

CSIS 2019

11th International Scientific and Theoretical Conference “Communicative Strategies of Information Society”

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND SOCIOMETRIC STATUS IN INFORMATION AND NETWORK SOCIETY

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Abstract

New revolutionary changes in information have resulted in a so-called network society that places great emphasis on one's ability to transform society and its material environment. The degree of successful transformation is closely tied to one's self-esteem, which is formed based on interpersonal relationships and personal sociometric status in the community. The purpose of the study was to determine correlations between one's self-esteem and sociometric status at the earliest stages of their development in early adolescence. Methodologically, the study was based on works by foreign and domestic researchers and the age periodization theory. The following methods were applied in the study: the self-assessment of the mental states method after Hans Eysenck, the sociometry method by Jacob Moreno, and some methods of the mathematical and statistical analysis, in particular, Spearman's correlation analysis. The study revealed close correlations between a young teenager's self-esteem and sociometric status. Moreover, it was found that increased sociometric status may result in higher self-esteem. The theoretical analysis of correlations between one's self-esteem and sociometric status indicated inconsistency in their nature, showing them as mostly positive but also negative in some cases. It can be explained by the role sociometric status plays in a teenager with unreasonably high or low self-esteem. Teenagers with unreasonably low self-esteem tend to experience inner conflicts, thus their high sociometric status has a compensatory function. Teenagers with adequate self-esteem demonstrate a direct correlation between their self-esteem and sociometric status.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Self-esteem, sociometric status, teenager, activity, information society, network society.



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1. Introduction

The new information revolution has resulted in a so-called network society that does not only values one's adaptability to new social and material conditions but also places great emphasis on one's ability to transform society and its material environment. The significance of the study is that in this new kind of society a child's personal development begins in early childhood and cannot proceed in isolation from their community and outside of the system of relationships they are included in (Lamblin, Murawski, Whittle, & Fornito, 2017; Galkina, 2017; Sidorov, 2017). The personality of a teenager and its dynamism are the key elements in the system of interpersonal relationships, as peer communication within smaller groups is considered to be an important means of socialization for teenagers (Petrovskij, 2016; Gill, Watson, Williams, & Chan, 2018; Hosein & Harle, 2018). A teenager's sociometric status in a group is therefore particularly important. The purpose of the study was to determine correlations between a young teenager's self-esteem and sociometric status at the earliest stages of their development.

Based on some of the studies available on juvenile's self-pride (Zabrodin & Pakhalyan, 2015; Zaharova, 2015; Rean, 2015; Thompson, Kaminska, Marshall, & Zalk, 2019; Viyayanand, 2019), the following characteristics of it were compiled: self-respect is an important key component in the self-concept; self-esteem is a significant component of self-awareness that helps people reflect on themselves, their physical strength, mental abilities, actions, motives and goals of their behavior, their attitude to the outside world, other people and themselves; self-respect is an emotive component of the self-concept related to awareness of oneself and personal qualities, which determines one's self-esteem level, self-respect and positive perception of everything included in the self-image (Schwab, 2015; Tsiring & Ponomareva, 2015).

When viewing it as a self-awareness value, three levels of self-esteem are described. When viewing it as a self-awareness value, three levels of self-esteem are described. On the level of organic self-knowledge, self-respect is said to be of sensory and perceptual nature. On the level of individual self-awareness, a person reflects on other people's assessment of them and establishes corresponding self-esteem that includes their age, gender and social identity. On the level of personal self-awareness, a conflict meaning is of primary importance, as it explains to an individual the value of their characteristics and qualities and showcases the results in the form of the emotional and value-based attitude to self.

Awareness of personal self-esteem is identical to such notions as self-consciousness, self-perception, self-regard and self-worth (Harlamenkova, 2017; Arynbaeva, Massyrova, Kaimova, Suranshieva, & Seidakhmetov, 2015). However, the notion of self-esteem has some specific conceptual characteristics that distinguish it from other notions. Self-esteem begins its development from early childhood under the influence of the environment and values. It also has such important functions as regulatory, protective, warning, emotional, aspirational and predictive ones, thus shaping the behavior and development of an individual and their relationships with other people. At the same time, one's self-perception is closely connected to their emotional assessment of this process. One's self-esteem illustrates the level of their self-satisfaction or self-dissatisfaction and provides the basis for their perception of personal success or failures and the level of pretensions (Haller, Raeder, Scerif, Kadosh, & Lau, 2016; Panadero, Jonsson, & Botella, 2017).

Teenagers tend to constantly assess themselves and evaluate their behavior and actions. Such self-evaluation results in either high, average or lowly self-esteem. Such subject self-esteem lets a teenager undervalue personal abilities, capabilities, skills and achievements, and is characterized by increased anxiety, fright to be considered from the negative point of view and increased vulnerability that prevents them from expanding their social circle. Thus, a teenager cannot fully realize inner potential and sets boundaries on communication and personal relationships with others.

Average self-esteem can be considered as a naturalistic perception of oneself, one's actions and opportunities. It ensures a rather objective evaluation of one's personal abilities, qualities, and skills. In this case, a teenager tries to set realistic and attainable goals, thus actually achieving success. This is the most optimal degree of self-esteem, because it facilitates to communicate confidently with others, develop as an individual and be active.

Unreasonably great self-worth lets a teenager believe to be a perfect person with incredible abilities. It is often associated with arrogance. Moreover, teens with large self-esteem tend to overestimate their own abilities and devalue personal efforts when failing. They strongly refuse to accept everything that does not correlate with their self-perception. They lose the ability to perceive reality as it is, therefore approaching it in an inadequate way that is fully based on emotions. As a result, even the smallest comments are seen as harsh criticism rather than a constructive review of the outcome of their work.

The advancement of self-esteem is greatly dependent on the equilibrium between the real self and the desired self (Iliyn, 2015). The ability to assess oneself properly has an undeniable impact on the way a person is perceived by the community. A teenager is greatly influenced by the opinions of their parents, relatives, and friends. Due to the fact that a teenager's primary activity is communication with peers, one's social status in the community is of great importance in this age. However, the same members of the community often receive completely different status when being a part of smaller groups. In order to describe every person's place in the system of internal relationships more accurately, experts use such terms as *position*, *status*, *inner attitude*, and *role*. A teenager's status in the community may correspond to or differ from their personal perception. In the process of evaluating their own abilities and qualities, a teenager may establish a personal program of self-improvement, which is an essential part of self-esteem.

It should be highlighted that teenagers compare themselves to other peers rather than adults. A peer is somebody who looks up to, a person who can be used as a role model as their image is much more realistic and achievable. Therefore, it can be concluded that teenagers' self-esteem develops under the influence of peers' opinions, evaluations given by parents, and results of comparing personal qualities to those of peers (Dolgova, Kryzhanovskaya, Rokitskaya, Salamatov, Nurtdinova, & Zhakupova, 2018; Litnaskaya, 2017). The higher status of a teenager in a smaller group leads to increasing of self-esteem. Thus, greater pretensions and greater self-esteem could result in a lower positive or higher negative social status. Some experts believe that this behaviour of teenagers can be explained by their increased self-criticism, which in turn results from choosing a wrong role in the group (Martinelli, Ackermann, Bernhard, Freitag, & Schwenck, 2018; Shipunova, Berezovskaya, Evseev, Evseeva, & Mureyko, 2018; Dane & Marini, 2014; Muhina, 2015).

When a teenager's behavior is assessed by others only negatively, their self-worth does not find support in their group. As a result, their need for self-respect is not realized, which may cause discomfort. In this case, a teenager tries to find self-realization in another community and joins smaller groups according to personal abilities and capabilities (Zhakupova, Dolgova, Kondratieva, Kapitanets, & Nurtdinova, 2018; Ratanova, 2014). For example, an unsociable student with a small circle of acquaintances, who is often made fun of by classmates, with few academic or sport achievements, has a rather low social status in class (Longobardi, Iotti, Jungert, & Settanni, 2018; Andrei, Mancini, Mazzoni, Russo, & Baldaro, 2015; Kuzmina & Semenova, 2014). However, as a member of a music group, this student has a high status among peers with the same interest.

In this environment, a teenager's need for respect is realized **via oral and non-oral** demonstrations of high evaluation by members of this certain group. Therefore, a teenager's self-esteem finds the necessary support to exist in the external social environment as well. However, there is a possibility that in the process of transitioning from one group to another a teenager might end up in an asocial group. Even if a teenager has a low status in this group, they can still be reluctant to leave this, **as their self-regard** gets fuelled by the mere fact of being a part of it, while other children are left outside. A teenager must have an opportunity not only to leave a group that prevents **his self-worth** from being realized but also to join a more appropriate group.

2. Problem Statement

The Problem Statement is the study was to determine correlations between one's self-esteem and sociometric status at the earliest stages of their development in early adolescence.

3. Research Questions

Research questions related to analysis on correlations between one's self-esteem and sociometric status indicated inconsistency in their nature, showing them as mostly positive but also negative in some cases.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine correlations between one's self-esteem and sociometric status at the earliest stages of their development in early adolescence.

5. Research Methods

The present study on correlativity betwixt self-worth and sociometric status was based on works of foreign and domestic researchers as well as the age periodization theory (Dolgova, Rokickaya, & Salamatov, 2018). It was conducted with assistance from our student A. Krasnikova. The following methods were applied in the study: the self-assessment of the mental states method after Hans Eysenck, the sociometry method by Jacob Moreno and some mathematical and statistical data analysis techniques, in particular Spearman's correlation analysis.

6. Findings

The study comprised 22 school students of the fifth grade, including 12 girls and 10 boys. The age of the subjects was 11-12 years. Overall, the children are rather friendly with each other. They have formed smaller friendship groups among themselves. Some students demonstrate leadership qualities. All students are eager to communicate, curious and friendly. The class is well-structured. There is little to no conflicts among the students, the emotional atmosphere is mostly positive. In the study, we applied Hans Eysenck's self-assessment of mental states technique. The students were given a test comprising 10 questions on the most common mental states. Figure 01 demonstrates the findings.

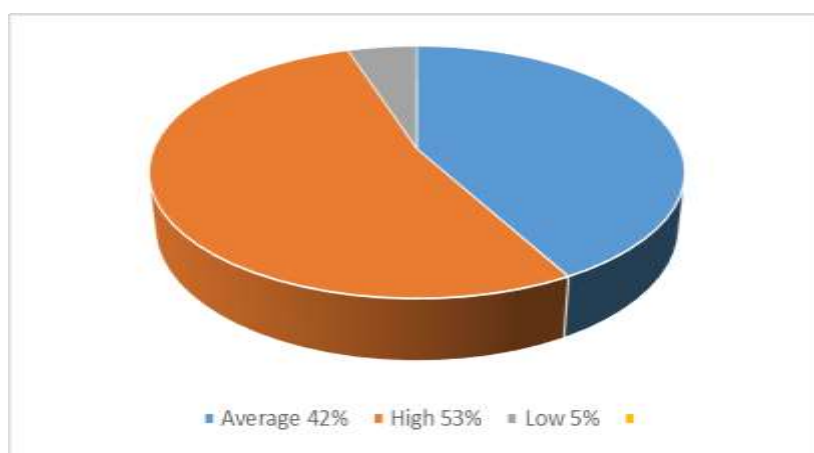


Figure 01. Self-esteem discovered in the subjects based on Hans Eysenck's self-assessment of mental states technique

The findings 01 show, that 42% of the students have average self-esteem and 53% is self-esteem level high enough. By 5% of students is the self-esteem level low. When processing the findings according to the students' gender, it can be seen that among boys 60% have high self-esteem degree and 4% have average self-esteem level, while among girls 54% have high self-esteem rate, 40% - average level of self-esteem and 6% - low self-esteem mark. Next, we used Jacob Moreno's sociometry method to apply these quantitative characteristics to the studying of interpersonal relationships in the group. The conducted analysis revealed four status types among the students.

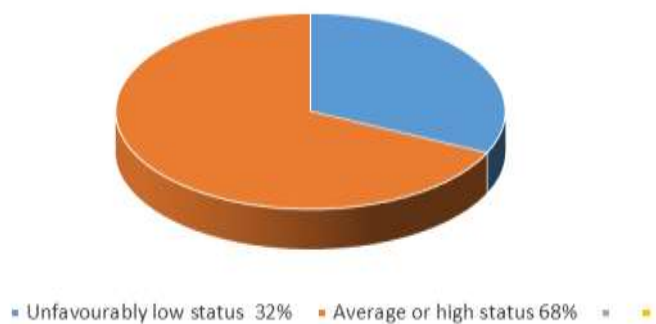


Figure 02. Self-esteem discovered in the subjects based on Jacob Moreno's sociometry method

Figure 02 shows that 32% of the students have unfavorably low status in the class, while 68% have either average or high status. Therefore, it proves the impact of sociometric status on a student's self-regard development. It should also be noted that both inflated self-esteem and low degree of self-esteem are abnormal, thus the sample must be checked based on the average values.

7. Conclusion

Every person might experience having different status in various systems of interrelationships when working and interacting in smaller groups. The current study proved the direct correlation between one's self-esteem and sociometric status. It was also discovered that there can be the following interaction patterns among members of a community: mutual acceptance or mutual rejection, acceptance by some and rejection by others, indifference by some, and mutual indifference. A teenager's status determines their position in the system of internal relationships and their reputation among peers. Due to the fact that a teenager's primary activity is communication, every teenager's self-worth feeling depends substantial on the nature of interpersonal relationships in the community. Every member of the community is committed to maintaining their current degree of self-esteem and demonstrates deep concern over the possibility of its lowering. Therefore, a teenager's self-esteem is fuelled by the external social environment. In the process of self-evaluation, teenagers reflect on themselves and recognize personal abilities and flaws. Society dictates certain rules and ideals. A teenager may use them as a guide to building proper relationships with adults and peers while meeting personal requirements and requirements set by others.

Acknowledgments

The research is conducted in the framework of the Scientific and Methodological Foundations of Psychology and Management Technology of Innovative Educational Processes in the Changing World project supervised by the South Ural research center of the Russian Academy of Education in the South Ural State Humanitarian Pedagogical University.

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