DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF SELF-ESTEEM SCALE FOR CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to indigenously develop the Self-Esteem Scale for Children grounded on multidimensional model of self-esteem by James Battle (2002). For this purpose self-esteem was espoused as having four components namely (1) General self, (2) Social self, (3) Academic self, and (4) Parental self. After item generation the scale was administered on a population of 298 children in terms of two pilot studies having sample of (n=97; n =200) repectively. After pilot testing, the final Self-Esteem Scale for Children was administered upon a sample of 234 children with age range between 12-16 years. Principle component analysis showed that most of the items on scale were heavily loaded on first four factors with Eigen value >.1. The 16-item scale correlated positively with an average of r= .50, p<.01. The Self-Esteem Scale for Children is shown to have very good internal consistency (α=.80, p<.01), split-half reliability (r= .68, p<.01) and test-retest reliability r= .80, p<.01). Henceforth psychometric evaluation established Self-Esteem Scale for Children as a reliable and valid measure of self-esteem in a multidimensional context.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Children, Adolescent, Scale Development, Validation

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INTRODUCTION

The construct of self-esteem is as diverse as any human behavior and cannot be fully defined through a single operational definition, therefore various theories have been postulated in order to fully understand the dynamism behind self-esteem as it modulates the developmental stages of human being by making them adjust to the transitions of life such as social, occupational, educational and interpersonal. Self-esteem can be considered as one of the most commonly researched construct in social sciences, it's been so extensively explored that more than 54,000 articles and researches have been published on it from 1980's till 2017 (American Psychological Association, 2017). This substantial body of literature is filled with critical theoretical debate over the genesis, effects and consequences of self-esteem (Baumeister et al., 2003; Cameron & Granger, 2019; Choo et al., 2017; Gebauer et al., 2015; Leary, 2004; Peng, et al., 2019).

Notwithstanding the crucial role of self-esteem in child's emotional, physical and psychological health/wellbeing, its measurement has proven to be difficult for decades. Many scales have been developed, but unfortunately are poorly validated with low psychometric properties. Therefore it is considered hard to study the consequences of self-esteem for behavior, cognition and affect of children (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). Despite these shortcomings, the importance attached to this construct by many researchers and theorists have resulted in many assessment measures of self-esteem

There is no single agreed definition and theory of self-esteem from the earliest nineteenth century to the contemporary period. It has been explored and explicated in different dimensions many times. Its definition was remodeled by Rosenberg (1965), who provided an empirical model. Rosenberg definition of self-esteem was based on James theory and classified self-esteem into three distinct divisions (i) the affective and cognitive components (ii) self-evaluative component (iii) Social component. Rosenberg redefined self-esteem from being a self-evaluative emotion to a construct having cognitive and social aspects. Similarly when Coopersmith (1967) defined self-esteem he also added the component "worth" along with self-evaluation, and considered it as a powerful indicator of self-esteem. Using his theoretical conceptualization he developed an instrument to measure self-esteem, which is considered as one of the initial tools to measure self-esteem. The development of this tool made self-esteem an empirical and measureable construct.

Many of the recent theories of self-esteem define it in terms of two distinctive elements (i) evaluative component and (ii) affective/emotional component. These theories provided a conceptual framework on which self-esteem could be assessed and quantified through various tools. One of the major issues self-esteem assessment faced was the presence of multiple self-referent terms used interchangeably with self-esteem such as self-acceptance (Pillay, 2016), self-worth, (Byrne, 1996), self-regard (Rogers, 1959) self-concept (Ackerman, 2018; Jack, 2020). Pope and associates (1988) even described self-esteem as an evaluative part of self-concept. Both complex constructs have certain similarities as they both deal with a person's self-worth and self-evaluation, and both are often affected by perception, cognition and judgments of one's self and others (Dillon, 2004). To ascertain that the measuring tools are actually measuring self-esteem and not another self-referent construct, over the years researchers provided operational definitions distinguishing these similar terms from the construct self-esteem (Baron & Byrne, 1997; Coon, 1994; Epstein, 1973; Rogers, 1959; Snygg & Combs, 1949; Turner, 1968).

Many researches were conducted to understand whether the structure of self-esteem is uni-dimensional or multi-dimensional (Miller & Moran, 2007; Tafarodi & Milne, 2002). Researches which consider self-esteem as an overall self-attitude, believe that self-esteem assessment and measurement scales are empirically sound when taking the construct globally. In order to prove its uni-dimensional nature Robins et al. (2001) constructed a single item scale which measured self-esteem globally on a 5-point likert scale. Nonetheless, self-esteem is also regarded as multidimensional construct and substantial amount of data define self-esteem in terms of estimate of self within specific factors such as academic competence, relationships and success or failure (Brooks, 1992; Papadopoulos et al., 2011; Saigal et al., 2002). One of the major critique towards uni-dimensional assessment of self-esteem came from Susan Harter. Harter (1991) postulated that while measuring self-esteem development in children and adolescent numerous components and factors need to be studied. She specifically mentioned measuring perceived competence in important domains of life and measuring social support from peers friends and significant others.

In Pakistan there is a dearth of assessment tools when it comes to measuring self-esteem in children and adolescent population. On National level a few researches have been carried out to study the construct of self-esteem and self-concept within the Pakistani culture. For instance, some studies (Farid & Akhtar, 2013; Iqbal et al., 2012; Javaid & Aslam, 2019) explored self-concept and self-

esteem through various assessment tools. One of the earliest studies exploring the self-concept of school going children was carried out by Durrani (1989), he developed a scale comprising of 24 items on a 5-point Likert scale. Previously Ahmed (1986) carried out a study to develop and validate academic self-concept scale. It consisted of 40 items and had good psychometric quality. This scale was used by different researchers to assess academic self-concept (Aziz, 1991; Shafiq, 1987). Recently few indeginous tools have been developed to access self-esteem in pakistani adolescents (Rizwan et al. 2017; Iqbal et al., 2016). Saleem and Zahid (2011) developed scale to measure self-esteem in school children with focus on academic and social aspect of children. Self-esteem being one of the frequently assessed construct in adolescence (Masselink et al., 2017; Marsh 1989; Robins, Norem & Cheek, 1999) needs to be explored in Pakistani population as well.

Hence development of scales specifically directed for this sample is significant. Based on the aforementioned literature our study is based on the premise that self-esteem is best measured as a multidimensional construct and is an attempt to develop and validate Self-Esteem Scale for Children (SESC-ICP[*]) grounded on James Battle's (1992) model of self-esteem. For that purpose James Battle's (1992) model of self-esteem has been taken. Self-esteem has been conceptualized by Battle (1992) through four different terms, namely; acceptance, evaluation, comparison and efficacy. The development of self-esteem occurs gradually as the child grows and his or her self-emerges (Battle, 1992). According to Battle, the self is ambiguous and not well consolidated to begin with, but it becomes more defined and integrated as the child matures and develops experiences by interaction with significant people in his or her life. Battle (1990) posits that the cognitive and emotional makeup of self-esteem, when once established remains consistent throughout life. Battle (2002) provided an operational definition of self-esteem stating; "It is an attitude of an individual towards himself or herself, build upon one's estimate of his or her abilities and limitations in four domains (1) General self (2) Social self (3) Academic self (4) Parental/home-related self".

Literature shows that individual differences exist in people's behavior with respect to their cultural differences (Markus & Kitayama, n.d). Therefore, the current research will focus on the significant areas of self-esteem that are cultural specific. The present scale is specifically developed in Urdu language i.e the National language of Pakistan for ease of understanding. Many slangs and terms pertaining to Western culture are not applicable when applied to Eastern culture. Henceforth,

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this scale will be easy to understand by the Pakistani children as they can relate with it more aptly.

METHOD

The development and validation of Self-Esteem Scale for Children (SESC-ICP) is accomplished in following phases:

Phase I: Development of Self-Esteem Scale for Children

A deductive approach was employed, and theoretical definition of Self-esteem as given by James Battle (2002), was used as a guide for the creation of new items. Battle's scale CSFEI-3 was also taken as a reference point, which defines self-esteem in 4 different dimensions i.e.: (a) Academic Self (b) General Self (c) Parental/Home Self (d) Social Self.

The participants, procedure, material and instruments necessary for each step are deliberated by stages when applicable.

Step I: Generation of Item Pool

The item pool was created by in-depth interviewing from different community settings. They were asked about their opinions based on the definition of self-esteem as provided by Battle (2002). The qualitative data obtained was analyzed and items were formulated. Furthermore, review of translation and adaptation of previous related measures of self-esteem was carried out and included in the item pool. Lastly experts and panel of psycghuoogist were asked to generate questions tapping Battle's model, which were also included in the initial item pool. Initially, 168 items were generated in this way.

Step II: Experts' Evaluation

Next the item pool was content validated by expert panel copmrising of 5 Assistant Professors having PhD. Qualification. A total of 47 items for General Self-esteem, 40 for Social self-esteem, 43 for Academic Self-esteem and 40 for Parental Self-esteem were given to the panel for evaluation. Repetitive and overlapping questions were eliminated, item calarity and grammatical finnese was also maintained. A combination of reverse and forward scoring items were kept to avoid response bias. Panel was asked to rate the face validity of items on a continuum of

1-5 where 1 stands for least relevant item and 5 stands for most relevant to the construct. Items having an average rating of 3 and above were selected and below 3 were discarded. After eminiation of ambigious, double barreled and leading questions a final draft of 149 items was created for pilot study.

Step III: Pilot Testing

As described by Benson (1998) and Downing (2006), developing a scale is an intricate process therefore two or more iterations of different steps is necessary before considering the developed measure valid and acceptable for use. Henceforth, our study involves two sets of pilot testing followed in each case by subjective and psychometric analysis.

(i)   ***Pilot Study-I:*** In the first pilot study 149 itemized scale (General Self=39, Social Self=33, Academic Self=37, Parental Self=40) was put to testing, using a 5-Point Likert scale. Negative items were put in between positive items to check the validity of the responses. A sample of 97 participants was recruited from 3 different schools of Karachi, having an age range of 10-16 years. After pilot testing, responses were content analyzed, so that the items which were reflective of the self-esteem construct can be kept and unrelated items could be discarded. Correlation values were examined and items with values <.3 were eliminated, On the basis of total-item correlation and scrutiny of item responses many of the vague redundant and repetitive items were eliminated. The final scale was reduced to 44 items.

(ii)   ***Pilot Study-II***: The second pilot study was carried out to obtain self-evaluative items that are reflective of children self-esteem. The Purpose was to refine the scale and also to reduce number of items responsible for the variance. The 44 itemed scale was administered on a sample of 200 children aged 12-16 years. The sample was taken from a single English medium Convent school. After data collection a panel comprising of three experts in the field of Psychological scale construction were approached. The 44-item scale was presented before the panel to select items with greater discriminating power on the basis of face validity, total-item correlations and subjective judgment. The scale after rating and elimination was reduced to 25 items

Phase II: Item Analysis through Structural Validity: Factor Analysis and Total Item Correlation

Item analysis was carried out to choose highly associated items for the development of the scale.

Participants

The sample comprised of 234 respondents (*n*= 234) who were selected from various school of Karachi from commercial and private sector. In order to make the sample representative of the whole population gender participation of both sexes was maintained. Age range of the participants was between 12 and 16 and their mean age was 14.2 years.

Procedure

The participants were administered upon the final scale, comprising of 25 items and 5 response categories *1=Completely true, 2= Somewhat true, 3= I don't know, 4= Somewhat false, 5=Completely false*.

Statistical Analysis

The evaluation of data was done to examine item response distributions; to assess the internal consistency of the scale using Cronbach's alpha; and to check item total correlations using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Structural validity of the obtained data was also measured through factor analysis, before that KMO-Bartlett test was administered (Table2).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Exploratory factor analysis was carried out for data reduction. The EFA was run on 25 items to check factor validation and item significance. Adequacy of data was maintained through Bartlett test of Sphericity (Table 3). KMO value of 0.79 indicated that the data is in the acceptable range declaring adequate sample. Also Bartlett's test is significant *p*<0.001for Self-esteem scale suggesting the data is suitable for factor analysis.

Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed 8 components having more than one Eigen value and the scree plot reflects 4 major components having Eigen value >1

explaining the model. After the examination of all the factors and their respective items with loading value >.4 a consistent pattern is found in the content which can be labeled into different dimensions. After removing item 4 and 8 from factor 1 due to their high generalizibility all the items on factor 1 are related to theme of academic self-esteem. Items on factor 2 are related to Parental/home related self-esteem. Items on factor 3 are related to General self-esteem. Lastly items on factor 4 are related to a common theme of social self-esteem. Hence our final SESC-ICP may constitute of 16 items with 4 subscales having categories (1) General Self-esteem (2) Social Self-esteem (3) Academic self-esteem (4) Parental Self-esteem.

Factor structure analysis, communalities index and eigen values have confirmed 16 items based on 4 factors. General Self-Esteem component comprising of 3 items, Social Self-Esteem component comprising of 4 items, Academic Self-Esteem component comprising of 5 items and Parental Self-Esteem component with 4 items are heavily loaded on the given construct. The factor loading of each item ranges between .45 to .97.

Statistical Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out by using principle component analysis and varimax rotation (Table 6).

Phase-II: Validation of 16-Item Self-Ssteem Scale for Children

Reliability Analysis:

Participants

For measuring the reliability of final version of Self-Esteem Scale (SESC-ICP), the sample comprising of 234 participants were selected from various school of Karachi from commercial and private sector. Age range of the participants was 12-16 years and their mean age was 14.2. For test-retest reliability a sample of 40 participants with 14 males and 26 females was reapproached after an interval of 1 week (Table 8).

Procedure

Permission from educational institution and participants' parents was sought and informed consent was taken. Research purpose and significance is briefed. The

final version of SESC-ICP was administered on the selected sample. At the end the participants and respective Institution were thanked for their cooperation and time.

Statistical Analysis

The collected responses were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS; V. 21). Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess internal consistency where Pearson *r* was employed to assess Split-half reliability Test-retest reliability. Inter correlation between the subscales was also determined using Pearson *r* (Table7).

RESULTS

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=234)

Group		*f*	*%*
Gender	Male	164	70.1
	Female	70	29.9
Religion	Islam	215	91.9
	Christian	1	.4
	Hindu	18	7.7
Birth Order	First	69	29.5
	Middle	93	39.7
	Last	72	30.8
Fathers Education	Illiterate	8	3.4
	Middle	12	5.2
	Primary	4	1.7
	Metric	59	25.3
	Inter	49	21.0
	Male	*Female*	*Total Sample*
Mean Age	14.5	13.6	14.2

Table 2
Item-total Correlations of 16 items on Self-esteem Scale for Children (N=234)

Item No.	r	Item No.	r
1	.57	9	.60
2	.52	10	.52
3	.47	11	.60
4	.53	12	.64
5	.48	13	.49
6	.43	14	.53
7	.53	15	.41
8	.52	16	.38

Table 3
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

			Bartlett	*Test*	
	KMO	*p*	*Chi Square*	*df*	*p*
Self-Esteem Scale for Children (SESC-ICP)	.79	.00	1433.8	300	.00

Table 4
Communalities of 25 items of Self-Esteem Scale for Children including 4 Subscales, obtained through Principle Component Analysis (N=234)

Item No.	Initial	Extraction	Item No.	InitIal	Extraction
Item 1	1.00	.619	Item 14	1.00	.745
Item 2	1.00	.677	Item 15	1.00	.531
Item 3	1.00	.580	Item 16	1.00	.615
Item 4	1.00	.557	Item17	1.00	.560
Item 5	1.00	.677	Item18	1.00	.514
Item 6	1.00	.673	Item 19	1,00	.548
Item 7	1.00	.619	Item 20	1.00	.645
Item 8	1.00	.516	Item 21	1.00	.562
Item 9	1.00	.496	Item 22	1.00	.607
Item 10	1.00	.454	Item 23	1.00	.722
Item 11	1.00	.624	Item24	1.00	.555
Item 12	1.00	.624	Item25	1.00	.669
Item 13	1.00	.677			

Table 5
Eigen Values & Percentage of Variance explained by 8 components of Self-Esteem Scale in the Factor Solution obtained through Principal Component Analysis (N=234)

Component	Eigen value	Variance %
1	5.279	21.116
2	2.163	8.653
3	1.640	6.560
4	1.335	5.342
5	1.203	4.811
6	1.188	4.750
7	1.033	4.132
8	1.013	4.051

Table 6
Rotated Component Matrix of the 25 items of Self-Esteem Scale for Children obtained through Principal Component Analysis (N=234)

	Rotated Component Matrix							
	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Item16	.707							
Item17	.697							
Item19	.638							
Item4	.627							
Item15	.624							
Item18	.553							
Item8	.500							
Item9								
Item25		.783						
Item21		.682						
Item20		.674						
Item24		.614						
Item2			.780					
Item1			.647					
Item3			.523					
Item13				.771				
Item12				.701				
Item11				.551				
Item10				.469				
Item23					.804			
Item22					.662			
Item5						.801		
Item7						.586		.451
Item14							.838	
Item6								.782

Table 7
Reliability Analysis of Self-Esteem Scale for Children and is Subscales

Subscale	α	Split Half r	Test-Retest r
General	.62	.48	.73
Social	.62	.57	.72
Academic	.76	.72	.74
Parental	.58	.44	.90
SESC-Total	.80	.68	.86

Table 8
Inter-correlation between Self-Esteem Scale for Children and its Subscales (N=234)

	Subscales	1	2	3	4	CSES
1	General	__	.43**	.40**	.35**	.70**
2	Social		__	.31**	.30**	.71**
3	Academic			__	.33**	.82**

DISCUSSION

Our study was based on the preamble that there is a dire need of good scales, developed in local language to measure self-esteem in children specifically adolescents. Literature review provided in the preceding section established the merit of self-esteem in young population. The cost of having low self-esteem is huge, hence rationale of scale construction. Research review further showed that only few

scales available have good psychometric profile, majority of the scales are based on single unit constructs.

Our Self-Esteem Scale for Children (SESC-ICP) scale established Self-esteem as a multidimensional construct with subcomponents. We followed notion given by (Azjen & Fishbein, 1975) that global unit does not define self-esteem into behavior but specific self-esteem does. Another reason for developing multi faceted scale was the importance of peers, family environment and academics in shaping up children self-esteem. As studies suggest low social activity and lack of friendships is associated with Self-esteem problems (Donders & Verschueren, 2004); bullying at school results in low self-esteem (Ahmed & El-Salamoni, 2018) and low grades are also linked up with poor self-esteem in children (Alvarez & Szücs, 2022). In fact all these problems are somehow related to different facets of Self-esteem which need to be explored considering these as the important areas of child's life. Also it further purpots Battle's (2002) model of multidimensionality in self-esteem. Henceforth the 16 itemed final scale comprises of four subscales.

Exploratory factor analysis identified 8 factors through varimax rotation out of which 4 significant factors were drawn by merging common themes in the redundant factors. After that nine factors werer identified through varimax rotation including 82 items (Table 6). On the basis of these factor loadings the four highly loaded factors were labeled as General self-esteem having 3 items, Social self-esteem having 4 items, Academic self-esteem having 5 items & Parental self-esteem having 4 items. These findings are in line with previous researches which found self-esteem having multidimensional structure (Coopersmith, 1967; Briggs & Cheek, 1986) similarly our research after factor analysis yielded four underlying dimensions of self-esteem. Although nature and type of subcomponents differ across studies, (Franks and Marolla, 1976) but a general theme persists which includes feeling of self-evaluation, competence and feeling of adequacy.

Total-item correlation of the scale has been computed as in Table 2. The magnitude of the scores reveal that correlation with the total score increased after two pilot studies (Average= .5), which serves as an indicator of increased internal consistency for the selected 16 items. All the items show moderate to strong positive correlation with the total scale score. Correlations are significant with p <.01 which indicates the homogeneity of the scale and validate that the items are tapping the same underlying construct (Nunnally, 1978). Another estimate of internal consistency is the inter-item correlation matrix given in table 15 which shows mild to moderate positive correlation among items with p <.01. However item 16 of

Parental Self-esteem is found to be correlating negatively with items of general self-esteem (Item 3; r = -.04), Social self-esteem (Item 9, r = -.03) and Academic self-esteem (Item 6; r = -0.3). It is showing the discriminating power of Parental Self-esteem scale, however the values are low and only single item per domain is showing negative correlation. Therefore these negative correlations will have a negligible effect on the total score hence it can be ignored.

Reliability analysis indicates that even though our total-item correlation values are not high for all the 16 items, but the correlation is strong between the subcomponents and overall self-esteem construct. Matrix of intercorrelation (Table 7) shows the correlation coefficient between SESC and its four subscales having r=.70 (p<.01), r=.71(p<.01), r=.81(p<.01) and r=.88(p<.01) for General self-esteem, Social self-esteem, Academic self-esteem & Parental self-esteem respectively. It is also found that the strength of correlation is higher between SESC and its subscales as compared to strength of correlation among subscales. Hence it can be assumed that not only our scale measures self-esteem as a general and over all construct but its subscales can also be taken as separate measures which are assessing different dimensions of self-esteem.

Children's cognition and feelings about themselves are private and often difficult to be observed; hence construct validity is important for validation. Self-report measures are utilized to draw inferences, which are prone to different biases and confounding variables. Since our scale also assesses Self-esteem through a self-report measure, it faced the problem of social desirability. In the first two pilot studies, subjects attributed to themselves traits which are socially accepted and responded in negation over items that were challenging their self-esteem and making them feel exposed. As suggested by Huang (2013) while being assessed individuals with low self-esteem will try to mask their feelings of inadequacy, when they interact with people they consider important. Similarly on the initial drafts of scale (Pilot Study 1 & 2) the children tried to falsify responses by presenting a good picture. Hence total-item correlation yielded weak values initially and many of the items had to be removed. Social desirability has always been considered a threat to validity by many researchers (Furr, 2010; Meisels & Ford, 1969).This faking good and falsifying resulted in many of the items being cut and subscales reduced to a limited few items, which yielded low alpha values in reliability estimates. Children Self-Esteem Scale on the basis of above mentioned psychometric evaluation can be established as a valid and reliable tool to measure self-esteem in children.

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