

Golden Research Thoughts

Abstract:-

The term 'self-esteem' refer to overall level of self-evaluation or self-regard. It is an evaluative measure of attitudes toward the self in social, academic, family, and personal areas of experience. Within the self-esteem literature, there has been mixed empirical support for the relationship between self-esteem and performance. In this study, researcher has studied whether the children with learning disabilities (LD) differ significantly in their self-esteem from the children without learning disabilities (NC). Data was collected from 6th class 725 children of six schools. Out of these 725 children, 98 LD were identified and classified into three groups on the basis of their intelligence scores. Also, 98 NC were matched with the 98 LD on the basis of intelligence score, gender; class and school. The Self-esteem Inventory (SEI) – school form – was administered which consists of fifty-eight items yielding scores on General Self (SEGEN); Social Self-Peers (SESOC); Home-Parents (SEH); School-Academic (SESCH) and Total score (SET) along with lie score.



SELF-ESTEEM OF THE CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Though there are no gender differences on self-esteem among children with learning disabilities (LD), findings reveal that LD have lower mean scores on all the dimensions of SEI as compared to the children without learning disabilities (NC). Also, the significant mean differentials between NC and LD on SESOC and SET indicate that the LD has significantly lower social-peer self-esteem and significantly lower overall self-esteem as compared to the NC. These findings stress the need to enhance the self-esteem of these children by making them feel good about themselves.

Keywords:

Self-esteem , learning disabilities , self-evaluation , academic, family.

Kuldeep Kaur

**Assistant Professor , Department of Education ,
Panjab University , Chandigarh.**

INTRODUCTION

'Self' is the sum total of a person's ideas about who and what he is, what he appears to be, what he thinks himself to be and what others judge him to be. The self is the person's essence of his existence that is known to him. It includes the entire structure of his being. A person's behavior in any situation depends upon the way he perceives the situation, his self being the part of that perceived situation.

In the words of Ruggiero (2000) a revolution has taken place in the vocabulary of self. Words that imply responsibility or accountability – self-criticism, self-denial, self-discipline, self-control, self-effacement, self-mastery, self-reproach, and self-sacrifice – are no longer in fashion. The language most in favor is that which exalts the self – self-expression, self-assertion, self-indulgence, self-realization, self-approval, self-acceptance, self-love, and the ubiquitous self-esteem.

The term 'self-esteem' refer to overall level of self-evaluation or self-regard. It involves one's mental perception of one's qualities. Self-Esteem is an evaluative measure of attitudes toward the self in social, academic, family, and personal areas of experience. According to Battle (2000) self-esteem is an attitude of acceptance, approval, and respect towards oneself, manifested by personal recognition of one's abilities and achievements and an acknowledgment and acceptance of one's limitations. It is an expression of approval or disapproval, indicating the extent to which a person believes himself to be competent, successful, significant, and worthy.

EMERGENCE OF THE PROBLEM:

Children are not born with concerns of being good or bad, smart or stupid, lovable or unlovable. They develop these ideas. They form self-images based largely on the way they are treated by the significant people, the parents, teachers, and peers, in their lives.

While there is some agreement about self-esteem's basic attributes, there is less agreement about its functions and its relevance to people's thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Within the self-esteem literature, there has been mixed empirical support for the relationship between self-esteem and performance. Sarswat (1982) and Accordinno (2000) reported significant positive relation between intellectual self-concept and academic achievement and that boys and girls differ significantly on total self-concept. On the other hand, Linehan (1999) and Thurman (2000) concluded that conceptions of ability may be redundant in predicting individual differences in achievement behaviours. Apple (2001) found moderate to weak correlations between school climate and self-esteem.

Self-perception of one's learning ability is related positively to both academic self-concept and self-esteem, and that each of these relationships remained significant while controlling for sex, ethnicity, age, reading and math achievement, self-contained versus mainstreamed classroom setting, and age at diagnosis (Heyman, 1990). Students with learning disabilities usually carry negative self-perceptions (De Santos, 2006). Difficulties faced by them are quite embarrassing to them resulting in decrease of self-esteem (Lyon, 1997). They demonstrate lower perceptions of general intellectual ability than the normally achieving students (Crossen, 2001). Enduring extensive periods of failure result in poor self-worth (Seeratan, 2003). Special education program (Grant, 2001)¹³ and helpful and caring attitude of teachers (Krueger, 2001)¹⁴ may build up the self-esteem of students with learning disabilities.

Presently, the efforts are being made to mainstream the children with special needs. In inclusive setting, it becomes all the more pertinent to know what are the factors which may have direct impact on the children with special needs, especially on their achievements and their self-esteem, when they find themselves competing with other children.

OBJECTIVES:

In the present study self-esteem of students studying in 6th class was assessed. At this age the self-concept is evolving and children have built their self-images depending upon their achievements and the feedback they receive from the significant ones (teachers, parents, siblings, friends). Through this study, researcher had made an attempt to explore whether the children with learning disabilities (LD) differ significantly in their self-esteem from the children without learning disabilities (NC). Also, the gender difference among children with learning disabilities has been studied.

SAMPLE:

An initial sample of 725 children was selected from randomly selected six Government Model Senior Secondary Schools of Chandigarh. All 725 children were administered Diagnostic Test of Learning Disability (DTLD) and Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM). Out of 725 children, children with learning disabilities (LD) were identified. The children without learning disabilities (NC) were matched with the LD children on the basis of intelligence scores; gender; class and school. The final sample, therefore, comprised of 98 LD and 98 NC.

Table 1
Matching of children without learning disabilities (NLC = 98) and children with learning disabilities (NLD = 98) on basis of intelligence scores

Category	N _{LD}	N _{NC}
Average Intelligence (AI)	46	46
Above Average Intelligence (AAI)	33	33
High Intelligence (HI)	19	19
Total	98	98

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION:

Diagnostic Test of Learning Disability (DTLD) by Swarup and Mehta (1993).
 Self-Esteem Inventories (SEI) by Coopersmith (1987).
 Standard Progressive Matrices (SPM) by Raven, Raven and Court (2007).

PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION:

Phase – I: The Principals of the randomly selected schools (six) were personally contacted along with the written request for data collection. The purpose of the study for which data was to be collected, was explained to each of them. The Principals / Primary wing in-charges, after consulting the class teacher and the time-table of the class, permitted for data collection on particular dates, in particular periods.

Phase – II: As per the fixed dates and time, data was collected from the children by administering DTLD and SPM. In this phase, data from 725 children of six schools was collected. Out of these 725 children, 98 LD were identified and they were classified into three groups on the basis of their intelligence scores. Also, out of these 725 children, 98 NC were matched with the 98 LD on the basis of intelligence score; gender; class and school.

Phase – III: In this last phase SEI was administered. The SEI includes questions related to school, family, peers, self, and general social activities. The school form of SEI consists of fifty-eight items which yield scores on General Self (SEGEN); Social Self-Peers (SESOC); Home-Parents (SEH); School-Academic (SESCH) and Total score (SET) along with lie score.

RESULTS:

Table 2 gives mean scores and range of scores on self-esteem (SE) which includes measures of General-self (SEGEN); Social-peers (SESOC); Home-parents (SEH); School-academic (SESCH) and Total (SET) for the entire sample of children having learning disabilities (NLD = 98) and the entire sample of children without learning disabilities (NLC = 98).

Table 2
Means and range of scores of LD (NLD=98) and NC (NLC=98) on Self Esteem (SE)

SE DIMENSION	GROUP	RANGE OF SCORES	
		MEAN	
SE _{GEN}	LD	16.53	8 – 23
	NC	17.43	7 – 25
SE _{SOC}	LD	5.01	1 – 8
	NC	5.54	2 – 8
SE _H	LD	5.83	2 – 8
	NC	6	0 – 8
SE _{SCH}	LD	5.79	1 – 8
	NC	6.12	1 – 8
SE _T	LD	66.37	38 – 88
	NC	70.29	40 – 98

Table 2 shows that though the range of scores of LD and NC are comparable on all dimensions of SEI, yet the mean score of NC is more than the mean score of LD on all dimensions of SEI, i.e., SEGEN, SESOC, SEH, SESCH and SET.

Table 3
Category-wise mean score of LD (AI=46; AAI=33; HI=19) and NC (AI=46; AAI=33; HI=19) on SEGEN, SESOC, SEH, SESCH & SET

Self- Esteem	Category	AI (N=46)	AAI (N=33)	HI (N=19)
SE _{GEN}	LD	16.46	16.73	16.37
	NC	17.5	17.36	17.37
SE _{SOC}	LD	4.93	5.24	4.79
	NC	5.33	5.88	5.47
SE _H	LD	5.72	6*	5.79
	NC	6.09	5.76*	6.21
SE _{SCH}	LD	5.59	5.97	5.95
	NC	6.2	6.03	6.11
SE _T	LD	65.39	68.06	65.79
	NC	70.09	70.06	71.16

Table 3 gives mean scores of the three intelligence categories of LD and NC [viz. average intelligent (AI), above average intelligent (AAI) & high intelligent (HI)] on SEGEN, SESOC, SEH, SESCH and SET.

It is evident from the table values that the mean score on SEGEN, SESOC, SESCH, SEH and SET of all the three categories of NC (viz., NCAI, NCAAI & NCHI) is higher than that of all the three categories of LD (viz., LDAI, LDAAI & LDHI) except that the mean of LDAAI is higher than the mean of NCAAI on SEH (see * in the Table 3).

Table 4
Means; standard deviations and t-values on Self – Esteem (SE) for LD and NC (NLD = 98 & NNC = 98; df = 194)

	M _{LD}	M _{NC}	SD _{LD}	SD _{NC}	t	Remarks
SE _{GEN}	16.53	17.43	3.56	3.67	1.738	NS
SE _{SOC}	5.01	5.54	1.43	1.45	2.57	0.05 level
SE _H	5.83	6	1.27	1.41	0.901	NS
SE _{SCH}	5.79	6.12	1.64	1.52	1.488	NS
SE _T	66.37	70.29	12.38	12.43	2.21	0.05 level

Table 4 gives the mean differentials (t-values) between NC and LD on SEGEN, SESOC, SESCH, SEH and SET. The Table values show that significant mean score differentials exist on SESOC and SET. Both the values are significant at 0.05 level of confidence. This implies that LD group has significantly lower social-peers self-esteem as well as lower total / overall self-esteem as compared to the NC group. On the remaining measures of self-esteem, t-values are insignificant.

Table 5
Means; standard deviations and t-values on Self – Esteem (SE) for LD Males (N =55) and LD Females (N =43); df = 96

	M _{LD-M}	M _{LD-F}	SD _{LD-M}	SD _{LD-F}	t	Remarks
SE _{GEN}	16.4	16.7	3.55	3.6	0.409	NS
SE _{SOC}	4.93	5.12	1.48	1.36	0.646	NS
SE _H	5.8	5.86	1.28	1.28	0.232	NS
SE _{SCH}	5.76	5.81	1.74	1.53	0.149	NS
SE _T	65.78	67.12	12.8	11.93	0.527	NS

Table 5 gives the mean differentials (t-values) between LD males and LD females on SEGEN, SESOC, SESCH, SEH and SET. The Table values show that LD males and LD females do not differ significantly on any of the measure of SEI, all the t-values are found to be insignificant.

CONCLUSIONS:

The mean score of NC is more than the mean score of LD on all dimensions of SEI, i.e., SEGEN, SESOC, SEH, SESCH and SET.

The mean score on SEGEN, SESOC, SESCH, SEH and SET of all the three categories of NC (viz., NCAI, NCAAI & NCHI) is higher than that of all the three categories of LD (viz., LDAI, LDAAI & LDHI) except that the mean of LDAAI is higher than the mean of NCAAI on SEH (see * in the Table 3).

The t-value is significant between NC and LD on SESOC and SET at 0.05 level of confidence.

Though the mean scores of LD females were higher than the LD males, t-values were found to be insignificant on all the measures of SEI.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION:

The results of DTLD were not revealed to the children and the researcher assumed that none of the children who have been diagnosed as LD were actually aware of their LD status. Despite this ignorance, LD children were found to have lower mean scores on all the dimensions of SEI as compared to the NC group. Also, the significant mean differentials between NC and LD on SESOC and SET indicate that the LD group has significantly lower social-peer self-esteem and significantly lower overall self-esteem as compared to the NC group. The lower self-esteem may have originated from their inability to perform the tasks as others (their peers) do. Contrary to some of the literature and research studies stating gender differences, the present study did not find any significant mean differentials for LD male and LD female groups.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

A variety of psychological theories have attempted to explain the origins of self-esteem, its definition, its function, and its consequences in the everyday lives of children. In addition, a vast amount of research literature has characterized self-esteem as an important variable in both the attainment of a variety of positive outcomes for children having high self-esteem and associated a variety of children's clinical problems for those having low self-esteem.

The findings of the present study stress the need to understand the behavioral characteristics of the children having learning disabilities which differentiate them from other children. Continuous emphases on the children's weaknesses adversely impact their personality. Therefore, there is a need to chalk out a rich and stimulating curriculum that identifies and nurtures their strengths and talents.

Self-esteem is an important factor. Children with learning disabilities usually carry negative self-perceptions. It has been found that children with learning disabilities have significantly lower overall self-esteem. Their self-esteem related to social-peers is particularly and significantly low as compared to their counterparts.

Early diagnosis and remediation can benefit these children immensely. Timely intervention can help in improving their self-perceptions and self-esteem.

The findings stress the need to enhance the self-esteem of these children by making them feel good about themselves. Non LD peers can also be involved in collaborative activities, thereby assisting the LD children with tasks that they find difficult. Similarly, teachers must teach strategies that allow students to develop successful attributes and implement academic strategies to improve academic skills.

REFERENCES

1. Accordino DB. (2000) Effects of perfectionism, depression, and self-esteem on adolescent achievement and achievement motivation. *DAI-B*; 60:3197.
2. Apple JGT. (2001) "Is anyone listening?" Transescents' views of school climate and self-esteem. *DAI-A*; 61:4723.
3. Battle J. (2000) Culture free self-esteem inventories examiner's manual (3rd ed.). Austin, TX: Proed.
4. Coopersmith, S. (1987) Self-Esteem Inventories. Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc., CA.
5. Crossen SG. (2001) The relationship between reading self-concept and achievement motivation among students with learning disabilities. *DAI-A*; 61:4731.
6. De Santos MA. (2006) Negative self-perceptions among students with learning disabilities. *MAI*; 44:70.
7. Grant AB. (2001) A project to increase eight low-scoring high school learning disabled students' skills in academics, self-esteem, and employability. *DAI-A*; 62: 1375.
8. Heyman WB. (1990) The self-perception of a learning disability and its relationship to academic self-concept and self-esteem. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*; 23: 472-5.
9. Krueger CJ. (2001) In their words: At-risk students' perceptions of alternative high school teachers. *DAI-A*; 62:1369.

10. Linehan PL. (1999) Conceptions of ability: Nature and impact across content areas. *DAI-A*; 60:648.
11. Lyon GR. (1997) Why Johnny Can't Decode. *The Washington Post*, October 27, Sunday ed.
12. Raven J, Raven JC, Court JH. (2000) *Standard Progressive Matrices*. UK, Oxford Psychologists Press Ltd.
13. Ruggiero VR. (2000) Bad Attitude: Confronting the views that hinder student's learning. *American Educator*.
14. Sarswat R. (1982) A Study of Self-concept in relation to Adjustment, Values, Academic Achievement, Socio-economic Status and Sex of High School Students of Delhi. Ph.D. Soc. Sc., IIT New Delhi, published in 4th educational survey, 471
15. Seeratan K. (2003) Learning Disabilities: Metacognition, Motivation and Affect. Retrieved on January 3, 2003, from http://www.ldrc.ca/contents/view_article/kinds_of_ld/158/
16. Swarup S, Mehta DH. (1993) *Diagnostic Test of Learning Disability*. SNDT Women's Univ., Mumbai.
17. Thurman MF. (2000) A study of self-esteem, academic self-concept and academic achievement of African American students in grades five, seven, and ten in a predominantly White suburban school district. *DAI-A*; 61:1705.