

**Low Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem among
Moroccans, students of Ouarzazaete city, as a key study.**

ELMAHDI OUTBIR

mahdioutbir@gmail.com

Faculty Poly-disciplinary of Ouarzazate

Department of English and Pedagogy (ESCP)

2018/2019

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted with the aim to measure the influence of socioeconomic status over self-esteem. These variables in question were put into analysis using quantitative research. Respectfully, a bulk of identical researches were piloted using both variables, and through the lens of the discrepancy encountered in the literature, the objective was to see the extent to which this research would support, confirm or deny the dominating notions. It is then a replication with a different group of participants who have never taken a chance to be part of this concept. Various variables were vital to the study, including; parental and students' level of education, the area of living, the age, the gender and the mother tongue. With respect to the diversity that exists, subjects from rural and urban areas were given the chance and the same atmosphere to contribute. The instrument used to measure both variables were questionnaires. The total number of the participants who took the questionnaires was 81, with a number of 35 females and 46 males. Results to be discussed, a weak and negative correlation exist between socioeconomic status and self-esteem. A negative correlation (Pearson r) was found at a level of $-.118$, with an insignificance (p-value) at $.463$. Thus, the null hypothesis was not to be rejected.

Key terms; SES, Self-esteem, level of education, area of living, age, gender, mother language

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

1. INTRODUCTION

The term socioeconomic status is a diverse concept. As being composed of society and economic, it includes a variety of different variables in it sake. Social class remains a central idea surrounding a person's life. It can be measured through social position, education, health and wealth. APA website defines it as social standing position which is built upon inequities within a community. It is stated as having access to resources with privileges, power and control. Self-esteem on the other hand can be an individual image or belief held about oneself. It is an image which we wear and represents us within social gatherings. According to APA website, self-esteem is an attitude which determines our behaviors in social life, it is an evaluative process and has effects on our mood and actions.

As it is to observe above, both variables intertwine together when it comes to social life. Mark Leary (1995) introduced the notion of The Socio Meter Theory, this latter, views self-esteem to be based on social emotions working in terms of monitoring the self through being either accepted or rejected. The way we feel and evaluate ourselves intersect with our behaviors when dealing with people. For example, underestimating ourselves by considering our social status is represented in the we talk, behave and interpret external signals. According to Harmon and Redmond (2010) Self-image a particular student holds of his/herself goes on the same stream with underestimation he/she feels coming from a social class. Living in poor conditions seem to be a factor contributing to bypassing opportunities guaranteeing self-growth. Thereby, increasing the incidence of low self-esteem.

At the level of education, Jennifer (2005) observed that the quality of a student life revolves around the environment in which he lives, therefore his/ her socio-economic status affects either positively or negatively a learner's life. It is a situation in which people expend their horizons with respect to progress and limitations. On the same manner, learners with unemployed or educated parents are more prone to withdraw from extra-curricular activities and become disengaged in classroom sessions (PISA, 2009). The wealth of a particular family contributes to a child's opportunities to develop his/her academic skills (Ferguson,2007). The role parents play seems to integrate with a student's ability to internalize and make use of his/her learning. Low achievement and the fluctuation of self-esteem increases the chance of a child developing serious problems, more particularly, when it comes their performance in the classroom (Berk, 2006).

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

As an active engagement speaks of high concentration and long attention span, self-distractive thoughts has been observed to play the unwanted tune. Caretakers with economic hardship creates a challenging environment for their children. This, results with a negative impact on their performance through the absence and the presence of a poor concentration (Barry, 2005). According to Slavin (2006) social norms and home atmosphere in which a learner lives dominates all the areas of a his/her life, they influence the self-esteem and the idea held inside a particular student. Daily life interaction is where an identity mingles and melts, it offers chances for forming new or adjusting our old beliefs and behaviors. On a similar vein, at the age of puberty an adolescent strive to prove himself within a community. Self-worth at the ages of adolescence is strongly influenced with reaching an adolescent optimum (Rowe and Hall, 1991).

A high self-worth helps forming clarity in relation to a future goal. It is a visionary path drawn upon a belief system. According to Tyalor, Letica & Sears (2006) Self-conception is affected with the way a particular person regards him/herself, the higher the self-esteem the more the clarity of thoughts and goals, the lower the self-esteem to more a path becomes gloomy. The prosperity a family lives can be reflected on the quality of thoughts a child holds. Richer families provide environment which encourages the stimulation of the intellectual abilities comparing to poor ones with challenges (Sandro, 1987). Health issues on the other hand are questioned when they are related to life style. Low economic status endangers our life. In his research Drawler (2005) found a relationship to exist between the effects of low socio-economic resulting in bad nutrition and poor health, to the point where there is the possibility of spreading diseases like HIV and AIDS.

In addition to subverting a person inner self, the effects of poor living conditions manifest on different levels. Low economic status can be a trigger for issues related to low self-esteem, psychosocial characteristics and aggression (Blacksher, 2002). Feeling of less appreciated may lead to avoidance or rigidity when being in social interaction. The protection of oneself can be expressed though the way a person internalize, externalizes, blames and projects his/her anger toward others (Tracy and Robins, 2003). Adler (1959) suggested the notion of inferiority complex to be deemed as issues related to childhood developments which affects badly the process of a child integration within society. The feeling of being underestimated discourages taking initiatives which in turn involves an approachable way of dealing with people. On the same path, humanistic

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

psychologists view self-worth to be conditioned to psychological problems. Rogers (1969) links self-regard to psychological issues, believing this to be a factor contributing to aggression.

The idea of socio-economic status and self-esteem is a controversial topic with researches encounter insignificant, positive, negative relationship and others null hypothesis. With this in mind, and with this divergence in thinking and the ambiguity of the topic, this presented study aims at predicting whether a relationship exist. Thus, questions to be raised go as follow; does socio-economic status correlates with self-esteem? And do students with low socio-economic status suffers a low self-esteem?

2. OBJECTIVE AND HYPOTHESIS

2.1 OBJECTIVE

- The study targets the investigation of the relationship between low socio-economic status and low self-esteem among students living in Ouarzazate city.
- The aim is at finding out more about the relationship's presence, strength and implications.

2.2 HYPOTHESIS

- A relationship exists between low socio-economic status and low self-esteem.
- Students with low socio-economic status tend to have low self-esteem.

3. METHOD

3.1 *Participants*

This research was conducted with choosing a random sample. Randomness has been respected and viewed as a corner stone which was very much stressed. Males and females were given equal opportunities to be part of this study. Striving toward finding a good representative group, different participants from various places where encouraged to participate. Therefore, our sample is composed of students from both cities and villages. The number of the subjects reached 81, males with a number of 46 and females 35. These numbers were of the participants who found and expressed interest in the concept being studied. The range of the age was between 13 and 37. Participation was not determined by some certain rules and no limitations were created. Subjects from different levels were given the same questionnaire and almost being provided with a similar environment.

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

3.2. Procedure

The measure of both variables was targeted upon providing questionnaires to participants. The same format of the questions was distributed equally to everyone. The timing allotted to answer all questions was 40 minutes. The number of the questions was 31 with 4 choices per each. The environment in which these questions were given was a bit similar for different levels, students took the questionnaires inside classrooms while university students in lecture halls. Samples were explained that no harm would follow their initiative. Subjects who took these questionnaires were told that they should not mention their names, and should not leave any clue which could lead to them. No identification was requested. Therefore, anonymity was the main point stressed before distributing the questionnaires. To avoid the effects of priming, students were not told any hints about the aim of the research, and much information had to explained right after the handing over of the questionnaires.

3.3 Design

This research belongs to a quantitative type. It is with a humbles efforts in match with APA guidelines provided to researches. Starting with review of literature ending up with a discussion, the purpose it serves is out studying the correlation between two variables (Socioeconomic status and Self-esteem). It deals with turning answers of the participants into numbers, and be objective in relation to the manners in which answers are treated. These data are then inserted to a software called SPSS which turns responses into measured variables. The choice of this design is to be presented with factual information which could lead to accurate assumptions. Different variables are considered, and all of them are believed to be related to the topic of this research.

3.4 Instruments

As it has been always acknowledged in social sciences, distributing questionnaires remain an effective tool when thinking about measuring variables using a large sample. The instruments given students and university scholars in this study heads on the same direction. Two attached papers with a total of 31 questions were designed. The attachment of both papers served the aim of presenting both variables, they have been provided with order so that one can be used to predict the other. The first variable (Socioeconomic status) has a number of 13 questions, and the second (Self-esteem) with a number of 18 items. To ensure that consistency and reliability in the

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

scale used in this study, both scales were tested using Cronbach Alpha, and it has been shown that both are suitable serving the purpose. For example, socioeconomic status scale is measured with a reliability analysis of .621 while self-esteem a reliability of .729. Therefore, together seem to be consistent and can be efficient to learn more about their correlation.

4. RESULTS

3.1. Data Descriptive Table

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	81	1	2	1.43	0.498
Age	81	13	37	18.33	4.126
Area of living	81	1	2	1.59	0.494
Language	81	1	2	1.73	0.448
Level	81	1	4	3.05	0.82
Mother level	81	1	5	3.36	1.859
Father Level	81	1	5	3.53	1.636
Social class	81	1	2	1.86	0.345

Working with the aim to include many aspects related to the SES and Self-esteem, different variables are integrated to serve this objective. Data descriptive table above shows eight variables to be essential and present in this research. As it has been mentioned before, the total number of the participants is 81. The Age is major factor which distinguish this sample. Based on the table above, it is shown that the range of the age is between a minimum of 13 years old and a maximum of 37. This, should lead to make the inference that secondary, high school and university learners were the target groups. The area of living is provided with a minimum number of 1 and maximum number of 2, while 1 stands for a city, 2 a village. In Morocco two main languages are regarded as mother tongues, and as the table shows, 1 stands for Arabic and 2 Tamazight (Berber). The level of participants varies, thus, a minimum of 1 refers to primary, 2 secondary, 3 high school and 4 university level. Parental education was put under the measure of the educational level of participants' mothers and fathers, for both, a minimum of 1 goes to primary, 2 school, 3 high school, 4 university level and 5 no educational level. Finally, social class as a variable is presented with a minimum of 1 which denotes poor social status, 2 a moderate social class and 3 was originally included in the research as high social status, however, the table does not indicate it because no participant reported with belonging to this category.

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

3.2. Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	46	54.1	56.8	56.8
Female	35	41.2	43.2	100
Total	81	95.3	100	

This present study was conducted with respect to the diversity and randomness in the choice of whom should take the survey. It has been taken place in villages and cities. Preference was avoided, and an alert was put to keep away any bias. Students from different majors contributed to this research, participants were chosen from different levels with respect to the classrooms atmosphere and educational levels in Morocco. Eighty-one subjects got the same chance to respond to the questionnaires. The total number of the participants stands for the availability and the freewill of the pupils and scholars who wanted to be part of this project, and as it can be observed from the table above, the percentage varies and one group seems to have a dominant number. More males are found to attend schools, more particularly in very small villages, and this speaks the fact of the unfortunate circumstance of girls to take part in education especially in rural areas. the number of males is 46 with a percentage of 56% and the number of females is 35 with a percentage of 43%.

3.3. Area of leaving

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	City	33	38.8	40.7	40.7
	Village	48	56.5	59.3	100
	Total	81	95.3	100	

As demonstrated in the above table 3.3 and to ensure a good measuring, participants from villages and cities were the participants. The number of people from cities is 33 with a percent of 38.8 %, While the percentage of participants from village is 56.5 % with a number of 48 subjects. This presented table accounts for the consideration of sample from different backgrounds. As this table works with the purpose of depicting the diversity, it aims at showing

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

that no particular group is favorited, and that the participation of the 81 subjects was built in respect for the avoidance of any bias.

3.4 Correlations

		1	2
1- Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	-.118
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.293
2- Socioeconomic Status	Pearson Correlation	-.118	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.293	

Observing the presented data in the above table, one can notice that there is an absence of a strong correlations between both continuous variables this study aims to measure. Self-esteem and socioeconomic status are correlated at the level of -.118. This represents and demonstrates downhill negative linear correlation. As the value of R lies between 1 and -1, -.118 is a number that is far from -1. Therefore, remains an insignificant relationship to consider.

3.5 Coefficients table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	3.192	.621			5.140	.000
Socio economic status	-.082	.111	-.086		-.738	.463
Gender	.196	.078	.305		2.529	.014
Age	.012	.013	.153		.938	.352
Area of living	-.053	.094	-.082		-.567	.573
Language	.039	.098	.055		.402	.689
Level	-.096	.059	-.246		-1.630	.107
Mother level of education	.004	.023	.022		.168	.867
Father level of education	-.035	.025	-.178		-1.381	.172
social class	-.101	.127	-.108		-.790	.432

a. Dependent Variable: Self esteem

This table of coefficients demonstrates the existence and the presence of insignificant relationships. Surprisingly, only gender, as a variable, is found to hold a significance in relation to students' Self-esteem (the independent variable), the column which shows the results of significance (Sig) lists most of the predictors to be higher than 0.05. This indicates and supports

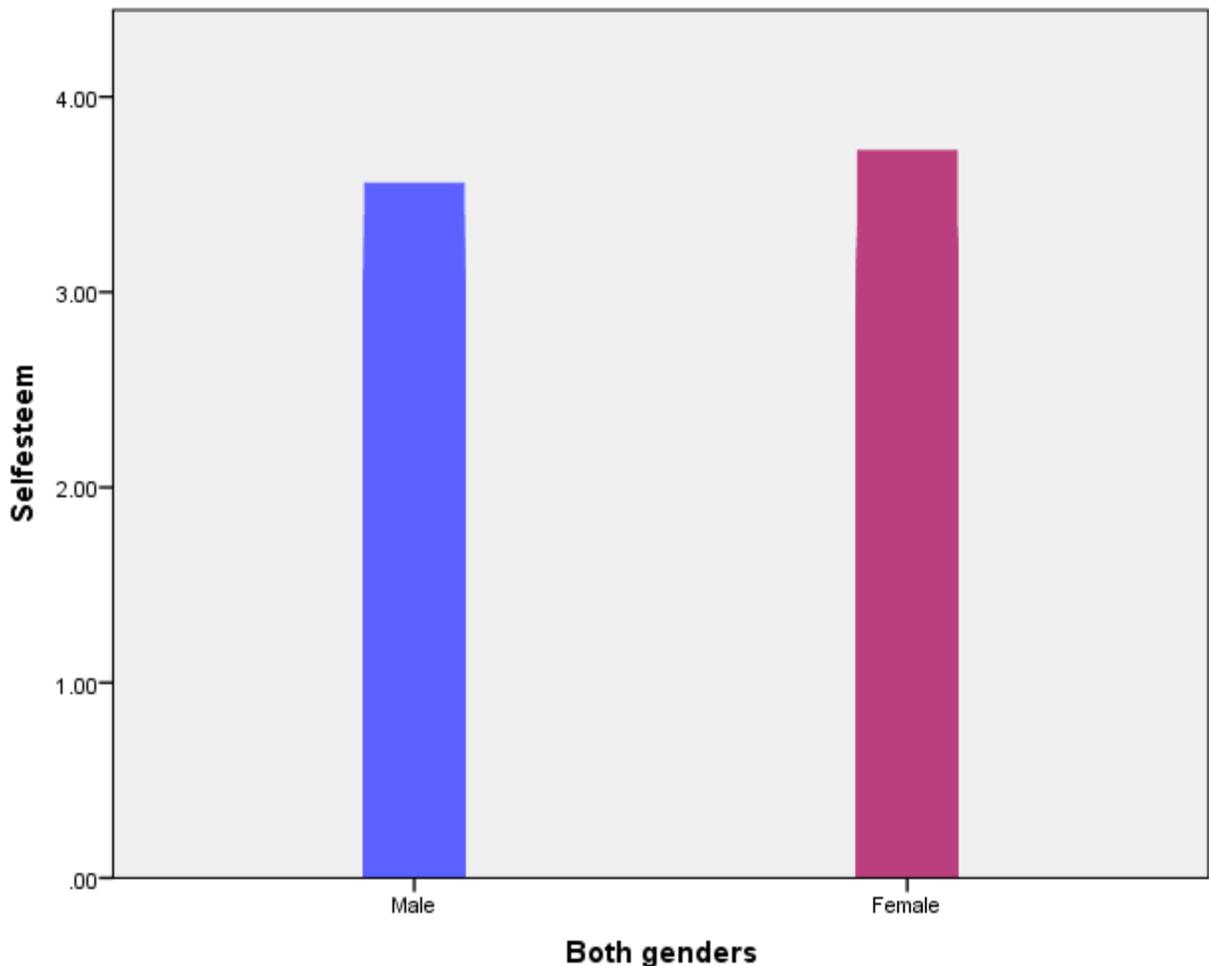
Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

the notion of a weak relationship which is to be drawn from this coefficients table. As a main measured element, low socioeconomic status, as a dependent variable and with the existence of other variables, is found to be correlated negatively and insignificantly with the independent variable (self-esteem) at a level of $B = -.086$ with $t = -.738$ and a low significance $.463$. This speaks the fact that this a non-significant relationship, the effects of one variable over the other is not significant. Therefore, the strength of the relationship, as to be represented by the slop of the regression line, cannot be used to make predictions. This also tells the fact that we fail to reject the null hypothesis considering that this correlation is not significant relative to the standard alpha level $.05$.

3.5 Two bar charters & ANOVA table

Figure 1: Bar charter

Measuring both genders self-esteem

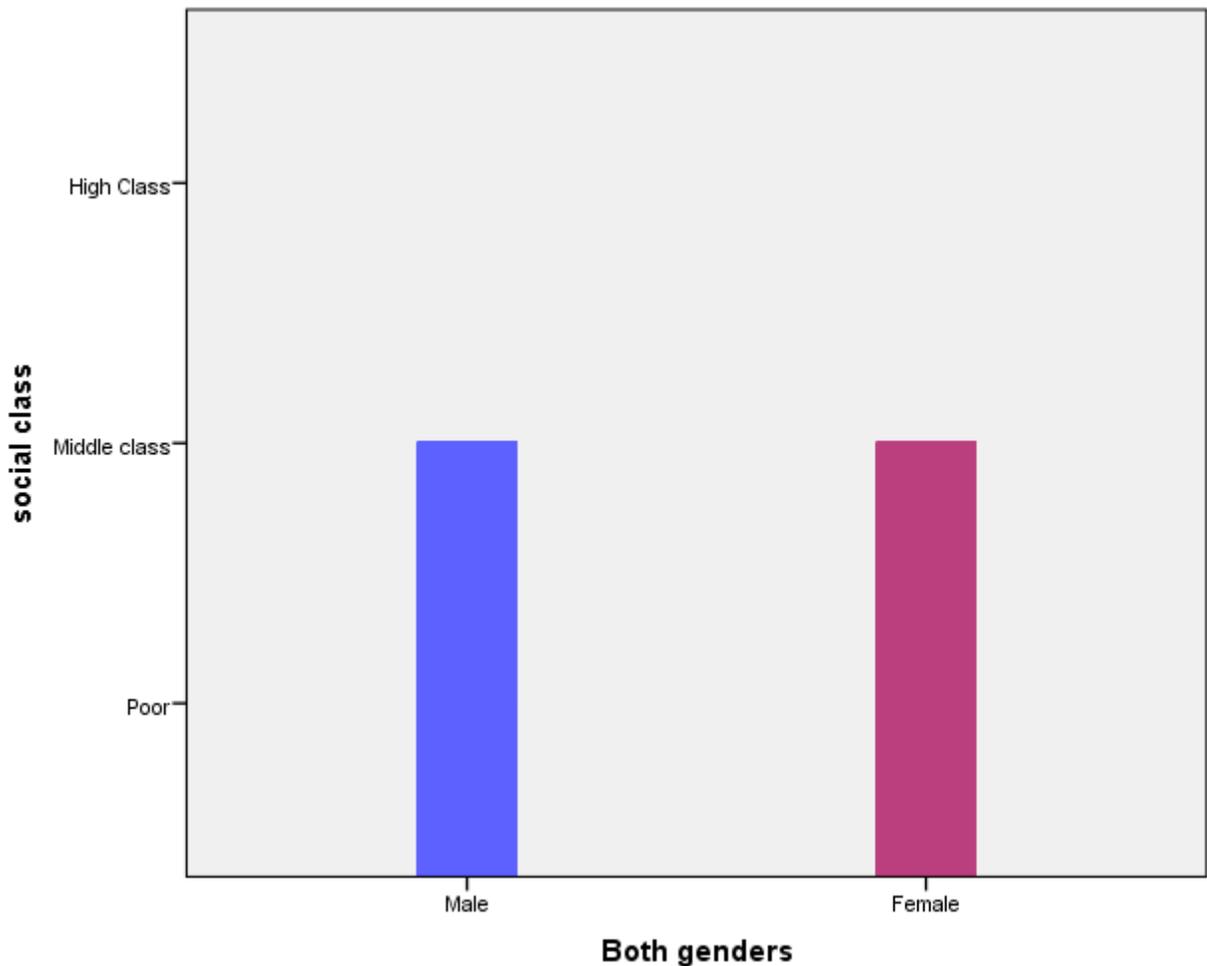


Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

The bar chart presented above deals with measuring the self-esteem of both genders. As it has been previously shown in the table of frequency for both gender, the total number of all participants is 81, the number of female students who participated in this study is 35 while males 46. In the above graph and contrary to the held belief, females are found to have a slightly higher self-esteem comparing to males. Thus, one can take for certain and observe through the bar charter that the majority of females who took the questionnaire regard themselves as esteemed, important and appreciated, Males on the hand were slightly lower than female students on this perspective.

Figure 2: Bar charter

Measuring both genders social class



Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

In respect to the information provided above, this bar chart illustrates the measuring of the socio-economic status in relation to gender difference. The divergence in the social class is counted through feedback provided by the participants. So far that the study was conducted in the cities and villages found in south of Morocco, a no surprise that both genders belong to the middle class if not poor ones considering the fact of financial hardship affecting the regions.

5. DISCUSSION

Basing this discussion on our finding, it is tangible to mention and highlight that no significant relationship was found between the independent variable (Socio-economic) and the dependent variable (self-esteem). In other words, making accurate forecasts using the X would no serve the purpose of predicating the Y. Thereby, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Social status, parents' education, family wealth, students' education level and gender, all these different variables have been indicated and measured but small effects were found to be of importance. Using the Pearson R and the table of coefficients, all variables revealed a weak relationship.

Morris Rosenberg and Leonard I. Pearlin with their publication, in the *American Journal of Sociology*, mentioned the possibility of the dilemma that is linked to the relationship between social class and self-esteem. It has been observed by these eminent researchers that previous studies were confronted with paradoxical results, either a null, positive or inverse relationship. The schema was about the incongruence that sheds lights on diverse outcomes that were obtained measuring the two main variables. Therefore, the concept of taking one stance undertaking both variables is very controversial. On a similar vein, a research was carried out by Cecilia Chepngeno Sang at the University of Kabianga supports the prevailing fact of the null hypothesis and the widely held contradictions. With a population that reached 9048, the data derived must be of worth refereeing to.

Various factors can play an essential part regarding the matter of this study, and one of the anticipations about the absence of a significant relationship in this research can be referred the notion of self-esteem across cultures, and how this discrepancy exists considering different societies and backgrounds. For example, starting with the way a particular culture perceives self-esteem. according to Maja Becker (2014) being unaware of the existence of the implicit

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

internalization of our societal norms and the driving force imposed by our environment can entirely lead to misunderstand how self-esteem is absorbed from country to another, and how it differs with respect to individual differences. In her survey that got hold of 5,000 teenagers world-wide, a project that was launched in 2008 covering 19 countries, Becker found that societies which prize freedom and looks at a person as independent (individualistic culture) encourages people to link their self-esteem to their personal accomplishments. This can be understood as a personal touch serving the case of an individual contributions to the development of the community. Oppositely, societies cherishing collective efforts and conformity view a particular person as part of a group (collectivist culture) deriving his/her self-esteem from doing their duty. One can say in this respect that a person's life is in relation to group identity, it is a group-esteem achieved through a collaboration and shared efforts toward a common goal.

As it has been observed by Morris Rosenberg and Leonard I. Pearlin (1978), the challenge behind taking a clear position surrounds the domain in which both variables (socio-economic status & self-esteem) seem to belong. In other words, and as the previously mentioned researchers observed, self-esteem is a concept dealt with from a psychological perspective while socio-economic is a concern of sociologists. This spot where both areas intertwine may lead to a confusion in making inferences and discrepancies in obtaining a variety of results, so, this may explain the bulk of the contradictions scholars encounter.

Moving a bit toward socio-cognitivism or more precisely to the attribution theory, one can say with confidence that a personal attribute to circumstance may explain his/her views regarding how we perceive our self-esteem in relation to our environment. Situation attribution is concept that is originated by Bernard Wiener. This social cognitive idea supports the fact that people may attribute their failure either explicitly or implicitly to a cause beyond their power. Through projecting their inconvenience away from their integrity, a relief is to be achieved. Linking this to our presented study, one can think that socio-economic status can cause or be correlated with a low self-esteem. However, this situation attribution may fail to stand as this false perception perhaps might be resulted from a biased perspective.

In addition to the above, this fluctuation encountered measuring both variables lead to an abstract situation regarding the topic at hand. Marsh, 1989; McCarthy & Hoge, 1982; Mullis, Mullis, & Normandin, 1992, O'Malley & Bachman observed that self-esteem is not restrained at particular

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

stage, they have found an increase in self-worth during the adolescent ages. Following this belief, the increase in self-worth is purely unknown. Evolutionary, it is believed that adolescence is a critical stage that in which an adolescent is full of energy, changes in hormones and brain growth. The effects of socioeconomic status and the self-esteem may be both intervening variables but not necessarily the main ones. This is to be said that certainty cannot be taken for granted in relation to assuming a strong correlation as the esteem of the self can be attained from different disciplines.

From another perspective, social gap was not a main concern when both variables were tested. In other words, the participants who took the questionnaire belong to the same social class. In this study, they were referred as belonging to middle class. This however should brighten the possibility of the absence of social scarification which sometime can result in a negative comparison. Now the issue that arises itself is that being part of the society in which a majority shares the same welfare may not trigger the unwanted tune strengthening a positive relationship between SES and self-esteem. Thereby, the results obtained in this research may be explained using this perspective.

6. CONCLUSION & LIMITATIONS

This study has failed to confirm the hypothesis. However, the lesson learned stands the fact that one should not be overconfident with the results obtained measuring both variables. Not to abuse the effects of other variables at the expense of our main variables, particularly, one should not be a slave to the concept of self-worth. Self-esteem is a value we give to ourselves. Socioeconomic status may provide a source for deriving such value. But, perhaps it may not be the main tunnel. Not to aggrandize the idea, the esteem of the self can be attained from diverse sources, it might be a meaning we address to an interest, including a hobby, art, playing on musical instruments, school achievements, friendship...etc. This is not strongly related the notion of belonging to a high class. But, it may however ring the bell that self-esteem is a single word which can be defined on different contexts.

The scope of the limitations related to this study depends on the everyone's interpretation concerning both variables. But we can also go brave and refer some shortcomings to the number of the participants who took the questionnaire, it was in fact a small sample consisting of 81 subjects, and this because the research was self-funded. Generalizing the results should be very much questioned and should be dealt with caution. However, one can say with confidence that

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

procedures were respected, and we can, respectively, state that participants were honest with their answers. The scale used to measure socioeconomic status was self-designed since itself measuring SES is controversial. The reason behind this was the absence in finding a well standard scale for Moroccans. As I personally belong to the region, I took in charge constructing items that were tested using SPSS through Cronbach Alpha. In short, still much to be learnt, and prudence regarding this matter remains a critical issue one should be aware of.

Socio-Economic Status and Self-esteem

References

- Adler, A. (1956). *The individual psychology of Alfred Adler: A systematic presentation in selections from his writings* (H.L. Ansbacher & R.R. Ansbacher, Eds.). New York: Harper.
- Barry, J. (2005). *Effects of Socio Economic status on academic achievement*. Unpublished Thesis project, Wichita State University. Retrieved from <http://soar.wichita.edu/bitstream/handle/1005/61>
- Becker, M., Vignoles, V. L., Owe, E., Easterbrook, M. J., Brown, R., Smith, P. B., ... & Aldhafri, S. (2014). Cultural bases for self-evaluation: Seeing oneself positively in different cultural contexts. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40(5), 657-675.
- Berk, (2006). *Development through the lifespan*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Blacksher, E., (2002). On being poor and feeling poor: Low socioeconomic status and the moral self. *Theoretical Medicine*, 3; 455-470
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2010). *PISA 2009 results: learning trends: changes in student performance since 2000* (vol. v). OECD, Paris, France.
- Delaney, L., Harmon, C., Redmond, C. (2011). Parental education, grade attainment and earnings expectations among university students. *Economics of Education Review*, 30; 1136- 1152.
- Dowler, E., (2005) . *Socio-economic status*. University of Warwick, Coventry, UK. Egili, E., Oghan, F., Ozturk, O., Harputluoglu, U. (2004). Effect of otorhinolarynhological diseases and socioeconomic status of school performance: a survey study. *International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology*, 68; 883-888.
- Ferguson, E. J. (2009). *A Comparative Analysis of Family Structure and Academic Achievement Level of African American Students in Selected North Carolina Schools: ETD collection for Fayetteville State University*. Paper AA13406577 Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unefsu.edu/dessertations>
- Hall, A.M., & Rowe, G.P. (1991). Self Esteem of rural teens. *Journal of extension*. Retrieved from <http://www.joe.org>
- Robins, R. W., Trzesniewski, K. H., Tracy, J. L., Gosling, S. D., & Potter, J. (2002). Global self-esteem across the life span. *Psychology and aging*, 17(3), 423.
- Rogers, C.R. (1961). *On becoming a person*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Sandro, C., (1987). *Schools urged to get parents involved Family participation aids academic*
- Slavin, L.R.E. (2006). *Educational Psychology, Theory and Practice*. New York: Pearson Education Inc.
- Tracy, J.L., & Robins, R.W. (2003). “Death of a (narcissistic) salesman”: An integrative model of fragile self-esteem. *Psychological Inquiry*, 14, 57–62.