



Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment among class 12 students in ICSE and CBSE board

Natania Perinchery, Student, Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University, Noida

Dr. Babita Prusty, Associate Professor, Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University,

Noida

Abstract

The development of self-esteem is crucial during the adolescent period, especially in the case of students to aid in academic excellence. This study tries to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and academic adjustment among ICSE and CBSE board class 12 students. A sample of 100 students, 50 from ICSE board and 50 from CBSE board were administered the questionnaires. A significant positive relationship was seen among the two variables in both ICSE and CBSE students. The T-Statistics test however, did not reveal any significant difference in the relationship between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment among ICSE and CBSE class 12 students. Future recommendations and limitations of this study are also discussed.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Academic Adjustment, ICSE, CBSE

Introduction

The education system in India requires class 12 students to write All India Board exams which play a vital role in their future career options prospects. Thus, during this time, a student faces extreme pressure to do well and rise above the competition. A student who is unable to cope and adjust with the increased difficulty in their coursework fails to succeed in their exams and this leads to low levels of confidence, self-esteem and overwhelming feelings of ineptitude and incompetence.

“Self-esteem refers to an individual's perception or subjective appraisal of one's own self-worth, one's feelings of self-respect and self-confidence and the extent to which the individual holds positive or negative views about self” (Sedikides & Gress, 2003). Global self-esteem is defined as “how an individual values the self ; it

is often treated as a trait that reflects an individual's stable level of self-evaluation (Brown et al., 2001; Tesser, 2004; Leary & Baumeister, 2000). Conversely, domain-specific self-esteem is “an individual's self-appraisals within circumscribed domains, for example, intellect and athleticism . Individuals therefore may hold different levels of self-esteem in various domains” (Harter, 2012).

Academic adjustment refers to how students adapt to their learning environment. It understands how a child acclimates to life in the classroom. Student behaviour undergoes modification as part of the academic adjustment process to create a more harmonious interaction between the student and the academic environment. One of a child's first few hurdles is going to school. This entails spending a lot of time away from his family, which the child may not be accustomed to. They must adopt new personas in the classroom and act in a manner that is in line with social norms. They are compelled to engage in numerous academic activities and interact with strangers, teachers, and friends. The child must adapt to his new surroundings in order to reduce his anxiety

Self Esteem

Rosenberg (1965) defined self esteem as “an individual overall positive evaluation to the self”. A person with self-esteem believes that he is suitable for life and can fulfil all its requirements. Self-esteem entails the conviction that an individual is valuable, worthy of consideration, and allowed to voice their demands and desires, to stand up for their privileges, and to take pleasure in the outcomes of their labours. It additionally encompasses the conviction that one is capable of solving challenges in life. Self-esteem is not something that comes naturally to everyone; rather, it is something that one learns over time and grows to associate with success. Self-esteem is described as a basic human need, which implies it plays a significant part in life, is essential for regular, optimal growth, and is important for survival (Brandon, 1990).

Children's lives are heavily influenced by their families since they rely on their parents to provide all of their needs. Children spend the majority of their daily lives at home with their parents during the formative stage, and the degree of their self-esteem depends on those relationships and the experiences that follow. A child's self-esteem is thought to be significantly influenced by warmth, supervision, a low rate of depressive symptoms in the mother, financial stability (as compared with hardship), and the father's presence (as opposed to absence). According to research, there are no gender variations in the effect these factors have on young children's self-esteem during their ages of ten and fifteen (Krauss et al., 2020)

Similar to this, it has been observed that a child's academic success is influenced by their level of self-esteem as a result of their parental environment. According to research, a negative home environment and family problems are significantly positively correlated with academic success. Family issues and self-esteem have a substantial association, and this is thought to impair the child's capacity to succeed academically as well. Therefore, providing a child with a happy home environment is essential for enabling them to develop in all spheres of their lives (Padilla & Schmidt, 2023).

According to studies, having good self-esteem in young people seems to depend on their feeling satisfied in a variety of life areas. Self-esteem and life satisfaction are found to be strongly and favourably correlated. The effects of self-promotion and self-depreciation on life happiness are beneficial and unfavourable respectively. A person's level of self-esteem is positively correlated with their tendency to promote themselves and negatively correlated with their tendency to criticise themselves. Additionally, both promotion of oneself and self-deprecation serve as mediators between life satisfaction and self-esteem (Szcześniak et al., 2021).

Since self-esteem is believed to be built on good interpersonal interactions, including those earned from achievement and social competence, emotional intelligence is expected to have an essential function in generating social interactions that are favourable to self-esteem in young adults. Therefore, emotional intelligence is likely to foster social skills and serve as a bridge between success and self-esteem. Essentially, it appears that emotional intelligence plays a big role in defining self-esteem and explains the positive effect that social competency has on it. For young individuals self-esteem to be strengthened, emotional intelligence needs to be improved (Cheung et al., 2014).

Male and female self-esteem disparities over a spectrum of ages have been the subject of research. When self-esteem is analysed on a global basis, men report slightly higher levels of self-esteem than women do across the life span, with adolescence showing the greatest discrepancy. In some areas, such as athletic ability, physical attractiveness, satisfaction with oneself, and personal self-esteem, men show a larger sense of self-worth. Yet, when self-esteem is analysed at the domain-dependent threshold, a lower score is shown in other areas, such as moral-ethical and behavioural conduct self-esteem. Despite the clear gender differences in some domain-dependent self-appraisals, males and females indicate almost comparable levels of self-esteem in the domains of educational, emotional, societal acceptance, and familial self-esteem (Zeigler-Hill & Myers, 2012).

Academic Adjustment

Educational adjustment refers to a person's approach to carrying out their educational responsibilities and to whether or not they succeed in doing so (Bhagat, 2017). In order to get satisfactory academic achievements, it is necessary that students refine their coping mechanisms and learning techniques. Adjustment is a crucial quality if someone is to be able to live effectively in their environment. Adjustment is accomplished by using a variety of coping mechanisms and methods that enable the person to adjust to his environment and lower his degree of stress and anxiety.

The degree to which a student may effectively adjust to school depends greatly on their knowledge, skills, and previous interactions within their homes (Dockett et al., 1997; Fabian, 2000). How well the child can adapt to his new setting is greatly influenced by his home environment. The child struggles to adapt to his unfamiliar setting and lacks the ability to adapt successfully if the home environment is unfavourable. Additional issues with this include dysregulation of emotion, unfavourable feelings, and diminished social skills (Chang et al., 2012).

The adoption of a strict schedule or timetable is one of the novel experiences for the child. In school, they have a set schedule that students and teachers must adhere to, as well as official norms that the student must obey. In his home, the child is allowed to do whatever he likes without any restrictions. When the child recognises that this is not the case at school, he must be able to use specific tactics that will assist him to integrate into the new setting as easily as possible so that he can blend in with his classmates and peers (Ramey & Ramey, 1998).

The temperament of the child is a significant factor in how well they transition to school. Their temperament serves as an indicator of how they will behave going forward and how they will connect with their peers and their instructors. The socialisation of the student is one of the primary goals of pre-schools (Mobley & Pullis, 1991). High reactivity, or how strongly a youngster responds to exciting situations, is a feature associated with maladjustment in educational settings. High reactive kids often have temper tantrums, bite their friends when they don't get their way, and don't listen to adults. The child's friendliness also makes it possible for them to interact with their teachers and peers (Acar et al., 2015).

It has been shown that a child's adjustment in preschool has long-lasting consequences on how they adjust in higher grades. Adolescents must successfully navigate through a variety of obstacles and problems they face in

school. These difficulties can occasionally serve as a predictor of the start of symptoms of anxiety and depression (Arjanggi & Kusumaningsih, 2016). Many teenagers experience stress during their transition from elementary school to high school due to elements like environmental change, increasing level of study and intensity, and forging new friendships (Aderi et al., 2013).

The extent to which a student can adjust to the demanding academic requirements, their perspective towards the material they study, their involvement with their syllabus, and the amount of work they devote to their academics are all important factors in academic adjustment in higher school (Baker & Siryk, 1984). As a student advances from a particular grade to the next, the amount of work and degree of their academic difficulty increase. Students are required to follow this trend and do well in their coursework. A feeling of inadequacy and inability sets in when a student lags behind in their studies owing to academic restrictions or lack of personal drive, especially when they observe their peers performing academically well.

Academic adjustment can be predicted in large part by academic motivation. Students go to college to learn skills that give them a feeling of achievement and satisfaction. Students generally perform academically well when they are intellectually challenged and enjoy what they are learning (Clark et al., 2014). The academic advantages of going to college and obtaining a higher degree are more appreciated by students who value studying and broadening their knowledge. The advancement of the student's mental, physical, and psychological health depends on a holistic educational experience. Students are given the opportunity to express themselves throughout disciplines other than academics in schools with a wide range of extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

Methodology

Purpose

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and academic adjustment among class 12 students studying in ICSE and CBSE board.

Sample

A sample of 100 students, 50 from ICSE board and 50 from CBSE board were administered the questionnaires. The sample resided in Delhi.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant relationship between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment in ICSE class 12 students
- There will be a significant relationship between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment in CBSE class 12 students
- There will be a significant difference in the relationship between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment among ICSE and CBSE class 12 students

Measures

- **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale:** developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, is used to assess the self-esteem of participants. There are a total of ten items rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. Scoring was done by summing up the scores of all ten items. High scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. Certain items are reverse scored. The scale has high ratings in reliability areas with internal consistency of 0.77 and test-retest reliability for 2-week intervals being 0.85 and 0.63 for 7-month intervals.
- **Academic Adjustment Scale:** developed by Anderson et al., in 2016 measures the academic adjustment of individuals with a focus on students sojourners. The scale consists of nine-items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'Rarely applies to me' to 'Always applies to me'. Scoring was done by summing up the items and higher scores represent higher levels of academic adjustment. Certain items have reverse scoring. Test-retest correlation coefficients of the scale are $r_s > 0.72$ showing high levels of temporal stability and internal consistency.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through Google forms. Informed consent of the participant was taken, and they were thanked for their cooperation. Standardised Psychological Tests were administered.

Analysis of data

Results

Table 1

N, Mean and Standard Deviation

	Self-Esteem (CBSE)	Academic Adjustment (CBSE)	Self- Esteem (ICSE)	Academic Adjustment (ICSE)
N	50	50	50	50
Mean	26.0	31.4	27.3	33.3
Median	26.0	31.0	28.0	35.0
Standard deviation	4.40	6.50	4.93	6.73

Table 2

Correlation between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment among CBSE students

	Self-Esteem (CBSE)	Academic Adjustment (CBSE)
Self-Esteem (CBSE)	—	
Academic Adjustment (CBSE)	0.432	**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3

Correlation between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment among ICSE students

	Self-Esteem (ICSE)	Academic (ICSE)	Adjustment
Self-Esteem (ICSE)	—		
Academic Adjustment (ICSE)	0.556 ***	—	

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 4

T-Statistics showing differences in education board

		Statistic	df	p
Self-Esteem	Student's t	-1.43	97.0	0.155
Academic Adjustment	Student's t	-1.32	97.0	0.189

Note. $H_a \mu_{CBSE} \neq \mu_{ICSE}$

Discussion of results

The aim of the study was to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment among class 12 students in ICSE and CBSE board. T-Statistics was used to analyse whether there was a difference between the two groups.

Table 2 shows the correlation between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment among CBSE students. A significant positive relationship ($r=0.432$, $p<0.01$) was seen between the two variables showing that an increase in one leads to an increase in the other. These results convey the important role of self-esteem in aiding adolescents to

adjust to their various surroundings (DuBois et al., 1998). Children who are repeatedly criticised, harshly addressed and do not excel in sports and academics develop low self-esteem and struggle with their identity (Bruno & Njoku, 2014).

Table 3 shows the correlation between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment among ICSE students. Similar to CBSE students, these results also show a significant positive relationship ($r=0.556$, $p<0.001$) between the two variables. However, a greater relationship is seen among ICSE students as compared to CBSE students. This can be due to a variety of reasons, including a more comprehensive course syllabus, greater support from teachers and access to a holistic education experience.

According to the results of the T-Statistics test, no difference was seen in the self-esteem and academic adjustment among ICSE and CBSE students as displayed in Table 4. Thus, there are no group differences between ICSE and CBSE students on the variables mentioned above.

Conclusion

The development of self-esteem is crucial during the adolescent period, especially in the case of students to aid in academic excellence. This study tried to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and academic adjustment among ICSE and CBSE board class 12 students. A sample of 100 students, 50 from ICSE board and 50 from CBSE board were administered the questionnaires. A significant positive relationship was seen among the two variables in both ICSE and CBSE students. The T-Statistics test however, did not reveal any significant difference in the relationship between Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment among ICSE and CBSE class 12 students.

Recommendations

On the basis of the results, enhancing the self-esteem of students is important in ensuring their smooth assimilation into their educational environment. Teachers must encourage the students and appreciate their efforts to aid students in maintaining high levels of self-esteem.

Apart from that, longitudinal future studies could be conducted to assess the effects of self-esteem on the various domains of a student's life over a period of time. This is important in assessing how much of an influence self-esteem has in ensuring overall wellbeing in a student's life and facilitating their academic adjustment.

Intersectional studies can help in asserting the other important developmental variables that are influenced by self-esteem and how these play a role in the adjustment of a student in his academic and personal life.

As this study compared students from only two educational boards, ICSE and CBSE, future recommendations would include incorporating a larger number of education systems into the study to evaluate the syllabus and its effects on the students.

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