

Role of Teacher's Attitude and Attribute in Fostering Students' Self Esteem

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Abstract

This research was aimed at investigating the teacher's role in fostering students' self-esteem as assessed by students with the objective to compare the views of male and female students about the role of a teacher's attitude and attribute in fostering the self-esteem of students at secondary level. This study was guided by the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the views of male and female students about their teachers' attitude and attribute in fostering their self-esteem at secondary level. A self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect the required information, data was collected personally. Validity and reliability of the instrument was checked through a pilot run. The respondents of the pilot study were from the population but were not included in sample. The questionnaire was found reliable with a Chronbach Alpha value 0.83. This study was descriptive in nature. All the students studying at secondary level constituted the population of this study. Keeping in view the total strength of the students in different schools at secondary level, 815 students of class 10th were sampled using proportional allocation technique. Chi Square was used for data analysis. The collected data was tabulated and interpreted in the light of objective. Significant difference was found as the respondents agreed regarding the role of teacher's attitude and attribute in fostering students' self-esteem. It was concluded that the role of the female teachers was more effective as compared to male teachers regarding their attitude towards their students in fostering self-esteem.

Keywords: Teacher's attitude, teacher's attribute, students, self-esteem

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Introduction

Self-esteem can be best described as the degree to which our “worthiness” as a person is evaluated. It is the evaluative aspect of self-concept (Gazzinga & Heatherton, 2005). Self-esteem is the summary of a set of evaluative judgments of the self as component, successful, virtuous and worthiness. Self-esteem appears to be both a trait and a state (Davey, 2005). As a trait, self-esteem differs in its typical levels. As a state, it fluctuates in response to circumstances (Davey, 2005). Self-esteem is simply defined as the opinion one has about oneself, the job one performs, and one's achievements, how one thinks others see him and his purpose in life (Obidigbo, 2006). Emler (2001) added that self-esteem involves one's strengths and weakness, social status and how one relates to others as well as one's ability or independence to stand on own feet. In the words of Coleman (2006), self-esteem refers to one's attitude towards oneself or one's opinion or evaluation of oneself which may be positive (favorable or high) neutral or negative (unfavorable or low). According to Obidigbo & Obidigbo (2010) self-esteem borders on how someone thinks and feels about self, work and relatives. This according to the authors can be negative or positive or more between the two ends (points). Self-esteem usually dictates how one lives one's life and it affects one's decision making strategy as well as how you view others. Generally, the more positive feelings one has about his or her own self; the higher will be the self-esteem and vice versa (Obidigbo & Obidigbo, 2010). Put differently self-esteem is used to portray one's worth (self-worth) and one's own view about oneself. It is not the same thing with self-conceited or self-centeredness. Self-esteem is compatible with humility and self-acceptance (Onyekuru & Obidigbo, 2012). Self-esteem simply allows one to be oneself and to appreciate the qualities one has as well as enables one to respond to others in a positive and productive way (Obidigbo 2007, Obidigbo & Obidigbo, 2010). Through thinking more positively and realistically about oneself, one can develop his or her talents and abilities, praise one self, trust oneself and relations, one can improve him or herself as one becomes more realistic about others too (Onyekuru & Obidigbo, 2012). Note that each person has a concept of his/her self-worth (which may either be accurate or inaccurate). Self-esteem simply means how that person feels about or evaluates this concept. Self-esteem fluctuates with achievement. Coppersmith (1967) observed that self-esteem influences the way we think and feel about ourselves. Lefton (2007) had suggested that people who have an unstable, fluctuating self-esteem react more strongly to positive and negative life events than people whose sense of self-worth is stable and secure. Self-esteem is also linked to important way on how people approach their daily lives (Obidigbo, 2006). Hence, people who feel good about themselves tend to be happy, healthy, successful and productive. They also tend to persist longer at difficult task, sleep better at night and have lesser disease like ulcer

(Obidigbo, 2006; Onyekuru & Obidigbo, 2012). They are also more accepting of others and less likely to conform to peer pressure. Healthy self-esteem allows people to be realistic about goals, to accept criticisms, learn from their mistakes and be adventurous (Obidigbo, 2011). Low self-esteem makes people fearful and unrealistic about goals and risks. This further dents their self-image and leads to low performance in school and work. The foundation of our self-image is first developed during childhood and continues throughout life. If someone has low self-worth, these earlier experiences have simply overshadowed him or her and have come to represent the sum total of who he or she believe about oneself. (Emler, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

The students remain deprived of their educational needs and thus miss the way to success due to not getting proper attention of the teacher. The role of a teacher is that of a ladder of success for students; the harsh and the ignorant role of the teacher can minimize the students' self-esteem, while fostering their self-esteem in proper way can lead them towards success. Therefore, this study tried to investigate the teacher's role in fostering students' self-esteem at secondary level.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to compare the views of male and female students about the role of a teacher's attitude and attribute in fostering the self-esteem of students at secondary level.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the views of male and female students about their teachers' attitude and attribute in fostering their self-esteem at secondary level.

Significance of the Study

Self-esteem is how children perceive themselves. Self-esteem is not a process that comes to maturity and stays in place. It is a process that is ever-changing unlike a physical trait, such as eye color. Because self-esteem is not a fixed characteristic, it can be constantly in flux. Parents, teachers, and success can help students develop high self-esteem. The flip side is parents, teachers, and failure can cause students to develop low self-esteem. Self-esteem not only plays a role in behavior and learning; it can also play a role in motivation to succeed (Ingrid Schweiger, 2008). Motivation of any type is affected by emotions which are not easily controlled yet very powerful (Marzano, 2003).

Self-esteem can affect students' abilities to make and keep friends which also can have an impact on educational achievement due to behavioral problems. Due to the natural tendencies that children have to compare themselves with others, those with exceptionalities may have low self-esteem from lack of success in school, sports, and friendships (Lyons, 2012).

Self-esteem, or the lack of it, can hinder motivation to learn, or develop friendships in students, especially those students with disabilities. Motivation to accomplish anything and self-esteem are negatively affected in children with disabilities. Motivation to learn can be intrinsic or extrinsic in nature depending on the student or circumstance. A difficult decision for teachers to make is whether or not to use rewards for classroom behavior management (Witzel & Mercer, 2003). There are arguments for and against the use of extrinsic rewards; however students with exceptionalities appear to need extrinsic rewards more than students without exceptionalities. Teachers must decide the best motivational choices for their classrooms and each individual student. Learning magic tricks can be both extrinsic and intrinsic in nature and may be a good strategy to motivate learning. While the research related to the impact of being able to perform magic tricks on self-esteem is limited, there is some evidence that it may improve self-esteem. Being able to perform magic tricks has the potential to not only help improve self-esteem, but magic tricks themselves can be used to motivate learning, interest in a lesson, organization, and cooperation with others

The use of magic tricks in the classroom makes learning fun and can motivate an interest in the lesson being taught by gaining students' attention (Wilson, 2002). Hootstein (2002) notes that teachers can gain students' attention and motivate learning by designing activities that stimulate learning. In his four action steps, Marzano (2003) recommends including engaging activities to boost motivation.

This study is significant in exploring how students perceived their classroom and their relationship with their teacher in fostering their self-esteem.

Review of the Literature

Research studies have emphasized the influence of significant adults (teachers) on students' personal development and the importance of significant others' verbal statements when directed at children. The relationships between negative and positive statements made by teachers and children's self-talk have been investigated (Burnett, 1996a) and positive statements (praise) have been found to be more beneficial than verbal criticism (Burnett, 1999). The quality of life in the

classroom in recent times has been considered of great importance to students and this is recognized by Baker (1999) who reported a relationship between students' satisfaction with the learning environment, and differential teacher feedback and praise. Teachers who attribute students' success in a task or a performance to a specific reason employ attribution feedback. Two main types of feedback have been reported in recent literature such as *effort feedback* ('you've been working hard'; 'You're trying really hard') and *ability feedback* ('Well done, you're really smart'; 'Gee you're a good student'). However, other studies have focused on both effort and ability feedback (Dohrn & Bryan, 1994). Some researchers have suggested that ability feedback is more important and valued by students (Marsh, 1990; Craven *et al.*, 1991; Dohrn & Bryan, 1994), although other research studies have suggested that effort feedback is much more preferred by Australian primary students (Burnett, 2001).

Mueller & Dweck (1998, cited in Dweck, 1999) studied fifth grade students and found that ability teacher feedback was associated with students' interest in performance tasks, while effort teacher feedback was related to interest in learning tasks. After failure on a task, students provided with ability feedback were more likely to attribute their failure to ability and not effort. Furthermore the failure experience resulted in a decline in their performance. In contrast, students receiving effort teacher feedback showed significant improvements in their performance when the initial task was compared to subsequent problem sets and failure seemed to have a positive effect on their performance by encouraging persistence at these tasks. (Mueller and Dweck 1998, cited in Dweck, 1999) also pointed out that ability feedback resulted in students lying about their performance to impress peers, while effort feedback resulted in students giving a truthful account of their performance. In summary, it appears that effort feedback is preferred to ability feedback when considering the consequences of student failure; and it seems that ability feedback creates vulnerability in students while effort feedback fosters hardiness.

Self-esteem has widely been researched and discussed among psychologists, educators and counsellors but its relation in identifying the role of teacher in fostering students' self-esteem has remained almost an unexplored area in Pakistan. Thus this study is an attempt to contribute to the enhancement of knowledge in this area and to identify the role of teacher in fostering the self-esteem of students. The findings of the research study will be beneficial to those who are involved directly in helping students; moreover, it will also facilitate the task of policy makers and planners to design different strategies for teachers to build the self-esteem of their students. There will be an open room for further research, role of teacher will more be explored.

Methodology

Survey is normally used in education and other behavioral sciences for collection of data; therefore it was used to attain needed information in this study.

Population and Sample

All students of Class 10th of district Bannu 4137 in number appeared in 2009 Annual examination of class 9th and promoted to class 10th from Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Bannu constituted the population of the study.

Keeping in view the total strength of the students in different schools at secondary level, 815 students of class 10th were sampled using proportional allocation technique with simple random sampling.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was developed in the light of the literature review. It was used to collect data from the respondents. As the questionnaire was a self-developed one, so to check its reliability and validity, only twenty four students were selected including six male and six female students of Urban Schools with three each from English Medium and Urdu Medium. The same selection was from Rural Schools. The schools were personally visited by the researcher and administered the questionnaire among twenty four students randomly taken from these schools. The respondents were asked to give their suggestions freely for the improvement of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was also checked by two Language experts, one of English and the other of Urdu to check the valid items as the questionnaire was prepared in English and its Urdu version was administered among pilot students. The questionnaire was revised in the light of their suggestions. The respondents of the pilot study were from the population but were not included in sample. The questionnaire was found reliable with a Chronbach Alpha value 0.83

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was personally collected by the researcher. Cooperation of teachers was praiseworthy. Most the filled questionnaires were returned in specific period of time to the researcher on his visits according to the schedule decided with mutual understanding. The data was entered in SPSS 16. For each variable category a code was assigned {for example in case of gender, male code was (1) and female code was (2)} Chi Square was computed and reported.

Scale Analysis

Data was entered in SPSS 16 and the frequencies of the responses were generated for each of five response option of the Five Point Likert Scale. The five options and the assigned weight were as follows:

Weight Scale	Option
1	Strongly disagree
2	Disagree
3	Undecided
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

Each dimension was reported and the frequencies of responses for each scale option were tabulated.

Analysis of Hypothesis

One hypothesis was tested in this study. The hypothesis was related to demographic variable. Chi Square was used as a Statistical method to compare the groups. The following Phi value was used as thumb rule to interpret results.

“Phi” Value Effect Size

- < 0.1 = Weak Significance Difference
- < 0.3 = Modest Significance Difference
- < 0.5 = Moderate Significance Difference
- < 0.8 = Strong Significance Difference
- ≥ 0.8 = Very Strong Significance Difference

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The collected data was entered in SPSS version-16 and analyzed according to the objectives and hypothesis of the study Chi Square test of Independence was applied as statistical tools. The scale and weight used for Descriptive Analysis are as follows.

(i) **Scale:** SDA = Strongly Disagree

DA = Disagree

UD = Undecided

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

(ii) **Weight:** 1=SDA, 2=DA, 3=UD, 4=A, 5=SA

Table

Comparison of male and female students' views about teacher's attitude and attribute in fostering their self-esteem

S.N	Statements	G	f	SD	DA	UD	A	SA	X ²	P	Phi
1	My teachers greet me with a smile while meeting me.	M	fo	10	22	39	174	331	2.6	0.6	0.06
			fe	9	23	39	183	322			
		F	fo	3	10	16	85	125			
			fe	4	9	16	76	134			
2	My teachers give me dignity.	M	fo	12	39	55	215	255	26	0.0	0.18
			fe	15	32	65	233	231			
		F	fo	9	6	37	115	72			
			fe	6	13	27	97	96			
3	My teacher gives me respect.	M	fo	8	32	62	200	274	26	0.0	0.18
			fe	7	30	65	229	245			
		F	fo	2	11	30	124	72			
			fe	3	13	27	95	101			
4	My teachers try to reinforce the importance of my educational needs.	M	fo	18	41	49	194	274	29	0.0	0.19
			fe	13	34	49	223	257			
		F	fo	0	7	21	121	90			
			fe	5	14	20	92	108			
5	My teachers actively listen to me.	M	fo	16	40	42	201	277	25	0.0	0.18
			fe	14	33	36	231	262			
		F	fo	4	7	9	126	93			
			fe	6	14	15	96	108			
6	My teachers acknowledge my dreams and problems.	M	fo	21	32	66	198	259	25	0.0	0.17
			fe	18	30	64	229	235			
		F	fo	4	10	24	126	75			
			fe	7	12	26	95	99			
7	My teachers show high expectations from me.	M	fo	21	34	89	217	215	20	0.0	0.16
			fe	19	28	92	199	238			
		F	fo	6	5	41	64	123			
			fe	8	11	38	82	100			

8	I am given importance in educational problems.	M	<i>fo</i>	20	33	77	219	227	13	0.1	0.13
			<i>fe</i>	18	25	74	234	225			
		F	<i>fo</i>	6	2	28	111	92	97	93	
			<i>fe</i>	8	10	31	97	93			
9	I can easily share my educational problems with my teachers.	M	<i>fo</i>	28	41	54	206	247	13	0.1	0.12
			<i>fe</i>	25	35	52	227	237			
		F	<i>fo</i>	7	9	20	115	88	94	98	
			<i>Fe</i>	10	15	22	94	98			
10	My teachers give importance to students' individual qualities.	M	<i>fo</i>	37	48	69	187	235	23	0.0	0.17
			<i>fe</i>	31	42	67	216	220			
		F	<i>fo</i>	7	12	26	118	76	89	91	
			<i>fe</i>	13	18	28	89	91			
Over all		M	<i>fo</i>	191	362	602	2011	2594	73.7	0.00	0.30
	<i>fe</i>		169	312	603	2204	2472				
		F	<i>fo</i>	48	79	252	1105	906			
			<i>fe</i>	52	80	160	553	589			

G= Gender, M= Male F= Female,fo= frequency observed, fe = frequency expected

Table shows that Male students of observed frequency for “SD” and “SA” is greater than the expected frequency while female students observed frequency for “DA” and “A” is greater than the expected frequency with $\chi^2= 2.6$, $p= 0.6$. Male students seem agreeing with the statement but no significant difference was found between the students’ perception about “Their teachers greet them with a smile while meeting them.” Male students of observed frequency for “DA” and “SA” is greater than the expected frequency while female students observed frequency for “SD”, “UD” and “A” is greater than the expected frequency with $\chi^2= 26$, $p= 0.00$, $\Phi= 0.18$. Male students seem agreeing with the statement. Modest significant difference was found between the students’ perception about “Their teachers give them dignity.” Male Students observed frequency for “SDA”, “DA” and “SA” is greater than expected frequency while Female Students observed frequency for “UD” and “A” is greater than the expected frequency with $\chi^2=26$, $P=0.00$, $\Phi= 0.18$. Male Students seem agreeing with statement Modest significant difference was found between the students’ perception that “Their teachers actively listen to them”. Male Students observed frequency for “SDA”, “DA” and “SA” is greater than expected frequency while Female Students observed frequency for “UD” and “A” is greater than the expected frequency with $\chi^2=29$, $P=0.00$, $\Phi= 0.19$. Modest significant difference was found between the students’ perception that “Their teachers try to reinforce the importance of their educational needs”. Male Students observed frequency for “SDA”, “DA”, “UD” and “SA” is greater than expected frequency while Female Students observed frequency for “A” is greater than the expected frequency with

$\chi^2=25$, $P=0.00$, $\Phi=0.18$. Female Students seem agreeing with the statement. Modest significant difference was found between the students' perception that "Their teachers actively listen to them". Male Students observed frequency for "DA" and "UD" is greater than expected frequency while Female Students observed frequency for "SDA" and "A" is greater than the expected frequency with $\chi^2=25$, $P=0.00$, $\Phi=0.17$. Female Students seem agreeing with the statement. Weak significant difference was found between the students' perception that "Their teachers acknowledge their dreams and problems. "Male Students observed frequency for "SDA", "DA" and "A" is greater than expected frequency while Female Students observed frequency for "UD" and "SA" is greater than the expected frequency with $\chi^2=20$, $P=0.00$, $\Phi=0.16$. Female Students seem agreeing with the statement. Weak significant difference was found between the students' perception that "Their teachers show high expectations from them". Male Students observed frequency for "SDA", "DA", "UD" and "SA" is greater than expected frequency while Female Students observed frequency for "A" is greater than the expected frequency with $\chi^2=13$, $P=0.1$ and $\Phi=0.13$. Female Students seem agreeing with the statement. No significant difference was found between the students' perception that "Their teachers show high expectations from them". Male Students observed frequency for "SDA", "DA", "UD" and "SA" is greater than expected frequency while Female Students observed frequency for "A" is greater than the expected frequency with $\chi^2=13$, $P=0.1$ and $\Phi=0.13$. Female Students seem agreeing with the statement. No significant difference was found between the students' perception that "They can easily share their educational problems with their teachers. "Male Students observed frequency for "DA" and "A" is greater than expected frequency while Female Students observed frequency for "SDA", "UD" and "SA" is greater than the expected frequency with $\chi^2=23$, $P=0.00$ and $\Phi=0.17$. Female Students seem agreeing with the statement. Weak significant difference was found between the students' perception that "They can easily share their educational problems with their teachers."

Findings

1. Significant difference was found as the respondents agreed regarding Teacher's attitude and attribute in fostering their self-esteem with $\chi^2 = 6.85$ and $P = 0.00$.
2. Female students agreed regarding teacher's attitude in fostering their self-esteem. They perceived that their teachers give them respect, they try to reinforce the importance of educational needs, and their teachers actively listen to them, and while male observed that their teachers give them dignity. Both male and female students perceived that they could share problems with teachers easily with $\chi^2 = 73.69$, $P = 0.00$, $\Phi = 0.30$.

Conclusion

On the basis of findings, the conclusion was drawn that the role of the female teachers was more effective as compared to male teachers regarding their attitude towards their students in fostering self-esteem.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. To improve the working conditions in the male schools, male teachers should properly be trained regarding their attitude and attribute towards students.
2. Further research in the area can be conducted by making the co relation among the variables with a continuous variable like academic achievement.
3. Heads of male schools should be trained for Clinical Supervision to foster the attitude and attribute of the teachers towards their students.

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