

# STUDY OF SELF-ESTEEM IN RELATION TO SEX OF OLD AGE PEOPLE

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## ABSTRACT:

Self-esteem issues are most often associated with negative feelings. Studies show that self-esteem rises steadily as people age but also declines around the age of retirement. The present study is to find out the self-esteem level among old age people of 50 to 60 age of group. The sample consists of 150 old age people, out of which 75 are females of 50-60 age group and 75 are males of 50-60 age group. The data is collected from the jodhpur city. Level of self esteem is measured through the Self Esteem Inventory developed by M.S. Prasad and G.P.Thakur (1989). The data were obtained and analyzed by means of 't'-test. It was found that there is a significant difference in the level of self-esteem among male and females of old age people of 50-60 age group. The result shows that the self-esteem level is higher in the males as they get more chances to communicate their feelings with society and gain positivity to boost their self-esteem. And when we talk about Indian women, most of the women are home maker and comparatively they get less chance to communicate with other people of society.

**KEY WORDS:** Self-esteem, Old age, Gender differences.

## INTRODUCTION

### Self esteem

Self esteem is one of the central component of personality that affected by almost all psychological difficulties. The term self esteem refers to the evaluation a person makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself. Self esteem expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval and indicates the extent to which a person believes himself capable, competent, significant, and worthy. It is subjective experience conveyed to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behaviours.

In short, a person self esteem is a judgement of worthiness that is expressed by the attitudes he or she holds towards the self. It is a subjective experience conveyed to others by verbal overt expressive behaviour.

There are three feature of this definition of self esteem that requires elaboration. First it should be noted that the definition centers on the relatively enduring estimate of general self esteem rather than on specific transitory changes in evaluation. Both the enduring and the transitory evaluation deal with the level of individual self-appraisal but the two differ in generality and reliability of the appraisals and the conditions under which they are made.

A second consideration in relation to the definition is that self-esteem may vary across different areas of experience and according to sex, age, and other role defining conditions. It is conceivable that a person would regard him or herself very worthy as a student, moderately worthy as tennis player and totally unworthy as a musician. A persons overall appraisal of ability would presumably weigh these areas according to their subjective importance enabling him or her to arrive at a general level of self esteem though this appears to be the case, objective evidence on the method of arriving at general appraisal is sparse.

A third feature of the definition that should be clarified is the meaning of the term self evaluation'. The term refers to a judgmental process in which a person examines his or her performance, capacities and attributes according to personal standards and values and arrives at a decision of his or her worthiness.

Attitudes toward the self, like other orientations and disposition, may be either conscious or unconscious. Presumably they are like other attitudes in that they carry positive and negative affective connotations and are intertwined with intellectual and motivational processes. Thus a person need not be aware of his or her attitudes towards the self, but they will nonetheless be expressed in the person's voice, posture, gestures and performance.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-esteem is a socio-psychological construct that assesses an individual's attitudes and perceptions of self-worth. Thus, self-esteem is "an understanding of one's quality as an object; i.e., how good or bad, valuable or worthless, positive or negative, or superior or inferior one is" (Thoits, 1999).

Gender differences in self-esteem focus on issues related to reflected appraisals and social comparisons. Girls and women, more than boys and men, are socially judged based on what they look like. If they diverge from socially constructed cultural ideals of beauty, others may think poorly of them, and through reflected appraisals, their self-esteem may suffer. Furthermore, girls and women take part in processes of comparison whereby they compare their beauty with that of others. If a woman feels less beautiful than the women with whom she interacts, her self-esteem will be negatively affected (Abell & Richards, 1996; Furman, 1997). There is little doubt that men also engage in comparative beauty exercises and value their corporeal appearances (Oberg & Tornstam, 1999). However, the fact that women rate their appearance with higher importance than men do suggests that physical appearance may be more salient to identities and self-esteem among women than among men.

The strong and consistent finding regarding gender and self-esteem is that compared with men, women have lower levels of self-esteem in adulthood (Josephs *et al.*, 1992). Although boys and girls start with very similar levels of self-esteem in early adolescence (between ages 11 and 13), they gradually diverge throughout the teenage years and adulthood with boys gaining a sense of positive self-worth and girls losing that sense (Rosenfield, 1999). Lower levels of self-esteem help to explain the fact that girls and women are more likely to experience higher levels of distress and depression than boys and men (Avison and McAlpine, 1992; Rosenberg, 1985; Rosenfield, 1989). Although there are several explanations for this relationship in the mental health literature, Rosenfield's (1999) is compelling. She argues that men and women have different social structural experiences that begin in early childhood and are reflected in the relative power that men and women have in society. Relative power, in turn, influences self-appraisals. As a result, Rosenfield suggests that "Given the power, the responsibility in the public domain, receipt of support, and value placed on masculine pursuits, males generally tend toward high self-esteem" (Rosenfield, 1999). Although Rosenfield uses this argument to explain gender differences, it can also be extended to explain differences in self-esteem among men. Working class men, for instance, have considerably less power than do middle and upper class men, and with increasing age, the likelihood of men engaging in valued masculine pursuits declines considerably (e.g., working for pay and playing football).

Individual assessments of self-esteem are formed through two interrelated processes. First, individuals compare their social identities, opinions, and abilities with others. To the extent that individuals feel that they are inferior to those with whom they interact, their self-esteem will be negatively affected. Second, individuals assess themselves through their interaction with others. People learn to see themselves as others believe them to be. If significant others do not think highly of an individual, that individual will come to think poorly of him or herself. This is referred to as the "reflected appraisal" of one's self-worth (Rosenberg and Perlin, 1978).

The maturation perspective suggests that as individuals' age, they become more accepting of whom they are. This perspective draws on Erikson's developmental stages and argues that the process of social comparison is not as salient in later life because at this stage individuals develop "ego integrity" and a general acceptance of their life's accomplishments (Dietz, 1996).

According to role perspectives, the loss of social roles that is associated with old age will result in lower levels of self-esteem. Thus, the role perspective argues that as people retire and disengage from active parenting, their self-esteem will suffer (Dietz, 1996).

Creemers *at al.* (2012) researched explicit and implicit self-esteem as a predictor of loneliness, depression and suicidal ideation. The study included 95 young female adults. The result indicates that self-esteem was negatively connected with loneliness.

## PROBLEM

The statement of the problem is:

"STUDY OF SELF-ESTEEM IN RELATION TO SEX OF OLD AGE PEOPLE"

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the present study is:

- Does Self-esteem influenced by the gender of the people?

## HYPOTHESIS

It was hypothesised for the present study that:

- Self-esteem would differ with different groups of gender.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

The present study cannot be attempted in laboratory situation. Therefore, a co-relational field approach has taken for this study. This is a non-experimental type of research. Self-esteem is dependent variable. Gender of subjects is independent variable.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study has conducted on 150 old age people divided into two groups-75 females of 50 to 60 years of age and 75 males of 50 to 60 years of age.

## TEST USED

For the present research study following test was used:

**SELF ESTEEM INVENTORY:** Self Esteem Inventory developed by M.S. Prasad and G.P.Thakur (1989). The inventory consists 30 items and has two parts. Part one measures personally perceived self and part two measures socially perceived self. There are 7 possible response to each item/statement i.e. totally correct, correct to a large extent, partially correct, uncertain, partially wrong, wrong to a large extent and totally wrong. The maximum score of this inventory is 210 and minimum score is 30. Here low score indicates poor self esteem while high score indicates high self-esteem.

## PROCEDURE

The test was administered on each subject. Scoring procedure and method is as per manual provided.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Obtained data has analysed for the under mentioned information:

1. Means, standard deviations.
2. For determining significance of mean differences t-test has applied between groups.

## RESULT

**Table: Comparison of Mean Scores of self-esteem of males and females in the age group of 50-60 years (N=150)**

Gender	Mean	S <sub>D</sub>	df	t Value	Sig.
Males 50-60 years of age N=75	<b>159.76</b>	14.56	148	<b>4.987**</b>	<b>.001</b>
Females 50-60 years of age N=75	<b>146.92</b>	16.88			

\*\*Significant at 0.01 level

## INTERPRETATION

Lower mean of second group indicates that less self-esteem is perceived in females of 50-60 age of group but the higher value of mean of first group indicates that the level of self-esteem is higher in males of 50-60 age of group. It is clear from table that on self-esteem, reveals that there is a significant difference between the males and females in the age group of 50-60 years of age ( $t=4.987, p<.01$ ). The males in the age group of 50-60 years of age have greater mean score on self-esteem than their counterparts. This result clearly indicates that males in the age group of 50-60 years are high on self-esteem than the females in the same age group. Thus our hypothesis which states that there will be difference between the mean scores of males and females in the age group of 50-60 years of age on self-esteem stands accepted.

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