

The Relationship between Social Skills, Self-Esteem and Big Five Personality Factors among Children

Abdullah MQ*

Department of Counseling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Aleppo, Syria

***Corresponding author:** Mohammad Q Abdullah, Department of Counseling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Aleppo, Syria, Email: mk.abdalah@yahoo.com

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between social skills, self-esteem and Big Five Personality Factors of children. The sample of the study were 225 children (115 boys and 110 girls) aged from 10 to 12 years of age (M=11.2 male, and 11.5 female), attending all primary school located in Aleppo City. In order to assess the social skills, self-esteem and Big Five personality Factors, the following scales are used: Social Skills Measure (SSM), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and Big Five Inventory (BFI). The findings revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between all the sub dimensions of the social skills (accepting criticism, showing respect, solving problems, accepting rights, responsibilities, and assertiveness) with the following Big Factors of Personality: Extraversion, agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness on one side, and significant and negative correlation between extraversion and the following sub dimensions of social skills : Accepting criticism, Showing respect, Accepting rights, responsibility and Self-esteem on the other side.

Keywords: Social Skills; Self-Esteem; Big Five Personality factors; Children

Introduction

Man is a social being influencing the conduct of others and being influenced by their behavior, in his turn. Social relationships depend upon the mutual adjustment between such behaviors. Every society has some norms and standards regarding social development. A child who accepts and obeys the traditions, customs and adjusts with the social norms is said to be Sociable.

Education is the most prominent means to socialization. Namka (1997) observed that socialization is the child's ability to relate positively to people in society in a manner appropriate to his or her age. Elementary education is the fundamental right of all people, men and women, of all types of areas and places, irrespective of gender, sect, religion or any other denomination.

Therefore, one of the purposes of elementary education is also to develop social skills among children because social skills are just as important as academics. Social skills are most often thought of as a set of skills that allow us to communicate, relate and socialize with others [1].

Social skills can be defined as the complete pattern of behaviors showed by an individual during his/her interpersonal relations. In this sense, adaptive social behavior is a complex construct that involves intra-individual characteristics macro-environment. Social skills are the skills we use in every environment that includes two or more people. They include such things as manners and reading and reacting appropriately in social environment. Being able to read social cues is probably

the most important skill we need, as almost every environment we are in is a social environment. Namka (1997) talked about importance of social skills that these are positive abilities that help the child to interact with others in different situations in ways that are valued. Social skills are those actions, which are acceptable by society and are beneficial both to the person and to others [2].

Social skills are fundamental factor for the formation of relationships, for the quality of social interactions and even for the individual mental health [3]. Child and adolescents have been introduced in to them peer group, through obtaining social skills and thereby form that live four Darian [4]. Social skills are behavior that using effective interaction with others, cognition of social signs and response to them provides individuals with application of appropriate to special status, avoidance of interpersonal conflicts and consistency with simple and complicate situations. Presence of this skills facilitator right emotion, protecting positive social relations and life imparting [5]. Caldarella and Merrell derived taxonomy from their review that included five broad dimensions of social skills: (a) peer relations skills (b) self-managements skills (c) academic skills (d) compliance skills, and (e) assertion skills [6].

National Association of School Psychologists Center noted that good social skills are critical to successful functioning in life. These skills enable to know what to say, how to make good choices, and how to behave in diverse situations. Murphy found that underdeveloped social skills could lead to isolation, loneliness, and frustration. Failure to develop adequate social skills can lead to negative feelings, self-doubt, and low self-esteem. While James contended that Social Skills are the foundation for getting along with others. A lack of Social Skills can lead to behavioral difficulties in school, delinquency, inattentiveness, peer rejection, emotional difficulties, bullying, difficulty in making friends, aggressiveness, problems in interpersonal relationships, poor self-concept, academic failures, concentration difficulties, isolation from peers, and depression. The most important "social skills" needed to survive in our world include: listening skills, Skills for social acceptance, skills for dealing with anger, Skills for dealing with your feelings, skills for thinking before acting, skills for accepting consequences, skills for dealing with peer pressure, skills to improve self-image, skills for problems solving. To be good friend and socially accepted, a child must be able to consistently be flexible, sensitive, responsive, be able to read social situations, take a joke, etc.,. To be able to effectively join in a social group a child

must be able to read interpret the clues of how best to join in. The child will also need the ability to establish and maintain friendships, ability to resolve conflicts and problems, and ability to pay attention to social skills and responsibilities. Self-esteem is about how one appraises oneself, about the faith put into one's own person and how satisfied one is with oneself. Self-esteem is a person's understanding of how valuable he or she is in the world. The child has questions like: "Do people like me? Do my parents love me? Do family members care about me? Do teachers respect my ideas? What abilities and traits do I have that are important to others?" Once these questions are answered in a positive way, the child develops trust, security, and a sense of self-worth, which promote confidence and a feeling of being valued. Many family scientists consider self-esteem to be the single most important factor in shaping a person's life. Researchers have found that people who have self-esteem are effective and productive. They know they are lovable and capable and do not have to tear other people down, dominate them, or view them as important or less useful persons. Self-esteem comes from home, schools, and friends. The development of high self-esteem is one of the greatest gifts we can give to children. Parents can do positive treatment to ensure the healthy development of children, such as establish a strong bond of love and trust at an early age, learn about normal childhood behaviors, provide an affectionate, nurturing, and self-emotional and physical environment for the child, set limits on acceptable behavior through teaching and role-modeling. Self-esteem is a central concept that is related to academic achievement, social functioning and psychopathology of children and adolescents. With respect to academic Achievement, various studies indicate that children with low self-esteem are less successful at school. With regard to social functioning, research demonstrated that children with low self-esteem are usually less accepted by their peers. Finally, many studies have shown that low self-esteem is related to child psychopathology, including anxiety and depression and eating pathology. There is still much debate about the relation between self-esteem and externalizing problems such as aggression, antisocial behavior and delinquency. Whereas some researchers have argued that externalizing problems are related to high self-esteem and result from threatened egotism others have found a strong relation between low self-esteem and externalizing problems [7-18].

Researchers often distinguish between an emotional (inner) self-esteem, and knowledge based (outer) self-esteem. Inner self-esteem is characterized by unconditional love for oneself and self-respects. It develops during the first years of life through parental

affirmation and psychological processes within the individual, who in turn combine to make up a representation of stability, safety and self—appreciation. The inner self-esteem can be either positive or negative depending on the early experiences of the child. A person with high inner self-esteem demonstrating awareness of his or her own feelings and needs, as well as a positive view of life. Outer self-esteem is characterized by for example talent, success and look-factors visible to oneself and others [12]. When an individual is complimented or get some other sort of affirmation, the outer self-esteem grows. A child with high outer self-esteem is responsible, keen on having influence, control and performing well, as well as receiving appreciation for these efforts. Self-esteem overlaps with the concepts of: self-concepts, self-confidence, and self-assurance. Child with learning disorders have problems in functions such as self-awareness in presence of others, relationship and cooperation. Learning disorders lead not only to low self-esteem in child but self-concept, and self-esteem has negative effect on children. Childs with low self-concept are significantly worse than those with high self-esteem, academically, and socially. Personality is one of the core aspects in the field of psychology. For layperson, personality is defined by such terms as friendly, high-strung, and punctual. These terms are the basic ways in which individual understand themselves and others. Developmental psychologists tend to be interested in the social and emotional reactions of the children of a particular age, without much regard to the ultimate outcome of the characteristics in childhood. There are various models of personality given by legendary personality psychologists like Freud, Adler, Allport, and Cattell. The latest famous model of personality was given by Costa and McCrae. This model is based on the lexical approach where five core dimensions of personality were derived by rigorous factor analysis. Over the past decade, a relative consensus has been reached regarding the Big Five Personality Factors (BFPP) to summarize the organization of adult personality traits across countries and language communities. These (BFPP) are: neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, Conscientiousness and openness to new experience. Neuroticism is a tendency to experience unpleasant emotions frequently. Individuals who are low on this factor are calm, even -tempered and imperturbable. Some personality researchers prefer to use the term emotional stability, which is the mirror image of neuroticism. Extraversion is a tendency to seek stimulation and to enjoy the company of other people. The opposite of extraversion is introversion. Extraversion is related to warmth, gregariousness, assertiveness, impulsiveness, and a need for excitement. People high on extraversion

are outgoing, sociable and assertive. Agreeableness is a tendency to be compassionate toward others. It implies concern for the welfare of other people and is closely related to Adler's concept of social interest. People high in agreeableness are generally kind, trusting, warm, altruistic, and modest. Conscientiousness is a tendency to show self -discipline, to be dutiful, and to strive for achievement and competence. People high in conscientiousness usually work hard and complete the tasks they say they will perform. Highly conscientious people tend to be organized, thorough, tidy and competent. Openness to experience is a tendency to enjoy new intellectual experience and new ideas. People high in this factor are imaginative, intelligent and creative. They enjoy modern art, unusual music, thought -provoking films, plays, and so forth. They enjoy meeting different kind of people and exploring new ideas and opinions [19-22].

However, from the point of view of developmental psychology, children's personality should be conceptualized with regards to the adult personality structure, and adult personality should be understood in the light of its childhood antecedents until recently, child personality was usually conceived in terms of temperament. Constitutionally based, early-emerging individual differences in emotional, motor and attentional reactivity, and self-regulation [23]. Studies show that there is a relationship between self-esteem and socially accepted behavior in elementary schools, and there is a relation between low self-esteem, anxiety and depression [16]. Among individual factors that could influence socio – emotional competences, including self-esteem and social adjustment, the factors of personality should be more investigated in developing children and youth. Recently, based on The Five Factors Model of personality, some instruments have been conceived to assess factors of personality in children that could be used about atypically developing children.

The current study will build on previous research by examining the link between the BFPP and a large set of diverse behaviors exhibited by children. The relations between children's personality traits and their behaviors during the social interactions will then be examined. It is hypothesized that youths' social behaviors and skills will be related to neuroticism, extraversion, and openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (BFPP) on one side, and to self-esteem on the other side. Such hypotheses have the potential to not only provide insight into how children behaviorally manifest the (BFPP) but to also demonstrate the validity of the (BFPP) when applied to children. Considering different works and researches,

the current study aims to assess the relationship between social skills self-esteem and BFPF in schoolchildren.

Methods

Participants

Participants in the study were 225 children (115 boys and 110 girls) aged from 10 to 12 years of age ($M=11.2$ male, and 11.5 female), attending all primary school located in Aleppo City.

Materials

Social Skills Measure (SSM): The questionnaire developed by present researcher, and consisting of 60 items divided into five sub-scales (Accepting criticism, showing respect, solving problems, accepting rights and responsibilities, tolerance of individual differences, assertiveness). The number of questions in each subscale consisted 12-items. Keeping in view the age group of the respondents three-point scale was used i.e. never, sometimes and always. The validity of the instrument was ensured through expert opinion on the correspondence between curricular content and questions included in the instrument. The Cronbach alpha reliability of the questionnaire was 0.84.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): The scale consisted 10-items that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be one-dimensional. All items are answered using a 5-point likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. (e. g. "on the whole, I am satisfied with myself", "At times I think I am no good at all", "I feel that I have a number of good qualities"). The internal consistency for the sample was 0.86.

Big Five Inventory (BFI): BFI Developed by John and

Srivastava (1999), and consisting (44) items that measure an individual on the Five Factors (dimensions) of personality. Each of the factors is then further divided into personality facets. The child could answer on a 5-point likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (disagree strongly, disagree a little, neither agree nor disagree, agree a little, agree strongly). The BFI scale scoring ("R" denotes reverse-scored items):

Extraversion: 1, 6R, 11, 16, 21R, 26, 31R, 36

Agreeableness: 2R, 7, 12R, 17, 22, 27R, 32, 37R, 42

Conscientiousness: 3, 8R, 13, 18R, 23R, 28, 33, 38, 43R

Neuroticism: 4, 9R, 14, 19, 24R, 29, 34R, 39

Openness: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35R, 40, 41R, 44

The present study found very good internal consistency for the current sample, (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.88).

Data Collection and Statistics

After conducting the schools, the author explained the background of the study to the counselors and teachers. Subsequently the children were informed about the objectives of the study. The participants of children who were authorized in this study, completed the self-report (SSM), (RSES) and (BFI) individually, with the presence of one of the counselors who was ready to answer questions in case of any doubt. The statistical package for Social Sciences software (SPSS) was used for the analysis. Descriptive parameters were shown as mean, standard deviation. Pearson's correlation tests were used to evaluate the relationship between the (SSM), (RSES) and (BFI).

Results

In the current study, as essence step of data analysis, mean and standard deviation were conducted. Person's correlation between subscales of social skills, self-esteem and BFPF, and the results presented in table 1.

Variables	Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Accepting criticism	0.31*	0.42*	0.24*	-0.23	0.43*
Showing respect	0.27*	0.32*	0.34*	-0.19**	0.33*
Solving problems	0.25*	0.29*	0.42*	0.13**	0.38*
Accepting rights and responsibility	0.37*	0.47*	0.34*	-0.25*	0.36*
Assertiveness	0.22	0.23*	0.19**	0.13**	0.39*
Self-esteem	0.29*	0.53*	0.28*	-0.35*	0.51*

*sig.0.01, **sig.0.05

Table 1: Correlation between social skills, self-esteem and Big Five Factors of personality.

As seen in table 1, accepting criticism had significant (sig.0.01) positive correlation with extraversion (R=0.31), agreeableness (R=0.42), conscientiousness (R=0.24,) and openness (R= 0.43). Showing respect had also significant (0.01) positive correlation with extraversion (R=0. 27), agreeableness (R= 0.32), conscientiousness (R= 0.34), and openness (R = 0.33). Solving problems had significant (0.01) positive correlation with extraversion (R= 0.25),), agreeableness (R= 0.29), conscientiousness (R=0.42), and with openness (R= 0.38). Accepting rights and responsibilities had significant (0.01) positive correlation with extraversion (R= 0.37),), agreeableness (R= 0.47), conscientiousness (R=0.34), and with openness (R= 0.36). Assertiveness had also significant (0.01) positive correlation with extraversion (R= 0.22),), agreeableness (R= 0.23), and with openness (R= 0.39). Self-esteem had significant (0.01) positive correlation with extraversion (R= 0.29),), agreeableness (R= 0.53), conscientiousness (R=0.28), and with openness (R= 0.51). The person correlation coefficients obtained from the analysis of the relations between subscales of social skills and neuroticism revealed significant negative correlations between extraversion and the following dimensions of social skills: accepting criticism (- 0.23, sig 0.01) , showing respects (- 0.19, sig. 0.05), accepting rights and responsibilities (- 0.25. sig.0.01) and self-esteem (- 0.35, sig.0.01).

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine the correlation between social skills, self-esteem and Big Five Factors of Personality in children. When we analyzed the results gained in this study, we found that there was a positive and significant relationship between all the sub dimensions of the social skills (accepting criticism, showing respect, solving problems, accepting rights and responsibilities, and assertiveness) with the following big factors of personality: Extraversion, agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness on one side, and significant negative correlation between extraversion and the following sub dimensions of social skills : Accepting criticism, Showing respect, Accepting rights, responsibility and Self-esteem on the other side. Personality Traits divided into two sections: first, normal personality traits such as openness, sociability, acceptability, conscientiousness, and extraversion. Second, abnormal or psychopathological personality traits such as neuroticism, hysteric, impulsive personality, paranoid, antisocial, and depressed personality [24]. Studies revealed that interpersonal skills were positively related to emotional regulation, school readiness, social confidence, and family involvement. There was also a statistically significant positive relationship between self-control and emotional regulation, school readiness, social

confidence, and family involvement [11]. Some studies confirmed that, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between verbal explanation and emotional regulation, school readiness, social confidence, and family involvement. There was also a statistically significant positive relationship between listening skills and emotional regulation, school readiness, social confidence, and family involvement. Some investigators have found negative relation between interpersonal sensitivity and self-esteem. Neuroticism represents the personality trait that predisposing the child to anxiety disorders. Among the factors that have been identified as predictors of anxiety and depression are low frustration tolerance, and the social integration decreases depressive and anxiety symptoms. Block and Block discussed the development of ego control, a variable that combine elements of low in Extraversion and high in Conscientiousness [25-27]. Are these dimensions indistinguishable in early childhood, hesitating a theory of their developmental differentiation? Or have theorists mistakenly conflated two independent dimension? A child who is high in both Extraversion and Conscientiousness may have the same average level of ego control as one who is low on both dimensions, and both children show the same social and emotional development [22]. Some researches indicated that the social skills have not developed in the children. As far as level of the social skills is concerned, Showing Respect social skill was more developed as compared to Tolerance of Individual Differences. There was significant difference between Showing Respect social skill and Tolerance of Individual Differences social skill, but there was no significant difference between Accepting Criticism, Showing Respect, Solving Problems and Accepting Rights and Responsibilities social skills [21,28]. Another outcome revealed by Cartledge, Adedapo, and Johnson, that there was statistically significant difference between male and female students on the subscales of Accepting Criticism and Accepting Rights and Responsibilities, the male students have developed more social skills than female students have. While significant difference was also found between genders on the subscales Tolerance of Individual Differences, female students have developed more social skills than male students have. It has been found the pattern of scoring associated high neuroticism, low conscientiousness, low agreeableness, and low extraversion with clinical disorders. Comparisons of diagnostic and norm groups showed higher levels of Neuroticism and lower levels of Extraversion than did studies of correlations between measures of the level of a disorder and measures of the Big Five Factors. Studies of observer ratings of the Big Five Factors showed lower levels of Neuroticism and Openness than did studies using self-report ratings [23]. Psychopathological symptoms have a significant and negative relation with the capacity

of cooperation, and with social skills, as well as a positive correlation with inappropriate assertiveness, impulsiveness, overconfidence, and jealousy-withdrawal [21]. Additionally, psychopathological traits of personality have a significant negative relation with emotional stability, mental openness, and with sociability and responsibility. Healthy social development lays the groundwork for successful social adaptation and effective social relations. In order to start and continue friendship relationships and to deal with the problems in relationships children must be emotionally healthy. In this period, any failure experienced in social skills might lead to behavioral problems that might continue in adolescence and adulthood. Inadequate social skills and developmental problems lead to behavioral problems and rejection by peers. Children with few social skills have unsuccessful interactions with their peers, which alienate and marginalize them from social relationships. In addition, these children cannot develop social skills and face new behavioral problems. Having inadequate social skills causes the individual to fail in interpersonal relationships in adaptation to the environment and to encounter problems in establishing and pursuing emotional and social relationships. Our findings, which suggest that there is a relationship between children having few social skills and few behavioral and emotional skills compared with their peers, are consistent with these findings. Our general findings reveal that social skills influence behavior and emotional skills in six-year-old children. Programs in preschools should, therefore, include activities for developing social skills. In addition, activities carried out with parents should teach them about the development of social skills in their children and these skills will contribute to the development of their children's behavioral and emotional development and adjustment.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to examine the correlation between social skills, self-esteem and BFPF of children. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between all the sub dimensions of the social skills (accepting criticism, showing respect, solving problems, accepting rights and responsibilities, and assertiveness) with the following big factors of personality: Extraversion, agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness on one hand, and significant negative correlation between extraversion and the following sub dimensions of social skills : Accepting criticism, Showing respect, Accepting rights,

responsibility and Self-esteem on the other hand. Indeed, personality development begins with the biological foundations of temperament but becomes increasingly elaborated, extended, and refined over time. In addition, personality is made up of many other features besides temperament. Children's developing self-concept, their motivations to achieve or to socialize, their values and goals, their coping styles, their sense of responsibility and conscientiousness, and many other qualities are encompassed into personality. These qualities are influenced by biological dispositions, but even more by the child's experiences with others, particularly in close relationships, that guide the growth of individual characteristics. Social and personality development is built from the social, biological, and representational influences discussed above. These influences result in important developmental outcomes that matter to children, parents, and society: a young adult's capacity to engage in socially constructive actions (helping, caring, sharing with others), to curb hostile or aggressive impulses, to live according to meaningful moral values, to develop a healthy identity and sense of self, self-esteem and to develop talents and achieve success in using them. These are some of the developmental outcomes that denote social and emotional competence. Childhood social and personality development emerges through the interaction of social influences, biological maturation, and the child's representations of the social world and the self. This interaction is illustrated in a discussion of the influence of significant relationships, the development of social understanding, the growth of personality, and the development of social and emotional competence in childhood. Understanding social and personality development requires looking at children from three perspectives that interact to shape development. The first is the social context in which each child lives, especially the relationships that provide security, guidance, and knowledge. The second is biological maturation that supports developing social and emotional competencies and underlies temperamental individuality and personality traits. The third is children's developing representations of themselves and the social world. Social and personality development is best understood as the continuous interaction between these social, biological, and representational aspects of psychological development. For social development, a child has to make friends and get involved in a circle of friends. Friendship provides the child with skills, an environment and conditions for learning, development, , emotional and cognitive support. A child learns to protect his/her rights and to respect other people's rights and responsibilities

through group friendships. A child adopts the methods and rules of social life.

Recommendations

These findings might be beneficial in our culture for further improvement of social skills through direct instruction. In this area several suggestions may prove helpful. Social skills should be integrated into the academic curriculum. This study only assesses the development of social skills at elementary level. Future researches are needed to evaluate the development of social skills among children and its relationship with personality traits and self-concept. Researchers are also needed to determine the role of school, teachers, parents and community to develop healthy social skills and self-esteem among their children.

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