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ARTÍCULO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

El autocontrol como motor interno de la motivación y el equilibrio emocional en los adolescentes

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Resumen. Este artículo ofrece un análisis teórico exhaustivo de la literatura psicológica clásica y contemporánea sobre autoestima y autoconcepto para clarificar la pregunta de investigación y demostrar la importancia de estudiar los fundamentos de la autoestima adolescente en contextos educativos modernos. A partir de los datos recopilados, se examina la naturaleza de la relación entre los componentes de la autoestima central y el bienestar psicológico, y se revela hasta qué punto el equilibrio emocional, la satisfacción vital y la resiliencia dependen de las evaluaciones internas que los adolescentes hacen de su valía personal. El estudio también identifica y describe los vínculos entre los fundamentos de la autoestima y variables académicas clave, como la motivación académica, la perseverancia en el aprendizaje y el rendimiento académico, y muestra que una autoestima estable y realista favorece la participación y los resultados educativos de los estudiantes. Se analizan las diferencias en las características de la autoestima adolescente con respecto a los cambios en los entornos educativos y los niveles de rendimiento académico, y se muestra cómo el clima escolar y las prácticas educativas moldean la autopercepción de los estudiantes. Se presta especial atención a las diferencias de género, que se analizan como un posible factor que contribuye al mayor rendimiento académico que se observa típicamente en las niñas. En general, este estudio proporciona una comprensión integral de los mecanismos que moldean la autoestima adolescente y ofrece información que puede servir de base para intervenciones psicológicas y educativas específicas.

Palabras clave: actividad educativa, reflexión, autocontrol, edad escolar, equilibrio emocional.

Self-control as an internal driver of motivation and emotional balance in adolescents

Abstract. This article provides an extensive theoretical analysis of the classical and contemporary psychological literature on self-esteem and self-concept to clarify the research question and demonstrate the importance of studying the foundations of adolescent self-esteem in modern educational contexts. Based on the collected data, the nature of the relationship between the components of core self-esteem and psychological well-being is examined, and the extent to which emotional balance, life satisfaction, and resilience depend on adolescents' internal assessments of personal worth is revealed. The study also identifies and describes the links between the foundations of self-esteem and key academic variables, including academic motivation, persistence in learning, and academic achievement, and shows that stable and realistic self-esteem supports students' educational participation and outcomes. Differences in the characteristics of adolescent self-esteem are analyzed with respect to changes in educational environments and levels of academic performance, and it is shown how school climate and educational practices shape students' self-perceptions. Particular attention is paid to gender differences, which are discussed as a potential contributing factor to the higher academic achievement typically observed among girls. Overall, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms shaping adolescent self-esteem and provides insights that may inform targeted psychological and educational interventions.

Key words: educational activity, reflection, self-control, school age, emotional balance.

INTRODUCTION

Given the role of adolescence in personality development, it seems appropriate to begin examining the issue of self-esteem from this age period—the age of identity and self-awareness formation, the construction of a worldview, and the development of value orientations. Furthermore, the study of self-esteem is limited to examining the level of self-esteem and its stability as a determinant of an individual's psychological well-being. However, the issue of the foundations of self-esteem, and its substantive basis, has only recently begun to be systematically studied. This paper examines the foundations of adolescent self-esteem (competence, parental approval, teacher approval, and pseudo-competence) as one of the most important characteristics of self-esteem associated with psychological well-being, motivation, and academic success.

Self-esteem as a personality variable has been the subject of extensive research, and a wealth of data has now accumulated on its importance for psychological well-being and success. Moreover, the pursuit of self-esteem is considered an essential human need, without which full personal functioning is impossible. Self-esteem motivation is the most characteristic type of academic motivation among children in modern public schools, representing a variant of autonomous academic motivation. Understanding the importance of self-esteem for well-being and successful personal functioning necessitates distinguishing authentic, truly high self-esteem from its less productive, defensive forms (Messaudi, I., & Sakale, S., 2024). The most obvious criterion for

authentic self-esteem is its level. Numerous studies demonstrate that high self-esteem, unlike low self-esteem, buffers against depression and anxiety and promotes optimism and perseverance. However, the ambiguous role of high self-esteem, due to the fact that it can include narcissistic traits, necessitates studying other parameters, such as the stability and foundations of self-esteem.

Currently, the foundations of self-esteem remain virtually unexplored, unlike the level and stability of self-esteem. The question of which foundations of self-esteem are authentic, i.e., contribute to psychological well-being and successful performance, remains open. This issue has been most thoroughly explored to date in the work of J. Crocker. She identified two types of foundations of self-esteem: competence and approval by significant others. However, this idea has not received sufficient empirical operationalization and testing: J. Crocker's classification of the foundations of self-esteem (Crocker et al., 2003; Crocker and Park, 2004), (Astremaska, 2020). is somewhat uneven and does not include foundations of self-esteem related to the individual's assessment of competence and mastery.

It is known that self-esteem is formed in children from early childhood. A key role in this process is played by the experience of unconditional acceptance, respect for the child's individuality, and support for their growing competence. Conversely, the experience of rejection, disdain for their attempts to gain independence, unfounded criticism, conditional acceptance, and overprotection, expressed in the desire to do everything for the child in the parental home. Early school years are also significant: the experience of success and competence or the inability to master the school curriculum and rules of conduct, a respectful and caring teacher or an overly critical and biased attitude, as well as the ability to integrate into a peer group, all lay the foundation for building self-esteem. Adolescence is a crucial stage in the development of self-esteem, being the age of identity formation and the final formation of the cognitive processes necessary for adequate self-perception and self-assessment. The study of self-esteem at the stage of its formation is important both from a theoretical point of view, since it solves the problem of mechanisms of well-being and success in activity, and from a practical one, since it allows for the timely prediction of unfavorable trajectories of adolescent development and the correction of its maladaptive forms.

The purpose of this study is to examine the authentic foundations of adolescent self-esteem that contribute to psychological well-being and productive academic motivation.

Object of the study: the foundations of self-esteem in adolescent schoolchildren.

Subject: the role of different types of foundations of self-esteem in adolescents in their psychological well-being and productive academic motivation.

Research hypotheses

- 1) The foundations of self-esteem play an important role in the psychological well-being and academic performance of adolescents, and this role varies depending on the foundations. It is assumed that competence-related foundations of self-esteem are more authentic and productive, as they contribute more to the psychological well-being and academic effectiveness of adolescents than those unrelated to competence. Also important is whether self-esteem depends on the individual's assessment of their qualities (self-assessment) or on the assessments of others, i.e., the extent to which it is autonomous and independent.

- 2) The types of foundations of self-esteem depend on the satisfaction of basic psychological needs by the adolescent's significant environment, primarily by their parents: if the adolescent feels that their parents satisfy their needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness, they are significantly more likely to choose authentic types of foundations of self-esteem and will not need compensatory ones.
- 3) Authentic types of self-esteem, which rely on one's own assessment of competence and its assessment by significant others, are predictors of psychological well-being: satisfaction with oneself, family, and school, as well as productive academic motivation, including higher intrinsic motivation and academic persistence, and academic performance.
- 4) Authentic and compensatory types of self-esteem will differ among adolescents studying in different types of educational environments.
- 5) Gender differences in self-esteem are associated with higher academic performance among girls.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study was: the cultural-activity approach in general psychology (Çelik, 2024), (Mirandi, Lis, Mazzeschi, Li, Pagano Salmi & Delvecchio, 2023), (Fabian, Rabiichuk, Mykhalchenko, Pavlushchenko, Dzhurylo & Soroka, 2024).

In addition, theoretical principles and methodological developments presented in the concepts of self-esteem and self-respect were used in the development of the study and methods of interpreting the obtained data (Mayangsari, Sugiharto & Mulawarman, 2024), (Haag, A. C., Et Al., 2024), (Fuentealba-Urra, S., Et Al., 2023), (Mirandi, Lis, Mazzeschi, Li, Pagano Salmi & Delvecchio, 2023).

Motivation of educational activity is considered from the standpoint of self-determination theory, in particular, the concept of basic psychological needs and the organismic theory of motivation, as well as the structural-dynamic approach to the motivation of achievement activity. Psychological well-being is considered based on the approaches (Astremaska, 2025).

METHODS

To solve the set tasks and test the proposed hypotheses, a comparative theoretical analysis of the literature on the issue under study was carried out, and a psychodiagnostic method was applied: tests and questionnaires.

A battery of methods was used, including the following instruments: the author's questionnaire of the bases of self-esteem of adolescents (OSAMO-P); M. Rosenberg's self-esteem scale; E. Huebner's children's multidimensional scale of life satisfaction (three scales: attitude towards oneself, attitude towards family, and attitude towards school); a questionnaire of satisfaction of basic needs in the family; the "Academic Motivation Scales" questionnaire; the children's questionnaire of persistence from the MULTI-CAM battery; the unfinished sentence technique, which allowed us to obtain additional information about the characteristics of adolescent self-esteem, their academic motivation, psychological well-being, and the coping strategies they use.

An analysis of data for the entire sample, a comparison of individual groups of subjects, and an analysis of individual cases were conducted.

To formalize the obtained data, the following statistical procedures were used: a correlation analysis of the bases of self-esteem with indicators of psychological well-being, academic motivation, and academic performance was conducted; Linear structural modeling was used to examine the role of self-esteem foundations as predictors of adolescent psychological well-being, as well as their relationships with other study variables. To identify differences between different groups of subjects, Student's t-test (for quantitative data) and Chi-squared test (for nominal data) were used.

Adolescence is a period of intense personal development and self-determination, critical for the formation of identity, including self-esteem. Significant changes in overall self-esteem occur during this period. It is during this age that both boys and girls experience a decline and then a rise in overall self-esteem (according to Rosenberg's methodology): for girls, it declines between 12 and 17 years of age and then rises; for boys, it declines between 14 and 16 years of age and then rises. The rise in self-esteem by the age of 15-16, in both boys and girls, is also recorded using the self-esteem research methodology.

Many factors influence a teenager's self-esteem. Among the most important factors are the characteristics of family upbringing and family relationships, such as parental satisfaction with the basic psychological needs of acceptance, autonomy, and competence; parental involvement in the child's life; parental expectations; parental parenting style; and the characteristics of the parents' own self-esteem. The broader social context also plays a significant role: the influence of value orientations and the nature of relationships within the adolescent's social environment (microsocial groups such as school, extracurricular activities, and interest groups; and macrosocial groups associated with cultural affiliation, national identity, etc.).

The role of school as the primary institution for adolescent socialization is particularly noteworthy. During adolescence, academic activity, although losing its leading role for most adolescents, remains the primary productive activity in which adolescents engage and in which they experience success, failure, and a sense of competence. It has been shown that educational system features that support students' own activity and intrinsic motivation, the absence of grades, while maintaining a differentiated assessment system, and a focus on the learning process itself, not just its outcome, contribute to the development of student self-esteem. Various approaches to fostering authentic self-esteem exist, including a number of specific programs: a development facilitation program; a behavioral approach to increasing self-esteem; A cognitive approach to increasing self-esteem; a meaning-based approach; and working with self-esteem from a developmental perspective. All of these programs involve developing skills for self-analysis and reflection on one's thoughts, personality traits, and behavior, and correcting cognitive errors (e.g., overemphasizing failures or selectively focusing only on one's shortcomings while ignoring strengths) (Almadani, N., 2025). The client develops constructive behavior and responses to difficulties and conflicts, including those occurring outside the psychological office. An important part of these programs is the demonstration of healthy forms of relationships: receptive and connected with constructive feedback. The model for such relationships is a psychologist (in individual work) or a group (in group work) (Shcherbakova, Gast, Blasi, Skirgård, Gray, & Greenhill, 2023).

Summarizing the results of the analysis of previous studies, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) Self-esteem is a multifaceted concept, encompassing various characteristics (level, stability, dependence, foundations of self-esteem). Generally, self-esteem can be defined as an individual's recognition of their own worth, skills, competencies, and unique strengths.
- 2) Adolescence is a key period for the development of self-esteem, as teenagers develop the necessary level of introspection and develop their identity and self-awareness.
- 3) One of the main sources of self-esteem is relationships with parents. School, relationships with teachers and peers, and academic success play a significant role in the development of a teenager's personality, including their self-esteem. Self-esteem also depends on the broader cultural context: the values and ideals conveyed by the social environment. School plays a significant role in the development of a teenager's personality, including their self-esteem.
- 4) The foundations of self-esteem are an understudied area that holds promise for further research, the results of which could help support authentic self-esteem in children and adolescents. Research should be aimed at overcoming the problem of redundancy in current classifications of the foundations of self-esteem, as well as the lack of competence-related foundations of self-esteem.

To address the objectives and test the hypotheses, a battery of six methods was used, including the author's questionnaire of the bases of self-esteem in adolescents, which diagnoses four types of self-esteem (four scales):

- 1) self-esteem based on one's own assessment of competence ($\alpha = 0.73$): diagnoses the bases of self-esteem associated with achievements acquired through one's own efforts and diligence (e.g., "I respect myself when I cope with a task that I previously could not do");
- 2) self-esteem based on parental approval ($\alpha = 0.76$): diagnoses the bases of self-esteem associated with positive assessments received from parents (e.g., "I respect myself when my parents praise me for being better than my peers in something");
- 3) Self-esteem based on teacher approval ($\alpha = 0.79$): assesses the basis for self-esteem associated with positive evaluations received from teachers (e.g., "I respect myself when a teacher sets me as an example to my classmates") (Shcherbakova, Michaelis, Haynie, Passmore, Gast, Gray, & Skirgård, 2023);
- 4) Compensatory self-esteem ($\alpha = 0.70$): assesses the basis for self-esteem associated with pseudo-achievements, attempts to demonstrate one's accomplishments, successes, and competence in their actual absence (e.g., "I respect myself when I manage to outsmart a teacher, cheat, or skip class").

An analysis of the questionnaire's internal structure showed (see Table 1) that the first three types of self-esteem—competence-based, parental approval-based, and teacher approval-based—correlated with one another, as expected. In contrast, compensatory self-esteem is uncorrelated with self-esteem based on the approval of significant adults and negatively correlates with self-esteem based on competence.

That is, adolescents who have high competence-based self-esteem also have high self-esteem based on the approval of significant adults and low compensatory self-esteem; conversely, adolescents with low competence-based self-esteem resort to compensatory forms of it, which is consistent with the proposed role and interaction of these bases.

TABLE 1. Theoretical findings and diagnostic scales used in the study.

Section	Indicator/Scale	Description
Key findings	Nature of self-esteem	Self-esteem is a multifaceted construct that includes level, stability, dependence, and the foundations of self-esteem. It reflects a person's recognition of their own worth, skills, competencies, and unique strengths.
	Adolescence as a developmental stage	Adolescence is a crucial period for the development of self-esteem because young people develop introspection, identity, and self-awareness.
	Primary social influences	Parents are one of the major sources of self-esteem. School, teachers, peers, academic success, and the broader cultural environment also significantly influence adolescents' self-esteem.
	Research gap	The foundations of self-esteem remain understudied. Further research should reduce redundancy in existing classifications and pay greater attention to competence-related foundations of self-esteem.
Questionnaire scales	1. Competence-based self-esteem ($\alpha = 0.73$)	Assesses self-esteem based on achievements attained through one's own effort and diligence. Example: "I respect myself when I cope with a task that I previously could not do."
	2. Self-esteem based on parental approval ($\alpha = 0.76$)	Assesses self-esteem associated with positive evaluations received from parents. Example: "I respect myself when my parents praise me for being better than my peers in something."
	3. Self-esteem based on teacher approval ($\alpha = 0.79$)	Assesses self-esteem associated with positive evaluations received from teachers. Example: "I respect myself when a teacher sets me as an example to my classmates."
	4. Compensatory self-esteem ($\alpha = 0.70$)	Assesses self-esteem associated with pseudo-achievements and attempts to demonstrate success or competence when these are actually absent. Example: "I respect myself when I manage to outsmart a teacher, cheat, or skip class."
Internal structure	Correlation pattern	Competence-based, parental approval-based, and teacher approval-based self-esteem are positively related to one another. Compensatory self-esteem is not related to self-esteem based on the approval of significant adults and is negatively related to competence-based self-esteem.
	Interpretation	Adolescents with high competence-based self-esteem tend to report high self-esteem based on parental and teacher approval and low compensatory self-esteem. Adolescents with low competence-based self-esteem are more likely to rely on compensatory forms of self-esteem.

An analysis of gender differences revealed that boys, overall, exhibit a less productive set of bases for self-esteem: they have significantly higher compensatory self-esteem ($p=0.005$) and somewhat lower competence-based self-esteem ($p=0.03$). This correlates well with boys' lower academic performance ($p=0.001$) and their less productive academic motivation profile, dominated by extrinsic motivation.

Next, the relationships between bases of self-esteem and indicators of psychological well-being, such as general self-esteem (according to Rosenberg), satisfaction with family, school, and self, were examined.

Self-esteem based on teacher approval correlates with all indicators of psychological well-being, but these correlations are weaker. That is, adolescents who base their self-esteem on competence and teacher approval have high levels of self-esteem and are satisfied with themselves, school, and their family; this is especially true for competence-based self-esteem.

Self-esteem based on parental approval correlates with family and self-satisfaction, as well as general self-esteem. This means that adolescents who base their self-esteem on parental approval also have high levels of self-esteem and are satisfied with themselves and their family, but this type of self-esteem is not associated with satisfaction with school.

Compensatory self-esteem shows negative correlations with family and school satisfaction: that is, the more an adolescent turns to compensatory reasons for self-esteem, focusing on pseudo-self-actualization, the less satisfied they are with their family and school. Thus, it can be concluded that the links between adolescent self-esteem and their psychological well-being are meaningful and varied. These differences provide the key to a deeper understanding of the described types of self-esteem bases.

The results of a study examining the links between the bases of self-esteem and such indicators of productive academic performance as academic motivation, academic persistence, and academic achievement show that competence-based self-esteem, teacher-approval-based self-esteem, and parent-approval-based self-esteem are all associated with high intrinsic academic motivation. Moreover, adolescents whose self-esteem is based on competence are the most intrinsically motivated. Conversely, compensatory self-esteem is negatively associated with intrinsic motivation: that is, adolescents with compensatory self-esteem lack interest in learning and engagement in academic activities, which, in turn, hinders their ability to attain genuine competence.

Moreover, competence-based self-esteem, teacher-approval-based self-esteem, and parent-approval-based self-esteem significantly correlate with identified and interjected academic motivation, while compensatory self-esteem correlates with external motivation and motivation. Thus, the first three types of self-esteem are associated with significantly more productive forms of extrinsic motivation than compensatory self-esteem (Kyrylenko, Havrylo, Romanyshyn, Mykhalchenko & Koperlos, 2025).

Competence-based self-esteem, teacher-approval-based self-esteem, and parent-approval-based self-esteem also demonstrate a link with academic persistence, unlike compensatory self-esteem, which correlates negatively with academic persistence.

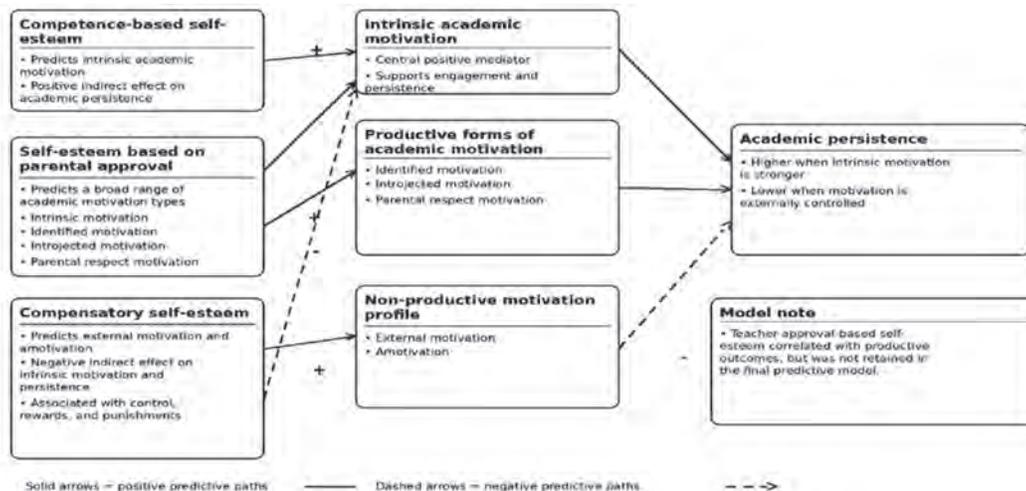
Competence-based self-esteem has the strongest relationship with academic achievement. Self-esteem based on parental approval and teacher approval demonstrate a weaker, but still

significant, relationship. As expected, a negative correlation was found between compensatory self-esteem and academic performance, indicating that poorly performing children tend to resort to self-esteem motivations that may temporarily make them feel incompetent.

The relationship between compensatory self-esteem and self-esteem motivation and parental respect, which have been identified as characteristic types of academic motivation in previous studies, was examined separately. Competence-based self-esteem, teacher-approval-based self-esteem, and parental approval-based self-esteem were found to correlate significantly with both self-esteem motivation (0.37**, 0.37**, and 0.35**, respectively) and parental respect motivation (0.25**, 0.33**, and 0.27**), unlike compensatory self-esteem. To test the hypothesis that the foundations of self-esteem predict productive academic performance, a path analysis was conducted (using Mplus 7.4). The initial model had good performance: $\chi^2 = 33.815$; $df = 20$; $p = 0.0274$; CFI = 0.979; NNFI = 0.955; RMSEA = 0.056; 90% confidence interval for RMSEA: 0.019-0.087; PCLOSE = 0.355; $N = 223$.

Figure 1 presents the relationships between the foundations of self-esteem and academic motivation and persistence. The results of the analysis suggest that competence-based self-esteem predicts intrinsic academic motivation and persistence (the relationship is mediated by intrinsic motivation). Self-esteem based on parental approval predicts a wide range of academic motivation types, including intrinsic, identified, introjected academic motivation, and motivation based on parental respect. On the other hand, compensatory self-esteem predicts external academic motivation and a motivation and negatively predicts intrinsic motivation and persistence (the relationship is mediated by intrinsic motivation) (Tremblay, M. A., Blanchard, C. M., Taylor, S., Pelletier, L. G., & Villeneuve, M., 2009). That is, the academic performance of adolescents with compensatory self-esteem is typically supported by external control, demands, punishments, and rewards. They see little meaning in their academic activities and, accordingly, exhibit little persistence. Self-esteem based on teacher approval, although correlated with productive academic motivation, persistence, and academic performance, is not a reliable predictor of these factors and is therefore not included in the final model (Chornomordenko, Taran, Havronenko, Astremska & Parfilova, 2023).

FIGURE 1. Final path model linking foundations of self-esteem with academic motivation and persistence.



A comparison of self-esteem profiles in high-achieving students (“straight A students” - average score above 4.5, N=48) and low-achieving students (“low-achieving students” - average score below 3.5, N=31) showed that high-achieving students have more pronounced authentic bases of self-esteem (self-esteem based on competence ($p < 0.001$), self-esteem based on teacher approval ($p < 0.05$), and self-esteem based on parental approval ($p < 0.05$)), and less pronounced compensatory self-esteem ($p < 0.001$). Moreover, as can be seen, these differences are especially pronounced in relation to the bases of self-esteem associated with competence, since good academic performance at school age is the main source of the experience of competence, while chronic academic failure, on the contrary, undermines the feeling of competence of an adolescent. Students from general education classes, compared to their gymnasium peers, demonstrated higher compensatory self-esteem ($p \leq 0.001$), while all other types of self-esteem were unchanged. Gymnasium students, however, demonstrated higher intrinsic motivation ($p \leq 0.01$), lower a motivation ($p \leq 0.05$), and higher school satisfaction ($p \leq 0.05$) and academic performance ($p \leq 0.001$). Overall, all of the differences identified were directly or indirectly related to learning activities, confirming the role of different types of educational environments in these schools. Clearly, gymnasium students were provided with greater opportunities to develop their competencies, likely primarily due to a factor we did not examine—pedagogical factors. It can be assumed that teachers who teach in gymnasium classes are not only good subject specialists, presenting material more effectively and competently, which leads to better student achievement and an increase in school ratings, but can also support children’s learning motivation and a sense of competence by using problem-based learning methods and productive feedback.

An additional source of the observed differences may be the selection process for children entering gymnasium and the factor of a more favorable family upbringing.

The role of basic psychological need satisfaction as a source of self-esteem, as well as the role of self-esteem as a mediator of the relationship between parental satisfaction of basic psychological needs and psychological well-being, was also examined.

The results of the correlation analysis show that self-esteem based on competence ($r = 0.35^{**}$) and self-esteem based on parental approval ($r = 0.24^{**}$) correlate positively with satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness; compensatory self-esteem ($r = 0.28^{**}$) correlates negatively with satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. And adolescents who feel their basic needs are not met by their parents have compensatory self-esteem. Self-esteem based on teacher approval is not associated with basic psychological need satisfaction from their parents.

The hypothesis that basic need satisfaction by parents is a source of self-esteem was tested using path analysis with Mplus 7.4. The final model had good performance: $\chi^2 = 18.928$; $df = 10$; $p = 0.0412$; CFI = 0.981; NNFI = 0.950; RMSEA = 0.063; 90% confidence interval for RMSEA: 0.012-0.106; PCLOSE = 0.271; N = 223.

The model presented that satisfaction of basic psychological needs is directly related to indicators of psychological well-being, as predicted by self-determination theory, and also determines the choice of bases for self-esteem, which, in turn, predicts adolescent well-being. Thus, adolescents whose parents satisfy their basic psychological needs, enabling them to feel empowered, competent, successful, respected, and accepted, base their self-esteem on their parents’ compe-

tence and approval and do not resort to compensatory forms of self-esteem. Moreover, competence-based self-esteem, parental approval-based self-esteem, and compensatory self-esteem partially determine the relationship between basic need satisfaction in the family and well-being.

In turn, competence-based self-esteem predicts self-satisfaction; self-esteem based on parental approval predicts satisfaction with family relationships; and self-esteem based on teacher approval predicts satisfaction with school.

Moreover, compensatory self-esteem, resulting from the dissatisfaction of adolescents' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, predicts decreased well-being at school and at home, but helps maintain self-satisfaction. This reveals the essence of its compensatory role: maintaining a positive self-image when neither real achievements nor the approval of significant adults can be relied upon. A comparison of the psychological characteristics of adolescents with high (upper quartile) and low (lower quartile) self-esteem across all four types of self-esteem bases (using a T-test) shows that adolescents with high self-esteem, based on self-assessments of competence and parental and teacher approval, have higher general self-esteem and life satisfaction, more productive academic motivation, and higher academic performance than those with low self-esteem bases. Conversely, adolescents with high compensatory self-esteem, compared to those with low compensatory self-esteem, are less satisfied with family and school, less intrinsically motivated and persistent, while having higher external motivation and a motivation and, predictably, lower academic performance.

Based on the obtained results, a conclusion is drawn about the significance of the self-esteem bases profile for predicting adolescent psychological well-being, as well as the characteristics of their academic performance.

Data on the self-esteem profile were analyzed using the sentence-complete method. Four sentence-complete items were selected for analysis: "When faced with difficulty or failure, I"; "If I make a mistake"; "If I don't know how to solve a problem"; and "I respect myself when." The first three sentences can be characterized as sentences related to overcoming difficulties, while the last sentence refers to the adolescent's qualitative description of their self-esteem.

The subjects' statements were assigned to one of the categories by two experts. For the sentence "I respect myself when," the following four categories of response analysis were used:

- 1) Competence, specific skills and abilities, and/or effort, perseverance. For example, "I understand complex topics and get excellent marks on tests," "I have many successes and achievements in sports and school," "I draw well," "I am diligent," "I only do what I really want."
- 2) Values (personal qualities that are important to a person and not directly related to achievements and efforts). For example, "I am a good person," "I love myself," "I am cool," "I am beautiful."
- 3) Positive relationships. For example, "I have many friends," "My friends appreciate me."
- 4) Depressive-pessimistic responses. For example, "I don't respect myself," "I overcome the urge to commit suicide every day."

For sentences related to overcoming difficulties, the following categories were used: 1) active independent coping (e.g., "I am trying to solve this problem," "I am correcting the mistake," "I am trying to understand the mistake," "I am analyzing it and remembering it so I don't make it again");

2) active coping with asking for help (e.g., “I ask the teacher,” “I ask my parents to help me,” “I turn to my classmates”); 3) passivity (lack of productive activity, but no pronounced negative emotional reaction; for example, “I’m doing nothing,” “I’m being stupid,” “I don’t pay attention,” “I’m leaving things as is,” “I’m copying from online responses”); 4) helplessness, a maladaptive negative emotional response (for example, “I’m starting to freak out,” “I give up,” “I’m upset”).

Analysis of the results of the unfinished sentence method showed that adolescents with a favorable self-esteem profile (high authentic foundations of self-esteem and low compensatory ones) tend to respond more constructively to difficulties and failures than adolescents with an unfavorable self-esteem profile. Self-respect in adolescents with a favorable profile is significantly more often based on competence and positive relationships with others; depressive-pessimistic responses and responses reflecting a helpless reaction to difficulties are absent from them. The significance of the profile of the grounds for self-esteem as an indicator of the psychological state of a teenager is further confirmed by the analysis of individual protocols of subjects with a favorable and unfavorable profile of the grounds for self-esteem.

The results obtained provide a new perspective on the issue of genuine self-esteem, complementing existing data on the importance of the level and stability of self-esteem. They also prompt a reconsideration of the approach to classifying the bases of self-esteem, demonstrating that the dichotomy between self-esteem based on competence and approval from others is not entirely accurate if we consider approval associated with competence-based support rather than manipulative approval. We believe that, when analyzing self-esteem, it is more important to consider whether it is associated with the acquisition of competence, effort, and persistence in real, productive activity, or with pseudo-competence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tracing the history of modern self-esteem research, we can conclude that self-esteem can be characterized as an individual’s recognition of their own worth, skills, and unique qualities. This recognition can be high or low, stable or unstable, and based on various factors. It is important to distinguish self-esteem from self-concept, which can be defined as an individual’s assessment of the degree to which they express various qualities that characterize them (e.g., beauty, intelligence, individual abilities, sociability, etc.) or themselves as a whole, typically compared to their expression in others.

The development of ideas about self-esteem has led to a shift from studying only the level of self-esteem to its other aspects (stability and foundations of self-esteem), as well as to exploring their interrelationships and mutual influences. Analyzing research results, we can conclude that authentic, genuine self-esteem is characterized by a combination of a consistently high level, relative independence (independence from the conditional acceptance and approval of others, one’s own successes and failures), and authentic, healthy foundations for self-esteem. In turn, authentic self-esteem, which implies its consistently high level and healthy foundations, is an important indicator of psychological well-being, being associated with both subjective well-being and life satisfaction (the hedonic approach to psychological well-being) and self-realization (the eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being), while defensive, neurotic self-esteem is associated with depression, anxiety disorders, aggression and narcissism.

Key research findings

Based on a literature review and the conducted research, a new classification system for the foundations of adolescent self-esteem is proposed. It differs from previous systems by adopting a unified design principle (linked to competence or pseudo-competence), allowing for a more meaningful characterization of adolescent self-esteem.

For the first time, the phenomenon of compensatory self-esteem was examined, with an emphasis on constructive approval associated with the encouragement of competence. This shifted the focus of research on the foundations of self-esteem from the opposition between competence and the approval of others to a more meaningful feature—the opposition between competence and pseudo-competence.

Using a specially developed method for assessing the foundations of self-esteem, the foundations of self-esteem that contribute to psychological well-being to a greater or lesser degree were identified. The relationships between the foundations of self-esteem and academic success, motivation, and persistence were analyzed; the types of foundations of self-esteem that facilitate and hinder the achievement of academic success and an optimal motivational profile in terms of academic activity were identified. The findings demonstrate the importance of competence as a foundation for self-esteem.

The study's results demonstrate that for an individual's psychological well-being and success, it's not the source of their self-esteem—the individual or others—that matters most, but rather whether it's based on real achievements and efforts within constructive activities.

The relationship between basic need satisfaction in the family and adolescents' self-esteem was examined. It was shown that basic need satisfaction in the family is a source of authentic self-esteem (while dissatisfaction leads to compensatory self-esteem), and that the foundations of self-esteem act as a mediator between basic need satisfaction and psychological well-being.

The study examined various self-esteem profiles, demonstrating that they can serve as an important indicator of an adolescent's psychological state.

The theoretical significance of this study lies in deepening theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of self-esteem and identifying its foundations in adolescents. Specifically, the concept of compensatory self-esteem in adolescents is introduced, allowing us to describe the characteristic and widespread phenomenon of individuals using various unproductive behavioral strategies aimed at maintaining self-esteem when basic psychological needs for competence and recognition by significant others are frustrated (for various reasons).

To structure research in this area of research developing in foreign psychology using the term self-esteem, the concepts of self-esteem and self-assessment are distinguished, and a theoretical model of the foundations of self-esteem is developed and empirically tested. This study makes a significant contribution to the analysis of the sources and consequences of the various foundations of self-esteem in adolescents.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study results, the following conclusions are drawn:

- 1) Authentic foundations of self-esteem are an important characteristic of genuine self-esteem. Their study partially overcomes the problem that arises from equating the concepts of authentic self-esteem with high levels of self-esteem, without considering other important characteristics.
- 2) The study of adolescent self-esteem showed that the most authentic self-esteem is that based on self-assessments of competence. It reliably predicts not only psychological well-being (self-satisfaction), but also such characteristics of productive academic activity as intrinsic academic motivation and persistence. Self-esteem based on parental approval also predicts family satisfaction, intrinsic and autonomous extrinsic academic motivation, demonstrating the importance of parental approval for adolescents and its role as a personal resource. Self-esteem based on teacher approval has a narrower, but equally important, role in predicting adolescent satisfaction with school. In contrast, compensatory self-esteem negatively impacts academic motivation and persistence, as well as family and school satisfaction. The only positive function of compensatory self-esteem is to maintain a sense of self-satisfaction.
- 3) Self-esteem based on self-assessments of competence, self-esteem based on parental approval, and self-esteem based on teacher approval are significantly more productive and authentic types of self-esteem than compensatory self-esteem.
- 4) A profile characterized by a predominance of self-esteem based on self-assessments of competence and its approval by others, and low compensatory self-esteem, is favorable. Conversely, a profile characterized by high compensatory self-esteem and low self-esteem based on self-assessments of competence, low self-esteem based on parental approval, and low self-esteem based on teacher approval is indicative of adolescent psychological problems.
- 5) The relationship between the foundations of self-esteem and academic performance is bidirectional: on the one hand, authentic types of foundations of self-esteem contribute to academic performance, while on the other hand, successful adolescents, thanks to their experience of academic competence, have more pronounced authentic types of foundations of self-esteem and less pronounced compensatory self-esteem.
- 6) The process of socialization significantly influences the choice of foundations of self-esteem and the associated characteristics of academic activity. The choice of foundations of self-esteem depends particularly on the nature of the parent-child relationship, in particular, on the satisfaction of basic needs by parents: if parents satisfy the adolescent's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, then they are much more likely to have authentic foundations of self-esteem and will not need compensatory ones. Moreover, self-esteem based on one's own assessments of competence, self-esteem based on parental approval, and compensatory self-esteem partially mediate the relationship between satisfaction with basic needs and psychological well-being.

- 7) Students in gymnasium classes have significantly lower compensatory self-esteem than students in general education classes. This result may be related to the greater opportunities provided to children in gymnasium classes to acquire academic competence.
- 8) An analysis of gender differences in the bases of self-esteem revealed a more productive profile of the bases of self-esteem in girls, including higher self-esteem based on self-assessments of competence and lower compensatory self-esteem. This is consistent with data on greater academic success and a more productive motivational profile in girls.
- 9) Authentic self-esteem can be developed by developing personal, intellectual, and communicative competence in adolescents: the ability to solve school and life problems; the ability to analyze one's thoughts and behavior, as well as the behavior of others; and constructive communication skills.

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