

Students' Perceptions about Self-Esteem

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Abstract

Self-esteem is very important for all of us. The main aim of the paper is the measurement of self-esteem of students of Psychology and Social Work branches of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Bachelor degree and analyzing students' opinions about the self-esteem in general and about their self-esteem. For the realization of this study it is used the technique of questionnaire. The measuring instrument is the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). It is used, also, the interview technique in order to understand students' opinions about their self-esteem in general and about their self-esteem. In the study, we had the participation of 209 students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences of the University "Luigj Gurakuqi" of Shkodër city. In the study we had the participation of 105 students of Psychology branch of Bachelor degree and the participation of 104 students of Social Work branch of Bachelor degree. The paper aims, also, to analyze the impact of specific academic programme and course on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed by means of the SPSS program, variant 20. It is used the analysis of variance Anova table and eta to examine the impact of specific academic programme and course on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students. There are given the appropriate conclusions. The results of students's self-esteem are good. The mean is 19,94, the median is 20 and the mode is 20. The maximum score obtained is 28 (obtained from 2 students or 1% of students), the minimum score obtained is 8 (obtained from 1 student or 0,5% of students). There is not a significant relationship between the type of academic programme on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students ($Sig=0,125$). There is a significant relationship between the specific academic course on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students ($Sig=0,030$). The students of the second academic course have a higher average of point (20,75), whereas the students of the first academic course have a lower average of point (19,05), and this relationship is statistically significant. According to the students, the causes of positive self-esteem, in general, are : a)the support from the family, b)the support from the social environment, c)their confidence and strength to face problems. According to them, the causes of negative self-esteem, in general, are : a)trauma in the family, such as death of the parent, b)physical maltreatment and physical violence in the family, c)the failures in life, d) the lack of self-confidence. There are given the appropriate suggestions, as the improvement of students'self-esteem, especially for the students of the first academic course.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965).

1. Introduction

For everyone self-esteem is very important. So, self-esteem is very important for the students in general and for the students of Psychology and Social Work branches.

Their self-esteem will influence their psychological functioning and, therefore, it will influence the quality of their work. So, the future psychologists and social workers self-esteem will impact the quality of social services, especially for the North of Albania area.

2. Theoretical Treatment

The evolution of the self-esteem construct is of interest and started with W. James in 1890 and has been going for more than a century.¹

In psychology, self-esteem is defined as a reflection of a person's overall self-appraisal, of their own worth (Suzanne Phillips, PsyD, 2009).²

At the conceptual level, self-esteem has traditionally been considered an evaluative component of the self-concept

¹Anderson J.E., (2002) "Self-esteem: The Myth of the Century", Campbell University

²<http://www.pbs.org/thismotionallife/blogs/how-your-self-esteem-impacts-relationships>

(Purkey, 1970; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976) by which subjects appraise their self-image from the feedback they receive as individuals and from information from social interaction during their diverse social roles (González-Pianda, Núñez, González-Pumariega, & García, 1997) (Martín-Albo J., Núñez J.L., Navarro J.G., Grijalvo F. (2007) "The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: Translation and Validation in University Students", The Spanish Journal of Psychology, Vol. 10, No. 2, pg.459).

Self-esteem is a student's overall evaluation of him- or herself, including feelings of general happiness and satisfaction (Harter, 1999) (Manning M.A. (2007).³

The media, printed journals, textbooks, and videos have advanced the widespread belief that raising an individual's self-esteem would be beneficial for the individual and society as a whole. According to Gegas (1982), Rosenberg (1965) and Wylie (1974), much of behavior is determined by how one assesses one's own sense of worth.⁴

Teachers, parents, therapists, and others have focused efforts on boosting self-esteem, on the assumption that high self-esteem will cause many positive outcomes and benefits.⁵

3. Methodology of preparation and development of this paper

3.1 Aims and objectives of the paper

The main aims and objectives are :

- Measuring self-esteem of students Psychology and Social Work branches of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Bachelor degree.
- Analyzing students' opinions about the self-esteem in general and about their self-esteem.

The research questions are :

The research question 1 : What is the self-esteem of students Psychology and Social Work branches of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Bachelor degree?

The research question 2 : What is the influence of specific academic programme on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students ?

The research question 3 : What is the influence of specific academic course on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students ?

The research question 4 : What are students' opinions about the self-esteem in general and about their self-esteem?

3.2 Sampling

In the study, we had the participation of 209 students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences. In the study we had the participation of 105 students of Psychology branch of Bachelor degree and the participation of 104 students of Social Work branch of Bachelor degree. 18 students (8,6%) are male, 189 students (90,4%) are female, while 2 students (1%) haven't given their gender. 70 students (33,5%) study in first academic course, 70 students (33,5%) study in the second academic course, 69 students (33%) study in the third academic course. In the study we had the participation of students of different ages. 49 students (23,4%) are 18 years aged, 62 students (29,7%) are 19 years aged, 62 students (29,7%) are 20 years aged, 27 students (12,9%) are 21 years aged, 6 students (2,9%) are 22 years aged, 2 students (1%) are 23 years aged, and 1 student hasn't given his age.

The students participating in the study live in different areas of northern Albania. 79 students (37,8%) live in Shkodra district, 4 students (1,9%) live in Tirana district, 29 students (13,9%) live in Lezha district, 14 students (6,7%) live in Malesia e Madhe district, 9 students (4,3%) live in Burrel, 8 students (3,8%) live in Puka district, 9 students (4,3%) live in Kukes district, 16 students (7,7%) live in Lac district, 15 students (7,2%) live in Tropoje district, 3 students (1,4%) live in Kruja district, 7 students (3,3%) live in Rreshen, 5 students (2,4%) live in Dibra district, 4 students (1,9%) live in Mamurras, 1 student (0,5%) live in Fushe-Kruje, 5 students (2,4%) live in Ulqin district, 1 student (0,5%) live in Has.

³<http://www.nasponline.org/families/selfconcept.pdf>, pg.11

⁴Anderson J.E., (2002) "Self-esteem: The Myth of the Century", Campbell University

⁵http://www.fetzer.org/sites/default/files/images/stories/pdf/selfmeasures/Self_Measures_for_Self-Esteem_ROSENBERG_SELF-ESTEEM.pdf

3.3 Apparatus/Materials

It is employed the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) to measure students' self-esteem. It is used, also, the the interview technique in order to understand students' opinions about their self-esteem in general and about their self-esteem.

3.4 Contents of the questionnaire

The scale is a ten item Likert scale with items answered on a four point scale - from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Scoring: SA=3, A=2, D=1, SD=0. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored, that is, SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self esteem.⁶

3.5 Method of completing the questionnaire

The questionnaires have been filled out by the students themselves. The administration of the questionnaires (distribution and collection) was conducted during the month November 2013.

3.6 Method of analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires was analyzed by means of the SPSS program, variant 20. It is estimated the reliability of the test. The internal reliability of the Self-Esteem Scale Alpha Cronbach coefficient=0,752. It is carried out the coding of the variables according to the respective rules defined by the author.

3.7 Piloting stage

It is realised the piloting phase. In this phase the internal reliability of the questionnaire Alpha Cronbach coefficient=0,797. In the piloting phase we had the participation of 35 students of Social Work branche, the second course. Alpha Cronbach coefficient was recalculated after 10 days with the participation of the same subjects and it resulted the same, Alpha Cronbach coefficient=0,797.

4. Findings of the study

4.1 General data concerning students' self-esteem

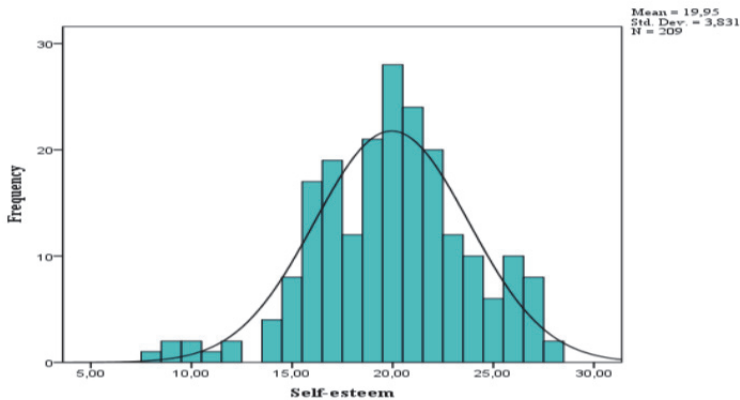
Table 1. Data about students' self-esteem

	N	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Self-esteem	209	19,94	20	20	3,83	8	28
Valid	209						

The mean is 19,94, the median is 20 and the mode is 20. The maximum score obtained is 28 (obtained from 2 students or 1% of students), the minimum score obtained is 8 (obtained from 1 student or 0,5% of students). It is given the corresponding histogram (the graph 1).

⁶<http://www.yorku.ca/rokada/psycetest/rosenbrg.pdf>

Graph 1. Data about students' self-esteem



As we can see, the most of the results obtained is ranked in the range of values from 20 to 28 (120 students or 57,5%). A small fraction of the values obtained is ranked in the range of values from 8 to 10 (5 students or 2,5%). In the range of values from 11 to 19 is ranked the other portion of the results (84 students or 40%).

4.2 *The analysis of the influence of specific academic programme on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students*

It is used the analysis of variance Anova table and eta to examine the impact of the specific academic programme on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students.

Table 2. The relationship between the type of academic programme on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students

Academic programme	Mean	Median	N	Std.Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Psychology	20,35	20,00	105	3,81	9,00	28,00
Social Work	19,53	20,00	104	3,81	8,00	28,00
Total	19,94	20,00	209	3,83	8,00	28,00

There is not a significant relationship between the type of academic programme on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students (Sig=0,125). As we can see from table 2, the students of Psychology Bachelor degree have a higher average of point (20,35), whereas the students of the Social Work Bachelor degree have a lower average of point (19,53), but this relationship isn't statistically significant. So, the type of students' academic programme doesn't impact their self-esteem.

4.3 *The analysis of the influence of specific academic course on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students*

It is used the analysis of variance Anova table and eta to examine the impact of specific academic course on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students

Table 3. The relationship between the specific academic course on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students

Academic course	Mean	Median	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
First academic course	19,05	19,00	70	3,96	8,00	27,00
Second academic course	20,75	21,00	70	4,14	9,00	28,00
Third academic course	20,02	20,00	69	3,16	10,00	27,00
Total	19,94	20,00	209	3,83	8,00	28,00

There is a significant relationship between the specific academic course on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students (Sig=0,030). As we can see from table 2, the students of the second academic course have a higher average of point

(20,75), whereas the students of the first academic course have a lower average of point (19,05), and this relationship is statistically significant. So, the type of students' academic course impact their self-esteem.

4.4 The analysis of students' opinions about the self-esteem in general and about their self-esteem.

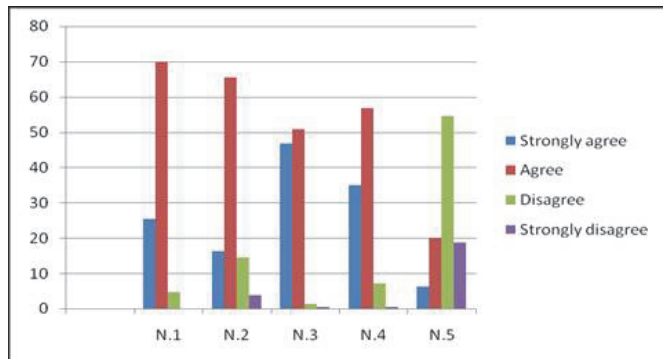
Table 4. Results of students' self-esteem (expressed through absolute frequency)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
N.1	53	146	10		209
N.2	34	137	30	8	209
N.3	98	106	3	1	208
N.4	73	119	15	1	208
N.5	13	42	114	39	208

Table 5. Results of students' self-esteem (expressed through relative frequency)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
N.1	25,4	69,9	4,7	-	100%
N.2	16,3	65,6	14,4	3,8	100%
N.3	46,9	50,7	1,4	0,5	99,5%
N.4	34,9	56,9	7,2	0,5	99,5%
N.5	6,2	20,1	54,5	18,7	99,5%

Graph 2. The results of students' opinions (expressed through relative frequency) for the items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5



In relation to the item 1 "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself", 199 students (95,3%) respond positively, while 10 students (4,8%) respond negatively. In relation to the item 2 "At times, I think I am no good at all", 171 students (81,9%) assert this statement, whereas 38 students (18,2%) disagree. In relation to the item 3 "I feel that I have a number of good qualities", 204 students (97,6%) respond positively. In relation to the item 4 "I am able to do things as well as most other people", 192 students (91,8%) assert this statement, whereas 16 students (7,7%) disagree. In relation to the item 5 "I feel I do not have much to be proud of", 55 students (26,3%) assert this statement, whereas 153 students (73,2%) disagree.

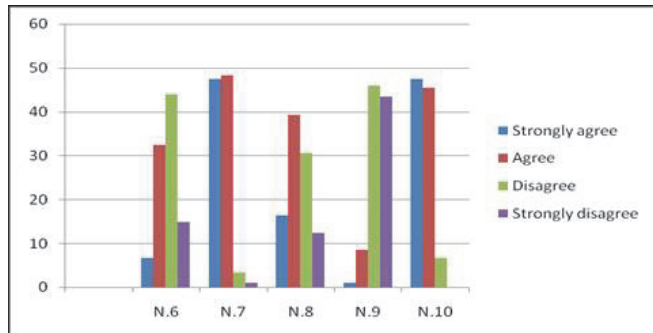
Table 6. Results of students' self-esteem (expressed through absolute frequency)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
N.6	14	68	92	31	205
N.7	99	101	7	2	209
N.8	34	82	64	26	206
N.9	2	18	96	91	207
N.10	99	95	14	-	

Table 7. Results of students' self-esteem (expressed through relative frequency)

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
N.6	6,7	32,5	44	14,8	98,1%
N.7	47,4	48,3	3,3	1	100%
N.8	16,3	39,2	30,6	12,4	98,6%
N.9	1	8,6	45,9	43,5	99%
N.10	47,4	45,5	6,7	-	99,5%

Graph 3. The results of students' opinions (expressed through relative frequency) for the items 6, 7, 8, 9, 10



In relation to the item 6 "I certainly feel useless at times", 82 students (39,2%) assert this fact, whereas 123 students (58,8%) disagree this statement. In relation to the item 7 "I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others", 200 students (95,7%) respond positively, while 9 students (4,3%) respond negatively. In relation to the item 8 "I wish I could have more respect for myself", 116 students (55,5%) agree this fact, whereas 90 students (43%) don't agree. In relation to the item 9 "All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure", 20 students (9,6%) agree, whereas 187 students (89,4%) disagree this statement. In relation to the item 10 "I take a positive attitude toward myself", 194 students (92,9%) respond positively, while 14 students (6,7%) respond negatively.

In general, the students think that their self-esteem is positive. Only 15 students (7,1% of students participating in the study) think that their self-esteem is negative. The students list the following causes for their positive self-esteem : a)positive opinion about themselves, b)high self-confidence, c)their optimism, d)the positive impact of family and the positive impact of social environment. The students that think their self-esteem is negative, base their judgment on : a)their pessimism, b)perception of inferiority in comparison with their peers, c)lack of the courage to face the problems and to continue forward without regret for what that had occurred, d)lack of self-confidence e)perception of low evaluation for them from their peers.

According to the students, the causes of positive self-esteem, in general, are : a)the support from the family, b)the support from the social environment, c)the confidence and the strength to face problems. According to the students, the causes of negative self-esteem, in general, are : a)trauma in the family, such as death of the parent, b)physical maltreatment and physical violence in the family, c)the failures in life, d) the lack of self-confidence.

The students suggest different ways to improve their self-esteem : a)increasing their self-confidence, b)increasing confidence in their capabilities, c)evaluating the positive aspects of themselves, d)increasing their motivation, d)the support of their closed friend, e)the professional help from the psychologist, f)increasing their optimism, g)the involvement in the activities where they have the opportunity to show their capabilities.

5. Conclusions

The results of students's self-esteem are good. There is not a significant relationship between the type of academic programme on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students. There is a significant relationship between the specific academic courses on mean Self-Esteem Scale score of students. The students of the second academic course have a higher average of point, whereas the students of the first academic course have a lower average of point, and this relationship is statistically significant. According to the students, the causes of positive self-esteem, in general, are : a)the

support from the family, b)the support from the social environment, c)their confidence and strength to face problems. According to them, the causes of negative self-esteem, in general, are : a)trauma in the family, such as death of the parent, b)physical maltreatment and physical violence in the family, c)the failures in life, d) the lack of self-confidence. In general, students are satisfied with them, are proud of them. They have a positive attitude toward them.

6. Recommendations

The following would be necessary:

The improvement of self-esteem of students of first academic course. It is very important that the staff of our Department give more support to them, considering the fact that they come from different districts of North of Albania (where there is too much poverty), and they have to adjust with the life of a big city as is Shkodra city.

The improvement of students'opinion regarding being useless at times. It is important to change this opinion. This can be done through some interventions, as : psychological interventions, support from their peers, support from our staff.

It is very important that the students have more respect for them. For this, their view about themselves must be changed.

It is very important the development of rural areas of the North of our country. The focus will be on the economic empowerment of these areas. The focus will be, also, on preventing physical maltreatment and physical violence in the family. For this, it is important improving social services for the people of these areas.

The improvement of students's self-esteem is very important, inter alia the fact that these students in the future will be the psychologists and the social workers of these rural areas. The improvement of their self-esteem will influence the improvement of their psychological functioning and, therefore, it will influence the quality of their work. So, improving students'self-esteem will result in improving the quality of social services and empowerment of our society, especially of North of Albania area.

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