The study is based on a measure of global self-esteem developed by Rosenberg (1965). The aims are (1) to investigate in an adult population the concept of self-esteem as defined by Rosenberg, (2) to develop measures for examining qualitative differences within this global concept, (3) to map out qualitative differences in self-esteem for the sample of adults involved in the study. Antonovsky (1979) provides the theoretical basis for measures to examine qualitative differences. These include a sense of coherence, machiavellism (Mach IV) and the 'Big Five' personality theories. Emerging qualitative factors (personality components) and their interrelationships are examined.

Data was collected during 1995 through questionnaires administered to course participants representing different work environments (n=368). Gender, age and education were independent variables. In methodological terms the study was quantitative. Results were examined first on the basis of percentages, averages and correlations. The predictors of the global concept of self-esteem were analysed by means of factor analysis and linear regression analysis. Analysis of variance examined whether, in terms of the predictors, there were differences between different professional groups.

The following dimensions of coherence emerged: a sense of meaninglessness (a=.77), disappointment in interpersonal relationships (a=.74), anxiety (a=73). The components of machiavellism were: cynicism (a=.73) and honesty/moral respect (a=.65). The dimensions of a sense of competence were: a wish to please (a=.70), competence and success (a=.78) and success at school (a=.74). Other personality factors were: social competence and empathy (a=.78), willingness to experiment (a=.69), social and verbal influence (a=.78), a sense of shame (a=.70), a sense of guilt (a=.69) and conservatism (a=.67).

Gender and age did not have an effect on global self-esteem (Rosenberg). However, level of education did. Those with more extensive education seemed to have higher levels of self-esteem. Weak sense of coherence, shame and guilt as predictors of low self-esteem were common to the whole sample. Education and age also contributed to qualitative predictors. Cynicism and disappointment in interpersonal relationships characterised low self-esteem in young men (aged below 31) who had less education. For employed young adults and women with more education, talkativeness, which was associated with low self-esteem, could be explained as a defence and compensatory mechanism. For women, low self-esteem was affected by aspects to do with a sense of life coherence, shame and guilt. Low self-esteem among educated men was explained by aspects of empathy and social competence. While for men success was the most important contributor, for women it was close interpersonal relationships, empathy and social interaction. The results are largely in agreement with the views expressed by Rosenberg, i.e. the importance of social, normative and institutional integration in affecting self-esteem.

Rosenberg, M. (1979): Conceiving the self
Antonovsky, A. (1979): Health, stress and coping

Avainsanat-Nyckelord-Keywords
- global self-esteem - sense of coherence
- guilt - shame - self-image
- success - social interaction - self-esteem
- machiavellism

Säilytyspaikka-Förvaringsställe-Where deposited

Muita tietoja-Övriga uppgifter-Additional information