



A STUDY OF SELF-ESTEEM AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WITH REFERENCE TO GENDER DIFFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

Self-esteem refers to an individual's perception of their own worth, competence, and value. It plays a critical role in shaping personality, professional behaviour, and emotional well-being, especially in professions like teaching where interpersonal dynamics are vital. The present study aimed to examine the self-esteem of senior secondary school teachers in relation to gender. A sample of 127 teachers, including 52 males and 75 females, was selected using the survey method. The Self-Esteem Scale developed by Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar was administered to collect data. Mean, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test were used for statistical analysis. The results indicated that there was **no significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female senior secondary school teachers**. This suggests that gender does not play a determining role in shaping self-esteem levels among teachers at the senior secondary level.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Senior Secondary School Teachers, Gender, Teaching Profession.

Introduction

Self-esteem is a crucial psychological construct that significantly influences an individual's thoughts, emotions, motivation, and behaviour. It reflects how individuals perceive and value themselves in different roles and situations. For teachers, particularly those at the senior secondary level, self-esteem plays a vital role in shaping their instructional practices, professional confidence, classroom interactions, and overall job satisfaction. Teachers with high self-esteem are more likely to be effective educators, demonstrate resilience in facing professional challenges, and contribute positively to the school environment. In today's dynamic and demanding educational landscape, teachers are expected not only to deliver curriculum effectively but also to act as mentors, counsellors, and role models for students. This multifaceted role can place immense psychological pressure on teachers, influencing their sense of self-worth and professional identity. At the senior secondary level, the academic pressure intensifies, and teachers often encounter high expectations from students, parents, and administrators alike. In such circumstances, maintaining a healthy level of self-esteem becomes essential for sustaining motivation and professional commitment. Gender, as a socio-cultural construct, may have a profound impact on self-esteem. Societal expectations, cultural norms, and professional experiences often shape how male and female teachers perceive themselves in their roles. While both male and female teachers contribute equally to the academic and emotional development of students, their lived experiences in the teaching profession may vary significantly due to gender-based expectations and biases. Exploring self-esteem through the lens of gender can thus provide meaningful insights into the psychological well-being of educators and help in developing gender-sensitive policies and interventions. Despite the critical role of self-esteem in teacher effectiveness, relatively little empirical attention has been given to studying it in the context of gender, particularly among senior secondary school teachers. This study, therefore, aims to examine the self-esteem of senior secondary school teachers in relation to gender. The findings of the study will

contribute to the growing body of educational psychology and may help in designing targeted support systems for improving teacher well-being and performance.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Self-esteem is a vital psychological construct that influences how individuals perceive themselves, interact with others, and handle professional responsibilities. In the context of education, teachers' self-esteem significantly affects their teaching effectiveness, classroom management, motivation, and ability to foster a positive learning environment. Senior secondary school teachers, in particular, face unique academic pressures and developmental challenges associated with adolescent learners, curriculum delivery, and career-related responsibilities of students. In recent years, the issue of gender equity in educational professions has gained attention, yet limited research focuses on whether gender differences exist in the psychological attributes of teachers—particularly self-esteem. Investigating self-esteem through the lens of gender can help educational administrators, counsellors, and policymakers develop targeted support mechanisms that foster the personal and professional growth of teachers. This study is especially relevant in the Indian educational context, where gender roles and societal expectations can influence professional identity and self-perception. By exploring whether male and female senior secondary school teachers differ in their self-esteem, the study seeks to contribute empirical evidence to the discourse on teacher well-being and gender sensitivity in schools. Moreover, understanding teachers' self-esteem is crucial as it directly impacts their students' development. Teachers with healthy self-esteem are better equipped to inspire confidence, handle classroom challenges, and build positive student-teacher relationships.

Senior secondary school teachers face unique pressures associated with managing adolescent learners, delivering complex curricula, and addressing students' academic and career aspirations. These demands can impact their psychological well-being. Despite the critical role of self-esteem in professional performance, there is limited research in the Indian context on how gender influences self-esteem among school teachers. This study aims to bridge that gap by examining self-esteem among male and female senior secondary school teachers. In a society where traditional gender roles and societal expectations continue to shape professional identity, it is crucial to explore whether self-esteem levels differ by gender. Understanding these differences can help educators, administrators, and policymakers develop gender-sensitive support mechanisms to promote teacher well-being.

Furthermore, this study is significant because it:

- Addresses an essential psychological variable (self-esteem) that affects teacher motivation, performance, and classroom climate.
- Contributes to the limited body of empirical research on gender-based differences in teacher self-esteem, especially in the Indian educational context.
- Provides insights for designing effective teacher training programs, counseling interventions, and policy initiatives that support both male and female educators.
- Emphasizes the importance of emotional and psychological well-being in improving the overall quality of education.

By highlighting the relationship between gender and self-esteem among senior secondary school teachers, this study supports the broader goals of enhancing teacher effectiveness and student outcomes through targeted psychological support and gender-aware educational strategies.

REVIEWS OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

A number of studies have been conducted to examine the role of self-esteem in teaching effectiveness, organizational commitment, and adjustment among school teachers and student teachers.

Hatim and Jamil (2023) conducted a study to evaluate the impact of self-esteem, gender, and type of institution (public and private) on the organizational commitment of secondary school teachers. The study used a sample of 200 secondary school teachers (119 male, 81 females; 105 government, 95 private) selected through a multistage random sampling technique. The researchers administered the Self-Esteem Scale developed by Dhar & Dhar and the Teacher's Organizational Commitment Scale developed by Jamal & Raheem. Statistical techniques including mean, standard deviation, product moment correlation, regression, t-test, and factorial ANOVA were applied. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and organizational commitment ($r = 0.48$), and self-esteem had a significant differential effect on organizational commitment ($F = 2.711$). However, gender ($F = 0.395$) and type of institution ($F = 0.298$) had insignificant effects on self-esteem and organizational commitment. Suraiya and Jamal (2019) investigated the influence of self-esteem on teacher effectiveness among 200 government secondary school teachers from Muzaffarpur, Bihar (103 female, 97 male). The researchers used self-constructed tools to measure teacher effectiveness and self-esteem. Data analysis through Pearson Product Moment Correlation and stepwise multiple regression revealed a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and teacher effectiveness. The study further emphasized that components of self-esteem significantly impacted teacher effectiveness. In a related study, Thiruppathi and Anitha (2017) examined the relationship between self-esteem and personal adjustment among 300 student teachers from various colleges of education in Kanyakumari district. Stratified random sampling was used to select the sample. The Self-Esteem Scale and Personal Adjustment Inventory were used as tools for data collection. The study reported a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and personal adjustment, suggesting that individuals with high self-esteem were more personally adjusted. It was also found that gender, religion, and income status had no significant influence on self-esteem or personal adjustment, while type of management significantly influenced self-esteem, and locality and religion affected personal adjustment. Melekewei (2024) explored the causal relationship between self-esteem, gender, and teacher effectiveness among 1,650 public secondary school teachers in the Southwest region of Nigeria. The study adopted an ex-post facto survey research design and used a multistage sampling

technique. Data was collected using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (reliability = 0.73) and the Teacher Effectiveness Scale (reliability = 0.76). Pearson product-moment correlation was used for data analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated a weak linear relationship between gender and teacher effectiveness ($r = 0.053$) and a slight inverse relationship between self-esteem and teacher effectiveness ($r = -0.017$). This suggests that higher self-esteem did not necessarily predict higher teaching effectiveness. The study concluded by emphasizing the importance of considering gender as a factor in teacher recruitment due to its influence on teacher effectiveness.

OBJECTIVE

1. To study the self-esteem among senior secondary school teachers.
2. To compare the self-esteem of senior secondary school teachers with respect to their gender.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Method was employed.

TOOL USED

1. SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Self-Esteem Scale was developed by Santosh Dhar and Upinder Dhar was used. This scale consists 23 items divided into six areas namely;

1. Positivity
2. Openness
3. Competence
4. Humility
5. Self-worth
6. Learning orientation

SAMPLE

The sample for the present study consisted of 127 senior secondary school teachers drawn from two districts of Himachal Pradesh. The sample included both male and female teachers, selected to examine gender-wise differences in self-esteem.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE USED

To analyze the self-esteem of senior secondary school teachers and to examine the difference in self-esteem with respect to gender, appropriate statistical techniques were employed. The Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) were calculated to determine the overall level and variability of self-esteem scores among the teachers. Furthermore, the t-test was applied to compare the self-esteem scores of male and female senior secondary school teachers, in order to assess whether a statistically significant gender difference exists in their self-esteem levels.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited to senior secondary school teachers of Himachal Pradesh. Furthermore, the scope of the study was confined to one independent variable; gender, and one dependent variable; self-esteem. As such, the findings may not be generalizable to teachers of other educational levels, regions, or to other psychological variables beyond self-esteem.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1.1 Self-Esteem Of Senior Secondary School Teachers

The responses collected from senior secondary school teachers on the Self-Esteem Scale were subjected to statistical analysis. In order to examine the general level of self-esteem among the respondents, the mean and standard deviation of the total scores were computed. The results are presented in Table-1.

Table-1

Mean and standard deviation of total scores of Senior secondary school teachers on self-esteem

Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
127	70.99	27.98

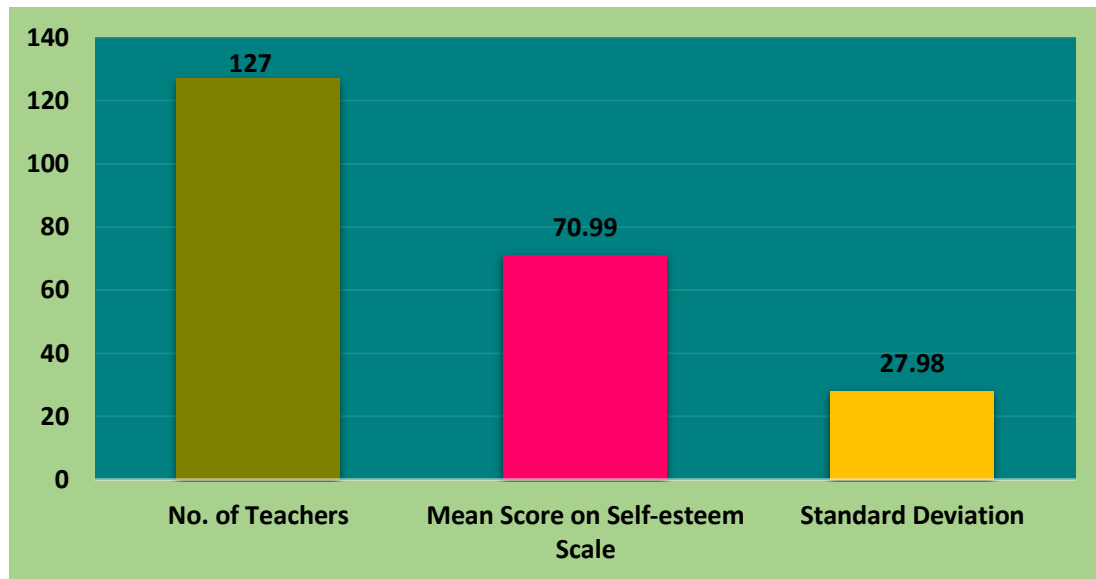
Table-1 presents the descriptive statistics for the total sample of senior secondary school teachers with respect to their self-esteem scores. The mean self-esteem score for the sample ($N = 127$) is 70.99, with a standard deviation of 27.98. This indicates that, on average, the self-esteem level of senior secondary school teachers in the sample is moderate. The relatively high standard deviation suggests a wide

variation in self-esteem levels among the teachers, indicating that while some teachers report high self-esteem, others may experience lower levels of self-worth or self-confidence.

These results serve as a foundational step for further comparative analysis, particularly in relation to gender, to determine whether significant differences exist in self-esteem across male and female teachers. The mean and standard deviation are further depicted in Figure-1, which visually represents the distribution of self-esteem scores across the sample.

Figure-1

Mean and standard deviation of total scores of senior secondary school teachers on self-esteem



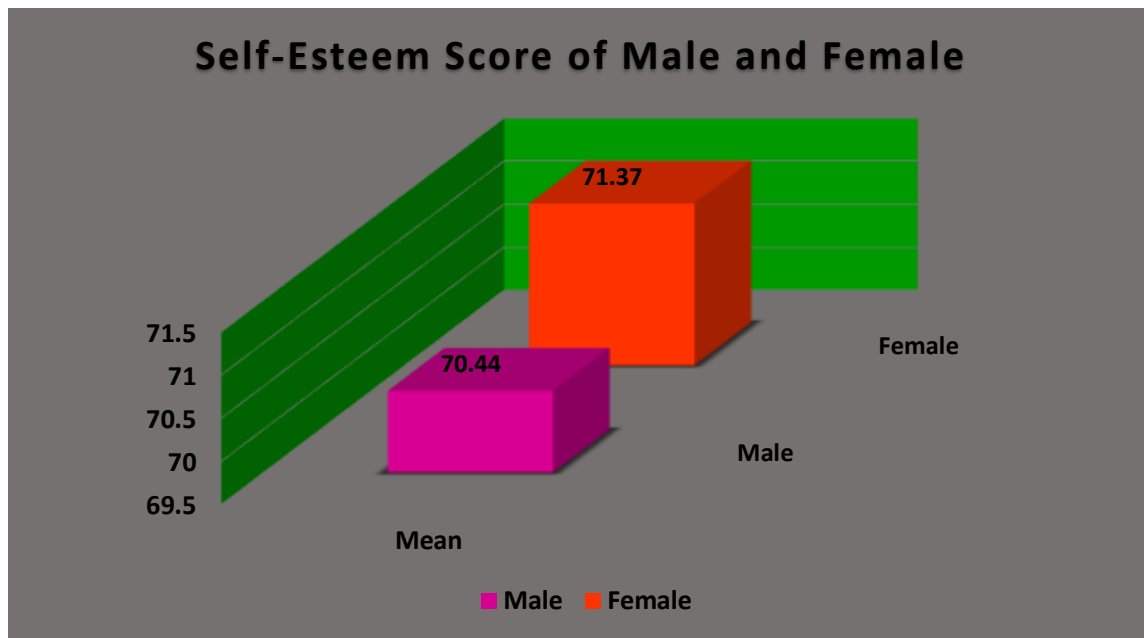
1.2 Gender-Wise Comparison of Self-Esteem Among Senior Secondary School Teachers

To examine the influence of gender on self-esteem, the mean and standard deviation scores of male and female senior secondary school teachers were compared. An independent samples t-test was applied to determine whether the observed difference in self-esteem scores was statistically significant. The results are presented in Table-2.

Table-2
Comparison of Self-Esteem Scores by Gender

Gender	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Significance
Male	52	70.44	33.49	-0.17	not significant
Female	75	71.37	23.65		

As shown in Table-2, the mean self-esteem score of male senior secondary school teachers is 70.44 with a standard deviation of 33.49, whereas the mean score for female teachers is 71.37 with a standard deviation of 23.65. The calculated t -value is -0.17, which is not significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the self-esteem of male and female senior secondary school teachers. Thus, it can be inferred that gender does not play a determining role in influencing the self-esteem levels among the sample of teachers studied. Figure-2 graphically represents the mean scores of self-esteem among male and female senior secondary school teachers.

Figure-2**Difference in Self-esteem of male and female Senior secondary school teachers**

The difference is statistically insignificant, as supported by the t -value in Table-2. This visual reinforces the finding that gender has no substantial impact on the self-esteem levels in the present sample.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The analysis of data collected from senior secondary school teachers regarding their self-esteem revealed that, overall, the group displayed a moderate level of self-esteem. The mean self-esteem score for the total sample was 70.99, with a standard deviation of 27.98. This suggests that while some teachers possess high levels of self-esteem, others fall at the lower end of the spectrum, indicating a considerable variation in how teachers perceive themselves in terms of self-worth and personal competence.

When comparing self-esteem based on gender, it was observed that male teachers had a mean score of 70.44 with a standard deviation of 33.49, whereas female teachers had a slightly higher mean of 71.37 with a standard deviation of 23.65. However, the calculated t -value of -0.17 was found to be statistically insignificant. This implies that there is no meaningful difference in the self-esteem of male and female senior secondary school teachers. The results suggest that gender does not significantly influence the level of self-esteem among teachers in the sample under study.

These findings indicate that both male and female teachers perceive themselves similarly in terms of their capabilities, value, and self-worth, reflecting a balanced sense of professional identity regardless of gender. Therefore, any efforts to support or enhance teacher self-esteem can be designed and implemented universally rather than being tailored specifically to either gender.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, several suggestions can be proposed to enhance the self-esteem of senior secondary school teachers.

1. **Create a Supportive Work Environment**
 - Schools should foster a positive atmosphere where teachers feel valued and respected for their contributions.
2. **Recognize and Appreciate Teachers' Efforts**
 - Regular recognition through awards, appreciation notes, or feedback can enhance teachers' self-worth.
3. **Organize Professional Development Programs**
 - Conduct workshops on self-awareness, emotional intelligence, stress management, and confidence-building.
4. **Promote Equal Opportunities**
 - Ensure both male and female teachers have equal access to professional growth, leadership positions, and decision-making roles.
5. **Implement Mentorship Programs**
 - Pair experienced teachers with newcomers to build confidence and promote mutual learning.
6. **Encourage Open Communication**
 - Create platforms where teachers can freely express their concerns and suggestions without fear of judgment.

7. Focus on Individual Strengths

- Interventions should be tailored to individual needs rather than focusing solely on gender differences.

8. Provide Mental Health Support

- Offer counselling services or wellness sessions to help teachers manage stress and boost their morale.

9. Conduct Further Research

- Future studies may explore other variables such as age, experience, school type, and socio-economic status to better understand self-esteem in teachers.

By recognizing the crucial role self-esteem plays in teaching effectiveness, motivation, and overall job satisfaction, stakeholders in education can design interventions and professional development programs that bolster teachers' self-image. The study contributes to the growing discourse on teacher well-being and provides empirical data that can inform gender-sensitive and inclusive educational policies.

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