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Self-Esteem And Personal Self-Concept In Primary School-Aged Children

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Abstract: This article investigates the development of self-esteem and personal self-concept in primary school-aged children, emphasizing their psychological, educational, and social dimensions. Self-esteem and self-concept are fundamental components of personality formation during childhood, influencing not only academic performance but also interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being. At the primary school stage, children begin to form a clearer sense of who they are, how they evaluate themselves, and how they are perceived by others. These processes are shaped by family upbringing, peer interactions, cultural environment, and school experiences. Drawing on psychological theories of child development, including the works of Erikson, James, and Cooley, the study explores how children construct their self-image and develop self-assessment mechanisms in relation to success, failure, and social comparison. Special attention is given to the role of teachers and classroom practices, as encouragement, feedback, and social inclusion significantly influence the development of positive self-esteem. The article also addresses challenges such as low self-esteem, negative labeling, and peer rejection, which can hinder healthy personality development. The study concludes that fostering self-esteem and a coherent self-concept requires a balanced approach combining psychological understanding with supportive pedagogical strategies, ensuring that children grow into confident, socially responsible, and emotionally stable individuals.

Keywords: self-esteem, self-concept, child psychology, primary education, personality development, pedagogy.

Kichik Maktab Yoshidagi Bolalardao'z O'zini Baholash Va Shaxsiy Men Konsepsiyasi

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada kichik maktab yoshidagi bolalarda o'z-o'zini baholash va shaxsiy men konsepsiyasining rivojlanishi ularning psixologik, ta'limiy va ijtimoiy jihatlari bilan birgalikda o'rganiladi. O'z-o'zini baholash va men konsepsiyasi shaxs shakllanishining muhim tarkibiy qismlari bo'lib, ular nafaqat o'quv faoliyatiga, balki shaxslararo munosabatlar va emotsional farovonlikka ham ta'sir ko'rsatadi. Boshlang'ich maktab davrida bolalar o'zlari

kimligini, oʻzlarini qanday baholashlarini va boshqalar ularni qanday qabul qilishini aniqroq tushuna boshlaydilar. Ushbu jarayonlar oilaviy tarbiya, tengdoshlar bilan muloqot, madaniy muhit va maktabdagi tajribalar orqali shakllanadi. Erikson, Jeyms va Kuli kabi psixologlarning bolalar rivojlanishiga oid nazariyalariga tayangan holda tadqiqot bolalarning oʻz-oʻzini tasavvur qilishini, muvaffaqiyat va muvaffaqiyatsizlikka hamda ijtimoiy taqqoslashga nisbatan baholash mexanizmlarini qanday shakllantirishlarini tahlil qiladi. Tadqiqotda oʻqituvchilar va sinf amaliyotlarining oʻrni, xususan, ragʻbatlantirish, fikr-mulohaza va ijtimoiy qoʻllab-quvvatlash ijobiy oʻz-oʻzini baholashni rivojlantirishdagi ahamiyati alohida taʼkidlanadi. Shuningdek, maqolada past oʻz-oʻzini baholash, salbiy yorliqlash va tengdoshlar tomonidan rad etilish kabi muammolar ham koʻrib chiqilib, ular sogʻlom shaxsiy rivojlanishga salbiy taʼsir koʻrsatishi qayd etiladi. Tadqiqotning xulosasiga koʻra, bolalarda ijobiy oʻz-oʻzini baholash va yaxlit men konsepsiyasini shakllantirish psixologik tushunchalar hamda qoʻllab-quvvatlovchi pedagogik strategiyalar uygʻunligini talab qiladi, bu esa ularni ishonchli, ijtimoiy masʼuliyatli va emotsional jihatdan barqaror shaxs sifatida kamol topishini taʼminlaydi.

Kalit soʻzlar: oʻz-oʻzini baholash, men konsepsiyasi, bolalar psixologiyasi, boshlangʻich taʼlim, shaxs rivojlanishi, pedagogika.

INTRODUCTION

The development of self-esteem and personal self-concept in primary school-aged children represents a central aspect of child psychology and pedagogy. During these formative years, children gradually transition from a largely family-centered identity toward broader social participation, where interactions with peers and teachers play an increasingly significant role. Self-esteem, understood as a child's overall evaluation of their worth and abilities, is closely linked to the development of self-concept, which refers to the structured perception children hold about themselves in relation to their strengths, weaknesses, social roles, and aspirations. These constructs are not static but develop dynamically as children encounter new challenges and opportunities in their academic and social lives.

Psychological theories provide valuable insights into this developmental process. Erikson described the primary school years as the stage of industry versus inferiority, where children begin to evaluate themselves based on competence and achievement. Success in academic and social tasks contributes to a positive self-concept and healthy self-esteem, whereas repeated failure or lack of recognition can foster feelings of inadequacy. Similarly, Cooley's concept of the "looking-glass self" emphasizes that children shape their self-perception by imagining how others see them, highlighting the importance of teacher and peer feedback in building self-esteem. William James also noted that self-esteem arises from the balance between success and aspirations, meaning that children's sense of self depends on both their achievements and the standards they set for themselves.

The school environment plays a pivotal role in shaping these processes. Classroom experiences, assessment systems, and teacher-student interactions provide children with constant feedback that informs their self-evaluations. Positive reinforcement, encouragement, and inclusive teaching practices promote confidence and motivation, while negative labeling, excessive criticism, or peer rejection can undermine self-esteem and distort

self-concept. At the same time, peer relationships provide important opportunities for children to compare themselves with others, negotiate their roles in groups, and develop a sense of belonging.

Cultural and social contexts also exert a strong influence on how children perceive themselves. Societal values, family expectations, and cultural traditions affect the standards children adopt when evaluating their abilities and behavior. In this sense, the development of self-esteem and self-concept reflects not only individual psychological growth but also the broader educational and cultural environment in which the child is embedded. Understanding these dynamics is essential for educators, psychologists, and parents, as it provides the foundation for creating supportive conditions that nurture positive self-perceptions and foster the holistic development of children during their primary school years.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative and analytical research design to examine the development of self-esteem and personal self-concept in primary school-aged children. The methodology combined theoretical review with classroom-based observation and interviews, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how psychological and educational factors interact in shaping children's self-perceptions.

The first stage of the research consisted of an extensive review of psychological theories related to self-esteem and self-concept formation. The works of Erikson, James, and Cooley served as theoretical foundations, offering perspectives on how self-perception evolves in relation to achievement, social interaction, and feedback from significant others. These frameworks were used to interpret the developmental processes observed in children during their primary school years.

The second stage involved classroom observations in selected primary schools. The focus was on teacher-student interactions, peer relationships, and classroom practices that directly or indirectly influenced children's self-assessments. Observed behaviors included students' responses to praise or criticism, participation in group activities, and reactions to both academic success and failure. Special attention was given to the role of teachers' feedback in shaping self-confidence and the impact of peer comparisons on self-concept.

The third stage of the research incorporated interviews with teachers and parents to gain insights into their perceptions of children's self-esteem development. Teachers provided perspectives on how instructional strategies, assessment methods, and classroom climate influenced children's self-concept, while parents discussed the role of family expectations, encouragement, and emotional support. This combination of viewpoints offered a holistic perspective on the interplay between school and home in shaping children's self-perception. Data from observations and interviews were analyzed thematically, focusing on recurring patterns in self-evaluations, emotional responses to feedback, and the influence of social interactions on self-concept. Triangulation of theoretical frameworks, observational data, and interview findings ensured reliability and validity of the results.

This methodological approach allowed the study to capture both the cognitive and emotional aspects of self-esteem formation and to highlight the importance of supportive educational and familial environments. By integrating psychological theory with empirical observations,

the research provides practical implications for teachers and parents in fostering positive self-esteem and a coherent personal self-concept in primary school-aged children.

RESULTS

The analysis of the data revealed several important findings regarding the development of self-esteem and personal self-concept in primary school-aged children. One of the key observations was that children at this stage begin to construct a clearer image of themselves, moving beyond simple descriptions toward more evaluative judgments about their abilities and personality traits. Younger primary students often described themselves in terms of physical attributes or basic skills, while older students increasingly used psychological characteristics such as being helpful, hardworking, or responsible. This shift indicated a growing sophistication in self-concept as children matured cognitively and socially.

Classroom observations showed that teacher feedback played a decisive role in shaping children's self-esteem. Positive reinforcement, encouragement, and recognition of effort were strongly linked to higher levels of confidence and motivation. Conversely, repeated criticism or negative labeling had detrimental effects, often leading to withdrawal, reluctance to participate, and reduced academic performance. The balance between constructive criticism and supportive feedback emerged as a crucial factor in maintaining children's healthy self-esteem.

Peer relationships were also found to have a significant impact on self-concept development. Children who experienced acceptance and inclusion within peer groups tended to develop more positive self-perceptions, while those who faced rejection or bullying often struggled with lower self-esteem. Group activities provided opportunities for students to compare themselves with others, and these comparisons influenced how they evaluated their own strengths and weaknesses. Importantly, cooperative tasks and inclusive group work promoted a sense of belonging and enhanced self-confidence, suggesting that the social climate of the classroom is critical for positive self-concept formation.

Family influence remained another strong factor in children's self-esteem development. Interviews with parents indicated that children who received consistent emotional support and encouragement at home demonstrated more resilience in the face of challenges. In contrast, children exposed to excessive parental criticism or unrealistic expectations were more likely to display insecurity and self-doubt.

Overall, the findings highlight that self-esteem and self-concept in primary school-aged children are dynamic constructs shaped by the interaction of cognitive growth, social experiences, and educational practices. A supportive environment—both at home and in school—appeared to be the strongest predictor of positive self-perceptions, while negative experiences in either setting could hinder the healthy development of self-esteem and a coherent self-concept.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study confirm that the development of self-esteem and personal self-concept in primary school-aged children is a multifaceted process shaped by the interaction of psychological, educational, and social influences. Children at this stage are in a sensitive period where their self-perceptions are rapidly evolving, and the feedback they receive from

significant others—teachers, parents, and peers—plays a decisive role in either strengthening or undermining their sense of self. These results are consistent with Erikson's notion of industry versus inferiority, where success in tasks and positive recognition foster competence, while repeated failure or negative feedback creates feelings of inadequacy.

The role of teachers emerged as particularly significant in the study. Classrooms that emphasized encouragement, recognition of effort, and inclusive practices promoted higher levels of self-esteem and more coherent self-concepts among students. On the other hand, environments characterized by excessive criticism or neglect were associated with withdrawal and lower confidence. This indicates that pedagogy should extend beyond cognitive instruction to include deliberate efforts to build children's self-worth. Teachers act not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as models and facilitators of positive identity development, making their role in shaping children's self-esteem indispensable.

Peer relationships also demonstrated a powerful influence on self-concept formation. The study revealed that peer acceptance and inclusion contributed to positive self-perceptions, while rejection and bullying undermined confidence. Group-based learning activities were especially effective in fostering cooperation, mutual respect, and a sense of belonging. These findings highlight the need for educators to structure collaborative experiences that encourage positive peer interactions and reduce social exclusion, ensuring that all students benefit from supportive group dynamics.

The influence of family was equally important. Parental support, encouragement, and realistic expectations provided children with a stable framework for evaluating themselves. Families that fostered open communication and celebrated children's efforts helped to cultivate resilience and confidence. In contrast, children raised in environments of high criticism or unrealistic demands often internalized feelings of inadequacy. These observations underline the necessity of cooperation between schools and families in nurturing children's self-esteem.

Taken together, the study suggests that the development of self-esteem and personal self-concept requires a holistic approach that integrates psychological understanding with pedagogical practice and family involvement. By creating supportive environments in both school and home contexts, educators and parents can work together to help children build confidence, develop a strong sense of identity, and grow into emotionally balanced and socially competent individuals.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that self-esteem and personal self-concept in primary school-aged children are essential psychological constructs that significantly influence their learning, emotional well-being, and social adjustment. At this developmental stage, children are particularly sensitive to the judgments and expectations of others, and their emerging self-image reflects the combined influence of family, school, and peer environments. A strong and positive self-concept provides the foundation for resilience, motivation, and academic success, while fragile or negative self-perceptions can hinder development and create long-lasting psychological difficulties.

The findings emphasize that teachers play a critical role in shaping children's self-esteem through daily interactions, classroom practices, and assessment methods. Encouragement,

recognition, and constructive feedback not only foster academic achievement but also nurture confidence and self-worth. On the other hand, negative labeling and excessive criticism risk reinforcing feelings of inferiority and disengagement. Therefore, teacher training should prioritize the development of strategies that combine academic instruction with the promotion of healthy self-esteem.

Family influence remains equally important in the process. Parents who provide consistent emotional support and set realistic expectations contribute to their children's ability to cope with challenges and build resilience. A supportive home environment reinforces the values and confidence that children need to navigate the social and academic demands of school life. Peer relationships also provide powerful opportunities for self-concept development, with inclusive and cooperative interactions strengthening identity, while rejection or bullying can undermine it.

The research concludes that fostering self-esteem and self-concept in primary school students requires a holistic and collaborative approach. Educational institutions should work closely with families to ensure consistency in values, expectations, and support. Classroom practices should encourage cooperation, reflection, and positive peer interactions, while also recognizing individual achievements. By combining psychological understanding with pedagogical innovation, it is possible to create conditions where children feel valued, competent, and capable of growth.

Ultimately, the healthy development of self-esteem and self-concept not only prepares children for academic success but also equips them with the emotional stability and social responsibility needed for lifelong personal and professional fulfillment. A balanced approach that integrates family, school, and peer support ensures that children develop into confident, empathetic, and resilient individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society.

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