

A Comparative Investigation of Self-Esteem among Depressed and Non-Depressed Individuals

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Abstract

This study was conducted to measure the extent of self-esteem among depressed and non-depressed individuals. The sample of the study consisted of 30 participants classified as fifteen depressed and fifteen non-depressed. The subjects were selected using purposive random sampling technique. The tools used for data collection was Rosenberg Self-esteem scale. Result of the study revealed that non-depressive individuals found better on self-esteem than depressive individuals.

Key Words: *Self-esteem, Depression*

Introduction

Self-esteem: Self-esteem refers to one's overall assessment of one's worth as a person. Self-esteem is a global self-evaluation that blends many specific evaluations about one's adequacy as a student, an athlete, a worker, a spouse, a parent, or whatever is personally relevant.

It has long been thought that individuals with low self-esteem hold strong negative views about themselves. In reality, it seems that the self-views of these individuals are not more negative, but more confused and tentative (Campbell, 1990; Campbell & Lavalley, 1993). In other words, their self-concepts seem to be less clear, less complete, more self-contradictory, and more susceptible to short-term fluctuations than the self-views of high self-esteem individuals. According to Roy Baumeister (1998), an eminent researcher on the self, this 'self-concept confusion' means that individuals with low self-esteem simply don't know themselves well enough to strongly endorse many personal attributes on self-esteem tests, which results in lower self-esteem scores.

Studies generally show self-esteem to be quite stable over time, once past childhood (Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins, 2003). In other words, if one has high self-esteem today, he/she is likely to have high self-esteem six months or two years from now. While it is true that baseline self-esteem is stable, it's also true that the ups and downs of daily life

can produce short-term fluctuations in self-esteem. People vary in the stability of their self-esteem. Those whose self-esteem fluctuates in response to daily experiences are highly sensitive to interactions and events as having significance (Kernis & Goldman, 2003). Thus, in their eyes, their self-worth is always on the line. These tendencies have important implications for adjustment.

Depression: Major depressive disorder (MDD) (also known as clinical depression, major depression, unipolar depression, or unipolar disorder; or as recurrent depression in the case of repeated episodes) is a mental disorder characterized by a pervasive and persistent low mood that is accompanied by low self-esteem and by a loss of interest or pleasure in normally enjoyable activities. The term "depression" is used in a number of different ways. It is often used to mean this syndrome but may refer to other mood disorders or simply to a low mood. Major depressive disorder is a disabling condition that adversely affects a person's family, work or school life, sleeping and eating habits, and general health. In the United States, around 3.4% of people with major depression commit suicide, and up to 60% of people who commit suicide had depression or another mood disorder.

The diagnosis of major depressive disorder is based on the patient's self-reported experiences, behaviour reported by relatives or friends, and a mental status examination. There is no laboratory test for major depression, although physicians generally request tests for physical conditions that may cause similar symptoms. The most common time of onset is between the ages of 20 and 30 years, with a later peak between 30 and 40 years. Typically, people are treated with antidepressant medication and, in many cases, also receive counselling, particularly cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Medication appears to be effective, but the effect may only be significant in the most severely depressed. Hospitalization may be necessary in cases with associated self-neglect or a significant risk of harm to self or others. A minority are treated with electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). The course of the disorder varies widely, from one episode lasting weeks to a lifelong disorder with recurrent major depressive episodes. Depressed individuals have shorter life expectancies than those without depression, in part because of greater susceptibility to medical illnesses and suicide. It is unclear whether medications affect the risk of suicide. Current and former patients may be stigmatized.

Relationship between Self-Esteem and Depression: Although it is well documented that low self-esteem and depression are related, the precise nature of the relation has been a topic

of ongoing debate. We describe several theoretical models concerning the link between self-esteem and depression, and review recent research evaluating the validity of these competing models. Overall, the available evidence provides strong support for the vulnerability model (low self-esteem contributes to depression), weaker support for the scar model (depression erodes self-esteem), and little support for alternative accounts such as the diathesis-stress model. Moreover, the vulnerability model is robust and holds across gender, age, affective-cognitive versus somatic symptoms of depression, European background versus Mexican-origin participants, and clinical versus nonclinical samples. Research on further specifications of the vulnerability model suggests that the effect is (a) partially mediated by rumination, (b) not influenced by other characteristics of self-esteem (i.e., stability and contingency), and (c) driven predominantly by global rather than domain-specific self-esteem. The research has important theoretical implications because it counters the commonly repeated claim that self-esteem has no long-term impact. Moreover, the research has important practical implications, suggesting that depression can be prevented, or reduced, by interventions that improve self-esteem.

OBJECTIVE

To search the difference between depressive and non-depressive individuals with regards to their self-esteem.

HYPOTHESES

A significant difference would exist between depressive and non-depressive individuals on self-esteem; however non-depressive individuals will have greater self-esteem as compared to depressive individuals.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Sample: The effective sample of the study consisted of 30 subjects, classified into 15 depressive and 15 non-depressive individuals. Already diagnosed depressive patients were taken from various hospitals and Counselling Centres of Amravati City. The age of the subjects ranges from 20-30 years, no gender differences were considered.

Tools: Self-esteem scale developed by Rosenberg (1965) was used to measure self-esteem. The scale consists of 10 items. The reliability coefficient of the scale for internal consistency = 0.77 for test-retest reliability = 0.85.

Procedure: Prior to actual administration of scale, rapport was established with the subjects. The Self-esteem scale was administered and asks them to complete without skipping any

statement. Finally, filled copies of response sets were collected and subjected it for further scoring procedure and statistical analysis.

Research design: Two randomised group design was used.

Statistical treatment: At first stage, the data was treated by mean and standard deviation. Finally, t-test test for independent sample was employed.

Result and Discussion

Present study aimed at finding the differences between depressed and non-depressed individuals on self-esteem. In order to find the difference between depressive and non-depressive individuals the data was treated by descriptive and inferential statistics. The results obtained in this regard are presented in the table given below.

Table No. 1 showing Mean, SD and t values on self-esteem

Treatment Group	N	Mean	SD	't' value	P - value
Depressed	15	8.73	2.54	16.46**	Significant at .01 level
Non-depressed	15	22.80	3.74		

** Significant at .01 level

Summary of independent sample 't' presented in the above table indicate that mean scores of self-esteem differ among depressed and non-depressed subjects, $t(28) = 16.46$, $p < .01$. This significant 't' ratio suggests that depressed and non-depressed subjects differ on self-esteem; where predominance of self-esteem exist better among non-depressed subjects, because mean score obtained by the group of depressed individuals found smaller ($M=8.73$, $SD=2.54$) than non-depressed individuals ($M=22.8$, $SD=3.74$).

Low self-esteem and depression both fill a mind with negative thoughts. Negative experiences with others may greatly influence the low self-esteem someone develops. Researchers unlocked some of the connections between the two and found that people with low self-esteem have an increased risk of falling into depression. If those with low self-esteem can be swiftly treated, then they may be protected from the grip of depression. A low self-esteem can prevent a person from pursuing goals, fulfilling hopes, and rising to their full potential. Many people start seeing flaws in themselves or misjudging their strengths when they are young. They feel isolated and unworthy, and believe that they are destined to fail in whatever they may pursue. Bullies, mental or physical abuse, or loneliness can all trigger low self-esteem.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Participants incorporated in the study were restricted to Amravati District only. Sample size was very small to generalize the finding of the study. Already diagnosed depressive patients were taken from various hospitals and Counselling Centres of Amravati City. The participants were selected from the age group of 20 to 30 years and finally no gender differences were considered.

CONCLUSION

Low self-esteem exists among individual suffering from depression.

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