

# Self-esteem and depression in adolescents

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## ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a crucial period from childhood to adulthood in terms of psychological, physical and mental changes and transformations of adolescents. Since this period is difficult and sensitive for adolescents, it can be so challenging to build self-esteem and stay away from depression. Self-esteem is a word that means knowing one's self and valuing one's own skills, and is an indicator of mental health. An individual's inner vision, experiences, and information from others shape and develop self-esteem. These levels affect the well-being and circumstances of adolescents, as shown in the article. The aim of this article is to examine the self-esteem and depression of adolescents, which is an

important period between childhood and adulthood, and to inform about this sensitive period by evaluating the pros and cons as well as some suggestions and solutions in different situations. Examples and conditions are given through studies, and different positions for self-esteem and depression are highlighted. There are different studies investigating the effects of age and gender on self-esteem. Among the physical problems that affect adolescents' self-esteem, self-confidence and social connections, acne is mentioned. The relationship between a concept called academic procrastination and the self-esteem of adolescents has been evaluated and situations that may cause academic procrastination have been included. Finally, there is a subjective evaluation and claim about why adolescents become depressed and lose their self-esteem.

**Key Words:** *Pandemic; Procrastination*

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## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a significant period and transition stage between childhood and adulthood. Every individual experiences this period before individuals pass into adulthood, and this transition includes the physical and psychological development of adolescents. The adolescence, in which their future character is formed, is crucial and sensitive. Besides, people around adolescents should gain this awareness and approach them in this way. That's why a few points will be mentioned about adolescents, that can raise awareness in the approach of parents to their adolescent children. Therefore, this paper will be effective for adolescents to gain self-esteem and protect them from depression. On the other hand, self-esteem is one of the most well-studied and practiced notions in psychology about adolescents. Self-esteem is linked to major life outcomes including academic accomplishment, psychological well-being, physical health, and relationship satisfaction, according to extensive studies. The terms self-esteem may include the notions of self-significance, self-respect, self-love. Also, self-esteem could be defined as an adolescent's subjective assessment of his or her own worth. It may be defined as a collection of thoughts, beliefs, and values that guide a person's behavior in the face of adversity. Moreover, self-esteem indicates whether a person has a positive or negative self-perception. It entails the disciplines of living consciously with self-awareness, self-responsibility, self-assurance, focused living, and personal entirety [1].

According to Alexander, self-esteem is a state in which an individual appreciates his abilities at the maximum level, both positively and negatively, and is an indicator of mental well-being.

Self-esteem is shaped and developed by the individual's inner perception, experiences, and information from others. Self-esteem may have different rates in adolescents such as high self-esteem and low self-esteem. According to Sherman, high self-esteem is defined as healthy self-awareness without harsh criticism. Absolutely low self-esteem can affect adolescents' self-esteem and mood. For instance, faintheartedness and depression are more frequent in people who have low self-esteem. They may feel alone, unwanted, unable to articulate or defend themselves, and helpless to fix their issues. Instead of being engaged in a social group, they choose to be passive in places where they may be alone. They may adopt a defiant attitude and experience emotional turmoil. People who have low self-esteem are more likely to be sad, discouraged, irritated, and academically challenged. In this case, this situation of adolescents may cause the risk of depression [2-4].

The findings of studies on age and sex differences are variable, so they are definitively endless. While some found that age and gender differences were important in self-esteem, others argued that there was no significant difference and found no significant results. According to one study, an individual's self-esteem increases especially from early adolescence to adulthood. There are also studies about gender showing that men have higher self-esteem than women. One of the studies that claimed to have an effect on age found that adolescents aged 14-17 had higher self-esteem than older adolescents around 17-18 ages. Therefore, the majority of older adolescents had lower self-esteem than younger adolescents according to this claim. However, according to some Turkish researchers, they did not find a

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a noticeable difference in the self-esteem of Turkish adolescents due to age differences. To deduce from these studies, results of empirical investigations regarding gender and ages differences are contradictory [5].

Due to unemotional and unsupportive parents or caregivers, adolescent children tend to develop a low sense of self as a result of feeling inadequate, unloved, and worthless. That is, significantly inadequate attention and care during adolescence, including late childhood, is the presumed cause of reactive attachment disorder. It is not surprising that children who do not receive enough attention from their parents and the people around them do not develop self-esteem. This will also affect adolescents' communication with the outside world as is pointed out in the paper. On the contrary, high self-esteem also is problematic for adolescents such as. Narcism can be defined as a person who has a mental disorder; these people feel the importance of themselves excessively. These people may see themselves as overly important and superior to other people. They may look down on other people, so they may have problematic relationships with people.

In adolescence, not only people, who are around teenagers, do not expect to complete a variety of developmental activities; but also adolescents require parental support and encouragement to achieve these developmental tasks. According to a study, Nigerian adolescents face a high rate of parental separation that affects their development, self-esteem, and well-being. Many other studies have evaluated the impacts and outcomes of parental separation on the self-esteem of adolescents. This claim may be denied that the self-esteem and development of adolescents who do not receive complimentary support from their parents may be affected. The opposite may be the case, and this may also have an advantage for the adolescent. When adolescents, who have separated parents, need support from their parents, they might have to deal with their problems themselves due to the deficiency of their parents. Even if the adolescent who starts to cope with her problems has difficulties, she will learn to deal with difficulties after a point. At the end of this struggle, the adolescent will both mature and her ability to cope will increase her self-confidence and self-esteem. For example, many people say that going to university in another city is a challenging situation. People might have difficulties, and resist for a while, but then the feeling of succeeding shows that one can do something. Even if adolescents may be very upset because of their parents' separation, they will develop and their self-confidence and respect will increase as they have to cope with their problems.

Another important point is acne, which adolescents try very hard to get rid of and which affects them physically and mentally. Acne vulgaris is a dermatological situation of serious concern among adolescents as noted. A study was conducted to investigate psychosocial factors such as depression, self-esteem, or social disorders among adolescents with and without acne vulgaris. Adolescent girls, 50 with acne and 100 without acne, were recruited to the Dermatology Outpatient Clinic. And at the end of the study, adolescents with acne had a high degree of psychosocial problems. Many results such as depression, social phobia, and communication disorder have been reached in adolescents who have acne vulgaris. Moreover, according to those quotes from this study, Half of the acne sufferers (52 percent) believe that their skin condition makes them appear nasty, that's why they prevent themselves from connecting with persons of the opposite sex. As a consequences adolescents who have acne expressed difficulty overcoming emotional disturbances caused by acne vulgaris. Adolescents with acne vulgaris are prone to a significant risk of psychological difficulties, according to this study. One of these researchers found a substantial link between acne and

increased aggression, depression, disappointment, low self-esteem, even suicide thoughts, and psychological issues among teenagers. Besides, acne has a substantial effect on social interaction, health-related quality of life, and self-esteem [6].

Considering the observations in the immediate environment, adolescents have a high tendency to dislike themselves. One of the main causes of these is acne on the face, which is why many do not want to be photographed, and their self-esteem and self-confidence drop. It is important that this situation does not make adolescents oppressive and self-confident. If their self-confidence is broken and they lose their self-respect, they may become depressed and withdrawn. Because they are mentally and psychologically sensitive as mentioned in the paper. Therefore, parents should consciously explain to them that these changes in their children are natural. Therefore, initially, parents should gain this awareness. They should be aware that if their children lose their self-esteem and self-confidence, their depressed mood might create great dangers such as suicidal ideation. It is also important to stay in touch to protect adolescents. A patient and understanding approach towards adolescents who may have a nervous temperament due to this change, and their parents' feeling that they understand them, will ensure that the communication between them remains healthy [14].

Other relationships also help teens avoid depression and maintain their self-esteem by making contact and relationships. Similar relationships emerge in longitudinal studies. For example, one study found low self-esteem in early adolescence and depressive attitudes due to the disconnection of adolescents from their friends. A follow-up study for the same condition observed that the negative effects of low self-esteem extend into adulthood and that individuals' communication problems continue to progress. Based on my observations, as adolescents develop relationships, their self-esteem and self-confidence increase and they tend to be more social. Therefore, the risk of introversion, suicidal attitudes, or depression is almost non-existent. These relationships can be in love and friendship. In fact, the feeling of being liked in adolescents with romantic relationships strengthens their communication skills by feeding their self-esteem and self-confidence. The need for admiration and approval is very high during adolescence; adolescents experience uncertainty due to the change in their appearance. However, being liked by the opposite sex or being approved by friends increases the adolescent's self-esteem. One aspect of this can be observed in social media, especially in adolescence, individuals attach great importance to being liked and approved by people. But not every relationship is good for teenagers because when there is a breakup, they can be more affected because their emotional state is more sensitive and fragile. That's why relationships also might be a reason for depression, which is another possibility for adolescents.

Academic procrastination is a point that displays and affects self-esteem situation in adolescents. Several cross-sectional research has looked at the relationship between self-esteem and academic procrastination, which is defined as the deliberate delaying or postponement of academic activities or decision-making. It also covers issues such as procrastination, missing deadlines, receiving worse marks, and even dropping out of classes. The findings revealed that self-esteem was an antecedent of academic procrastination, adolescent participants' self-esteem was gradually declining while academic procrastination increased; and the initial degree of self negatively predicted the initial degree of academic procrastination and positively affected the upward trend of academic procrastination, whereas the downward trend of self-esteem negatively predicted the upward trend of academic procrastination [2].

It is impacted by the individual's procrastination sensitivity traits,

which allude to the procrastination inclination or degree influenced by personal elements such as self-esteem or perfectionism. Self-esteem is a personality attribute that is strongly linked to individual procrastination. It refers to people's positive or negative evaluations of themselves as a whole. Low self-esteem is commonly thought to be a psychological trait linked to a fear of failure. Individuals with low self-esteem, in particular, have a poorer belief in their capacity to complete and be successful in activities because they are terrified of the consequences of failure, which can lead to the inability to begin a task. Procrastination is regularly reported to be greater in students with poor self-esteem. People who have low self-esteem are more likely to have low motivation and expectations when it comes to academic assignments, which can contribute to procrastination [3].

Adolescents with low self-esteem may be terrified by the negative thoughts that they will not be able to accomplish a task. But there may also be an interpretation of the situation, that the subconscious of the adolescents refuses to start the work in order to avoid the mistake. For this reason, they postpone that task as much as they can, and they may even drop the course in which that task is given. To illustrate this condition from the immediate surroundings, adolescents who are not sure of themselves when an assignment will be done tend to either not do the homework at all or wait until the last moment and do it as I observed them. Self-sufficiency for self-regulation and apprehension to fail totally are regulated by self-esteem and academic procrastination. Because people with low self-esteem are fearful of unfavorable results as was highlighted, they may ignore challenges in order to find momentary relief. Although this situation provides a temporary inner peace for the student, the feeling of not completing their tasks and fulfilling their problems will create inner restlessness in adolescents. At the same time, self-sufficiency, self-esteem, and irresponsibility will also lead to guilt, which will negatively affect the adolescent's well-being and peace of mind. Recently, the lack of desire for in-depth learning on a subject, especially in the new generation, has also emerged in the field of beliefs and values. In this case, it caused the adolescents, who are the product of the new generation, to lose their patience, willpower, and, most importantly, their self-esteem, which had a great influence on their character, when a minor problem arose. Having an understanding of oneself and having values is a situation that strengthens one's character and increases self-esteem in the face of this solid stance. Unfortunately, in adolescents, this situation does not go beyond 'being caught in the wind of luck'. The new generation of adolescents who are caught in different currents and do not have solid values will be incomplete individuals with incomplete character in the future. To give an example to explain the seriousness of the situation, being an atheist has become a trend among adolescents and there is a new generation among them who think it's cool to say 'I am an atheist and are atheists. After a while, when this current ends, when a current comes to which they will be thrown again, adolescents who do not have values will go into a depression because they will not have a dependable value. Therefore, the weakness and worthlessness in his character will destroy her self-esteem over time. This absolutely leads to more serious consequences that will lead to the depression or suicide we talked about above. Therefore, they should be encouraged to read and learn, and the values that feed their character and self-esteem should be fixed.

Adolescents are the adults of the future, so if we want our future to be solid, we must invest in them.

## CONCLUSION

Adolescence is the period from childhood to adulthood, and during this period, adolescents' psychological, physical and mental changes and transformations can be difficult and sensitive for them. Self-esteem is a word that is a recognition of a person and values his own skills, and it is a sign of mental health. The individual's inner view, experiences, and information from others shape and grow self-esteem. Adolescents may have varying levels of self-esteem, such as high and low self-esteem. These levels affect adolescents' well-being and conditions as are illustrated in the paper. The purpose of this paper is to examine adolescents' self-esteem and depression as an important period between childhood and adulthood and to be informed about this sensitive period by evaluating some suggestions and solutions with their pros and cons in different situations. The examples and conditions are given by studies, and different positions are highlighted for self-esteem and depression. To mention about the paper overall, the effects of low-level self-esteem and high-level self-esteem on adolescents and the possible consequences are mentioned. Different studies investigating the effects of age and gender on self-esteem were mentioned. Among the physical problems affecting adolescents' self-esteem, self-confidence, and social connections, acne was mentioned. The connection of a concept called academic procrastination with the self-esteem of adolescents was evaluated and situations that could be the reason for academic procrastination were included. Finally, a subjective evaluation and claim about why adolescents get depressed and lose their self-esteem were included.

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