Gender and its Influence on High School Students Self-Esteem: A Study in the Dibrugarh District of Assam

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the self-esteem among high school students, with a focus on gender differences. The research was conducted on a sample of 185 students from five high schools in the Dibrugarh district. The study has investigated into the level of self-esteem among students, as well as a comparative analysis of self-esteem levels among students, with the aim of determining if there is a statistically significant disparity in self-esteem levels based on gender within the Dibrugarh district. To assess the level of self-esteem among students, statistical measures of central tendency such as the mean, median, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis were calculated. The analysis of the result of the independent sample t-test has revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in self-esteem between male and female students. The research additionally revealed a notable influence of gender on self-esteem of high school students.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Gender, High School, Students and Dibrugarh district

1.1. Introduction

The concept of self-esteem is widely acknowledged as a crucial element in an individual's holistic state of being, particularly during the formative stage of adolescence. Adolescence, a pivotal period of human development, is commonly correlated with the cohort of individuals encompassing high school students. The stage of adolescence represents a pivotal and metamorphic phase in the existence of a student. According to the scholarly research conducted by Connor et al. (2004), it is postulated that self-esteem possesses considerable pertinence within diverse aspects of an individual's existence. It exerts an influence upon the cognitive faculties, emotional state, and behavioural reactions of the individual in relation to the various exigencies encountered in life that induce stress.

Several researchers from throughout the world have defined self-esteem differently. According to Braden (1994), "*Self-esteem is the disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and as worthy of happiness.*" On the other hand, self-esteem, as expounded by the esteemed psychologist Rosenberg (1965) in his seminal work, is delineated as the positive or negative orientations towards one's self. The cultivation of self-esteem assumes a position of utmost significance in the holistic advancement of students, particularly those traversing the realm of secondary education. According to Shore's (2017) scholarly work, it has been posited that self-esteem exerts a significant influence on the manner in which a student actively participates in various activities, navigates through

challenges, and engages in interpersonal interactions. The influence of students' self-esteem on their academic achievements within the educational setting is of notable consequence. Students enrolled in secondary educational institutions encounter a myriad of formidable obstacles, encompassing academic strain, societal expectations, and the intricate process of self-discovery, all of which exert a profound influence on their sense of self- esteem.

The self-esteem of students is susceptible to the sway of a myriad of factors. The profound impact of familial influence on the lives of students is indisputably substantial, encompassing an array of multifaceted factors. Along with familial influence, the concept of gender also influences the self-esteem of the high school students. Numerous scholarly investigations have yielded diverse findings pertaining to the ramifications of gender and its sway on the sense of self-esteem among student populations. The forthcoming investigation endeavours to comprehend the influence of self-esteem on high school students within the Dibrugarh district of Assam.

1.2. Review of related Literatures

Numerous studies have been conducted on the subject of students' self-esteem on a global scale. Several scholarly works pertaining to the self-esteem of students have concentrated on various elements. Multiple studies have been conducted globally to examine the relationship between students' self-esteem and gender. The subsequent part presents a discussion on studies pertaining to the relationship between students' self-esteem and gender.

Boruah (2016) conducted a study in the Lakhimpur district of Assam to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and academic accomplishment. The findings of the study indicate that there was no significant disparity in self-esteem levels between male and female students.

The study conducted by Kumar (2018) demonstrated a significant impact of gender on the formation of self-esteem in the adolescent population. The individual holds a strong conviction that, in the context of adolescence, males tend to exhibit elevated levels of self-esteem and self-worth in comparison to females. During the early stage of adolescence, male individuals commonly experience a notable increase in self-esteem, whilst female individuals tend to see a slight decline in their self-esteem. The recognition of gender's influence on the self-esteem of adolescents is crucial, necessitating the provision of support and resources to facilitate the cultivation and sustenance of positive self-esteem.

Shewale and Pawar (2019) did a study which revealed a significant disparity in levels of self-esteem between male and female high school students. There exists a notable disparity in levels of self-esteem between male students and their female counterparts, with male students exhibiting much greater levels of self-esteem. A notable finding from their research indicates that male high school students demonstrate notably higher levels of self-concept in comparison to their female peers. In general, the findings of this study indicate the presence of a gender-related disparity in self-esteem and self-concept among adolescents in high school, wherein males have higher levels of self-esteem and self-concept. The findings underscore the imperative to engage in further comprehensive study and implement interventions aimed at addressing the gender-based disparities in self-esteem and self-concept among adolescents.

In Barathi's (2020) research study entitled "*Examining Self-Esteem Levels in High School Students,*" it was observed that there was no significant disparity in the average self-esteem scores among male and female high school students. Hence, the study concluded that there is no discernible impact of gender on the self-esteem levels of high school students. According to the findings of Barathi's

study, it can be inferred that gender does not exert a substantial influence on the determination of self-esteem levels among high school students. This implies that there is an equitable probability for both male and female students to cultivate a healthy level of self-esteem.

According to the findings of Newar and Devi's (2022) study on "Self-esteem of Secondary School Students in Tezpur Town, Assam State," there was no significant difference between boys and girls in terms of general, cognitive, and social self-esteem. According to Ummet (2015), there is no significant variation in self-esteem based on gender. The influence of parental views on child development surpasses the significance of the child's gender. Gender has less influence on the development of self-esteem compared to other characteristics.

Birndorf et al. (2005) conducted a study that identified various influential elements contributing to the enhancement of self-esteem in adolescent males and females. Enhancing the self-esteem of adolescents can be facilitated by various factors, including positive family communication, a perception of safety within educational institutions, and active participation in religious communities. These various aspects have the potential to exert a substantial influence on young individuals, facilitating their personal growth and developmental processes. There is a positive correlation between the quality of communication within the family unit and the level of self-esteem exhibited by adolescents. The findings of the study indicate that there is variability in the levels of self-esteem among adolescent males throughout the course of time. The observed occurrence may be plausibly ascribed to the gradual progression of cognitive growth.

In a study conducted by Farid and Akhtar (2013), an investigation was undertaken to analyse the disparities in self-esteem levels among students, with a specific focus on gender. Male students have high levels of self-esteem in comparison to their female counterparts. There exists a propensity for male pupils to exhibit higher levels of self-esteem when compared to their female peers.

Based on the aforementioned literature analysis, it is evident that several studies have identified notable disparities in self-esteem across students or persons, with gender serving as a determining factor. Conversely, several further studies corroborate the notion that self-esteem exhibits no discernible variation with respect to gender. This study aims to determine if there is a substantial difference in self-esteem among high school students according on gender. The present study has additionally investigated the potential influence of gender on the self-esteem levels of high school students in the Dibrugarh region of Assam.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The study encompasses the subsequent objectives. -
(i) To find out the level of self-esteem among students based on their gender.
(ii) To compare the students' level of self-esteem based on gender.
(iii) To explore whether gender affects the self-esteem of the high school students.

1.4. Methodology

The research was conducted among students from five high schools located in the Dibrugarh district of Assam. The Dibrugarh district is situated in the eastern region of the state of Assam. Out of the five schools under assessment three are affiliated with government-run high schools, while the remaining two are associated with the private sector. The schools that have been chosen for this study are Dibrugarh Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Dibrugarh Government Boys Higher

Secondary School, Barpathar Boys High School, Little Flower Higher Secondary School, and Brahmaputra Valley Academy. The schools were purposively selected to conduct the study. The research was done on a sample of 185 students, drawn from five different schools. The student respondents were selected through the utilisation of a simple random sampling technique from a pool of five schools. In the study, a total of 185 students participated, with 110 of them being female and 75 of them being male respondents.

The current study encompasses both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The study was conducted using a mixed methods approach. The first and second objectives were investigated using a quantitative research approach, while the third objective was addressed through a qualitative research methodology. The chosen research design for this study is an explanatory sequential research strategy. This study aims to investigate the potential influence of gender on students' self-esteem. The data has been gathered from a combination of primary and secondary sources. The researcher has undertaken fieldwork to acquire primary data. The secondary data comprises many sources including books, journal articles, and research papers. The study employed the interview method and observation method as data collection techniques. The study employed the unstructured interview method and the non-participant observation method. A self-esteem measurement scale, designed by Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar, was utilised to assess the level of self-esteem among students in five schools.

1.5. The Level of Self-esteem among Students

Self-esteem holds considerable importance in the lives of high school students. The measure of self-esteem level pertains to the distribution of self-esteem scores among students within the dataset of self-esteem scores in the Dibrugarh district. To ascertain the level of self-esteem among high school students, statistical measures of central tendency, such as the mean, median, and standard deviation, were computed. In addition to measures of central tendency, an evaluation of skewness and kurtosis values has been employed to ascertain the level of self-esteem exhibited by students. The present study examines the self-esteem levels of male high school students in the Dibrugarh district, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Distribution of Male Students' Level of Self-esteem

Sl No.	Gender	N	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	Male	75	89.71	90.00	9.42	-.666	1.162

(Source: Fieldwork)

The Figure 1 below representing the above tabulated in the Table 1.

Figure 1 Histogram representing the Self-esteem Scores of the Male High School Students
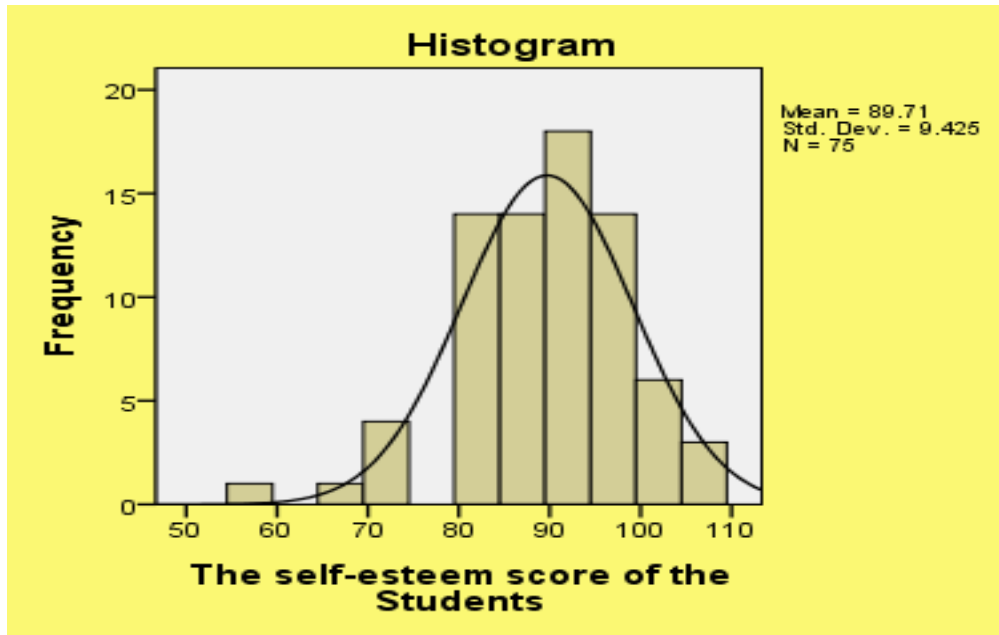

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of 75 male students' self-esteem levels in the Dibrugarh district. The statistical measures of central tendency and dispersion, specifically the mean, median, and standard deviation (SD), pertaining to the self-esteem scores of the students, have been determined to be 89.71, 90.00, and 9.42, correspondingly. The median value surpasses the mean value in terms of the scores. The computed skewness score for students' self-esteem is -.666, which signifies that the distribution of self-esteem scores exhibits a negative skewness, implying that the tail of the distribution is elongated towards the lower end. This observation indicates that the scores exhibit a clustering tendency towards the upper or rightmost portion of the scale, while progressively dispersing towards the lower or leftmost portion. In a distribution that exhibits a negative skew, it can be observed that the median value surpasses the mean value. From Figure 1, it is evident that the majority of students have achieved scores ranging from 80 to 100. Only a minority of students have obtained scores below 80 on the self-esteem scale, while conversely, a few students have achieved scores exceeding 100. Henceforth, it can be deduced that a significant proportion of the male student cohort in Dibrugarh district have attained scores of moderate or middling magnitude on the self-esteem measurement. The kurtosis score of 1.162 observed in the self-esteem levels of students residing within the district suggests that the distribution of these scores can be characterised as platykurtic. The platykurtic distribution demonstrates a more pronounced flatness in its shape when compared with the standard normal curve. Hence, based on the aforementioned analysis, it is evident that the self-esteem scores of male students in the Dibrugarh district exhibit a negative skew and a platykurtic distribution. In the same vein, the female high school students' level of self-esteem from Dibrugarh district has been presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Distribution of Female Students' Level of Self-esteem

Sl No.	Gender	N	Mean	Median	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
1	Female	110	85.84	86.00	8.37	-0.278	-0.115

(Source: Fieldwork)

The Figure 2 below depicting the above tabulated in the Table 2.

Figure 2 Histogram depicting the Self-esteem scores of Female High School Students
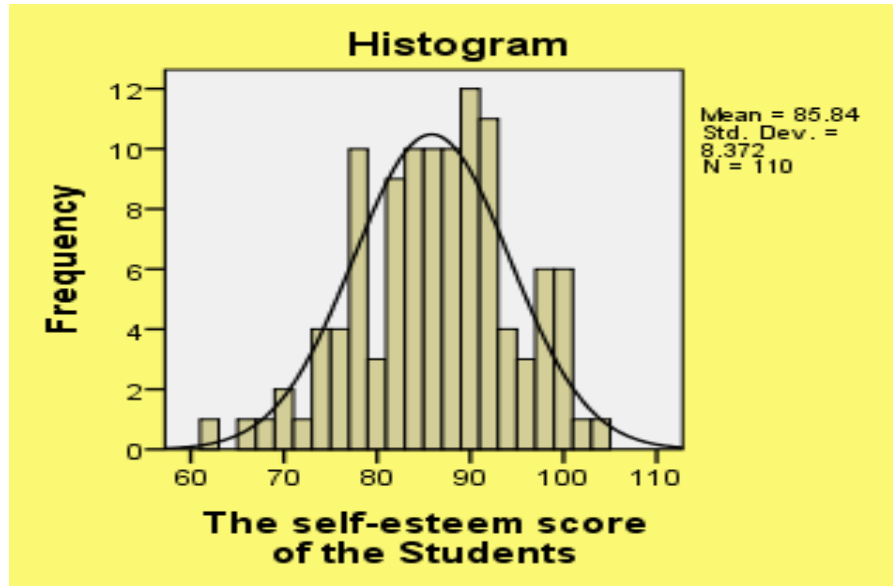

Table 2 demonstrates the distribution of 110 female students' self-esteem levels in the Dibrugarh district. Female students' self-esteem scores have a mean of 85.84, a median of 86.00, and a standard deviation (SD) of 8.37. The median value exceeds the mean value in terms of the scores. The observed skewness value for the male student's self-esteem is -0.278, implying that the distribution of self-esteem scores shows a negative skew. The observed score distribution illustrates a discernible proclivity towards the uppermost or rightmost end of the continuum, progressively diffusing towards the lowermost or leftmost end. In a negatively skewed distribution, the median value is higher than the mean value. From Figure 2, it is evident that most of the female students scored between 80 and 100. Only a few students have obtained scores between 60 and 80 on the self-esteem scale, while conversely, a few students have achieved scores exceeding 100. Henceforth, it can be deduced that a significant proportion of the female student populace within the confines of Dibrugarh district have achieved scores of moderate magnitude on the self-esteem scale. The kurtosis value of the female students' self-esteem is -0.115, indicating that the distribution has a flatter shape compared to the normal distribution curve. Therefore, it can be inferred that the distribution of self-esteem scores among female students in the schools selected within the Dibrugarh district reveals a negative skewness and a platykurtic distribution.

1.6. A Comparison of Students' Self-Esteem Levels Based on Gender

A gender-based comparison has been conducted to ascertain any possible differences between the self-esteem levels of male and female high school students in the Dibrugarh district of Assam. The comparison of male and female students' level of self-esteem in the district has been conducted utilising a statistical technique referred to as the independent samples t-test, and the outcomes have been presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Gender comparison of Students' Self-esteem in the Goalpara district

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Mean Differenc	df	t	Inference
Students' Self-esteem	Male	75	89.71	9.42	3.870	183	2.933 Sig. 0.004	Significant at 0.05 level
	Female	110	85.84	8.37				

(Source: Fieldwork)

Table 3 compares the self-esteem levels of male and female high school students in Dibrugarh district by gender. An independent samples t-test was performed to compare the level of self-esteem of male and female students in the Dibrugarh district. There were significant differences (t (183) = 2.933, p= 0.004) in the scores, with male students having a higher mean score (Mean=89.71, SD=9.42) than female students (Mean=85.84, SD=8.37). The magnitude of the mean difference (mean difference= 3.870, 95% CI= 1.267 to 6.474) was statistically significant. From the aforementioned analysis of independent samples t-test data, it is evident that there are significant differences in self-esteem between male and female high school students in the Dibrugarh district.

1.7. Categorisation of Self-esteem of the Students

The categorisation of students' self-esteem as high, low and normal has been determined by assessing their scores on the self-esteem scale. Table 3 elucidates the categorisation of students' self-esteem into the domains of high, low, and normal within the geographical confines of Dibrugarh districts.

Table 3 Categorisation of Students' Self-esteem

Sl No.	Categorisation of Students' Self-esteem	Number of Students	
		Male	Female
1	High Self-esteem	18 (24%)	13 (11.80%)
2	Low Self-esteem	13 (17.30%)	27 (24.50%)
3	Normal Self-esteem	44 (57.70%)	70 (63.60%)
4	Total	75	110

(Source: Fieldwork)

Table 3 displays that out of 75 male high school students selected for the study from the Dibrugarh district, 18 of them were found to have high self-esteem, accounting for 24% of the male total student population. Out of the total male number of students, a staggering 13 students are grappling with low self-esteem, accounting for approximately 13.30% of the student body. Out of 75 male students, 44 exhibit normal levels of self-esteem. Among male student population, a whopping 57.70% of students

possess a normal self-esteem. In contrast, the study included a total of 110 female high school students from Dibrugarh district, of whom 13 students were identified as having high self-esteem. The proportion of female students with high self-esteem is 11.80% of the entire female student population. There are a total of 27 female students in the study that exhibit low self-esteem, accounting for 24.50% of the overall female student population. In contrast, it is seen that among the overall population of 110 students, a majority of 70 students exhibit average levels of self-esteem. Approximately 63.60% of the entire female student population in the Dibrugarh district exhibit average or normal levels of self-esteem. Based on the analysis of the aforementioned data pertaining to the categorisation of students' self-esteem based on gender in the Dibrugarh districts, it is apparent that the percentage of students exhibiting high levels of self-esteem is greater among male students in comparison to female students in Dibrugarh district. In contrast, the percentage of low self-esteem among female students exceeds that observed among male students in the Dibrugarh district. In comparison, the percentage of female students with average self-esteem levels surpasses that of male students in the Dibrugarh district.

1.8. The influence of Gender on the Self-esteem of High School Students

The influence of self-esteem on the lives of high school students is substantial. There exists a notable disparity in the levels of self-esteem among students in the Dibrugarh district, which can be attributed to gender differences. The study has revealed that gender exerts various degrees of influence on students' self-esteem. The majority of students who possess high levels of self-esteem have stated that the self-esteem of high school students is unaffected by gender or gender identity. The self-esteem of secondary school students is not influenced by their gender. However, it is important to note that there are certain cases where a subset of students with elevated levels of self-esteem maintains the belief that gender norms, roles, and gendered expectations significantly impact their self-esteem.

In addition to the aforementioned factors, the self-esteem of students is also influenced by their gendered perspective of themselves. Conversely, a majority of the students who exhibited low self-esteem in the study recognised the important influence of gender on their self-esteem levels. It is posited that the existence of societal pressures to conform to prescribed gender norms and expectations has contributed to the development of feelings of inadequacy and diminished self-esteem. The high school students frequently articulate their discontentment with the restricted prospects and societal norms imposed upon them due to their gender. The students have a sensation of confinement due to the pressures imposed by societal norms, leading to difficulties in cultivating a distinct sense of self-identity and self-esteem within these limitations. This implies that although there may exist certain instances that deviate from the general trend, gender indeed exerts a substantial influence on the development of students' self-esteem, either in a positive or negative manner. Additional investigation is required to delve into the intricate dynamics between gender, society norms, and self-perception in order to gain a more comprehensive comprehension.

1.9. Conclusion

The influence of gender on self-esteem among high school students is quite significant. Given that high school students fall within the adolescents' developmental stage, they are exposed to a diverse range of experiences that ultimately play a significant role in the formation and development of their personal identity. Gendered experiences are of significant importance in the lives of high school students during this particular period, amidst the vast array of experiences they encounter. The self-esteem of

students is influenced by a range of gender-based responsibilities and expectations set forth by their families and peers. The gendered experiences encountered by students can exert a significant influence on their self-esteem, as these events frequently mould their self-perceptions and evaluations of personal value. These expectations have the potential to induce emotions of inadequacy or a perception of not belonging, ultimately impacting an individual's self-esteem. It is imperative for educators and parents to possess an awareness of these gendered encounters and strive towards establishing an inclusive and nurturing milieu for all students, irrespective of their gender.

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