

***The Relationship between Self-Esteem and
Gender, Grade Level and Academic Achievement, in
Secondary Schools' Classes in Lebanon***

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ABSTRACT

It particularly aimed at investigating the relationship between self-esteem and gender, grade level, and academic achievement among a sample of Lebanese Secondary school students: grades 10, 11 and 12. Six schools were randomly sampled and one section of each grade was randomly chosen. Participants were 479 students of whom 235 were males and 244 were females. The students responded to Culture-Free Self-Esteem inventory questionnaire (CFSEI-3). SPSS was used for analyzing data, using ANOVA design. The results revealed no significant gender difference in the Global, General, Academic, Parental and Social self-esteem subscales. Whereas the results showed a significant difference between males and females in the Personal self-esteem subscales. The results also revealed a significant difference between grade levels in the Global, General, Academic, and Social self-esteem subscale while no significant difference was recorded in the Personal and Parental self-esteem subscales among those grade levels. No significant interaction between gender and grade level in the Global, General, Academic, and Social self-esteem subscales. However, a significant interaction was noticed in the Personal self-esteem subscale. There was a significantly low correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement in the Global, General, Academic, and Parental self-esteem subscales, but no significant correlation was revealed between Social and Personal self-esteem subscales and academic achievement in the whole sample and in grades 10 and 11. In the case of grade 12 a significant correlation was recorded between the Global, General, Academic self-esteem and academic achievement. No significant difference was recorded between the Parental, Social and Personal self-esteem subscales and academic achievement of grade 12 students. Finally, z scores revealed no significant correlation differences across grade levels.

Some findings with regards to the relationship between gender, grade level and interaction were noted concerning the six individual schools represented in the sample. Results were compared and discussed.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my loving parents, God rest their souls. To my mother, Maram Elrafei, who taught me among other things, the value of commitment, hard work and the importance of education. To my dearest uncle Faisal El rafei, you were the origin of my self-esteem.

A special word of appreciation and thanks is extended to my family. To my loving husband, Mr. Abdul Rahman Al rafei, who is my life-long companion and whose love, patience, kindness and encouragement are a constant source of support and grace. You are the rock on which I can always depend. To my two beloved sons Abdel Majid Alrafei and Ali Alrafei, You were a great help throughout the whole process.

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Table of contents

	Page
TITLE.....	1
ABSTRACT	2
DEDICATION.....	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMNT.....	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	5
 CHAPTER.I	
INTRODUCTION.....	9
A - Background Information about the problem	10
B - Statement of the Problem	12
C- Personal and professional rationale	15
D- Purpose of the Current Study	16
E- Significance of the Current Study.....	17
F - Context of the study.....	19
G- Conceptual Framework	22
1. Self-esteem, in comparison to self-concept and self-efficacy.....	22
2. Develoment, Function, and Nature of self-esteem.....	24
3. Self-esteem, learning, and emotions	27
4. Self-esteem Controversy	27
 CHAPTER II : REVIEW OF LITERATURE	 34
A- Theoretical Framework.....	36
Self-esteem, Self-concept and Self-efficacy.....	38
1. Self-esteem and self-concept.....	38
2. Self-efficacy and Self-esteem	43
3. Development of Self-esteem.....	43
4. Function of self-esteem.....	48
5. Nature of self-esteem	50
6. Emotions and self-esteem	52

B- Correlates of Self-Esteem: Academic Achievement, Grade Level, and Gender.....	55
C- Historical view.....	57
1. Psychodynamic Approach.....	59
2. Behavioural approach	61
3. Cognitive-behavioural approach	64
4. Humanistic approach.....	67
5. Socio-cultural approach	71
6- Cognitive – Experiential Approach	88
D- Empirical Perspectives of Self-Esteem.....	92
1- Self-Esteem and Gender	92
2- Culture and Gender differences	96
3- Self-Esteem and Grade Level.....	107
4- Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement.....	114
E- Culture and academic achievement.....	118
CHAPTER III : METHODOLOGY.....	124
A- Purpose of Research Study.....	124
B- Rationale for the Hypotheses.....	125
C- Hypotheses.....	1270
D- Research Paradigm.....	128
E- Research Method.....	130
F- Ethical Considerations.....	132
G- Definition of variables.....	133
H- Predictions.....	Error!
Bookmark not defined.	
I- Data Collection.....	136
1- Population and sample.....	136
2- Instrument.....	140
3- Instrument Reliability and Validity.....	143
4- Pilot Testing of the (CFSEI-3) and Test-retest Reliability.....	146
5- Procedures.....	147
H- Data Analysis.....	148

CHAPTER IV : RESULTS.....	149
A- Gender and Grade level Difference in self-esteem.....	149
1- Gender and self-esteem.....	149
2- Grade level and self-esteem.....	153
3- Interaction between grade level and gender in self-esteem.....	155
4- Relation between Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement.....	156
5- Relation between Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement across Grade Level.....	162
CHAPTER V : DISCUSSION	160
A- Correlates of self-esteem.....	160
1- Self-esteem and gender.....	160
2- Self-esteem and Grade level	164
B- Interaction between Grade level and gender in self-esteem.....	170
C- Academic achievement and self-esteem.....	175
D- The Relation between self-esteem and academic achievement across Grade level.....	188
CHAPTER VI : NONE HYPOTHESIZED FINDING.....	190
A- Results.....	190
1- Self-esteem and Gender.....	195
2- Self-esteem and Grade-level.....	197
3- Interaction between Grade-level and self-esteem.....	198
B- Discussion of the none hypothesized findings.....	208
Correlates between variables within each school.....	202
1-Self-esteem and Gender.....	208
2- Self-esteem and Grade level.....	214
3- Interaction between Grade level and Gender.....	225
CHAPTER VI : CONCLUSION.....	229
Summary.....	229
Limitations.....	231
Strengths.....	232
Implications.....	233
Implications for Teachers and Parents.....	239

Implications for teachers	240
Implications for parents	243
Recommendations	245
APPENDIX	249
I - CULTURE-FREE SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY (CFSEI-3)	
(Original version)	249
II- CULTURE-FREE SELF-ESTEEM INVENTORY(CFSEI-3)	
(Modified version).....	252
III- LETTER TO SCHOOLS.....	254
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	256

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with the social and psychological problems that Lebanese students encounter at key transition points in their educational careers. It is, particularly, concerned with the role of self-esteem in assisting adolescent students (aged 15-18) in coping with the transition into and from secondary school and the particular challenges these transitions pose for students including the academic pressures that characterize this stage, and that mainly engages in preparation for the official public examinations (Baccalaureate). The research is concerned with how the students' development of self-esteem relates to the way in which they experience these transitions and how self-esteem of both genders is affected by these transitions. The thesis also examines the relationship between self-esteem and gender, grade level, and academic achievement to achieve an understanding of the relationship between self-esteem and these variables.

This chapter aims to present an overview of the concept of self-esteem, state the research problem, present the personal and professional rationale, the purpose and the significance and the context of the study. The conceptual framework of the study shows how self-esteem is defined from different perspectives and how it is related to self-concept, and self-efficacy. In this respect, theoretical framework is presented concerning the beliefs about the development of self-esteem, its functions, nature and educational significance. In addition, some attention is given to the role of emotions in the learning process in relation to self-esteem. This chapter, also, includes the significance of the study in the field of education, and also presents the context of the problem.

A - Background Information about the problem

Self-Esteem is a topic in psychology that has been researched since the second half of the twentieth century. From William James (1890) to White (1959), Coopersmith (1959; 1967), Rosenberg (1965; 1979), Branden (1969; 1994), and Mruk (1999), self-esteem has been given a broad theoretical perspective that is considered a major indicator of mental health and adaptive human functioning.

Many research studies have conceptualized self-esteem to emerge as a result of the individual's interaction with the social environment. This can be traced to the first social scientist William James (1890), who recognized that people's feelings about themselves arise from interactions with others. He viewed self-esteem as a ratio of the person's successes compared to failures in areas of life that are important to a given individual, or that individual's "success (to) pretensions" ratio. Many of James' basic ideas remain theoretically and methodologically relevant to social psychologists today. Scholars like Cooley (1902) and, Mead (1934), Vygotsky (1978) emphasize the way that the self is socially constructed in interaction, based on people's shared values and social roles, rules, symbols, and categories. Rogers (1961) also explained self-esteem in terms of the disparity that exists between the ideal self and the real self, and viewed the social world as the source of ideas and knowledge (ideal self) against which the individual evaluates his/her actual performance and thus his/her level of self-esteem is determined. He suggests that any maladjustment is due to the difference between the two. Vygotsky (1978) views the role of the social world as the source of the child's ideas and views the cultural world as a stimulus the child will experience and internalize as the criteria against which his/her actions are evaluated and his/her level of self-esteem is determined.

Over the last decade, increased interest in self-esteem has been fuelled by research that report the influence of self-esteem on human behavior and that link high self-esteem and strong academic and social functioning in children. Conversely low self-esteem were associated with many personal and social concerns, such as school failure, depression, social anxiety , violence, substance abuse, and chronic self are (Coopersmith 1967).

During adolescence, a person may experience increased stress in relation to school, friends, and family, as well as new responsibilities and interests (Overholser et al., 1995). Research mostly conducted in western countries has also shown a relation between low self-esteem and feelings of depression and hopelessness in adolescence. Females with low self-esteem are twice as likely to develop depression following a stressful life event than those with average or high self-esteem (Andrews, 1998). Yet, very few research attempts have seriously illuminated adolescents problems in Lebanon.

On the other hand, some researchers have taken a different position concerning the efficacy of self-esteem and have raised doubts regarding its significance. Emler (2001) reported on research that associates high self-esteem with having an inflated ego, and with behaviours more commonly associated with insecurity such as arrogance and conceit. Baumeister (2003) also claimed that there is no evidence that attaining the values of self-worth will actually increase the individual's efficacy or affect school performance. It is important in this regard, to suspect the consensus of the definition of self-esteem among the contradicting views of its value. The definition of Rosenberg and social learning theories that defines self-esteem in terms of the sense of worthiness was challenged by Branden's definition as "the experience of being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and being worthy of happiness" that seems to be balanced and capable of dealing with limits of defining self-esteem primarily in terms of worth or competence alone. The current study builds

on Branden's definition of self-esteem that encompasses both self-worth and self-competence and investigates self-esteem in relation to gender, age, and academic achievement among adolescent students in Lebanon and thus uncovers the misconceptions of self-esteem as a state of inflated ego that is not based on competence feelings as major components of self-esteem and thus sheds light on the apparent contradictions toward self-esteem.

B - Statement of the Problem

Research largely carried out in western contexts suggests that adolescence is a critical transitional period when many physical, emotional social and educational changes constitute a challenge for the adolescents. Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Reuman, & Midgley (1991) suggest that when adolescents move into secondary school, they are required to adjust to the academic changes and increased challenges which may have effects on their motivation and learning. Their self-esteem development may be disrupted by transition to a new school. This finding could be related to the interruption of students' social networks at a time when friends and peers are important to adolescent development. It could also be attributed to the educational challenges that the secondary school poses on adolescent students as they enter the new cycle, and as they prepare to move towards higher education, i.e. the university level.

With regard to the Lebanese context, education is highly valued in Lebanon. The Lebanese educational system has produced one of the highest literacy rates in the Middle East (75 to 88 percent). Enrollment rates at various levels have been considered the highest in the region (with the exception of the civil war period) (U.S. Department of State, 1998). The number of students attending schools is expanding year after year and the increase was recorded to be steady in the period following the war. At the university level, well-known Arab, Lebanese, American, and French universities, continue to offer high educational

services, besides, many new universities and technical and vocational institutions were opened which gave ample opportunities and facilitated the enrollment of secondary school students once they terminate their secondary school exams (Baccalaureate) successfully. The Lebanese private secondary school accordingly, is responsible for making it possible that their students make it and have their chance of enrollment in the university according to their preferences.

On the academic level, the overly demanding curriculum that is more theoretical and less practical, in addition to the rigid evaluation system that builds on official public examinations which heavily rely on memorization rather than comprehension of concepts contributes to creating feelings of stress to students and their families and can lead to a high rate of failure or dropouts. This fact has led many school teachers to waste much time explaining and teaching the content of previous examinations so students may learn how to answer them correctly (Hashem, 2000).

Added to this fact, that the Lebanese students are regarded as mere learners, whose academic attainments shape the opinions and consequently the treatments they receive from their teachers (Ayyach, 2001). These practices can hamper the development of positive self-perceptions of adolescents, who at this stage of development are extremely concerned with how they are perceived by their teachers as significant others (Damon and Hart, 1988). Rosenberg (1986) demonstrated that adolescent's perceptions of significant others affect their global self-esteem.

It is also noteworthy to mention the difficulties of adjustment the students face as they enter the new environment of the secondary school. They are required to face new

environmental and social relationship demands. They need to fit into a new peer group and establish their identities and in the same time deal with a substantial increase of the number of the teachers as a result of the increase of the subject matters (Ayyach, 2003). Added to that, the Lebanese curriculum is mainly concerned with academic skills while teaching survival skills like social and emotional skills are absolutely absent (Ayyash, 2001).

Like others in the Lebanese society, adolescent students in secondary schools are also affected by the country's dramatic regression on the social, economic, and political levels in Lebanon, in the same time when they need a stable and healthy environment to foster the development of their identities. The high rate of unemployment has led to wide spread immigration as the only choice for youth to find a job opportunity. This problem will not help the adolescent students in forming their identities and suffer from role confusion. On the other hand, the Lebanese society is mostly a collective society where the family support accompanies children till adulthood and helps to alleviate the effects of these problems on the adolescents.

While these contradicting influences on the lives of the adolescent students in Lebanon can seriously affect their emotional and behavioural overall well-being, their psychological and educational standing is not widely researched and seriously tracked to find solutions. The current study investigates adolescent students' self-esteem as a way to approach their various needs and problems and helps to find ways to cater for their needs and find solutions for their problems. This study sets out to achieve an understanding of the relationship between self-esteem, gender, grade level and academic achievement of private secondary school students in Lebanon.

C- Personal and professional rationale

Research studies have demonstrated that students' beliefs about themselves affect the way they face educational challenges throughout their educational careers. This means that when students do not see their capability to succeed in school, their chances of academic success will diminish. Their beliefs in themselves can provide the foundation for motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment in all areas of life (Pajares, 2003). The other side of the picture reveals that students are motivated to maintain or enhance positive self-perceptions (Skaalvik, 1983). In this regard, the absence of significant differences in self-esteem levels between low achievers and high achievers in certain investigations were attributed to the students' self-esteem mechanisms that can be activated when self-esteem is threatened (Alves-Martins and Pixoto, 2000).

In addition to the importance of self-esteem as a need and a motivator, Healthy self-esteem is required for social contacts among adolescents in the school environment. Social contacts, including peer group recognition, in return are important for the development of a healthy identity. Working on enhancing students' self-esteem has been helpful in reducing their maladaptive behaviours and improving their performance.

As a teacher and a counselor, I have noticed an association between students' academic and behavioural problems with their views of themselves. Working on enhancing students' self-esteem has been helpful in reducing their maladaptive behaviours and improving their performance. By working on changing the way students see themselves, I have watched them achieve better at school as they gain more beliefs about their capabilities to succeed in school and achieve success. On the other hand, when enhancing the way withdrawn and timid adolescents see and evaluate themselves, they were noticed to engage in

group activities and initiate friendships and successful social contacts. Thus, students' beliefs about themselves affect the way they face emotional and educational challenges throughout their educational careers. Being in direct contact with adolescent students and their school professionals in Lebanon, I have realized that they are viewed as mere learners, whose academic attainments are the only concern of school professionals. Whereas, students should be recognized as whole individuals, for the development of their identity and self-esteem. Parents, in turn, should view their children as whole persons whose affective and developmental needs should be recognized alongside with their academics to help them develop positive self-perceptions, form their own identities and face the challenges of the transitional period of adolescence. Investigation of the relationship between self-esteem, gender, grade level and academic achievement of secondary school students in Lebanon will help uncover important aspects of adolescents' emotional and psychological well being.

D- Purpose of the Current Study

Self-esteem is believed to play a significant role because it helps the individuals in adjusting and coping with the demands of their environment and maintain the appropriate behaviours. The learning environment as a social environment, too, involves the learners' emotions that relate to self-esteem and interact with the students' learning. Self-esteem is, also, suggested as a basic human need or motivation, and its development evolves in specific stages.

These key points were studied in many research studies that have examined the relationship between self-esteem and other factors such as gender, grade level, and academic achievement but hardly ever has research been done on the relationship between these variables in Lebanon. However, an attempt was made by Mona Al –Abed (1998) to study the

relationship between different correlates of self-esteem namely gender, grade level and academic achievement in Lebanon. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between these variables on a sample of students in the middle school of both sexes using Coopersmith's Self-esteem Inventory. Four categories of self-esteem were measured: General Self, Home-Parents, School and Social-self Peers.

Yet, there is inconsistent research evidence on the relationship of self-esteem with academic achievement, grade level, and gender. Some research studies have revealed a direct relationship between the level of self-esteem and academic achievement, and other studies showed that the level of self-esteem varies with gender and age. Yet, other research studies have shown that the level of self-esteem is not directly related to academic achievement and the variations in self-esteem cross age and gender are not significant. Thus, conducting further research to investigate such relationship will be of help to understand how self-esteem is related to these variables. Moreover, it would be interesting to examine this relationship in a different social content, namely the Lebanese society, to compare results with similar research in other cultures and gain some empirical verification of the measures of self-esteem in Lebanon. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between self-esteem, academic achievement, grade level and gender of students in secondary classes in Lebanon.

E- Significance of the Current Study

Adolescents undergo major physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes that might be associated with an increase in negative affect in teenagers (Larson and Asmussen, 1991). When adolescents move into secondary school, many academic changes and rising challenges that face them might have effects on their motivation and learning. This transition

to a new academic stage is prone to disrupt their self-esteem development (Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Reuman, & Midgley, 1991). Changes in students' self-esteem are expected to reflect the challenges adolescents face in this transitional period. Accordingly, investigating students' self-esteem helps in approaching adolescents' various needs and problems and helps in finding ways to cater for their needs and find solutions for their problems.

Conducting a research study to examine the relationship between self-esteem academic achievement, grade level and gender will help shed light on how adolescent students in Lebanon view themselves in social, academic, personal, relationship with parents and home atmosphere as major aspects of self-esteem. Such variables have direct influence on the level of self-esteem students have, as they are related to the many environments in which the students exist, For example, the school environment, the home environment, and the social environment. These major aspects of self-esteem point to the potential components or elements in the school, home and society that might affect the students' self-esteem by one way or another.

Studying these major aspects of self-esteem uncovers some of these elements that might be pertinent to the way students are treated at school, at home and the way they are viewed in their social environment.

Besides, examining the relationship of self-esteem with gender, academic achievement, and grade level might be useful to gain some empirical evidence that might be of interest to counselors, psychologists, educators, teachers and parents. Such evidence would serve as guidelines as to how teachers should deal with students in school and parents with children at home to raise their self-esteem or help them in coping with their problems at home, in school and in the society. In other words, results of the study might provide a base

for certain preventive or corrective measures to be carried out. In addition, conducting such a study will be of value from a developmental and psychosocial perspective and might contribute to the existing knowledge about the correlates of self-esteem. Furthermore, there is no consensus on whether there is a significant or a non-significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. Therefore, further research is still required to contribute to the knowledge base concerning self-esteem correlates.

It is well known that culture shapes the way people think, feel and behave. Besides, education cannot be separated from the cultural context. Therefore, it is important to look at the Lebanese culture to create a picture of the various influences that might affect the relationship between the variables of the study, and trace the sources of any phenomenon of interest that findings of the study may reveal.

F - Context of the study

Rosenberg (1979) observes that the individual's self-esteem is affected by their perceived reality. Therefore; we must understand the context in which they live their environment, their experiences with their social surrounding shapes the way they perceive themselves.

Looking into the Lebanese context, it has been established that the Lebanese society constitutes a heritage of different cultures and foreign interventions throughout history. This history, together with the Lebanese diverse population that belongs to different religions and different subcultures, has made the Lebanese society of a distinct identity that influenced the Lebanese educational system. Approximately 70 percent of the Lebanese population are Muslims (mostly Shiites, Sunnis and Druzes) while Christians (Maronites, Greek Orthodox,

and Catholics) represent 30 percent of the Lebanese population (Sedgwick, R., 2000).

During the French mandate in Lebanon, French missionaries had made some educational contributions in Lebanon in early 19th century. Many primary and secondary schools still follow the French system, while other schools maintained their Arab Islamic identity. Accordingly, both the traditional Islamic and the western Christian influence have always been strong and continued to play an important role in shaping the education even today (Salibi, 1990).

Eventually, in Lebanon, different regions hold different cultural traits. Some hold eastern cultural traits versus those of western cultural traits. This extends to the schooling systems where some schools are liberal, secular and coeducational versus schools that are conservative, religious and segregated. Many people believe that this flexibility of the Lebanese educational system marks it with diversity and helped in protecting Lebanon from a probable social devastation caused by the civil war.

The Lebanese educational system is divided into two sectors: the private and the public. Unlike private schools, public schools are non-profitable. Besides, the National Educational System in Lebanon, divides the years of schooling into three Cycles the primary (6 years), the intermediate (3 years) and the secondary (3 years, leading to the Lebanese Baccalaureate before students go to higher education . In the second secondary class students are branched out into the Humanities and the scientific section, and in the third secondary class they are branched into the Humanities, Socio-economics, General sciences, and Life science each of which leads to a different field of specialization at the university level.

The curriculum in the Lebanese schools is systematic to all students. The national curriculum is set by the Ministry of Education and there is a national book for all subjects throughout the three cycles. The national textbook is obligatory to all public schools and the

private schools are free to choose their textbooks provided that these books meet the criteria of the national curriculum and approved by the Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD), with the exception of the Civics book that is obligatory to both types of schools.

Arabic and either French or English are the languages of instruction in the Lebanese schools. The subjects taught in Arabic are Arabic language and literature, history, geography, and civics. All other subjects are taught either in French or English, depending on the school orientation or affiliation (Inati, 1999).

In early times, the method of instruction used to be teacher-centered and teachers relied mostly on lecturing and giving homework, where students played a passive role, listened to the teacher, memorized facts and events as memorization was greatly emphasized especially for passing the official exams (Inati, 1999).

Yet, with the new curricula that were launched in September 1998, there was an emphasis on the student-centered teaching method. The Educational Center for Research and Development has trained 16,000 teachers in public schools and 6,000 teachers in private schools on the new principles of the new curricula. The new curricula reflected positively on the learning process as students have become more involved in their learning process. Also, the new curricula emphasized values like tolerance, liberty, and democracy. A link was also made between the curricula and the demands of the labor market, where new subjects were introduced in the curricula like economics and sociology (Inati, 1999).

G- Conceptual Framework

In addressing the conceptual framework, the study will illuminate the relationship between self-esteem and the other self-constructs of self-concept, and self-efficacy, and how

these self constructs are related to the development of self-esteem. A reference will also be made to self-esteem development, its function and nature and their educational significance. It also sheds light on how emotions, self-esteem and learning continue to affect each other in the lives of the adolescent learners.

1. Self-esteem, in comparison to self-concept and self-efficacy

The current study is mainly concerned with self-esteem relationship with gender, age, and academic achievement. Other self-constructs like self-concept, self-efficacy are also related to these variables in terms of development, nature, and function. To fully understand these relationships, an understanding of these constructs in relationship to self-esteem is necessary.

A person's self-theory is often comprised of self-descriptions and self-evaluations. Although the terms self-esteem and self-concept have been used to distinguish these concepts, they are often confused. This confusion reflects the difficulty of separating self-descriptions from the value judgements that are associated with them.

Early views of the self-concept were concerned only with self-evaluation. Self-concept often meant self-esteem (one's evaluation of oneself in affective (negative or positive) terms (Rosenberg, 1979). To broaden this view, Rosenberg (1979) suggested that there was more to the self-concept than self-esteem. He defined the self-concept as the sum total of our thoughts, feelings, and imaginations as to who we are.

Later conceptions elaborated and refined this view suggesting that the self-concept was made up of cognitive components (given the collection of identities) as well as affective components or self-feelings including self-esteem (both worth-based and efficacy-based) self-esteem (Franks & Marolla, 1976; Stryker, 1980).

The current study investigates the adolescent secondary students' self-esteem/self-concept. Therefore, it is important to note that self-concept as a descriptive phenomenon sees critical qualitative changes that appear in its nature as the individual makes the transition to adolescence (Rosenberg,1965).While self-attributes of early children are merely observable , and conceptual or trait like in the middle childhood (Rosenberg,(1979), adolescents develop a self-reflective gaze that probes into internal , private attributes of the self and begin to describe their inner emotions, attitudes, beliefs, wishes and motives (Harter,1992).

Self-efficacy is another construct related to self-esteem and sometimes confused with it. Correlation studies indicated significant relationships between self-esteem and self-efficacy (Lane et al, 2004). Self-esteem relates to a person's self-worth and self-competence, whereas self-efficacy relates to one's estimation of how well one can execute specific tasks necessary to deal with life events (Bandura, 1982). An important difference between self-efficacy and self-esteem is that perceptions of self-efficacy vary depending on the life event in question whereas self-esteem perceptions are relatively stable evaluations of the self that starts to establish early on in life. Therefore, it sounds more realistic for educators to address students' perceptions of self-efficacy than to focus on their feelings of self-esteem, which are less likely to change. This can also be more approachable in school, where students' competence performances in classroom tasks are constantly evaluated and the perception they have about themselves is fostered mainly in school structure (Bandura, 1987). The major importance of understanding of self-constructs is that they are linked to the individual's developmental process.

2. Development, function and nature of self-esteem

The current investigation cares to study how the self-esteem of adolescent students develops throughout their secondary school years. It is therefore important to track the process of self-esteem development in the early stages of the person's life. In this regard, Higgins (1991) referred to the role that the development of self-esteem plays as a mediating factor that assists the individual to adjust to environmental demands and to develop socially appropriate behaviours and self-regulations.

Researchers suggest that the development of self-esteem evolves in specific stages. Erikson (1968) hypothesized that children develop in a predetermined order. He was interested in how children socialize and how this affects their sense of self. His Theory of Psychosocial Development has eight distinct stages of unique developmental tasks or crisis. According to the theory, a healthy personality and successful interactions with others requires successful completion of each stage. Failure to successfully complete a stage can result in a reduced ability to complete further developmental stages and therefore a more unhealthy personality and sense of self.

As to Maslow (1987), He suggested that self-esteem is a basic human need or motivation. He included self-esteem in his hierarchy of needs where it comes after physical, safety and belonging needs. According to Maslow, people will only grow and obtain self-actualization if they first fulfill their self-esteem. A self-esteem need comes after physical, safety and belonging needs.

The developmental significance of self-esteem is relevant to teachers, parents, students and counselors. The fact that self-esteem develops through stages, necessities that significant others understand the child's needs to acquire self-esteem at each stage. Feelings of self-worth

develop early in the first years of the child's life. Therefore parents or the primary caregivers are called to cater for his/her love, care, autonomy and pride to ensure that he/she acquires a sense of self-worth. Later in the middle childhood, teachers should join parents and help the child acquire feelings of competence and efficacy in addition to self-worth to develop industry and avoid feelings of inferiority. In adolescence, students needs differ from those of middle childhood. Adolescent students engage in additional demanding tasks. Searching for their identity is their prime interest.

Identity development in adolescence also has been associated with long-term optimal health and well-being (Baumeister, 1995). Erikson, (1968) emphasized that identity was not only an intrapsychic process, but also an interpersonal process that was imbedded in a social context. Identity formation takes place when adolescents try to find their place in peer group relationships. Peer group recognition together with the academic challenges, constitute a burden that affects their psychological and emotional well-being. It is important that adolescent students developmental needs be recognized to attain positive self-esteem.

The development of self-esteem is manifested by different psychological functions. These functions help to keep a steady growth of the various individual's aspects. The current study investigates the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. In other words, how self-esteem functions to assist adolescent students cope with the particular challenges of the transitional phase of secondary school. In this regard, self-esteem was generally considered to serve as a need which is the most basic type of motivation (Pednar, Wells, and Peterson, 1989 as cited in Mruk 1995). Maslow put self-esteem as a need necessary to fulfill in order to achieve self-actualization. Self-esteem can be considered as the need to maintain the self-sameness or identity. In this sense it acts as a protector of the self against threats from the environment and protects the integrity of the self during stressful situation

(Coopersmith, 1967).Self-esteem also acts as a motivator to reach for goals and achieve mastery and growth. Such a motivation pushes the individual to persist in the face of challenges and overcome difficulties (Mruk, 1995).

The self-serving functions and strategies of self-esteem are important for parents and educators. The fact that students self-esteem develops through stages of childhood and adolescence, requires that parents and teachers understand its developmental nature and the role they can play to nurture the development of a healthy self-esteem. While parents can instil feelings of trust and self worth early in their children's' lives, teachers can work on providing their students with feelings of competence and industry that well prepare students for the next stage of identity formation.

In fact, the functional characteristics of self-esteem are directly related to its nature. The dynamic nature of self-esteem provides people with the capacity to face failure in ways that ensure that these feelings about themselves remain. Yet, researchers have different views concerning the direction of the self-esteem variable some views particularly psychologists regard it as independent as it affects aspects of the individuals behaviour .On the other hand, self-esteem is also viewed as a dependent variable by social psychologists who consider it to be a product of the social processes(Flynn,2003).

Branden, (1969) revolutionized the notions concerning the nature of self-esteem emerges from the conscious experience and consists of two components: (1) self-efficacy-or feelings of competence confidence in one's ability to think, learn, choose, and make appropriate decisions; and (2) self-respect or worthiness of love, friendship, achievement, success, and happiness are natural and appropriate (Branden, 1994).

Branden (1987) asserts that teachers and parents cannot offer self-esteem to children

but they can provide them with experiences that foster their self-esteem. The implication is that teachers should provide students with tools to succeed and achieve mastery, and efficacy beliefs which will in turn lead to self-esteem.

Beside the constructs of self-concept and self-efficacy that are related to the development, nature, and function of self-esteem, emotions are believed to play a role in self-esteem as well. To understand the variables that affect self-esteem, referring to the role of emotions in self-esteem becomes necessary.

3. Self-esteem, learning, and emotions

It is important to note that emotions play a vital role in the learning experience. Adolescence is a crucial period with regards to the brain and emotions. It is also, an important time for learning. At this time, adolescents encounter new experiences and face new situations that are new to them and that may trigger intense positive or negative emotions that are not part of their emotional experiences, and thus may interfere with their ability to function effectively in academic, vocational and social setting. Besides, their identity development requires that they manage to cope with the emotional demands that daily face them in their school, work and other social settings (Cash, 2003; Velting, Setzer, & Albano, 2004). The difficulties that they encounter at this stage of their development may cause them stress and feelings of low self-esteem. The current study explores how self-esteem of adolescents is related to the changes and challenges they face as they pass into the transitional period of secondary school, including the learning difficulties and social pressures.

4. *Self-esteem Controversy*

Despite the fact that the concern with self-esteem is not new, there has been a

significant decline of what has been called the self-esteem movement (Dweck, 2002). The concern about the preoccupation with self-esteem has resulted in opposing views on the topic among many in education, and society in general (Covington, 2001).

Emler (2001) stated that self-esteem has gained much attention in human sciences to the extent that the interest in self-esteem has become part of the public talk. With the involvement of this interest, self-esteem has been related to health, motivation and identity. High self-esteem has also been treated as a value that protects people against many psychological and social ills. People with high self-esteem are less likely to abuse drugs or commit crimes, while people with low self-esteem behave in a harmful way to themselves and to others.

In this respect, Emler argues that for research to confirm this popular belief about self-esteem, what is required is some accurate procedure such as tests or measures that can determine the level of self-esteem precisely. He stated that there is some agreement that self-esteem is an attitude that researchers could measure with some degree of reliability. However, Emler points out that there is some disagreement concerning the nature of what is being measured: is it a feeling or a judgment? That is self-esteem is a positive or negative feeling about the self or a set of judgments about one's self. Emler concludes that whether self-esteem is a feeling or a collection of judgment, it can be considered both a state and a trait that varies with time. Thus, the positive or negative opinion people have about themselves might change over time.

He also adds that although self-esteem can be measured in a reliable way, much of the research is not enough to determine whether self-esteem has a causal influence on behaviour.

For example, the link between self-esteem and achievement might show that self-esteem can be a cause, an effect and a mediator. Referring to Maslow's suggestion that self-esteem is a basic human need in his hierarchy; individuals attain self-actualization when they first fulfill their self-esteem. This means that Maslow puts self-esteem below self-actualization which indicates that it is important to have self-esteem before achieving self-actualization. The individual who has achieved self-actualization probably has high self-esteem. Yet, being self-actualized, means that the individuals have developed their own standards for judging their success and failure that affect their self-esteem.

However, when the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement is established, its existence is not persistent cross age, sex, and ethnic group. That is sometimes there is evidence that there is a relationship between self-esteem and variables such as gender and age, and sometimes evidence does not show such relationship. Also, self-esteem may vary according to factors related to race and ethnicity such as social class and racial composition of schools and communities. In this concern, Ross (1995) reported that African-American students who attend African-American high schools report higher self-esteem than African-American teenagers who attend white high schools.

Besides, many of the claims made about self-esteem are not rooted in strong evidence. For instance, many of the social problems such as crime, violence, and alcohol abuse bear no hard evidence that low self-esteem plays an important part. According to Emler, we need to remember that high self-esteem cannot be an unconditional benefit. People with high self-esteem, are also described as boastful or arrogant. Thus, we should accept that very high self-esteem is a problem as low self-esteem that requires treatment, and we should concentrate on the benefits of moderate self-esteem.

Emler explains his viewpoint by saying that to some extent, low self-esteem is a risk

factor for suicide and depression, yet in each case, low self-esteem is only one of other related risk factors. Although this causal influence of low self-esteem is not clear enough, to a certain extent low self-esteem in children seem to correlate with adolescent eating disorders and employment problems in young adulthood. Young people with very high self-esteem tend to hold racist attitudes, reject social pressures from peers and engage in risky behavior, such as drink driving or driving too fast.

Such observations can be of significance to understand the dynamics of the adolescents and to identify the variables that affect their behaviour. Besides, prevention and intervention and treatment might draw on the role of self-esteem we need to understand and explore.

Likewise, Baumeister (2003) confirms that a high self-regard does not necessarily stand by itself as something good. Self-esteem, adds Baumeister, has been transformed into a universal human goal that all should attain. This does not take into consideration that self-esteem is not celebrated as a valuable concept in certain cultures. For example, collectivist and individualist cultures differ in their emphasis on self-esteem value. In collectivist cultures, where the interest of the group is the main value, self-esteem of individuals are not valued or welcomed. This might be of significance for researching the role of self-esteem in different cultural contexts, namely Lebanese context. It helps in understanding how different elements within a certain cultural context interact to explain to what extent importance should be given to the role of self-esteem.

Baumeister (2003) suspected the positive beliefs that high self-esteem has beneficial effects and low self-esteem has deteriorating effects and called for reconsideration of these beliefs. Self-esteem may create pleasant feelings but this does not mean that it causes high academic achievement. Likewise, low self-esteem does not cause violence and taking drugs at

an early age. Thus, there is little evidence that attaining the values of self-worth will actually increase the individual's efficacy and improved outcomes. Baumeister concludes that it is out of optimism to assume that high self-esteem leads to many positive consequences and that people would perform better in their life if we could manage to raise their level of self-esteem. This is true because research results do not sustain such conclusions.

It is noteworthy that with these different beliefs about the role of self-esteem, many other variables have been widely researched in their relation to self-esteem. For example, low self-esteem has been correlated with feelings of dissatisfaction, loneliness, anxiety, and depression. Also, high self-esteem has been correlated with academic success in high school. Furthermore, a close relationship has been recorded between low self-esteem and such problems as violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, eating disorder and low academic achievement. However, it has been difficult to isolate it, as a primary cause for it is usually one of several contributing factors. Yet, it is noteworthy that self-esteem is an important component of any program that aims at self-improvement because it is a key element in self-development. Accordingly, we might assume that the propositions presented by Emler and Baumeister that criticize the overemphasis on the role and the relationship of self-esteem with other variables are significant enough to call for more research to verify the degree of influence self-esteem has on other variables. In this sense, conducting the current research to examine the relationship between self-esteem, gender, grade level and academic achievement, will add to clarifying the preconceptions about the role of self-esteem.

Besides, this study can be of particular importance to educators and professionals concerned with the welfare of others like teachers and counsellors. This proposition is based on the reference of self-esteem to the affective or emotional aspect of self in terms of how the individuals feel about themselves. In their concern, educators need to identify the variables

that affect the well-being of the individuals and how to enhance it. This will reflect on the way teachers understand students' behaviour, problems and needs. Teachers need to be aware of the effective methods to boost the self-esteem of their students. This can be true as teachers are in a powerful position to influence the self-esteem of their students, through both the establishment of a caring relationship, and through raising competence, through genuine success experiences and skill development strategies.

The hypotheses of the current study are directly related to the assumptions of Baumeister and Emler. That is examining the relationship between self-esteem, academic achievement, and gender contributes to a more in-depth understanding and verifications of the assumptions presented by Emler and Baumeister. In other words, studying the relationship between self-esteem academic achievement and gender in a different culture, namely the Lebanese, where the society is influenced by both the Eastern and Western culture will help examine the sustainability of the assumptions presented by Emler and Baumeister. The kind of relationship this research might uncover between self-esteem and these variables helps in discussing the causal directionality of self-esteem as a variable. This can be attained through the new evidence this study will show as to how self-esteem changes with the variables under study, i.e. the degree of change in self-esteem across grade level, age and gender. Besides, since Emler states that self-esteem cannot be an unconditioned benefit, conducting the current study would contribute to understanding which variables play a role more significantly with self-esteem to lead to certain outcomes and how such outcomes vary with high and low self-esteem.

At the same time, and based on Baumeister's point that self-esteem is not of big importance in some cultures, conducting this research on participants in a different social context will reveal how the relationship between self-esteem and other variables varies across

cultures. This will help in verifying how much we can be optimistic or not about the significant role of self-esteem as a cure to many problems.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate how self-esteem of adolescent students in Lebanon is related to their gender and how their self-esteem is affected by age as they try to cope with the changes and challenges they face in their secondary school years. The study also explores how self-esteem affects their behavior particularly their academic achievement as they move in their secondary school years.

The results of this study will provide educators and parents with some useful information concerning adolescents at this phase of their development. The study will also provide some insights about the self-esteem concept and how it is related with academic achievement. In particular, the study will help shed light on adolescent students' problems in Lebanon and open the door for further and more in deep studies of their standing in the emotional and behavioral healthy development.

In this part of review of related literature, we look at the different views that explained the development, function and nature of self-esteem with particular consideration given to the correlates of self-esteem. A comparison between self-esteem and self-concept and self-efficacy is made, with reference to the different approaches that discussed self-esteem. Two major parts expand the theoretical and empirical perspectives of self-esteem. This study aims to examine the relationship between self-esteem, academic achievement, grade level and gender of students in secondary classes in Lebanon. This chapter will present a review of

relevant literature from both a theoretical and empirical perspectives. Theories and studies that focus on the investigation of self-esteem as related to academic achievement; grade level and gender are presented.

Self-esteem is a construct within psychology that has been related to almost every other psychological concept or field; including personality and behavioral concepts. This complex concept continues to be one of the mostly studied concepts in psychological and educational research. Self-esteem is also conceptualized as a major factor of many other related terms such as our self-concept, self-efficacy, self-worth, self-regard and self-image. Self-esteem is also considered the individual's global positive and negative feelings towards himself or herself (Rosenberg, 1979).

In addition, self-esteem is believed to affect the ways in which the individual deals with the environment. People with low self-esteem tend to view their environment as threatening and have difficulty in their environmental interactions, while people with high self-esteem deal more actively with their environment. They are able to meet environmental demands and feel more secure about themselves (Coopersmith, 1967).

Adolescent students face unique and diverse challenges, both personally and developmentally, that impact their academic achievement. They begin to separate from their parents and struggle to prove their independence. They try to decide who they are and search for a place to belong and aim for peer group recognition and acceptance. In other words they begin to search for their identity. Adolescent students in Lebanon have their own set of problems. They are part of a devastated society that suffers from after war various social problems like unemployment, poverty and immigration (Ayyach, 2001). Besides, they are part

of a changing society. The Lebanese collective society is open to the contemporary world's influences of both western and religious cultural trends.

As students make the transition to secondary school, they face a new phase of academic and social life that may affect their self-beliefs negatively. Periods of transition in schooling, can cause changes in self-efficacy (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). The changes in their peers, teachers, classes and grading criteria often cause them declines in their competence and efficacy beliefs (Anderman et al., 1999; Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Eccles et al., 1983; Harter, Whitesall, & Lowalski, 1992; Urdan & Midgley, 2003; Wigfield et al., 1991). In the same time, adolescent students in the Lebanese secondary school are required to deal with academic pressures.

Education is highly valued in Lebanon. Parents place great importance on their children's success in secondary schools' exams and the government official exams (Baccalaureate). The Lebanese private secondary school accordingly, is responsible for making it possible that their students meet successfully high-stakes testing, and have their chance of enrolment in the university according to their preferences(Inati, 1999).These challenges may affect students' self-efficacy and self-esteem. The current study investigates secondary students' self-esteem and its relationship to gender, age, and academic achievement.

A- Theoretical Framework

Since self-esteem has been used with other self-constructs to refer to the same concept, it is important to reveal the relevant views concerning these constructs and their relationship with self-esteem. Besides exploring the relevant views concerning these

constructs, various key ideas were identified in the introduction to present the conceptual framework for the study. The conceptual framework highlighted the relationship between self-esteem and the other self-constructs like self-concept, and self-efficacy, and how these self constructs are related to the development of self-esteem. A reference was also made as to how emotions, self-esteem, and learning continue to affect each other in the lives of adolescent learners.

Building on these key ideas, helps in communicating their importance to what will be presented in the review of literature in terms of understanding the comparison between self-esteem and self-concept and self-efficacy. It also contributes to the understanding of the beliefs concerning the development of self-esteem, its functions, nature and educational significance ; specially that the preoccupation with self-esteem has resulted in opposing views on the topic, some of which entailed that many of the claims made about self-esteem are not rooted in strong evidence. In addition, it contributes to a more in-depth understanding of the assumptions about the causal directionality of self-esteem variable as a cause or an effect.

Besides, this study aims to examine the relationship between self-esteem, academic achievement, grade level and gender of adolescent students, thus, the reference of self-esteem to the affective or emotional aspect of self-esteem in terms of how the individuals feel about themselves can be of significance to understand the dynamics of the adolescents and to identify the variables that affect their behaviour. In addition it assists in drawing on the role of self-esteem in the developmental stages of the adolescents. In other words, it helps in understanding how self-esteem functions help adolescent students cope with the particular challenges of these transitional stages.

Self-esteem as a point of focus in different types of research is based on different theoretical perspectives. In this regard, other self-constructs have been used to refer to the

same concept of self-esteem. Since the current study examines self-esteem relationship with gender, age and academic achievement, other constructs related to self-esteem may have similar relationship with these variables. Therefore, it is important to explore the relevant views concerning these constructs and their relationship with self-esteem.

Self-esteem, Self-concept and Self-efficacy

1. Self-esteem and self-concept

Self-concept and self-esteem that have been used interchangeably, made many researchers call for a clear definition of both terms as two different constructs (Shavelson, Hubner, Stanton, 1976). Some investigators assert that giving specific definitions pertaining to self-esteem and self-concept is needed to differentiate the two constructs because a better differentiation between the two will increase reliability and validity of studies (King, 1997).

Purkey (1988) pointed out that when using the word "self", we generally means the conscious reflection of one's own identity as separate from the environment of the individual. We think about the self in a variety of ways, the most widely used terms are self-concept and self-esteem. Self-concept is the cognitive aspect of self that is related to one's self-image. It generally refers to a complex, organized, and dynamic system of acquired beliefs, and attitudes that the individual believes to be true about his or her own being. Purkey differentiates between self-concept and self-esteem, in that the latter refers to the personal feeling of worth and the degree of satisfaction with one's self.

Besides, to explain self-concept, Franken (1994) states that research shows that the self-concept is, probably, the basis for all motivated behavior. Self-concept gives rise to possible selves, and the possible selves create the motivation for behavior. Our self-concept is

developed and maintained through the process of taking action and then reflecting on what we have done and what others tell us about what we have done. We reflect on what we can do and what we have done in comparison to both our expectations and the expectations of others as well as to the characteristics and accomplishments of others. That is, self-concept is not innate, but is developed or constructed by the individual through interaction with the environment and reflecting on that interaction. This dynamic aspect of self-concept and by corollary, self-esteem is important because it indicates that it can be modified or changed. Franken also suggests a relation between self-concept and self-esteem in that people with good self-esteem have a clearly distinctive self-concept. As people know themselves, they know what they can and can't do, and this helps them in maximizing their outcomes.

In the same line, Rosenberg's (1965), referred to self-esteem as the individual's sense of his or her value or worth and considered it as the evaluative component of the self-concept and a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991).

In an attempt to make the distinction between self-concept and self-esteem, Bean and Lipka (1984) differentiate between both terms by stating that self-esteem is judgments based on attitudes and beliefs, thus, they can be positive or negative. Self-concept is the description an individual gives to one's self. It is only a description of self from the angle of roles and attributes. Thus, if the individuals describe themselves as "Asian-American", they are providing statements about their self-concept. The value that the individual places on these attributes is what comprises self-esteem.

Among the different views on the self-processes that call for two different directions in considering self-concept and self-esteem, as two different or two similar constructs is Huitt (2004) who states that self-esteem is the affective or emotional aspect of self that refers to the

way we feel about, or the way we value ourselves, while self-concept refers to the idea we have about ourselves. Self-esteem, also, refers to certain measures about components of self-concept.

Besides, Campbell and Lavalee (1993), draw a relationship between self-esteem and self-concept as two distinct constructs. They viewed self-concept as a cognitive schema that controls the processing of information and the organization of memories about the self. On the other hand, self-esteem is viewed as an attitude that is self-reflexive and determines how one feels about the self when it's an object of evaluation, for example, how the individuals feel about who they are.

It can be added, that the distinction between self-concept and self-esteem is based on the presupposition that the self-concept is a significant cognitive structure that organizes the individual's experience, while self-esteem is the affective evaluator that influences this experience. The self-concept organizes all that we think we are, what we think we can do, and how well we think we can do it, while self-esteem is the extent to which we are pleased with that concept, or feel worthy (Hamachek, 1978; Wylie, 1974). Hence, self-esteem is an evaluative term and self-concept is a descriptive term.

However, in a study by Burnett (1994) concerning the differentiation between self-concept items that reflect self-description and self-esteem items that reflect self-evaluation, the results suggest that descriptive and evaluative items measure the same dimensions of self-concept. Burnett, in addition, investigated the notion originated by Rosenberg (1979) that self-esteem is a global construct that is affection -orientated and self-concept is a construct that entails both descriptive and evaluative beliefs about the self. Burnett's results indicated that the cognitive and affective items could be combined to form a single scale. Thus, it can be concluded from this research that, although the distinction between belief and feeling is made

in theory, from an empirical point of view the two types of statements seem to be measuring the same construct.

In summary, there is some consensus that self-concept implies the broad cognitive, behavioral and affective aspects, while self-esteem refers more to the evaluative component of self-concept. The interest in this study lies in adopting the perspective where self-esteem is not used as an interchangeable construct with self-concept.

As the current study explores the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, it is therefore important to explore the other constructs related to academic achievement, namely, self-efficacy.

2. Self-efficacy and Self-esteem

Self-esteem and self-efficacy constructs have been used in literature as highly related to academic achievement. Self-efficacy can be defined as the levels of confidence individuals have in their ability to execute certain courses of action, or achieve specific outcomes (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1997). Efficacy beliefs influence the choice of behaviors, and the degree of persistence the person expends in overcoming difficulties encountered in the pursuit of accomplishing a task or tasks (Bandura, 1997). In this regard, low self-efficacy in a student, for example, creates self-doubt that may keep him away from trying. Another way that self-beliefs influence human agency is by affecting an individual's thought patterns and emotional reactions: people with low efficacy may think that things are tougher than they really are. Such a feeling hinders motivation and creates great stress and anxiety in them. On the other hand, people with high self-efficacy often take a wider picture of a task in order to take the best way of action (Pajares, 2006). They also believe that they are in control of their lives as their own actions and decisions shape their lives. While people with low self-efficacy do not

believe that their lives are in their hands (Bandura, 1997). Learners' self-efficacy is also associated with the goals they set for learning. That is, learners with high self-efficacy set higher goals and higher personal standards, while the low self-efficacious students set easily achievable and short-term goals (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995)

Self-efficacy beliefs are derived from four sources of information (Bandura 1977, 1982, 1997). These sources are enactive mastery experience, the experience from performing similar tasks; vicarious experiences; verbal persuasion; and physiological states. Bandura (1982) suggests that previous successful experience tends to raise efficacy expectations, and failures tend to lower it. Information from these sources does not automatically influence levels of self-efficacy; rather, efficacy is influenced by how information is cognitively appraised. It is important in this regard to help students achieve success to acquire feelings of efficacy and competence as foundations for future success. Erikson (1968) suggests that students will acquire feelings of industry and a sense of who they are when they are helped to master school work.

Self-esteem and self-efficacy appear to be very different constructs. Self-efficacy questions are concerned with capabilities to execute specific tasks, or courses of action, the outcomes of which may or may not have any bearing on self-esteem. Thus if a person has high levels of self-efficacy on tasks within an occupation in which he/she has invested much self-worth then there is likely to be a positive correlation between self-esteem and self-efficacy (Bandura 1997). Where there is little investment of self-worth such associations are unlikely to exist (Bandura 1997). Educators need to involve learners in the learning process, and to enable them to put part of themselves in their subject matters (Ayyach, 2001). This will encourage students to expand more effort as their success in their academic endeavors will

raise their self-esteem. After relating self-esteem to other self-constructs, it is important to investigate related views with regards to the process of self-esteem development as it is an essential increment of a healthy personality.

3. Development of Self-esteem

The development of self-esteem is important because it helps the individual be able to meet the environmental demands. Self-esteem as an affective phenomenon has an influence on the overall wellbeing of the individual. James (1890) considers self-esteem a personal feeling about the self that the individual lives as an emotion like any affective state we find it in ourselves unwillingly. The influence of self-esteem as an emotion may affect the behavior and the overall wellbeing of the individual.

Self-esteem of individuals develops in different perspectives. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Erikson (1968) emphasized the psychosocial aspect of development when he clarified the importance of social factors and their effect on ego development through particular crises. When these crises are addressed appropriately, the individual will have a strong and mature personality. In these psychosocial stages, foundations of self-esteem are laid early in life. Feelings of trust develop early in infants' lives if their parents provide them with consistent love and care by meeting their needs and responding to their smiles and cries. Otherwise, they mistrust the world around them. Autonomy is likely to develop in children if they are encouraged and supported to initiate some independent actions and choices, otherwise, they will develop feelings of shame and doubt. Children's sense of initiative will be observed when they are allowed to initiate activities and play games with other children. Over controlled, restricted or criticized children are likely to develop guilt feelings.

As children grow up through stages of development, their self-esteem changes according to the successes they achieve in the areas that they consider valuable (Reasoner, 1994). At the school age, children's feelings of industry and pride require that they achieve success in schoolwork. If school age children are neglected and restricted by teachers or parents, a sense of inferiority will affect their future performance and they may not reach their potential. Parents and teachers have the responsibility to help the child develop adaptive skills and strategies that enable the child to approach mastery (Erikson, 1968). Vygotsky (1987) referred to the importance of teacher's support in reaching for the child's potential. Scaffolding is the term Vygotsky (1987) used for the teacher's support. It is the teacher's role to guide the student by providing different means of instruction that would increase in difficulty level up till the student reach for potential or the highest level of the zone of proximal development. Success in this stage prepares the child for higher stages of development.

During the mid to late adolescent years, adolescent students are engaged in resolving the crisis or task of "identity versus identity confusion" (Erikson, 1959/1980). Their sense of identity will develop, if they were allowed to explore possibilities and choices of their future to settle on a school or occupational identity. Otherwise, their sense of identity will be confused and hindered. Erikson believed that, although identity formation continues throughout the life cycle, the formation of a strong and coherent sense of identity represents the crucial developmental step associated with the transition from adolescence to adulthood (Erikson, 1968). Adolescent students should be encouraged to engage as active learners in their learning. Bandura (1997) believed that students' self-perceptions are affected by their academic achievement if their feelings of self-worth are likely to emerge from school achievement.

One value of Erikson's theory is that it illuminated the importance of resolving the crisis of early phases to avoid the difficulties of later ones in adolescence and adulthood. More importantly, it could provide answers for practical application. But at the same time it yielded a guide or yardstick that could be used to assess teaching and child rearing practices in terms of their ability to nurture and facilitate healthy emotional and cognitive development.

Drawing from Maslow's theory, Peseski (1997) argues that self-esteem is thought of as comprising four specific stages which include, respect and approval from others; achievement and accomplishments; self-talk/self-trust and the development of basic trust in life. Parents and educators who must be a role model in communicating respect, approval and must utilize consequences for acceptable and unacceptable behaviours profoundly influence the first two stages. The fourth stage, achievement and accomplishments, is best developed through positive verbal praise, taking risks, succeeding and failing. The final stage, a basic trust in life and ourselves, develops naturally after successfully passing through the first stages of self-esteem developmental evolution (Peseski, 1997).

From another perspective, Harter (1990) perceives self-esteem in terms of the degree to which a person accepts, and respects himself or herself as a person. She points out that while trying to understand self-esteem, we need to focus not only on global self-esteem but on the parts that constitute it. Harter's work, however, has provided evidence to support the notion that the specific components of self-esteem become more differentiated with age.

In her description of the child's self-esteem, Harter (1999) refers to the major developmental changes that take place in the child's self-representations. At an early age, these self-representations are not integrated and they tend to be unrealistically positive. The very young child discusses self-descriptions in terms of concrete characteristics that are

observable e.g., I can run fast. Harter, also, asserts that because of the cognitive limitations of very young children, they are unable to create a representation of their global self-esteem.

Harter continues to explain that between the ages of five and eight, self-esteem becomes more clearly defined. Children start to make judgments about their competences in five areas: physical appearance, social acceptance, scholastic ability, and athletic and artistic skills. The children's judgments about their competencies constitute their global view of their selves (Harter, 1983). Self-esteem takes its roots at this point of childhood because children start to initiate competent behavior, which helps them evaluate their achievements in terms of their worthiness (Mruk: 1995). As children grow, their social contacts increase and they develop an awareness of things they are good at and things they are not good at. Consequently self-esteem begins to affect behavior as children try to protect their sense of self worth against the challenges and problems of their life experiences.

It is in early and middle childhood that the children begin to show limited abilities to describe themselves in different competencies. For example, by middle and late childhood, the child might be able to describe himself as smart, helpful or nice. Thus, children become able to apply these traits or competencies in a manner that is specific to certain situation and at the same time their conception of the self becomes more differentiated across domains. It is in middle childhood, Harter adds, that the concept of global self-esteem starts to evolve. What helps in this regard, is that educators make use of Gardner's notion of multiple intelligences. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1995), stipulates that there are seven kinds of intelligences that need to be attended to. Logical-mathematical, linguistic, Spatial, Musical, Bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences operate together and at the same time, Teachers, therefore, need to attend to all intelligences, not just the first two that

have been their tradition concern. For this purpose, they should employ effective strategies to discover and address their students' unique talents and abilities.

As the individuals make the transition to adolescence, they begin to describe their psychological interior, emotions, attitudes, beliefs, wishes, and motives. At this stage, the self-reflective gaze is turned inward towards those internal, private attributes of the self. Rosenberg (1965) described that the adolescent probes the inner, abstract world of thoughts and feelings, both real and hypothetical. Their major concern is to find who they are and develop their identity. The transitional period was found to affect adolescents' self-esteem. Harter, 1990 found that one-third to one-half of adolescents struggle with low self-esteem, especially in early adolescence. Their major concern is to find who they are and develop their identity (Erikson, 1968).

As they start to differentiate between different domains of the self, they start to build contingencies of self-worth on their Identity-relevant aspects and discard irrelevant ones. Educators and parents at this stage of development need to cater for the adolescents needs of recognition, independence and ample opportunities to explore and find their own identity. Their relationships with parents and relationships with peers are two important sources of social support that contribute to adolescents' self-esteem (Harter, 1990; Savin-Williams & Demo, 1983).

In adulthood, self-esteem changes from being reactive to being consciously acted upon to increase or decrease the feelings of self worth. Many situations confront us as adults that affect our levels of self-esteem. Epstein (1979) has researched those situations that affect self-esteem in adulthood; and they are the experiences of success and failure where individuals either deal successfully or unsuccessfully with a situation.

As was presented, a person's self-esteem is built in stages. Each different stage plays a role in developing a self-esteem that will in turn function to determine the person's level of adjustment to various environmental demands. The current study investigates the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. In other words, how self-esteem functions to assist adolescent students cope with the particular challenges of the transitional phase of secondary school. Hence it is important to explore the related findings concerning the function of self-esteem.

4. Function of self-esteem

Self-esteem was generally considered to serve as a need which is the most basic type of motivation (Pednar, Wells, and Peterson, 1989 as cited in Mruk 1995). Self-esteem can be considered as the need to maintain the self-sameness or identity. In this sense it acts as a protector of the self against threats from the environment and protects the integrity of the self during stressful situation (Coopersmith, 1967). Self-esteem works also to regulate feelings of self-worth, particularly when negative outcomes, such as failure, criticism, or rejection, are experienced (Brown, 1993, 1998).

Self-esteem works to keep the behaviour of the individual at a certain level that maintains social functioning (Leary, 2004 as cited .in Mruk 1995). In this sense low self-esteem functions as an indicator to stop certain behaviour. Self-esteem also acts as a motivator to reach for mastery or growth. Such a motivation pushes the individual to face challenges, overcome obstacles, and take risks to 'be all one can be'.

The way self-esteem function is reflected in the characteristics of individuals with different levels of self-esteem. Different researchers have outlined a profile of the

characteristics of individuals with different levels of self-esteem. For example, Hamachek, (1982) states that individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to think well of others and expect to be accepted by others. They evaluate their own performance more positively than people with low self-esteem. Their performance is not affected when being watched, and are able to defend themselves against negative comments. They are able to work hard even for those who demand high standards of performance. Finally, they tend to feel comfortable with others even if they were superior to them in some way.

On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem expect to be rejected by others and tend to disapprove of others. In many cases they tend to blame others for their faults, and when challenged, they have tendency to defend themselves. This makes them more concerned with the situation than with resolving it (Coopersmith, 1967). Moreover, comparing people with high self-esteem to those with low self-esteem, the latter seem to evaluate their performance more negatively, and are sensitive to negative reactions. They are easily affected by negative comments and find difficulty in defending themselves. Individuals with low self-esteem generally doubt their worthiness and lack self-confidence; hence, they do not take risks and try to impress others (Campbell, 1986).

The self-serving functions and strategies of self-esteem are important for parents and educators. The fact that students self-esteem develops through stages of childhood and adolescence, requires that parents and teachers understand its developmental nature and the role they can play to nurture the development of a healthy self-esteem. While parents can instil feelings of trust and self worth early in their children's' lives, teachers can work on providing their students with feelings of competence and industry that will prepare students for the next stage of identity formation. In fact, the functional characteristics of self-esteem

are more dynamic in nature. It provides people with the capacity to face failure in ways that ensure that these feelings about themselves remain. This makes it important to explore more in depth the different views regarding the nature of self-esteem.

5. Nature of self-esteem

There is no perfect agreement among researchers about the nature of self-esteem. The most significant division is between the view that self-esteem is a generalised feeling about the self, and the view that it is the sum of a set of judgements about one's value, worthiness, and competence in various domains. In early literature on self-esteem, Rosenberg (1965) defines self-esteem as an attitude towards the self that can be positive or negative. Likewise, Coopersmith (1967) sees self-esteem as the evaluation that the individual makes and maintains in regard to himself/herself. In addition, Branden (1980) sees self-esteem as the individual's judgment of himself/herself as competent and able to cope as a result of life experiences with challenges of life. Through continuous interaction of the individual with his/her environment, self-esteem is maintained, and once it is developed, it remains almost stable. It changes when the individual undergoes a long period of consistent failure.

Self-esteem is also viewed from internal and external directions. For example, Flynn (2003) indicated that the most challenging issue in the study of self-esteem is its direction as a variable. He adds that psychologists, view self-esteem as an independent variable and an internal process, while social psychologists highlight social mechanisms of the self and see self-esteem as a dependent variable that is influenced by social processes.

Besides, when we try to identify the factors that contribute to a high or low level of

self-esteem, the concept of self-esteem seems to be connected to the nature / nurture debate. The role of nature or nurture in self-esteem starts with the relationship between heredity and environment. Battle (1992) emphasized the role of the social dimension when he defined self-esteem as an attribute that evolves as people interact with significant others in their life experiences. Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) acknowledged the importance of the social dimension in developing the individual's psychological processes when he pointed out that a child begins learning from people around him. This social world is the source of the child's ideas and knowledge. It is the roots of the culture that includes the stimuli a child will experience and internalize. He concluded that the individual's psychological processes start as social processes between adults and children. Besides, Fowler (1996) states that when it comes to self-esteem, the many factors that interact ,including genetic predispositions, reveal themselves in some stable traits of temperament, personality and intelligence and other qualities like social skills and self-esteem. These qualities are subjected to environmental influences. For example, children form their own expectations that determine their social experiences through their early experience with parents and caregivers. Thus, these social learning processes influence the children's self-esteem and behaviour.

Branden, (1969) provided noteworthy insights into the nature of self-esteem. He conceptualized self-esteem to emerge from the individual's conscious experience and judgment of himself or herself in terms of self-competence and self-worthiness based on reality. Worthiness is considered the psychological aspect of self-esteem, while competence is considered the behavioural aspect of self-esteem. Worthiness is connected to whether the individual finds meanings that foster his or her human growth and making commitments in a way that leads to a sense of integrity and satisfaction. As to the sense of competence, it is having the belief that the individual is capable of meeting the expected results, having

confidence in one's efficacy and making appropriate decisions (Mruk, 1999).

Furthermore, Brown (1993) conceptualizes self-esteem in terms of the feeling of self-worth, liking, and acceptance. He maintains that the degree we value and accept ourselves determines how we evaluate our qualities. In his analysis he sees self-esteem as the integration of self-worth and self-competence. He argues that for individuals to have positive self-esteem they have to feel confident about their sense of self-worth and sense of self-competence. A feeling of worth alone is not enough. If individuals have a deficiency in one or other dimensions, they may behave in ways that reflect a defensive self-esteem.

6. Emotions and self-esteem

With regards to learning, emotions play a role in the learning process. A learning environment is a social environment by nature where the learners' emotions interact with their learning. Vygotsky (1987) observed that cognition and emotions cannot be separated and that in order to provide causal explanations for thinking it is important to know how emotions affect thinking. In this regard, Vygotsky (1978) used the term zone of proximal development to differentiate between a person's "actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and his or her level of potential development as determined through problem solving with the help of the tutor". This difference is the "zone." Guidance and support of the teacher (scaffolding) will not only help make significant changes in academic achievement but it will also help in providing the student with emotional support that will raise the level of motivation and create feelings of efficacy that will help create feelings of self-esteem, which will in turn, help the learner to pursue his goals independently.

Emotions have a role in establishing the individual's identity and self-esteem in a

learning situation. According to the psychoanalytic and social constructionist view, it is argued that the social relationship is the basis for the individual's disposition to learn. Many emotions like pride and shame emerge from these social relationships that play a role in the development of identity and self-esteem. When such emotions appear in the context of success and failure experiences, they make students act positively or negatively towards learning. Thus, emotions can be powerful in encouraging and inhibiting learning, (Ingleton, 1999).

Emotions are also seen as the affective product of learning, and its role in learning is constructed at deeper level as being significant in the development of identity when formed in social relationship. Thus, emotions are considered a vital element in the learning activity. The maintenance of self-esteem and identity is affected by past emotions that may be experienced consciously or unconsciously in the present. Emotions are not only the product of individual experiences, but also an element in the social settings that entails interpersonal relationships. For both teachers and students emotions shape learning and teaching experiences.

According to Greenleaf (2002), adolescence is an important stage for learning during which the development of the brain takes place. It is the time when the brain decides on what information to keep and what to ignore. In this respect the role of emotions is to inform the brain as to what is worth keeping and the way with which one attends to in a particular situation. It is, therefore, important that adolescents learn that emotions affect the adolescents' way of thinking. They should be aware of these emotional symptoms that determine their emotional well being in order to find their way out. This is what Connell referred to as the "The emotional mind". To him this emotional mind seems to be powerful enough to affect the way in which the adolescent may get carried away with negative emotions and might not be able to control it no matter how he/she tries. Connell (2005) also

explains that our life experiences are full of rejections, and we might get stressed. When this happens the limbic system carries a message to our neocortex that interprets the immediate situation as threatening or uncontrollable. In this case, when the student is stressed, he cannot learn the required academic content as the limbic system will pull the blood and oxygen away from their neocortex. The result is an increase in heart rate and the adrenal glands will secrete the stress hormone into the blood. This makes it clear that when a student is stressed, he or she will not be able to learn efficiently and may not at all” (Connell, p.36). To this, Connell (2005) states that students’ emotions determine whether it is safe and worthy to focus, concentrate and make a lot of effort at school or not. Therefore, for effective learning to take place, adolescents’ emotional well-being should be maintained in parallel with their cognitive and academic ones.

In this regard, students must be helped to attain successful academic experiences that will help generate the feeling of pride. Acceptance and recognition are also important elements in achieving pride (Scheff, 1997), which is an emotion that significantly correlates with self-esteem.

After having presented a discussion about the development, function and nature of self-esteem, and raised the importance of emotions in this regard, it is useful to expand the correlates explored in this study as believed to be connected to self-esteem.

B- Correlates of Self-Esteem: Academic Achievement, Grade Level, and Gender

The current study investigates how self-esteem is related to gender differences, age and age related, and academic achievement. Self-esteem has been related to different

psychological concepts including personality and cognitive concepts. These many variables that are related to self-esteem urged researchers to conduct different studies to identify these variables. Parents and educators believe that a low sense of self-esteem leads to problems such as school failure, delinquency, and drug abuse. On the other hand, there is a common conception that a positive self-esteem protects people from many life problems. It is also thought that high self-esteem contributes to higher achievement and positive relationships with others. In contrast, low self-esteem is believed to make people vulnerable to psychological problems (Owens & Stryker, 2001).

A number of studies have investigated the relationship between self-esteem and gender. It is believed that there is a direct relationship between the self and the gender as sex stereotype goes parallel with self-esteem. According to Marsh (1989) how an individual ought to behave is provided by the environment. Consequently, sex differences in self-esteem are connected to sex stereotypes that persist from preadolescence to adulthood. Besides, Katz and Ksansnak (1994) explain that gender differences are not only associated with biological differences but also with the socialization process. Research showed a significant difference between male's and female's self-esteem (Block and Rubin 1993; Skaalvik1983; Wiggins1987), while in different direction showed that there is no gender difference in students' self-esteem (Coopersmith 1967; Simon & Simon 1975; Skaalvik1990) In addition, when relating self-esteem and gender to other variables as grade level and academic achievement, a significant and a non-significant gender differences were detected (Garzelli & Lester, 1987; Primavera, 1974).

Along with the problems associated with the level of self-esteem and Gender differences, academic achievement as a variable is found to be related to self-esteem. Thombs

(1995) sees that poor academic achievement may decrease students' self-esteem. He sees that academics and self-esteem are related; students with low level of self-esteem are more likely to have problem behavior and low grades than those with high level of self-esteem.

Several studies have examined the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement as measured by Grade point average (GPA). To Reasoner (1994), and Wiggins (1987), it is well recognized that the child's self-esteem is a crucial factor in his/her learning at all levels of success. Children with high self-esteem assume responsibility and cope with frustration and are able to act positively. On the other hand, children with low self-esteem are easily frustrated and tend to avoid difficult situations. However, according to Kohn (1994) even when a significant relationship is found between self-esteem and academic achievement, this does not necessarily mean that students with high self-esteem achieve better than those with low self-esteem. Likewise, Bachman and O'Malley (1986) have concluded their study by saying that it is the individual's actual ability more than the perceived ability that seems to be a determinant of self-esteem. Emler (2001), too, stated that genes are more important than parenting and environment, and that low self-esteem is not a risk factor for poor academic achievement.

Beside the relationship between the level of self-esteem and academic achievement, theorists have been interested in how self-esteem varies with age. Literature suggests that the transition from childhood to adolescence puts the individual at risk of disturbance in self-esteem. They become susceptible to environmental stresses like being accepted into peer group or the transition from elementary to middle school and this susceptibility can be related to a drop in self-esteem (Sadker & Sadker, 1994) ; Wigfield & Eccles 1991). With the changes that take place through the shift from childhood to adolescence, to some theorists,

self-esteem stabilizes. Students, who think positively about themselves in elementary school, also demonstrate positive self-esteem in secondary school. Equally children with a negative self-esteem in early years tend to have a negative feeling about themselves later in their life (Marsh and Craven, 1997; Savin Williams and Demo 1984).

In accordance with the relationship between self-esteem and age, investigators have studied how self-esteem varies with age in terms of transition periods and mixed results were observed. To some researchers, such as Dockter (1991), self-esteem remains stable or almost the same. But to Marsh (1989), Wigfield, Eccles, MacIver, Reuman, and Midgley (1991) self-esteem decreases as the grade level rises, while to Proctor and Choi (1994), self-esteem increases with higher levels.

C- Historical view

The concept of self-esteem goes back to the psychologist William James who used the term self-esteem for the first time. James (1890) believed that the individual's self-esteem lies in the area between one's ideal self and one's perceived self. Humans are able to recognize themselves as objects and form feelings and attitudes toward themselves. Their aspirations and values play a role in determining how favorably or not they regard themselves. The individuals' achievements are measured against their aspirations in a certain area of behavior. When achievement meets aspiration in an area, which is valued by the individual, the result is high self-esteem. James also regarded self-esteem more than a drive for self-enhancement. He believed that self-esteem depends, in part; on social comparisons and on how one thinks he/she is viewed by others.

Beside James, many approaches tried to discuss building self-esteem where each is based on a different assumption and considers self-esteem from a different perspective. In fact, there are many conflicting theories that studied self-esteem in terms of its nature, its development, and its function; and it has been approached from different perspectives. The psychodynamic, humanist, behaviour, cognitive-behavior, cognitive-behaviour, and sociocultural approach, are major personality approaches that were particularly selected because they tend to focus explicitly on self-esteem and not on a related topic. They also seem to maintain a high degree of consistency with a major theoretical perspective on a long tradition of thought in social sciences. Besides, they appear to be reasonably systematic in that they move from the abstract to the concrete (Mruk, 1999), or from theorizing about self-esteem to offering some practical suggestions for enhancing it.

The following part discusses these approaches as different perspectives for studying self-esteem.

1. Psychodynamic Approach

The psychodynamic approach is based on the theories of psychoanalysis. First developed by Freud, the basic idea, which underlies the psychodynamic approach, is that understanding behavior requires insight into the thoughts and feelings which motivate our action. Freud (1958; as cited in Mruk, 1995) explained human self-esteem in terms of child's natural self-love, and the experience the child feels that he is fulfilling his own ego.

Besides, the psychodynamic approach generally relates the problems during social and emotional development to the early years of the individual's life and the kind of relationships built at that early stage. The key idea in solving such problems is the conversation or the

talking and listening to those who have problems in an attempt to help them solve their problems (Brown and Peddar 1979 as cited in Cooper, 1994).

On the other hand, White (1963) stated that self-esteem involves respect from self and others as well as the appreciation of real abilities or achievements. Self-esteem has to do with the respect the individual has for one's self that is essential for self-esteem. This respect is related to the fact that self-esteem is connected to achievement. Self-esteem has an internal source that involves the child's own accomplishment and an external source that involves affirmation from others.

White (1963) puts self-esteem in a developmental perspective and suggests that self-esteem is a developmental issue that extends into adulthood. It is affected by experience and develops gradually. This makes the emergence of self-esteem subject to the process of development. For instance, the growing sense of efficacy goes parallel with developmental stages where each is an opportunity to explore, achieve success or face failure and master certain skills, and all requires self-esteem. White's ideas corresponds with Erikson's theory that children's healthy personality requires that they successfully resolve certain crisis at each developmental phase of their lives. Children's recognition and acceptance from their parents and caregivers, in addition to their successful accomplishments at school, result in feelings of industry and efficacy that pave their way for future success.

In his developmental view of self-esteem, too, White (1963) suggested that we need another idea of motivation. Motivation as a desire for stimulation is a continuous attempt to master the competence and this competence results in a feeling of efficacy. Thus, the need for competence motivates the organism to master the necessary skills to be able to deal with the environment effectively. White took the notion of competence and efficacy to the notion of

self-esteem and concluded that self-esteem is achieved, earned; and not only given. In addition, as a developmental process, White states that self-esteem is connected to other developmental processes. Thus, self-esteem is related to achieving different developmental stages that facilitate the development of healthy self-esteem. These developmental processes reach a point that characterizes the individual reflection of his or her general self-esteem.

It can be inferred that the psychodynamic approach assumptions, entail essential implications for education. Teachers can work on building a good relationship with their students, a relation that is characterized by trust to pave the way for a possible talk between both. When the teacher listens to their students, students will have more chance to reveal the ills they suffer from and express their emotions and ideas as, for example, the way they feel about a peer or a teacher. This will help them work out their problems. In addition, teachers can foster their students' motivation to master the expected competencies that will add to their feeling of efficacy. When, according to the students' developmental stage, the teachers help their students to accomplish and achieve they will be directly enhancing their feeling of mastery, industry and self-esteem. Thus, teachers should provide an environment in which students can attain their potentials in making their own choices.

Along with the psychodynamic approach that was based on the theories of psychoanalysis, the behavioural approach tried to understand self-esteem from a different perspective. Therefore, it is helpful to explore this perspective for a better understanding of the concept.

2. Behavioural approach

While psychodynamic approach places significant emphasis on conflict within the person and puts the emphasis on unconscious motive, it does not adequately address the

meaning of behavior, and the nature of growth. As it also uncovers self-esteem as a developmental process, the behavioral approach assumes that all behavior can be learnt.

The behavioral approach is based on the assumption that when we are born we have a blank mind. We become what we are by the effect of experience and interactions we make with the environment because our behavior is a form of response to a stimulus in reaction to the environment. This perspective suggests that the environment in which we exist determines us. Another assumption in the behavioral approach is that all behavior can be explained in terms of conditioning that build up to more complex behaviors. A further assumption is that we need to look into the behavior that we can observe in order to understand and explain how humans operate. The focus in the behavioral approach is only on observable behavior. There is no need to look at what goes on in the mind such as, perception, attention, thinking etc. It is enough to be concerned only with external and observable behavior: Huitt, W., & Hummel, J. (2006).

Beside the assumption that all behavior can be learned, the behavioral approach is based on the notion that behavior, even if unacceptable, occurs as a result of reinforcement. It investigates how certain behaviors become conditioned to specific situations and how reinforcement plays a role in the occurrence and maintaining of maladaptive behavior. For example, maladaptive behavior at school needs to be examined in terms of the environment of the classroom and the behavior of teachers and peers to identify how this behavior is reinforced. This implies that changing the behavior is possible by manipulating the consequences of the behavior or working on the situation that triggered it (Cooper, 1994).

Coopersmith (1967) believes that self-esteem has a great importance to the individual personally, socially and psychologically. He relates his explanation of self-esteem to the

principles of learning to point out that there are certain variables connected to self-esteem that are based on learning mechanisms of these variables. In his explanation of self-esteem, he aimed to investigate self-esteem and to modify it. To him, self-esteem refers to the evaluation the individual makes with regard to himself that reflects an attitude of approval or disapproval. That is, the attitude the individual holds towards himself is expressed as personal judgment of worthiness that he is capable or worthy. It is a trait that is acquired as the individuals judge their competences through their successes or failures they experience with time.

Coopersmith adds, that the major determinants of self-esteem are the warmth and affection provided by the relationship with parents from which children learn that they are worthy. Second, when the limits that are clearly outlined, and the children are treated respectfully, and when values are reinforced by classical and operant conditioning, this sets high standards for the children's behavior. When the children play the parents' role, and when they observe how their parents act and deal with others, they learn how to treat themselves with respect. Thus, self-esteem, and the lack of it, can be learned. Conversely, when there is parental neglect or too many limits, the result is different kinds of self-esteem construct. Coopersmith adds that feelings of anxiety and inadequacy are connected with low self-esteem. People with low self-esteem are more susceptible to stress, and they tend to be more defensive as a result of anxiety producing recognizable patterns of behavior. He emphasizes that strategies should be developed to enhance self-esteem of the individual and to eliminate factors that detract from it.

The behavioral assumptions entail essential implications for education. The belief that all behaviors are learned implies that children can be taught necessary social and academic skills. Training should be based on selecting the behavioral objectives that are needed. Then

teachers reinforce the steps that lead to the behavioral objectives. By this no child will be left behind. Moreover, problematic students who have behavioral difficulties can have their behaviors modified. Since the behavioral approach stresses the external reinforcement of the behavior expected, this entails that teachers have a full load job to help their students. They can set goals and work on them to achieve the desired behavior. Modeling can also be another way the teachers can adopt to modify certain behaviors of students like the way she reacts to the test or the low grades.

However, according to the assumptions of the behavioral approach, behavior can only be understood objectively. But this results in concluding that individuals are incapable of understanding their own behavior. In other words the self has no role in understanding the behavior. There is more focus on the individual than on the cognitive and social factors. The main concern is the learning principles rather than the general social influences.

3. Cognitive-behavioural approach

The behavioural approach insists on observation and measurement of behavior with no reference to self- related experiences. Unlikely, the cognitive-behavioral approach aims to improve the individual's behavior by focusing on how the individuals think, how they behave, their problem solving skills and coping strategies (Kendall, 1993).

The cognitive- behavioral approach is based on the assumption that the way we think affects the way we feel and the way we act. It deals with difficulties such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem arising from an individual's irrational thinking, misperceptions, and faulty learning. It assumes promoting positive change in individuals, and getting rid of emotional distress. Its argument is that we can't control people or situations, but we can control the way they perceive and react. The goal is to restructure one's thoughts,

perceptions, and emotions to facilitate behavioral change and develop coping skills .It aims to teach the skills needed for changing the way of thinking, manage our emotions and consequently our reactions to stressful people and situations.

In this regard, it is important that adolescents understand the mechanism of negative effects of thoughts and emotions on their behaviours and how their brain functions to help them cope with the difficulties and demands of adolescence. The link between emotion, cognition and learning has, at a deeper level, to trigger neural developments in the brain stem, and limbic system .Here, the adolescent needs to learn how to integrate knowledge more meaningfully, especially knowledge of how to cope more effectively with the emotional demands.

Thus, as adolescents learn to cope more effectively with negative emotions that can take place through the use of cognitive behavioral counseling interventions, the neurons of their brains become repeatedly activated, which results in a neural superhighway that enhances their ability to adapt more effectively to the emotional demands they encounter from day to day (Jensen,2000).

In this, the cognitive-behavioural approach stresses the use of inner talk as a helpful technique to help replace negative thoughts with positive ones. This means that the individual discusses his or her thoughts, feelings, and actions with a professional. For example, a situation that might be perceived positively by one person, enhancing his/her well-being is perceived negatively by another contributing to feelings of anxiety. Cognitive-behavioral approach helps in identifying negative thoughts and evaluates how realistic these thoughts are. Then, works on unlearning negative thought patterns and learn new helpful ones Cognitive-behavioral strategies can incorporate cognitive, behavioral, emotive techniques using rewards,

modeling, role-plays, and self-evaluation (Meichenbaum, 1988). Also, the cognitive-behavioral intervention aim to increase self-esteem. The intervention involves modification of the strength of positive beliefs about the self through the focus of attention on specific behavioral examples of the individual's positive attributes (Meichenbaum, 1988).

Meichenbaum (1980) discussed several studies to establish a relationship between positive and negative self-statements, affect, and performance. He concluded that poor intellectual performance is related to negative self-statements. He also reported that negative affect is associated with less-creative students, poor problem solvers, and children with learned helplessness. These negative statements are generally directed towards the self rather than the task. Meichenbaum stated that any time the individual shows low interpersonal and intellectual performance of tasks, most likely that negative self-thinking is involved.

The cognitive-behavioural approach assumptions have clear implications for educational objectives. The teacher can teach students how to use their inner talk to work on and change their cognitions that affect the target behavior .When teachers use cognitive-behavioral approach for intervention, they provide students with the needed tools for controlling their own behavior and not only with external reinforcement like tokens and praise. Thus, helping students become aware of their inner talk and teaching them to how to act on it can help them avoid or change patterns of behavior that is maladaptive. Besides, using modeling, the teacher can be the model for the student concerning the behavioral and the cognitive skills the student needs For example, teachers can think aloud about how they might deal with their anger and learn from experience. When teachers explain the cognitive strategies they use and their awareness of these strategies, they present a powerful model for students. By this, the student's cognition about the situations they encountered throughout the

school day can be examined and modified through verbal self-regulation using self-talk to solve the problem of certain behavior. The cognitive-behavioral techniques can help them see they are more competent and supported than they believe they are. Instilling these self-perceptions in them is the responsibility of their educators, school psychologists and counsellors (Hattie, 1992).

This approach is also oriented to imply that interactions between children and adolescents and their teachers should be provided. During these interactions, the teacher can help students learn how to solve problems and learn verbal skills based on a self-directed process. It also implies that teachers provide age-appropriate co

gnitive materials and experiences that help students feel competent and acquire positive self-perceptions.

4. Humanistic approach

The humanistic approach began as a response to the limitations of psychodynamic theories. While the psychodynamic approach tends to emphasize the early life experiences, the humanistic approach tends to emphasize the importance of the immediate environment and the potential for positive and negative adaptation. While behavioral approach insists on observation and measurement of behavior with no reference to self-related experiences, and while cognitive behavioral approach focuses on the inner talk, the humanistic approach emphasizes our feelings about ourselves as crucial in our happiness and effectiveness i.e. it emphasizes the subjective meaning of the individual's behavior. In other words, the key difference between the behavioral and the humanistic approach relates to the role of self-

motivation and autonomy, where behaviorism is more concerned with the individual's response to external stimuli and the humanistic approach stresses internal states.

The humanistic approach is based on the assumptions of Carl Rogers (1978) that the meaning of behavior is essentially subjective, because by nature all individuals are subjective. He argues that what makes science reliable is not that scientists are completely objective, but that the nature of observed object or event can be agreed upon by different observers. Rogers also states that we need to focus on our subjective understanding of our behavior rather than on our unconscious motives or the way someone else interprets them. He also maintained that we behave as we do because of the way we perceive our situation and not that we are determined to behave the way we do. He adds that no one else can know how we perceive the way we do, we are the best experts in ourselves.

In fact the "self" is a central idea to Rogers, where he made reference to self-concept and self-esteem. He defines self-concept as the organized perceptions and beliefs about one's self that are usually consistent and include how the individual values what he/she is and what he/she can do. This makes the self-concept a crucial element that influences both the individual's perception of the world and of one's self. This valuing will be reflected in his/her self-esteem. Self-concept does not necessarily match with reality, the way we see ourselves may differ from how others see us.

In this respect, Rogers says that we want to feel and behave in a way that is consistent with our self-image and what we would like to be i.e. our ideal-self. The less the discrepancy we have between our self-image and ideal-self the more consistent we feel and the higher our sense of self-worth becomes. As we prefer to see ourselves in a way that is consistent with our self-image, we may use defense mechanisms like denial or repression in order to feel less

threatened. A person whose self-concept is inconsistent with his/her real feelings and experiences will become defensive because the truth hurts.

In short, according to Rogers a healthy development is understood in terms of how the individuals perceive their own being. Healthy individuals tend to feel the accordance between their sense of who they are and who they feel they should be, and the relative degree of congruence is an indicator of health.

Besides, Abraham Maslow (1954) viewed self-esteem as a basic need in the hierarchy of needs. Self-esteem is the need that comes before the self-actualization need and after the physiological, safety, and belonging needs. He believed that if basic needs are met, people will strive to actualize their highest potential. According to him, self-esteem entails competence, confidence, mastery, achievement, independence and freedom. He described two kinds of esteem needs: the need for respect from others and the need for self-respect. Respect from others entails recognition, acceptance, and appreciation. Healthy self-esteem is a realistic appraisal of one's capacity and has its roots in the deserved respect from others.

Along with Rogers and Maslow, Nathaniel Branden (1969), explains self-esteem from a humanistic perspective. He highlights self-esteem as an existential and a vital psychological issue and not only a developmental process or a personal problem or a social concern. He views self-esteem as a basic human need that affects most of our behavior. Even if man could not identify it, he can't avoid the feeling that having a positive view of himself is so crucial and he can not face the universe without it.

Branden, also, stated that through continuous successful interactions with the environment, the individuals' self-esteem resists to change unless they undergo a period of repetitive failures. He also adds that self-esteem can be understood in terms of worthiness and

competence and both are equally important as components of self-esteem. There is an inter-relationship between these two components. They comprise a sense of personal efficacy or self-confidence and a sense of personal worth or self-respect. Self-esteem is rooted in these two components and gives the individual the belief that he/she is competent to live and worthy of living. In short, self-esteem is a basic human need and dynamic in nature that is related to our ability to live in a way that honors our view of ourselves. The lack of self-esteem has serious negative consequences and may lead to self-destruction behavior like substance abuse suicide anxiety and depression.

The humanistic approach holds some educational implication as to how the teacher can help students. The teacher should recognize what the students accomplish and show appreciation to help them accept themselves. The teacher should recognize that self-esteem is a vital psychological issue in the students' life. Students should be given the freedom and the choice to hold responsibilities. The teacher plays the role of a significant other in the students' life. She/he has a direct impact on making the students feel they are worthy, competent and accepted. Self-esteem enhancement can be done by focusing on the activities that help students feel self-worth by emphasizing the special attributes of each student and by establishing a classroom environment in which students are respected listened to by the teacher and peers. The classroom environment should allow special kind of freedom to produce students who are self-directed, responsible for what they learn and where self-evaluation and not external evaluation is supplied. In case of feeling of inadequacy the teacher can help the students realistically perceive their real self in relation to their ideal self by setting realistic expectations for them. The kind of relation the teachers build with their students is the key for attaining these objectives, thus, the student - teacher relationship is vital in this respect.

When human nature is concerned, the humanistic approach focuses on the acceptance of the self. It gives hope to the individuals that they are accepted and empowers them to accept themselves. Yet, this approach overemphasizes the fact that we all have the tendency for self-growth. It does not adequately address the social context in which the individual lives. It might be the case, for instance, that a person might feel in a certain way for personality related reasons and he needs to act upon himself but many are the cases when we need to focus on changing the situation or context. It is not accepted to assume that it is all the individuals' problem if they are not functioning in a society.

5. Socio-cultural approach

• The Culture and the self

While the focus in the humanistic approach is on the self and its needs, the socio-cultural approach shifts the attention to a broader context in which the individual functions, namely the social context. The humanistic approach seeks the interpretation of the human behavior from a subjective perspective, while the socio-cultural approach sheds the light on the factors in the individual's environment that influence the way the individual behaves. In this respect, we find that Rosenberg (1965) added to the concept of self-esteem what those who came before him did not attain. He emphasized that the acquisition of values is connected to interpersonal processes such as culture and by this he took the self-esteem concept to a sociological perspective. Self-esteem, as a product of social and cultural influences, represents an attitude that might be good or bad positive or negative towards the self. He assumed that the self is a social construction and works on the premise that self-values associated with self-esteem emerge from an interrelationship between cultural, social, and interpersonal processes. In addition, self-esteem results from a process of comparison that

involves values and discrepancies. A set of personal values affects the individuals' self-esteem and the level of self-esteem individuals have is proportional to the degree to which they positively meet these values. That is the individuals have self-esteem to the degree they perceive themselves as matching with a set of central self-values. These values are related to what the person has learned -through the process of socialization- to be of value to attain. The level of self-esteem goes in the same direction of the ideals, perceptions, evaluations the individual has. High self-esteem expresses the feeling that the individual is good or that he/she is of worth and respects him/herself for what he/she is. Emphasizing worth and relating it to values opened the door to the role of culture and social group in self-esteem (Mruk, 1999).

In fact, the notion that cultural context shapes the self has been of interest in social psychology that maintains that culture and the self are interrelated and constitute each other mutually (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1997 ; Greenfield, 1997). In other words, many psychological processes that make up the person are shaped through socialization. This creates a degree of harmony and interaction between the psychological system and the cultural system.

Accordingly, the socio-cultural approach assumes that society, culture, and interpersonal relationships affect behavior. Self-esteem, according to the socio-cultural approach, is believed to be based on a cultural dimension. It consists of two components, first the way the individuals conceive the world meaningfully. Second, this conception is combined with the individuals' perception that they meet the standards of values within the cultural reality they exist in. This entails that self-esteem becomes possible by the way the individuals develop their cultural worldviews. This cultural worldviews provide both a

meaningful conception of the universe, and specific prescriptions for behaviors that ensure for those who satisfy these prescriptions a feeling of security (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991). The point here, concerning the role of culture in self-esteem, is that the self cannot be treated as if it were an entity that exists independently of the individual's social contexts that develop through specific sets of historical and cultural antecedents (Kitayama & Markus, 1999).

Moreover, self-esteem is assumed to be related to the individual's social identity. According to the social identity theory (Smith & Tyler, 1997), the individual's membership in a negatively valued group is related to low self-esteem. People prefer to belong to positively valued groups because positive social identities contribute to a feeling of self-worth. People are more likely to join groups that are appealing to improving their social stature and giving them a sense of pride and respect. The social identity theory explains that membership in a negatively valued or low status group should be related to low personal self-esteem. Smith and Tyler (1997) found in their study that pride and respect reflected social identities and people who felt proud and well respected were more likely to endorse or engage in group behavior.

According to Vygotsky (1987), culture is viewed as socially accepted behaviors, attitudes and beliefs that are constructed through institutions, symbol systems and tools such as language. Culture is a dynamic outcome of certain developments and a product of human development as well. Vygotsky emphasizes the fact that culture itself influences human mental functioning and behavior, leading to a complex and integrated relationship between the cultural environment and personal development. In short, humans do not only produce culture, but are also products of culture themselves.

An important implication of the socio-cultural approach is that there is an opportunity through the classroom environment that the teacher influences the cognitive development of children through the attitudes, beliefs and values of teachers as significant others. In other words, the thinking patterns and beliefs of students can be shaped by the teacher. This gives rise to the importance of student-teacher and student-peer relationships that are of prime importance for instilling new ideas, perspectives and values. Furthermore, the role of the students can be seen to be active within their learning environments when they attempt to construct understanding where possible in their culture. Another implication is that when teachers give their attention to a student's behavior, they should consider this behavior as part of a social situation. This allows a more comprehensive understanding of the students' behavior and a better student- teacher relationship in relation to the cultural and immediate-social influences.

Hence, the emphasis made by the socio-cultural approach on the broader social context in which the individual functions and the environmental factors that influence the way the individual behaves, render self-esteem a social and cultural product. It influences the attitude that might be positive or negative towards the self. Thus, self-esteem is considered a social construction that emerges from an interrelated cultural, social, and interpersonal process through which the individuals develop their cultural worldviews that directs the way they behave.

Bearing all of the above in mind, we can assume that the type of culture has a role in the individual's self-esteem. In this respect, a reference has been made to two different types of cultures namely the collectivistic and the individualistic culture. In fact, individualism and

collectivism as cultural constructs have been the focus of many studies because cultures, groups, and individuals vary in their relative emphasis of individualism and collectivism.

Individualism has been defined as the assimilation of the collective goals into the individual goals, whereas collectivism involves the opposite, that is, the assimilation of the individual goals into the goals of collective society (Hui & Triandis, 1986). Besides, two different constructs of Individualism and collectivism are believed to operate on two levels, namely, the personal level and the collective one (Kim, Hunter, & Yoon, 1996). Also, societies are described as individualistic or collectivistic according to the type of orientations that dominate the individuals. This means that within a certain society, individual differences depend on the predominant orientation. Thus, individuals in a predominantly individualist society bear characteristics that are different from those in a collectivist one.

Comparing these two types of societies, members of an individualistic society perceive themselves as independent of what is collective, and they give priority to their own needs, and rights. They are motivated to achieve personal goals more than the goals of others and are driven by their own beliefs and attitudes. They tend to focus on themselves as individuals, and think in terms of "I" (Hui & Triandis, 1986). In other words, the individual comes first, and his or her rights must be recognized and considered above the right of the whole group. If the group's goals aren't in accordance with the individual's goals, then, the individual is free to go his or her own way.

On the other hand, in a collectivistic society individuals are closely linked in a social pattern and see themselves as parts of one collective. They are more driven by social norms, obligations imposed by the collective and are prepared to sacrifice personal interests for collective ones. In addition, collectivists emphasize their affiliation to members of these

collectives (Bontempo & Rivero, 1992; Leung & Bond, 1984; Triandis et al. 1986) and think in terms of "we". In other words, the group comes first. Its rights must be recognized and considered above the right of the individual, i.e. the individual belongs to the group.

Besides, collectivists emphasize fostering interdependence and group success, respecting authority and elders, and attaining group consensus. They are also associated with stable or hierarchical roles that are related to gender, family background, and age. At the same time, they highlight shared property and group ownership. More specifically, parents for example, see their children's primary role as members of the family and are expected to act with a sense of responsibility toward the group and the community. In such collectivistic cultures, self-esteem is not defined chiefly in terms of individual achievement. It is rather based on self-sacrifice that creates social solidarity. In contrast, young people in individualistic societies are typically expected to make educational and occupational choices, and work up to their own potential without considering how their success would benefit their families (Quiroz & Greenfield & Altchech 1999).

East versus West cultures illustrates the differences between individualistic or collectivistic societies. Sex differences are a clear example. In Western countries like the United States, women, for example, are more likely to have an interdependent self and men are more likely to have an independent self. However, ethnic groups, such as Asian Americans and Latinos, are more collectivistic than individualistic (Markus and Oyserman 1989).

Moreover, individualism and collectivism differ in their relative emphasis on individuals and groups in terms of different aspects, namely, interpersonal relations, norms and roles. Concerning the interpersonal relationships in collectivistic societies, there is greater

loyalty to the group and less concern for those who are out of the group, while in individualistic societies there is an emphasis on exchanging relationships rather than communal relationships. With respect to norms and roles, collectivistic societies stress hierarchy and value conformity, while individualistic ones stress individuality and independence. As to motivation, in collectivistic societies there is group-serving tendencies and reliance on the equality norm, while in individualistic societies, there are self-serving tendencies. Finally, the self-conception in collectivistic societies is based on a collective, social identity, while in individualistic societies the emphasis is on the personal identity (Ayyash, 2001).

Based on the above, it is assumed that self-esteem depends on the individuals' personal qualities and the value of the groups to which they belong. Consequently, when rating one's own group as positive, self-esteem is enhanced, and if one's own group is rated as a prestigious group, self-esteem will increase. Besides, it can be concluded that collectivistic cultures tend to have lower levels of self-esteem than individualistic cultures, and this implies that individualism–collectivism plays a role in moderating the psychological experience of self-evaluation.

It is noteworthy, to say that the reference to societies as individualistic or collectivistic gives the impression that members of a particular society are either individualistic or collectivistic. However, a number of researchers have noted that individualism and collectivism are multidimensional social constructs rather than opposites of a single dimension (Kagitcibasi & Berry, 1989; Kagitcibasi, 1990; Kashima, 1987). This means that society members can be high on both, low on both, or high on one and low on the other.

Accordingly, researchers have emphasized that both individualistic and collectivistic traits can be within individuals and cultures.

Given that the self-esteem construct is affected by cultural context, and many studies were done in western contexts, it seems important to explore this issue in Lebanon as part of the Eastern cultures, because Eastern and Western cultures tend to differ in relation to individualistic and collectivistic values. Accordingly, self-esteem would seem to be related to an individualistic rather than collectivistic orientation. This leads to exploring the Lebanese culture in an attempt to understand its relation to self-esteem.

• The context of Lebanon

Lebanon is located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Its geographic position as a midpoint linking the Mediterranean with Asia and Europe has given it a multicultural as well as a cosmopolitan character. This fact has been reinforced by the return of many Lebanese immigrants and the universal technological innovations (Harik, 1993).

The population of Lebanon is about 4 million and consists mainly of Christians, Muslims, and Druze. Religion in Lebanon is not only an individual preference reflected in the ceremonial practice of worship but rather a phenomenon that often determines social and political identification. In short, Lebanon is by necessity a multi-lingual society and implicitly a multi-cultural one as well (Ayyash, 2001). In general, the Lebanese culture is an Arab culture affected by Western influences; mainly French and American. The Lebanese culture is characterized by diversity and openness of the Lebanese people to influences from East and West. This makes Lebanon, as a culture, holds both features of both collectivism and individualism.

First, examining the context of Lebanon in terms of the dimension of individualism and collectivism, there are some attributes that reflect individualism and collectivism. It has been shown that attributes such as self-definition, attitudes and values vary as a result of language, gender, and religion. Thus these attributes are influenced by the variety in languages and religions in Lebanon. As to languages, Arabic is the official language as well as the religious language for Muslims, Druze, and Christian communities. In addition, all students in Lebanon are required to learn a second and/or a third language (Ayyash, 2001).

The importance of referring to the language here is that there are reasons to imply that language is associated with individualistic or collectivistic orientations. According to Trafimov, Silverman, Fan, and Fun Law (1997), the language used by particular individuals plays a role in how they merge in either the private or the collective self. The private self, from a developmental perspective, is constructed as a distinct concept and is connected to private self-cognitions. On the other hand, the collective self is associated with collective self-cognitions. The development of these concepts takes place in people's native culture where the native language is spoken and influences the way people look at the world.

In addition to language, Gender is another factor that has a role in the individuals' orientations whether individualistic and collectivistic. In most societies, including Lebanon, men have greater individualistic tendencies because they have more choices than women. In addition, women are more involved in the needs of their children than men are, resulting in more collectivistic orientations for women. Accordingly, women appear to be more collectivist, and men appear to be more individualists (Ho & Chiu, 1994; Daab, 1991; Lykes, 1985; Triandis, 1995).

Additionally, another important factor that is connected to collectivism or individualism is religion. Several researchers have stated that individuals who attend a place of worship, frequently, tend to be more socially conservative or traditional than those who do not (Schwartz & Huismans, 1995; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). It seems that such places provide a chance to meet other people, and accordingly satisfy communal goals (Warner, 1993).

• The effect of religion on education in Lebanon

Looking into the Lebanese scene we find that while people are described in simple terms “Muslim” and “Christian”, the reality is much more complicated. The government recognizes 17 religious groups in the country under the two main sects of Muslim and Christian. The Muslim sect comprises mainly the Sunni, Shi'i, Druz and Alawis while the Christian sects are mainly, Maronites, Greek Orthodox, and Catholics (Sedgwick, R., 2000). In Lebanon, religion is not merely a function of individual preference reflected in ceremonial practices of worship (Ayyash, 2001). Rather, religion is a phenomenon that runs deeply in the Lebanese lives, and often determines social and political identification. It also determines people's various cultural aspects and ways of life. More specifically, confessional ties are major givens of the Lebanese social existence and are considered fundamental facts of the Lebanese society and politics (khalaf, 1968). Socially, confessionalism permeates all levels of social life because it plays a role in the relations of production and distribution, and determines recruitment, residence, marriage, education, culture and language (Beydoun 1984). Religion is seen as a potential contributor to differences among the Lebanese people. Christians and Moslems are the two religious sects in Lebanon (Ayyach, 2001).

Besides, the effect of religion on education seems particularly influential in Muslim communities as the Islamic religion entails a way of life dictated by the holy book and the life of the prophet. Besides, the Lebanese society is mainly collectivistic and the family ties are very strong in the Lebanese society which makes it more possible for children to be affected by their immediate and extended families religious values (Ayyash-2001). Schools may complement the family influence regarding the religious values. Confessional schools, particularly, hold the responsibility of transmitting religious values to their students. In this regard, Muslim youth were found to possess more collectivistic attributes than their Christian counterparts who were found to possess individualistic attitudes (Ayyash, 2001). This fact makes Muslims adhere to their families' religious values more than their Christian counterparts.

In addition, adolescents' identity development has been linked to religion in many research studies. Erikson (1968) emphasized the development of a secure identity in adolescence. In theory, religion can be an important contributor to the process of establishing a secure identity (1964, 1965). Studies regarding the relationship between religion and identity development have indicated that religious commitment is linked to identity achievement. In this regard, religion helps to satisfy two essential needs for a healthy identity development and self-esteem, as it helps to provide a sense of belonging available in religious groups and answer questions concerning existential issues.

• Classifications of schools in Lebanon

The different Lebanese religions have produced different subcultures that made the Lebanese society of a distinct identity that influenced the Lebanese educational system (Ayyash, 2001). This system is divided into two sectors: the private and the public. Unlike

private schools, public schools are non-profitable, almost free of charge, and are open to all the Lebanese population. Many private schools are established by confessional communities and sometimes foreign groups who used to supervise education. Then, with the rising number of students in public schools, the government started to cooperate with the private sector and established more schools to meet the public demands. In this concern, there had always been a disparity between private and public schools reflected in academic performance, which is usually higher in private schools than in public ones (Ayyash, 2001).

Private schools, that are mainly dependent on various religious communities, have had a long and strong tradition in Lebanon. This has resulted in the emergence of various educational institutions in the country (French, Anglo-Saxons, Germans, and Italians), that reflected the openness of the government to the international community. Beside private schools that are established by western clerics, there are many local, foreign, religious and secular schools. The majority of these schools are subsidized by religious groups. Mainly, there are the Jesuits (Catholics who came in 1625 and, with the Maronites, established the first religious schools in Lebanon), the Presbyterian missionaries who came to Beirut in 1866 and competed with the Catholics by establishing the American University of Beirut and high schools, and the Muslim schools that started teaching in mosques and are supported by local organizations, and wealthy Islamic nations such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Gulf states (Inati, 1999). In addition to these categories, there are the International schools that are found in many regions all over Lebanon, some of which have branches in the neighboring Arab countries (Sedgwick, 2000).

This classification of schools in Lebanon was reflected in the sample of schools used for the current study. The sample consists of six private schools located in different areas

around the city of Tripoli, the capital of North Lebanon. They are two Christian schools(originally Greek Orthodox missionaries), one local Islamic school regarded as the main school for the Muslim Sunni majority in Tripoli, Two western-oriented schools(international)and one Islamic school founded and run by the Islamic Brothers Party.

• Nature of school transitions in Lebanon

The nature of school transitions in Lebanon in particular also needs to be explored. Moving from a cycle to a higher one, has always brought particular changes and difficulties to students at all levels. The four cycles represent four transitional stages. In this regard, many educational reports have noticed the difficulties that arise during these transitions. The difficulties specifically culminate the academic in the first two cycles and the social and behavioral ones in the third and fourth cycles (NCERD, 1998).

The secondary level in particular, has its own set of problems as it holds the students' responsibility to end the years of schooling successfully, and moving them to the university. Private secondary schools in Lebanon pursue an ambitious task of helping students reach for the major, faculty and university of their and their parents' choice (Inati, 1999).

Academically speaking, as students start secondary school, they face an increase in new school subjects, in addition to the change in the methods of teaching in each subject. Added to that there is a great concern about students' academic activities compared to the concerns about other important factors in the pursuit of the adolescents' well being in the Lebanese secondary schools (Ayyach, 2001). Besides, students' various talents and non-academic areas of competence; technical, artistic/creative and practical do not receive recognition in the majority of the Lebanese secondary schools (Inati, 1999). This creates alienation and feelings of uncertainty and leads to low self-efficacy and self-esteem. Self-

esteem may be protected if students feel competent in areas that they value and discount the importance of the domains others value (Harter, 1999).

Educators should consider the emotional as well as the cognitive aspects of the students to enable them to meet these difficulties in the time when their one of their prime needs is finding their identity in their immediate environment. However, in the current system of Lebanese secondary schools, there is less likelihood for the change of school environment to fit in with the student's needs. Instead it is more likely that a student has to change oneself to adapt to the school environment. The changes that face adolescents in the new environment of the secondary school challenge adolescents with excessive responsibilities and obligations that may hamper the process of self-discovery and create complications for their identity development. If we want to help adolescents enjoy their secondary school life, which is a significant factor affecting their further development, helping them to adjust to new schools become very crucial (Ayyach, 2001).

• The new educational reform effect on students' self-esteem.

By 1995, a new educational reform known in Arabic as "Haykalyah," had emerged. The (NCERD) experts, together with many experts in the field of public and private education from Lebanon and international organizations, mainly UNESCO, were assigned to design the new curricula (NCERD, 1995). The aim was to end an era that produced a civil war, and was described to lack the necessary basics of *homogeneous* education that unites citizens and help to create a buffer against social and political ills. "The reform should enhance belonging, social integration, and respect for spiritual and cultural diversity" (NCERD, 1995 P.60).

Guided by the principles of the new educational policy, the curriculum was designed to adopt new trends of international curriculum that apply recent innovations in conceptual

learning and pedagogy. In this regard, the new curriculum emphasizes a learner-centered educational philosophy, which places the learner at the core of the learning process, when they act as active participants rather than passive ones. They explore, manipulate, create, infer, draw conclusions, question and search out answers for themselves. The learners are meant to be involved in their own learning by engaging them in meaningful and interactive performance tasks at all levels of instruction (Shaaban and Ghaith, 1977). The learner-centered curriculum is one of the best practices of constructivism. Constructivism holds that prior knowledge forms the foundation by which new learning occurs (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969).

The social side of learning is well considered in the new curriculum. The curriculum highlights the role of group work in creating an interactive classroom environment. Many of the objectives and performance tasks included in the curriculum, call for pair and group work in line with the cooperative learning model of classroom interaction (NCERD, 1997). In this regard, self-esteem had been found to be an outcome of cooperative learning, because students in cooperative learning feel more liked by their classmates, besides, they are more likely to feel more successful academically (Slavin, 1983).

The new system of education provides general framework and organization for the various educational tracks, for the relationship between academic and vocational technical education, for the relationship of pre-university with higher education, and for the relationship between education, market, and the needs and aspirations of the Lebanese society (Kobeissy, 1994).

Besides, the new framework added new branch to the Baccalaureate II curriculum: social and economic sciences to develop new skills as is the case in the developed countries.

These new changes added a variety of opportunities and choices for the youth. Erikson (1987) states that adolescents need to feel that they are free to make choices about their immediate futures, in order to solve the identity crisis. The new organization also took students' needs for knowledge, values and attitudes as well as activities and life skills into consideration (NCERD, 1995). Thus new positions were created for academic advising, extra-curricular activities and career guidance counselling. In this regard, extracurricular participation was found to enhance students' self-esteem, foster development and improve the psychological well-being of adolescents (Brown, 1988).

For a smoother transition for the subsequent grade levels, the "Haykalyah" proposed curriculum changes in each transitional phase. Students were helped to move to the subsequent class through following a spiral program that links concepts in a chain of brief and elaborate content. Furthermore, the new assessment system employed new techniques that changed the role of the student from a passive receiver to an active learner, involving the student in analysing and synthesizing. Besides, a new balance was established between the practical and the theoretical components of the curricula with more emphasis on the practical (NCERD, 1995). Besides, continuous assessment was also implemented to direct the teaching-learning process from the beginning (NCERD, 1995).

In conclusion we can say that the characteristics of the Lebanese society that is multilingual, comprises many religions and exposed to Eastern and western influences render it a society in which collectivistic and individualistic traits coexist. In addition, the different religions in Lebanon make this society a pluralistic society that comprises multi perspectives that reflect fundamentally different perceptions about social development and education in the Lebanese society.

6- Cognitive – Experiential Approach

While the socio-cultural approach shifts the attention to external influences originating from the society, the role of the individual in this approach is reduced to the changes made in the individual's surrounding environment. Thus, the individual bears no personal or direct responsibility as to the manifested behavior. Yet the cognitive-experiential approach focuses more on information processing or cognition. According to this approach, the human being organizes information and experience of his self and the world around him and the others. The aim is to form a view of reality and make sense out of the world and develop an understanding of the world and others. People process information by two parallel interactive systems: a rational system and an experiential system. The rational system operates primarily at the conscious level and is intentional, analytic, verbal, and relatively free of affections. The experiential system is assumed to be automatic, preconscious, holistic, nonverbal, and associated with affect. It is oriented toward immediate action and is more resistant to change i.e. experiencing is believing (Epstein, 1991).

Epstein's approach is based on the cognitive notions of information we get from experience, the organization of information through concept formation, representation of a hierarchical system, and the process of development. Individuals come to develop personal view of reality that includes both an understanding of the world and others i.e. a world theory, and an understanding of which we are in relation to them i.e. a self-theory. People make sense out of the data given by life through our capabilities, experience, family, culture, etc. Then these ideas and beliefs are generalized to form a framework for understanding past, present, and future events. Finally, these personal theories influence our motivation and behavior and thus maintain a favorable level of self-esteem. Besides,

to Epstein, a good theory must expand over time in order to accommodate new information. Such growth increases self-esteem (Epstein 1985). Besides, Epstein defines self-esteem as a need to be love worthy that plays the role of motivation in the individuals' life. Any change in self-esteem changes the whole life of the individual. It is, also considered the individuals' understanding of the world and others and who we are in relation to them. We strive to maintain equilibrium of the self and once the self becomes established it constitutes a base for stability to which the individual works hard to maintain. Change is resisted as it causes destabilization because changing one part of the system affects other parts and disrupts one's ability to function in general (Curtis, 1999). He also sees self-esteem as structured in a hierarchical manner. The first level is the global self-esteem and the most powerful in terms of its influence on behavior because, once established, this global self-esteem it is always present in one way or another. Second, there is an immediate of self-esteem that is more specific to particular domains of self-experience including competence, lovability, self-control, personal power, and bodily appearance. The third level of the hierarchy is the most visible level of self-esteem because it is situation specific where our self-esteem is active in a particular setting or activity (Epstein 1985). This experiential approach implies that the teachers provide positive experiences for students to build up feelings of self-respect and self-esteem. The teacher should, in most of the activities, rely on external sources of feedback and reinforcement. It also implies that the teacher knows that the change process requires addressing the intellectual, behavioral, and emotional levels of the individual.

Based on these various theoretical notes, it can be noted that these different personality approaches view self-esteem from different perspectives. Yet, they care to make use of the inside and outside factors to help the individual develop positive self-perceptions.

In this regard, the psychoanalytical approach gives much importance to the person's unconsciousness that is affected by the early experiences of the child, whereas, the humanistic approach stresses the subjective aspect where emotions and needs determine the individual's behaviours and self-esteem. On the hand, Behaviourism views the human behaviour as a resultant of negative and positive reinforcement; with no regard to free will. The cognitive behavioural approach shifts this emphasis to the individuals' cognitions that affect their behaviour through self-talk. Yet, the sociocultural approach stresses the influence of the culture and the immediate relationships with the environment on the individuals' behaviour and self-esteem. Finally, the cognitive experiential approach highlights the role of experience in the way individuals form their self-views.

Despite the differences between these different personality approaches with respect to behaviour and self-esteem, they all seem to stress the importance of immediate relationships the individual has in his/her life. In this regard, the psychodynamic approach stresses the relationship with parents in early years, the humanists focus on the role of relationships in acceptance and unconditional positive regard. The sociocultural approach, in turn, emphasizes the effect of relations with others and with the surrounding environment. In addition, the behavioural approach stress the role of others in learning through modeling and shaping of behaviour.

Accordingly, it is important to take into consideration what these theories of personality implied concerning the adolescent students' self-esteem. For example, it is important according to the psychoanalytic view to gain insight into the feelings and thoughts of the young adults. It is also necessary, according to White (1963), to help the student in this period of development to master the competences required to achieve success. Besides, from

the behavioural perspective approach, when the limits are clearly outlined and the adolescent students are treated respectfully, and when values are reinforced by classical and operant conditioning, this helps in setting high standards for the adolescent's behavior. Parents' role, in this regard, is important as role models for their children. They can learn from their parents how to accept themselves, accept others and acquire self-esteem. The cognitive behavior approach is important in this phase of development as adolescents learn how to listen to, understand their inner talk, and deal with their negative thoughts and emotions, in order to replace them with more positive and adaptive ones. The humanist approach carries also insights into the role of significant others in the immediate environment to help adolescents feel they are worthy through respect and understanding. In addition, the sociocultural approach renders self-esteem as a social and cultural product that emerges from the influences of interrelated cultural, social, and interpersonal factors through which the individuals develop their cultural worldviews that directs the way they behave. Finally, in the cognitive experiential approach, the role of the individual is heightened. The individual comes to an understanding of the world through his/her personal experience. Thus, though these theories understand self-esteem from different perspectives, they all stress the influence of the immediate environment and significant others in developing the student's self-esteem. It is of particular importance to gain insights on how these theories help to make sense of different inside and outside factors to influence the way people value themselves.

D- Empirical Perspectives of Self-Esteem

1- Self-Esteem and Gender

Although it has a biological basis, gender as a social construct, is directly connected with differences in socialization practices such as the influence of parents, peers and teachers. Society, culture and family shape the individuals' sex stereotypes as learned from those around them. The environment provides strong cues for the individuals' behavior. Consequently, sex differences in certain areas such as self-esteem are consistent with sex stereotypes and relatively stable from preadolescents to adulthood (Marsh, 1989). A study conducted by Burnett, et al. (1995) showed how the cultural identity of a certain society determines the character traits and the sex stereotypes of males and females, and this outlines the differences between both genders. The results showed that in the American society a large amount of masculine characteristics such as decisiveness, independence and competitiveness is more dominant. Such individuals reported greater self-esteem than those who score less in such traits.

Brogan & Jackson (1998) pointed to the role played by gender in self-esteem. For example, boys have more chance to form positive self-images from activities such as sports or academic achievement, while girls rely on the groups they belong to and interact with to form their positive self-images. For instance, it is acceptable for a boy to be a sports star and be smart with athletics as the primary interest. Females may act smart if their group of friends considers academic ability more important than physical appearance. In the same vein, Block and Robins (1993) showed that adolescent females' self-esteem is oriented interpersonally while males' self-esteem is more self-oriented. He explains that female self-esteem is developed through girls' and women's relations with others.

Many studies pinpoint pre-adolescence and adolescence as periods when females' self-esteem decreases. Furthermore, compared to males, self-esteem formation is a more demanding process for females. This is due to the fact that at this developmental level, females construct their self-views in more life domains than males do (Knox, 2000). In this regard, they are obliged to experience higher levels of communion and interpersonal concern in close relationships to conform to societal pressures (Davies and Lindsey, 2004).

Another area of Gender differences is the "possible selves". In his analysis of the gender differences and the self, Knox explained that gender differences rely on the adolescents' understanding of what he termed as the "possible selves". He found that both females and males experience some kind of fear of reaching this possible self. However, the generated females feared possible selves is more related to relationships, whereas boys' generated feared possible selves are related to occupation and feeling of inferiority. In addition, males and females are able to perceive these different selves. Knox concluded that these differences indicate that, when comparing males to females, males tend to have higher self-evaluations in masculinity, achievement, and physical ability, whereas females have higher self-evaluations in sociability, and verbal ability.

Studies that evaluated gender differences in self-esteem produced different views along with different results. Most of the studies found that adolescent females score lower on self-esteem than adolescent males (Cairnes, McWhirter, Duffy, & Barry (1990). Rosenberg and Simmons (1975) found that more girls reported lower self-esteem than did boys during middle and late adolescence. Gender differences were also studied in high school by Chubb, Fertman, and Ross (1997). Results revealed that males' self-esteem was significantly higher than that of females but found no dramatic change of self-esteem during high school. Rosenberg (1986 as cited in Reasoner, 1994) noted that psychological changes that occur in

puberty affect girls more so; they report lower self-esteem than boys do. Richman, Clark, and Brown (1985), in their study of self-esteem among adolescents, found interactions of gender, race, and social class: white females were significantly lower in general self-esteem than white males and black males and females.

According to Harter (1992), gender difference in self-esteem increases with development. Beginning in junior high school, self-esteem was consistently lower for females as compared to males. According to Chubb, Fertman, and Ross (1997) study of gender differences in self-esteem during the high school years, self-esteem did not change dramatically during the high school years, but girls scored much lower than did boys. Gender differences were highly manifested in the ninth grade.

Other researchers suggest that girls are more negatively affected than boys by school transitions (McGee et al, 2003). Lord et al (1994) found in their own longitudinal analysis, that being a male was predictive of self-esteem increases over time whereas being a female was predictive of decreasing self-esteem. In this regard, adjustment patterns seemed to play a role in this regard; girls tend to be more depressed, to have more feelings of vulnerability. They also tend to be less committed to go to school and experience more feelings of hostility and low self-esteem (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987).

Researchers continue to investigate why females have lower self-esteem in high school. Freiberg (1991), states that adults convey different messages to male and female adolescents. Researchers have found that teachers provide their female students with a different type and amount of reinforcement than that they provide for their male students. In addition, Shaffer (1997) noticed that male students, all through school years to college, receive more attention acceptance, praise, and criticism from the teacher attention and are given more chance to talk in class. Girls, in turn, were also found to be more affected by the

kind of teacher-student relationships, showing more interest in class and subject attitudes when the relation is positive (Ferguson and Barry, 1998a).

On the contrary, there are a number of studies that have shown no significant gender difference. Coopersmith (1967) found no difference in the means of Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) between males and females in the 5th and 6th grades. Moreover, Skaalvik (1990) found no significant gender difference between males and females for students in Grade six in general academic self-esteem, and no statistical significant difference between males and females was observed among Grades 7, 8 and 9 by Dockter (1991) and Collien (1995).

Likewise, a research study by Wilgenbusch and Merrell (1999) on children and adolescent across all grade levels indicated that male participants reported higher levels of self-esteem than female participants in the global, mathematics, physical appearance, psychomotor coordination, and emotional domains, while females reported higher levels of self-concept in only the verbal domain. In the elementary grades' participants, males reported higher self-esteem in five domains, namely global, academic, mathematics, family, and psychomotor coordination, while females reported higher levels of self-esteem in four dimensions, namely verbal, musical, and psychomotor coordination domains. Although the results of this study show that the differences between males and females are consistent with gender stereotypes, the size of these differences was relatively small. The authors concluded that the findings indicate that global generalizations regarding gender and self-esteem is considered an oversimplification and even erroneous. Similarly, Cram (1996), in her review of gender and self-esteem, found evidence for gender differences in domain specific areas of self-esteem, namely the areas of physical appearance and physical ability. However, her conclusion was that the differences between boys and girls are not significant enough for practical importance.

Significant as well as non-significant gender differences in self-esteem were also found. Gender and self-esteem were studied in relation to academic achievement, grade level and to specific facets in self-esteem. Garzelli and Lester (1985) studied the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in both males and females. Boys and girls showed no significant difference in the total score of self-esteem as measured by SEI. However, boys and girls showed a difference in the sub-scores: self-satisfaction and family. In 1987, Wiggins worked with 483 students and found self-esteem scores were nearly equivalent for boys and girls in grades 6, 8 and 10. Boys in grade 4 scored substantially higher than girls but girls in grade 12 scored higher than boys. To sum up, significant and non-significant gender difference were revealed in self-esteem when other variables were taken into consideration.

2- Culture and Gender differences

Bearing in mind that culture affects self- processes and that self-esteem differs with gender takes us to investigate to which extent culture is a variable in explaining gender differences of self-esteem. Gender, according to Flynn (2003) is culturally and socially constructed. Socialization is a lifelong process by which the values and norms of a society are constructed and learned, including those related to gender. Gender schema theory (Bem 1981) argues that when children learn the right cultural definitions of gender, this becomes the way by which all other information is organized. Thus, the socialization process of children involves learning how to behave like a boy and learning how to behave like a girl. This explains in what ways these genders differ. For example, American masculinity stereotypes include independence, strength, and dominance. American stereotypes of femininity include interdependence, sensitivity, passivity, and emotionality. When children undergo the

socialization process, they get socialized along gender stereotypes. When a baby is born, the first question after a baby's birth from parents is, "Is it a boy or a girl?" The answer will determine how that child will be treated and the gender construction process begins (Renzetti and Currany 1995).

Gender differences are emphasized through stereotyping and reinforced by social factors. For example, the clothing, books, toys and games, and media that are chosen for children influence gender socialization. Some studies (Clark et al, 1993; Flynn 2003; Gooden and Gooden (2001) found that children's picture books play an important role in gender socialization by the way they represent the social norms.

Triandis (1989) defined the self as one element of subjective culture that is shared by the members of a certain culture, and he distinguished between the private, public, and collective selves. He indicated that the complexity of these selves depend on cultural variables. Given this distinction among aspects of the self between the private, public, and collective self, people sample these three kinds of selves in different cultures, and this distinction has specific consequences for social behavior. He adds that there is a recognition that the self is partly shaped by the individual's interaction with groups, yet the way the self determines aspects of social behavior in different cultures is not clear.

In Triandis' study, the three aspects of the self (private, public, collective) in different kinds of social environments were sampled. Three dimensions of cultural variation (individualism-collectivism-tightness-looseness-cultural complexity) were studied in relation to the sampling of these three aspects of the self. Results revealed that aspects of the self differ in different cultures, depending on complexity, level of individualism, and looseness of the culture. The more complex, individualistic, and loose the culture is, the more likely it is that people will sample the private self and the less likely it is that they will sample the collective

self. On the other hand, when people sample the collective self, they are more likely to be influenced by the norms, role definitions, and values of the particular collective culture. In short, a major determinant of social behavior is the kind of self that operates in the particular culture. Besides, the environments, child-rearing and cultural patterns, are linked to differential aspects of the self. Triandis in his differentiation between individualistic cultures, such as the United States, and collectivistic cultures, such as Asian cultures, states that self-esteem in the individualistic cultures is more likely to be based on the achievement of personal goals, while in the collectivistic cultures it is based on the achievement of collective goals, such as family or society goals.

A similar distinction between Western and Eastern cultures was presented by Hazel Markus, Shinobu & Kitayama (1991) in their concept of "independent" versus "interdependent" selves. Independent self emphasizes that the individual is unique and the self is separated from others. Interdependent self emphasizes the degree to which the person fits in within his or her group. The formation of self-processes may apply in both types of cultures, but the emphasis is different. In collectivist cultures, such as Japan or China, the primary source of self-esteem is the appraisals from one's family, work or peer group. By contrast, in the individualistic Western cultures, individual achievement is a more important process for self-esteem.

This distinction between Western and Eastern cultures helps in understanding self-processes. Yet, within each culture there is variation regarding self-processes. For example, within Western countries like the United States, women are more likely to have an interdependent self-concept and men are more likely to have an independent self-concept (Markus and Oyserman 1989). This collectivist or interdependent self also characterizes ethnic and racial minorities in the United States. It is concluded that even

though the level of self-esteem does not vary much by race or ethnicity (Gecas and Burke 1995), other factors that are related to race and ethnicity such as social class and racial composition of schools and communities do affect self-esteem. For example, African-American students who attend African-American high schools report higher self-esteem than African-American teenagers who attend white high schools (Ross 1995).

As to self-esteem and culture, much research has focused on differences between cultures with respect to different psychological processes. The extent to which individuals are motivated to possess positive self-views is a process that varies between cultures. It can be concluded that to the extent cultures differ from each other, it follows that their associated self-concepts should be similarly different. Likewise, the divergent cultural views of self should lead to differences in psychological processes that involve the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For example, Heine & Lehman (1997), in three longitudinal acculturation studies provided evidence that being engaged in another culture leads to changes in self-esteem in Japanese and Canadian subjects. They showed how the engagement in North American culture fosters the development of positive self-views.

In the first study, self-esteem scores of Japanese exchange students, collected a few days after their arrival in Canada, were compared with scores collected 7 months later. The average self-esteem scores of the visiting Japanese students increased significantly by 1.8 points over this time. A complementary longitudinal study was conducted with Canadian English teachers who went to live in Japan. Their self-esteem was measured before they left Canada. Then seven months after arriving in Japan, the Canadian teachers exhibited a significant decrease in self-esteem of 1.0 points over this time. A third longitudinal study measured self-esteem in a second group of Japanese students before they left Japan. Then seven months after their arrival in Canada. In this study, Japanese exhibited a non-significant

increase in self-esteem of 0.3 points after living in Canada. In this latter study, however, a significant correlation ($r = .32$) emerged between the students' self-esteem change and their acculturation attitudes: Those students who had assimilated and integrated most of the Canadian life exhibited greater increase in self-esteem than those students who were more likely to maintain their original cultural lifestyle.

These data suggest that individuals' evaluations of themselves are receptive of the cultural context within which they interact. It seems that participating in a North American cultural context leads Japanese to attend more to their positive features as individuals. Thus increases their positive self-evaluations especially for those who assimilated and showed integrated attitudes in the Canadian culture. In contrast, living in Japan seems to lead North Americans to experience a decrease in their positive self-evaluations. Relative to that of Japan, North American culture appears to result in positive self-views.

The cultural differences were also explained by Twenge and Crocker (2000) in their attempt to study the levels of self-esteem in terms of race. They made several important points. First, although levels of self-esteem differ between racial groups, there is no single pattern of higher, lower, or equal levels of self-esteem related to whites. Thus, the conclusions about the level of self-esteem in any racial group are simplified. And, the best theoretical perspective that fits the overall pattern of results was the cultural perspective. They added that we need to move away from questioning which racial group has higher or lower self-esteem to questioning why members of these groups have high or low self-esteem. The variations based on self-esteem measurement suggest that different groups will construct the self through different processes. The opinions of others and having specific competencies may not constitute the basis of self-esteem in the same way for all racial groups. Future research

should examine how self-esteem is constructed in different racial groups (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001).

It can be concluded that the process of self-evaluation is culture-related. What is important and ideal in one culture may be unworthy in another culture. Each culture forms its hierarchy of priorities and these priorities differ from one culture to another. Accordingly, different forms of self-esteem emerge in different cultures. For example, Delacourt, & Others (1997) stated that in the Caribbean, students usually form a positive self-image from conducts that show proper behaviors such as being polite and having good manners. In the United States, students might develop a high self-esteem derived from their hunting and musical skills. Furthermore, Kester (1994) found that many African-American students perceive that being loyal to one's heritage entails that one must adopt the street image more than succeed in school. Consequently, this has a large impact on academic achievement. This makes it almost difficult to measure academic achievement accurately when students are not doing their best purposefully. Thus, some students do not see academic achievement as a positive characteristic and will avoid looking intelligent in front of their peers.

Based on the above, it is noticed that most research on self-esteem is based on Western cultures and populations with some comparison between Western and Eastern cultures. It is important to identify the cultural context in which the findings of these studies were generated to consider the likely impact or the possibility of generalizing these findings to the Arab world. An attention to cross-cultural differences of self processes has also been outlined and, thus, for the purpose of our study that is applied in a Lebanese context, it is useful to look into the culture of the Arab world.

As to the cross-cultural differences in self-esteem, surveys were given to nearly 17,000 people in 53 nations for both men and women who participated in all countries

(Schmitt and Allik, 2005). Scores of self-esteem showed that no matter where they lived, people with high self-esteem scores had three traits in common. They are more likely to be extraverts with lower scores for neuroticism and more likely to report romantic attachments. Schmitt and allik (2005) concluded that high self-esteem may serve as a natural buffer against anxiety and noted that high self-esteem scores were linked to low neuroticism scores across all cultures.

Yet, some cultural differences appeared, especially in the self-competence and self-liking aspects of self-esteem. People in individualistic nations such as U.S. rate themselves higher for self-competence than for self-liking. The opposite was found for those in countries that are more oriented to communities, not individuals. Schmitt and allik (2005) noted that self-esteem may not get as much attention in some countries, and that's what makes people in those countries more likely to rank themselves in the middle of the spectrum.

Understanding the distinction between Western and Eastern cultures helps in understanding the variations regarding self-processes. Accordingly, the cross-cultural differences become of importance when studying self-esteem specially when studied and in almost totally different cultures; meaning Western and Eastern cultures. More specifically, to understand how culture affects self- processes and how self-esteem differs with gender ,it is important to explore the role of culture as a variable in explaining gender differences of self-esteem. Thus, it is noteworthy to refer to the cultural influences on the woman's self-esteem in the Lebanese context.

Looking into the Lebanese cultural context, it can be noted that the Lebanese women, led by the feminist movement, have succeeded in making their advancement in education and employment and in making great strides in improving their status specially their right to

vote in 1953, yet, their status remains subject to the confessional and religious hurdles of the Lebanese political and social system. As many other aspects in the Lebanese life, personal status laws are governed by religious tribunals, thus, making Lebanese women unequal not only to men but also vis-a-vis each other (Shehadeh, 1998). Many of the obstacles are colored with a sectarian tint, which permeates most aspects of life in Lebanon, specially the woman's status that is often determined by her religious affiliation. For example, polygamous marriages are permitted within Muslim communities, while they are prohibited by Christian courts. Family law is in the hands of religious institutions which “directly support domestic hierarchy” in favor of the authority of males and elders.

On the political side, the Lebanese women have very few chances to break through the political system since it is based on religious and confessional communities controlled by clans, whereby hereditary lines determine how male leaders succeed each other. Thus, women's participation in the political and public life remained marginal and very few of them could reach for decision-making positions. Therefore, many of their legitimate causes were unmet. For example the Lebanese mothers can not grant their nationality to their children and are deprived from their basic rights as citizens, when they are denied the right to grant their nationality to their children (shehadeh, 1998).

After discussing how women's status is shaped by the personal status laws and religious and confessional communities in the public and political life in the Lebanese context, women's status can be traced at the educational level to understand the role of culture in shaping the gender differences in self-esteem. The way the woman's image is depicted in textbooks marks the role and status of women in the Lebanese culture.

In this respect, it is meaningful to refer to textbooks to examine the relationship between self-esteem and culture in terms of gender differences. Using content analysis of the Lebanese curriculum, for example, contribute to understanding gender differences. Abi Nasr (1983) reviewed the Lebanese textbooks and found out that women were identified in terms of their sex-roles as mothers, little girls, grandmothers and working women and in terms of their jobs as unidentified women who are given no attributes. She also found out that mother's identity, as an individualized person is non-existent. She was never described physically and was never given a personal name or age. Only historical or religious female figures were given names. "Mothers are mothers" is the message conveyed about mothers no matter who they are; working women, peasants or housewives. Mothers' lives are important only through the success of their husbands or sons or through the well-being of their family. This is reflected in the traditional cultural way of addressing women as the wife of Mr.X or the widow of Mr.Y, or the mother of the eldest son. Personality wise, women are described as tender, protective, self-sacrificing, courageous, good and respectful housewives. With respect to the roles and functions attributed to women in the analyzed textbooks, the most prominent roles ascribed to mothers are feeding, housekeeping and childrearing. Shaarani (2002) studied the gender roles in the national reading textbooks in the new Lebanese (1983) reviewed the Lebanese textbooks and found out that women were identified in terms of their sex-roles as mothers, little girls, grandmothers and working women and in terms of their jobs as unidentified women who are given no attributes. She also found out that mother's identity, as an individualized person is non-existent. She was never described physically and was never given a personal name or age. Only historical or religious female figures were given names. "Mothers are mothers" is the message conveyed about mothers no matter who they are; working women, peasants or housewives. Mothers' lives are important only through the

success of their husbands or sons or through the well-being of their family. This is reflected in the traditional cultural way of addressing women as the wife of Mr.X or the widow of Mr.Y, or the mother of the eldest son. Personality wise, women are described as tender, protective, self-sacrificing, courageous, good and respectful housewives. With respect to the roles and functions attributed to women in the analyzed textbooks, the most prominent roles ascribed to mothers are feeding, housekeeping and childrearing. Shaarani (2002) studied the gender roles in the national reading textbooks in the new Lebanese curriculum issued in 1998 and noticed that they reflect traditional roles of men and women and discriminate between them in terms of functions and status. Shaarani added that women and little girls are depicted as weak, submissive, and dependant with no identity of their own as individuals. She continued to stress the importance of these images and their negative impact on the student's perceptions and representations of their future roles in the society. Kallab (1983) argues that "This feminine model found in school textbooks, affects the mind of the child and contributes to delaying women's progress. This small child cannot, when he grows up, easily overcome by himself these strong images that have taken up his mind ".

From the cultural influences on self-esteem, it is important to go deeper in the Lebanese context to investigate other components of the Lebanese social context, and, here, the scene in the Lebanese social context opens with the civil war. By examining the case of Lebanon, Oweini (1998) tried to gain an understanding of the impact of war on adolescent school experiences, and outline the coping strategies of secondary schools by exploring the role of educators in trying to normalize and give meaning to schooling for adolescents. The constant disruption to schooling stood as the most prominent factor influencing school experiences because it significantly impacted friendships and academic studies, Security concerns seemed to be most urgent priority to educators. The main role of secondary schooling during war was

the maintenance of social networks and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. However, secondary schools ability to maintain the norms of security, authority, academic standards, and to foster future oriented values were severely challenged because of the political situation.

Ghaith (2003) set out a study to investigate the effects of the Learning Together model in promoting learners' achievement, enhancing their academic self-esteem, and decreasing their feelings of school alienation. The results did not yield any statistically significant differences between the control and the experimental group concerning academic self-esteem and feelings of alienation from school. It did indicate that the Learning Together model is more effective in improving the reading achievement of Lebanese high school students.

Al Abed (1998) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between gender grade level and academic achievement of Lebanese students in the middle school .Results indicated that there was no significant difference in self-esteem total score across gender grade level. There was low significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement but no correlation between self-esteem scores and academic achievement across grade.

In summary, the process of self-evaluation is culture-related where culture affects self- processes. Self-esteem, also, differs with gender where gender differences are emphasized through stereotyping and reinforced by social factors. Depending on culture complexity, aspects of the self differ in different cultures in terms of the level of individualism and collectivism. Lebanese culture, however, has components that may have direct influence on the members of the Lebanese society, for example, the status of women socially and educationally, this is beside the civil war that might have had certain impact on the adolescent students

3- Self-Esteem and Grade Level

Hundreds of studies have examined the development of self-esteem with age. Wylie (1979) concluded from an analysis of the longitudinal studies addressing change in self-esteem over time that while some studies did show an increase in self-esteem over time, most indicated no significant change.

Robins, Trzesniewski, Tracy (2002) pointed out that although researchers have questioned this conclusion, the majority of existing studies have focused on age differences in self-esteem during childhood and adolescence and produced findings that were inconsistent, making the relation between self-esteem and age more questionable. For example, some studies show a rise in self-esteem during adolescence (Marsh, 1989; O'Malley & Bachman, 1983), whereas others do not (Block & Robins, 1993; Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997).

Moreover, Robins et al (2002), add that if self-esteem does decline in adolescence, researchers did not determine at which age the decline begins, at which age it reaches its lowest level, and when it begins to rise again. Researchers that have studied self-esteem in children have focused on self-evaluations in specific domains more than on global self-worth. However, as children move through elementary school, their self-evaluations tend to decline and studies that have assessed global self-esteem in this age group also point to decreases over childhood. Even studies in self-esteem during adolescence reported a rise, and others reported no change. This is may be due to gender differences that are believed to start at this age specifically the tendency for boys to have higher self-esteem than girls.

Understanding the relationship between age and self-esteem can be attained through the perspective of stages of human development. These stages are important to educators in their educational concerns. For example, to a secondary educator, the stages of adolescent

development are especially important, as it is a time of considerable biological, cognitive, and emotional growth. It is generally a stage of increasing capacity for abstract reasoning (Baer, 1999).

The particular characteristics of adolescence make the transition from elementary into a high school or middle school environment particularly important. This means that these characteristics entail the need for a balance between the needs of the adolescent and the opportunities provided by his/her learning environment (Baer, 1999).

Eventually, adolescence has been described as a discontinuity in physical psychological development from that of childhood. The period of adolescence is characterized by rapid biological, cognitive psychological changes because it marks the advent of puberty (Proctor and Choi, 1994). In this respect, Konopka (1973) argues that the adolescence is seen as a time of preparing the individual for adulthood that places youth in an ambivalent situation where they neither feel as children nor adults. Instead of considering it a preparation process, she states that adolescence must be considered as a total developmental process characterized by specific traits and not a purely preparation stage for adulthood.

However, some theorists and behavior scientists suggest that there is more continuity than discontinuity between childhood and adolescence. They reported that adolescents maintain a consistency in psychological and behavioral functioning between childhood and adolescence despite changes because these changes don't occur suddenly (Bandura, 1964). Within these views researchers have investigated the period of early adolescence with particular emphasis on the effects of school transition on students' self-esteem. In this regard, research findings reported an increase, stability or a decline in self-esteem through age.

In a cross-sectional study of adolescents' self-esteem, Simmons, Rosenberg, and Rosenberg (1973) found that self-esteem decreases during early adolescence, with greater decrease at age 12. From that point it gradually increases, and then increases at age 16. When it is established, self-esteem becomes resistant to change other than what results from normal developmental processes.

An increase in self-esteem was suggested in a study, by McCarthy and Hoge (1982), on junior to senior high school students in the 7th, 9th and 11th grades, using Rosenberg and Coopersmith self-Esteem Scale. Results suggested an increase in self-esteem with age on total score and the most appropriate of Coopersmith's 4 subscales. O'Malley and Bachman (1983) asserted that self-esteem increases with age especially between ages 13 and 23. They followed up data in 1978, 1979 and 1980. They indicated a good deal of stability from one year to another. O'malley and Bachman concluded that age didn't cause any change in self-esteem but rather changes that are age-related would generally cause an increase in self-esteem such as an increase in physical size, academic skills, and so forth. In addition, Proctor and Choi (1994) studied whether or not students experience change in self-esteem. Results of 112 students in 7th, 8th and 9th grades demonstrated an overall increase in self-esteem for both males and females across the transition from elementary to junior high school.

Among the number of investigators who tried to study the stability of self-esteem across age, Savin-William and Demo (1984) used multiple measures of self-esteem to test the stability of self-esteem during early and middle adolescence. It was concluded that if there was a change in self-esteem level during adolescence, it would be gradual and slight. Thus, adolescence is a time of stable or gradual growth in self-esteem levels and of stability in self-feelings from one year to another. Based on such result, Savin-William and Demo concluded that self-esteem is an enduring trait of personality. That is adolescence is not a dramatic phase

in the individual's life. Besides Dockter (1991) found no difference in self-esteem among levels 7, 8, and 9 and Adams and Jones (1983) showed that middle adolescence is not a period of dramatic age change.

Other studies found out that adolescents go through a time of downward turn in self-esteem. Rosenberg (1979) maintained that early adolescence is a time of self-consciousness concerning what others think about the self and is, thus, a time of self-esteem disturbance. Besides, Rosenberg found that self-esteem declines during adolescence years until late adolescence where one's level of self-esteem improves. This decline in self-esteem was explained by Erikson (1959) as a manifestation of the identity crisis aspect of adolescents. Marsh (1989) found out that there was a linear decline in self-esteem with age. Self-esteem is higher in grade 7 and declines in grades 8 and 9 but increases in grades 10 and 11.

Furthermore, Wigfield (1991) conducted a study on 1,850 students in a large city in the Midwestern United States. They completed questionnaires that contained items assessing students' beliefs and values and attitudes regarding Math, English, Sports and social activities. Results showed that the self-esteem of early adolescence was lowest immediately after the transition to junior high school. Wigfield (1991) commented that the decline observed in self-esteem is probably a reflection of young adolescents' reactions to their new school environment.

Chubb, Fertman, and Ross (1997) state that some theorists have supported the idea that adolescence is a difficult and stressful period. However, recent research has led to a renewed debate on how traumatic this period actually is for the majority of adolescents (Powers, Hauser, & Kilner, 1989). If adolescence is a difficult and stressful period it would be expected that variables related to personality such as self-esteem would change as adolescents

move toward adulthood. At the same time a stable self-esteem would indicate that adolescence may be less stressful than some theorists have proposed.

Few studies have focused on understanding the relationship between self-esteem and school transition, in particular, the transition from middle school to high school. Some of the studies that examined changes to self-esteem as a result of the transition from elementary school to middle school found that self-esteem decreased for those students who changed schools during the transition. However, another set of studies reached to opposite conclusions that self-esteem increased for those students who changed schools during this transition. Many difficulties are believed to be experienced by students during this transition, and the difficulties that students experience, particularly in the first year of high school, can be substantial.

Research has shown that the high school transition is a difficult time that is marked by decrease in academic achievement and a decline in grades (Seidman et al., 1996; Reyes et al., 1994; Felner et al., 1982; Rumberger, 1987). Moreover, (Roderick 1993). States that the problems students experience during the transition to high school extend for a rather longer period. For example, many students may experience poor performance in the first year of high school ,and this establishes for a repeated failure that leads to lower outcomes throughout school and a higher risk of dropping out of school.

In addition, students' difficulties may not be limited to academic achievement. Seidman (1996) found that the transitional period into high school lead to a decrease in perceived support from people at school and an increase in failure expectation.

Studies have also shown that the transition to high school may be associated with negative changes other than in academic performance. Some researchers have focused on the number of changes in the schooling and social experiences of students that accompany beginning high school. For example, Holland, Kaplan, and Davis (1974) state that successful transition into high school, requires that the students become able to find a place for themselves in the social system of the school they attend and cope with the new teachers, rules, and academic requirements.

Similarly, Reyes, Gillick, and Kobus (1994) noted that the high school transition affects groups of students differently as the students experience a different social structure at school different and richer curricular activities, different teachers, and different peers. This transition might make academic achievement and grades more likely to decline for certain groups of students like minority adolescents than for other students in moving to high school.

Additionally, the negative effects of the high school transition are greater for adolescents who previously made a transition from elementary to junior high. Simmons and Blyth (1987) show that students who made an earlier transition into junior high are more prone to face difficulties in the high school transition than those who did not. A study by Felner, Ginter, and Cauce (1981) Showed that the risk of failure following the transition to high school is more probable for students who have previously experienced a school transition of any kind.

On the other hand, there are some studies that have found positive effects of the high school transition. For example, Kinney (1993) shows that the diversity of the high school social world allows some unpopular adolescents in earlier grades to gain more experiences to

enhance their identity and gain more self-confidence. Thus the high school transition may be beneficial to some students.

More recently, Weiss and Bearman (2004) found that transitions had little negative impact. The few significant differences they found were in a positive direction, suggesting that students who are socially or academically stigmatized are less likely to carry their stigma across a school transition.

Based on these different findings concerning the effect of age, grade level and school transitions, it can be noted that certain variables play a role in helping students face the changes and challenges in this critical phase of development. Contextual, educational and emotional factors help to equip adolescent students with sufficient tools to sustain the difficulties of the stage, protect their self-conceptions and find their ways in the ladder of actualization.

4- Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement

There have been numerous studies supporting the fact that individuals must have a certain level of self-esteem to attain success. Studies seemed to confirm the idea that children who have positive self-esteem are able to achieve, while those with negative feelings toward themselves are underachieving. Low self-esteem was cited as a factor in school dropouts. However, most studies support the idea that achievement is more likely to be the result rather than the cause of self-esteem. Both are, thus, intimately related to one another.

In fact, many researchers believe that enhanced self-esteem is likely to lead to improved achievement., several writers for example, Baumeister et al., 2003; Emler 2001; Humphreys, 1994) have examined the evidence in this area. Emler explained that research conducted so far does distinguish between self-esteem as a cause, or an effect of academic

achievement. Emler concluded by stating that self-esteem and educational achievement are related, but not strongly; the effects vary with age and other factors. However, evidence from longitudinal studies suggests that achievement has an effect on self-esteem, rather than the other way around.

Gage and Berliner (1991) states that level of school success, particularly over many years, predicts level of regard of self, and one's own ability, whereas level of self-esteem does not predict level of school achievement. The implication is that teachers need to concentrate on the academic successes and failures of their students. It is the students' history of success and failure that gives them the information with which they assess themselves. Wiggins, Shatz, and West (1994) found that self-esteem and academic achievement were positively correlated. They found the score that students gained on a self-esteem inventory during the first year of the study raised their grade point averages substantially the second year.

Kifer (1973) found similar results that consistent success or failure has an effect on self-esteem and self-concept of a learner. He found that successful academic achievement interacted with self-esteem, and increased over time. Likewise, unsuccessful academic achievement interacted with self-esteem, and decreased over time. As time went by, students who had high academic achievement also had a high self-esteem; also students who had low academic achievement had low over time.

While some research supports the evidence of an interaction between academic achievement and self-esteem. Holly (1987) disagrees with the idea that self-esteem has a direct influence on academic achievement, but points out that it may affect self-esteem in different ways. First, feeling unworthy leads to depression, this by turn inhibits performance. If a student does not feel worthy, he/she will not feel like doing their best. Second, those with

greater self-esteem may be more willing to take the challenge while fear of failure makes students hold back. Finally, constant failure with feelings of incompetence is discouraging, so students who are convinced that they are unable to succeed, they do not even give it a try.

Besides, self-esteem and school achievement are related in terms of the motivation to maintain positive self-evaluation. Harter (1993) suggests that possible way of maintaining self-esteem at acceptable levels involves a reorganization of the students' evaluation in specific domains where they invest less in areas that threaten self-esteem and invest more in other areas that are more rewarding. Thus, students with poor results at school can protect their self-esteem by reducing their investment in the academic field and investing in other domains in which they perform better, such as interpersonal relations or sports. In a previous work (Alves-Martins & Peixoto, 2000) have found that ninth grade low achievers, present high perceived competence in areas not related to school. Thus, it is concluded that in this age group the protection of self-esteem implies the use of various mechanisms, one of which is the devaluation of school-related areas of self-evaluation; and indicate that protection of self-esteem involve a parallel investment in the field of interpersonal relations with members of the opposite sex.

A number of researchers have found that studying the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement with another variable is valuable. In this regard, Kuncze et al (1972) found out that self-esteem correlated significantly with an Aptitude Test and with academic grades in school. Another variable that influences students' self-esteem is the relationship between the teacher and the student. Rosenberg (1979) referred to this relationship to explain that the influence of the teacher comes immediately after the influence of the child's family in maintaining a high or low level of self-esteem. In an interesting study by Fox & Peck (1978) it was found that teachers with negative attitudes affected their

students' self-esteem levels and consequently affected the students' grades. Teachers with negative attitudes were found to cause their students to have low self-esteem level. In this respect, Hargreaves (1967) explained how self-esteem is influenced by the way the teacher treats a student. He states that the categorization and labeling of students by the teacher affects their behavior and shapes the way in which the teacher and the students interact. He explains that teachers use their experience with old students to classify their new students into categories. They tend to classify the students into three categories; the good who meet the teacher's expectations, the bad who do not, and those who are in between. Hargreaves adds that the teacher's ability to apply these labels comes from his or her status as an authority. He also noted that when a teacher categorizes students, two main things happen. First, the teacher tries to use the implications of the category as a reference point to explain the student's behavior. Second, students need the teacher to form their self-concept or how successfully they are performing. Therefore, they refer to the behavior of others towards them and internalize the image they get of themselves from what the teachers say to them. This means that the teachers will contribute to the student's image in their labeling. Hargreaves adds that other teachers tend to behave towards that student on the basis of the category he or she belongs to. Bandura (1977) referred to the teacher influence as part of social persuasion that alters students' self-efficacy. Social persuasion relates to verbal encouragement and /discouragements that tend to stay in memory for long periods of time. . Negative persuasion affect the way people feel and decrease their self-efficacy while positive persuasion increase self-efficacy and self confidence.

Kohn (1994), too, concluded that something else was driving both self-esteem and academic achievement and gave appearance of an intimate connection between the two. He argued that even if studies could find a significant correlation between self-esteem and

academic performance, this gives us no reason to think that higher self-esteem causes better academic performance. He based his argument on the fact that statistics only give elementary interpretation of these findings because correlation doesn't prove causation. He believes that researchers should be aware that correlations do not explain the role of self-esteem in academic achievement in depth. Kohn reported that even in cases where the correlation was positive, it was dependent on other variables these two variables are related in so far as they share the background variables as common causes (e.g. intelligence, social class, attribution and locus of control).

In this regard, Jackson (1998) indicated that there is a problem in researching a definitive causal link between self-esteem and academic achievement. This is true because insisting on this causal link will underestimate the role of other areas, in particular, the importance of the family, the type of school, etc.

F- Culture and academic achievement

In his discussion of the effects of culture on self-esteem and academic achievement. Delacourt (1997) states that what is important in one culture might be trivial in another culture. Each culture has different set of priorities, and these different priorities will lead to different forms of self-esteem depending on that culture.

The relationship between culture and academic achievement can be understood in terms of the relationship between cognitive development and the social world as seen by Vygotsky (1987). He understands the social world not only in terms of the interpersonal interactions within the learning environment, but also in terms of the broader socio-cultural and historical influences on learning environment. Vygotsky's ideas on cognitive

development emphasize the significance of culture, and the student's relationship with and within this social cultural world. In addition, Vygotsky's ideas suggest that student-teacher and student-peer relationships are of prime importance of cognitive strategies. Furthermore, the student can be seen to be active within their learning environments, trying to construct understanding where possible. In turn, this aspect of human development has influence on the environment itself, and thus learning and development are affected by the social world, and the social world change through learning and development.

Accordingly, Vygotsky views that attention should be given to behavior and performance when the student is engaged in a social situation, and not only to student's characteristics. In this respect he presents the notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) that draws the attention to the difference between the child's independent learning and learning under the guidance of someone who is more competent. In this context adults are a key in this relationship, because adults are more likely to be truly competent in the task, and thus are more likely to cause progression in collaboration. Thus the maximization of potential is viewed as a social process, emphasis is given to the potential of the student and its social contextualization, rather than cognitive abilities measured independently of a social context. However, personality attributes, locus of control, and self-esteem for example, may all have possible influences on the efficacy of learning through the social interaction. (Tudge and Winterhoff (1993).

Cultural differences of educational implications of the above points arise when it comes to practical teaching within schools. That is, the application of these ideas might vary from one school to another according to the culture in which this school exists. For example, when a teacher is teaching an instructional objective to a child with certain personality traits,

the ZPD describes what a student can accomplish with the help of the teacher's support. It describes the actual task that can be effectively supported by the teacher. The implication, here, is that teachers need to continuously evaluate how effectively a student is progressing in a learning activity and respond accordingly. In other words, students should be given opportunities to express understanding, and the teacher should give specific learning tasks to address individual capabilities of students based on student needs. Such teacher support has been referred to as scaffolding. It is the initial teacher support that is gradually reduced as the student approaches the intended learning outcome. In specific, scaffolding may range from detailed explanation of procedures and demonstrations, to the organization of activities. Scaffolding is also understood as a mechanism used to achieve a learning outcome beyond a child's starting potential. Thus, as the student competence towards the ultimate task grows, the specific learning activities change to reach the highest levels of ZPD. The notion of ZPD also suggests that effective teaching should not only be within the proximate potential of the individual, but also to be at the upper-level of the ZPD so as to maintain the student interest in the activity.

In this regard, Jackson (1998) also indicated that another area to be considered would be the different ethnic group in order to see whether the differences in self-esteem indicate academic success or failure. For example, Chapman et al., (2000) found that rather than a relationship between academic achievement and high self-esteem, coping strategies were different between African American and Caucasian adolescents. In particular, African American adolescents said that they use diversions, self-reliance, spiritual support, close friends, and relaxation on a more regular basis than the Caucasian adolescents. It appeared that to cope with stressors, African American youth learn to rely on and maintain a certain

degree of group autonomy. This group autonomy promotes positive identity formation and self-esteem of its members.

From another perspective, Dollison (1999) explained gender differences in performance within particular subject areas including mathematics and the sciences. He stated that the difference in achievement level is due more to the male learning style that is more competitive and to curriculum materials. This remains the case until schools and curriculum material become more sensitive to the needs of female students. Furthermore, academic achievement is related to self-esteem through learning strategies. Dean (1977) found a significant relationship between self-esteem and choice of learning strategies. He studied 48 preadolescent gifted children, males and females, who had either high or low self-esteem. He found that those who showed high self-esteem used learning strategies that are more advanced or sophisticated and performed better on free recall and nonverbal paired-associates tasks. They employed a recall order opposite to that given to them during paired-associates learning. They, also, used a clustering strategy on the free recall task. On the other hand, those with low self-esteem, they used an output order similar to that which they were given. They showed more rigidity, employing a repetitive rehearsal strategy when a more complex strategy could be more efficient. Dean's findings suggest that individuals with high self-esteem tend to rework material more actively, using deeper and more elaborated strategies, while individuals with low self-esteem tend to use shallower, repetitive strategies. He concluded that deep and elaborate strategies are self-assertive in nature, while shallow strategies are more passive and dependent.

Thus, it can be concluded that as the relationship between culture and academic achievement can be understood in terms of the relationship between cognitive development and the social world stated by Vygotsky (1987), this has some implications concerning the

relationship between the school culture and academic achievement. There might be cultural differences among schools especially when it comes to practical teaching within schools. In other words the way the ideas are applied might vary from one school to another within the same culture.

In fact, within a particular ethnic group, members are extremely diverse in education, in socio-economic status, in whether they come from a rural or urban background, in their personalities. Hence, they vary in the degree to which they reflect the dominant values of their group. Additionally, cultures themselves also change over time and when they come in contact with each other. Accordingly, like individuals and groups, schools have cultures, too. They usually mirror the culture of the dominant society, for example in the major holidays, religious customs, dress etc. (Trumbull, et al 2000).

Looking back into the Lebanese culture, as the context of the study, Greenfield (1994) states that no society is all one thing or another. Each strives to maintain a certain balance between individual and group, between independence and interdependence, and as noted above the Lebanese culture bears this kind of balance between the collectivistic and the individualistic traits.

Thus, it is noteworthy that in Lebanon both traits can be traced at home and at school in the Lebanese culture. For example in collectivistic societies, children are less likely to be asked to formulate and share their opinions or to talk about what they learn. The role of sharing opinions and knowledge is reserved for people with higher status (Delgado-Gaitan 1994), Parents, too, in collectivistic cultures tend to keep in psychological and physical closeness with their children and such closeness is associated with teaching and managing children (Azuma 1991) Azuma, H. (1991). Children are held more and often sleep with their

parents when small; infants are often carried and kept physically close to mothers or other caretakers at all times. In contrast, parents in more individualistic cultures often encourage children to amuse themselves independently and discourage them from requiring constant adult attention (Greenfield & Suzuki 1998). These characteristics are illustrated in the Lebanese culture.

These differing views also lead parents and schools to prepare children for schooling quite differently. They also typically lead to different organizational patterns of learning in the classroom. While collectivistic cultures tend to teach to the whole group, and allow students to learn from each other (peer-oriented learning) (McAlpine & Taylor 1993), individualistic societies tend to focus on the individual and emphasize individual responsibility for learning, even when instruction is given to the whole group (Estrin & Nelson-Barber 1995). For example, in the classroom, differences appear with regard to independence, personal achievement, self-expression, and personal choice. In line with the individualistic orientation, children are encouraged to become independent thinkers who focus on their own achievement and on fulfilling their own individual needs. They are taught that authority is not restricted to the teacher. They are encouraged to become independent learners, build their own knowledge, and even explain it to adults at home.

In contrast, in the line of the collectivistic orientation, children raised in collectivistic communities, form a sense of self from recognizing their self from their place in hierarchy of the community and from affiliation with the group mainly the family. So, they are expected to listen respectfully more than assert their opinions publicly.

In summary, this review of literature addressed major points as to the different views that explained the development of self-esteem and how it differs from Self-Concept. A

particular consideration was given to the correlates of self-esteem or how it correlates to variables of Academic Achievement, Grade Level, and Gender culture. Additionally it showed how many approaches tried to discuss building self-esteem based on the different assumption of each approach and how self-esteem is considered from different perspectives starting with humanistic approach, Behavioral, Cognitive-behavioral, Socio-cultural- and Cognitive – Experiential. It also expanded an empirical perspective of self-esteem as to the relationship between Self-esteem and Gender, Culture and Gender differences, Self-esteem and Grade, Self-Esteem and Culture and academic achievement. A reference was made to self-esteem as a construct affected by cultural context. Then to explore this issue in a little depth a comparison was made between Eastern and Western cultures that differ in relation to individualistic and collectivistic values. Also, the characteristics of the Lebanese society as a multilingual society, comprises many religions and exposed to eastern and western influences were discussed in order to reveal how the Lebanese society is a society in which collectivistic and individualistic traits coexist. It showed how Lebanon is a pluralistic society where people belong to different religions and different subcultures that make this society of a particular identity. The affiliation of some groups in Lebanon to Western culture and other groups maintained their Arab Islamic identity characterize their society with a mixture of subcultures that is reflected in different Lebanese regions. Some hold an eastern cultural trait versus those of western cultural trait. This also extends to the schooling systems where some schools are liberal, secular and coeducational versus schools that are conservative, religious, and segregated. Hence, this reflects how different perceptions about social development exist in the Lebanese society that constitutes a heritage of different cultures throughout history.

Since self-esteem seems to be related to an individualistic rather than collectivistic orientation, exploring the Lebanese culture in an attempt to understand its relation to self-

esteem was important because it would help in attaining a more comprehensive understanding of the students' behavior and the type of student- teacher relationship in relation to the cultural and immediate-social context of Lebanon.

On the other hand, this society has witnessed a long war that affected its members and the values they hold. In many cases schools - because of the security issues that made the schools close more often- had to find certain coping strategies to adapt to the unstable situation. This was reflected in the prioritization of security at the expense of social behavior norms. In addition, with the situation as such, the school authority was weakened, and this led to some kind of feelings of alienation among students. Hence the two features of the Lebanese society namely the cultural diversity and the war had an impact on the educational situation in Lebanon and the society at large.

Thus, forwarding research questions that examine how self-esteem is related to age academic achievement and gender will help explain how these variables are related to self-esteem in such a society. Asking the research questions of this study bears some pertinence to the Lebanese context as it is conducted on Lebanese students. More specifically, these research questions are pertinent to the Lebanese educational situation in particular. It seeks to explore how students in secondary classes in Lebanon differ in their self-esteem in terms of gender, how their self-esteem changes across grade level and to what extent there is an interaction between gender and grad level. Finally, it seeks to explore how self-esteem relates to academic achievement in the Lebanese context.

The following research questions have been addressed as they relate to the educational situation in the Lebanese society:

- 1- Is there a statistically significant difference in self-esteem between males and females in secondary classes?
- 2- Is there a statistically significant difference in self-esteem across grade level?
- 3- Is there a statistically significant interaction between grade level and gender with respect to self-esteem?
- 4- Is there a statistically significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement in each grade level?
- 5- Does the correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement differ across grade level?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A- Purpose of Research Study

Self-esteem has been related to many psychological concepts including personality, cognitive and behavioral concepts. Some researchers attempted to understand the nature of self-esteem, and others have focused on its adaptive functions. Many variables were found to be related to self-esteem. These variables urged researchers to conduct different studies to identify them. Yet, few are the studies that examine the relationship between self-esteem and other factors such as gender, grade level, and academic achievement at the same time and the evidence on the relationship of self-esteem with these has been inconsistent.

This study aims to investigate self-esteem of adolescent students in the transitional period of the secondary school. The purpose is to examine and gain more empirical verification of the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement, grade level, and gender in a Lebanese social context and to compare the results with results in other cultures.

In addition, the study is meant to reveal how adolescent students in private schools in Lebanon view themselves in major aspects of self-esteem. The aim is to add some empirical evidence that might be of interest to, psychologists, educators, and parents. The terminal goal is helping students to reach higher level of self-esteem that would contribute to a higher level

of academic achievement because improving the way students view themselves to gain a better self-esteem may lead to more success.

B- Rationale for the Hypotheses

Different views have been recorded regarding the way males and females perceive and evaluate themselves. Gender differences are related to both biological differences and differences in socialization processes the males and females undergo (Katz and Ksansnak, 1994). However, both male and female participants in this study belong to the same period of development that is adolescence and to the same social context, namely, the Lebanese context.

Besides, literature has referred to the fact that adolescents experience changes physically, socially and mentally that might result in a lower level of self-esteem .Yet, according to social and behavioral interactionists, such changes take place gradually and are almost stable (Proctor and Choi, 1994). In addition, whether males or females, both pass through the same period of development. Generally speaking, girls are believed to mature earlier than boys and to be more affected by physiological changes than boys. They, also, display a lower level of self-esteem as they grow up into adolescence (Atkinson, Smith and Ben, 1993). However, to Erikson (1968) both males and females undergo the crisis identity versus role confusion as they both experience the same psychological changes. They also seek social relationships to attain a feeling of belonging to a peer group. This helps in reaching some favorable integrated image of one's self as a unique person. Thus, it would be expected that students in the current study would experience similar levels of self-esteem.

The process of examining the relationship between the level of self-esteem (low, medium, and high) and academic achievement is based on anticipation that individuals with different levels of self-esteem are expected to achieve academically the same. Past research has shown that self-esteem and academic achievement correlate directly to a moderate degree (Wiggins, 1994). While others like Kuncze et al (1972) found out that self-esteem correlated significantly with an Aptitude Test and with academic grades in school, Owens & Stryker, (2001), indicated that high self-esteem contributes to higher achievement and positive relationships with others.

Yet, opposing views have been raised against the prevailing trend towards highlighting the effects of self-esteem. For example, Baumeister (2003) claimed that it is not proved that people's attainment of self-worth determines their efficacy or increases their academic achievement. Likewise, Emler (2001), also, suggested that self-esteem can be a source of trouble, but found little evidence that self-esteem and educational attainment are associated, because even failing students can show high self-esteem. In this respect, Emler adds that there is some agreement that self-esteem is an attitude that researchers could measure with some degree of reliability, thus, some accurate procedure such as tests or measures that can determine the level of self-esteem precisely are required.

Emler (2001) also viewed Gender as an important variable in self-esteem. He supported the view that women, on average, have lower self-esteem than men, and added that though the difference is highly consistent, it is rather small. He also stated that the size of this difference varies with age. It becomes the largest in the late stage of adolescence and less before and after it.

The views of Emler and Baumeister were informative to identifying certain hypotheses concerning the relationship between, gender, academic achievement and self-esteem. Therefore, the current study tries to examine the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement and how self-esteem changes across grade levels, or how adolescent students view themselves as they move to the secondary school or to higher grades.

Besides, the adolescent students in the current study are believed to undergo certain changes and share similar experiences whether physiologically, cognitively, socially or academically as they belong to the same developmental period namely adolescence and to the same school environment. Thus, it is expected that students will display a similar level of self-esteem in relation to academic achievement. Regardless of the grade level they are in.

C - Hypotheses

1. There is a significant gender difference in self-esteem.
2. There is a significant grade level difference in self-esteem.
3. There is a significant interaction of grade level and gender with self-esteem.
4. There is a significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement.
5. The relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement will vary with grade level.

So far, the concept of self-esteem was introduced as a major focus in educational research, and to the attempts made to define and explain its nature. The concerns about the preoccupation with the role of self-esteem were presented with a reference to the role of emotion to learning and self-esteem. The purpose, the significance and the rationale of the

current study were discussed and the research questions and the hypotheses were also addressed. In the following part we will review the related literature on self-esteem and its relation to other variables.

D- Research Paradigm

Generally speaking, research aims to understand the nature of different phenomena and reach the truth. The application of the methods of social sciences can follow different paradigm: positivist or antipositivist. This study follows the positivist paradigm because this paradigm is based on certain assumptions that are convenient to the purpose and the rationale of the study. First, the positivist paradigm implies that the knowledge the researcher obtains from research can be expressed in terms of generalizations that are found in the natural phenomena. It also entails that there are stable laws of cause and effect that govern these phenomena and the world functions within these laws of determinism. There is also regularity in the way these phenomena are determined. Accounting for these phenomena gives a solid ground for prediction and control. Accordingly, these phenomena need to be investigated by the method of natural sciences. Besides, to be able to study these phenomena objectively and scientifically to uncover these laws, the researcher needs to develop instruments that are reliable (Turner& Martin, 1986). Therefore, following the positivist paradigm will help in investigating how self-esteem can be related to variables such as academic achievement, grade level and gender.

In addition, doing research in the field of education relies on describing, exploring certain phenomena by collecting data and then analyzing and interpreting these data. The findings the investigators reach through educational research help them solve problems and make changes in teaching and learning. Unlikely, the anti-positivist view or the interpretive

paradigm emphasizes the person's individuality and freedom of choice stating that human behavior is too complex to be explained by general laws. The human behavior is understood from the individual's perspective as a unique individual. According to the anti-positivist view, the aim is to get into the individual and understand the behavior from within ending with a set of meanings and multifaceted images of human behavior. Thus, the anti-positivist view does not match with the purpose of our study (Cohen and Manion, 1996).

Besides, what also justifies following the positivist paradigm is the assumption that, in educational research, the data the researcher collects in the study, allows building inferences and making predictions. For this purpose, different techniques can be used in educational research such as experimentation and observation (Cohen and Manion, 1996).

Furthermore, the classroom situation imposes certain challenges concerning teaching, learning and human interaction and studying the complex educational issues requires using more than one approach. Thus, different approaches are needed for different cases to reach deep understanding of the human behavior. Moreover this positivist paradigm assumes that the methodological procedure of natural sciences can be directly applied to social sciences where the researcher can be the observer of the social reality thus studying the phenomenon quantitatively (Cohen&Manion, 1996).

Accordingly, and since the researcher aims through research to reach solutions to problems, the researcher needs to collect data systematically, analyze it, and then interpret it. Besides, based on what it is experienced and observed with individuals, the behavior needs to be measured and quantified. This allows adequate analysis of the data collected to

investigate the relationship between the variables that caused the behavior and see how they are related; this would help in approximating the truth (Cohen&Manion, 1996).

As the researcher is conducting a quantitative study, and looking for generalization, the researcher tries to pose a research question and answer it in terms of describing a certain trend or explaining a relationship between variables. This means that researchers try to find an overall trend in the responses of the individuals and how this trend changes with different individuals. Besides, explaining the relationship between variables helps in determining the degree to which two or more variables are related. The interest in this research is to reveal how one variable is influenced by other variables. In other words, the researcher tries to explain the phenomena by collecting numerical data that can be analyzed. For this reason, it is required to obtain measurable and observable data or variables to forms hypotheses, verifies them using certain instruments. This means that the researcher is looking for causality, prediction, and generalization of the findings in concern, and not for insights, understanding, and extrapolation (Gay, 1996).

E- Research Method

The method used for this study is the survey because it allows gathering data at a particular point in time to describe the nature of existing conditions of the participants. It also helps in identifying the factors that contribute to the level of self-esteem of the participants. The aim is to collect data in standardized form of a questionnaire from a relatively large number of individuals from known population. The survey is also appropriate for descriptive purposes. It seeks to describe and analyze some aspects of the participants to provide information about how the participants' characteristics are distributed and how these characteristics interrelate (Robson, 1997).

The survey was used in order to provide a quantitative picture of the participants and to determine the current status of the participants with respect to the variables under study. The survey was used to provide explanations of what is described in the form of correlations, analyzing the pattern of correlations to see where the relationships are strong and where they are weak or non-existent. The purpose is to get substantial information based on structured questions that allow precision and comparability of responses. As we need quantifiable data to be collected from a number of schools, the survey is an appropriate method for this study (Robson, 1997).

The survey was used to help in assessing the levels of participants' self-esteem in examining how different levels of self-esteem are distributed in the private schools. Since a survey seeks to describe and/or analyze some aspects that are out there in the population, then conducting a survey will help in obtaining an understanding of the interrelationship between the different variables under study of students in private schools. Thus, the survey results will serve as to determine the current status of our sample with respect to self-esteem and the selected variables. The survey will be efficient in providing a large amount of data at relatively low cost and in a short period of time (Cohen and Manion, 1996).

The study aims to examine the relationship between the level of self-esteem and academic achievement, grade level, and gender. To meet this goal will data will be collected from a number of students in the chosen schools. The survey suits our study as we are conducting a quantitative research and it is ideal for studying large numbers of students. The survey has the advantage of collecting data with precision and comparability. It allows the use of statistical technique. As the survey permits the collection of a large sample, it permits more detailed analysis. It can cover a large number of variables and these variables can be quantified in a survey (Robson, 1997).

Responses that will be collected from respondents will allow inferring informative data about our sample with respect to levels of self-esteem and factors that affect it. A survey would allow anonymity when it comes to questions that respondents would have to answer. It also allows pilot study to obtain a high reliability of responses. Conducting the survey entails the administration of the same standardized questionnaire where we have confidence that the questions mean the same thing to different respondents.

As our study seeks to collect quantitative data, the survey method will be more helpful for presenting our data as numbers, percentages, and means and in graphs or on charts. This will help get ample description of the number of cases under study. Then collected data will help in measuring, quantifying, validating and testing our hypotheses (Cohen and Manion, 1996).

F- Ethical Considerations

In educational research, and in principle, ethics should be respected whether the study involves cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude or achievement test. According to the guidelines of ethics in educational research; the respondents in this study were respected and treated as autonomous individuals. They were treated with care, and recognition of rights. Besides, we were committed to maximizing benefits from research and minimize harm like psychological or emotional distress. Students were kept at ease and on task and they were fully informed about the conclusion and the benefits of the study. Also, data were used only for the research purpose (Burgess, 1989).

The most important ethical principles that were considered in this study were the informed consent of the respondent before participating in the survey. Participants were

informed about the purpose of the study and what the researcher will do with the results. As to anonymity, participants were permissive in revealing their identity by writing their names, and they were also interested in knowing the results. For this reason anonymity was not required specially that schools encouraged and welcomed conducting research on students and showed interest in the educational objective of the research. Besides, participants were also informed what is to be done with the information they provide. Also, the consent and permission of those who control access to sampling like teachers and principals was obtained. Besides, data storing, processing and dissemination of data were not used in any way other than the purpose of the study. Results of the study will be published for the appraisal of the public concerning its validity, reliability, and authenticity (Bell, 1991).

G- Definition of variables

Self-esteem: a construct measured by the 67 items of The Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventory (CFSEI-3) Adolescents Form covering 5 areas: Academic, General, Parental/Home, Personal, Social, and Defensiveness (Table 3.1).

- Academic Self-Esteem: An 11 items subscale that measures self-esteem in academic and intellectual situations and pursuits.
- General Self-Esteem: A 14 items subscale that measures an individual perception about himself or herself as a person. It investigates about the individual's perception of his or her emotional states, physical characteristics, successfulness, and self-acceptance.
- Parental/Home Self-Esteem: A 12 items subscale that measures self-esteem within the family unit. The items ask about the individual's abilities, attitudes, interests, and values as they relate to the quality of interactions with within the home and family unit. For Example, "My parents understand how I feel" "My parents think I am a failure".

- Personal Self-Esteem: A 14 items subscale that measures the individual's most intimate perceptions of anxiety and self-worth. For example, "Do you find it hard to make up your mind and stick to it?" and "Do you often feel that you are no good at all?"
- Social Self-Esteem: A 12 items subscale that measures self-esteem in social situations and interpersonal relationships with peers. The items include questions that clarify the individual's perceptions of his or her abilities, attitudes, interests, and values as they relate to the quality of interactions with peers outside of the family unit. For example, "Do you have only a few friends?" and "Do you have trouble talking to other people?"
- Academic achievement-student's performance specified by Grade point Average, i.e., students' average in all school subjects.
- Gender: two levels – boys and girls.
- Grade Level: Grades 10, 11, and 12.

Table 3.1

Self-Esteem Inventory: Subscales Scores

Subscales	Item Numbers	Maximum	Minimum
General (G)	2-4-9-11-13-20-25- 32-37-43-64	22	11
Parental/Home (P/H)	3-7-12-16-19-27-47- 52-55-59-61-67	24	12
Academic (A)	15-21-26-31-33-53- 58-60-62-66	20	10
Social (S)	1-6-8-28-38-39-42- 44-50-54-57-65	24	12
Defensiveness (D)	5-10-18-23-29-36- 40-48	16	8
Personal (P)	14-17-22-24-30-34- 35-41-45-46-49-51- 56-63	28	14

H-Predictions

The stated hypotheses were translated into the following operational statements:

HQ1: There is a significant difference in mean CFSEI-3 scores (global and subscales).

HQ2: There is a significant grade level difference in mean CFSEI-3 scores.

HQ3: There is a significant interaction of grade level and gender with CFSEI-3 scores
(Global and subscale).

HQ4: There is a significant correlation between self-esteem (Global and subscale) and academic achievement (GPA) in each grade level.

HQ5: The relationship between CFSEI-3 scores (Global and subscale) and academic achievement will vary with grade level.

I- Data Collection

Data collection started by defining the population of the study then the process of sampling. Then the instrument used was considered in terms of its appropriateness to the study and its degree of reliability and validity. The following step was the piloting study and the verification of the test-retest reliability of the instrument. After the pilot study, certain procedures were followed for the fieldwork to collect the data needed for the study, and then the data were analyzed statistically for the purpose testing the hypotheses.

1- Population and sample

The population of the present study consisted of students in secondary private schools of North Lebanon (Grades 10, 11, and 12). The students belong to middle socioeconomic status and their age ranges between 15 and 18 years old with an average age of 15.3.

Sampling procedure was based on random sampling (cluster). The Center of Educational Research and Development in Lebanon prepared a list of the private middle socioeconomic status schools. Then, while blind folded, the "fish bowl" technique was used to select six schools randomly. The six private schools are coeducational schools except for one.

The participants were 479 students: 235 males and 244 females distributed as follows: 157 students from Grade 10, 165 students from Grade 11, and 157 students from Grade 12 (Table3.2).

Table 3.2**Grade / Gender**

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Grade	G10	71	86	157
	G11	81	84	165
	G12	83	74	157
Total		235	244	479

The six schools can be described as follows: School (1) is a coeducational private school. It can be described as a modern school where school uniform is obligatory to all students. The students are from different areas in North Lebanon and of different religions (Christians and Muslims). This school follows the Lebanese Baccalaureate Program and the language of instruction is English. Other languages like French and Arabic are taught at all grade levels. Subjects taught at the secondary level are English, Arabic, French, Mathematics, Social Studies, Sciences, Arts, Music, and Physical Education.

Likewise, School (2) is a coeducational private school. The school was originally one of the confessional religious schools. School uniform is obligatory. This school is open to students from different areas in North Lebanon and of different religions (Christians and Muslims). It follows the Lebanese Baccalaureate Program and the language of instruction is French. Other languages like English and Arabic are taught at all grade levels. Subjects taught at the secondary level are English, Arabic, French, Mathematics, Social Studies, Sciences,

Arts, Music, and Physical Education. Students may continue in the Science or literary level or choose to join the vocational section.

School (3) is an international coeducational private school where students come from different areas in North Lebanon and of different religions (Christians and Muslims). . It follows both the Lebanese and the British Program. Students set for the Lebanese Baccalaureate program and the GCE Exams, Advanced Placement courses and A-Level exams. English is the main language of instruction and other languages like French and Arabic are taught throughout the school years. Subjects taught at the secondary level are English, Arabic, French, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Sciences, Arts, Music, and Physical Education.

School (4) is a coeducational private school, and it is, also, a missionary confessional school. School uniform is obligatory to all students who are from different areas in North Lebanon. It follows the Lebanese Baccalaureates program where English is the language of instruction, and other languages like English and Arabic are taught at all grade levels. Subjects taught at the secondary level are English, Arabic, French, Mathematics, Social Studies, Sciences, Arts, Music, and Physical Education.

School (5) an Islamic private school, and unlike the other schools there is segregation between boys and girls. There are two buildings one for boys and one for girls. Females, whether teachers or students, are required to be veiled or wear the Hijab. School uniform is obligatory to all students who are from different areas in North Lebanon. English is the language of instruction, and French and Arabic are taught at all levels. Subjects taught at the secondary level are English, Arabic, French, Mathematics, Social Studies, Sciences, Arts, Music, and Physical Education.

School (6) is a coeducational liberal private school where school uniform is not obligatory. It follows the American High School Program, The International Baccalaureate, and the Lebanese Baccalaureate Program. The language of instruction is English, and French and Arabic are taught at all levels. It comprises students who have double nationalities and they come from different areas in North Lebanon. Subjects taught at the secondary level are English, Arabic, French, Mathematics, Social Studies, Sciences, Arts, Music, and Physical Education.

2- Instrument

Different instruments have been used to measure self-esteem like Rosenberg's and Coppersmith's Inventory. To measure self-esteem for this study, the researcher used James Battle's (2002) Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventory (CFSEI-3), which is a revised test for assessing self-esteem. The CFSEI-3, which is a revised test for assessing self-esteem, is a set of self-report inventories used to determine the level of self-esteem of students of different ages. It includes three age- appropriate forms: primary, intermediate and adolescent.

The (CFSEI-3) inventories were designed to assess the self-esteem of children between 6 years and 18 years using a self-report inventory. Each form of the CFSEI-3 is particularly designed to measure only the level of self-esteem differentiation that corresponds with the participants' cognitive capabilities covered by the form. Battle's culture-free test has three forms: The primary form (ages 6-8) consists of 29 items that measure up Academic, General, Parental/Home, and Social content areas and yields A Global Self-Esteem Quotient (GSEQ). Items are read by the examiner to the child, who is required to choose between 'yes' and 'no' answers. Children at this stage are confined to a one-dimensional thinking where

things are good or bad. They identify the self as positive and are unable to identify the negative characteristics of the self.

The Intermediate Form (ages 9-12) consists of 64 items that are grouped under four subscales: Academic, General, Parental/Home, and Social. The students must read and respond to the items by either by 'yes' or 'no' answers. Like the primary form it also yields a Global Self-Esteem Quotient and a Defensiveness score. Children at this stage are able to coordinate self-representations that were previously categorized as (opposites). Self is compared with others on various skills and global self-worth emancipates and become differentiated into general, academic, social, parental/home related self-esteem.

The Adolescent Form (ages 13-18), which was used for the present study, includes 67 items that are grouped under five subscales which adds an additional score, the Personal self-Esteem. Students are required to check with yes or no questions on the scale. Scores have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 0.15. A major achievement in this stage is the adolescent ability to think abstractly and combine abstract traits such as smart and creative and gradually proceeds to develop higher order abstraction and become capable of all the adult forms of logic (Battle, 2002).

For the present study, the 67-item Adolescent Form was used. Administration time for the 67-item measure was 30 minutes. The CFSEI-3 Adolescent Form measures Adolescents' self-esteem in relation to Academic, General, Parental/Home, Social Personal and Global self-esteem (Battle, 2002).

Battle's inventory was used for our study because it is appropriate for this particular study. First, this instrument includes three age-appropriate forms, and it is practically

appropriate for the age of students in the sample in terms of time and feasibility that fit for students in elementary intermediate and high schools. Besides, the three forms of the inventory provide a Global Self-esteem Quotient (GSEQ) and sub-scores of other aspects of self-esteem. In addition, the responses in this instrument are 'yes' or 'no' answers, and it is easy to administer and score. It can be administered to individuals or groups in 15-20 minutes.

What also makes Battles' inventory an appropriate instrument is that it is a more culturally fair test compared to others. It was standardized on the basis of many variables such as the geographic, region, gender, race, rural or urban residence, ethnicity, family income, parent education and disability variables.

This standardized instrument, also, meets the criteria of a well-designed questionnaire. First, its topic is of clear signification to the respondents to motivate them to respond. The topic is defined in terms of specific objectives concerning the kind of information needed and every item on the questionnaire directly relate to them.

It is rather brief and as easy to respond as possible and carefully planned concerning content and format. No long, boring or repetitive questions were included in the questionnaire to rule out loss of interest in answering or producing inaccurate responses. Besides, there are no questions that do not measure what they claim to measure to ensure that the collected data is valid. Also, no content questions to which the respondents have little or no knowledge, or rely too heavily on the respondent's memory were included to ensure accurate and reliable data.

Concerning each item in the questionnaire, each question is constructed in a way in which each one deals with a single concept. Questions were worded as clearly as possible i.e. they were not ambiguous, vague, difficult, unusual or technical. Such questions can be

misunderstood, misinterpreted or interpreted differently by different respondent and will lead to unreliable and invalid data. Finally, the layout of the questionnaire was carefully designed to avoid errors in recording and in data processing.

3- Instrument Reliability and Validity

To determine if this questionnaire measures what it was developed to measure, it needs to be validated. It should be made valid for the particular purpose of the research study and for its particular respondents. Validity here refers to the ability of the specific measures or questions used to measure what they claim to measure i.e. the items in the questionnaire represent a measurement of self-esteem and not other areas, and to what degree these items cover all dimensions of self-esteem. Content validity can be determined by expert judgment. Experts in self-esteem research can be asked to assess its content validity. These experts will carefully review the process used in developing the questionnaire and make judgment concerning how well the items represent the intended trait namely self-esteem. Their judgment will be based on whether all sub-points have been included and in the correct proportions. In other words, a comparison will be made between what ought to be included and what is actually included.

CFSEI-3 has proved to have a significant reliability and validity. The instrument was administered on a sample of 1,727 children in 17 states in the United States. The sample was made of a representative group based on the projected characteristics of the school-age population by the U.S Bureau of the Census (Battle, 2003). According to the normative group, Internal consistency for the General Self-Esteem Quotient (GSEQ) ranged from .77to .93. With greater values correlating to higher ages of the respondents. Test-retest reliability, based

on a sample of 77 students from Austin with an interval of two weeks between tests, ranged from .72 to .98 (Battle, 2002).

Validity, which in its basic sense refers to whether a test instrument measures what it meant to measure, was demonstrated by investigating the relationship of the CFSEI-3 with other measures of self-esteem. The content validity of the CFSEI-3 was evidenced by median item discrimination coefficients meeting or exceeding the .35 value for all CFSEI-3 scores. Concurrent Validity of the CFSEI-3 was demonstrated by Lazowski, Miller, Boye, and Miller (1998), using the development sample of (n=2,015), found a 95% concordance between the Student Self-Concept Scale (SSCS). These authors also found a test sensitivity of 96% and a specificity of 93%.

Test-retest reliabilities range from .70 to .92 (Form B) and .79 to .82 (Form AD) (Battle, 1981, 1991). Concurrent validity is supported by significant relationships with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, Beck Depression Inventory, and various MMPI scales (Battle, 1981). Because Form B had 25 items and Form AD had 40 items, the last 15 self-esteem items were removed from Form AD to make the scores comparable. This procedure was adopted by Battle (1981) when he shortened the children's Form A to Form B by eliminating the final 30 questions.

The Construct validity refers to the extent to which the test of a particular construct adequately represents what is intended by theoretical account of the construct being measured (Anastasi and Urbina, 1997). In other words, it corresponds to how much the traits of the inventory represent the theoretical model on which the trait is based.

The authors validated the CFSEI-3 by comparing its scores with other related tools using three age-category samples consisting of 32 Primary-aged children, 20 Intermediate-aged youth, and 49 Adolescents. The first study compared the CFSEI-3 with the Self-Esteem Index (SEI) – another self-report based inventory system. According to the authors, the GSEQ score correlated .61 with the SEI “Self-Esteem Quotient;” other subscales correlated with each other in the .50s and .60 for most age groups. The second study compared CFSEI-3 scores with scores from the Piers-Harris Children’s Self-Concept Scale (PHCSCS). According to the authors, the Piers-Harris Total Score correlated .72 with the CFSEI-3 GSEQ; subscales for all age groups.

The CFSEI-3 as an assessment measure has been used for different purposes in research studies. CFSEI-3 gives a global idea on how students evaluate their attitudes in relation to their self, parents, school, and peers. In research studies, the CFSEI-3 is employed in measuring self-esteem whereby the Global Self-Esteem Quotient (GSEQ) can help differentiate high self-esteem, mature socio-emotional development, or exceptional mental health from poor self-esteem, immature behavior patterns or unsatisfactory adjustment (Battle, 2002). Subscales can tell about the person's strength's and weaknesses while speculating about the reasons behind an examinee's low or high quotient score. It yields information about areas where the students need help in, and accordingly, use appropriate methods to raise their self-esteem. Moreover, mean scores and or subscale standard scores of CFSEI-3 can aid in studying the relationship between self-esteem and other variables questioned in a genuine research problem.

Many studies have used CFSEI-3 to measure self-esteem for educational purposes. McDonald (2004) used CFSEI-3 to examine the self-esteem of disadvantaged, artistically talented and disadvantaged, non-artistically talented students in grades four, five, and six. The

talented students were receiving special programming in a specific area of the arts. Three were for placement levels and two assessment times. Using independent sample t tests, mixed analysis of variance (ANOVA), and a chi-square test showed significantly higher results in the talented students receiving both years of art than the non-talented students at both Time1, and Time 2. The group of talented students had also slightly higher than average self-esteem compared with published norms for the CFSEI-3.

Hutton (1996) used CFSEI-2 when he studied the self-esteem of adolescent girls participating in an optional course designed to improve participant' self-esteem. Thirty six girls in the experimental and control group were presented and results indicated an overall decline in self-esteem for the control group.

4- Pilot Testing of the (CFSEI-3) and Test-retest Reliability

In order to establish clarity of items, time needed to respond and to study the difficulties faced by students, a pilot test was conducted. The pilot study was conducted on a group that represents the sample in all the variables to check if the students will have any problem in responding to the inventory. A group of 36 students from grades 10, 11, and 12 were randomly selected from a school not included in the sample of this study. As a result of piloting, changes were added to the instrument in the light of the students' feedback about the (CFSEI-3). The changes carried out by the researcher were in sentence structure and vocabulary. A number of 10 items were restructured and paraphrased to insure a better understanding.

Reliability was established using the test-retest method with 46 students who were not included in the sample of this study and who were selected randomly. The responses obtained from the test showed an index of coefficient alpha .83 for the first testing and a coefficient alpha of .85 from the second retesting after three weeks interval. The test-retest reliability coefficient was 90.

5- Procedures

The schools of the sample were contacted to get permission for conducting the research. Permission was obtained by the school principals and the prospective classroom teachers who supervised the administration of the questionnaires with the researcher. One section from each grade level was randomly selected by the school administration for the study. Students were informed about the purpose of the study, and the instructions for filling in the questionnaire were explained to ensure that students understood what was expected of them. Students were told that the purpose of the research was to collect some information about how they feel about themselves. They were also told that there are no right or wrong answers to the questionnaire items. The first question was read for the students as an example. Students were asked to check "yes" or "no" on the scale that are designed to measure levels of self-esteem.

Students completed the questionnaires individually during the recess time of the school day. The time for filling the questionnaires was approximately 25 minutes. After referring to the school administration, the researcher was given access to school records that contained the GPA of each student. The GPA in the school record was based on the subjects;

Math, Science, Chemistry, Physics, Languages; Arabic, English and French, Philosophy and Cultures (in second secondary and third secondary classes only), and Informatics. They represent the main subject matters taught at the school according to the mid-year exam.

H- Data Analysis

For analysis, data were summarized in tables after coding and entering the data on the SPSS program to obtain the means, standard deviations, ANOVAS, Regression analysis and z's.scores.

For each student we obtained one total score of Global self-esteem and five sub-scores for each student; for Academic, General, Parental/Home, Personal and Social self-esteem.

Responses for positive answers on the inventories were given a numerical value equals to 1, while responses for negative answers were given a value equals to zero. The null hypotheses (1), (2) and (3) were tested by performing separate two-ways ANOVAS for the Global quotient and the subscales scores. The null hypothesis (4) was tested by calculating a Pearson-Product Moment Correlation Coefficient; and the null hypothesis (5) was tested by calculating Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients for each of grades 10, 11, and 12 of the secondary cycle and then transforming the Pearson (r's) into z coefficients in order to compare the relation between self-esteem and academic achievement across grade level.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data summarization and analysis of 479 inventories, using SPSS program, will be dealt with in this chapter. Next, results of testing the null hypothesis will be reported.

A- Gender and Grade level Difference in self-esteem

1- Gender and self-esteem

Means and standard deviations SD of total and subtotal scores of participants' responses on CFSEI-3 were obtained for males and females. These are presented in Table 4.1. Likewise, means and standard deviations SD of total and subtotal scores of participants' responses on CFSEI-3 were obtained for grades 10, 11 and 12 of secondary school. These are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Mean and standard deviation of Global Self-Esteem with Gender

	<i>N</i>	<i>Gender</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>Female Mean</i>	<i>S D</i>
		<i>Male Mean</i>	<i>S D</i>			
Global Self-Esteem	235	85.31	10.70	244	84.20	12.28
General	235	8.31	1.82	244	8.09	2.11
Parental	235	8.26	2.44	244	8.55	2.56
Academic	235	4.91	2.50	244	5.26	2.60
Social	235	9.43	2.17	244	9.09	2.34
Personal	235	8.45	2.97	244	7.50	3.29

Means were compared by separate two ways ANOVA to test the null hypotheses. A summary of the ANOVA is presented in Table (4.3).

As to the hypothesis (1) that there is a significant gender difference in self-esteem, the separate two way ANOVA revealed no significant difference between males and females in the Global score of CFSEI-3 ($P = 0.35 > 0.05$). Thus the hypotheses (Q 1) for gender difference in self-esteem were rejected for the total score.

Likewise, there were no gender differences in the sub-scores between males and females except for one sub-score which is the Personal Self-esteem sub-score. There was a difference between males and females in the Personal sub-score ($P = 0.00 < 0.05$). Thus the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between males and females is not rejected for the Personal Self-esteem score. While for the Parental ($P = 0.16 > 0.05$), the Academic ($P = 0.1 > 0.05$), the Social ($P = 0.1 > 0.05$), and the General score ($P = 0.28 > 0.05$), there were no gender differences. Thus the null hypothesis that there are no gender differences was not rejected for these sub-scores.

A Regression analysis was calculated to obtain the various weights and magnitudes of the various self-esteem subscales with regards to the global self-esteem revealed a significant effect for the Personal self-esteem subscale. $F = 10.974$ $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ as can be seen in Table 4.2. The magnitude of the effect of self-esteem subscales can be observed in Figure (1). The effect of the Personal self-esteem subscale constitutes 57% of the Global scale.

Table 4.2

Multiple Regression Analysis / Gender

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
General	.359	1	.359	1.437	.231
Parental	.425	1	.425	1.699	.193
Academic	.568	1	.568	2.276	.132
Social	.659	1	.659	2.639	.105
Personal	2.692	1	2.692	10.974	.001*

Figure 1 : Regression / Gender

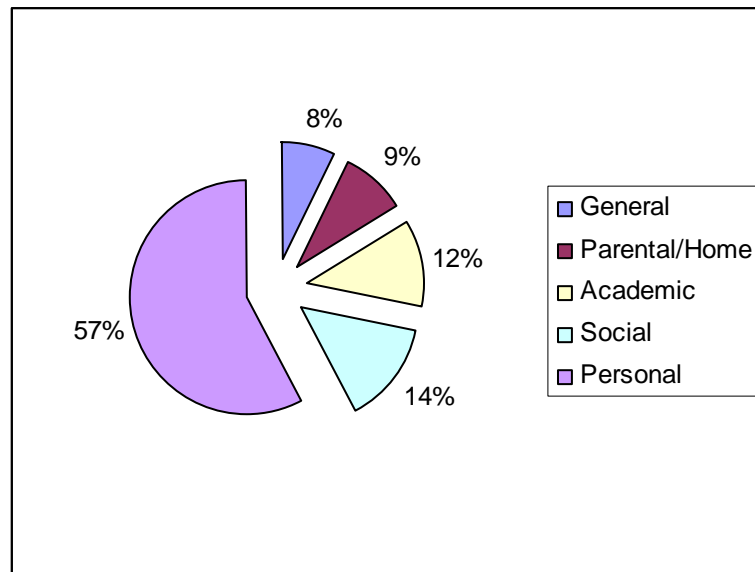


Table 4.3

Two-ways (ANOVAs) of Self-Esteem scores Global and Subscales for Grade Level and Gender

Source	Type I Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Global Self-Esteem					
Grade	1786.572	2	893.286	6.890	.001*
Gender	110.366	1	110.366	.851	.357
grade * Gender	369.411	2	184.705	1.425	.242
General					
Grade	28.995	2	14.497	3.753	.024*
Gender	4.436	1	4.436	1.149	.284
grade * Gender	3.050	2	1.525	.395	.674
Parental / Home					
Grade	16.647	2	8.324	1.336	.264
Gender	12.139	1	12.139	1.948	.163
grade * Gender	16.981	2	8.491	1.362	.257
Academic					
Grade	52.426	2	26.213	4.072	.018*
Gender	15.485	1	15.485	2.406	.122
grade * Gender	4.654	2	2.327	.361	.697
Social					
Grade	48.348	2	24.174	4.807	.009*
Gender	11.472	1	11.472	2.281	.132
grade * Gender	8.256	2	4.128	.821	.441
Personal					
Grade	47.564	2	23.782	2.455	.087
Gender	103.632	1	103.632	10.700	.001*
grade * Gender	80.919	2	40.459	4.177	.016*

* P<0.05 significance

2- Grade level and self-esteem

As to grade level difference in self-esteem, mean total and sub-total self-esteem scores for grades 10, 11, 12 of secondary schools were compared by separate two ways ANOVAs. A summary of the ANOVAs is presented in Table (4.3). The results revealed significant grade level difference in the total score ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$) and a significant grade level difference in the following sub-scores: General ($p = 0.024 < 0.05$), Academic ($p = 0.18 < 0.05$), and Social ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$). However, there was no significant grade level difference in the subscale score of Personal self-esteem ($p = 0.08 > 0.05$) and the Parental ($p = 0.2 > 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis (2) that there is a significant grade level difference in self-esteem was not rejected for the Global, the General, the Academic, and the Social, but it was rejected for the sub score of the Personal and the Parental self-esteem sub scores.

Table 4.4

Mean and standard deviation of Global Self-Esteem and subscales with Grade

	<i>Grade</i>								
	<i>G10</i>			<i>G11</i>			<i>G12</i>		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S D</i>
Global Self-Esteem	157	82.20	12.84	165	86.89	10.48	157	85.03	10.76
General	157	7.85	2.10	165	8.41	1.83	157	8.32	1.96
Parental	157	8.14	2.52	165	8.54	2.40	157	8.54	2.59
Academic	157	4.78	2.63	165	5.54	2.49	157	4.92	2.48
Social	157	8.82	2.59	165	9.58	1.98	157	9.34	2.14
Personal	157	7.55	3.28	165	8.32	3.15	157	7.99	3.06

The regression analysis measures revealed a significant effect for the General self-esteem subscale score ($F=4.630$ $p=0.03 < 0.05$). The Social effect proved significant ($F=4.211$ $P= 0.4 < 0.05$), as can be seen in Table (4.5).

The regression analysis measures revealed that the General subscale accounted for 36% of the global score, and the social accounted for 34% of the global score (Figure 2).

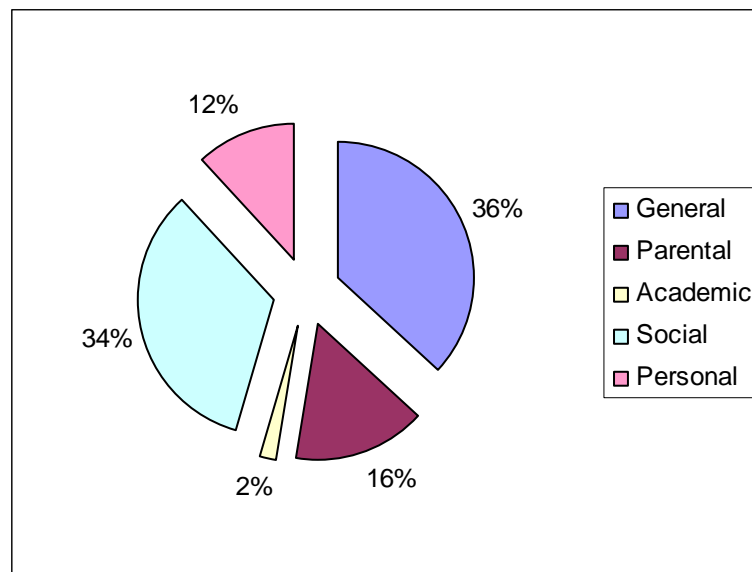
Table 4.5

Regression / Grade

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
General	3.018	1	3.018	4.630	.032*
Parental	1.284	1	1.284	1.959	.162
Academic	.155	1	.155	.236	.627
Social	2.748	1	2.748	4.211	.041*
Personal	.989	1	.989	1.507	.220

* $P < 0.05$ significance

Figure 2: Regression / Grade



B- Interaction between grade level and gender in self-esteem

Means were compared by separate two ways ANOVA to test Hypothesis (3). A summary of the ANOVAS is presented in Table (4.3). As to the 1 hypothesis (3) that there is a significant interaction between grade level and gender, the separate two ways ANOVA revealed no significant difference between males and females in the Global self-esteem score of CFSEI-3 ($p = 0.24 > 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis (3) for the interaction between grade level and gender was rejected for the global score.

Likewise, there was no significant interaction in the sub-score of self-esteem except for one sub-score which is the Personal Self-esteem sub-score. There was a significant interaction between gender and grade level in the Personal sub-score ($p = 0.01 < 0.05$). Thus the hypothesis that there is significant interaction between grade level and gender was not rejected for the Personal Self-esteem subscale score. While for the Parental ($p = 0.25 > 0.05$), the Academic ($p = 0.69 > 0.05$), the Social ($p = 0.44 > 0.05$), and the General score ($p = 0.67 > 0.05$), there was no significant interaction between Grade level and Gender. Thus the hypothesis that there is a significant interaction between grade level and gender was rejected for these sub-scores.

Table 4.6
Means of Global Self-Esteem with Gender and Grade for all schools

	Gender					
	<i>Female</i>			<i>Male</i>		
	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12
Global Self-Esteem	81.95	87.33	83.27	82.51	86.43	86.60
General	7.78	8.39	8.11	7.93	8.42	8.52
Parental	8.42	8.81	8.42	7.80	8.26	8.64
Academic	5.06	5.71	4.99	4.45	5.36	4.87
Social	8.51	9.50	9.30	9.20	9.67	9.39
Personal	7.15	8.33	6.95	8.04	8.31	8.93

a- Relation between Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients were computed between the self-esteem scores and Academic achievement (Global and subscales) and academic achievement (GPA) for the whole sample and for every grade level. These correlations coefficients are presented in Table (4.7). Significant low correlation coefficients between Global self-esteem scores and subscale scores: General ($P=0.000<0.01$); Parental/Home ($P=0.06<0.01$); and Academic self-esteem ($P=0.00<0.01$) were noticed in the whole sample. However, a non-significant correlation was found between self-esteem subscale score Social and Personal and academic achievement in the whole sample and in grades 10, 11, and no significant correlation was found between Social, Personal and Parental self-esteem and academic achievement (GPA) in grade 12. Thus Hypothesis 4 was not rejected except for the subtotals Social and Personal with respect to their relation to academic achievement (GPA) where hypothesis 4 was rejected.

Table 4.7

Correlation Coefficients (r) for the Relationship Between Self-Esteem Scores and Academic Achievement (GPA) for the Whole Sample and for Grades 10, 11 and 12 of the Secondary Cycle

	R	P	Level
Whole Sample			
Global Self-Esteem	0.204	0.000*	0.01
General	0.166	0.000*	0.01
Parental / Home (P/H)	0.115	0.006*	0.01
Academic	0.373	0.000*	0.01
Social (S)	- 0.043	0.344	--
Personal (P)	0.085	0.063	--
Grade 10			
Global Self-Esteem	0.209	0.009*	0.01
General	0.192	0.016*	0.05
Parental / Home (P/H)	0.231	0.004*	0.01
Academic	0.414	0.000*	0.01
Social (S)	-0.045	0.575	--
Personal (P)	0.008	0.921	--
Grade 11			
Global Self-Esteem	0.282	0.000*	0.01
General	0.154	0.049*	0.05
Parental / Home (P/H)	0.179	0.022*	0.05
Academic	0.442	0.000*	0.01
Social (S)	-0.023	0.766	--
Personal (P)	0.141	0.071	--
Grade 12			

Global Self-Esteem	0.198	0.013*	0.05
General	0.229	0.004*	0.01
Parental / Home (P/H)	0.018	0.826	--
Academic	0.302	0.000*	0.01
Social (S)	-0.042	0.598	--
Personal (P)	0.125	0.119	--

b- Relation between Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement across Grade Level

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between self-esteem scores (Global and subscales) and academic achievement (GPA) were compared with regard to grade level. Correlation coefficients(\underline{r}) that represented the relationship between self-esteem scores (Global and subscales) and academic achievement were transformed into standard scores by using Fisher's Formula. These standard scores (\underline{z}) are presented in table 6. \underline{Z} scores (Table 4.8) showed a no significant difference in the correlation coefficients between self-esteem scores (Global and subscales) and academic achievement (GPA) across grade level. Thus, hypothesis 5 for the relationship between self-esteem scores (Global and subscales) and academic achievement (GPA) across grade level was supported.

Table 4.8

Standard Scores (z) for the Relationship between Self-Esteem Scores (General Subscores) and the Academic Achievement in relation to Grade levels 10, 11 and 12 of the Secondary Cycle

Grade		
10	11	12
1- Total-score		
0.20	0.25	0.20
2- General		
0.20	0.15	0.20
3- Parental		
0.25	0.20	0.05
4- Academic		
0.40	0.40	0.30
5- Social		
--	--	--
6- Personal		
0.005	0.15	0.15

Note: No significant values have been observed

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The discussion chapter consists of two sections. The first section consists of three parts; the first part discusses the relationship between self-esteem and gender. The second part discusses the relationship between self-esteem and Grade level and the third discusses the interaction between Grade level and gender.

Section two addresses the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement and shows how such a relationship varies across Grade level. In addition, implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research and a summary will be presented.

A- Correlates of self-esteem

1- Self-esteem and gender

The first research question aims to investigate the differences between males and females in self-esteem scores. This study revealed no significant difference between males and females in the total score of CFSEI-3. The results were consistent with the results obtained by Coopersmith (1967) who found no difference in the means of Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) between males and females. Moreover, the results were also consistent with Skaalvik (1990) and Simon & Simon (1975) who found no significant gender difference between males and females in self-esteem.

Likewise, the results support the findings of Wilgenbusch and Merrell (1999) on adolescent that revealed relatively small differences in some aspects of self-esteem and

considered that global generalizations regarding gender and self-esteem is an oversimplification. The results are also consistent with Cram's (1996), review of gender and self-esteem, who provided evidence for gender differences only in domain specific areas of self-esteem and concluded that the differences between boys and girls are not significant enough for practical importance.

However, there are other studies that were inconsistent with the findings of the study. For example, Cairne, Mcwhirther, Duffy, & Barry (1990) whose evaluation of gender differences in self-esteem of adolescents reveals that female's score lower on self-esteem than adolescent males. Similarly, Rosenberg and Simmons (1975) found that more girls reported lower self-esteem than did boys during middle and late adolescence. On the other hand, with Chubb, Fertman, and Ross (1997), gender differences in self-esteem in high school students revealed that males' self-esteem was significantly higher than that of females.

Although the results revealed no significant difference between males and females in the total score of CFSEI-3, they revealed a significant difference in the Personal subscale score. The mean of boys was higher than that of girls, as shown in Table (4.1). Looking back into the items that constitute the sub score of the Personal self-esteem, we find that there are fourteen items that focus on the aspects of self-esteem that refers to individual's feelings about one's self. These items are mainly focused on statements that describe negative feelings about one's self such as "Are you easily depressed?", "Are you usually tense or anxious?", "Do you often feel like quitting school?", "Do you often feel ashamed of yourself?", "Do you often feel uneasy most of the time without knowing why?", "Do you feel that you are not good enough?", "Are you often upset about something?", "Is it hard for you to find the energy to do things?" (Table, 3.1). These items, in their statements relate directly to feelings that are not pertinent to traits of the male adolescent personality. Negative feelings such as

being depressed, not good enough, ashamed, uneasy, upset, worried, having no energy are not well praised for boys. Boys tend to avoid or even hide such feelings to maintain a good male self image. Supportive feelings that males hold lead to higher levels of adolescent self-esteem and a better sense of overall self-worth. This may serve as a buffer against depression and other negative feelings. Adolescents' males come to view themselves as competent.

These negative feelings are, also, related to the way the boys and the girls perceive themselves as adequate or inadequate. Negative feelings are connected to self-perception of inadequacy. The difference between boys and girls in the Personal self-esteem can be explained in terms of the sex stereotypes inherent in our culture. Gender differences are emphasized through stereotyping, and reinforced by social factors where each culture forms its hierarchy of priorities. These priorities differ from one culture to another and are directly connected to how both sexes perceive their selves. This makes self-evaluation culture-related. The feelings referred to in the Personal self-esteem items are more tolerated in the Lebanese culture for girls than for boys. Males are more encouraged to be proud of themselves, full of energy, never quit, good enough, uneasy to get depressed. While girls are perceived as less adequate than boys, consequently, they develop self-image that is less adequate than that of the boys.

On the otherhand, school transitions play a role in gender differences in self-esteem. Lord et al (1994) found that girls are more affected than boys by school transitions. They also tend to be less committed to go to school and experience more feelings of hostility and low self-esteem (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987). This can be attributed to the importance girls place on social relationships. In this regard, girls have shown to be more affected by the perception of positive teacher-student relationships, showing more interest in class and subject attitudes

when the relation is positive (Ferguson and Fraser, 1998a). Crocker et al. (2003) described girls as "being sensitive to, attuned to, connected to and generally interdependent with others". The change in the social network of teachers and peers in the new environment of the secondary school creates feelings of alienation and low self-esteem.

The above discussion could explain why, and in what ways the two genders differ and illustrates how the individuals' feelings about themselves are receptive of the cultural context. It also entails the kind of feelings both sexes experience or live with.

With respect to the sub scales scores, there was no significant gender difference in the Home/Parental, Academic, Social and General self-esteem. These findings suggest that feelings towards family, parents, peers and friends are similar between males and females. Since the students of the sample belong to the same socioeconomic status, they share similar experiences with regard to their homes, school environment, and relations with friends. This suggests that the role of parents, teachers, and friends, as significant others play an important role in the way the individual develops his or her view of the self. The findings suggest that males and females hold similar perceptions of schools, friends, and parents. Their psychosocial development yields similar self-esteem between males and females. It is also assumed that the parenting and the schooling styles that set clear standards for conduct and role play allow more understanding of the equality between males and females and is less biased to any gender. With such a situation such styles produce less difference between males and females. The students of the study attend private schools and belong to the middle socioeconomic status where a climate of openness and trust is ensured by one way or another yielding equal treatment of males and females and setting similar expectations from both genders.

Thus, concerning the relationship between self-esteem and gender, it is believed that there is a direct relationship between the self and the gender as sex stereotype plays an important role in self-esteem. The environment, too, directs the way an individual behaves and this leads to sex differences. This connection between self-esteem and sex stereotypes persists from pre-adolescence to adulthood. Besides, this also explains that gender differences are not only associated with biological differences but also with the socialization process.

Accordingly, adolescent females' self-esteem seems to be more interpersonally oriented, whereas, males' self-esteem seems more self-oriented. Males appear to be closely associated with asserting oneself or getting ahead of others, whereas female are more closely associated with connecting with others. Therefore, compared with females, males tend to have higher self-evaluations of their masculinity, achievement, and physical ability, whereas females have higher self-evaluations in relation to others.

2- Self-esteem and Grade level

The second research question aims to investigate the differences in self-esteem scores across Grade levels 10, 11, and 12. Significant differences in self-esteem scores across Grade level were revealed in the results of the study. The differences were in the Global, General, Academic, and Social self-esteem while no significant differences were found in the Personal and the Parental. Looking at the means of the Global, Social, General and Academic self-esteem as presented in Table (4.4) we find that they were lower in Grade 10, and then there was a rise in these scores in Grade 11, and an insignificant decline in Grade 12. These findings were obtained in other studies that have examined the development of self-esteem with age. For example Bachman and O'Malley's (1977) longitudinal study of 1,600 students found that self-esteem increased steadily from the beginning of tenth Grade to the end of

twelfth Grade, and beyond. Other studies also have found changes or differences in self-esteem with age. It was found out that adolescents go through a time of downward turn in self-esteem. For example, Rosenberg (1979) maintained that early adolescence is a time when the individual becomes more self-consciousness of what others think about him/her and this makes the adolescence period a period of self-esteem disturbance. Besides, Rosenberg found that self-esteem declines during adolescence years until late adolescence where one's level of self-esteem improves. Erikson (1959) also found a decline in self-esteem as a manifestation of the identity crisis aspect of adolescents. Marsh (1989) found out that there was a linear decline in self-esteem with age. Furthermore, these findings were consistent with Wigfield (1991) whose results showed that the self-esteem of early adolescence was lower immediately after the transition to junior high school and commented that the decline observed in self-esteem is a reaction to the new school environment.

However, these findings were not consistent with the studies that showed stability in self-esteem across age. For example, Chubb (1993) found that self-esteem did not change significantly over the four years of high school. This finding adds support to other research which found that self-esteem doesn't change over time (Brack, Orr, & Ingersoll, 1988; Wylie, 1979). McCarthy and Hoge's (1982) concluded in a cross-sectional study, that self-esteem remains stable over time.

Some theorists and behavior scientists suggest that there is more continuity than discontinuity between childhood and adolescence; some studies show a rise in self-esteem during adolescence (Marsh, 1989; O'Malley & Bachman, 1983), whereas others do not. Block & Robins, 1993; Chubb, Fertman, & Ross, 1997, and Bandura, 1964, reported that adolescents maintain a consistency in psychological and behavioral functioning between childhood and adolescence despite changes, because these changes don't occur suddenly.

Besides, in a cross-sectional study of adolescents' self-esteem, Simmons and Rosenberg (1973) found that self-esteem decreases during early adolescence, and then it gradually increases. When it is established, self-esteem becomes resistant to change. The findings were also inconsistent with Savin-William and Demo (1984). Using multiple measures of self-esteem to test the stability of self-esteem during early and middle adolescence, Savin-William and Demo concluded that if there was a change in self-esteem level during adolescence, it would be gradual and slight. Accordingly, adolescence is a time of stable or gradual growth in self-esteem levels and of stability in self-feelings from one year to another and this makes self-esteem an enduring trait of personality. That is adolescence is not a dramatic phase in the individual's life. Besides, Dockter (1991) found no difference in self-esteem among levels 7, 8, and 9 and Adams and Jones (1983) showed that middle adolescence is not a period of age change.

The results that revealed a significant difference in self-esteem across Grade level can be understood in terms of the stages of human development. These stages are important to educators in their educational concerns with students that are during the stages of adolescent development, and these stages help in understanding the relationship between age and self-esteem. What makes these stages especially important is that it is a time of significant biological, cognitive, and emotional growth. It is also the stage of increasing capacity for reasoning (Piaget, 1952).

The significant differences in the Global General Academic and Social self-esteem scores mean that these aspects of self-esteem are directly affected by age or the developmental stages of adolescents. In fact, these dimensions of self-esteem pertain to the social and academic environment of the students. The results showed that these aspects of self-esteem are lower in Grade 10 rise in 11 and slightly decline 12. These fluctuations can be

attributed to the changes that take place in the adolescence period and are manifested in the Social, Academic, General and Global self-esteem.

Eventually, the discontinuity in physical psychological development in adolescence from that of childhood characterize this period by rapid changes of the onset of puberty. Within this view an emphasis should be made on the effects of school transition on students' self-esteem. The characteristics of adolescence make the transition from the middle into a high school environment particularly important (Bruner, 1996). This means that these characteristics entail the need for a balance between the needs of the adolescent and what the environment provides (Ayyach, 2001). Adolescence as a time of preparing the individual for adulthood places youth in an ambivalent situation where they neither feel as children nor adults. Thus the lower self-esteem scores in Grade 10 can be attributed to this transitional period. This Grade is the first Grade in the secondary school. There is a shift in the curriculum, in the expectations concerning the preparation for the university education (CERD, 1995). At the same time it is the age where students experience identity versus role confusion as presented by Erikson's (1968). An overview of pertinent aspects of Erikson's view provide some interpretations of the results. The crisis that Erikson associates with adolescence, identity versus role confusion, marks the transition from childhood to adulthood that takes place at the age of Grade 10 where adolescents pose the question of their identity or "Who am I?". This crisis must be resolved for an individual to progress to the next stage.

These differences in General, Global, and Social and Academic self-esteem across Grade level also entail the interactions the student has at school and in the society. These interactions are marked by certain fluctuations that can explain the self-esteem instability at this age period. The adolescents' development involves moving out from the family toward interdependence with peers and elders and creates tension and emotional conflicts especially

when it comes to group acceptance adolescents appear to have group needs to gain group acceptance. They become preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are. The idea that identity and personality development takes place within a social context makes social agents play critical roles in the resolution of the identity crises. Peers are a key social agent for adolescents' successful resolution of the crisis of identity versus role confusion. In this context, the drop and the rise in self-esteem shown in the results reflect the effect of these changes in the adolescent's personality and the emotional and psychological development that by turn affect their level of self-esteem. Teachers, also, play an important role in the life of the adolescent. In the secondary school, student-teacher relations become less personal, less positive, less supportive, less caring, and teachers were found to trust students less (Eccles, et al 1993). This factor may affect student's self-esteem, particularly at the time when students try to achieve independence from parents and find more interest in teachers and peers.

The rise in self-esteem in Grade 11 after the decline in Grade 10 can be attributed to the variety of choices among secondary school tracks. The new organizational structure provided the adolescent with some alternatives to choose among the tracks of Literature and Humanities, Biology and Sciences, Mathematics, in addition to vocational and technical schools available in many private schools. Bandura (1977) stated that young people need to be provided with the option to select their own life paths, and participate in activities of their choice in order to be able to persevere in the face of difficulties, achieve success and confidence. According to Erikson (1968), in order for the adolescent to successfully resolve the identity crisis, they must feel that they are free to make choices about their immediate futures. Adolescents in this stage, actively seek opportunities to make choices from available options. They may often tend to oppose when being forced into certain situations. When the

adolescents do not perceive that they have a choice in the activities by which they define themselves, they will have difficulty in resolving the crisis of identity and role confusion. They will not be able to reflect upon their activities and the impact they have on larger social contexts and will not, also, be able to feel that they have a specific role within social contexts. At this point, adolescents may find themselves unable to accept who they are, and this will affect their feeling of self-esteem.

The difference in self-esteem scores between Grade 11 on one side and Grades 10 and 12 is that at this Grade, students might have already adjusted to the new environment of the secondary school. By this time, they could have established new friendships and accustomed to new teachers.

The significant differences in the Global, General, Social and Academic self-esteem across Grade level do not only relate to the identity crisis and psychological developments but also to the adolescents' intellectual development too. In his theory of intellectual development, Piaget (1952) describes the stage of formal operations as a period when adolescents begin to show the ability to operate on operations. This makes the adolescents able to comprehend the unobservable world. They develop the ability to work through a hypothesis to a conclusion. In this respect, adolescents begin to develop meta-cognitive and hypothetical thought to reflect upon aspects of their emerging identities, and make hypothetical conclusions about who they will be. Then adolescents reach a point where they can develop realizations of their purpose and roles in certain social contexts. Thus the changes in the level of self-esteem are connected to the changes in the way of thinking when the adolescents discover their social identities as a result of new ways of thinking.

B- Interaction between Grade level and gender in self-esteem

The current study investigates the interaction between Grade level and Gender. The results revealed no significant interaction between Grade level and gender in the Global score of CFSEI-3, General, Parental, Academic, and the Social self-esteem sub scores. The results were consistent with the results obtained by Emmirich and Shepard (1982) and Wiggins (1987) who found no significant interaction between Grade level and gender of students in Grade 8 and 10. The results were also consistent with Al Abed (1998) who found no significant interaction between Grade level and gender in self-esteem scores. Wylie (1979), too, concluded from an analysis of the longitudinal studies addressing change in self-esteem over time that while some studies did show an increase in self-esteem over time, most indicated no significant change.

Similarly, in a study of 4th-, 6th-, 8th-, and 10th-grade students, Bohan (1973) found no significant differences between Grades or sexes except in the tenth Grade. Tenth-Grade girls had significantly lower self-esteem than did the 10th-Grade boys. Savin-Williams and Demo (1984) measured self-esteem in the ninth and tenth Grades and concluded that self-esteem is a stable, enduring aspect of the personality.

However, there are other studies that were inconsistent with the findings of this study. For example, the study of Chubb, Fertman, and Ross (1997), about gender differences in self-esteem in high school students revealed that males' self-esteem was significantly higher than that of females. Similarly, Rosenberg and Simmons (1975) in a cross-sectional study of adolescent self-esteem found that self-esteem dropped during early adolescence, with the greatest decrease at age 12. From that point it gradually increased, with a burst at age 16.

These findings imply that males and female adolescents in Grade 10, 11, 12 share almost the same level of self-esteem. These findings can be analyzed in terms of the commonalities between both genders that are related to physiological aspect, parental practices with adolescents in the family, quality of school attended and relationships with peers, and social backgrounds. The students in the study, males and females, experience physiological changes at this age stage, they all attend private schools, and live in the same areas of North Lebanon and from the same socioeconomic status of family. In other words, the way they perceive and evaluate their parents, peers, schools and they are similar regardless of their gender. This means that the students' perceptions and interactions with their surroundings at home, in the society, and at school are almost the same for both genders in these Grades. Thus, these results reflect some kind of similar developmental patterns that males and females undergo in these grades. Additionally, these developmental patterns entail changes in the perception of both genders of themselves as a result of their interactions within the surroundings in the same period of time. More specifically, these changes pertain to the sense of identity that they develop gradually from childhood to adulthood. These interactions affect their feelings of self-esteem whether these interactions are in their social, familial, and school context. Thus, although there are many other factors that must be considered for a more complete understanding of adolescent development, self-esteem is one major part of the equation in which males and females share common experiences that lead to similar outcomes.

However, the study revealed that there was no significant interaction in the sub score of self-esteem except for one sub-score which is the Personal Self-esteem sub-score. There was a significant interaction between gender and Grade level in the Personal self-esteem sub-

score. This interaction is expected as the results of comparing means by separate two ways ANOVA that revealed a significant difference between males and females in the Personal self-esteem sub score and not in the global and the other sub scores of self-esteem. This means that this difference between males and females in the Personal sub score interacted with grade level across Grade levels showing a significant interaction between grade level and gender in the Personal self-esteem. The means of males and females in the sub score of the Personal self-esteem (Table, 4.6) shows that the Personal self-esteem of females gets higher from Grade 10 to 11 and then drops in Grade 12, while the Personal self-esteem sub score for males gets higher from Grade 10 to 11 and rises from Grade 11 to Grade 12. This is consistent with what Emler (2001) found with regards to gender differences in adolescence. He stated that the largest differences are apparent in late adolescence; they are smaller both before and after.

The interaction between Grade level and gender needs to be analyzed on two levels, first the consistent rise in Personal self-esteem of males cross Grade level, second, the rise in Personal self-esteem of females from Grade 10 to 11 and then the drop in Grade 12. This interaction might be related to the role of the environment, to the cultural dimension and the type of expectations from males and females, to the school transitions' changes and challenges and the different attitudes of parents and teachers towards males and females.

As a start, this significant interaction between Grade level and Gender in the Personal self-esteem sub-score may be attributed to the role of the environment in shaping one's self-esteem. As Boyd (1997) states, self-esteem is influenced by social interaction and the individual's experience with the environment. In fact, the school environment that does not

take into account the differences between genders emphasizes competition, social comparison, and self-assessment components of one's abilities. These components are more appropriate for the male adolescents' developmental needs than they are for females. This, in part, explains why the rise was consistent with males and not with females.

Besides, and culturally speaking, the North region of Lebanon is characterized by traditional attitude towards gender differences where discrimination between girls and boys is clearly detected. For example, there are some schools that segregate boys from girls in different buildings of the school, and if not, then the segregation is in school playground. Such school culture meets the expectations of parents who chose these schools for their children. This makes schools in North Lebanon reflect or echo the social environment in the school culture that transmits gender bias concerning what's expected of boys and girls. These expectations determine how girls and boys are treated, how they're taught, and how they're followed up in different areas through their schooling and into their careers. The expectations are more encouraging to males than they are to females. In some cases, girls are expected to get married by the end of high school while boys are expected to build a future and a career. Thus females are treated differently from males leading to different development of self-esteem that was revealed in a drop in self-esteem in Grade 12 for females.

Added to that, Grades: 10 and 12 are years of transition in the secondary school, where changes are often challenges. Changes that face them in the new environment of the secondary school entail new teachers, new peers and new academic concerns. These changes take place at the time when adolescent students are engaged in trying to decide on their identities. Girls, more than boys, are expected to be more affected by this change as they are

more attuned to interpersonal relations, particularly, peers and teachers. Girls in turn were also found to be more affected by the kind of teacher-student relationships.(Ferguson and Fraser, 1998a) In fact, this goes in parallel with separate studies that referred to how girls receive less attention, less praise, less effective feedback, and less detailed instruction from teachers than do boys. Research by Myra and David Sadker (2004) indicated that teachers initiate more communication with boys than with girls in the classroom. For example, teachers tend to ask boys more complex, abstract, and open-ended questions, providing better opportunities for active learning. Teachers, also, tend to praise boys more often than they do with girls especially for the intellectual content and quality of their work. Girls more often praised for neatness and form in class projects and assignments. Also, teachers are sometimes more likely to give detailed instructions to boys, and more likely to take over and finish the task for girls, giving them less chance for active learning. Thus, the differences in the way boys and girls are treated illustrate why females showed a drop in self-esteem in Grades 10 and 12.

It is important, in this regard, to note that the gender differences in self-esteem in Grade 12 reflect girls' feelings of anxiety and insecurity as they approach the end of their school years, This can be attributed to the feelings of anxiety and stress they encounter throughout this terminal year as they prepare for the exam of the Baccalaureate (Ayyash, 2001). Added to that, the messages adolescent girls receive concerning their future education and career choices are different from those received by adolescent boys. Parents, teachers and counselors often do not show enough encouragement to girls to choose the studies that lead to high-skilled or high technology careers or that requires that the student travels abroad. Besides, while boys are often given the chance to choose among many universities inside and outside Lebanon, whereas, girls are often recommended to join a nearby university. On the

otherhand, marriage is often a preferred path for girls to follow after terminating secondary school years. When these negative messages reach adolescent girls at the key transition years, particularly, year 12, they lead to Gender differences in feelings about the self. Thus, the differences in the way boys and girls are treated illustrate why females showed a drop in self-esteem in Grades 10 and 12.

In sum, it can be concluded that the significant interaction between Grade level and Gender in the personal self-esteem can be understood in terms of the cultural dimension that entails schools and social standards and the attitudes that are shaped by perceptions of girls, the school transitions' changes and challenges, and the different attitudes of parents and teachers towards males and females.

C- Academic achievement and self-esteem

The current study aims to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in secondary school students. The results revealed a significant low correlation between the scores of Global self-esteem and the subscale scores (General; Parental/Home; Academic self-esteem and academic achievement) except for Social and Personal self-esteem. The results were consistent with Wiggins, Shatz, and West (1994) who found that self-esteem and academic achievement were positively correlated. They found that the score students gained on a self-esteem inventory during the first year of the study raised their Grade point averages substantially the second year.

Kifer (1973) found similar results where successful academic achievement interacted with self-esteem, and increased over time. Likewise, unsuccessful academic achievement interacted with self-esteem, and decreased over time. With the course of time, students who

had high academic achievement also had a high self-esteem; also students who had low academic achievement had low self-esteem over time.

In this regard, several studies have examined the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement as measured by Grade point average (GPA). For example, to Reasoner (1994), and Wiggins (1987), it is well recognized that the child's self-esteem is a crucial factor in his/her learning at all levels of success. Children with high self-esteem assume responsibility and cope with frustration and are able to act positively. On the other hand, children with low self-esteem are easily frustrated and tend to avoid difficult situations.

Similarly, Kuncze et al (1972) found out that self-esteem correlated significantly with an Aptitude Test and with academic Grades in school. Also, Harter, Whitesell, and Junkin (1998), found a significant correlation between academic achievement and self-esteem and that low self-esteem is associated with low academic achievement. In addition, Owens & Stryker, (2001), indicated that high self-esteem contributes to higher achievement and positive relationships with others. Thombs (1995), too, sees that poor academic achievement may decrease student's self-esteem. He sees that academics and self-esteem are related; students with low level of self-esteem are more likely to have problem behavior and low Grades than those with high level of self-esteem. Therefore, these studies reported a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement.

However, while some research supports the findings of this study concerning the correlation between academic achievement and self-esteem, Holly (1987) disagrees with the idea that self-esteem has a direct influence on academic achievement, and points out that it may affect self-esteem in different ways. First, feeling unworthy leads to depression, which by turn inhibits performance? Second, those with greater self-esteem may be more willing to

take the challenge while fear of failure makes students hold back. Finally, constant failure with feelings of incompetence is discouraging and makes students convinced that they are unable to succeed.

According to Kohn (1994), who argues that although most research has confirmed a positive association between self-esteem and achievement, the actual differences reaches only about 4% to 7% of variation in academic performance? Kohn reported that even in cases where the correlation was positive, it was dependent on other variables. He adds that, even when a significant relationship is found between self-esteem and academic achievement, this does not necessarily mean that students with high self-esteem achieve better than those with low self-esteem. He based his argument on the fact that statistics give only elementary interpretation of these findings because correlation doesn't prove causation. He believes that researchers should be aware that correlations do not explain the role of self-esteem in academic achievement in depth.

Likewise, Bachman and O'Malley (1986) have concluded their study by stating that it is the individual's actual ability, more than the perceived ability that seems to be a determinant of self-esteem. Emler (2001), too, stated that genes are more important than parenting and environment, and that low self-esteem is not a risk factor for poor academic achievement. Emler concluded by stating that self-esteem and educational achievement are related, but not strongly; the effects vary with age and other factors.

Gage and Berliner (1991) state that level of school success, particularly over many years, predicts level of regard of the self and one's own ability, whereas level of self-esteem does not predict level of school achievement. The implication is that teachers need to

concentrate on the academic successes and failures of their students. It is the students' history of success and failure that gives them the information with which they assess themselves.

The significant correlation, as revealed by the results, in the whole sample and in Grades 10, 11, between Global self-esteem and the sub-scores of General, Parental, and Academic self-esteem on one hand and academic achievement on the other hand. And between Global self-esteem and the sub-scores of General, and Academic self-esteem on the other hand is clearly established in terms of the traits that these sub-scores include in their items. These sub-scores include items that are directly related to academic achievement except for the items of the Personal and the Social self-esteem sub-scores in the whole sample and in Grades 10, 11 and the items: Social, Personal and Parental in Grade 12 (Table 1). They are indirectly related to academic achievement. This becomes clear when finding that the traits that constitute each self-esteem sub score correspond to variables that affect academic achievement by one way or another. First, in the General self-esteem, the traits that constitute the profile of these self-esteem sub-score relate to various dimensions like being able to do things well, the motivation to go to school, intelligence, feeling important, being successful or a failure. Second, in the Academic self-esteem sub-score, the traits that constitute this profile relate to being satisfied with school work, perseverance, enjoying learning, doing homework, doing one's best, failing, being proud of school work, working hard, and avoiding failure. Finally, in the Parental self-esteem sub-score, we find that the traits that constitute this profile relate to talking about one's problems, having trust in family, freedom, good relation with parents, understanding and love.

On the other hand, the traits referred to in the Social and the Personal self-esteem sub-scores correspond to social contexts and to personal development dimensions. For example, in the Social self-esteem sub-score the traits include having friends versus being alone, accepted and respected by the others, expressing feelings, popularity, getting along with others and communication skills. As to the Personal self-esteem sub-score we find traits that are emotion-related like depression, tension, shame, uneasiness, happiness, anger, feel of energy, admiring one's self, self-worth, ability to change and make decisions.

For an interpretation of the results, the correlative relationship of the General, Academic and Parental self-esteem to academic achievement becomes more understandable, when we refer to the traits that constitute each of the sub-scores of self-esteem. As to the Parental /Home sub score, its items correspond to how the relationship with parents at home has a direct influence on the ability of the students to perform at school. For example, a negative relation with parents at home causes anxiety that affects academic performance. Although a specific degree of anxiety may motivate the student and make him/her inclined to show better academic achievement and can be considered a motive for learning and high academic achievement, a high anxiety may be an obstacles to academic achievement.

Another aspect that shows how the Parental self-esteem is directly related to academic achievement is the importance of the role of the family in children's life. In fact, the family is one of the most important social contexts for the development and expression of self-esteem. It is the most important context because its major function is the socialization process. In the family, the child gets the experience of being a member in a group, and the place where the identity takes shape (e.g., male/female,). Also, the child's assessment of role performance takes place based on his/her identity. This comprises the early sources of self-esteem.

Moreover, within the context of family interactions, essential processes for the development of the self occur. Here, parents typically serve as mentors and as significant others for children. This intimate and enduring relationship in the family makes it an important context for the early development of self-esteem of children as well as adults.

In addition, the correlation between Parental self-esteem and academic achievement can also be understood in the light of research that has focused on the effects of parental behavior on children's self-esteem. In general, these studies find that the support encouragement, and responsiveness parents show are positively related to children's self-esteem (Gecas and Seff, 1990). From another perspective, parents place greater emphasis on the academic competence and behavioral conduct of their children. Consequently, academic achievement becomes of special importance for both the student and his parents making the relation between parents and children with direct effect on academic achievement. More importantly is that among the relevant domains of evaluation for adolescents' self-esteem is academic competence that affects the feeling of self worth as much as, athletic competence, social acceptance, and physical appearance.

Besides, the correlation between Parental self-esteem and academic achievement can also be understood in terms of the type of relations the student builds at home. For example, when the student has good relation at home and feels accepted and loved he/she tends to be more optimistic and this increases the student's ability to tolerate situations and to solve problems, and it may have an effect on academic achievement.

Also, the correlation between Parental self-esteem and Academic achievement indicates how, according to Humphrey (1994), parents have a role in helping their children develop self-esteem. For example, labeling children, calling them names and/ or comparing them with peers does not help. It makes the child feel bitter and it destroys his/her self-esteem. Besides, parents play a role in helping adolescents adjust to the new environment of the secondary school. Pusher (2007) found a link between Family support and parental engagement and student's academic achievement. In this regard, (Lord et al, 1994) reported that adolescents who claimed having less opportunity to express their own desires and opinions and perceived a “lack of attunement” between themselves and their parents did more poorly in adjustment to transitions. A strong parent student relationship helps students to adjust to the requirements of the new environment in this critical phase of development, manage to find themselves, accept who they are and become independent. This means that parents influence the way their kids establish their identity and later develop into mature and productive members of the community.

The result of insignificant correlation between Parental self-esteem and academic achievement in Grade 12 can be explained in terms of the mature and purposeful relationship that seems to emerge between parents and adolescents in Grade 12 due to the adolescent's increasing demand for autonomy, and to changes in school structure and organization. Hill (1983) reported, that parents of adolescents become less demanding due to the transformations of adolescents as matured people. Parents become more willing to step away from their direct parental control of their adolescents' children. Parents' attitudes of support and understanding at this critical stage of the student's life are unconditional and may remain stable even if their children's Grades are not up to their expectations. This is particularly evident in the culture of Lebanon, where parents attach great importance on higher education

and thus put an effort to create a supportive environment for their children to pass the National Baccalaureate Exam. This parental support can take the form of listening to their adolescents' children, accepting their views, understanding their feelings and providing them with the academic support when needed.

Likewise, the correlation between General self-esteem and academic achievement can be considered by referring to the traits that correspond to the sub-scales of the General self-esteem (Table 3.1). These items include being able to do things well, the motivation to go to school, intelligence, being important, successful or a failure. These traits, too, correspond by one way or another to academic achievement as they relate to the self-evaluation of one's self. In fact researchers state that self-esteem is a conscious cognitive and affective expression of self-evaluation. A number of researchers view high self-esteem level as an important prerequisite for high academic achievement. In contrast, other researchers consider academic achievement and other experiences related to teaching and learning exert significant influence on self-esteem, and that a student should be successful at school first in order to develop a positive self-image and his academic abilities. Thus, General self-esteem in which the student evaluates his/her self corresponds to the level of academic performance.

The findings of this study can, also, be interpreted in terms of student's ambitions. Students who score high on the General self-esteem, most likely tend to be more ambitious than those with low self-esteem. They make more focused and sustained effort to attain a higher academic performance, which consequently reinforces feelings of high self-esteem. They become more confident than those with low self-esteem as their efforts will lead to success as stated by Nathaniel Branden (1994), attaining worthwhile goals nurtures good self-

esteem. Thus, their feeling of self-competence results in higher levels of motivation for better scholastic performance.

Besides, students with high level of General Self-esteem set high expectations that facilitate the establishment of challenging goals that in turn, help to trigger more effort. They tend to focus their attention and effort on the demands of tasks, to overcome potential difficulties and to persist in the face of obstacles. While students with low General self-esteem, set lower expectations for their performance in a variety of situations and underestimate their capabilities. They do so because they primarily lack self-confidence and a realistic knowledge of their own abilities or because they are threatened by failure. They also have lower preference for challenge and set less challenging goals that consequently lead to reduced effort and poor performance.

These accords with what Reasoner (2005) states about the experience of being capable of meeting life's challenges that relates to self-esteem that is strongly connected to a sense of competence and worthiness. The worthiness aspect is tied to whether or not a person holds on making commitments. This competence aspect, he explains, refers to having the belief that one is generally capable of reaching the intended results, having confidence in the efficacy of his/her mind and the ability to think and make the appropriate choices and decisions. In this respect, Bandura (1997), too, states that one's self-efficacy is one of the best predictors of successful achievement. He states that one's success-related experience is the major influence on one's self-efficacy and self-esteem, and both are constructed by one's conscious reflections.

Besides the Parental and the General self-esteem sub-scores, it is important to move to the Academic self-esteem sub-score. In order to find any meaningful relationship with how well students perform, it is necessary to look not only at some global measure of self-esteem

i.e. how positively they feel about themselves in general, but at something more specific like academic self-esteem or self-esteem related to the ability to succeed at school. As a matter of fact, one can hardly expect an individual's general sense of self, like being a good person, to have much to do with his or her success on a certain test. Therefore, the concept of self-esteem becomes more useful and practical the more narrowly it is conceived. Bearing this in mind, the correlation between the Academic self-esteem and academic achievement becomes more prominent.

Based on the above, and by looking into the traits that constitute the Academic self-esteem items, it is obvious that they include statements that refer to being satisfied with school work, perseverance, enjoying learning, doing homework, doing ones best, failing, being proud of school work, working hard, and avoiding failure. These traits uncover the beliefs that the student has about his/her academic self-esteem. They are part of the self-beliefs that affect the students' self-esteem. More importantly, self-beliefs pertain to the self-efficacy beliefs that are important factors that determine the levels of motivation for academic performance. According to Pajares and Schunk (2001), in the educational settings, the perceptions students create, develop and hold to be true about themselves and about their academic capabilities are vital forces in their success or failure in school. Thus, students' sense of their academic self will have a substantial bearing on how they approach their studies. In this respect, Covington (1989) reports that since level of self-esteem increases with the level of academic achievement scores and decreases as achievement drops, he concluded that self-esteem can be modified through direct instruments which can lead to achievement gains.

Therefore, the correlation between these different self-esteem sub-scores and academic achievement can be understood as reciprocally related. Self-esteem can be a good predictor of academic success and is also powerfully influenced by results achieved and appreciation shown by others. Accepted level of self-esteem is related to the ability to manage with academic tasks following efficient study methods and actively participating in the learning process, all of which are involved in achieving the intended goals.

Thus, in general, self-esteem seems to be associated with personal conceptions of oneself as active and capable of promoting change through effort, and of setting goals, which involve learning new things and showing better academic performance.

Concerning the relationship between academic achievement and the Social and Personal self-esteem, results showed that there is no significant correlation between these variables. In fact, the traits referred to in the Social and the Personal self-esteem sub-scores correspond to social contexts and relationships and to personality dimensions such as having friends versus being alone, being accepted and respected by the others, expressing feelings, popularity, getting along with others and communication skills.

On the other hand, the Personal self-esteem sub-score traits are related to feelings like depression, tension, self-worth, shame, uneasiness, happiness, anger, and feel of energy, admiring one's self, ability to change and make decisions. These traits refer to the extent to which a student feels comfortable and secure in his or her emotional and social relationships. It draws upon the pupil's sense of happiness, of ease with own identity, quality of peer relationships and friendships, their sense of being valued, and of their enjoyment of school. Eventually, self-esteem is considered as an important component of emotional health. It encompasses both self-confidence and self-acceptance. Thus, problems related to behavior

such as violence, shyness, bullying is more expected to be correlated with Social and Personal self-esteem than with academic achievement.

Yet, if social and personal traits are to be related to academic achievement, they can be related intrinsically or indirectly. Students in their educational pursuit are more concerned with their potential to perform well and their abilities to achieve higher. Thus, the traits of the Social and Personal self-esteem make the predictions about a correlation between social and personal and academic achievement less probable.

Moreover, the insignificant correlation between Social and Personal self-esteem and academic achievement can be due to the fact that self-esteem is not only the way the individuals think, but also the way they feel about themselves and how well they do things that are important to them. That is, self-esteem is shaped by both what they think and how they feel about themselves. It is, also, related to the fact that there are two components of self-esteem: a feeling of being lovable, and a feeling of being competent. The first component goes parallel with the Personal and the Social where we negotiate an identity for ourselves with the people we interact with. We give people an image as to the type of person we are through our behavior to construct our identity. Thus, social interactions are very important for our self-identities, and self-esteem. This makes academic achievement in relation to our social interaction a second concern.

Scholastic achievement depends on the enhancement of students' cognitive abilities more than social interactions. The relationship between how the individuals think vs. how they feel and academic achievement can be comprehended in the light of the considerable evidence in the literature that demonstrates how the relationship between the cognitive aspect and academic achievement. For example, when there is a problem concerning studying caused

by an ineffective representation of the student's abilities, and then the result is low self-esteem, negative attribution style, and lack of persistence that creates poor use of the student's cognitive capacity. Then, the negative consequences will be low scholastic achievement.

From another perspective, Harter (1993 a, 1998) suggests a dialectical relationship between the student's social life and academic achievement and self-esteem. She states that the students' self-esteem becomes threatened when they make poor academic achievement. In this case, the students find another way to maintain their self-esteem at acceptable levels. They try to reorganize their self-evaluation in specific domains like academics, whereby they reduce their investment in those domains as they represent a threat to their self-esteem and try to invest in others that are more rewarding to them. By doing so, students with poor academic achievement at school become able to protect their self-esteem by reducing their investment in the academic field and investing in other domains in which they perform better, such as interpersonal relations. For example, Alves-Martins and Peixoto (2000) found that ninth Grade low achievers have high-perceived competence in areas not related to school and depreciate those that are related to school. Accordingly, it can be inferred that students might reach an adequate level of social self-esteem even though they do not reach high level of academic achievement. This in part explains the insignificant correlation between Social self-esteem and academic achievement.

Therefore, Social and Personal self-esteem involve a complex set of feelings, and expectations based on a person's skills in interacting with their environment and influencing their world. Every individual is in charge of his/her own feelings that come from an individual's evaluation about himself/herself and the extent to which one believes he/she is a

worthy person. Students with a low social self-esteem will usually try to avoid social situations. And that is why some effort is needed to encourage a gradual involvement in social situations.

D- The Relation between self-esteem and academic achievement across Grade level

The results showed no significant difference in the correlation coefficients between Global self-esteem scores and academic achievement (GPA) across Grade level. Similarly there was no significant difference in the correlation coefficients between self-esteem and the sub scores General, Parental, and Social, Academic, Personal and Academic achievement across Grade level.

The findings accord with theorists who have been interested in how self-esteem varies with age. Some suggests that with the changes that take place through the shift from childhood to adolescence, self-esteem stabilizes. Students, who think positively about themselves in elementary school, also demonstrate positive self-esteem in high school. Equally children with a negative self-esteem in early years tend to have a negative feeling about themselves later in their life (Marsh and Craven 1997; Savin Williams & Demo 1984).

Although some theorists suggest that the transition from childhood to adolescence puts the individual at risk of disturbance in self-esteem and make him/her susceptible to environmental stresses that result in a drop in self-esteem, other investigators, who have studied how self-esteem varies with age in terms of Grade levels, found mixed results where self-esteem remains stable or almost the same.

Thus, the insignificant difference in correlation cross grade level may suggest that students have similar perceptions of themselves in relation to academic achievement regardless of their grade level. This can also be attributed to the similar experiences they undergo in a school setting. Similarly they experience common changes as to their physiological cognitive and social development. Therefore, the correlation between different aspects of self-esteem and academic achievement are rather stable over grade level.

This insignificant difference or the stability in the correlation can also be attributed to the fact that the sample of this study belongs to the same stage of schooling, which is the secondary classes. The transition from intermediate to secondary can be a period of disturbances more than from one grade to another within the same stage. This can be referred to the proposition that once self-esteem is established it becomes resistant to change.

Besides, once correlation is established between achievement variable and the different aspects of self-esteem, it is expected that changes in these correlation - if any - would be too slight to be detected cross Grade level. In other words the period from one Grade to another is not enough for a change in correlation to take place. This was suggested by some theorists who stated that after the changes that take place through the shift from childhood to adolescence, self-esteem stabilizes. Thus, the correlations that self-esteem has with other variables are expected to be stable as well.

After examining the findings related to the research questions, it was found plausible to introspect into the individual schools' data to find how these variables are related with regards to each school culture.

CHAPTER VI

NONE HYPOTHESIZED FINDINGS

A-Results

1-Self-esteem and Gender

With respect to the individual schools a significant difference was found in School 2 in the Academic self-esteem subscale ($P=0.025<0.05$) (see Table 6.3) where the means for the males are 4.05 and for the females are 5.23(Table 6.1), and in School 5 (Table 6.6) in the Global where ($P=0.028<0.05$) the means of the males scored 85.13 and for the females 80.61. In the Social self-esteem subscale where ($P=0.00<0.05$) and the means are 9.55 for the males and 7.95 for the females and in the Personal ($P=0.01<0.05$) where the means are 8.22 for the males and 6.36 for the girls respectively.

Table 6.1

Mean of Schools with Gender and Global Self-Esteem

	School 1		School 2		School 3		School 4		School 5		School 6	
	Female	Male	Female	male	Female	Male	Female	male	Female	male	Female	Male
Global												
Self-Esteem	84.74	84.94	82.49	84.92	87.11	87.32	83.77	84.63	80.61	85.13	87.10	87.27
General	7.94	8.41	7.90	8.22	8.20	8.41	8.23	8.27	7.98	8.20	8.39	8.41
Parental	8.34	8.18	8.51	7.86	9.00	8.19	7.84	8.30	8.74	8.50	8.97	8.35
Academic	5.09	5.29	5.23	4.05	5.77	5.35	5.42	4.70	4.87	4.93	5.48	5.11
Social	9.29	9.32	9.31	9.22	9.66	9.41	9.42	9.23	7.95	9.55	9.74	9.70
Personal	8.14	7.59	7.72	7.95	8.14	9.27	7.28	8.43	6.36	8.22	8.29	9.30

Table 6.2 School (1)

Two-ways (Anovas) of Self-Esteem scores Global and Subscales for Grade Level and

Gender

Source	Type I Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Global Self-Esteem					
Grade	756.199	2	378.099	3.257	.045*
Gender	11.910	1	11.910	.103	.750
grade * Gender	1058.961	2	529.481	4.562	.014*
General					
Grade	14.470	2	7.235	2.112	.129
Gender	4.672	1	4.672	1.364	.247
grade * Gender	26.362	2	13.181	3.848	.027*
Parental / Home					
Grade	25.880	2	12.940	1.608	.208
Gender	.476	1	.476	.059	.809
grade * Gender	8.050	2	4.025	.500	.609
Academic					
Grade	49.868	2	24.934	3.344	.042*
Gender	.829	1	.829	.111	.740
grade * Gender	18.288	2	9.144	1.226	.300
Social					
Grade	4.617	2	2.309	.584	.561
Gender	.152	1	.152	.038	.845
grade * Gender	21.089	2	10.544	2.667	.077*
Personal					
Grade	16.180	2	8.090	.946	.394
Gender	3.384	1	3.384	.396	.532
grade * Gender	96.366	2	48.183	5.635	.006*

* P<0.05 significance

Table 6.3 School (2)
Two-ways (Anovas) of Self-Esteem scores Global and Subscales for Grade Level and Gender

Source	Type I Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Global Self-Esteem					
Grade	264.385	2	132.193	1.154	.321
Gender	135.184	1	135.184	1.180	.281
grade * Gender	321.319	2	160.660	1.402	.253
General					
Grade	5.208	2	2.604	.695	.503
Gender	1.420	1	1.420	.379	.540
grade * Gender	28.152	2	14.076	3.755	.028*
Parental / Home					
Grade	29.940	2	14.970	2.838	.065
Gender	9.686	1	9.686	1.836	.180
grade * Gender	5.850	2	2.925	.554	.577
Academic					
Grade	14.384	2	7.192	1.364	.262
Gender	27.697	1	27.697	5.253	.025*
grade * Gender	24.981	2	12.491	2.369	.101
Social					
Grade	5.056	2	2.528	.500	.608
Gender	.294	1	.294	.058	.810
grade * Gender	5.605	2	2.803	.555	.577
Personal					
Grade	1.629	2	.814	.086	.918
Gender	.892	1	.892	.094	.760
grade * Gender	6.633	2	3.317	.350	.706

* P<0.05 significance

Table 6.4***School (3)******Two-ways (Anovas) of Self-Esteem scores Global and Subscales for Grade Level and Gender***

Source	Type I Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Global Self-Esteem					
Grade	398.513	2	199.257	1.892	.159
Gender	.951	1	.951	.009	.925
grade * Gender	83.954	2	41.977	.399	.673
General					
Grade	.387	2	.193	.048	.953
Gender	1.331	1	1.331	.329	.568
grade * Gender	23.229	2	11.614	2.873	.064
Parental / Home					
Grade	3.250	2	1.625	.269	.765
Gender	11.619	1	11.619	1.923	.170
grade * Gender	1.558	2	.779	.129	.879
Academic					
Grade	36.864	2	18.432	2.976	.058*
Gender	2.456	1	2.456	.397	.531
grade * Gender	1.023	2	.512	.083	.921
Social					
Grade	7.191	2	3.596	.855	.430
Gender	2.002	1	2.002	.476	.493
grade * Gender	14.735	2	7.367	1.752	.181
Personal					
Grade	92.669	2	46.334	6.236	.003*
Gender	21.839	1	21.839	2.939	.091
grade * Gender	24.354	2	12.177	1.639	.202

- P<0.05 significance

Table 6.5***School (4)******Two-ways (Anovas) of Self-Esteem scores Global and Subscales for Grade Level and Gender***

Source	Type I Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Global Self-Esteem					
Grade	831.045	2	415.523	2.873	.064
Gender	19.478	1	19.478	.135	.715
grade * Gender	1024.148	2	512.074	3.540	.035*
General					
Grade	3.407	2	1.703	.348	.707
Gender	.210	1	.210	.043	.837
grade * Gender	3.711	2	1.855	.379	.686
Parental / Home					
Grade	79.161	2	39.580	6.025	.004*
Gender	.482	1	.482	.073	.787
grade * Gender	98.704	2	49.352	7.513	.001*
Academic					
Grade	35.693	2	17.847	2.513	.089
Gender	18.171	1	18.171	2.559	.114
grade * Gender	6.829	2	3.414	.481	.620
Social					
Grade	15.285	2	7.643	1.414	.250
Gender	2.294	1	2.294	.425	.517
grade * Gender	9.132	2	4.566	.845	.434
Personal					
Grade	7.348	2	3.674	.370	.692
Gender	17.036	1	17.036	1.718	.194
grade * Gender	45.637	2	22.818	2.301	.108

* P<0.05 significance

Table 6.6***School (5)******Two-ways (Anovas) of Self-Esteem scores Global and Subscales for Grade Level and Gender***

Source	Type I Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Global Self-Esteem					
Grade	1723.374	2	861.687	7.060	.001*
Gender	605.486	1	605.486	4.961	.028*
grade * Gender	203.958	2	101.979	.836	.436
General					
Grade	23.711	2	11.856	3.291	.041*
Gender	1.152	1	1.152	.320	.573
grade * Gender	8.070	2	4.035	1.120	.330
Parental / Home					
Grade	11.156	2	5.578	1.013	.367
Gender	1.366	1	1.366	.248	.619
grade * Gender	.242	2	.121	.022	.978
Academic					
Grade	14.946	2	7.473	1.453	.238
Gender	.023	1	.023	.005	.946
grade * Gender	11.925	2	5.963	1.159	.317
Social					
Grade	163.910	2	81.955	18.653	.000*
Gender	71.163	1	71.163	16.197	.000*
grade * Gender	46.552	2	23.276	5.298	.006*
Personal					
Grade	65.685	2	32.842	3.318	.040*
Gender	109.828	1	109.828	11.095	.001*
grade * Gender	2.340	2	1.170	.118	.889

* P<0.05 significance

Table 6.7 ***School (6)***
Two-ways (Anovas) of Self-Esteem scores Global and Subscales for Grade Level and Gender

Source	Type I Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Global Self-Esteem					
Grade	459.779	2	229.889	1.779	.177
Gender	6.327	1	6.327	.049	.826
grade * Gender	226.449	2	113.225	.876	.422
General					
Grade	7.272	2	3.636	1.068	.350
Gender	.038	1	.038	.011	.916
grade * Gender	7.585	2	3.792	1.114	.335
Parental / Home					
Grade	27.575	2	13.787	2.768	.071
Gender	6.763	1	6.763	1.358	.248
grade * Gender	9.705	2	4.853	.974	.383
Academic					
Grade	19.227	2	9.613	1.247	.294
Gender	3.286	1	3.286	.426	.516
grade * Gender	7.906	2	3.953	.513	.601
Social					
Grade	24.434	2	12.217	3.127	.051*
Gender	1.192	1	1.192	.305	.583
grade * Gender	.682	2	.341	.087	.917
Personal					
Grade	3.333	2	1.666	.171	.843
Gender	20.637	1	20.637	2.114	.151
grade * Gender	24.524	2	12.262	1.256	.292

* P<0.05 significance

2- Self-esteem and Grade-level

With regards to Hypothesis 2 concerning the relationship between self-esteem and Grade level in individual schools, the means were compared using a separate two ways ANOVAS. In School 1 (Table 6.2), a significant difference was found in Global self-esteem ($p=0.045 < 0.05$) and Academic self-esteem ($p=0.042 < 0.05$). In School 3 (Table 6.4) ANOVAS results revealed significant difference in the Personal subscale scores ($p=0.003 < 0.05$). The results in School 4 (Table 6.5), revealed a significant difference in the Parental subscale score with regard to grade level ($p=0.004 < 0.05$). In School 5 (Table 6.6), significant differences were found in Global self-esteem scores ($p=0.001 < 0.05$), General ($p=0.4 < 0.05$), Social ($p=0.00 < 0.05$), and Personal subscale scores ($p=0.04 < 0.05$). And in School 6, (Table 6.7) a significant difference was found in the Social subscale score ($p=0.05$).

Table 6.8

Mean of Schools with Grade and Global Self-Esteem

	<i>School 1</i>			<i>School 2</i>			<i>School 3</i>			<i>School 4</i>			<i>School 5</i>			<i>School 6</i>		
	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12
Global Self-Esteem	83.52	89.08	81.24	84.60	81.15	85.56	86.60	90.19	84.73	79.88	88.09	84.54	78.07	84.26	86.95	85.05	90.12	85.71
General	7.70	8.76	8.00	7.88	7.85	8.44	8.40	8.35	8.19	7.96	8.26	8.50	7.50	8.46	8.39	8.05	8.73	8.33
Parental	8.30	8.92	7.43	8.36	7.38	8.88	8.55	8.35	8.85	6.83	9.09	8.19	8.52	8.31	9.05	8.00	9.38	8.33
Academic	5.52	5.96	3.90	5.24	4.12	4.64	4.85	6.50	5.15	4.33	5.91	5.15	4.43	5.18	5.16	4.62	5.81	5.29
Social	9.09	9.64	9.14	9.32	8.92	9.56	10.00	9.38	9.31	8.79	10.00	9.27	7.20	9.56	9.68	10.24	10.04	8.81
Personal	7.48	8.48	7.57	7.72	7.73	8.04	8.55	10.12	7.46	7.42	8.26	7.62	6.59	7.08	8.29	8.67	8.88	8.95

3- Interaction between Grade-level and self-esteem

With regards to the study question 3 concerning the interaction between Gender and Grade level in self-esteem, findings of each school alone have shown that there is a significant interaction between grade level and gender in certain aspects of self-esteem in certain schools. In School 1 (Table 6.2), there is a significant interaction in the Global self-esteem ($p=0.14<0.05$), where the means of females for grades 10, 11, and 12 are respectively 94.08, 103.83, 86.18 and the means of the males are respectively 95.00, 95.00, 96.60 (Table 6.9). Another significant interaction was found in the General ($p=0.027<0.05$) and the means of females for grades: 10, 11 and 12 are respectively 7.50, 9.25, 7.00 and for the males: 7.91, 8.93, 9.10. Also, a significant interaction was revealed in the Personal self-esteem subscale ($p=0.00<0.05$) where the means for females are respectively: 7.00, 8.54, 5.92, and for the males are 8.00, 6.69, 8.30.

In School 2 (Table 6.10), a significant interaction was revealed in the General self-esteem subscale ($p=0.28<0.05$) where the means for females are respectively: 8.15, 6.93, 8.75 and for males are: 7.58, 8.92, 8.15. In School 4, there is a significant interaction in the Global ($p=0.035<0.05$) (Table 6.12), where the means of females are respectively: 81.22, 91.31, 79.42, and for males are 75.83, 83.90, 88.93. Another significant interaction was revealed in the Parental self-esteem ($p=0.00<0.05$), and the means of the females are 7.44, 9.62, 6.50, and for the males 5.00, 8.40, and 9.64 (Table 6.12).

Finally, in School 5 (Table 4.19), results revealed a significant interaction between gender and grade level in the Social self-esteem ($p=0.00<0.05$). The means for females are respectively 5.59, 9.05, 9.05, and for the males 8.82, 10.05, and 9.89 (Table 6.13).

Table 6.9

Means of Global Self-Esteem with Gender and Grade for School (1)

	Female			Male		
	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12
Global self-Esteem	94.08	103.83	86.18	95.00	95.00	96.60
General (G)	7.50	9.25	7.00	7.91	8.31	9.10
Parental/Home	8.17	9.50	7.27	8.45	8.38	7.60
Academic (A)	5.83	6.17	3.09	5.18	5.77	4.80
Social (S)	9.25	10.17	8.36	8.91	9.15	10.00
Personal (P)	7.00	10.42	6.91	8.00	6.69	8.30

Table 6.10

Means of Global Self-Esteem with Gender and Grade for School (2)

	Female			Male		
	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12
Global Self-Esteem	81.75	82.83.	82.85	87.23	79.71	88.50.
General	8.15	6.93	8.75	7.58	8.92	8.15
Parental	8.85	7.36	9.50	7.83	7.42	8.31
Academic	6.46	4.00	5.33	3.92	4.25	4.00
Social	9.46	8.64	9.92	9.17	9.25	9.23
Personal	7.23	7.71	8.25	8.25	7.75	7.85

Table 6.11

Means of Global Self-Esteem with Gender and Grade for School (3)

	Male			Female		
	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12
Global Self-Esteem	86.64	89.08	86.15	86.56	91.31	83.31
General	8.91	7.69	8.69	7.78	9.00	7.69
Parental/Home	8.18	7.77	8.62	9.00	8.92	9.08
Academic	4.73	6.15	5.08	5.00	6.85	5.23
Social	9.55	9.85	8.85	10.56	8.92	9.77
Personal	8.91	10.08	8.77	8.11	10.15	6.15

Table 6.12

Means of Global Self-Esteem with Gender and Grade for School (4)

	Female			Male		
	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12
Global Self-Esteem	81.22	91.31	79.42	75.83	83.90	88.93
General	8.00	8.54	8.25	7.83	7.90	8.71
Parental	7.44	9.62	6.50	5.00	8.40	9.64
Academic	4.72	6.54	5.25	3.17	5.10	5.07
Social	8.89	10.54	9.00	8.50	9.30	9.50
Personal	7.28	8.54	5.92	7.83	7.90	9.07

Table 6.13

Means of Global Self-Esteem with Gender and Grade for School (5)

	Female			Male		
	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12
Global Self-Esteem	74.27	81.89	86.35	81.86	86.50	87.61
General	7.18	8.21	8.65	7.82	8.70	8.11
Parental	8.68	8.42	9.10	8.36	8.20	9.00
Academic	4.00	5.26	5.45	4.86	5.10	4.83
Social	5.59	9.05	9.50	8.82	10.05	9.89
Personal	5.82	5.95	7.35	7.36	8.15	9.33

Table 6.14

Means of Global Self-Esteem with Gender and Grade for School (6)

	Female			Male		
	G10	G11	G12	G10	G11	G12
Global Self-Esteem	86.92	89.69	81.83	82.56	90.54	87.27
General	8.42	8.69	7.67	7.56	8.77	8.60
Parental	8.75	9.38	8.50	7.00	9.38	8.27
Academic	5.25	5.85	5.17	3.78	5.77	5.33
Social	10.00	10.00	8.67	10.56	10.08	8.87
Personal	8.75	8.54	6.83	8.56	9.23	9.80

B- Discussion of the none hypothesized findings

Correlates between variables within each school

The study revealed important relationships between self-esteem and gender, self-esteem and Grade level, and the interaction between self-esteem and Grade level within each school. A comparison between schools to understand how the relationship between these variables appears in each school is important. Such comparison provides useful insight into how the relationship of self-esteem varies from one school to another. This comparison helps also in reaching more in-depth understanding of how these variables are related.

1-Self-esteem and Gender

Looking back into the results of the whole sample, this study revealed no significant difference between males and females in the Global score of (CFSEI-3). However, though these results revealed no significant difference between males and females in the Global score, they revealed a significant difference in the Personal subscale score. The means of boys were higher than that of girls.

Based on these results, making a comparison among all schools to see how each school differs from other schools seems to explain the results more significantly. First, the results show that the boys in all schools had almost similar results. The means of their Global and General self-esteem (though not statistically significant) were slightly higher than those of girls in schools 1, 2, and 4. Similarly in Schools 3 and 6, the scores of Global self-esteem

and general self-esteem were almost identical; there was no difference between boys and girls.

Yet, in school 5, findings indicated a significant difference in the Global self-esteem where the means of the boys were much higher than those of the girls, and the same applies to the Personal and the Social self-esteem. In other words, the differences in self-esteem in terms of gender were the highest for school 5 compared to other schools in favor of boys compared to girls. More interestingly, as shown above the results revealed a significant difference in the Personal sub score among all schools of the whole sample. This difference again was the highest in school 5 in favor of boys compared to girls. Thus, this clear difference between schools 5 compared to the other schools bears insightful interpretation as to how the culture of the school can be an indicator of self-esteem.

These characteristics classify school 5 in a category different from that of the other schools. It is publicly known in North Lebanon that school 5 is an Islamic conservative school that has a defined mission and vision. Rules and regulations are derived from the Islamic Shari' an (Islamic law) that imposes much more constraints on the girls than on boys.

This classification mirrors the Lebanese social reality, and is directly related to the concern that has been established about the national role of education in Lebanon: a country with a history marked by political changes and sharing of power by politically influential leaders. For example, it is acknowledged that confessional communities have exerted considerable influence over the role of education, as they considered it a vital agent for national socialization in a multi-communal coexistence in the Lebanese society. This fact triggered a call for the re-socialization of schoolchildren along a national unifying line. At the curricula level, the need to standardize textbooks in history, as well as civics in such a way

that they promote national integration was highlighted. But, the awareness of the sensitivity to teach religion in Lebanon made the government avoid introducing religion courses in the new curriculum. Against this, many private confessional schools continued to teach religion as they see it fits, without being directed by the Ministry of Education about the content and the way in which this subject should be taught. Accordingly, it is believed that Lebanon's confessional communities are not well prepared to deal with the challenges imposed by a society of pluralism especially when it comes to their educational practices, at least, in the areas of religious instruction (Abouchedid, Nasser, Blommestein, 2002). In other words, such schools had a chance to orient their students according to their own agenda. Hence, this scenario allows having schools that practice their own culture in their schools rendering them confessional, religious and traditional schools. This fact questions the way their practices respond to a society of pluralism and questions the effectiveness of these schools in preparing students for life in pluralistic country. School 5 belongs to this category of schools.

On the other hand, and based on the distinction made between collectivism and individualism, such schools represent the collectivistic orientation. It has been claimed that in collectivistic cultures, individuals are primarily concerned with how to fit in and become part of their relevant social relationships. One's feelings of worth tend to depend less on positive self-evaluations and more on self criticism as a result of achieving social harmony (Sedikides, Gaertner, & Toguchi, 2003). Tafarodi and Milne (2002) also argue that in individualistic cultures, self-confidence, independence, and the priority of the self comes before group harmony. One's feelings of worth tend to depend more on positive self-evaluations resulting in higher levels of self-competence. While in collectivistic cultures, the individual's need for efficacy is subsumed under the social needs of others, resulting in lower self-competence. Thus, as this has been confirmed across a large number of cultures, it can be concluded that

it provides support for the assumption that individualism–collectivism plays a role in shaping the individual's experience of self-evaluation (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Markus & Kitayama, 1991 Crocker, J., & Luhtanen, R. (1990). Consequently, the findings that indicated a significant difference in school 5 in the Global self-esteem where the means of the boys were much higher than those of the girls as well as in the Personal and the Social self-esteem provide more evidence about the collectivistic school culture. In other words, the difference in self-esteem in terms of gender that was the highest for school 5 compared to other schools has to do with the fact that it has a collectivistic orientation. This also implies the sex stereotypes inherent in this school culture that can too be described as collectivistic. This was manifested in the aspects of self-esteem namely the Global, the Social, and the Personal. Girls are treated differently from boys where the expectations are less from girls compared to boys.

In parallel, the results can also be explained in the light of the items included in the questionnaire. For example, statements in the items of the social self-esteem refer to elements that are related to interpersonal relationships, like having only a few friends, spending most of the free time alone, expressing ones views and feelings, being popular with other people of the same age, meeting new people, others respect and like your ideas or views, comfortable in groups and having trouble talking to other people. Besides, the items on Personal self-esteem refer to individual's feelings about one's self. These items are mainly focused on statements that describe negative feelings about one's self such as depressed, tense or anxious, feeling like quitting school ashamed of one's self, feeling uneasy without knowing why, often upset about something, and not finding the energy to do things.

It is important in this regard, to refer to the effect of the transition period of the secondary school with regard to gender differences. Lord et al (1994) reviewed the literature on gender difference in transition and reported that girls' self-esteem decline was not matched by the boys. Moreover, risk and protective factors were found to differentially relate by gender such that perceived physical attractiveness is more important to girls' development of self-esteem. Lord et al (1994) found in their own longitudinal analysis that being a male was predictive of self-esteem increases over time whereas being a female was predictive of decreasing self-esteem. The perception of positive teacher-student relationships affects girls more. A positive relation draws more interest in class and subject attitudes (Ferguson and Barry, 1998).

School culture is another factor that can play a role in gender differences. In a collectivistic school culture like that of school 5, girls are not expected to show easiness of feelings and openness to others because collectivists, emphasize fostering interdependence and group success, respecting authority and elders, and subsuming hierarchical roles according to gender. In other words, in such collectivistic school culture, self-esteem is not defined chiefly in terms of individual achievement. It is rather based on social solidarity. In contrast, young people in individualistic societies are typically expected to make educational and occupational choices and work up to their own potential. Moreover, girls in this school are segregated from boys, veiled and conformists when it comes to religious practices. Socializing and dating are not open to girls and conformity is valued more than independence or personal freedom.

The interpretation of the findings can also be related to the sense of private self. Each person has inner thoughts and feelings, which lead the individual to a sense of private self. Part of the presentations of the private self is culture-related. For example, in Western cultures, the norm is to become independent from others and to discover and express ones unique attributes (Geertz, 1975). In addition, research in cross-cultural psychology supports the existence of different self-constructs that vary according to different cultural settings, such as individualistic and collectivistic. For example, Trafimow et al. (1991) concluded that people with an individualistic cultural background will have more private self-cognitions than people from a collectivistic cultural background. Thus; girls in a collectivistic school are less likely to develop a sense of private self resulting in a lower self-esteem.

On the other hand, an interdependent view of the self is a characteristic of collectivistic cultures. It promotes the connection of the individuals to each other. In such a view of the self, the individual feels complete through his/her relation with other members of the society (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Thus, the differences shown in the results of school 5 are understood in the light of the school culture and its connectedness to the way the girls view themselves and the chances they have to develop a higher self-esteem. Unlike school 5, the other schools bear more traits of the individualistic orientation, as they are more open to the western, liberal and secular orientation; and the students could show a higher level of self-esteem. As results revealed significant gender difference in student's academic self-esteem in school 2, in favor of girls. Some studies reported similar results. For example, in studies of Australian (Marsh, 1989) and American (Harter, 1988) adolescents, gender differences have been found. Females scored higher on certain competencies in verbal and reading competencies, while males scored higher in regard to physical ability, physical appearance and, problem solving. Besides, the

culture of this school is one of few schools in Lebanon that provides students with equal opportunities for self-expression for both boys and girls. In this particular school, both females and males with low academic achievement are supported and offered choices instead of developing low academic self-esteem and dropping out of school. Those students are offered to join vocational program and stay in their school. This particular arrangement is only found in this school in North Lebanon and could be a major factor behind keeping both males and females with high academic self-esteem and high self-efficacy. This arrangement is important in this critical stage of development when students are faced with problems regarding their identity crisis. According to Erikson (1986), in order for the adolescent to successfully resolve the identity crisis, they must feel that they are free to make choices about their immediate futures. Adolescents in this stage actively seek opportunities to make choices from available options. When the adolescents perceive that they have a choice in the activities by which they define themselves, they can resolve their identity crisis, can also accept themselves and thus develop a feeling of self-esteem.

One additional factor that could have led girls to score higher than boys in the academic self-esteem could be a reason of the girls' higher verbal ability needed for most of the school subjects in the secondary years.

2- Self-esteem and Grade level

After discussing the differences between schools in terms of gender, the comparison between schools in terms of Grade level will clarify the picture of the students stand as they move from a Grade level to another. Looking back into the results of the whole sample, we find that the results of the study revealed significant differences in self-esteem scores of the whole sample across Grade level. The significant differences were in the Global, General,

Academic, and Social self-esteem, while no significant differences were found in the Personal and the Parental. Examining the means of the global, social, general and Academic self-esteem, it was observed that in Grade 10 they were lower; in Grade 11 there was a rise in these scores while in Grade 12 there was a slight decline. These significant differences can be understood in terms of the stages of human development because these aspects of self-esteem are directly related to age or the developmental stages of adolescents. Besides, these aspects of self-esteem pertain to the changes that take place in the adolescence period in relation to the social and academic environment of the students.

This is concerning the whole sample. However, making a comparison between schools, we find that the significant differences in the various aspects of self-esteem vary from one school to another, though some schools yielded same results of the whole sample in some aspects of self-esteem. In other terms, the results of the whole sample that revealed a significant difference in self-esteem across Grade level in the Global, General, Academic and Social self-esteem did not apply to all schools at the same time. Some had significant difference in one aspect of self-esteem others had a significant difference in more than one. These aspects varied between the academic, the parental, the social and the personal self-esteem. Needless to say, these differences among schools in the various aspects of self-esteem provide useful insights into the differences in schools culture.

Interestingly, in school 5 the significant difference in the aspects of self-esteem across Grade level was the most among all other schools. Other schools showed significant difference in one aspect of self-esteem across Grade level, while school 5 showed a significant difference in more than one. The aspects that were significantly different across Grade level in this school were the Global, the General, the Social and the Personal. These aspects of self-esteem increased cross Grade level and there was no drop in Grade 12. This

means that school 5 was similar to the whole sample in the parental and the general, but different from the whole sample in the other aspects of self-esteem.

The results suggest that this enhancement of self-esteem across Grade level indicates the extent to which the students feel comfortable and secure in their emotional and social relationships. In other words, the results draw upon the degree to which the students feel contented concerning the ease they feel with themselves and their own identity. They also refer to the quality of peer relationships and friendships especially when we know that they are all from the same sex. Further, this can also be interpreted in terms of their sense of being valued by the others in their immediate environment at a home and at school.

As a matter of fact, the students in this school, that is a religious school, abide by spiritual sacred values where solidarity and cooperation among group members are emphasized. Supporting the others is a celebrated value in all religions, and since religion is taught at this school as part of the curriculum, a strong peer relationship is expected among such students. On the other hand, these students come from conservative religious families. This means that religiosity extends from school to home and vice versa. Thus, the result could imply that support derived from family members and friends both have enhanced the students feeling of self-worth. It can also indicate that such support had important positive effects on the students as adolescents. Consequently this contributed positively to their psychological adjustment of these students as adolescents.

In fact, self-esteem depends not only on an individual's personal qualities and the value of the groups to which they belong but also on membership in a Group that plays a role in the way the individuals perceive and evaluate themselves. Self-esteem is also driven by

social motivation. Miller and Neese (1997) have suggested that engaging in social activities may positively influence self-esteem. Besides, adolescents are eager for appreciation from their group and become more socially motivated within a group. Their self-esteem depends upon their perceptions of what others in a group think of them. In addition, it has been established that the adolescents' development involves moving out from the family toward interdependence with peers and elders. This creates tension and emotional conflicts especially when it comes to group acceptance. This tension creates in the adolescents a need to gain group acceptance. Thus, adolescent's value being an accepted member in a group, because it means the recognition of the adolescent in the group and consequently this enhances the self.

Further, it can also be suggested that threats to self-esteem help to account for one's experience of negative affect. That is, when the adolescents feel that their self-esteem is threatened by one way or another; they experience negative feelings that are revealed in the instability of their emotional well-being. In this respect, the support the adolescent students get from their connectedness to a group would help in minimizing this threat to self-esteem, resulting in more positive affect. This is gained, particularly, from social interaction that facilitates the maintenance of self-esteem and increases the ability to cope more effectively. Thus, the extent to which the adolescents face pleasant or unpleasant emotional experiences, are related to the level of self-esteem they have. Hence, it is probable that adolescent's relationships with family and friends and being accepted as members in a group imply implicit messages of competence or acceptance that can enhance or weaken their self-esteem.

On the other hand, denying connections to group might have negative effect on the individuals' self-esteem and emotional well-being. They might feel incompetent, guilty, or

unattractive to others. This creates anxiety because individuals become more anxious when out-group. In this respect, anxiety becomes a form of distress that arises in response to the exclusion from a social group, leading to a low self-esteem. More importantly Social exclusion may foster cognitions that are self-esteem threatening; the adolescent would attribute his social exclusion to some negative traits in himself/herself. Thus, connections to group affect ones Social Identity that in turn affects self-esteem.

Moreover, some explanations can account for these differences in the findings in school 5 in terms of the collectivistic cultures in which the group comes before the individual. We can argue here, that when there is a balance between the individual's rights and the group's rights, better adjustment is predicted. In this sense the members of the group would satisfy the individuals' needs. It can also be added that when the individuals feel that they belong to the group they have more chance to feel more secure and less emotionally troubled. This emotional easiness is mostly needed at the adolescence period that is marked with emotional fluctuations.

More importantly, school 5 is one-sex school. Since it is not a coeducational school, the gender characteristics provide some ground for the differences revealed in school 5. Girls have higher social esteem values than boys. This might create a tendency for social approval that could make girls more open to engage in social interaction, resulting in a high social self-esteem. Lynch, (1998) indicated that cultural socialization findings indicate that girls are socialized toward a collectivist orientation while boys are socialized toward an individualist orientation. This may account for a gendered response differences. It is possible that girls in school 5 developed a high social self-esteem from within their collectivistic school culture. It

may be probable that adolescents girls in this school are more motivated socially in the collectivistic, had they been in school with an individualistic.

More interestingly, school 6 had a significant difference in social self-esteem across Grade level. There is a significant drop in social self-esteem in this school. Looking back into the items referred to in the social self-esteem, we find that they relate to having few friends, spending most of free time alone, being liked by others, expressing one's own views and feelings, meeting new people, feeling comfortable in groups of people, finding trouble talking to other people, and having friends one can confide in. These traits indicate the extent to which the students feel comfortable in a group versus feeling comfortable when on their own. The drop in the social self-esteem of students in this school provides some useful insight into the culture of this school. As mentioned above this school is not a religious one; it is westernized and international liberal. It is a school where independence and individual achievement is fostered, also, self-expression, individual thinking, personal choice are promoted. In brief, it is a school with an individualistic culture. The drop in social self-esteem can be used as an indicator of how well students feel accepted into social groups and how much they experience emotional and social loneliness. In Fact membership in groups can reduce both types of loneliness.

Considering The interrelationship between being alone or in a group, we find that when alone, the individuals are free to act any way they like. But when joining a group, the individuals need to tailor their actions to the demands of the group... In this respect, cross-cultural psychology supports the existence of different self-constructs in different cultural settings like individualistic and collectivistic. Each of these orientations has benefits and

costs. For example, in socially oriented or collectivistic societies, the cost of interdependence is experienced as suppression of individual development, while in individualistically oriented cultures; the cost of independence is experienced as alienation (Kim 1987).

Based on the above, our ability to carefully examine how these orientations tend to be expressed in school-related expectations and behaviors, as in the case of school 6, can lead to more insights into how these orientations affect self-esteem. Eventually; Living in groups requires making compromises. Some-times we give priority to the needs and concerns of the group and put one's own interests on hold. In case the group's goals aren't compatible with the individual's goals, then the individual is free to go his or her own way. In a collectivistic religious school like school 5, the interpersonal relations are based more on greater loyalty to group parallel with group-serving tendencies. In other words there is reliance on equality and on the collective, i.e. social identity. While in an individualistic liberal school like school 6, individuality and independence are stressed with self-serving tendencies. In other words there is reliance on the individual i.e. the personal identity.

Hence, It may be probable that these two contrasting value systems: individualism and collectivism, that differ in their emphasis on independence and success of the individual versus interdependence and success of the group, provide some evidence for how the social self-esteem is negatively affected in an individualistic school culture. This, also, bear some implications as to how these two systems help in shaping the roles we take within societies and give us ideas on how to rear and educate children.

Besides the school culture, other explanation may account for the drop in the social self-esteem. Certain situations or conditions that occur in or around a school setting can cause

negative impact on the students' self-esteem level that is beyond their control. This might be the failure to fit in the peer group stereotype. Some pressure from other students within the group might affect the students' relationship with each other. This becomes more prominent knowing that secondary school students have their own set of problems. Adolescents at this stage face a period of great challenge and confusion in their lifetime. They have to deal with the battle between the enjoyment of youth, and the responsibilities of adulthood.

Besides, their identity crisis is occurring and will continue throughout their educational life. During this period adolescents' are trying to identify the position of their social status amongst a peer group. Added to this, adolescents at this period of their life time are striving for independence from their parents. They need the recognition of this in order to enhance their self-image with both their peer group and their parents. Moreover, during adolescence, the primary focus is on establishing a positive ego identity, peer group recognition and development of social skills.

Other schools showed a significant difference in other aspects of self-esteem. School 4 results revealed significant difference in the Parental self-esteem scores which can be explained in terms of the transitional period they pass through as they move to the new environment of the secondary school. The difficulties they encounter in the new environment of the secondary school can create tension and stress to both students and parents and thereby lower their self-esteem. Besides, adolescents at this period of their life time are striving for independence from their parents. They need the recognition of this in order to enhance their self-image, find who they are, and resolve their identity crisis. School 1 and school 3 revealed a significant difference in the academic self-esteem where there was a significant drop in Grade 12 in academic achievement. Some explanations can account for these results. These

two schools have some common characteristics like the overloaded curriculum and the competition that is emphasized among students at the expense of cooperation. Extracurricular activities are limited compared to other schools with very few holidays and a lot of homework and many tests. Saturdays are school days for making tests and achieving the highest scores that are highly emphasized. Orientation towards standardized test and national exams is extremely emphasized. Subject matters taught at school are very rich, for example, three types of Math are taught in school 3. In addition, expectations are very high and criteria for passing are very strict. Moreover, each of these schools represents one school in a network of schools where the same program and yearly skills should be applied in a rigid way. Thus, no differentiated instructional methods are used and low achievers are asked to withdraw.

Such characteristics bear some explanations as to the significant differences in academic self-esteem. Delacourt (1997) states that what is important in one culture might be trivial in another culture. Each culture has different set of priorities, and these different priorities will lead to different forms of self-esteem depending on that culture... Besides, educational practices might vary from one school to another according to the culture in which this school exists. Accordingly, since the culture of these schools is different from other schools, different results in academic self-esteem are expected.

In addition, relationship between culture and academic self-esteem can be understood in terms of the relationship between cognitive development and the social world stated by Vygotsky (1987). This has some implications concerning the relationship between the school culture and academic achievement. There might be cultural differences among schools as to the ideas being applied that might vary from one school to another within the same culture. These differences in school cultures and practices yield different academic self-esteem.

Furthermore, the results provide insight into the relationship between the learning environment and self-esteem of students in these schools. According to Vygotsky (1987), we need to understand the social world not only in terms of the interpersonal interactions within the learning environment, but also in terms of the broader socio-cultural and historical influences on learning environment. The students' cognitive development emphasizes the significance of culture, and the student's relationship with and within this social cultural world. In addition, in these schools it is probable that the student teacher and student-peer relationships are of prime importance to cognition and achievement and consequently academic self-esteem. The student-teacher and student-peer relationships are oriented towards achievement and competition. Accordingly, the attention that should be given to the students' behavior and performance to construct meaningful understanding of the world as Vygotsky stated; might not be observed in such schools. It is expected that the students have no chance to be active within their learning environments.

Cultural differences of educational implications arise when it comes to practical teaching within schools. In this respect academic self-esteem is related to learning strategies. Dean (1977) found a significant relationship between self-esteem and choice of learning strategies, those with low self-esteem showed more rigidity, employing a repetitive rehearsal strategy when a more complex strategy could be more efficient. Dean's findings suggest that individuals with high self-esteem tend to rework material more actively, using deeper and more elaborated strategies, while individuals with low self-esteem tend to use shallower, repetitive strategies. Bearing this relationship between learning strategies and academic self-

esteem it is probable that the rigidity in the culture of these schools contributed to a decline in the academic self-esteem.

Accordingly, we can argue that these schools lack the needed balance between the needs of the adolescent and what the learning environment provides. The students' self-evaluations of their academic self-esteem are a function of their beliefs about their abilities to live up to the schools aspirations or to accomplish the scholastic goals. This might have rendered this decline in their academic self-esteem. This can be referred to the fact that self-esteem encompasses not only perceptions of social acceptance, but also the perceptions of abilities. By this, self-esteem can be associated with particular cognitive like personal beliefs about competence and acceptance. In the case of students in these two schools they are adolescents who pass through a difficult and stressful period. They view their academic self-esteem as a function of their success in a certain domains by scoring high in subject matter. The interaction between this stressful period and the expectations from them led to a decline in academic self-esteem. In fact, some students seem to be able to catch up with their school system that lets them feel good when they've tried hard and done the best they can, others seem to be born without that ability. Therefore, teachers should help students raise their spirits when they are doing poorly and cheer them on when they are doing well. Teachers must be careful to recognize effort, and to set reasonable standards and expectations for students to internalize. This will help students understand that everyone has different strengths and weaknesses, and consequently reach a better level of academic self-esteem.

On the other hand, the results revealed no significant difference in self-esteem across Grade level in schools. The no significant difference in these schools can be attributed to the common characteristics shared by these schools. They are all private schools and encompass students who belong to the same socio-economic status. They are located almost within the

same region of North Lebanon; their students belong to the same social community. They also share similar social background and the school systems are similar to each other. Besides, students are of the same age and undergo similar developmental experiences. Thus it seems that the interaction between the common characteristics among these schools yielded no significant differences in self-esteem across grade level in these schools.

3- Interaction between Grade level and Gender

After discussing the different aspects of self-esteem among schools across grade level, a comparison of the interaction between gender and Grade level among all schools is important to clarify. Results revealed in the whole sample that there was no interaction between these two variables in all aspects of self-esteem, except in the Personal self-esteem, where there was an interaction between gender and Grade level. Comparing the differences in the interaction between these two variables among school shows that schools vary in the aspect of self-esteem that had a significant interaction with Grade level. In school 1 there was a significant interaction in the Global and the Personal. In school 2, the interaction was with the General self-esteem and in School 4, the interaction was in the Global and the Parental. The interaction was significant in the social self-esteem in School 5.

These interactions point out to the differences between genders when it comes to self-esteem. Although gender has a biological basis, it is directly related to the differences in socialization practices of parents, peers and teachers. In fact Society, culture and family shape the individuals' sex stereotypes as females and males who learn it from those around them. It is the environment that provides the stimuli that orient the individuals' behavior.

Consequently, sex differences in certain areas such as self-esteem are connected to sex stereotypes as the individuals pass from childhood to adolescence (Marsh, 1989).

Thus, cultural identity of a certain society determines the character traits and the sex stereotypes of males and females, and this outlines the differences between both genders. This becomes more understood when we know that many studies have shown that during the pre-adolescence and adolescence periods females' self-esteem decreases compared to males due to developmental factors. Accordingly, these differences in the interaction between gender and grade level among these schools indicate that teachers deal with males and females in different ways. Not at school only, at home, too, males and females are treated differently. Also, in terms of identity formation, the role of community may be very different for girls compared to that of boys.

Beside socialization and cultural identity, the significant interaction between Grade level and gender can also be understood in the light of the adolescent development that involves different patterns for boys and girls in the areas of emotional expression. The ability to report feelings about the self may be a function of culturally ascribed gender roles. Males tend to be less expressive when disclosing feelings about the self. This can be a function of the stereotyped masculine gender role that encourages avoidance of emotional intimacy. In fact it is agreed in the Lebanese society that strong men do not show emotions and should be rational. It is part of the public talk in Lebanon that expressive males are weak. In this respect, Polce-Lynch et al (1998) have found that adolescent boys are more emotionally restrictive than female peers.

Another explanation that may also account for these differences in interaction is the identity crisis explained by Erikson (1968), who states that adolescents have a need for freedom in making choices. In order for the adolescent to successfully resolve the identity crisis, they must feel that they are free to make choices about their immediate futures. Adolescents in this stage actively seek opportunities to make choices from available options. In the Lebanese culture, males and females do not have equal opportunities because of gender biases. Males are given more freedom than females, the expectations from them are higher, and are provided with wider choices. Females are mainly foreseen as future mothers. This, also, partly explains gender differences in feelings about the self. Adolescent girls' expectations of success and self-evaluations are lower compared to adolescent boys. In this respect, the possible impact of gender bias upon adolescents can be argued in terms of the cultural orientation. That is, boys are raised oriented toward individualism, and girls are raised oriented toward collectivism that might make girls consistently have lower self-esteem than boys. Thus, it is expected that these cultural differences would yield significant interaction between grade level and gender.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Summary

Self-esteem has been related to many psychological, cognitive and behavioural factors. Some researchers have focused on the nature of self-esteem and others have focused on its functions. The current study aims to investigate how self-esteem functions to help adolescent students cope with the challenges they face in the transitional period of the secondary school. It, also, aims to study the construct of self-esteem in relation to gender, grade level and academic achievement in a sample of private secondary school students in Lebanon.

The participants in the study were selected from six secondary schools in North Lebanon. The size of the sample was 479 students out of which 244 students were females and 235 were males. All the participants responded to the Adolescent Form of the Culture Free Self-esteem Inventory (CFSEI-3).

Statistical analysis revealed significant differences in the various aspects of self-esteem. Yet, there was no significant relationship between males and females in the Global, General Academic, and Social self-esteem. On the other hand, a significant difference was noticed in the Personal self-esteem subscale. Another significant difference in the Global, General, Academic and social self-esteem was, also, noticed across grade level. Yet, no significant difference was found in the Personal and Parental self-esteem subscales. The difference in the Global, General, Academic and Social self-esteem was clear as self-esteem increased from grade 10 to grade 11 followed by a decrease in grade 12. The results also revealed no significant interaction between gender and grade level in the Global, General, Academic, and

Social self-esteem. However, a significant difference in interaction was noticed in the Personal self-esteem subscale scores. Low significant correlation was noticed between Self-esteem subscales; Global General, Academic, and Parental self-esteem and the students' academic achievement. However, no significant correlation was recorded between the Social and Personal self-esteem and the academic achievement of the students.

The schools in the sample represent the Lebanese social structure, particularly the middle socio-economic class. As the results of this study showed, the differences among schools reflect the diverse beliefs and trends in the Lebanese society that had various effects on the adolescent student. Certain differences were noticed between the students' Global and other self-esteem subscales cross schools. Differences between the Global self-esteem components i.e. the General, Academic, Parental, Social and Personal self-esteem subscales were also identified.

To explain and understand these variations in the scores of the aspects of self-esteem, many factors were considered such as the developmental, social, biological, cultural, environmental and familial factors. Besides, certain implications and recommendations were discussed to highlight what should be done to create a healthy environment that best enhances the students' self-esteem and thereby their adaptive cognitive and emotional functions.

Limitations

The present study primarily comprised participants of private secondary schools in Lebanon. Accordingly, the results are considered generalizable only to that group, i.e. students from the middle socio-economic class represented in the sample of this study. In Lebanon, the public schools represent a considerable percentage of the total number of

schools, and the population of their students belongs to the low socio-economic class. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all secondary school students in Lebanon.

Another limitation is that the current study investigates the relationship between self-esteem, gender, grade level and academic achievement. Since correlation does not mean causation, no causal inferences can be drawn from the data. Therefore, the study does not reveal the causes that have direct effects on self-esteem, but rather establishes a relationship between the related variables. This study reveals that there is a relationship between self-esteem and gender, self-esteem and age and self-esteem and academic achievement, but it does not show whether academic achievement increases or decreases self-esteem. Other variables might have played a role in affecting both variables like cognitive abilities and personality variables.

Another limitation to consider is that in the questionnaires, some respondents might have answered the self-report items in a more favorable way in an endeavour to please the researcher. On the other hand, most items in the questionnaires tend to address the males' values more than the females'. In this case, adolescent girls' self-esteem might have possibly come to an inaccurate judgement. Despite the fact that the questionnaire used in this study is culture free, certain items may tend to address more individuals of individualistic society. Although the questionnaire used in this study is culture free, certain items are more or less addressed to an individualistic society. Since the Lebanese society is a diversified society; collectivistic and individualistic, accurate responses might have been elicited more accurately from one and not the other.

However, the limitations of this study underly some points of strength as the results of this study helped in adding more evidence to the role of self-esteem and the factors that affect

it. The presence of these limitations, if necessary, did not hinder coming out with significant results. Focusing the study on the adolescent students and the relationship between their gender, grade level, academic achievement and self-esteem within a certain context could allow a deeper understanding of the relationship between these variables.

Strengths

The study was sampled from six private schools in North Lebanon. The sample is representative of the different categories of schools in Lebanon, namely confessional (Muslim and Christian schools), modern liberal and international private schools in Lebanon. As the sample included these categories, the results of this study can be generalized to other schools in the private sector in Lebanon that is considered to be highly representative of the Lebanese educational sectors. In addition, the focus in this study on the adolescent student is of much importance as little research was conducted on this category of students in North Lebanon. Yet, more importantly, exploring the relationship between self-esteem and gender, grade level, and academic achievement, of this category of students helps in understanding and dealing with educational and developmental problems the Lebanese adolescents might face. For example, the gender differences found among the Lebanese adolescents that can be related to the sex stereotypes inherent in the Lebanese culture, can be used to call to action in educational practices in terms of the needed changes to decrease the gender gap. This would help in enhancing the well-being of the Lebanese adolescents.

Besides, the study revealed significant differences in self-esteem across Grade levels within an important stage of the adolescents' development. These significant differences in self-esteem of the adolescent students were found across levels, 10, 11, and 12. It was found

that Adolescents' self-esteem declines in Grade 10, increases in grade 11, and then undergoes a slight drop in Grade 12. These findings are important to understand the changes in the students' self-perceptions in the transitional period of the secondary school. These findings, also, help to diagnose the probable causes of these changes, take measures and find solutions.

This study also helped add evidence concerning the positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement and in a different cultural context, namely the Lebanese context. This added evidence will help educators, teachers and parents in the Lebanese society find ways to invest in this positive relation to enhance both academic achievement and self-esteem of the adolescents.

Implications

The results of this study revealed certain significant differences in almost every aspect of self-esteem across the relations between the three variables of gender, grade level and academic achievement. The importance of these results resides in revealing how these significant differences varied from the global self-esteem to its components and from one component of self-esteem to another. In other words, the differences in the Global self-esteem can be understood by looking into the differences of its components. Many factors, such as the developmental, social, cultural and environmental factors should be taken into consideration to understand these differences in the aspects of self-esteem. These factors play a role in shaping, directing and outlining the differences among individuals when it comes to self-evaluation and self-esteem.

The significant gender difference in the Personal self-esteem subscale has several implications concerning the social mechanisms of self-esteem that make of it a dependent variable influenced by social processes. The implication here is that parents and teachers should play a very important role as significant others in the life of adolescent students.

This significant gender difference in the Personal self-esteem can be attributed to Gender stereotyping that is directly related to social factors within the individual's environment and culture. These differences vary from one culture to another and affect how both sexes perceive themselves. What makes this issue a challenging one to parents and educators is the fact that such social factors cannot be controlled directly and that is why educators should strive to rule out or minimize any possible negative effect from the environment on the adolescents' self-esteem. For example, values associated with self-esteem emerge from an interrelationship between cultural, social, and interpersonal processes. Educators can act upon the set of personal values that affect the individuals' self-esteem because the individuals' self-esteem varies with the way they perceive themselves as matching with this set of values. Since these values are related to what the individual learns through the process of socialization, then the level of self-esteem goes parallel with the ideals and perceptions the individual has (Rosenberg, 1965). Accordingly, the role of educators here has to do with what values they instil in the students and to help them match these values by orienting them to set realistic expectations that match with their abilities and capacities. This is developed at an early age through the influences of the parents or guardians. For example, sex-role stereotyping by the parents, as well as positive or negative feedback on personal characteristics, may establish a healthy or unhealthy self-esteem (Richards, Gitelson, Peterson and Hartig, 1991).

The process continues in the school years through new experiences and the influences of significant others, such as peers and teachers. Through this social process, they develop beliefs which become personal resources that influence them through the life cycle. In other words, the cognitive development of the adolescents will determine how they reflect on their experiences and the image they form about themselves as a response to the environment (Harter, 1992). In this respect, social feedback has influences on self-esteem through the causal relationship between adolescents' beliefs about themselves and their use of self-regulatory processes, such as the goals they set, the strategies they use, and the causal attributions they make (Pajares, 2003).

This has many implications as to the gender differences in self-esteem. Educators should be aware of the difference in attitude they might form towards boys and girls, because it affects the students' personal self-esteem through the cognitions and beliefs they hold about themselves whether positively or negatively. In many societies, and Lebanon is no exception, attitudes towards gender is in favour of boys who show a higher self-esteem than that of girls' (Ayyash, 2001). The significant difference between males and females in the Personal self-esteem in this study accounts for this biased attitudes towards gender in the Lebanese society. As we have mentioned above, the positive or negative manner in which a person judges herself or himself is the evaluative component self-esteem. This makes the degree to which girls evaluate themselves as competent, and worthwhile determines the rise and drop in their self-esteem. Schools and social standards, and attitudes serve as major influences on how girls evaluate themselves especially in a developmental period of adolescence that brings with it conflicts that affect girls' self-esteem. A more moderate attitude towards girls and boys is needed to avoid any differences in self-esteem caused by the biased attitude towards genders.

More importantly, is the variations in the school culture. The significant gender differences in certain schools relate by one way or another to how the school culture affects the way both genders evaluate themselves (Adler, 1998). This implies that the adolescents' beliefs about themselves vary within the cultural context of the school. This makes the school culture an important and critical agent in building adolescents' self-esteem. Consequently, looking into the school culture whether collectivistic or individualistic will help us identify the factors that we need to act upon. By doing so, we ensure a more supportive school culture or school environment that accommodates the differences between genders and not discriminate between them.

This is needed in a school culture because males and females are different in their formation of identities. The chances and opportunities given at school should be diversified enough to adapt to the needs of both genders. Taking into account that gender plays a part in self-esteem and then identifying the needs and assessing the genders' demands will help both genders in building their self-esteem. For example, boys are more likely to form positive self-images and self-esteem from sports or academic achievement; girls look to their group belonging and interactions first for positive self-images. Teachers and parents here should offer both genders the domains in which they excel and show appreciation to both (Harter, 1992).

The findings related to the significant difference in Global, General, Academic and social self-esteem subscales across grade level bear several implications for parents and teachers and educators. In fact the stages of human development are critical to educational decisions. For example, Piaget's (1952) stages of development, contributed a lot to what, how, and when to introduce certain concepts, and when not. For this reason, when we are observing students at a critical developmental stage like the adolescents period, many points should be

taken into account. This is what makes the secondary classes of great importance to educators in all educational affairs. This period is a time of great changes in the personal life of a student. These changes are physical, cognitive, social, and emotional. In addition, these changes extend to the school life of students. It is a stage of academic transitions from the intermediate to the secondary classes when responsibilities increase and students become more independent. It is also a stage of psychological changes. When the students form their self-identity, they undergo identity crisis, make friendships and live under the stress of peer pressure (Erikson, 1968).

These significant differences revealed in this study across grade levels have many practical implications for teachers in particular. For example, the significant differences in the Global, General, Academic, and Social self-esteem across grade level imply that students' self-esteem varies with time and during adolescence. It might vary from one grade to another. The results showed that self-esteem was higher in grade 11 compared to grade 10 with slight drop in grade 12. These fluctuations in self-perceptions are influenced by the changes and challenges that adolescents encounter at the transitional period of the secondary school. The new social environment, together with the academic challenges in the critical period of adolescence, burdens the adolescent and create feelings of stress that may lead to low self-esteem (Eccles et al, 1993). This takes place at the time when the adolescent strive for self-discovery in order to achieve a sense of identity (Erikson, 1968). Teachers can help adolescents adjust and adapt to requirements of new environment of the secondary school and experiment with different roles and identities to be able to try different personalities and ways of behaving to find their own identity.

Based on research findings, adolescents experience strong emotions; both positive and negative emotions affect peoples' thoughts and behaviours. Positive emotions help the

adolescents face difficulties, become more balanced and able to cope with changes. The emotional well being is important at the adolescence stage because adolescents need their emotional stability to cope with the changes they experience. They also have challenges to meet successful functioning at school and in the society. Since adolescence is a stage through which everyone must inevitably pass as part of a preordained developmental sequence, teachers and parents need to help adolescents to make responsible decisions that build self-esteem and work with them to smooth out transitions. This can be done by teaching adolescents strategies for dealing successfully with conflicts that arise at home, with peers, and in school. Such strategies would help enhance the adolescents' self-esteem that in turn will help them face the difficulties they encounter (Greenleaf, 2002).

The results that showed significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement make this relation between the affective domain and academic achievement central to both teachers and students as they share the concern about high achievement. In fact, academic achievement is a mark of success for both the student and the teacher. The student aims to prove his/her academic ability to parents and to self. The teachers, too, has an intention to work on improving a student's academic achievement, because they want students to reach their highest potential and improve their own standing within the school. Academic achievement is considered a medal of honour for both students and teachers. Accordingly, affective traits and academic achievement are strongly correlated. If teachers wanted students to do well on academic achievement, it would be wise to work on students' affect as well. By the same token, if teachers wanted students to have a high self-esteem, it would be wise to work on academic achievement. In this respect, teachers need to be aware that self-esteem and academic achievement have lasting impacts on each other. Adequate self-esteem is related to the capacity to cope with academic tasks by employing effective study methods and actively

participating in the learning process, both of which are involved in achieving set goals by teachers and students.

Implications for Teachers and Parents

To help both genders build up self-esteem, parents and teachers need to follow certain strategies that help ensure a healthy development of adolescents in this critical stage of their lives.

Implications for teachers

Teachers can play a significant role in the life of adolescents. This makes the teacher-student relationship a very important factor to build up positive self-esteem.

Teachers should understand the nature of student's development and the importance of their roles in building students' self-perceptions. They are required to understand children's developmental needs at each phase of development and how each stage affects the following one. In adolescence, children face challenges of particular kind. They are required to adjust to the dual transition from childhood to adulthood and from the elementary school to the secondary one. Their main concern is to find who they are i.e. their identity, and achieve peer group recognition (Erikson, 1987). Failing to do this puts the adolescent at risk of disturbance in self-esteem. Thus, teachers are required to help the adolescent find his/her identity and achieve peer group recognition.

The climate of the classroom is an area a teacher might work on to promote self-esteem among students. The climate of the classroom can create a sense of comfort, safety

and support. It is a product of the behaviours that the teachers accept and model, how they assess and manage these behaviours, and their attitudes and values towards these behaviours. In other words, the climate the teacher allows is no accident. There are many practices a teacher can do to promote a sense of acceptance and belonging within a group in the class atmosphere. For example, teacher can use cooperative learning strategies where interdependence is a requirement. Here, students will need to work with and rely on each member of the class, not just their friends. The teacher needs to know how to assign roles and assign groups in a cooperative work. Teachers can find ways to make the students do peer tutoring and leadership in daily activities (Wentzel, 1997). These practices are, particularly, helpful in the periods of school transition. In this regard, researchers have found that students have more positive transitions into schools that modify social cultures to increase a sense of belonging and care than did students in schools that did not (Eccles & Midgley et al, 1996; Keating, 1996).

As to adolescent girls and the difficulties they encounter in the years of transitions to the secondary school, research in general suggests that girls are more negatively affected by the transition than boys (MdGee et al, 2003). Wright (2000) also suggests that some social groups or communities still express more worry about boys when they do less well compared to girls when they do the same. In other words, they do not worry as much when girls are doing less well than boys. In this respect, teachers are advised to cater for girls' particular needs. This makes acceptance and recognition vital for the development of girls' self-esteem at this stage.

Besides, students, in general, feel more empowered when they are involved in the learning process (Ayyach, 2001). Here, teachers can engage students as active learners by giving them voice in classroom decisions, projects or rules and make them follow up the consequences. By doing so, students will feel more in control of their learning. In this respect, Bandura (1997) adds that students' self-perceptions are affected by their academic achievement when their feelings of self-worth are likely to emerge from school achievement.

With regard to school performance, perceptions of self-efficacy are areas where teachers can act to improve students' performance. Those perceptions tend to vary according to life events. Therefore, it may be more realistic for educators to address students' perceptions of self-efficacy than to focus on their feelings of self-esteem, which are less likely to change. This can also be more approachable in school, where students' competences in classroom tasks are constantly evaluated and the perception they have about themselves is fostered mainly in school structure (Bandura, 1987).

Accordingly, teachers should, set expectations within the abilities of their students that will help students set realistic expectations for themselves. By doing so, students will feel more confident when they know what is expected of them. When the teacher sets clear expectations, students will work accordingly. By this, they will gain more self-confidence; and when their confidence is raised, they will do better and try harder – they may even take a few risks.

In this regard, students need evidence to confirm that they have done something well. For this reason, teachers need to promote a sense of competence and self-efficacy in students in order to promote their self-esteem (Schunk & Miller, 2002). Here, teachers are required to

provide clear and meaningful feedback because students need to know specifically what it is that they did well when they succeed and what they did incorrectly when they did not. Teachers need to make the criteria for success clear to students so that they identify the path they should follow to achieve the expected results.

Thus, teachers have a wide range of opportunities that they can use to enhance students' self-esteem. This is true as students spend as much time at school as they spend at home; and the type of relation they build with their teachers mirrors that they have with their parents. A parent is a teacher sometimes and when teachers give pieces of advice they become like parents. Accordingly, the relationship between the teacher and the student almost has equal effect of that of parents; with the teacher as an authority at school as the parents is the authority at home.

Implications for parents

The role of the parents in the adolescent's educational development is of no less importance than that of a teacher, and it should not be undervalued. Parents can play a role in the development of their children's self-esteem, both males and females. The more parents realize that self-esteem contributes to the personal happiness and affective well being of their kids, the more they try to communicate attitudes that give rise to feelings of security, belonging and competence to their children.

As teachers at school, parents at home should be aware of the effect of the developmental factors on the adolescents' self-esteem. First, they should recognize that adolescence is a developmental period in which the students begin to form a lifelong sense of personal identity about themselves. In this developmental process, self-esteem is a key component that affects

the way adolescents behave, act and interact. Second, they need to take into consideration while dealing with adolescent students that the transition from childhood to adolescence puts the students at risk of disturbance in self-esteem. For example, a drop in self-esteem might occur because adolescents become susceptible to environmental stresses like being accepted into peer group. This transition from childhood to adolescence is accompanied by the transition from middle to secondary school and this, too, adds to putting the students at risk of disturbance in self-esteem.

Parents should also be involved to the best of their abilities in schools because the two major environments that have direct impacts on the adolescent are the home and the school. Home visits and home calls should be made to speak of successes and improvements and not only of failure and underachievement and misbehaviour. In some cases, especially here in Lebanon where the extended family members, who are significant others to the adolescents, are usually involved in the adolescent's family interactions. These members should also be communicated and involved.

The role of the parents in the adolescents' personal and educational development is also important for developing a feeling of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an important variable to be considered here, because much of self-efficacy information the adolescents acquire is from their families and family environments (Schunk & Miller, 2002). Parents are said to be successful in promoting in their children positive competence perceptions when they modify their expectations and demands according to the varying needs and abilities of their children as they develop. Children's self-efficacy and competence beliefs are also enhanced by family environments that promote effective interactions within the environment. More specifically, parents and caregivers play a role in helping children build their sense of competence. They achieve this when they provide an encouraging environment that offers some challenges, sets

realistic expectations, offers positive role models, and teaches how to deal with difficulties (Eccles et al., 1998).

In addition, helping students acquire feelings of efficacy and competence can be shared by both parents and teachers. In this respect, the parent-teacher communication is a critical element in shaping students' feelings of self-competence and self-efficacy. Accordingly, parents have a lot to do with teachers. They can work with teachers to help instill self-efficacy beliefs in the adolescents. Bandura (1977), points out that persistent encouragement through verbal persuasion, especially from parents, may help students maintain feelings of competence and self-efficacy that in turn help them persevere longer in facing any problems. This parental support provides the students with the focus and direction they need to persist in their educational attainment.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research are needed in the light of the results of this study. First, a qualitative study should be carried out to explore more in depth the students' self-esteem as related to the variables under study. It is also recommended that further research be done to include students of Grade 9 to explore the relationship between their self-esteem in relation to the variables of the study as they move from the intermediate to the secondary school. In addition, replicating this study using the same instrument on a sample of public schools' students in Lebanon would help in forming a more comprehensive picture as those students represent a considerable percentage of the Lebanese student population and belong to a different socio-economic status.

Furthermore, it is recommended that a reconsideration of the Lebanese curriculum be made. The curriculum that employs gender stereotypes that widens the gaps among genders should be revised to create a more balanced perceptions and representations of a gender differences in the minds of students. This should be of great importance to educators as students form their sex role through identification with sexist stereotypes in textbooks. One way is to set objectives for producing non-sexist materials that aims to teaching children the value of the individual as a person regardless of his/her sex and to treat men and women as equal citizens. The curriculum should also introduce realistic models that portray the diversity of the Lebanese society by portraying images of successful female characters. The objectives should also draw on encouraging and inspiring women to develop their talents, abilities and potentials. Finally, to instil a message of respect for women and describe them as active agents and not as passive ones should be a priority.

More importantly, it is recommended that educators identify the personal and environmental determinants of feeling of competence and self-worth of the adolescents and make efforts to plan for prevention and interventions. Such interventions can be focused on creating and enhancing the personal and environmental attributes that serve as the keys to healthy development. This becomes highly important and recommended because personality and individual outcomes are the result of interaction with the environment. It should be ensured that all adolescents have the opportunities to build their healthy self-esteem, to develop social competencies, autonomy, and a sense of purpose. More specifically, a link between families and schools and between schools and communities must be made. For example, it is recommended that the schools employ the resources of families, communities,

and social service agencies in meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of students (Erikson, 1987).

In short, we create a healthy learning environment in our classes by what we do and say and what we instruct our students to do and say. Thus, adolescents should be provided with an optimal environment that stimulates positive growth and is responsive to the individual's developmental needs. Otherwise, the adolescent's development will be impeded.

A healthy learning environment that promotes self-esteem will produce more successful, hard working, risk taking, ambitious, respectful, and self-directed students. Self-esteem development should be a primary focus in our teaching practices whether our goal is to educate mentally healthy students or students who perform well academically or to educate the students as whole citizens. Not all talented people are able to succeed in life, but people with genuinely high self-esteems will always find ways to succeed and achieve.

Appendix

CFSEI – 3

Culture-Free Self-Esteem

Adolescent

Inventories – Third Edition

Student Response Form

Name _____

Female

☐

Male

☐

School _____ Date of Testing _____

Grade _____ Date of Birth _____

Instructions: Read each statement and mark the circle or square to respond yes or no.

Item Statement

1. Do you have only a few friends?
2. Are you happy most of the time?
3. Are you comfortable telling your parents about your problems?
4. Can you do things as well as others?
5. Do you like everyone you know?
6. Do you spend most of your free time alone?
7. Do you trust your family?
8. Do most people like you?
9. Do you often feel like quitting school?
10. Have you ever taken anything that didn't belong to you?
11. Are you as intelligent as most people?
12. Do you argue often with your family?
13. Do you feel you are as important as most people?
14. Are you easily depressed?
15. Are you satisfied with your schoolwork?
16. Do you feel like you have enough freedom at home?
17. Would you change many things about yourself if you could?
18. Do you always tell the truth?
19. Do you have a good relationship with your mother?
20. Are you as nice looking as most people?

21. Do you usually quit when your schoolwork is too hard?
22. Are you usually tense or worried?
23. Do you gossip at times?
24. Do you often feel that you are no good at all?
25. Are you as strong and healthy as most people are?
26. Do you enjoy learning?
27. Do you have a good relationship with your father?
28. Is it difficult for you to express your views and feelings?
29. Do you ever get angry?

Item Statement

30. Do you often feel ashamed of yourself?
31. Are you pretty good enough about doing homework on time?
32. Are other people generally more successful than you are?
33. Are you doing as well in school as you would like to do?
34. Do you feel uneasy most of the time without knowing why?
35. Do you feel that you are as happy as others are?
36. Are you ever shy?
37. Are you a failure?
38. Are you popular with other people your age?
39. Is it hard for you to meet new people?
40. Do you ever lie?
41. Are you often upset about something?
42. Do most people respect your views?
43. Are people your age smarter than you are?
44. Are you uncomfortable in groups of people?
45. Do you worry more than most people do?
46. Are you as happy as most people?
47. Do the people in your family have quick tempers?
48. Are you ever sad?
49. Is it hard for you to find the energy to do things?
50. Do you feel as though your friends have a lot of confidence in you?

51. Do you feel that you are not good enough?
52. Do your parents understand how you feel?
53. Are you doing the best school work that you can?
54. Do people like your ideas?
55. Do your parents think you are a failure?
56. Is it hard for you to give yourself credit when you do a good job?
57. Do you have trouble talking to other people?
58. Are you a failure at school?
59. Do your parents love you?
60. Are you proud with of your schoolwork?
61. Do you often get upset when you are at home?
62. Are you a hard worker at school?
63. Do you find it hard to make up your mind and stick it?
64. Do you like yourself very much?
65. Do you have friends you can confide in?
66. In school, do you do as little work as you can get by with?
67. Do you feel as though your family trusts you?

CFSEI – 3

Culture-Free Self-Esteem

Adolescent

Inventories – Third Edition

Student Response Form

Name _____

Female ☐

Male ☐

School _____ Date of Testing _____

Grade _____ Date of Birth _____

Instructions: Read each statement and mark the circle or square to respond yes or no.

Item Statement

1. Do you have only a few friends?
2. Are you happy most of the time?
3. Are you comfortable telling your parents about your problems?
4. Can you do things as well as others?
5. Do you like everyone you know?
6. Do you spend most of your free time alone?
7. Do you trust your family?
8. Do most people like you?
9. Do you often have a feeling to stop going to school?
10. Have you ever taken anything that didn't belong to you?
11. Are you as intelligent as most people?
12. Do you argue often with your family?
13. Do you feel you are as important as most people?
14. Are you easily depressed?
15. Are you satisfied with your schoolwork?
16. Do you feel like you have enough freedom at home?
17. Would you change many things about yourself if you could?
18. Do you always tell the truth?
19. Do you have a good relationship with your mother?
20. Are you as nice looking as most people?

21. When your school work is too hard, do you usually leave it or stop doing it?
22. Are you usually tense or worried?
23. Do you gossip at times?
24. Do you often feel that you are no good at all?
25. Are you as strong and healthy as most people are?
26. Do you enjoy learning?
27. Do you have a good relationship with your father?
28. Is it difficult for you to express your views and feelings?
29. Do you ever get angry?

Item Statement

30. Do you often feel ashamed of yourself?
31. Are you good enough about doing homework on time?
32. Are other people generally more successful than you are?
33. Are you doing as well in school as you would like to do?
34. Do you feel uneasy most of the time without knowing why?
35. Do you feel that you are as happy as others are?
36. Are you ever shy?
37. Are you a failure?
38. Are you popular with other people your age?
39. Is it hard for you to meet new people?
40. Do you ever lie?
41. Are you often upset about something?
42. Do most people respect your views?
43. Are people your age more intelligent than you are?
44. Are you uncomfortable in groups of people?
45. Do you worry more than most people do?
46. Are you as happy as most people?
47. Do the people in your family get angry easily?
48. Are you ever sad?

49. Is it hard for you to find the energy to do things?
50. Do you feel as though your friends have a lot of confidence in you?
51. Do you feel that you are not good enough?
52. Do your parents understand how you feel?
53. Are you doing the best school work that you can?
54. Do people like your ideas?
55. Do your parents think you are a failure?
56. Is it hard for you to admire yourself when you do a good job?
57. Do you have trouble talking to other people?
58. Are you a failure at school?
59. Do your parents love you?
60. Are you proud or pleased with yourself for your schoolwork?
61. Do you often get upset when you are at home?
62. Are you a hard worker at school?
63. Do you find it hard to make decisions and stick to them?
64. Do you like yourself very much?
65. Do you have enough friends you can trust and talk confidentially to?
66. In school, do you do as little work as you can avoid failure?
67. Do you feel as though your family trusts you?

Tripoli, Lebanon

April 13, 2006

Dear Sirs,

I am in the process of conducting a doctoral thesis in Education, majoring in "Teaching and Learning" from the University of Leicester, England, titled "Self-Esteem As Related to Academic Achievement, Gender, And Grade Level in a Sample of Lebanese Secondary School Students."

This scientific educational research involves a study of a large sample of high school students in varied schools and will be of great benefit to schools. Its importance lies in its emphasis on the construct of self-esteem, which is an essential factor that directly correlates with the students' academic achievement in all grade levels, in addition to its effect on the individual's psychological and social adaptation. The results will help clarify the factors that have a direct, as well as an indirect effect on the students' self-esteem, such as the parents' rearing practices, their expectations and perceptions of their children. Other factors will include the influence of the school's environment (i.e. classroom environment), the evaluation system and the curriculum followed. This field study will also assist counselors and psychologists, in addition to teachers and parents, in taking effective and preventive and corrective measures to help build up an enlightened generation that acts positively and responsibly, and can handle responsibilities and manage to solve problems and difficulties.

It must be noted that the results of this study and its related statistics, which will be supported with appropriate field evidence, will be put in the service of the schools concerned and will pave the way for the employment of diagnostic self-reports aimed at development, creativity and competency.

And since this work requires that questionnaires be distributed to be filled up by students, we kindly ask you for permission to conduct this research in your high-school, noting that confidentiality will be honored regarding all research documents and participants' identities.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. Saeda Rafei.

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