Assertiveness and Self-Esteem in Indian Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Assertiveness and self-esteem in adolescents are the instruments for expressing themselves without any psychological disturbances in different situations. It is essential for a better emotional wellbeing and to maintain socially supportive relationships.

Methodology: A descriptive correlation survey research design was adopted for the collecting data from sixty adolescents from a selected children hospital, OPD, Bangalore using simple random sampling technique. Rathus Assertiveness Schedule and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were used to assess the assertiveness and self-esteem in adolescents. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: Majority of the adolescents were moderately assertive, 75% and 53.33% had high self-esteem. A significant positive correlation was (rs=0.64) was found between the assertive behaviour and self-esteem of the adolescents. Significant association were found between the assertive scores with the age & education level of the adolescents(x^2=7.16 & 6.13). Education level of the adolescents was the only variable significantly associated between the assertive and self-esteem scores (x^2=14.08).

Key words: Adolescents, assertiveness and self-esteem

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent period of transition starts at the age of 10 years and ceases by the age of 19 years. [1] Adolescence is a Latin word and the meaning is "to grow up". It is a transitional stage of physical and mental human development generally occurring between puberty and legal adulthood (age of majority) but largely characterized as beginning and ending with the teenage stage. [2]

Adolescence is a period of preparation for adulthood during which time several key developmental experiences occur. [2] Besides physical and sexual maturation, developmental experiences include movement toward social and economic independence, and development of identity, the acquisition of skills needed to carry out adult relationships and roles, and the capacity for abstract. [3]

Adolescents go through many changes. One characteristics feature seen in the adolescents is self-hatred. This is a strange emotion, it is outrageously common in teenagers and it can be extremely hard to get out of the rut it creates. [4] Low-self-esteem is also associated with feelings of being weak, helpless, hopeless, frightened, fragile, in-complete, worthless and inadequate. They suffer from negative thoughts and fail to recognize their potential, they fear criticism and take compliments negatively and are afraid to take up responsibilities, and afraid of forming their own opinion. [5]

Assertiveness is a form of behaviour characterized by a confident declaration or affirmation of a statement without need of proof; this affirms the person's rights or point of view without either aggressively threatening the rights of another assuming a position of dominance or submissively permitting another to ignore or deny one's rights or point of view. [5]

Self-esteem can be broadly defined as the overall evaluation of oneself in either

a positive or negative way (Hughes, J. N etal, 2005). It is one of the basic needs of human being. The degree of our self-esteem impacts every major aspect of our lives. Deficits in self-esteem contribute to virtually all psychological problems. [6]

Need For the Study

India has the largest population of adolescents in the world being home to 243 million individuals' aged 10-19 years. Nearly 90 per cent live in developing countries. Karnataka is the eighth largest state in India in terms of population. In Karnataka about 21% of the population is comprised of adolescent population.

Studies have found that one-third to one-half of adolescents struggle with low self-esteem, especially in early adolescence. The results of low self-esteem can be temporary, but in serious cases can lead to various problems including depression, anorexia nervosa, delinquency, self-inflicted injuries and even suicide. Self-esteem is related to school performance and delinquency. Adolescents with low self-esteem are more likely to do poorly in school, to become pregnant, or to impregnate a partner. [7]

Many studies have shown that low self-esteem is actually a thinking disorder in which an individual views himself as inadequate, unworthy, unlovable, and/or incompetent. Once formed, this negative view of self permeates every thought, producing faulty assumptions and on-going self-defeating behaviour. [8]

A study have shown that 78% of girls with low self-esteem admit that it is hard to feel good in school when you do not feel good about how you look (compared to 54% of girls with high self-esteem). 75% of girls with low self-esteem reported engaging in negative activities such as disordered eating, cutting, bullying, smoking, or drinking when feeling badly about themselves (compared to 25% of girls with high self-esteem). 61% of teen girls with low self-esteem admit to talking badly about themselves (compared to 15% of girls with high self-esteem). [9]

One of the main factors in teen promiscuity is self-esteem. When a teen has little or no self-confidence, he or she will use sex as a means to build confidence. Recent years have seen a significant increase in body dysmorphia in teen boys. Body Dysmorphic Disorder is a psychiatric disorder in which the affected person is excessively concerned about an imagined or minor defect in their physical feature. Teenage boys can be prone to obsessive exercising, binge eating, anorexia nervosa, bulimia, steroid abuse and diet aid abuse. It is estimated that about 45% of Western men are unhappy with their bodies 25 years ago, only 15% were unhappy with their bodies. [10]

Adolescent health has become an increasingly important focus for governments, foundations, and behavioural researchers. In contrast to other age groups, mortality and morbidity rates for 10-25 year olds have been increasing the past few decades and there is increasing evidence that the health status of adolescents is not as high as was the case for their parents. [11] Investigator personally witnessed many adolescents having problems of low self-esteem and non- assertive behavior. Considering all these facts, the researcher felt the need for finding the relationship between the assertive behavior and self-esteem among adolescents.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

A study to assess the correlation between the assertive behaviour and self-esteem among adolescents.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of assertive behavior among adolescents
2. To assess the level of self-esteem among adolescents
3. To correlate between the level of assertive behavior and self-esteem among adolescents.

4. To find out the association between the assertive behavior and self-esteem of adolescents with their selected socio demographic variables.

Operational Definitions

1. **Assertive behaviour**

   It refers to the behaviour which enables adolescents to act in his or her own best interest, to stand up for herself or himself, without undue anxiety, to express honest feeling comfortably, or to exercise personal rights without denying the rights of others which is measured using Rathus Assertiveness Schedule.

2. **Self esteem**

   It refers to adolescents overall evaluation or appraisal of his or her own worth which is measured by using Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale.

3. **Adolescents**

   It refers to individuals in the age group of 13-19 years and includes both girls and boys.

Assumptions

1. Adolescents may not have assertive behaviour and have a low self-esteem.
2. Assertive behaviour may improve self-esteem of adolescence.
3. Assertive behaviour and self-esteem may vary with the selected socio demographic variables of the adolescents.

Research Hypotheses

H₁: There is a significant correlation between level of assertive behavior and self-esteem among adolescents.

H₂: There is a significant association between the selected socio demographic variables and with the scores of assertive behaviour and self-esteem.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employed quantitative descriptive correlation survey design. The study variables were assertive behaviour and self-esteem of adolescents. This study was conducted in the Outpatient department of Children hospital, Bangalore in the month of November, 2016, which involved 60 adolescents selected through simple random sampling technique. The inclusive criteria of the study were, adolescents of both gender in the age group of 13 -19 years and who can speak English and the local language. Data were collected using standardised questionnaires, and were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics with SPSS version 17.

Data collection Tools

Tools consist of three sections:

Section A: Socio Demographic variables: It includes the base line information of adolescents such as age, gender, religion, education of father, education of mother ,occupation of father, occupation of mother, monthly income family, type of family, education level, Area of residence.

Section B: Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (30 items) was used to assess the assertive behaviour. There are 14 items for assertive behaviour and 16 items for non-assertive behaviour. Scoring of assertive behaviour is given as 05 for Very much like me, 04 for rather like me, 03 for somewhat like me, 02 for somewhat unlike me, 01 for rather unlike me and zero for very unlike me. Reverse scoring is done for the non-assertive behaviour. The total score of assertive behaviour ranged from 0-150 for 30 items. Levels of assertiveness were classified as very highly assertive (121-150), highly assertive (91-120), moderately assertive (61-90), less assertive (31-60), very less assertive (0-30).

Section C: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (10 items) was used to assess the self-esteem. There were five items for positive self-esteem and five items for negative self-esteem. They were scored for positive self-esteem as 03 for strongly agree, 02 for agree, one for disagree and zero for strongly disagree. Reverse scoring is done for the negative self-esteem. The total score of self-esteem ranged from 0-30 for 10 items. Levels of self-esteem were classified as very high self-esteem (25-30), high self-esteem

(19-24), moderate self-esteem (13-18), low self-esteem (07-12), very low self-esteem (0-06).

Data collection Procedure:

After obtaining formal administrative approval and institutional ethical clearance from the concerning authorities and informed consent from the samples parents the investigator personally collected the demographic data for a period three weeks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was aimed to assess the correlation between the assertive behaviour and self-esteem among adolescents. The study was unique in nature, as the patient participants were asymptomatic, hence they may be the true representative of the target population. In the present study fig.1, shows that 75% of the adolescents were moderately assertive, 20% of them were highly assertive, 3.33% of them were less assertive, 1.66% of them were very less assertive and none of them were very highly assertive. Fig.2 shows that 53.33% of the adolescents had high self-esteem, 41.6% had moderate level of self-esteem, and 1.66 % of them had respectively very high, very low & low self-esteem. And also a significant positive correlation (rs=0.64 at p<0.005) was found between the assertive behaviour and self-esteem of the adolescents (table 1). Among the adolescent participants it was found that the age and the educational level of the adolescents had a major influence in development of assertiveness and self-esteem, as the age and the education level of the adolescents were high the level of assertiveness and self-esteem were also increased(Table 2). These findings were in coinciding with the findings of Tesring et al, 2009 &Tachan et al, 2012. [12,13] In the current study, a positive significant correlation (rs=0.64 at p<0.005) was found between the assertive behaviour and self-esteem of the adolescents. These findings reflect the adolescent's awareness on being assertive and developing self-esteem and

these study findings are similar to the findings of Aghajani .M et al, 2010. [14]
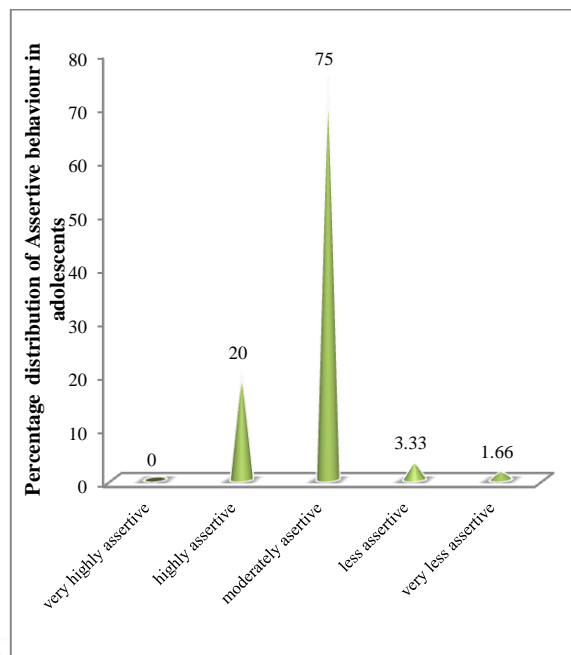

Fig: 1 Assessment of level of assertive behaviour among adolescents

Fig: 1 highlights that 75% of the adolescents were moderately assertive, 20% of them were highly assertive, 3.33% of them were less assertive, 1.66% of them were very less assertive and none of them were very highly assertive.
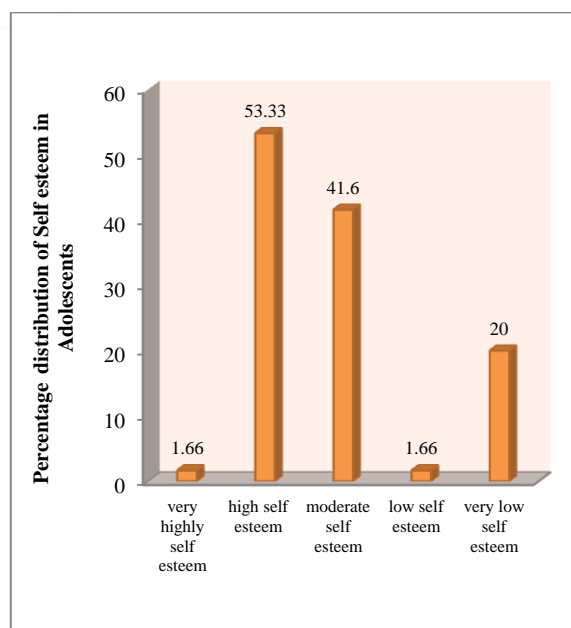

Fig: 2 Assessment of level of self-esteem among adolescent.

Findings in fig.2 shows that 53.33% of the adolescents had high self-esteem, 41.6% had moderate level of self-esteem, 1.66 % of them had respectively very high , very low & low self-esteem.

Table 1: Correlation between assertive behaviour and self-esteem N= 60

Spearman's Rank Order correlation between assertive behavior and self-esteem		
Correlation coefficient (rs)	0.64	at p<0.005

A significant positive correlation (rs=0.64 at p<0.005) was found between the assertive behaviour and self-esteem of the adolescents.

Table 2: Association between the assertive behaviour and self-esteem of adolescents with their selected socio demographic variables N= 60

S.no	Socio demographic variable	Chi square value		Table value
		Assertive behavior	Self esteem	
1	Age	7.16*	0.74	3.84 (P <0.05 level)
2	Gender	1.21	0.54	
3	Religion	1.04	0.65	
4	Education of father	2.46	1.63	
5	Education of mother	0.06	0.23	
6	Occupation of father	0.13	0	
7	Occupation of mother	0.1	0.42	
8	Monthly income family	0.34	0.54	
9	Type of family	1.08	0.31	
10	Education level	6.13*	14.08*	
11	Area of residence	0.41	0.01	

Significant association were found between the assertive scores and the age & education level of the adolescents. Education level of the adolescents was the only variable significantly associated between the assertive and self-esteem scores.

The present study also has certain limitations such as the study was restricted to the adolescents who attended outpatient department at a tertiary care centre and smaller sample size made it difficult to generalize the findings. The type I errors may be high due to the item wise chi-square analysis. Prospective longitudinal research is vital to examine correlation between the assertive behaviour and self-esteem among adolescents. Future research should focus on larger sample size and qualitative approach for depth understanding correlation between the assertive behaviour and self-esteem among adolescents. Despite these limitations, our study also has several strengths such as creating awareness among the adolescents and their relatives regarding assertive behaviour and self-esteem. Further, it contains interesting findings from developing countries perspective, which will be of use to both researchers and clinicians.

In a nutshell, the findings of the present study indicate that there is felt need to improve the self-esteem and the assertiveness among adolescents through training programmes. Although this is a small scale quantitative study, it provides the insights of the adolescent's level of assertiveness and their relation with self-esteem.

Declaration of Interest

Author's Contribution

Data was collected by Primary author. All authors made a substantial contribution to conception and design of the study and were involved in drafting and reviewing the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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