

DIFFERENCES IN SELF-ESTEEM OF ORPHAN CHILDREN AND CHILDREN LIVING WITH THEIR PARENTS

The current research investigated differences in self-esteem of orphan children and children living with both parents in their homes. The sample was composed of 150 children (75 children from orphanages and 75 living with both parents in their homes). Non - probability purposive sampling technique was used. Children living with both parents were drawn from different private schools and orphan children were drawn from orphanages of Lahore city of Pakistan. *Jonathan Berent's Self-esteem Scale (1994) was individually administered to all the research participants. The author of self-esteem scale granted permission for its use in the current research. The children in orphanages reported lower degree of self-esteem than children living with their parents ($t = 2.66$, $df = 148$, $*p < .01$). The findings further suggest no significant gender difference in self-esteem of the orphan children and the children living with both parents ($t = -.54$, $df 148$, $p > .05$). The findings of this research will promote our understanding of the personality and self-esteem of children in orphanages and intact homes.

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Introduction

The current research examined the difference in self-esteem of orphan children and children living with their parents. Self-esteem is the feeling of being happy with your character and abilities. It is obvious in a wonderful feeling of inner balance, grounded on self- acceptance and a healthy, comforting self-respect towards you. This is totally different from self-confidence which is deeply rooted in what you believe you can attain (Ameachi, 2007).

Simon and Schuster (1997) define self-esteem as the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness. It may be argued that self-esteem is in fact confidence in the efficacy of our mind and in our ability to think. Simon and Schuster (1997) further suggest that by extension, it is confidence in our ability to learn, make appropriate choices and decisions, and respond effectively to change. It is also the experience that success, achievement, fulfillment, happiness, are right and natural for us.

Mazhar (2004) described that the meaning of self-esteem is a sense of self, the value one puts on self and the worth one attaches to self. In fact, self-esteem is the basic belief about self. Thus, it may be argued that, if one has a positive belief system about one's self, one will have a positive self-esteem. On the other hand, if one views oneself as worthless, one will have a negative self-esteem.

Rogers (1959) described that self -concept has three different components: 1) the view you have of yourself (Self-image); 2) how much value you place on yourself (self-esteem or self-worth); and 3) what you wish you were really like (ideal-self). According to Rogers (1959) high self-esteem refers to positive view of ourselves which tends to lead to confidence in our own abilities; self-acceptance; optimism and not worrying about what others think. On the other hand, lower self-esteem refers to negative view of ourselves which tends to lead to lack

of confidence; desire to be/look like someone else; always worrying what others might think about ourselves.

Maslow (as cited in Boeree, 2006) explained self-esteem in his hierarchy of needs. He described two versions of esteem needs, a lower one and a higher one. The lower one is the need for the respect of others, the need for status, fame, glory, recognition, attention, reputation, appreciation, dignity and even dominance. The higher form involves the need for self-respect, including such feelings as confidence, competence, achievement, mastery, independence, and freedom, that this is the higher form of esteem need; because, unlike the respect of others, once you have self-respect, it's a lot harder to lose.

Twenge (2009) stated that self-esteem has a strong relation to happiness. He argues that the people high in self-esteem claim to be more likeable and attractive; to have better relationships and to make better impressions on others than people with low self-esteem. However, objective measures disconfirm most of these beliefs proposed by Twenge (2009). For example, the Narcissists are charming at first but tend to alienate others eventually. Thus, it may be argued that self-esteem has not been shown to predict the quality or duration of relationships.

Juffer, Marinus and Ijzendoorna (2007) found that adopted children show lower self-esteem than their non-adopted peers. Adopted children are hypothesized to be at risk of low self-esteem. They may endure from the consequences of neglect, abuse and underfeeding in institutions before adoption. They have to cope with their adoptive status which often includes difficulties associated with the lack of similarity to their adoptive parents. Additionally, transracial and international adopters may feel less integrated into their family, resulting in low self-esteem. This was equally true for international, domestic, and transracial adoptees.

Litt, Cuskey and Rosenberg's (1982) research findings suggests that high self-esteem and self-efficacy have been

associated with increased compliance with medicine regimens and fewer health problems.

Children with high self-esteem have a much closer relationship with their parents than do children with low self-esteem. (Coopersmith 1967; Gecas & Schwalbe 1986; Kernis 2000)

Felson and Zielinski (1989) stated that there may be a reciprocal effect between parental support and self-esteem among children. The results also showed that parents' supportive behavior, as measured by children's report affects the self-esteem of children but that self-esteem also affects how much support children report their parents give them. Moreover, Felson & Zielinski (1989) found that parents have a greater effect on the self-esteem of girls than of boys.

Kernis, Brown, & Brody (2000) examined fragile self-esteem in children and its associations with apparent patterns of parent-child communication. They found that the children with stable self-esteem as compared to the children with unstable self-esteem reported that their fathers were more critical and psychologically controlling and less likely to acknowledge their positive behaviors or to show their approval in value-affirming ways. Likewise, children with low self-esteem reported that their fathers exhibited these qualities to a greater extent than did children with high self-esteem.

Kallestal, Dahlgren and Stenlund (2000) explored relationship between self-esteem and oral health behavior. A polychromous regression on self-esteem showed that having very poor self-esteem as opposed to good and very good self-esteem was associated with being a girl, not living with one's biological parents, poor social support, having less interest in politics, poor adaptation in school and poor oral health behavior. The results also suggested that being a boy, choosing statements reflecting less exemplary behavior and being less well adapted in school increased the risk of having poor oral health behavior as did ethnic group affiliation and having poor self-esteem. Thus, the review of literature and relevant researches suggest that self-

esteem is a crucial variable in the personality development in the children.

Lanz, Iafrate, Rosnati and Scabini (1999) found that there are some differences in parent-child communication and in adolescent's self-esteem among adoptive, separated and intact non-adoptive families and to examine the extent to which parent-child communication is related to adolescent self-esteem in the three types of families. The findings of this research showed that adolescents from separated families have more difficulties in their relationships with both the mother and the father than their peers and that the adoptive children perceive a more positive communication with their parents than biological children. Moreover, adoptees showed lower self-esteem than the other two groups of adolescents.

Methodology

Research design

The survey research design was used in this research.

Sampling technique and sample

Non- probability purposive sampling technique was employed in this research. The sample was composed of 150 children. Out of the total sample, 75 participants were living in the orphanages (37 boys and 38 girls); and 75 participants are living with their both parents (32 boys and 43 girls) at the time of this research. The inclusion-exclusion criteria were: 1) children willing to participate in the current research.2) the age range between 10 - 15 years and 3) the orphans must be living in orphanages for the past 3 - 6 months whereas those children who are living with their parents should not have any history of parental loss by death or divorce.

Instruments:

The following instruments were used:

1. Demographic Information Form
2. Urdu version of *Jonathan Berent's Self-esteem Scale (1994).

Demographic Information Form was used to gather information about age, education, gender, number of siblings and birth order. Jonathan Berent Self-esteem Scale (1994) is a copyrighted instrument to measure the self-esteem of an individual. It was developed by Jonathan Berent. The permission was granted by the author to use and translate this scale in Urdu for the current research project of Prof, Dr Yasmin Nilofer Farooqi on self-esteem. Moreover, this researcher voluntarily participated in this project. The scale was translated into Urdu for the convenience of the participants. The Self-esteem Scale consists of eight statements with four optional responses which measure how highly you value yourself, such as: Always, Sometimes, Frequently, Never. The respondents are directed to pick one of the four optional responses to each statement in order to indicate how much each of the eight statements represents the way they think or feel about themselves during the past three months. There is inverse scoring for all the eight statements. Therefore, the higher score on Self-esteem Scale would indicate lower level of self-esteem; whereas low score would indicate higher level of self-esteem.

Procedure

Formal permission was obtained from Dar-ul-shafqat and Agosh (institute of Minhaj-ul-quran) to draw the sample of orphans from these orphanages. Moreover, formal permission was also obtained from different private schools of Lahore city

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that were Aizar School system, The Chief Academy high school to draw the sample of children living with both parents from these schools.

Before the administration of the Self-esteem Scale, the participants were briefed about the nature and purpose of the study. Rapport was established with the respondents assuring them of confidentiality of their personal information to elicit their true responses. They were assured that their information would be used for research purpose exclusively. A consent form was also obtained from each participant. The Self-esteem Scale was individually administered to all the research participants in order to determine the level of their self-esteem.

Statistics

The SPSS (version 11.5) was used to analyze data. Independent sample t- test was applied to determine the differences in self-esteem of orphan children and children living with their parents.

Results

Table 1 indicates descriptive characteristics of sample by gender. (See Table 1).

The results given in Table 2 indicate that there is significant difference in self-esteem of orphan children and children living with their parents. ($t = 2.66$, $df = 148$, $*p < .01$) The orphan children showed lower self-esteem as compared to the children living with their parents (Mean of the orphan children = 19.26 and Mean of the children living with their parents = 17.8, respectively). (See Table 2).

The results given in Table 3 indicate that there is no significance gender difference in self-esteem of the orphan children and the children living with their parents. ($t = -.54$, $df = 148$, $p > .05$) However, the girls showed slightly more self-esteem as compared to the boys (Mean of boys = 18.37 and Mean of girls = 18.67, respectively). (See Table 3).

The results given in Table 4 indicate that there is significant difference in self-esteem of the boys from orphanages and boys living with their parents. ($t = 2.32$, $df = 67$, $*p < .05$) The orphan boys showed lower self-esteem as compared to boys living with their parents (Mean of the orphan boys = 19.1 and Mean of boys living with their parents = 17.4, respectively). (See Table 4).

The results given in Table 5 indicate that there is no significant difference in self-esteem of girls from orphanages and girls living with their parents. ($t = 1.58$, $df = 79$, $p > .05$) However, the orphan girls showed slightly lower self-esteem as compared to girls living with their parents (Mean of the orphan girls = 19.3 and Mean of girls living with their parents = 18.0, respectively). (See Table 5).

Discussion

The findings of the current research suggest all the orphan children reported lower self-esteem as compared to the children living with their parents probably due to loss of their parents. These findings are consistent with those of the prior researches.

Mohanty and Newhill's (2005) research findings suggest that international adolescent adoptees have lower self-esteem and are at higher risk for developing severe mental health problems and social maladjustment than children of the same age living with their biological families in the general population. Their study also indicated that many international adoptees are confused about their racial and ethnic identity and face difficulties in handling bias and discrimination. They further argue that the international adoptees may have a better adjustment if their adoptive parents are sensitive and appropriately responsive to issues related to their adopted child's race, ethnicity, and culture.

Conclusions

The findings of this research suggest that there is a significant difference in self-esteem of the orphan children and the children living with their parents. The orphan children reported lower self-esteem than the children living with their parents. The findings of this research have implications for understanding the emotional state of mind and personality development of the children living in orphanages as compared to those who are living with both parents.

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Table 1: Descriptive characteristics of the sample by gender (N=150)

Characteristics	Total Sample (N=150)		Orphan Children (n=75)		Children living with both parents (n=75)	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Age:						
10-12	81	54	34	45.3	47	62.7
13-15	69	64	41	54.7	28	37.3
Gender:						
Boys	69	64	37	53.6	32	46.6
Girls	81	54	38	46.9	43	53.1

Note: Freq=Frequency, Percent= Percentage, N=Number of participant

Table 2: Difference in *self-esteem of orphan children and children living with their parents

	M	SD	SEDX	t
Orphan Children (n = 75)	19.26	3.65		
Children living with their parents (n= 75)	39.32	24.56	.54	*2.66

t = 2.66, df = 148, *p < .01

*Level of self-esteem was determined by Scores on Jonathan Berent's Self-esteem Scale (1994). Higher Mean score on Self-esteem Scale indicates lower level of self-esteem.

Table 3: Gender difference in *self-esteem of orphan children and children living with their parents

	M	SD	SEDX	t
Girl (n = 81)	18.67	3.59		
Boys (n= 69)	18.37	3.52	.56	-.54

$t = -.54, df = 148, p > .05$

*Level of self-esteem was determined by Scores on Jonathan Berent's Self-esteem Scale (1994). Higher Mean score on Self-esteem Scale indicates lower level of self-esteem.

Table 4: Difference in *self-esteem of boys in orphanages and boys living with their parents

	M	SD	SEDX	t
Orphan boys (n = 37)	19.1	2.98		
Boys living with their parents (n= 32)	17.4	3.28	.76	*2.32

t =2.32, df =67, *p < .05

*Level of self-esteem was determined by Scores on Jonathan Berent's Self-esteem Scale (1994). Higher Mean score on Self-esteem Scale indicates lower level of self-esteem.

Table 5: Difference in *self-esteem of girls in orphanages and girls living with their parents

	M	SD	SEDX	t
Orphan girls (n = 38)	19.3	4.25		
Girls living with their parents (n= 43)	18.0	2.78	.78	1.58

t= 1.58, df = 67, *p > .05

*Level of self-esteem was determined by Scores on Jonathan Berent's Self-esteem Scale (1994). Higher Mean score on self-esteem scale indicates low level of self-esteem.