



Self-esteem and performance of an individual

Shakshi Rai

Abstract

The aim of this paper was to study the relationship between self-esteem and performance of an individual. Secondary research was conducted, where various literatures were reviewed. It was concluded that, self-esteem is involved in every day-to-day task, everything we are engaged in, from our behaviour to our cognitive tasks such as perception, problem solving, etc. One very important factor which is believed that high self-esteem leads to better “academic performance” was tested false in many literatures. The significance of this study states that, having a balance self-esteem is very important, i.e., not too high, or not too low, affects the performance. It helps in making an individual a better and useful social identity, motivates the person to perform better, improvises the relationships with others, helps in having a better perception about oneself, a better and optimistic view in life and improves the standard of living. It saves from various psychological disorders which may have huge impact in well-being.

Keywords: Self-esteem, performance, balance, disorders

Introduction

Self refers to “totality of an individual’s conscious experiences, ideas, thoughts and feelings with regard to themselves”.

“Self” is what makes us different from others. It makes us aware of our own characteristics, emotions, the ideas we hold, our identity, ways how we define our existence. As individuals we have our own two identities, “personal identity and social identity”.

Personal identity: this identity includes the characteristics of a person that makes them different from others such as while introducing, describing their name or qualities like “I like to paint”, i.e. describing personal information or identity.

Social identity: this identity includes features related to our culture or social groups. “I’m Hindu” or “I’m north Indian”, when we describe ourselves in this way its known as our social identity.

Self is considered both as subjective and objective. As subject self involves in knowing themselves but as an object the self is observed. For example, when some says “I’m a good painter” itself as subject but, when some

other individual tells you that “you are a good painter” the self, got observed and came to known. There are various kinds of self, depending on our interaction with culture, physical and environment. A difference is made between personal-self and social-self.

Personal self: when an individual’s primary concern is limited to themselves like personal responsibility, liberty, personal gains, personal goals.

Social self: when the primary concern is not just related to oneself but also to the social or cultural group we are involved in like unity, cooperation, understanding, support. Social self is also known as familial or rational self.

There are various cognitive and behavioural aspects of self, such as,

Self-concept: “the ideas we hold about our competencies and attributes is called self-concept”. In very general words the way we perceive, see or consider ourselves. It could be either positive or negative. For example, in your own view you feel you have good speaking or dancing skills but on the other hand you have poor academic skills.

Self-efficacy: we individuals also distinguish in the manner we perceive or consider a situation in life. Some people feel that the outcome or result in life can be directed or managed by ourself but some feel its upon our destiny or it’s on god’s will. People who feel that they can manage their behaviour in a specific condition have high self-efficacy. Self-esteem came into existence through Albert Bandura’s theory that individuals learn behaviour by observing others.

Self-regulation: “the ability to control, organise and monitor our own behaviour”. The way we can manage our behaviour is our self-regulation. For example, evaluation why I behaved in a particular way or how many times I got angry in the past few days. People who are able to manage their behaviour in specific situation or condition have high self-monitoring or high on self-regulation.

Self-control: when an individual understands how to delay the need of satisfaction or gratification it is called self-control. It plays a very important part in our life and there are various psychological techniques of self-concept. First, we observe our own behaviour that needs to be modified then we instruct ourselves for example, you observed that lately you have been acting very aggressively so now you instruct yourself to control that aggression to some limits, when you’re able to control it you reward yourself or if unable to control you punish yourself, which is self-reinforcement.

Self-esteem: it is the main topic of my research; it is a very important factor of self. “The judgements, values or worth we have about ourselves is our self-esteem”. It has a role in our everyday behaviour. Self-esteem could be high or low. People who have high self-esteem automatically perform better in life than those who have low self-

esteem. People who perceive themselves as “I play good badminton, or I’m liked by most people” have high self-esteem, as compared to those who don’t consider themselves in this way. There are studies which suggest that an individual forms their self-esteem by age of 6 or 7 years.

Individuals with high self-esteem in specific areas such as sports or academics or extra-curricular activities often perform better in it than those who has low self-esteem in that area. People with low self-esteem are more prone to psychological disorders such as anxiety or depression. Many a times they also portray unsocial or unfriendly attitude towards others. Self-esteem could also be described as how we estimate or evaluate ourselves. There is a very huge role of family or peers or the environment an individual grows in the formation or development of self-esteem, for example, if a child always take decisions with help of others could be family or peers tend to have low self-esteem as the self develops.

Self-esteem is not just limited to high or low, it could also be very high or very low. In cases of very high there is threat to our ego, such as cases of over confidence and very low as I have already discussed above are prone or inclined towards very psychological disorders such as anxiety, social anxiety, public speaking anxiety, or depression.

Self-esteem also plays a very important role in achieving or succeeding in life, it is believed that low self-esteem holds back people in achieving goals of life.

There are various theories of self-esteem, one of them is “Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs”. It’s a very famous theory which explains that how esteem needs are not just an internal need but also needed from people we are surrounded by to achieve self-actualisation. He suggested that esteem needs include need of status, achievement, freedom and respect from others. It is a need of affiliation i.e., involved in groups or family members.

There are various factors that state our self-esteem is in right condition or healthy condition:

- In no regret of your decisions made in past.
- Optimistic view in every situation of life.
- Aware about when to reject a proposal.
- Aware about strength and weakness of your own.
- Having faith on your decisions.
- Have confidence while speaking or socialising.

There are various factors that indicate our self-esteem is not in right or healthy state.

- Pessimistic or negative opinion about situations in life
- Unwilling to engage in social activities.
- Unable to take comments in life.
- Incline more towards weakness than strength.
- Unable to present your opinions and thoughts.
- Hesitate in rejecting proposals.
- Regretting past decisions.

Anxiety/depression.

Extreme fear and thoughts of failure in life.

Having healthy or high self-esteem helps in achieving so much in life than those who has low as it even helps in motivating individuals to perform tasks and manage their behaviour depending on the situation.

Review of Literature

In research of Hall et al (2011), the aim was “attributional retraining, self-esteem, and the job interview: benefits and risks for college student employment. the method used was experiment. The basic purpose was to see the effect of self-esteem on students’ employment interview. The data was collected from 3,500 students. The results indicated that in hypothesis 1, high self-esteem leads to better performance in employment interviews of students in control group. Contrary to this in hypothesis 2, low self-esteem individuals have better outcomes in terms of interview under controllable situations.

In research of Cheng et al (2012), the aim of the research was “effect of self-awareness on negative affect among individual within discrepant low self-esteem. The method used was survey. The purpose of research was to see whether self-awareness increases negative affect for discrepant low self-esteem individuals. The data was collected from 144 students (119 female) through 10-items Rosenberg self-esteem scale, self-esteem implicit association test. The results indicated that high self-esteem does not always have positive outcomes, but low self-esteem does lead to poor mental health and self-awareness could be source of negative affect for discrepant low self-esteem.

In research of Shim et al (2012), the aim of the research was “changes in self-esteem across first year in college the role of achievement goals”. The method used was survey. The basic purpose was to see role of achievement goal in self-esteem. The data was collected from 311 college students who ranked between 86-93 percentile in their high school graduating year. The self-esteem was measured by 10 item Rosenberg self-esteem scale. The results indicated that students who compare themselves with others have low self-esteem, whereas students having high mastery goals have high self-esteem.

In research of Toma in (2013), the aim was “effect of Facebook self-presentation on implicit self-esteem and cognitive task performance”. The method used was experiment using self-affirmation theory. The basic purpose of the research was to see if there any relationship exists between Facebook self-presentation and self-esteem & cognitive tasks. The data was collected from 178 students that were under graduation. The results portray that, there exists a relation between Facebook self-presentation with each self-esteem and cognitive performance. It will increase the self-esteem of an individual, there is a negative relation with cognitive task because it lowers the motivation to perform a task.

In research of Moncur et al (2013), the aim of the study was “the relationship of body size and adiposity to source of self-esteem in college women. The method used was survey, cross-section design. The basic purpose was to see the relation between size of body and self-esteem in women. The data was collected from 158 undergraduate students (women) of age group 18-25 years. The results indicated that women who had high BMI showed low self-esteem than those who has high.

In research of Dwyer et al (2013), the aim of the research was “when stigma-by-association threatens, self-esteem helps: self-esteem protects volunteer in stigmatizing content”. The method used was survey. The basic purpose was to see how self-esteem helps as coping mechanism in stigmatised related topics. The data was collected from 893 individuals. The result indicated that high self-esteem does helps as coping mechanism, but low esteem might negatively affect the individual.



In research of Svedberg et al (2014), the aim of research was “genetic and environment influence on performance-based self-esteem in population-based cohort of Swedish twins. The method used was survey. The basic purpose of the study was to see the role of genetic and environment factors in formation of self-esteem. The Data was collected from 21,703 twins from Swedish of same and opposite gender, that comes under age group of 20-46 years. The results indicate that there’s a huge role of environment in formation of self-esteem, on the other hand genes play important but less role in formation of self-esteem as compared to environment.



In research of Tabaczek and Sniecinska (2014), the aim was “how activation of self-motives moderates the relationship between self-esteem and task performance. The method used was experiment. The basic purpose was to see effect of self-motive on performance and self-esteem. The data was collected from 107 students. The results show that there exists a relationship between presence of self-motive in self-esteem and performance. In case of increase in self-esteem there will be better performance in presence of self-motive, but no such relation was found in control group.



In research of Noser & Zeigler-Hill (2014), the aim was “self-esteem instability and the desire for fame”. The method used was survey. The basic purpose was to examine stable and unstable self-esteem in terms of fame. The data was collected from 181 under graduation students (girls). The result indicated that individuals with unstable self-esteem have more incline towards fame as to get external validation or attention.

In research of Khaola (2014), the aim of the research was “students’ commitment, self-esteem, organisation citizenship behaviour and performance”. The method used was survey. The basic purpose was to see if there’s any relationship between student, organisation citizenship behaviour (OCB) and performance. The data was collected from 185 students using 7-point Likert scale. The result shows that there exists a relation between self-

esteem and OCB, i.e., high self-esteem leads to better organisation citizenship behaviour, but there's no such relation found between self-esteem and academic performance.

In research of Strelan & Zdaniuk (2014), the aim was “threatened state self-esteem reduces forgiveness”. The method used was experiment. The basic purpose was to see the effect of self-esteem on forgiveness. The results indicated that individuals with high self-esteem are more forgiving but individuals who have low self-esteem are less forgiving.

In the research of Neff et al (2015), the aim was “the crossover of self-esteem: longitudinal perspective”. The method used was survey. The primary purpose was to see the role of self-esteem in working couples. The data was collected from 746 couples in Time 1 study and 346 couples in Time 2 study. The results indicated that there exists a relation between self-esteem in performance of working couple. If a partner has baseline or low self-esteem it will affect the performance of another partner.

In research of Cameron et al (2016), the aim of the research was “the robust self-esteem proxy: impression of self-esteem informs judgements of personality and social value”. The method used was experiment. The basic purpose was to see how people perceive the target after knowing their self-esteem. The results indicated that people having low self-esteem are perceived as individuals having poor relationships with others where as people with high self-esteem has good relationships with others.

In research of Debowska et al (2017), the aim of the research was “the development and validation of self-esteem measures for prisoners”. The method used was survey (self-report). The data was collected from 10 prisons. The results indicated that there is requirement to see self-esteem of prisoners as multidimensional, non-biased culture and domain-specific

In research of Brown & Creaven (2017), the aim of the study was performance feedback, self-esteem and cardiovascular adaptation to recurring stressor. The basic purpose was to see relationship between performance feedback and self-esteem on cardiovascular adaptation in presence of stress. The method used was survey. The data was collected from 66 students. The results indicated that people with high self-esteem experienced less stress as compared to people with low self-esteem.

In research of Magnusson & s Neramo in (2018), the aim of the research was “importance of self-esteem during childhood for occupational achievements among young men & women. The method used was method. The data was collected from 1304 participants who were Swedish adults, age group 18-75 years. The basic purpose of the study was to see effect of self-esteem in childhood on adulthood's occupation in both men and women. The results

indicated that there is positive relation between higher self-esteem and better occupation status in women, but it was not the case in men.

In research of Vaughan-Johnston et al (2020), the aim of the research was “self-esteem importance beliefs: a new perspective on adolescent self-esteem”. The basic purpose was importance of belief in self-esteem in adolescence. The method used was survey. The data was collected from 334 students of age group 11-14 years (6-8th grade). The results present that students who believed in self-esteem were more inclined towards emotionally upset people and that self-esteem helps in construction of social identity of an individual.

In research of Terblanche et al (2020) the aim of the research was “impact of self-esteem and student-and-lecturer interaction on academic performance in CA programme”. The method used was survey. In the research the purpose was to see the relationship between self-esteem and student interaction. The data was collected from 313 students and the responses were analysed using general structural equation modelling. The results indicate that improving students’ self-esteem would improve their interaction with other students, lecturers and their academic performance as well as professional life, these finding are particularly restricted to CA programme students.

Discussion

The present study’s main aim was to see “self-esteem and performance of an individual”. After reviewing various research, self-esteem has come to a better understanding and that, it is involved in every day-to-day tasks, everything we are engaged in, from our behaviour to our cognitive tasks such as perception, problem solving, etc. One very important factor which is believed that high self-esteem leads to better “academic performance” was tested false in many research. It is true that if someone has high self-esteem in specific area such as mathematics or speaking skills, they will perform better than those who has less in it, but there is no direct relationship that if someone has high self-esteem will perform better in academics.

Self-esteem also plays a very important role in our formation of social identity, through research it is believed that people with high self-esteem are more forgiving, not only this factor but our potential to cooperate, sacrifice, motivation, our ability to express our thoughts and emotions can be managed if we have high self-esteem. Self-esteem helps in having an optimistic viewpoint in life, as people with high self-esteem do not regret the decisions they have made in past, they don’t just focus on their weaknesses but also their strengths. It helps people confidently keep up their emotions and have the capability to say “no” when its required. Self-esteem does have a huge role in performance of an individual, taking example of a research I have reviewed above by Moncur, Bailey, Lockhart, LeCheminant & Perkins, it says that “women with high BMI has low self-esteem”, which automatically indicates that they are not confident about their body, they are always conscious and anxious which will affect their performance of everyday life. High self-esteem also helps in presenting yourself when going in an interview, since people have confidence in themselves, they put up their knowledge, thoughts in an impressive manner which is not the case in people with low self-esteem.

People having mastery goals in life, who wants to achieve a lot of things in life has high self-esteem, it helps them remain motivated throughout. People with high self-esteem has better relationships with others and they don't judge others easily even after knowing the condition of other's self-esteem. They take less stress and forgive more. Self-esteem also helps as coping mechanism in stigma related contents, such as HIV. It is also believed that in married couples, if one of partner has low self-esteem it will somehow affect the performance of another partner. Self-esteem is not just an internal need, by internal it refers to having worth, values, confidence etc, but also an external need. It means need of affiliation, i.e. people want status, respect and involvement in groups they are surrounded by, and people who feel they are high on this have high self-esteem. People who have had formed healthy self-esteem in the childhood itself performs well in occupation.

Now, talking about low self-esteem, after reviewing the various research, low self-esteem has very negative effects in life. Firstly, they have pessimistic or negative viewpoint in life, they don't have confidence on their decisions, they regret the decisions they have taken in past. People with low self-esteem experiences, anxiety, depression, unable to openly speak in public and are prone to various psychological disorder.

Individuals having low self-esteem are unable to maintain good relationships with others, their baseline esteem affect the performance of another partner. Through studies it's indicated that individuals with low self-esteem takes more stress and are less forgiving. Having high self-esteem might not always have positive results or outcomes in life but low esteem does have a lot of negative impacts. In a study by Noser & Zeigler-Hill, it was believed that people having, low self-esteem are more inclined towards fame and that's because they need validation, but this not the case with people having high self-esteem.

There needs to a balance, too high self-esteem is also not good for the well-being, as it acts as threat to the ego of an individual, having confidence is healthy self-esteem but having overconfidence is indicating too high self-esteem. High self-esteem improves the interaction of individuals with others, which will automatically improve other factors of life such as social and cultural relationships etc. Low self-esteem hampers the formation of social identity of a person, it holds them back to set and achieve high goals in life. For example, someone having low esteem would not participate in competitions held in school or college or workplace because they don't have confidence on their thoughts and perceptions.

Low self-esteem also hampers the performance in occupation, as individual is unable to maintain good relationship with others and unable to interpret their opinions. They are unable to take comments from their superiors and always has the fear of failure. Having low esteem demotivates the individual. One of the major reasons why people have low esteem is that they compare themselves with others, for example a teenage girl having many pimples on face might compare herself with other girls who have clean skin.

People with low self-esteem are not self-aware, which means they are not aware about their own strengths, they need acceptance and validation from others. Genes and environment too have a huge role in the formation of our esteem. If a child is grown up in a family who never allows him to take his own decisions, he will grow up having low self-esteem and that's because he will never have confidence on his own decisions. It is believed that if people are trained or educated, they can balance their self-esteem and can improve their performance in various aspects. High self-esteem improves the standard of and helps in making a better social identity of an individual.

The significance of this study is, having a balance self-esteem, i.e., not too high or not too low helps a lot in the performance of day-to-day life. It helps in making an individual a better and useful social identity, it motivates the person to perform the everyday tasks, it improves the relationships with others, it helps in having a better perception about oneself, it helps in having a better and optimistic view in life and improves the standard of living. It saves from various psychological disorders which may have huge impact in well-being.

Conclusion

The above study mainly talks about “**self-esteem and performance of an individual**”. And it concluded that self-esteem does have a huge impact in performance of an individual. Having a balanced self-esteem motivates an individual to perform tasks, maintain good social and cultural relationships, have better understanding of own self. It helps in taking less stress in life and become a more forgiving individual. It helps in having confidence on our own opinions and express our thoughts and emotions in front of many people. Low self-esteem leads to various psychological disorders such as anxiety, public speaking anxiety, depression. It hampers the development of social-identity and a person’s ability to express themselves. It holds back people from achieving goals in life. Having too high self-esteem also hampers an individual’s performance as it is a threat to ego. Healthy self-esteem improves personal as well as occupational life of an individual. Keeping all the factors in mind, if a person has balanced self-esteem, it will improve the performance as well as standard and well-being of a person as it helps in having an optimistic viewpoint in life, having faith in oneself, has the ability to control behaviour according to demands of the environment.

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