The Influencing Factors on Self-Esteem of Adolescents

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Abstract – Self-esteem in adolescents has a very big impact on how they see themselves, how they value it and the relationships they create. Self-esteem is a general assessment of the value of the individual, which can be expressed positively or negatively towards oneself. Its development begins at birth and continues to change under the influence of experience. During adolescence, self-esteem is directly influenced by the main factor that is the family. The relationship a child builds with parents at birth comes as a result of secure attachment or insecure attachment. The aim of this study will be to analyze the correlation between self-esteem and the main factor influencing self-esteem, which is attachment parenting. This study is based on research questions that have as their main objective the relationship between self-esteem and the factors that affect it, in adolescents. For this purpose, a sample of 90 students aged 15-18 years were randomly selected from the state high school (Zejmen school, Albania). This research is based on quantitative data collection. Two questionnaires were used including the Inventory Parent and Peer Attachment Scale (IPPA) and the self-assessment scale. The results of the study showed obvious links between self-esteem and attachment. The teens showed high self-esteem and a secure attachment with their parents. Attachment turned out to have a significant relationship with self-esteem and the more secure the attachment the higher the self-esteem would result. Regarding the gender differences between girls and boys in the level of self-esteem, no significant differences were found.

Keywords – Adolescence, Self-Esteem, Attachment, Parent, Gender

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is usually considered a critical period for the development of self and identity. During this stage, adolescents usually experience significant changes in their physical, cognitive, and social functioning [1]. Adolescence is a period in which there are many dramatic changes, and as a result of such changes an individual's perception of the world is changed. It is well documented that there are many 'ups and downs' during this period [2]. One of the most important concepts during adolescence is that of self-esteem [3]. Interaction with other people is important for a teenager and plays a vital role in developing self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to a developed attitude about one's personality [4] and is an important factor in guiding behavior throughout various aspects of life. Self-esteem is a construct within psychology that has been linked to almost every other psychological concept or domain, including personality and behavioral concepts. This complex concept continues to be one of the most studied concepts in psychological and educational research. Self-esteem has also been conceptualized as a key factor in many other related terms such as

our self-concept, self-efficacy, self-worth, self-respect, and self-image. Self-esteem is also considered as the individual's global positive and negative feelings towards himself [5]. Individual variables such as gender have been shown to play important roles in determining adolescent self-esteem trajectories [6]. Gender has been studied to influence changes in self-esteem during the early teenage years. Girls consistently experience steeper declines than boys in their levels of self-esteem [7]. Many studies show that there is a strong connection between self-esteem and attachment to the parent. Attachment is an innate need to create strong and stable bonds between the baby and the parents, the quality of which accompanies him throughout his life and deeply affects every aspect of the cognitive, socio-emotional, physical development of the individual. From literature two attachment patterns are identified: secure and insecure (anxious, avoidant, ambivalent, disorganized) [8,9]. The type of relationship that is established between parent and child is influential in all subsequent developmental stages on the basis of which individuals develop their relationships with themselves and others through their attachment history.

During the transition of individuals from childhood to adolescence, changes are noticed in the attachment relationships with parents, losing their position as the primary attachment figure, and the relationship with peers begins to take more space, becoming more important. While an expansion of the social circle is observed during adolescence, relationships with peers play an important role in the development of self-esteem. The support of close friends positively affects the self-esteem and psycho-social adjustment of the adolescent [10]. Studies show that teenagers who have a secure attachment to their parents have positive relationships with their peers, have higher levels of self-esteem and success in various fields, such as stable academic achievements. For this reason, there was a need to study the impact of attachment with parents, how these relationships affect the self-esteem of teenagers, as well as to enrich the knowledge and literature on the importance of this relationship in the Albanian context. The study is based on quantitative research that investigated self-esteem and attachment to parents in adolescents. It was carried out in the "Zejmen United High School" of the Lezhë District, where 90 teenagers from the first, second and third years of this high school for the academic year 2020-2021 were included as study samples.

The purpose of the study is to identify self-esteem, and the attachment of adolescents to their parents and examine the relationship between them. Despite the importance of parent-child attachment relationships for adolescent self-esteem, it is still an open question whether and to what extent parent-child attachment relationships uniquely contribute to adolescent self-esteem. Self-esteem is defined as a general assessment of the individual, expressed in a positive or negative orientation towards oneself, is a component of the self-concept defined as 'a set of individual thoughts and feelings about oneself'. Self-esteem is defined as a stable sense of self-worth.

Self-esteem was described as a basic human need, part of the life process, necessary for the normal and healthy development of the individual and vital for his survival [11]. Self-esteem includes an individual's thoughts, feelings, and actions. Self-esteem was defined as part of our personality, where different life challenges affect the growth, formation and development of our success [12]. During different age periods, the child becomes aware of his skills and practical skills, such as: motor skills, artistic skills, performance skills. Achieving awareness of what we are capable of doing and accomplishing is influential in strengthening and forming our self-concept and self-esteem. Self-concept is our image of who we are, what we want to be, and what we should be.

Self-esteem is an essential component of self-awareness. It occupies a central place in the structure of the adolescent because it is related to mental health and the determination of life goals [13]. The processes related to the formation and development of self-esteem determine the perimeter of the relationship between the adolescent and the surrounding world and contribute to the development of their competences and the quality of the activities performed. These processes should not be random, they should be carried out in a subtle and calm way so that the teenager can build an appropriate and healthy self-esteem. The more true and realistic the adolescent's self-esteem, the better his functioning will be [14].

As children grow through developmental stages, their self-esteem changes in accordance with the successes they achieve in areas they consider

valuable [15]. At school age, children's feelings of industry and pride require them to succeed in schoolwork. If school-age children are neglected and restricted by teachers or parents, a sense of inferiority will affect their future performance and they may not reach their potential. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to help the child develop adaptive skills and strategies that enable the child to approach mastery [16].

According to the theory of symbolic interaction, self-esteem is perceived from the moment when the individual first meets society's views of him, therefore, the opinion and evaluation of others towards the individual and especially those important others significantly affect his self-esteem. In an attempt to clarify who is considered important to others in a person's life, is concluded that in order for a person to be considered important, he or she must have a positive opinion of that person. , which would be valid [11]. A valid opinion according to him is considered when this person is outstanding in terms of his level of knowledge, so that his opinion is identical to others and is based on his social role, therefore it is clear that evaluations of these individuals have a decisive effect on the development of self-concept [16].

As the main and primary factor that affects the life of a teenager is the family, since it has the greatest interaction with it since birth. Regarding the importance of the family, it should be noted that teenagers who live in traditional nuclear families have higher self-esteem compared to teenagers who live in single-parent families and have faced their parents' divorce in the past. Adolescent support from parents, as expressed through appreciation, interest, or assistance provided to the adolescent, makes the occurrence of adolescent depression less likely, contributing to the creation of a level of social support from teachers is also very important, as for many teenagers the defining event of school life revolves around their relationship with their teacher. Positive experiences of students are associated with intimacy, support from their teachers [15,16]. Self-esteem is defined as the overall self-image. It's about trust, acceptance, respect, and self-esteem. Self-image, which is the way you perceive yourself, and self-knowledge, i.e. realistic or unrealistic knowledge of your own capabilities and qualifications, complement each other in the development of self-esteem. It is divided into high or low self-esteem depending on the belief that the person adopts about himself.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The object of this paper are the teenagers of the city of Lezha, represented by the classes of the gymnasium "Zejmen United High School". High school students were randomly selected. In total, 90 high school students were surveyed. In order to correctly select the study population, the principle that the data must be representative and protect the interest of the study is defended. The quantitative method will be used in the study, the study population consists of high school students "United Zejmen High School", specifically 90 students. The population includes: a) the age group from 15 to 18 years (middle adolescence); b) includes both girls and boys, but it should be noted that the gender distribution is uneven with about 56.7% women and 43.3% men; c) includes an educational level, secondary education. 90 students were selected as a sample for the study. The sample of the study was selected through random sampling, a probabilistic method, where the selection is made on a group basis (making the selection with groups of students), a method which is highly recommended to be used in cases where the general population of the study is not very large and the information about all members of the population are more accessible. Considering that a total of 90 students were needed, it was thought that two parallels are sufficient to identify self-esteem and attachment to parents among teenagers aged 15-18 years.

First, the total number of the study population was calculated, which turned out to be 600 total of all students. Based on the total number of the study population, the number of the required sample was calculated according to the orientation table where for a population of 600 people it turns out that a sample of 90 is needed with an error (confidence interval) of +/-5% at the 95% confidence level. In total, 90 high school students were surveyed, given that the total number of teenagers enrolled in the Zejmen United High School is 90, and 15% of them corresponds to the number 90. 15% of all teenagers in high school were taken, given that in order to have scientifically acceptable representative data for a quantitative study, it is useful to include in the study at least 15% of the entire population where the phenomenon is studied [12].

A descriptive, correlational and predictive approach is combined. The quantitative study consisted in the use of questionnaires, which were applied to teenagers and which measure the level of self-esteem as well as attachment, where the obtained values are used to measure correlations, associations, differences, the predictive power of variables and the ability discriminant of measured constructs. To analyze the data we used IBM SPSS 25 statistics.

In the study, questions were used which were constructed with the Likert scale. Based on this fact, we used Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient to see the internal consistency of the instruments. 10 individuals were surveyed in the pilot phase and for the entire sample 90 individuals who responded according to the Likert scale.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients of the questionnaires for the scales used in the measuring instruments

Questionaire	Cronbach's Alpha n=10	Cronbach's Alpha n=90	Questions no.
Parental atachment	.884	.866	28
Self-esteem	.764	.780	10

The reliability coefficient of the questionnaires used in the study is greater than 0.7, which is the lower limit accepted by the literature for the validity of the questionnaires. This shows that the questionnaire was understood by the users and we have no problem with the reliability of the data. The method used to collect the survey data is the structured, direct method of collecting the required data using questionnaires. Questionnaires are one of the most common techniques for collecting empirical data and offer the possibility of their easy processing using statistical software programs, such as SPSS. Each person is asked to answer the same set of questions, which are in a predetermined order. In addition, questionnaires are very practical and provide a very efficient, systematic and rapid way to collect responses from a sample of participants, much wider than any other technique allows. The questionnaires were anonymous and the students' personal data were kept confidential. Students participated in the research voluntarily. In order to ensure the maximum final response rate to the research, the completion of the questionnaires with the physical presence of the researcher was used, from where the required instructions for completing the questionnaires were given and the purpose of the research was reported. The students who participated in the research completed the questionnaires in their school classes, during the lessons, with their consent and with the permission of the teaching teacher and the school principal. The average time it took students to complete the questionnaires - after being given the necessary clarifications first - was twenty-five minutes.

Inferential statistics are considered statistics that allow us to generalize the results to the entire population. Non-parametric analyzes/tests (based on the data normality test) occupied the largest space within the analyzes to test the study's hypotheses. Initially, correlation analysis (Pearson correlation coefficient) was applied to determine the direction / relationship between the study variables. The determination and description of the correlations between the variables in this study is based on the descriptions on the explanations of the connections, the directions based on the correlation values [8]. Pearson correlation which is used to measure statistical dependence, strength and direction between two variables. The range of correlation coefficients is presented as follows +1 positive correlation (strong positive relationship between two variables) 0 no relationship (no relationship between two variables) -1 negative correlation (strong negative relationship).

The study instruments were two structured questionnaires, which were used as part of the study's measurement instruments for data collection. Previously, the first introductory part for both questionnaires contained demographic data, where the participants provided data on their age, gender, direction of studies, place of residence (urban, rural), data which in the context of independent variables, are important for study hypotheses and comparisons between study variables.

The measuring instruments of the study include: The self-esteem scale and the Inventory of Parent-Peer Attachment (IPPA).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Demographic data by gender and age group

		N	%
Age	15 years	8	8.9
	16 y	38	42.2
	17 y	34	37.8
	18 y	10	11.1
	Total	90	100.0
Gender	Female	51	56.7
	Male	39	43.3
	Total	90	100.0

Ages from 15 to 18 years old participate in the study, respectively 15 years old with 8.9%, 16 years old with 42.2%, 17 years old with 37.8% and 18 years old with 11.1%

Out of 90 respondents, 43.3% are men and 56.7% are women. Descriptive data of parental attachment resulted in an average (M=3.82, ds=.55). The attachment style has 3 scales, specifically the degree of trust with an average (M=4.02, ds=.58), the degree of communication (M=3.69, ds=.67) and the degree of isolation with (M=3.72, ds=. 82)

Table 3. Level of Parental Attachment

	n	%
Insecure attachment	1	1.1
neutral attachment	51	56.7
High /secure attachment	38	42.2
Total	90	100.0

Based on the scoring level, it results that we have 1.1% insecure attachment, 56.7% neutral attachment and 42.2% secure attachment

Table 4: Descriptive data of self-esteem

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-esteem	90	6.0	30.0	21.76	5.24

The table above presents the descriptive data of self-esteem, which results in an average (M=21.76, ds=5.24) that falls at an average level. The minimum value is 6 points and the maximum is 30 points.

Table 5: Level of Self-Esteem

	n	%
low	6	6.7
medium	58	64.4
high	26	28.9
Total	90	100.0

Based on the scoring level, it turns out that we have low self-esteem with 6.7%, medium with 64.4% and high with 28.9%

Table 6. Pearson correlation between parental attachment and self-esteem

		Parental attachment	Self-esteem
Parental atachment	Pearson Correlation	1	**.363**[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	90	90
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	**.363**[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	90	90

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To see if there is a significant relationship between parental attachment and self-esteem we used the Pearson correlation. From the table above, we see that there is a statistically significant relationship between them (p≤.01). There is a significant positive correlation of parental attachment with self-esteem (r(n=90)=.363, p≤.01). The result shows that as the level of attachment increases, so does the level of self-esteem.

Table 7. Regression of the relationship between parental attachment and self-esteem

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	8.657	3.622		2.390	.019
Parental atachment	3.430	.939	.363	3.654	.000

$F=13.355, R^2=.132$

To see the measure of the effect of parental attachment on self-esteem, we used simple linear regression analysis according to the following model:

Self-esteem =□0+ □1*parental attachment+ εt

Self-esteem - dependent variable;

Parental attachment - independent variable;

□0–constant coefficient;

□1- coefficient of parental attachment

εt - the error coefficient;

The model. We note that R Square as a coefficient of determination shows a value of .132. This shows that 13.2% of the variance of self-esteem is explained by the parental attachment variable.

Self-esteem has a significant positive relationship with parental attachment (ß=3.430), since the t-statistic in absolute value is greater than 2. (t=3.654) or if we will see the significance p its value is presented (p=. 000<.05). Parental attachment increases self-esteem by 36.3% (Beta=.363).

In conclusion, we say that the hypothesis is confirmed. Relationship in the family (secure attachment in childhood) has a significant positive relationship with high self-esteem in teenagers.

Table 8. T-test of differences in mean self-esteem by gender

Gender		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	P
Self-esteem	Female	51	22.55	5.00	1.659	101
	Male	39	20.72	5.43		

To see if there are significant differences between genders in terms of the level of self-esteem, we used the T-test. From the table above, we see that there are no statistically significant differences between genders as the p value is greater than .05.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the relationship between self-esteem and attachment in adolescent girls aged 15-18 years at Zejmen United High School. The sample included in the study consisted of teenagers from the Lezhë District, among whom 56.7% of respondents were female and 43.3% were male. Their age group varies in four groups: 8.9% age group 15 years old, 42.2% age group 16 years old, 37.8% age group 17 years old and 11.1% age group 18 years old. The data analysis shows that about 64.4% of teenagers have medium self-esteem, 28.9% have high self-esteem and 6.7% have low self-esteem. The prevailing level of self-esteem among teenagers was medium self-esteem. Adolescents have managed to collect an average of 21.76 points regarding their self-esteem (the minimum value is 6 points, the maximum value is 30 points). Regarding gender differences, we note that there is no statistically significant difference in the average value of self-esteem points, since we used the T test and it turned out that p greater than 0.5, between women and men, despite the fact that women have collected more points high regarding their self-esteem. What we need to emphasize is that self-esteem shows a decline during the phase of early adolescence in both sexes, regaining the rise and stability of self-esteem and self-concept during late adolescence. The lack of studies proving higher self-esteem in women than in men should be taken into account. Although as we have mentioned above, the results do not show any relatively big difference between the two genders. Our cultural context is a factor we must consider in explaining gender differences in self-esteem. Females and males are raised with defined gender roles, which are ingrained and reinforced in individuals from early childhood, continuing throughout life. Traditionally, boys in our society have been brought up to express their strong side, to hide their feelings, while women have been encouraged to be feminine, tolerant, and sensitive. However, social developments in recent years have influenced the change of traditional roles. Women make up the highest percentage of students in high schools and

universities, pursuing a successful professional career, which has influenced their empowerment, self-concept, and a high and healthy self-esteem. What is essential is that gender role identity affects an individual's self-esteem, self-concept, and individual development.

From the findings of the study regarding parental attachment, we notice that teenagers have achieved relatively high scores. If we refer to the results of table 4, about 42.2% of the sample results with high attachment to parents, 56.7% results with medium attachment and about 1.1% of the sample with low attachment. From these results we can understand that the relationship of teenagers with their parents is characterized by a secure attachment. Regarding the three component subcategories of attachment to parents (trust, communication, isolation), we note that trust in parents is higher than communication and isolation with parents. Referring to the differences in average values presented in table 3, trust in parents with an average of 4.02, communication with parents with 3.69 and isolation from parents with 3.72 respectively results. Based on the findings of the study, teenagers show a safe and healthy relationship with their parents. The correlation between attachment to parents and self-esteem is statistically very significant. Data analysis and the application of the Pearson correlation ($r=0.363$, $p\leq.01$) show that there is a statistically significant relationship between attachment to parents and self-esteem. Consistent with previous findings, the results of our study suggested that attachment to parents significantly influences adolescent self-esteem. These findings support the fact that adolescent self-esteem emerges with a strong belief and assertiveness toward the adolescent. Studies have consistently shown that secure attachments to parents are associated with positive self-representations, which include high levels of global self-esteem and self-efficacy.

The analysis about self-esteem shows that 64.4% of teenagers have a medium-high self-esteem. Regarding the demographic variable, it turns out that: women have more points than men, even though it turns out that there was no very big difference between the sexes. Adolescents of Zejmen secondary school have a secure attachment with their parents. Specifically, about 42.2% of teenagers have a secure/high attachment to their parents and about 56.7% have a neutral attachment. The parent-adolescent relationship is characterized by a high level of trust, unlike communication and isolation among adolescents in the 15-18 age group. According to the relationship between the variables (self-esteem-parental attachment), the findings showed a very strong and significant correlation between adolescent self-esteem and parental attachment. The study also showed that teenagers end up with a generally secure attachment to their parents and a healthy normal self-esteem. The relationship of teenagers with their parents is characterized by a relationship of trust. Attachment to parents was found to be strongly positively related to self-esteem. The results of the study show that attachment relationships with parents are important in the successful and healthy development of the adolescent. Secure attachment to parents reflects high self-esteem in 15-18 year old teenagers at Zejmen United School.

Recommendations

This study aims to deepen the knowledge on the attachment of teenagers to their parents and their self-esteem. Based on the findings we have concluded some important recommendations for parents and teenagers.

From the findings, we have presented some recommendations for parents: First, parents should understand and become aware of the ongoing importance of their relationship with their teenage children. It is good for parents to be cautious about teenagers' autonomy and not take it as a rejection of them. Second, parents are recommended to constantly encourage teenagers to take initiatives and explore their environment, which would influence the growth of their self-esteem. Thirdly, it is important to recognize the factors that influence the low self-esteem of the teenager and at the same time to emphasize the achievements and skills of the teenager apparently.

Recommendations for teenagers: First, it is recommended that teenagers focus mostly on their abilities to start recognizing their strengths, by participating in activities, contests, competitions, etc. Second, it is recommended to stop thinking negatively about themselves. Each individual is special in his own way. Third, they should try new things by investing time with peers and things that make them feel good. Fourth, learn what they can change and accept the things they cannot change.

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