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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>This study aimed to clarify underlying variables of global self-esteem in work-aged Finnish men and women as assessed on a measure developed by M. Rosenberg (1965). The study examined the relationship between self-esteem and (1) sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1979) and sense of competence, (2) Machiavellism (Mach IV) and (3) personal values assessed through the Portraits measure (Schwartz, 2001) and completed in relation to work and spiritual values. Based on Eagly's (1987) theory of gender role differences, the self-esteem of young adults in further education or at work was compared.</p> <p>The study consisted of two data sets collected through questionnaires: the first in 1995 (n=368), the second in 2001 (n=1283). The central variables were gender, age, education and professional/occupational categories. The sets of data were also examined in relation to salary and type of occupational enterprise including farming.</p> <p>Results showed that neither gender nor age was related to level of self-esteem. However, the more educated the individuals the higher their self-esteem. Low self-esteem was best explained by a low sense of coherence and Machiavellian cynicism. Both can be considered related to weak social integration within society. Cynicism was highest among those men and women aged under 31 years with low levels of education and also those engaged in farming. Young people in further education had more problems with their sense of coherence than those in employment. Well-educated entrepreneurs achieved the highest scores on the self-esteem measure while those engaged in farming had the lowest scores. It seems that a proportion of the farming population perceive themselves deceived and marginalized within the Finnish society which, in turn, contributes to their low self-esteem, cynical attitude and conflicting values.</p> <p>Although this study showed that women were more social and emphatic than men, gender role differences at the workplace had narrowed. For both sexes, roles at the workplace were shaped by society's norms, expectations and demands. A sense of competence and success at the workplace was a very important correlate of self-esteem for both men and women. It can be concluded that work is an important route to social integration in society and work has a positive effect on the individual's sense of self-worth. According to the study, men and especially women at work appear to base their self-esteem on personal competence in the areas of knowledge, skills and social relations and on individual self-enhancement and values. The results of the study are in accordance with the views of Morris Rosenberg. Weak and problematic interpersonal relationships (integration between individuals) and weak institutional and norm-dependent behaviour are typical of persons with low self-esteem.</p>		
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