

A STUDY ON SELF-ESTEEM OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS FROM MANDALAY EDUCATION COLLEGE

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Abstract

The main aim of this study was to investigate the self-esteem of pre-service teachers from Mandalay Education College. Moreover, the present study was to find out the differences of their self-esteem among demographic characteristics (gender and grade). The study adopted a survey research design and employed with a quantitative method. To explore the present problems, 120 pre-service teachers (male = 60, female = 60) from Mandalay Education College were selected by using random sampling technique as the participants of the study. In this study, Sorensen Self-Esteem Questionnaire constructed by Marilyn J Sorensen (2006) was used as instrument. Then, the collected data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics and independent samples *t* test. The descriptive statistics revealed that the self-esteem of pre-service teachers from Mandalay Education College was moderate. The *t* test results showed that there was no significant difference in self-esteem of pre-service teachers with respect to gender and grade. So the results of this study would help the teachers to educate their pupils and to cultivate their pupils to become a good citizen for our country in future.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Global self-esteem, Pre-service teachers

Introduction

Importance of the Study

Human beings live with different important characteristics. One of the main characteristics of human beings is the view they have of themselves technically referred to as self-esteem. Self-esteem has recently become a hot topic for research in education and language teaching and refers to the image and view people have of themselves. The assessment and evaluation of a person's emotion concerning his worth is self-esteem. Self-esteem is considered as an evaluative component of the self-concept (Purkey, 1970) through which people evaluate themselves based on the feedback from others. Marsh (1990) who believes in academic achievement contends that self-esteem is an important factor in social construct and psychological view (Habibzade & Hashemi, 2004).

Self-esteem is the negative or positive attitude that individuals have of themselves (Rosenberg 1979). The study of self-esteem has persisted for at least 40 years because many are convinced that high self-esteem produces salutary outcomes and low self-esteem is at the root of personal and social problems. While researchers provide a dim portrait of people with low self-esteem (Baumeister 1993; Leary and MacDonald 2003; Rosenberg and Owens 2001), the positive outcomes associated with high self-esteem should not be overstated; it may have a dark side as evidenced in aggressive tendencies (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden 1996) and narcissism (Campbell, Rudich, and Sedikides 2002). Although high self-esteem may not always be beneficial, evidence that individuals hold themselves in high esteem across the globe may be an instance of a more general tendency to maintain and enhance positive information about who one is, relative to negative information (Sedikides, Gaertner, and Vevea 2005; cited in Stets & Burke, 2014).

Everyone, at some point or another, is uncertain about themselves, lacks self-confidence, doubts their abilities, or thinks negatively of themselves. Self-esteem usually refers to how we

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view and think about ourselves and the value that we place on ourselves as a person. Low self-esteem is having a generally negative overall opinion of oneself, judging or evaluating oneself negatively, and placing a general negative value on oneself as a person. Low self-esteem can also have an impact on many aspects of a person's life. It can affect a person's performance at work or at school (cited in Saulsman & Nathan, 2005).

Individuals with high self-esteem have positive perceptions about their self. They are more capable and feel mentally healthier as compare to those who have poor and low self-esteem. Individual's self-evaluation is based on their own perceptions about their own self and opinion of others also play important role [21]. It was explored that people have their own ways for interpreting their achievement and failures [22]. People who have high level of self-esteem perceive things more positively and they rationalized things as compared to those people who have low self-esteem [23](cited in Bibi et al., 2016).

Self-esteem continues to be one of the most commonly researched concepts in social psychology (Baumeister 1993; Mruk 1995; Wells & Marwell 1976; Wylie 1979). The focus on self-esteem has largely been due to the association of high self-esteem with a number of positive outcomes for the individual and for society as a whole (Baumeister 1993; Smelser 1989). Moreover, the belief is widespread that raising an individual's self-esteem (especially that of a child or adolescent) would be beneficial for both the individual and society as a whole. Self-esteem refers most generally to an individual's overall positive evaluation of the self (Gecas 1982; Rosenberg 1990; Rosenberg et al. 1995). It is composed of two distinct dimensions, competence and worth (Gecas 1982; Gecas & Schwalbe 1983). The competence dimension (efficacy-based self-esteem) refers to the degree to which people see themselves as capable and efficacious. The worth dimension (worth-based self-esteem) refers to the degree to which individuals feel they are persons of value (cited in Cast & Burke, 2002).

Bernard et al. (1996) found high correlations among self-esteem, self-efficacy, ego strength, hardiness, optimism and maladjustment and all of these constructs were significantly related to health and success (cited in Baumeister et al., 2003). Self-esteem is an individual's sense of his or her value or worth or the extent to which a person value, approves of, appreciates, prizes or likes himself or herself (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). Moreover, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan (1993) state that self-esteem is the key to a child's future. So, self-esteem is essential for adolescents, especially University and College students, in order to face their academic challenges, lead to low self-esteem, withdrawal and behavior problems.

Aims of the Study

The main aim of the study is to investigate self-esteem of pre-service teachers from Mandalay Education College. The specific objectives are as follows:

- To examine the difference in the self-esteem of pre-service teachers by gender.
- To study the difference in the self-esteem of pre-service teachers by grade.

Definitions of Key Terms

Self-Esteem is defined as a personal self-satisfaction and his sense of being valuable (Bandura & Adams, 2002).

Global self-esteem refers to a personality variable that represents the way people generally feel about themselves (e.g., Coopersmith, 1965; Crocker & Park, 2004; Crocker & Wolfe, 2001).

Pre-service Teachers are defined as those students who participated in pre-service training or education, a course or program of study which student teachers complete before they begin teaching. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002) (cited in Aye Chan Zaw, 2018).

Method

In this research, descriptive survey design and quantitative approach were used.

Sample

A total of 120 pre-service teachers (male =60, female =60) were randomly selected from Mandalay Education College.

Instrumentation

In this study, Sorensen Self-Esteem Questionnaire constructed by Sorensen (2006) was used as an instrument. Its Cronbach’s alpha value was .875.

Data Collection

In this study, a total of 120 (male= 60, female=60) first year and second year pre-service teachers from Mandalay Education College were selected for the study in the second week of August, 2018.

Data Analysis

After adapting and developing Sorensen’s Self-esteem Questionnaire, data analyses were computed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20.0. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate mean, mean percent, standard deviation, frequency, maximum scores of self-esteem of pre-service teachers from Mandalay Education College. And then, independent samples *t* test analysis was used to determine whether there were significant differences in self-esteem of Pre-service teachers by gender and grade.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics for Self-esteem of Pre-service Teachers

By using descriptive statistics, data were analyzed to investigate self-esteem of pre-service teachers.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Self-esteem of Pre-service Teachers

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Self-esteem	120	73	148	110.52	13.625

According to the Table 1, pre-service teachers’ mean score of self-esteem was 110.52 and the standard deviation was 13.625. The minimum and maximum scores of pre-service teachers’ self-esteem were 73 and 148 respectively. So, it can be seen that participants’ self-esteem was satisfactory because the mean score (110.52) was almost equal to the theoretical mean (110).

Figure 1 indicated that the frequency distribution of pre-service teachers’ self-esteem scores.

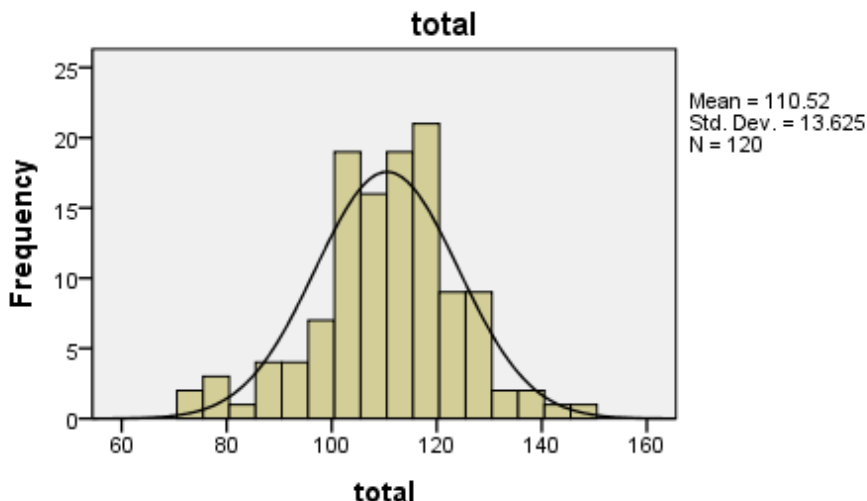


Figure 1 Frequency Distribution of Mean Score of Self-esteem

Figure 1 showed that the largest number of pre-service teachers had self-esteem scores in the range (between 110 and 120). Similarly, small numbers of pre-service teachers had very low and very high scores. The bars in the histogram from a curve that was quite similar to the normal, bell shaped curve. Thus, the frequency distribution of the self-esteem was said to be approximately normal.

Comparison of Self-esteem by Gender

In this study, the sample consisted of 120 pre-service teachers, 60 males and 60 females. Descriptive statistics were firstly conducted to find out mean and standard deviations for self-esteem by gender. The results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of Self-esteem of Pre-service Teachers by Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Self-esteem	Male	60	109.38	12.634
	Female	60	111.65	14.566

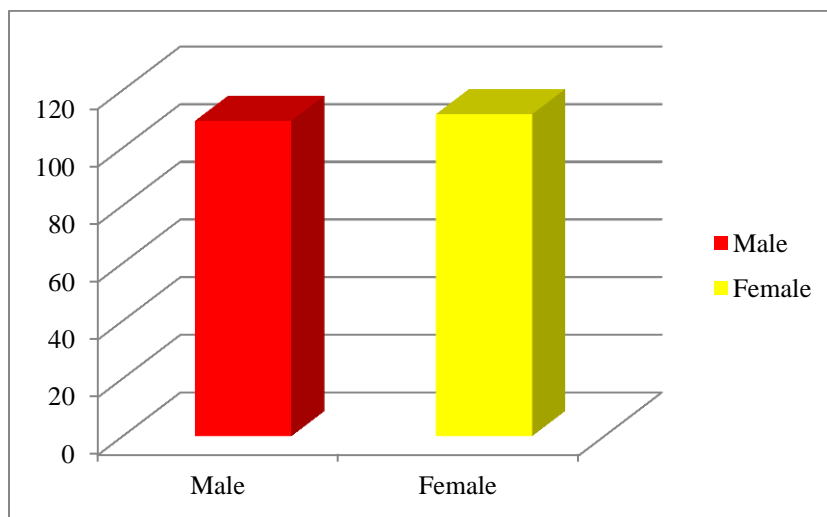


Figure 2 Mean Comparison of Self-esteem by Gender

Table 2 and Figure 2 revealed that the mean scores of female pre-service teachers (111.65) were higher than that of male pre-service teachers (109.38) in self-esteem. In order to examine whether these differences were statistically significant or not, the independent samples *t* test was conducted.

Table 3 Result of Independent Samples *t* test on Pre-Service Teachers’ Self-Esteem by Gender

Variable	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Self-esteem	-.911	118	.364

According to the result of the *t* test, there was no significant difference in self-esteem of pre-service teachers by gender. So, they need to do activities that they enjoy, spend time with positive, supportive people and try to do regular exercise, eat healthily and get enough sleep.

Comparison of Pre-Service Teachers’ Self-Esteem by Grade

Descriptive statistics was first used to find out the differences in self-esteem between the first year and second year. Table 3 and figure 3 showed the comparison of self-esteem between first year and second year pre-service teachers.

Table 4 Mean and Standard Deviation of Self-Esteem by Grade

Variable	Grade	N	Mean	SD
Self-esteem	First Year	60	108.70	11.674
	Second Year	60	112.33	15.212

According to Table 4, it was found that second year pre-service teachers’ mean score of self-esteem (112.33) was higher than that of first year pre-service teachers (108.70) in self-esteem.

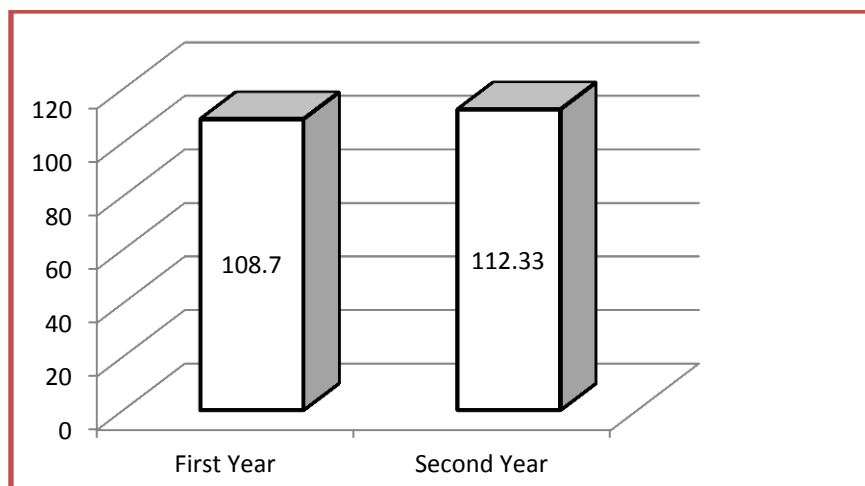


Figure 3 Mean Comparison of Self-Esteem by Grade

To be exact statistically, the independent sample *t* test was used to explore whether these differences were significant or not.

Table 5 Result of Independent Sample *t* test for Self-Esteem by Grade

Variable	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Self-esteem	-1.468	118	.145

The result for the independent sample *t* test in Table 5 showed that there was no significant difference in self-esteem by Grade. Thus, it may be said that the self-esteem between first year and second year pre-service teachers does not significantly differ in this study.

Discussions

The present study was mainly designed to investigate the self-esteem of pre-service teachers from Mandalay Education College. To explore the difference in self-esteem of pre-service teachers by gender and by grade were specific objectives of this research. Sorensen Self-Esteem Questionnaire constructed by Marilyn J Sorensen (2006) was used as the research instrument for the study. According to the results of data analysis, summary of findings, conclusion and suggestions would be discussed simultaneously as follows:

Self-esteem of Participants: First, descriptive analysis was applied and the result showed that pre-service teachers' mean score of self-esteem was 110.52 and standard deviation was 13.625. The largest number of pre-service teachers had self-esteem scores in the range (between 110 and 120). Similarly, small number of pre-service teachers had very low and very high scores. The results indicated that pre-service teachers' self-esteem in the research study was satisfactory. This study is consistent with the result of Arguelles (2014) in which almost half of the codependents are with moderately low self-esteem.

Gender Differences in Self-esteem: To explore gender difference in self-esteem, *t* test was used and the result revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between males and females with regard to their self-esteem. The female's mean score of self-esteem was slightly higher than the male's score. It could be concluded that they all get the same treatment under the control of their teachers and parents. This result agrees with the study carried out by Alissa Maitino (2009) who found that there was no gender difference in academic self-esteem of the pre-service teachers. Similarly, a study by Swanson & Hoskyn (1998) stated that there were no significant differences between boys and girls in the incidence of learning disability. Moreover, Jain et al., (2014) conducted a study using mixed method research design and the results of their study showed that there was no gender difference among males and females on self-esteem.

Differences in Self-esteem of Pre-service Teachers by Grade: To investigate the difference in self-esteem of the pre-service teachers by Grade (first year and second year), *t* test was performed and the result showed that second year pre-service teachers had higher self-esteem than first year pre-service teachers. The result for the independent sample *t* test showed that there wasn't significant difference in self-esteem by Grade ($p=0.145$). Thus, it may be said that the self-esteem between first year and second year pre-service teachers does not significantly differ in this study. It could be concluded that first year and second year pre-service teachers are given the same opportunities and equal chances in only one environment.

Conclusion

Nowadays, the modern world becomes developed in every sectors, technology and aspects in society. The more developed the world, the more challenges it can face in everything such as economic, social, political, cultural, racial and environmental challenges. To face and solve them, everyone must have high self-esteem as well as adequate social and emotional skills. Hence, the youths must be cultivated and trained to possess high self-esteem, social competences and emotional skills since their childhood. The people with high self-esteem can possess competences to cope with the basic challenges of life and a stable sense of personal worthiness.

Moreover, a high self-esteem person can set goals and strive to reach them and he can have a positive attitude toward life. So, he can get not only facilitate interpersonal interactions but also good jobs or occupations which are one of the aims of education. According to these facts, the people who have high self-esteem can be more successful in everywhere than low self-esteem people.

In current study, first and second year pre-service teachers have been selected as the targeted sample. They are the youths with the age of adolescent. Adolescence is the time occurring biological, psychological and cognitive changes. Relationship with peers and parents change too. If they are the persons with high self-esteem, it will become beneficial outcomes, such as good mental health, improved academic performance, and success in relationships as adults. However, if they are the persons with low self-esteem, it will become negative outcomes such as psychological problems, underachievement in academic performance and failures in relationship. Therefore, the life of adolescents is crucial to have high self-esteem.

The research found that most of pre-service teachers had good self-esteem. Thus, pre-service teachers who have low self-esteem should be trained to enhance self-esteem and should provide them with opportunities for success. The teachers, the principals and the parents are the most responsible persons for their pupils and children to have high self-esteem. In order to improve self-esteem, the following suggestions can be considered.

1. Parents, teachers and other significant adults do not deliberately nor intentionally block the emergence of the self of children.
2. Parents and care workers can only bring children/ teenagers to the same level of maturity and level of self-expression they have reached themselves.
3. The future of society lies not with children, but with adults, because in order to survive, children cleverly adapt to the vulnerabilities (repressions) of significant adults; otherwise they would be in great emotional peril.
4. Children and teenagers are not out to make life difficult for parents/teachers and others; the intention of their challenging responses is to bring attention to how difficult life is for them.
5. Each young person needs a unique response to their challenging responses.
6. The frequency, intensity and endurance in the present and over time of protective responses are important determinants of a person's current level of self-esteem.

Moreover, according to Murphy (2003), there are some suggestions to build up the child's self-esteem. The children need to

1. Do activities that they enjoy.
2. Spend time with positive, supportive people.
3. Be helpful and considerate to others.
4. Try not to compare themselves to other people.
5. Try to do regular exercise, eat healthily and get enough sleep.
6. Be assertive – don't let people treat them with a lack of respect.

7. Use self-help books and websites to develop helpful skills, like assertiveness or mindfulness.
8. Learn to challenge their negative beliefs.
9. Acknowledge their positive qualities and things they are good at.
10. Get into the habit of thinking and saying positive things about themselves.

(cited in Murphy, 2013).

The role self-esteem plays when people confront negative events, such as failure in the classroom or interpersonal rejection. These types of events lead low self-esteem people (but not high self-esteem people) to believe.

Education is the core to build a developed country. Thus, education needs to qualify in accordance with international levels. Nowadays, the pre-service teachers are the youths who will shape our country. So, they need not only to become educated persons but also to improve self-esteem. To conclude, more studies should be done on the concept concerning self-esteem to motivate pre-service teachers for educating their students, the leaders for the future.

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