

Research Paper

Impact of Gender on Self-Esteem among Junior College Students

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of gender on self-esteem among junior college students, focusing on dimensions such as positivity, openness, competence, humility, self-worth, and learning orientation. The sample consisted of 100 students (50 males and 50 females) aged 15 to 18 from Aurangabad City, Maharashtra, selected through purposive non-probability sampling. The Self-Esteem Scale (SES) by Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar was used for data collection, featuring 23 items rated on a five-point Likert scale. Data analysis utilized the t-test to compare self-esteem dimensions between male and female students. Results revealed significant gender differences in several dimensions: male students reported higher levels of positivity, openness, competence, self-worth, and learning orientation than female students. However, no significant difference was observed in humility between the two groups. These findings suggest that gender plays a notable role in shaping self-esteem characteristics among junior college students, highlighting areas where gender-specific support may be beneficial.

Keywords: *Gender differences, Self-esteem, Junior college students, Positivity, Openness, Competence, Humility, Self-worth, Learning orientation*

Self-esteem is a foundational aspect of human psychology, influencing individuals' perception of self-worth, competence, and personal potential. For junior college students, self-esteem becomes a critical factor that shapes their academic performance, social interactions, and personal development. During this stage, students experience rapid growth and transformation, facing new academic challenges and navigating social dynamics. Gender often plays a significant role in shaping self-esteem levels, as societal expectations and cultural norms can influence how males and females perceive themselves and their abilities. Investigating gender's impact on self-esteem among junior college students thus becomes essential in understanding and promoting positive mental health and personal growth in young adults.

Self-esteem is multi-dimensional, encompassing attributes such as positivity, openness, competence, humility, self-worth, and learning orientation. These dimensions reflect an individual's confidence, willingness to embrace new experiences, perceived capability in tasks, sense of humility, intrinsic value, and orientation toward personal growth and learning. Positivity reflects the inclination to view oneself and life situations favorably, often linked with optimism and resilience. Openness pertains to one's ability to be receptive to

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new experiences, ideas, and change, which is essential for adaptability and social connectedness. Competence, a critical element of self-esteem, represents the perceived ability to succeed and handle various tasks, which significantly impacts students' academic and career aspirations.

Gender may influence each of these dimensions differently. For example, social stereotypes and expectations may encourage males to exhibit confidence and independence, impacting their perceived competence and self-worth. In contrast, females may often feel pressured to align with societal standards that emphasize humility and emotional expressiveness, potentially affecting their positivity and openness to new experiences. These factors, coupled with the distinct physiological and psychological changes that male and female adolescents experience, make it necessary to examine self-esteem from a gendered perspective to understand how gender-based socialization and expectations shape self-perception.

The educational environment further amplifies these dynamics, as schools are not merely academic spaces but social environments where students negotiate their identities and self-worth. Teachers, peers, and family members all contribute to shaping the self-esteem of junior college students, often reinforcing or challenging gender norms. Female students may face implicit expectations to demonstrate empathy and humility, while male students are frequently encouraged to exhibit strength and competence. Such expectations can create disparities in how students internalize their value and abilities, influencing their academic engagement, social relationships, and mental well-being.

Self-esteem significantly impacts learning orientation, which reflects a student's willingness to pursue personal growth and self-improvement. Gender-based differences in self-esteem can shape learning orientation, as individuals who feel confident and valued are more likely to engage in learning activities and set ambitious goals. Conversely, students who feel inadequate or undervalued may adopt a fixed mindset, avoiding challenges to protect their self-worth. Gender thus not only affects self-esteem but also students' approach to learning and academic success, with far-reaching consequences for their future careers and personal lives.

Reilly, D., Neumann, D. L., & Andrews, G. (2022) his study investigates gender differences in self-estimated intelligence (SEI), focusing on the phenomenon known as the "male hubris, female humility effect," where males tend to provide higher self-estimates of intelligence than females despite evidence of similar measured intelligence between genders. A sample of 228 participants (103 males, 125 females) provided self-estimates for general intelligence and Gardner's multiple intelligences, followed by the Cattell Culture Fair IQ test as an objective measure. Participants also completed the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) to assess sex-role identification, along with measures of general and academic self-esteem. Findings revealed both gender and sex-role influences on SEI, with males and individuals scoring higher in masculinity reporting higher intelligence estimates. While no gender differences were observed in SEI accuracy, females systematically underestimated their intelligence. Hierarchical multiple regression showed significant independent effects of gender, masculinity, and self-esteem on SEI. Results highlight the nuanced role of sex-role identification in understanding gender differences in SEI, offering insights into the male hubris, female humility effect.

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Blegur, J., Tlonaen, Z. A., Lumba, A. J. F., & Leko, J. J. (2021) This study explores the relationship between self-esteem, learning responsibility, and group learning commitment among physical education students. Using a quantitative, correlational design, data were collected from 88 sixth-semester physical education students. The State Self-Esteem Scale by Heatherton and Polivy (1991), the Personal Responsibility Questionnaire by Mergler (2007), and the Organization Commitment Scale by Allen and Meyer (1990) were used for data collection. Descriptive analysis showed that self-esteem (67%), learning responsibility (54.6%), and group learning commitment (65.9%) were all relatively good. Pearson correlation results indicated a positive and significant relationship between self-esteem and learning responsibility ($r = 0.468$) and self-esteem and group learning commitment ($r = 0.282$). These findings highlight the importance of lecturer and peer support in fostering positive self-esteem to enhance students' learning behaviors, including responsibility and commitment in group learning tasks.

Ravindranadan, D., & Tom, A. (2016) This study investigates gender differences in self-esteem among undergraduate students. Self-esteem, defined as an individual's overall subjective emotional evaluation of self-worth, plays a crucial role in coping with life's challenges. The sample consisted of 120 students (60 males and 60 females) aged 19-21, drawn equally from 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate arts and science programs in Ernakulum District, Kerala, with equal representation from urban and rural areas. Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was used to assess self-esteem, and data analysis was conducted using SPSS. Results from the t-test indicated a statistically significant gender difference in self-esteem at the 0.01 level. Additionally, a significant mean difference in self-esteem was observed between urban and rural students. The findings highlight important gender-based and regional differences in self-esteem among undergraduate students.

Objective of the study

To explore self-esteem (Positivity, Openness, Competence, Humility, Self-Worth and Learning Orientation among male and female junior college students.

Hypotheses

There will be no significant difference between boys and girls in junior college concerning self-esteem (Positivity, Openness, Competence, Humility, Self-Worth and Learning Orientation).

Samples

For the current research, 100 junior college students from Aurangabad City, located in Maharashtra State. This sample comprised 50 male college students and 50 female college students. The selected students fell within the age range of 15 to 18 years. The sampling method employed in this study was Purposive non-probability random sampling.

Variable

Independents Variables:

1. Gender

1. Male
2. Female

Dependent Variables

2. Self Esteem

1. Positivity

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2. Openness
3. Competence
4. Humility
5. Self-Worth
6. Learning Orientation

Research Tools

Self Esteem Scale (SES): Dr Santosh Dhar and Dr Upinder Dhar constructed and standardised this scale. It is consisted 23 items with the following six factors: Positivity, Openness, Competence, Humility, Self Worth, Learning Orientation. The scoring procedure for 23 items set against a Likert five-point scale, i.e. Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree and Strongly Agree, awarded 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, respectively. Split has established the tool's reliability- the half method. The reliability of the tool is 0.71. Therefore, the tool is reliable.

Statistical Analysis:

“t” value Statistics was used for the present study.

STATISTICAL INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Table No-1 Mean Std. Deviation and t value of Self-Esteem among junior college students.

Self-Esteem	Male		Female		df	t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Positivity	29.35	4.10	24.01	3.75	98	6.79**
Openness	24.56	3.59	19.47	4.70	98	6.08**
Competence	16.40	4.15	12.76	3.57	98	4.70**
Humility	15.47	3.08	15.80	3.69	98	0.48
Self-Worth	16.88	4.53	11.78	3.18	98	6.51**
Learning Orientation	9.77	3.41	6.09	3.38	98	5.41**

*Significant at 0.01** = 2.62, 0.05* = 1.98*

The table compares self-esteem dimensions between junior college male and female students. It includes each dimension's mean scores, standard deviations, and t-test results.

Positivity: Male students report significantly higher positivity levels than female students ($t = 6.79^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that male students have a more positive outlook on life and are more optimistic than female students.

Openness: Male students also report significantly higher openness levels than female students ($t = 6.08^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that male students are more open to new experiences, ideas, and perspectives.

Competence: Similar to positivity and openness, male students report significantly higher levels of perceived competence than female students ($t = 4.70^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that male students feel more confident in their abilities and skills.

Humility: No significant difference is observed between male and female students in terms of humility ($t = 0.48$, $p > 0.05$). Both groups seem to exhibit similar levels of modesty and self-awareness.

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Self-Worth: Male students report significantly higher self-worth levels than female students ($t = 6.51^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that male students have a stronger sense of self-value and self-esteem.

Learning Orientation: Male students report significantly higher learning orientation levels than female students ($t = 5.41^{**}$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that male students have a greater desire to learn and a more growth-oriented mindset.

The analysis reveals significant gender differences in certain dimensions of self-esteem among junior college students. Male students report higher levels of positivity, openness, competence, self-worth, and learning orientation than female students. However, there is no significant difference in humility between the two groups.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Male students reported significantly higher positivity levels than female students.
2. Male students reported significantly higher openness levels than female students.
3. Male students reported significantly higher perceived competence levels than female students.
4. Male students reported significantly higher self-worth levels than female students.
5. Male students reported significantly higher learning orientation levels than female students.
6. No significant difference was found in humility between male and female students.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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