



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

PERCEIVED TEACHER TALK, STUDENT SELF-TALK AND  
GENDER AS PREDICTORS OF SELF-ESTEEM AMONG  
LEBANESE ADOLESCENTS

by

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## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Major: Educational Psychology: School  
Guidance and Counseling

Title: Perceived Teacher Talk, Student Self-Talk and Gender as Predictors of Self-Esteem among Lebanese Adolescents

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender on Lebanese adolescents' self-esteem. For this purpose the following research questions were addressed: 1) Is there a significant relationship between perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self esteem among Lebanese adolescents? 2) Do perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem vary according to gender? and 3) Do perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender predict self-esteem? A questionnaire consisting of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Significant Others Statement Inventory - Perceived Teacher Talk Subscale and Self-Talk Inventory was administered to a sample of 250 Lebanese students from grades 6, 7, 8 and 9. Bivariate correlations revealed a significant relationship between perceived teacher talk and student self-talk, between perceived teacher talk and self-esteem and between student self-talk and self-esteem. In addition, positive relationships were found between perceived teacher negative talk and negative self-talk, between perceived positive teacher talk and positive self-talk and between each of positive teacher talk and positive self-talk with self-esteem. On the other hand, negative relationships were found between each of perceived negative teacher talk and negative self-talk with self-esteem. Independent samples *t*-tests revealed no gender differences in the tested variables except for perceived negative teacher talk. Finally, the stepwise regression analysis indicated that perceived negative teacher talk, positive self-talk and negative self-talk all significantly contributed to self-esteem. Recommendations for future research and implications for practice are discussed.



# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background.....	1
1. Operational Definitions.....	2
a. Self-Esteem.....	2
b. Student Self-Talk.....	3
c. Perceived Teacher Talk.....	3
2. Predictors of Self-Esteem.....	4
a. Self-Talk.....	4
b. Significant Other Statements.....	5
c. Gender.....	5
3. Student Self-Esteem in the Lebanese Context.....	6
B. Statement of the Problem.....	7
C. Research Questions.....	8
D. Hypotheses.....	8
E. Rationale.....	8
F. Significance.....	10
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
A. An Overview of Self-Esteem.....	13
1. Definition of Self-Esteem.....	13
2. Development of Self-Esteem: Adolescent Self-Esteem.....	14

B. Influential Factors of Self-Esteem.....	16
1. Significant Others and Self-Esteem.....	17
a. Perceived Teacher Talk.....	19
2. Self-Talk and Self-Esteem.....	22
3. Gender and Self-Esteem.....	26
C. Final Remarks: Predictors of Self-Esteem.....	29
<b>III. METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>31</b>
A. Research Design.....	31
B. Participants.....	31
1. Population.....	31
2. Sample.....	32
C. Instruments.....	33
1. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale .....	33
2. Significant Others Statement Inventory .....	34
3. Self-Talk Inventory.....	35
D. Data Collection Procedures.....	36
E. Data Analysis Procedures.....	38
<b>IV. RESULTS.....</b>	<b>40</b>
A. Descriptive Analyses.....	40
1. Demographic Information.....	40
2. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.....	40
3. Significant Others Statement Inventory.....	41
4. Self-Talk Inventory.....	43
B. Main Analyses.....	47
1. Hypothesis 1:There is a significant relationship between perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem among Lebanese adolescents.....	47
2. Hypothesis 2:Perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem vary according to gender.....	49
3. Hypothesis 3: Perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender are predictors of self-esteem.....	51

V. DISCUSSION.....	54
A. Major Findings.....	54
1. The Relationship among Perceived Teacher Talk, Student Self-Talk and Self-Esteem.....	54
2. Gender Differences in Perceived Teacher Talk, Student Self-Talk and Self-Esteem.....	54
3. Predictors of Self-Esteem.....	56
B. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research.....	57
C. Implications for Practice.....	58
D. Conclusion.....	60
REFERENCES.....	61
Appendix	
A. ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE (RSE).....	70
B. SIGNIFICANT OTHERS STATEMENT INVENTORY.....	71
C. SELF-TALK INVENTORY.....	73
D. IRB PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM.....	79
E. IRB PARENT CONSENT FORM.....	82

## TABLES

### Table

1. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Descriptives.....	41
2. Percentages of Significant Others' Statement Inventory (Teacher Subscale).....	42
3. Percentage of Responses of the Items in the First Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale.....	43
4. Percentage of Responses of the Items in the Second Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale...	44
5. Percentage of Responses of the Items in the Third Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale.....	45
6. Percentage of Responses of the Items in the Fourth Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale....	46
7. Percentage of Responses of the Items in the Fifth Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale.....	47
8. Pearson's Correlations between Variables.....	48
9. Means and Standards Deviations of Negative and Positive Teacher Talk, Negative and Positive Self-Talk and Self-Esteem by Gender.....	49
10. Prediction of Students' Self-esteem from Student Self-talk, Perceived Teacher Talk and Gender.....	52

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background**

Adolescence is an important transitional phase where children begin to develop their self-concept and start to assume the roles of adulthood (Bandura, 1997). One major facet which begins to cement during adolescence is that of self-esteem (Alves-Martins, Peixoto, Gouveia-Pereira, Amaral & Pedro, 2002; Pullman, 2008). Although self-esteem is important in all developmental stages, it is of particular importance during adolescence (Searcy, 2007). Self-esteem influence adolescents' choices, behaviors and consequences such as peer selection, achievement motivation, reckless behavior and relational skills (Searcy, 2007). It is also associated with general psychological well-being (Harter, 1993). More importantly, levels of self-esteem among adolescents have been shown to significantly influence academic achievement (Alves-Martins et al., 2002).

Since enhancing academic achievement is one of the most prominent concerns in educational research and practice (Burnett, 1999; Pullman & Allik, 2008), it is important to study the influence of various factors on adolescent self-esteem. In order to get a fully-rounded understanding of the findings from the literature as well as the purpose and rationale behind the present study, it is first necessary to provide the operational definitions of a few key terms.

## **Operational Definitions**

### ***Self-Esteem***

Many definitions of self-esteem have been provided in the literature. Guindon (2002) defines self-esteem as a “baseline feeling of worth, value, liking and accepting of the self that one carries at all time regardless of objective reality” (p. 205). Throughout the study of self-esteem in research, many different aspects or manifestations of self-esteem have been uncovered. For instance, there is a distinction between implicit versus explicit self-esteem whereby implicit self-esteem refers to an unconscious process that occurs in an individual while explicit self-esteem refers to a conscious and direct articulation of one’s identity (Tafarodi & Ho, 2006). The latter is often emphasized in the literature due to the fact that it is quantifiable using explicit measures such as self-report self-esteem scales (Tafarodi & Ho, 2006). There is also the differentiation between global and domain-specific self-esteem, where global self-esteem is an *overall* evaluation of the self, whereas domain-specific self-esteem is the evaluation of oneself in relation to a specific attribute, performance or domain of life (e.g. evaluating oneself as being a good athlete or as being good at math) (Dutton & Brown, 1997). For the purpose of this study, only explicit global self-esteem was considered.

### ***Student Self-Talk***

Self-talk is generally defined as the statements people say to themselves whether internally (in their own heads) or out loud. Hackfort and Schwenkmezger (1993) defined self-talk as “internal dialogue in which the individuals interpret feelings and perceptions, regulate and change evaluations and cognitions and give themselves instructions and

reinforcement” (p. 355). Similarly, Burnett (1996) described self-talk as “what people say to themselves, with particular emphasis on the words used to express thoughts and beliefs about oneself and the world to oneself” (p.57). Self-talk basically constitutes all the thoughts and self-judgments that run through people’s minds (Prins & Hanewald, 1997). Some research on self-talk has considered both cognitive and behavioral aspects which include the verbal ways such as statements and non-verbal ways such as thoughts, a smile or a frown (Hardy, 2006). On the other hand, other research has focused solely on the cognitive elements of self-talk including internal statements and evaluations made to and of the self (Hardy, 2006). In this study, only the cognitive aspect of student self-talk is considered and is therefore defined as the internal statements and self-judgments that typically run through a student’s mind.

### ***Perceived Teacher Talk***

The statements and opinions expressed by significant others are considered meaningful to a child (Lackovic-Grgin & Dekovic, 1990). Teachers play a significant role in students’ lives especially during adolescence and hence can have an influence on students’ self-esteem. In fact, Harter (1989) and Juhasz (1989) found that children identified teachers, along with parents and peers, as “significant others” or those they rank as most important in their lives. Significant other talk refers to positive or negative statements made by individuals that are influential in a person’s life (Burnett & McCrindle, 1999). However, it is not the statements themselves that directly impact children, but it is rather how children *perceive* those statements (Burnett, 1996). Given the importance that

students place on teachers, the current study assessed “perceived teacher talk” which refers to students’ perceptions of the negative and positive statements made by their teachers.

### **Predictors of Self-Esteem**

Identifying factors that influence student academic achievement has long been an issue researched by educators and has been the underlying reason behind much of the research on student self-esteem. Canfield (1990) argues that students with higher self-esteem tend to perform academically better than those with lower self-esteem. Therefore, research has sought to identify factors that effectively predict students’ self-esteem in an attempt to improve their academic achievement. Although many factors may influence self-esteem, self-talk, significant other talk (such as teacher talk) and gender are considered in this study. A brief discussion of each of these factors is presented below.

#### ***Self-Talk***

Students, as most individuals, exhibit many thoughts during the day, and most if not all, are thoughts about the self (Canfield, 1990). Counselors found that it is extremely healthy and normal for students to talk to themselves (Ellis, 1994; Meichenbaum, 1977). However, the type of self-talk (i.e. whether positive or negative) can influence self-esteem. Previous research has found that there is a direct correlation between self-talk and adolescent self-esteem whereby positive self-talk has been associated with higher levels of self-esteem and negative self-talk has been associated with lower levels of self-esteem (Burnett, 1999; Burnett & McCrindle, 1999; Sunderland, 2000). Also, in a study conducted by Conroy and Metzler (2004), it was found that self-talk was the most powerful cognitive strategy in depressed and anxious adolescents.



### ***Significant Other Statements***

People are not born with ready-made self-esteem, and self-esteem is not merely built based on isolated self-perceptions. Children's development of self-esteem and self-image is influenced by the various experiences they have with themselves, and more importantly, with the people in their environment (Pullman & Allik, 2008; Yaratana & Yucesoylu, 2010). According to Gablo (1984), one of the major effects that significant others can have on the child's development is the impact on their self-esteem and self-concept. In line with this, research has consistently shown that there is a significant relationship between verbal statements made by significant others and self-esteem (Bamburg, 1996; Burnett, 1996; Campbell, 1989; Pullmann & Allik, 2008) especially among younger and older adolescents (Lackovic-Grgin & Dekovic, 1990). Furthermore, Juhasz (1989) found that older children ranked their friends and teachers as the most important in their lives. Therefore, it is important to consider teachers as influential factors on students' self-esteem.

### ***Gender***

There is a wealth of literature linking gender to self-esteem. Levels of self-esteem have been shown to differ across gender, where males tend to show higher self-esteem than females (Kling, Shibley Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999). Lackovic-Grgin and Dekovic (1990) have also shown that the contribution of significant others to adolescents differs with gender in which females tend to be more influenced by significant others than males. Additionally, Burnett (1999) demonstrated a gender effect on the frequency and type of

self-talk, where females used self-talk more often than males and females tended to engage in more negative self-talk than males.

### **Student Self-Esteem in the Lebanese Context**

Only a handful of studies on adolescent self-esteem have been conducted in Lebanon. Nevertheless, a study conducted by El-Hassan (2004) suggests that there is a continuous decrease in the self-esteem of Lebanese students till they reach grade 10 and that this variation in self-esteem is affected by many factors including personality, social life and the surrounding environment. Similarly, Sarouphim (2011) showed that among a sample of gifted and non-gifted Lebanese adolescents with an average age of 13.9 years, most participants showed average levels of global self-concept and self-esteem.

A couple of studies conducted in Lebanon have also investigated the influence of several factors on self-esteem. For instance, in a sample of college students, Ayyash-Abdo and Alamuddin (2007) showed that optimism, positive affect and self-esteem were all positively correlated with subjective well-being. In addition, Khraybani's (2008) study on a sample of Lebanese students from grades 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 showed that there was a positive relationship between body image and self-esteem. Moreover, Mokaddem (2007) studied the relationship among social anxiety, self-esteem and peer relations in a sample of female adolescents from grades 7, 8 and 9. Results showed a negative correlation between social anxiety and self-esteem on the one hand and social anxiety and peer relations on the other (Mokaddem, 2007).

Finally, a couple of studies have given evidence to gender differences in the self-esteem of Lebanese adolescents. For example, males have been shown to have higher self-

esteem than females with regard to athletic competence, physical appearance and romantic attachment (Khraybani, 2008). Similarly, Sarouphim's (2011) study revealed that males had significantly higher scores on the measures of physical image and happiness and satisfaction and lower scores on measures of anxiety whereas girls had significantly higher scores on depression measures.

### **Statement of the Problem**

As evident from the previous discussion, self-esteem in adolescents is important for general well-being and academic achievement. Previous research has found an influential relationship between self-talk, perceived teacher talk, gender and self-esteem. Within the context of Lebanon, studies on adolescent self-esteem are very minimal. Nonetheless, there is evidence that Lebanese adolescents seem to have low levels of self-esteem (El-Hassan, 2004; Sarouphim, 2011) and thus it would be important to explore the factors that influence the latter. Studies done in Lebanon suggest the influence of various personal and social variables on self-esteem (e.g., Ayyash-Abdo, 2010; El-Hassan, 2004; Khraybani, 2008). However, none of these studies considered the influence of self-talk and perceived teacher talk on self-esteem. Moreover, although the studies conducted in Lebanon indicated that there are gender differences in adolescent self-esteem (Khraybani, 2008; Sarouphim, 2011), these differences were apparent in *domain-specific* self-esteem rather than *global* self-esteem. Therefore, the current study aimed at investigating the influence of student self-talk, perceived teacher talk and gender on the global self-esteem of Lebanese adolescents. More specifically, the purpose of this study was threefold: 1) to determine the different relationships among perceived teacher talk, student self-talk, and student self-

esteem; 2) to investigate gender differences across these three variables; and 3) to explore perceived teacher talk, student self-talk, and gender as predictors of student self-esteem.

### **Research Questions**

For the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed:

1. Is there a significant relationship between perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem among Lebanese adolescents?
2. Do perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem vary according to gender?
3. Do perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender predict self-esteem?

### **Hypotheses**

In accordance with each of the above research questions, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem among Lebanese adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant effect for gender on perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender are predictors of self-esteem.

### **Rationale**

The current study explored the influence of self-talk, perceived teacher talk and gender on student self-esteem which, in turn, has been shown to have an effect on academic achievement. Although numerous studies have focused on the influence of self-talk and

perceived teacher talk on self-esteem, most of these studies focused on the influence of self-talk and perceived teacher talk, *separately*. Little, if any, research has been conducted to study whether self-talk and perceived teacher talk, together, were predictors and not mere correlates of self-esteem. Therefore, there exists a gap in the literature that needs to be targeted.

Also, although many factors have been found to contribute to the variation of students' self-esteem, there is a lack of research combining different predictors of self-esteem together to create a model that can maximally explain variations in self-esteem (Gray-Little & Hafdahl, 2000). In particular, no study has been conducted to explore a model containing student self-talk, perceived teacher talk and gender on self-esteem. In many of Burnett's studies (1994; 1996; 1999), it was found that perceived statements made by significant others highly correlate with self-esteem. These studies also suggested that perceived teacher talk influences student self-talk (Burnett, 1994; 1996; 1999). Several studies have also indicated the relationship between gender and perceived teacher talk, self-talk and self-esteem. Together, these results demonstrate the possibility of a relationship among perceived teacher talk, self-talk, gender and self-esteem. However, no such study has been done.

Moreover, this study provides cross-cultural significance by extending previous literature and applying it to the Lebanese context. Most of the studies on the variables contributing to self-esteem are Western-based. An extensive review of non-Western research was conducted to see whether similar studies which combined different variables existed. However, no studies to date have been identified that investigate the relationship

between perceived teacher talk, student self-talk, gender and self-esteem from a cross cultural perspective. This is also true for the Arab world in general and Lebanon in particular. Thus, the current study combines and extends work from several lines of research by contextualizing mostly Western-studied phenomena in a Lebanese setting.

It is expected that Lebanon differs from Western countries in terms of its cultural and social context. For example, Lebanese people live in extended family systems where decisions and statements are often made and given by significant others. Thus, we may infer that Lebanese people, especially adolescents, place a great emphasis on what significant others say to them (Ayyash-Abdo & Alamuddin, 2007; El-Hassan, 2004; Faour, 1998). As such, there is a need to find whether perceived teacher talk affects self-esteem among Lebanese adolescents. However, no such study has been done in Lebanon.

Finally, another cultural aspect that may influence the results of the study done in Lebanon is the issue of gender roles. Lebanon is considered a patriarchal society and in Arab countries traditional gender role expectations are common (Sultana & Watts, 2007). Therefore, gender differences in self-esteem, perceived teacher talk and self-talk may also be evident among Lebanese adolescents. In fact, only a couple of studies have investigated gender differences in Lebanese adolescents' self-esteem and these studies have focused on domain-specific self-esteem (Khraybani, 2008; Sarouhim, 2011). Therefore, this study addresses the gap in the existing research on Lebanese adolescents by exploring gender differences in not only global self-esteem but also in self-talk and perceived teacher talk.

## **Significance**

The findings of the following research can have many valuable implications for both theory and practice. With respect to implications to theory, the findings of this research would further contribute to the literature on predictors of self-esteem in adolescents specifically with regard to the influence of self-talk, perceived teacher talk and gender. In terms of implications to practice, the findings may be useful for schools counselors, teachers and students.

According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA; 2003), a school counselor is expected to help students develop healthy and positive self-esteem. The findings of this study may help school counselors understand the importance of student self-talk and perceived teacher talk to self-esteem. By being aware that self-talk influences self-esteem, counselors can help students identify and monitor the statements they typically say to themselves. By using cognitive and behavioral interventions, school counselors can promote the self-esteem of students by helping them transform their negative self-talk to more positive self-talk (Harris, 1991; Van Sistine, 2008). According to Harris (1999), “[t]he first step in improving a student's self-esteem is to identify the problem and isolate specific aspects of the self-talk that a counselor can help a student improve” (p. 22). As students gradually change negative thoughts into positive ones, this will eventually lead students to automatically develop even more positive thoughts and thus lead to higher levels of self-esteem (Burnett, 1999).

Additionally, the findings of this study can help teachers become more aware of the influence their statements and opinions have on student’s self-esteem. Students spend the

majority of their time in the classroom and therefore teachers play a significant role in adolescents' lives. By being aware of the negative statements that teachers say in their classrooms - whether intentionally or unintentionally - teachers can have an important role in boosting their students' self-esteem. In fact, the school counselor can play an important role in training teachers in employing positive feedback and comments in their classrooms. By creating a more positive learning environment in which teachers provide positive judgments and opinions, students' learning and academic achievement can be enhanced (Canfield, 1990). Since studies have indicated the relationship between perceived teacher talk and self-talk, more positive teacher talk would lead to more positive student self-talk which in turn will enhance self-esteem.

Finally, if gender differences are evident in this study, then the school counselors and teachers should be sure to take this into account. More specifically, if females are shown to have higher levels of negative self-talk and lower self-esteem than males, then school counselors and teachers should be more sensitive when dealing with females and help them use strategies that can enhance their self-esteem.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **An Overview of Self-Esteem**

##### **Definition of Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem is a complex and multi-faceted concept that has garnered research attention for decades and that still currently influences practice across educational, employment and therapeutic settings. The scientific term “self-esteem” was coined towards the end of the nineteenth century when a research paradigm was initiated to define this construct, study its pathways and find its correlates. Researchers across the years have had difficulty finding a clear-cut definition of self-esteem, considering the complexity of the phenomenon and its applicability across diverse fields including psychology, counseling and education (Guindon, 2002). However, the best-rounded definitions of self-esteem describe it as the way an individual perceives himself (Grizzly, 2010) and the attitudes towards oneself which include both an evaluative and affective component (Guindon, 2002). In essence, self-esteem can be defined as “a sense of satisfaction in oneself” or a person’s “self-evaluation of self-worth” (Pullmann & Allik, 2008). Self-esteem is usually assessed on a continuum, where high self-esteem refers to positive and favorable evaluations of the self whereas low self-esteem refers to negative or unfavorable definitions of the self (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003).

The quest for defining self-esteem has resulted in various aspects of the concept being uncovered and eventually researched. Research discusses implicit versus explicit

self-esteem, the latter often being more emphasized in the literature due to the fact that it is quantifiable using explicit measures such as self-report self-esteem scales (Tafarodi & Ho, 2006). Also relevant to the definition of the term is the distinction made between global and domain-specific self-esteem, where global self-esteem refers to an overall evaluation of the self while domain-specific self-esteem involves a self-evaluation of specific attributes or domains in life (e.g. evaluating oneself as being good at math) (Dutton & Brown, 1997).

Self-esteem was initially perceived as an important factor underlying many positive outcomes (Malanchuk & Eccles, 2005). Debates have been stirred over the valid importance of self-esteem on well-being, performance, educational outcomes, and many other constructs. Pyszczynski et al. (2004) claim that self-esteem is associated with highly favorable outcomes, adaptive behaviors and enhanced well-being. Their research, considered one of the key works exploring the role that high self-esteem has on adaptive behavior, posits that self-esteem acts as an anxiety buffer in terrorizing situations (Pyszczynski et al., 2004). Despite many researchers claiming that the role of self-esteem in behavioral outcomes has been intensely exaggerated (e.g. Krueger, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2008), self-esteem research has been ongoing, and practitioners are still highly attached to the prospects that self-esteem can have on behavioral outcomes.

### **Development of Self-Esteem: Adolescent Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem has constantly been approached from a developmental perspective. Developing a healthy and positive self-esteem begins as early as when children are in their toddler years during which they begin to discover the world and develop a

positive or negative self-image. During preschool, children become more independent and have developed motor skills, cognitions and language skills which in turn relate to the development of their self-esteem.(Bandura, 1990)

Although self-esteem is important in all developmental stages, it is of particular importance during adolescence (Searcy, 2007). In a recent and large longitudinal study on the effects of self-esteem on life outcomes, Orth, Robins and Widaman (2012) revealed that self-esteem development occurs in a curve-like manner in which it increases from adolescence into early adulthood to peak in middle age, only to drop lower into old age. Adolescent self-esteem eventually leads to outcomes that influence self-perception throughout one's lifespan (Orth et al., 2012). Additionally, levels of self-esteem influence many choices, behaviors and consequences taking place during and after adolescence such as peer selection, achievement motivation, awareness levels, reckless behavior and relational skills (Searcy, 2007). It is also widely acknowledged that self-esteem is positively associated with general psychological well-being of children and negatively correlated with depression (Harter, 1993).

Three types of self-esteem are particularly important during adolescence: associative, activity-based and aural self-esteem. Associative self-esteem is based on the associations an adolescent makes with his/her peers, surroundings, significant others, friends and family. Activity-based self-esteem refers to self-esteem which influences engagement in certain activities such as sports, book clubs, and volunteer work as well as self-esteem influencing the level of engagement in such activities. Finally, aural self-esteem refers to esteem based on what is heard from others about the self. This latter aspect

of adolescent self-esteem emphasizes the importance that significant others and influential individuals have on developing good self-esteem. (Searcy, 2007)

High self-esteem is essential to the development of a child since low levels of esteem can influence behavior and thus might impede daily life events (Grizzly, 2010). For instance, Krueger et al. (2008) revealed that high self-esteem is closely associated with self-enhancement. Also, previous research on adolescents has indicated a relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement (Burnett, 1999) with low achieving adolescents showing lower levels of self-esteem than high achieving adolescents (Alves-Martins et al., 2002; Canfield, 1990; Yaratana & Yacesoylu, 2010).

In addition, a couple of studies have shown that low self-esteem is associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety (e.g. Kley, Tuschen-Caffier & Heinrichs, 2012). de Jong's (2012) study demonstrated that in a sample of 1806 first stage secondary students, explicit self-esteem was found to be a predictor of both depression and social anxiety symptoms. The fact that students with low self-esteem are more likely to develop anxiety and depressive symptoms may influence their likelihood of forming meaningful peer relationships, bonding with significant others, feeling like the school environment is conducive for well-being, and be de-motivated to learn and interact in classroom settings which might in turn impede academic achievements (de Jong, 2012).

### **Influential Factors of Self-Esteem**

Given that self-esteem is a very important element in adolescents' lives, a significant amount of research has been devoted to understanding its influential factors. Many factors come into play when it comes to building self-esteem, and taking these

factors into consideration is very important when tailoring self-esteem enhancing programs in a school setting or other educational settings. Some of these factors are related to the adolescent him or herself, such as the way in which they perceive themselves and talk to themselves, while others pertain to interactions with significant others in their environments (i.e. parents, friends, peers, and teachers).

### **Significant Others and Self-Esteem**

The formation and maintenance of children's self-esteem is very much impacted by significant others including parents, teachers, close friends and classmates (Burnett, 1994; Harter, 1985). According to Thomaes, Reijntjes, Orobio de Castro, Bushman, Poorthuis and Telch (2010), "interpersonal appraisals can have immediate, causal effects on state self-esteem" (p. 820). Similarly, Grizzly (2010) argues that in older adolescents it is the social experiences and successes and disappointments that determine the development of good or poor self-esteem. In fact, numerous studies have highlighted the significant influence that statements or judgments made by parents, peers and teachers have on students' self-esteem levels. On the one hand, studies have shown that the use of positive verbal statements, such as giving praise or providing positive comments and feedback, is advantageous when talking with children (e.g., Burnett, 1996; 1999). On the other hand, negative statements made by significant others such as parents, teachers or peers have been found to negatively affect self-esteem by often leading to self-degradation and feelings of shame and guilt (Campbell, 1989).

It is important to note that studies suggest that the influence of positive or negative statements from significant others on self-esteem lies in the way students *perceive* these

statements. Burnett (1996) investigated the correlation between children's perceptions of statements made by significant others, self-concept and self-esteem among a sample of 675 elementary children aged 7 to 13 years. Results indicated that statements made by significant others that were perceived as favorable were positively correlated with self-esteem and non-academic self-concepts. Conversely, statements that were perceived as negative negatively correlated with self-concept.(Burnett, 1996)

A study conducted by Thomaes et al.(2010) aimed to test whether peer approval and disapproval experiences caused a direct change in the self-esteem levels of 333 preadolescents aged between 10 and 11. These children completed several personal online inventories that were later presented for judgment by a jury which consisted of both popular and unpopular peers. The children then randomly received positive, negative, or neutral feedback from the jury. Individual responses from the jury members were examined by each of the students. Results revealed that peer appraisals, whether approval or disapproval, served a dual role in both modulating and regulating self-esteem in children with a large effect size. More specifically, peer disapproval reduced self-esteem level among participants while peer approval improved and increased self-esteem. Furthermore, participant's self-esteem improvement was mainly dependent on the extent to which they felt positive feedback from the judges. Additionally, for the students who experienced negative feedback from the jury, recovery of pre-test self-esteem levels was highly dependent on later positive feedback from the perceived popular members of the jury. (Thomaes et al., 2010)

Blake and Slate (1993) researched the adverse effects of parental verbal abuse on adolescents' self-concept and self-esteem. In the study, a Verbal Interaction Questionnaire (VIQ) was developed which consisted of 30 Likert-type scale self-report questions such as "My primary caretaker praises me when I do something well" (for positive talk) and "My primary caretaker yells at me" (for negative talk). The study described and explained the existence of four broad categories of verbal abuse: belittling or berating; nonsupport; non-communication; rejection and hostility. Participants were 64 high school students in grades 10, 11, and 12 and completed the Coopersmith Self-Esteem inventory and the VIQ. Results showed that parental verbal abuse was directly and significantly related to lower levels of self-esteem. (Blake & Slate, 1993)

### ***Perceived Teacher Talk***

As evident from the previous discussion, significant others, including parents and peers, have an influential role on students' self-esteem. Juhasz's (1989) study suggests that the influence of significant others varies according to age. More specifically, although fifth and sixth graders ranked their parents and families as the most important, seventh and eighth graders ranked teachers as the most important (Juhasz, 1989). The latter suggests that as children enter early adolescence, teachers become highly important significant others whose opinions and perceptions are integrated into one's self-concept which in turn may influence self-esteem. Teachers are some of the most influential figures in students' lives as they are cognitively and emotionally engaged with them on a daily basis (Pullman & Allik, 2008). Therefore, the pathway between self-esteem and achievement is likely to be influenced by teachers' positive or negative statements (Pullman & Allik,

2008). Positive teacher feedback has shown to enhance student's self-worth by boosting self-image and helping to develop an intimate relationship between children and teachers (Burnett, 1994).

In Murdock's (1999) study on 431 seventh-grade students, it was found that students' perceptions of their teachers' academic support and expectations were the strongest predictors of students' engagement in the classroom and their behavioral compliance. When teachers were disinterested and critical, creating a negative motivational context, students displayed the most disciplinary and behavioral problems. The strongest relationship emerged between students' own perceptions of their teachers' expectations of them and student engagement. It is thus very important that teachers are supportive and engaging with their students, tailoring a positive motivational environment that enhances student classroom engagement and decreases disciplinary problems. Additionally, it is important that students themselves perceive their teachers as supportive and not as critical in order to nurture self-esteem and well-being among students. (Murdock, 1999)

Yet another study conducted by Domagala-Zysk (2006) aimed to determine the influence of social support from significant others (including parents, peers and teachers) on students' school performance. The sample included 100 students experiencing no scholastic problems and 100 students experiencing school failure. Results indicated that perceived support from significant others supported adolescents in obtaining good grades. Also, when teachers were more supportive of their students, and when the students actually perceived their teachers to be more supportive of them, they tended to perform better in school. Since self-esteem has been linked to academic achievement, improvements in



academic achievement through positive teacher support would lead to better self-esteem. (Domagala-Zysk, 2006)

Battistich, Solomon, Watson and Schaps (1997) observed the effect of tailoring the classroom into a caring community on student well-being and student-teacher relationships. The study revealed that teachers who motivated and supported students' learning were successful in promoting a caring climate in the classroom which in turn predicted a number of positive outcomes including academic outcomes. The affective climate in the classroom that is maintained by teachers includes students' perceptions of teachers as being caring and supportive. The way in which students perceive their teachers, especially when it relates to teachers portraying positive affect and genuine care towards their students, is highly important in determining positive student outcomes ranging from enhanced self-esteem to better academic performance. (Battistich et al., 1997)

The influence of teachers' perceived behavior on students' self-esteem has been studied in cross-cultural settings and not merely in Western countries. A study by Kususanto, Nizam Ismail and Jamil (2010) assessed the linkages between students' self-esteem and their perception of teacher behavior across achievement groups (high achievers versus low achievers) among a sample of 302 secondary school students in Malaysia. In the context of the study, teacher behavior was described by students as belonging to either one of two broad categories: controlling (negative perceptions) or supporting (positive perceptions: encouraging students' academic growth and achievements). The study revealed several important findings. First, high achievers received higher self-esteem scores than low achievers, and the difference was statistically significant, further bolstering

the link between self-esteem and academic achievement. Second, high and low achieving groups significantly differed on the way in which they perceived their teachers whereby high achievers thought of their teachers as being more supportive while low achievers perceived their teachers as controlling. Additionally, and most importantly, perceptions of teachers' behavior influenced students' self-esteem in both groups. High achievers' self-esteem was boosted by teachers' supporting behavior whereas the low achievers' self-esteem was debilitated by teachers' controlling behavior. (Kususanto et al., 2010)

In sum, students' perceptions of teachers' talk and attitudes towards them has consistently been shown as an important factor behind fostering student self-esteem and predicts several positive outcomes including more classroom engagement and less behavioral problems, both of which influence academic achievement.

### **Self-Talk and Self-Esteem**

Burnett (1994; 1999) is one of the trademark names in education and educational counseling research, especially when it comes to the role that self-talk plays in children's self-esteem and behavioral and academic outcomes. Burnett (1994), in a sample of 105 elementary school children in grades 4 to 7, found correlations between positive self-talk and negative self-talk with self-esteem. In particular, results showed that positive self-talk is directly related to high and healthy self-esteem, less irrational beliefs, and less depression.

Since Burnett's trademark study, many subsequent studies have confirmed the influence of self-talk on self-esteem(e.g. Burnett, 1999; Conroy & Metzler, 2004; Hogendoorn, Prins, Vervoort, Wolters, Nauta, Hartman & Boer, 2012; Philpot, Holliman

& Madonna, 1995). For instance, Harris (1991) found that positive self-talk was one of the most important keys to increasing self-esteem. According to that line of work, students with low self-esteem exhibit negative self-talk whereas those with high self-esteem engage in positive self-talk more often (Harris, 1991).

Van Sistine (2008) explored the influence of children's negative self-talk on various self and school outcomes, including students' well-being. The author argues that children use self-talk, initially overtly to serve as an adaptive tool for task completion, but later internalize self-talk as it becomes a tool for monitoring and evaluating the self. Links have been made between negative self-talk and depression and anxiety symptoms. When children are critical of themselves, they are more likely to self-debilitate, and their mental health and self-image suffer in return. (Van Sistine, 2008)

Kendall and Hollon (1981) argue that the use of negative self-talk rather than positive self-talk can be much more significant and powerful on students' well-being and on their self-esteem development. In line with this, in a study conducted by Philpot and Bamburg (1996) on 60 undergraduate students with low levels of self-esteem, an intervention was implemented to enhance positive self-talk and change students' negative self-talk by transforming the same statements initiated by the students into more positive ones. Results showed that participants' negative self-talk had more significant correlations with self-esteem as compared to positive self-talk. These results suggest that negative self-talk can sometimes have a larger effect than positive self-talk on students' self-esteem (Philpot & Bamburg, 1996).

Pullman and Allik's (2008) study highlight the importance that self-talk has on academic achievement. Their study was conducted on a national representative sample of 4572 Estonian students and university applicants. The study directly linked levels of self-esteem to higher academic achievement, presenting rather surprising results where students with lower levels of self-esteem performed better academically, controlling for academic self-esteem. The authors attribute this finding to the fact that high achievers tend to be highly self-critical whereas modest or low academic achievers compensate for their lack of academic excellence by boasting other parts of the self and inflating their self-esteem. (Pullman & Allik, 2008)

As was previously discussed, statements made by significant others impact students' self-esteem. The findings of some studies suggest that self-talk plays a significant role in not only directly influencing self-esteem but also in *moderating* the effect of statements made by significant others on students' self-esteem. For example, Burnett & McCrindle (1999) evaluated self-esteem in a sample of 269 primary school children (grades 3 till 7) and assessed the influence that statements made by significant others (mother, father, peers, and teachers) and self-talk (positive and negative) had on participants' self-esteem levels. The results showed that both positive and negative self-talk respectively mediated the relationship between positive and negative talk by significant others and self-esteem. For example, teachers' positive statements were directly associated with students' positive self-talk and to better mathematics accomplishments. The findings were especially significant for the mediating role negative self-talk played between negative statements by peers and self-esteem. In other words, negative self-talk actually

perpetuated the effect that negative statements made by peers had on the students. (Burnett & McCrindle, 1999)

Another study done by Yaratan & Yucesoylu (2010) investigated various influential factors on self-esteem among 107 fifth grade students from both private and public schools in North (Turkish) Cyprus. The variables investigated were positive and negative self-talk, perceived talk by significant others, self-concept, and self-esteem. Results showed that positive self-talk was correlated to positive statements by significant others (parents, peers, and teachers only) while negative self-talk was correlated to negative statements made by significant others. Furthermore, both statements made by significant others and self-talk were correlated to self-esteem levels reported by the children and their teachers. (Yaratan & Yucesoylu, 2010)

What is the underlying reason behind why self-talk and significant other statements influence and change self-esteem in children? The cognitive explanation can be viewed in terms of the influence that direct statements have on an individual's cognitive state. For example, it was found that when children use positive self-instruction while engaging in tasks, their cognitions were positively manipulated (Burnett & McCrindle, 1999). Burnett (1996) also found that the more positive the statements made by others, the more positively directed self-talk is. This, in turn, can lead to more positive perceptions of the self and elevated levels of self-esteem. Research corroborates this mechanism as the structure behind self-esteem enhancement using strategies such as positive self-talk and self-instruction. Other studies show that when teachers use positive statements and

instructions with students, it is more likely that these students use positive self-talk while engaged in any type of activity (Yaratan & Yucesoylu, 2010).

In sum, the literature has shown that both positive and negative self-talk influence student self-esteem and academic achievement. Self-talk appears to be an important variable that moderates student self-esteem in response to teacher behavior and therefore the two variables cannot be isolated.

### **Gender and Self-Esteem**

Gender has been one of the ardently researched influential variables in self-esteem research. Previous research has made evident gender differences in students' levels of self-esteem. Harter (1993) found that adolescent females usually have lower levels of self-esteem than their male counterparts. Similarly, Richman, Clark and Brown's (1985) results revealed that there is a correlation between gender and self-esteem whereby females showed significantly lower self-esteem than males. Additionally, Burnett's (1994) study revealed a gender effect on self-talk, where girls reported using self-talk more often than boys.

Several studies have indicated that there are gender differences in the different types of self-esteem. More specifically, de Jong (2012) found that, compared to males, females reported more symptoms of depression and social anxiety as well as lower levels of explicit self-esteem. Along the same lines, a study conducted by Dukes and Martinez (1994) on a sample of 18,612 junior high and high school students found that, on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, males scored higher than females on global self-esteem. Several meta-analyses were conducted to look for trends, power, and actual impact of

gender on esteem levels. Kling, Shibley Hyde, Showers and Buswell (1999) conducted two analyses pertaining to gender and self-esteem compiling studies with over 140,000 respondents. Both analyses provided evidence that when it comes to global self-esteem men score higher than women but with a small effect size. Although the effect size is not too large, which the authors attribute to the effect of other moderating variables, it is consistent, and the consistency through which males appear to exceed females on self-esteem is statistically worthy (Kling et al., 1999).

In a very recent large-scale study by Sprecher, Brooks, and Avogo (2013), self-esteem was explored across gender, race, and cohort (1990-2012), among a large sample of 7,552 undergraduate students at a U.S. based university where the students evaluated their self-esteem using a 7-item self-report measure. Results displayed a significant main effect for gender consistent with the literature on gender and self-esteem whereby men possessed higher self-esteem than women. (Sprecher et al., 2013)

More recent efforts have also tried to conceptualize the effect of gender on *domain-specific* self-esteem. Gentile et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis involving 115 studies and 32,486 individuals on 10 different domains of self-esteem: physical appearance, athletics, academics, social acceptance, family, behavioral conduct, affect, personal self, self-satisfaction, and moral-ethical self-esteem. Males scored significantly higher than females on athletic, physical appearance, personal self, and self-satisfaction self-esteem, while females scored higher than males on behavioral conduct and moral-ethical self-esteem. There were no significant differences among gender on the four remaining self-esteem domains (i.e. academics, social acceptance, family, and affect). In comparison,

similar to the results of studies done on global self-esteem, men scored higher than women on a larger number of self-esteem in specific domains. (Gentile et al., 2009)

Gender differences on self-esteem appear to be consistent across cultures as well. A study by Moksnes and Espnes (2012) examined the possible role gender plays when it pertains to self-esteem and other indicators of psychological well-being and emotional health (e.g. anxiety and depression indicators) among a cross-sectional sample of 1,209 Norwegian adolescents aged 12-17 years. Results consistently showed that boys scored higher on self-esteem than girls surveyed, and in turn also displayed lower scores on anxiety and depression measures, further corroborating the link between self-esteem and psychological and emotional well-being (Moksnes & Espnes, 2012). Ye, Yu, and Li (2012) assessed a model that tested gender differences on self-esteem and life satisfaction through structural equation modeling among a sample of 214 male and 134 Chinese university students. As opposed to Western findings of males scoring higher than females on self-esteem, the Chinese sample displayed the reverse trend. Over the period of investigation, females scored higher on both self-esteem and life satisfaction than their male counterparts. The results display a clear cross-cultural difference in the effect of gender on self-esteem measures and assessment.

Despite evidence of gender differences in levels of self-esteem and type of self-talk, research has indicated that the effect of negative statements from significant others is the same for both genders. For instance, a study conducted by Joubert (1991) investigated the effect that parental techniques and styles had on the self-esteem of 134 college students (50 males and 84 females). Participants filled out a series of self-report measures including



a self-esteem inventory, a social desirability measure and their perceptions of their parents' fairness. Results of the study indicated that males with high levels of self-esteem had mothers who treated them fairly when they were children, showed interest by participating with them in many activities and were less likely to engage in verbal abuse. Similarly, females with high self-esteem levels indicated a history of positive parental praise, parental interest in child activity, and less abusive verbal statements. The study found that verbal abuse was the parenting quality that influenced both male and female self-esteem. Among all other variables assessed, verbal parental talk stood out as a decisive factor that significantly predicted future levels of self-esteem. (Joubert, 1991)

In sum, the literature consistently shows the important role that gender plays in determining self-esteem levels and type of self-talk. In addition, the influence of statements made from significant others seems to be the same in both males and females.

### **Final Remarks: Predictors of Self-Esteem**

In sum, self-esteem has been the focus of much psychological and educational research over the past two decades as it has been heavily linked with student-related outcomes—whether psychological well-being or academic achievement. Some of the predictors of student self-esteem across the literature have been teacher behavior and student self-talk. However, it is also important to consider students' perceptions of teacher-talk and the influence of such perceptions on students' self-esteem. Although some studies have linked teacher talk and student self-talk (e.g. Burnett, 1999; Burnett & McKindle, 1999), little work has examined the interplay between perceived teacher talk, student self-talk, and self-esteem. Additionally, many studies have implicated gender as a factor

influencing self-esteem, with results generally showing that males exhibit higher self-esteem levels than females. However, cross-cultural nuances do exist, which makes it essential to study whether self-esteem patterns in Lebanon follow a standard Western-based path (males having higher self-esteem than women) or diverge into other pathways such as that exhibited by Ye, Yu, and Li (2012) in China, where female expressed higher self-esteem levels than males. Finally, there is a need to combine the three different factors of perceived teacher-talk, self-talk, and gender, to find all the different pathways and ways through which they predict student self-esteem and how they interplay among one another in order to be able to create more coherent and well-rounded intervention plans that target increasing self-esteem among students.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a complete and comprehensive explanation of the methodology followed in this research and it includes a description of: research design, sample selection, instrumentation and the data collection and data analysis.

#### **Research Design**

The current study used a correlational and predictive quantitative design through a survey procedure. First, the study was designed to investigate the relationship between student self-talk, perceived teacher talk and self-esteem in Lebanese adolescents. In addition, it was hypothesized that a combination of social (i.e. perceived teacher talk) and individual/personal variables (i.e. student talk and gender) would be associated with self-esteem. Therefore, the current study also investigated the predictors of self-esteem including perceived teacher talk, self-talk and gender. Finally, gender differences in student self-talk, perceived teacher talk and self-esteem were also determined.

#### **Participants**

##### **Population**

The population targeted by the current study was that of Lebanese adolescent students aged between 11 and 15 years old which correspond to grades 6, 7, 8 and 9 according to the Lebanese system in the Beirut area. In order to allow for sample homogeneity and control for the influence of extraneous variables such as socioeconomic status and language of instruction, only private schools following the Lebanese curriculum and using English as the language of instruction were selected. English speaking private

schools were chosen due to the fact that the surveys were given in English and students in private schools tend to be linguistically stronger in English compared to students from public schools. Furthermore, mixed-gender schools were targeted in order to account for gender as it is one of the main variables under study.

### **Sample**

In order to determine the sample, the Lebanese Ministry of Education was contacted which in turn provided the researcher with a booklet containing a comprehensive list of all private and public schools located in the Beirut district for the academic year 2012/2013. In order to choose the sample of schools, three levels of stratified sampling was done on the total list of schools. First, according to the list, approximately 111 of all the schools located in Beirut were private schools. Second, of these schools, 73 followed an English-instructed Lebanese curriculum and thus satisfied the criteria required for this study. Third, out of these 73 schools, only 41 schools contained the targeted grade levels in the current study (i.e. grades 6 through 9).

Twenty of the total 41 eligible private English-language instruction schools were randomly emailed to participate and three schools replied and agreed to take part in the study. Within each school, random cluster sampling was used where the whole classroom section was taken as the sampling unit. Therefore, one section from each of the grade levels 6, 7, 8 and 9 were randomly selected and surveyed. This resulted in 4 sections from each of the three schools for a total of 12 sections. Each section consisted of 22 students and therefore 264 students were targeted. However, 14 students did not agree to participate in the study. Therefore, the resulting sample consisted of 250 students aged 11 to 15 years,

where 132 were males (52.8%) and 118 were females (47.2%). A total of 90, 85, and 75 students were surveyed from schools one, two, and three respectively. The students were almost equally distributed among the four different grade levels. More specifically, the sample consisted of a total of 60 students from grade 6 (24%), 59 students from grade 7 (23.6%), 63 students from grade 8 (25.2%) and 68 students from grade 9 (27.2%). It is important to note that out of the different statistical tests used in this study, the regression analysis is considered to be the most demanding when it pertains to sample size. Field (2009) emphasizes that in order to obtain a medium effect size a minimum sample size of 200 should be used when three predictors are involved in the regression analysis. The present sample size of 250 exceeds the recommended size for the statistical analyses at hand and thus guarantees statistical power.

### **Instruments**

A questionnaire that included a demographic section and three scales was used for the purpose of this study. The demographic section asked about gender, age, and grade level of the participant while the three scales measured each of the following variables: self-esteem (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale), perceived teacher talk (Significant Others Statements Inventory) and self-talk (Self-talk Inventory). A description of each of the three scales follows in the subsequent sections.

#### **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale**

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to measure global self-worth by assessing both positive and negative feelings about the self. The RSE was chosen since it is a widely used self-report instrument for evaluating individual self-

esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). The RSE consists of 10 items that are rated on a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (see Appendix A). A sample item of the RSE is "I feel that I have a number of good qualities". The original sample for which the scale was developed consisted of 5,024 high school juniors and seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in the New York State. The scale has sound construct validity and high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of .91 (Rosenberg, 1965). For the current study Cronbach's alpha for this scale was 0.85.

The scoring procedure used for the RSE was as follows. First, items 1, 3, 4, 7 and 10 refer to positive self-evaluations and were therefore reverse-scored- i.e. a score of 1 (Strongly Agree) was scored as 4 and a score of 4 (Strongly Disagree) was scored as 1. As for items 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9, the scores remained the same since these items refer to negative self-evaluations. The mean for the 10 items was then determined for each student whereby a score closer to 4 reflected higher self-esteem while a score closer to 1 reflected lower self-esteem.

### **Significant Others Statements Inventory**

The Significant Others Statements Inventory (SOSI) (Appendix B) consists of 54 items distributed among eight subscales measuring children's perceived frequency of positive and negative statements made by parents, teachers, siblings and peers (Juhasz, 1989). Since this study aimed to measure perceived teacher talk, only the teacher statements inventory was administered to the students. Therefore, only 10 items were used from the SOSI (5 positive teacher statements and 5 negative teacher statements). Students were asked to respond how often teachers say a particular statement to them by responding

to a three-point scale (3=Often, 2=Sometimes, 1 = Never). A sample item of the SOSI teacher subscale is “Good work. Well done!” for the positive statement and “That was a silly thing to do” for the negative statement. Two separate scores were obtained for the SOSI teacher subscale: one for the negative statements (items 1, 2, 7, 9, and 10) and one for the positive statements (3, 4, 5, 6 and 8). The scores were obtained by adding the responses of the positive statements and negative statements separately.

The reliability coefficients for the SOSI subscales ranged from .70 to .83 with a mean of .77 indicating good internal consistency (Burnett, 1996; Burnett, 1999; Juhasz, 1989). For the current study, Cronbach’s alpha for the positive teacher talk and negative teacher talk were .81 and .72, respectively.

### **Self-Talk Inventory**

The Self-Talk Inventory (STI) (Appendix C) is a 36-item scale developed by Burnett (1999) which consists of two separate subscales: an 18-item Positive Self-Talk Scale (PSTS) and an 18-item Negative Self-Talk Scale (NSTS). A sample item of the PSTS includes “Everything will be OK” and a sample item of the NSTS includes “I’m hopeless”. All the items in the STI were presented on a three-point scale (3=Often, 2=Sometimes and 1 = Never) according to how often the students said the statements to themselves. The two subscales were scored separately by adding the responses of all 18 items in each of the PSTS and NSTS subscales.

Burnett (1994) found the reliability coefficients for the PSTS and the NSTS to be .90 and .89 respectively while Sunderland (2000) found the reliability coefficient to be .89

for the PSTS and .86 for the NSTS. For the current study, Cronbach's alpha of the PSTS was .89 while that of the NSTS was .92, indicating a high internal consistency.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The study was first submitted to the American University of Beirut Institutional Review Board (IRB) for expedited review. Upon IRB approval, the data collection process commenced. The researcher contacted the three schools that agreed to participate by contacting the school principals by telephone and making separate appointments with each of the three schools' principals. The researcher visited the three schools and handed the principals three documents: a letter to the principal, the research proposal and the IRB approval form (including the questionnaire with the IRB approval stamp). Principals were shown the questionnaire in order to ensure that the scenarios presented in the Self-Talk Scale were relevant to what students take in their classrooms. The letter to the principals comprised an informed consent form that detailed the purpose of the study, the extent and type of participation of the schools' students in the process, and the possible risks and benefits of the study. The form sought written consent of the principal (Appendix D). Upon receiving written consent from the principals, sample clustering was used to select one section of each of grades 6, 7, 8, and 9 within each school.

As the participants were below the age of 18, consent of the parents/legal guardians through written permission for participation was obtained prior to obtaining oral assent from the students. Parents or legal guardians were sent informed consent letters with a cover page that explained the procedures, objectives and risks/benefits of the study (Appendix E). The researcher made sure to clearly explain to principals, legal guardians,



parents and students that participation is entirely on a voluntary basis and that any party had the right to withdraw consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. The school administrators, parents or students had the option to terminate the study and ask the students to stop participating in this project at any time without penalty. All parties were made aware that their refusal to participate or their withdrawal from the study will not influence their relationship with AUB in any way.

Once principals and parental approvals were obtained, the researcher set a date to visit the school. To ensure student confidentiality and anonymity the researcher read the oral assent form to the students in each of the selected sections from grades 6 to 9. An oral assent rather than a written informed consent was requested due to the fact that reading an oral consent out loud was deemed less time consuming and assured that any ambiguity or misunderstanding is immediately targeted by the researcher. The details of the study were explained and the students were informed about the purpose of the study and what will be required from them if they accept to participate. Any student that did not wish to participate was not given a questionnaire and was permitted to leave the classroom and go to the school library or join another section of the same grade level. Students were given a couple of minutes to consider participating in the study after the researcher had adequately read and explained the assent form before handing out the questionnaire. A quick response was needed on behalf of the students as the researcher could only visit each school once for distributing the questionnaire.

A group administration method was used whereby each item was read out loud by the researcher until all the items were completed by all the participating students. The

questionnaire took around 60 minutes to be completed which was about one period of school classes. The questionnaire administration took place in the students' classroom during a session of subject matters chosen by the administration. The procedure of distributing the questionnaire and collecting adolescents' responses from the three private schools took approximately three weeks to complete.

After completing the questionnaire, the students placed their responses in a sealed envelope that was handed to the researcher. The students were cordially thanked for their participation. To ensure the confidentiality of participants' responses, their names and other identifying information were not recorded. A coding system was employed in which each student was given a certain code. All codes and data were kept in a safe cabinet and data was entered and saved on a password protected computer that is kept secure and inaccessible by others. Data access was limited to the Primary Investigator and the Co-Investigator working on this research. All data will be destroyed after the required retention period of three years. The privacy of the participants will be maintained in all written data resulting from this study, which means the codes and identifying information were and will not be used in the reports of results and during the presentation of findings.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Several data analyses were carried out on the data obtained from this study. First, the internal consistency for each of the scales and subscales used in the questionnaire (i.e. Rosenberg Self-Esteem, positive teacher talk, negative teacher talk, Positive Self-Talk Scale and Negative Self-Talk Scale) was measured using Cronbach's alpha. Second, descriptive analysis was employed to investigate the means, standard deviations for all the

five measures. For the RSE, coefficients of variations were also calculated in order to have a better understanding of students' consensus about their satisfaction of the self. Moreover, percentages were calculated for the SOI and STI in order to present quantitative descriptions in a manageable form.

In order to answer the first research question "Is there a significant relationship between perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem among Lebanese adolescents?" correlational analysis using Pearson correlation ( $\alpha= 0.01$ ) was conducted to investigate the relationship between each of students' self-talk (positive and negative) and perceived teacher talk (positive and negative) with self-esteem. For the second research question "Do student self-talk, perceived teacher talk and self-esteem vary according to gender?", an independent samples *t*-test was employed where the grouping variable was taken to be gender (male and female) and the dependent variables were taken to be teacher negative talk, teacher positive talk, student positive talk, student negative talk and self-esteem. Finally, to answer the third research question "Do perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender predict self-esteem?" a stepwise regression analysis was done to investigate the contribution of students' self-talk, perceived teacher talk and gender to self-esteem. Therefore, the predicted variable (dependent variable) was student self-esteem and the predictor variables (independent variables) were negative teacher talk, positive teacher talk, negative self-talk, positive self-talk and gender.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The results section of the current study is divided into two parts. The first part will present descriptive statistics which include information on demographic variables, means, coefficients of variation, and standard deviations. The second part will present the main analyses that allowed for the research questions to be answered which included Pearson bivariate correlations, an independent samples t-test and a step-wise regression analysis.

#### **Descriptive Analyses**

##### **Sample Characteristics**

The sample consisted of a total of 250 participants of whom 52.8% were males and 47.2% were females. The students in this sample ranged in age from 11 to 15 years old, with a mean of 12.75 ( $SD = 1.26$ ). The majority of the students were in grade 9 (27.2%) while the minority was in grade 7 (23.6 %). The remaining students were in grade 6 and 8 (24.0% and 25.2% respectively).

##### **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale**

Table 1 displays the means ( $M$ ), standard deviations ( $SD$ ), and coefficients of variation ( $CV$ ) of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The scale ranged from 1 ("strongly agree") to 4 ("strongly disagree") with a midpoint of 2.50, since  $(1+4)/2$  is 2.5. A mean that was above the midpoint of the scale was taken to indicate an above average score on self-esteem with values closer to 4 indicating higher self-esteem. Similarly, a mean that was below the midpoint of the scale was taken to indicate a below average score on self-esteem with values closer to 1 indicating lower self-esteem. The means of the scores on all

items of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were computed so that one overall score for self-esteem was obtained. Data showed that students have above average self-esteem since the average value of self-esteem was above 2.5 ( $M=2.95$ ;  $SD=.59$ ).

Table 1

*Means and Standard Deviations of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale*

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	3.24	0.72
2. At times I think I am no good at all	2.59	0.94
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities	3.18	0.77
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people	3.23	0.79
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of	2.92	0.94
6. I certainly feel useless at times	2.88	0.93
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth	2.90	0.95
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself	2.46	1.05
9. All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure	3.08	0.96
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself	3.04	0.91

**Significant Others Statement Inventory**

Because this study was conducted in a school setting, the significant others' inventory focused mainly on perceived teacher talk. That is, it merely focused on students' perceptions of their teachers' statements. Students were asked how frequently ("never", "sometimes" or "often") their teacher told them specific positive statements. Table 2 shows the percentage of students' answers at each of the three frequency levels. In general, the most frequent positive feedback that students received *often* is “keep up the good work” (48.4%) followed by “good work, well done!” (46.8 %). The most frequent negative feedback students only *sometimes* received was “come on, you can do better” (58.8 %) then “do that again, please” (46.8 %), while the negative feedback that most students

reported *never* receiving was “that’s very untidy work” and “that was a silly thing to do” (both at 56.0 %). Thus, preliminary frequency data suggests that most teachers use positive and encouraging statements with students, rather than negative feedback.

Table 2

*Percentages of Significant Others' Statement Inventory Items (Teacher Subscale)*

Item	Never	Sometimes	Often
1. Come on, you can do better*	17.6	58.8	23.6
2. Do that again, please*	32.0	46.8	21.2
3. Keep up the good work	6.4	45.2	48.4
4. That’s really good	13.2	44.4	42.4
5. Lovely work	26.0	36.0	38.0
6. Good Boy or Good Girl	32.8	38.0	29.2
7. That’s very untidy work*	56.0	27.6	16.4
8. Good work. Well done!	8.8	44.4	46.8
9. That was a silly thing to do*	56.0	29.6	14.4
10. That’s not good enough*	36.4	45.2	18.4

\* Negative Teacher Statements

**Self-Talk Inventory**

Students were asked how frequently ("never", "sometimes" or "often") they said certain statements to themselves when the teacher asks them to read a page out loud. Table 3 shows the percentage of students' answers at each of the three frequency level. Reports from the section on reading a book aloud from the Self-talk Inventory revealed the most frequent statement that students *often* tell themselves is “I will read well” (60.4 %) and “I can do this” (48.0 %). The most frequent statement that students *sometimes* tell themselves is “the other kids will really like my reading” (49.2 %) and “I can do this” (45.2 %). The most frequent statement that students *never* tell themselves is “I am a hopeless reader” (66.0 %) or “I am no good at reading in front of a group” (50.0 %). Based on this

preliminary analysis, students seem to avoid discouraging self-talk statements when the teacher asks them to read a page aloud in the midst of a group. Students instead reported feeling confident in both their ability to conduct the reading task and in their peers' appreciation of their work.

Table 3

*Percentage of Responses of the Items in the First Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale*

Item	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
1. I can do this	6.8	45.2	48.0
2. I am no good at reading in front of a group*	50.0	38.4	11.6
3. I read really well last time, I'll do it again	12.4	40.0	47.6
4. I am a hopeless reader*	66.0	24.0	10.0
5. The other kids will really like my reading	21.2	49.2	29.6
6. I hope no one laughs when I can't read a word*	38.8	28.0	33.2
7. I will read well	8.8	30.8	60.4

\* Negative Self-Talk Statements

Table 4 displays the frequencies of the statements that students say to themselves when faced with a difficult math problem to complete. Preliminary analyses showed that when the teacher gives students a difficult math problem to complete, most students *often* tell themselves to “just give it [their] best shot” (52.4 %), that “[they] have done one of these before, [and they] can do this one” (46.8 %). Most students *sometimes* tell themselves that they will “work it out” (40.4 %), that they have done this before (38.0%), and that they “hope [they] are not the only [ones] who cannot do it” (38.0 %). In addition, students reported *never* telling themselves that they are hopeless at math (60.4 %) or that “there is no way [they] can do this” (52.4 %). Thus, in accordance with the section on reading a book out loud, it seems that most students refrain from telling themselves negative and discouraging statements when faced with a difficult math problem. Instead,

they often encourage themselves and hope their peers share similar concerns when it comes to finding a solution to the problem.

Table 4

*Percentage of Responses of the Items in the Second Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale*

Item	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
8. Just give it your best shot	10.0	37.6	52.4
9. Math has always been a problem for me*	37.2	36.8	26.0
10. I will work it out	13.2	40.4	46.4
11. I am hopeless at Math*	60.4	25.2	14.4
12. I have done one of these before, I can do this one	15.2	38.0	46.8
13. There is no way I can do this*	52.4	30.4	17.2
14. I hope I am not the only one who cannot do it	30.8	38.0	31.2

\* Negative Self-Talk Statements

Regarding the scenario where students are expecting to present a report in front of their class soon (Table 5), most students reported that they *often* tell themselves to “just stay calm” (54.4 %) and that they are “going to do well” (52.0%). Most students reported that they *sometimes* told themselves that “everything will be OK” (48.0%) and that “[they are] going to do well” (42.4 %) on the presentation, even though they were also *sometimes* insightful when it came to their own nervousness (48.0%). Moreover, most students reported *never* telling themselves that they knew they “were going to fail” (63.6%) or that “everyone will think [they] are hopeless” (61.6%) once they present their project in the classroom. Thus, in line with the previous sections of the Self-talk Inventory, it seems that students who are asked to present their project in class do not engage in discouraging self-talk but rather in soothing and encouraging self-talk.



Table 5

*Percentage of Responses of the Items in the Third Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale*

Item	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
15. I am going to do well	5.6	42.4	52.0
16. Everyone will think I am hopeless*	61.6	25.2	13.2
17. Everything will be OK	8.4	48.8	42.8
18. This is going to be awful*	52.4	34.0	13.6
19. Just stay calm	8.4	37.2	54.4
20. I know I am going to fail*	63.6	27.2	9.2
21. I am so nervous	12.4	48.0	39.6

\* Negative Self-Talk Statements

Table 6 shows the statements that students tell themselves when it is their turn to present their report in front of their teacher and classmates. The table shows how frequently (“never”, “sometimes”, or “often”) students tell themselves these statements and the percentage of students’ reports to each frequency. The most frequent positive statements that students *often* told themselves were “be confident” (58.0%), “you can do it” (52.4%) and “just say what you have to say” (52.4%). The most frequent negative statements that students *sometimes* told themselves were “I am going to make a mistake” (54.0%), and “I wish it could be over” (40.8%). Most students *never* told themselves negative statements such as “I am going to muck this up” (58.4%) and “I am hopeless at giving speeches” (58.0%). Thus, preliminary data consistently indicates that students tend to motivate themselves when it is their turn to give a report in front of the teacher and class.

Table 6

*Percentage of Responses of the Items in the Fourth Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale*

Item	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
22. Just relax and let the words come	9.2	40.8	50.0
23. I wish it could be over*	21.2	40.8	38.0
24. You can do it	10.4	37.2	52.4
25. I am going to make a mistake*	24.0	54.0	22.0
26. Be confident	10.0	32.0	58.0
27. I am hopeless at giving speeches*	58.0	30.0	12.0
28. Just say what you have to say	10.4	37.2	52.4
29. I am going to muck this up*	58.4	30.4	11.2

\* Negative Self-Talk Statements

Table 7 shows the frequency (“never”, “often”, “sometimes”) of statements that students say to themselves when their teacher praises them in front of the whole class for doing a really good project. In this section, the most frequent statements that students told themselves *often* were “I worked really hard on that project” (70.8%), followed by “this is really great” (67.2%). Students reported that *sometimes* they told themselves negative statements such as “Oh no! Everyone is looking at me!” (33.2%) and “I wish my teacher wouldn’t do that” (32.8%). Most students also reported that they *never* said to themselves “I wish my teacher wouldn’t do that” (57.6%) or “this is embarrassing” (54.8%). All in all, it seems that most students positively receive their teacher's praise and do not get embarrassed by it. It is important to note that the analysis so far has only included descriptive statistics which only provide preliminary results. The main analyses presented next will provide a more complex understanding of the data and the relationship between the variables.

Table 7

*Percentage of Responses of the Items in the Fifth Scenario of the Self-Talk Scale*

Item	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
30. Oh no! Everyone's looking at me*	49.2	33.2	17.6
31. This is really great	4.4	28.4	67.2
32. This is embarrassing*	54.8	30.0	15.2
33. Well done	6.8	26.4	66.8
34. I wish my teacher wouldn't do that*	57.6	32.8	9.6
35. I did really well	6.4	30.8	62.8
36. I worked really hard on that project	3.6	25.6	70.8

\* Negative Self-Talk Statements

### Main Analyses

The following sections present the results of the bivariate correlation analysis, independent samples *t*-test and the stepwise regression analysis. The results of each of these tests were related to the three hypotheses that were tested in this study.

**Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem among Lebanese adolescents.**

In order to test hypothesis 1 of the current study, two-tailed Pearson bivariate correlations were conducted among the variables: positive teacher talk, negative teacher talk, positive self-talk, negative self-talk and student self-esteem. The results of each of these correlations are presented below in Table 8.

Table 8

*Pearson's Correlations between Variables*

	Negative Teacher Talk	Positive Teacher Talk	Positive Self-Talk	Negative Self-Talk	Student Self- Esteem
Negative Teacher Talk	-				
Positive Teacher Talk	-.58*	-			
Positive Self-Talk	-.51*	.69*	-		
Negative Self-Talk	.62*	-.63*	-.73*	-	
Student Self-Esteem	-.61*	.63*	.70*	-.77*	-

\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Perceived teachers' negative talk was significantly negatively correlated with students' positive self-talk,  $r = -.51, p < .01$ , and with students' self-esteem,  $r = -.61, p < .01$ . Teacher's negative talk was also significantly positively correlated with student's negative self-talk,  $r = .62, p < .01$ . On the other hand, perceived teachers' positive feedback was significantly positively correlated with students' positive self-talk,  $r = .69, p < .01$  and with students' self-esteem,  $r = .63, p < .01$  but was significantly negatively correlated with students' negative self-talk,  $r = -.63, p < .01$ . Together, the results indicate that the type of teacher talk significantly influence the type of student self-talk and the level of student self-esteem. More specifically, the more teachers provide negative comments to students, the more students engage in negative self-talk and have lower self-esteem. Conversely, the more teachers provide positive comments to students, the more students engage in positive self-talk and have higher self-esteem.

The bivariate correlations further revealed that student positive self-talk was significantly positively correlated with their self-esteem,  $r = .70, p < .01$ , which indicates that the more students give themselves positive comments, the higher their self-esteem is.

On the other hand, students' negative self-talk was significantly negatively correlated with their self-esteem,  $r = -.77, p < .01$ , which shows that the more students criticize themselves, the lower their self-esteem.

In sum, a relationship was found between the type of perceived teacher talk (positive vs. negative), the type of self-talk students engage in (positive vs. negative) and students' level of self-esteem. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was confirmed.

**Hypothesis 2: Perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem vary according to gender.**

To test the second hypothesis, a series of independent samples *t*-tests were conducted with student gender as the independent variable and perceived teacher negative talk, perceived teacher positive talk, student negative self-talk, student positive self-talk, and student self-esteem as dependent variables. The means and standard deviations of each of these variables are presented in Table 9 by gender.

Table 9

*Means and Standards Deviations of Negative and Positive Teacher Talk, Negative and Positive Self-Talk and Self-Esteem by Gender*

Variables	Males (N=132)		Females (N=118)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher Negative Talk*	9.58	2.45	8.27	2.27
Teacher Positive Talk	10.89	2.87	11.50	2.42
Student Positive Self-Talk	43.79	6.94	44.02	6.76
Student Negative Self-Talk	31.06	8.52	30.85	8.21
Student Self-Esteem	29.47	6.25	29.60	5.40

\*Independent sample *t*-test significant at .01 level.

Male students in this sample reported receiving more negative feedback from teachers ( $M=9.58; SD=2.45$ ) compared to female students ( $M=8.27; SD=2.27$ ), and this

difference was significant,  $t(248) = 4.35, p < .01$ . On the other hand, female students ( $M=11.50; SD=2.42$ ) did not perceive significantly more positive feedback from their teachers compared to male students ( $M=10.89; SD=2.87$ ), as the difference was not significant  $t(248) = -1.81, p > .01$ . This indicates that males and females do not differ in their perceptions of positive teacher feedback; however, they differ in their perceptions of negative teacher feedback with males reporting more negative feedback from their teachers.

With regard to student self-talk, female students ( $M=44.02; SD=6.76$ ) and male students ( $M=43.79; SD=6.94$ ) did not significantly differ in their levels of positive self-talk,  $t(248) = -.26, p > .01$ . Similarly, male ( $M=31.06; SD=8.52$ ) and female students ( $M=30.85; SD=8.21$ ) did not significantly differ when it came to negative self-talk,  $t(248) = .20, p > .01$ . Thus, female and male students did not differ when it came to engaging in both positive and negative self-talk.

Finally, male ( $M=29.47; SD=6.25$ ) and female ( $M=29.60; SD=5.40$ ) students did not significantly differ in their levels of self-esteem,  $t(248) = -.18, p > .01$ . Thus, the results indicate that male and female adolescent students have similar levels of self-esteem.

In sum, the results indicated that statistically significant gender differences were apparent in students' perceptions of teacher negative talk while there was no statistically significant difference between males and females in their perceptions of teacher positive talk, their positive and negative self-talk and their level of self-esteem. Thus, hypothesis 2, which expected gender differences on all variables, was only partially confirmed since the only gender difference found pertained to perceived teacher negative talk.

**Hypothesis 3: Perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender are predictors of self-esteem.**

To test hypothesis 3, a stepwise regression analysis was conducted in which gender, perceived teacher negative talk, perceived teacher positive talk, student negative self-talk and student positive self-talk were the independent variables and student self-esteem was the dependent variable. Gender was entered as a dummy variable (0=Females; 1=Males). The results of the stepwise regression are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

*Prediction of Students' Self-esteem from Student Self-talk, Perceived TeacherTalk and Gender*

Variables Entered	Student Self-Esteem				
	<i>B</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Student Negative Self-Talk	-.44	.59	.59	-7.31	.00
Student Positive Self-Talk	.28	.63	.04	4.97	.00
Teacher Negative Talk	-.19	.65	.02	-4.03	.00
Model		.65			.00
Teacher Positive Talk				1.72	.09
Gender				1.44	.15

*Note.* Gender was scored: 0 = Female, 1 = Male.

The results indicated that 65% of the variance in self-esteem could be predicted by the variables assessed. The model was statistically significant,  $F(3, 246) = 152.90, p < .01$ . “The adjusted  $R^2$  gives us some idea of how well our model generalizes and ideally we would like its value to be the same, or very close to, the value of  $R^2$ ” (Field, 2009, p. 235). In other words, if the difference between adjusted  $R^2$  and  $R^2$  is small, this ‘shrinkage’ means that if the model were derived from the population rather than a sample it would account for only a bit less variance in the outcome; and the model can be said to generalize well to the population. In our last model, the difference between the adjusted  $R^2$  and  $R^2$  is null.

Because the shrinkage in this case is null, the cross-validity of this model can be said to be excellent; and the results can be safely projected onto the general population.

Positive teacher talk and students' gender were both non-significant predictors of student self-esteem and were excluded from the regression equation. Among all the predictors in the self-esteem model, negative self-talk, positive self-talk and negative teacher talk were significant predictors. In addition, student negative self-talk explained 59% of the variation in self-esteem while positive student self-talk and negative teacher talk contributed only 4% and 2% respectively.

In sum, this shows that students' self-esteem was not affected by their gender or teachers' positive feedback whereas it was significantly affected by positive student self-talk, negative student self-talk and negative teacher talk. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was partially confirmed. Indeed, students' positive and negative self-talk as well as teachers' negative talk significantly predicted students' self-esteem. However, whether students were male or female and whether they received positive feedback from teachers did not predict students' level of self-esteem.



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the study's major findings, presents the study's limitations and recommendations for future research, and concludes with implications for practice.

#### **Major Findings**

The current study aimed to explore the influence of perceived teacher talk, self-talk and gender on Lebanese adolescents' self-esteem. More specifically, the study explored the relationship among perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem. Gender differences in perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem were also determined. Finally, the contribution of perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender in predicting self-esteem was investigated.

#### **The Relationship among Perceived Teacher Talk, Student Self-Talk and Self-Esteem**

The results of this study revealed a direct relationship between perceived teacher talk and student self-talk in which positive teacher talk was associated with positive self-talk whereas negative teacher talk was associated with negative self-talk. This is consistent with previous research which has confirmed the direct relationship between significant other statements (including teachers) and self-talk (Burnett, 1996; Yaratan & Yucesoylu, 2010). With regard to self-esteem, positive teacher talk and positive self-talk were found to positively influence students' self-esteem. On the other hand, negative self-talk and negative teacher talk negatively influenced students' self-esteem. This is also consistent with previous research which has shown that interpersonal appraisals (Burnett, 1996; & Allik, 2008; Thomaes et al., 2010; Yaratan & Yucesoylu, 2010) and type of self-talk

(Burnett, 1999; Burnett & McCrindle, 1999; Harris, 1991; Van Sistine, 2008; Yaratan & Yucesoylu, 2010) directly influence self-esteem. Together, these results indicate that Lebanese adolescents' self-esteem is significantly influenced by the statements and opinions made by their teachers and by themselves. Moreover, statements made by their teachers significantly impact what students say to themselves.

These findings can be explained in terms of Bandura's (1990) social learning theory in which he argues that there is a reciprocal interaction between the environment and people's cognitions. According to Bandura (1990), people's cognitions are influenced by whom they perceive as role models in their lives. Since adolescents spend a large portion of their lives at school, they rank teachers as most influential in their lives (Juhasz, 1989). Therefore, their cognitions (i.e. self-talk) are affected by what teachers say to them which, in turn, affects their self-esteem. In fact, Burnett and McCrindle (1999) found that self-talk mediated the relationship between perceived significant other talk and self-esteem. In other words, if a statement made by a significant other is perceived as positive, this will result in positive self-talk which leads to higher self-esteem, and vice versa. This is especially important in the Lebanese context where social interactions are important. Therefore, adolescents may be more influenced by the statements and opinions made by significant others in their lives (Ayyash-Abdo & Alamuddin, 2010).

### **Gender Differences in Perceived Teacher Talk, Student Self-Talk and Self-Esteem**

The results of this study revealed gender differences in only perceived negative teacher talk. In particular, there was a significant difference in perceived teacher talk between males and females with males perceiving higher levels of teacher negative talk.

This result may be attributed to the patriarchal nature of the Lebanese society where traditional gender role expectations are an essential part of the culture (Sultana & Watts, 2007). Since males in the Lebanese society are expected to be the future providers of their families, academic achievement is very important for them to secure a steady job. This may explain why male Lebanese adolescents receive more negative talk from their teachers since teachers may hold higher academic expectations from males than females.

No gender differences were found in perceived positive teacher talk, negative self-talk, positive self-talk and self-esteem. The latter finding is inconsistent with numerous studies which have indicated significant gender differences in type and frequency of self-talk (Burnett, 1999), levels of self-esteem (Dukes & Martinez, 1994; Harter, 1993; Kling et al., 1999) and influence of significant others (Lackovic-Grgin & Dekovic, 1990). This is also inconsistent with gender differences found in studies on Lebanese adolescents (Khaybani, 2008; Sarouphim, 2011). However, it is important to note that the studies done in Lebanon studied *domain-specific* self-esteem and not global self-esteem, as in the current study. These studies, including previous Western studies, have shown that males tend to have higher self-esteem in physical appearance, athletics, personal self and self-satisfaction while females show higher levels of self-esteem in behavioral conduct and moral-ethical self-esteem (e.g., Gentile et al., 2009). Therefore, it can be argued that gender differences in Lebanese adolescents may appear in domain-specific self-esteem which requires further study.

## **Predictors of Student Self-Esteem**

Findings revealed that students' positive and negative self-talk as well as perceived teachers' negative talk were significant predictors of students' self-esteem whereas gender and perceived positive teacher talk were not significant predictors. More specifically, negative teacher talk and negative self-talk were associated with lower levels of self-esteem and positive self-talk was associated with higher levels of self-esteem. This was consistent with the findings of the correlation analyses. Although no studies have been conducted that consider the predictive ability of perceived teacher talk, self-talk and gender together, as discussed earlier, studies have indicated a relationship between significant other talk, gender and self-talk on self-esteem (e.g., Burnett, 1996, 1999; Burnett & McCrindle, 1999; Kling et al., 1999; Pullman & Allik, 2008) .

The results of this study surprisingly showed that perceived positive teacher talk did not significantly contribute to the variation in self-esteem. This may be due to the fact that negative remarks and judgments made by teachers are more influential than positive ones. What is even more surprising is the fact that self-esteem was influenced by negative and positive self-talk with negative self-talk accounting for the greatest portion of the variation in self-esteem. This indicates that despite influences from the environment, cognitions- especially negative ones- have a greater impact on self-esteem. The latter argument is consistent with previous research which has showed that negative self-talk had a more powerful influence on self-esteem than positive self-talk (Kususanto et al., 2010; Philpot & Bamberg, 1996).

## **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

The current study has a number of limitations concerning both methodology and research design. The first limitation pertains to the self-reported nature of the instruments (Baumeister, 2005) in which participants might have portrayed themselves in a more favorable light and might have been reluctant to reveal detailed accounts of their teachers' feedback in their presence. Therefore, future research needs to rely on observational methods that would allow researchers to assess teachers' feedback in the classroom. In terms of self-esteem, measures of behavioral aspects of self-esteem, rather than just cognitive aspects, may also provide a more accurate account of students' self-esteem (Tafarodi & Ho, 2006). In addition, the Self-Talk Inventory included scenarios that were specific to certain classroom situations and therefore may not reflect the typical thoughts that students often say to themselves. Future research could involve the use of self-talk scales that include statements that are more generic.

Moreover, the current study's design might have benefited from the inclusion of confounding variables that might have explained some of the variance regarding the outcome variable of self-esteem. Variables like age (e.g., Orth et al., 2012), parenting style in the household (e.g., Joubert, 1991), and students' personality (e.g., El-Hassan, 2004) were included in the analysis. Since academic achievement has been found to be associated with self-esteem (e.g., Alves-Martins et al., 2002), it would be useful to include variables related to achievement such as student grades in the design of future studies. This, for example, would allow for a clearer examination of the interaction between student self-talk, teacher talk, self-esteem and academic achievement. Furthermore, since this study

showed that only negative teacher statements and not positive ones influenced self-esteem, it could be possible that other significant others in Lebanese adolescents' lives are more influential, such as their peers. This also needs further study.

Finally, another limitation of the current study pertains to the generalizability of the findings. It is important to bear in mind that the current study was conducted in only three private schools in the Beirut area. The sample's lack of diversity concerning demographic variables might prevent the results' generalizability to the population of Lebanese students. Future research should more prudently include a more representative and larger sample that would recruit students from different municipalities, sects and socio-economic statuses, as these demographic variables could have extremely telling effects on student-teacher interactions, student perceptions and student self-esteem.

### **Implications for Practice**

Self-esteem has been associated with important facets of life including academic achievement (Domagala-Zysk, 2006), psychological well-being (Harter, 1993) and peer and social relations (Searcy, 2007). In addition, self-esteem among adolescents has been reported to be low in Western countries (Searcy, 2007) as well as in Lebanon (El-Hassan, 2007). Therefore, gaining an understanding of the factors that influence self-esteem is essential for practice. As such, this study has valuable implications for school counselors and teachers in terms of promoting healthy adolescent self-esteem.

Students' type of self-talk (i.e. whether positive or negative) has been shown to be largely affected by their perceptions of the type of feedback they receive from their teachers. Also, self-talk and perceived teacher talk both influence self-esteem. Thus,

teachers should be aware of the types of comments and feedback they give the students in their classrooms, whether intentionally or unintentionally. The current study also found that males reported more negative teacher talk than females. Hence, it is important for teachers to take extra care in the expectations they place on their male students since these expectations may be reflected in the negative comments they make. Providing positive and motivating comments in the classroom promotes students' self-esteem by nurturing positive relationships between students and teachers (Burnett, 1994) and by creating a more positive learning environment in which academic achievement can be enhanced (Canfield, 1990). In addition to providing positive feedback, teachers ought to encourage students to engage in more motivating and encouraging self-talk.

The results of the study also have important implications for school counselors. School counselors play an important role in developing healthy and positive self-esteem among students (ASCA, 2003). By being aware that self-talk influences self-esteem, counselors can help students identify and monitor the statements they usually say to themselves. Using cognitive strategies, school counselors can promote the self-esteem of students by helping them transform their negative self-talk to more positive self-talk (Harris, 1991; Van Sistine, 2008). As students gradually replace negative thoughts with positive ones, they will slowly develop a healthier self-esteem (Burnett, 1999). Not only can school counselors intervene to help students promote their self-esteem, but they can also conduct workshops in order to train in-service teachers on employing positive feedback and comments in their classrooms.

## **Conclusion**

Very minimal studies have tackled the factors that influence Lebanese adolescents' self-esteem. Thus, this study has added to the scarce body of literature pertaining to the self-esteem of Lebanese adolescents by providing valuable insight into the factors that affect the latter. The findings of the current study revealed the significant influence of perceived teacher talk and student self-talk on self-esteem. More specifically, higher levels of positive teacher talk and positive self-talk were associated with higher levels of self-esteem while higher levels of negative teacher talk and positive self-talk were associated with lower levels of self-esteem. Furthermore, the study revealed a significant correlation between the type of perceived teacher talk and the type of student self-talk. This study emphasizes the important roles of teachers in promoting healthy self-esteem among Lebanese adolescents. This study paves the way for more future research to be done on the factors that influence Lebanese adolescents' self-esteem.



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## APPENDIX A

### Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE)

**Author:** Professor Morris Rosenberg

**Reference:** Rosenberg, M. (1979). *Conceiving the Self*. New York: Basic Books.

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please read the statements carefully and write the appropriate answer for each item, depending on whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with it.

**1 = strongly agree**

**2 = Agree**

**3 = Disagree**

**4 = strongly disagree**

Write number **1** next to the statement where you **strongly agree**, write number **2** next to the statement where you **agree**, write number **3** next to the statement where you **disagree** and write number **4** next to the statement where you **strongly disagree**.

\_\_\_\_\_ **1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **2. At times I think I am no good at all.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **6. I certainly feel useless at times.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **7. I feel that I'm a person of worth.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **9. All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.**

## APPENDIX B

### Significant Others Statement Inventory (SOSI)

**Author:** Professor Paul Burnett

**Reference:**

Burnett, P. C. (1996). Children's self-talk and significant others' positive and negative statements. *Educational Psychology*, 16, 57-67

Here are some situations and some things your teachers might say to you.

Please read the statements below carefully and decide which of the following is right for you.

**Example:**

	<b>OFTEN</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
If the person says it <b>OFTEN</b> , tick <b>O</b> for <b>OFTEN</b>	<b>X</b>		
If the person might say it <b>SOMETIMES</b> , tick <b>S</b> for <b>SOMETIMES</b>		<b>X</b>	
If the person <b>NEVER</b> says it, tick <b>N</b> for <b>NEVER</b>			<b>X</b>

There are no right or wrong answers. Only you know what your teachers say to you. Please tick next to each correct answer how often does your teachers say these statements to you.

**How often does your TEACHER say to you:**

	<b>OFTEN</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
1. Come on, you can do better			
2. Do that again, please.			
3. Keep up the good work.			
4. That's really good.			
5. Lovely work.			
6. Good Boy or Good Girl.			
7. That's very untidy work.			
8. Good work. Well done!			
9. That was a silly thing to do.			
10. That's not good enough.			

**Scoring instructions:**

Teacher Negative: Add Items 25,26,31,33,34 together

Teacher Positive: Add Items 27,28,29,30,32 together.

## APPENDIX C

### Self-Talk Inventory (STI)

**Author:** Professor Paul Burnett

**References:**

Burnett, P. C. (1994). Self-talk in upper elementary school children: Its relationship with irrational beliefs, self-esteem, and depression. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 12, 181-188.

Here are some situations and some things you might say to yourself. Read each statement carefully, and decide which of the following is right for you.

	<b>OFTEN</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
If the person says it <b>OFTEN</b> , tick <b>O</b> for <b>OFTEN</b>	<b>X</b>		
If the person might say it <b>SOMETIMES</b> , tick <b>S</b> for <b>SOMETIMES</b>		<b>X</b>	
If the person <b>NEVER</b> says it, tick <b>N</b> for <b>NEVER</b>			<b>X</b>

There are no right or wrong answers. Only you know what you say to yourself. Please mark the way you really talk to yourself and answer the questions.

**Your teacher asks you to read a page of your reading book aloud to the group. How often would you say this to yourself**

	<b>OFTEN</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
1. I can do this.			
2. I am no good at reading in front of a group.			
3. I read really well last time, I'll do it again.			
4. I am a hopeless reader.			
5. The other kids will really like my reading.			
6. I hope no one laughs when I can't read a word.			
7. I will read well.			

**Your teacher gives you a difficult Maths problem to complete. How often would you say this to yourself?**

	<b>OFTEN</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
8. Just give it your best shot.			
9. Maths has always been a problem for me.			
10. I will work it out.			
11. I am hopeless at Maths.			
12. I have done one of these before, I can do this one.			
13. There is no way I can do this.			
14. I hope I am not the only one who cannot do it.			

**You will soon give a report about your project in front of the whole class. How often would you say this to yourself?**

	<b>OFTEN</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
15. I am going to do well.			
16. Everyone will think I am hopeless.			
17. Everything will be OK.			
18. This is going to be awful.			

19. Just stay calm.			
20. I know I am going to fail.			
21. I am so nervous.			

**Now it's your turn to give your report. You go to the front of the class, turn and face your teacher and classmates. How often would you say this to yourself?**

	<b>OFTEN</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
22. Just relax and let the words come.			
23. I wish it could be over.			
24. You can do it.			
25. I am going to make a mistake.			
26. Be confident.			
27. I am hopeless at giving speeches.			
28. Just say what you have to say.			
29. I am going to muck this up.			



**Your teacher praises you in front of the whole class for doing a really good project.**

**How often would you say this to yourself?**

	<b>OFTEN</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>	<b>NEVER</b>
30. Oh no! Everyone's looking at me.			
31. This is really great.			
32. This is embarrassing.			
33. Well done.			
34. I wish my teacher wouldn't do that.			
35. I did really well.			
36. I worked really hard on that project.			

**Scoring instructions:**

Items 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26, 28, 31, 33, 35 and 36 are added together to form the Positive Self-talk. Subscale (Range=18-54, alpha=0.90)

Items 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 32 and 34 are added together to form the Negative Self-talk. Subscale (Range=18-54, alpha=0.89).

## APPENDIX D

### IRB Principal Consent Form



**Institutional Review Board**  
**American University of Beirut**  
Beirut, Lebanon  
**Tel: (01) 350-000 ext. 5445**  
**Fax: +961-1-738025**

**American University of Beirut**  
**Faculty of art and sciences**  
**Department of Education**

**Study Title:** Perceived Teacher Talk, Student Self-talk and Gender as Predictors of Self-esteem among Lebanese Adolescents.

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Vivian Khamis

**Co-Investigator:** GhinwaMasri

Dear principal,

My name is GhinwaMasri; I am a graduate student in the Department of education in the art and science faculty at AUB. This research is being conducted as a requirement for my Master program in school guidance and counseling at the American University of Beirut.

I would like to request your approval to conduct a study in your school under the AUB and Institutional Review Board (IRB) to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects.

We would like to ask a group of students to participate in a research study about self-esteem and its relation to perceived teacher talk and self-talk. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions.

#### **Project Description:**

1. The purpose of the study is twofold, first to determine the levels of perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and self-esteem in Lebanese adolescents. Second, to investigate the predictors of self-esteem including perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender. It was hypothesized that a combination of teachers (i.e. perceived teacher talk) and personal variables (i.e. student talk and gender) would be associated with self-esteem.

2. This study will be conducted in three private schools in Beirut area having English as the main language of instruction. This consent is only given to schools that have been accepted as a site for the study. Only private schools whose principal has signed the consent form will be qualified to participate in the study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep with you. In each of the three participating private schools, only one section from each of the grade levels 6, 7, 8 and 9 will be randomly selected. It is assumed that each section contains approximately 25 students; a sample of around 100 students per school is expected. Therefore, the total number of students participating in this study is expected to be 300.
3. Parental permission forms will be also distributed, by the principal, to the students of the randomly chosen sections in order to get their approvals. Only students whose parents have signed the parental permission form will be entitled to participate in the study and will be given the questionnaire. Not only parental permissions are required but also students' approvals are obtained orally.
4. In this study, a questionnaire that has three sections will be distributed to one randomly chosen section from each of the grade levels between grades 6 and 9. The questionnaire contains three sections. The first section includes the Rosenberg self-esteem scale and will measure self-esteem, the second section includes the self-talk inventory which will measure self-talk and the last section includes the significant others statements inventory (teacher scale only) to measure the students' perception of teacher talk.
5. The questionnaire is expected to take around 60 minutes to be completed which means about one period. The questionnaires will take place in the students' classroom during a session of any subject matter chosen by the administration. Any student that does not wish to participate will not be given a questionnaire and can leave the classroom. The students who refuse to participate will go the school library or can join another section until the others fill the questionnaires. The school will be responsible for the students who are not participating in the study and will decide where to take them in the time the questionnaires are being filled.

### **Risks and Benefits:**

There are no risks to participants in the study. When I am done with the study, I will use students' responses to write a report about what I found out. Their names will not be requested. No names should be provided. Students who are participating in the study are not involved in any physical risk or emotional risk to them beyond the risks of daily life. The school, parents and students have the right to withdraw the consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. The decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Discontinuing participation will not affect the relationship with AUB in any way.

Participants and school staff might possibly benefit from this study since it gives the opportunity for students and school counselors to explore the relationship of self-esteem to self-talk and perceived teacher talk. In doing so, administrators and school counselors can help students use more positive self-talk in order to increase their self-esteem. Students themselves can be encouraged to use positive self-talk in everyday life to increase their self-esteem. Moreover school administrators and school counselors can conduct a general meeting in order to advice teacher to use positive statements in their classrooms since it can encourage students to use positive self-talk and thereby increase self-esteem. The participation will help researchers better understand the relation between self-esteem, self-talk and perceived teacher talk. The findings of this research would further contribute to adding more predictors for self-esteem that explains students' behavior during adolescents. In terms of implications to practice, the findings may be useful for schools counselors, teachers, parents and students. The findings can help school counselors understand that self-esteem can be predicted by both self-talk and perceived teacher talk therefore they can use the measures used in the study to measure students' perception about the statements made by their teachers in the classroom and to measure how the student talks with himself and the extent to which he or she uses positive or negative self-talk. When counselors assess the students they can discover which variable is more likely affecting students' self-esteem which might lead them to implement the needed interventions. Additionally this study becomes significant in informing people around the students to be aware of the relationship between the statements made by significant others (teachers) and self-esteem, and self-talk of students. The findings of the following study will also contribute to the self-esteem development literature of Lebanese students.

### **Confidentiality**

The participation of the students in the study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk. Students' names will not be registered and their answers in the questionnaires will not be graded. If the school agrees that students from grades 6 to 9 participate in this research study, the information will be kept confidential. To secure the confidentiality of the responses of students, their names and other identifying information will never be attached to the questionnaire; each student will be given a code. All codes and data will be kept in safe place or on a locked computer only accessible by the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigator working directly on this study. Students' responses to the questionnaire and data will be shredded and destroyed after the required retention period (after three years). The students' privacy will be maintained in all written data resulting from this study. Names or other identifying information of the students and of the school will not be used in any reports or presentations.

### **Participant rights:**

Please understand that your participation is entirely on a voluntary basis and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. The school administrators, parents or students are free to leave the study and ask the

students to stop participating in this project at any time without penalty. Please be aware that your decisions for not participating in the study will not influence your relationship with AUB in any way.

**Contact Information**

In case you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact:

**Principal Investigator:**Dr. Vivian Khamis

Address: Department of Education  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
American University of Beirut

**Phone:**01- 350 000 ext. 3067

**Student investigator name:** GhinwaMasri

Address: Lebanon, Beirut  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
American University of Beirut

**Phone:** 76- 61 76 51

In case you have further questions and you want to make sure that students' rights are maintained please feel free to contact:Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights at 01- 374374, ext:5445 or by email: irb@aub.edu.lb.

Best regards

Dr. Vivian Khamis  
Professor, Department of Education  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
American University of Beirut

GhinwaMasri  
Graduate Student, Department of Education  
School guidance and counseling  
Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
American University of Beirut

I have read and understood the above information. I voluntarily agree for the students of this school to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal Date & Time

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the researcher Date & Time

## APPENDIX E

### IRB Parental Consent Form



**Institutional Review Board  
American University of Beirut**  
Beirut, Lebanon  
**Tel: (01) 350-000 ext. 5445**  
**Fax: +961-1-738025**

**American University of Beirut**  
**[Faculty of art and sciences](#)**  
**Department of Education**

#### **AUB Social & Behavioral Sciences Parental Permission Form Permission for Child to Participate in Research**

**Study Title:** Perceived Teacher Talk, Student Self-talk and Gender as Predictors of Self-esteem among Lebanese Adolescents.

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Vivian Khamis

**Co-Investigator:** GhinwaMasri

This is a permission form for your child for whom you are legal guardian to participate in a research study. This paper contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to permit your child for whom you are legal guardian to participate. Your child's participation is voluntary.

Please read the information below, a brief description of the study will be provided so you consider carefully before you decide to allow your child to participate. After receiving this permission letter, you will be given two days to think about it. This waiting period is essential since the participation is voluntary. If you decide to permit participation, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

#### **Description of the study:**

Your child is invited to participate in a research study designed to explore the relation of self-esteem to perceived teacher talk and self-talk. I am trying to find out more about what factors influence students' self-esteem and whether these factors differ among gender. I am also trying to see whether perceived teacher talk, self-talk and gender can be predictors of self-esteem.

So basically the purpose of the study is twofold, first to determine the relation of perceived teacher talk student self-talk to self-esteem in Lebanese adolescents. Second, to investigate the predictors of self-esteem including perceived teacher talk, student self-talk and gender. It was hypothesized that a combination of teachers (i.e. perceived teacher talk) and personal variables (i.e. student talk and gender) would be associated with self-esteem.

This study will be conducted in three private schools in Beirut area having English as the main language of instruction. A consent form was only given to schools that have been accepted as a site for the study. Only private schools whose principal has signed the consent form will be qualified to participate in the study. In each of the three participating private schools, only one section from each of the grade levels 6, 7, 8 and 9 will be randomly selected. It is assumed that each section contains approximately 25 students; a sample of around 100 students per school is expected. Therefore, the total number of students participating in this study is expected to be 300.

Parental permission forms were distributed by the principal, to the students of the randomly chosen sections in order to get their parents' signatures and approvals. Only students whose parents have signed the parental permission form will be entitled to participate in the study and will be given the questionnaire. Not only parental permissions are required but also students' approvals will be obtained. Only the students whose parents approved on their participation and who have signed the oral assent form will participate.

### **Procedure and tasks:**

Students will be asked to fill a questionnaire that involves three sections. The first section includes the Rosenberg self-esteem scale and will measure self-esteem, the second section includes the self-talk inventory which will measure self-talk and the last section includes the significant others statements inventory (teacher scale only) to measure their perception of teacher talk.

### **Duration:**

The questionnaire is expected to take around 60 minutes to be completed, about one period. The questionnaires will take place in the students' classroom during a session of any subject matter chosen by the administration. Any student that does not wish to participate will not be given a questionnaire and can leave the classroom. The students who refuse to participate will go to the school library or can join another section until the others fill the questionnaires. The school will be responsible for the students who are not participating in the study and will decide where to take them in the time the questionnaires are being filled.

**Risks and benefits:**

There are no risks to participants in the study. Students who are participating in the study are not involved in any physical risk or emotional risk to them beyond the risks of daily life.

The school, parents and students have the right to withdraw the consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. The decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Discontinuing participation will not affect the relationship with AUB in any way.

When I am done with the study, I will use students' responses to write a report about what I found out. Their names will not be requested. No names should be provided.

Participants and school staff might possibly benefit from this study since it gives the opportunity for students and school counselors to explore the relationship of self-esteem to self-talk and perceived teacher talk. In doing so, administrators and school counselors can help students use more positive self-talk in order to increase their self-esteem. Students themselves can be encouraged to use positive self-talk in everyday life to increase their self-esteem. Moreover, school administrators and school counselors can conduct a general meeting in order to advise teacher to use positive statements in their classrooms since it can encourage students to use positive self-talk and thereby increase self-esteem. The participation will help researchers better understand the relation between self-esteem, self-talk and perceived teacher talk. The findings of this research would further contribute to adding more predictors for self-esteem that explains students' behavior during adolescents. In terms of implications to practice, the findings may be useful for schools counselors, teachers, parents and students. The findings can help school counselors understand that self-esteem can be predicted by both self-talk and perceived teacher talk therefore they can use the measures used in the study to measure students' perception about the statements made by their teachers in the classroom and to measure how the student talks with himself and the extent to which he or she uses positive or negative self-talk. When counselors assess the students they can discover which variable is more likely affecting students' self-esteem which might lead them to implement the needed interventions.

Additionally this study becomes significant in informing people around the students to be aware of the relationship between the statements made by significant others (teachers/parents/peers) and self-esteem, and self-talk of students. The findings of the following study will also contribute to the self-esteem development literature of Lebanese students.

**Confidentiality and disposal of records:**

Students' names will not be registered and their answers in the questionnaires will not be graded. If the school agrees that students from grades 6 to 9 participate in this research



study, the information will be kept confidential. To secure the confidentiality of the responses of students, their names and other identifying information will never be attached to the questionnaire; each student will be given a code. All codes and data will be kept in safe place or on a locked computer only accessible by the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigator working directly on this study.

Students' responses to the questionnaire and data will be shredded and destroyed after the required retention period which is after three years. The students' privacy will be maintained in all written data resulting from this study. Names or other identifying information of the students and of the school will not be used in any reports or presentations.

Efforts will be made to keep your child's study-related information confidential. All data from this study will be maintained in a secure locked drawer in a locked office or on a password protected computer. Data will only be reported in the aggregate. No names of individual children will be disclosed in any reports or presentations of this research. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your child's participation in this study may be disclosed if required by law. Also, your child's research data may be reviewed by the following group if needed:

The AUB Institutional Review Board or Office of Human Research Protections.

**Incentives:**

No payment will be made for your child to participate in this study and their answers will not be graded; they won't receive any extra credit for participating.

**Participants' right:**

Students who are participating in the study are not involved in any physical risk or emotional risk to them beyond the risks of daily life.

The school, parents and students have the right to withdraw the consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. The decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Discontinuing participation will not affect the relationship with AUB in any way.

Students will have the freedom not to answer any questions they do not wish to answer and your child may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop your child's participation in the study, there will be no penalty to you, or your child and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship or that of your child, with AUB for example: If you decide to stop your child's participation in the study, the relationship between you/your child and the school or AUB would not be adversely affected. If you are a student or employee at AUB, your decision about whether or not you allow your child to participate in this research will not affect your grades or employment status.

By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you or your child may have as a participant in this study.

Please note that The Social & Behavioral Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at AUB has reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable Lebanese and U.S. federal regulations and AUB policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

**Contact Information:** In case you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact:

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Vivian Khamis

Address: Department of Education

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

American University of Beirut

**Phone:** 01- 350 000 ext. 3067

**Student investigator name:** Ghinwa Masri

Address: Lebanon, Beirut

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

American University of Beirut

**Phone:** 76- 61 76 51

In case you have further questions and you want to make sure that students' rights are maintained please feel free to contact: The AUB Social & Behavioral Science Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human rights at 01- 374374, ext:5445 or by email: [irb@aub.edu.lb](mailto:irb@aub.edu.lb).

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep with you. Only children who present this consent form signed by their parents will be enrolled in the study. Also, a copy of the student assent form will be given to each participant.

I have read and understood the above information. I voluntarily agree to give permission for my child/children under my guardianship to participate this study. I am aware that I am being asked to give permission for my minor child to participate in the following research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Investigator/Research Staff**

I have explained the research to the parent or legal guardian of the child subject/participant before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the parent/legal guardian of the child participant/subject.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person obtaining permission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person obtaining permission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date and time am/pm

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