The Effects of Socioeconomic Status and Materialistic Attitudes on Children’s Self-Esteem

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INTRODUCTION
• How a child’s self-esteem develops can lead to positive and negative opportunities throughout their life
• One factor that likely influences a child’s self-esteem—especially in a materialistic society—is socioeconomic status (SES).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
• How does SES affect children’s self-esteem?
• Does SES’ influence on materialistic thinking and acquisitions affect children’s self-esteem?

PRIOR RESEARCH
• Prior work has examined how SES affects self-esteem development and has revealed that age and gender play a large role.

Article 1: Wells (2001)
• Children in grades 3 through 12
• Measured family social class and child’s self-esteem
• Relationship depends on how variables are measured and whether individual values and prioritizes influences of social class.

Article 2: Twenge & Campbell (2002)
• 312,940 participants of all age groups
• Measured self-esteem, SES, age, gender, birth cohort, and race
• SES has a small but significant effect on self-esteem

Article 3: Muldoon & Trew (2000)
• Primary school children from Northern Ireland
• Examined interaction between age, gender, SES, and ethnicity and self-competence in children
• The influence of group membership along with gender and age have the most significant effects

• 10- to 15-year-olds
• Measured effects of SES, gender, and race/ethnicity on scholastic competence, self-worth, depression, and hyperactivity
• Levels of scholastic competence and self-worth increased over time while levels of depression and hyperactivity decreased

PROPOSED STUDY

Hypotheses
• SES will be positively correlated with self-esteem, and this relationship will be influenced by materialistic attitudes.
• Specifically, children from lower SES families will have lower self-worth because they attribute self-worth to material possessions and wish that they were able to have more material goods.

Participants
• 3rd - 5th graders in La Crosse, WI area. Children of all races, genders, SES’s, emotional development classifications, and cognitive levels will be eligible.
• At least 150 children and 150 parents
• Teachers of the selected children

Measures and Procedure
• Questionnaires completed by parents, teachers, and children.

Examples of Questions:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Materialistic Attitudes</th>
<th>SES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children: Do you like yourself?</td>
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<td>Do you want things that your parents cannot afford?</td>
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<td>Do you wish your family had more money?</td>
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<td>Parents: Does your child complain of being teased at school?</td>
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<td>Does your child complain that others have more than them?</td>
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<td>Which amount is closest to your annual income?</td>
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<td>Teachers: Does this child usually appear happy?</td>
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<td>Does this child dress well?</td>
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<td>Does this child appear to have necessities?</td>
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Data Analysis & Predicted Results
• Questionnaire data will be scored & summed
• Relationships between SES, attitudes about materialistic goods, and self-esteem will be analyzed.
• 3rd - 5th graders expected to be positively affected by SES, but this will interact with materialistic attitudes.

CONCLUSIONS
• This study adds to prior research in that it explores the importance of materialistic goods and how that correlates with SES and in turn effects self-esteem.
• This will provides a better understanding of what promotes lower or higher self-esteem
• One implication: uniforms in schools

REFERENCES