

The Development of a Self-Esteem Scale for Children in Pakistan

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Self-esteem is generally construed as an evaluation of one's self-worth; its manifestation however, tends to vary considerably in different cultures. This study attempts to develop a scale for the assessment of self-esteem among school children in Pakistan. A list of 44 items of self-esteem was presented as a self-report measure Self-Esteem Scale for Children, (SESC) to 346 children of 13-15 years old (48% boys and 52% girls) along with Rifa'i Self-Esteem Scale (Rifa'i, 1999). Factor analysis revealed three positive domains of SESC namely; Academic, Self Confidence, Social, and a negative one named Low Self-esteem. The psychometric properties of SESC were found to be satisfactory. The findings are discussed in terms of the structure of the self-esteem within the cultural context. Implications for theoretical construct of this research were also discussed.

Keywords: self-esteem, school children, gender, culture

Self-esteem is considered to be one of an extremely important and most fundamental constructs of psychology. A great deal of research in the role of self-esteem in child development, mental health and adjustment has been carried out throughout the world (Barrett, Webster, & Wallis, 1999; Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987; Leary, 1999; Mayberry, 1990; Zimmerman, Copeland, Shope, & Dielman, 1997). Many researchers considered self-esteem and self-concept as the cornerstone of healthy emotional and social development of children and adolescents (Davis-Kean & Sandler, 2001).

During this transitory period of growth and development, the adolescents redefine themselves in many areas of life and they start paying more attention on themselves and they also tend to develop new roles, new identity and their adjustment to life depends on the how well they acquire skills to fulfill these new demands (Bolognini,

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Plancherel, Bettschart, & Halfon, 1996). Self-esteem is said to have a long lasting impact on almost all aspects of an individual's life from academic achievement (McMullin & Cairney, 2004; Pullmann & Allik, 2008) to suicide, job selection, domestic violence and dissatisfaction with life (MacDonald & Martieau, 2002; McGee & Williams, 2000; Turner, Kaplan, Zayas, & Ross, 2002; Searcy, 2007; Veselska et al., 2009) and internalizing problems including anxiety and depression (Muris, Meester, & Fijen, 2003).

Adolescence is the period marked by several developmental challenges, including changing physical growth, shifting parental control, social and emotional demands, changing role identification, learning of new skills, becoming a member of society, adopting gender related interests, values, activities and so on (Anderson & Olmhausen, 1999; Bos, Huijding, Muris, Vogel, & Biesheuvel, 2010). In this process of gender differences are clearly observable. Schwable and Staple (1991) pointed finger at unequal distribution of opportunities to self enhancement between men and women. Several studies have revealed that girls tend to have lower self-esteem than boys (Chan, 2000; Francis, 1998; Hoelter, 1984; Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992; Kawash, 1982; McMullin & Cairney, 2004). It has also been reported that in males self esteem tends to improve with time while in females it declines (Block & Robins, 1993; Bolognini et al., 1996).

Self-esteem is a phenomenon that is full of controversies. Researchers are still struggling to define the concept of self-esteem conceptually and operationally. Cooley (1902) asserted that the concept that self-esteem was socially determined and emphasized the role of significant others in the development of self-esteem. Coopersmith (1967) operationally defined the term self-esteem as the evaluation a person makes about his or herself. He used various terms to define self-esteem including self evaluation, expression of approval or disapproval. Furthermore, he viewed Self-esteem as a form of self-protection and self defense.

Branden (1969) conceptualized self-esteem as an evaluation a person makes about himself. Kernis (2003) define the concept of optimal level of self-esteem as positive way people feel about themselves. Seracy (2007) describe self-esteem as an individual's overall feelings about self. A review of literature has highlighted the fact that researchers are still struggling to determine the fundamental structure of self-esteem and wrestle with the questions like whether self-esteem is unidimensional or multidimensional, is it a state or trait (Linton & Marriott, 1996), implicit or explicit (Bos et al., 2010). Mruk (1999) put forward the phenomenological theory of self-esteem by

defining this construct as an interaction of two basic components competence and worthiness. Competence as a behavioral component is related to aspiration and success whereas Worthiness an internal feeling based on personal and social values. For him, competence (skillfulness) is easier to observe than worthiness (value system) which is being more experiential and based on subjective experience. According to Mruk (1999) there are four basic types of self-esteem namely high self-esteem (individual having both competence and worthiness), low self-esteem (individual having low competence and feel more worthless), defensive self-esteem or pseudo self-esteem (individual either have high competence and low worthiness or low competence and high worthiness), and lastly medium self-esteem (individual possessing some degree of competence and worthiness).

Mruk (1999) also identified factors that affect the development of self-esteem including parents, social values, personal values, and culture in which an individual lives. There are number of parental factors that significantly contribute to the development and maintenance of self-esteem includes the degree of parental involvement and warmth boost the self-esteem of the child (Coopersmith, 1967; Milvesky, Schlechter, Netter, & Keehn, 2006). Another source of diversity in the conceptualization of self-esteem is the way in which it is construed in different cultures, particularly in the oriental and occidental cultures (Chan, 2000; Luk & Bond, 1992; Wang & Ollendick, 2001). Broadly, the Western cultures are more individualistic in which autonomy, independence, uniqueness are highly desirable attributes, whereas the Eastern cultures, being more pluralistic, tend to reinforce interdependence and conformity (Chao, 1994). These differences are not just semantic but also more profound tendencies to develop different sets of attitudes and behaviors that offer greater congruence with the socially acceptable norms promoting high self-esteem and psychological health. Triandis (1993) maintained that in the collectivist cultures the self is viewed in relation to the in-group and adaptation of the self to fit into a situation. Self is seen more similar to the other members of the group. Cooperation, endurance, self control, and modesty are desirable attributes. By contrast, the individualistic cultures, defined the self as an independent entity and changing the situation to fit the self. Self is seen as achieving personal glory, independence, distinct entity, and being competitive and exhibitionistic.

In Chinese culture humaneness, piety, righteousness, loyalty are some of the attributes that bolster the self (Morris, 1994), defining the individual essentially in relation to others. Western concept of seeking autonomy, independence and a distinct role would be viewed by the

same philosophy as being selfish, undesirable and negative acts. Similar to the Chinese language there is no word for self-esteem in Urdu (the language spoken in Pakistan) either. Some of the Urdu words close to the English expression high self-esteem mean similar to "selfishness", "self centeredness", "egotism", "feeling superior to others", "bragging", "boasting", "overconfident", "arrogant" and so on--all socially undesirable and repulsive. On the other hand, having low self-esteem is equated with qualities like humanity, self negation and selflessness (Wang & Ollendick, 2001). Islamic teachings insists on self-denial, submission to the will of God, predetermination of fate the suffering in this world is preferred to the rewards in the next, greater importance is attached to piety than material and so on (Stewart et al., 1999). Prayers, modesty, humility, conformity all are positive social values that enhance one's status in the eyes of the one who is more religious and value God. Self-actualization and self-realization are anathema to the submission to the will of God. These differences between Eastern and Western conceptualization of self-esteem are not just semantic but they also reflect more profound tendencies to develop a different set of attributes that would offer greater congruence with socially acceptable norms of their respective cultures as a mark of high self-esteem and positive mental health (Boucher, Peng, Shi, & Wang, 2009; Heine & Lehman, 1999).

It should be noted that these different attributes of self-esteem across cultures do not necessarily devalue importance of the role of self-esteem plays in facilitating social and personal development. Mruk's (1999) view that self-esteem (comprising sense of worthiness and competence) is shaped by culture and that the primary caregivers serve as the medium between culture and the child remains valid. One can go further by saying that whatever models and standards of personal beliefs and social values, one accepts to be desirable a concomitant competence would promote adjustment, self-esteem and mental health.

Such differences in cultural evaluation of psychosocial constructs also raise questions about cross cultural comparisons and using scales which are developed in different cultures. The point underlying these questions is that the precise meaning, significance and the relevance of a construct may vary from one culture to another (Gergen, Massey, Gulerce, & Misra, 1996). More specifically, scales developed in the western cultures based on the individuality and uniqueness of an individual may not give comprehensive picture of that culture which promotes collectiveness and interdependence. It would be helpful to start with the *emic* approach for each culture (Berry, 1989) before any comparisons are made. The present research is the first step towards

identifying and measuring components of self-esteem as observed in early adolescent boys and girls in Pakistani culture.

As far as Pakistan is concerned some researchers have been carried out to look at the relationship of self-esteem with other personality variables (Khurshid, 2003). However, very few systematic attempts have been made to develop a culturally and linguistically appropriate scale for measuring self-esteem. Rifai (1999) constructed a scale based on a mixture of qualitative data and translated items of a well established Western scale like Rosenberg Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), this study failed to consider the cultural definition and appropriateness of the concept of self-esteem. There is ample evidence to suggest that self-esteem is an important construct that can have a long lasting impact on the growth and development of adolescents. The above discussion also highlight that the core of self-esteem is determined by cultural values and role expectations. The present study is an attempt to explore the phenomenology of self-esteem in Pakistani culture. This research also aimed to develop a valid and reliable scale for measuring self-esteem.

Method

Phase I: Generation of Items Pool

Taking an emic stance, an operational definition of self-esteem based on Mruk (1999) phenomenological approach was given to twenty school children. In response, most of the twenty children interviewed reported more socially accepted and desired behaviors, religious practices and moral qualities approved by teachers and parents. Some of the attributes elicited in this way were included "telling the truth/ not telling lies", "being a good Muslim", "saying prayers regularly", "being honest", and "being obedient of the teachers or parents" and so on. We attempted to contact some parents but they were not very forthcoming to take part in a research like this. Therefore, it was decided to take teachers as respondents for exploring the phenomenology of self-esteem. The definition of self esteem for the current research is the capacity to feel good about oneself and having the confidence of possessing the required competence (Murk, 1999). In this regard, twenty school teachers including men ($n = 10$) and women ($n = 10$) with minimum of five years' teaching experience were asked to list the characteristics of self-esteem in school children. A list of 63 items was collected which, after linguistic modification, was reduced to 51 items.

Phase II: Establishing the Content Validity

The revised list of 51 items was presented to clinical/school psychologists with at least four years of experience. They were asked to rate each item on a 5 point rating scale indicating the extent to which it reflected the concept of self-esteem in school children.

Based on this data obtained from clinical/school psychologists, items that were not endorsed by at least one third of the experts were eliminated. The list of 44 items that retained was transformed into a self-report measure in which each item was scored by the respondent on a five-point scale (0-4) indicating the degree to which each characteristic was seen as present in the respondents, where 0 mean "Not at All" and 5 means "Very Much". The overall score range would be 0-176. The scale was called Self-Esteem Scale for Children (SESC). It was designed very carefully keeping in mind the user friendliness of the lay out, the font size, clearly written instructions, items and options. In this way, SESC was converted on a 5-point likert type rating scale. The final scale of 44 items was administered on 30 children (15 boys and 15 girls) 5 from each 8th, 9th, and 10th grades respectively. The results revealed that none of the participant found any difficulty in comprehension and understanding any item.

Phase III: Determining the Psychometric Properties of SESC

Sample. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the participants for the research. In the first stage stratified sampling was used to divide the sample into two strata of boys and girls public schools. In the second stage two main strata were subdivided into three strata including 8th, 9th and 10th grades, respectively. At the last stage the sample was collected through systematic random sampling where every 3rd child was selected.

The sample was collected from these three strata. The sample consisted of 346 children including boys (49%) and girls (51%). The age range was between 13-16 years ($M = 14.26$, $SD = 1.24$). The sample comprising 4 boys' and 4 girls' mainstream public schools in highly urbanized area of the city of Lahore. Furthermore, the demographic description of sample with respect to gender and grades are mentioned below in Table 1. Attempt was made by researcher to include equal number of participants with reference to gender and grades.

Table 1

Percentage of the Sample according to Gender and Grades

Variables	Gender		Total <i>n (%)</i>
	Boys <i>n (%)</i>	Girls <i>n (%)</i>	
	170(49)	176(51)	346(100)
Grades			
8	55(32.3)	40(22.9)	96(27.8)
9	61(35.6)	72(40.9)	132(38.1)
10	54(32.1)	64(36.3)	118(34.1)

Table 1 show that there is almost equal proportion of both genders in the sample. Moreover, there are slightly more children from 9th grade (38.1%) as compared to 8th and 10th grades.

Instrument. Rifai's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rifai, 1999) was used to determine the concurrent validity of SESC. This is a 5-point rating scale with 29 items comprising four factors i.e., self-acceptance (11 items), self-competence (6 items), social and physical self-acceptance (7 items), and academic self-competence (5 items) with the internal consistency of .83, test retest reliability of .72, correlation with Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (1965) was found to be .61 (Rifai, 1999).

Procedure. Eight out of the 10 public schools approached agreed to take part in the research and children from grades 8th, 9th, and 10th were tested in groups of 30. The researcher introduced herself to the participants and explained the purpose of the research. The final protocol for testing comprised SESC, RSES, and a personal information form asking for age, grade, and gender. All participants were assured that their information will be kept confidential.

They were instructed in Urdu (National language of Pakistan). It took 20 minutes to complete the final protocol. After completion, each group was given about 20 minutes for any questions, feedback, and debriefing. For establishing the test-retest reliability of the SESC, 20% ($n = 70$) of the sample was retested with one week's interval. After the completion of questionnaires by children, researcher rechecked the filled questionnaire for any unmarked item. At the end, participants were thanked for their cooperation in research.

Results

This section deals with establishing the factorial structure and psychometric properties of SESC.

Factor Structure of School Self-Esteem Scale for Children (SESC)

Principle Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation and Scree Plot was used to explore the factor structure of SESC. Varimax rotation is one of the methods of orthogonal rotation. The basic assumption to use Varimax rotation is to maximize the orthogonality, interpretability, simplification, and maximize the variance of factors. The factor structure obtained through Varimax rotation is unrelated to one another (Kahn, 2006). The number of factors was determined on the basis of Eigen values greater than 1 and Scree plot (Kim & Mueller, 1978). Kaiser-Guttman's retention criterion of Eigen values (Kaiser, 1974) greater than 1 revealed a 6 factor solution for SESC. The six factor solution resulted in over extraction and cross loadings. On the basis on this initial factor solution, subsequent Principle Component Factor Analyses were performed using seven, six, five and four factor solutions with Varimax Rotation and ended up with four factor.

Table 2

Factor Loadings, Eigen Values, and Variance Explained by Four Factors of Self-Esteem Scale for Children (SESC) with Varimax Rotation

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>F1</i>	<i>F2</i>	<i>F3</i>	<i>F4</i>
8	.57	.21	.24	-.29
9	.59	.17	.18	-.18
10	.54	.21	.25	-.16
15	.31	.29	.20	-.20
18	.63	.27	.18	-.15
21	.55	.26	.27	-.21
29	.68	.15	.11	-.11
31	.65	.16	.17	-.20
32	-.36	.22	-.22	.18
37	.75	.17	.16	-.18
11	.21	.42	.21	-.11
17	.22	.38	.22	-.17
19	.25	.42	.24	-.12
20	.14	.63	.22	-.15

Continued...

<i>Item no.</i>	<i>F1</i>	<i>F2</i>	<i>F3</i>	<i>F4</i>
22	.12	.46	.18	.15
23	.21	.44	.24	-.12
24	.16	.58	.14	.21
25	.23	.56	.18	.15
26	.29	.58	.21	-.14
30	.21	.38	.20	.18
35	.10	.51	.10	-.15
1	.28	.21	.35	-.20
3	.11	.28	.43	-.23
4	.24	.19	.51	-.21
5	.16	.22	.53	-.19
6	.15	.22	.59	-.21
13	.21	.19	.36	.13
14	.17	.11	.36	-.14
34	-.29	.16	-.49	.27
39	.22	.24	.51	.15
40	.22	.14	.59	.21
42	.28	.19	.49	.25
43	.15	.21	.35	.20
2	-.24	-.22	-.20	.44
7	-.19	-.21	-.11	.35
12	.10	.22	-.18	.49
16	-.21	-.14	-.26	.34
27	-.25	-.16	-.15	.65
28	.21	.14	.21	.56
33	-.15	.25	-.10	.35
36	-.19	.26	-.16	.41
44	-.27	-.29	.10	.37
Eigenvalues	8.68	2.42	2.25	1.76
Variance	19.38	5.49	5.13	4.01
Cumulative Percentage	19.74	25.23	30.36	34.37

Note. Factor loadings > .30 have been boldfaced. Scoring polarity was changed for all items with negative factor loadings.

Table 2 indicates the factorial structure of SESC. The four factor solution was clearly corresponding to the best approximation of simple structure and yielded the most interpretable results. All those items with factor loadings > .30 were retained in each factor. Table 2 also showed Eigen values, variance, and cumulative percentages for four factors.

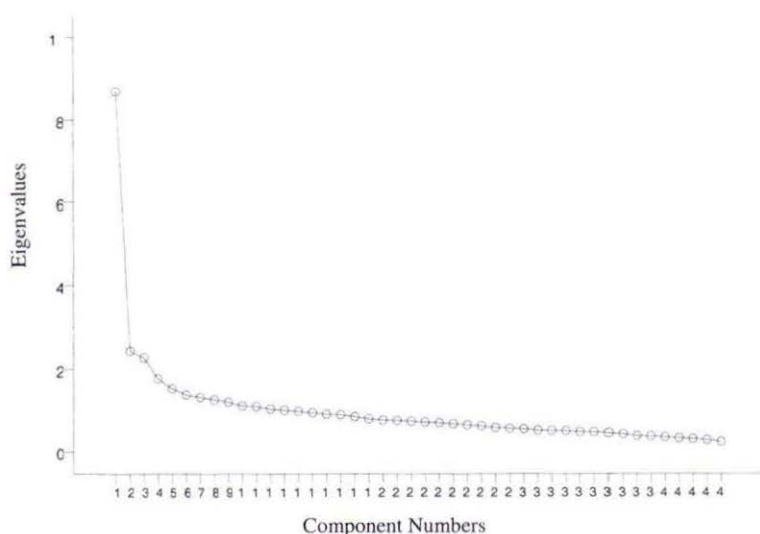


Figure 1. Scree Plot for matrix of 44 Items of SESC through Principal Component Factor Analysis

Scree Plot revealed four factor solution as the best fit (see Figure 1). Items for each factor of SESC were selected on the basis of factor loading equal to .30 or greater (Kline, 1994). A total of 10 items loaded on the first factor. Similarly, 12, 12, and 10 items were loaded on second, third, and fourth factors, respectively.

A descriptive label was assigned to each factor on the basis of commonality of items in the factors namely Academic Self-Esteem, Self-Confidence, Social Self-Esteem, and Low Self-Esteem. The description of four factors is as following:

1. *Academic Self-esteem.* The first factor of SESC comprised 10 items highlights the child's evaluation as a student. Examples include taking interest in studies, being punctual, consider oneself as a good student and being hard working. In this factor higher the score means higher the academic self-esteem. One item was found to be with negative loading, therefore, the scoring polarity has been reversed.
2. *Self-confidence.* The second factor consists of 12 items and is related to the personal self of the individual and evaluation of self in terms of being a good player, being happy, being

satisfied with self. The individual score higher on this factor would have higher self-confidence.

3. *Social Self-esteem.* The third factor comprised 12 items clearly indicates Social self-esteem raised by more acceptable like being helpful to others, the facility to deal with others in accordance with the social norms, showing good manner, being polite, being compliant and trusting. One item was found to be with negative loading, therefore, the scoring polarity has been reversed.
4. *Low Self-esteem.* The fourth factor of SESC was a negative factor indicate the low level of self-esteem comprised of 10 items. Items included in this factor were avoiding people, being critical of others, wasting time, feeling inferior, being big headed, not liking self, and feel disappointment in oneself. The higher score on this factor denotes to low self-esteem.

Psychometric Properties of SESC

To further establish psychometric properties, reliability, and validity estimates and correlations were computed.

Construct Validity. The Cronbach alpha for the total scale was found to be .86. Whereas, all the four scales of SESC were found to be internally consistent with the Cronbach alphas of .86, .78, .72, and .74 for four factors respectively. The detailed results are shown in following table.

Table 3

Cronbach Alphas and Inter-subscale Correlations of SESC

Scales	α	$M(SD)$	SC	SSE	LSE
ASE	.86	31.6(6.15)	.53**	.59**	-.34*
SC	.78	32.4(7.59)	—	.51**	-.30*
SSE	.72	31.6(6.41)		—	-.26*
LSE	.74	9.8(5.57)			—

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$.

Note. ASE = Academic Self-Esteem; SC = Self-Confidence; SSE = Social Self-Esteem; LSE = Low Self-Esteem

Table 3 indicates that a positive correlation was found among Academic Self-esteem, Self-confidence and Social Self-esteem. A

negative correlation was found between Low Self-esteem and Academic Self-esteem, Self-confidence, and Social Self-esteem. Alpha values mentioned in Table 3 ranges from .72 to .86 which indicate the high internal consistency of subscales and scale is considered to be a reliable measure.

Test-retest Reliability. In order to establish the test-retest reliability, 20% ($n = 70$) of the sample was retested with one week's interval. The test-retest reliability was .79 ($p < .001$).

Concurrent Validity. The concurrent validity between SESC and RSES was found to be .60 ($p < .001$) showing that SESC was highly correlated with RSES.

Split-half Reliability. Odd and even method was used to determine the split-half reliability of SESC and results showed that split half reliability coefficient was .81 ($p < .001$) split half reliability coefficients for two equal halves of SESC were found to be .76 and .78 ($p < .001$), respectively.

Gender and Self-esteem

In order to find out the gender differences on self-esteem the t -analysis was computed.

Table 4

Gender Differences on Four Factors of SESC for Boys and Girls

Variables	Gender		$t(344)$	p	95% CI		Cohen's d
	Boys ($n = 165$)	Girls ($n = 181$)			UL	LL	
ASE	26.4(4.8)	24.2(5.7)	3.76	.001	.46	2.88	.51
SC	33.5(6.9)	31.8(7.8)	2.19	.035	-.37	3.17	.32
SSE	30.3(4.9)	28.4(5.6)	3.18	.002	.36	2.79	.35
LSE	10.9(5.7)	10.3(5.8)	1.11	.268	-.58	1.88	.12

Note. ASE = Academic Self-Esteem; SC = Self-Confidence; SSE = Social Self-Esteem; LSE = Low Self-Esteem; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit

Table 4 shows that boys and girls are significantly different on Academic Self-esteem, Self-confidence, and Social Self-esteem. Boys are significantly higher on these three factors than girls and nonsignificant difference was found on Low Self-esteem.

Grades and Self-esteem

In the present research three different educational levels were selected including 8th, 9th and 10th. In order to investigate the mean difference of three educational levels on four factors of Self-esteem Scale for Children (SESC), Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out. Furthermore, in order to test each class wise difference was also found by using Post Hoc LSD Tests.

Table 5

One Way Analysis of Variance for Four Factors of SESC across Grades

Variables	Grades						F	p
	8 th		9 th		10 th			
	(n = 115)		(n = 115)		(n = 116)			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
ASE	32.38	5.39	32.93	6.42	29.42	6.03	11.57	.001
SC	33.68	7.29	32.03	8.27	31.57	7.06	2.47	.086
SSE	36.49	6.30	35.95	7.02	33.09	5.33	9.85	.001
LSE	9.56	5.42	9.60	6.17	10.27	5.08	0.61	.547

Between groups $df=2$; within group $df=343$, groups total $df=345$

Note. ASE = Academic Self-Esteem; SC = Self-Confidence; SSE = Social Self-Esteem; LSE = Low Self-Esteem

Results in Table 5 showed significant differences among 8th, 9th, and 10th grades on Academic Self-Esteem and Social Self-esteem. Children of 8th and 9th grades were significantly higher on Academic and Social Self-esteem than 10th grade ($p < .001$), nonsignificant differences were found among three grades on other two factors of SESC i.e., Self-confidence and low Self-esteem. In higher grades children are expected to do more hard work so their academic self-

esteem matters a lot as compared to the rest of other domains of self-esteem.

Discussion

Self-esteem is a construct that relates to the social and emotional development of children and adolescents. Self-esteem has been defined differently by different researchers, (e.g., Kernis, 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Rosenberg, 1979). These differences have emerged with the refinement of the concept of the self and the debates that have ensued as the role of self esteem in the development, mental health and its impact on behavior, present and future was realized. Also, the manifestation of self-esteem was seen as behaviors and attitudes conditioned by culture. Western and Eastern countries view self-esteem differently and expect different types of behavior (Wang & Ollendick, 2001). While the importance of self-esteem in child development and their role in society remains the same across cultures; the behavioral and attitudinal manifestations may not. It is imperative to see what Self-esteem is in its context; exploring the most appropriate operational definition and the culture-specific way, in which it is manifested, expressed and described. In the Western cultures highly positive view of oneself, overt confidence, success and so are considered highly desirable signs of high self-esteem. The same attributes may be perceived as evidence of arrogance, pride, having superior view of the self, egoism, self-centered approach used to undermine and bully others.

In the present study we took Mruk's (1999) view of Self-esteem as the basis for developing the Self-Esteem Scale for Children (SESC). Mruk conceptualization of self-esteem, comprehensive and concise, comprised two essential components i.e., competence- the behavior or skills that help the individual in achieve success and aspirations in life and worthiness- the attitudinal system that help the person set his/her own value and worth. Mruk (1999) also maintains that the latter is the internalization of attitudes of others towards self i.e., what others view as worthy. His view is easily applicable on the culture and the type of sample it was developed on and its functional view supported by tangible evidence. It would be interesting to see whether adolescents see themselves as worthy or competent but also what helps them thinks so. The present study is an attempt to explore the cultural-specific characteristics of self-esteem in Pakistani young adolescents. As discussed earlier, the cultural variations may influence the way self-esteem is construed, perceived and portrayed (Luk & Bond, 1992; Wang & Ollendick, 2001).

Pakistan is a collectivistic culture, with largely agricultural economy where Muslim religion impacts individual's behavior profoundly. The child rearing practices are traditional where familial loyalties, obedience and conformity to parents and other authority figures are greatly valued and encouraged (Stewart et al., 1999). In Pakistan, like in other Asian cultures, childhood period is somewhat prolonged, dependence on parents is encouraged and children are expected to respect elders (Chao, 1994).

The aim of this study was to discover the relevant domains underlying self esteem and to develop a scale to measure self esteem according to agreed conceptualization. Starting with items explored from experienced teachers and further supported by clinical/school psychologists' opinion, the 44 item SESC scale with appropriate reading level for the youngest of the sample was used as a self-report measure. In line with Davis-Kean and Sandler's (2001) approach the use of direct and simple questions is considered best way to obtain information regarding self from children. The Scale was found to have respectable psychometric properties. The underlying factor structure of SESC revealed four factors, namely Academic Self-esteem, Self Confidence, Social Self-esteem and Low Self-esteem.

It was interesting though not entirely surprising to find that the first factor, the Academic self-esteem, where child evaluates himself or herself essentially as a student. These results exemplify the contextual nature of the way self esteem manifests itself at this age and stage. If self-esteem is defined as a set of worthy attributes promote in the self by competence the sense of achievement in the academic area are the most important desirable feat that would enhance self esteem in school children. This factor reiterates the attitude of the parents, teachers and the society at large, that doing well in studies and being hard working are among the most desirable attributes in a student.

The second factor on SESC is based on the evaluation of self in terms of Self Confidence. Self is seen more in terms of possessing confidence building skills like "being a good player in sports", "being happy", "being confident", "being a sincere friend", "being liked by people", "being satisfied with self", "easily making friends", and so on. Self congruence is also reflected in confidence, happy and being steadfast and perhaps feeling more successful than their mates.

The third factor clearly indicates Social self-esteem raised by more acceptable and sociable behaviors like "being helpful to others", the facility to deal with others in accordance with the social norms, "showing good manners", "being polite", "being compliant",

“trusting”, thus big judged positively by others. In Pakistani culture ‘being respectful to elders and affectionate to children’ are highly desirable qualities adored in children.

The fourth factor was a negative factor one (denoting low self-esteem). It was marked by statements indicating both lack of sense of worthiness and competence resulting sense of inferiority. Items included in this factor were; “avoiding people”, “being critical of others”, “wasting time”, “feeling inferior”, “being big headed”, “laziness”, “not liking self”, “being disappointed in self, and “not having many friends” and so on. The last factor is quite an interesting feature of SESC in that it highlights the negative characteristics that are seen undermining the child’s self-esteem. It showed that children in the sample can consistently differentiate between the positive and negative attributes of self esteem.

The factor analysis has shown that the domains that are found in most studies on self-esteem are present in these results. However, the contents of the positive factors by and large are more often found in pluralistic society, where compliance to the social norms of obedience, conformity, humility and so on are more valued than individualism, personal dynamism, success, and achievement orientation in a more industrialized western society. Doing what is expected of you and doing well will give you high self esteem in the respective cultures (Stewart et al., 1999).

As far as gender difference is concerned, the results of the current research are again consistent with literature (Chan, 2000; Francis, 1998; Hoellter, 1984; Josephs et al., 1992). Boys score significantly higher on these three factors than girls but no significant difference was found on Low Self-esteem. These differences on three dimensions of self-esteem clearly depict the picture of a culture in which girls have fewer opportunities for education and little encouragement for expressing the self. The gender specific role cultural mandates that girls are different from boys and have to play different roles in life. Girls are expected to be modest, shy, diffident, less expressive, and obedient and so on. As a result, they might feel discouraged, worthless and subservient with comparison to boys who have every opportunity for autonomy and independence. Boys and girls were not found to be significantly different on Low self-esteem, this might be because the response bias. Children might have responded in a socially desirable manner.

They are less encouraged and have fewer opportunities than boys to achieve competence in social and interpersonal skills compared with boys. This inequality experienced early on in life is likely result

in a sense of low self-worth and the absence of competence usually persists throughout the lives. It is also important to know that children can sense it at an early age. If we accept that self-esteem is a state rather than a trait and that the important role self-esteem plays in the all round development of the child and continues to exert profound influence throughout the life span (Block & Robins, 1993) then it is incumbent on any society to eradicate this inequity, discrimination and human rights violation of half the population. The concept of the optimum level of self esteem (Kernis, 2003) is quite an intriguing one. Having a level of positive self-esteem commensurate with one skills and social values and to abide by these should be taken as a right offers a more robust self esteem. One's self-esteem does not have to threaten or undermine anyone else's. If it is acknowledged as such this right to optimum level of self esteem is achievable in any society with a little understanding, sensitivity and sense of justice. For positive self-esteem can only help in promoting health, mental health, happiness and well being (Veselska et al., 2009).

As far as the difference in grades is concerned, only significant difference was found among 8th, 9th, and 10th grades on Academic and Social self-esteem. This may be due to the pressure and demands placed upon the children in higher grades. 10th grade is considered to be very critical in the academic life of a child, as in Pakistan, this grade becomes a base for future career. These findings are also consistent with the literature that as the age of an individual increases his or her level of self-esteem decreases (McMullin & Cairney, 2004). Moreover, as the child grows he has more pressures to face and cope may consequently challenge his self-esteem.

Worthiness and Competence would remain the valid theoretical bases for a universal concept of self esteem, the manifestations of which might be different at different times, ages and eras. Our sample in this study comes mainly from Lahore, the second largest city of nearly 15 million people. It would be helpful to understand the concept of self esteem in more diverse populations. Pakistan is a country of 175 millions with 67% of the population living in rural areas to find out how they differ from the urban population would the next logical step.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although this research is only the first step towards studying self esteem while using emic approach and Murk's (1999) phenomenological model that helps in better understanding the phenomenology of self-

esteem in cultural-specific perspective with an indigenously developed scale. Results also support the notion that self-esteem is a multidimensional concept and for this group of school children academic, personal and social domains are the essential part of their self-esteem evaluations. Cultural and family system is important to understand self-esteem related issues. In further studies it is hoped that the scale will continue to demonstrate its ecological validity, sensitivity and specificity in identifying, assessing and modifying the unhealthy trends and effects of low self esteem while remaining respectful to cultural norms. Moreover, in future research, children and parents may also be included as informants and different indirect assessment techniques may also be utilized regarding self-esteem including semantic differential and grid techniques. In further research, a diverse nature of the sample may also be included to study intra-cultural aspects of self-esteem.

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