

A STUDY ON SELF-ESTEEM AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence represents a dynamic and transitional stage in the human lifespan during which individuals experience significant growth and adaptation in various domains of life. During this period, individuals develop greater self-awareness and begin to form a clearer sense of identity and independence. In this context, self-esteem defined as the value and respect individuals hold for themselves is considered as the key factor determining psychological wellbeing, academic involvement, and social adjustment. This study examines the self-esteem of adolescents in relation to gender (boys vs girls) and family type (joint vs nuclear) in Kamrup Metropolitan, Assam. Descriptive survey method was conducted on a random sample of 100 adolescents of different higher secondary institution of Kamrup Metropolitan. Self-esteem scale by Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar (2015) was used to collect data. Percentage, mean, SD and t-test as used for data analysis. The results found that adolescents have normal level of self-esteem. Findings also showed that there is no significant difference found in self-esteem with reference to gender. The study also indicate that there is a significant difference between adolescents belong to joint and nuclear family type with reference to their self-esteem. Adolescents belong to joint family have high level of self-esteem the adolescents belong to nuclear family.

Keywords: adolescents, self-esteem, gender, family

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is one of the most critical and dynamic stages of human development, marked by rapid and multidimensional changes in physical, psychological, emotional, and social domains. According to the World Health Organization, adolescence is the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood during which individuals undergo biological maturation, develop a sense of independence, and gradually assume adult roles and responsibilities. This stage involves not only physical growth and sexual maturity but also the development of cognitive abilities, emotional regulation, and social competence. Adolescents begin to explore their identity, establish personal values, and form meaningful relationships, which significantly influence their future adjustment and personality.

One of the most important psychological factors that shape adolescent development is self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall evaluation, perception, and judgment of his or her own worth and capabilities. It reflects the degree to which individuals feel confident, competent, and valuable in different areas of life. According to Nathaniel Branden (1969), self-esteem consists of self-confidence, which is a sense of personal competence, and self-respect, which is a sense of personal worth. Similarly, Morris Rosenberg defined self-esteem as a positive or negative attitude toward oneself. These perspectives highlight that

self-esteem is a multidimensional construct that develops gradually through experiences, social interactions, and environmental influences.

During adolescence, self-esteem becomes particularly sensitive and unstable due to increased awareness of self, peer comparison, academic pressure, body image concerns, and changing family relationships. Adolescents often seek acceptance and recognition from peers and society, which can strongly influence their self-concept and self-worth. The process of identity formation, as emphasized by Erik Erikson in his theory of psychosocial development, plays a central role in shaping self-esteem. Successful resolution of identity-related challenges leads to higher self-esteem, whereas confusion and social rejection may result in low self-esteem.

Research has shown that self-esteem has a profound impact on various aspects of adolescent life. Adolescents with high self-esteem are more likely to demonstrate emotional stability, resilience, positive coping strategies, academic motivation, and healthy interpersonal relationships. In contrast, low self-esteem is associated with psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, stress, loneliness, and maladaptive behaviours including substance abuse, aggression, and social withdrawal. It also affects communication, decision-making, and future aspirations. Therefore, self-esteem functions as both a protective factor and a risk factor in adolescent development.

Several socio-demographic and environmental factors contribute to the development of self-esteem among adolescents. These include gender, family structure, parenting style, socioeconomic status, cultural background, academic performance, peer influence, and school environment. In the present global and digital era, the influence of social media, online comparison, and exposure to unrealistic standards has further intensified the challenges faced by adolescents in maintaining positive self-esteem. Cultural expectations and social inequalities also shape adolescents' perception of self-worth, especially in diverse societies.

Understanding the level and determinants of self-esteem among adolescents is essential for promoting their psychological well-being and holistic development. It provides valuable insights for educators, parents, counsellors, and policymakers to design effective interventions, counselling programmes, and supportive educational practices. Enhancing self-esteem can contribute to improved mental health, academic achievement, social adjustment, and overall quality of life.

The present study, therefore, aims to examine self-esteem among adolescents and to explore the influence of various personal, social, and environmental factors on its development. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and help in formulating strategies to promote healthy self-esteem and positive youth development.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Jain and Dixit (2014) conducted a study to examine gender differences in self-esteem and to identify the factors contributing to its decline among Indian youth. The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was used to measure participants' self-esteem levels. The sample consisted of 150 Indian college students, including 77 females and 73 males, aged between 18 and 23 years. The results of the study indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in self-esteem between male and female participants.

A study carried out by Reddy et al. (2015) compared the levels of stress and self-esteem among students from government and private high schools. The sample consisted of 60 students selected from urban schools in Nalgonda. For data collection, the researchers used a sociodemographic questionnaire, a stress questionnaire for students, and a self-esteem scale. The findings revealed that both government and private high school students experienced low levels of stress. The study also indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of stress and self-esteem. Furthermore, the results showed that 82.3% of the students had self-esteem within the normal range, while 6.2% demonstrated low self-esteem and 11.5% were found to have high self-esteem. These findings suggest that school type did not have a notable influence on students' stress levels and self-esteem.

A study conducted by Nematollahi et al. (2017) explored the relationship between self-esteem, academic achievement, and parental demographic variables. The sample of the study included 60 female school students. The findings revealed a significant association between self-esteem and both the age of the students and their academic performance. However, no significant relationship was observed between self-esteem and factors such as paternal age, maternal age, or socio-economic status. The study also reported that despite having high motivation for academic achievement, many students showed low levels of self-esteem. These results suggest that academic motivation alone may not be sufficient to enhance self-esteem among adolescents.

Tripathi N. (2018) conducted a study titled "Study of Adolescent Self-Esteem in Relation to Parenting and Child Abuse." The study aimed to examine the influence of age, gender, parenting, and child abuse on the development of self-esteem among adolescents. The findings showed that age had a significant effect only on certain domains of self-esteem, particularly social and academic self-esteem, while its effect on other domains was not significant. Gender differences were found to be partially significant, with boys and girls showing only slight differences in their levels of self-esteem. The study also revealed that positive parenting practices were positively related to higher self-esteem among adolescents. In contrast, child abuse had a negative impact on self-esteem, with abused adolescents, especially girls, showing lower levels of self-esteem. Overall, the study highlighted the significant role of parenting and the harmful effects of abuse in shaping adolescents' self-esteem.

A qualitative study conducted by Hesary et al. (2020) explored self-esteem among adolescent girls. The study employed a qualitative content-analysis approach and included adolescent girls aged 12–14 years, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through individual interviews and focus group discussions. The recorded audio materials were transcribed, and the information obtained was compared and integrated with existing literature. The researchers analysed the data by identifying key ideas, developing codes, and organising them into meaningful categories. The findings revealed a significant relationship between self-esteem and social anxiety, indicating that adolescents with higher self-esteem experienced lower levels of social anxiety. Furthermore, the study demonstrated an inverse relationship between self-esteem and both eating disorders and social anxiety, highlighting the importance of self-esteem in promoting better psychological and emotional well-being among adolescent girls.

A study conducted by Kinjari and Gopal (2020) examined the relationship between self-esteem and emotional maturity among adolescents. The study adopted an ex-post facto survey research design, and the sample consisted of 30 adolescents aged between 15 and 18 years. Data were

collected using the self-esteem scale developed by Dhar and Dhar, and the emotional maturity scale by Singh and Bhargava. The findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between self-esteem and emotional maturity. In addition, gender was not found to have a significant influence on either self-esteem or emotional maturity. The results further suggested the importance of providing training and guidance to adolescents so that they can perform to the best of their abilities and improve their self-esteem irrespective of their talents.

A study carried out by Mandal K. et al. (2020), investigated the relationship between parenting styles and the self-esteem of adolescents. The objectives of the study were to examine the association between various parenting styles and adolescents' self-esteem, to identify the common parenting patterns among adolescents attending clinical health centres, to assess their levels of self-esteem, and to analyse the impact of socio-demographic and socioeconomic factors on parenting styles. The researchers employed standardized instruments such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire developed by Morris Rosenberg, the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ), and the Kuppaswamy socio-economic status scale. The findings indicated that the authoritative parenting style was most prevalent among adolescents, followed by authoritarian and permissive styles. The study also revealed a significant relationship between parenting style and adolescents' self-esteem, showing that authoritative parenting was associated with higher self-esteem. The results emphasize the importance of positive and supportive parenting in fostering adolescents' psychological wellbeing and overall development.

In a study conducted by Mishra V. and H. G. R. Tripathi H. G. R. (2020), the pattern of self-esteem among rural and urban women was examined. The primary objective of the study was to compare the level of self-esteem between these two groups. The sample consisted of 360 women, including 180 from rural areas and 180 from urban areas. The findings of the study revealed that both rural and urban women demonstrated a normal level of self-esteem. However, the mean scores indicated that urban women exhibited significantly higher self-esteem compared to their rural counterparts. These results suggest that environmental and socio-cultural factors associated with urban settings may contribute to the development of higher self-esteem among women.

A study carried out by Mandal C. et.al. (2023), examining self-esteem among school-going adolescents. The main objective of the present study was to assess the level of self-esteem among school-going adolescents in Murshidabad district. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for this purpose. The study included a sample of 418 adolescents from rural areas who were selected through a simple random sampling method. Data were collected using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE, 1995), a standardized questionnaire developed by Morris Rosenberg. The results of the study revealed that female students demonstrated higher levels of self-esteem compared to male students. It was also found that adolescents belonging to joint family systems had significantly higher self-esteem than those from nuclear family backgrounds. Moreover, students from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category showed greater self-esteem in comparison to their peers from General, Scheduled Caste (SC), and Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories. These differences based on gender, family type, and social caste were found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study of self-esteem among adolescents is highly significant because adolescence is a transitional and formative stage of life during which individuals develop their identity, values, and self-concept. During this period, adolescents experience rapid physical growth, emotional fluctuations, and increased social expectations, and self-esteem plays a central role in determining how effectively they cope with these developmental challenges. Understanding the level of self-esteem among adolescents helps in identifying their psychological strengths and vulnerabilities and is important for promoting mental health and emotional well-being. By examining self-esteem levels, this study can help detect adolescents who may be at risk of emotional or behavioural difficulties and provide early intervention strategies. The findings of this study will be beneficial for teachers, educational institutions, parents, and guardians, as both school and family environments play a crucial role in shaping self-esteem. Since adolescents spend a significant portion of their time in school, understanding their self-esteem levels can help educators create supportive learning environments, encourage participation, reduce academic stress, and develop effective guidance and counselling programmes. Similarly, parental support, communication, and parenting style greatly influence the development of self-esteem, and the results of this research may guide parents in adopting positive parenting practices that foster emotional security and a healthy self-concept. Furthermore, in the present digital and social media age, adolescents face increased peer comparison, body image concerns, and societal pressures, making it even more essential to study self-esteem within this modern context. Overall, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge in psychology and education by emphasizing the importance of self-esteem as a key factor in adolescent development and highlighting the need for systematic efforts to enhance self-esteem in order to promote healthy, balanced, and productive individuals in society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To study the level of self-esteem among adolescents.
- 2) To study the level of self-esteem among the adolescents with respect to gender.
- 3) To study the level of self-esteem among the adolescents with respect to family type.

HYPOTHESIS

- 1) There is no significant difference between adolescent boys and girls with reference to their self-esteem
- 2) There is no significant difference between adolescents belong to joint and nuclear family background with reference to their self-esteem.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Method of the study: Researcher chose research method according to the nature of the study. The nature of present study is descriptive. The researcher employed survey method of descriptive research approach to collect the data selected sample.

Population: The population refers to the entire group or phenomenon being studied. In the study the target population is all the adolescents in Assam within 16-18 age group who are studying in the higher secondary schools.

Again in this study accessible population is the adolescents of Kamrup (Metro), Assam.

Sample: For the present study, the researcher has selected 100 adolescents, aged between 16 and 18. The sample was selected randomly from different higher secondary institutions of Kamrup (Metro), Assam. Stratification is done on the basis of their gender i.e girls and boys, their family background i.e joint family and nuclear family.

Tools used used for Data Collection: The researcher has used self-esteem scale which was developed by Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar (2015) to collect data from adolescent boys and girls. The scale consists of 23 statements. All the statements have to be answered in terms of strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree or strongly agree and it should be awarded the score of 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively.

Procedure of Data Collection: Data collection is a process of gathering information from all the relevant sources to find a solution to the research problem, depending on its type data collection method divided into two categories, namely- secondary data collection method and primary data collection method. Here researcher used primary data collection method. Which used to obtained information directly from the first-hand sources.

The researcher visited all the selected higher secondary schools. First, permission was obtained from the head of the institution. With the assistance of the class teachers, data were collected from the students during their leisure time. Before collecting the data researcher explained the purpose of the study. The students were assured that their responses would be kept confidential

Statistical techniques used: In this study to analyze the obtained data the researcher has used descriptive and inferential statistics.

DATA ANALYSIS

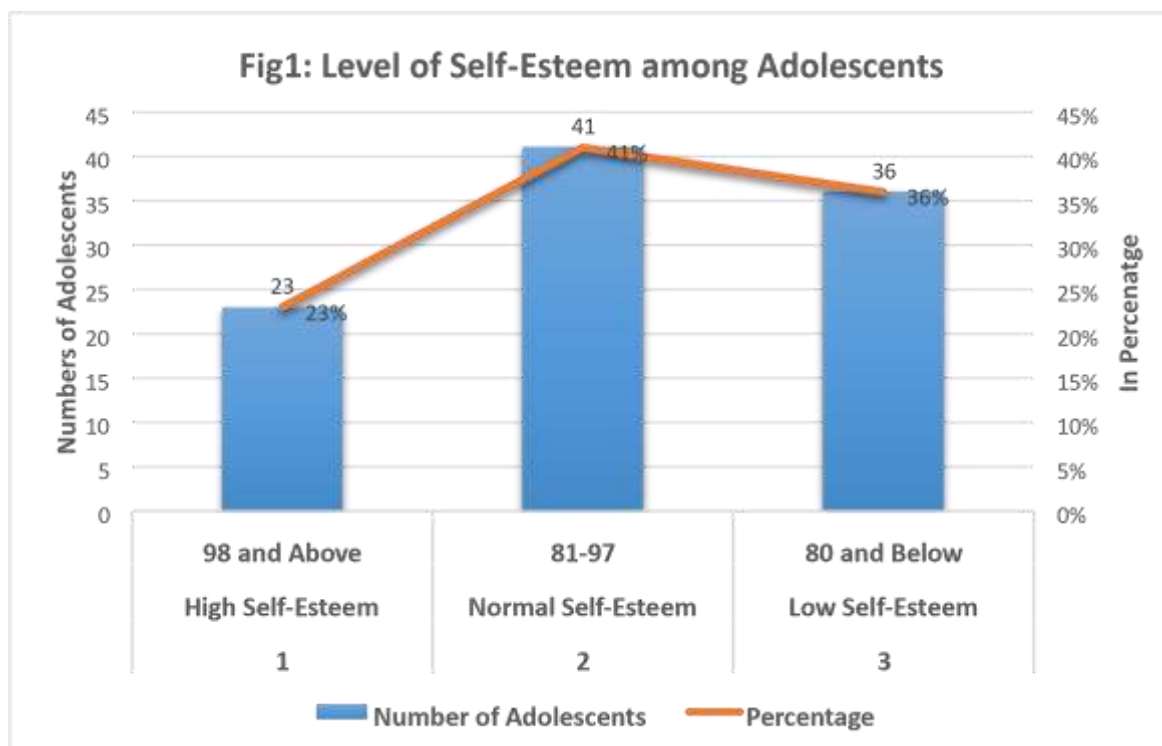
Objective No.1

Table 1: Level of Self-Esteem among adolescents

Categories	Description	Range of Scores	Number of Adolescents	Percentage
1	High Self-Esteem	98 and Above	23	23%
2	Normal SelfEsteem	81-97	41	41%
3	Low Self-Esteem	80 and Below	36	36%

The results show that 23 % of adolescents having high level of self-esteem, 41 % of adolescents having normal level of self-esteem and 36 % of adolescents having low level of self-esteem.

This indicates that the majority of the sample possess a normal level of self-esteem, while a considerable proportion also demonstrates low self-esteem.



Objective No. 2

Table 2: Mean, SD, and t-value of self-esteem among adolescents based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value	Remarks
Boy	50	81.8	10.18	1.68	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Girl	50	85.94	14.21		

The above table presents the analysis of the self-esteem of the adolescents sub-grouped on the basis of their gender, shows that the calculated t-value is 1.68, which is smaller than the tabulated value (1.96) at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 level. It is concluded that there is no significant difference among adolescent boys and girls in respect of their self-esteem. From mean score it is also inferred that girls have shown more self-esteem compared to boys.

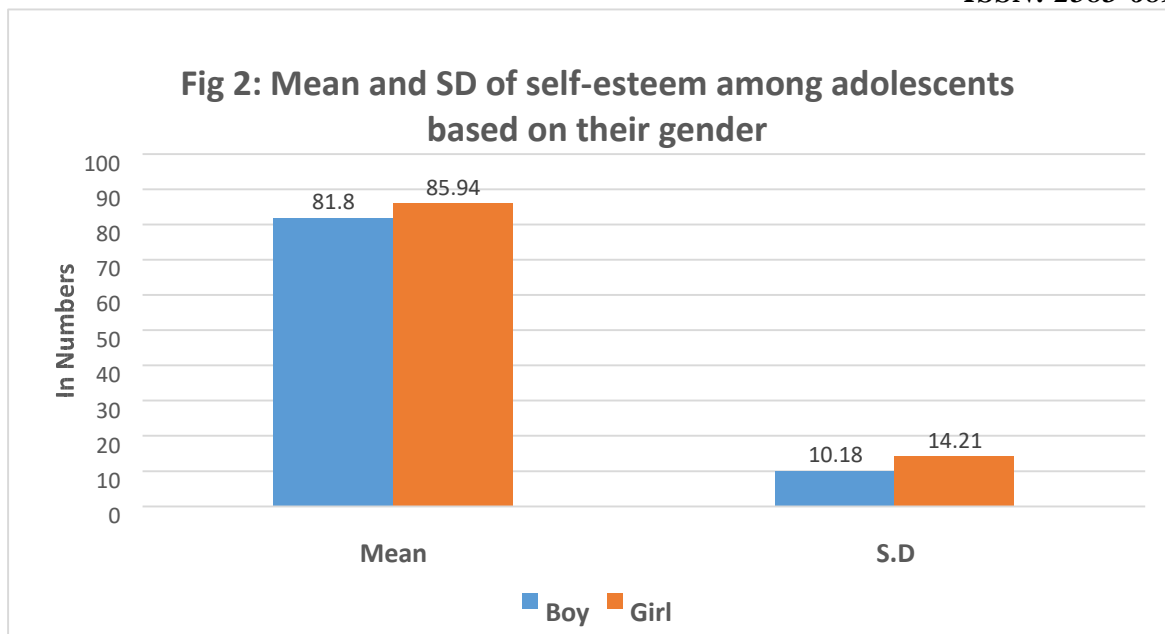
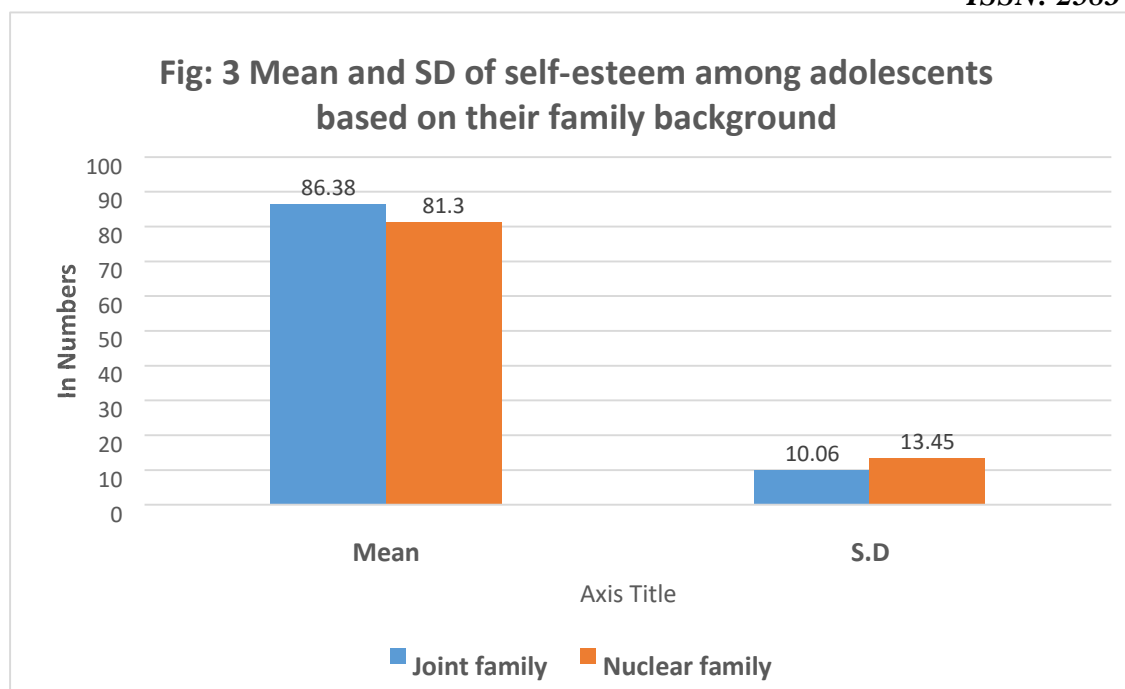


Table 3: Mean, SD and t-value of self-esteem among adolescents based on their family background

Family Background	N	Mean	S.D	't' Value	Remarks
Joint family	50	86.38	10.06	2.13	Significant at 0.05 level
Nuclear family	50	81.3	13.45		

The above table presents the analysis of the self-esteem of the adolescents belong to joint family and nuclear family type, shows that the calculated t-value is 2.13, which is greater than the tabulated value (1.96) at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level. It is concluded that there is significant difference among adolescents belong to joint and nuclear family type in respect of their self-esteem. From mean score it is also concluded that joint family adolescents shown more self-esteem compared to nuclear family adolescents.



MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The study found that the adolescents having high self-esteem is 23%.
2. 41% of adolescents are having normal self-esteem.
3. 36% of adolescents are having low self-esteem.
4. The study also showed that girls are having more self-esteem than boys but the difference is not significant.
5. There is no significant difference between adolescent boys and girls regarding their self-esteem.
6. The study shows there is a significant difference between adolescents belonging to joint family and nuclear family in respect to their family.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study reveal that there is no significant difference between male and female adolescents with regard to self-esteem in the Kamrup Metropolitan District. This lack of gender-based disparity may be attributed to the gradual shift toward more egalitarian socialization practices, where both boys and girls are increasingly provided with similar educational opportunities, parental support, and exposure to social environments. In contemporary contexts, especially in urban and semi-urban settings, traditional gender roles are becoming less rigid, which may contribute to a more balanced development of self-perception among adolescents. Additionally, the influence of mass media, digital platforms, and co-educational institutions may further reduce gender-based differences by promoting comparable aspirations and self-concepts among both sexes. This outcome is consistent with

the findings of earlier studies such as Jain and Dikshit (2014) and Tripathi (2018), thereby reinforcing the validity of the conclusion.

On the other hand, the study highlights that adolescents' self-esteem is significantly influenced by family structure. This significant difference may stem from the contrasting nature of social interactions and emotional support systems within joint and nuclear families. Joint families often provide a broader support network, including grandparents and extended family members, which can foster a sense of belonging, security, and social validation among adolescents. The presence of multiple role models and constant interpersonal engagement may enhance confidence and self-worth. In contrast, nuclear families, while offering independence, may sometimes limit the scope of social interaction and shared responsibilities, potentially affecting the development of self-esteem. Furthermore, parenting styles in joint families may be more collective and less pressurizing, whereas nuclear families may place greater expectations on individual achievement, which can influence adolescents' self-evaluation. This observation aligns closely with the findings reported by Tripathi (2018), lending additional support to the present study.

7. Overall, the combination of non-significant and significant findings underscores the complex interplay of social, familial, and cultural factors in shaping adolescent self-esteem. While gender may no longer serve as a strong differentiating factor in certain contexts, family environment continues to play a crucial role in influencing the psychological development of adolescents.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. A similar studies can be conducted with on other population.
2. Similar studies can be conducted with larger sample size to obtain more comprehensive and generalizable results.
3. Future research may include adolescents from different socio-economic, cultural and geographical backgrounds for better comparison.
4. Longitudinal studies can be conducted to understand how self-esteem develops and change over time during adolescents.
5. Future researchers may also explore the influence of factors such as social media, peer pressure, and family dynamics on adolescents' self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of self-esteem in the contemporary globalized world, as it plays a vital role in shaping adolescents' ability to adapt to changing situations, develop problem-solving skills, build cultural awareness, and achieve personal as well as academic growth. The primary objective of the research was to examine the level of self-esteem among school-going adolescents in Kamrup (Metro), and the findings obtained were found to be satisfactory in relation to the objectives of the study. The results indicate that strengthening self-esteem is essential for the healthy development and well-being of adolescents.

Based on the findings, several measures can be suggested to enhance self-esteem among adolescents. Parents and teachers should provide encouragement, emotional support, and constructive feedback to help adolescents develop confidence in their abilities. Schools should create a positive and inclusive learning environment where students are given opportunities to participate in academic and extracurricular activities. Guidance and counselling services can also help adolescents manage stress, overcome personal difficulties, and develop a positive self-concept. In addition, promoting open communication, recognizing individual achievements, and encouraging participation in decision-making and skill development activities can further help adolescents build a stronger sense of self-worth and confidence.

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