

Correlation between Sri Lankan University Students' Self —Esteem and their English Speaking Skills

H.M.W.M. Herath¹ and J.M.P.V.K. Jayasundara¹

¹Department of Management Silences, Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka

Attitudes of individuals on themselves and self-evaluation have continuously been subjected to many researches in social psychology. This research was conducted to discover the relationship between self — esteem and English speaking skills of undergraduates in Sri Lankan universities. To conduct the study, both male and female undergraduates in two state universities; Uva Wellassa University and University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka were selected. The sample of 100 first year undergraduates (42 male and 58 female) from Faculty of Management were taken as the sample. To measure the self — esteem of the undergraduates, Rosenberg self-esteem scale was used. All items in the questionnaire were answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. An oral proficiency test (OPT) was administrated to determine the level of students' speaking ability. The levels of skills were tested in term of accent, structure, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. In addition to those, their nonverbal skills were also taken in to the consideration. To analyze the data Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS 11) was used. T-test was used to find whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the spoken performances of the students and their self-esteem. The study also revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between English language speaking skills and self-esteem of undergraduates in tertiary level education. The results showed that students with lower level of English speaking skills have lower level of self-esteem and students with high level of English speaking skills have high self-esteem. The students who suffer from lowered self-esteem as they examine themselves; they tend to focus their attention on negative thoughts, which thereby increases self-dissatisfaction.

Key words: University Students, Self —Esteem, English Speaking Skills, Education