

SELF-ESTEEM AS A MODERATOR OF THE AFFECTIVE BALANCE AND GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES IN ADOLESCENCE

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The aim of the article is to trace out and analyze the impact of gender-role attitudes on affective balance and self-esteem of adolescents, and to determine whether there is an interrelation between self-esteem and affective balance. The studied sample consists of 257 adolescents, aged between 13 and 20 years. The applied questionnaires are - Personal Attribute Questionnaire (Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1974, 1975), The Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967), and Affect Scales: Positive Affect, Negative Affect, Affect Balance (Bradburn, 1969). The results showed that girls in the studied sample are characterized by significantly higher affective balance and lower negative affect than boys. Masculine and androgynous adolescents are not characterized by higher positive affect and positive affective balance, but they are with higher self-esteem than the feminine adolescents in the studied sample.

Contemporary investigations devoted to subjective well-being (SWB) includes variables that promote or reduce welfare. SWB and its components are defined as a result of certain dimensions or a set of dimensions. Subsequently, the focus is put on the variables that affect the well-being, while the nature of the SWB appears to be secondary in these studies.

Self-esteem is associated with the regulation of affects (Baumeister, 1990). This could be particularly so for certain types of positive events and for the regulation of positive affects. People with low self-esteem suppress positive effects while those with high self-esteem retain them. By itself the regulation of positive and negative affects is distinct.

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Self-esteem. Aspects of the self-esteem

Self-esteem is an affective component of self-image. It is based on the self-concept. Self-concept can be characterized by the statement „how I perceive myself“ and self-esteem by „how I feel about myself“ (Kohr et al., 1988; p.11). Self-esteem is influenced by both a real and an ideal concept of us (Baumeister, 1993; Baumgardner, 1990).

Positive self-esteem is a critical component that motivates socially acceptable behavior among the teenagers. Children with high self-esteem demonstrate behaviors associated with confidence, curiosity, independence, initiative and adaptive reactions to stress and change. Those with low self-esteem are more prone to depression (Robertson & Simons, 1989), show difficulties in their adaptation to changes, stress, low confidence, weak curiosity and lack of initiative or independence (Harter, 1990). Moreover, low self-esteem supports deviant behavior (Rosenberg, Schooler & Schoenbach, 1989). Therefore, the American Psychological Association (APA) recommends schools to provide programs that encourage the maintenance of positive self-esteem, among other skills.

In a study of adolescent self-esteem, Rosenberg has found that only 27 percent of the adolescents with high self-esteem do not participate in extracurricular activities, compared with 40 percent of students with low self-esteem. 70 percent of students with low self-esteem, compared with 38 percent of students with high self-esteem do not belong to a club. These findings suggest that self-esteem affects the choice of activities related to leisure (Rosenberg, 1965).

From the other side, Harter suggests that a wide range of aspects should be included in the assessment of adolescent self-esteem. In particular, school / academic competence, athletic ability, approval from friends, physical appearance, close friendships, romantic relationships, job competence and general self-esteem (Harter, 1990).

Individual interests (mastery)

Boys enjoy a greater sense of mastery than girls. They are surer of themselves and are more likely to feel that they are leaders among their peers. As well, boys are less afraid than girls that they will make a mistake and will fail (Quatman & Watson, 2001).

Parents

Nielsson and Metha have found that the perceptions of parental support and autonomy during adolescence are positively associated with self-esteem, but only in girls (Nielson and Metha, 1994). According to other authors, girls between 12 and 14 years have less self-prevention associations concerning the relationship between self-esteem and their parents than boys (Isberg et al., 1989).