



STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM IN LEARNING ENGLISH AND THEIR HAPPINESS

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Abstract

This study is conducted to find out the level of students' self-esteem in learning English, and the level of students' happiness, and the main purpose is to find out if there is a significant correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness. This study is quantitative and descriptive correlative. Two kinds of adapted questionnaires are used according to the nature of this study, and they are Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) and The Children's Happiness Scale (Morgan, 2014). The participants of the study are the 141 students at selected private senior high school grade X in Airmadidi, who enroll in the first semester of the 2016/2017 academic school year. The findings show that the level of students' self-esteem in learning English and their level of happiness are high. Moreover, there is a significant correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness. It is recommended that English teachers need to maintain the way they teach the students by creating friendly circumstances so the students can feel free to express their feelings in positive ways and the students may learn enjoyably.

Keywords: *self, esteem, happiness*

INTRODUCTION

Knowing English as an international language may help people to go abroad without much worry because they can communicate using English well. People usually evaluate themselves to know whether they can speak that language well. Self-esteem has a great influence on the students to learn English well that's why according to Aronson, Wilson, and Akert (2007) self-esteem is "people's evaluation of their own selves" (p. 20). Moreover, Satriani (2014) in her study about self-esteem and foreign language proficiency found that students with high levels of self-esteem set a higher goal for themselves and become more willing to continue learning. It can be said that students with a high level of self-esteem will try harder to achieve a higher level of achievement. In this case, students with a high level of self-esteem will try their best to learn English.

In studying a language like English, happiness matters. Passer and Smith (2004) explained that "self-esteem is a very important aspect of personal well-being, happiness, and adjustment" (p. 441). In the year of 2015, Agathangelou argued that "Self-esteem and happiness nurture each other, therefore, building self-esteem can help you to become happier" (para. 1). It means that there is a correlation between self-esteem and happiness. Everyone has a different personality because everyone is unique. A person with a good personality mostly has a high level of self-esteem, and self-esteem has a great influence on happiness. Coon and Mitterer (2009)



stated that people with a high level of self-esteem are generally calm and happy. A person with a high level of self-esteem may see themselves as valuable. They may also be happy to learn something. There is some view about self-esteem and happiness. Brown (2007) argued that "self-esteem is probably the most pervasive aspect of any human behavior" (p. 154). He mentioned that self-esteem can influence a person's behavior (how a person acts and thinks) in learning. It can be said that when a person has good behavior that person is happy or enjoys learning something. In this case, he/she will enjoy learning English. Happiness is very important to improve student performance.

Wood and Boyd (2008) argued that "happiness is closely related to life satisfaction-people who feel happy also tend to believe that their lives are satisfying" (p. 380). There are some studies that mentioned that there is a strong correlation between self-esteem and happiness, such as Liu (2012) in her research about humor style, self-esteem, and subjective happiness, Wikiversity (2015) proclaimed that self-esteem and happiness have a strong relationship. But on the other side, Lyubomirsky and Tkach (2004) stated that there is no significant relationship between self-esteem and happiness in learning. They said that "happiness and self-esteem can exist independently" (para. 6). Moreover, they explained that people with high self-esteem have a bigger probability to be unhappy when they think that they can do something, but they cannot, since they are perfectionist people. They also stated that people with low self-esteem may feel happy when they have a good relationship with others. In addition, Lyubomirsky, Tkach, and Dimatteo (2006) mentioned that "high self-esteem is not a sufficient condition for happiness" (p. 364).

Since there is interesting information about self-esteem in learning and happiness and there is a mismatch in the previous findings regarding the correlation between self-esteem in learning and happiness, the researchers are eager to study whether there is a correlation between students' self-esteem in learning and their happiness. The purpose of this study was to find out the level of students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness. This study also focused to see if there is a correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness. The result of this study may benefit the process of learning in the English classroom. For instance, when students value themselves highly, they may be happy in learning English. Also, the result of this study may give information to English teachers on students' self-esteem in learning English so they could encourage students to be brave to speak English in the classroom and help students who have difficulties in learning English by creating a conducive environment in classroom.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Self-Esteem

Every human being has self-esteem in life. Self-esteem is a feeling of satisfaction that someone has in himself or herself and with self-esteem, someone has a better relationship with others (Rosenberg, 1965). To be successful in the learning process students must believe in themselves. According to Masters and Wallace (2010), self-esteem is the "believe in

your ability and your worth or value" (p. 3). Self-esteem can influence the way students learn especially in learning English. Students must have the power of having positive thinking, believing in their ability of themselves, and having faith that they are able to do their best to be successful in their learning. How students feel about themselves can affect on how they handle problems in meeting the challenges in the learning process.

High Self-Esteem

Someone with high self-esteem may have positive outcomes in the learning process. Rosenberg (1965) mentioned that high self-esteem "will cause positive outcomes and benefits" (para. 2). He also mentioned that students with high self-esteem will have benefits. One of the benefits is a pleasant feeling. A pleasant feeling may cause good performance in the class. According to Rosenberg (1965), someone who has high self-esteem has several characteristics. The first one is willing to speak in groups, the second characteristic is being more likable and attractive, and the third one is students becoming popular. Elementary students with high self-esteem "tend to be more popular, cooperative, and successful in class" (Coon & Mitterer, 2009, p.144). Besides, students with high self-esteem are more enjoyable learning (Feist J. & Feist, G., 2006). High self-esteem in learning English is also known as positive self-esteem. Masters and Wallace (2010) argued that "positive self-esteem results from finding the positive in your life-academic success, self-control, self-acceptance, and optimism about the future" (p.7). In this case, students who have high self-esteem may have a bright future life.

Low Self-Esteem

The opposite side of high self-esteem is low self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) stated that "low self-esteem may contribute to externalizing behavior and delinquency" (para 4). It can be said that students with low self-esteem may be naughty students in the classroom who do not pay attention to their teacher when their teacher is teaching English. Students with "low self-esteem don't seem to know themselves in such as much detail as those with high self-esteem" (Weiten, Lloyd, Dunn, & Hammer, 2009, p. 168). Moreover, according to Masters and Wallace (2010) that "low self-esteem often leads to loneliness, anxiety, resentment, irritability, and little life satisfaction" (p. 4). In addition, Myers (2008) stated that "those who are negative about themselves also tend to be... judgmental" (p.452). He also mentioned that "people who are down on themselves tend to be down on other things" (p. 452). Students with low self-esteem have many weaknesses, such as lonely, anxiety, and little satisfaction in life. These situations lead to negative results in their learning. McLeod (2012) argued that "people with high self-esteem focus on growth and improvement, whereas people with low self-esteem.... are more likely to experience social anxiety, low levels of interpersonal confidence, and are more troubled by failure. According to him, it can be concluded that students with low self-esteem will have problems in learning rather than students who have high self-esteem.

Happiness

In the psychological world, happiness also is one important factor for



a person to be a success in learning. Passer and Smith (2004) stated that happiness is to have high self-esteem, be optimistic, and be agreeable, and people who have many friends will feel happy. Moreover, Morgan (2014) in his research about children's happiness stated that "happiness is one of the main emotions a person can have" (p. 3). He explained that happiness has a great influence on children's success in their studies and in their social life. In addition, Passer and Smith (2004) mentioned that "individuals who are sociable, optimistic, altruistic, curious, and open to new experiences report higher levels of happiness and are rated by others as happier than are those who have the opposite traits" (p. 369). Some experts have different views about happiness. Two major points as the predictor according to Passer and Smith (2004) that is the attractive and intelligence. In their explanation, they said that people who are attractive and intelligent may contribute to happiness. Another researcher claims a different point as the predictor for happiness. Happiness as explained by Weiten, Lloyd, Dunn, and Hummer (2009) influenced by love and personality. It means that people will be happy if they experience love in their lives. Myres (2008) stated that when we feel happy, we are willing to help others. He also mentioned that people who are happy tend to be cooperative people.

Happiness is also related to friendship. O'Grady (2012) argued that building a relationship with others will cause someone happiness. Happiness cannot be felt if someone has no good relationship with others. So, building a good relationship with others is important to find happiness. An unhappy person may cause depression. Delaware (2012) stated that "Studies show that there is a darker side to feeling good and that the pursuit of happiness can sometimes make someone depressed" (para. 1). Furthermore, he described that "too much happiness will make someone gullible, selfish, less successful and, in some cases, suicidal" (para. 1). Moeller (2012) conducted research about happiness and learning and the finding was when people were intensely engaged in doing and learning new things, their well-being and happiness could blossom. Those who actively do and learn new things will find happiness in their lives.

Students' Self-Esteem in learning English and Happiness

Self-esteem in learning has a big impact on students' happiness. In this case, they are happy to learn English. When students have high-level self-esteem, it means that they are happy to learn English. Ordoñez (2013) explained that "a high this case, they are happy and that they are happy self-esteem equals a high level of happiness" (para. 3). When the students have high self-esteem, they will be happy to learn English. She also reported that students with high self-esteem will lead to greater happiness, but students with low self-esteem are more likely to depress in doing something. A study conducted by Rosenberg (1965) found that "self-esteem has a strong relation to happiness" (para. 9). According to him, there is a significant correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness. It means that students' self-esteem in learning English has the power to influence their happiness.

The design of this study was descriptive-correlational. A descriptive design of the mean was used to find out the level of students' self-esteem in

learning English and the level of students' happiness. Descriptive is used to "describe the characteristics of your sample in the methods section of your report" (Pallant, 2007, p. 53). The correlational design of Pearson Product Moment Coefficient Correlation was used to find whether there was a significant correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness. As Pallant (2007) mentioned that Pearson Product Moment Coefficient Correlation is used to explore the relationship between two variables. The respondents of this study were the 141 students of grade X at a selected private senior high school in Airmadidi who enrolled in the first semester of the 2016/2017 academic school year. They were the sample for this study. The sampling technique for this study was convenience. Ellison, Barwick, and Varrant (2009) stated that convenience sampling is the sample based on those who are available during the data gathering. Dörnyei (2009) added that convenience sampling is easy to use since this sampling technique considered the respondents who are available at the time when the data was collected. Therefore, the researchers collected the data only from students who were available at the time when the researchers distributed the questionnaires.

The instruments used by the researchers in conducting this research were adapted instruments according to the nature of this study. They were Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) and The Children's Happiness Scale (Morgan, 2014). The questionnaires were translated into Indonesian and checked by some experts to make sure that the translation was understandable. After having the correct translation by the experts, the researchers did the correction before distributing the questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A descriptive analysis of the mean was used to find out the level of students' self-esteem in learning English, and the mean was 3.59 (see Table 1). According to the interpretation of the data scale of self-esteem in learning English, it fell between 3.50 and 4.49. It showed that the self-esteem in learning English of grade X students of selected private senior high school in Airmadidi was at a high level. It means that grade X students of selected private senior high school in Airmadidi are generally calm and happy in learning English.

The same finding by Maahuri (2015) mentioned that self-esteem was at a high level ($M=3.78$). Besides, Jumawan and Lotulung (2014) found that students' self-esteem was at a moderate level ($M= 3.49$). It can be concluded that the level of students' self-esteem may depend on the respondents who filled the questionnaires. Such as the level of education, the understanding of the questions from the questionnaires, the condition when they filled the questionnaires in, and respondents' attitude toward themselves.

Table 1. The Mean Score of the Level of Students' Self-esteem

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviaton
Self-esteem	141	2.6	4.70	3.5901	.38919

Valid N (listwise)	141				
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The level of students' happiness

A descriptive analysis of the mean was used to find out the level of students' happiness, and the mean was 3.61 (see Table 2). According to the interpretation of the data scale of happiness, it fell between 3.50-4.49. It showed that the happiness of grade X students at selected private senior high school in Airmadidi was at a high level. It means that grade X students at selected private senior high school in Airmadidi are generally optimistic, sociable, and also they have a tendency to trust that their lives are satisfying.

Discussion

Interestingly the result of this study regarding happiness is the same as other studies on how to measure happiness by O'Rourke and Cooper (2010) and the result showed that the respondents' happiness was high. Also, in 2008 a study by Holder and Coleman (as cited in O'Rourke and Cooper, 2010), found the Canadian students' happiness is high. It can be concluded that in general, students are happy when they learn something at school where they have friends, a nice teacher, and a comfortable environment.

Table 2. The Mean Score of the Level of Students' Happiness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviaton
Self-esteem	141	2.89	4.72	3.6127	.34966
Valid N (listwise)	141				

Pearson Product Moment Coefficient Correlation was used to analyse whether there was any significant correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness. The result showed that there was a significant correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness with $p=.000$ (see Table 3). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated: "there is no significant correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness" was rejected.

There was a significant correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness in this present study. Previous studies also have the same results: Hill (2015) in her study about the relationship between self-esteem and happiness, found that self-esteem is highly correlated with happiness with $p .005$. According to Liu (2012) self-esteem had a significant positive effect on happiness. It can be concluded that in general, students' self-esteem and their happiness have a positive correlation.

Table 3. The Correlation between Students' Self-esteem and their Happiness

		Happiness
Self Esteem	Pearson Correlation	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	



CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made. Grade X students from selected private senior high school Airmadidi have a high level of self-esteem. It means that most of the students are generally calm and happy in learning English. They also have a high level of happiness. It means that they are generally optimistic, sociable, and also they have a tendency to trust that their lives are satisfying. Interestingly, there is a significant correlation between students' self-esteem in learning English and their happiness. It means that when students have a high level of self-esteem then their happiness is also high. Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, several recommendations were made

The first one is for English teachers. English teachers need to maintain the way they teach the students by creating friendly circumstances so the students can feel free to express their feelings in positive ways and the students may learn enjoyably. The second is for students. Students need to maintain and even improve their self-esteem in learning English because the higher their self-esteem in learning English, the happier they are. And the third is for future research. The same study could be implemented for other subjects not only for English, but the same study could also be done to other levels of education, not only for high school, and the same methodology could be used for this study with different respondents.

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