

Self-esteem among eunuchs of Hazara Division, Pakistan

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Abstract

Self-esteem among eunuchs is highly influenced by a variety of factors. The aim of the current study was to investigate the differences in self-esteem of eunuchs on the basis of education, income, age and marital status. The study was conducted at the University of Haripur, Pakistan, from December 2015 to November 2016. A sample of 140 eunuchs was collected from different areas of Hazara division, through purposive and snowball sampling technique. A self-esteem scale with four sub-scales was used to measure the self-esteem of eunuchs. One-way analysis of variance was used to determine education level differences. The t-test was applied to find out the impact of demographics differences such as marital status, income level, and age on self-esteem of eunuchs. The scale used was found to be quite reliable with alpha coefficient of 0.85. The outcomes are significant and showed that educated, higher income, younger and unmarried eunuchs had higher self-esteem ($p < 0.05$).

Keywords: Self-esteem, Eunuchs, Hazara division, Pakistan, Snowball.

Introduction

Eunuchs are considered to be the third-gender surrounded in large numbers with their distinguishable features within each and every community. But, unfortunately, Pakistanis in their native language vociferate them as "Hijras", "Khusra" or "Khawjasaras", and consider them tramp, danseur and whore. People who are neither male nor female without any conformation identity and moves between the context of men or women, born either hermaphrodite, neuter and cross-dresser are termed eunuchs.¹ Hijras, as a special community, are micromanaged or governed by a special mentor

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whom they call guru.²

Millions of eunuchs with stereotyped roles³ live in Pakistan and are found as street beggars suffering from various issues⁴ and living in a pretty much poor area with extremely deteriorated mental health.⁵ There is no formal record about the citizenry of eunuchs as they are much dispersed.⁶

Self-esteem and motivation die in eunuchs after becoming victim of abuse and facing many refusals and disappointments. One of the most extensively studied constructs refers to a discrete instinctive assessment of a person's own sense of value allied to self-esteem.⁷ Mental, emotional and social health increases with the rise in self-esteem.⁸

Various studies focussed on the prevalence of self-esteem among male and female genders, but literature on interconnection of demographics with self-esteem of eunuchs is insufficient. Eunuch, gay and transgender people have equal rights to acquire education as it helps increase their self-esteem.⁹ Income level and self-esteem are strongly correlated.¹⁰ Salary and educational level both determine self-esteem in eunuchs.¹¹

Age also seems to have an effect on self-esteem. Young individuals report high self-esteem than old persons.¹² Another study also reported that self-esteem is high in young people than older ones.¹³ Well-being is further enhanced as a result of marriage, but due to high demands without any social support unmarried people seem to have more self-esteem than married people. Some of the Hijras did marry while others do not and engage in unhealthy sexual encounters.¹⁴ Approximately two to three million individuals are eunuchs, gay or transgender, and within them marriage is significantly linked with high self-esteem while others who are unmarried have high self-esteem than married ones.¹⁵

The current study was planned to examine the self-esteem of eunuchs and to investigate the difference in age, marital status, education and income level. The study also aimed at investigating the difference of self-esteem

between educated and uneducated, high- and low-income, younger and older, married and unmarried eunuchs.

Methods and Results

The study was conducted at the University of Haripur, Pakistan, from December 2015 to November 2016, and comprised eunuchs. It was approved by the institutional ethical board. The participants were selected for data collection from Haripur, Mansehra, Abbottabad and various villages of the Hazara division. Snowball sampling technique was used because the exact quantity of eunuch population is unknown. Diagnosed cases of eunuchs by birth were included in the study. Married and unmarried eunuchs who lived with their husband and guru as well as those who knew Urdu were included.

Eunuchs who were not aware of the Urdu language, who lived with their blood relations, those who were not diagnosed cases of eunuchs and those with sex reassignment were excluded.

The tools for the collection of data comprised characteristics like education, age, marital status and income level. For measuring self-esteem, 29 items with four subcategories based on Likert-type self-esteem scale were used.¹⁶ First dimension self-acceptance composed of 11 items; second dimension self-competence composed of 6 questions; 7 items composed of social and physical self-acceptance; and the remaining 5 questions were part of academic self-competence. Scale span composed of 0 (extremely true) to 5 (extremely false). Some of the items were negatively scored while others were positively scored (Annexure).

Starting with the consent form, data was assembled and further statistical analysis was made through

Table-2: Mean, Standard deviation, and t-value for income level of eunuchs on self esteem scale (N=140).

Sub Scales	Low income eunuch	High income eunuch	t
	N=23 M±SD	N=117 M±SD	
Self Acceptance	26.2±2.2	34.2±4.2	0.80
Self competence	17.3±2.5	23.1±3.1	0.89
Social and physical acceptance	17.2±3.5	26.1±2.3	1.08
Academic Acceptance	18.1±2.3	28.4±1.4	0.91
Total	73.8±10.5	111.8±10.9	0.775

SD: Standard deviation.

SPSS. The alpha coefficient of overall self-esteem scale was .85 whereas for subscales it ranged from 0.4 to 0.7.

The data was collected from one hundred and forty eunuchs (N = 140). The participants age ranged from 18 to 48 years (Mage= 33.09; SDage=5.69). Overall, 43(30.7%) were illiterate, and the education level ranged from primary to graduation. They earned 200 Pakistani rupees daily and gave money to their mentor. The educated eunuchs had high self-esteem compared to non-educated ones. Those who were highly qualified had high self-esteem. The values were highly significant ($p < 0.05$) (Table-1).

The income-wise differences in the eunuchs' scores on self-esteem scale indicated that eunuchs with higher income had higher self-esteem as compared with eunuchs with low income. The total value of low income was 73.8±10.5 while the total value of high income was 111.8±10.9 (Table-2).

The differences in the eunuch's age scores or marital status on self-esteem scale indicated that young eunuchs had higher self-esteem compared to elder eunuchs, and unmarried eunuchs scored higher on the all factors of

Table-1: Mean, Standard deviation, and F-value for education differences level of eunuchs on self esteem scale (N=140).

Subscale	illiterate n=43 M±SD	up to primary n=20 M±SD	6th-10th n=29 M±SD	uptoFA n=37 M±SD	BA and above n=11 M±SD	F	p
Self-Acceptance	12.3±55.91	18.1±3.2	26.1±4.2	22.1±2.5	52.4±3.3	1.983	.02
Academic Competence	23.01±28.0	19.0±1.2	15.1±2.2	17.2±2.2	43.4±1.3	1.951	.004
Physical & Social Acceptance	21.4±29.61	25.6±2.2	18.0±3.4	19.2±3.3	31.3±1.2	.764	.01
Self-Competence	17.67±18.1	20.5±3.1	14.2±2.1	20.4±2.1	20.1±2.1	.730	.005
Total	71.76±74.6	72.9±9.00	75.9±10.1	64.2±8.7	86.4±10.8	.977	.039

SD: Standard deviation

FA: Faculty of Arts

BA: Bachelors of Arts.

Table-3: Mean, Standard deviation, and t-value for age level or marital status of eunuchs on self esteem scale (N=140).

Sub Scales	Youngest Eunuch (18-30 years) N=94	Eldest Eunuch (31-48 years) N=46	t	p	Unmarried Eunuch N=77	Married Eunuch N=63	t	p
	M±SD	M±SD			M±SD	M±SD		
Self Acceptance	33.7±3.3	26.3±4.3	.75	.03	36.7±3.3	22.3±4.3	1.34	.002
Self competence	22.4±2.1	15.3±2.2	.95	.001	28.4±2.1	12.3±2.2	1.86	.001
Social and physical acceptance	22.1±4.0	16.0±2.3	.97	.002	22.1±4.0	13.0±2.3	.789	.002
Academic Acceptance	25.3±2.3	15.4±3.1	.57	.003	27.3±2.3	15.4±3.1	.79	.014
Total	103.5±11.7	72.0±11.9	.85	.036	114.5±11.7	63.0±11.9	.779	0.01

*p<.05

SD: Standard deviation.

self-esteem as well as on the total scale as compared with the married eunuchs (Table-3).

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study were significant. Education is the most significant factor as it enables an individual to excel in each and every juncture by amplifying self-confidence and self-esteem.¹⁷ Existing or previous literature shows that with the rise in education, self-esteem increases.^{9,11,18} Most of the time eunuchs experience low self-esteem and confidence without any locus of control. So, salary also plays a significant factor in enhancing the self-esteem of an eunuch. Income level and self-esteem in turn linked with each other in the same manner as education. Individuals with rise in wages experience rise in self-esteem than low-earning people.^{19,10} Age, on the other hand, is conjoined with self-esteem.^{20,11} Young adulthood is associated with increase in self-esteem than late adulthood.²¹ According to Maslow, self-esteem is a remarkable feature of psychological health.²² Those who are unmarried have high self-esteem than the married²³ because the former have less responsibilities.¹⁵ Thus, the findings of the current study are consistent with the literature review.

In Pakistani society, eunuchs are popularly known by dancing and street beggars with stereotyped roles. Nothing is much known about their esteem level and the factors influencing it. Identical to many hypothetical aspects, self-esteem is determined by a variety of factors. Age, marital status, income and educational level seem to influence self-esteem among eunuchs. The current study's findings reveal significant demographic differences in self-esteem of Pakistani eunuchs. There is a need to determine the exact ratio of eunuchs in Pakistan. Moreover, a proper consideration should be given by the family and

society if eunuchs were born as a part of their family. Their issues should be understood and resolved by the underlying community. Men and women should consider eunuchs as a separate entity with distinctive characteristics. They have their own identity and they should be treated humanely.

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