



SELF-ESTEEM AS AN INDICATOR OF QUALITY OF LIFE

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Abstract

Aim. This study aims the quality of life having self-esteem as an indicator. Self-confidence, the reaction in the face of setbacks, mobilization to achieve certain objectives are attitudes related to self-esteem. People who have an optimal self-esteem react easily to certain contingencies and mobilizes more easily in order to achieve certain goals. We want to see to what extent self-esteem is influenced by practicing physical activities and is higher in subjects participating in physical activity programs compared to subjects who do not participate in such programs and to capture the importance of an optimal self-esteem in daily life.

Methods. As research method we used one of the most known instruments for evaluating self-esteem: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a ten item Likert scale developed in 1965 by the American sociologist Morris Rosenberg. Self-esteem is generally a stable characteristic of adults and refers to his being and overall self Rosenberg defines it as the totality of individual thoughts and feelings with reference to himself as an object.

Results. We have applied the scale on a number of 56 subjects, 33 of them are freshmen students and participants at physical activity programs, and 23 are master students. The results are focused on finding differences at the two categories of subjects on how people find themselves, how pleased are about them.

Conclusion. The conclusions aim to encourage people to avoid sedentary lifestyle by highlighting the benefits of active lives on self-esteem and quality of life of participants in physical activity programs.

Key words: self-esteem, quality of life, physical activity programs, physical inactivity;

Introduction

Self-esteem is a complex concept which has attached variable definitions. Băban A. indicates that self-esteem refers to how we evaluate ourselves and how good we think we are by comparison with our own expectations or others. Albu G. considers self-esteem as individuals' confidence in their own ability to think and to face the challenges of human life and success. Self-confidence, the ability to achieve the objectives set, the reaction to failures are related attitudes that can influence self-esteem and the quality of life. The emphasis on the subjective side of oneself enables us to consider self-esteem as an indicator of the subjective side of the quality of life.

Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs (2003) identify a link between low self-esteem and happiness, meaning that a person with high self-esteem is considered happier than a person who has low self-esteem.

Zamfir and Vlăsceanu address in an interesting way the relationship between quality of life and happiness, saying about quality of life that from another perspective resumes the concept of

happiness. They also distinguish the difference between the two concepts as follows: "if happiness refers to the subjective state resulting from living their own lives, quality of life refers to both aspects: objective conditions in which human life is constituted and subjective where each evaluates their own life, satisfaction, happiness and fulfillment". (Zamfir and Vlăsceanu, 1998)

From the literature review we find that surveys were conducted on students in terms of establishing a correlation between self-esteem and emotions of participants. Researchers Constantin and Trefas concluded that the sample of 28 Students participating in the study there is no significant correlation between emotions and level of self-esteem. For assessing the level of self-esteem has been used also the Self-esteem Scale developed by Morris Rosenberg.

James (1998) believes that self-esteem is the result of the relationship between the success of individual actions and aspirations about them. So we can state that self-esteem is influenced by individual successes, namely: success equal or greater than

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aspirations can lead to high self-esteem. This also applies if the aspirations beyond achievements, which can lead to low self-esteem.

Cooley quoted in Macarie et al. is advancing the hypothesis that self-esteem is a social construction and self-assessment is conducted by social and linguistic interactions that we have with others since childhood. So others are a "social mirror" in which the person gets an idea about the opinion of others about him. Coley's assumption shows us that self-esteem is influenced by the opinion that others have about us, the more they feel better about a person, his/ hers self-esteem may be higher and vice versa: if others have a bad opinion about a person, it can lead to a low self-esteem.

The level of self-esteem is flexible and is influenced by personal experience of the individual. Compile a list of personal achievements, sharing feelings with others, socializing, setting smart goals, maintaining a optimistic attitude, emphasizing the positive things in life, accepting failure as a natural thing and also a good opportunity to gain experience are prerequisites of improving the acceptance of ourselves and improving the level of self-esteem which may have beneficial effects both in terms of maintaining healthy relationships with others and improving results of activities undertaken as well.

Methods

The subjects who participated at this study are students at faculties of National University of Physical Education and Sports. The subjects chose freely to participate in this study. The aims and scale applied on this study were explained to the participants.

To encourage honesty answers, subjects were asked not to reveal their identity, thus being kept confidential answers but we kept two items of identification, depending on which we can analyze participants' responses: gender and age.

As research method we used one of the most known instruments for evaluating self-esteem: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a ten item Likert scale developed in 1965 by the American sociologist Morris Rosenberg. Self-esteem is generally a stable characteristic of adults and refers to his being and overall self Rosenberg defines it as the totality of individual thoughts and feelings with reference to himself as an object.

Self-esteem Scale contains 10 items and each item has four response options: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. For each

response option chosen by survey participants are given the following points: totally agree 4 points, 3 points, 2 points disagree, strongly disagree 1 point. Quotation results are taken as benchmark values between 10 to 16 points low self-esteem, self-esteem average 17-33 points and 34-40 points higher self-esteem.

This scale targets items that relate to think about their own person, how satisfied are themselves, if they feel they have qualities that are equally proficient in doing things as well as others, if they feel positive about themselves, etc.

For the second research instrument, we originally intended to use the International Physical Activity Questionnaire, short version, but we found that does not provide enough opportunities to compare results with the level of self-esteem and then we decided to develop a questionnaire specifically designed for this purpose to provide greater flexibility in terms of answers and more detailed information on young people's attitudes towards the practice of physical activity.

The second research instrument applied in this study is a self applied questionnaire. We carried out a questionnaire with 21 items of which six are open-response items and 15 with closed-response. The questionnaire conducted aimed at youth opinion on the practice of physical activities and is part of a wider research on the quality of life of individuals and has been applied to a number of 33 students of one college and one year 22 master students at the National University of Physical Education and Sports.

The research was conducted in May 2015.

We have applied the scale on a number of 56 subjects, all students at National university of Physical Education and Sports from Bucharest.

Results

The results are focused on finding differences at the two categories of subjects on how people find themselves, how pleased are about them and how much time they spend on practicing physical activity.

The results were compared with results arising from the application of Self-esteem Scale to see to what extent self-esteem is influenced by physical activity practice.

After applying the tools of research found the following:

Media for self-esteem at students is first year (freshmen students): 29.60 points.



Media for self-esteem in students of first year at master is 17.73 points.

Also notice that any master student at master has a high self-esteem.

However, in terms of first year students (freshmen students), 7 of survey participants have a high level of self-esteem. Related to the number of

subjects in first year (33), we obtain a rate of 21.21% who have high levels of self-esteem.

Table 1. Level of self-esteem compared to the number of minutes of physical activity practiced daily for freshmen students and master students

Variables	M ± SD	
	Freshmen students (n = 33)	Master students (n = 23)
Average of self-esteem	29,60 points (medium level- upper end of medium category)	17,73 points (medium level- low end of medium category)
Time spent on practicing physical activity per day (including walking)	152,12 minutes/day	83,91 minutes/day

In table 1 comparing the results obtained by the two categories of participants at the research: freshmen students and master students, we note that although all master students have a medium level of self-esteem, it is at low end of the medium category.

The fact that they practice physical activity in less amount than freshmen students and that no master student has a high level of self-esteem, makes us believe that practicing physical activity is closely related to the level of self-esteem.

Table 2. Level of self-esteem compared to the number of minutes of physical activity practiced daily for freshmen students

Variables	M ± SD	
	Freshmen students (n = 26)	Freshmen students (n = 7)
Average of self-esteem	28,19 points (medium level- upper end of medium category)	34,85 points (high level of self-esteem)
Time spent on practicing physical activity per day (including walking)	141,92 minutes/day	178,57 minutes/day

In table 2 we observe significant differences in the level of self-esteem related to the timed spend on practicing physical activities by the survey participants. So we find that participants who practice more physical activity per day have a higher level of

self-esteem. The result after this activity enables us to say that physical activity influences positively practicing self-esteem: how we perceive ourselves in relation to others and in relation to successes and aspirations that we have established.



Discussion

The conclusions aim to encourage people to avoid sedentary lifestyle by highlighting the benefits of active lives on self-esteem and quality of life of participants in physical activity programs.

What surprises us is the big difference between the level of self-esteem from the two categories of subjects participating in the study: freshmen students have a level of self-esteem at the upper limit, students from master have also a level of self-esteem self but at the lower end of this category.

For greater accuracy of results, the research instruments were applied on the same day for all participants in the study, so the comparison of results to be as accurate as possible.

We also notice a big difference between the two categories of subjects participating in research in terms of time spent on practicing physical activities (including walking). Based on the sincerity and correct assessment of participants regarding the time spent on physical activity performed during the day, we can say that freshmen students place throughout the day almost twice more physical activities than master students. One possible reason why this happens might be that most master students are enrolled in labor market and have less free time available than the other category of participants at this study.

Griffin & Kirby (2007) highlight the influence of media on self-esteem which promotes unrealistic body shapes and forms so that women have unrealistic body standards that can lead to disturbances of body image and eating disorders.

Grossbard et al. (2009) state that body dissatisfaction in women and less in men is associated with low self-esteem, depression and eating disorders.

Here it may be an interesting starting point for future research: to analyze in detail all the factors that influence the practice of physical activities.

Another research that can be made could investigate how happy the participants are related to the level of self esteem they have, and in what extent they consider themselves as having success in various plans, having more friends, if they are more optimistic, if they are better paid for doing they jobs than people with a lower level of self esteem and also what makes people feel happy, what influences happiness and we could do something about it.

Therefore we find it interesting in what extent the subjective part of the quality of life is influenced by the level of self-esteem.

Conclusions

In conclusion we can say that it is necessary to practice physical activity at least 30 minutes a day, just as it says the message promoted through the media in Romania. This can help maintain a healthy life, but might not be enough to have a high self-esteem.

A high level of self-esteem gives self-confidence, ability to solve difficult situations and it is an engine that emits optimism and generates resources for the successful achievement of predetermined goals.

Note that this is a pilot study in which we intend to see to what extent we can apply these tools to a larger number of participants and to see what changes are needed to improve the quality of the instruments so the results are more relevant, to faithfully reflect reality and constitute a benchmark in terms of students of the National University of Physical Education and Sport, which also can be applied successfully in other categories of participants.

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