

SELF-ESTEEM OF CHILDREN IN RELATION TO THE TRANSACTIONAL STYLES OF THEIR PARENTS

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Abstract: Transactions between parents and children begin from the time a child comes into existence. In the present study, the investigator seeks to analyze the relation between OK and Not OK transactional styles of parents and the self-esteem of their children. It was hypothesized that there will be a significant relationship of OK transactional styles of parents and the self-esteem of their children. 96 children (48 boys and 48 girls) belonging to the age group of 12 to 14 years and their parents were part of this study. The self-esteem of children and the OK or Not OK Styles being used by the parents were determined using standardized inventories. Data was analyzed by comparing the self-esteem of children and the OK or Not OK transactional styles of parents and results interpreted.

Key words: self-esteem, transactional styles, children, parents

I. INTRODUCTION

People's interactions are made up of transactions. Some of these transactional sets or sequences can be direct, productive and healthy or devious, wasteful and unhealthy Transactions, OK and Not OK thus are a part of every interaction and influence the effectiveness of relationships. "All through life, information is received, necessary actions adhered to, and relationships developed or maintained. Each party in the communication, whether they agree with each other (or not) or like each other (or not) usually tries to maintain an I'm OK, You're OK position" (Berne. E, 1967).

In today's world of heightened demand for excellence, one's value of self-worth is constantly being put to test. We see a rapid increase in the number of children ending up depressed and suicidal. What could be the role of parents in the development of self-esteem of their children? At least, in the early years of life, children spend a great amount of time at home. Parents ought to display pride in their children and encourage them through the mistakes they make. "We must not let the mistakes and failures shatter our faith in the child, he needs real and lasting self-respect if he is to develop both integrity and a durable capacity to achieve." (Gruenberg, S. 1930).

According to Coopersmith. S. (1967), "the link between self-esteem and frailty in children is either domination or rejection or severe punishment which results in lowered self-esteem. Under these conditions children have fewer experiences of love and success and tend to become generally more submissive and withdrawn and occasionally veer to the opposite extreme of aggression and domination. Levels of discipline, family affection, and marital stability are all registered in a child's emerging concept of self-worth and are significantly associated with feelings of personal worth." If so, to what extent is the development of self-esteem influenced by the OK or Not OK transactional styles that their parents use? Stanley Coopersmith's (1967) study with his own self-evaluation scale measured self-esteem in children and later assessed the parent's child rearing practices for those children with high self-esteem and concluded that the origins of higher self-esteem lay in clear rules and limits enforced by the parents.

But, are the rules and limits enforced by parents which help children develop high self-esteem? Herz. L., Gullone. E. (1999) of Monash University in Australia, conducted a cross-cultural comparison of Australian and

Vietnamese-Australian adolescents to investigate the relationship between self-esteem, parenting style and acculturation. They found that parenting characterized by high levels of overprotection and low levels of acceptance related negatively with self-esteem. In the study “Parental Contributions to Southeast Asian American Adolescents' Well-Being” by Ying Y. W and Han, M. (2008) found that parental involvement fully mediated the effect of parental acculturation on intergenerational relationship.

On the other hand, a study by Chirayath, S. (2008) titled “Transactional Styles and Gender — A Correlational Study” sought to understand the predominant interpersonal style of officers in a refinery at Kochi, Kerala to analyze whether the transactional styles are same or different for male and female officers with respect the 12 different OK or Not OK Styles. The operating effectiveness quotient of the officers could be generalized to be average and there is significant difference between the transactional styles of male and female officers.

2. METHOD.

In the present study, the investigator seeks to examine the relation between OK and Not OK transactional styles of parents and the self-esteem of their children. It was hypothesized that there will be a strong relationship between OK transactional styles and the self- esteem of their children.

2.1. Participant Recruitment and Pilot study

Two schools in Hyderabad were selected. To determine the possible difficulties and short comings that would arise during the process of data collection, ten children and their parents were selected. The specific inventories were used to collect required data. Specific difficulties and the average time taken to complete the questionnaire were noted.

2. 2. Informed Consent and Demographic details

The Heads of Institutions were approached for consent and briefed about the relevance and implications of this study. At the same time a note was sent across to the parents requesting their consent to be part of the study. Students were selected using simple random sampling method. Details such as name, age and gender were noted.

2.3. Sample details

The total sample consists of 288 individuals of which are adolescent boys, girls and their parents:

48 Boys & 96 Parents (i.e. Mothers -48; Fathers-48)	48 Girls & 96 Parents (i.e.Mothers-48; Fathers-48)
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2. 4. Procedure

To assess the self-esteem of children, the Self-esteem Inventory developed by Stanley Coopersmith (1967) was used. The inventory was designed for the evaluation of attitudes towards the self in family, social, academic, and personal areas of experience. The self-esteem inventory consists of 25 items which are short statements such as “I usually feel as if my family is pushing me” and are to be responded to with “like me” or “unlike me”. Responses were scored as per the instructions given in the manual and the obtained total score was multiplied by four to get an equivalent percentile score. Self-esteem was categorized into three groups low, moderate and high based on the interpretation.

To assess the Transactional Styles of Parents, the Transactional Styles Inventory for Parents (TSI - P2) was used. This tool was developed by Surabhi Purohit (1995) and is based on “Transactional Analysis” by Eric Berne (1967). This inventory consists of 48 simple statements in which each describes one of the six OK or six Not OK Transactional styles used by parents.

Both parents i.e. Father and Mother had to read each statement carefully and on two separate inventories (one for each) mark their responses by choosing one of the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 against each statement number in the response sheet where: 1 stands for -rarely or never behave this way, 2 – occasionally behave this way, 3-sometimes behave this way, 4-often behave this way, and 5-almost always behave this way. The item numbers in the response sheet were summed horizontally and 12 scores obtained of which each represents one of the six OK styles or one of the six Not OK Styles. The Transactional Style corresponding to the highest score is the OK or Not OK Transactional style of the parent.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The self-esteem of children and transactional styles of parents were statistically analyzed. The Not OK and OK transactional styles of parents and the level of self-esteem of their children were tabulated and discussed accordingly. However, it should be noted that since in this present study the transactional styles of parents and self-esteem of their children are being analyzed, the results which are tabulated and discussed below are limited to denoting and interpreting the same, even though there is scope for in-depth of analysis.

Table I showing the self-esteem of children and the transactional styles of their fathers

Fathers Transactional Style	Self-esteem		
	Low	Moderate	High
Not OK	67.7%	30.3%	2.0%
OK	5.7%	60.0%	34.3%

Table I denotes that in the case of fathers who were using Not OK transactional style, 67.7% of children had a low level of self-esteem, 30.3% had a moderate level of self-esteem and only 2.0% of children had high level of self-esteem. On the other hand, when fathers were using OK transactional style, 5.7% of children had a low level of self-esteem, 60.0% had a moderate level of self-esteem and 34.3% had high level of self-esteem.

Since it was hypothesized that there will be a significant difference in the relationship between OK transactional styles of parents and the self-esteem of their children, from the table we specifically note that when father’s transactional style was OK, 60% of children showed moderate self-esteem and a considerable 34.3% of children showed high self-esteem.

The above scores imply that when fathers used OK transactional styles with their children, a moderate to high level of self-esteem is evident. Thus, the hypothesis stating that the self-esteem of children whose fathers use OK transactional styles is accepted.

Table II showing the self-esteem of children and the transactional styles of their mothers

Mothers Transactional Style	Self-esteem		
	Low	Moderate	High
Not OK	49.4%	30.6%	21.0%
OK	6.0%	69.2%	25.8%

Table II denotes that when the mothers were using Not OK transactional style, 49.4% of children showed a low level of self-esteem, 30.6% a moderate level and 21.0% a high level of self-esteem. On the other hand, when mothers were using OK transactional style, 6.0% of children had a low level of self-esteem, 69.2% had a moderate level of self-esteem and 25.8% had high level of self-esteem.

Since it was hypothesized that there will be a significant difference in the strength of the relationship between OK transactional styles and the self-esteem of their children, from the table we specifically note that when mothers' transactional style was OK, 69.2% of children showed moderate self-esteem and 25.8% of children showed high self-esteem.

This implies that when mothers used OK transactional styles with their children, a moderate to high level of self-esteem will be formed. Thus, the hypothesis stating that the self-esteem of children whose mothers use OK transactional styles will be high is accepted.

4. CONCLUSION

This research study implies that when fathers and mothers used OK transactional styles with their children, a moderate to high level of self-esteem will be formed. Thus, the hypothesis stating that the self-esteem of children whose parents use OK transactional styles will be high is accepted. An intervention to improve the Not OK transactional styles of parents to OK transactional styles can be designed based on Transactional Analysis by Berne, E., (1961) to improve the quality of parent-child interaction and the lasting effects seen in the self-esteem of the child.

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