# SELF ESTEEM AMONG EARLY ADOLESCENT ATHLETES AND NON ATHLETES

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to compare self-esteem among early adolescent athletes and non-athletes. Sport participation has been shown to positively influence self – esteem of early adolescent. This effect was measured in sample of early adolescents, with the effect of gender; participation and level of participation in sports were explored. The participants in this study were 187 early adolescent where 89 non-athletes (43 males and 46 females) and 98 athletes (51 males and 47 females) between in the Grades 5-8. The athletes are further divided into two groups of 50 recreational/ fun athletes and 48 competitive athletes. The sample was collected through non- random sampling method. Rosenberg scale of self – esteem was used to measure participants Self –esteem. Through the Descriptive statistics and Independent Sample t- Test the following results were concluded. The results showed the athletes have significantly higher self – esteem compared to non- athletes. Also, competitive athletes have higher self- esteem than recreational athletes. It was also found that there is no gender difference in self – esteem among early adolescent athletes.

**Keywords:** sports, self-esteem, type of participation, levels of participation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

All humans experience distinctive phases of development, which incorporates, prenatal period, post natal period, childhood (early, middle and late), adolescent, young adulthood, middle adulthood and late adulthood. Adolescence is a time of transition, where they struggle to deal with the physical, cognitive, and social changes throughout this formative period. Adolescence is the developmental period of transition from childhood to early adulthood, entered at approximately 10 to 12 years of age and ending at 18 to 21 years of age (Standrock, 2011). According to Barrett adolescence is divided into three stages where in early adolescence ages 11-13, middle adolescence ages 14 - 16 and late adolescence ages 17 – 19. ). The transition occur in adolescence can be more challenging and socially difficult; consequently it might lead to outburst and stress period. The characteristic feature of adolescence period is the physical and psychological growth. During adolescence biological processes drive many aspects of this growth and development, with the onset of puberty marking the passage from childhood to adolescence. Thus, adolescence is a critical period where individuals form their self –esteem. As indicated in a study by Badayai and Ismail, (2012) a decrease in self-esteem was found to occur during adolescence. The development of self-perception is the most intense at the stage of adolescence and it includes perception of both self-concept and self-esteem.

Self- esteem is the individual's sense of self- worth, as in how much one matters to him or herself and to others. Self- esteem also, refers to the extent to which a person values their abilities and appreciates him or herself. (Bowker, 2006). Self-esteem concept could be traced from Self – Determination Theory (SDT) which was developed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in 1995 in which he explained Non contingent self-esteem, who characterizes persons for whom the issue of self-esteem is not noticeable, largely because they experience themselves on a fundamental level as worthy of esteem and love. Successes and failures do not implicate their self-worth, even when they lead to a reevaluation of actions and efforts (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Tracing the trajectory of self-esteem development on the average, one's self-esteem is relatively high in childhood, then drops during adolescence, later to arise gradually throughout adulthood, and then declines sharply in old age. The reasons for the significant drop are adolescence is an important period for self-analysis and self-evaluation and develops a sense of self or identity in this period of life. Therefore it is a crucial period where adolescence forms their self –esteem. Self-esteem in adolescence is affected by how significant others view them that is parents, family, peers and teachers. Self-esteem has noteworthy impact of the overall personality of the individual. Whether one feels good about themselves or bad about themselves depends on the self-esteem of the individual. It is found that the first drop occurs at the onset at the early adolescence (9-13 years) when the young person's separation from childhood creates a loss of contentment with being treated any longer as a child (Orth, Robins & Roberts, 2008). Several reasons are found for the drop of self-esteem during early adolescent, it includes due to the onset of puberty, experiences of either negative or positive occurrence as well as continues to receive negative feedbacks and comments on his or her physical appearances, academic achievement, peer relationships and so on. This transition can be more challenging and socially complex, thus it might lead to storm and stress period. It is important to identify to the how self-esteem can be increased especially during early adolescence and it is viewed that sport participation is positive has received much empirical support over the years. The association between sports activities and more general measures of self-esteem is more complex especially during childhood and early adolescence. Self-esteem is a basic motivational factor in sport.

A large amount of research has been collected identifying sport participation and its various affects upon adolescents (Feldman and Matjasko 2005). Participation in sports positively affects mental health and the level of general happiness. Greater sports participation may enhance physical self-esteem, which in turn, predicts more positive global self-esteem. It also endows one with a

sense of control and dominance, improves psychological state and alleviates depression, increases assertiveness and self-esteem. Like every sport event participation athletics also have positive effects on individuals and communities. Athletics helps an individual to have a healthy physical structure and confidence but also enhance psychologically which includes self-awareness and self-discipline leading to self-respect and courage. Furthermore, it helps an individual to learn and develop one's skills, potential and leadership abilities. Development of competence or expertise in sporting skills can lead to a sense of personal effectiveness and feelings of autonomy, and these are associated with the promotion of self-esteem Athletic activity during adolescence has been shown to correlate with an increase in the amount of positive self-talk later in life (Dodge & Lambert, 2009). Therefore, self-esteem is a powerful variable and its impact on athletes. Monzo (2011) revealed the students who participated in sports did have a higher self-esteem score than the participants who did not play sports. As a result, it is important these support systems help the adolescents to explore their identity and develop self –esteem and positively influences adolescents in the development of self-esteem with the strategies which could have an impact on the development of self- esteem.

An athlete is one who trains for and competes in sporting events in track and field events including running races, jumping and throwing events or extracurricular activity or fun. Competitive sports are those who compete against others formally for awards. Non-competitive (recreational) sports are for whom playing and fun is emphasized over winning. Sport provides. athletes with opportunities to try new skills and assess their capabilities and association with these leads to the promotion of self-esteem. In their study, Erkut and Tracy (2002) found that participation in school sport was significantly associated with self-esteem. Also, the study of (Armstrong and Oomen-Early, 2009) revealed that athletes maintain higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression than non-athletes. Another study (Cornell, 2013) concluded athletes scored significantly higher on a standardized measure of self-esteem than non-athletes. Competitive sports often exaggerate difficulties, and studies have found that non-competitive sports benefit more. Adolescence is the developmental period where the self-esteem is majorly focused on external factors and it is significant period where self –esteem is in fragile state. Therefore coaches, physical education teachers, parents, critical feedbacks are the other factors which influence self-esteem. It is also observed peer acceptance to be a significant factor in determining the relationship between sport participation and self-esteem. Therefore, considering these factors it is difficult to predict the effect of self-esteem and participation in athletics in early adolescence.

## 1.1 Hypotheses

$H_0 1$: There is no significant difference in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes and non-athletes

$H_0 2$: There is no significant difference in self- esteem among early adolescent recreational participant and competitive participant of sports.

$H_0 3$: There is no significant gender difference in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes.

# 2. METHODOLOGY

## 2.1 Sample

In the present study, the respondents were selected from early adolescent's athletes and non-athletes within the age group of 11 to 13. The total size of the sample was 187 early adolescent which includes 89 non-athletes (43 males and 46 females) and 98 athletes (51 males and 47 females). The athletes are further divided into two groups which comprises of 50 recreational/ fun athletes and 48 competitive athletes. The athletes included in the current study are the participants who involve in track and field events including running races, jumping and throwing events. The samples were chosen from who are residing in Trivandrum, Kerala. The sample was selection through non – random purposive sampling method (Kothari, 2015) and Non-Experimental

comparative research designs (Bryman, 2014) were adopted.

The sample was redistricted to athletes of field and tracks. Samples from other athletic events were not included. Being a small scale research, the researcher couldn't obtain larger representation of sample. Though the result was found to be there was significant difference. This stood as a limitation of the study for not being able to generalize the result to all athletic events

Samples Included only from Urban Trivandrum. The sample that was chosen for the present study was only limited to Trivandrum. If the geographical area was wider the study could have helped to carry out a comparative study across various states, however the present study did show significant difference in self-esteem among athletes and non- athletes.

## 2.2 Instrumentation

The data required was collected mainly with the aid of socio demographic sheet which consists of the participant's information of the individual's which includes initials, age, gender, current location, place of living , levels of participation, type of participation and sports participation information of the participants and Rosenberg self- esteem questionnaire (1965) developed by sociologist Dr. Morris Rosenberg. This scale is a self-report measure of self-esteem. The scale consists of ten items. Half of the items are positively worded and negatively worded. The items are scored on a four- point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Rosenberg (1965) reported Internal consistency from 0.77 to 0.88 and Test-retest reliability range from 0.82 to 0.85 and the criterion validity = 0.55. The RSE has received more empirical validation than any other self – esteem scale and therefore, was the best choice for this study (Robins, Hendin, and Trzesniewski, 2001).

## 2.3 Data Collection

Selected participants were approached and permission was taken from authorities and then informed consent was taken from the participants followed by explaining the instructions. The participants were asked to fill in the necessary socio- demographic details and Rosenberg self- esteem scale and then data was collected from the participants directly.

## 2.4 Statistical Analysis:

The obtained data was analyzed through the process of editing, tabulating, coding and scoring through Microsoft excel and SPSS version 20. To examine the difference in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes and non- athletes, mean, SD, Skewness, Kurtosis and t -test were applied.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To examine the difference in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes and non-athletes, t -test was used and data pertaining to this has been presented in table 1 to 5 and depicted in Figure 1 &2.

The objective of the study was to examine the difference in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes and non- athletes.

### TABLE 1
### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SELF-ESTEEM AMONG EARLY ADOLESCENT ATHLETES AND NON-ATHLETES

|  | N | Mean | SD | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self -esteem | 187 | 19.93 | 4.457 | -.285 | -.252 |

Table 1, shows a descriptive statistics of participation in athletics and Self- esteem score. For the total number of respondents, (N = 187) a group of samples with representation of non-athlete (89) and athlete (98) were selected. The mean score of self-esteem is 19.93 ± 4.457. The skewness (-.285), and kurtosis (-.252) value of self- esteem score are identified between the range of-1.96 to +1.96, hence the distribution of data is normal.

**TABLE 2**
**DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE BASED ON PARTICIPATION IN ATHLETICS &**
**TYPES OF PARTICIPATION**

| Participation in Athletics | Types of Participation | N | Total | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Athletes | Recreational Participation<br>Competitive Participation | 50<br>48 | 98 | 52.4 |
| Non-athletes | | 89 | 89 | 47.5 |
| Total | | | 187 | 100% |

The table 2 illustrates the distribution of samples based on the Participation in Athletics & Types of Participation. The types of participation are classified as recreational and competitive Participants. Table shows that 52.4% (98) of the samples are Athletes and 47.5% (89) of the samples are of Non- athletes.
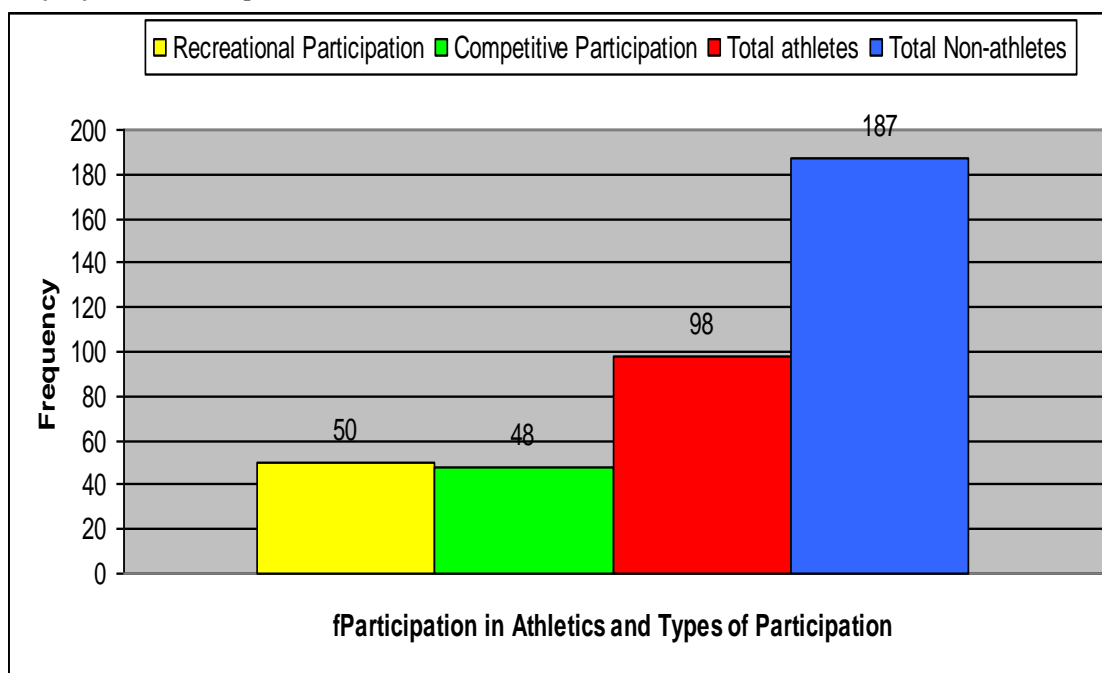


Figure 1 Distribution of Sample Based on Participation in Athletics & Types of Participation

**TABLE 3**
**GENDER WISE DISTRIBUTION OF ATHLETES & NON-ATHLETES**

| Gender | Athletes | Non-athletes | Total | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 51 | 43 | 94 | 50.2 |
| Female | 47 | 46 | 93 | 49.7 |
| Total | 98 | 89 | 187 | 100 |

The table 3 describes the sample based on gender wise distribution of Athletes and Non – athletes. Out of total 98 samples of Athletes 51 are of males and 47 are of females and in Non – athletes out of 89 samples 43 are of males and 46 are of females. Among the total respondents, 50.2% (94) of the samples are males, 49.7% (93) of the samples are females.
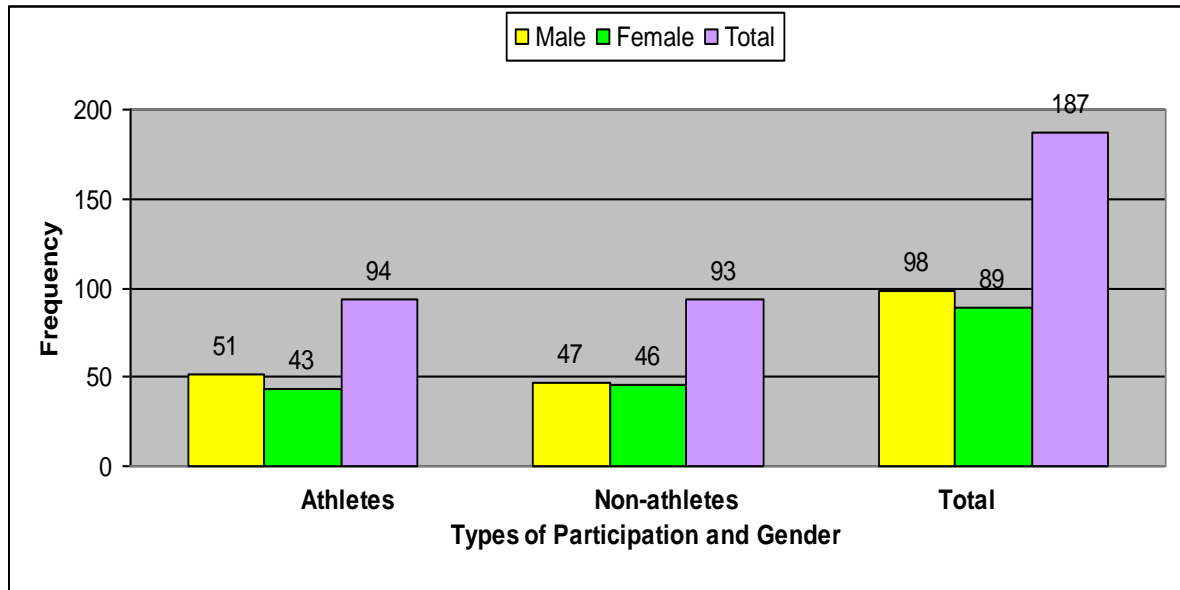
**Figure 2 Genderwise Distribution of Athletes and Non-athletes**

**TABLE 4**

**COMPARISON OF SELF – ESTEEM BETWEEN ATHLETES AND NON- ATHLETES**

| Gender | Athletics | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rosenberg self -esteem score | Non-Athletes | 89 | 17.60 | 3.996 | -7.866 | 185 | .000 |
| | Athletes | 98 | 22.05 | 3.748 | | | |

*p<0.05

Results presented in table 4 indicates research sample (n = 189), the group of athletes (*M*= 22.05, *SD* = 3.748, *n* = 90) has obtained a higher self-esteem score than the group of non-athletes (*M* = 17.60, *SD* = 3.996, *n* = 89), *df* = 185, *t* = -7.866, *p* = .000 and is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, there is significant difference in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes and non- athletes.

The results indicates that sport participation has positive effect on self- esteem and that participation who are involved in sports have higher self –esteem than those who have not. It was found that athletes on the whole felt satisfied with themselves and felt they were on equal plan with others and in general report positive attitude towards themselves. Whereas on the other hand non – athletes participants of the study at times felt that they didn't have much to be proud off and had a need of respect for themselves, which they feel they lack and in general non-athletes perceived themselves to be effective. The findings in this study have shown similar results on the previous studies. Ozsaker (2013) studied on assertiveness and self-esteem among athletes and nonathletes of Turkish Adolescents. The study concluded that there is a significantly stronger relationship between assertiveness and self-esteem among athletic adolescents compared to the sedentary adolescents. Another study by Cornel (2013) investigated differences in self-esteem between Division III Collegiate Athletes and Non-Athletes and concluded self-esteem levels were found to be significantly higher in athletes. In the present study also it was found that there is significant difference in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes and non- athletes. Athletes are having higher self-esteem than non-athletes. The explanations for this finding could be due to sports participation, athletes learn to maximize skill sets that they succeed

in, and in turn reduce their "feared" selves. These results also conclude that athletes maintain a heightened and more positive self-concept than non-athletes similarly athletes develop socially and leadership skills, increase peer-awareness, and improve emotional fitness.

**TABLE 5**
**COMPARISON OF SELF – ESTEEM BETWEEN COMPETITIVE AND RECREATIONAL ATHLETES**

|  | Type of Participation | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rosenberg self -esteem score | Competitive | 48 | 23.81 | 3.022 | 5.116 | 96 | .000 |
|  | Recreational | 50 | 20.36 | 3.618 |  |  |  |

*p<0.05

Table 5 shows research sample (n = 98), the group of competitive participants (M = 23.81, SD = 3.022, n = 48) has obtained a higher self-esteem score than the group of recreational participants (M = 20.36, SD = 3.618, n = 50), df = 96, t = 5.116, p = .000 and is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, there is significant difference in self-esteem among early adolescent recreational participant and competitive participant**.**

In their study, Amac, Anastasio, et.al (2002) found there is higher self-esteem between girls of recreational gymnastics than the girls' who participate in competitive gymnastics. However, in the present study the finding is the competitive athletes have higher self-esteem compared to the recreational athletes and it could be as recreational adolescent athletes decrease the threatening nature of competitive sport by emphasizing intrinsic enjoyment and the pursuit of personal performance goals are advocated and as well as not required to deal with the pressures of increased skill level that goes with competition. Another reason for high significance of self-esteem with competitive athletes than recreational - athletes could be participation in competitive sport events can enhance one's own identity, increasing athletic skills, achievements in competition, staying physically fit and attractive, improving feelings of self-worth, and making new friends compared to recreational participation.

**TABLE 6**
**COMPARISON OF SELF – ESTEEM BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE ATHLETES**

|  | Gender | N | Mean | SD | t | df | Sig. (2tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rosenberg self -esteem score | Male | 51 | 22.55 | 3.454 | 1.376 | 96 | 0172 |
|  | Female | 47 | 21.51 | 4.010 |  |  |  |

*p<0.05

Table 6 reveals research sample (n = 98), the group of male athletes (M = 22.55, SD = 3.454, n = 51) has obtained a higher self-esteem score than the group of female athletes (M = 21.51, SD = 4.010, n = 47), df = 96, t = 1.376, p = .172 and is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, there is no significant gender difference in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes.

Bowker, Gadbois and Cornock (2003) concluded sports participation does predict self-esteem, participants' gender orientation and the type of sports in which they participate as moderating factors. Another study Ahmed, Mladenovic, et.al (2014) found level of self-esteem between male and female high school athletes was found significantly

different. In the present study finding shows that though there is no significant difference between early adolescent male and female athletes, males are having high self-esteem than females. It could be because the sample size involved in this study is less to make significant or generalizable results and also it can be because self – esteem of athletes are influenced by the self – perception of athletic capability irrespective of gender.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The current study focused on the exploration on the effect of self-esteem among early adolescent athletes and non-athletes and among early adolescent athletes which includes competitive and recreational athletes. Another focus of the study was to find the impact of self-esteem among athletes across gender. It was found that there are significant differences in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes and non-athletes and among recreational participant and competitive participant. However, it was found that there is no significant gender difference in self-esteem among early adolescent athletes.

The findings can be used to increase and widen the scope for the further research by including samples both urban and rural as well as from different states and can offer ample opportunity and encouragement to both who participate in sports as well as non-athletes, which can protect against depression, suicidal ideation and can enhance psychological well- being by boosting self-esteem as well as increasing social support during the early adolescent period of developmental stage.

## 5. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Results of the study facilitated to understand the effect of self – esteem among early adolescent athletes compared to non-athletes. The results of the study can be used by educational institutions as well as sports institutions to understand and advocate the importance of participation in sports including regulation of emotions, achievement of autonomy, physical fitness, competence and acceptances of self especially at the developmental period of early adolescent. The findings can also help to understand participation in sports makes each individual motivated to take care of themselves and to persistently strive towards the fulfillment of personal goals and aspirations and can encourage athletes to continue in this field and as well as the non-athletes to consider joining such activity

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