

Impact of Self-Esteem on Performance



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Introduction

- The present study looked at the impact of self-esteem on school performance
- Self-esteem is the confidence in one's own worth and abilities. Self-esteem can vary throughout life as different events and people have a huge impact on how we perceive ourselves (Demeyer 2018)
- Fortunately, there are ways to increase and maintain self-esteem through motivations like self-enhancement (Chung 2016)
- In relation to school, students show decreased confidence in subjects where they have had difficulty in the past. This lack of confidence decreases self-esteem and impacts other areas of the self
- Could increased self-esteem help students to perform better on subjects varying in difficulty?

HYPOTHESIS

- We hypothesized that positive self-esteem would increase the average quiz score on a school subject that was considered their weakest compared to negative self-esteem, but on their strongest school subject.

Method

- 16 undergraduate students
- 13 Males, 3 Females
- 2 participants received extra credit for a Social Psychology course
- Participants were asked to rank four common school subjects from strongest to weakest in terms of their perceived ability
 - Math, Science, Reading, History
- Participants were then randomly assigned to the positive or negative self-esteem group and the strongest or weakest school subject group

- They were then given six minutes to write down in detail five events from the past week that either increased or decreased their self-esteem
- Examples such as "A stranger complemented my outfit" or "I did poorly on a test I really studied for"
- Immediately after completing this task, a 15 question quiz was handed out on either their strongest or weakest school subject, which they had 20 minutes to complete
- Once everyone finished, the quizzes were collected and the participants were thanked and then debriefed on the purpose of the study
- They were told that all scores would remain anonymous and the recalled events would not be read and instead discarded

Results

- This study was a between groups, 2x4 design
- The independent variable had four levels including (Positive/Strongest, Negative/Weakest, Positive/Weakest and Negative/Strongest)
- A one-way ANOVA was run in R Studio to identify the statistical correlation between Positive/Weakest and Negative/Strongest condition groups
- The test yielded a p value greater than 0.05, with a *SD* of 1.53 for both
- This observed difference was not statistically significant according to the one-way ANOVA

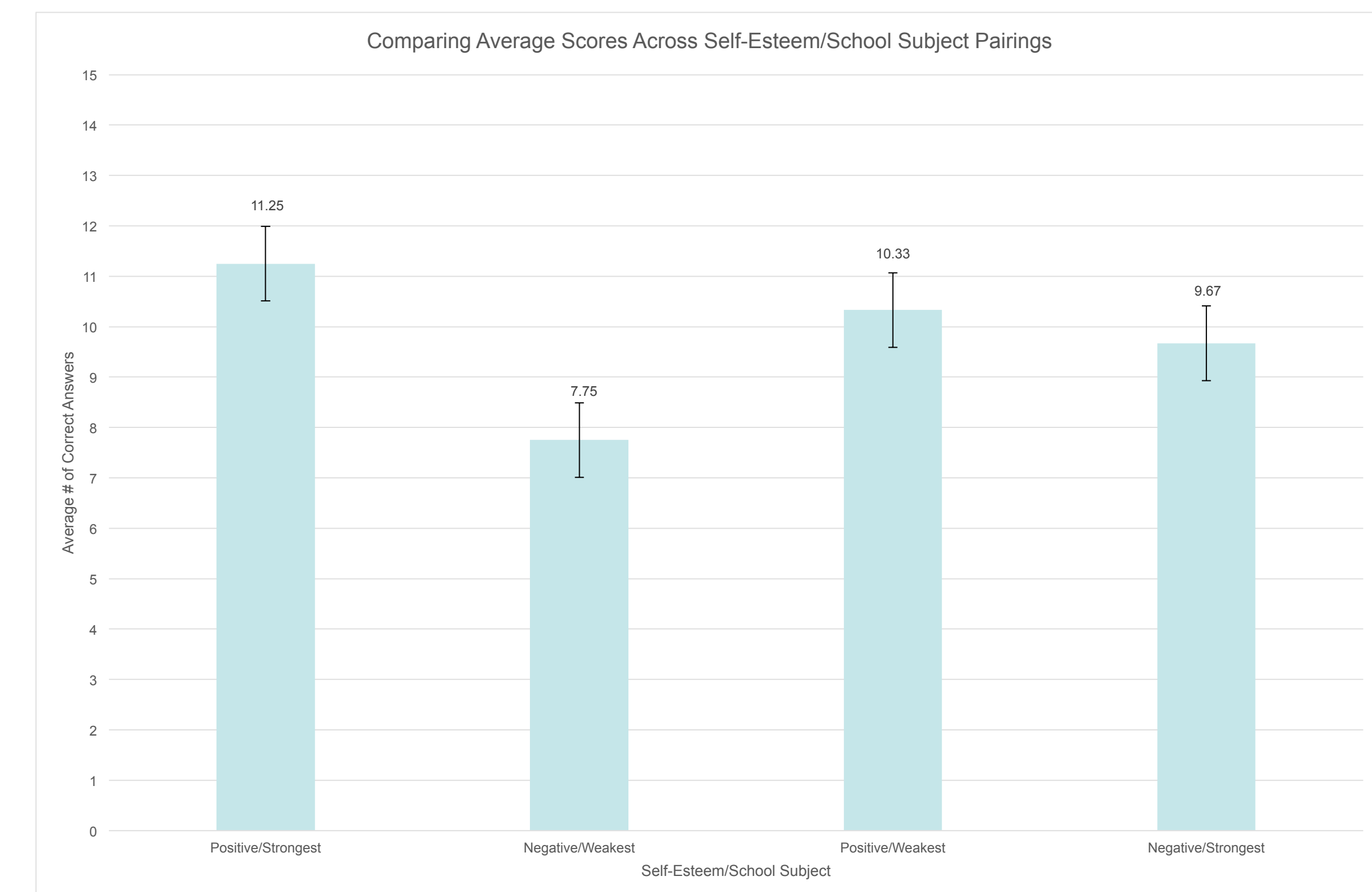


Figure 1: Relationship between self-esteem and quiz performance

Conclusions

- In this study, we found that increasing self-esteem prior to taking a quiz was statistically insignificant. And therefore the hypothesis was not supported
- While the overall average scores are higher for the positive self-esteem groups compared to their counterparts, the p values were simply too large
- This study had many limitations including not having more participants with varying genders. And not doing a Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale after they recalled their events
- This study could be done again with the limitations corrected, because there seems to be some relationship. The current study was unable to properly uncover that correlation.

References

- Chung, J. M. (2016). Continuity and change in self-esteem, self-enhancement, and ethnocultural identity in adolescence and emerging adulthood. Dissertation Abstracts International, 76,
- Demeyer, I., Romero, N., & De Raedt, R. (2018). Assessment of implicit self-esteem in older adults: The role of actual and ideal self-esteem in negative mood. *Assessment*, 25(3), 302-309. doi: 10.1177/1073191117691607