

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SELF-ESTEEM
OF STUDENTS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF
THEIR TEACHER'S STYLE
OF TEACHING

by

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ABSTRACT

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The Relationship between the Self-Esteem of Students and their Perception of their

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Self-esteem is a powerful part of who we are and who we become. Children must possess a healthy self-esteem to be successful in school and to be willing to try. The way that parents, educators, and friends have treated a child helps determine how he or she will feel about himself or herself. Teachers are often the only positive force in a child's life and the only one to tell them that "they can do it and to keep trying."

Youngs cited several reasons why it is important for children to develop healthy self-esteems. Children with higher self-esteems are more likely to participate in new experiences and a greater range of events, and they are more willing to share. These adolescents also accept advice without seeing it as criticism. Being comfortable alone is

another trait found in these students as well as a commitment to achieving. Making friends often comes easier to these children and they become more social (1991).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between the self-esteem of fifth grade students, attending an elementary school in Western Wisconsin, and their perception of their teacher's primary style of teaching. Data was collected during the spring of 2002 through the use of a self-esteem test and a questionnaire, used to determine the students' perception of their teacher's style of teaching, both developed by the researcher.

There were four questions this research examined. They were:

1. Is there a relationship between the authoritative teaching style and self-esteem?
2. Is there a relationship between the authoritarian teaching style and self-esteem?
3. Is there a relationship between the indifferent teaching style and self-esteem?
4. Is there a relationship between the laissez-faire teaching style and self-esteem?

Fifty-eight participants were included in this study. According to this survey, 58.5% of the participants possess average to high self-esteem. The range of scores was from 87 to 110 points. In addition, 41.5% are classified as below average to low self-esteem.

The survey testing the teaching style found that 44% of those with high self-esteem and 50% with average self-esteem rated their teachers authoritative. The data also found that 47% of the students with below average and 22% with low self-esteem rated

their teachers authoritarian. Both showing either a positive or negative relationship between self-esteem and teaching style. The laissez-faire style had no clear results thus the researcher could not agree with the research question. The indifferent style was not reported as a style used except in the case of three respondents who had this style tied with two others. Based on the results, the researcher could not agree with this question.

In conclusion, there appears to be a relationship between certain teaching styles and the students' self-esteem. According to this study, the more authoritative the teacher is the higher the self-esteem. The students with average to high self-esteem had a combined rating of 94% authoritative teaching style. The more authoritarian a teacher is the lower the self-esteem. The students who fell below average or in the low self-esteem group rated their teachers authoritarian with a combined score of 69%.

Therefore, the researcher believes that this study could help prepare future educators by teaching them about the different styles. In addition, this would help future students as well. Possessing higher self-esteem is important in all aspects of a student's life. Teachers are very powerful forces that have a tremendous impact on the children they teach.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated and a child humanized or dehumanized (Seymour & Seymour, 1992, p. 44).

Self-esteem is a powerful part of who we are and who we become. Children must possess a healthy self-esteem to be successful in school and to be willing to try. The way that parents, educators, and friends have treated a child helps determine how he or she will feel about himself or herself. Teachers are often the only positive force in a child's life and the only one to tell them that "they can do it and to keep trying." It has been shown that self-esteem is associated with higher achievement and success (Van Ness, 1995).

Bill Nave, the Teacher of the Year from Maine 1990-91, said, "The single most accurate predictor of success is self-esteem" (cited by Seymour & Seymour, 1992, p. 43). Schwarzer concurred with Nave and stated, "Individuals with a low self-esteem have pessimistic thoughts about their accomplishments and personal development. Having a strong sense of competence helps cognitive processes and performance in areas such as academic achievement" (cited by McKenzie, 1999, p. 7). Academic achievement is only

one reason why nurturing healthy self-esteem in children should be a concern for educators.

Youngs cited several reasons why it is important for children to develop healthy self-esteem. Children with higher self-esteem are more likely to participate in new experiences and a greater range of events, and they are more willing to share. These adolescents also accept advice without seeing it as criticism. Being comfortable alone is another trait found in these students as well as a commitment to achieving. Making friends often comes easier to these children and they become more social (1991).

Educators play a crucial role in building the self-esteem of their students. Why can some teachers do this with ease? Silver, Hanson, Strong, and Schwartz stated the most effective classroom management is for the teacher to be both congruent and flexible in the decision-making (1996). Youngs (1991) stated the more positive statements a child hears, the more he or she tries and the better he or she does. This occurs because the self-esteem of the child has increased and thus a belief in self has evolved. Not all educators behave this way and treat children with such respect. Thoughts described by Tracy Kidder in Among Schoolchildren as cited in Seymour and Seymour touch on this.

Children get dealt grossly unequal hands but that is all the more reason to treat them equally in school, Chris thought. "I think the cruelest form of prejudice is... if I ever said, Clarence is so poor, so I'll expect less of him than Alice. Maybe he won't do what Alice does. But I want his best" (1992, p. 8-9).

Treating children equally is very important, but it is also very difficult and often means treating them very differently. Tracy Kidder went on to say it also means bringing the same morale force to bear on all of them, saying in effect, to Clarence that you matter

as much as Alice and won't get away with not working (cited in Seymour & Seymour, 1992). Teachers often form low opinions of students based on standardized tests or past behaviors. This opinion often results in lower expectations and thus the student being treated differently.

Van Ness agreed with this statement when he described a study done by Rosenthal in the 1960s. "Randomly chosen teachers were told that randomly selected groups of students had either high or low ability. The findings showed that the students tended to perform in accordance with the teacher expectations and treatment"(1995, p. 12). Those children have now performed lower than they should have and this was due to the way the teacher treated them and what was expected of them. This is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If students are told they will not succeed, or are called on last, or are not given the same amount of help, or are not interacted with on the same level as other children, those children will start to believe that they are not worthy or deserving of the teacher's praise or attention. Those children will lose self-esteem, thus causing grades to drop and the teacher's expectations to be proven correct. This is a never-ending circle. However, this would not occur in all classrooms. The teaching style the teacher follows would help determine whether something like this could happen or not.

There are four common teaching styles: authoritative, authoritarian, indifferent and laissez-faire. Each has unique characteristics and is used by numerous teachers everywhere. Due to the evidence that self-esteem plays such an important role in academic and overall achievement, the researcher investigated which, if any, of the four styles of teaching was related to higher self-esteem. This pilot study is an attempt to

examine whether a relationship exists between the self-esteem of students and their own perceptions of their teachers' primary teaching style. It is the voice of the student that is important in regard to teaching style. It is their perception of their classroom that affects their self-esteem. The children are young and need good guidance from a teacher who expects the best from everyone and who makes the children understand that they can succeed and are able to achieve their goals. This study could help future educators see the benefits in utilizing a particular teaching style, as it enhances self-esteem within their students.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between the self-esteem of fifth grade students, attending elementary school in Western Wisconsin, and their perception of their teacher's primary style of teaching. Data was collected during the spring of 2002 through the use of a self-esteem test and a questionnaire, used to determine the students' perception of their teacher's style of teaching, both developed by the researcher.

Research Questions

There were four questions this research examined. They were:

1. Is there a relationship between the authoritative teaching style and self-esteem?
2. Is there a relationship between the authoritarian teaching style and self-esteem?
3. Is there a relationship between the indifferent teaching style and self-esteem?
4. Is there a relationship between the laissez-faire teaching style and self-esteem?

Definition of Terms

For clarity of understanding the following terms need to be defined.

Self-Esteem - A composite picture of one's perceived self-value. Seeing one's self as worthy of happiness, health, respect, achievement, and success (Youngs, 1991).

Teaching Style - A reflection of the educator's value system regarding human nature and the types of goals and classroom environment that enhance human learning (Silver, Hanson, Strong, & Schwartz, 1996).

Assumptions

1. The researcher assumed that the children reported honestly.
2. The researcher assumed that the children understood all questions.
3. The researcher assumed there was a relationship between self-esteem and teaching style.

Limitations

1. A limitation to this study was that all children might not have reported honestly. Without honest answers, the results would be skewed. The students could have marked answers that they thought the researcher wanted to hear or those that they wished were true.
2. A limitation to this study is that the researcher had assumptions about the relationships before conducting research. This could have come through when the researcher read the questions to the students, resulting in the marking of certain responses.
3. A limitation to this study is the number of participants in the study. The sample

size was fifty-eight. Eighty students were asked to participate and only fifty-eight did. This is not representative of the entire population of fifth graders.

4. A limitation to this study based on the number of participants is that the findings cannot be generalized to all schools. More research is needed before the results can be generalized.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the significant studies, findings, and opinions discussed in literature. The chapter will investigate why a healthy or high self-esteem is crucial in education, the effects of possessing a high or low self-esteem on one's education, and the connection the teacher may have to this. In addition, the four teaching styles will be defined and discussed.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem affects everyone in his or her daily life and activities. Daily living has a direct bearing on self-esteem. Positive events or successes tend to increase it, while negative events or losses tend to decrease it (Van Ness, 1995). Imagine being a child at school again and remember how certain teachers or events shaped the way you felt about yourself. "A healthy self-esteem is essential in the recipe of learning. Regardless of age, the self-image one has can facilitate or inhibit learning" (Van Ness, 1995, p. 7). Self-esteem, as defined by Carl Rogers, is the way we feel about ourselves (cited in Huffman, Vernoy, & Vernoy, 1997). If our self-concept is congruent with our experiences, we have high self-esteem. Rosenberg (cited in Burnett, 1994, p. 165) defined self-esteem as "the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to him or herself as an object." So why then do some children develop higher esteem than others?

Rogers explained that the state of self-esteem is contingent upon unconditional love and acceptance given by important adults in a child's life (cited in Huffman, Vernoy, & Vernoy, 1997). Teachers and educators are very significant figures to a child. Increasingly, teachers are becoming the only positive influence in many kid's lives (Seymour & Seymour, 1992). This means that the schools are where children's self-esteem is often formed and where the opportunity to create a higher self-esteem is possible. Without a healthy self-esteem, children often struggle in school.

Global self-esteem was related to how well children perceive they do at school (Burnett, 1994). Self-esteem is related to academic achievement as well as to how supportive and nurturing the teacher is. Gordon (cited in Brutsaert, 1990) stated that a striving for acceptance among girls, and for achievement among boys is what may influence self-talk among some adolescents. Girls' self-esteem is more dependent on emotional support, while boys' is dependent on a need to achieve. The schools and teachers influence both of these.

Van Ness (1995, p. 8) reported, "if self-evaluation is positive and confidence high, then the learner tends to learn more easily and to persist through difficulties. Conversely, if confidence is low, the learner approaches learning more hesitantly and will abandon the effort when obstacles occur." Youngs (1991) previously reported, when someone feels that he or she is good at something, one is willing to learn how to do other things. The child feels capable and is willing to persevere rather than abandon things when difficulties arise. She continued and stated that a child who considers him or herself capable of learning is willing to put an effort into studying and to overcome frustrations when something does not come easily. "A child with low self-esteem is defeated before

he begins. He assumes he's not intelligent enough to master the rigors of learning and he gives up at the first obstacle" (Youngs, 1991, p. 23).

There are numerous reasons why possessing a higher self-esteem is an extremely vital ingredient in a child's education. Seymour and Seymour (1992, p. 44) found "that children with high self-esteem are capable of making sound decisions, are proud of their accomplishments, are willing to take responsibility and are able to cope with frustration. They learn to view failures as positive learning experiences." These are all characteristics needed for success within a school setting. Frustrations, obstacles, and challenges are inevitable aspects of education. A child will face these things nearly everyday and should be prepared for them. Clemes and Bean (cited in McKenzie, 1999, p. 3) reported, "Students with low self-esteem tend to get little satisfaction from school since low self-esteem interferes with good academic learning." Children's self-esteem can be harmed very easily.

"Young children receive ten times more negative messages than positive ones" (Van Ness, 1995, p. 9). These come in the form of "don't," "can't," and "shouldn't," or in actions that criticize and embarrass children. Van Ness (1995) found many school children internalized comments about errors or failures as negative reflections of themselves and their ability rather than normal feedback.

There are six vital ingredients to self-esteem. Physical safety, emotional security, identity, affiliation, competence, and mission are the six ingredients reported by Youngs (1991). Youngs described two of these as related directly to an educational setting, emotional security and competence (1991). Competence is described as how capable we feel. When one feels good at some things, he or she is willing to try other things. Also

one is able to accept what he cannot do and will not develop victim behaviors (Youngs, 1991). Competence and a feeling of capability are extremely important to education and learning. One must believe he can, before he is able to do it.

Emotional safety is the second thing Young said could be influenced within a school setting. Emotional security develops when a child knows he or she will not be put down, made fun of, or teased with sarcasm or hurtful words. This frees him or her to be able to make mistakes, which is a vital part to learning. "Feeling that you belong is important, but there is nothing like being able to do something, however simple or small. Actually doing something makes you feel worthwhile and capable"(Lehman, cited in McKenzie, 1999, p. 3). In order to learn, children must be willing to take chances and have confidence in themselves. Teachers and educators play an important role in developing these characteristics in the children they teach.

Self-Esteem and Education

Apter reported a child's important years were between the ages of five and fifteen. This is when he or she learns to assess his or her abilities, successes or failures. A child discovers and develops much of his or her sense of whom he or she is and what one is capable of within the classroom (1997). According to Van Ness, "the learning task, the instructor, the experiences during learning, or emotionally charged unrelated events occurring at the same time, all may affect an individual's sense of self-efficacy either positively or negatively"(1995, p. 15). There are many instances that may occur that damage a child's self-esteem that teachers may not even be aware. Repeated negative evaluation by others, mistakes or errors, being embarrassed or criticized, all can lower self-esteem. There are several other things that can lower self-esteem. Nuttall stated

expecting too much or too little from children, yelling at or criticizing them especially in front of others as well as criticizing them more often than praising can all lower self-esteem (Nuttall, 1991, p. 3). As an educator, the goal should be to raise it and produce more effective learners and stronger individuals.

Strategies that might raise self-esteem in learners are placing the focus on the learner personally rather than the subject matter, providing a positive learning environment, and opportunities to help others, as well as keeping track of achievements. When disciplining, the teacher should focus on the behavior, not the child (Van Ness, 1995). Silvernail reported previously, "Reinforcement is the key concept in the learning theory...positive reinforcers promote academic learning and encourage future learning" (1986, p. 16). "Using simple phrases such as "right," "okay," and "thank-you" all correlate with achievement gains for elementary students"(Wallen; Wright & Nuthull, cited in Silvernail, 1986, p. 18).

According to Youngs, the more positive statements a child hears, the higher his or her self-esteem becomes. Praise should be focused on the individual and be personal, also it should be immediate, specific, and deserved as well as behavior-centered (1991). "The teacher stands at the crossroads day in and day out, sending signals and messages. Each message is hurtful or healing, uplifting or downgrading. Every interaction is saying, this way or that (Seymour & Seymour, 1992, p. 45). Teachers must be willing to take on the responsibility to build self-esteem also.

Educators must be flexible and realize that not all students are going to be equal achievers. The expectations for students should be high, but steps for achieving those levels should be clear and realistic (Seymour & Seymour, 1992). "If we don't challenge

young people- if we don't stretch them- they will never see what they are capable of' (Seymour & Seymour, 1992, p. 8). Preconceived notions and expectations about certain children are also evident in some teachers, while harmful to the students.

Some children have a label placed on them as a "low" achiever and this carries with them every year. Educators often perpetuate this circle by further damaging the child's self-esteem rather than building it up and helping that child succeed. There are numerous ways teachers might lower self-esteem further, as reported by Seymour and Seymour.

Some ways are to simply demand less from the "low" children or when calling on them for an answer, give less time, give no additional clues or no repetition of the question. Some teachers might even accept incorrect or low-quality answers. Some things may be done in even more subtle ways like seating the "lows" further away from the "highs" and interacting with them less frequently. (1992, p. 9-10)

They went on to say that blunders and mistakes are part of life and teachers must recognize this and treat them casually and as a learning tool. This lets the children know that making a mistake is okay and they go on from there (1992, p. 9-10).

Barbara Prentiss, New Hampshire Teacher of the Year 1990-91, said, "For far too long, we have been trying to teach students as if they were all alike"(cited in Seymour & Seymour, 1992, p. 21). "The more students are approved for the ways in which they prefer to learn, the more they will be willing to risk altering those ways" (Seymour & Seymour, 1992, p. 15).

Teaching Styles

Teaching styles have emerged from the various styles of parenting. Parents as well as teachers have a tremendous impact of a child's self-esteem. Classroom management is another term connected to teaching style and the two are often interchanged. For the purpose of this paper, the term teaching style will be used.

Much has been written about managing a classroom and enhancing self-esteem. Response to student misbehavior is most effective when it maintains or enhances the student's dignity and self-esteem and encourages the student to be responsible for his or her behavior (Strategies for Classroom Management, n.d., p. 2). According to Wiggins, one should address the behavior, not the character of the student. Consequences must be applied consistently and never be harmful physically or psychologically to a student. The student should understand that he or she has chosen them by misbehaving (n.d., p.5).

Wiggins also stated, the teacher has the power to build or destroy student self-concept. The students need to feel safe and free from ridicule or sarcasm (n.d., p. 5). The following paragraphs will discuss and define the four main teaching styles in detail.

Authoritative Teaching Style

Authoritative teachers are well liked by their students. The rooms are based on such concepts like equality and trust (Huxley, 2001). These teachers place limits on the students but also encourage independence. Reasons behind rules and decisions are explained. If a student is disruptive, a polite but firm, reprimand is given (Bosworth, 1996). Dinwiddie states, misbehavior is handled with appropriate consequences or by problem solving with the child to find an acceptable way to get desires met (2001, p.2).

Verbal interactions are encouraged, even debates. Interruptions are tolerated if students have a relevant comment or question. Students are given the opportunity to learn and practice communication skills.

Authoritative teachers are warm and nurturing towards students and express genuine interest and affection (Bosworth, 1996). Praise is given freely within these classrooms and the students are continually encouraged. Students' papers often have positive comments written on them and they are spoken to the students as well.

This type of teacher encourages self-reliant and socially competent behavior and fosters higher achievement motivation (Bosworth, 1996, n.p.). This teacher guides students through projects instead of leading them. Students are given a lot of choices in making decisions and guided to see the consequences of those choices (Dinwiddie, 1995, p. 2). She also adds that students learn to accept responsibility, make wiser choices, cope with change, and are better equipped to succeed in a workforce which relies on cooperative problem-solving (Dinwiddie, 2001, p. 2).

Authoritarian Teaching Style

This teacher is the opposite of the authoritative teacher. Firm limits and controls are placed on the students. This type use external control to teach right from wrong and are quick to act on a discipline problem (Huxley, 2001, p. 1). The students often have assigned seats the entire year, with their desks in straight rows. There is little movement during class time and the students must be in their seats at the beginning of the class period (Bosworth, 1996).

Students know they should not interrupt the teacher and it is often quiet. Since verbal exchange and discussion are discouraged, the authoritarian's students do not have

the opportunity to learn or practice communication skills (Bosworth, 1996). This teacher prefers vigorous discipline and obedience is expected. Students follow directions and do not question rules. An authoritarian teacher commands the students what to do and what not to, rules are clear and unbending (Dinwiddie, 1995).

At the extreme, authoritarian teachers give no indication that he or she cares for the students (Bosworth, 1996). Verbal or written praise is often not given. Students feel this teacher is unfair and strict. The students do not initiate activities or suggest alternative ones because anything that deviates from the teacher's plans is not tolerated. This style does little to increase achievement motivation or encourage the setting of personal goals (Bosworth, 1996). According to Dinwiddie, this style mismatches a rapidly changing society, which values choice and innovation (1995, p. 1).

Indifferent Teaching Style

This teacher is not very involved in the classroom and generally seems uninterested. Thus, few demands are placed on the students. Bosworth stated this type of teacher feels that class preparation is not necessary and special projects or field trips are out of the question (1996). The same materials are often used year after year.

Classroom discipline is lacking since the teacher may lack skills, confidence or courage to discipline. One student said, "This teacher can't control the class and we never learn anything in there. There is hardly any homework and people rarely bring their books" (Bosworth, 1996, n.p.). Very little learning occurs in the classroom of an indifferent teacher.

The students reflect this attitude also. Students have low achievement motivation and lack self-control (Bosworth, 1996). This teacher often feels the students are

responsible for their own education. Huxley defines this style as a lack of emotional involvement and supervision (2001, p. 2).

Laissez-faire Teaching Style

This type of teacher also places few demands or controls on the students. “Do your own thing,” describes this classroom (Bosworth, 1996, n.p.). The Laissez-faire teacher tries not to hurt anyone’s feelings, has trouble saying no or enforcing rules. This teacher cares more about the students’ well being than classroom control. According to Huxley, they spend a lot of time with the child communicating, negotiating, and reasoning (2001, p. 1). Bosworth states, classroom decisions are often based on the students’ feelings rather than on academic concerns. This instructor wants to be the student’s friend (1996).

This overindulgent style is associated with students’ lack of social competence and self-control (Bosworth, 1996). It is difficult for students to learn socially acceptable behavior with such a permissive teacher. With few demands placed on them, these students frequently have lower motivation to achieve (Bosworth, 1996).

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will describe the subjects used in the study and how they were selected to be part of the study. In addition, the instrument being used to collect data will be discussed as to the validity and reliability of it. Data collection and analysis will be discussed as well. The chapter will conclude with some limitations.

Description of Subjects

The subjects for this study were fifth graders at an elementary school found in Midwest Wisconsin. The sample size was fifty-eight. All were Caucasian with an equal mix of genders.

Site Description

The elementary school was located in the Midwest region of Wisconsin. The school was an average size elementary school holding third through fifth grades. The testing took place in the students' regular classroom or in the library without the primary teacher present. The students sat at their desks or at the tables in the library.

Sample Selection

The researcher contacted the homeroom teacher in each classroom and met with him or her, prior to the administration of the test. The researcher also was granted permission by the building principal. A permission slip (See Appendix A) was sent home with every student in each of the homerooms for a guardian to sign, giving permission to

participate in the study or not. The researcher collected the permission slips the following day and explained the test to those with signed slips. The researcher asked these students if they also agreed to participate. These were the students included in the study. The number of students used was fifty-eight.

Instrumentation

This study used two tests developed by the researcher, a self-esteem survey and a teaching style survey. The self-esteem survey questions were written with fifth grade students in mind. The questions are relevant to things that are important and that shape self-esteem at that age (see Appendix B). A survey, developed by the researcher (See Appendix B) was used determine each student's perceptions about his or her teacher's teaching style. This survey was based on the characteristics of each teaching style.

This is a pilot study and it did not use an established test, thus making validity and reliability hard to predict. However, several people in the field of test making and analysis examined the instrument. It was shown to be high in content or face validity. This means it measures what it should be or what it appears to measure. Construct validity is defined as how well a test measures human traits. The construct validity of the self-esteem survey should be fairly high as well since it is measuring the trait of self-esteem. There are no exact numbers or data available.

The reliability of a test is defined as the consistency of scores obtained by the same person over time. The surveys have not been normed on any sample and these participants were not retested after a period of time. So reliability is not reportable.

Data Collection

On the day the test was administered, those who had agreed themselves to participate, in addition to a guardian's signature were given the tests. Two of the three classes participating were taken to the library; the third class remained in their classroom. The teacher was not present during testing. The students not participating were asked to read or work on homework quietly. The directions were read aloud for clarity and any questions were answered along the way. The students were instructed not to put their name on the survey. The researcher read each question aloud and the responses. The researcher collected the completed tests from each participant.

Data Analysis

The tests were scored and analyzed by the researcher. The participants completed the survey using a Likert scale of five answers. When completing the self-esteem test, the participant circles a number, one through five, that correlates with the response they desire. The scoring of the test is quite simple. If the number one was chosen, that was scored as one point. If three was chosen, that was scored as three points. However, there are several questions where the point values must be reversed. So if a five was chosen, it was awarded only one point. If two was chosen, it was awarded four points. The following questions are the ones that were reversed: 3, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 14, 17, 19, 23, and 24.

There is a total of 125 points possible on the self-esteem test. The researcher determined the cut off scores based on percentages. Eighty percent and higher constitutes a high self-esteem. Seventy to seventy-nine percent qualifies as average self-esteem.

Sixty to sixty-nine percent is below average, while anything under sixty percent is considered low self-esteem.

The researcher also developed the method for scoring the teaching styles survey. For each of the four teaching styles, there are four questions related to them. So there are a total of sixteen questions. The researcher added up the score for each style separately. Questions 2, 9, 11, and 14 are added together to find the score for the authoritative style. Questions 1, 5, 10, and 15 are added together to find the authoritarian score. Questions 4, 6, 7, and 12 are added to find the laissez-faire score and the remaining questions, 3, 8, 13, and 16 are added to find the indifferent style. The score that is found to be the highest is the style that the student feels his or her teacher uses.

The researcher then divides all surveys into the four self-esteem levels. Once this is completed, subdivide each by the teaching style and count the number of surveys in each organized category and label. The researcher then finds what percentage each of these categories is of the total number.

Limitations

The findings of this study are not to be generalized to all fifth graders or all classrooms. The limitations to this study are:

1. The sample size was fifty-eight. The researcher distributed eighty permission slips, fourteen were not returned and eight returned not granting permission. This is too small of a sample to generalize.
2. Self-esteem of the students could be influenced by outside sources rather than school. Family and friends affect self-esteem as well. The researcher could make assumptions about the results of the surveys that are untrue due to this.

3. The students may not have answered questions regarding their teacher honestly. This is a limitation because the basis of the paper is based on the correlation between self-esteem and teaching styles. If the students did not answer honestly, the correct correlations cannot be found

4. The students may not have answered the self-esteem test honestly. This would skew the results and would correlate incorrectly to teaching styles.

5. The scores of the teaching styles could be equal. This would limit the results because there is not one teaching style rated higher than another. So those tests create another category without clear correlations.

CHAPTER FOUR

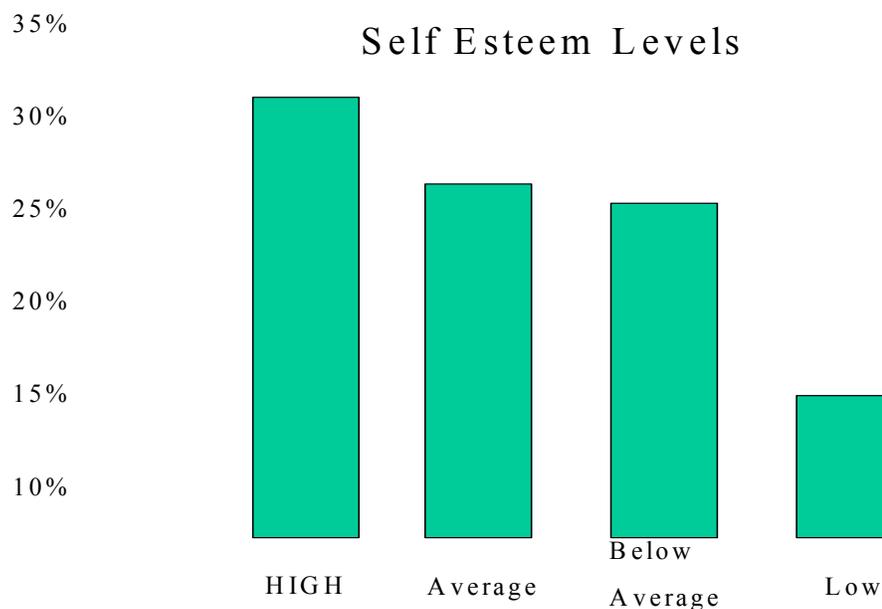
Results and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the self-esteem survey, the teaching style survey and any relationship between them. The results will be reported using percentages and will parallel the four research questions previously reported. The researcher will accept or reject each of the four research questions based on the results.

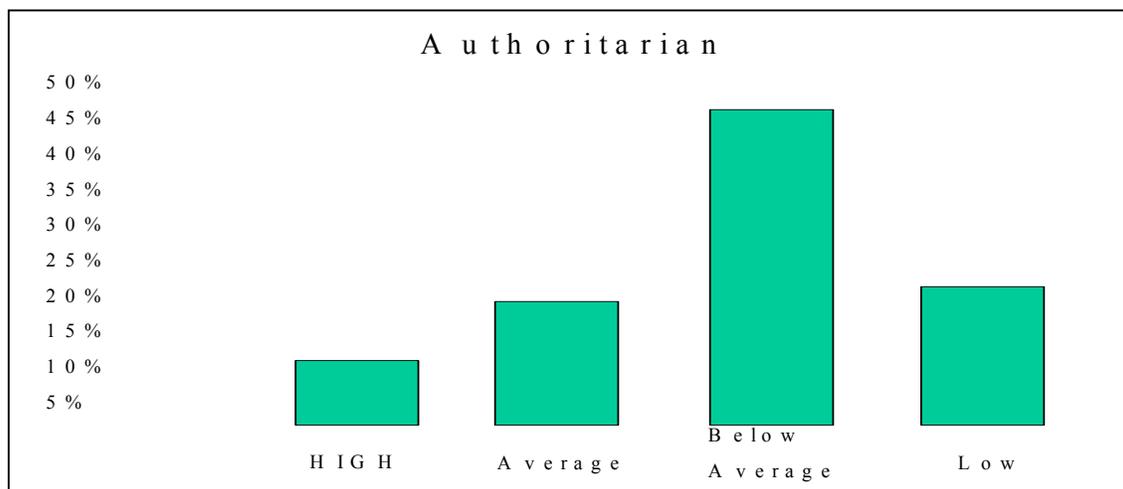
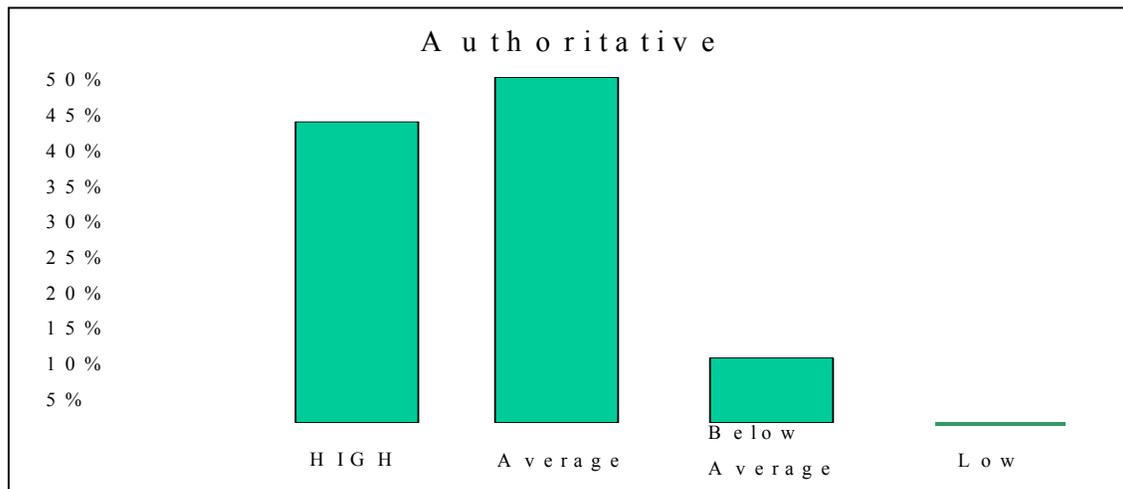
Results and Discussion

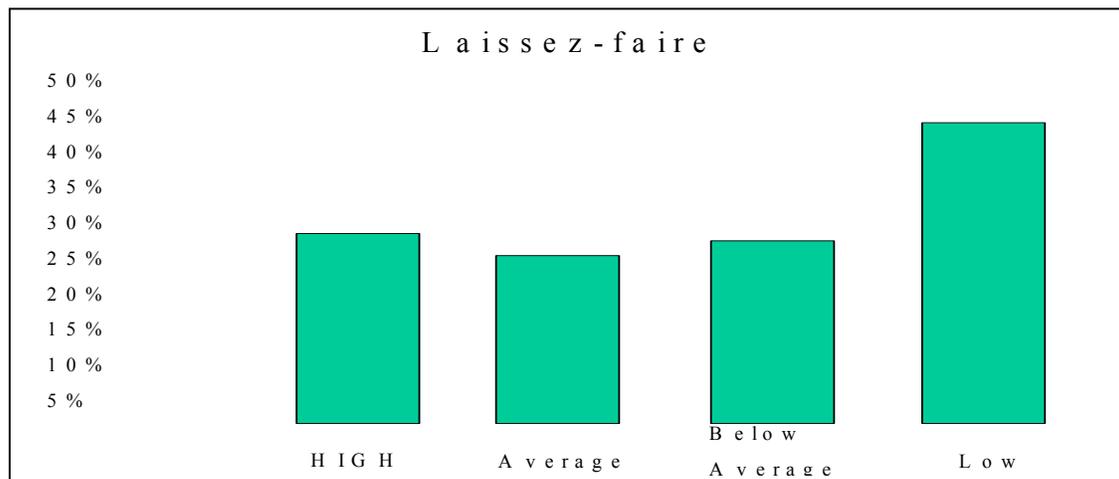
The self-esteem survey was scored based on a possible high score of 125. The cutoff point for high self-esteem is 80%. Anything higher than 80%, which is 100 points, was scored as high self-esteem. Average self-esteem was scored between 70% and 80% or 87 to 100 points. Scores between 75 and 86 points or 60% to 69% results in a label of below average self-esteem. The last group was found to have low self-esteem if their points were below 74 points or 59%. The following chart shows the breakdown of the 58 participants into the four self-esteem levels.



According to this survey, 58.5% of the participants possess average to high self-esteem. The range of scores was from 87 to 110 points. In addition, 41.5% are classified as below average to low self-esteem.

After the data was totaled and the self-esteem levels established, the groups were subdivided by their opinion of their teacher's style. The following tables will illustrate the opinions of each of the four groups. Percentages were once again used to show any relationships or trends in the data.





1. Is there a relationship between the authoritative teaching style and self-esteem?

A positive relationship was represented by the percentage of average to high self-esteem participants who chose the authoritative teaching style. In addition, the group with below average to low self-esteem reporting low percentages of the authoritative teaching style to be present also represents a relationship. The factors moved in the same direction. Therefore, the researcher finds this research question to be true.

2. Is there a relationship between the authoritarian teaching style and self-esteem?

A negative relationship was represented by the percentage of average to high self-esteem participants who rated the authoritarian teaching style low. A negative relationship was also shown with the below average to low self-esteem students who rated the authoritarian teaching style high. The factors moving in opposite directions indicate a negative relationship. Therefore, based on this, the researcher accepts this research question as true.

3. Is there a relationship between the indifferent teaching style and self-esteem?

The researcher finds this question false due to the lack of any significant data.

There were only two surveys that resulted in the indifferent teaching style being present in their teacher. However, these two surveys had a three-way tie between two other styles and the indifferent style. Therefore, these surveys had no statistical value.

4. Is there a relationship between the laissez-faire teaching style and self-esteem?

The only significant numbers came in relation to the low self-esteem group with a high rating of the laissez-faire teaching style, thus showing a negative relationship. The other three levels of self-esteem had similar ratings of this teaching style, around 25%. However, this percentage was much lower than the percentage given to the authoritative style in the average to high self-esteem group, once again indicating a slight negative relationship. In addition, the below average self-esteem group scored laissez-faire higher than that given to authoritative style, also indicating a negative relationship. However, the researcher rejects this research question based on the lack of significant data.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

In this pilot study, the researcher investigated whether a relationship existed between self-esteem and teaching style. The literature was reviewed in regard to self-esteem and its importance in education. The four teaching styles: authoritative, authoritarian, indifferent and laissez-faire were described and defined.

The self-esteem survey and the survey measuring the students opinion of their teacher's teaching style were developed by the researcher. The self-esteem survey consisted of 25 questions that were answered using a Likert scale. The second survey was 16 questions that were also answered using a Likert scale. The surveys took approximately twenty minutes to complete. The tests were answered anonymously. All participants were instructed not to put their names on the paper. They were assured that no one would see their answers especially their teachers.

There were 58 participants from several fifth grades found in a small elementary school in Midwestern Wisconsin. Permission from a guardian was obtained to participate in the study using a permission slip sent home with the students. Fifty-eight of the eighty permission slips distributed were returned granting permission. The researcher read each question aloud and answered any questions along the way. The classroom teachers were not present in the room, so the students would feel comfortable answering the questions regarding their teacher.

The researcher tabulated the results using percentages. The self-esteem survey had a possible high score of 125. The cutoff scores were as follows: 80% and higher were

labeled high self-esteem, 70% to 79% of the total resulted in a label of average self-esteem, 60% to 69% received a label of below average and any score below 60% was labeled low self-esteem. Each of these groups was then subdivided by the teaching style that they rated as the highest.

There appears to be a relationship between the self-esteem and authoritative style. The higher the self-esteem the higher the rating for the teaching style. When the self-esteem score was below average or low, the authoritative teaching style was rated low. The opposite was true for the authoritarian style. The higher the self-esteem was, the lower the rating for this style was. The lower the self-esteem was, the higher the rating for the authoritarian score. Therefore, there appeared to be a negative relationship. The indifferent teaching style did not produce enough results to draw any conclusions. There were only two surveys indicating any presence of this style. However, these two surveys rated three different styles equally. Based on this, the researcher concluded there was not a relationship. The laissez-faire teaching style produced some mixed results. The low self-esteem group rated their teacher high in this teaching style, while the other three groups all had ratings around 25%. The researcher could not conclude that there was a clear relationship based on this data.

Conclusions

In conclusion, there appears to be a relationship between certain teaching styles and the students' self-esteem. According to this study, the more authoritative the teacher is the higher the self-esteem. The students with average to high self-esteem had a combined rating of 94% authoritative teaching style. The more authoritarian a teacher is

the lower the self-esteem. The students who fell below average or in the low self-esteem group rated their teachers authoritarian with a combined score of 69%.

Therefore, the researcher believes that this study could help prepare future educators by teaching them about the different styles. In addition, this would help future students as well. Possessing higher self-esteem is important in all aspects of a student's life. Teachers are very powerful forces that have a tremendous impact on the children they teach.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends that this study be duplicated at various locations, using different aged children and a higher number of participants. This pilot study has not been tested for reliability or validity therefore this study should be reproduced to establish this. The use of correlational statistics to determine significance would also be recommended.

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APPENDIX A

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am a graduate student completing a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling at the University of Wisconsin, Stout. I am currently completing my thesis, which examines whether there is a relationship between students' self-esteem and their perception of their teacher's teaching style. I will be surveying fifth grade students in the building during the week of May 3rd - 8th.

The students will be asked to complete a short survey, which will be read aloud to them and will take approximately fifteen minutes. The surveys will be answered anonymously with no way to connect the student to his or her answers. The name of the school and town will also be kept confidential in the paper. This assures that the classes involved in the study will not be known to anyone other than myself.

The benefits of this study are to future educators and students. Self-esteem has been shown to be connected with higher grades, willingness to participate, and greater success in school. If a relationship is found between certain styles and students' self-esteem, these styles can be taught to those studying to become teachers.

The only potential risk to those participating involves privacy. The students are asked to reveal their feelings about themselves and their teacher. But as stated above, the students will be instructed not to put their names on their surveys, so their identities and thus responses will be anonymous. No one will know where the information was gathered or who was involved in the study.

The students will be given the choice to opt out of the questionnaire on the day of the procedure. If a student does not participate in the survey by his or her choice or yours, the time will be spent reading quietly. Please return the bottom portion of this letter and keep the remainder for reference. Please contact any of the following people with questions or concerns.

Thank you for your help with this project,

Kathryn McGinley, researcher
715-xxx-xxxx

xxxxx xxxxx, Counselor
715-xxx-xxxx

Rod Crist, researcher advisor, UW-Stout
715-232-1343

Sue Foxwell, Research Administrator and Human Protections Administrator
UW-Stout 715-232-2477

CUT ALONG THE DOTTED LINE AND RETURN BOTTOM PORTION

_____ Yes, my child _____, may participate in this survey.

_____ No, my child _____, may not participate in this
survey.

Signature of parent or guardian _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B

Do Not put your Name on this

	Never	Hardly Ever	Some- times	Most of the Time	Always
1. I am smart	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have good ideas	1	2	3	4	5
3. I do not have many friends	1	2	3	4	5
4. My teacher calls on me	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am not good at math	1	2	3	4	5
6. I will never be as smart as my classmates	1	2	3	4	5
7. I turn in my homework on time	1	2	3	4	5
8. Classmates ask me for help	1	2	3	4	5
9. I understand the books I read	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am not a good learner	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am popular	1	2	3	4	5
12. My teacher does not like me	1	2	3	4	5
13. I am nervous when my teacher calls on me	1	2	3	4	5
14. I find it hard to ask for help	1	2	3	4	5
15. I have good grades	1	2	3	4	5
16. I am happy at school	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am embarrassed during class	1	2	3	4	5

	Never	Hardly Ever	Some- Times	Most of The time	Always
18. I am asked to do extra jobs and projects for my teacher	1	2	3	4	5
19. I feel dumb.	1	2	3	4	5
20. My teacher thinks I am smart	1	2	3	4	5
21. I feel comfortable at school	1	2	3	4	5
22. I find my homework easy	1	2	3	4	5
23. I feel sick to my stomach	1	2	3	4	5
24. I would rather listen to others than speak in class	1	2	3	4	5
25. I like myself	1	2	3	4	5

	Never	Hardly Ever	Some- times	Most of the Time	Always
1. My teacher insists the room is quiet	1	2	3	4	5
2. My teacher explains reasons behind rules and decisions	1	2	3	4	5
3. My teacher does not seem prepared	1	2	3	4	5
4. My teacher tries not to hurt my feelings	1	2	3	4	5
5. My teacher accepts no excuses when I am not prepared	1	2	3	4	5
6. My teacher gives me hall passes	1	2	3	4	5
7. My teacher cares more about our feelings than having control	1	2	3	4	5
8. My teacher does not have a lot of rules	1	2	3	4	5
9. My teacher is concerned with what I learn and how I feel	1	2	3	4	5
10. If I am disruptive during class, my teacher gives me a consequence without discussion	1	2	3	4	5
11. My teacher is warm and caring towards me	1	2	3	4	5
12. My teacher is inconsistent in his or her reactions and discipline	1	2	3	4	5

Hardly Some- Most of

	Never	Hardly Ever	Some- times	Most of the Time	Always
13. Not much learning occurs in my class	1	2	3	4	5
14. My teacher writes positive things on my paper and says them to me	1	2	3	4	5
15. My teacher seems unfair	1	2	3	4	5
16. My teacher places few demands on us	1	2	3	4	5