



**Bülent Ağbuğa<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Pamukkale University, School of Sport Sciences and Technology, Denizli, Turkey

[bakboga@pau.edu.tr](mailto:bakboga@pau.edu.tr)

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN YOUNG BOXERS

### *Abstract*

This study examines the relationship between young boxers' perceptions of self-esteem and their personal and social responsibility. The participants consist of two hundred and seventeen young male boxers ( $M$  age = 15.76,  $SD$  = .88). They completed both a 4-point Likert-type questionnaire assessing their self esteem and a 6-point Likert-type questionnaire assessing their personal and social responsibility. Results of the study revealed that young boxers were likely to report high levels of self-esteem and personal responsibility and social responsibility. Simple correlation and multiple regression analyses revealed young boxers' self-esteem was positively related to their personal and social responsibility. This finding results reinforce the view that people who appreciate themselves and have a sense of personal empowerment will improve their personal and social responsible behaviors. This study allows us to gain insights into a relationship that is relevant to society and that can reduce the growing incidence of social and personal problems.

**Key words:** Personal responsibility, self-esteem, social responsibility, society

## INTRODUCTION

Today, adolescences have to live in a harsh environment, such as they have more access to drugs and are more exposed to media with messages about violence (Weissberg et al., 2003). For example, surveys of adolescences reveal that 15% of 8th graders and 27% of 12th graders have used illicit drugs within the last 30 days (Johnson et al., 1999). As a result of this, today's adolescences are more angry, less social/emotional compenticies, and show less responsible behaviors (Weisberg et al., 2003).

Given this condition, people must take several steps to improve the quality of adolescences' life. While they can benefit when their families, schools, community organizations, health-care and human-service systems, and policymakers work together, they can also benefit from research-based strategies (Weisberg et al., 2003). Because personal and social responsible behaviors are relevant to academic achievement, a safe environment for society, cognitive and social development (Ames and Ames, 1984; Freiberg, 1999), researchers have examined personal and social responsibility development (for a review, see Hellison and Martinek, 2006). While personal responsibility "involves being able to make and keep agreements; set goals and create ways to achieve them; accept consequences of personal choices; and acknowledge personal accomplishments", social responsibility "involves being able to communicate with others in a way that empowers them rather than demeans them; honor others' rights, dignity, and worth; work together toward common goals; negotiate problems and conflicts success fully; and create opportunities for others" (Lavay et al., 2006; p. 119).

There have been several studies performed to assess youths' personal and social responsibility in physical activity settings. Hellison (2003), for example, developed a model (Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility [TPSR]) to assess youth's perceptions of personal and social responsibility. TPSR empowers students to take personal and social responsibility for their learning and behaviour without the need for teacher direction through sport and physical activities. Hellison et al. (2000) and Okseon (2012) state that the model includes two sets of values, personal responsibility (i.e., effort [self-motivate, explore new tasks, and persist through adversity], self-direction [exhibit on-task independence, show goal setting progression, resist peer pressure] and social responsibility (i.e., respect [respect the rights and feelings of others], caring and helping others [put others' need before your own,

provide leadership, help and prioritize group welfare], with transfer of the lessons learned in the gymnasium to outside settings such as the classroom, community, and home).

Watson et al. (2003) also developed The Contextual Self-Responsibility Questionnaire (CSRQ) to assess personal and social responsibility in a physical activity setting after examining Hellison's (1995) TPSR model. Recently, Li et al. (2008) modified Watson et al. (2003) CSRQ to assess middle school students' perceptions of personal and social responsibility in physical education. Eight original items were reworded and six items were created to the first four TPSR model. At the end of this modification process, researchers developed the Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire (PSRQ). The result of their study suggests the two-factor PSRQ is valid and reliable.

As a main study, Ağbuğa (2013) examined the perceptions of personal and social responsibility behaviors among adolescences in Turkey. The participants consisted of two hundred and twenty one high school students in physical education settings. Results of his study revealed that students were more likely to report higher levels of personal responsibility and social responsibility in physical education classes and personal and social responsible behaviors were correlated.

Several strategies have been applied to reduce social and personal problems in literature (Ağbuğa et al., 2010; Downing, 1996; DuPaul and Hoff, 1998; Oswal et al., 2005). Oswald et al. (2005), for example, examined whether a multi-component Positive Behavior Support (PBS) intervention program, serving 950 sixth through eighth grade students, could reduce school students' misbehaviors. With assistance from university consultants, a PBS team developed a plan to reduce hallway disruptive behaviors for an intervention program consisting of positive practice, pre-correction, verbal praise, reinforcement, correction of inappropriate behavior, active supervision, discussion of behavior with students and on-time dismissal. After a five-week intervention period, researchers observed meaningful improvement in these students' disruptive behaviors.

However, there still is a lack of studies providing simple strategies that minimize irresponsible behaviours. Moderate and/or high self-esteem can be a different way to lessen personal and social responsibility problems, if significant relationships exist among these variables. Self-esteem can be defined from "the feeling that one is 'good enough'" (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 31) to a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward her/himself (Sanaktekin and Sunar, 2008). There are

different scales to assess individuals' self-esteem, such as, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1991); the Coopersmith Scale (Bagley, 1989), the Piers-Harris Scale (Bagley and Mallick, 1978), and the Tennessee Scale (Roid and Fitts, 1988). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is the most frequently used of these scales. This is because the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a well-established and global measure of self-esteem that has demonstrated reliability and validity (Brand and Dodd, 1998).

Specifically, previous studies indicated that self-esteem can be an important construct to examine various social and psychological problems (Kaplan, 1975; Rosenberg, 1985, Wray and Stone, 2005). While people with high self-esteem maintain a positive self-concept which is a basic human motive (Cox and Pyszczynski, 2004), people with low self-esteem tend to view themselves less favorably, lack self-concept, clarity, and certainty, and high feelings of shame and humiliation (Maner and Park, 2009). Berry and Howe (2000), for example, indicated that low self-esteem is correlated with more competitive anxiety and more eating disorders than high self-esteem among female university athletes.

It is important for individuals to maintain an ideal environment by fostering self-esteem that influences cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors positively (Leary et al., 1995). Because of being a moral activity, being a part of culture, kids' loving (Martinek and Perez, 2005), and improving physical competence and attractiveness (Nelson, 1994), sport has proven to be an ideal environment for advancing individuals along through levels of responsibility and self-esteem (Larson, 2000; Pedersen and Seidman, 2004; Tremblay et al., 2000; Whitehead and Corbin, 1997). Pedersen and Seidman (2004), for example, investigated the contribution of achievement in team sports to adolescent girls' self-esteem development. Two hundred and forty seven adolescent girls participated in their study. They found that team sports achievement experiences in early adolescence are positively associated with self-esteem in middle adolescence. They also found that the relation between achievement and self-esteem was partially mediated by girls' perceptions of competence and interest in the team sports domain. However, having high self-esteem may cause negative interpersonal consequences, such as "encompassing people who frankly accept their good qualities along with narcissistic, defensive, and conceited individuals" (Baumeister et al., 2003, p.1).

Although such studies have been performed to examine relationships between self-esteem with other variables (e.g., King et al., 2000; Nieman, 2002; Treasure et al., 1996) in the literature, there has been no research conducted that has examined the variable of personal

and social responsible behaviors with self-esteem for both professional and amateur athletes. This is because boxing can be seen as a sport more prone to aggressiveness and/or disruptive behaviours than other sports. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine young amateur boxers' perception of self esteem and its' relationship with personal and social responsible behaviors. The researcher proposed the following hypothesis. First, there would be high scores of their self-esteem, personal and social responsible behaviors. Second, there would be a positive correlation among the variables of self-esteem, personal and social responsible behaviors.

## METHOD

### The Setting and Participants

Two hundred and seventeen male boxers ( $M$  age = 15.76,  $SD$  = .88), who competed in 2012 National Junior Boxing Championship in Turkey, participated in this study. Participation was voluntary and permission from the institution, clubs, and boxers was obtained.

### Variables and Measures

The students responded to a two-part questionnaire. The first part consisted of demographic information including age, gender, and club name. The second part assessed student self-reported personal and social responsibility and self-esteem.

*Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire (PSRQ)*. Students' personal and social responsibility behaviors were measured using an adaptation of the Contextual Self-Responsibility Questionnaire developed by Li et al. (2008). The PSRQ consists of two categories of responsible behaviors (personal and social) with seven items for each category. Each construct of personal and social responsibility consists of four TPSR levels: A three-item effort (e.g., I try hard), a four-item self-direction (e.g., I set goals for myself); a three-item respect for others (e.g., I respect others) and a four-item caring for others (e.g., I am helpful to others), respectively. The format for all items is a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). All items were prefaced with the heading "It is natural to behave both well and poorly. We are interested in how you normally behave in your physical education class. Please answer the following statements honestly by checking

the box that best represents your behavior.” (Li et al., 2008; p. 171). The scale was adapted to Turkish adolescents by Agbuga (2013) and generated reliable and valid scores.

*The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire.* The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-esteem. The scale is a 10-item scale that measures global self-esteem and both positive and negative feelings about the self. Participants rate their level of agreement by using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. The example items used in this study are the following: (1) I am satisfied with myself, (2) I think I am no good at all, and (3) I feel I do not have much to be proud of. The scale was adapted to Turkish adolescents by Cuhadaroglu (1986) and generated reliable and valid scores. This Turkish version of the scale was recently used to investigate Turkish athletes by several researchers (e.g., Gencer, 2012; Gencer and Ilhan, 2012; Ucan and Caglayan, 2012).

In the current study, scales of self-esteem and personal and social responsible were constructed by averaging the items on the scales. Cronbach’s alphas were .72, .70, and .75, respectively, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

#### Procedure

All data were collected during the National Junior Boxing Championship in 2012. The study was introduced to participants when they started to come to the gymnasium on the morning of the first day. All participants were handed a package containing a consent form, a questionnaire and a pen. The participants were invited to complete the questionnaire. They were encouraged to answer as truthfully as they could and to ask questions if they had difficulty understanding instructions or items in the questionnaire. They were also informed that their coaches would not have access to their responses. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

#### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to provide a summary of participants’ self-reported self-esteem and personal and social responsible behaviors. Pearson-product correlations were performed to examine relationships between these two variables. Simultaneous multiple regression analysis was employed to examine how self-esteem might affect their personal and social responsible behaviors.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics

As indicated in Table 1, the mean scores of self-reported self-esteem, personal and social responsible behaviors were above the midpoint of the scale (i.e., 2 for self-esteem and 3 for responsible behaviors, respectively), suggesting that participants had high self-esteem and high personal and social responsible behaviors (they respect and cares others, put forth effort and set goals for themselves).

### Relationships Among Variables

Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated to identify significant relationships between self-reported self-esteem, personal and social responsible behaviors (see Table 1). Correlation analysis revealed that all variables ([self-reported self-esteem, personal [respect for others and caring for others] and social responsible behaviors [self-direction and effort]) were positively correlated with one another.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Data and Correlations for self-reported self-esteem and personal and social responsible behavior

		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Boxers (n = 217)								
Personal Responsibility	1. Self-esteem	3.36	.42	1	.351**	.212**	.349**	.356**
	2. Respect to others	5.49	.54		1	.577**	.320**	.472**
	3. Caring to others	5.33	.66			1	.249**	.290**
Social Responsibility	4. Self-direction	5.47	.65				1	.435**
	5. Effort	5.28	.66					1

\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Simultaneous multiple regression analysis, with using “stepwise” method tested the hypothesis that self-reported personal and social responsibility was related to self-esteem among boxers in this study. In the first step, caring for others was entered first, respect for others was entered second, then self-direction, and lastly effort. Specifically, as shown in Table 2, respect for others ( $\beta = .210$ ,  $p = .011$ ); self-direction ( $\beta = .211$ ,  $p = .003$ ); effort ( $\beta = .169$ ,  $p = .023$ ) emerged as significant positive predictors of self-esteem. On the other hand, caring for others only emerged as non-significant predictor of self-esteem ( $\beta = -.010$ ,  $p = .893$ ). Moreover,  $R^2$  from this multiple regression analysis was .20.

**Table 2:** Results of Multiple Regression Analysis on Boxers' Self-Esteem

Predictor Variables	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	t-value
<b>Step 1</b>				
Caring to others	.045	.041	.212**	3.185
<b>Step 2</b>				
Caring to others			.015	.186
Respect to others	.123	.115	.342**	4.369
<b>Step 3</b>				
Caring to others			-.011	-.141
Respect to others			.272**	3.506
Self-direction	.186	.174	.264**	4.036
<b>Step 4</b>				
Caring to others			-.010	-.134
Respect to others			.210*	2.565
Self-direction			.211**	3.058
Effort	.205	.190	.169**	2.286

Note.  $R^2$  values are cumulative, with each incremental step adding to the variance explained; \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .001$ .

## DISCUSSION

The study of adolescences' self-esteem and personal and social responsibility may provide us an effective strategy that can reduce the growing increase of personal and social problems. This study, therefore, examined the relationship between young boxers' self-reported self-esteem and their self-reported personal and social responsibility behaviours. Previous research (e.g., Asci 1999; Gencer, 2012; King et al., 2000; Nieman, 2002; Treasure et al., 1996 ) revealed that self-esteem was positively associated with many variables such as, full of life satisfaction, healthy and perpetual relations, ability to adapt, winning, and mastery motivational climate. The results from this study provided additional support to these findings in a sport environment by examining the relationship between self-esteem and personal and social responsibility in young boxers.

Significant correlations between self-esteem and personal and social responsibility clearly indicated that adolescences with high self-esteem who feel good about themselves and see themselves as competent exhibit high personal and social responsibility. A multiple regression analysis also revealed that personal and social responsibility behaviours were significant positive predictors of self-esteem. Moreover,  $R^2$  from this multiple regression analysis was .20, indicating a positive linear relationship between the set of predictors (personal and social responsibility) and self-esteem. The findings should be interpreted cautiously because of small  $R^2$  value. It is only about 20% of the variations in participants' self-esteem explained by personal and social responsibility behaviours.

It can be said that people who appreciate themselves and have a high sense of self-worth will improve their own personal responsibility and so behave responsible for the society. This result is consistent with previous studies indicating positive relations between self-esteem and other variables. Martens (1987), for example, suggest that if the individual feels himself valuable, he will feel that other people are also valuable. As an important study, Trzesniewski et al. (2006) reported that those with low self-esteem as adolescents were at increased risk for poor mental and physical health as adults and had worse economic prospects than adolescents with high self-esteem. Their study also indicated that adolescents with low self-esteem were more likely to be convicted of a crime during adulthood. Several studies, however, suggested that self-esteem plays no causal role in predicting positive outcomes. Baumeister et al. (1996), for example, summarized a large number of studies on self-esteem. They reported that the research did not support claims that self-esteem is not a solution to the social problems. Baumeister (2005), on the other hand, admitted that some positive characteristics associated with high self-esteem, such as high energy and general happiness. Follow-up study, therefore, is required to support or refute the positive relationship between self-esteem and personal and social responsibility.

In conclusion, this study represents the first attempt to examine the relationship between adolescences' perceptions of self-esteem and their personal and social responsibility by using Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire (PSRQ) in boxing. This study helps in expanding the continuum of the positive effect of self-esteem by studying young boxers. Future research efforts, however, are recommended to replicate this study with other sport branches and/or a larger number of participants.

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