

Self-Esteem in Children (9th Standard Children)

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Abstract

The culture free self-esteem, inventory of Battle (1981) [9] form A, was administered to a sample of 184 boys and girls of 9th standard who were matched for age. The results revealed high self-esteem for boys and girls. But statistical examination for the significant difference between the groups showed that, boys have significantly high self-esteem on general, social and academic self-esteem than girls. Girls are more defensive than boys. The norms in the form of means and SD's are given for boys and girls separately.

Key words -

**Self-esteem,
Children,
Norms,
Lie-score**

The concept of self has appealed to researchers and theoreticians from many disciplines for the past 5 decades. This concept has secured a great deal of attention within the sphere of social and emotional development. Coopersmith [1] has pointed out that ".....building self-esteem is not a secondary luxury option in the school programmes, but is more of a basic component of programmes geared to indicate learning".

Several investigations have found a relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. Self-esteem is believed to be the best single predictor of achievement [7]. Branden [8] remarks that the self-esteem is the single most significant key to understand the behaviour of a person. To understand a man psychologically one must understand the nature and the degree of his self-esteem and the standards by which he judges himself. This holds goods in the case of children. It is also indicated by researchers that self-concept is well formed at school entry itself.

Hence, the lower a child's self-appraisal, the more likely he is to feel worried, ashamed of himself, leading to frustration. In view of the importance accorded to this concept in undertaking children, a search for a comprehensive scale on self-esteem, covering its various facets, yielded the culture free inventory of Battle [9]. An attempt was made to try out his tool in the Indian set up.

Description of the Inventory

The culture free self-esteem inventory for children contains 60 items and the following 5 subscales.

1. General self-esteem
2. Social/peer related self-esteem
3. Academic/school related self-esteem
4. Parents/home related self-esteem

Lie-scale (questions which indicate defensiveness)

Thus the instrument measures an individual's perception in 5 areas namely general, social, school, parents and defensiveness. The items have a yes/no response format. This instrument was standardised for children, in grades three through nine, and also used successfully with senior high school pupils. A test-retest reliability within the range of 0.81-0.89 has been reported for children in grades three through six and 0.91 for children in grades seven through nine. A factor analysis of the scale indicated that the items in the scale possessed acceptable internal consistency.

Method

This culture free self-esteem inventory (form A) was administered to a sample of 184 boys and 184 girls of 9th standard belonging to a government school. It was first tried on 8th standard children but they showed difficulty in comprehending many items. Therefore specially the 9th standard was considered for this investigation. The boys had a mean age of 13.8 years with a SD of 2.2 and for the girls mean age was 13.6 and SD 0.9. The medium of instruction was English. The children were asked to rate themselves on the response sheet provided. Clarifications were offered whenever the situation arose.

Results and Discussion

The response were scored using standard key (Higher score represents high self-esteem). Means and SD's were calculated, for boys and girls separately and are presented in Table 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1 - Means & SD's on self-esteem for boys (N=184)

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Table 2 - Means & SD's on self-esteem for girls (N=184)

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The mean and SD's may serve as norms for the group. Since there was difference between boys and girls in their means & SD's they are presented separately for the purpose of norms. For the same value the 't' value was found out. The findings are presented in Table 3 along with their significance level.

Table 3 - Mean, SD, "t" value and significant level for the boys and girls on self-esteem (N=184)

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In general both boys and girls have scored high on self-esteem which means that the (normal subjects) subjects are capable of taking active role in social groups. They are bold enough to express their views. They are able to perceive the threatening stimuli and act appropriately. When the results of boys and girls were compared, significant difference was noticed between them on most of the scales except parental self-esteem (refer Table 3). This indicates that both boys and girls feel secure with parents. They have undertaking with their parents and they perceive the parents as affectionate disciplinarians. With regard to social-self-esteem boys are significantly high on this as compared to girls (Table 3) which denotes that boys are less worried, more happy and they have trust in themselves. They are not troubled by inhibition. Boys seem to have more friends and have better leadership quality with helping nature as compared to the girls in this study.

On the academic self-esteem also boys show significantly high score as compared to girls (Table 3). This indicates that the boys are proud of their success in school work, as compared to girls. Girls have a fear that they may not be as smart as boys and also they become anxious that they may fail in the exam even if they have done well. At times they feel like quitting school.

On general self-esteem too boys seem to significantly differ from girls showing high general self-esteem. This conveys that boys are more realistic and direct in their personal goals. They are bold and feel assertive. They perform their leadership role successfully.

As regards defensiveness girls seem to be significantly high on its as compared to boys, indicating that girls are more manipulative and are defensive. Boys do not use such manipulating tendency as girls do. They are more direct in their approach.

The study of self-esteem has become relevant now because the importance of self-esteem has been emphasized by educationists. Recent researchers are indicating that, self-concept is a fundamental determinant of academic performance. Recent upsurge of humanistic philosophies of education have shown that the self-concept is believed to be the best single predictor of achievement. Importance of self-esteem has been emphasized in motivation research which strongly suggests that striving after social status and social approval stems in good part from the desire to maintain a favourable self-esteem.

In a study on measurement of self-esteem, for preparing an inventory for secondary school pupils Thomas and Sam Sanandaraj [10] have also highlighted that separate norms for boys and girls would be better than the combined norm. Their inventory gives a measure of self-esteem. Reliability of that test has been established on 9th grade children, it was 0.95 which is high and significant.

In the present investigation in order to consider the mean and SD for the norms, the standard error for all the scales both for boys and girls were checked and are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 - Standard error of self-esteem scores

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It was found to be very low and not significant. Thereby it indicates that the mean and SD can be considered as tentative norm both for boys and girls.

It was felt necessary to check the correlation of self esteem scores with the lie score before using this scale with the clinical sample. It was found that all the self-esteem sub scale scores have got negative correlation with the lie score (Table 5) for girls. For boys 2 correlations are negative and 3 are very low (Table 5), which means that higher the self-esteem, lower the lie-score, hence lesser is the

defensive behaviour.

Correlation between self-esteem subscales and the lie-score for boys and girls

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The obtained norms in the present work are being used to compare the scores of the clinical sample. In the clinical situation it is observed that many children are approaching the clinic with school problems. It is noticed that the difficulties of some children are pre-dominantly due to the problems in self-esteem. Due to their low self-esteem some children are not able to cope with the stresses in schools and home. Effort is made to increase the self-esteem through psychological intervention programmes.

Further work by authors on self-esteem is aimed towards establishing the reliability of this scale and highlighting the clinical utility of the scale.

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