

Beyond shyness: Self Esteem and Participation in the classroom

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MSC DS Part 1 Roll no: 13

Background:

The content has focused on the relation between self-esteem and participation of students in the classroom.

Participation of students in the classroom is very important but at the same time can be difficult to implement due to some external factors. Out of the many factors, some of them can be consolidated as Fear of negative evaluation. The whole line itself is pretty explanatory, as it means being afraid of getting negatively evaluated by other people.

Fear of negative evaluation is mostly unreasonable and at times unstoppable, so to avoid this fear, the contribution in classroom gets compromised. Some students may be interested or wants to participate in the class but fails to do so as they fear that they might be perceived academically underprepared or wrong. In a research, it is found that fear of negative evaluation can cause students to not participate in the classroom and have a negative impact on their learning experiences.

According to a Chinese research, self-esteem directly or indirectly predicts fear of negative evaluation. It means that fear of negative evaluation can be a consequence of self-esteem. Self-esteem is your overall opinion of yourself, your beliefs about your abilities and limitations. It can either be low or high depending on the whether your opinion is negative or positive.

Sociologist Morris Rosenberg developed a Rosenberg self-esteem scale which measures individual level of self-esteem. It is used as a tool that analyses individual's self-esteem level and is majorly used to give a relation between self-esteem and participation.

Purpose/Motivation:

Student's willingness to not answer/ ask questions in an ongoing lecture and the fact that some of them are actually aware of the things they want to ask or say, but avoid it, has become sort of normal. Most of the time for an individual, it is easy to not participate or contribute and sit back rather than choosing their interest of participation.

Majority of them avoid participation because they don't want to become a laughing stock or get judged by everyone in the class. The feeling that one might be wrong about things and saying it out loud would only make the whole thing worst is one of the reasons for not participating in the class. Lack of confidence is also one of the reasons of concern as some individuals are simply more concerned with making a mistake in front of their peers. Sometimes not being able to speak socially can also be a reason for lack of contribution in the classroom.

The comparison of certain terms related to all the reasons and establishing a relation between a few is the purpose here.

Problem definition:

As fear of negative evaluation influences the decision of participation in the classroom and also is a consequence of an individual's level of self-esteem, it is fair to establish a relation between individual's self-esteem and his or her participation in the classroom i.e., analyzing how one's self-esteem affects his or her willingness to answer/ask questions.

Data used:

Secondary data used-

1. Relationships among inferiority feelings fear of negative evaluation, and social anxiety in Chinese junior high school students by Jijian Li, Shuxin Jia, Lishen Wang, Mingming Zang and Shushen Chen- A survey was administered to a sample of 734 Chinese high school students. An exploration of the relation between self-esteem that is inferiority feeling, social anxiety and fear of negative evaluation was aimed. A previous research reference has been stated-individuals with lower self-esteem were more prone to have a higher level of fear of negative evaluation. The research itself concludes a direct as well as an indirect self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation.
2. Student anxiety and fear of negative evaluation in active learning by Katelyn N. Cooper- In the research paper, the section of evidence of fear of negative evaluation and active learning it is stated that undergraduates with higher level of fear of evaluation tend to participate less in the classroom.

Details of analysis:

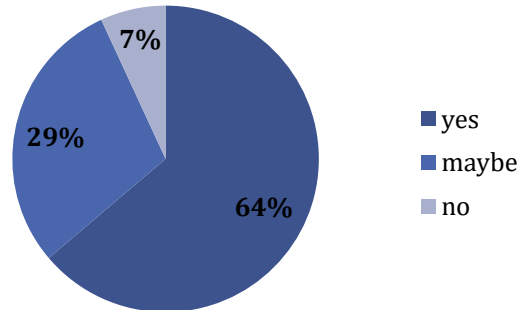
To analyze the problem, a survey was conducted among students between ages 18-22. It has questions regarding participation and also a self-esteem scale. This scale is developed by sociologist Morris Rosenberg. It uses a 0-30 scale, where a score less than or equal to 15 indicates lower self-esteem. This scale is considered a reliable and valid quantitative tool for self-esteem assessment among young adults as well as adults.

Q1. Do you have interest in participating in a class discussion (active learning)?

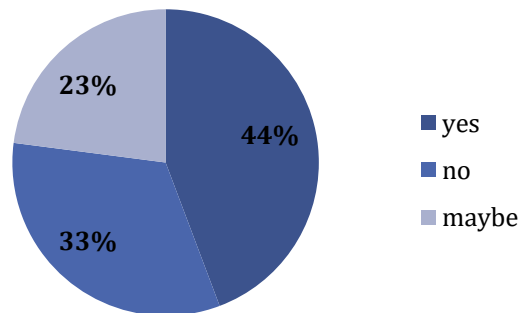
Q2. Do you avoid asking questions in the class?

Q3. Do you avoid answering even when you know the answer?

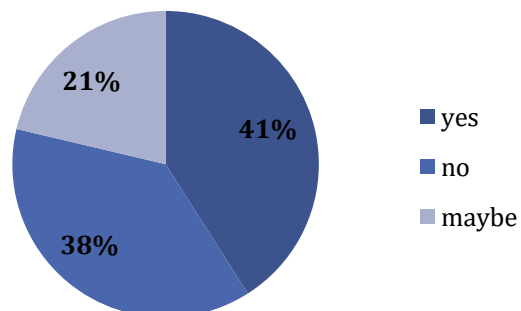
Interest in Participation



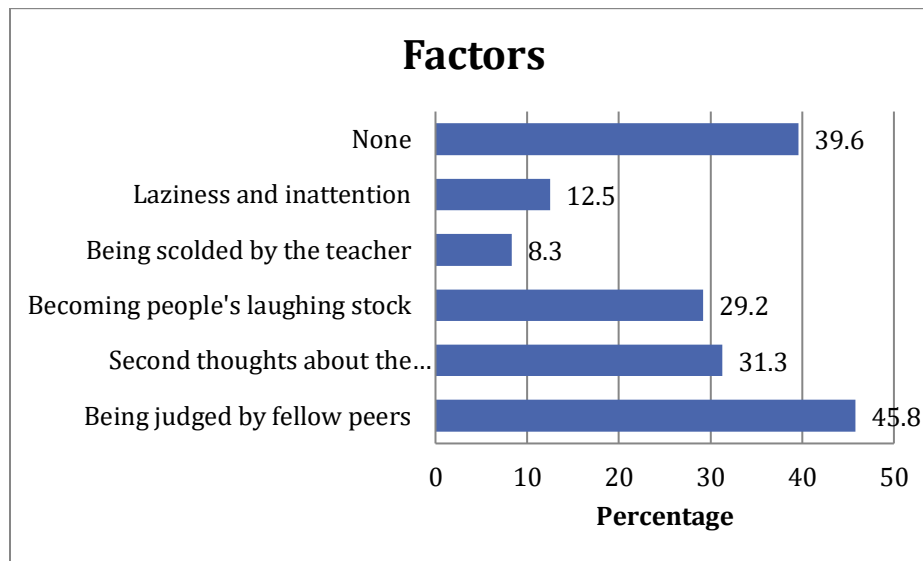
Avoid asking questions



Avoid answering questions

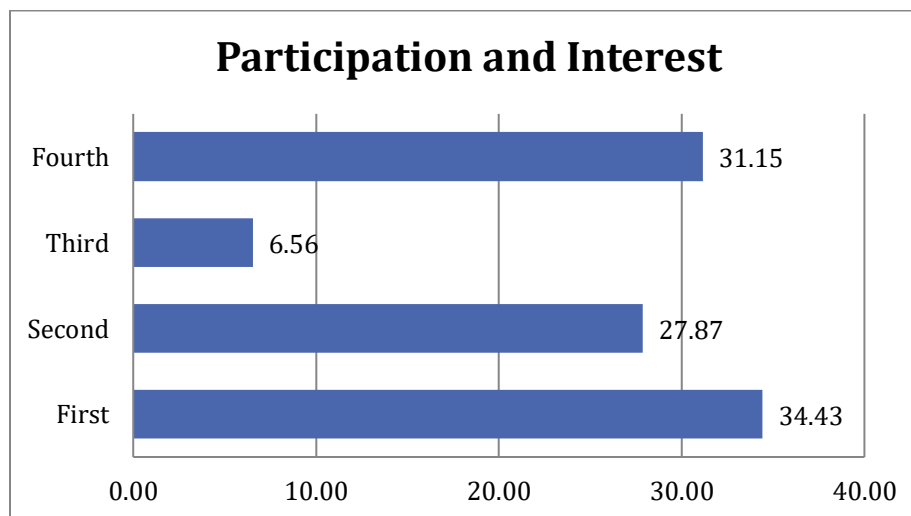


Q4. Choose the factors that compromise participation in the classroom.



According to majority of individuals (45.8%), being judged by fellow peers is a factor concern which falls in fear of negative evaluation. Another major factor is second thoughts about question/ answer (31.3%) i.e. whether I am asking the correct question or whatever answer I am supposed to say, is it correct or incorrect, also is related to lack of confidence in oneself. Other than this 29.2% individuals don't want to be laughed at, 12.5% states being lazy or inattentive in the classroom can be their reason and 8.3% individuals don't want to get scolded by the teachers.

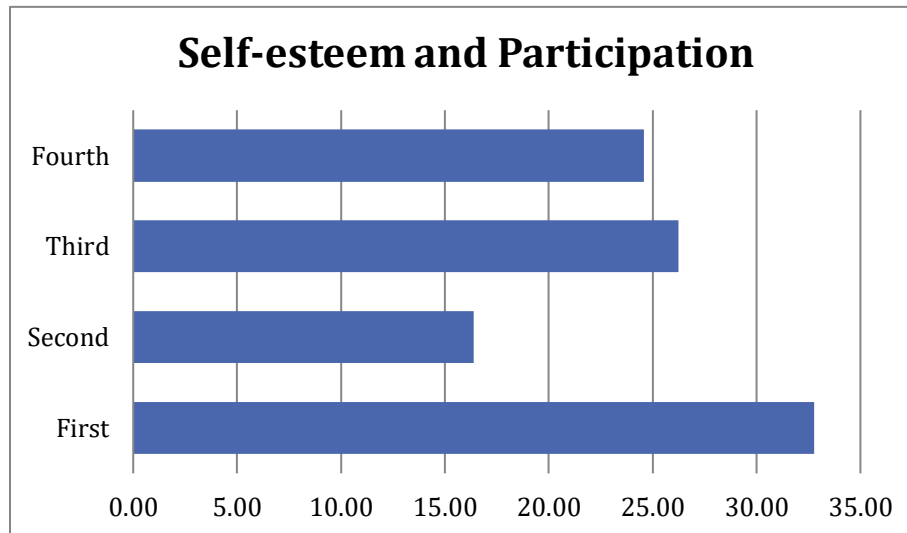
A. *Participation and Interest of an individual:*



- First case: individuals are interested but avoid overall participation (34.3%)
- Second case: individuals are interested but avoid some participation (27.87%)
- Third case: individuals are not interested and hence, do not participate (6.56%)

- Fourth case: individuals are interested as well as they participate (31.15%)

B. Self Esteem and Participation:



- First case: Low self-esteem and no participation (32.79%)
- Second case: Low self-esteem and some participation (16.39%)
- Third case: High self-esteem and absolute participation (26.23%)
- Fourth case: High self-esteem and some participation (24.59%)

Around 32.79% individuals avoid participation and have been scaled to have low self-esteem. On the other, 26.23% of individuals have higher self-esteem and their participation is absolute. Besides, individual who may avoid participating are either having a low self-esteem (16.39%) or high self-esteem (24.59%)

Inference:

- **Lower the self-esteem of an individual lesser is participation in the class i.e. less willingness to ask/answer questions in the class.**
- **Higher the self-esteem of an individual more is participation in the class i.e., more of asking / answering questions.**

Future work:

- Self-esteem predicts fear of negative evaluation but can an individual with fear of negative evaluation have low self-esteem?
- The content above is limited to students of higher classes but do the kids who are in lower grades go through the same situation or it differs?

- Are they unknowingly influenced by low self-esteem which compromises their contribution?

Reference:

- Student anxiety and fear of negative evaluation in active learning
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339444503_Student_Anxiety_and_Fear_of_Negative_Evaluation_in_Active_Learning_Science_Classrooms
- Relationship among inferiority feelings, fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety in Chinese high school students
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9872515/>
- Social phobia among university student and its relation to self -esteem.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/070674370404900910>
- Morris Rosenberg Self-esteem scale
https://fetzer.org/sites/default/files/images/stories/pdf/selfmeasures/Self_Measures_for_Self-Esteem_ROSENBERG_SELF-ESTEEM.pdf
- Recognizing the Fear: The Elephant in the classroom
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24760535>
- Self-esteem as a predictor of fear of negative evaluation and social anxiety
<https://www.pjpku.com/index.php/pjp/article/view/112>