



On the Psychological Significance and Education of Adolescent Self-esteem

Yuze Sun

Victoria Shanghai Academy, Hong Kong, China.

How to cite this paper: Yuze Sun. (2023). On the Psychological Significance and Education of Adolescent Self-esteem. *The Educational Review, USA*, 7(10), 1615-1618. DOI: 10.26855/er.2023.10.030

Received: September 30, 2023

Accepted: October 29, 2023

Published: November 30, 2023

Corresponding author: Yuze Sun, Victoria Shanghai Academy, Hong Kong, China.

Abstract

Suhomlinski, an educator from the former Soviet Union, emphasized that "self-esteem is a highly delicate aspect for young individuals, serving as a potential catalyst for students to advance, a motivating force for progress, an impetus for growth, and a noble and untainted psychological attribute." Today, as we advocate for the education of self-esteem, self-love, self-reliance, and self-improvement among young people, and emphasize the importance of their holistic development, the cultivation and education of self-esteem have become crucial issues. Self-esteem is not only an important aspect of adolescent psychological well-being, but it also influences the development of other qualities in adolescents. Adolescence is a crucial period for the development of individual self-esteem. Self-esteem, as one of the important aspects of personality development, plays a crucial role in shaping children's healthy personality and promoting their social adaptability. The level of self-esteem of an individual should continue to improve as they grow and develop, deepen their socialization, and form their cognitive abilities. The individual's self-recognition and evaluation should become more stable and mature. It is important to understand the factors that influence self-esteem and its development.

Keywords

Teenagers, self-esteem, psychological significance, education, education

1. Introduction

In today's society and a competitive world, daring to take risks, exploring, being good at competition, and being creative are the basic requirements for talent standards in the 21st century. These qualities are closely related to good psychological qualities. It can be seen that mental health education is not only an inevitable requirement of the times for education, but also the core of implementing quality education. Among numerous psychological qualities, the education of self-confidence is particularly important. Some foreign psychologists have tracked and investigated hundreds of adolescents with high levels of intellectual development, similar living environments, and educational conditions. When these surveyed subjects entered the age of displaying results, there were significant differences, some becoming career leaders, while others remained inactive. The research results indicate that an individual's psychological set plays an important role in the process of success. Those who have a more stable inner tendency for self-affirmation have a higher success rate than those who have a more obvious tendency for self-negation. Confidence, as a positive and enterprising internal driving force, its level of development corresponds to the success or failure of the activity. As Vanderbilt said: "A person who is full of confidence, his career is always smooth, and those who have no confidence may never enter the threshold of career". The value of self-

confidence as an important condition for success in adolescent mental health education has been accepted by people from all walks of life.

People are a highly self-regulated system, and all external influences must take effect through self-regulation. Most people direct their behavior based on self-analysis and self-evaluation of their own strengths, and the resulting level of positive behavior is directly related to the effectiveness of activities. In real life, blind confidence, high expectations, and inability to meet expectations have evolved into utopian ideas and high ideals (Wen et al., 2020). Although failures may occur from time to time, among students, more often than not, their self-evaluation is too low. In front of what can be accomplished, they believe they cannot do it, so they shrink, hesitate, and hesitate, suppressing the exertion of their inner abilities. Excessive self-negative evaluation is commonly referred to as a sense of inferiority. Students with a sense of inferiority exhibit timid behavior, rely on teachers, parents, and classmates everywhere, have low activity efficiency, and are unwilling to socialize with others. Primary school students are in a stage of rapid physiological and psychological development, as well as a stage of rapid self-awareness development, and the polarity of emotions is more evident. Negligence or educational misunderstandings by teachers can easily lead to a sense of inferiority in children. So how should teachers cultivate students' confidence?

2. The concept of self-esteem

Self-esteem is the subjective feelings and experiences of individuals after making their own Value judgments. Self-esteem is an evaluative self and an emotional aspect of oneself.

2.1 The psychological significance of adolescent self-esteem

Self-esteem, as an important component of the self-system, is not only a major indicator of mental health but also constrains the direction of personality development. In addition, self-esteem, as a mediating personality variable, plays an important role in constraining the social adaptive behavior, cognition, emotions, motivation, and moral development of adolescents.

(1) Self-esteem and social adaptability are closely related to an individual's social adaptability, and it is the main driving force of individual social behavior. Self-esteem is an individual's psychological resource for adapting to the social environment and basic survival. Research has shown that children develop a clear sense of self-esteem around the age of 3, and the generation of this social emotion is very important (Xu et al., 2019). Because before the emergence of self-esteem, children did not have a conscious emotional judgment of themselves. Although they had a certain level of self-awareness, they would not actively and consciously modify their cognition and behavior to adapt to the requirements of society and others, and would not effectively protect and develop themselves under the emotional guidance of experiencing themselves. Self-esteem is also a mechanism for cultural and social adaptation, which can effectively buffer human basic anxiety. When faced with threats and shocks, self-esteem triggers certain social behaviors to remedy and defend, allowing oneself to regain a sense of meaning and value; When the impact and threat are too severe and the time is too long, the buffering mechanism of self-esteem is damaged, which can cause maladaptation and psychological disorders.

(2) Research has shown that there is a significant positive correlation between academic performance and self-esteem development in young children. The better academic performance, the higher the overall level of self-esteem development in children. The self-esteem level of high school students may be more determined by their feelings and experiences of learning success or failure. Because students with self-esteem and confidence generally tend to rely on internal motivation for learning, while students with low self-esteem lack confidence in their own abilities and tend to rely on external motivation for learning. Therefore, self-confidence and the pursuit of success come from a high level of self-esteem. The successful experience in learning also helps to improve self-esteem. The more successful an individual experiences, the higher their expectations, self-esteem, and confidence. If students often suffer from academic failures, they will feel inferior and suspicious, and may eventually lose confidence and motivation in learning.

(3) Numerous studies on self-esteem and mental health have confirmed that the relationship between self-esteem and mental health is extremely close. The overall health level of self-esteem determines an individual's psychological strength or fragility, liveliness, or depression, as well as the presence or absence of psychological endurance, self-control, and awareness. Lack of self-esteem (i.e., low self-esteem) is closely related to many important negative possibilities such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and problematic behavior (Concepción Moreno-Maldonado et al., 2019). Having sufficient self-esteem (i.e. high self-esteem) is often closely related to positive mental health and general psychological well-being. The higher level of self-esteem of adolescents helps them to better adjust their own behavior and mood, and reduce their somatization tendency, neurosis, and psychotic reactions when facing difficulties and setbacks.

3. Education of Adolescent Self-esteem

3.1 Increasing Success Experience

Improving self-efficacy is an important factor affecting self-esteem, which is an individual's sense of competence and control over events. Success can enhance a person's sense of efficacy, while failure can reduce it. If students find it difficult to experience the joy and excitement brought about by success, they may completely deny themselves and abandon themselves, or maintain their self-esteem level with a negative self-esteem or rebellion. Some teenagers are particularly concerned about their experiences of failure, and this perceptual bias affects the evaluation of self-efficacy, reducing self-esteem levels. By emphasizing individual success experiences and allowing them to observe their own success performance, this selective perception bias can be improved. Educators can create conditions for these students to independently complete a task within their capabilities, and use this to publicly praise and help them experience a sense of achievement. In addition, setting an achievable goal for students to improve their grades will give them more sense of efficacy, enhance their internal interest in learning content, and thus enhance their self-esteem.

3.2 Emphasis on Ability Development

Strengthening moral education. Some Western scholars consider ability and morality as structural factors of self-esteem, which are also internal conditions that affect the formation and development of self-esteem. Generally speaking, students with strong abilities and high moral character will have a certain level of self-esteem, while students with poor abilities and bad moral character will find it difficult to develop the necessary self-esteem. Educators can purposefully help teenagers improve their abilities, especially those that others and teenagers themselves value, thereby enhancing their sense of competence. For example, by improving students' physical abilities, they can gain recognition from peers and teachers, and correspondingly increase their self-esteem level. In addition, attention should also be paid to the moral education of young people, cultivating their noble sentiments, enhancing their sense of collective honor and responsibility, and suppressing negative psychological tendencies of self-esteem. For example, comparing and showing off to teenagers can inspire them to engage in self-education; For teenagers, jealousy can encourage them to enhance friendship, unity, and cooperation.

3.3 Guiding correct self-evaluation

Establishing an appropriate level of ambition leads to the development of self-esteem through self-evaluation of identity. Only appropriate self-evaluation can be conducive to the formation of self-esteem; On the contrary, overestimating or underestimating oneself is not conducive to the normal development of self-esteem. Educators should help teenagers learn to evaluate their grades and attribute them correctly. If students attribute their success to internal factors such as their own abilities and efforts, rather than external factors such as luck and help from others, it can enhance their self-esteem. Teenagers have a strong desire for achievement and are prone to setting excessively high goals, resulting in a large gap between the actual self and the ideal self that is difficult to achieve, leading to a decrease in self-esteem. Teachers and parents should guide students to establish their level of ambition based on their own characteristics and a correct understanding of themselves and also have appropriate and reasonable expectations for students (Graham, 2019).

3.4 Creating a good environmental atmosphere

The strength of self-esteem also depends on the environmental atmosphere. If a person lives in an environment of mutual respect and trust, they will have appropriate self-esteem; On the contrary, a person lives in tense interpersonal relationships and lacks respect and trust towards each other.

4. Measures taken by schools to effectively cultivate students' confidence and self-esteem

4.1 More affirmative evaluations being given to students

Students have weak judgment ability, and teacher psychological projection is the main source of their self-evaluation, which is particularly evident in the lower grades of primary school. Students need to establish confidence from the positive evaluation given by the teacher. If you can evaluate him as smart and capable when writing the report book. By writing motivational language, he believes that he is indeed like this and dares to do it himself when faced with difficulties; If you always use language that undermines your self-esteem, such as being foolish and unproductive, he will feel that he is really not capable and lose the confidence to do it himself. Foreign psychologist Rosenthal conducted an experiment in an elementary school in the United States, taking 18 classes of students and conducting future prediction tests. He then handed

over a list of students with the "best development prospects" to the teacher. This suggestion confirms the teacher's affirmation of the students on this list. Make these students who were originally randomly assigned feel a strange sense of confidence, self-esteem, and self-love, daring to ask and answer questions. After a few months of re-examination, these students made rapid progress and were lively, and cute. The experiment shows that teachers have an expected effect on students' emotions, smiles, and positive evaluations. From a psychological perspective, why don't we satisfy him? It can not only stimulate students' learning enthusiasm, but also enable them to learn autonomy, self-improvement, confidence, and self-reliance, while also showcasing the original ecology of life. Why not?

4.2 Providing more opportunities for students to overcome failures and achieve virtual success

Although setbacks can cause people to lose confidence, finding a positive way can transform them. Sukhomlinsky never gave failing grades to students under fourth grade, but instead asked them to redo the questions they missed, allowing them to achieve good grades in progress and discover their strengths through it (Francesca et al., 2019).

It can be seen that teachers should constantly virtualize opportunities for success in teaching and activities, allowing students with low self-esteem to unconsciously participate and enjoy the joy of success, gaining enough confidence. If students do not do things well in the created opportunities, teachers will criticize, even satirize, and satirize them. This not only causes students to lose confidence but also sets them in opposition to you—reading.

4.3 Valuing Students' Success

When students accomplish tasks independently or meet the requirements within their capabilities, based on the teacher's instructions, the affirmation and encouragement provided by the teacher can have positive psychological effects. Appropriate praise is like the rain that nourishes self-confidence. "The teacher is delighted that you are able to get along well with your classmates." This will make students feel confident in their interactions. The student presents a certain opinion to you, and you listen and respond, "Your suggestion is valuable and it brings me joy." The student experiences judgment based on your reaction. Believe in students and encourage their participation. American educator Rhoda Beckmeister once said, "If we want our students to be confident, we must trust them." People's educator Tao Xingzhi had great trust in his students. He said, "When I joined the children's lives, I discovered that they possess not only strength but also creativity." In schools, teachers should provide students with more opportunities to engage in tasks, while also empowering them to tackle challenging assignments. Classmates should also provide training to some parents and should not be too hasty.

References

- Claudio Longobardi; Laura Badenes-Ribera; Francesca Giovanna Maria Gastaldi; Laura Elvira Prino. The student-teacher relationship quality in children with selective mutism. *Psychology in the Schools*, 2019.
- Concepción Moreno-Maldonado; Pilar Ramos; Carmen Moreno; Francisco Rivera. Direct and Indirect Influences of Objective Socioeconomic Position on Adolescent Health: The Mediating Roles of Subjective Socioeconomic Status and Lifestyles. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2019.
- Walker Sue; Graham Linda. At risk students and teacher-student relationships: student characteristics, attitudes to school and classroom climate. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 2019.
- Xu Fuzhen; Cui Wei; Xing Tingting; Parkinson Monika. Family Socioeconomic Status and Adolescent Depressive Symptoms in a Chinese Low- and Middle-Income Sample: The Indirect Effects of Maternal Care and Adolescent Sense of Coherence. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2019.
- Ye Zhi; Wen Ming; Wang Weidong; Lin Danhua. Subjective family socio-economic status, school social capital, and positive youth development among young adolescents in China: A multiple mediation model. *International Journal of Psychology*, 2020.