

The Relationship between Children's Self-Esteem and Parents' Educational Level

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Abstract

Self-esteem is an important factor in persons' personality which associates to the worth that he considers for himself or the others ascribe the value to him. This study examined the relationship between Children's Self-esteem and Parents' educational level.

Purposive sampling which is applied in this study is likely to include children from a poor and ignorant neighborhoods and Kindergartens of Khomeinishahr city and Kindergarten's Employees Industrial University was located in the same city. Samples that were analyzed included 16 boys and 18 girls from ignorant families, 18 males and 16 females from families with high level education. All of them were been in the age group of 5 to 6 years. The study was conducted by using a structured interview. The interview's questions are taken from Pope Self-esteem Test. Content of question was entered into a consistent form with the theological literature of this age group that was changed and the same was asked of them.

The results demonstrated that no relationship between self-esteem and education level of parents. Also there was no a significant relationship between children of high education parents and poor parents. In fact, both groups had same self-esteem

Keywords: Self-esteem, Children, Parents, Level of Education

Introduction

Self-esteem has long been considered an essential component of good mental health. This concept extensively used in psychology. It refers as a set of attitudes and beliefs that a person brings with him-self or hers-elf when facing the world. It includes beliefs as to whether he or she can expect success or failure, how much effort should be put forth, whether failure at a task will "hurt," and whether he or she will become more capable as a result of difficult experiences (Coopersmith, 1981). Self-esteem is a form of self-protection since any loss of self-esteem brings a feeling of distress. Since the presence of anxiety can minimize our self-esteem defenses, it is the maintenance of an idealized image. This philosophy is supported by Diaz (1984) who posited that the events and the people which surround the individual have a direct relationship with the development of self-esteem (Colquhoun and Bourne, 2012). It finds expression in behavior. One can interpret self-esteem as a long-term personality characteristic or as a temporary psychological condition. Thus self-esteem refers to how one think and feels about him. Self-esteem is the temperament to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness. Self-esteem grips both self-relevant viewpoint competent/in competent and related self-relevant emotions—triumph/despair, pride/shame, confidence/caution, assertiveness/timorousness. Self-esteem or self-worth includes a person's, positive, negative or mixed, subjective appraisal, thoughts, or feelings about him or her. The more positive these thoughts and feelings are, the higher his/her self -esteem will be and conversely the more negative these thoughts and feelings are, the lower his/her self -esteem will be (Mustaq et al., 2012). Self-esteem is described as a life skill which is asocial competence used to cope with academics in order to meet fundamental challenges of forming stable human relationships and maintaining hope about the future (Opolot et al., 1997; Wahl, 2000). Pope (1988) defined self-esteem as the evaluative feelings one holds for oneself and the sense that one has essential worth, and asserted that self-esteem is evaluated as the difference between the actual self and the ideal self. The actual self is based on objective information that the self perceives about itself, that is, the self-concept. The ideal self is an image of the type of person that the individual wishes to be. Self-esteem is high when the actual self and ideal self are in agreement and low when they are discrepant (Hosogi et al., 2012).

The results of different studies in this area indicate that self-perception is derived from our social experiences. In other words, we see them that how others see us (Ganji, 1999). The first self-perception is a complex one that is derived from others' reactions. The parents and other relatives have significant role in the child's perception (Alipor and Rahmani, 2012). Formation of the child's perception about themselves begins very soon. Childs pay attention to their parents' behavior in the perception of cleverness and ability. If they cannot see these behaviors in their parents, their self-esteem cannot be improved (Fathi and Baadeleh, 2013). On the other hand, the messages that the child perceive about their surrounding peoples can influence their self-esteem. The children usually perceive everything as reality. Indeed, this improves their attractiveness. Also parents' self-esteem influences their child's that. It is should be remembered that the parents' activities influences the child's self-esteem more than their own one. The child usually be haves according to their parents' behavior. Therefore, the family's performance and structure plays an important role in the child's self-esteem. The results of different studies revealed that the divorced parents' child has very low self-esteem (Ganji, 1999). Some parents attend their child more than others. They provide a desirable and appropriate environment for their child. Indeed, the parents who valorize

themselves and have a determinant attitude toward them will be to cultivate the child with high self-esteem (Smith, Marsh, Barnes, 1985).

The results of different studies confirm the significant relationship between parents' self-esteem and child's that. One study though in Uganda had observed also that education increased girls' knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem (FAWE, 2000). Many studies have investigated that the relationship between parents' self-regulation strategies and child's self-esteem (Samadi, 2007) and the relationship between Literacy and self-esteem (Haffarian and Agaei, 2007). Therefore, it can be concluded that the parents 'literacy influence their child's self-esteem. This is why those different studies confirm significant relationship between parent's and child's self-esteem and their correlations (Sharifi, 2011; Panahande, 1993; Hoffman, 1987; Lau, 2008; Baker, 2011). On the other hand, self-esteem refers to the degree in which everybody profits it for doing his/her activities. Self-esteem exists in everybody in different degrees. Also self-esteem refers to the individuals' confirmation or disconfirmation toward themselves. This also refers to degree in which individuals consider them as able and important one. In other words, self-esteem is a personal experience that can be observed in the individuals' behavior. If the peoples evaluate themselves positively, then their self-esteem will be increased and vice versa (Veenhoven, 2000). Also self-esteem is placed on the external performances and is not continuous and sustainable. Living with self-esteem needs sound recognition, suitable effort, utilizing individual capabilities, and achieving necessary skills (Dinner and Lucas, 2000). With regard to the above-mentioned descriptions, the parents play an important role in creating child's self-esteem. Therefore, it is necessary to study this subject.

Mansori (1990) indicated that the midwifery students' self-esteem is more than nursing ones. Another part of his results indicated some of the demographic variables influence students' self-esteem such as age, academic seniority, personal and job problems. Also the results of his study indicated the students' academic field influences their self-esteem. The role of gender in adolescent occupations has been given much attention (Wahl and Blackhurst, 2000). Porshafei (1991) found that there is not any significant difference between male and female students' self-esteem. Also another part of his study indicated there is a significant correlation between self-esteem and educational progress. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and educational progress. Based on these results, it can be said that the individuals with high self-esteem will have more academic achievement than others.

Panahande (1993) concluded that there is a significant difference between students with high and low self-esteem and their behaviors with parents. This means that parents' behavior influences students' self-esteem. Also, Karbalaee and Lalaei (1998) investigated the effects of mothers' employment on their child's self-esteem. The results of this study revealed that the child of employed parents have more self-esteem than other child.

The results of other study revealed that shortages in the educational, moral and cultivation areas are the most important effective factors on the teenagers' low self-esteem and tendency to crime (Navabinejhad, 2002; Biabangard, 2005). Haffrian and Agaei (2007) found that educated women had much self-esteem than less educated ones. This study confirms the importance of the role of literacy on the self-esteem.

Mruk (1995) examined the self-esteem among children and found that the 4-5 ages are the most important critical period in the self-esteem formation. Hoffman (1973) studied teenagers and found that the mother-son relationship has the most important role in positive self-image and confidence formation. He also examined the effects of father and mother

supportive resources on the children's self-esteem. The results of his study indicated that there is a significant positive relationship between father and mother supportive resources and their children's self-esteem. On the hand, their findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and educational achievement. Based on their results, the students will have more positive attitudes toward education and learning if they can do their homework successfully and encouraged by their parents and teachers (Biabangard, 2005).

Baumeister (2003) examined the relationship between students' self-esteem and performance with their parents' literacy. The results of his study revealed that high self-esteem cannot result in better performance and also parents' literacy cannot be considered as a reliable predictor of students' self-esteem. Harman, Hansen, and Cochran (2005) indicated that the self-esteem leads to decrease undesirable activities that can be done through abnormal behaviors. Indeed, they found that self-respect is one of the important mediating factors in the aggression behaviors.

Yanping and Thomas (2007) examined the effects of culture on the children's self-esteem among Chinese and Western children. The results of their study indicated that the self-esteem diagram is different for Chinese and Western children. It can be concluded from their results that the approaches used for improving and promoting child's self-esteem are different based on their cultures. Lau (2008) examined self-esteem of children of the divorced parents in Hong Kong and found that parents' divorce is a significant factor on the child's self-esteem. Bulanda and Majumdar (2009) studied the inter-family communications on the teenagers' self-esteem and found that there is a significant relationship between teenagers' self-esteem and their relations with their parents. Also the results of their study revealed that teenagers' autonomy and their relations with parents are the most important effective factors on the self-esteem. Baker and Ben-Ami (2010) surveyed 118 American teenagers and found that lack of relationship with parents and sense of alienation to them is the most important factor in decreasing teenagers' self-esteem. They also pointed out that there is a significant relationship between teenagers' low self-esteem and their tendency to alcohol abuse, stress, and depression.

An overview of the past studies indicates the relationship between self-esteem and some components such as educational achievement and mental health has been studied in the previous studies. Unfortunately, the relationship between effectiveness of self-esteem and parents' literacy has not been examined in the past studies. One of the main reasons is lack of a comprehensive study on the self-esteem among different age periods. Therefore, the present study was aimed to investigate the relationship between children's self-esteem and parents' educational level through a semi-structured interview based on the Pope test.

Research Methodology

This study is a comparative-casual research. The statistical population of this study included children with 4-6 years old. In order to select sample members, sampling has been done in different regions of Khomeinishahr city. For this purpose, 16 male and 18 female students selected from less educated families and also 18 male and 16 female students selected from educated families. The respondents' responses analyzed in both descriptive and inferential statistics. This study has performed through semi-structured interviews based on the Pope Self-esteem test.

Pope's 5-Scale Test of Self-Esteem for Children consists of 60 questions and evaluates self-esteem on 5 scales: Global Scale, Academic Scale, Body Scale, Family Scale, and Social Scale. The maximum score for each scale is 20 points, and the total score for each scale is used for

the evaluation. In addition, Lie Scale was established to evaluate response validity for this test (Hosogi, 2012). This questionnaire has been developed for students. This questionnaire was developed in three scales in which 0 = never, 1 = sometimes, and 2 = always. But a two point scale (yes or no) has been used in this study. During interview period, the authors seek to control the respondents' conditions such as interviewer, questions, and encouragement. With regard to respondents' ages, the authors seek to communicate them appropriately so that they answer the questions soundly. Also different methods have been used for communicating respondents appropriately such as giving rewards. Also some control questions have been asked from students. Ultimately, 21 female and 14 male students have been eliminated from interview because their answers had bias.

Findings

As indicated in past sections, the main hypothesis of this study was: there is a significant relationship between parents' literacy and children's self-esteem. In order to test this hypothesis, the findings have been indicated in this section. For this purpose, variances of two groups have been calculated in table 1.

Table 1:

The Results of Levin Test

| Children's self-esteem | F | Sig |
|--|-------|-------|
| Children's self-esteem in the less educated families | 3.04 | 0.101 |
| Children's self-esteem in the educated families | 0.313 | 0.584 |

The results of table 1 showed that the variances of two groups are equal.

Table 2:

The Average And Standard Deviation of Children's Self-Esteem

| Self-esteem | Standard deviation | Average | Lower limit | Upper limit | Frequency |
|-------------|--------------------|---------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| | 5.38 | 29.12 | 19 | 38 | 33 |

This table showed the average, standard deviation, lower limit, and upper limit of the children's self-esteem.

Table 3:

The Results of Comparison Between Average And Standard Deviation Of Children's Self-Esteem Based on The Parents' Literacy

| Self-esteem | Standard deviation | Average | Lower limit | Upper limit | Frequency |
|--|--------------------|---------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Children's self-esteem in educated families | 5.03 | 29.29 | 19 | 37 | 17 |
| Children's self-esteem in less educated families | 5.89 | 28.93 | 19 | 38 | 16 |

The results of this table indicated that least score of self-esteem is 19 in each group and maximum is one score more than least score. The difference between averages of self-esteem of two groups is 0.36.

Table 4:

The Results of Comparison of Significance of Averages Differences

| Self-esteem | Average | Standard deviation | Df | Sig | T |
|--|---------|--------------------|----|-------|-------|
| Children's self-esteem in educated families | 29.29 | 5.03 | 31 | 0.853 | 0.187 |
| Children's self-esteem in less educated families | 28.93 | 5.89 | | | |

The results of table 4 indicated that the t-value is not significant (in $p \leq 0.05$). Therefore, it can be said that there is not any difference between children's self-esteem with educated parents and children's self-esteem and less educated parents. Based on the results, it can be concluded that there is not any significant difference between children's self-esteem and parents' educational level and so the main hypothesis of study is rejected.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that there is not any difference between children's self-esteem in educated and less educated families. Indeed, the results indicated there is not any significant relationship between children's self-esteem and parents' literacy. These results are supported by Ahadi and Mohseni (1992). Also Ahadi and Mohseni (1992) found that the parents' literacy is not a reliable predictor of the children's self-esteem. Additionally, Coopersmith (1987) indicated there is not any significant relationship between children's self-esteem and other factors such as family income, literacy, geographical region, social conditions, and parents' job. On the other hand, quality of the relationship between children and adults is effective in their self-esteem. Also the results of this study are supported by Türkbay, Özcan, Doruk, and Uzun (2005). They pointed out that there is not any significant

correlation between parents' literacy and teenagers' self-esteem and identity. Another part of the results indicate that there is not any significant relationship between female students' individual identity and mothers' employment status. These results are supported by the results of Johnston, Swanson, and Luidens (2008). They indicated that the mothers' employment status have not any effects on the children's identity.

In order to explain the results of this study in accordance with the effective components on the children's self-esteem, it can be said that the parents' relations with their children (Panahande, 1993), individuals' perception and impression from family and their own competencies (Zeki, 2007), self-esteem in the cultures (Baker et al., 2010), physical and mental health (Blake, 2002), individual and family religious maturity family flexibility and children's freedom (Jamshidi et al., 2008) are the most important effective factors on the children's self-esteem. Also the results of this study are not supported by Porshafei (1991); Karbalaee and Llaei (1999); Mansori (1990); Navabinejhad (2002); Biabangard (2005); Haffarian and Agaei (2007). In order to explain this difference between our findings and past findings, it can be said that the present different findings are derived from different studies that have been done in different cultures. The parents seek to develop children's competencies successfully. Discussion about sound parenting methods that is done in today's academic communities indicates that there is a significant relationship between parents' effective relationship and children's self-esteem. As a result, parents with different social conditions and literacy are seeking to cultivate their children and use effective methods for improving their self-esteem. With regard to this fact that self-esteem is one of the most important measures of life quality, this measure and measures of physical and mental health show individuals' success. It is necessary that not only parents seek to improve their children's self-esteem, but also responsible organizational effort for this purpose. It seems that workshops and classes for educating the teachers and coaches, educational workshops for educating parents, and also developing an integrated educational plan for satisfying children's needs and capabilities are effective in the children's self-esteem improvement. With regard to the importance of preschool period in the children's self-esteem, it is necessary to implement several studies in this area. These studies should consider the effects of parents' age and occupation, mothers' occupation, and other factors on the children's self-esteem. Also it is necessary to be pointed out that the researchers who study the students in preschool period must have necessary knowledge and experiences for this purpose. On the other hand, it is suggested that experts and professionals are employed for such studies.

Authors Contributions

Mrs. Soltani, Leila

Original Idea for the research, Designer and planner for this research, writing the manuscript, seeking the references and doing interview with samples.

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