

## Self-esteem as a moderator of neuroticism - interpersonal sensitivity measure relationship

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### ABSTRACT

The study is attempted to explore the relationship between self-esteem, neuroticism and interpersonal sensitivity among children and find out the self-esteem as a moderator of neuroticism and interpersonal sensitivity measure. A sample of 100 students selected from different schools of Kerala State (Kannur District). Interpersonal Sensitivity Scale, Big-Five Personality inventory and Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scales along with socio demographic sheet were used for data collection. The result states that self-esteem has a predictor of neuroticism. Further, it states that low self-esteem can be a good predictor of interpersonal sensitivity character among children and e may tend to develop neurotic character.

**Keywords:** *Self-esteem, Neuroticism, Interpersonal Sensitivity.*

Emotional and behavioural struggles are among the mainly important causes of functional disability in children. Children's emotional and behavioural problems are a general concern of parents and teachers because these problems often have serious negative consequences for their academic achievement and personality development. The type of problems often differ by the age of the child and include a wide variety of issues such as conduct problems, aggression, anti-social behaviour, anxiety, depression and substance abuse.

Self-esteem is how we assess ourselves; it is how we identify and observe our value to the world and how precious we think we are to others. Self-esteem affects our trust in others, our relationships, and our work – nearly every part of our lives. Positive self-esteem gives us the strength and flexibility to take charge of our lives and grow from our mistakes without the fear of rejection (Rosenberg, 1965).

Neuroticism is a personality aspect that is illustrates by adjectives such as edgy, anxious, unstable and contrariwise categorized emotional steadiness. Research has recognized a central role of neuroticism in the reactivity to a diversity of frightening cues such as emotional stimuli (Gross, Sutton, & Ketelaar, 1998; Norris, Larsen, & Cacioppo, 2007), negative feedback (Larsen & ketelaar, 1989) and the occurrence of everyday struggles (Suls, Green, & Hillis, 1998). This evidence is consistent with a conceptualization of neuroticism as pulsating into individual's predilection to respond attentively to intimidating cues.

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Interpersonal sensitivity is a personality style that is connected with an extreme consciousness of the conduct of others as well as their beliefs (Boyce and Parker, 1989). Interpersonal sensitivity is considered as being too sensitive headed for interpersonal relations as a consequence of insight about probable condemnation of others (Harb et al., 2002). Interpersonal sensitivity has a multidimensional construct linking interpersonal awareness, separation anxiety, need for approval, timidity, and fragile inner self components (Boyce and Parker, 1989). Interpersonal sensitivity is concurrence with maladaptive execution that includes the social, psychological and academic area of influence.

A number of studies reported that there is significant negative relation between self-esteem and neuroticism which means that if once has high self-esteem then he has low level of neuroticism character (Leary & Kowalski, 1995). Further studies showed that neuroticism is significantly related with interpersonal sensitivity character as well as self-esteem. Neuroticism is a significant predictor of self-esteem (Moutier & Stein, 1999). Research indicate that emotional and behavioural problems in early childhood tend to continue into middle childhood and adolescents and may predict later social and academic problems or other difficulties such as substance abuse, high-risk sexual activity and suicide.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

1. To study the relation between Self-Esteem, neuroticism and interpersonal sensitivity character of children.
2. To find out the self-esteem as a moderator of neuroticism and interpersonal sensitivity measure.

### ***Hypothesis***

- There would be significant relationship between self-esteem, neuroticism and, interpersonal sensitivity measure.
- Self-esteem as a moderator of neuroticism.
- Self-esteem as a moderator of interpersonal sensitivity measure.

### ***Aim***

- To find out the self-esteem as a moderator of neuroticism and interpersonal sensitivity measure

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Sample***

The sample of the study consisted of 100 children, 50 boys and 50 girls from different schools of Kerala state (Kannur District). The age of the participants ranged from 10-12 years.

### ***Tools for Data Collection***

The participants were contacted and interviewed on following valid and reliable scales: The Interpersonal Sensitivity Measure (IPSM); the Interpersonal Sensitivity scale (ISM) was developed by Boyce and Parker (1989) consisting of 36 items self report questionnaire with five point Likert type scale.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to measure self-esteem: The Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES), developed by sociologist Dr. Morris Rosenberg, is a self-esteem measure widely used in social science research. This scale consists of 20 items with a five point Likert type scale. Higher scores on this scale indicate of high in self-esteem. For the present study used the standardized version of scale which was developed by Thomas and Sam Sanada Raj (1985).

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The Big Five Inventory (BFI) was developed by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991), was used to measure five personality traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. It consists of 44 item with five point Likert type scale.

### Procedure

Sample of the study was taken from diverse schools of Kerala State( Kannur District) both Govt. and Private schools. Three scales along with socio demographic data sheet are used to get information from sample. The character and intention of the study was shared with sample. After collection of the data the sample was express thanks for their corporation.

### Statistical Analysis

After the data collection, the data were entered in Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 for analysis. Pearson's Product Moment correlation was applied to find out the relationship. The multiple regression analysis was used to find out the moderating effect between two independent variables in predicting a dependent variable.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data was analyzed and the results are shown below in tables,

**Table 1 shows the correlation analysis between neuroticism, interpersonal sensitivity measure and self – esteem**

Variables	IPSM	NT	SET
IPSM	1		
NT	.882**	1	
SET	-.532**	-.495**	1

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

\*\**IPSM- Interpersonal sensitivity measure, NT- neuroticism, SET- Self-esteem*

**Table 2 shows the moderation effect of Self-Esteem on Neuroticism and Interpersonal Sensitivity Measure Relationship**

Variables entered in the Equation	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> change	F	F change	Significance of F
NT (X1)	0.005	0.005	1.543	1.543	0.166
NT x SE(X2)	0.053	0.046	8.46	16.367**	0.00
SE x NT NT.SE (X3)	0.113	0.040	13.39	17.512**	0.00

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

*Dependent variable- interpersonal sensitivity measure*

The current study describes out the self-esteem as a moderator of neuroticism and interpersonal sensitivity measure. It was hypothesized that there is significant relation between self-esteem neuroticism and interpersonal sensitivity among children. Studies have shown that low self-esteem more likely to have a high impact on child's emotional and cognitive development along with poor interpersonal relationship and exhibition of neurotics character.

The major conclusion elicited that low self-esteem is an interpreter of interpersonal sensitivity measure and neuroticism with negative significant correlation. Self-esteem, the general self-evaluation one makes of oneself, can vary during life predominantly throughout major life changes. It is no speculate then that during the changes and challenges of

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adolescence there can be significant changes in a teenager's assessment of their personal self-image or self-worth. Researches illustrate that that self-esteem acted as a mediator between introversion, reserve and anxiety. It is stated that up to a half of adolescents will resist with low self-esteem, many of these occurrences during the early teen years.

Researches show that the increased rates of lower self-esteem is the transition from one stage of development to the next. The most remarkable transition period is from 8 years to 18 years. The development of self-esteem may change the status of the child or adolescent and may occur the comfort level. Table 1 shows that the self-esteem shows negative high significant correlation with timidity, which states that the if the child is having high self-esteem then the child will show low level of timidity character.. In other sense if the child shows high level of timidity character then the child may have the low self-esteem.

Table 1 shows that the interpersonal sensitivity measure and neuroticism denotes negative significant correlation with self-esteem. The result describes that if the child has any kind of difficulty with wide range of events and activities, situations like meeting strangers, playing with peer group, attending a party etc. has to be revealed more over the interpersonal sensitive characters. In the present study interpersonal sensitivity measure shows high significant relationship with neuroticism. The interpersonal relationship would be poor and insensitive, self-possession, unvarying criticism or correction at the hands of parents, intra-parental conflicts etc often leads to neurotic character and dread towards socio-cultural views.

Table 2 shows the moderation effect of Self-Esteem on Neuroticism - Interpersonal Sensitivity Measure Relationship. The predictive relationship between (i) neuroticism and interpersonal sensitivity measure was found (X1), the  $R^2$  value showed that 0.5% of interpersonal sensitive measure was accounted for by neuroticism. The predictive relationship between self-esteem and interpersonal sensitivity showed that 5.3% of the interpersonal relationship character was accounted for by the addition of self-esteem on neuroticism and interpersonal sensitivity measure relationship. The interaction effect of self-esteem and neuroticism was added to the equation, with this the value increase to 0.113, which meant that 11.3% of interpersonal sensitivity can be predicted by neuroticism, self-esteem and the interaction effect of self-esteem on neuroticism –interpersonal sensitivity measure.

When the significance of the predictive relationship was compare in this analysis for the significant difference (table-2), it was found that interpersonal sensitivity measure (X1) does not have any significant moderating (predictive) effect on neuroticism ( $F= 1.543$ , significant at 0.166 level), where as in neuroticism combined with self-esteem, has a significantly higher ( $F= 8.46$ , significant at 0.001 level) predictive effect on neuroticism-interpersonal sensitivity measure relationship, and self-esteem, neuroticism interaction effect has (X3) a very high significant moderating effect ( $F=13.39$ , significant at 0.001 level) on neuroticism-interpersonal sensitivity measure relationship. From this considerable change in the  $R^2$  value, and from the significant value of  $F$ , found when the interaction effect was entered in to the relationship (X3), it can be concluded that there is a significant high moderating effect by self-esteem on neuroticism-interpersonal sensitivity measure relationship.

## CONCLUSION

Any deviant behaviour of the child, which is not in conformity with the expectations of the society to which he belongs and detrimental to the welfare of himself as well as others is termed as behaviour problem. When the behaviour of a child become problem to the home,

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the school and the community, he becomes a problem child. Factors like parental attitude, peer rejection, imbalanced interpersonal relationship, lack of support and love, authoritarian attitudes of parents and teachers etc are responsible for the neurotic character or any deviant behaviour of children. The best way to deal with neuroticism and poor interpersonal relationship is by reducing the child's feeling of insecurity, inadequacy and guilt. Positive reinforcement is very important in improving the child's self-esteem and changing his self-perception. Rectify the school education and school environment by making it healthy and congenial. Provide personal guidance to children to assertive to make proper social and emotional adjustment. Provide personal guidance and group work shop for the parents and teachers to get the awareness of child neurotic character and its influencing factors healthy and positive interpersonal relationship.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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