

Empowering College Students: Cultivating Self-Esteem And Emotional Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the holistic development of college students takes center stage, with a growing emphasis on equipping them not only with academic knowledge but also with essential life skills. Among these, self-esteem and emotional intelligence stand out as pivotal attributes that pave the way for personal growth and success in various spheres of life. This exploration delves into the realm of empowering college students through the deliberate cultivation of self-esteem and emotional intelligence. By nurturing these critical facets, educational institutions embark on a journey to foster well-rounded individuals who possess the inner strength to navigate challenges, forge meaningful relationships, and ultimately thrive in a complex and interconnected world. This investigation delves into the strategies and implications of nurturing self-esteem and emotional intelligence within the context of higher education, shedding light on how such efforts can empower students to become confident, empathetic, and resilient contributors to society. The study concludes that students' overall self-esteem is moderate, indicating a balance between high and low levels. Emotional intelligence varies based on courses, with Psychology and Office Systems Management students having higher levels compared to Tourism and Entrepreneurship students. This difference highlights emotional intelligence's role in effective emotion management. Higher emotional intelligence improves emotion navigation, while lower emotional intelligence hampers emotion understanding. Importantly, self-esteem isn't solely tied to emotion management skills. Positive self-regard doesn't guarantee high

emotional intelligence. This study clarifies that self-esteem and emotional intelligence are distinct and not strongly correlated. Enhancing emotional intelligence doesn't solely depend on improving self-esteem, emphasizing their separate nature.

Keywords: self-esteem, intelligence, personal growth.

INTRODUCTION

The study delves into the intricate composition of human beings, encompassing their mental, spiritual, physical, social, and emotional dimensions. Within this comprehensive framework, the concept of the self emerges as a pivotal factor in effectively navigating diverse life situations. However, the journey of the self is not without its trials and obstacles, demanding resilience and strength to endure. At the heart of this narrative lies the concept of self-esteem – the valuation and perception one holds of oneself. It's a fundamental human requirement that underpins not only survival but also holistic and healthy growth.

The foundation of a robust self-esteem rests upon an individual's confidence and the inherent value they assign to themselves. This self-esteem is distinctly delineated from the broader notion of self-concept, which encompasses all cognitive beliefs about one's identity, including personal traits, preferences, beliefs, and appearances. However, self-esteem is not solely an intellectual construct; it is infused with emotional responses that stem from self-evaluation.

Inextricably linked to self-esteem is the realm of emotions, which imbue life with color and significance. Emotions, as argued by Coon (2003), encompass physiological reactions, facial expressions, gestures, postures, and subjective feelings. These emotions are a constant presence, influencing behavior and actions. This interplay between emotions and self-awareness gives rise to emotional intelligence – a distinct form of intelligence that enables individuals to comprehend the motivations of others, collaborate effectively, and manage their own emotions.

Quoting Howard Gardner, emotional intelligence is being "heart smart" as opposed to just "book smart." It empowers individuals to cultivate robust relationships, thrive in professional settings, and achieve personal aspirations. In a world brimming

with daily stresses and challenges, emotional intelligence is especially pertinent for students, equipping them with the skills to navigate complexities with grace.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey method, using questionnaires as the primary data collection tool, to explore the link between self-esteem and emotional intelligence among college students. Incorporating a correlational approach, the research aimed to uncover the relationship between these two variables. The study took place at Bohol Island State University (BISU)-Main Campus, the exclusive state university in Bohol, situated in Tagbilaran City. The university is divided into four distinct colleges, each overseen by respective deans: the College of Business, Arts and Sciences; College of Technology and Allied Sciences; College of Teacher Education; and College of Engineering and Architecture.

The researcher used the stratified random sampling was employed to select participants from the College of Business, Arts and Sciences, which has a total student population of 1,197. This population includes 281 students from the BS Psychology Major in Industrial Psychology department, 350 students from the BS Office Systems Management (OSM) department, 312 students from the BS Tourism Major in Travel and Tours department, and 256 students from the BS Entrepreneurship department. The study's sample size was determined to be 604 respondents, constituting 50% of the total population. This sample included 142 respondents from the BS Psychology Major in Industrial Psychology department, 177 from the BS Office Systems Management department, 157 from the BS Tourism Major in Travel and Tours department, and 128 from the BS Entrepreneurship department.

For assessment purposes, the research employed standardized instruments – the Sorensen Self-Esteem Test (Sorensen, 2006) and Emotional Intelligence Test (Goleman, 1999) – each consisting of twenty-five items to gauge participants' levels of self-esteem and emotional intelligence. Scoring modifications were implemented to determine these levels: the self-esteem questionnaire presented negative statements with corresponding options representing low, moderate, and high self-esteem, while the emotional intelligence questionnaire contained positive

statements with options indicating low, moderate, and high emotional intelligence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF SELF-ESTEEM

ITEMS	WM	QD	RANK
1. I generally feel anxious in new social situations where I may not know what is expected of me.	2.23	Moderate	5
2. I am very fearful of criticism, disapproval, or rejection.	2.28	Moderate	3
3. I tend to magnify my mistakes and minimize my successes.	1.82	Moderate	9
4. When someone mistreats me, I think that I must have done something to deserve it.	2.12	Moderate	6
5. I have difficulty knowing who to trust and when to trust	2.12	Moderate	6
6. I feel like I don't know the right thing to do or to say.	1.91	Moderate	9
7. I am very concern about my appearance.	2.25	Moderate	4
8. I feel too embarrass ed to eat out alone or to attend movies and other activities by myself.	2.05	Moderate	7
9. I tear making a mistake which others might see.	2.27	Moderate	2
10. I feel depressed about things I've said and done, or things I failed to say.	2.31	Moderate	1
11. I have avoided making changes in my me life because I was fearful making a mistake or failing.	1.87	Moderate	10
12. I get defensive and strike pack when perceive am being criticized.	2.01	Moderate	8
Average Weighted Mean	2.22	Moderate	

The study discusses the self-esteem and psychological tendencies of adolescents, focusing on the fluctuation of self-esteem, the prevalence of negative thoughts and emotions, goal-setting behavior, and the cognitive development of adolescents. The researchers found that students exhibited a moderate level of self-esteem, with varying tendencies to attribute negative thoughts and feelings towards themselves. The highest-rated item indicated moderate depression related to past actions and regrets, while the lowest-rated item showed a high inclination to set goals for the future.

Rosenberg (1986) noted that self-esteem experiences moment-to-moment fluctuations, with the capacity to change rapidly. Hurlock (1982) pointed out that during puberty, depression, irritability, anxiety, and negative moods are common, which Buhler labeled as the "negative phase." The researchers observed that adolescents can be idealistic, sometimes

undermining their logical thinking and ability to make decisions. Jean Piaget's formal operational stage is characterized by abstraction, idealism, and logical thinking. Idealism involves setting and preferring ideal standards, leading to impatience and confusion. Adolescents exhibited clear objectives and plans for the future, as evidenced by the low rating on the item "I do not set goals for the future." Despite potential immaturity in some aspects of thinking, adolescents can engage in abstract reasoning, sophisticated moral judgments, and realistic future planning (Papalia et al., 2009) they possess the ability to provide reasons for their actions.

Jean Piaget's formal operational period marks cognitive development during adolescence, enabling hypothetical thinking and understanding of consequences. Adolescents construct a "theory of the self," aiding the development of identity (Elkind, 1998; Erikson as cited in Papalia et al., 2009). A coherent self-conception with committed goals and values contributes to positive self-esteem. High self-esteem individuals are optimistic and confident, while low self-esteem individuals are anxious, helpless, and dependent on others (Hurlock, 1982).

In summary, the study highlighted that adolescents' self-esteem can vary, and they experience moments of negative thoughts and emotions. Despite this, they show tendencies toward goal-setting and exhibit cognitive development marked by idealism and abstract reasoning. The development of a clear self-concept and identity is crucial for fostering positive self-esteem and psychological well-being during adolescence.

Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded that the overall level of self-esteem among the students is moderate, indicating a balance between high and low self-esteem. Meanwhile, the analysis of emotional intelligence levels reveals variations among students based on their respective courses. Specifically, students enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Psychology Major in Industrial Psychology and Bachelor of Science in Office Systems Management exhibit higher emotional intelligence levels compared to their counterparts in Bachelor of Science in Tourism and Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship. This variance underscores the importance of emotional intelligence in effective emotion management. It is evident that greater emotional intelligence

enhances the capability to navigate and regulate emotions, while lower emotional intelligence hinders the identification, control, and evaluation of one's emotional states.

It's important to note that a person's self-esteem does not inherently rely on their proficiency in managing, assessing, and controlling emotions. Positive self-regard does not necessarily equate to a high level of emotional intelligence. Therefore, while self-esteem is a significant aspect of an individual's self-perception, it doesn't hold a substantial correlation with emotional intelligence. This study underscores the distinctiveness of these constructs and emphasizes that enhancing emotional intelligence does not solely rely on improving self-esteem.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the comprehensive findings and conclusive insights drawn from this study, the researchers offer the following recommendations to guide future actions:

Firstly, it is advisable for the university administration, in collaboration with the Guidance Center, to grasp the profound significance of nurturing self-esteem and emotional intelligence among the student body. To actualize this, the development of a structured program comprising tailored training sessions, immersive workshops, and enlightening seminars is highly recommended. These initiatives would serve as effective vehicles for instilling the essential attributes of self-esteem and emotional intelligence in students. Secondly, the expertise of the guidance counselors should be harnessed to lead the charge in initiating and facilitating these transformative experiences. Their guidance can be instrumental in orchestrating dynamic training sessions, workshops, and seminars, which are tailored to equip students with practical tools and strategies for enhancing both their self-esteem and emotional intelligence.

Furthermore, by embracing such comprehensive training, workshops, and seminars, students would gain a profound understanding of the intrinsic value associated with fortifying their self-esteem and enriching their emotional intelligence. These platforms have the potential to cultivate heightened awareness regarding the benefits and strategies underpinning these critical dimensions of personal growth. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to build upon the foundational insights of this study,

with the possibility of replicating or diversifying its outcomes. However, it's imperative to recognize that self-esteem and emotional intelligence are distinct variables, each wielding multifaceted impact. As subsequent studies are conceived and executed, it is vital to meticulously consider this distinction, ensuring that research methodologies are thoughtfully designed and interpreted to allow for a comprehensive exploration of their individual and interconnected influences.

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