

The Correlations of Self Esteem, Social Support, Locus of Control, and Self Efficacy

Debra L. Edwards

California State University, Channel Islands

Author note

Debra Edwards, Department of Psychology, California State University, Channel Islands.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Debra Edwards, Department of Psychology, California State University, Camarillo, CA 90210, E-mail: debra.edwards568@myci.csuci.edu.

Abstract

Self esteem is part of a person's self-concept and related to social support, self efficacy, and locus of control (Park, J., Kitayama, S., Karasawa, M., Curhan, K., Markus, H. R., Kawakami, N., Ryff, 2012). Research shows the social atmosphere influenced a person's actions, (Blau, & Blau, 1960) and feelings (Cohen, Mermelstein, Kamarck, & Hoberman, 1985). The present study hypothesized self esteem was positively correlated to a person's level of social support. The second hypothesis was self esteem was negatively correlated to locus of control. The third hypothesis was self esteem was positively correlated to self efficacy. The data was collected from 72 undergraduate students using Rosenberg Self Esteem Evaluation (1989), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988), Rotter's Internal Verses External Locus of Control Self Assessment (1966), and General Self Efficacy Assessment (Schwarzer, 2012). The research concluded no correlational relationship between self esteem and social support. A moderate negative relationship between self esteem and locus of control. The relationship between self esteem and self efficacy was positive and statistically significant.

The Correlations of Self Esteem, Social Support, Locus of Control, & Self Efficacy

What exactly is self esteem? Maslow argued self esteem was the difference between the desired self and actual self (1954). In the literature self esteem is defined as a person's positive or negative judgement of self-worth and human behavior is influenced by self esteem and social situations (Park et al, 2012).

A child develops identity during feedback and rejection with the parent or caregiver (Bowlby, 1979). A positive environment fosters a high level of self esteem. Self esteem is maintained throughout adulthood and has a great influence on how a person acts (Wagner, Hoppmann, Ram, & Gerstorf, 2015). Ferris, Lian, Brown, & Morrison found that self esteem mediated the the outcome of social situations (2015). The self-verification theory postulates a person will seek social support interaction to counter-act the self esteem threat of rejection (Kleiman & Riskind, 2013). Moreover, a positive influence helps self esteem (Park et al, 2012). A person has the most influence on one's self-esteem and self perception through a myriad of behavioral, as well as situation adjustments (Ferris et al., 2014).

Supportive environments including social situations can boost, (Jetten et al., 2006) and foster a high level of self esteem. Maslow believed self esteem was part of a persons social identity (1943). Social support is defined by one's feelings of social attachment to a person or group. There is a strong relationship between one's social identity and level of self esteem and a person with high self esteem feels more acceptance from others (Park et al, 2012). Social interactions define and shape behavior according to the social learning theory, during social integration (Blau & Blau, 1960). Group social activity influences self esteem. Positive interactions make a

Running head: THE CORRELATIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

person feel good about themselves and negative experiences have the opposite effect (Kleiman et al., 2013). Gonzales and Hancock, (2011) found social support from group membership with Facebook positively effected self esteem for those people invested in a Facebook image (Wilcox & Stephen, 2013).

Social support can be provided by family members, and friends that offer a sense of belonging, or tangible resources (Kleiman et al, 2013). Social support serves as a defense against negative social interactions by providing emotional assistance or advice (Hlebec, Mrtzl, & Kogovsek, 2009). Park et al, (2012) found social support to be a critical necessity that needed to be maintained by each person (2012).

One's view of themselves is a reflection of past experiences and accomplishments (Park et al, 2012). Bandura identified locus of control (LOC) as the degree to which a person believes they have control over where and what has occurred (Bandura, 1977). Rotter defines LOC as the belief that the individual or outside forced controls one's own fate (1954). This is different than what Bandura defines self efficacy to be because self efficacy is the belief in one's own abilities to accomplish a goal (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002). The current study was conducted in order to further understand the influence social support, locus of control, and self-efficacy has on a person's self esteem.

Therefore, this research study examined the relationship between self esteem, social support, locus of control and self efficacy. The research study hypothesized self esteem to be positively correlated with social support. Next, the research study hypothesized self esteem to be negatively correlated with locus of control. The research study hypothesized self esteem to be positively correlated to self efficacy.

Method

Participants

A total of 72 undergraduate students, 40 men and 30 women at a California State University participated in the study for class credit. The participants ranged from 19 to 48 years of age, with a mean of 24 years of age.

Procedure

The participants completed online the self esteem, LOC, and social support self assessment surveys. Self esteem was measured using a 12 item version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Evaluation (1989). The participant read each statement on the RSEE and decided the truthfulness using a 4 point Likert scale. The response ranged from, definitely true to definitely false.

Social support was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), (Zimet et al, 1988) was used. The participant taking the MSPSS read a statement regarding social support and rated if the statement was true using a 7 point Likert scale ranging from, very strongly disagree through very strongly agree.

Locus of control was measured online using a version of J. B. Rotter's internal versus external self assessment survey with a 4 point Likert scale (1966). Participant's taking the LOC read a statement and checked the corresponding box next to the feeling that best described the statement ranging from 1 to 4, 1 = strongly disagree and 4 = strongly agree.

Self efficacy was measured using the General Self Efficacy Scale, a 10 item survey that used a 4-item Likert scale (Schwarzer, 2012). For example, the participant is

Running head: THE CORRELATIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

asked to rate a statement about how confident they are and if they could deal efficiently with unexpected events. The corresponding number represented how true the statement was; 1 = not at all true, 2 = hardly true, 3 = moderately true, and 4 = exactly true. After the assessments the participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation in the study.

Results

Each participants self esteem questionnaire was calculated using the following guidelines, numbers 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7, add 3 points for answer, 'Strongly agree,' 2 points "agree," 1 point "disagree", and 0 points for "strongly disagree." Numbers 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 are computed by reversing the number of points each item is worth. Add all of the points together to get the total score. The range was from 0-30 with scores below 15 suggesting low self esteem. The mean was 22.46, SD = 4.96, n = 66. (refer to Table 1.)

Each participants social support questionnaire was calculated by subtotaling numbers 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 12 and subtracting the total from the remaining items. The mean score was 68.63, SD = 15.14, n = 57. (refer to Table 1.) The LOC scores were calculated by subtotal and ranged from 0 (internal locus of control) to 13 (external locus of control). The mean score was 4.94, SD = 2.31, n = 62. (refer to Table 1.) The self efficacy scale was computed by subtotaling each response score. The mean score was 32.19, SD = 3.58, n = 68. (refer to Table 1.)

With each scale, a correlation analyses was conducted using 0.1 degrees of freedom (refer to Table 2). There was no statistically significant relationship observed between self-esteem and social support, $r(51) = .014$, $p < .01$ (refer to Figure 1). A statistically significant negative relationship was observed between self-esteem and

Running head: THE CORRELATIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

locus of control, $r(56) = -.311, p < .01$ (refer to Figure 2). A statistically significant relationship was observed between self-esteem and self efficacy, $r(64) = -.529, p < .01$ (refer to Figure 3).

Discussion

The participants represented in this study showed an overall high level of self esteem, as shown on Table 1. The first hypothesis was not supported and no correlational relationship was found between self esteem and social support (refer to Figure 1.). This is consistent with a study conducted by Khareng, Awang, Rahman, Machae, & Ismail (2014) for the purpose of assessing the value of the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) in a collectivist culture. Khareng et al hypothesized a high level of self esteem to be negatively correlated to a positive self image. This is based on their religious beliefs where, in the Muslim culture self esteem is a sin. In the country of Malaysia, RSES scores were collected from 480 youth, who were between the ages of 15 - 21 years old and they found that as self esteem increased, so did juvenile delinquency. Khareng et al (2014) believed the reason was because the culture has deep Muslim beliefs, and self esteem translates into self pride, which is a sin for a Muslim. Despite there being no evidence of a relationship between social support, the current study affirmed a moderate correlation between self-esteem and locus of control, and a statistically significant relationship with self efficacy. Self esteem and Self-efficacy are closely related (Schwarzer, 2012). The practical implications are that the more a person has a sense of control over their environment, the greater the level of self efficacy (Clark, 1996). This is possibly due to a persons acquired knowledge on how to manipulate their environment. Self esteem is shaped by each persons beliefs

Running head: THE CORRELATIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

and culture and this can be a big influence on one's self esteem score (Khareng et al, 2014)

The first weaknesses of this study was that there was a restricted range. This research used convenience sampling and a low number of participants that clearly did not represent the population. Social support scores were calculated as a general measurment (Zimet et al, 1988) and other multidimensional testing may return a higher correlation in a specif area of social support (Cohen et al, 1985). Future studies should include, The Interpersonal Social Support Inventory. It may produce a different correlational result because the scale divides individual scores into sub-scales that are specific to a particular function, including perceived availability of support, belonging support, and appraisal support (Cohen et al, 1985).

Self esteem is an important topic to study because of it's subjectivity. Aside from the influence that socioeconomic status and poor health has on self esteem the biggest influence may be a person's belief system, as well as the influence of social support, locus of control, and self-efficacy.

References

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. United States: Prentice Hall.
- Blau, & Blau, P. M. (1960). *A theory of social integration*. United States: Irvington Publishers.
- Bowlby, J. (1979). The Bowlby-Ainsworth attachment theory. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 2(04), 637–638. <http://doi.org/10.1017/s0140525x00064955>
- Cohen, S., Mermelstein, R., Kamarck, T., & Hoberman, H. M. (1985). Measuring the functional components of social support. *In Social Support: Theory, Research and Applications* (pp. 73–94). Springer Science + Business Media. http://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-009-5115-0_5
- Ferris, D. L., Lian, H., Brown, D. J., & Morrison, R. (2014). Ostracism, Self-Esteem, and Job Performance: When Do We Self-Verify and When Do We Self-Enhance? *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(1), 279–297. <http://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0347>
- Gonzales, A. L., & Hancock, J. T. (2011). Mirror, Mirror on my Facebook Wall: Effects of Exposure to Facebook on Self-Esteem. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 14(1-2), 79–83. <http://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2009.0411>
- Hlebec, V., Mrzel, M., and Kogovšek, T.(2009) Social Support Network and Received Support at Stressful Events *Metodološki zvezki*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2009, 155-171
- Jetten, J., Branscombe, N. R., Haslam, S. A., Haslam, C., Cruwys, T., Jones, J. M., ... Zhang, A. (2015). Correction: Having a lot of a good thing: Multiple important group memberships as a source of self-esteem. *PLOS ONE*, 10(6), e0131035. <http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0131035>
- Judge, T. A., Erez, A., Bono, J. E. and Thoresen, C. J. (2002) 'Are measures of

Running head: THE CORRELATIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

- self-esteem, neuroticism, locus of control, and generalized self-efficacy indicators of a common core construct?', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 83(3), pp. 693–710. doi: 10.1037//0022-3514.83.3.693
- Khareng, M., Awang, J., Ab Rahman, Z., Machae, R. and Ismail, K. (2014) 'Freedom of religion in Islam and Buddhism: A comparison study of the barriers that determines the freedom of religion', *Asian Social Science*, 10(22), doi: 10.5539/ass.v10n22p315
- Kleiman, E. M., & Riskind, J. H. (2013). Utilized Social Support and Self-Esteem Mediate the Relationship Between Perceived Social Support and Suicide Ideation. *Crisis*, 34(1), 42–49. <http://doi.org/10.1027/0227-5910/a000159>
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396. <http://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>
- Park, J., Kitayama, S., Karasawa, M., Curhan, K., Markus, H. R., Kawakami, N., Ryff, C. D. (2012). Clarifying the links between social support and health: Culture, stress, and neuroticism matter. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 18(2), 226–235. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1359105312439731>
- Rosenberg, Morris. 1989. *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*. Revised edition. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied*, 80(1), 1–28. <http://doi.org/10.1037/h0092976>
- Schwarzer, R. (2012, January 9). General self-efficacy scale. PsycTESTS Dataset. American Psychological Association (APA). <http://doi.org/10.1037/t00393-000>

Running head: THE CORRELATIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

Wagner, J., Hoppmann, C., Ram, N., & Gerstorff, D. (2015). Self-esteem is relatively stable late in life: The role of resources in the health, self-regulation, and social domains. *Developmental Psychology*, 51(1), 136–149.

<http://doi.org/10.1037/a0038338>

Wilcox, K., & Stephen, A. T. (2013). Are Close Friends the Enemy? Online Social Networks, Self-Esteem, and Self-Control. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40(1), 90–103. <http://doi.org/10.1086/668794>

Zimet, G.D., Dahlem, N.W., Zimet, S.G. & Farley, G.K. (1988). The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 52, 30-41.

Descriptive Statistics For Variables

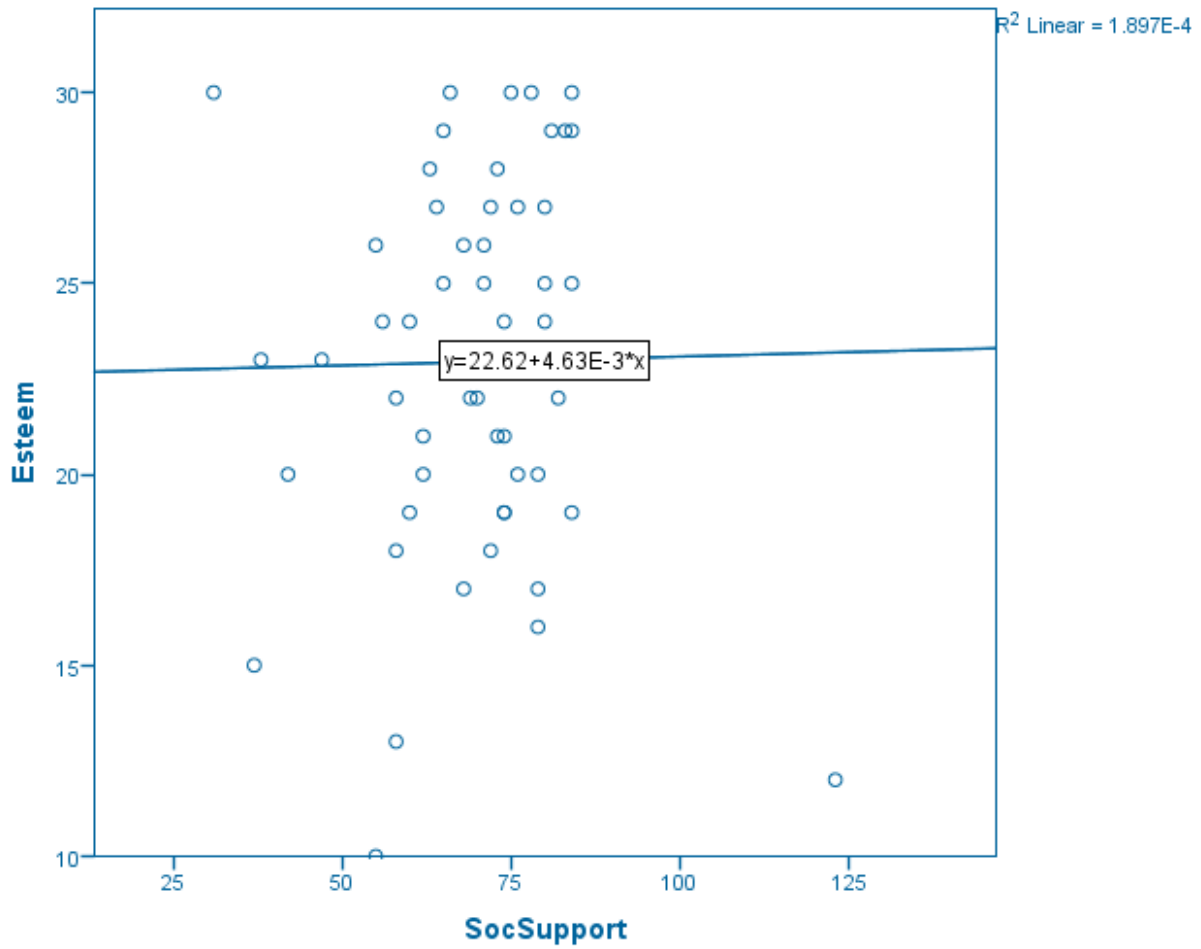
	Self esteem	Social Support	LOC	Self efficacy
Mean	22.46	68.63	4.94	32.19
Std. Deviation	4.96	15.14	2.31	3.58
N	66	57	62	68

Table 2. *Pearson Correlations For Variables*

	Social support	Locus of control	Self efficacy
Self esteem	.014	-.311*	.529**

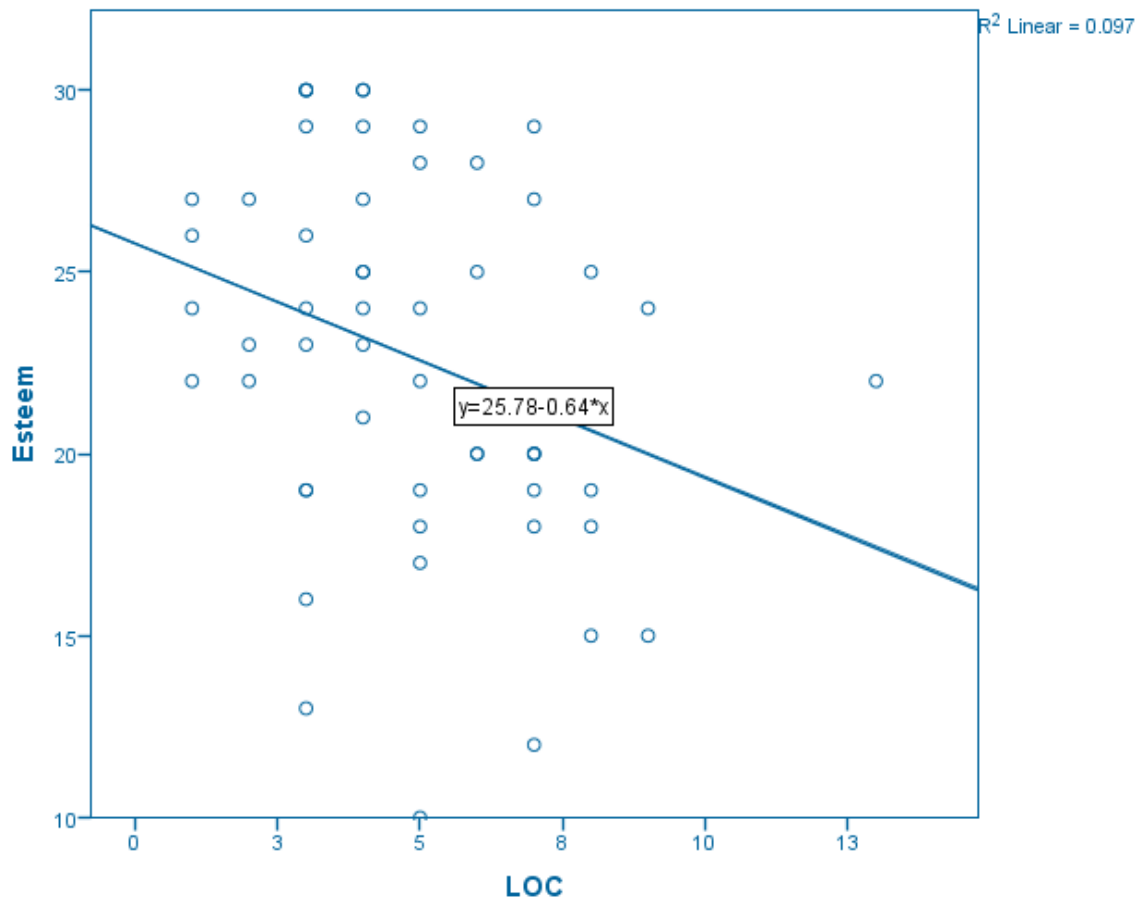
** = Sig. 2 tailed

Figure 1. Correlation between self-esteem and social support.



Running head: THE CORRELATIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

Figure 2. Correlation between self-esteem and locus of control.



Running head: THE CORRELATIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

Figure 3. Correlation between self-esteem and self efficacy.

