

Self-esteem, empathy and introversion among adolescent readers

Fathima Najiya^{1*}, Sannet Thomas²

ABSTRACT

Aim: This study is aimed to investigate the levels of self-esteem, empathy and introversion in adolescent readers based on their levels of reading. Self-esteem is quite simply one's attitude toward oneself (Rosenberg, 1965). Empathy can be defined as the act of coming to experience the world as you think someone else does (Bloom, 2016). Introversion refers to a personality type in which there is an orientation towards the internal private world of one's self and one's own inner thoughts and feelings, rather than towards the outer world of people and things (American Psychological Association [APA]). Individuals belonging to this category are usually quiet, reserved and shy. Adolescence refers to the period of human development that starts with puberty (10-12 years) and lasts till maturation (approximately 19 years). **Method:** This study has been conducted on 120 participants belonging to adolescent age group (09-19 years) through purposive sampling. The tools for data collection used in the study are Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Morris Rosenberg, 1965), Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (Sprenge et.al, 2009) and Introversion Scale (McCroskey). Data is analyzed using SPSS by the application of Kruskal Wallis Test and Post-hoc analysis. **Results:** The results indicate significant difference in the levels of self-esteem, empathy and introversion among adolescent readers varying on their reading level. That is, individuals with high levels of reading show higher levels of self-esteem, empathy and introversion compared to their counterparts.

Keywords: *Self-esteem, Empathy, Introversion, Reading*

The world has moved a long way along with the technology. Technology brought in differences in each and every aspects of our daily life including how we spent our leisure time. We are caught up in a digital era, opening up possibilities to spend handsome free hours in Social Medias, video gaming, watching movies etc. Has every one moved on from the leisure of reading to the leisure captivated in screens? If we believe that the feeling of pages is a thing of a different generation, we should be aware that people are still fond of their personal library and favorite stack of books next to the bed stand. In fact, reading cannot be abandoned; it is important. However, the digital era has successfully brought in the digital reading. So, reading sustain in a different medium but more importantly it preserves its benefits.

¹3rd year Bsc. Psychology student, Yuvakshetra Institute of Management Studies, Palakkad, Kerala, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Yuvakshetra Institute of Management Studies, Palakkad, Kerala, India

*Responding Author

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Reading

Reading is a development, interactive and global process involving learned skills (Leu & Kinzer, 1987). Reading is a multi-faceted process. It involves word recognition, comprehension and fluency. If an individual is not able to read, he or she cannot make any sense out of the given text- the text might just look like some oddly shaped symbols. Reading is an activity usually preserved in educational sector and academic activity since so long. But reading is not limited to the sole process of education. The joy derived from reading is irreplaceable. Additionally, like Mullis et. al (2009) points out, ability to read is fundamental to each person's intellectual development. Reading has been subjected to investigations from different viewpoints and has undergone testing in the field of social sciences. Reading habit refers to behavior which expresses the likeness of reading and tastes of reading (Sangkeo, 1991). Benefits of reading can be spoken in volumes. Studies reveal benefits in terms of writing ability, quick comprehension, expressive styles, self-esteem, empathy, and personality traits. Parents and teachers realize these benefits, which insist them to encourage their children and students to develop reading habits from very young age. This influences their cognition and behavior in various ways. Readers yield expectations, stick to the activity, are curious for the next part of the story and imagine and carry themselves into different peoples' worlds. Survey on an online reading site shows that reading a book is a personal experience and favorite depends on current mood or stage of life. A reader's purpose of reading may be pleasure, knowledge or a mental escaping. Reading sums to be a marvel.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is a term used to describe the overall sense of self-worth or personal value of a person towards oneself. It involves beliefs about oneself, appraisals on own appearances, emotions and behaviors. It is developed over the course of life and is a personality trait which is stable over time. An individual's self-esteem affects various areas of his/her life and play vital role in success of life.

Rosenberg (1995) defined global self-esteem as "the individual's positive and negative attitude toward the self as a totality." He distinguishes between global and specific self-esteem. Global refers to an overall attitude towards an object or phenomenon while specific self-esteem indicates a particular aspect or part of the object or phenomenon. So, self-esteem (attitude towards oneself) can be toward the entire self (globally) or a part of the self (specifically). An individual can hold both types of attitudes. For example, one can have a negative attitude towards one's aptitude for a subject but may have a generally positive attitude about his/her overall intelligence). Studies also indicate that Rosenberg's model of Self-esteem includes two major components. These are self-confidence and self-deprecation, which counterbalance each other.

Self-esteem has many applications in the daily lives of those ranging from laymen to white-collared professionals. It is an important factor contributing to other personality traits, attitudes, and motivation. A significant role in motivation and success throughout life is played by self-esteem. Low self-esteem may hold one back from succeeding at school or work because they don't believe themselves to be capable of success. By contrast, healthy self-esteem can help to achieve success, because one can navigate life with a positive, assertive attitude and one believes in the ability to accomplish goals. Studying self-esteem and student achievement has been a preoccupation with educators for several decades (Auer, 1992; Klein & Keller, 1990; Lane, J., Lane, A. & Kyprianou, A., 2004).

Empathy

Empathy refers to the capacity to vicariously experience and understand the thoughts and feelings of another person by putting oneself in that person's place (Strickland, 2001). So, instead of looking at a person from outside (external frame of reference), empathetic approach attempts to see things as how they actually look to the person (internal frame of reference).

This is one of the earliest abilities developed by human beings. Researches show how infants show distress as a response to other infants' cries. Even eighteen months old infants try to do something to comfort others while others are in comfort. Psychologist suggests that early development first takes place to distinguish individual from others, this forms a concept of self. Followed by this, infants develop a sophisticated theory of mind which allows infants to understand that other individuals too have feelings and these feelings may differ from us.

Importance of empathy is evident in pro-social behavior. Empathy evokes a sensation to find help or at least provide simple aids for the person in distress. Such acts might not necessarily bring any benefits to the doer.

Introversion

Introversion is common term used for people who are quiet, reserved, thoughtful, and self-reliant. They are those who tend to prefer solitary work and leisure activities. Such individuals are often referred to as "introverts." Extroverts draw energy from social interaction and usually respond immediately to external stimuli, while introverts tend to mull things over before formulating a reaction.

Carl Jung was the first psychologist to use the terms introversion and extroversion, which literally mean "inward turning" and "outward turning." Later, these terms were incorporated into the broad field of personality. Hans Eysenck popularized these terms, by bringing in a biological basis, explained by differences in sensitivity to physical and emotional stimulation. Introversion can be observed in early childhood, which suggests a biological and temperament basis. An introverted child is able to entertain herself alone long time, while extroverts need company most of the time. Introverts usually maintain only one or a few best friends. Introversion is a preference, while shyness stems from distress.

Introverts are independent and introspective thinkers. They prefer to concentrate on a single activity at a time and dislike interruptions. Also, they are often absorbed by their own emotions, pay less attention to people around them, reluctant to express emotions. Some claim that such introverts contribute to be great minds as their personality traits overlap at several points with gifted people, such as independence of thought, spending long absorbed in solitary works, and heightened sensitivity to social interactions (Dr. Silverman, L.).

Definition of Key terms

- **Self-esteem:** Self-esteem is quite simply one's attitude toward oneself (Rosenberg, 1965).
- **Empathy:** Empathy can be defined as the act of coming to experience the world as you think someone else does (Bloom, 2016).
- **Introversion:** Introverts are individuals with a preference for a quiet, more minimally stimulating environment (Cain, S., 2012). Introverts tend to enjoy quiet

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concentration, listen more than they talk, and think before they speak, and have a more circumspect and cautious approach to risk.

- **Reading:** reading is a process carried out and used by a reader to acquire message conveyed words printed and hence, seen by the reader (Tarigan, 2008).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kaniuka, T.S. (2020) conducted a study "Reading Achievement, Attitude Toward Reading, and Reading Self-Esteem of Historically Low Achieving Students. Two groups of students (N=367) were asked to complete a Reading Attitude Inventory (Vitale, 1975) and the results were analyzed using 2x2 factorial design ANOVA. This study shows that when compared to similar achieving students, students who experience academic success possess more positive attitudes toward reading and higher levels related self-esteem. It also found that students who received remedial reading program had significantly higher levels of reading self-esteem.

Tabullo et. al (2018) did a study on "Associations between fiction reading, trait empathy and theory of mind ability". It suggests link between reading and Theory of Mind which is a component of empathy. The study was conducted on Latin American sample of 208 adults. The research used tools including Ad hoc Reading Habits Questionnaire, Davis Interpersonal Reactivity Index Scale, Reading the Mind in the Eyes Task and Author Recognition Test. The results concluded that there exists a relationship between Theory of Mind (empathy) and Reading.

Lau, S. and Cheung. S.M. (1988) conducted study on "Reading Interests of Chinese Adolescents: Effects of Personal and Social Factors". It aims to investigate reading interests of Chinese adolescents, which demonstrated the personality (introversion) and reading interests of family and peers. The relationship was found positive i.e. more introverted students were attracted to more literary materials.

Rationale:

After reviewing the literature, the researcher found that there are no studies that investigate relationship between levels of self-esteem, introversion and empathy among adolescent readers.

METHODOLOGY

Research questions

1. Does reading has a significant effect on self- esteem among adolescents based on their levels of reading?
2. Does reading has a significant effect on empathy among adolescents based on their levels of reading?
3. Does reading has a significant effect on introversion among adolescents based on their levels of reading?

Objectives

1. To study level of self- esteem among adolescent readers based on their levels of reading.
2. To study level of empathy among adolescent readers based on their levels of reading.
3. To study level of introversion among adolescent readers based on their levels of reading.

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Aim

To study the level of self-esteem, empathy and introversion among adolescent readers based on their levels of reading.

Hypotheses

- There will be no significant difference in level of self-esteem among adolescent readers based on level of reading.
- There will be no significant difference in level of empathy among adolescent readers based on level of reading.
- There will be no significant difference in level of introversion among adolescent readers based on level of reading.
- These hypotheses are further divided into the following:
- There will be no significant difference in self-esteem among adolescent readers in reading level of Low-Average.
- There will be no significant difference in self-esteem among adolescent readers in reading level of Low- High.
- There will be no significant difference in self-esteem among adolescent readers in reading level of Average- High.
- There will be no significant difference in empathy among adolescent readers in reading level of Low-Average.
- There will be no significant difference in empathy among adolescent readers in reading level of Low- High.
- There will be no significant difference in empathy among adolescent readers in reading level of Average- High.
- There will be no significant difference in introversion among adolescent readers in reading level of Low- Average.
- There will be no significant difference in introversion among adolescent readers in reading level of Low- High.
- There will be no significant difference in introversion among adolescent readers in reading level of Average- High.

Research Design

The research design used in this study was a sampling design and also adapted a between group research design. The participants for the study were selected using judgmental sampling. The study is empirical and quantitative in nature.

Sampling and Participants

The sample of the study consists of 120 adolescents aged 15-18. The participants were selected by the non-random method of judgmental and convenient sampling. 85 of them were female and 35 were male.

Data Collection Instruments

The study is conducted using four questionnaires: One of which is a survey questionnaire to record the reading habits and three of them measures psychological variables like self-esteem, empathy and introversion.

1. Reading Habit (Socio-demographic information; self-developed)
2. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)
3. Introversion Scale (James C. McCroskey)
4. Toronto Empathy Questionnaire (Spreng et.al)

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Procedure

The research proposal was approved by the guide. When the informed consent of willing participants was ensured, each of them were assured with confidentiality and privacy. An online link for a forum to enter their responses were sent to them via online mediums like email, WhatsApp and other Social Medias. A brief introduction on the focus of the study and its purpose was discussed. The willing participants then had to answer the socio-demographic enquires followed by the above mentioned scales for each variable. Name of the participants and other contact details are kept completely confidential. The data collected then underwent statistical analysis to draw upon conclusions.

Analysis of the data

The collected data was scored for each variable. The data was then further analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The following statistical tests were used:

- Mean, Standard deviation
- Kruskal Wallis Independent Sample Test
- Post-hoc analysis test (Kruskal Wallis Test)

Ethical Issues

1. Informed Consent of every participant was collected
2. Confidentiality of the data collected were retained.
3. Contact information collected in the process (email addresses) are kept completely confidential.
4. The data collected will be used for research purpose only.

RESULTS

Data Analysis

The main purpose of the research was to study the levels of Self-esteem, Empathy and Introversion among Adolescent Readers based on their level of reading. The study used data collected from 120 participants belonging to adolescents and were readers. For this purpose, investigator formulated 3 general hypotheses and 9 sub-hypotheses. The obtained results are shown below.

Table 1 Mean and significant values on Self Esteem, Empathy and Introversion among Adolescent Readers using Kruskal Wallis Test.

Variables	Levels	N	Mean	Sig.
Self Esteem	Low	16	40.94	.000
	Average	45	50.23	
	High	59	73.64	
	Total	120		
Introversion	Low	16	44.88	.000
	Average	45	48.57	
	High	59	73.84	
	Total	120		
Empathy	Low	16	40.91	.000
	Average	45	40.48	
	High	59	81.08	
	Total	120		

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The general hypothesis 1 states that there is no significant difference in self-esteem among adolescent readers based on level of reading. This hypothesis was tested by Kruskal Wallis Test and indicates a significant value of .000. The hypothesis is significant at level of .05, and therefore, the Hypothesis 1 is rejected. There is a significant difference in level of self-esteem among the adolescents based on level of reading.

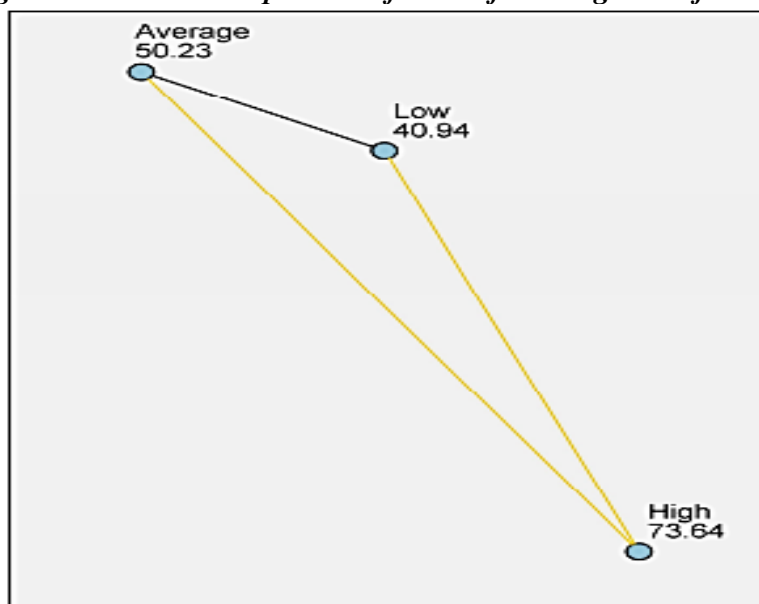
The general hypothesis 2 states that there is no significant difference in empathy among adolescent readers based on level of reading. The Kruskal Wallis Test results indicate a significant value of .000. The hypothesis is significant at level of .05, and therefore, the Hypothesis 2 is rejected. There is a significant difference in level of empathy among the adolescents based on level of reading.

The general hypothesis 3 states that there is no significant difference in introversion among adolescent readers based on level of reading. The results show a significant value of .000. The hypothesis is significant at level of .05, which leads to rejection of Hypothesis 3. There is a significant difference in level of introversion among the adolescents based on level of reading.

Table 2 Pairwise comparison significant value of self-esteem among adolescent readers based on their level of reading.

Level of Reading	Test statistic	Significant Value
Low- Average	-9.296	1.00
Low-High	-32.698	.002
Average- High	-23.402	.002

Figure 1 Pairwise comparison of level of reading on self-esteem.



Post-hoc analysis was used as there are more than two independent categories. From Table 2 and Figure 1 we can infer that there is no significant difference in level of self-esteem between the low level and average level adolescent readers. The difference is significant at a level of .05 and in this case the significant value is 1.00. It also shows that there is a significant difference in self-esteem between Low and High level (.002) adolescent readers

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and similarly between Average and High level of adolescent readers (.002). Here, the hypothesis 4 is accepted while, hypothesis 5 and 6 are rejected.

Table 3 Pairwise comparison significant value of level of empathy among adolescent readers based on their level of reading.

Level of Reading	Test statistic	Significant Value
Low- Average	.428	1.000
Low-High	-40.607	.000
Average- High	-40.178	.000

Figure 2 Pairwise comparison of level of reading on empathy.

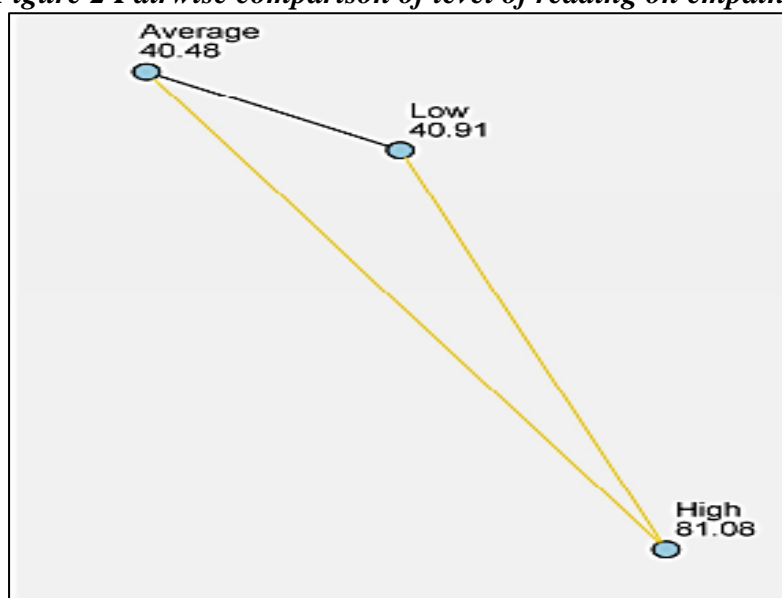


Table 3 and Figure 2 shows the Post-hoc analysis of independent categories. It indicates that there is no significant difference in level of empathy between the low level and average level of adolescent readers. The difference is significant at a level of .05 and in this case the significant value is 1.00. It also shows that there is a significant difference in empathy between Low and High levels (.000) of adolescent readers and similarly between Average and High levels (.000) of readers. The hypothesis 7 is accepted and hypotheses 8 and 9 are rejected.

Table 4 Pairwise comparison significant value of level of introversion among adolescent readers based on their level of reading.

Level of Reading	Test statistic	Significant Value
Low- Average	-3.692	1.000
Low-High	-28.964	.009
Average- High	-25.272	.001

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Figure 3 Pairwise comparison of level of reading on introversion.

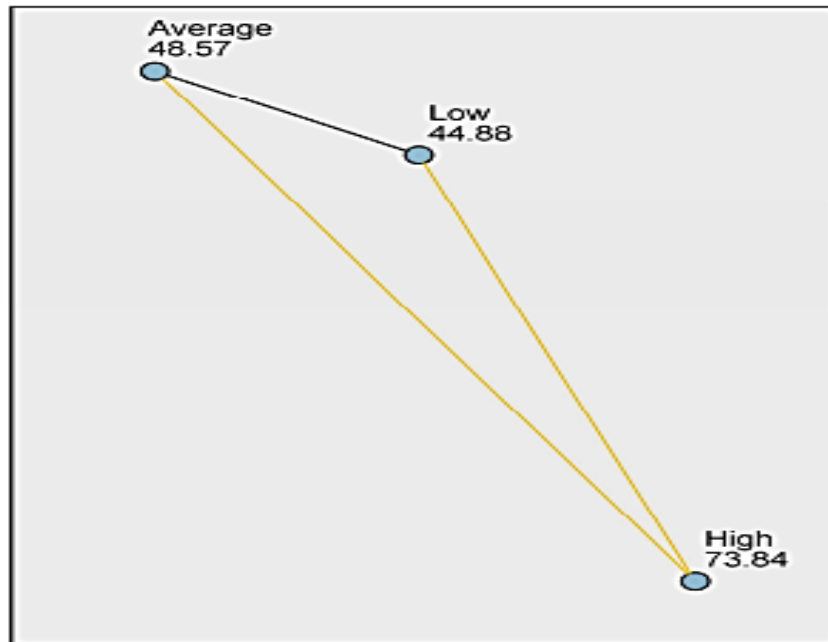


Table 4 and Figure 3 shows the Post-hoc analysis of independent categories. It indicates that there is no significant difference in level of introversion between the low and average levels of adolescent readers. The difference is significant at a level of .05 and in this case the significant value is 1.00. It also shows that there is a significant difference in level of introversion between Low and High levels of reading (.009) and a similar significant difference is indicated between Average and High levels (.001) of adolescent readers.

Figure 4 Graphical representation of level of self-esteem, introversion and empathy among adolescent readers based upon their levels of reading.

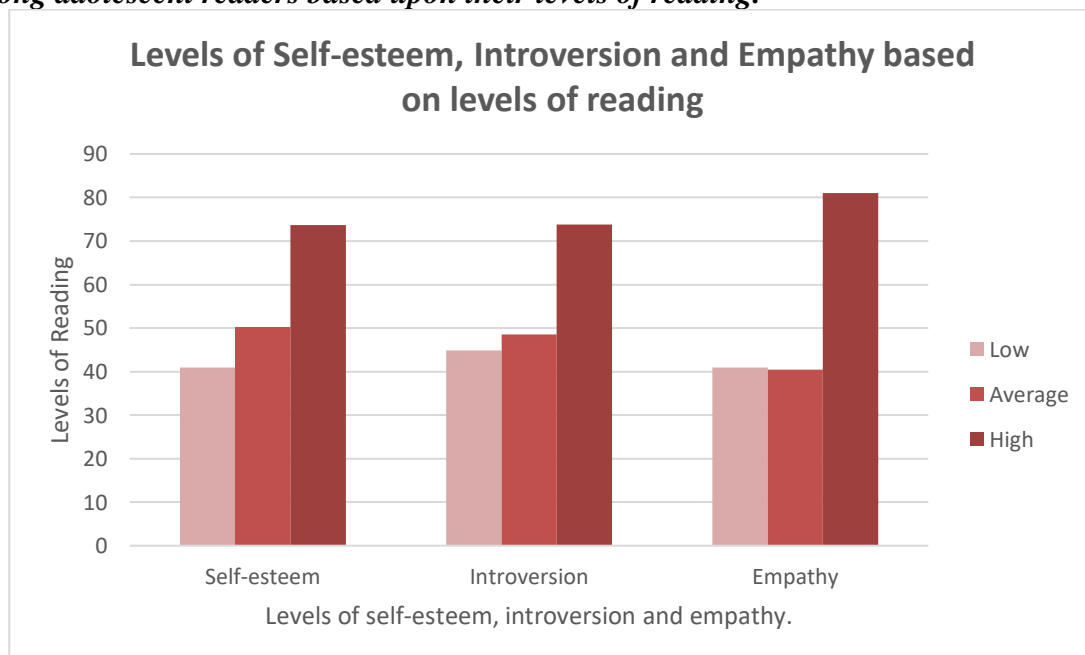


Figure 4 provides a graphical overview of levels of self-esteem, introversion and empathy among adolescent readers based on their levels on reading. It indicates that the levels of self-

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esteem and introversion is highest in high level readers, and then followed by the average level readers and the least among low level readers. Level of empathy is also found to be the highest in high level readers. But, the level of empathy is approximately same while comparing the average and low level readers.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- There is significant difference in level of self-esteem among adolescent readers based on their reading level.
- There is significant difference in level empathy among adolescent readers based on their reading level.
- There is significant difference in level introversion among adolescent readers based on their reading level.
- Analysis using levels of reading indicate that high level readers show highest self-esteem, followed by average level and then by low level readers.
- Analysis using levels of reading indicate that high level readers show highest introversion, followed by average level and then by low level readers.
- Analysis using levels of reading indicate that high level readers show highest level of empathy, and average and low level readers have scored a similar level of empathy.

IMPLICATIONS

Reading is an activity that had to step back with the rise of digital era. The modern generation tend to savor the sounds of internet pubs rather than the smell of giant books in library. Parents involved in their own hassles should take time to emphasis the importance of reading in the child's life, hence developing interest of reading. More reading programs should be organized by educational institutions to instil the interest of reading in individuals. Such programs should be extended to adults levels also, which would be helpful for them to pick up the reading habits and interests that they left in between. Reading is now an activity so important that it is even used in individual and group counselling.

This study shows scientific evidence for benefits of reading in self-esteem and empathy. Self-esteem is a vital characteristic that reflects almost every domains of an individual's life, whereas empathy is the base feeling that facilitate pro-social behavior in the society. The study also shows that readers tend to show introversion. Introversion was once considered as a negative quality when only the shyness and withdrawal traits were emphasized. With more studies devoted, the power of introversion like high intellectual capacity, better judgment, independent resources, introspective, make powerful leaders and good listeners etc. More studies being conducted reveal more merits of introverts in the world. Even then the withdrawal, closed up traits, less awareness of others' feelings, lesser attachment and decreased communication are all characteristics attributed to introverts.

The study touches an area not much attended by many of researchers. Bringing the benefits of reading into the light of scientific investigation provide greater strength to importance of reading and why it should be encouraged from very young age. The study also indicate that reading is one of the way to attain and develop self-esteem and empathy in minds of young people.

Scope

1. The study could be done on a larger population.
2. Further studies can also adapt different variables that may be related to reading.

3. Future studies can also be conducted using different population

LIMITATIONS:

1. The study was conducted on a relatively small sample (N=120).
2. The study has focused on only a single age range i.e. adolescence.
3. The sample consist of mainly participants from Kerala, India.

CONCLUSIONS

Self-esteem is one's attitudes towards oneself and empathy refers to experiencing the world from the perspectives of someone else. Introversion is a personal characteristic in which the individual's orientation to internal world, rather than the external world. Reading habit relates to empathy, self-esteem and introversion among the adolescent readers. The present study was conducted on a total of 120 adolescent readers. The results indicate that there is a positive correlation between levels of reading and levels of self-esteem, empathy and introversion. This study can be used to develop interventions that will aid in the welfare of adolescents, by focusing on reading habit that facilitate the attainment of self-esteem and empathy. Further studies can be conducted on a larger population or using a population of different age group.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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