

The Correlation between Personality and Self-Esteem Level among Students at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)

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Abstract. *Self-esteem refers to how an individual assesses himself from a positive or negative perspective. The ability to self-assess will build self-esteem and be able to manage ways of thinking, acting and emotion control. There are several factors that affect individuals in self-determination process of self-esteem. Personality is defined as inherent characteristics in the individual by distinguishing themselves from other individuals. Research question proposed in this study is whether or not individuals' personalities will influence the way individuals' value and evaluate themselves. The study is aimed to examine the relationship between self-esteem and personality among students at University of Science Malaysia (USM). The study was conducted on a selected sample of six (6) respondents by interview session (qualitative study design). There were four questions or sections that were being proposed during the session, namely knowledge on the definition of self-esteem, the level of self-esteem, knowledge of respondent's personality and the respondent's opinion on the correlation between personality and self-esteem. The results have indicated that most of respondents (five out of six respondents) agreed the personality could affect self-esteem level. The implication of the study is that individuals are able to identify correlation between personality and self-esteem as well as be able to use the knowledge of personality possessed in the effort to increase self-esteem.*

Keywords: *Self-esteem, personality, relationship, qualitative, interview*

Introduction

Personalities and self-esteem are not considered as new topics study nowadays. This is based on the fact that there are many prior writers conduct a study on these aspects by using a suitable variety of measuring tools. For instance, in order to investigate the relationship between personality and self-esteem, most researchers have used Big Five (personality) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory (self-esteem) and many more (Jonsson, 2000; Rosenberg et.al., 1978 in Kenneth, 2014). Major aim of this study is to identify the correlation between personality and self-esteem that contributes to the formation of individual self-concept. In this paragraph, the writers will describe the background of the study and the results of the previous studies which attract researchers to conduct this current study. The problem of the study will also be covered why self-esteem and personality aspects are chosen. This subdivision also contains research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Each individual has a certain personality and this is one of the most important factors in accomplishment precisely in the aspect of daily communication. Funder et.al. (2000) observe 40 undergraduate students in two different experimental situations. At first, two different-gendered are grouped in a small class. They are asked to talk about what they like and later another student joins join them in a few minutes later. The second situation happens after a couple of weeks, the situation is still the same as the beginning. Yet, they are being came upon for the second time. The findings from this study have found that in the first session, students have odd feeling, tense, disinterested, distant, insecure, and feared behavior. However, in the second session, observed behaviors have become more relaxed, adept in social communication, interesting, expressive, fluent, and situation becomes more hilarious than before. This situation shows how small changes can influence behavior, personality traits and an interest of individual psychological aspects. The personality of each individual has a difference in their behavior towards the world of socialization.

According to Jonsson (2000), Columbia Encyclopedia defines personality as a unique pattern of behavior, thoughts and emotions that individuals possess, and how they interact to help or prevent one's adaptation to others and the environment. However, there is one other factor that is said to be much related to the personality of an individual, namely self-esteem. According to New Webster Dictionary, self-esteem can be defined in the simplest sense of "self-satisfaction" (Kenneth, 2014). According to Jonsson (2000), in terms of psychology, self-esteem is seen as a subjective form of self-esteem toward one's self either positively or negatively (Sedikides, & Gregg, 2003 in Jonsson, 2006) and it can also be explicit formed through interaction with others. In short, this self-esteem can be regarded as a personal assessment made by individuals, their own values, interests, or personal capabilities (Rosenberg, et al., 1978 in Kenneth, 2014).

However, how does this self-esteem affect a person? Those with low self-esteem are reportedly able to experience repeated interpersonal rejection over those who have high self-esteem who are capable of through many successful or non-repudiated interpersonal relationships (Kenneth, 2014). According to Kenneth (2014), recent studies conducted on students show that by enhancing self-esteem, it brings a positive impact in their life's objectives as a human being and students as well as affecting their personalities. He mentions that this self-esteem is also dependent on the attitude of an individual in respecting himself. In addition, it is also associated with dependence on other areas such as work, life goals, independence, world acceptance and society, the potential of success, skills and abilities that society can accept.

This study is supported by another study that shows a rise in student grades as their self-esteem increases (Baumeister et al., 2005). According to Robins, et.al. (2001), self-esteem and personality are supposed to provide shared developments that are the root of an individual's self. It is also said to be influenced by the genetic differences affecting the tendency of individual behavior and individual affective feelings (Kendler, Gardner, & Prescott, 1998). In addition, self-esteem is related to the personality of one another (Robins et al., 2001).

According to Kenneth (2014), low self-esteem individuals have a tendency to self-destructive behavior. Some people are always inferior (inferiority) and cannot face barriers in their lives. They always bow and accept what others are saying. This attitude will eliminate their respect and self-esteem. Individuals with more dominant personality in socialization will take advantage of their drawback. However, the characteristics or personality traits of what is said to have low self-esteem? Is there any correlation between personality and an individual's self-esteem? Additionally, the risk of an individual suffering from low self-esteem can lead to more complicated situations. According to Kenneth (2014), the negative situation can be shackled, disturbing the individual's personalities and the survival of the

individual. This study is carried out to examine the correlation between self-esteem and personality in the student environment at the public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia in a slightly larger sample compared to other previous studies. A study has been conducted among 1000 first-year students who just enroll the 2009/2010 academic year at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia finds that self-esteem measured by using the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSE) shows that student self-esteem is moderate (Khaidzir, et.al., 2010). The study conducted by Masiron, et.al. (2009) among 141 students finds that there is a relationship between personality and self-esteem where the reliability of the two variables studied exceeded 0.8. However, this study, writers recruit the Big Five personal measuring tools commonly used by most prior researchers (Troncione et al, 2014; Song et.al. 2017; Bakker et al., 2002).

This current research is aimed to identify the correlation between self-esteem and the personality of students of Malaysian public higher education institutions.

According to Uba et.al. (2010), self-esteem is defined as the highest aspect in childhood. However, it decrease significantly afterwards, from adolescence to college and previous studies have reported among Malaysian teenagers (13 to 16 years old) involved as samples. 61.2% of the study participants are reported to acquire low self-esteem (Uba, Siti, Rumaya, & Mansor, 2010). Therefore, the proposed research question in this study: Is there a correlation between self-esteem and personality to students of Malaysian public institutions of higher learning?

This study will contribute to help students in learning the correlation between the personality they possess and self-esteem. This study also provides parents overview as well as educators and administrators in enhancing student self-esteem.

The writers conduct this study in a public institution of higher learning in Malaysia only and it cannot represent the entire students in public universities spread out in the country. The obtained results may also be affected by the current situation of the respondents during the interview session.

Result

Six respondents were recruited for the interview session in this study. The population of this study was students from University of Science Malaysia at Main Campus. Respondents were randomly selected in this study. This meant that respondents consisted of any student who were willing to be volunteer and they fulfilled the qualifications. The foremost qualification to be the respondent was a student of University of Science Malaysia at Main Campus.

Structured and unstructured interviews were used for qualitative data collection. The interview session was conducted to achieve the target of this study, namely 3 females and 3 males. Transcripts were recorded from the interview. No audio and video recorded to save

respondent's identity. All information obtained in this method was solemnly used for the study.

Transcripts were taken from interviews to conduct analysis. Verbal answers and non-verbal responses such as tone and facial expressions were also observed and recorded in form of transcripts. There were four questions asked during interviews as follows:

(1) What do you understand about self-esteem? (2) From scale 1 to 5, on which scale is your self-esteem level? 1 very weak, 3 moderate, 5 very high; (3) Do you know and aware of your personality? (4) In your opinion, does your personality affect your self-esteem level? If so, please explain. If not, why?

Interview Results

Table 1. Respondents Information

RESPONDENT	GENDER	STATUS	AGE	SCHOOL
Respondent 1	Female	Student	25	Biological Sciences
Respondent 2	Male	Student	24	Educational Studies
Respondent 3	Male	Student	23	Mathematical Sciences
Respondent 4	Male	Student	22	Management
Respondent 5	Female	Student	24	Mathematical Sciences
Respondent 6	Female	Student	26	Social Sciences

The interviewed respondents are all students of the Bachelor's Degree in USM from different subjects of Study. Respondents consist of 3 males and 3 females whose ages are in 20's. The identity of the respondent is kept confidential with the consent of conducting this interview.

Knowledge of the definition of self-esteem

Self-esteem can be categorized as a basic concept in psychology associated with an individual's self. According to Xavier Belsiyal (2015), self-esteem refers to the level of respect afforded by individuals to themselves and is a measure of the value that individuals place on their abilities and judgment. In addition, self-esteem is defined as an assessment of the value of their self-agreed or not (Zafar, Saleem, & Mahmood, 2012). Of the six respondents interviewed, five out of six respondents were able to explain the meaning of self-esteem from their understanding, while a respondent was not clear with the intention of self-esteem.

"This self-esteem is how we look at ourselves. Whether good or not. Whether successful or not. If we have self-esteem it means, we know about ourselves and appreciate what we have. But if we do not have self-esteem, it means we feel like we're useless and maybe we do not value ourselves. "

(Respondent 1)

"In my view, self-esteem or self-esteem is one's view of himself as a whole. How he views himself either positively or negatively. Self-esteem is also like a dignity for me. How much do us value and respect what's inside us"

(Respondent 2)

"Self-esteem is the value of one's self esteem and the way he sees himself. Whether he is respected in society or not"

(Respondent 4)

"Self-esteem for me is the level of confidence to present myself in public with my own identity"

"Self-esteem is the self-worthy of an individual which involves trust, confidence in oneself through behavior, feelings and actions"

(Respondent 6)

From this finding, it can be concluded that there are respondents who know clearly about the concept of self-esteem. However, there are also respondents who are still unclear and lack understanding of the concept of self-esteem.

Level of self-esteem

Researchers have asked about the level of self-esteem that respondents have. Using scale from 1 to 5, scale 1 for the lowest level of self-esteem, 3 scale for moderate self-esteem level, and 5 scale is for the highest level, respondents are asked to place the level of respondent's self-esteem according to their views. Two respondents stated their level of honor in fourth, three respondents were in the third and one respondents were in the second stage. Respondents 1 stated that he was satisfied with himself though not very successful when compared to other individuals.

"I think my level of self-esteem is at level 4. Although I am not great compared to other people, I am satisfied with what I have done and what I have. I always feel that every individual has their own worth."

(Respondent 1)

"My self-esteem level is at 3. Still in a moderate level"

(Respondent 2)

"I think, maybe at level 2. Because I do not think I have any advantages. I'm not as great as others. I'm not sure about my own abilities. "

(Respondent 3)

"Hmm, I guess maybe just moderate, because I never even thought about this before"

"I think mine is moderate. It is easier and safer to say that I'm moderate than saying I'm at level 4 because it feels too high if I say so."

(Respondent 5)

"I think my level of self-esteem is at level 4 because I

know more about myself and I do not care about other people's views"

(Respondent 6)

In conclusion, there are respondents who value themselves and feel that they have done their best even when compared to other individuals. There are also respondents who place their level of moderate appreciation at a moderate level as they do not feel worthy of being placed at a higher level. In addition, there are also respondents who feel their level of appreciation at a weak level because they feel they have no advantage.

Knowledge of personal personality

According to Eryigit-Madzwamuse, Strauss, Baumann, & Bartmann (2015), personality is defined as individual characteristics that remain in one's own and differentiate the individual with other individuals. Individual personalities are constructs that are different from the cognitive aspect or the individual's skills and abilities, and the personality is characterized by traits or personal characteristics (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003). Researchers have asked about the knowledge of personalities in the respondents. Respondent 1 states that his personality is clear in his social style. He said that he is more of an extrovert and he likes to mingle in the group. Like respondent 1, respondent 6 also say that he is an extrovert and is fonder of socializing and promoting himself when dealing with society. Meanwhile, Respondents 3 and 4 feel that their personality is introvert which means the they prefer to work alone. There is also a respondent who is still unclear about his personality.

"Personality has too many aspects ... but what I see in myself is an extrovert. Because I like to interact with people. I prefer to mingle and do outdoor activities that involve people. I feel the need to meet and mingle with people every single day. "

"It's introvert because I do not like it very much working with people. I prefer to sit home and work by myself. I would rather study alone Not with other people. "

"I'm an introvert"

"Yes, I know my personality. I'm a person who likes to be with people. So I guess maybe I'm the kind of extroverted person"

(Respondent 6)

Meanwhile, respondents 2 and 5 state that they are not yet clear with their own personality and are still looking for quality in themselves.

"To be honest I still do not know clearly the personality of myself. At the same time, I'm still

searching what is the quality within me. I'm still vague. "

(Respondent 2)

"I want to know my personality because I am not clear enough about myself."

In conclusion, there are 4 respondents who can express their personalities according to their views. However, the rest of the respondents are still unclear with their own personality and are still looking for quality in themselves.

Relationships between personality and self-esteem

This study aims to look at the relationship between personalities within the individual as well as the level of self-esteem. The researchers have asked the opinion of the respondents if the personality they possess will affect the level of self-esteem in the respondents. Five respondents argue that personality will influence the level of personal self-esteem.

"Yes. For me the personality is like an 'identity card' to someone. This is because through the personnel of others we can recognize ourselves. When we know our personality, we can indirectly know the strength of ourselves. Through that, it can build the self-esteem in oneself. Through our self-esteem we are also able to close the negative side of ourselves which can lower our level of self-esteem."

(Respondent 2)

"In my opinion, personality can affect my level of self-esteem. Because of my lack of socialism, I have no friends, although there are only a few close friends. So when I have to be in a crowd, it's hard for me to get along and I notice that, others do not want to talk to me. That (Respondent 1) as me feel inferior and not accepted by others. "

(Respondent 3)

"It affects (Respondent 3) if I feel like I'm no longer appreciated, (Respondent 4) stay with that person anymore."

"Yes, it really influences because for me self-esteem is important in shaping an engaging personality. But my self-esteem is not high enough when I know that it is an important element to succeed in life"

(Respondent 5)

"Yes, it affects as it relates to behavior and self-indulgence. If you have a good personality, self-esteem will be equally high"

(Respondent 6)

"Personality has indeed existed in every individual. If a person has a personality, it means he is comfortable with the situation. For example, if someone is introverted, it means he does not like to mingle ... and if there are other individuals who criticize the matter, then the individual is indifferent. He will not feel isolated, inferior, and so on. So this will not affect how he judges himself. "

(Respondent 1)

In conclusion, almost all respondents believe that personalities will have an impact in building an individual's level of self-esteem. However, there is also respondent who do not see the relationship between individual personality and how the individual assesses themselves.

Discussion

Introduction

This section has been previously discussed on research question and findings on the study of correlation between personality and self-esteem among USM students. Further details are explained as follows.

Research Summary

The study was conducted in University of Science Malaysia (USM). Interview method was employed to get the data. The transcript form interview was also used in analyzing the data. During the interview session, 6 respondents were selected. The results later were analyzed according to questions during interview.

Research Finding

The finding has shown that most of the respondents support the study. Table are the shown below:

Table 2. Interview Findings on 6 respondents

Question / Respondent	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1	Yes	4	Extrovert	No
2	Yes	3	Not Sure	Yes
3	No	2	Introvert	Yes
4	Yes	3	Introvert	Yes
5	Yes	3	Not Sure	Yes
6	Yes	4	Extrovert	Yes

The findings from the interview for 1st question show 5 out of 6 respondents understand the meaning of self-esteem. Only one respondent is not sure with the meaning of self-esteem. Next, 2nd question shows the level of self-esteem scale which indicates scale 1 is the lowest whereas scale 5 is the highest. There are 2 respondents who acquire high score level of self-esteem. While the other 3 respondents score moderately. Then, the 3rd question shows the knowledge on personality. The finding has found out that there are 4 respondents

who respond as they know the type of personality that they have in their selves. However, there are 2 respondents who are not sure on their own personality types. Finally, the 5th question is related to relationship between two variables and only 1 respondents disagree with the relationship between personality and self-esteem.

Overall, there are 5 out of 6 respondents have agreed with the positive relationship between the level of self-esteem and personality. This shows that 80% of respondents has supported positively on the relationship between these two variables. Other studies also has revealed as individual's behavior (personality) affects how people accept and evaluate themselves (Robins et al., 2001). In fact, self-esteem plays a critical role in the process of forming a personality in every individual. Many studies has supported the correlation between personality and self-esteem. Most of the studies have been putting the personality dimensions into Big Five. Besides, self-esteem has found to have a positive correlation with the Big Five factor (Robins et al., 2001). Self-esteem is rooted in basic dimension of personality such as Big Five (Watson, Suls & Haig, 2002; Erdle, Gosling and Potter, 2009). It can be seen as personality seems to be very closely related as well as be able to form self-esteem on individuals.

Further Research Suggestion

The study on correlation between the level of self-esteem and personality is seem to be helpful for the students so as to increase their self-esteem. The study has successfully achieved the objective of this study. Interview instruments can help in making the study to progress based on the plan.

For future research, it is expected that there are some suggestions provided, such as (1) Comparing various level of education; (2) Comparing students by faculty; (3) Comparing students according to their personality types. Hence, the level of self-esteem and personality of the students are expected to be extending by other researchers.

Summary

This chapter is going to summarize the study on the discussion of the outcome of the study. The finding has shown that there is a relationship between the level of self-esteem and the personality of first degree USM students which has supported the prior studies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study has shown 5 respondents do agree there is a correlation between the level of self-esteem and personality.

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