

Prediction of histrionic characteristics of female university students based on explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, social competence and body image

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at predicting histrionic characteristics of female university students based on explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, social competence and body image. To achieve this goal, 100 students were selected by multistage cluster sampling. Then Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire, Fisher Body Image Questionnaire, Felner et al. (1990) Social Competence Questionnaire, and Ferguson and Nagy (2014) Histrionic Personality Scale were given to them, and then computerized implicit-association test (IAT) of self-esteem was done. The obtained data were analyzed by two-variables and multivariate correlation and regression. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between social competence and histrionic characteristics. However, explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, and body image could predict histrionic characteristics.

Keywords: Histrionic personality, Implicit self-esteem, Explicit self-esteem, Body image, Social competence.

Introduction

People with Histrionic Personality Disorder (HPD) are irritable and emotional, and have a bold, histrionic and extroverted behavior. But, despite their boastful and glamorous behavior, they often cannot maintain a deep attachment for a long time. These patients consider themselves as the counterparts of the best cinema stars, and are always the boastful star of the party, and by charm, apparent attractions, and seduction and coquetry, try to be at the focus of attention.

They have passionate, but at the same time superficial and constantly changing emotions and relationships. They, for example by boasting about having shares of large organizations or having athletic or artistic skills, try to attract the attention of others toward themselves. Their interests and attitudes are easily influenced by others or by the role they are playing now. Raskin, Novacek and Hogan (1991), Morf and Rhodewalt (1993) have considered histrionic personality as an attempt to regulate self-esteem^[1, 2]. The study by Jalali, Borjali and Hossein Sabet (2015) also supported the importance of low self-esteem in the formation of histrionic personality^[3]. Contradictory results have been obtained about the relationship between self-esteem and histrionic personality that have sometimes been in line with psychodynamic explanations and sometimes in contrast to them. Many researchers believed that outward grandiosity of histrionic personalities covers their underlying emotions, degradation and implicit self-esteem that are derived from their initial life experiences, and influences their general and explicit self-esteem (Kernberg, 2015, quoted from Vater, Ritter, Schröder-Abé, Schütz, Lammers et al., 2013; Zeigler-Hill and Jordan, 2011)^[4-6]. According to clinical

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opinions^[4], explicit self-esteem is the cause of implicit or hidden vulnerability in people with histrionic personality disorder. In contrast, according to social learning theories, implicit pride (low explicit self-esteem, high implicit self-esteem) is the characteristic of people with histrionic personality disorder^[5]. People who have lower self-esteem, invest more on their body image as a source of self-value and when they receive a lot of negative feedbacks, their self-esteem and sense of self-value are threatened and they try to maintain their sense of self-value by high focus and through emphasizing on their appearance and body. As the person may feel a body deficiency or for any reason be dissatisfied with his/her body image, his/her main source of self-confidence is felt to be insufficient. As there is no other basis for referral and restoring of self-esteem, the lack of self-esteem is seen in these individuals. Farokhzad and Sehati (2016) showed that the mean of body deformity disorder in women is higher than men^[7]. Also, there was a significant relationship between body deformity disorder and most of personality disorders such as histrionic personality and narcissistic personality disorder. The reason for behaviors has long been under the attention of scholars, especially psychologists and sociologists. Educational, clinical and personality psychologists have always paid attention to the study of motivation and reason for behaviors. Therefore, paying attention to the students' mental status can make the implementation of educational plans easier and more desirable. Afzali Naniz (2016) also showed that there was a difference between body image in non-professional female athletes and non-athlete women^[8]. But no significant difference was observed between explicit self-esteem and implicit self-esteem in non-professional female athletes and non-athlete women. Young people constitute the major part of the world's population. In developing countries, the share of this population from the total population is about fifty percent. In our country also major part of the population are adolescents and young people. Therefore, we must try to properly understand this great population and strive to provide material and spiritual conditions necessary for their physical, emotional and intellectual growth. Given the possibility of affliction of the youth and university students with histrionic personality disorder, the practitioners and authorities with the help of psychologists and researches such as the present study can provide appropriate educational and therapeutic programs for reducing unhealthy behavior in these people and prevent future problems in society.

On the other hand, as was previously mentioned, investigating psychological variables by self-reporting tools was not much reliable. For this reason, implicit tools have been designed to measure some variables _especially cognitive variables such as perception, memory, self-esteem, and so on. One of these tools is implicit self-esteem measurement tool that has solved the problems of explicit scales to a large extent and has measured self-esteem as an unconscious structure in people^[9]. Since in Iran no comparison has been made between explicit and implicit self-esteem, it has become necessary in studies to measure implicit self-esteem. Doing so, the relationship

between this variable and explicit self-esteem would also be examined and these two structures could be compared. The present study aimed at, in addition to examining the relationship between predictor variables and criteria of the research, investigating the relationship between implicit self-esteem and explicit self-esteem, specifically and extracting their correlation so that the difference between explicit and implicit evaluation of this variable could be understood. According to the above, the present study sought to investigate and answer to the question whether explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, social competence and body image can predict histrionic characteristics in female university students of Kerman universities or not?

Methodology

The statistical population of this study included all female students of Kerman universities during the spring 2018. The sample size was 100 people. Sampling was done through multi-stage cluster sampling method. To do this, firstly, by compiling a list of Kerman universities, two universities were randomly selected. Then, by receiving the list of students and their contact numbers from the universities, 50 female students from each university (a total of 100 students) were randomly selected. For descriptive-correlational studies, it has been suggested to have a sample size of at least 100 individuals. Then, Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire, Fisher Body Image Questionnaire, Felner et al. (1990) Social Competence Questionnaire, computerized implicit-association test (IAT) of self-esteem, and the questions related to Histrionic Personality Scale were provided to them^[10]. Finally, the obtained data were analyzed by descriptive statistics, and two-variables and multivariate correlation and regression.

Instruments

Brief Histrionic Personality Scale (BHPS)

This questionnaire first had 11 items (under the title of "Brief Histrionic Personality Scale") that Ferguson and Nagy (2014) designed the revised (developed) form of which having 36 items in order to measure the histrionic characteristics^[11]. This scale includes two components of seduction and attracting the attention of others. The items are scored in Likert spectrum from 1 (never) to 4 (always). Questions number 3, 7, 12, 15, 18, 22, 23, 30 and 36 are scored in reverse order. The highest score of this scale is 144 and the lowest one is 36. People who score less than 65, do not have significant symptoms. At the scores of 65-95, there are significant histrionic personality traits, but they are not necessarily at a clinical level. Regarding the scores of over 95, personality characteristics are clinically significant. Reliability of the whole scale was obtained as 0.91 through re-test method and it was 0.82 and 0.91 for subscales of seduction and attracting the attention of others, respectively. In addition, convergent validity of total test score

with the MMPI histrionic subscale was equal to 0.60^[11]. Before starting the sampling of the present study, validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by five professors. Reliability of the questionnaire was also obtained as 0.71, through bisection method, which was acceptable.

Rosenberg Self-esteem Questionnaire (1965)

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) measures the overall self-esteem and personal value. This scale consists of 10 general terms that measure the degree of life satisfaction and having good feelings about one's own. To perform this test, the scale was given to the subject and he/she was asked to read the sentences and express his/her agreement or disagreement by choosing the options "totally agree" to "totally disagree". Scoring of this questionnaire is done through Likert spectrum; the option totally agree is scored 4 and the option totally disagree is scored 1. The items 3, 5, 6, 8, and 9 are scored in reverse order. Rosenberg has reported the scale's recreation to be equal to 0.9 and its scalability to be equal to 0.7.

Cronbach's alpha coefficients for this scale were calculated to be 0.87 for men and 0.86 for women at the first time, and 0.88 for men and 0.87 for women at the second time. Retest correlation was in the range of 0.82-0.88 and internal consistency coefficient or Cronbach's alpha was in the range of 0.77-0.88. This scale has a satisfactory internal validity (0.77). Validity of this scale has been estimated to be equal to 0.73 through bisection method, between two Persian and English versions by Spearman-Brown formula of Vahdatnia (2005), which was statistically significant and no specific problem has existed in terms of implementation. Also, the validity of the Persian version has been calculated through retest method after ten days by Vahdatnia (2005), and the correlation coefficient has been obtained to be 0.74.

Computerized Implicit-Association Test (IAT) of self-esteem

IAT is a classification test developed by Greenwald et al. (1998). This tool has been used to measure individual differences in tacit recognition and in creation and measurement of self-concept and self-esteem. Associations have been used in depressed patients and others. The basis of IAT is that, in the event of high relation between two concepts, the reaction time to IAT when defining a response key for those two concepts is faster. The result of this test obtained the response time when responding to various stimuli. Various studies have reported good validity and reliability for this tool. Implicit-association test has seven blocks, five of which are exercise and two of which are test. The blocks one, two and five have 24 attempts, and blocks three, four, six and seven have 48 attempts. Implicit-association test has two dimensions including purpose dimension and attribution dimension. Purpose dimension includes the words of attributes associated with "I" and "others"; and the attribution dimension includes "positive

attributes" and "negative attributes". The underlying assumption of implicit-association test is that the stronger are the associations, the faster will be the response time to the stimuli. In the utilized test in this research, four categories of words have been used: a) words related to "I", b) words related to "others", c) "positive attributes" and d) "negative attributes".

For scoring the implicit-association test, as mentioned above, the information of blocks four and seven was required. According to the test instruction, before any analysis, the data should be normalized. The scores were normalized and in the next step, after obtaining the mean for the scores of both blocks, the blocks of block seven, which was the inconsistent block, were deducted from block four, that was consistent; and the score of interference of the individual's implicit self-esteem was calculated. This score was the individual's score of implicit self-esteem. In the present study, before performing statistical tests, the scores of implicit-association test were normalized according to the main test instruction through surface normalization method and by Rankit formula.

Hashemipour et al. (2012) examined psychometric properties of self-esteem's implicit-association test^[12]. According to the results, retest reliability and internal consistency were obtained to be 0.52 and 0.63, respectively. Also, differential validity of self-esteem's implicit-association test compared to Rosenberg's self-esteem was obtained as equal to 0.06. These results indicated that implicit-association test (self-esteem version) had good reliability and internal consistency and it had appropriate differential validity.

Fisher's Body Image Questionnaire

This test was made by Fisher in 1970 having 46 items. Each item has a value ranging from 1 to 5 (1. very dissatisfied, 2. dissatisfied, 3. mediocre, 4. satisfied, and 5. very satisfied). Gaining a score of 46 indicates a disorder, and a score higher than 46 and the much higher (up to maximum 230) indicates the lack of disorder. The domains measured in this test include face and head with 12 items (questions 1 to 12), upper limbs with 10 items (questions 13 to 22) and lower limbs with 6 items (questions 23 to 28). The other 18 items measure the subject's attitude toward general characteristics of body (questions 29 to 46). Validity of this test in Iran has been examined by Yazdanjou. The calculated correlation coefficient of the test in the first run and the second run, according to Pearson's method, was 0.81 for the first year students, 0.84 for the second year students, 0.87 for the third year students, and 0.84 for the total number of students. Given the significance level of these coefficients, it can be accepted that there was a significant correlation between the scores obtained from the first run and the second run of the image test.

Felner's Social Competence Questionnaire:

Felner et al. (1990) Social Competence Scale has been prepared based on Felner's theory. It has 47 items and measures four dimensions of cognitive skills, behavioral skills,

emotional adequacy and motivational sets. The subjects respond to the items of this test in a 7-point scale (from totally disagree to totally agree). Reliability and validity of this test has been estimated by Parandin (2006) in Tehran province on 450 people. Two methods of Cronbach's alpha and correlation coefficient between two runs (retest) have been used to estimate reliability coefficient of the scale. Cronbach's alpha method has been used to examine internal consistency of the scale and the subscales. The obtained alpha coefficient was equal to 0.884, which indicated that the questionnaire had an acceptable and desirable internal consistency coefficient. To use reliability method, in addition to alpha coefficient, retest method has also been used. The questionnaire was implemented on 30 subjects over a time period of 4 weeks. Correlation coefficient between two runs in the retest was obtained as 0.889. In order to evaluate validity of the questionnaire, content validity and construct validity have been examined. Regarding content validity, given the background theory provided by Felner, its face validity and logical validity have been confirmed by psychology and psychometrics specialists. Construct validity of this questionnaire has been investigated through two methods. Correlation of the whole scale with the subscales has been very high and has been significant at the level of 99%. Also, construct validity of the scale has been examined by factor analysis. KMO value (sampling adequacy) was 0.826.

In social competence questionnaire, each question has four options including: totally agree, agree, somewhat agree, I have no idea, somewhat disagree, disagree, and totally disagree; and the subject must choose the option which mostly expresses his/her feelings and opinions. Scoring is done through Likert method and follows 0 to 4 system such that if the subject chooses totally disagree option, the score is 1; disagree has the score of 2; somewhat disagree has the score of 3; I have no idea has the score of 4; to some extent agree is equal to 5; agree is equal to 6; and totally agree is equal to the score of 7. Also, questions number 3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 21, 25, 26, 28, 32, 36, 37, 38, 43, 44, 45 are scored in reverse order. That is, totally agree has the score of 1 and totally disagree has the score of 7.

Results

Table 1 shows mean and standard deviation of the research variables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of research variables

Index	Mean	Standard deviation
Social competence	208.70	60.126
Explicit self-esteem	27.26	8.68
Histrionic characteristics	98.99	30.76
Body image	162.70	39.66
Implicit self-esteem	50.83	29.01

Using Pearson correlation coefficient, the relationship between predictor variables of the study and histrionic characteristics in female students was examined.

Table 2: Results of examining the correlation between predictor variables of the study and histrionic characteristics in female students, separated based on variables

Variable	Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R ²)	Significance
Social competence	0.03	-	0.75
Explicit self-esteem	0.36	0.13	0.001
Body image	-0.36	0.13	0.001
Implicit self-esteem	-0.35	0.12	0.001

According to the results in Table 2, social competence with the obtained significance level (0.75) had no significant relationship with histrionic characteristics. But explicit self-esteem, body image, and implicit self-esteem can alone accounted for 13, 13 and 12 percent of changes in the variable of histrionic characteristics, respectively (p<0.01).

Then, using multiple correlation and regression, the relationship between explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, social competence and body image, and histrionic characteristics was investigated.

Table 3: Results of examining the correlation between explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, social competence and body image, and histrionic characteristics

Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R ²)	Significance level
0.55	0.30	0.001

Table 4: Regression coefficients predicting histrionic characteristics based on explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, social competence and body image

Predictor	Regression coefficients (B)	Mean standard error	Beta weights	Significance
Social competence	-0.01	0.04	-0.02	0.840
Explicit self-esteem	1.17	0.31	0.33	0.001
Body image	-0.02	0.07	-0.28	0.001
Implicit self-esteem	-0.25	0.10	-0.24	0.001
Fixed	85.10	18.49	-	0.010

According to the results in Table 3, explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, social competence, and body image could together explain 30% of changes of the variable of histrionic characteristics (P<0.01). Among these variables, explicit self-

esteem with beta value of 0.33, body image with beta value of 0.28 and implicit self-esteem with beta value of 0.24, respectively, all with the significance level less than 0.01 were decisive in the regression model, but social competence did not play a significant role in the regression model.

Finally, using Pearson correlation coefficient, the relationship between explicit self-esteem and implicit self-esteem in female students was studied.

Table 5: Results of examining correlation between explicit self-esteem and implicit self-esteem in female students

Correlation coefficient (R)	Coefficient of determination (R ²)	Significance
-0.38	0.14	0.001

According to the results of Table 5 and given the obtained significance level (0.001), there was a significant relationship with histrionic characteristics.

Discussion and conclusion

The present study showed that explicit self-esteem, implicit self-esteem, social competence, and body image could predict histrionic characteristics in female students of Kerman universities. According to the results of this study, the above mentioned variables together could explain 30% of changes of the variable of histrionic characteristics. Among these variables, implicit self-esteem, explicit self-esteem and body image were decisive in the regression model, but the other variable, social competence, was not decisive in the regression model. No similar research was found in this regard, but Vincent et al. (2014) showed that there was a reverse and significant relationship between social skills and histrionic personality style. Although the above research has been conducted on social skills, not social competence, but it can be said that their results were not consistent with the result of the present study. However, it can be said that the difference between different cultures can be effective in the inconsistency of results. Therefore, given that no similar domestic research has been done in this regard, no definite result can be obtained. But explicit self-esteem and implicit self-esteem had the ability to predict histrionic characteristics of female students of Kerman universities. These results showed that there was a significant and direct relationship between explicit self-esteem and histrionic characteristics. This result was contradictory with the results of other researches. In other researches, it has been found that with the increase of self-esteem, the amount of need to attract the attention of others and selfishness of people was reduced. In other words, self-esteem resulted from a person's feelings about his/her own value and competence. Before explaining this result, it should be reminded that in examining the other hypothesis of the present study, the relationship between implicit self-esteem and histrionic characteristics was reverse and significant. This indicated the difference between self-measurement tools and

tactic measurement tools of psychological variables, because if both mentioned tools were consistent in measuring self-esteem, probably the direction of this relation in both hypotheses would be the same (either reverse or direct). In examining the relationship between implicit and explicit self-esteem also some studies have indicated a significant relationship between these two variables (Leibold and McConnell, 2001; Lapor and Brown, 1997; Kavakami et al., 1998; Wittenbrink et al., 1997; Quoted from Fazio and Olson, 2003) ^[13]. While some other studies have indicated the lack of any significant relationship between implicit and explicit self-esteem, meaning that, they argued that factors affecting explicit self-esteem may quite differently affect implicit self-esteem (Fazio et al., 1995; Greenwald et al., 1998; Rudman and Kilanski, 2000; Kavakami and Divido, 2001; Mantieth et al., 2001; Divido et al., 2002; quoted from Fazio and Olson, 2003) ^[13]. Although some researches have mentioned that explicit and implicit self-esteem are two independent categories and have poor correlation ^[12], it should not be forgotten that implicit-association test is in fact a response time task and is different from self-measurement scales in terms of nature. On the other hand, this result can be justified by a phenomenon called Dunning–Kruger effect (compound ignorance). The mentioned effect is a kind of cognitive bias in nonprofessional individuals in which they mistakenly assess their ability as greater than it is. This bias is attributed to metacognitive inability of nonprofessional individuals in the identification of their disability. Dunning and Kruger concluded that incorrect estimation of the incompetent individual is due to a mistake in his/her assessment, while incorrect estimation of very competent people is due to a mistake in others' assessment. People afflicted with histrionic personality disorder try to say to themselves that they have high self-esteem and self-confidence, and under the false popular teachings, they think that with the idea of “my self-esteem is high”, they can achieve high self-esteem. Therefore, they are mistaken in assessing themselves and they no longer accept their true self-esteem and constantly escape from themselves and the truth. Results of the studies by Apt and Hurlbert (1994) ^[14] and Jahani (2011) confirmed the results of the present study.

Given that implicit self-esteem in the present study has been measured by computer software, but explicit self-esteem has been measured by self-report tool, it can be said that people who have expressed themselves as positive in the self-report tool, have not been able to use the same method in computer tool, thus, have led to a significant but reverse relationship between these two variables. This showed the strength of computer tools and on the other hand, a weakness of self-report tools. Since so far, no research has been conducted to prove this hypothesis, and the present study was the first investigation of the relationship between these variables. Therefore, to prove or reject this hypothesis, it was not possible to just use this one research, rather further investigations in this regard are needed to confirm or reject it.

On the other hand, body image also had the ability to predict histrionic characteristics of female students of Kerman universities. The present study was consistent with the studies conducted in this field, including researches by Farokhzad and Sehati (2016), Mattei et al. (2015), Pecorari et al. (2009), Phillips and McElroy (2000), and Khanjani et al. (2012), Moheb et al. (2009), Zokaee and Farzaneh (2008) [7, 15-20].

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