

ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Reference:

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Description of Measure:

A 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Gray-Little, B., Williams, V.S.L., & Hancock, T. D. (1997). An item response theory analysis of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23, 443-451.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem, was investigated using item response theory. Factor analysis identified a single common factor, contrary to some previous studies that extracted separate Self-Confidence and Self-Depreciation factors. A unidimensional model for graded item responses was fit to the data. A model that constrained the 10 items to equal discrimination was contrasted with a model allowing the discriminations to be estimated freely. The test of significance indicated that the unconstrained model better fit the data—that is, the 10 items of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale are not equally discriminating and are differentially related to self-esteem. The pattern of functioning of the items was examined with respect to their content, and observations are offered with implications for validating and developing future personality instruments.

Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4, 1-44.

Summary – Self-esteem has become a household word. Teachers, parents, therapists, and others have focused efforts on boosting self-esteem, on the assumption that high self-esteem will cause many positive outcomes and benefits—an assumption that is critically evaluated in this review.

Appraisal of the effects of self-esteem is complicated by several factors. Because many people with high self-esteem exaggerate their successes and good traits, we emphasize objective measures of outcomes. High self-esteem is also a heterogeneous category, encompassing people who frankly accept their good qualities along with narcissistic, defensive, and conceited individuals.

The modest correlations between self-esteem and school performance do not indicate that high self-esteem leads to good performance. Instead, high self-esteem is partly the result of good school performance. Efforts to boost the self-esteem of pupils have not been shown to improve academic performance and may sometimes be counterproductive. Job performance in adults is sometimes related to self-esteem, although the correlations vary widely, and the direction of causality has not been established. Occupational success may boost self-esteem rather than the reverse. Alternatively, self-esteem may be helpful only in some job contexts. Laboratory studies have generally failed to find that self-esteem causes good task performance, with the important exception that high self-esteem facilitates persistence after failure.

People high in self-esteem claim to be more likable and attractive, to have better relationships, and to make better impressions on others than people with low self-esteem, but objective measures disconfirm most of these beliefs. Narcissists are charming at first but tend to alienate others eventually. Self-esteem has not been shown to predict the quality or duration of relationships.

High self-esteem makes people more willing to speak up in groups and to criticize the group's approach. Leadership does not stem directly from self-esteem, but self-esteem may have indirect effects. Relative to people with low self-esteem, those with high self-esteem show stronger in-group favoritism, which may increase prejudice and discrimination.

Neither high nor low self-esteem is a direct cause of violence. Narcissism leads to increased aggression in retaliation for wounded pride. Low self-esteem may contribute to externalizing behavior and delinquency, although some studies have found that there are no effects or that the effect of self-esteem vanishes when other variables are controlled. The highest and lowest rates of cheating and bullying are found in different subcategories of high self-esteem.

Self-esteem has a strong relation to happiness. Although the research has not clearly established causation, we are persuaded that high self-esteem does lead to greater happiness. Low self-esteem is more likely than high to lead to depression under some circumstances. Some studies support the buffer hypothesis, which is that high self-esteem mitigates the effects of stress, but other studies come to the opposite conclusion, indicating that the negative effects of low self-esteem are mainly felt in good times. Still others find that high self-esteem leads to happier outcomes regardless of stress or other circumstances.

High self-esteem does not prevent children from smoking, drinking, taking drugs, or engaging in early sex. If anything, high self-esteem fosters experimentation, which may increase early sexual activity or drinking, but in general effects of self-esteem are negligible. One important exception is that high self-esteem reduces the chances of bulimia in females.

Overall, the benefits of high self-esteem fall into two categories: enhanced initiative and pleasant feelings. We have not found evidence that boosting self-esteem (by

therapeutic interventions or school programs) causes benefits. Our findings do not support continued widespread efforts to boost self-esteem in the hope that it will by itself foster improved outcomes. In view of the heterogeneity of high self-esteem, indiscriminate praise might just as easily promote narcissism, with its less desirable consequences. Instead, we recommend using praise to boost self-esteem as a reward for socially desirable behavior and self-improvement.

Ciarrochi, J., Heaven, P. C. L., & Fiona, D. (2007). The impact of hope, self-esteem, and attributional style on adolescents' school grades and emotional well-being: A longitudinal study.

We examined the distinctiveness of three "positive thinking" variables (self-esteem, trait hope, and positive attributional style) in predicting future high school grades, teacher-rated adjustment, and students' reports of their affective states. Seven hundred eighty-four high school students (382 males and 394 females; 8 did not indicate their gender) completed Time 1 measures of verbal and numerical ability, positive thinking, and indices of emotional well-being (positive affect, sadness, fear, and hostility), and Time 2 measures of hope, self-esteem, and emotional well-being. Multi-level random coefficient modelling revealed that each positive thinking variable was distinctive in some contexts but not others. Hope was a predictor of positive affect and the best predictor of grades, negative attributional style was the best predictor of increases in hostility and fear, and low self-esteem was the best predictor of increases in sadness. We also found that sadness at Time 1 predicted decreases in self-esteem at Time 2. The results are discussed with reference to the importance of positive thinking for building resilience.

Scale:

Instructions

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I certainly feel useless at times.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Scoring:

Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. Give “Strongly Disagree” 1 point, “Disagree” 2 points, “Agree” 3 points, and “Strongly Agree” 4 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.