

Comparative Study

Self-Confidence: A Comparative Study on Young Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

To meet the demands of the everyday challenges in life one is expected to be skilful, knowledgeable and have the ability to deal with the situation effectively. This not only helps an individual to manage the difficult situation in an easy way but also helps to build the self-confidence with-in the individual. Therefore, it has been accepted that as early in life as possible people learn abilities to cope with the difficult situation and master their skills on various aspects such as academics, social skills, physical appearance and so on they would be high on their self-confidence. Hence, the aim of the present investigation is to investigate gender differences on general self-confidence among young adolescents. For the purpose general self-confidence questionnaire has been administered on a sample of 80 participants (40 males & 40 females). It was expected that male would score high on self-confidence as compared to female counterparts. To accomplish the objectives of the present investigation between participant research design was followed. The data was analysed by using the t-test for independent sample and the findings of the same reveals no significant ($t = 1.48$; N.S.) gender differences existing on general self-confidence among young adolescents.

Keywords: *Young Adolescents, Gender Differences, Self-Confidence, Between Participants Research Design*

The maintenance and enhancement of the belief one has towards self in performing different roles in life efficiently, is the basic difference among individuals. This particular behaviour of an individual is termed as self-confidence. Most of the researchers from different fields of education have been focusing on this particular element of life because the quality of life changes with the levels of confidence an individual has. Self-confidence can be defined as “*individuals’ performance expectancies and their self-evaluations of ability and completed performances*” (Lenney, 1985: 905). Having enough knowledge about the situation gives the readiness to attempt and complete the given task. In most of the incidents in daily life success is decided by readiness to attempt the task. This readiness can be otherwise called as self-confidence. Self – confidence is a combination of different components like self-esteem, self – efficacy, self- worth, self – respect, self – image and so on.

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Self-confidence can be broadly divided into general self-confidence (GSC) and specific self-confidence (SSC) (Lampert & Rosenberg, 1975). GSC is a confidence which is maintained by the individual in general, that is on a regular manner. On the other hand, SSC is the confidence maintained by the individual in a particular scenario, or related a specific aspect of life like, academic performance, physical appearance, social relationships, athletic, romantic etc. Lampert and Rosenberg (1975), have defined GSC as “*general self-confidence indicates whether a person exhibits the personality trait of self-confidence irrespective of any specific context*” and SSC as “*A person’s self-stated degree of confidence in judging a specific context at a given point of time*”.

Each individual differs in their levels of self-confidence, then question of why that difference exists is always fascinating. It is difficult to identify at what stage self-confidence starts to develop, but it is assumed that similar to personality traits, self-confidence also starts to develop from early childhood or even before that. So, as the individuals get exposed to the multiple environments and the world around them, they go on build up the confidence. Aspects like parenting, people around, exposure, understanding about the world are the major deciding factors of the confidence of an individual. As one develops positive self-confidence, they start seeing the world in a positive or safer place for themselves, which in turn boost up the confidence.

Furthermore, optimal levels of confidence help the individuals to survive in a better way, whereas high or levels of confidence can act as a hinderance and effect the abilities in a negative way. As mentioned earlier self-confidence is the readiness to take up the task, when a person is running short of confidence that is having low self-confidence may not choose to perform the task, and if the confidence level is more than optimum there is a possibility for the person to over-look or underestimate the intensity of the task and he may lose it by acting inappropriately.

Factors influencing self-confidence may include (i) **development** (life experiences during the course of development right from womb has a direct influence on self-confidence of an individual. Several developmental theories like Erikson and others have focused on self-esteem during 3 to 5 years and its impact on rest of the life) (ii) **parenting style** (home is a setting to which an infant is first exposed to, and parents and siblings are his immediate respondents, so their responses to the child and his behaviour decides self-perception there by decides the level of self-confidence) and (iii) **social approach** (society is a second home for human being, so the impression of society has a direct influence on individual’s self-image and confidence). All these factors have a reciprocal relationship with self-confidence that means one affects another and it is vice-versa.

Panwar and Gorsy (2016) conducted an empirical investigation on 111 high school students have concluded that irrespective of the gender a student who maintain good peer relationships show high levels of self-confidence with regard to public speaking and academics. Physical appearance is an all-time key factor for self-confidence among adolescents. The statistical analysis shows that peer relationship (friends) among sample is significantly associated with two dimensions of self-confidence that is public speaking ($r=0.330$) and academic performance.

Nupur and Mahapatro (2016) in a study on understanding the association between gender and self-esteem conducted among the sample of 203 young adults found that the self-esteem of the men was significantly higher than that of women.

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Vanaja and Geeta (2017) in their study on locus of control and self-confidence in high school students inferred that there is no significant difference among the students in their locus of control and self-confidence with respect to medium of instruction. The sample was chosen from high school students of Government School, Private School and Government Aided School in Coimbatore District.

Tasneem and Panwar (2019) in another study on a sample of 60 undergraduate students from science stream concluded that male and female undergraduate students reported moderate levels of academic self-confidence and found no significant gender difference ($t = -0.28$; N.S.) in mean values on academic self-confidence.

Rationale of the study

Self-confidence can be explained under several dimensions like academic, athletic, romantic, general, speaking abilities, physical appearance, social etc. The main focus of this study was on general self-confidence which means the levels of confidence one maintains in general, to be precise under no pressure or expectation given. Following are the statements given by different authors regarding the relationship between gender and dimensions of self-confidence. “*The determinants of self-confidence like academic, appearance, athletic and general confidence differs according to the gender*” (Shrauger & Schohn, 1995). “*Teenagers’ who have healthy relationships with their friends show more self-confidence levels irrespective of the gender*” (Panwar & Gorsy, 2015).

Adolescence is one stage of development where enormous changes take place, in relation to the perception towards the world, one-self, there by modifying the opinions about the same. So, studying self-confidence among student population is helpful for them to boost up and maintain the optimum levels of self-confidence.

Hence, self- confidence is one of the essential aspects for growth. Especially for young adolescents who are yet to dive into deeper levels of life having trust on one-self is very important. In the country like India where youth population is huge there is a lot of scope for studying this concept. It is clearly evident from the review of literature that research on self-confidence in Indian context is very limited. The available literature talks about only specific dimensions of confidence, but studies on general self-confidence are yet to study deeper.

Research Question

Do male and female young adolescent students report same level of general confidence?

Objectives

- To assess the level of general self-confidence for both the genders.
- To study the gender differences on general self-confidence among young adolescent students.

Hypothesis

H_0 = Young adolescent students from both the genders would report similar levels of general self-confidence.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In order to fulfil the requirement of current empirical research work the quasi-experimental (between group) design was followed.

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Sample

For the purpose of the present study 100 adolescent students who were enrolled in regular schools within Bangalore city were selected on the basis of purposive random sampling. The sample includes equal number of participants from both the genders within the age range of 12 to 16 years. Further, potential participants were identified on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to maintain the homogeneity of the sample. An attempt was made to choose the representative sample across all the levels of the society. For the final analysis responses of 80 participants were used which includes equal numbers from both the genders.

Inclusion Criteria

- Age between 12 to 16 years
- Can read, write and understand verbal and written instructions in English.
- Regular students or Students with the domicile of Bangalore.
- Students living with their parents and belongs to upper middle socio-economic class.

Exclusion Criteria

- Below 12 years and above 16 years of age.
- Cannot read, write or understand verbal and written instructions in English.
- Part time students or Students with the domicile other than Bangalore.
- Students living in hostels and belongs to lower or upper socio-economic class.

Tool Used

General Self-Confidence [GSC; Shrauger & Schohn, 1995]:

To assess the general self-confidence among the present sample Personality Evaluation Inventory (PEI) was used which consists of 7 self-report items that are grouped into eight subscales. Scores across the content specific subscales can be summed to give an alternate measure of general confidence. Each subscale is assessed with seven items except Athletic confidence, which has five items. Each item is rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale i.e., 1 (Strongly Agree), 2 (Mainly Agree), 3 (Mainly Disagree) and 4 (Strongly Disagree). Scores are summed across items, with higher scores indicating greater perceived confidence.

Blascovitch and Tomaka (1991) reported Cronbach's alpha values for the subscales ranging between 0.67 and 0.89; Shrauger and Schohn (1995) reported that internal consistency, as measured by coefficient alpha, was 0.81 for women and 0.77 for men. They reported one-month test-retest reliabilities as 0.80 for women and 0.93 for men.

Procedure

To fulfil the objective of the present investigation, the management of the concerned academic institution was contacted and explained the details and purpose of the study since the participants are minors. After taking the consent from the management, the children were approached personally. Rapport was established initially with every participant after which the demographic information was collected. The test was conducted after providing the instructions.

Statistical analysis

To accomplish the objectives of the present investigation descriptive statistics were computed for both the groups and t-test for independent sample was calculated.

RESULTS

The present investigation was taken with an objective to study the level of general self-confidence among young adolescents. Additionally, it was also proposed to study the gender differences on general self-confidence among the participants. The results of statistical analyses have been exhibited in the following table.

Table – 1: Descriptive statistics and t-test values on general self-confidence for male and female young adolescents (N = 80).

VARIABLE	GENDER	N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
General Self-Confidence	MALE	40	18.20	2.05	1.48	0.14
	FEMALE	40	17.45	2.47		

Table 1 reveals the outcome of statistical analyses for the present empirical research work which shows that mean score obtained by male young adolescents is 18.20 (S.D. = 2.05) whereas, the mean value of 17.45 (S.D. = 2.47) has been obtained by their female counterparts. The obtained mean value by participants of both the gender is close of the expected mean value (i.e., 17.50). Hence, from the descriptive statistical values it could be concluded that participants of both the gender reported moderate level of general self-confidence.

Further, the above table also highlights that male young adolescents do not differ ($t = 1.48$; N.S.) with regard to their self-confidence from their female counterparts. Such a trend indicates that majority of young adolescents irrespective of their gender gets an equal treatment from their social groups including family, schools, peer, neighbours etc. and thereby develop a sense of general self-confidence. Not only this but it keeps on growing as they take part in various day to day activities assigned to them and performing numerous roles related to their specific gender.

DISCUSSION

As the competition and expectations towards the younger population are increasing, irrespective of the gender the roles are expected to fulfil in the institutional or corporate settings are equal, developing and maintaining optimum self-confidence levels plays a crucial role among the current adolescent student population. Once they are ready to face the challenges of life at this stage, they would develop a positive approach towards the entire life and maintain the confidence levels, which are important to succeed in life. Self-confidence gives an assurance about one-self.

In the current empirical research, the inventory used was a part of personal evaluation inventory, which is self-reported inventory with four-point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It's a positive inventory which means higher the score higher the confidence level. The participants in the current study have scored average range scores, indicating the average self-confidence.

The current empirical study is in line with Paliwal et.al (2006), Tasneem and Panwar (2019), that there is no significant effect of gender on general self-confidence ($t = 1.48$; NS). According to the literature the majority of the boys and girls have moderate levels of school adjustment and self-confidence (Paliwal et.al, 2006). Both boys and girls have reported moderate levels of academic self-confidence (Tasneem & Panwar, 2019). Several studies in past have shown that self-confidence is directly related to number of siblings, stress levels,

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economic status, exposure to the environment, intelligence etc. Several studies are contradicting with the results of current empirical research and have concluded that girls have more self-confidence when compared with boys (Geeta & Lakshmi, 2006).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the current empirical research it can be concluded that both adolescent boys and girls have moderate levels of general self-confidence, gender has no role to play in expression of general self-confidence among adolescents. The participants scoring just moderate levels of self-confidence indicates the necessity to provide the information related to increase in confidence levels. As the participants are from high school, providing quality workshops, conducted programmes related to enhancing self-confidence and its uses would help them increase in their confidence levels.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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