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Self-esteem and Academic Performance

Case study :fourth year pupils' at Ameur Moussa and Reffas Ibrahim Middle Schools in SAIDA

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in English Didactics.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution. I also certify that the present work contains no plagiarism and is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Signature:

Name:

BENSEGHIR DALILA

Date:

Dedications

This work is dedicated:

For my dear and best mother ever, my dear father and my lovely family.

I would like to thank all the members of my family; my brother Mohamed and my sisters; Hinde and Malika.

To my little angels: Serine and Aymen.

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Abstract

In education, self-esteem has been considered as one of the most important factors in determining success and failure in schools. The goal is to produce pupils who have excellent academic performance as well as those who have the capability, talent and potential to contribute significantly to the development of a nation. Self-esteem refers to a person's overall evaluation of his or her own worth. It encompasses beliefs such as 'I am competent'. It can also apply to a particular dimension such as 'I believe I am a good writer and I feel proud of myself or I believe I am a good person and I am proud of that". Self-esteem can be equated to self worth, self regard, self respect, self love, and self-integrity. In the mid of 1969, Morris Rosenberg, a social learning theorist defined self-esteem in terms of a stable sense of personal worth or worthiness. This study aims to investigate factors that affect self-esteem in the performance of the English language of fourth year middle school pupils at Ameur Moussa and Refas Ibrahim in Saida. To accomplish this objective a mixed methodology was used : A questionnaire, interviews and a classroom observation . Findings have shown that pupils in rural areas are less able to perform the language and have a lack of self-confidence. It was therefore concluded that environmental factors, parents, teachers had an impact on pupils' self esteem.

Key words : self-esteem ,self confidence, performance

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General introduction

An individual's self-esteem is one of the major factors in self-image or self-concepts and is considered to be an important determinant in human behavior. As such, self-esteem has been conceptualized and examined in a variety of ways in the educational, sociological and psychological contexts. Self-esteem can influence various aspects of human behavior including the level of aspiration, learning and delinquency.

The history of self-esteem as a concept began with known theorists in psychology. William James and Mead (1890) were among the first ones. They postulated that self-esteem was equivalent to the success of a person divided by his or her pretensions. One's self-esteem would be academic success divided by how well one thinks he/she ought to be doing. To increase the sum total of one's self-esteem, one needs to boost successes or diminish expectations for achievements. This continues to influence the understanding of self-esteem (Wickline, 2003) As a matter of fact, many factors intervene in the individual's self-confidence accessibility to perform the language and the different related tasks.

To enhance pupils' oral performance and speech delivery, the different difficulties that hinder their performance have to be tackled. For this reason the present study was conducted in order to find what causes these difficulties as well as to seek out different solutions.

According to the above objectives to be reached the following question is asked:

What are the factors behind the low self-esteem in pupils' performance?

Different hypotheses are suggested:

1) Cultural and socio-economic status could influence pupils' self-esteem.
2) The stability of the family or the lack of it shapes pupils' self-esteem.

To achieve the research aims and to verify the validity of these hypotheses, the study used different techniques: a questionnaire devoted to fourth year middle school pupils, an interview done to teachers and observations of the same pupils in their classes

The present work is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter represents the different theories concerning self–esteem. The second chapter describes the current situation and the methodology used in this study. Finally, chapter three is concerned with the data analysis of the experimental study and the suggested recommendations

The previous works attempted to study the effects of self-esteem on the learning process. This research looks for the factors that minimize this self –esteem in pupils' performance in the hope that fruitful solutions could be taken into consideration so as to help pupils promote their self – confidence to successfully progress in their learning.

While conducting this research some difficulties were encountered such as; the non –availability of sources (references), the difficulty most students found in understanding the questionnaire until read and translated by the researcher as well as the last minute change of the supervisor.

CHAPTER ONE

Theoretical background

1.1. Introduction :

An individual's self-esteem is one of the major factors in self-image or self-concepts and considered to be an important determinant in human behavior. As such self-esteem has been conceptualized and examined in a variety of ways in the educational, sociological and psychological contexts. Self-esteem can influence various aspects of human behavior including the level of aspiration, learning and delinquency. This chapter reviews literature on various aspects of self-esteem and how these relate to academic performance. This is followed by conceptual framework, on the factors that influence self esteem and in turn affects academic performance.

1.2. The Concept of Self-esteem and academic performance

1.2.1. Self-esteem

Self-esteem according to Ferkany (2008) is "how a person feels about him or herself, good or bad, and as manifested in a variety of ways, for example, in pride or shame, but especially in self-confidence". Possession of high self-esteem has positive behavioral benefits. These include independence, responsibility taking, and toleration of frustration, resistant to peer pressure, willingness to attempt new tasks and challenges, ability to handle positive and negative emotions, and willingness to offer assistance to others. Conversely, there are negative aspects of self-esteem that can cause undesirable effects on behaviors. Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Moffitt and Caspi (2005) noted that individuals with low self-esteem are prone to real-world externalizing problems such as delinquency and antisocial behavior.

For this study self-esteem is defined as "the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself: it expresses an attitude of

approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy" (Coopersmith, 1967, p. 4).

Self-esteem continues to be one of the most commonly researched concepts in social psychology (Baumeister 1993; Mruk 1995; Wells and Marwell 1976; Wylie 1979). While generally conceptualized as a part of the self-concept, to some, self-esteem is one of the most important parts of the self-concept. Indeed, for a period of time, so much attention was given to self-esteem that it seemed to be synonymous with "self-concept" in literature on the self (Rosenberg 1976, 1979). This focus on self-esteem has largely been due to the association of high self-esteem with a number of positive outcomes for the individual and for society as a whole (Baumeister 1993; Smelser 1989). This includes a widespread belief that raising an individual's self-esteem (especially that of a child or adolescent) would be beneficial for both the individual and society as a whole.

Self-esteem has generally been investigated in three ways, each of which has been treated almost independently of the others. First, self-esteem has been investigated as an outcome. Here, scholars have focused on processes that produce or inhibit self-esteem (e.g., Coopersmith 1967; Harter 1993; Peterson and Rollins 1987; Rosenberg 1979). Second, self-esteem has been investigated as a self-motive, noting the tendency for people to behave in ways that maintain or increase positive evaluations of the self (Kaplan 1975; Tesser 1988). Finally, self-esteem has been investigated as a buffer for the self, providing protection from experiences that are harmful (Pearlin and Schooler 1978; Longmore and DeMaris 1997; Spencer, Josephs, and Steele 1993; Thoits 1994).

Universities can increase, maintain, or decrease motivation, self-esteem, self-efficacy and value-expectancy of students for better academic performance; The history of self-esteem as a concept began with known theorists in psychology William James and Mead (1890) were among the first ones. They postulated that self-esteem was equivalent to success of a person divided by his or her presentations. One's self

esteem would be academic success divided by how well one thinks he/she ought to be doing.
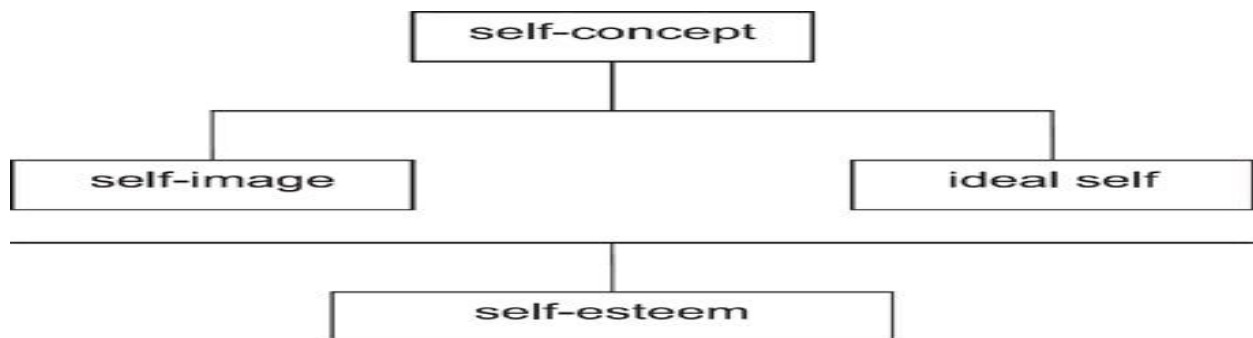
Figure 1.2.1. An Alternative Model of the Relationship between Self Terms

1.2.2. Academic performance

Is the extent to which a learner , a teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals.

Academic is a term to indicate a success rate of achieving a goal because an attempt has been made by someone learning an optimal (setiawan,2006)

Academic performance is the change in the efficiency of behavior ,or ability to grow for some time and not because of the growth process,but the learning situation.

1.3. Self-esteem theory

Self-esteem has been conceptualized as an outcome, motive, and buffer; however, there exists no overall theory of self-esteem. In this paper it is suggested that identity theory can provide a theoretical framework for the integration of the different conceptualizations of self-esteem.

1.3.1.Theories of Self-esteem

There are many theories about self esteem. These include Maslow's Theory of needs, Carl Rogers Theory of personal development and Bednar and Perterson's Theory of self esteem among others. However, this study will use Maslow's hierarchy of needs to investigate the effects of self esteem on academic performance.

1.3.2. Maslow's Theory of Needs

According to Maslow people are motivated to seek personal goals that make their lives rewarding and meaningful. The law contends that human beings have wants and rarely reach a state of complete satisfaction. He attested that all human beings have needs that are innate and are systematically arranged in ascending (order) hierarchy of priority. Satisfaction of one need creates another need that commands the person's attention and efforts. The basic assumption in Maslow's theory is that the lower order pre-potent needs must be relatively satisfied before the person can become aware of or motivated by higher order needs. Physiological needs should be satisfied first followed by safety and security needs, love and belonging needs. Self-esteem needs are 4th in the hierarchy. Maslow divided it into self respect and respect for others.

To Maslow, satisfaction of self-esteem needs generate feelings and attitudes of self confidence, self worth, capacity and the feeling of being useful and necessary in the world. Frustration of these needs lead to feelings and attitudes of inferiority, ineptness, weakness, passivity and dependency. These negative self perceptions give rise to basic discouragements, a sense of futility and hopelessness in dealing with life's demands and low evaluation of self vis-à-vis others. This condition is most likely able to lead to poor performance due to lack of drive as learners tend to fear their abilities.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
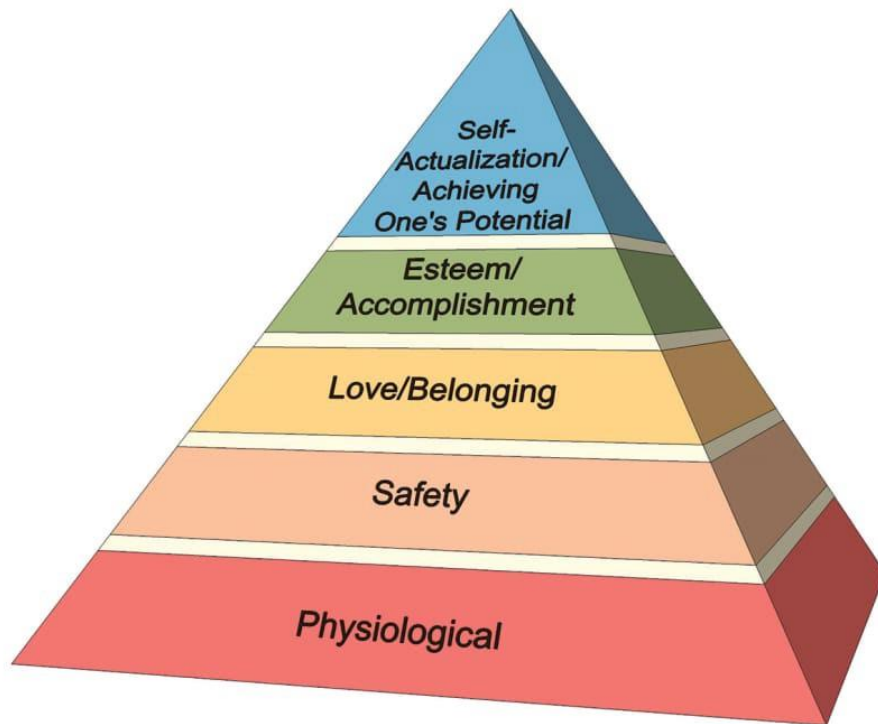
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Figure 1.3.2.Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

1.4. Self-esteem and Parenting

According to Coopersmith (1976), the child high self-esteem is associated with expression of affection, concern about the children' problems, harmony in the home, participation in joint family activities, abiding by the rules and allowing boys freedom within prescribed limits. Parents provide unconditional love by meeting their physical needs e.g. physical affection through word, reassuring them that frowning at them does not mean that the parents do not love them (Stenhouse, 1996) showing respect for them by providing for their basic needs, protecting them from danger and illness as well as recognizing them as young people with their own personalities and potentials.

Young people with low self-esteem tend to have negative attitude and pessimism to life. They find it hard to accept criticism without defensiveness and hostility and tend to overreact. They have strong need for re-assurance and praise from others (Rugel, 1995).

1.4.1.Parent-Adolescent Relationships

Authoritative parenting style places and controls the adolescents and allows limited verbal exchange. This parenting style leads to socially incompetent behavior. The adolescents therefore, fail to initiate activity and have poor communication skills (Jeffrey and Brown 2003). Authoritative parenting which encourages adolescents to be independent but still places limits and control on their actions, encourage socially competent behavior,

Family interactions that allow adolescents the opportunity to express independent thoughts and feelings while maintaining closeness and connection to parents facilitate higher self esteem (Stenhouse, 1996). Permissive parenting is associated with adolescents' socially incompetent behaviors, especially a lack of self – control. The parents allow their children to do what they want and the result is that the adolescents never learn to control their own behavior and always expect to get their way (Baumrid, 1999).

1.5. Self-esteem, Grade and Relationships

Recent research by Frank; 2009, indicates that inflating students' self esteem by itself can actually decrease grades. High self esteem correlates highly with self-reported happiness. However it is not clear, which, if either, necessarily leads to the other. Additionally, self- esteem has been found to be related to forgiveness in close relationships, in that people with high self-esteem tend to be more forgiving. The relationship involving self-esteem and academic results does not signify that high self esteem contributes to high academic result. It simply means that high self esteem may be accomplished due to high academic performance.

1.5.1. Indicators of High and Low Self-esteem

High self-esteem, these include willingness to express opinions, initiating friendly contact with others directives or commands, sitting with others during activities, working co- operatively in groups, maintaining eye contact and speaking fluently or little hesitation in speech (Santrock 2001).Low self esteem:-These include putting down others, teasing, name calling or gossiping, failure to express views and opinions, assuming a submissive tone, bragging excessively about achievement skills, giving excuses for failure and verbally putting down of oneself (Santrock 2001). The study carried out sought to determine the authenticity of these indicators through the questionnaires for pupils .

1.6. The Role of Self-esteem in Academic Performance

Factors that influence an individual's self esteem and academic performance include and not limited to school environment, teachers, peers, and the hidden curriculum, as well as demographic factors such as parents' background affect learners self esteem as well as performance. It was important to find out how these factors shape the pupil self esteem. The recognition of self worth of learners or the lack of it can yield an observable trait in the learners which would inspire them either to achieve or not to achieve an end in life.

Self esteem of individuals seems to influence their academic performance either positively or negatively. An individual whose self worth is recognized strives hard to achieve academic excellence. Feelings of competence, confidence and good directedness influence pupils' performance. pupils who felt worthy before their teachers and parents had their goals directed towards achieving bright future.

The success of any action usually depends on the extent to which individuals strive to attain their purpose, along with their desire to do so. In general people have come to refer to this psychological factor – the impulse that generates the action – as motivation. As the term itself indicates, it is a "motive force", something that prompts,

incites or stimulates action. According to The Short Oxford English Dictionary, motivation is "that which moves or induces a person to act in a certain way; a desire, fear, reason, etc which influences a person's volition: also often applied to a result or object which is desired."

To think of motivation as belonging only to the initial stages of an action, - that is as concerned with arousing initial interest and turning it into a decision to engage in some activity – is only a limited understanding of the term. The need to maintain this state of arousal, to determine someone to make the necessary effort to complete an action is also of great importance. This idea is reflected in the definition given by Williams and Burden (1997: 120) who see motivation as "a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, a state which leads to a conscious decision to act and gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort". Thus intellect and affect combine with volition and perseverance to result in what is known as motivated behaviour. The same idea is conveyed in different words by R.C. Gardner who seems to explain the term with the precision of mathematical demonstration: motivation is a combination of effort plus desire to achieve a goal plus favourable attitudes towards the goal to be accomplished (Gardner, 1985:11).

Thus the simple existence of desire, strong reasons for doing something or favourable attitudes towards a particular thing or action do not reflect motivation in and of themselves. The same R.C. Gardner gives the example of individuals who may have a strong desire to do something or may enjoy an activity and who cannot be considered to be motivated, since their intentions are not linked with a striving to accomplish that particular thing. Similarly, a person can put a great deal of effort toward a goal without being necessarily motivated: the decision to accomplish something may be triggered by different causes, both internal – such as interest, curiosity, or even a general desire to achieve – and external ones such as another person, social pressure, material rewards, etc.
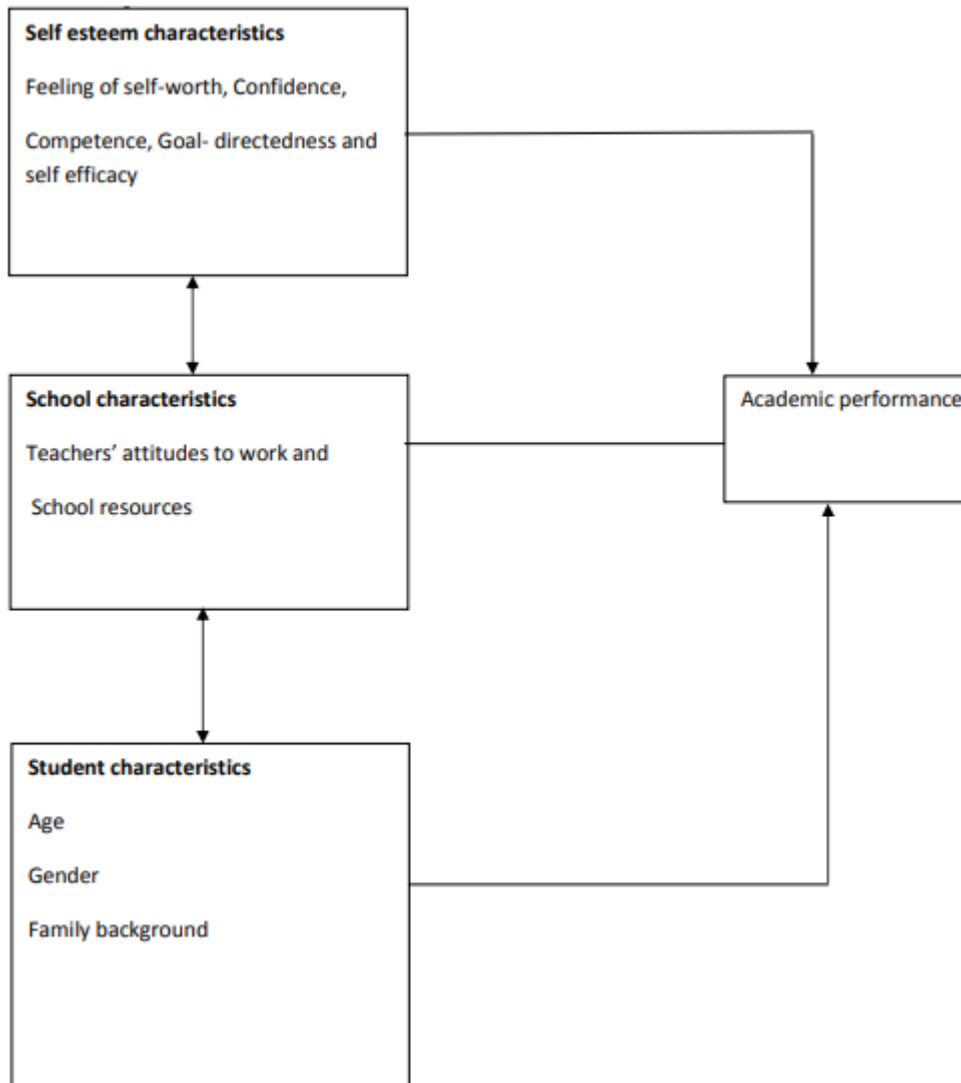
Figure 1.4. Contextual framework on correlates between self esteem and academic
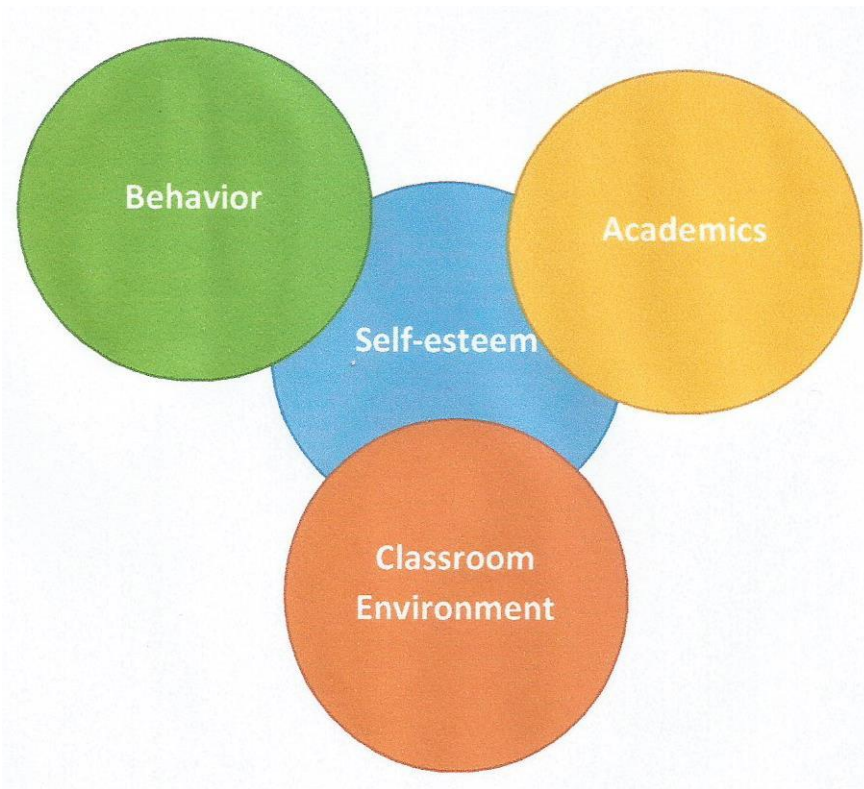
Figure 1.4.Self-esteem and Academic Setting

1.7. The nature of Self-esteem

Self-esteem is part of everyday language and everyone seems initiatively to know what self-esteem is. In fact, self-esteem means different things to different people and the term is used in at least three different ways:

a. Global Self-esteem

Sometimes the term is used to prefer to a personality variable that captures the way people generally feel about themselves researchers call this form of self-esteem, global self-esteem or trait self. Self-esteem as it is relatively enduring across time and situations. In the remainder of this paper, we will use the term self-esteem without any qualifies when referring to this variable.

Attempts to define self-esteem have ranged from an emphasis on primitive individual impulses (Kenberg 1975) to the perception that one is available member of a meaningful universe (Solomon et all 1991). We take a decidedly less exotic approach and define self-esteem in terms of feelings of affective of oneself (Brown 1993-1995) Brown & Dutton 1995 within normal population, high self-esteem is characterized by a general fondness or love for oneself. Low self-esteem is characterized by mindly positive or ambivalent feeling toward oneself.

In extreme cases, low self-esteem people rate themselves but this kind of self. Loathing occurs only in clinical population (Banister, Trice Shelton 1989) Beaters should be aware that one definition emphasizes the affective nature of self-esteem when we talk about self-esteem. We are talking about how people feel about themselves other researchers treat self-esteem in cognitive terms, for example, (Crocker and Wolfe 2001) use the term self-esteem to refer to global judgments of self worth (p590) this emphasis on the judgmental processes shifts the focus of self-esteem from a affective construct, (it means how people feel about themselves) to a cognitive one (it means what people think about themselves to our mind this distinction is a critical and we will revisit it throughout the paper.

b. Feelings of Self-esteem

Self-esteem is also used to refer to momentary self-evaluative reactions to valence events, this is what people mean when they talk about events that threaten self-esteem or boost self-esteem, for example, a person might say his/her self-esteem was sky-high after getting a big promotion or a person might say his/her self-esteem plummeted after a diverse. Although, it is possible to view these reactions in cognitive judgmental terms (Thinking just succeeded. I think I 'am a good person). We believe these reactions are fundamentally affective in nature and call them feelings or self-worth feeling proud or pleased with ourselves (on the positive side) are examples of what we mean by feelings of self-worth.

Many researchers use the term state self-esteem to refer to the emotions we are calling feeling of self-worth and trait self-esteem to refer to the way people generally feel about themselves. These terms commute an equivalency between the two constructs replying that the essential difference is that global self-esteem persists while feeling of self-worth are temporary. We disagree with this approach, we do not believe that feelings proud is also goes to having high self-esteem to illustrate our thinking consider that most parents smell with pride when their children do something great but these accomplishments don't alter how much love must parents feel for their children.

The pride comes and goes in response to a particular event or achievement but the love remains, and is independent of whether the child has done something great or not, this is how we think of self-esteem and feelings of self-worth rise and fall in response to particular outcomes but self-esteem is ending, they are different constructs with different antecedents and they differ in ways more fundamental than their temporal course.

c. Self-evaluation

Finally, the term self-esteem is used to refer to the way people evaluate their various abilities and attributes. For example, a person who devotes his /her ability in school is sometimes said to have low academic self-esteem, the term self-confidence

and self-efficacy have also been used to refer to these beliefs. Self-evaluation or self-affairs as they refer to the way people evaluate or affrays their attributes abilities and personal characteristics.

1.8 Conclusion

in EFL context, learning a foreign language is a process that requires the excessive practice and time. Therefore, EFL learners always find difficulties in using English language whether with its native speakers or with the users of the language. Indeed, it is considered to be a difficult task for them. The language performance is hindered by several factors for rural learners. Self-esteem is the most salient factor that dominates learner's psychology. To explore what is behind this self-esteem and what are the causes that lead to its decrease, this study used a diversity of tools which follow a systematic procedures.

CHAPTER TWO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter two

2.1. Introduction

Language performance is very important when learning a foreign language as it determines the language proficiency of the learner. To reach a high level of performance many elements are needed in this process . One of these elements is self-esteem which is considered to be one of the most powerful factors.

In its turn, self-esteem can be influenced by different circumstances which can lead to either self-esteem decrease or increase. In this section the current situation of the learners' performance and the methodology used in this study are described .in addition to that the complete procedure is explained .

2.2. Statement of the problem

In rural schools "at Ameur Moussa middle school in Sidi Ahmed" especially fourth year classes, pupils suffer from the current phenomenon, which breaks their self-confidence, self-efficacy, motivation and the desire of learning. This is called low self –esteem. The mentioned behaviors cause various problems and obstacles that affect pupils negatively inside and outside of the classroom.

Pupils with low self-esteem feel inferior to their classmates. To compensate they pretend to be stronger and bigger than their peers. Since they have low self-esteem, they create an uncomfortable atmosphere in the class by making noise and disturbing their teachers and their classmates, they are passive and pass their time daydreaming.

Low self-esteem serves as a risk factor for depression. Pupils with low self-esteem don't interact with their teachers neither follow instructions nor do they

do their homework. They seem to be in the class just for the fun, they show clearly their disinterest about the subject. To mask their low confidence they act like adults, show that they are much stronger than the rest and pretend to be proud of their low achievement. But only sometimes do they show a glimpse their shyness and accept their weakness in performing the language.

Since being the researcher and teacher, it was easy and clear to observe the pupils and distinguish their competencies and abilities through their performance, behaviors and acts.

In rural schools and during classroom instruction, teachers face a lot of

obstacles in conveying the meaning of the lesson and this difficulty is because of

the lack of pupils' involvement in the classroom. Learners seem to be less motivated in English lessons although their willingness to learn and their competencies in other subjects are significantly higher.

It is apparent from the behavior and the interactions of these pupils that they are stuck in a vicious circle of negative emotions leading to low performance. Due to their disengagement these pupils tend to invest a lot of energy in disturbing the lesson and preventing their peers from focusing and achieving in class. Their disengagement is the product of their low self-image which is initially triggered by their inability to understand the language.

In an attempt to resolve the issue teachers translate the material to this group of pupils only to realize that this has resulted in slowing down the high achievers and has caused other issues in the classroom.

Pupils with low self-esteem are generally pupils either pupils with difficulties, "weak pupils"; pupils who get always low marks in all subjects or average pupils who are unable to express themselves in English but do their best in order to develop their competencies

Generally, in schools and at the start of the academic year the civil status of each pupil is mentioned; orphan pupils, pupils with alcoholic parents, pupils from disadvantaged socio-economic background, Pupils with health issues (diabetic pupils ,blind pupils ….etc) are all brought to the attention of teachers.

All the mentioned above conditions lead to this phenomenon because pupils compare themselves with their classmates and while comparing themselves, they feel inferior, which makes them loose their self-esteem.

2.3. The purpose of the study

This issue prevails in EFL classes which creates a big worry to both teachers and parents alike. The main objectives of this study are: first, to examine how self-esteem interacts with other factors in order to investigate the effects of self-esteem on academic performance .Secondly, to find out solutions and suggestions that help teachers and pupils to minimize this weakness.

2.4. Research question

From the objectives mentioned above, the research question being tackled in this research study :

1) What are the factors behind the low self-esteem in pupils' performance?

2.5. Hypotheses

According to the research question asked, a set of hypotheses are being

supposed:

1) Cultural and socio-economic status could influence pupils' self-esteem.
2) The stability of the family or the lack of it shapes pupils' self-esteem.

2.6. Research design

This research was an experimental one which was reinforced by questionnaire,

Interview and a classroom observation "triangulation method".

Questionnaires were distributed to both pupils at Ameur Moussa middle school in Sidi Ahmed Khalfallah "rural school" and pupils at Refas Ibrahim middle school in Saida "urban school".

The interview was done with teachers who are concerned with 'BREVET' exam classes. A concerned teacher and researcher of a fourth year class can easily detect pupil's self-esteem and analyze their performance. A school year is enough to get a clear idea about them, their day to day life and their target objectives.

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2.7. Sample

The sample taken in this study (a total of 54 pupils) consists of two fourth year classes, each class includes 27 pupil the first one at Ameur Moussa middle school in Sidi Ahmed Khalfallah, the second one at Reffas Ibrahim middle school in cité El Naser inSaida during the academic year 2018-2019. Their ages are between 15 years of age and 18 years of age. The population also consists of teachers who work at the same middle schools. The first language of both classes is the Arabic language and none of them had the chance to travel to English countries so they have never experience the English language in foreign countries.

Inside the classroom, there are mixed ability pupils with three different categories; excellent pupils who perform in a very good manner, show their interest about the language, and average learners who are neither excellent nor weak, but the majority of them are motivated and want to improve their level.

2.8. The teachers' sample

The current study used an interview for teachers to investigate their learners' behaviors in performing the English language. Four teachers participated in this interview, two of them are beginner English teachers and the other two teachers have a long teaching experience. Their ages are between 25 and 45 years of age.

2.9. The pupils' sample

The total number is fifty four pupils whom are from different socio-cultural background and from different geographical regions and a mixture of gender.

2.10. Research Instruments

An eclectic study is chosen. A questionnaire for pupils at Ameur Moussa middle school and at Reffas Ibrahim middle school was carried out, an interview discussed with teachers at the same middle schools, and an experimental study also carried out at the same middle schools. These techniques will be described in more details.

2.10.1 The classroom observation

The observation is a perception which aims at describing the visible

behaviors of learners while learning the language. This observation took place over five sessions for each class. All sessions were during English classes. The

focus of the observations was on both pupils and teachers. The

observations were particularly concerned with the interaction between the teacher and the learners when explaining the lesson. All behaviors were noted down in details in order to be systematically analyzed.

2.10.2. The questionnaire

A questionnaire is a set of written questions specific to the case study given to the targeted individuals to respond to in order for the researcher to collect the information and data needed to analyze and complete the research.

2.10.3.description of the pupils' questionnaire

The questionnaire that was administered to pupils is divided into two main sections. The first section is concerned with the personal information

and background of the pupils and it contains two structured questions. The second section deals with pupils' perceptions toward the English Language and includes fifteen questions eight questions of these are structured and seven are open-ended questions. Taking the pupils' low ability into, an additional translation into the Arabic language was included. Pupils spent 15 minutes responding to the different items asked in this questionnaire.

2.10.4. Interview

An interview is a set of oral questions specific to the case study and asked of the interviewees to respond to. The answers of which will contribute to the data of the research.

2.10.5. Teachers' interview description

The interview that concerns teachers is designed to include three main

items. It took place in two days. One day was dedicated to carry out the interview with teachers of Ameur Moussa middle school and the second day was dedicated for interviews with teachers of Reffas Ibrahim middle school. These interviews were carried out with their total agreement and their answers were recorded for the sake of being transcribed and analyzed carefully.

2.11.Methodology

This study results are analyzed using both approaches, the quantitative

and the qualitative. The quantitative approach deals with the graphic language

which measure the instruments results and gives percentages about learners

performance. The qualitative approach seeks the behavioral attitudes of

learners toward language use and performance.

2.12. Conclusion

It is a matter of fact that learners face problems in front of language performance which is caused by low self-esteem. As this research investigates the factors causing this phenomenon, a set of tools were used to explore the desired data. By the end of the data collection, the information has to be presented visually and the results analyzed accurately ready for interpretation and drawing meaningful conclusions that will serve the purpose of this investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Introduction

The gathered data revealed various results that lead to different and meaningful

interpretations. This chapter discusses these results in a detailed manner which gives

clarification about all the research work. It summarizes the results obtained by the

pupils' questionnaire, teachers interviews and the classroom observations carried out with the intention to know the teachers' and pupils' perspectives towards pupils' self -esteem. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be provided.

3.2. The Results of the pupils' Questionnaire

1. Indicate your gender

Total	Boys	Girls
54	25	29
100%	46,3%	53,7%

Table 3.1 pupils' gender

The analysis indicates that there were number of girls more than boys in the study. 46,3 % of

the respondents were boys and the other 53,7% were girls. The discrepancy in these percentages was attributed to the fact that the classes in question were BREVET classes. To make sure the study was a fair and unbiased one all pupils who were part of the class were included in the sample. Therefore it was not possible to ensure an equal percentage of boys and girls.

2. Indicate your age:

Total	15 years old	16-17 years old	18 years old
54	14	32	8
100%	25%	60%	15%

Table 3.2.pupils' ages

Legend:
- 15years old
- 16-17 years old
- 18 years old
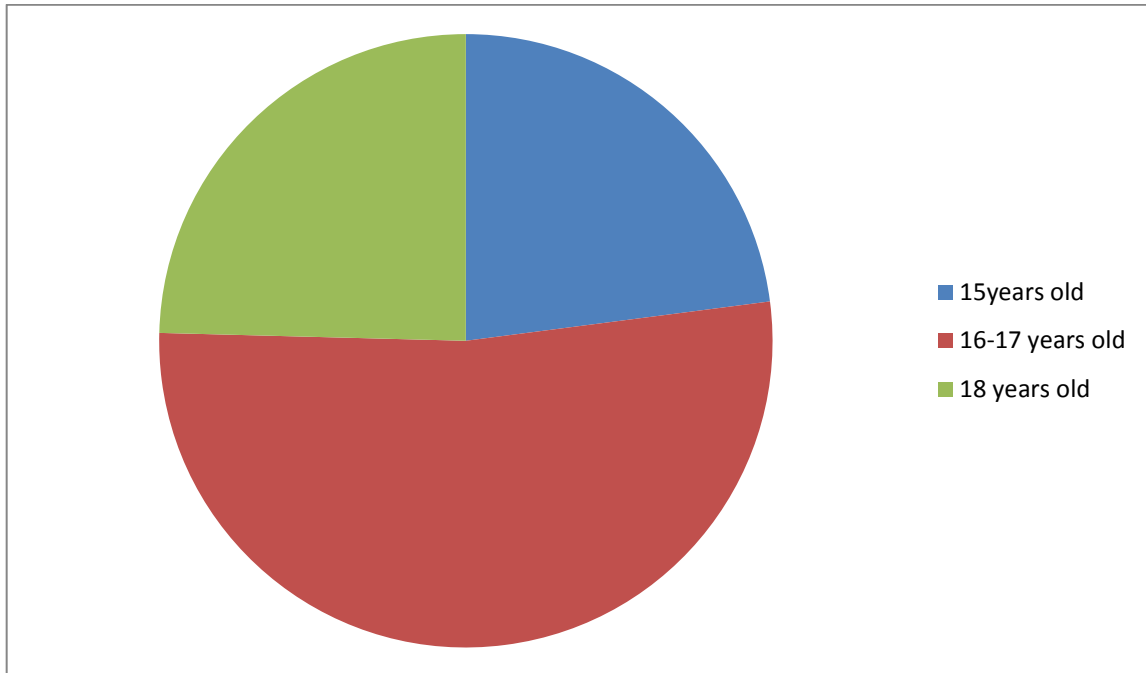
Graph 3.2 pupils' ages

The results show that the majority of the pupils are aged between 16 -17 years old. 25% of the pupils are of the age of 15 years and 15% of the pupils aged 18 years old . This study reveals that the majority of the pupils are adolescents and are not able to make their own decisions on whether to continue with their education or not. This sensitive period of hormone fluctuation in a child's life is sufficient to disturb their emotions and create instability and uncertainty. As children grow up their perceptions might change and as they leave this period their self-image will surely change.

3. **What is the academic level of your parents?**

The study findings reveal that most of the parents of the pupils had attained some level of formal education. Parents who had acquired primary education were many as compared to those with no formal education (whose main jobs were in farming). Other parents had acquired secondary school, license or Master.

4. What is the profession of your parents?

The study reveals that the occupation of the majority of the parents is in the field of

Teaching, whereas, some of them are in the national army (gendarmerie). The majority of mothers are house wives. These findings further indicate that the parents' level of education as well as their occupation influences the pupils' perceptions of self as well as their aspiration. For example, pupils whose parents got good education and hence a high position/ earning job aspired for higher levels of education with a view to getting good jobs.

5. Indicate the level of education you aspire for:

Total	BEM	Baccalaureate	License	Master
54	3	27	13	11
100%	5%	50%	25%	20%

Table 3.3.levels of education students aspire for.
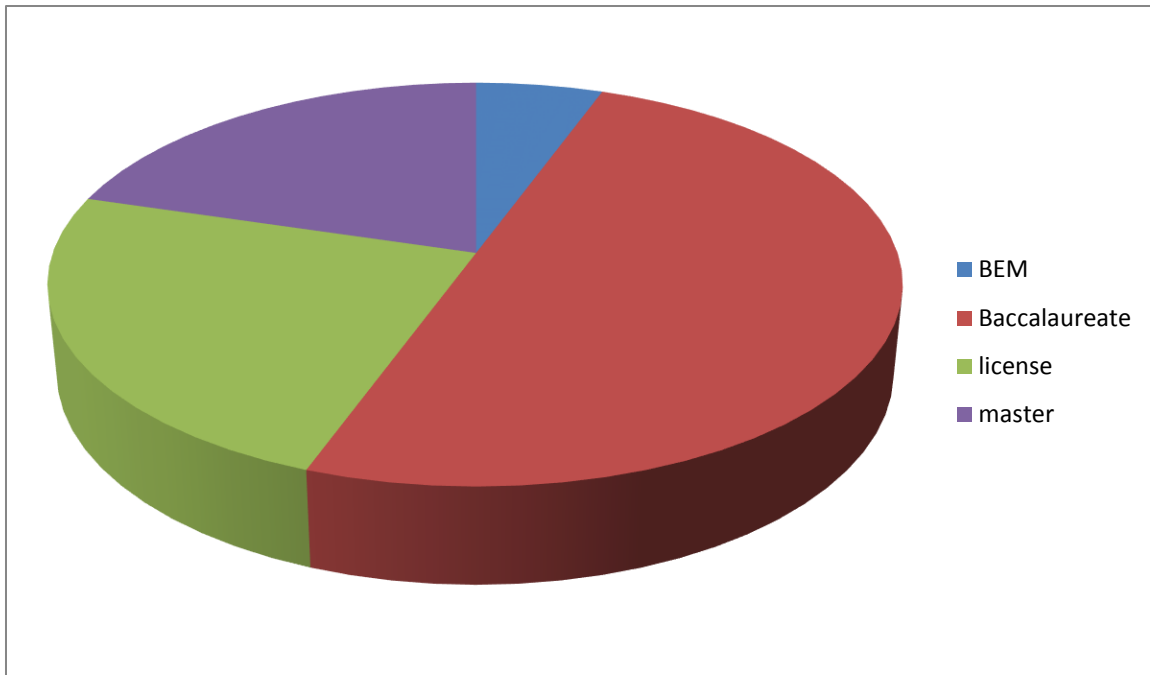
Graph 3.3.levels of education pupils aspire for.

The result indicates 25% of the pupils aspire to attain their 'License' degree. 50% of the pupils aspire for Baccalaureate Degree (the highest proportion). 20% of the respondents aspire for other levels such as Master. Whereas 5% of pupils aspire to leave at that level "fourth year".

6. Why do you aspire for the level of education you have indicated above?

The answers indicate that different pupils aspire to attain different levels of education. Among those who aspire for a degree qualification, some of them said that they want to get good jobs. Others said they need it to enable them cope with the ongoing knowledge advancement. With respect to pupils who aspire to attain diploma level of education, some said that they want to pursue education in order to be more suited in the ever competitive job market while some said that they were not satisfied with the most basic level of education and therefore wanted to acquire a higher qualification. The study also found out that a few number of pupils opted to leave at Baccalaureate level or before.

The results above show some maturity in the pupils' attitudes towards their future

carriers, however, there is s big proportion of pupils who aspire to leave education at the age of 18. This indicates that their aspirations are very low which could be due to their low self-esteem amongst other factors. in order to find out more, further multiple choice questions were asked of the pupils.

7. When not in your class, do you study on your own?

Total	Always	Sometimes	Never
54	22	27	5
100%	40%	50%	10%

Table 3.4pupils' self-study

Graph 3.4.pupils' self-study

The analysis indicates that majority of pupils (50%) said that they sometimes studied on their own while only 40% said they always studied on their own. A 10% of them said that they never study by themselves (Self-study). Pupils who study at home are more likely to be more prepared for their day at school and hence face the day's challenges with more confidence. Equally pupils who have high confidence in themselves and a high self-esteem are more independent and able to study by themselves.

8. **Do you feel worthless when teachers don't appreciate your work?**

Total	Always	Sometimes	Never
54	32	0	22
100%	60%	0%	40%

Table 3.5.pupils' self-worth
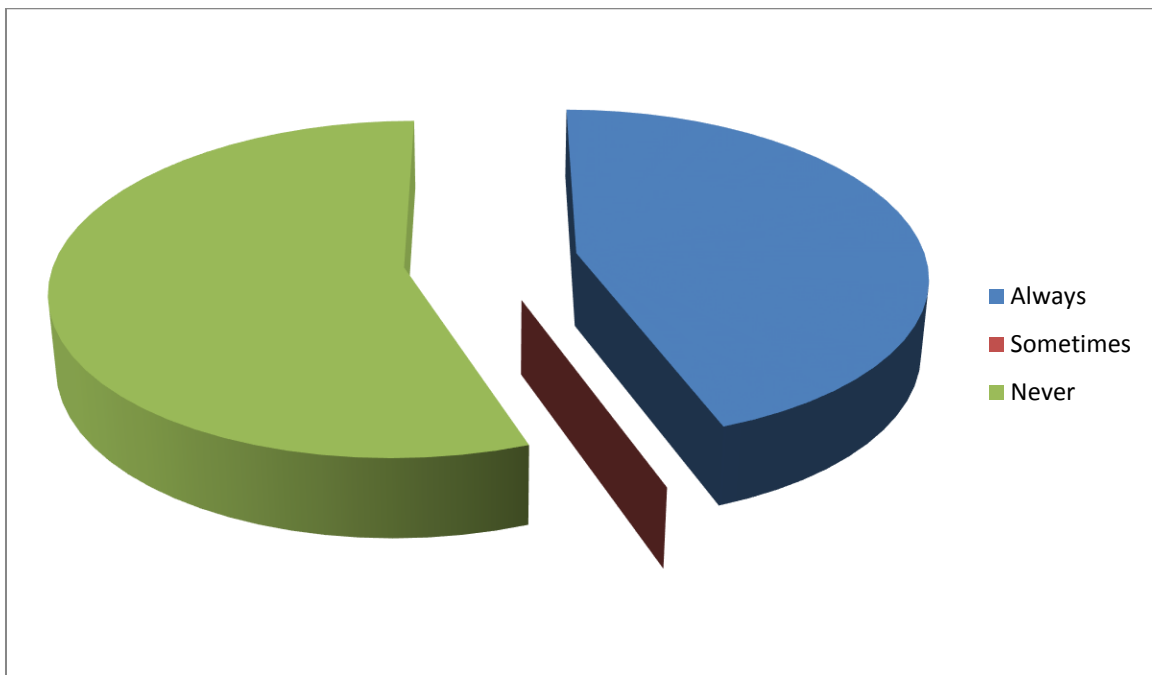
Graph 3.5.pupils' self-worth

Most pupils (60%), said they feel worthless when teachers do not appreciate their work while 40% said they were not affected.

9. Whenever I get good grades I feel like showing it to others.

Total	Always	Sometimes	Never
54	32	6	16
100%	60%	10%	30%

Table 3.6.pupils' feelings when showing their marks to others

It was also evident that most pupils feel like showing their good grades to others and thus 60% of the pupils said they always feel like showing their good grades. Only 30% said they did not like revealing their grades to others.

10. Consider your general academic performance, how satisfied are you with the way you are performing?

Total	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not satisfied
54	11	16	27
100%	20%	30%	50%

Table 3.7.pupils's perception about their general academic performance
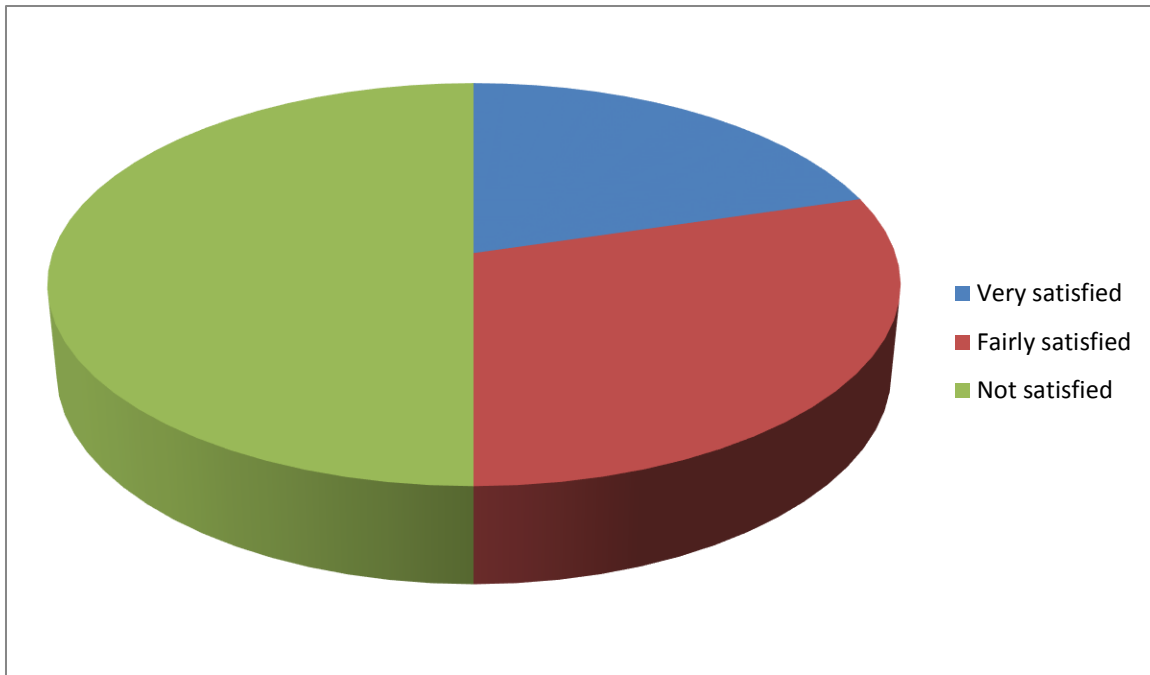
Graph 3.6.pupils' perception about their general academic performance

The study reveals that both boys and girls seem not to be satisfied with their performance. Most of the students, (50%) of the boys and girls said they are never satisfied. Only 20% of the pupils said that they are very satisfied; while, 30% of the pupils are fairly satisfied with their academic performance.

11. **When it comes to being perfect :**

- I put a lot of pressure on myself to be perfect –I have to be best at things

- I don't worry about it – I just try to do my best

    Other people expect me to be perfect - so if I 'am not, I feel like I'm letting
    them down

.

Most Ameur Moussa's pupils' replies indicated that their main focus was on things they were not good at; an indication of low self-esteem, whereas, pupils' answers from Reffas Ibrahim leaned towards their focus on what they were best at.

12. When I make a mistake

I usually don't like to admit it .

I usually give up .if I think I won't do well at something, I 'd rather not try .

I try to fix things, but if I can't, I try to move on and plan to do better next time .

The results here showed that pupils in the rural school seemed to measure themselves against other people's progress rather than against their own previous progress. This was another clear distinction between the results of the urban and rural schools.

13. People in my life

Are often critical and unkind toward me.

Don't really know me.

See the good in me and let me know it

When friends and family are too critical or hard on a child it can lower their self-esteem. The pupil's inner voice might start to imitate their criticism or unkindness. This kind of low self-talk was noticed throughout the lessons especially with certain pupils with demanding parents and or with parents who have themselves low confidence in themselves or who have attained low academic levels.

14. Write two ways used by your teachers to reward pupils' good work in class.

The majority of answers were that most teachers rewarded their pupils by way of giving positive comments. Some pupils said that their teachers sometimes gave tangible rewards. The rest said that teachers took them to educational tours while only a few said that their teachers rewarded them by giving them responsibilities amongst others. From the above findings, it is evident that teachers like reciprocating their

pupils' good work by way of rewards. These rewards are meant to reinforce the pupils' self esteem in order to come out with good grades.

15. **State how your teachers help you overcome your difficulty in learning?**

The data indicate that most of the pupils received guidance and counseling on how to overcome difficulties followed by remedial tuition. In addition, pupils indicated that teachers gave encouragements and used varied methods when solving their problems.

The results of teachers' interview

What do you think about your pupils English language?

Teachers who teach in Ameur Moussa Middle School said that their most able

learners are successful in written examination. They attain higher marks in their written evaluations in comparison to their oral assessments. Despite knowing the answers, teachers notice that pupils feel challenged and cannot formulate their answers orally. This could well be due to weakness in their competency, however, it is the most able pupils in question here, who are very competent in writing. They feel hesitated and they can't convey what they want to say.

Teachers of Reffas Ibrahim Middle school said the contrary. The majority of their pupils speak the English language fluently and are well articulate, they can be involved in the lesson easily.

What do you think about the causes that decrease their self – esteem?

Teachers commented that the environment is an essential factor which influences pupils' behavior and performance; the environment in rural areas is different from that of urban areas. They don't have neither the same life style nor the same way of thinking . Unlike, pupils of Reffas Ibrahim Middle School, Ameur Moussa Middle School pupils are less involved in performing the language. Their way of living is somehow limited or restricted because of their parents' life style and cultural limitations. There is a lack of understanding of the need of studying and a lack of resources to facilitate the learning. These parents lack the necessary experience to provide support to their children.

In addition, according to teachers, rural pupils have a lot of family problems; poverty, parents with addiction issues, divorce and a high rate of orphan children. Teachers take into consideration all these factors that may lead to this low self-esteem.

According to you how do your learners react to these difficulties?

Learners are aware about their difficulties, but they don't know exactly the

suitable remedial work to follow. They depend generally on their teachers'

efforts and are more involved in listening and speaking lessons when interested in the topic and attracted to the facts discussed (when the learning is made personalized).

The results of the classroom observation

After observing pupils during their learning process, many notes were taken.

Pupils of Ameur Moussa Middle School seem to be less involved in the lesson.

They show their weakness in speaking. They find difficulties to express themselves in a full and a correct sentence. The majority of them were not interested

by the lesson and they were not really motivated only a few of them were following With their teacher while the others were playing with each other making noise and disturbing their classmates. They saw themselves as useless pupils who are not able to perform no hope in trying. They had lost their self-confidence and motivation. They had very low self-esteem.

Discussions of the results

The study sought to examine the difference in self-esteem between pupils of rural and urban areas and assess the factors that influence their self-esteem.

Factors such as: socio-economic as well as demographic factors such as age amongst others.

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

The present study concur with empirical evidence that there is a direct relationship between middle school pupils' self-esteem level, gender, and age variables

Findings also showed that there is a direct correlation between middle school

pupils' self-esteem and academic performance. The association between academic performance and self-esteem was equally identified by almost all teachers.

Self-esteem of individuals seems to influence their academic performance

 positively or negatively. This data shows that parents and teachers as well as

school environment play a significant role in improving middle school pupils

self-esteem . The teachers' role is critical; the teacher is the most salient source of feedback for pupils' academic proficiency. Undoubtedly , the teacher is a:

facilitator, teaches the curriculum, provides the feedback, and guides academic work.   The findings indicate that both teachers and parents are the most influential factors on performance and achievement as well as raising self esteem.

Recommendations and suggestions of the study

This study investigates the reasons behind pupils' low self-esteem in order to find solutions and increase their confidence on their learning capacities. In regard to this research's results, some recommendations are suggested to help pupils overcome their difficulties and progress in their learning process. In addition teachers play a great role in implementing these recommendations.

In the first place, teachers should explicitly identify the learners' targets and expectations. In this case, learners can achieve their potential and try to reach their goals. learners are in need to acquire how to analyze their objectives and evaluate their progress. For this reason, teachers have to teach them how to examine their work and evaluate it. Also, learners when being rewarded for their success in learning feel their importance in their environment as an essential part. The later encourages them to keep improving their success while maximizing their effort.

In learning environment, learners' psychology is very important to be taken into consideration. Thus, teachers can create a positive environment for the learners where each pupil feels valued and considered.

Regarding learners' age and their inability to take decisions in their own, teachers can guide their pupils to take the right steps in making decisions and

encourage them to assume responsibility in order to feel valued and hence raise their self-esteem.
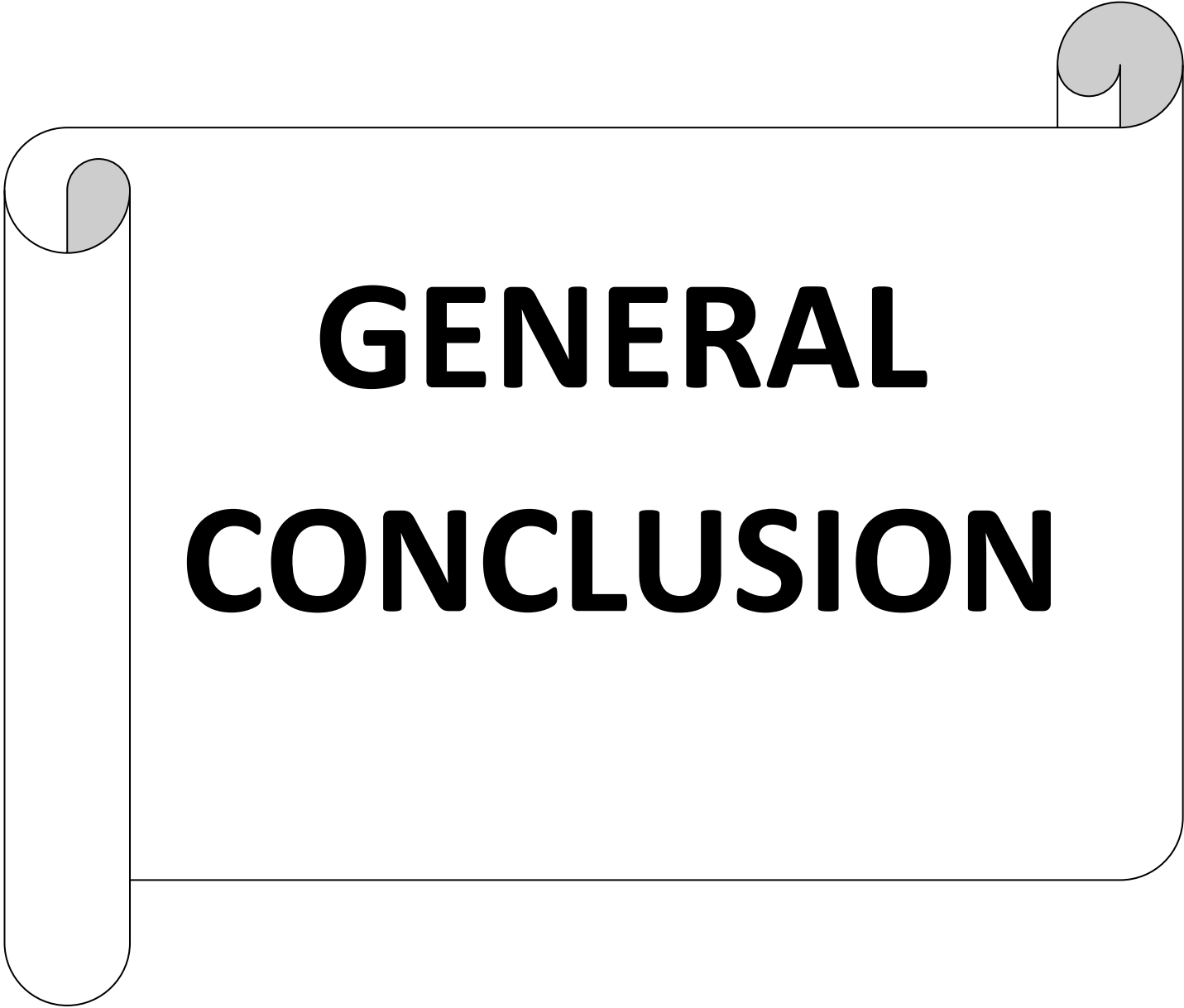
The most important behavior teachers should adopt, in addition to personalizing the learning, is to give learners the chance to express themselves and respect all their ways of expression because each learner has his own way to express him/herself and his/her views. Consequently, they feel at ease when entering the classroom.

It is not easy at all to make learners engage in the lesson and avoid stress or reluctance because many factors have to be put under attention and managed by both teachers and learners. This paper suggests some recommendations to be implemented by teachers and they should be careful when working with them otherwise learners will face psychological barriers in learning the English language and this prevent them from developing their knowledge.

In the second place, parents have to do their best in order to help their children overcome their low self-esteem by trying to help them learn to do things, how do they do them, and love what they are doing ,parents should praise and appreciate their children efforts and progress in order to show them that you are proud and to higher their self -esteem. Parents should teach their children to be responsible in order to be mature ,parents don't have to punish and blame their children in each mistake or error because they are going lose their self-esteem , they have also to take his thoughts and saying into consideration to show them that they have a such status in the family and the society .the stability of home plays an important role in children self-esteem because they are going to feel comfortable and live a peaceful life , parents have be friends of their children and protect them from those who try to treat them badly, make fun of them or hurt them with bad words .parents have to be a model and an example of their children .

conclusion:

In this current chapter, the researcher has attempted to present ,analyze ,and discuss the findings of the main data gathered through different tools .First, exposing the data collected from pupils' questionnaire , then moving to that information obtained from teachers' interview ,and finally ,ending with the results and data gained in the classroom observation. The researcher also provides a set of recommendations and solutions that can guide parents and teachers help their children and learners overcome their low self-esteem. To conclude ,this study examined the relationship between the factors beyond low self-esteem and the academic performance of fourth year pupils at Ameur Moussa and Reffas Ibrahim middle schools in Saida .

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

Self-esteem is the connection between the physical, emotional/mental, intellectual and spiritual realms. It is how an individual lives in balance (identity) with each of these aspects of self being cared for and attended to. Therefore, self-esteem is an important element of every pupil in his quest to attain academic completion and achievement. Self-esteem is thus, proven to be profoundly related to pupils' academic achievement. This is a vital human characteristic among the education community and this study investigated its relevance in this new millennia among middle school pupils'.

The connection between self-esteem and achievement gets stronger as pupils advance through the three year middle school program. The self-esteem beliefs of middle school pupils' are more strongly related to their achievement than any measure of their ability. The characteristics like, age and high /low self-esteem are significant predictors for pupils' achievements at the middle school besides other factors such as parents' background, teachers and peers. Moreover, this study evokes the vital role that teachers play in the classroom to enhance and promote pupils' self-esteem to improve their academic performance.

The study starts by exploring the theoretical foundations of the self with an attempt to clarify the importance of self-esteem in improving academic achievement. The study then offers a theoretical perspective on the correlation between middle school pupils' self-esteem level and age, as well as on the academic achievement and the different influencing factors such age. Lastly, the study reports the correlation results between both academic achievement and self-esteem between rural and urban schools.

As the study investigated the relationship of self-esteem and academic achievement between both schools, a correlation analysis has been conducted.

General grades average in English of the pupils was correlated with the three dimensions: environment, and age. The results of the analysis confirmed the hypotheses of the research.

As the socio-economic level increases, the performance of pupils in the English language seems to increase leading to raising pupils' self-esteem which in turn gives them a boost to achieve more and therefore raises their competencies.

The stability of the home was the most important factor contributing to a thriving pupil life. The lack of it disturbed greatly pupils and contributed negatively to their self-image and inner voice leading them to being stuck in a negative circle of low-self esteem and low academic achievement.

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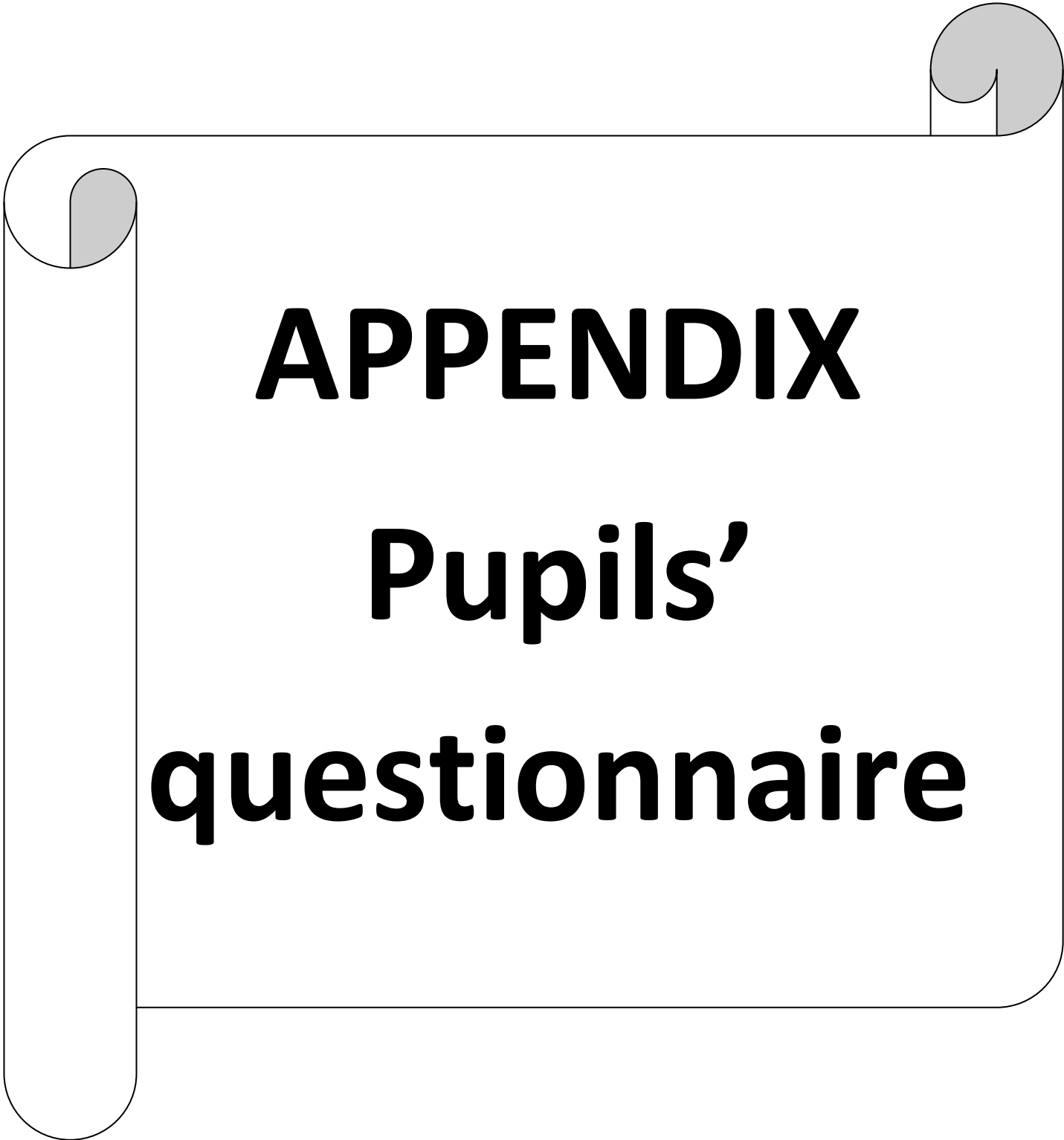
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APPENDIX

Pupils' questionnaire

Appendix

Pupils' Questionnaire

The research work is conducted on "Self-esteem and Academic Performance". Your answers to the questions will assist to ensure the accuracy of data. Thank you for your help.

Section1: Demographic Information

1. **Indicate your gender:**

a. Boys ( )

b. Girls ( )

2. **Indicate your age:**

a. 16 years and below ( )

b. 17 years ( )

c. 18 years and above ( )

Section2: Students' Perspectives about Self-esteem and Academic

Performance

3. **What is the academic level of your parents?**

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4. **What is the profession of your parents?**

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5. Indicate the level of education you aspire for:

a. Baccalaureate ( )

b. License ( )

c. Master ( )

d. PhD ( )

6. Why do you aspire for the level of education you have indicated above?

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7. When not in your class, do you study on your own?

a. Always ( )

b. Sometimes ( )

c. Never ( )

8. Do you feel worthless when teachers don't appreciate your work?

a. Always ( )

b. Sometimes ( )

c. Never ( )

9. Whenever I get good grades I feel like showing it to others.

a. Always ( )

b. Sometimes ( )

c. Never ( )

10. Consider your general academic performance, how satisfied are you with the way you are performing?

a. Very Satisfied ( )

b. Fairly Satisfied ( )

c. Not Satisfied ( )

11.When it comes to being perfect :

a. I put a lot of pressure on myself to be perfect –I have to be best at things
b. I don't worry about it – I just try to do my best
c. Other people expect me to be perfect - so if I 'am not, I feel like I'm letting them down.

12.When I make a mistake

a. I usually don't like to admit it
b. I usually give up .if I think I won't do well at something, I 'd rather not try
c. I try to fix things, but if I can't, I try to move on and plan to do better next time

13.People in my life

a. Are often critical and unkind toward me.
b. Don't really know me.
c. See the good in me and let me know it .

14. Write two ways used by your teachers to reward pupils' good work in class.

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15.State how your teachers help you overcome your difficulty in learning?

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APPENDIX

Teachers' interview

Interview

1) What do you think about you pupils' English Language ?

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2) What do you think about the causes that decrease their self-Esteem ?

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3) According to you , How do they react to these difficulties?

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