

Adolescents' Self-Esteem: The Influence Factors and Solutions

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Abstract. In the psychology field, self-esteem is a concept used to explain the overall sense of the value of an individual. It can also describe how much people love themselves and feel worth and meaningful about their life. According to the previous research, self-esteem refers to individuals' sense of worth or value for themselves. Self-esteem as one of adolescent psychology's traits has been focused on by researchers and educators all the time. Adolescents's self-esteem have a substantial influence on a great number of aspects of adolescents' psychological functioning and mental health. In the review of different research about factors, this review compared the affected factors of adulthood which are related to school achievements, physical attractiveness, or social status, the factors which can impact the self-esteem level of adolescents are different. This article aims to discuss the definition of self-esteem and its causes, the benefits of self-esteem for adolescents, and solutions for adolescent self-esteem.

Keywords: Self-esteem; adolescents; well-being.

1. Introduction

With the increase of psychological problems related to self-esteem in the contemporary age of adolescents, such as social anxiety disorder, aggressive behavior, and psychological insecurity caused by poor companionship and family relationship, there is a current phenomenon in China that the self-esteem level of senior school students is lower than that of middle school and college students due to the investigative statistics of teenage students in 31 Chinese provinces [1]. According to various kinds of summaries about causes of low self-esteem, there was research focusing on how family factors such as parental care influence adolescents' self-esteem levels. It showed that parental care is a major cause. In Shi et al.'s research, they found that positive parent-adolescent relationship is a significant predictor of Chinese adolescents' self-esteem, which indicated that when adolescents establish a good relationship with their parents, they would have higher self-evaluation and sense of value, this would enhance adolescents' mental health [2]. Similarly, Hu and Ai also examined the impact of parent-adolescent relationship on adolescents' self-esteem, the results showed that there was a positive relationship between parent-adolescents relationship and children's self-esteem, friendly, warm, and supported family environment have a positive effect on children's self-esteem development, and improve their self-identity and self-evaluation. Meanwhile, school environment which including the relationships with teachers and peers also plays an important role in adolescents' self-esteem development. Moreover, a gender studies review introduced the self-esteem level among girls connected to the school environment and education to a certain degree, which indicated that the gender environment in school would affect boys' and girls' self-esteem differently [3,4]. Moreover, peer relationships also is a key factor establish adolescents' self-esteem. Previous studies have found that peer relationship have a positive effect on adolescents' self-esteem, which means that adolescent who build a healthu, warm and friendly relations with their peers and classmates, would feel better about themselves, and reported a high level of self-esteem, and this is a long-term effect which improve adolescents emotional problems and stress [5, 6].

2. Methods

The database used in this review were Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Wiley. Moreover, the terms are as follows: self-esteem, adolescents, parental care, school education, companionship, and school bully. The research was included if they: (1) viewed self-esteem as a dependent variable; (2) included at least one factor that can influence the level of self-esteem; (3) focused on the adolescents group; and (4) published after 1998.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Definition and Importance of Self-Esteem

According to Harter, self-esteem is mainly related to self-worth and how people value themselves, and refers to a positive self-evaluation which comes from individuals' comparison with others [7, 8]. People incline to evaluate themselves from various perspectives, and the impact of different factors on their self-esteem may depend on the value of the specific object to people [7, 8].

Self-esteem is viewed as an important positive element in stress situations [9,10]. People who with a high self-esteem level would have better coping strategies and performance when feeling pressure [11]. However, those who with low self-esteem level may feel it's difficult to cope complex problems, this will lead to people's negative emotions and mental health problems [12]. According to previous studies, self-esteem was negatively related with stress [12, 13].

Therefore, self-esteem is important to adolescents' emotion development and mental health. In this article, the authors aim to discuss the influencing factors on adolescents' self-esteem, such as parental care and family education, teacher-student relationship and peer relationship. From these three perspectives affecting adolescents' self-esteem, different solutions also would be proposed.

3.2 Influencing Factors of Self-Esteem

3.2.1 Parental care and family education

Take various influencing factors of adolescents' self-esteem into consideration, the elements of the family seemed to be highly related to adolescents' self-esteem degree. Research showed that adolescents' self-esteem could be affected by the degree of intimacy in childhood and teenager, the expression of parental care, and the mode of family education.

From the perspective of how childhood intimacy with parents can affect the degree of self-esteem: In a study of self-esteem development of children whose parents leave them to work, it was found that there is a positive correlation between the age at which their parents left them and the level of self-esteem [14]. This result is due to the premature separation of children and parents, resulting in indifference to family affection and common psychological problems, such as avoidant attachment, anxious attachment, and ambivalent attachment. The lack of parental care and protection has not formed a good parent-child relationship, leaving a shadow in the child's heart and hindering the self-esteem development [15]. Teens: adolescence is individual self-esteem high self-esteem development period. The harmonious family relationship also directly influences adolescents' self-esteem development. The perceived similarity between parents and children will provide stable and consistent support for the development of adolescents' self-esteem. The higher the perceived similarity is, the higher the self-evaluation and self-esteem will be. Conversely, the lower the self-esteem.

Family education is closely connected with a person's three views-moral outlook, world outlook, and values, which can determine the majority of a person's cognition of the world and the subsequent development of life and determine how a person knows the outside world and how to know himself. Existing research shows that adolescents' self-esteem development is linked with parenting styles. In Zhang and Lin's study, the researchers investigated 895 high school students both in village and urban areas, and they found that there was a significant correlation between the self-esteem of high school students and parenting styles. It shows that parents' parenting skills and cognition, attitude, and

concept of education directly affect children's self-esteem. Proper family education affects children's life and plays a significant role in high school students' mental health in all aspects [14].

3.2.2 Teacher-student relationship at school

Many factors affect self-esteem development in high school students, including family, society, individuals, schools, peers, teachers, and other factors. In contrast, teachers have the most influence on high school students. In the process of communication with high school students, teachers' character, attitude, verbal expression, and expectations will impact students. To want the students to have a good level of self-esteem, teachers should improve their quality level, seriously love every student and care about every student. In addition, appropriate speech and expression are the external sources for students to obtain self-esteem. Also, establishing a harmonious relationship between teachers and students is also important. Teachers should not only respect their students and treat every student fairly but pass on good expectations to their students. Previous studies have shown that the higher the expectations of students, the higher the confidence level; if teachers give students too much criticism and punishment, it will seriously damage their self-esteem and confidence [16].

3.2.3 Peer relationship at school

The interpersonal relationships of high school students in school can also affect their self-esteem. If a student grows up in a loving and nurturing family and has a close group of supportive friends in school, his self-esteem may be higher self-esteem than the average child's. By contrast, if a child has few friends, it can also damage adolescent self-esteem. Moreover, learning to communicate with others can make students know about themselves in the eyes of others to realize self-thinking and examination, which is conducive to improving self-understanding. At the same time, communicating with people can relieve students' psychological pressure and relieve the harm caused by negative emotions. Furthermore, listening to others' talk can enhance students' social connection, enhance the external acceptance of the students, and then enhance students' inner self-recognition degree.

3.3 Solutions

With the development of the times, high school students face increasing psychological pressure and frequent psychological problems. Previous studies [17, 18] has shown that adolescent mental health is associated with their self-esteem level. If the students' self-esteem level improves, they will subsequently improve the completion degree of learning tasks, and their happiness in life will also improve, which is conducive to the improvement of the overall level of study and life. So there are some suggestions about how to improve self-esteem.

3.3.1 Cultivation of personality

Firstly, self-judgment and self-understanding in an appropriate way are necessary. People should treat themselves comprehensively and correctly understand and evaluate themselves. In order to find people's bright spots, not only should they truthfully see their shortcomings, but also their strengths appropriately. When they have progress, people should also timely encourage themselves and experience the pleasure of success to find a sense of confidence.

Secondly, learning to motivate oneself is also important. People with low self-esteem are generally more sensitive and vulnerable, so it is difficult for them to withstand the blow of setbacks. Therefore, to be good at self-satisfaction is totally crucial. Comparing with others and choosing similar people and things compared to oneself in all aspects can make people succeed, which is a kind of incentive oneself, is conducive to improving their self-confidence.

Thirdly, creating achievement and focusing on achievement instead of failure is significant. People can choose what they are proud of in life and the most beneficial things to do and participate in more activities to find their importance and value, which substantially impact a teenager's self-image and thus make higher self-confidence.

Fourthly, teenagers must do things with a purpose and take responsibility. If they want to improve their self-esteem, they need to set achievable goals for themselves to be motivated to achieve such

targets. Self-responsibility is responsible for realizing their wishes, their own choices and behavior, their awareness level in work, and their interpersonal relationship. The sense of self-responsibility reflects a positive life, and taking responsibility is an excellent way to establish self-esteem and self-confidence.

Finally, people should have a positive attitude and communication with others with high confidence. Thus, they can get others' feedback and know how well they did it. In addition, if someone tells them that they need to learn something, they have a direction to work on.

3.3.2 Support from family and school

High school students' world outlook and outlook on life are in a critical period. Families and schools must respect the law regarding students' psychological development. They can not be hasty while can not expect too high. Families and teachers must respect students to the greatest extent instead of belittling them. They should help students to deal with their psychological problems on the road to growth with a similar mentality and their analysis of solutions. Paying more attention to caring for them, helping children find their strengths, encouraging them more, timely expressing praise, and helping them learn to compete are several valuable methods for parents and teachers to improve students' self-esteem.

3.3.3 Attention from the society

Social development today has entered an era of intense competition, and it is no doubt that the importance of mental health has become increasingly prominent. In order to adapt to this new era, quality education is ongoing, and mental health is an important embodiment of quality education. Society should give enough care to high school students' mental health. When a person establishes more social relations with higher ability and independence, self-esteem will be higher, conducive to the construction of social, interpersonal relations, and social work. Therefore, more attention should be given to the educational advantages of family, school, and society and establish the interconnection between family, school, and social and cultural education with mutual coordination and complement. Therefore, a joint educational force will form and provide a harmonious environment for improving the mental health improvement and self-esteem level of high school students.

4. Conclusion

In order to investigate the resources and learn about adolescents' self-esteem degrees in different regions maximumly, the authors collected articles based on empirical study. The definition of self-esteem and its importance, and learning the factors which have various correlations with self-esteem was discussed. Finally, the solutions to raising self-esteem levels among teenage groups related to self-education and the awareness of family, school, and society were suggested. Adolescents' self-esteem can be influenced by parental care, family education, school environment, and companionship. Thus, the family and social environment are all important to adolescents' self-esteem and mental health.

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