



Кросс-культурный анализ самооценки российских и индийских младших школьников

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Введение. Обеспечение эффективного развития самооценки младшего школьника требует многоаспектного учета ее детерминации, в том числе влияния макрофактора культуры. Изучение культурно-специфических особенностей самооценки российских детей представляет актуальную, но крайне мало и фрагментарно реализованную задачу. Сравнительный кросс-культурный анализ особенностей самооценки младших школьников из России и Индии выступил целью данного исследования.

Материалы и методы. В исследовании приняли участие 600 десятилетних детей из городских общеобразовательных школ России и Индии, по 300 младших школьников из каждой страны с равномерным гендерным распределением. Для диагностики использовалась методика измерения самооценки Т. В. Дембо и С. В. Рубинштейн в модификации А. М. Прихожан (форма для детей 10–11 лет). Для определения статистической значимости межгрупповых различий в самооценке применялись t-критерий Стьюдента и χ^2 -критерий Пирсона.

Результаты исследования. Констатируется, что для индийских младших школьников характерны более высокие средние значения по всем частным самооценкам кроме «авторитета у друзей», высокую статистическую значимость имеют различия с российскими детьми по параметру «ум» (71,88 / 68,30 при $p \leq 0,01$), «способности» (73,52 / 65,65 при $p \leq 0,001$), общей самооценке (71,73 / 68,81 при $p \leq 0,01$). Установлено, что для десятилетних школьников из Индии как в общей выборке (90%), так и отдельно для мальчиков и девочек в большей степени по сравнению с российскими сверстниками (58,7%) свойственна адекватная самооценка. Статистически значимые гендерные отличия в самооценке детей из России не обнаружены, а у индийских младших школьников зафиксированы только по одному параметру – «красота».

Заключение. Полученные результаты обогащают представления о психологических особенностях самооценки ребенка, формирующихся в различных культурных контекстах, и могут быть использованы в практике психолого-педагогического сопровождения десятилетних российских и индийских школьников.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

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A cross-cultural analysis of self-esteem among Russian and Indian primary school pupils

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. Ensuring the effective development of primary school children's self-esteem requires a multifaceted consideration of its determinants, including the influence of the cultural macro-factor. The study of culture-specific characteristics of Russian children's self-esteem is a pressing issue, yet addressed only to a very limited and fragmented extent. *The aim of this study* was to conduct a comparative cross-cultural analysis of self-esteem characteristics among primary school pupils from Russia and India.

Materials and methods. The study involved 600 ten-year-old children from urban comprehensive schools in Russia and India – 300 primary school pupils from each country with even gender distribution. The self-esteem assessment involved the method developed by T.V. Dembo and S.V. Rubinstein, as modified by A.M. Prikhodzhan (a form for children aged 10–11). Student's t-test and Pearson's chi-squared test were used to determine the statistical significance of intergroup differences in self-esteem.

Results. It was found that Indian primary school pupils exhibited higher mean scores across all specific self-assessment categories except "prestige amongst friends"; the differences between them and Russian children are statistically highly significant in terms of "intelligence" (71.88 / 68.30 at $p \leq 0.01$), "abilities" (73.52 / 65.65 at $p \leq 0.001$), and overall self-esteem (71.73 / 68.81 at $p \leq 0.01$). It was found that ten-year-old schoolchildren from India, both in the overall sample (90%) and separately for boys and girls, were more likely to have an adequate self-esteem compared to their Russian peers (58.7%). No statistically significant gender differences in self-esteem were found among children from Russia, whereas differences recorded among Indian primary school pupils concerned only one parameter – "beauty".

Conclusion. The findings enrich the understanding of psychological characteristics of children's self-esteem as it develops in different cultural contexts, and can be applied in the practice of psychological and educational support of ten-year-old Russian and Indian schoolchildren.

KEYWORDS

self-esteem, primary school pupil, cross-cultural analysis, gender characteristics, Russia, India

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INTRODUCTION

The collective information appeal to national governments "Five essential pillars for promoting and protecting mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and learning environments: a briefing note for national governments" from the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization and UNESCO substantiates the need to create a safe and supportive school environment, conditions that provide not only high-quality education, but also emotional support, confidence, self-esteem and positive self-esteem of the child, coping skills [1].

The issue of self-esteem in schoolchildren—an important determinant of subjective well-being, behavioral regulation, academic success, and adaptation within the educational environment—has been the subject of particular scientific attention. Self-esteem is considered a key element of the broader psychological construct of self-consciousness. It has a multifactorial nature and represents a dynamic construct that develops throughout the individual's life [2]. According to Russian psychologists, primary school age is a sensitive period for the formation of self-esteem. This viewpoint was initially proposed by L. S. Vygotsky, who argued that around the age of seven, a child begins to form a stable (non-situational) and differentiated attitude toward oneself [3]. This perspective has since been supported by numerous works of Soviet psychologists, including L. I. Bozhovich, D. B. Elkonin, among others.

An analysis of contemporary psychological and pedagogical publications by authors from various countries reveals a substantial number of theoretical and applied studies devoted to the key aspects of self-esteem development in primary school children. The determinants of self-esteem in younger students have received detailed scientific attention both in Russian (B. V. Sergeeva, T. K. Gabelia [4], A. A. Gorokhova et al. [5]) and foreign works (Y. Gao, F. Ali [6], Y. Wang, T. H. Ollendick [7]). The main factors influencing the formation of a child's self-esteem at primary school age include the family microclimate, parenting style, the evaluative practices of the primary school teacher, and the nature of teacher–student interactions.

Considerable attention has been paid by researchers to the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among primary school students (S. A. Zaitseva, A. A. Smirnova [8], L. Herrera et al. [9]). Various positions of researchers have been identified on the correlation between the levels of self-esteem of a child aged 7–11 years and his personal anxiety: most publications state the connection between low self-esteem and high personal anxiety of a younger student (L. Y. Komlik, I. V. Faustova, N. M. Kopylova [10], T. A. Egorenko, A. V. Lobanova, N. P. Radchikova [11], etc.), however, in some studies, the interdependence of increased self-esteem and anxiety exceeding the norm in elementary school students has been established (E. S. Donskova [12], L. Hollenstein, C. M. Rubie-Davies, C. Brühwiler [13]).

The gender-specific self-esteem of primary school-age children from different countries was also analyzed: Russia [5; 11], Spain [9], the USA [14], India [15; 16], while the presented results are controversial and ambiguous, which is largely due to the specifics of cultural values, the social status of the respondents' families, and the choice of diagnostic methods and a fairly wide age range of participants (from 6 to 11 years old). In addition, a significant number of works provide theoretical justification and empirical verification of psychological and pedagogical conditions and methods for optimizing self-esteem of younger schoolchildren in academic and extracurricular activities as in Russian (E. G. Gutsu, S. I. Aruslanova, T. A. Runova [17], N. V. Ivanova, O. V. Suvorova [18]), and foreign practice (N. Lee [19], C. Gidwani, K. Chaudhary, D. Banerjee [20]).

At the same time, it is important to emphasize that certain issues within the studied problem field remain insufficiently or only fragmentarily explored. In particular, the cross-cultural context of self-esteem in primary school-aged children has received inadequate attention, especially in samples of Russian elementary school students. As a result, the characteristics of children's self-esteem shaped by the cultural specifics of a given country remain largely unexamined and are not taken into account in the educational process at the primary level. Meanwhile, in large-scale samples of high school students, university students, and working youth from various countries, the influence of culture as a macro-level factor on an individual's self-esteem has been convincingly demonstrated (D. P. Schmitt, J. Allik [21], Н. В. Лебедева, Е. Д. Васильева [22]).

First and foremost, cross-cultural psychological studies have paid particular attention to the comparative analysis of self-esteem among residents of countries that differ in one of the key sociocultural dimensions introduced by G. Hofstede—namely, the individualism–collectivism ratio. This parameter has a quantitative measurement and reflects the extent to which individuals in a given country are socially independent or, conversely, subordinate to the beliefs, norms, and values of their immediate community—family, friends, tribe, or clan [23]. For instance, in the study by D. P. Schmitt, J. Allik [21], based on a sample from 53 countries with over 16,000 participants and using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), it was found that general self-esteem levels are higher in Western countries dominated by individualistic culture than in East Asian countries characterized by collectivist culture. The same study also reported significant cross-cultural differences in the key components of self-esteem: self-competence and self-liking. In countries with a predominance of collectivism, people tend to show lower self-competence and higher self-liking compared to respondents from highly individualistic countries, for whom the reverse is true. Other studies (H. Cai et al. [24] и Y. Wang, T. H. Ollendick [25]) have revealed substantial differences in self-esteem among residents of China, the United States, and Western European countries: Chinese respondents, representing a collectivist culture, showed lower levels of both cognitive and global self-esteem. A. Nagar et al. [26] note that residents of such Asian countries as Japan and India generally have a self-esteem that is more dependent on social ties and the opinions of others compared to Europeans. Researchers explain these findings of cultural sensitivity in self-esteem by differences in value priorities, social expectations, goal orientations, and child-rearing traditions typical of individualist and collectivist cultures. According to Y. Wang, T. H. Ollendick [25], lower self-esteem in East Asian countries—where group identity, conformity, modesty, and adherence to group norms and goals play a significant role—is largely a reflection of these cultural features. H. Cai et al. [27] emphasize that Confucian ideas forming the basis of child-rearing in China, combined with a predominantly authoritarian teaching style, promote modesty and discourage self-praise, resulting in restrained self-esteem and an avoidance of overly positive self-assessments. In contrast, individualistic cultures place strong emphasis on the personal “self,” with primary child-rearing goals including encouragement of independence, freedom, self-development, and autonomy, which in turn can contribute to higher levels of self-esteem [21; 23].

Given the established lack of cross-cultural studies on self-esteem among Russian primary schoolchildren on the one hand, and the necessity of considering all determinants of a child’s personal development—including self-esteem—within the educational process on the other, the aim of our study was to conduct a comparative analysis of self-esteem characteristics in primary school-aged children from Russia and India.

The selection of India for the implementation of this research objective is based on several reasons. First, the partnership between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India (a declaration on strategic partnership between the two countries was signed in October 2000) enables academic collaboration, as well as the organization and execution of cross-cultural psychological research in the field of primary education. Second, Russia and India differ significantly in their socio-economic, political, cultural, and religious contexts, as reflected in standardized indicators generated through specialized programs of the United Nations. For instance, according to the 2025 Human Development Report (dated May 6, 2025), which reflects a country’s achievements in education, health, life expectancy, and quality of life, Russia belongs to the “very high” category and ranks 64th with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.832, while India ranks 130th with an HDI of 0.685, placing it at the upper threshold of the “medium” category [28]. The Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), which measures the percentage of people with gender-biased attitudes, shows that, according to the World Values Survey 2023 (dated January 12, 2023), the education-specific GSNI is 27.65% for Russia and 38.5% for India [29]. The two countries also differ in their levels of individualism, as determined by large-scale international studies [30]. India’s individualism score is relatively low—24 out of 100—indicating a dominant collectivist orientation within Indian society. In contrast, Russia’s individualism score is moderate—46 out of 100—with significantly higher values recorded in major cities (e.g., Moscow and Saint Petersburg) and in certain regions [31]. It is also important to highlight the continuing relevance of India’s “sensitive issue” of social stratification in education—a complex system of class and caste division—which significantly influences both the quality of educational services received and the academic success of students already at the primary school level (M. R. Gain, S. Biswas, P. Deb [32], S. K. Tiwari, K. R. Paltasingh, P. K. Jena [33]).

The listed differences between Russia and India allow us to hypothesize the existence of culturally specific features in the personal development of primary schoolchildren from the two countries, particularly in the characteristics of children's self-esteem.

To achieve the aim of the study, the following objectives were set:

- to examine the features of self-esteem development in Russian and Indian primary schoolchildren aged 10;
- to analyze gender differences in self-esteem among ten-year-old boys and girls from Russia and India;
- to identify culturally specific features of self-esteem in Russian and Indian primary schoolchildren.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To collect empirical data in our study, we used the self-esteem measurement technique developed by T. V. Dembo and S. V. Rubinstein, modified by A. M. Prikhozhan (for children aged 10–11) [34]. This diagnostic tool makes it possible to assess both general integrative self-esteem and a set of specific self-esteem dimensions. It is characterized by the simplicity and speed of the procedure: participants are required to mark, on special scales, the level of development of various qualities in themselves—i.e., to perform a self-assessment. In specialized studies by A. M. Prikhozhan [34], the high reliability of the results obtained through this “direct evaluation” method for children and adolescents was demonstrated, confirming the position of B. Phillips and his colleagues. Among the undeniable advantages of the method are the standardization of results by age and its broad application in contemporary psychological research, which has provided a robust empirical base for comparative analysis [10; 11]. Since the Dembo–Rubinstein method, unlike questionnaires, does not contain a substantial amount of verbal content either in the instructions or in the individual forms, its cross-cultural linguistic validation does not pose significant difficulties. In our study, to ensure equivalence of the English-language version for Indian schoolchildren, the standard international procedure of bilingual translation by a panel of experts was employed.

The study involved 600 primary schoolchildren—300 from Russia and 300 from India. Gender stratification was evenly distributed: each country's sample included 150 boys and 150 girls. The sample size was determined based on findings from large-scale psychological studies, which have shown that at least 100 participants per group are required to reliably identify culturally specific and gender-related characteristics [35].

To minimize differences between the samples, the participant pool was limited to urban primary schoolchildren attending public general education institutions; private schools and schools with advanced programs (gymnasiums, lyceums, and institutions for gifted children) were excluded. These criteria were introduced due to the significant disparities in educational conditions between large cities and rural areas, as noted in both countries [36; 37], as well as differences between public and private school environments—an especially pronounced issue in India [32].

Ten-year-old primary schoolchildren from seven schools in Nizhny Novgorod (Russia) and seven schools in Delhi (India) participated in the self-esteem assessment, with the support of school administrations and informed consent from parents. The selected age corresponds to the primary level of education in both countries and defines a relatively narrow age range, thereby minimizing the potential influence of age-related variability. Moreover, children at this age typically possess a sufficient level of self-reflection and the ability to meaningfully assess their own qualities [34].

It is worth noting that the Nizhny Novgorod region is characterized by a relatively high level of individualism, according to the results of a large-scale intra-Russian study [31].

Descriptive statistics (mean values and standard deviations) and percentage indicators were used in the analysis of the study results. To determine the statistical significance of intergroup differences, Student's t-test and χ^2 Test (Pearson's Chi-Square) were applied.

RESULTS

The results of the self-esteem assessment of ten-year-old urban primary schoolchildren from Russia (N = 300) and India (N = 300), using the T. V. Dembo and S. V. Rubinstein method as modified by A. M. Prikhozhan, are presented for the overall child samples in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Self-Esteem Among Primary Schoolchildren from Russia and India

Self-Esteem Parameters	Russia $M \pm \sigma$	$M \pm \sigma$	Student's t-Test
Character	72,12 $\pm$ 18,75	74,55 $\pm$ 14,09	-1,792
Intelligence	68,30 $\pm$ 16,95	71,88 $\pm$ 13,78	-2,835**
Abilities	65,65 $\pm$ 21,42	73,52 $\pm$ 14,41	-5,275***
Peer Authority	70,46 $\pm$ 21,42	68,87 $\pm$ 13,52	1,090
Appearance	68,47 $\pm$ 22,56	71,17 $\pm$ 15,18	-1,720
Confidence	67,59 $\pm$ 23,93	70,38 $\pm$ 14,69	-1,721
Overall Mean	68,81 $\pm$ 15,37	71,73 $\pm$ 7,38	-3,043**

Note. M – mean value; σ – standard deviation; * – statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$, ** at $p \leq 0.01$, *** at $p \leq 0.001$

First of all, it should be noted that the mean self-esteem scores of ten-year-old children from both countries fall within the range of adequate self-esteem (from 61 to 85 points) for this age group.

It is worth emphasizing that the average scores for all specific self-esteem parameters—except for “peer authority”—are higher among Indian primary schoolchildren compared to their Russian counterparts. This trend is also evident in the overall self-esteem indicator. Statistically significant differences between the two national samples were found using Student’s t-test for the parameters of “intelligence” ($p \leq 0.01$), “abilities” ($p \leq 0.001$), and overall self-esteem ($p \leq 0.01$).

Both Russian and Indian children rated their “character” the highest among all proposed parameters (72.12 and 74.55, respectively). Russian schoolchildren were the most critical in evaluating their “abilities” (65.65), while Indian primary school students gave the lowest ratings to their “peer authority” (68.87).

To conduct a multifaceted comparative analysis of self-esteem characteristics among primary schoolchildren from the two countries, the empirical data were distributed according to self-esteem levels based on the age norms of the methodology. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Self-Esteem Levels Among Primary Schoolchildren from Russia and India

Country	Self-Esteem Levels (%)				χ^2 -Test (Pearson's Chi-Square)
	Very High	Adequate		Low	
		High	Medium		
Russia	16,3	30,7	28,0	25,0	91,083***
India	0	54,6	35,4	10	

Note. *** – statistically significant at $p \leq 0.001$

The data presented in Table 2 demonstrate highly statistically significant differences ($p \leq 0.001$ according to χ^2 Test (Pearson’s Chi-Square) in self-esteem levels between ten-year-old schoolchildren from Russia and India. The vast majority of Indian children (90%) exhibit adequate

self-esteem: 54.6% with high and 35.4% with medium levels. Only 10% of Indian primary schoolchildren were found to have low self-esteem. In the Russian sample, only 58.7% of children showed adequate self-esteem: 30.7% high and 28% medium. A quarter of the Russian respondents (25%) exhibited low self-esteem, and 16.3% showed very high self-esteem—this latter level was not observed among the Indian participants.

An analysis of gender-specific self-esteem characteristics showed no statistically significant differences in the Russian sample in the mean scores for either specific or overall self-esteem, nor in the percentage distributions across self-esteem levels between boys and girls. Among Indian ten-year-olds, statistically significant gender differences were found only in the mean score for the specific self-esteem parameter “appearance”: girls rated their attractiveness significantly lower ($p \leq 0.01$).

The results of self-esteem assessment for boys from Russia ($N = 150$) and India ($N = 150$), and for girls from both countries ($N = 150$ in each sample), are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Self-Esteem Among Boys and Girls from Russia and India

Parameters	Boys		t	Girls		t
	Russia	India		Russia	India	
	$M \pm \sigma$	$M \pm \sigma$		$M \pm \sigma$	$M \pm \sigma$	
Character	71,29±18,93	75,49±13,66	-2,196*	72,69±18,64	73,35±14,56	-0,337
Intelligence	67,80±17,34	71,60±13,37	-2,106*	68,64±16,71	72,22±14,32	-1,980*
Abilities	67,00±21,38	74,52±13,91	-3,619***	64,71±21,45	72,25±14,96	-3,469***
Peer Authority	70,90±20,86	69,18±13,29	0,854	70,15±21,85	68,47±13,82	0,436
Appearance	69,57±19,87	73,24±14,53	-1,815	67,70±24,27	68,56±15,62	-0,358
Confidence	67,96±23,29	70,50±14,38	-1,142	67,32±24,42	70,21±15,12	-1,205
Overall Mean	69,15±14,91	72,52±7,09	-2,552**	68,57±15,70	70,90±7,69	-1,580

Note. M – mean value; σ – standard deviation; t – Student’s t -test;

* – statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$, ** at $p \leq 0.01$, *** at $p \leq 0.001$

According to Table 3, the most substantial statistically significant differences in self-esteem between boys from Russia and India were observed for the parameters “character” and “intelligence” ($p \leq 0.01$), as well as for “abilities” ($p \leq 0.001$) and overall self-esteem ($p \leq 0.01$). Among girls from the two countries, statistically significant differences were found in two self-esteem parameters: “intelligence” ($p \leq 0.01$) and “abilities” ($p \leq 0.001$). Indian boys and girls rated themselves higher than their Russian peers of the same gender across all parameters except for “peer authority.”

The distribution of empirical data by self-esteem levels for boys and girls from both countries is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Self-Esteem Levels Among Girls and Boys from Russia and India

Gender	Country	Self-Esteem Levels (%)				χ^2 -Test (Pearson's Chi-Square)
		Very High	Adequate		Low	
			High	Medium		
Boys	Russia	17,1	30,9	30,9	21,1	49,728***
	India	0	56,2	36,6	7,2	
Girls	Russia	15,8	30,5	26,0	27,7	38,958***
	India	0	52,6	33,9	13,5	

Note. *** – statistically significant at $p \leq 0.001$

The results presented in Table 4 demonstrate highly statistically significant differences ($p \leq 0.001$ according to the χ^2 Test (Pearson's Chi-Square)) in self-esteem levels among both boys and girls from Russia and India. It is noteworthy that primary schoolchildren of both genders in India show a more favorable tendency toward the development of adequate self-esteem: only 7.2% of male respondents and 13.5% of female respondents were found to have an inadequate low level of self-esteem, and no cases of very high self-esteem were recorded. In the Russian samples, 38.2% of boys exhibited inadequate self-esteem (17.1% had a very high level and 21.1% a low level), while 43.5% of girls demonstrated inadequate self-esteem (15.8% had a very high level and 27.7% a low level).

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the research findings allows us to identify certain culturally conditioned features of self-esteem among ten-year-old primary schoolchildren living in large cities in Russia and India and attending public general education institutions.

First, it should be noted that Indian children—both in the total sample and separately among boys and girls—demonstrated higher mean values across all specific self-esteem parameters (except for “peer authority”), as well as in overall self-esteem, compared to their Russian peers. Many of these differences are statistically significant: in the overall samples, for “intelligence,” “abilities,” and overall score; in the boys' samples, for “character,” “intelligence,” “abilities,” and overall score; and in the girls' samples, for “intelligence” and “abilities.” This finding contradicts the results of large-scale cross-cultural studies conducted with adult respondents, which have shown that self-esteem levels tend to be higher in countries with pronounced individualism compared to those with predominant collectivism [21; 24]. We propose several possible interpretations of this contradiction. It is possible that the influence of the individualism–collectivism dimension on self-esteem is relevant only for adult populations, and that it is neither stable nor clearly defined in children, whose self-consciousness and self-esteem are still in development. This hypothesis requires dedicated verification through age-stratified samples using cross-sectional methods, as well as longitudinal research, and may be considered a promising direction for future study. It is also reasonable to assume that the level of individualism in a metropolis such as Delhi is significantly higher than the national average, similar to the pattern observed in Russia's largest cities [31]. However, in the absence of specific data on regional variations in the individualism–collectivism ratio within India, this remains a hypothetical assumption. Moreover, it is possible that self-esteem levels are influenced not only by the degree of individualism in a given country, but also by its type (vertical or horizontal), which determines variations in self-perception and self-evaluation—particularly in relation to socially accepted norms regarding interpersonal relationships [38]. Thus, establishing the causes of the identified differences in average self-esteem scores between children from the two countries requires further in-depth and multifaceted research.

It is also worth noting the only parameter on which Indian boys and girls reported lower self-esteem compared to their Russian peers—namely, “peer authority.” Although this difference is not statistically significant, it is nevertheless noteworthy. One possible explanation may lie in the difference in classroom size: in the Indian sample, the average number of students per class was 38, while in the Russian sample it was 28. However, this hypothesis requires further investigation using sociometric methods.

Secondly, it should be emphasized that Indian primary schoolchildren—both in the overall sample and when broken down by gender—demonstrated a more favorable distribution of self-esteem levels compared to their Russian counterparts. In the Indian sample, 90% of respondents showed an adequate level of self-esteem, whereas in the Russian sample, this figure was significantly lower at 58.7%. Only 10% of Indian children displayed low self-esteem, indicating a need for targeted psychological, educational, and parental support, while in the Russian sample, 25% of schoolchildren fell into this category. It is worth noting that our findings regarding the relatively high proportion of Russian primary schoolchildren with low self-esteem are consistent with the results of other studies [10; 17]. For example, in a study by L. Yu. Komlik et al. [10], involving 132 fourth-grade students from the city of Yelets (average age: 10 years), low self-esteem was identified in 27% of children using the same diagnostic method (T. V. Dembo and S. V. Rubinstein as modified by A. M. Prikhodzhan).

In addition, it should be emphasized that, according to the obtained results, Indian primary schoolchildren did not exhibit a very high level of self-esteem, which aligns with the findings of studies by Y. Wang & T. H. Ollendick [7] and H. Cai et al. [24]. These studies highlight the culturally conditioned caution and restraint shown by residents of East Asian countries in giving overly positive self-assessments.

The 16.3% of children in the Russian sample who demonstrated an inflated level of self-esteem require a dedicated system of psychological and pedagogical support, as not only low, but also excessively high self-esteem can have a negative impact on personality development [6; 12].

Thirdly, no statistically significant gender differences in self-esteem were found among the Russian sample of ten-year-old schoolchildren, while for Indian children, such a difference was identified in only one parameter—"appearance," with boys reporting significantly higher self-esteem than girls. This finding correlates with the results of studies by A. A. Gorokhova et al. [5] and T. A. Egorenko et al. [11], which involved more than two thousand boys and girls aged 9–11 from various regions of Russia, as well as with the data from a study by H. Samantaraya et al. [39], conducted on a group of 200 adolescents from the Indian state of Odisha. It should be noted that earlier studies by Indian scholars [15; 16] reported that boys aged 9–15 tend to have significantly higher self-esteem than girls of the same age. The authors explain this by referring to specific cultural traditions in Indian society that favor males. In light of the results obtained from our sample of ten-year-old children in Delhi, it may be assumed that India's ongoing efforts to combat gender inequality are gradually yielding results in public schools of the nation's largest metropolitan area at the stage of primary education.

To optimize self-esteem in Russian and Indian primary schoolchildren—particularly in terms of overcoming and preventing its inadequately low levels—it is important to take into account evidence-based practices developed by psychologists and educators from both countries, whose effectiveness has been experimentally confirmed: the use of multi-criteria assessment, the organization of reflection on both the process and results of learning activities during lessons [17; 40], the development of achievement portfolios with students, confidence-building training [18; 41], the teacher's use of adaptive styles of humor, and the facilitative role of the teacher [20; 39]. Researchers from both Russia and India have also emphasized the importance of educational outreach to parents of primary schoolchildren. This includes helping parents moderate overly high expectations regarding academic performance [16; 39], encouraging unconditional emotional support for both sons and daughters, and fostering trusting parent-child relationships [4; 18].

Special attention should be paid by Russian educators and psychologists to the fact that the most pronounced statistically significant differences compared to Indian children were observed in the "abilities" parameter. To address the tendency of Russian primary schoolchildren to underestimate their abilities, it is important to direct children's attention not only to academic achievements but also to their successes in extracurricular domains—such as sports, music, art, drama, and technical skills. In addition, within the framework of psychological and educational support, it would be appropriate to implement diagnostic assessments of abilities in ten-year-old children. The results of such assessments can assist students in gaining self-awareness and in forming a realistic evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of their self-concept.

CONCLUSION

In line with the stated objective, the conducted study yielded new data reflecting culturally specific features of self-esteem in ten-year-old children from Russia and India.

It was established that Indian primary schoolchildren, in comparison with their Russian peers, exhibit higher average scores across all specific self-esteem parameters except for "peer authority." Statistically significant differences were identified for the parameters "intelligence," "abilities," and overall self-esteem. A similar pattern was observed in the separate samples of boys and girls.

It was found that a greater proportion of ten-year-old schoolchildren from India exhibit adequate self-esteem compared to their Russian peers, with these differences being highly statistically significant. This trend was also observed in gender-based subsamples when comparing the two countries.

It was determined that no statistically significant gender differences in self-esteem were present among Russian children, while for Indian children, a significant difference was identified in only one parameter – “appearance,” in favor of boys.

Overall, the comparative analysis of self-esteem in ten-year-old urban primary schoolchildren from Russia and India enriches our understanding of the psychological characteristics of children’s personalities shaped within different cultural contexts.

The practical significance of this study lies in the fact that the obtained results can be used in planning psychological and educational programs aimed at supporting the personal development of primary schoolchildren—particularly their self-esteem—in both countries, and can also inform the development of recommendation systems for primary school teachers and parents. It is important to note that this study has certain limitations. The first is related to the strictly defined participant group, limited to ten-year-old children enrolled in public general education schools in two major cities in Russia and India. As a result, the findings can only be generalized to similarly composed child populations. The second limitation concerns the use of a single assessment method, which is due to the fact that this article presents only one aspect of a broader cross-cultural comprehensive analysis of various dimensions of children’s personal development, conducted on the same samples using a range of other instruments. In this regard, a priority direction for future research will be the exploration of correlations between the identified features of self-esteem and other developmental indicators in the same primary schoolchildren—such as levels of personal anxiety [42], parameters of the motivational and need sphere. As previously mentioned, continued research into the self-esteem characteristics of Russian and Indian schoolchildren of other age groups, including through the use of longitudinal methods, holds significant scientific value within the framework of this topic.

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