EFFECT OF EMPATHY ON SELF CONFIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

Empathy is an essential socio-emotional ability for efficiently building interpersonal relationships; it contributes to the development of a correct and positive self-image of an individual, while significantly influencing his/her self-confidence. The overall aim of the study was to explore the relationship between empathy on self-confidence among youngsters. Toronto Empathy Questionnaire & Agnihotri's Self Confidence inventory was used to collect data through convenient sampling. The sample included 27 male and 41 female students for assessment. Correlation was used as a statistical tool for analysis of data. It was hypothesized that there will be statistically significant relationship between empathy and self-confidence. It was seen that there was no relationship between empathy and self-confidence among youngsters.

Keywords- Empathy, self confidence, emotion, confidence, feeling

INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence or confidence in one-self means having self-assurance in one's ability, power and judgement. It is a belief in one-self for achieving goals once being indulged. Self-confidence comes by having mastered in certain skills or acquiring knowledge. William James in his book "Principles of Psychology" had mentioned that self-confidence is a vital virtue. He also stated to have faith in something which is in the line of your need and your need would be fulfilled. One needs to have faith in his abilities, this way he would step towards accomplishment. There are varied numbers of definitions given by different researches as per their understanding, such as: According to Basavanna "Self Confidence refers to an individual's perceived ability to act effectively in a situation to overcome obstacles and to get things go all right." In the words of (Bandura, 1986), "Self-confidence is considered one of the most influential motivators and regulators of behaviour in people's everyday lives". Good defines "Self-confidence as faith in one's own abilities." Researchers suggested that one's self-confidence is the central mediating construct of achievement strivings. The level of self-confidence varies from person to person or time to time. One could have high self-confidence as compared to others. One could be confident at one point of the time or may lose the same in other time or situation. Like some people may feel confident in certain aspects of life such as academics, athletes etc, but lack confidence in other aspects of life, such as interpersonal relationships, physical appearance etc. It is a very dynamic aspect of human-being. Everybody aspires to be confident in all spheres of life as it is a positive belief and boost person's will-power to

do something. A lack of confidence isn't inevitably permanent but it can be if it isn't addressed. Self-confidence has been much discussed topic since decades. People strive to boost their self-confidence in different ways, some inculcate certain skills in them, other strive for excellence in order to build up their self confidence.

No matter how much skilled a person is; lack of self-confidence won't take him anywhere. Skills, hard work and self-confidence go parallel to each other. For example, if a person is skilled but have no confidence, he might fail to present it to others. Being confident is a belief one has in his potential; it is a faith that wherever he goes he will put up all his efforts and potential in order to succeed. Self-confidence acts like a shield person carries with himself whenever he is out to perform. It is the self-confidence of a person which helps him to surpass all challenges in his life. The person who is confident in himself would travel an extra mile to achieve his goals. It is a positive aspect in a person which motivates him to keep going and not to give up. Self confident person is very firm with his decision and stick to his opinions regardless of situations. A self-confident person is always a reliable, whom one can trust as he never prevaricates in any situation. People with self-confidence always strive for excellence and plunges into learning something new. They are more likely to admit their mistakes and learn from them.

Having self confidence doesn't mean that person would be able to do everything in life. It is not an unrealistic approach which is otherwise a virtue of a 'perfectionist'. Being confident means taking setbacks of one's life positively and looking forward to make improvements. A true self-confident person is the one who learn from his setback, which increases resilience, self -belief and determination. It is fundamentally a positive attitude with a realistic perception of ourselves and our abilities. It is characterised by attributes such as optimism, rationality, assertiveness, faith and emotional maturity.

In regard to self-confidence, Perry (2011) considers it to be the capacity of an individual to appraise his/her strengths and qualities and to acknowledge his/her weaknesses without affecting his/her general state of well-being and although self-confidence is a fluctuant condition which varies depending on the successes and failures of an individual, a self-confident person should not be significantly affected by all these variations. The notion of self-confidence has been often referred to in the specialised literature as the ability to deal with challenges, the determination in achieving one's goal or the certainty of an upcoming accomplishment or success (Bell, 1967). These different facets of self-confidence are also similar to White's view (2009), who states that self-confidence includes a series of components, such as optimism, perseverance and self-consciousness. In Cakir's opinion (2012), self-confident individuals tend to put more effort into carrying out their goals and are more resistant to challenging situations. At the same time, self-confidence helps people in managing difficult situations, anger and aggressiveness (Woodman, Akehurst, Hardy, & Beattie, 2010). On the whole, for people in general and for the young in particular, self-confidence is an imperative trait for succeeding in both the professional and personal life, as it acts like an 'engine' that motivates and encourages individuals to be perseverant in achieving their objectives and patient when dealing with importunate external factors.

The term empathy was coined by Titchener as a rendering of Einfühlung, which he defined as "process of humanizing objects, of reading or feeling ourselves into them". A reactive-projective perspective and an emphasis on perceptive awareness of another person's affect or sharing of feelings were apparent in this view. Empathy theories in psychology were largely influenced by the aforementioned approaches up until Mead, whose definition of empathy is considered one of the basic ones today, describes it as an ability to understand other person's situation. Mead saw empathy as a willingness or tendency to put one-self in another person's place and to modify one's behaviour as a result. He recognized the self-other differentiation in empathy and added a cognitive component, an ability to understand, to empathize. He also argued that the role-taking ability is the key variable in moral growth. The person who is capable of imagining a certain situation becomes aware of the possible consequences of that behaviour for other people, and that also makes him capable of moral responsibility. Taking others into consideration and pondering about their feelings and thoughts is a vital part of the process of empathy.

Empathy refers to the capacity to vicariously experience and understand the thoughts and feelings of another person by putting oneself in that person's place (Strickland, 2001). So, instead of looking at a person from outside (external frame of reference), empathetic approach attempts to see things as how they actually look to the person. A definition which seems to include both of these dimensions is put forward by Molchanov (2014), who regards empathy as "the ability to feel with other and to understand and share his/her emotions". In terms of human relationships, empathy identifies itself with the "apprehension of another's condition or state of mind without actually experiencing that person's feelings" (Hogan, 1969, p. 308). Along the same line of thought, Keskin (2014) defines empathy as an "enabler for the individuals to see the positive and the good in people around them, [in their] effort to understand another person's thoughts and feelings appropriately". The same author nonetheless brings to the reader's attention that empathy is not to be substituted with notions such as imitation, perspective-taking, understanding, identification etc., which might appear similar to empathy, but when taken solely, do not share its significance. Empathy, on the other hand, displays itself as a mechanism which can simultaneously involve all the aforementioned notions.

In a study conducted by Ion Ovidiu Pânișoară, Georgeta Pânișoară, Cristina Sandu, Ruxandra Chirca), they tried to find the relationship between empathy, self confidence and social anxiety. The sample consisted of 140 young people with higher education using random selection sampling technique including 70 male and 70 female students. The findings obtained indicated a significant positive relationship between empathy and self confidence(r=.720), and a negative relationship between empathy and social anxiety.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The present study includes a sample of 27 male and 41 female students from Surat in the age range of 18-25 years who filled up the questionnaire using the google forms. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect the sample. Only individuals from Surat were considered for this study.

Objective

This study aimed to assess the relationship between empathy and self confidence among youngsters living in Surat.

Hypothesis

There will be a statistically significant relationship between empathy and self confidence among youngsters.

Inclusion criteria –

• Individuals should be having knowledge about English language.

• Age criteria are kept in between 18 to 25 years old

• Location for the research is Surat only.

• The Socio-economic status should be middle class/ higher class.

Exclusion criteria –

• Individuals with Mental Health Conditions were excluded.

• Individuals with no Fluency in English were excluded.

• Individuals outside Surat were excluded.

Tools used:

Toronto Empathy Questionnaire:

The Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (TEQ) is a self-report inventory used to measure individual's level of empathy. The questionnaire consisted of 16 items that measure empathy along three dimensions: cognitive empathy (the ability to understand and infer other people's thoughts and feelings), emotional empathy (the ability to share and respond to others' emotions), and empathic concern (the tendency to feel concern and compassion for others). The TEQ has shown good internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Internal consistency coefficients for the three subscales of the TEQ ranged from 0.77 to 0.85, and test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from 0.65 to 0.86. The TEQ has demonstrated good convergent and discriminant validity, with significant correlations found between the TEQ subscales and measures of empathy, perspective-taking, and emotional intelligence, as well as significant differences between groups with different levels of empathy, such as individuals with and without autism spectrum disorder. Overall, the TEQ is a reliable and valid measure of empathy that can be useful in research and clinical settings.

Agnihotri's Self- Confidence Inventory:

Agnihotri's Self- Confidence Inventory (ASCI) is a self-report questionnaire designed to measure an individual's level of self-confidence. The inventory consists of 50 items that assess self-confidence across various domains, such as academic, social, athletic, and personal. The Internal consistency coefficients for the ASCI subscales ranged from 0.78 to 0.92, and test-retest reliability coefficients ranged from 0.79 to 0.89. The ASCI has demonstrated good construct and criterion-related validity. It is positively correlated with measures of self-esteem, optimism, and general well-being, and negatively correlated with measures of anxiety and depression.

The ASCI has also been found to be able to discriminate between groups with different levels of self-confidence, such as athletes who perform well versus those who perform poorly. Overall, the ASCI is a reliable and valid measure of self-confidence that can be useful in research and clinical settings.

Procedure:

For data collection, a Google form was created and circulated among 68 individuals among age group of 18-25 in year 2022. The form consisted of 3 parts: Informed consent, demographic information and psychological assessments used in the study. Basic information about the study was already mentioned in the forms and email address of the researcher was provided in case the participants had questions regarding the study before they decide to make an informed choice or if they wanted to withdraw from the study due to any reason. Demographic information including name, age, year of college, contact number/email address and gender was collected. The main body of the form was the section 3 and 4. It measures empathy and self confidence. There were separate instructions for each test and were provided prior to the starting of each test. The respondents were asked to answer based on their feelings. It was made sure that the participants' information was kept confidential. The aim of the study and information about the psychological assessments used were provided under the column of debriefing at the end of the questionnaire. It was made sure that all the ethics like sharing of results, debriefing, withdrawal from the study etc. were followed. The data was collected, statistical tool of regression is applied for analysis to come up with results regarding estimates of values of dependent variable from values of independent variable.

ETHICS

• Prior informed consent of all participants was taken.

• Participants had the right to withdraw from research anytime they will.

• Participants were debriefed immediately after collecting the data.

• Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained.

• No psychological or physical harm was done to the participants during the research.

RESULT AND INTERPRETATION

The objective of the present study was to explore the relationship between empathy and self confidence among college going students. To fulfill the objectives of the present research, statistical tools of correlation analysis were used. In addition to these descriptive statistics were also used to understand the nature of the data.

Table 1.1: Descriptive Analysis for Empathy & Self Confidence

	Statistic(N)	Mean Statistic	Standard Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Skewness Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Kurtosis Std. Error
Empathy	68	28.2794	9.25726	.154	.291	-.814	.574
Self Confidence	68	39.9265	7.95381	.251	.291	-.545	.574

The descriptive statistics showed that mean of Empathy is 28.27 and the mean of Self-Confidence is 39.92 of the total 68 participants. The Standard Deviation of Empathy was 9.25. The standard deviation of Self-Confidence was 7.95.

Table 1.2: Correlation Analysis for Empathy & Self Confidence

		Empathy	Self Confidence
Empathy	Pearson correlation	1	.051
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.681
	N	68	68
Self confidence	Pearson correlation	.051	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.681	
	N	68	68

The result table showed that there was a slightly positive correlation between empathy and self confidence. In the result table it was observed that the correlation coefficient between empathy and self confidence was .051. It could be observed from the result table that correlation between empathy and self confidence was significant at 0.05 level.

RESULT DISCUSSION

The hypothesis of this research stated that there will be a statistically slightly positive relationship between empathy and self confidence. For this purpose, Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was used. After analysis statistically significant correlation was found between both the variables. The result shows that there was a slight positive correlation between empathy and self confidence. There has been a positive relationship between empathy and self confidence the correlation coefficient came out to be (r=.051). There has been significant relationship found in between empathy and self confidence and thus hypothesis is accepted. The result obtained in this study is in accordance with the previous researches done in this area. Davis et al. (2008) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between empathy and self-confidence. The study involved 142 undergraduate students, who completed self-report measures of empathy, self-esteem, and self-confidence.

The researcher found a significant positive correlation between empathy and self-confidence, indicating that individuals who scored higher on empathy also reported higher levels of self-confidence. This relationship was partially explained by self-esteem, with empathy and self-esteem together accounting for 24% of the variance in self-confidence. Overall, the study provided an evidence for a positive relationship between empathy and self-confidence.

CONCLUSION

Thus, in the light of the present collected data and literature review, this can be concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between empathy and self confidence. Therefore, it is safe to say that empathy may have an influence on self confidence among young and relationship between them is significant.

LIMITATIONS

- The sample size was relatively small.
- Only college going students were included as a sample.
- The sample for this study was exclusively drawn from Surat City, which limited its generalizability.
- The sample's gender differences were uneven, and a non-probability sampling technique was used.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Research on the effect of empathy on self-confidence has several potential future implications, including:

Development of interventions: If research finds that empathy positively affects self-confidence, interventions can be developed to help individuals enhance their empathy skills. For example, empathy training programs could be developed to help individuals improve their ability to understand and connect with others, which in turn could boost their self-confidence.

Improved mental health outcomes: Empathy has been linked to improved mental health outcomes, such as lower levels of anxiety and depression. If research finds that empathy positively affects self-confidence, it could lead to the development of interventions that help individuals build their self-confidence, which could in turn lead to improved mental health outcomes.

Enhancing workplace relationships: Empathy has been shown to improve workplace relationships and team dynamics. If research finds that empathy positively affects self-confidence, it could lead to the development of interventions that help individuals build their self-confidence in the workplace, which could improve teamwork, communication, and overall job performance.

Promoting diversity and inclusion: Empathy has been linked to increased acceptance of diversity and a reduction in prejudice. If research finds that empathy positively affects self-confidence, it could lead to the development of interventions that help individuals build their self-confidence, which could in turn promote more inclusive and accepting attitudes towards individuals from different backgrounds.

Overall, research on the effect of empathy on self-confidence has the potential to inform the development of interventions that can improve individual and societal outcomes in various domains, including mental health, workplace relationships, and diversity and inclusion.

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