Utilizing Desserts Inherited from Chinese Culture as a Method of Promoting Self-Esteem at Wat Bot Woradit

Paisan Sukjairungwattana*

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mahidol University, Thailand

Submission: July 26, 2023; **Published**: Aug 09, 2023

*Corresponding author: Paisan Sukjairungwattana, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mahidol University, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand, Email: paisan.suk@mahidol.edu

Abstract

This study identifies the factors that affect the self-esteem promotion of orphans at Bot Woradit Temple in Pa Mok District, Ang Thong Province, and develops and determines the quality of self-esteem promotion for orphans at this temple. Accordingly, it tries and evaluates this model by utilizing snacks derived from Chinese culture to build self-esteem as part of it. The results of this study will be used to develop strategies to improve the self-esteem of orphans in the Pa Mok District and beyond. Data were collected using questionnaires from 30 orphans living in Wat Bot Woradit, Pa Mok District, Ang Thong Province. The results indicated that the using of desserts inherited from Chinese culture improved the orphans' self-esteem significantly. Incorporating Chinese desserts into the diet of orphans and participating in their preparation were effective methods for improving their self-esteem. Implications are that if this trend is followed, it can potentially lead to improvements in mental health, social well-being, and overall quality of life for the orphans.

Keywords: Self-Esteem Promotion; Orphan; Thai Temple; Wat Bot Woradit; Chinese Desserts

Introduction

Trend of population in Thailand

Thailand's population has undergone significant changes over the years, leading to various trends and problems [1]. Thailand has experienced both rapid population growth and decline in recent decades. From the 1960s to the early 1990s, the population grew alarmingly, primarily due to high birth rates and reduced mortality rates. However, since the early 2000s, the population growth rate has decreased. One of the most pressing demographic challenges faced by Thailand is the aging population. The country's fertility rate has dropped below the replacement level, resulting in a decline in the working-age population and an increase in the elderly population. This demographic shift poses significant social and economic challenges, such as increased healthcare costs, a shrinking labor force, and a strain on the pension system.

Urbanization has been a prevailing trend in Thailand, with the majority of the population residing in urban areas. Cities like Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Phuket have experienced rapid urban growth, attracting people from rural areas seeking better job opportunities and improved living standards. However, this urban migration has led to various problems such as overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, and increased demand for housing.

Thailand exhibits significant regional disparities in population distribution and development [2]. The central region, particularly Bangkok, has the highest population density and economic growth, while the northern and northeastern regions face challenges such as poverty, limited job opportunities, and inadequate public services. These disparities contribute to internal migration, as people from less developed regions seek better prospects in urban centers.

To address the challenges associated with population growth, Thailand has implemented various family planning and population control measures. The government has promoted family planning services, reproductive health education, and access to contraceptives. These efforts have contributed to a decline in the fertility rate; however, ensuring equal access to family planning services across all regions remains a challenge. The population trends in Thailand reflect a complex interplay of factors, including urbanization, aging population, regional disparities, and migration. While the country has made progress in addressing some of the challenges, there is a need for continued efforts to ensure sustainable population growth, equitable development, and social well-being for all segments of society.

Orphans at Thai temples

This special group of people are a significant social issue in Thailand. These temples, also known as wats, have historically provided shelter and support for orphans and abandoned children. Many Thai temples have dedicated areas or buildings where orphans are cared for [3]. These facilities often provide a safe haven for children who have lost their families or been abandoned. The caretakers at these temples, usually monks or volunteers, work tirelessly to ensure orphans receive proper care, education, and emotional support. The number of orphans in Thailand has been a cause for concern. Factors such as poverty, drug addiction, and the HIV/AIDS epidemic have contributed to the increasing number of children left without parental care. Thai temples have become a refuge for these children, offering them a chance at a better life.

Despite the noble efforts of the caretakers, orphans at Thai temples face numerous challenges. One of the primary concerns is the lack of resources and funding. Many temples rely on donations and support from the local community to sustain orphan care. However, these resources are often limited, making it difficult to provide adequate food, clothing, and healthcare for children. Orphans at Thai temples face another challenge. While some temples have established schools within their premises, others struggle to provide formal education to children. Limited resources and a shortage of qualified teachers make it challenging to offer quality education to all orphans

Furthermore, the emotional well-being of orphans is also a concern. Losing their families and growing up in an institutional setting can have a lasting impact on their mental health. The absence of a stable family environment and the lack of individualized attention can lead to feelings of loneliness and detachment. Efforts are being made by both the government and non-governmental organizations to address the challenges faced by orphans at Thai temples. Initiatives such as increased funding, vocational training programs, and counseling services aim to improve the lives of these children. Additionally, awareness campaigns and advocacy work seek to highlight the issue and encourage support from the public. Thus, orphans at Thai temples are a vulnerable group in need of support and care. While these temples provide a safe haven for children who have lost their families, there are several challenges that need to be addressed. By raising awareness and providing adequate resources, we can help improve the lives of these orphans and give them a chance for a brighter future. Thus, this study aims to identify the challenges faced by Thai temple orphans and develop programs to help improve their lives. We hope to make a difference in the lives of these vulnerable children and help them reach their full potential.

Related Studies on Self-esteem

Self-esteem and well-being

Self-esteem is essential for personal well-being and overall success in life. It plays a crucial role in shaping one's confidence, resilience, and ability to navigate through challenges [4,5]. When individuals have a healthy level of self-esteem, they are more likely to have positive relationships, make better decisions, and achieve their goals. Having a strong sense of self-esteem provides a solid foundation for mental and emotional well-being. It allows individuals to have a positive attitude towards themselves, which in turn affects their overall outlook on life. When someone has high self-esteem, they are more likely to believe in their abilities, embrace their strengths, and accept their limitations.

Self-esteem and social-emotional adaptation

Self-esteem also influences the way individuals interact with others. When someone feels good about themselves, they are more likely to engage in healthy relationships and set boundaries that protect their well-being [6]. They are less likely to tolerate mistreatment or allow others to take advantage of them. This ability to assert oneself is essential for maintaining healthy relationships and creating a supportive social network. Moreover, perceived mattering should receive greater attention as a relevant psychosocial construct, with significant implications for individuals' general functioning [7]. It is important to note that perceived mattering is not necessarily associated with the feeling of being loved, but with the feeling of being valued and respected. This feeling of being valued can be a powerful motivator for people to reach their goals.

Self-esteem and personal achievement

Furthermore, self-esteem has a significant impact on personal achievement. When individuals have confidence in their abilities and believe in their worth, they are more motivated to pursue their goals [8,9]. They are more likely to take risks, embrace challenges, and persist in the face of setbacks. This resilience and determination are crucial for success in various areas of life, such as education, career, and personal growth. When individuals have higher self-esteem, they are more likely to take on difficult tasks and have a better attitude toward failure. They understand that failure is a part of success and don't let it discourage them [10]. This helps them stay focused and motivated to keep working towards their goals. This mindset helps them to stay focused, which is essential for achieving success. It also helps them to have a positive attitude and to persevere, even when faced with obstacles. Ultimately, having resilience and determination is key to achieving success. This allows them to take risks and learn from their mistakes, which ultimately leads to greater success. They also remain open to feedback and use it as an opportunity for growth. Having this attitude towards failure gives them the confidence to keep trying and pushing forward.

In contrast, low self-esteem can have detrimental effects on an individual's mental, emotional, and social well-being [10,11]. It can lead to feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and anxiety. This negative self-perception can hinder personal growth and prevent individuals from reaching their full potential [12]. Therefore,

it is crucial to foster and nurture self-esteem throughout life. Encouraging positive self-talk, celebrating achievements, and embracing mistakes as learning opportunities are some ways to promote healthy self-esteem. Additionally, providing support and validation to others can also contribute to their sense of self-worth.

Objectives and Research Design

Therefore, this study is made to explore the improvement of self-esteem among orphans at Bot Woradit Temple using desserts derived from Chinese culture. The purpose of this is to enable children to express themselves in a manner appropriate to the situation they are in, including emotions, physical abilities, social skills, and verbal skills. The author hopes the findings can be used to improve orphans' self-esteem. As a result, children will feel more confident and able to live a happier life in society. The objectives of this study are:

 i. Use desserts inherited from Chinese culture to study factors affecting the promotion of self-esteem among the orphans at Bot Woradit Temple.

 ii. Develop and evaluate a model for promoting self-esteem.

 iii. Conduct experiments with the model.

 iv. Evaluation and improvement of the self-esteem promotion model.

Accordingly, the design of the research can be shown in the following Figure 1:

Figure 1: Research Design.
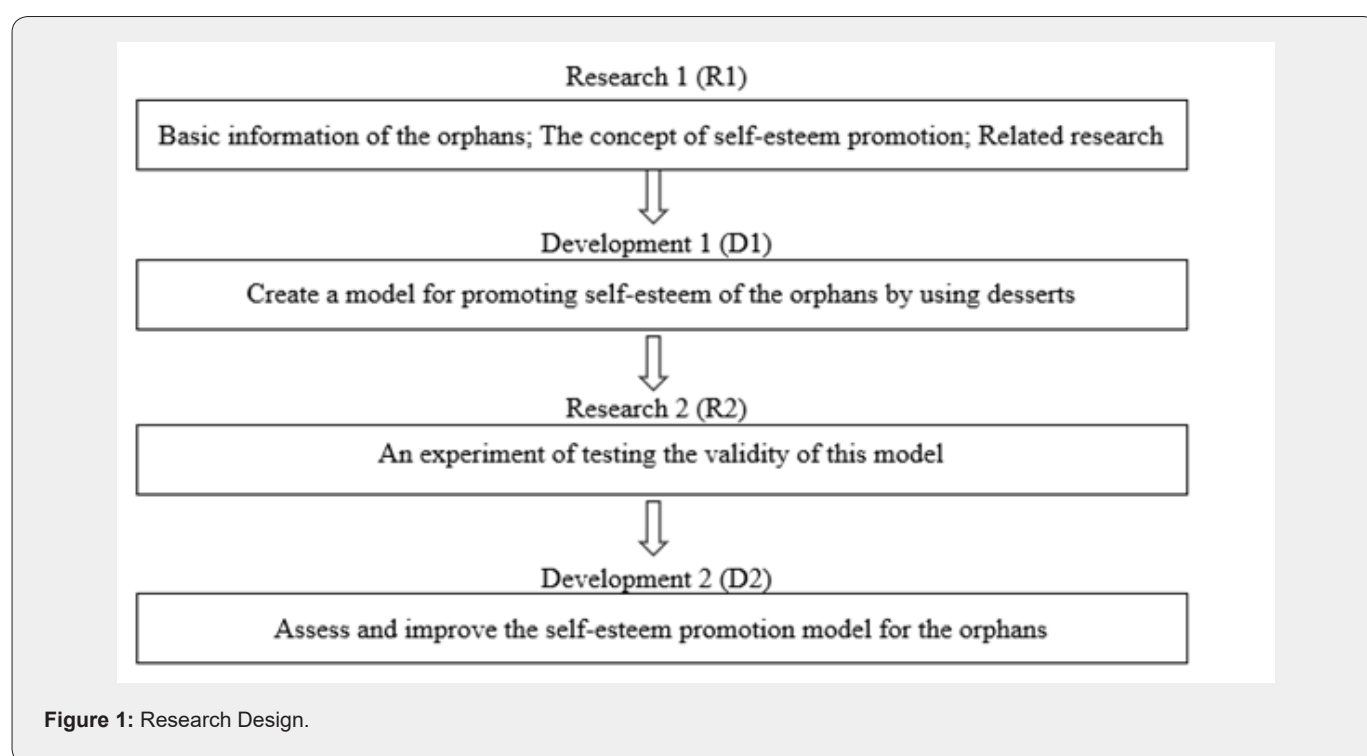
Methodology

This section describes how the Research & Development process of the study explored this topic and developed the model. It is divided into the following steps:

Step 1: Research 1 (R1)

This part is an analysis of the basic knowledge and context to promote self-esteem of the orphans. The research involved 30 orphans and their caretakers as participants at Wat Bot Woradit. To create a survey topic and frame a broad set of questions, research design-based data collection methods were utilized. Approximately 10 photographs of each person were collected from orphan caretakers of the temple. The photographs were used to create a digital album for each person, which was then used to measure self-esteem. The results of the survey were then used to analyze the relationship between self-esteem and the amount of care received by each orphan. Using the data collected, an understanding of the caretaker-orphan relationship was provided with regards to the impact of desserts inherited from the Chinese culture on the self-esteem of the orphan.

Step 2: Development 1 (D1)

This part focuses on developing and improving a model to promote orphans' self-esteem by defining the main components, which are principles, objectives, and processes. In order to determine whether the pattern is satisfactory, five experts reviewed a suitability assessment form to determine consistency and feasibility with the following steps:

i. Analysis and model development;

ii. Develop data collection tools;

iii. Check and certify the model.

The target group consisted of 5 experts in the model certification with specific selection criteria (purposive sampling) who have worked with orphans for at least 5 years and have high moral and ethical standards. The tools used to collect data were 1) a self-esteem assessment form, and 2) a self-esteem behavior observation form. The data were analyzed by means and standard deviation, and the accuracy (reliability) of the data was checked by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (.83).

Step 3: Research 2 (R2)

In this phase, the validity of the model is being tested experimentally. Using desserts inherited from Chinese culture, a form of promoting the self-esteem of the orphans was used in the trial. Following the experiment, a test was administered to measure knowledge before and after the experiment. A training program for making Chinese desserts, such as Snow Lotus Cake, was then conducted for the orphans. Lastly, a self-esteem promotion model was implemented with the orphans. This model allowed the orphans to gain a sense of accomplishment by learning how to make these desserts, which in turn helped to boost their self-confidence and self-esteem. Additionally, the use of the desserts provided a unique, cultural experience for the orphans that was both fun and informative. The test administered before and after the experiment showed that the orphans had gained a better understanding of Chinese culture, which was likely a contributing factor to their improved self-esteem.

Step 4: Development 2 (D2)

In this phase, the self-esteem promotion model will be evaluated for its effectiveness and potential for improvement. A Satisfaction Questionnaire was used to evaluate the satisfaction of 30 orphans at Bot Woradit Temple. A qualitative focus group discussion was conducted with 7 experts or those with experience working with orphans. Results were analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the model. Recommendations and suggestions from the experts were incorporated into the model. Finally, the model was revised and refined for further implementation.

The research and development conducted in this process significantly contribute to the understanding of self-esteem promotion in orphans. It examines the impact of cultural activities, specifically the making of Chinese desserts, on the self-esteem of orphans, providing a unique angle to the discussion of mental health in vulnerable children. The research takes into account not only the experiences of the orphans themselves but also their caretakers and experts in the field, ensuring a comprehensive view of the problem at hand. The development and refinement of a model dedicated to boosting self-esteem in orphans could have far-reaching impacts on the wellbeing of these children and the

methods used in orphanages and similar institutions. The methods used in this process are considered to be valid and reliable. In (R1), the researchers used a careful data collection method and analyzed the relationship between self-esteem and caretaking patterns. In (D1), expert opinions were sought to ensure the model's consistency and feasibility. The reliability of the data was verified through Cronbach's Alpha, which is a widely-accepted measure of internal consistency in research. The model's validity was further tested in (R2) through a before-and-after experiment, and the effectiveness of the model was eventually evaluated in (D2) through a satisfaction questionnaire and expert focus group.

The research and development process provides a comprehensive exploration of self-esteem promotion in orphans using cultural activities. The research's significance lies in its potential to improve the mental health and wellbeing of orphans. The use of reliable and valid methods further strengthens the research's credibility. The process concludes with a refined model for promoting self-esteem in orphans, which could be a valuable tool for orphanages and similar institutions. However, further research might be needed to generalize these findings to different cultural settings and age groups. It would also be beneficial to explore long-term impacts of the model on the orphans' self-esteem and overall wellbeing.

Findings and Discussion

According to the previous steps, the questionnaire was designed to gather feedback on the orphans' overall satisfaction with the model, while the focus group discussion allowed experts to provide insight into how the model could be improved. The collected data was analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the model, and the suggestions from the experts were used to revise and refine it for future use. A model developed in this study to improve the self-esteem of orphans at Wat Bot Woradit by utilizing desserts inherited from Chinese culture can be summarized as follows (Figure 2):

However, it is important to note that the model has not been implemented with a larger sample size yet. Therefore, it is difficult to say definitively whether or not the model is effective. Additionally, the model may only be effective for the specific population of orphans at Bot Woradit Temple. It is possible that the model would not be effective with a different population of orphans. Nevertheless, from the experiment of this model several points can be summarized regarding the improvement of self-esteem of the orphans in Thai temples:

Cultural Connection and Identity: Introducing orphans to desserts inherited from Chinese culture can help foster a sense of cultural connection and identity. By exploring and learning about their cultural heritage, these children may develop a stronger sense of belonging and pride, which can positively impact their self-esteem.
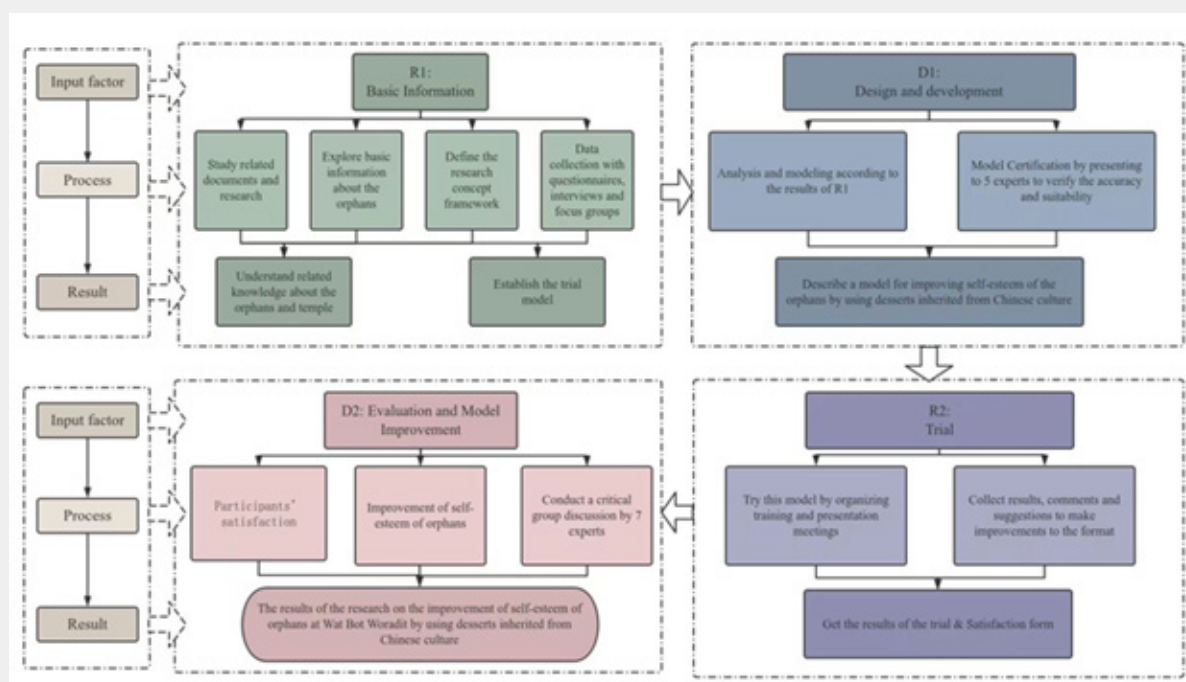
Figure 2: Model of Improving Self-esteem.

Skill Development: Preparing and sharing traditional desserts requires learning culinary skills and techniques. Engaging orphans in the process of making these desserts can provide them with opportunities for skill development, boosting their confidence and self-worth. As they acquire new abilities and knowledge, they may feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in their achievements.

Cultural Appreciation and Acceptance: Exposing orphans to different cultural practices fosters an environment of cultural appreciation and acceptance. By celebrating the diversity of Chinese desserts, the orphans can develop a broader perspective and learn to embrace different traditions and customs. This exposure can help them develop open-mindedness, tolerance, and an appreciation for their own unique qualities, leading to enhanced self-esteem.

Sense of Community: The act of making and enjoying Chinese desserts together can promote a sense of community among the orphans and temple members. Participating in communal activities can create a supportive environment where children feel valued and included. This sense of belonging can significantly impact self-esteem, as they experience a network of caring individuals who appreciate their contributions.

Sense of Tradition and Continuity: Traditional desserts inherited from Chinese culture can provide a link to the past and a sense of continuity for orphans. By engaging in these practices, they become part of a lineage of traditions and customs that have been passed down through generations. This connection to their cultural heritage can instill a sense of pride and self-worth, contributing to their overall self-esteem.

While these points outline the potential benefits of utilizing Chinese desserts to promote self-esteem among orphans at Thai temples, it is important to note that the effectiveness of such an approach will depend on a variety of factors, including the children's individual backgrounds [13], receptiveness to cultural activities [14], and the support and guidance provided by temple staff or caregivers [15]. It would be beneficial to conduct specific research or consult with experts in the field in order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of these practices on the self-esteem of orphans.

Conclusion

The current study provides an exploration of improving self-esteem of orphans at Wat Bot Woradit by utilizing desserts inherited from Chinese culture, for example, Snow Lotus Cake. The dessert-based intervention was designed to improve orphans' self-esteem, and the results of the study showed that it was successful. The intervention was found to be effective in reducing the orphans' sense of loneliness, as well as improving their overall mood. For example, the orphans reported feeling more confident, and their fear and anxiety were reduced after the intervention. However, it is possible that the dessert-based intervention was not the only factor that contributed to the orphans' improved self-esteem. It is

possible that the orphans' improved self-esteem was also due to the increased attention they received from the researchers during the study.

Moreover, implementing the approach of utilizing desserts inherited from Chinese culture to promote self-esteem among orphans at Thai temples may encounter several challenges. It is essential to approach cultural practices with sensitivity and respect, ensuring that the adoption of Chinese desserts is done in a manner that appreciates and honors the cultural heritage without appropriating or diluting its significance. Care must be taken to avoid misrepresentation or oversimplification, and to involve individuals from the Chinese community who can provide guidance and cultural context. Furthermore, some orphans may have dietary restrictions or allergies that need to be taken into account when introducing Chinese desserts. It is essential to consider the ingredients used and ensure that they align with the dietary needs and restrictions of the children. Providing alternative options or adapting recipes may be necessary to accommodate various dietary requirements. Depending on the location and resources of the Thai temples, the availability of specific Chinese ingredients required for traditional desserts may be limited. This may pose challenges in obtaining authentic ingredients and could require adaptations or substitutions in recipes. Ensuring the accessibility of ingredients without compromising cultural authenticity can be a logistical hurdle. There is another fact that the orphans may come from diverse backgrounds, and some may not have any prior exposure to Chinese culture or desserts. Introducing a new cultural element can be met with hesitation or resistance. It is crucial to create an inclusive environment where all children feel comfortable and included, regardless of their cultural background. Providing educational and engaging activities to familiarize them with Chinese culture can help overcome initial resistance. Finally, implementing this approach effectively requires adequate training and resources for the staff or volunteers responsible for teaching the children about Chinese desserts. They need to possess the necessary knowledge and skills to introduce and guide the children in the preparation and cultural significance of these desserts. Investing in training programs and resources may be necessary to ensure the best possible experience for the orphans.

Sustaining the practice of utilizing Chinese desserts as a means of promoting self-esteem among orphans may require ongoing commitment and resources. It is crucial to consider the long-term feasibility and sustainability of this approach, including factors such as funding, availability of volunteers, and continued support from the temple community. Addressing these potential challenges through careful planning, cultural sensitivity, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders can help facilitate the successful implementation of this approach to promote self-esteem among orphans at Thai temples.

References

1. Kosulwat V (2002) The nutrition and health transition in Thailand. Public health nutrition 5(1a): 183-189.

2. Lessmann C, Seidel A (2017) Regional inequality, convergence, and its determinants–A view from outer space. European Economic Review 92: 110-132.

3. Carpenter K (2015) Continuity, complexity and reciprocity in a Cambodian orphanage. Children & Society 29(2): 85-94.

4. Lin C C (2015) Gratitude and depression in young adults: The mediating role of self-esteem and well-being. Personality and Individual Differences 87: 30-34.

5. Bajaj B, Gupta R, Pande N (2016) Self-esteem mediates the relationship between mindfulness and well-being. Personality and Individual Differences 94: 96-100.

6. Saltalı N D, Arslan E, Arslan C (2018) An investigation of self-esteem, socio-emotional adaptation and relational problem solving in pre-schoolers. European Journal of Education Studies 5(3): 1-18.

7. Matera C, Bosco N, Meringolo P (2020) Perceived mattering to family and friends, self-esteem, and well-being. Psychology, health & medicine 25(5): 550-558.

8. Farhan S, Khan I (2015) Impact of stress, self-esteem and gender factor on students' academic achievement. International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications 6(2): 143-156.

9. Yang Q, Tian L, Huebner E S, Zhu X (2019) Relations among academic achievement, self-esteem, and subjective well-being in school among elementary school students: A longitudinal mediation model. School Psychology 34(3): 328-340.

10. Marshall SL, Parker PD, Ciarrochi J, Sahdra B, Jackson CJ, et al. (2015) Self-compassion protects against the negative effects of low self-esteem: A longitudinal study in a large adolescent sample. Personality and individual differences 74: 116-121.

11. Satuf C, Monteiro S, Pereira H, Esgalhado G, Marina Afonso R, et al. (2018) The protective effect of job satisfaction in health, happiness, well-being and self-esteem. International journal of occupational safety and ergonomics 24(2): 181-189.

12. Wang JL, Wang HZ, Gaskin J, Hawk S (2017) The mediating roles of upward social comparison and self-esteem and the moderating role of social comparison orientation in the association between social networking site usage and subjective well-being. Frontiers in psychology 8.

13. Martinsen KD, Neumer SP, Holen S, Waaktaar T, Sund AM, et al. (2016) Self-reported quality of life and self-esteem in sad and anxious school children. BMC psychology 4: 1-10.

14. Montgomery J, Srivastava S, London-Johnson A, Ferrill J, Iheanacho EC (2021) Cultural activities in transracially adoptive families. Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work 30(5): 430-444.

15. Cantwell J, Muldoon O, Gallagher S (2015) The influence of self-esteem and social support on the relationship between stigma and depressive symptomology in parents caring for children with intellectual disabilities. Journal of Intellectual Disability Research 59(10): 948-957.

Annals of Social Sciences & Management Studies