6.7 )	17( 28.3 )	
	17<	4(6.7 )	8( 13.3 )	8( 13.3 )	20( 33.8 )	
	>17	2( 3.3 )	6(0 )	2( 3.3 )	10(16.2 )	
Maternal age	30-40	4(6.7 )	15(25 )	8(13.3 )	27( 45)	P=0.287*
	41-50	11(18.3 )	15( 25 )	7( 11.7 )	33( 55 )	
Father age	30-40	2( 3.3 )	6(10 )	5( 8.3 )	13(21.7 )	P=0.367*
	41-50	7( 11.7 )	19(31.7 )	7(11.7 )	33(55 )	
	>51	6(10 )	5( 8.3 )	3( 5 )	14( 23.3 )	

\* Fisher exact test

**Table 4: The relationship between economic level and self-esteem in the population under study**

Rials	N(%)	M±SD	Lower Bound	upper Bound	PV
Poor(2000000-4990000)	26(43.4)	20 ± 2.36	19.04	20.96	Fisher's exact test:459 P=0.634
Medium(5000000-9990000)	31(51.66)	20.52 ± 2.65	19.54	21.49	
Good(10-20000000)	3(5)	19.33 ± 0.45	8.13	30.53	
Total	60	20.23 ± 2.60	19.56	20.90	

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**Table 5: The relationship between economic level and self-esteem scores in our sample**

Economic level	self-esteem scores				pv
	15-18	19-22	22-26	total	
Poor	0(0)	12(20)	14(23.3)	26(43.3)	Fisher's exact test:7.24 P=0.090
Medium	3(5)	8(13.3)	20(33.3)	31(51.7)	
Good	1(1.7)	1(1.7)	1(1.7)	3(5)	
Total	4(6.7)	21(35)	35(58.3)	60(100)	

**Table 6: The association between academic achievement level and self-esteem scores in the population in our sample**

Self-esteem scores	Achievement score)				pv
	Poor(10-13)	Moderate(13.1-14.9)	good≥15	total	
15-18	4(26.7)	11(8.3)	0(0)	15(25)	Fishers exact test=34.86 P=000
19-22	0(0)	9(15)	21(35)	30(50)	
22-26	0(0)	1(1.7)	14(23.3)	15(25)	
total	4(6.7)	21(35)	35(58.3)	60(100)	

**DISCUSSION:**

Our study showed that significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. Self-esteem is a critical component of human psychological structure, and it is a support for our daily activities. Those who feel decent, "good" and deserving respect in their interactions with others have a high self-esteem as a big support in contrast to those who feel indecent, "bad", deserving scorn and mercy due to their low self-esteem [20-21]. *Individuals with low self-esteem constitute our study population, and a quarter (25%) of the study population had very low self-esteem.*

A study regarding the adolescents' self-esteem indicated that the majority of subjects (49/1%) were those with an average self-esteem and just 13.1% of that population had low self-esteem. In this study, the majority were average and low self-esteem, we are somewhat similar our study (5). The researchers reported that development and promotion of self-esteem is complex and multifactorial Low self-esteem in students causes academic failure, loneliness, drug abuse, away from reality and self-destructive behaviors [5, 22] in study of Sethi *et al.*; has been emphasized yoga can improves attention, mental health and can be effective on self-esteem and academic achievement in

underprivileged girl student [23]. Therefore, high level of self-esteem is one of the most valuable resources for adolescence to rely on in their entire life to remain safe against many of social, psychological and cultural damages [24]. Undesirable level of self-esteem in this study was rooted in the subject's age range, their natural puberty changes, in addition to educational system and even family's lack of attention to this issue. Therefore, it is necessary to make a serious action for enhancing the students' self-esteem, since most of them reveal emotional disease symptoms or psychosomatic, stress and anxiety signs.

*In this study, we did not find socioeconomic status as an influential predictor of self-esteem.* To illustrate more, those with high and average socioeconomic status did not have higher self-esteem in comparison to those who earn less. However, socioeconomic status was found to be positively correlated with self-esteem in another study [25]. In some other studies have a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and socioeconomic status was reported, That with our results are different [5, 25, 26].

The researcher believes, Parents under economic pressure are more likely to apply more abuse and neglect discipline strategies than the supportive ones. It is assumed that their various conflicts and tensions decrease their chance to attend to their children self-esteem. On the other hand, people with high levels of socio-economic status seem to have more communication skills than other people; this enables them to achieve further support and thus higher self-esteem. Lack of statistical significance in this study may lie in the small size of research population. *This study demonstrated a significant relationship between self-esteem and the student's age and academic achievement.* Psychologists define self-esteem as a judgment of oneself about his worthiness, features and capabilities [27].

Self-esteem evolves and impacts the human life entirely which leads to self-image formation. Childhood experiences beside the quality of our relationships with parent and friends shape our self-esteem [28]. Parents, as the first social factors, play a key role in their children's psychological and social development. The quality of parental relationships can impact the quality of parents in handling their children's desires [29]. This study indicates that as students' age increases, their self-esteem improves. This is rooted in the parents' better engagement and interaction with their teen at puberty age. Additionally, we can't find a gap between parents and students' age which causes better interaction. Studies which were conducted in 35 different countries revealed that student's success at school is associated positively with their parent's income and educational status [30]. *This study demonstrated a significant relationship between the student's grade point average and academic achievement with self-esteem.* Another key variable that plays a vital role in students' self-esteem is achievement motivation; this impacts the education process and students' function in addition to self-esteem improvement. Academic motivation is associated with students' achievement and performance directly or indirectly [31]. So, many of educational implications will emerge. Education related researches indicate that there is a positive correlation between motivation and self-esteem [32].

Studies show a connection between students' self-concept and their academic achievement. In other words, better self judgment assists in higher academic achievement. This was consistent with our study's results [33]. Other studies are also confirmed [34-35]. However, other studies did not find any association between student's emotional intelligence, self-concept

and self-esteem with their academic achievement. Furthermore, gender seems not to affect the students' emotional intelligence and self-concept. Also, female students had higher self-esteem than males; this was incompatible with our study results [36]. Some researchers also believe that culture is an important factor in the impact of self-esteem (37-38) and For this reason, Booth *et al.* says " the direct influence that self-esteem has on academic performance remains unclear, with further longitudinal research needed to assist with understanding the relationship " [39]. Higher level of self-esteem in societies makes them more resistant in their encounter with psychological pressures, natural threats and disasters, which lead to flourishing their talents, and cultural, economic and social development [40].

Healthy community's mind and soul, providing a proper personal and social environment are the main mental health goal, so all health educational teams must cooperate to make it occur. Throngs of adolescents on one hand and increasing growth of behavioral disorders, on the other hand, require medical staff's more attention to this large segment of the population. Medical teams must be trained in order to know stressful situations and learn how to deal with it, and enjoy their life. One of the limitations was Lack of diversity in schools; the plan is implementation a problem that was better was taken from different areas. This issue reduces the adaptability of results. Another limitation; It is better to mention how many students were in high self-esteem group and then we continue study on low self-esteem group.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

Results showed the subjects had low self-esteem; despite had a high motivation for academic achievement. Therefore, understanding self-esteem and its influencing factors can be important for health educational authorities' planning and decision making. Self-esteem play an important role in mental health and Low self-esteem has a inhibitor effect on academic performance. It seems that high motivation for achievement in the study despite with low self-esteem is a compensatory mechanism to cover the student's personality weakness. Or other factors may have been involved in academic achievement which in this case is not investigated and the need for more research. It is recommended to compare effective interventions to improve self-esteem in adolescents in further studies.

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