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## **A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELF- ESTEEM AMONG BOYS AND GIRLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOL**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Self-esteem and perceived competence are necessary for students to take risks in their learning and to bounce back after failure or adversity. Low self esteem or lack of confidence leaves students doubting their ability to succeed, making them hesitant to engage in learning or take appropriate academic growth risks, correlates with both academic achievements and mental health. Girls experience an increase in self-esteem from childhood to adolescence, boys experience a decrease in self-esteem during the same periods.

Key aspects of self-esteem include:

1. Self-confidence
  2. Feeling of security
  3. Identity
  4. Sense of belonging
  5. Feeling of competence
- Healthy self-esteem is associated with better mental health, relationships, and overall life satisfaction. Low self-esteem can contribute to anxiety, depression, and other issues. Self-esteem develops over time, influenced by experiences and relationships.

**Keywords** Self-esteem Boys and Girls

## INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem and self-acceptance are often confused or even considered identical by most people, self-esteem is important your decision-making process, relationships, and emotional health. Self-esteem is based on evaluating the self, rating ones behavior and qualities as positive or negative impact. Self-esteem refers to a person's overall sense of self-worth and value. It involves beliefs about oneself as well as emotional states like triumph, despair, pride, and shame.

## SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is a scene of individual's value or worth and extent to which his worth or value is approved or appreciated. It has its origin since 18<sup>th</sup> century which can be first seen in the writings of David Hume . He was a Scottish and an enlightened thinker .It has it's origin and can be depicted from works of philosophers, psychologist and anthropologist William James,1892.He identified many dimensions of one's self, having two levels of hierarchy .One is known as "I" self and the other is known as "me" self. In the middle of 1960 the

social psychologist, Rosenberg (2015) mention self-esteem as an attitude which could be favourable or unfavorable towards his own self. Self-concept is an evaluated component of self-esteem. In 20<sup>th</sup> century the studies were done in terms of introspection of mental processes, feeling, etc. Self-esteem predicts academic achievements, confidence level, job performance and satisfaction in relationship and in marriages. It improves ones belief in one self. According to Smith and Mackie (2014) defines is "the self-concept is what we think about the self; self-esteem, is the positive or negative evaluations of the self, as in how we feel about it." The construct of self-esteem has been shown to be a desirable one in psychology, as it is associated with a variety of positive outcomes, such as academic achievement, relationship satisfaction, happiness, and lower rates of criminal behavior. In one sense, we all know something about what self-esteem "really is" because it is a human phenomenon. In other words, like many common-sense understandings, there are serious limits to such knowledge that become apparent as soon as we begin to examine them more closely. However, the group will also notice that, although different, several definitions appear to be of some value in that they suggest, capture, or describe an important aspect of the phenomenon few wish to discard. Two things usually become quite apparent by the end of this activity. The first is that developing a good definition of self-esteem is difficult, because people tend to emphasize different aspects of it when they put their thoughts into words. The other is that how one defines self-esteem is a crucial issue, because definitions have power: They help shape what we see and what remains hidden. In addition to being a good pedagogical tool, the reason the exercise is mentioned here is because it is a microcosm of what actually seems to happen among writers, researchers, and clinicians in the field (Smelser, 1989; Wells & Marwell, 1976). The result was a typology of definitions that consists of four ways of defining self-esteem. The first and most basic definition is to simply characterize self-esteem as a

certain attitude. As with any other attitude that is held toward a given object, this one can involve positive or negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Schwalbe and Staples (1991)** properly defined self-esteem as the feelings an individual has about him herself that affect the way he/she views him herself. These views include self -observations, perceived feelings of him herself: and self-knowledge. High self-esteem is dependent on attitudinal factors. This differs from self-concept in that self-esteem addresses feelings and emotions. Additionally, while self-concept tends to be a construct that varies little.

**Hassan, Jami, Aqeel (2016)** examined the role of truancy in academic self-concept, self-esteem and academic achievement between the truant and punctual students. 200 students were taken for the sample through purposive sample technique. Out of 200 sample, 100 were truant and 100 were punctual. Result revealed that academic achievement was more in punctual students than truant. Moreover, self-concept is positively correlated with self-esteem in both truant and punctual students. Further, the study revealed that truancy and punctuality played no role for self-esteem in predicting academic self-concept.

**Nupur and Mahapatro (2016)** in a study on understanding the association between gender and self-esteem conducted among the sample of 203 young adults found that the self-esteem of the men was significantly higher than that of women.

**Giofre` et.al. (2017)** investigated the joint role of cognitive and non- cognitive factors in predicting academic achievement. They took sixth and right grade Italian students as a sample for the study. The results revealed that intelligence as the best product of achievement in the cognitive factors. In case of non- cognitive factors, academic self-esteem was effective. It has an indirect effect on academic achievement

**Tasneem and Panwar (2019)** in another study on a sample of 60 undergraduate students from science stream concluded that male and female undergraduate students reported moderate levels of academic self-confidence and found no significant gender difference ( $t = -0.28$ ; N.S.) in mean values on academic self-confidence.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Self-esteem plays a crucial role in adolescent development, influencing academic performance, social relationships, and overall well-being. During secondary school years, students undergo significant physical, emotional, and social changes that can impact their self-esteem. While research has explored self-esteem in adolescents, there is a need to better understand potential differences in self-esteem between boys and girls during this critical developmental stage. This study aims to investigate these differences to inform targeted interventions and support strategies in educational settings.

### **Objectives:**

1. To assess and compare the levels of self-esteem among boys and girls in secondary school across various domains (e.g., academic, social, physical appearance).
2. To examine the relationship between gender and factors influencing self-esteem (such as peer relationships, academic performance, and extracurricular activities) in secondary school students.

### **Hypotheses:**

1. Girls in secondary school will report lower overall self-esteem scores compared to boys.
2. The factors most strongly associated with self-esteem will differ significantly between boys and girls, with physical appearance having a stronger correlation to self-esteem for girls and academic/athletic performance having a stronger correlation for boys.

## METHODOLOGY

### SAMPLE

The sample considered of 13 to 17 years old 60 respondents 30 boys and 30 girls with minimum intermediate academic qualification from Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh randomly sampled by following multistage sampling procedure. Initially a total of 60 healthy respondents without any history of physical and mental were identified and within from these 30 boys and 30 girls were randomly selected conduct of the study. The use of T-test is used measure the difference between exactly two means through a purposive sampling technique.

### Inclusion criteria:

Currently enrolled in secondary school, able to provide informed assent and parental consent

### Exclusion criteria:

Students with severe learning disabilities or those unable to complete the survey independently

### Sampling Method:

Present study use a stratified random sampling method to ensure a representative sample of secondary school students. Stratification will be based on grade level (years 7-12) and school type (public and private). Schools will be randomly selected from a comprehensive list of secondary schools in the region, and within each selected school, students will be randomly chosen to participate. This method ensures that the sample reflects the diversity of the secondary school population and allows for meaningful comparisons between subgroups.

### Instruments and Tools:

- Demographics questionnaire
- Self-Esteem Scale (SES)

All instruments have been validated for use in adolescent populations and demonstrate good psychometric properties (reliability and validity) in previous studies.

### **Data Collection Procedure :**

1. Obtain necessary permissions from school boards and individual schools.
2. Contact potential participants and their guardians through appropriate channels.
3. Provide detailed information about the study and obtain informed consent/assent.
4. Schedule data collection sessions during school hours with permission from school administrations.

#### **t- tests.**

A p-value of  $<0.05$  will be considered statistically significant.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

The study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Institutional Review Board. Key considerations include:

- Obtaining informed consent from parents and assent from students
- Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of collected data
- Providing the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences
- Offering debriefing and support resources
- Securely storing and handling all data in compliance with data protection regulations
- Reporting findings responsibly and accurately



## Self-Esteem INVENTORY

Selection of Items: 65 items representing self of the individual in Hindi language were framed on the basis of literature on the subject and consulting teachers of Psychology and other disciplines. This scale developed by M.S Prasad and G.P Thakur department of psychology university of Bihar, Muzaffarpur (india).

### Procedure:

The present study was undertaken to examine the self-esteem as related boys and girls of intermediate students. Thus, participants were selected from different government and private colleges using purposive sampling method of Varanasi district. The empirical data for conduct of the study will be collected by intermediate students contacting from colleges and residential places. Following the rapport, inclusion and exclusion criterion, Questionnaires were distributed individually to each participant during the study. The tests were administered as per the instructions/directions provided in the manual and scored methodologically.

### Statistical analysis:

The statistical analysis of the data obtained on the above tools calculated with the help of the SPSS 20, statistics viz: Mean, S D, t -test etc. statistical Modifications and adaption will be made and required. Statistical Data Analysis. The following analyse was performed:

#### 1. Descriptive statistics:

- Calculate means, standard deviations, for all variables.

#### 2. Inferential statistics:

- Compare mean self-esteem scores between boys and girls using independent samples.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

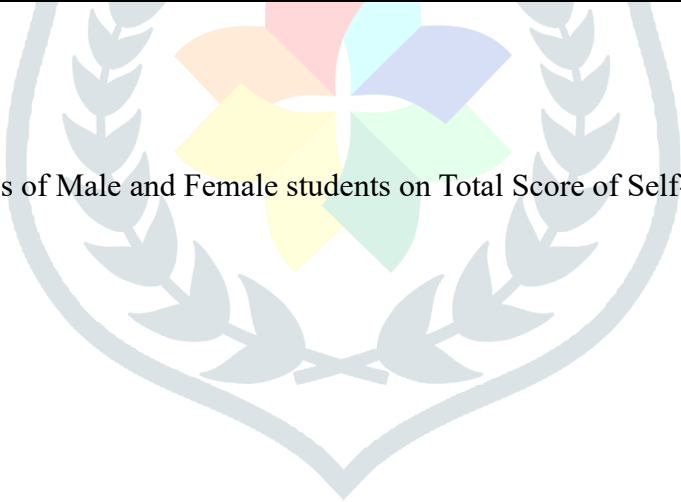
The present study aimed to investigate the differences in self-esteem between male and female students in secondary school. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Tables 1.

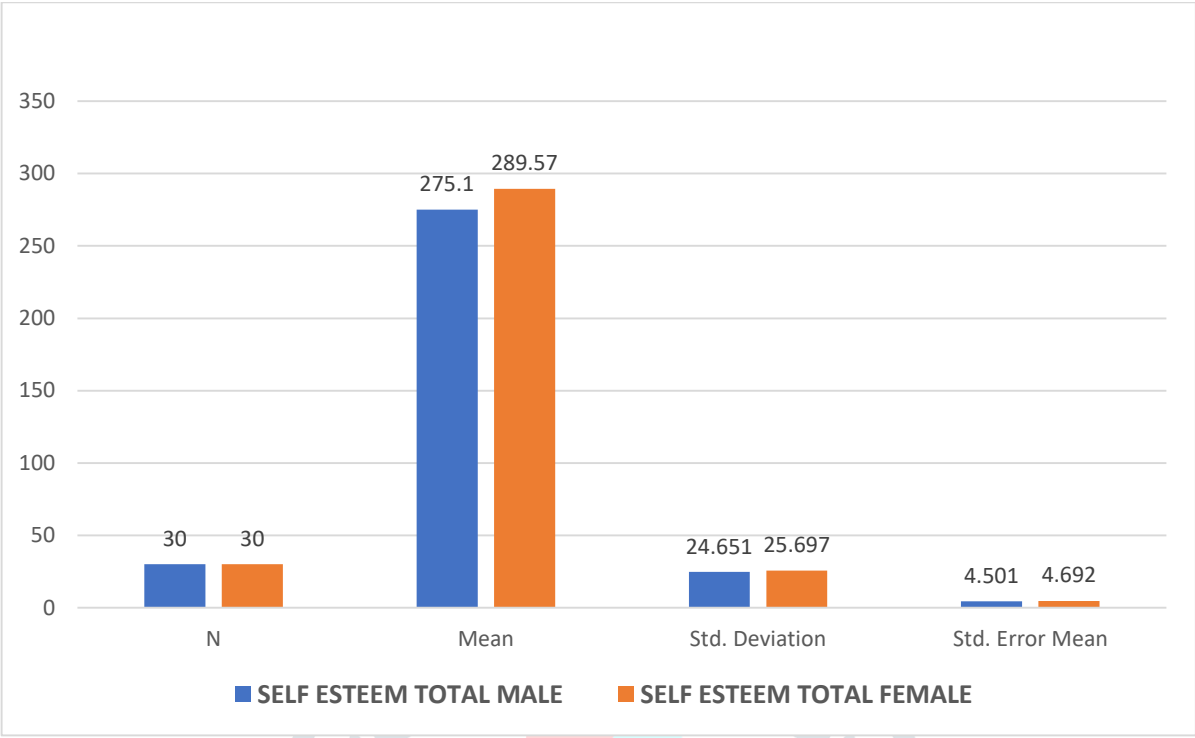
Table: 1. Mean, SD and T -Test values of Male and Female students on Total Score of Self-Esteem.

SELF ESTEEM TOTAL	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	df	T	p-value
	MALE	30	275.10	24.651	4.501	58	-2.225**	.030
	FEMALE	30	289.57	25.697	4.692			

P<.01\*\*

Figure: 1. Mean and SD values of Male and Female students on Total Score of Self-Esteem





Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. and Figure.1 presents the descriptive statistics for the total self-esteem scores of male and female students. The sample consisted of 60 participants, equally divided between males (n = 30) and females (n = 30). The mean self-esteem score for male students was 275.10 (SD = 24.651), while the mean score for female students was 289.57 (SD = 25.697). These results indicate that, on average, female students reported higher levels of self-esteem compared to their male counterparts.

Inferential Statistics

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in self-esteem scores between male and female students. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 1. The t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in self-esteem scores between male and female students (t (58) = -2.225, p < .030). These results suggest that female students in this sample reported significantly higher levels

of self-esteem compared to male students. The magnitude of this difference (14.46) points on the self-esteem scale) indicates a notable disparity in self-esteem levels between genders.

## Discussion

The findings of this study provide interesting insights into the self-esteem differences between male and female secondary school students. Contrary to the initial hypothesis and some previous research, female students in this sample reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem compared to their male counterparts. This result challenges some long-held assumptions about gender differences in self-esteem during adolescence and warrants further exploration. Several factors may contribute to this unexpected finding. First, it is important to consider the cultural and social context in which this study was conducted. Recent efforts to promote gender equality and empower young women may have positively influenced the self-esteem of female students. Additionally, changes in societal norms and expectations regarding gender roles could be contributing to shifts in self-esteem patterns among adolescents. The higher self-esteem scores among female students might also be attributed to their academic performance, social relationships, or involvement in extracurricular activities. Without additional data on these factors, it is challenging to determine the specific contributors to the observed difference. Future research should explore these potential mediating variables to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing self-esteem in adolescents. It is worth noting that while female students reported higher overall self-esteem scores, this does not necessarily mean that they experience higher self-esteem across all domains. The measure used in this study provided a total self-esteem score, but it would be valuable to examine domain-specific self-esteem (e.g., academic, social, physical) to identify any areas where gender differences may be more or less pronounced. The findings of this study both align with and diverge from previous research on gender differences in self-esteem among adolescents. In a large-scale, cross-cultural study, Bleidorn et al.

(2016) examined gender differences in self-esteem across 48 nations. Their research, which included data from 985,937 individuals aged 16-45, found that males consistently reported higher self-esteem than females. This gender gap was observed across all nations and age groups, although its magnitude varied across cultures. The authors suggested that universal biological factors and universal gender-specific socialization processes might contribute to the observed gender differences in self-esteem. They also noted that the gender gap in self-esteem was smaller in more gender-egalitarian cultures, suggesting that sociocultural factors play a role in shaping self-esteem. Kiviruusu et al. (2016) conducted a longitudinal study examining the development of self-esteem from adolescence to mid-adulthood. Their research, which followed participants from age 16 to 42, found that self-esteem generally increased with age for both genders. However, they observed different trajectories for males and females. In their study, males started with higher self-esteem in adolescence, but females showed a steeper increase in self-esteem over time. By mid-adulthood, the gender gap in self-esteem had narrowed considerably. The authors suggested that life transitions, such as educational attainment and family formation, might contribute to these changes in self-esteem trajectories. The results of our study, when considered alongside these previous research findings, highlight the complex and potentially changing nature of gender differences in self-esteem. They underscore the importance of considering developmental stages, cultural contexts, and societal changes when examining self-esteem in adolescents.

## Conclusion

This study provides evidence of significant gender differences in self-esteem among secondary school students, with female students reporting higher levels of self-esteem than male students. These findings challenge some previous assumptions about gender differences in adolescent self-esteem and highlight the potential for changing patterns in self-esteem development. The results underscore the importance of considering gender as a relevant

factor in understanding and promoting self-esteem among adolescents. However, they also remind us of the complex and multifaceted nature of self-esteem, which can be influenced by a wide range of individual, social, and cultural factors. Educators, counselors, and policymakers should be aware of these potential gender differences in self-esteem and consider tailored approaches to supporting the psychological well-being of both male and female students. At the same time, it is crucial to avoid overgeneralization and to recognize the individual variations that exist within each gender group. Further research is needed to replicate these findings in larger and more diverse samples, to explore the factors contributing to these gender differences, and to examine how self-esteem patterns may be changing over time in response to evolving societal norms and expectations. Ultimately, this study contributes to our understanding of adolescent self-esteem and highlights the need for continued research and nuanced approaches to supporting the psychological well-being of all students, regardless of gender.

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