

SELF-ESTEEM PREDICTING ENGLISH ACADEMIC

Abstract

This study examined the effect of self-esteem on second language academic achievements of Form 2-3 Hong Kong students, with English being their second language. In addition, two moderators were proposed to have an effect on the relationship between self-esteem and the students' English achievements: optimism and happiness. Students were asked to fill out some demographic questions and a research questionnaire made out of three separate scales. It was expected that the students with higher self-esteem would have better English exam results. Another expectation was the higher the 'optimism', the higher the English exam scores, which also goes for the other moderator, 'happiness'. One of the demographic questions included their citizenship status, being either a China mainland immigrant or a Hong Kong-born citizen. Several other demographic factors were also related to this because the current research also anticipated the difference between a mainland immigrant's self-esteem and that of a Hong Kong local, which may consequently affect their English exam results. A total of 371 valid student questionnaires were used for this research. Though significant positive correlations were found between self-esteem, optimism, and happiness, these previous variables and the English academic performance had very few significant results. Linear regression analysis was also used to analyse the variables, but the end results were also insignificant as regression would need a stronger relationship than correlation. Possible reasons for the insignificance, such as cultural background and self-values, are examined in the discussion.

Keywords: Self-esteem, optimism, happiness, Mainland immigrant, Hong Kong-born citizen