PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE SELF-ESTEEM OF ETHNIC MINORITY TEENAGERS OF ARAD COUNTY

T. Dughi, A. Ile

Tiberiu Dughi
Aurel Vlaicu University Arad
Romania
Anamaria Ile
Global Outreach Asociation
Romania

Abstract: Teenagers have varying levels of self-esteem, which are influenced by factors such as gender, ethnicity, and social class. However, these can vary also from person to person. Studies have shown that one-third to one-half of teenagers struggle with low self-esteem, especially in the early adolescence. The results of low self-esteem can be temporary, but in serious cases can lead to various problems including depression, anorexia, delinquency, self-inflicted injuries and even suicide. In contrast to traditional measures of self-esteem which focus on individual self-esteem, Luthan and Crocker developed a measure of collective self-esteem with the following subscales: membership self-esteem, private collective self-esteem, public collective self-esteeme and importance o identity. Our study is based on this type of research.

Keywords: personal and collective self-esteem, ethnic, gender differences

Argument

Life becomes easier when you learn to accept who you are and who others are. Living in a city with different ethnic minorities, like Hungarians, Roma, Slovaks, besides the native Romanians, we started wondering how they perceive themselves in the society, especially the teenagers. Do they think of themselves as different? Is the gender and the membership in a minority group influencing the personal and collective self-esteem? Is there a difference between Romanian teenagers' and ethnic teenagers' self-esteem? These questions have awakened in us the desire to find answers. In this paper, we provide answers, based on the existing theories and in line with the already existing research. These are answers to questions raised due to the fact that everybody, whether belonging to an ethnic minority, or being Romanian, is living in the same geographical area, and this living together and interaction is desired to be in harmony and good will.

Adolescence is - or should be – life's happiest time. From the perspective of Jean Chateau, adolescence is „a forward movement, a departure to multiple horizons, a plenitude of projects, a boldness" (Bonchis, 1998, p 11). Jean Chateau made his point on the idea that a teenager needs courage to dream and to strive to fulfill all his dreams, in order to fully live this time of his life. Every day the world mirrors to him a reflection that may become his friend or his enemy. Sometimes he loves what he sees, other times he hates it, nonetheless, the teenager has to his make choices: to accept or to reject, to disguise or to work on correcting the visible reality.

A teenager's life is challenging, it is also a battlefield where the real ego struggles with the ideal ego. The teenager wants to be loved, to be appreciated, to find himself and the fulfillment of his life, and

therefore he seeks to integrate into a reference group, that in short time will define the image of who he is.

Each individual is motivated to behave either according to his own standards, or to the social standards. Teenagers who have a private self-consciousness will try to reduce the self-discrepancies according to the personal standards, while the ones with a public self-consciousness will try to change their behavior according to the accepted social norms.

Ethnic Minority Group

Minority groups are made up of people who share both physical and cultural characteristics that define them as different from the dominant group. This is, however, often the reason for social discrimination. In our society unconventional people are often labeled as deviant, rather than unique, this „seriously affects how others treat such individuals and inevitably, how people thus labeled get to consider themselves" (Goodman, 1992, p 160). Members of a minority group, being disadvantaged by the majority of the population, develop a sense of „group solidarity", a sense of belonging together, due to the fact that the experience of prejudice and discrimination, often strengthens feelings of loyalty and common interests. Prejudice often operates through stereotypical thinking, that is, thinking in terms of fixed and inflexible rules. People release resentments on some „scapegoats", those persons accused for things that are not guilty of.

Referring to the legal reference system, we mention what Victor Duculescu said: „citizens belonging to national minorities should not be persecuted or discriminated, but should have equal rights, and in addition we should ensure the maintenance of cultural identity, the respect of traditions and the way they live, and to consider inadmissible any

attempts to stop their rights or to assimilate them with the majority of the population" (Duculescu, 1994, p 230).

Discrimination involves unequal treatment of minorities in relation to some characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, social position. Self-consciousness of minority groups is forming gradually, and thus the group embraces similarities of position and common destiny. The personal identity reflected on the group, is formed through self-consciousness. Hence, it is necessary for society to know the minority groups and to be willing to accept and to want them.

Self-Esteem

Self-image depends on the way teenagers see themselves and on the way others, family and social group, perceive them. To function effectively in this world, every teenager needs to know himself, to know his weaknesses and strengths, capabilities, and to be honest with himself about them all. „Once you know your strengths, you can extend your limits and you can turn your weaknesses into tools to help you in the future" (Bota, 1997, p 31).

Adolescence is the season for the „originality crisis", it is the time when the positive or negative evaluation is definitory for the involvement of the future adult in the social life and in the professional career. Self-respect and self-esteem is „one of the most fundamental dimensions of our personality, it is a discrete phenomenon, intangible, complex, of which we are not always aware" (Lelord, Christophe, 2003, p 11). Self-image depends not only on how a person sees himself, but on the way the family and the social group sees heim. It is the foundation on which every human life is built.

When self-image is intact, the teenager feels good, sure of himself, satisfied, acting efficiently, feeling good in his own skin, able to

face difficulties, happier, healthier, longer persisting on a difficult task, but when his self-image is affected, the teenager becomes anxious and insecure, he feels that many pains and troubles are coming to disrupt his everyday life.

Personal and Collective Self-Esteem

Concerned about how to investigate issues relating to self-esteem, M.B. Brewer (1996) and his collaborator, W. Gardner, says that this can be achieved on two dimensions: personal and collective self-esteem. In their vision, personal self-esteem issues are concern with how the individual evaluates himself, according to his personal results, the extent of how much he meets his own expectations. L. Festinger (Doise, 1999, p 170) says: „Every individual has a tendency to assess his own opinions and attitudes. When lacking non-social objective means, assessment of opinions and skills is made by comparing them to the opinions and attitudes of others." Therefore, positive and negative feelings developed by the individual about himself are influenced equally by the way he thinks others perceive him and by how he evaluates himself in relation with them.

A similar process occurs during the collective self-esteem development. „Collective identity is the ability of a community to recognize itself as a group outside the group" (Dictionnaire of Sociology, 1989, quoted in E. Zamfir, I. Badescu, C. Zamfir, 2000, p 494). If traditionally, when we talk about the development of self-esteem the focus is mainly on its individual appearance, the collective self-esteem concerns aspects regarding the membership character of a social group to which the individual belongs. Collective self-esteem may be an important moderator of dominant trends of the group, of tasks within the group and other collective or group processes (Luthanen, Croker, 1992). The

personal self-esteem corresponds to personal identity, and collective self-esteem to social and collective identity as it was approached in the American literature.

The way a person reduces self discrepancies is determined by the difference between public self-consciousness and private self-consciousness. Thus, every individual is motivated to behave according to his personal standards or to behave in order to match social standards. The teenager who has a private self-consciousness is trying to reduce discrepancies according to his personal standards, while the one with a public self-consciousness will try to change his behavior according to the accepted social norms.

The goal of this study is to identify the differences between ethnic minority groups and the Romanian teenagers, with respect to personal and collective self-esteem.

We took in consideration the following hypotheses:

1.1. Depending on the gender, differences will occur regarding personal self-esteem among teenage boys belonging to a minority group and those who do not belong to a minority group.

1.2. Depending on the gender, differences will occur regarding the personal self-esteem among teenage girls belonging to a minority group and those who do not belong to a minority group.

2.1. Depending on the gender, differences will occur regarding the collective self-esteem among teenage boys belonging to a minority group and those who do not belong to a minority group.

2.2. Depending on the gender, differences will occur regarding the personal self-esteem among teenage girls belonging to a minority group and those who do not belong to a minority group.

Sample of subjects

For the achievement of the actual research we involved four groups of teenagers. Three ethnic groups of teenagers from Arad county and a group of native Romanian teenagers. The three ethnic groups were: Roma, Hungarians and Slovaks. Each group was formed of 30 subjects, 15 teenage girls and 15 teenage boys. The data collection was carried out from January to March 2013.

Instruments used

Rosenberg Scale (1956)

The Rosenberg scale is a 10-item-scale measuring the sense of personal worth. This is one of the most popular and well validated scales on personal self-esteem in the research literature. The 10 items of the scale are statements that the subjects need to grade according to their opinion, on 1-4 scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = moderately agree, 4 = strongly agree. Scores can range from 0 points - minimum score - to 40 points – maximum score. Scores up to 16 points show a low self-esteem; an average of 17 to 33 points, shows an average self-esteem; scores between 34 and 40 points indicate a high self-esteem.

Collective Self-Esteem Scale (1992)

The Collective Self-Esteem Scale achieved by Luthanen and Crocker, is an instrument that shows the extent to which we value ourselves in relation to the group, and the extent to which we value the group we belong to. The scale itself has 16 items, graded on a 1-7 scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = neutral, 5 = somewhat agree, 6 = agree, and 7 = strongly agree. The scale refers to the following characteristics: membership esteem which assesses an

individual's judgments on how worthy he is as a member of his social groups, private collective self-esteem that measures personal judgment on how good one's social groups are, public collective self-esteem that assesses one's perceptions of how positively other people evaluate one's social groups, and importance to identity that assesses the importance of one's social groups memberships to one's self-concept.

Data analysis and interpretation

To verify the hypothesis we have set, we used the T-test (up to 30 subjects) where the statistic is calculated by the formula:

$$T = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

When comparing populations that are not normally distributed, we used the Mann-Whitney Test, a median test using the sum of the sample for calculating statistics - a test included in most modern statistical packages.

We have also considered the 5% critical values of the T-test, and we tested the corresponding hypothesis by this approach as well. The motivation for this double checking was the usability of this approach in current statistical practice. For data sets where we applied the Mann-Whitney test, we didn't use the critical values method for reasons of complexity and because the p-value was sufficient for making decisions. All statistical calculations and assumptions for decisions were made automatically by the statistical program used.

For taking the decisions we used the p-value associated with the data in the study and we worked with 5% significance level for rejecting the null hypothesis.

According to (Vickers, A., 2009), when the mean is the adequate measure of center to use, the corresponding measure of spread is the standard deviation. When working with the median, the measure of spread of the data is given by the interquartile range. We have kept these correspondences in the research presented in the following pages.

Obtained data were analyzed in relation to the study hypotheses.

Hypothesis Interpretation

1.1. Depending on the gender, differences will occur regarding the personal self-esteem among teenage boys belonging to a minority group and those who do not belong to a minority group.

H0 (null hypothesis): Personal self-esteem of minority teenage boys is equal to that of the Romanian teenage boys.

Ha (alternative hypothesis): Personal self-esteem of minority teenage boys is different than that of the Romanian teenage boys.

$\overline{X}_B$ = sample mean results of Rosenberg test applied to minority teenage boys

$\overline{X}_{BR}$ = sample mean results of Rosenberg test applied to Romanian teenage boys

Table 1

Comparative data: personal self-esteem of minority teenage boys and of Romanian teenage boys

Personal self-esteem	Mean	Standard deviation	
Ethnic teenage boys	$\overline{X}_B = 27.71$	$s_B = 3.82$	T-statistic = -5.07309
Romanian teenage boys	$\overline{X}_{BR} = 32.53$	$s_{BR} = 2.95$	p-value = 0.0000382568

The p-value being 0.0000382568, it is almost zero, so H0 is rejected, and thus the personal self-esteem of minority teenage boys is different from that of the Romanian teenage boys. On the significance level α = 0.05, the acceptance region of H0 is between -2.042 and 2.042 and T = -5.07309. Since T < -2.042, we are in the rejection region, so H0 is rejected, and we have the same conclusion as before.

Regarding personal self-esteem of minority teenage boys compared with the Romanian teenage boys, we observed that the Roma minority scored equally as the Romanians, while the Hungarian and Slovak minority boys scored less.

1.2.   Depending on the gender, differences will occur regarding the personal self-esteem among teenage girls belonging to a minority group and those who do not belong to a minority group.

H0 (null hypothesis): Personal self-esteem of minority teenage girls is equal to that of the Romanian teenage girls.

Ha (alternative hypothesis): Personal self-esteem of minority teenage girls is different than that of the Romanian teenage girls.

$\overline{X}_B$ = sample mean results of Rosenberg test applied to minority teenage girls

$\overline{X}_{BR}$ = sample mean results of Rosenberg test applied to Romanian teenage girls

The p-value being small, 0.00358538, H0 is rejected, and thus the personal self-esteem of minority teenage girls is different from that of the Romanian teenage girls. On the significance level α = 0.05, the acceptance region of H0 is between -2.042 and 2.042 and T = -3.41912. Since T < -2.042, we are in the rejection region, so H0 is rejected, and we have the same conclusion as before.

Table 2

Comparative data: personal self-esteem of minority
teenage girls and of Romanian teenage girls

Personal self-esteem	Mean	Standard deviation	
Ethnic teenage girls	$\overline{X}_F =$ 28.49	$s_F = 4.38$	T-statistic = -3.41912 p-value = 0.00358538
Romanian teenage girls	$\overline{X}_{FR} =$ 32.27	$s_{FR} = 3.45$	

Regarding personal self-esteem of minority teenage girls compared with the Romanian teenage girls, we observed that the Roma minority scored equally as the Romanians, while the Hungarian and Slovak minority girls scored less.

1. Depending on the gender, differences will occur regarding the collective self-esteem among teenage boys belonging to a minority group and those who do not belong to a minority group.

H0 (null hypothesis): Collective self-esteem of minority teenage boys is equal to that of the Romanian teenage boys.

Ha (alternative hypothesis): Collective self-esteem of minority teenage boys is different than that of the Romanian teenage boys.

M_B= sample median results of CSES test applied to minority teenage boys

M_{BR}= sample median results of CSES test applied to Romanian teenage boys

The p-value being small, 0.005, H0 is rejected the collective self-esteem of minority teenage boys being different than that of the Romanian teenage boys.

Table 3

Comparative data: collective self-esteem of minority
teenage boys and of Romanian teenage boys

Collective self-esteem	Median	Interquartile	
Ethnic teenage boys	$M_B = 78$	$Q_1 - Q_3 = 22.25$	Mann Whitney statistic = 107.5 p-value = 0.005
Romanian teenage boys	$M_{BR} = 87$	$Q_1 - Q_3 = 11.5$	

Regarding personal self-esteem of minority teenage boys compared with the Romanian teenage boys, we observed the same results in the case of collective self-esteem as in the case of the personal self-esteem (see Table contents).

2.2. Depending on the gender, differences will occur regarding the personal self-esteem among teenage girls belonging to a minority group and those who do not belong to a minority group.

H0 (null hypothesis): Collective self-esteem of minority teenage girls is equal to that of the Romanian teenage girls.

Ha (alternative hypothesis): Collective self-esteem of minority teenage girls is different than that of the Romanian teenage girls.

$\overline{X}_B$ = sample mean results of CSES test applied to minority teenage girls

$\overline{X}_{BR}$ = sample mean results of CSES test applied to Romanian teenage girls

The p-value being high, 0.136, H0 is accepted, and thus the collective self-esteem of minority teenage girls is equal to that of the Romanian teenage girls. On the significance level α = 0.05, the acceptance region of H0 is between -2.042 and 2.042 and T = -1.56.

Since T is between -2.042 and 2.042, we are in the acceptance region, so H0 is accepted, and we have the same conclusion as before

Table.4

Comparative data: collective self-esteem of minority
teenage girls and of Romanian teenage girls

Collective self-esteem	Mean	Standard deviation	
Ethnic teenage girls	$\overline{X}_F = 75.09$	$s_F = 11.35$	T-statistic = -1.56 p-value = 0.136
Romanian teenage girls	$\overline{X}_{FR} = 80$	$s_{FR} = 10.6$	

Regarding collective self-esteem of minority teenage girls compared with the Romanian teenage girls, we observed that the Roma and Hungarian minority scored equally as the Romanians, while the Slovak minority girls scored less.

Conclusions

At the beginning of the research we asked ourselves how minority teenage groups perceive themselves among Romanian teenage groups, and whether gender and membership of a minority group influence the personal and the collective self-esteem. Based on these questions we built hypotheses that led to the results based on which we can draw the following conclusions:

Regarding personal self-esteem there are differences between minority teens and Romanian teens. If we look at Roma teenage boys and teenage girls regarding the personal self-esteem, we notice that there are no differences between them and the Romanian teenagers, their personal

self-esteem being equal, but higher than the one of Hungarian and Slovak minority teenage boys and girls. Personal self-esteem of Hungarian minority teenagers, both girls and boys is lower than of the Romanian teenagers, but equal to the Slovak minority teenagers.

Regarding collective self-esteem we note that there is a difference between Romanian teenage boys and minority teenage boys, but there is equality between minority teenage girls and Romanian teenage girls, equality that is not found when considering the personal self-esteem. In case of Roma minority teenage boys and girls and Hungarian minority teenage boys and girls there are no differences, the level of collective self-esteem being equal. Also referring to Roma teenage boys and girls and Romanian teenage boys and girls, there are no differences regarding the collective self-esteem. If we look at the Hungarian minority teenage boys and girls we observe an increase of their collective self-esteem as opposed to Slovak teenage boys and girls, difference that is not seen regarding the personal self-esteem where the two minorities score equally. Comparing the Romanian teens with the Hungarian minority regarding personal self-esteem Romanian teenage girls have a stronger self-esteem than the Hungarian minority teenage girls, but regarding the collective self-esteem there is no difference, it is equal. Research results show for both personal and collective self-esteem, that there is some equality between Romanian and Roma teenagers, but there are differences between the Romanian, Hungarian and the Slovak teenagers. Hungarian minority teens have personal and collective self-esteem lower than Romanian and Roma teenagers, but higher than Slovak minority teenagers.

This being not a large-scale study, it has its limiations, and data is to be taken as a starting point for further extensive studies. Another

important limitation comes from the fact that the subjects weren't chosen in a completely random way, since they were chosen from public schools that have classes that are primarily dedicated to minorities. Nonetheless, though we are different because we are unique, the beauty lies in knowing how to find balance between diversity and uniqueness and the acceptance of the unity in diversity.

Bibliography:

Bonchiş, E., (1998), *Copilul şi copilăria,* Editura Imprimeria de Vest*,* Oradea

Bota, I., (1997), *Secretele minţii, Secretele succesului*, Editura Crican, bucure;ti

Dictionnaire de la sociologie, (1989), Librairie Larousse, Paris

Doise, W.,(1999), *Psihologie şcolară experimentală*, Editura Polirom, Ia i

Duculescu, V., (1994), *Protecţia juridică a drepturilor omului,* Editura Lumina Lex, Bucure   ti

Goodman, N, (2002), *Introducere în sociologie,* Editura Lider, Bucure   ti

Lelord, F., Christophe, A., (2003), *Cum sa te iubesti pe tine,* Editura Trei, Bucure   ti

Luthanen, R., Crocker, J., (1992), A Collective Self-Esteem Scale: Self-Evaluation of One's

Social Identity, în *Journal of Personality and Social Psyhology*

Vickers, A., (2009), *What is a p-value anyway?*, Editura Pearson, UK.