

Comparing the Boys' and Girls' Self-esteem in the Less Educated and Educated Families

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Abstract

The education of parents is linked to their children's educational attainment and self-esteem. Educated families' greater influence in household negotiations may allow securing more resources for children. On the other hand, the first self-perception of children is a complex perception that is derived from others' reactions. The purpose of this study was to compare the boys' and girls' self-esteem in the less educated and educated families.

Purposive sampling which is applied in this study to include children from a poor and ignorant neighborhood Kindergartens and Kindergarten's Employees. Samples included 16 boys and 18 girls from ignorant families, 18 males and 16 females from families with high levels and age between 4-6 years.

The study was conducted by using a structured interview. The interview's questions are taken from Pope Self-esteem Test. The results of multi-variable analysis of variance revealed that there is not any significant relationship between parents' literacy and their boys' and girls' self-esteem. The research demonstrated that there were no differences between boys' and girls' self-esteem and their families' literacy.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Gender differences, educated family.

1. Introduction

Education is important for everyone and it is a key part of strategies to improve individuals' well-being and societies' economic and social development. Flourian and Buchanan (2004) believed that most children have two main educators in their lives – their parents and their teachers. Parents are the prime educators until the child attends an early years setting or starts school and they remain a major influence on their children's learning throughout school and beyond. The school and parents both have crucial roles to play. Self-esteem refers to our beliefs and images about ourselves and also it is a measure by which we determine that how much we love ourselves and others (Sanford and Donovan, 1995). Self-esteem is defined by Woolfolk (2005) as an affective act and encapsulates the value or worth we attach to our self-assessments. The first self-perception is a complex one that is derived from others' reactions. Mothers play the most important role in their children's lives. Also father and other relatives have significant role in the child's perception (Alipor and Rahmani, 2012). Formation of the child's perception about themselves begins very soon. Children pay attention to their parents' behavior in the perception of cleverness and ability. If they cannot see these behaviors in their parents, their self-esteem cannot be improving (Fathi and Badleh, 2013). On the other hand, the messages that the children perceive about their surrounding peoples can influence their self-esteem. The children usually perceive everything as reality. Indeed, this improves their attractiveness. Also parents' self-esteem influences their children's lives. It should remember that the parents' activities influences the child's self-esteem more than their own one. The children usually behave according to their parents' behavior. Therefore, the family's performance and structure plays an important role in the child's self-esteem. The results of different studies revealed that the divorced parents' child has very low self-esteem (Ganji, 1999). A child's self-esteem can have a significant influence on their life then parents play a significant role in shaping their child's opinion of themselves and they need to actively employ strategies to enhance it where possible.

1.1 The effects of children's gender

Gender inequality is considered as a problem that exists in every society in different times from past to now and only its degree and type is different from a society to another based on the time and place conditions. Family is the first institute that everyone enters it after birth. The family is the most important factor in transmitting gender inequality. On the other hand, the first self-perception of children is a complex one that is derived from relatives' beliefs and thoughts (such as father and mother). Father and mother's behavior and emotions toward their children will be different based on their gender. For example, birth of baby boy is a happiness phenomenon more than baby girl birth in many countries (Michael, 1997). Orsola indicated in his book that the family starts an especial trend of gender socialization after recognizing children's gender. Perception of the gender roles is not a random phenomenon but is influenced by especial characteristics of gender. Although this trend does not finished in the especial stage of children's growth, but there are several social realities that reinforce the gender role such as production and reproduction (Ezazi, 2003).

1.2 Importance of early years

The children's primary experiences have an important role in the growth and development of self-esteem, because children's personality is formed from his/her birth and the primary experiences are effective in the growth of children's personality. Also mother's positive attitude and emotional reactions can form self-esteem in elderly childhoods (Hirsch and

DuBois, 1991). Based on the children psychology literatures the period of 2 to 6 years is effective in their growth. The reason is that many of the basic models of personality are formed in this period and their personality strength or weaknesses are derived from this period experiences(Navabinejhad, 2008).

Kling et al. (1999) analyzed more than 100 studies about self-esteem from 1987 to 1999 and found that the males' self-esteem is more than females' one in different time. All in all, it can concluded that males' score on self-esteem in the standard tests is more than males' one. Also it is should remember that this difference was not significant.

1.3 Parents' attitude and children's self-esteem

Since the parents have a critical role in creating children's experiences, it can be concluded that the children's attitude toward parents' role can be an effective factors in their self-esteem. Many authors study the correlation between parents' attitude and children's self-esteem (Hoseynian and Porshahriari,2007).

Anderson et al. (1998) studied the relationship between parents' attitude and male and female children's self-esteem in the high schools in the University of Arkansas. The results of their study revealed that there is a significant relationship between parents' attitude and children's self-esteem. Based on the children's perspective, there is a significant relationship between parents' freedom attitudes and teachers' evaluation from children's self-esteem.

1.4 The effects of educational levels on changing gender perspectives of women

Males that are influenced by educations and societies' values determine and classify special behaviors for females. These include cowardice and jealousy that results in inappropriate gender classification and stereotyping. Therefore, it can be concluded that schemas are became difficult cognitive. The change and modification of schemas will be possible through increasing awareness.

Unfortunately, there are several gender discrimination schemas in the mind of societies' members. Regardless of this, increasing knowledge and educational levels is one of the most effective factors in decreasing stereotyping and reviewing schemas. Riahi (2007) has assessed the effective social factors (such as families' socioeconomic bases and educational levels) on the extent of gender stereotyping.Sarokhani (2008) found that there is a significant positive relationship between mothers' employment and formation of gender inequalities. They also indicated that the most gender inequality was observed in the housewives. Also their results indicated that the most gender inequality is created by less educated women. Some parents attend their child more than others. They provide a desirable and appropriate environment for their child. Indeed, the parents who valorize themselves and have a determinant attitude toward them will be to cultivate the child with high self-esteem (Smith, Marsh and Barnes, 1985).

Sharifi and Masoudi (2011) confirmed the significant relationship between mothers and female child's self-esteem in Iran. Also the results of another study indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between parents' self-regulation strategies and child's self-esteem (Samadi, 2007). Also the results of another study indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between literacy and self-esteem (Haffarian and Aghaei, 2007). Therefore, it can be concluded that the parents' literacy influence their child's self-esteem. This is why that different studies confirm significant relationship between parents and child's self-esteem and their correlations (Sharifi and Masoudi,2011;Lau, 2008; Baker and Ben- Ami, 2011). Self-esteem is a personal experience that can be observed in the individuals' behavior.

If the peoples evaluate themselves positively, then their self-esteem will be increased and vice versa (Veenhoven, 2000). Also self-esteem is placed on the external performances and is not continuous and sustainable. Living with self-esteem needs sound recognition, suitable effort, utilizing individual capabilities, and achieving necessary skills (Dinner and Lucas, 2000). With regard to the above-mentioned descriptions, the parents play an important role in creating child's self-esteem. Therefore, it is necessary to study this subject.

Mansori (1990) indicated that the midwifery students' self-esteem is more than nursing ones. Another part of his results indicate that some of the demographic variables influence students' self-esteem such as age, academic seniority, personal problems, and job problems. Also the results of his study indicate, the students' academic field influences their self-esteem. Therefore, it can be concluded that not only parents' Literacy but also their academic field influence their children's' self-esteem (Sharifi and Masoudi ,2011;Lau, 2008; Baker and Ben-Ami,2011).

Haffarian and Aghaei (2007) found that educated women had much self-esteem than less educated ones. This study confirms the importance of the role of literacy on the self-esteem.Mruk (1995) examined the self-esteem among children and found that the 4-5 ages are the most important critical period in the self-esteem formation. They also concluded that it is possible to improve children's self-esteem through defining their expectations and presenting feedback for them. The results of their study also revealed that there is a significant relationship between confidence and competency sense with their self-esteem. Baumeister (2003) examined the relationship between students' self-esteem and performance with their parents' literacy. The results revealed that high self-esteem cannot result in better performance and also parents' literacy cannot be considered as a reliable predictor of students' self-esteem.

Harman, Hansen, and Cocharn (2005) indicated that the self-esteem leads to decrease undesirable activities that can be done through abnormal behaviors. Indeed, they found that self-respect is one of the important mediating factors in the aggression behaviors. Yanping and Ollendick (2001) examined the effects of culture on the children's self-esteem among Chinese and Western children. The results of their study indicated the self-esteem diagram is different for Chinese and Western children. It can be concluded from their results that the approaches used for improving and promoting children's self-esteem are different based on their cultures.

Lau (2008) examined self-esteem of children of the divorced parents in Hong Kong and found that parents' divorce is a significant factor on the child's self-esteem. Bulanda and Majumdar (2009) studied the inter-family communications on the teenagers' self-esteem and found that there is a significant relationship between teenagers' self-esteem and their relations with their parents. Also the results of their study revealed that teenagers' autonomy and their relations with parents are the most important effective factors on the self-esteem. Baker and Ben-Ami (2011) surveyed 118 American teenagers and found that lack of relationship with parents and sense of alienation to them is the most important factor in decreasing teenagers' self-esteem. They also pointed out that there is a significant relationship between teenagers' low self-esteem and their tendency to alcohol abuse, stress.

2. Materials And Methods

This study is a comparative-casual research. The statistical population of this study includes children with 4-6 years old. In order to select sample members, sampling has been done in different regions. For this purpose, 16 male and 18 female students have been selected from

less educated families and also 18 male and 16 female students have been selected from educated families. Data analyzed in both descriptive and inferential statistics. This study carried out through semi-structured interviews based on the Pope test. Pope's 5-Scale Test of Self-Esteem for Children consists of 60 questions and evaluates self-esteem on 5 scales: Global Scale, Academic Scale, Body Scale, Family Scale, and Social Scale (Hosogi et al., 2012). The maximum score for each scale is 20 points, and the total score for each scale is used for the evaluation. Also, each part includes 10 questions. This questionnaire has been developed for students. This questionnaire was developed in three scales in which 0 refers to never, 1 refers to sometimes, and 2 refer to always. But a two point scale (yes or no) has been used in this study. During interview period, the researchers seek to control the respondents' conditions such as interviewer, questions, and encouragement. With regard to the age period of the respondents, the researchers seek to communicate them appropriately so that they answer the questions soundly. Also different methods have been used for communicating respondents appropriately such as giving rewards. Also some control questions have been asked from students.

3. Findings

The hypothesis of this study assumed that there is a significant relationship between parents' literacy and children's self-esteem. In order to test this hypothesis, the findings demonstrated in this section. For this purpose, variances of two groups have been indicated in table 1.

Table 1:
frequency, average, and standard deviation of children's self-esteem based on the gender

		The least self-esteem	The most self-esteem	Standard deviation	Average	Frequency
Female children's self-esteem	Educated parents	19	34	87.5	28.27	7
	Less educated parents	19	36	68.5	33.29	6
Male children's self-esteem	Educated parents	25	37	80.4	7.30	10
	Less educated parents	19	38	73.5	70.28	10

This table shows the frequency, average, and standard deviation of children's self-esteem based on their gender.

Table 2:
the results of examining the components of self-esteem based on the male and female parents' educational levels

Components of self-esteem	F	Sig	Eta
Overall	0.207	0.65	0.07

Educational	1.48	0.23	0.049
Physical	0.700	0.41	0.024
Family	0.66	0.42	0.022
Social	0.14	0.71	0.005

The results of multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) indicate that parents' literacy did not influence the components of self-esteem significantly. Also Eta coefficient indicated that the effect of parents' educational level on the children's self-esteem is low. Also the results cleared that the parents' literacy have the most effect on the children's self-esteem in comparison to the other components of self-esteem.

Therefore, the results demonstrated that there is not any significant relationship between male and female children's self-esteem and their parents' literacy and the main hypothesis of study is rejected.

4. Discussion And Conclusion

The results of statistical analysis showed that there is not any significant difference between less educated and educated parents and their children's self-esteem. In other words, these results indicated that there is not any significant relationship between male and female children's self-esteem and their parents' literacy. The main reason for this fact is the main past gender stereotypes and perspectives are eliminated in the today's families. This means that parents do not differentiate their male and female children in different positions. These inequalities were considered natural and inherent in the past, but they are not important in today's modern world (Casteles, 2001).

Feminists were striving to confirm that the gender differences are not inherent. The liberal feminists indicate that the gender differences are derived from socialization and condition of gender roles and believe that male and female children are behaved differently from birthday. They also pointed out that this prevents women from progress (Abbot and Wallas, 2001). Indeed, there are such differences in different societies and cultures with different degrees (Chae, 2002); (Whitaker, 1999). On the other hand, new generations do not experience their socialization process in the family, but they experience it in other institutes (Casteles, 2001). As a result, it can be concluded that this process is changed during past times. Therefore, it is necessary to study it as a necessity of social sciences in the present. It can be concluded from this discussion that human and social development leads to review the traditional views about women. On the other hand, development goals will not be achieved unless these gender inequalities are eliminated (UNISEF, 1991, 1992); (Jakob, 1992).

The parents' behavior with their children leads that the male children are expected to show some characteristics such as aggression, competition, reliance, and autonomous. Also it is suggested for them to seek for achieving their goals. On the other hand, it is expected from females to being peaceful and compromising, solve their problems through discussion, and being compassionate and care (Ross, 1994).

The social psychologists believe that there is a significant difference between males and females' confidence. Although some studies indicate that males' score is more than females' one, but most of the studies indicate that there is not any significant difference between male and female in their score (Ahmadi,2004). The results are supported by Ahadi (1992) who he found that the parents' literacy is not a reliable predictor of the children's self-esteem. Also the results of this study are supported by Türkbay, Özcan, Doruk, and Uzun (2005). They pointed out that there is not any significant correlation between parents' literacy and

teenagers' self-esteem and identity. Another part of the results indicate that there is not any significant relationship between female students' individual identity and mothers' employment status.

In order to explain the results of this study in accordance with the effective components on the children's self-esteem, it can be said that the parents' relations with their children (Panahande, 1993), individuals' perception and impression from family and their own competencies (Zeki, 2007), Mruk, 1995), self-esteem in the cultures (Baker and Ben-Ami., 2011), physical and mental health (Blake and Rust, 2002), individual and family religious maturity (Zohrevand,2004), family flexibility and children's freedom (Jamshidi et al., 2008) are the most important effective factors on the children's self-esteem.

5. Suggestions

As a result, parents with different social conditions and literacy are seeking to cultivate their children and use effective methods for improving their self-esteem. With regard to this fact that self-esteem is one of the most important measures of life quality, this measure and measures of physical and mental health show individuals' success. It is necessary that not only parents seek to improve their children's self-esteem, but also they responsible for organizational effort for this purpose. It seems that workshops and classes for educating the teachers and coaches, educational workshops for educating parents, and also developing an integrated educational plan for satisfying children's needs and capabilities are effective in the children's self-esteem improvement. With regard to the importance of preschool period in the children's self-esteem, it is necessary to implement several studies in this area. These studies should consider the effects of parents' age and occupation, mothers' occupation, and other factors on the children's self-esteem. Also it is necessary to be pointed out that the researchers who study the students in preschool period must have necessary knowledge and experiences for this purpose. On the other hand, it is suggested that experts and professionals are employed for such studies.

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