

## DEPRESSION AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM AND ITS INFLUENCES ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

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**Abstract:** *Often we know what to do to create a good image for the people around us, but it is much harder to convince ourselves to have a good opinion about us. And this, sooner or later, shows in how we relate to the world and how we relate to others.*

*The child's low self-esteem is determined mainly by how parents saw their child. If the father or mother have not valued their child, when the child becomes adult he/she will underestimate his/her qualities and will only see the flaws. In this way the person can develop some inferiority, disability, culpability complexes and can get to hate himself/herself, to speak badly of himself/herself.*

*Self-esteem is a key factor for success in life, because self-esteem or how we see ourselves, how we see our skills and talents, our thoughts are transformed into actions that condition who we are and what we live.*

**Keywords:** *Self-esteem, underestimate, inferiority*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is how we evaluate ourselves in relation to our own expectations and to others and is directly proportional to the awareness of our value.

Every human being is unique and has a value that deserves to be respected. The value of a human being is the sum of its past, present and future behaviours, actions and potentialities. The capacity of a human being to project itself into the future, to be aware of, desire and anticipate its becoming by referring to past experiences and successes and its belief about its own efficacy contribute to strengthening self-esteem.

### 2. SOCIAL MALADJUSTMENT

Some researchers share a "bleak" vision on people with low self-esteem. According to this vision, people with low self-esteem possess a wide range of impaired cognitive, affective, motivational and behavioural patterns leading to social maladjustment. Such individuals evaluate themselves negatively in most areas, readily accept negative feedbacks about themselves, experience a variety of negative emotions, are prone to anxiety and depression, adopt ineffective strategies when facing obstacles. Research has shown that teenagers with low self-esteem are prone to delinquency, drug abuse, unsafe sexual practices, often have suicidal ideas and behaviour .

Moreover, low self-esteem is involved in a number of mental illnesses that require psychotherapeutic intervention and assistance. According to more "optimistic" researchers, people who have low self-esteem are characterized primarily by being

cautious and insecure without necessarily being social misfit. In fact, such persons have behavioural styles oriented towards minimizing exposure of personal deficiencies.

The concept of self of such persons is often confused, uncertain and rather neutral than negative. Empirical studies indicate that people with low self-esteem acknowledge to possess certain positive aspects of self and engage in some forms of protection of self, only when they feel safe to do it. In whole, the above researches show that people with low self-esteem are not some social misfits who loathe themselves inevitably engaging in self-destructive behaviours.

Like in the previous section we can ask which of the two visions on people with low self-esteem is the correct one? In answering this question, indicating that the studies presenting people with low self-esteem as cautious and insecure ("optimistic" vision) were performed mainly on groups of students while the studies that adhere to the "bleak" vision of low self-esteem subjects were performed on children, adolescents and special participants (drug addicts, juvenile delinquents, patients that were under psychotherapeutic treatment) will help.

It may be that the persons who, beyond having low self-esteem, came to graduate from a college, use effective social integration strategies. It is also possible that only a small number of persons with very low self-esteem reach severe social maladjustment.

*Self-esteem and affective reactions when facing failure:*

Studies have shown that, when facing failure, low self-esteem persons have negative emotional reactions much deeper than the persons with high self-esteem in identical situations. Humility, lack of motivation, shame, are just some of the typical emotional reactions they experience. The downside is that low self-esteem persons are not prone to self-complacency error: they are less able to find the cause of failure as it lies outside. They usually assume responsibility for their failure, blaming themselves for lack of sufficient effort, of required skills etc.

Why? One of the possible explanations is that unlike high self-esteem persons those with low self-esteem believe that particular failures negatively impact global self-assessment, that these failures can be representative.

Due to this belief, when they fail, they come easily to find that they are stupid, incompetent, and generally unable to do anything right. These reflections amplify the negative affective reaction (otherwise normal in case of failure) often demoralizing them and causing them to "let their hands down."

The human individual becomes personality because it is hereditarily endowed with a native human potential that can be achieved, developed and creatively harnessed by social learning, socialization, personal and psychosocial activities.

The personality as a system includes all the attributes, traits, structures and values of the human being and that manifest unitarily in the person's social or interpersonal statuses and roles, especially in terms of temperament, skills and character.

Knowing the temperament types and attributes of students by their teacher has an important relevance for the proper conduct of the training-educational activity, for establishing appropriate socio-educative relationships between teachers and pupils, for training and development, for each temperamental profile of positive valuable instrumental, skill and trait structures.

The abilities determine performance both in general and in particular, this influence is felt through the general abilities that hold a decisive role in the area of performance in various fields of activity.

There are major differences between students, not only in terms of temperamental traits and abilities, but also in terms of the attitudinal, psycho-moral character attributes. In the personality system, the character is the relational-value side, the specific spiritual

and attitudinal instance through which the subject relates in terms of evaluation and options to others, to the activity.

The character plays an important role in performance both through personality traits, and through attitudes. A student characterized by a character focused on positive moral values shall endeavour to obtain good results, while a student characterized by a weak character, besides positive moral values, will be focused more on the motivation to avoid failure, obtaining minimal results based on the principle of minimum resistance.

Traits are sometimes decisive in terms of school performance, listing among them: perseverance, tenacity, discipline, and others such as: neglect, inertia, laziness have a negative impact on performances and school performance.

a. knowing the share of factors influencing and/or maintaining low self-esteem leading to depression set in

b. knowing the influence and role of school and teachers in this context

Objectives

Development of the desire for self-awareness, set up of an assertive behaviour and restoring the self-confidence of the students participating in the research project

Establish effective communication relationships

Awareness of the need for extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of the students for better educational and social integration.

Research hypothesis:

This research is based on the following working hypothesis:

Individualized teaching activities, leading to an increase in school performance, self-confidence of students and particularly an increase in their motivation.

An altered self-image leads to decreased school performance.

Positive attitude of the family toward the needs of the teenager leads to an increase of self-confidence, school performance and of the quality of personal life.

The methods used to collect the data were applied in order to know familial factors and pedagogical issues of these students. We applied the observation method, the survey based on a questionnaire

This research started by an initial assessment of the subjects, consisting of:

- analysis of school results in the first semester of the current academic year;
- submission of a questionnaire to the class masters to obtain a psycho-pedagogical profile of each subject;
- submission of a questionnaire to the students to obtain a profile of the ideal teacher;
- submission of a questionnaire to the parents.

The objectives of this initial assessment were:

- identification of the subjects' type of personality;
- knowing the type of relationship between the subject and his/her family;
- identification of the involvement level of the family in the child's educational activity;
- establish the integration and school and social accommodation levels.

Second stage – active intervention period:

• After completing this assessment, a period of active intervention on the subjects followed, through various educational activities in a formal and non-formal program within the school.

• The aim of creating this program was to increase students' adaptability to school environment, their motivation, awakening their interest for knowing and understanding the study subjects.

- The group of this program includes students who, at the beginning of the intervention period showed difficulty in school adjustment and integration, reflected in poor school performance and in general conduct.

During the teaching activities, they failed in understanding the material taught, easily gave up when facing difficulties, they followed on in error, had a reduced task forecasting capacity and were coping increasingly harder with the requirements. The third stage, the completion period, aimed at highlighting whether there have been improvements compared to the initial condition of the subjects or not.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Teenagers are evaluated on a wide range of dimensions differing in personal relevance. Self-esteem can take the form of a global self-assessment or a specific self-assessment. The global self-esteem refers to the extent to which the individual likes, values and accepts himself/herself. Self-esteem is different from self-confidence: the first refers to affectivity, the second to cognition. People with high self-esteem are not even remotely the same: some have a defensive self-esteem being motivated by achieving and maintaining social approvals while others are relatively calm when facing a certain failure. Self-esteem has a component that is conscious (explicit self-esteem) and a hidden one, unconscious, and unknown to the subject (implicit self-esteem);

Some teenagers' self-esteem is strongly determined by the achievement of some objectives, compliance with certain standards and expectations.

Self-esteem can fluctuate depending on the course of self-assessing events and can even oscillate in very short time intervals.

The various aspects of self-esteem are not necessarily contradictory but rather complementary.

Regardless of which would be the main reasons for the existence of self-esteem it is indispensable for self-control: for behaviour planning, monitoring and correcting.

The educational practices and family environment are particularly important to educate a self-esteem adapted to social life and to individual achievement.

The concept of self and self-esteem are two different dimensions of social self: sometimes the connection between them is very weak, other times it is especially strong but they remain in the architecture of social self as distinct intra-psychic realities.

Self-esteem is how we evaluate ourselves in relation to own expectations and to others and is directly proportional to the awareness of our value. Every human being is unique and has a value that deserves to be respected. The value of a human being is the sum of his/her past, present and future behaviours, actions and potentialities. The capacity of human beings to project into the future, to become aware of, to desire and anticipate their becoming by referring to past experiences and successes and the belief about their own efficacy contribute to self-esteem strengthening.

School performance achieved by a student highlight a certain preparation, maturation and intellectual activation level, they reveal certain development parameters which, in turn, refer to factors and conditions related to both the student's powers and, especially, the components of instructional, educational and environmental models. This is where the curricular and extracurricular environmental dimensions, the dimensions of teacher's personality, intervene and combine with strategies, requirements and information contents selected to be transmitted, the dimensions of student's personality with its mental and motivational structures

Based on experimental data obtained under curricular and extracurricular environments about the students subject to this research, we can find that by creating the

conditions for acquiring adequate learning strategies and a positive, stimulating relational environment, the improvement of school performance can be provided. Individualized training has proved to be an effective instructional technique, being reflected in school results, in attitude toward self and the world.

Action plan:

- Balanced and gradual use of psychotherapeutic and counselling methods for the entire family.
- Development, awakening and strengthening the spirit of observation and cognitive interest.
- Using the child's points of interest as a starting point in raising awareness for better collaboration. Using art therapy.
- Collaboration with the family.

Awareness of colleagues and teachers regarding the problems and needs of the student.

Improved collaboration between the boy's family and school.

Preparing together with the family and the boy of a "schedule" for home.

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