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**Self-esteem, Attitudes to Behaviours,
Influences and Dimensions of
Personality among Young People in
Northern Ireland**

BULLETIN 2

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Self-esteem, Attitudes to Behaviours, Influences and Dimensions of Personality among Young People in Northern Ireland

Summary

This report provides data relating primarily to the self-esteem of young people in Northern Ireland. It provides analysis of self-esteem by key demographic characteristics; the relationships between self-esteem and attitudes to behaviours; the relationship between self-esteem and influences; and the relationship between self-esteem and media exposure. In providing the context for these analyses by self-esteem, data on attitudes to behaviour and life choices, and data on influences are provided, though these are presented elsewhere (i.e. data on behaviour and life choices in Bulletin 1, and data on influences in Bulletin 3). Data on the dimensions of personality are also presented in this report.

Data were collected in 2002 from a total of 2134 Year 12 pupils in 22 schools with a wide geographical distribution in Northern Ireland. They comprised 7 grammar, 14 secondary and 1 comprehensive. Nine of the schools are predominantly attended by members of the Protestant community, 12 are predominantly attended by Catholic pupils and 1 is integrated. Children in Year 12 were asked to complete a questionnaire booklet. Pupils of all academic ability completed the questionnaires anonymously, under exam conditions, in each school.

The questionnaires provide data on: demographic variables i.e. gender, locality, age, parental employment and marital status; attitudes to behaviours and influences; religiosity – denomination, practice, attitudes; media exposure – TV, reading, internet; aspects of personality including self-esteem.

The demographic breakdown of the sample is approximately as follows: 57% male, 43% female; 53% urban, 47% rural; 82% of parents married, 18% of parents separated or divorced; 53% Catholic, 28% Protestant (which includes Baptist, Church of Ireland, Methodist and URC/Presbyterian), 4% 'Other' and 15% of no religious denomination.

Data on self-esteem shows that one third of young people in Northern Ireland have high self-esteem, three fifths have moderate self-esteem and less than one tenth have low self-esteem.

When the data on self-esteem are analysed by demographic variables, on the basis of gender, more boys than girls have high self-esteem, while more girls than boys have low self-esteem. More grammar school pupils than secondary school pupils have high self-esteem and more pupils whose parents are married, than those whose parents are divorced or separated, have high self-esteem. When data are analysed on the basis of location, or on the basis of parental social class, no significant differences are observed.

Pupils were asked if they belonged to a church or other religious group. They could define themselves as either belonging to no religious group ('None'); being Baptist, Church of Ireland, Methodist or URC/Presbyterian (grouped together as 'Protestant' for the purpose of analysis) or they could define themselves as being 'Catholic' or belonging to some other religious group ('Other'). When the data are analysed on the basis of religious denomination, more pupils who define themselves as Catholics, than those of other denominations, have high self-esteem.

Bulletin 1 reports the data on attitudes to behaviours and life choices from the study, but a brief overview is provided in this bulletin to provide the context for the analysis of these attitudes by self-esteem. Young people in this survey displayed almost universal disapproval of some behaviours such as stealing (96%), bullying (94%) and drug taking (85%). There were also high levels of disapproval for behaviours such as suicide (76%) and abortion (75%). Approximately half of the young people considered homosexuality and homosexual practice to be wrong. On the other hand, a considerable level of tolerance with regard to issues around alcohol, and a liberal attitude to sexual intercourse before/outside marriage and under the legal age, contraception and divorce is apparent.

When attitudes to behaviours are analysed on the basis of self-esteem, where differences are significant, more pupils who have high self-esteem, than those of low self-esteem, consider the behaviours wrong.

Bulletin 3 reports on the influences on young people and media exposure, but a brief overview is included in this bulletin to allow analysis by self-esteem. Data from the study on influences shows that the categories of people the young people say are most influential in their decisions about what is right and wrong are parents, friends, peers and grandparents.

Analysis by self-esteem shows that greater percentages of those with high or moderate self-esteem say that in deciding what is right and what is wrong, they are influenced by parents, grandparents, teachers, church leaders, and their RE teacher. On the other hand, more young people with low self-esteem say that they are influenced by writers in teenage magazines, celebrities, TV 'experts' and TV 'soap' characters.

Data on dimensions of personality based on the Junior Eysenck Personality Questionnaire – Short-form is presented in this bulletin, together with comparable data from England and Wales. Significant differences between the samples occur on neuroticism (instability), psychoticism (tough-mindedness) and the lie scale (social desirable responses). Pupils in the present study scored significantly higher on the measures of neuroticism and psychoticism and lower on the lie scale than a comparable sample of pupils in England and Wales.

The aim of this report is to provide information on the self-esteem of young people in Northern Ireland, analysis of this self-esteem by key demographic characteristics, and analysis of the relationships between self-esteem, attitudes to behaviours, influences and media exposure. Information on personality dimensions is also presented. It is hoped that the report provides useful insights for those interested in, or concerned with, the well being of young people in Northern Ireland.

Self-esteem, Attitudes to Behaviours Influences and Dimensions of Personality among Young People in Northern Ireland

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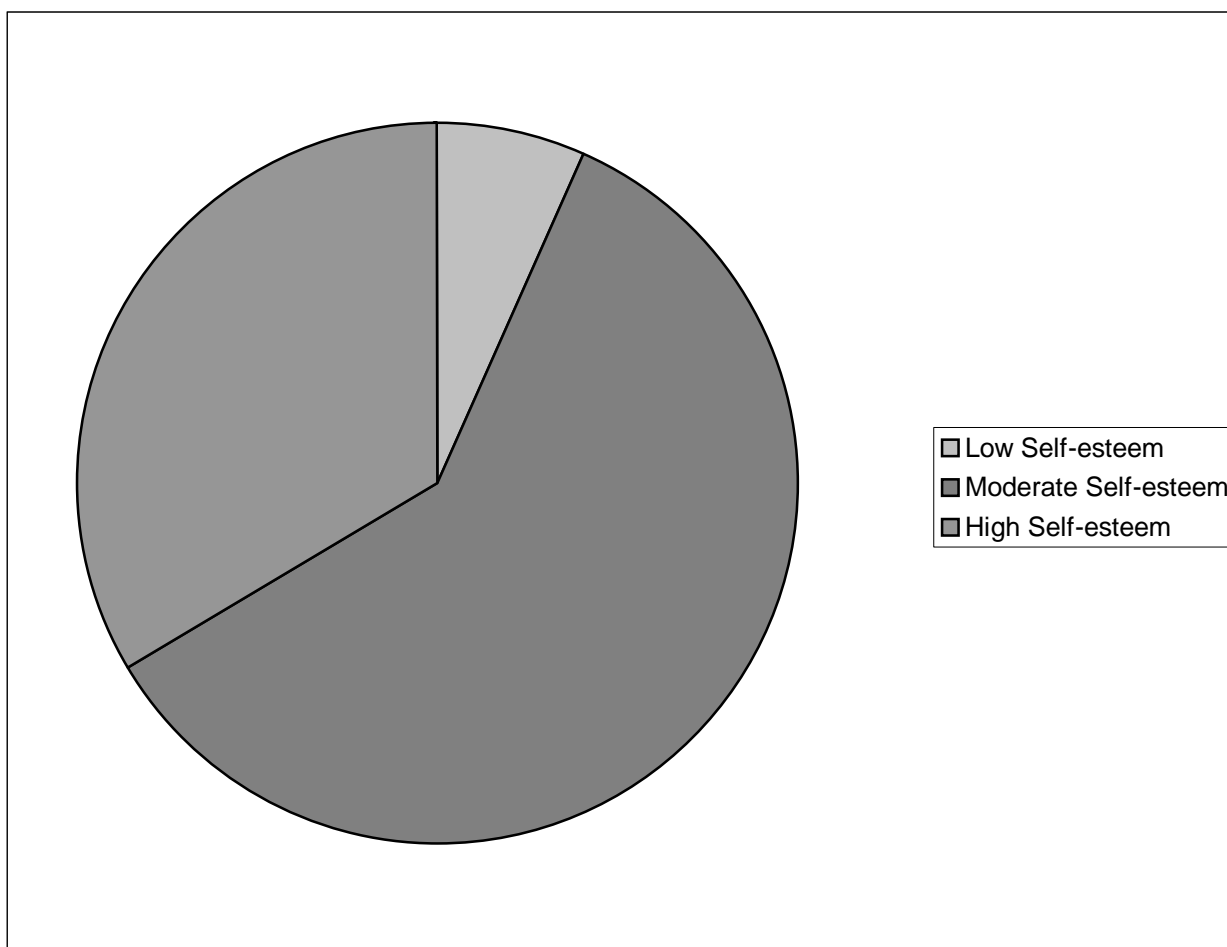
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Section A

Overview of the Self-Esteem of Young People in Northern Ireland

The young people in the survey completed the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). This scale was designed to measure adolescents' global feelings of self-worth or self-acceptance. It consists of ten items that require the respondent to report feelings about the self directly. It is scored using a four-point response format, 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree'. Scores can range from 10 to 40, with higher scores representing higher self-esteem. In this bulletin, scores have been grouped into three bands: 10 - 19 = low self-esteem, 20 - 29 = moderate self-esteem and 30 - 40 = high self-esteem.

Figure 1 The Self-esteem of Respondents

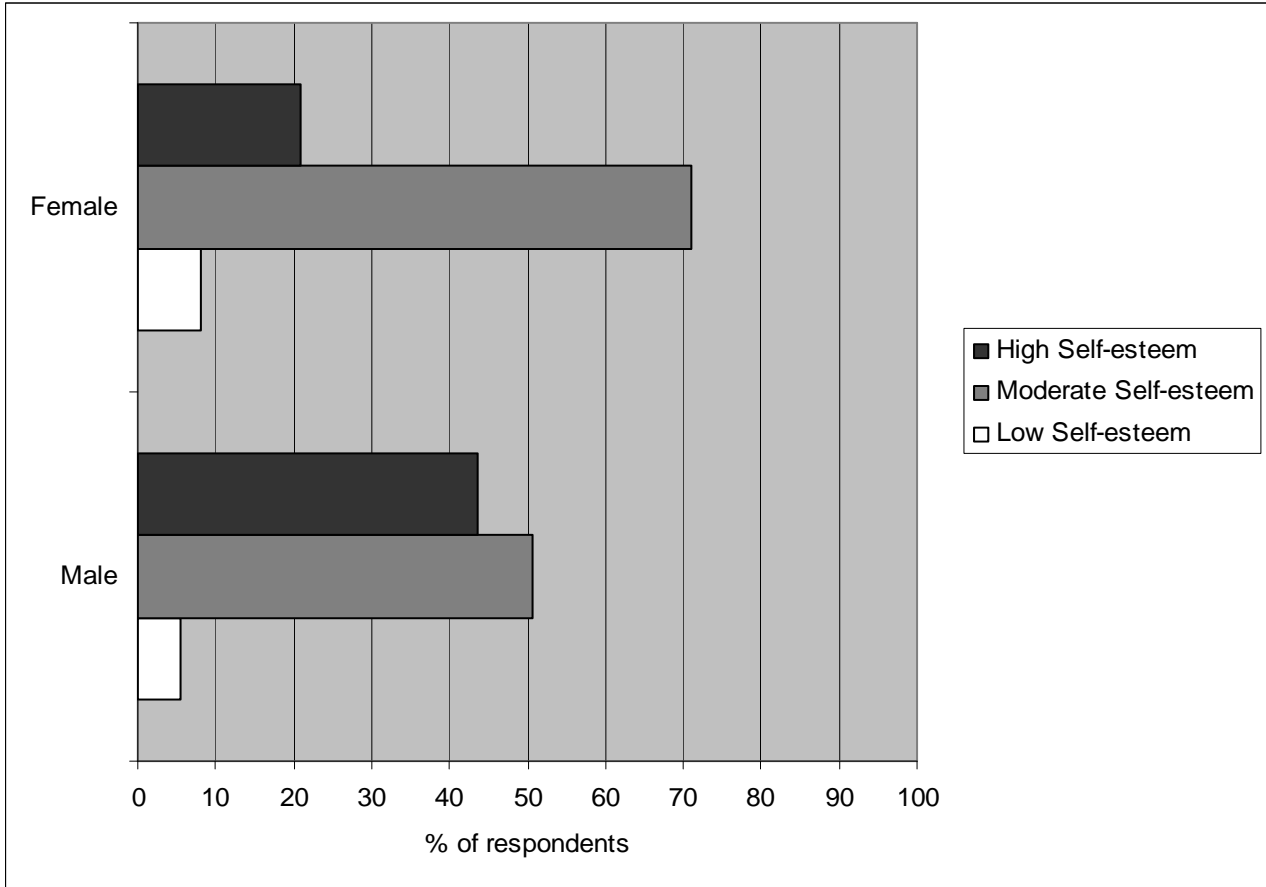


- Figure 1 shows that three fifths (60%) of the young people surveyed have moderate self-esteem; approximately one third (34%) have high self-esteem and less than one tenth (7%) have low self-esteem.

Section B

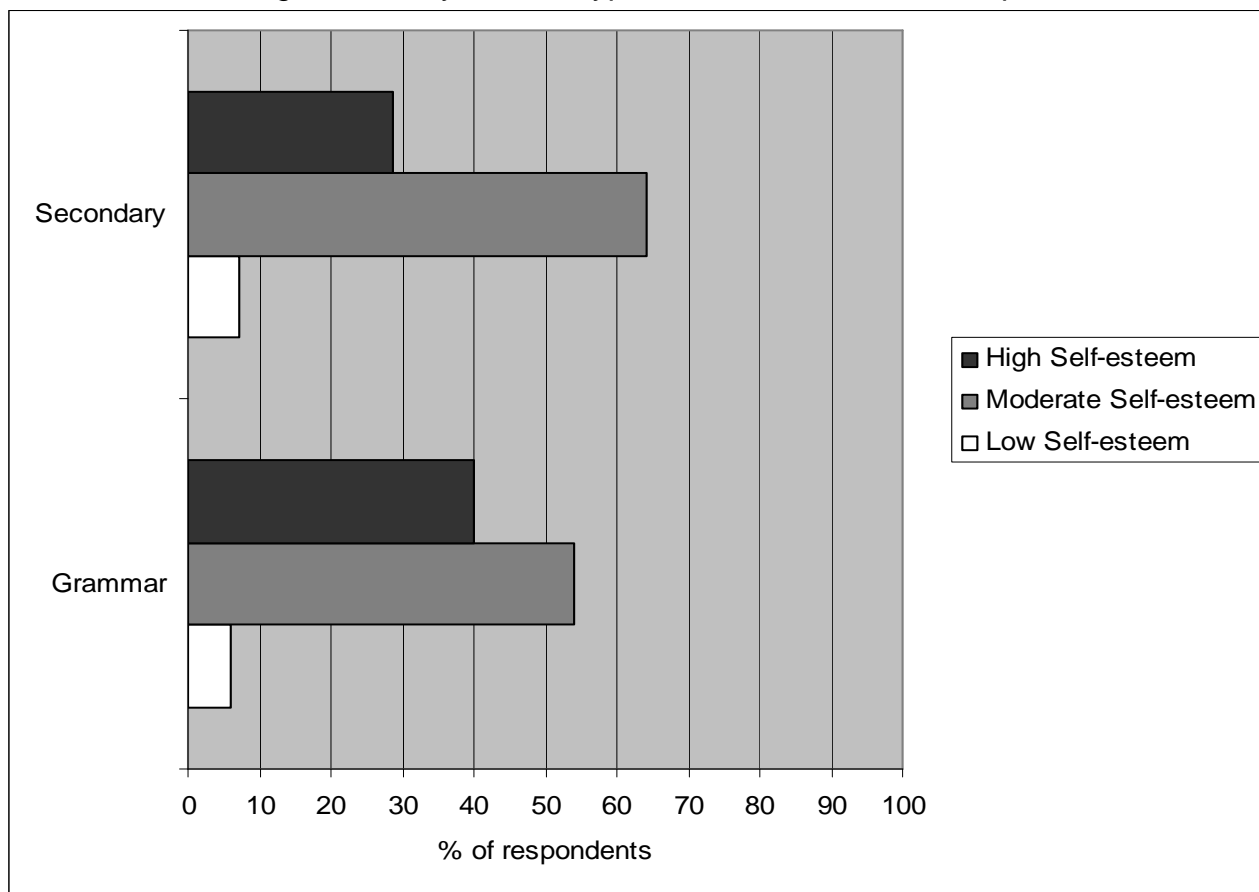
Analysis of Self-esteem by Key Demographic Characteristics

Figure 2 By Gender: The Self-esteem of Respondents



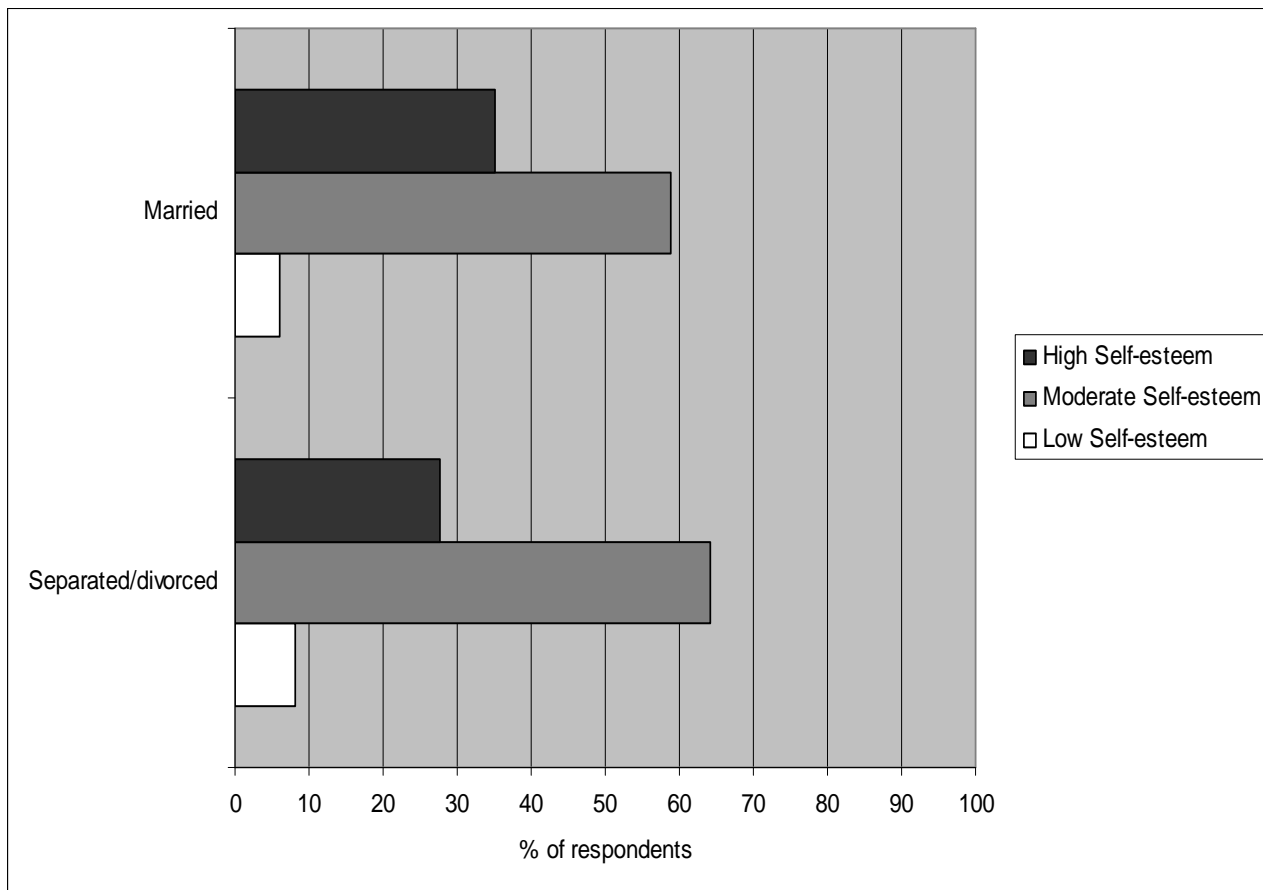
- Figure 2 shows that there are significant differences in self-esteem between the sexes.
- 44% of boys compared to 21% of girls in the survey have high self-esteem.
- 71% of girls and 51% of boys have moderate self-esteem.
- More girls than boys have low self-esteem, 8% and 6% respectively.

Figure 3 By School Type: The Self-Esteem of Respondents



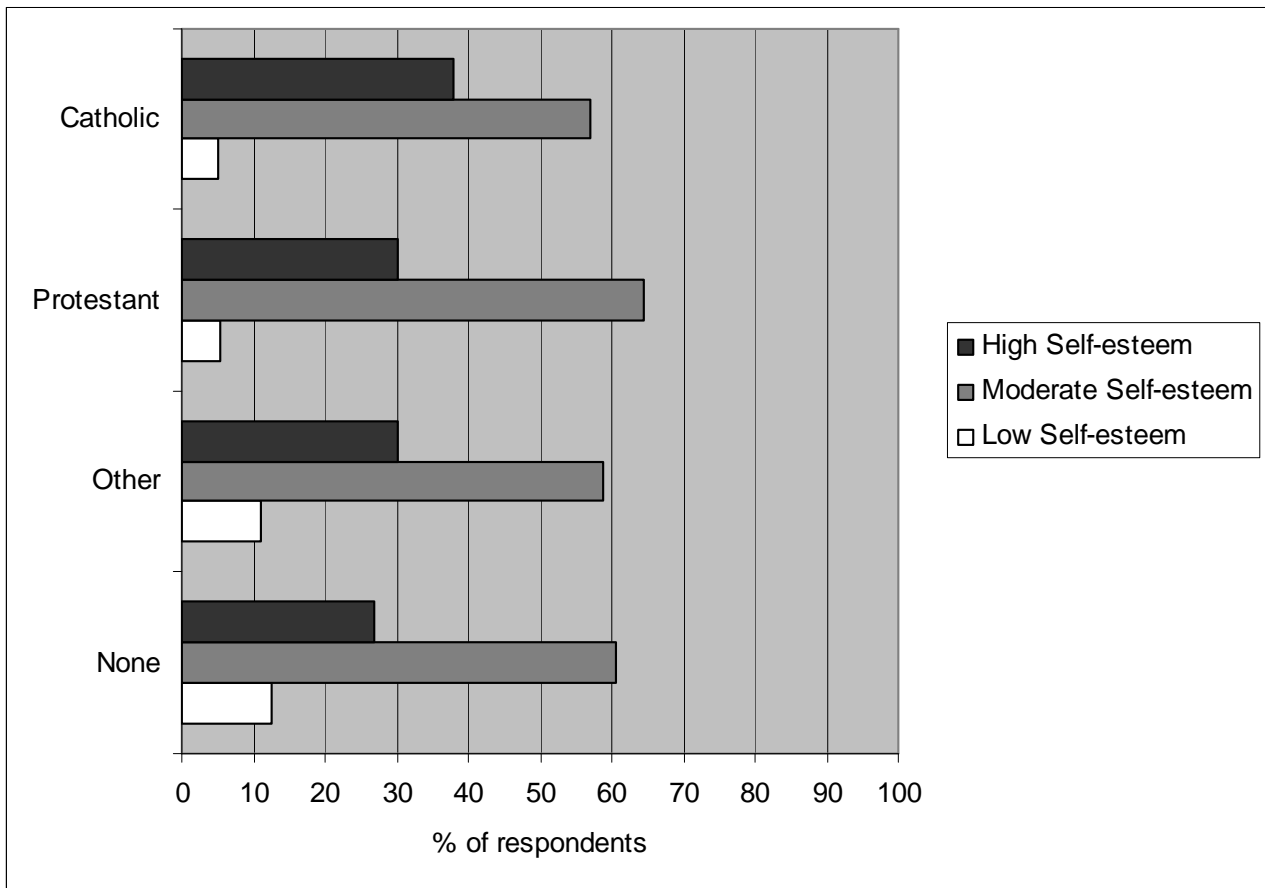
- Figure 3 shows that 40% of grammar school pupils and 29% of secondary school pupils have high self-esteem.
- 64% of secondary school pupils and 54% of grammar school pupils have moderate self-esteem.
- The percentage in each group who have low self-esteem is small, 7% among secondary school pupils and 6% among grammar school pupils.

Figure 4 By Parental Marital Status: The Self-esteem of Respondents



- Figure 4 shows that more pupils whose parents are married (35%), than those whose parents are separated or divorced (28%), have high self-esteem.
- More of the pupils whose parents are divorced, than those whose parents are married, have moderate self-esteem (64% v 59%) and low self-esteem (8% v 6%).

Figure 5 By Religious Denomination: The Self-esteem of Respondents



Note: Pupils were asked if they belonged to a church or other religious group. They could define themselves as either belonging to no religious group ('None'); being Baptist, Church of Ireland, Methodist or URC/Presbyterian (grouped together as 'Protestant' for the purpose of analysis) or they could define themselves as being 'Catholic' or belonging to some other religious group ('Other').

'None' - Approximately 15% of the Sample; 'Other' - Approximately 4% of the Sample; 'Catholic' - Approximately 53% of the Sample; 'Protestant' - Approximately 28% of the Sample

- Figure 5 shows that more Catholic pupils (38%) than those in other groups have high self-esteem.
- More Protestant pupils (64%) than those in other groups have moderate self-esteem.
- Low self-esteem is more prevalent among those of no religious denomination (13%) and those of 'Other' denominations (11%) than among Protestant (5%) and Catholic pupils (5%).

Additional analysis of Self-esteem

- Additional analysis (Figure not presented) shows that differences in self-esteem between pupils from rural areas and those from urban areas are not significant.
- Additional analysis (Figure not presented) shows that there are no significant differences in self-esteem on the basis of parental social status.

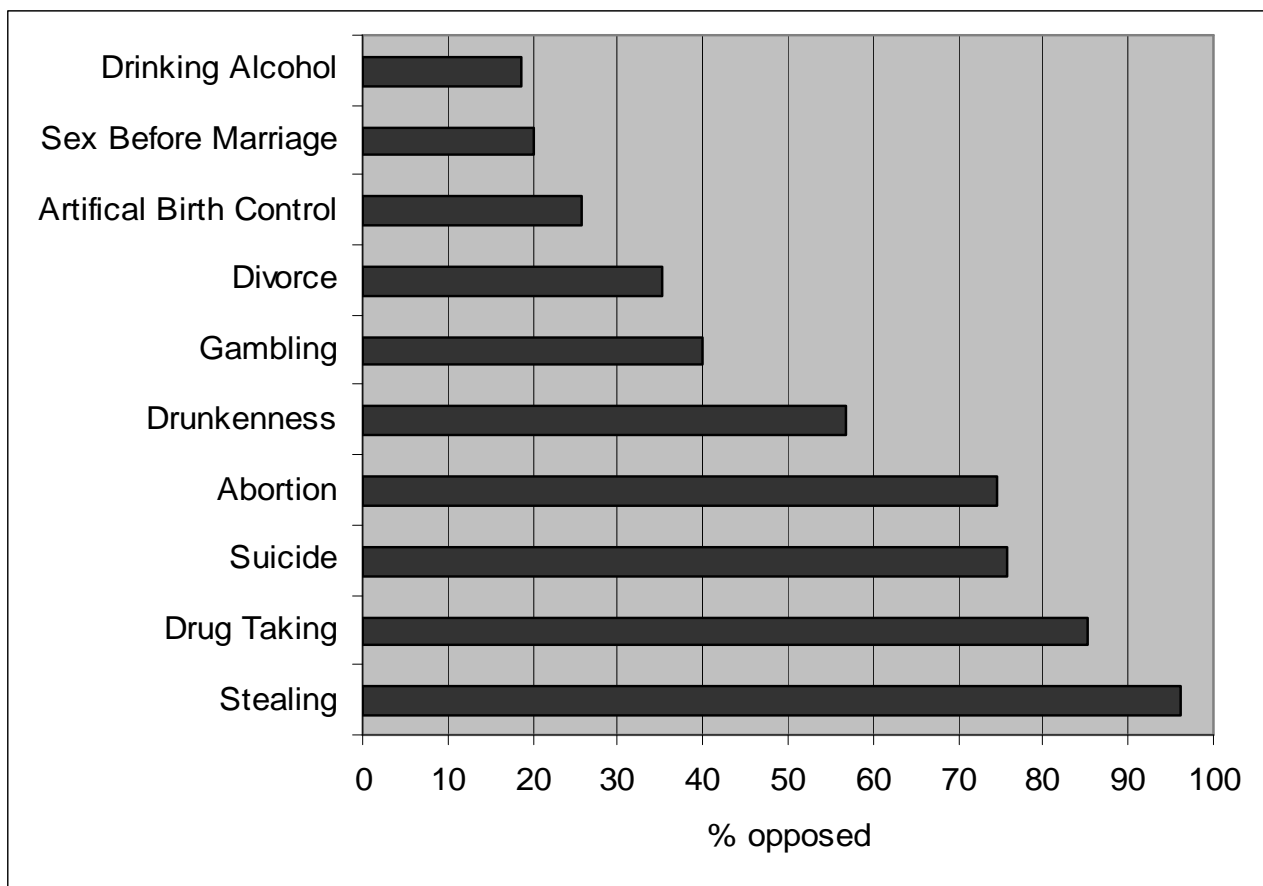
Section C

Overview of Attitudes to Behaviours

The following chart was presented in Bulletin 1. It is repeated in this bulletin to provide the context for analysis of the choices the young respondents made in relation to these behaviours and the level of their self-esteem.

The young people were asked if they considered certain behaviours wrong. They were able to choose that the behaviours were 'Never Wrong', 'Usually Excusable', 'Undecided', 'Usually Wrong' or 'Always Wrong'. For the purpose of this bulletin, the responses have been grouped into 'Not Wrong', 'Undecided' and 'Wrong'. The percentage which considers behaviours wrong is presented in the following graphs as '% opposed to behaviours' and includes those who answered 'Usually Wrong' or 'Always Wrong'.

Figure 6 Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Behaviours



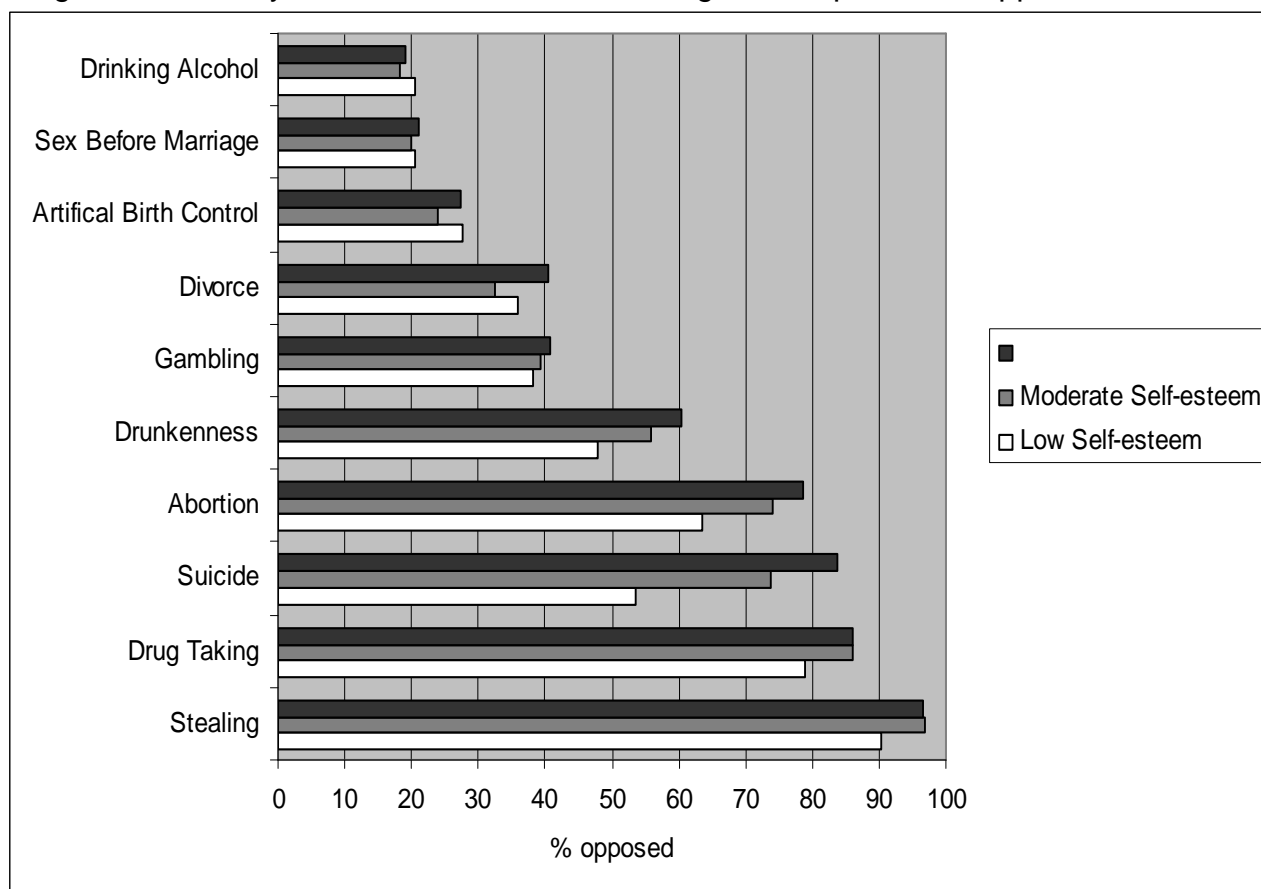
- Figure 6 contains the level of opposition to ten behavioural issues, for the total sample.
- The vast majority of pupils in the sample consider stealing to be wrong (96%), consider drug taking wrong (85%), believe that suicide is wrong (76%) and consider abortion to be wrong (75%).
- Just over one half of the pupils believe that drunkenness is wrong and two fifths consider gambling to be wrong.

- Approximately one third of the pupils believe that divorce is wrong, one third do not consider it wrong and one third are undecided.
- One quarter of the pupils think that artificial birth control is wrong.
- Only one fifth of the pupils believe that sexual intercourse before marriage is wrong while just over half believe it is not wrong.
- Less than one fifth believe that drinking alcohol is wrong, while almost two thirds consider it acceptable.
- The pupils surveyed strongly disapprove of only four out of the ten behaviours considered. These are stealing, drug taking, suicide and abortion.

Section D

Analysis of Attitudes to Behaviours by Self-esteem

Figure 7 By Self-esteem Level: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Behaviours



- Figure 7 presents comparison of responses on the basis of self-esteem, with clear differences of attitude emerging between pupils who have high self-esteem and those who have low self-esteem on the issues of suicide, abortion and drunkenness.
- On the issue of suicide, 84% of pupils who have high self-esteem believe it is wrong, whereas 54% of those with low self-esteem agree. 74% of pupils with moderate self-esteem believe it is wrong.
- 79% of pupils with high self-esteem believe abortion is wrong, whereas 64% of pupils with low self-esteem hold this view. 74% of pupils with moderate self-esteem believe it is wrong.
- Drunkenness is considered wrong by 61% of pupils who have high self-esteem, but by 48% of pupils who have low self-esteem. It is considered wrong by 56% of pupils who have moderate self-esteem.
- Smaller, but significant, differences occur on the issues of stealing and divorce with 6 percentage points difference between pupils of high self-esteem and pupils of low self-esteem on stealing, and 5 percentage points difference on divorce.

- On all behaviours where differences in attitude are significant, more pupils who have high self-esteem consider them wrong, than do pupils with low self-esteem.

Section E

The questionnaire for this study included three sets of questions from the questionnaire Teenage Religion and Values (Francis & Kay, 1995), which was used in a large study of over 34,000 teenagers in England and Wales. These questions were used to allow comparison with data available from England and Wales, though some behaviours previously considered are repeated in these sets or 'themes'. The themes were referred to as 'Sexual morality', 'Right and wrong' and 'Substance use' by Francis and Kay (1995), but in this report the themes are called 'Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion', 'Law-breaking' and 'Substance Use'.

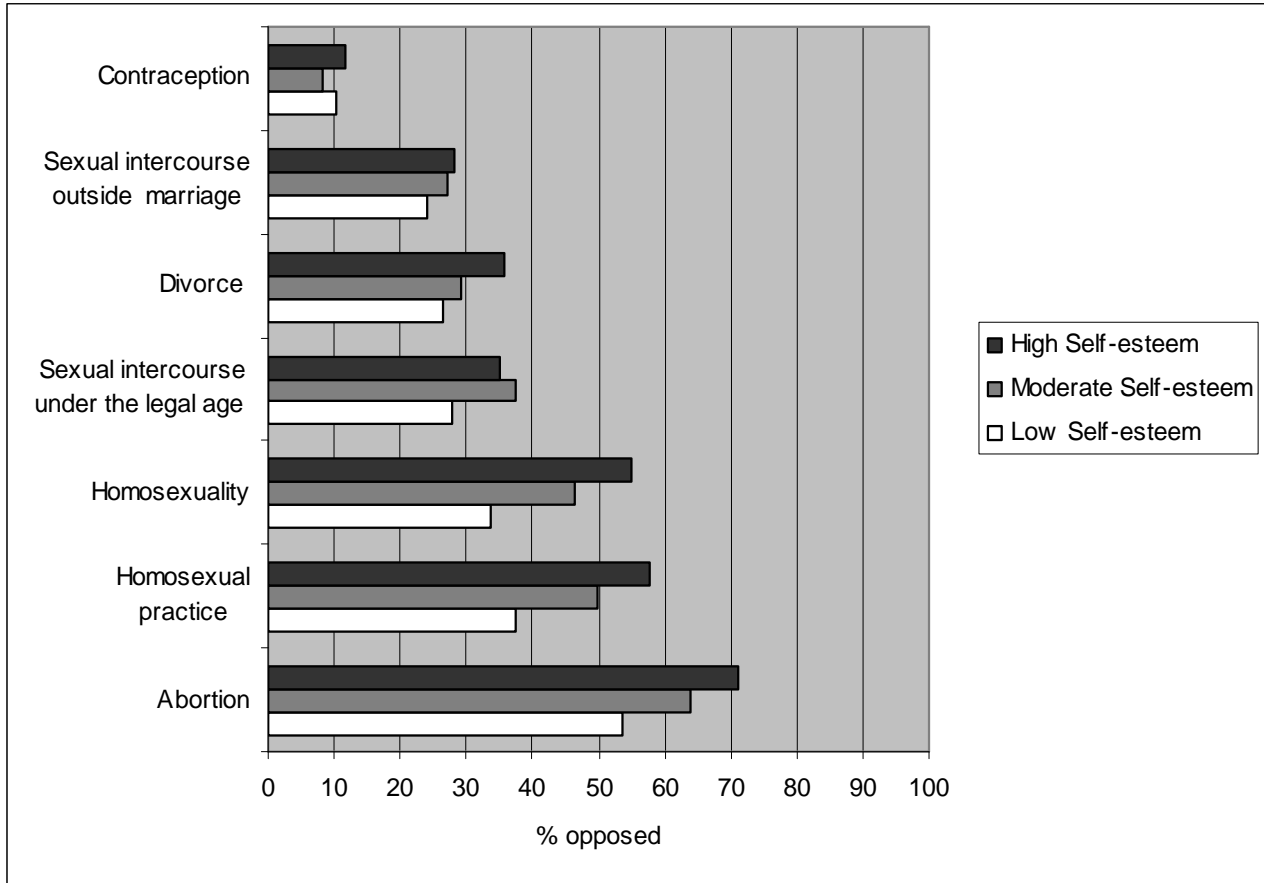
Different formats than that used in Section C of this report were used to examine these themes. For example, the questions shown in Section C were presented as a list of behaviours to which respondents could choose that they were 'Never Wrong', 'Usually Excusable', 'Undecided', 'Usually Wrong' and 'Always Wrong'. However, with regard to the results presented in this section of the report, respondents were presented with statements such as 'Abortion is wrong', to which respondents could indicate a level of agreement from five options, i.e., 'Agree Strongly', 'Agree', 'Not Certain', 'Disagree' and 'Disagree Strongly'. The different question and response format, used to examine the issues in these themes, may account for differing results, when various issues such as contraception, abortion, divorce and drunkenness appear in both Section C and E of this report.

The attitudes of the pupils to behaviours within the themes of "Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion", "Law-breaking" and "Substance Use" were examined in Bulletin 1 (Figures 8, 9 and 10.).

Diagrammatic representations of the data presented in Bulletin 1, Figures 8, 9 and 10 are not repeated in this bulletin, but main findings from the overall views of pupils' attitudes are presented alongside Figures 8, 9 and 10 of this bulletin, which examines pupils attitudes to the various themes on the basis of their level of self-esteem.

Analysis of the Attitudes to Behaviours by Levels of Self-esteem

Figure 8 By Self-esteem Level: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion



Overview of attitudes Respondents Opposed to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion, as shown in Figure 8, Bulletin 1.

The overview of attitudes of students showed that abortion is considered wrong by two thirds of the total sample. Homosexual Practice is considered wrong by just over half of the respondents, while just under half of the sample think homosexuality is wrong. Sexual intercourse outside marriage or under the legal age, contraception and divorce are not considered wrong by the majority of young people in the sample.

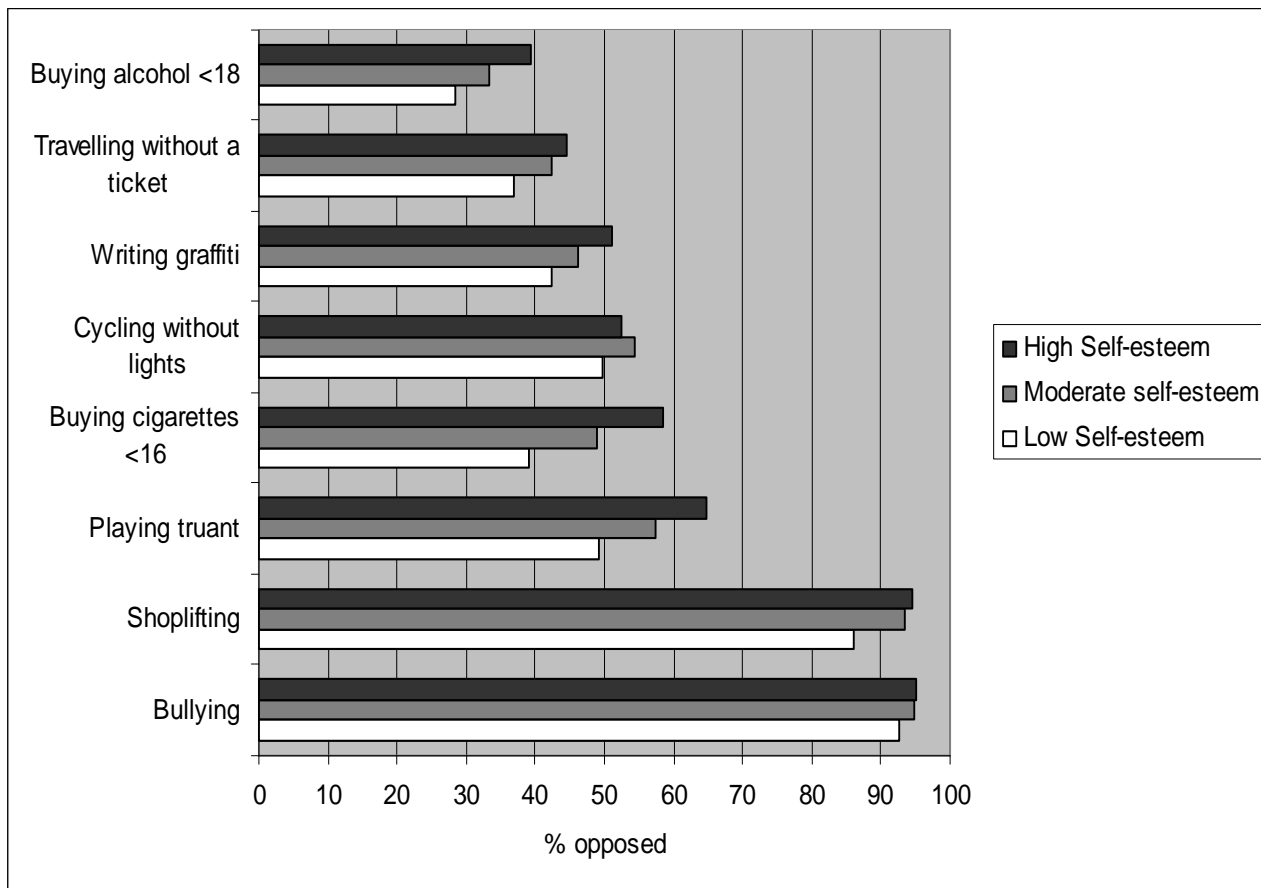
When attitudes to Sexual Behaviours, Homosexuality, Divorce, Contraception and Abortion are examined on the basis of level of self-esteem of respondents, (above diagram) the following is found:

- Figure 8 shows that pupils with high self-esteem are more opposed to all the behaviours listed than pupils with low self-esteem. (Differences on contraception are

not significant.)

- Homosexuality and homosexual practice are the issues that produce the biggest difference between pupils with high self-esteem and those of low self-esteem. 55% of pupils with high self-esteem believe homosexuality is wrong, whereas 34% of pupils with low self-esteem hold this view. 58% of pupils with high self-esteem believe homosexual practice is wrong, whereas 38% of pupils with low self-esteem hold this view. On both these issues, the attitudes of pupils with moderate self-esteem lie between that of the other two groups.
- Abortion is considered wrong by 71% of pupils who have high self-esteem, but by 54% of those with low self-esteem. It is considered wrong by 64% of pupils of moderate self-esteem.
- Divorce is opposed by 36% of pupils of high self-esteem, but by 26% of pupils of low self-esteem. 29% of pupils of moderate self-esteem consider it wrong.
- There are small, but significant, differences on the issues of sexual intercourse under the legal age and sexual intercourse outside marriage, with pupils of high self-esteem more opposed to these behaviours than those of low self-esteem.

Figure 9 By Self-esteem Level: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Law-breaking Behaviours



Overview of attitudes Respondents to Law-Breaking Behaviours, as shown in Figure 9, Bulletin 1.

The overview of attitudes of students showed that the young people in this survey make a clear distinction between bullying, shoplifting and other issues examined in this theme. 94% believe bullying is wrong and 93% believe shoplifting is wrong.

Thereafter the proportion considering the specified behaviours wrong is greatly reduced. Playing truant is considered wrong by three-fifths of the pupils. 53% consider cycling after dark without lights is wrong, and 51% believe that buying cigarettes under the legal age is wrong.

Less than half think that writing graffiti or travelling without a ticket is wrong and only a third think buying alcohol under the legal age is wrong.

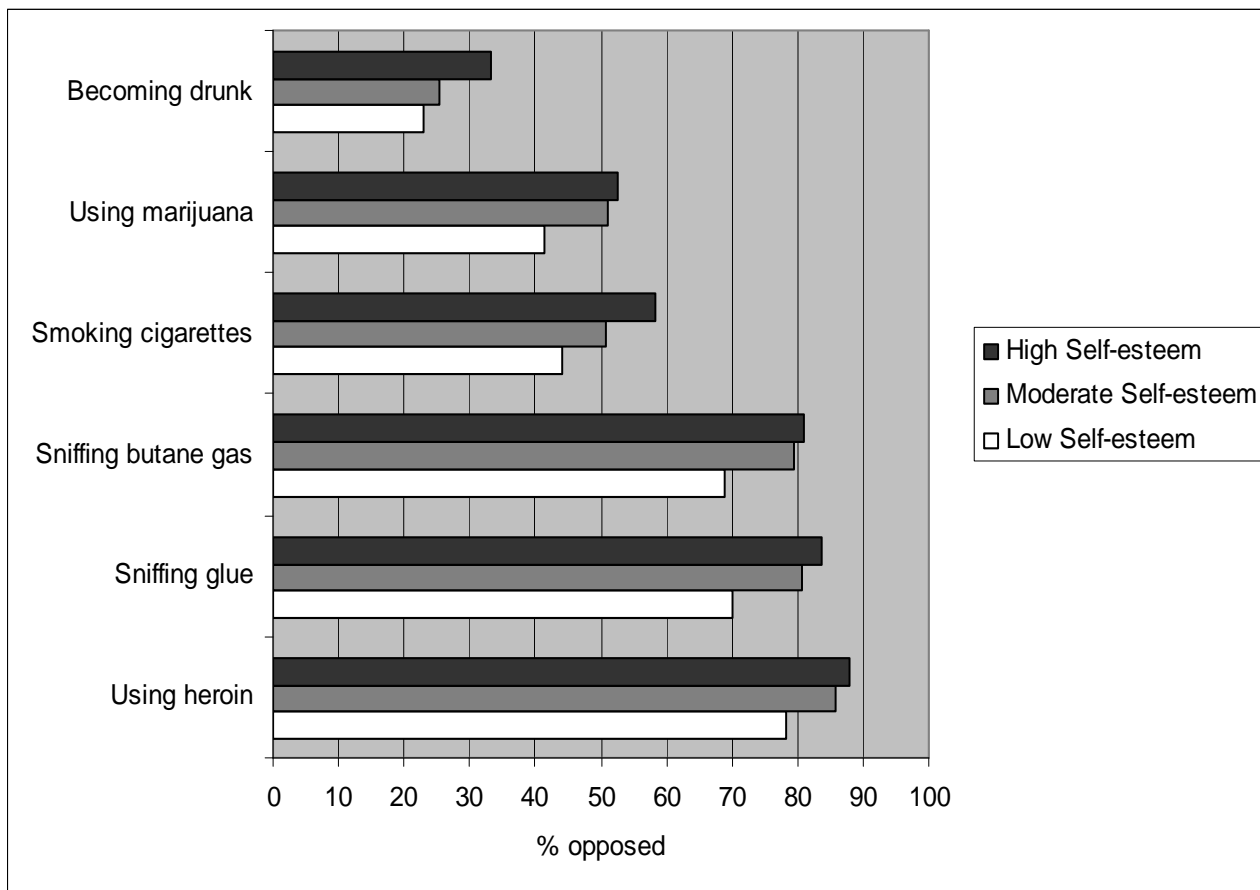
When attitudes to Law-Breaking Behaviours are examined on the basis of level of self-esteem of respondents, the following was found:

- There are five behaviours in Figure 9 where differences on the basis of the self-esteem of respondents are significant: buying alcohol under the legal age, writing graffiti, buying cigarettes under the legal age, playing truant and shoplifting.
- Buying cigarettes under the legal age is the issue that produces the biggest difference between those pupils who have high self-esteem and those who have low self-esteem. 59% of pupils with high self-esteem, but 39% of pupils with low self-esteem,

believe this is wrong.

- 65% of pupils with high self-esteem consider that playing truant is wrong, compared to 49% of pupils with low self-esteem.
- 39% of pupils with high self-esteem believe that it is wrong to buy alcohol under the legal age compared to 29% of pupils with low self-esteem.
- Writing graffiti and shoplifting are behaviours which produce 9 percentage points difference in attitudes, with pupils of high self-esteem more opposed to them than pupils of low self-esteem.
- With regard to all law-breaking behaviours where the differences are significant, pupils with high self-esteem are most opposed, pupils with low self-esteem are least opposed and the attitudes of pupils who have moderate self-esteem fall between that of the other two groups.

Figure 10 By Self-esteem Level: Percentage of Respondents Opposed to Substance Use



Overview of attitudes Respondents to Substance Use, as shown in Figure 10, Bulletin 1.

The three issues on this scale that produce a strong negative response from the young people are using heroin (86%), sniffing glue (81%) and sniffing butane gas (79%).

Just over half of the young people (53%) believe that smoking cigarettes is wrong, while marijuana is slightly more acceptable, with 51% considering its use wrong. 28% believe it is wrong to become drunk.

When attitudes to Substance Use are examined on the basis of level of self-esteem of respondents, the following is found:

- Figure 10 shows that pupils of high self-esteem are more opposed to all substance use behaviours than pupils of low self-esteem. (Differences are significant on all issues except that of using marijuana.)
- 58% of pupils with high self-esteem, and 44% of those with low self-esteem, are opposed to smoking cigarettes.
- Sniffing glue is considered wrong by 84% of pupils of high self-esteem, compared to 70% of pupils of low self-esteem.

- 81% of pupils of high self-esteem, and 69% of pupils of low self-esteem, are opposed to sniffing gas.
- Becoming drunk is considered wrong by 33% of pupils of high self-esteem, compared to 23% of pupils of low self-esteem.
- 88% of pupils with high self-esteem are opposed to using heroin compared to 78% of pupils of low self-esteem,

Section F

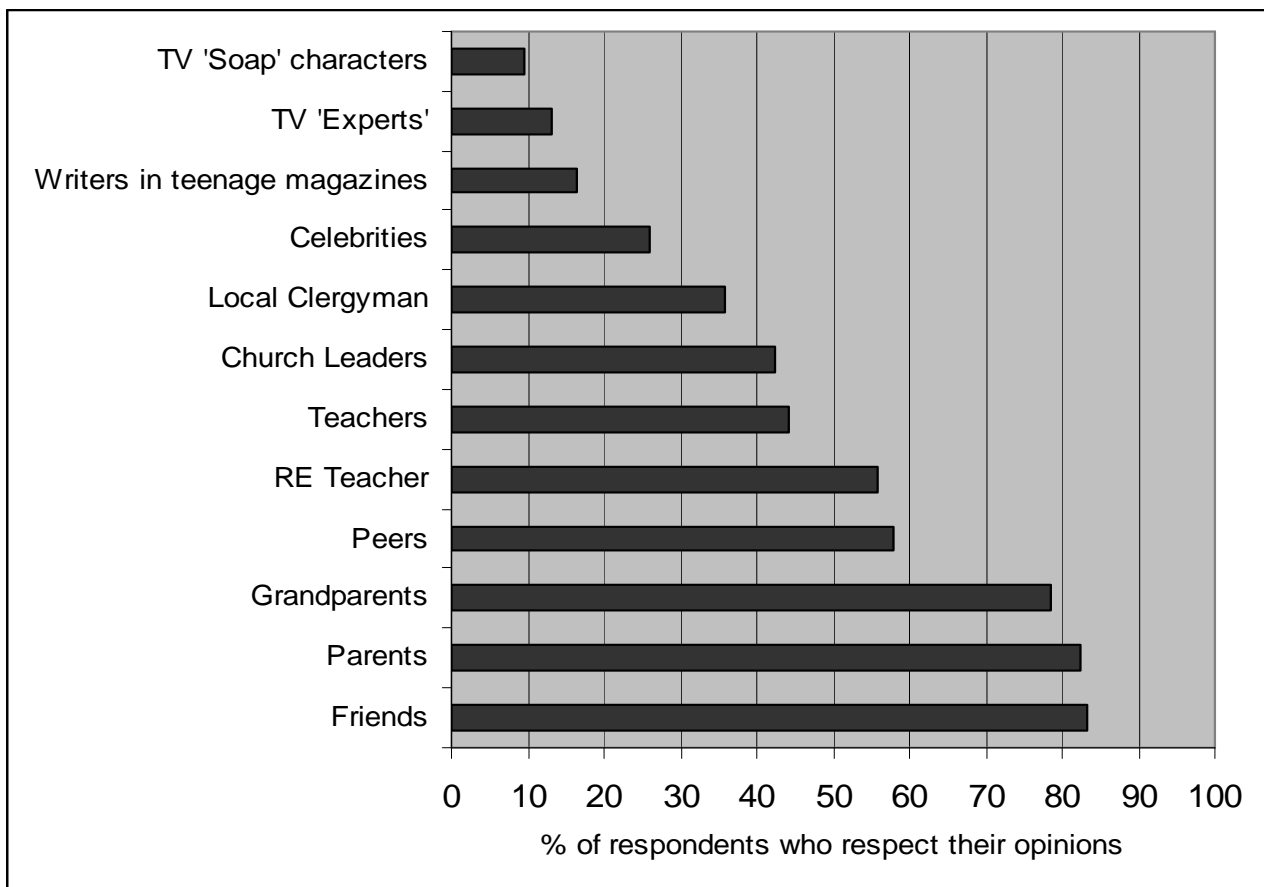
Influences on Young People in Northern Ireland

The questionnaire completed by the young people included new 'Moral Influence Questions' (Mullan, 2001). These questions were devised to assess the influence of various categories of people and institutions on young people in this survey. They were presented in the form of statements constructed in the same format as those of Francis and Kay (1995), and integrated into their randomly distributed items in the questionnaire.

One set of statements assesses the respect afforded to the opinions of 12 categories of people and institutions e.g. 'I have great respect for the opinions of my parents', on a five point scale, with the responses as 'Agree Strongly', 'Agree', 'Uncertain', 'Disagree' and 'Disagree Strongly'. The categories 'Agree Strongly' and 'Agree' have been merged and this data is presented in Figure 11.

More detailed analysis of the various categories of people whom the young students respect is presented in Bulletin 3. An overview of the categories of people respected by the pupils is presented to provide context for analysis of these views on the basis of the self-esteem of the respondents.

Figure 11 People Whose Opinions are Respected

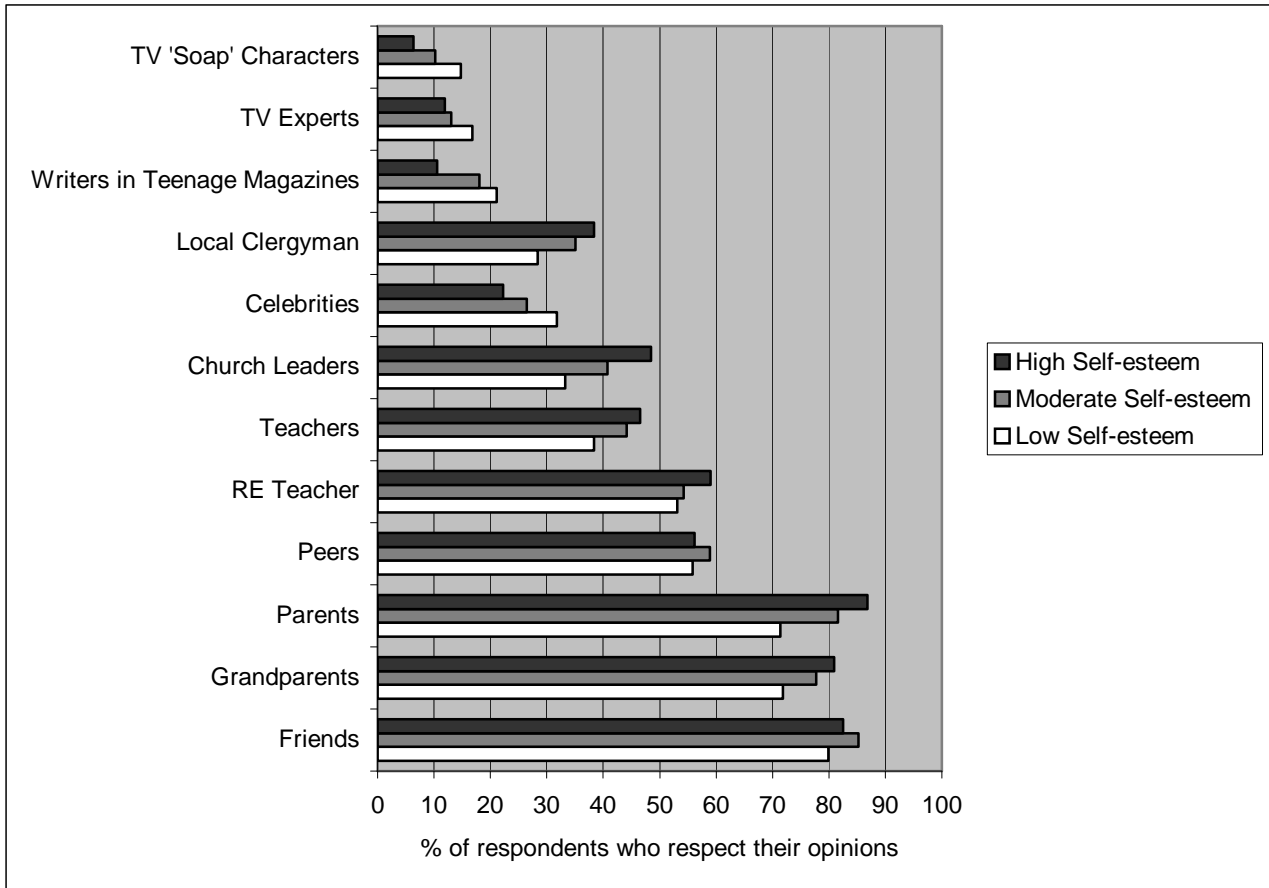


- Figure 11 shows that the opinions of friends, parents and grandparents are

respected by more than three quarters of young people in the survey.

- More than half of the pupils respect the opinions of their peers and their RE teacher.
- 44% of the young people in the sample respect the opinions of teachers, 43% respect the opinions of their church leaders and just over one third respect the opinions of their local clergyman.
- 26% of the pupils respect the opinions of celebrities.
- 16% of young people respect the opinions of writers in teenage magazines, 13% respect the opinions of TV 'experts' and 10% respect the opinions of characters in TV 'soaps'.

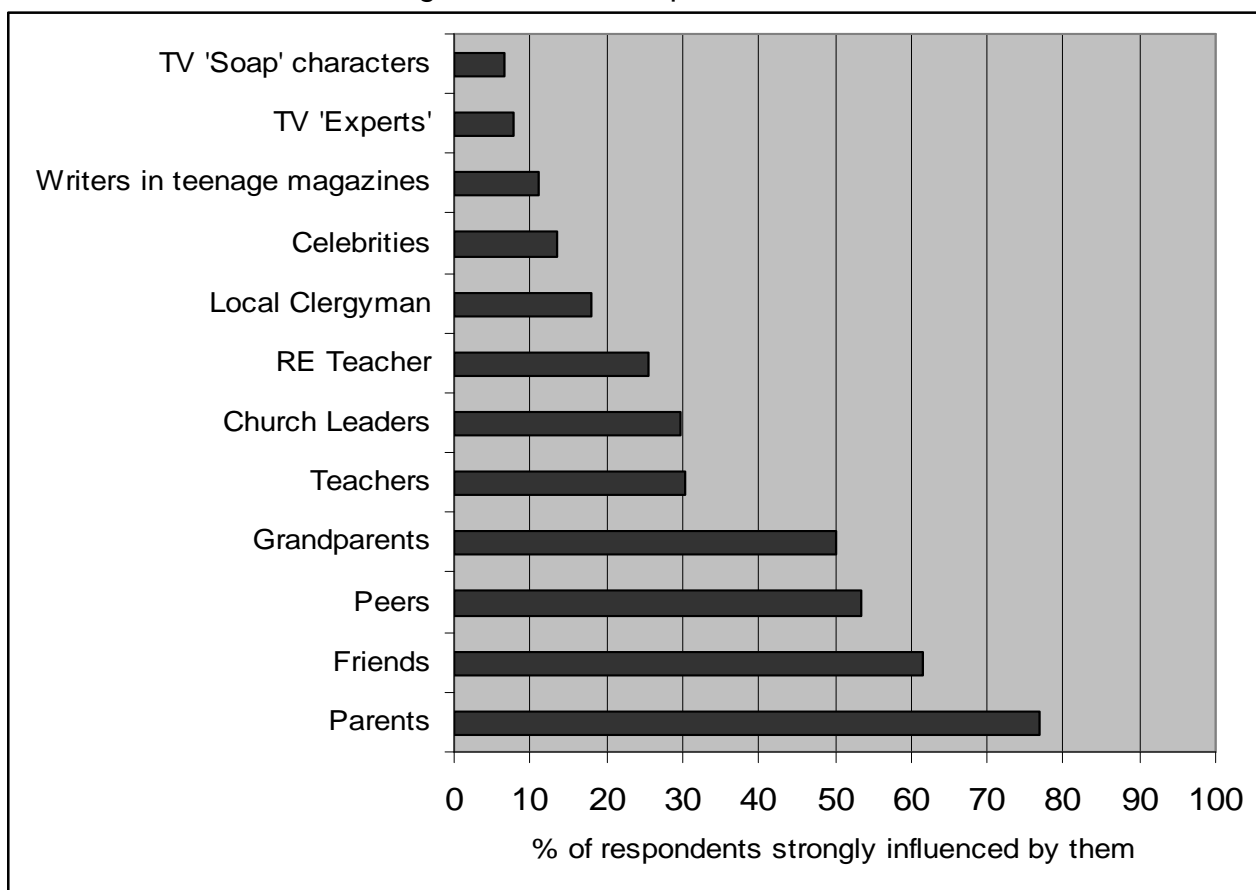
Figure 12 By Self-esteem: People Whose Opinions are Respected



- Figure 16 shows that greater percentages of the pupils with high self-esteem respect the opinions of parents, grandparents, their RE teacher, teachers, church leaders and local clergyman, than those with moderate or low self-esteem.
- More young people with low self-esteem respect the opinions of celebrities, writers in teenage magazines and TV 'soap' characters, than those with moderate or high self-esteem. (Differences in attitude to TV 'experts' are not significant.)

The second set of 'Moral Influence' statements in the questionnaire used in this study focuses directly on who influences the respondent's decisions about what is right and what is wrong. These statements are in the format 'In making decisions about what is morally right and wrong I am strongly influenced by (e.g. my parents)'. They have the response categories: 'Agree Strongly', 'Agree', 'Uncertain', 'Disagree' and 'Disagree Strongly'. The categories 'Agree Strongly' and 'Agree' have been merged and this data is presented in Figure 13.

Figure 13 People of Influence

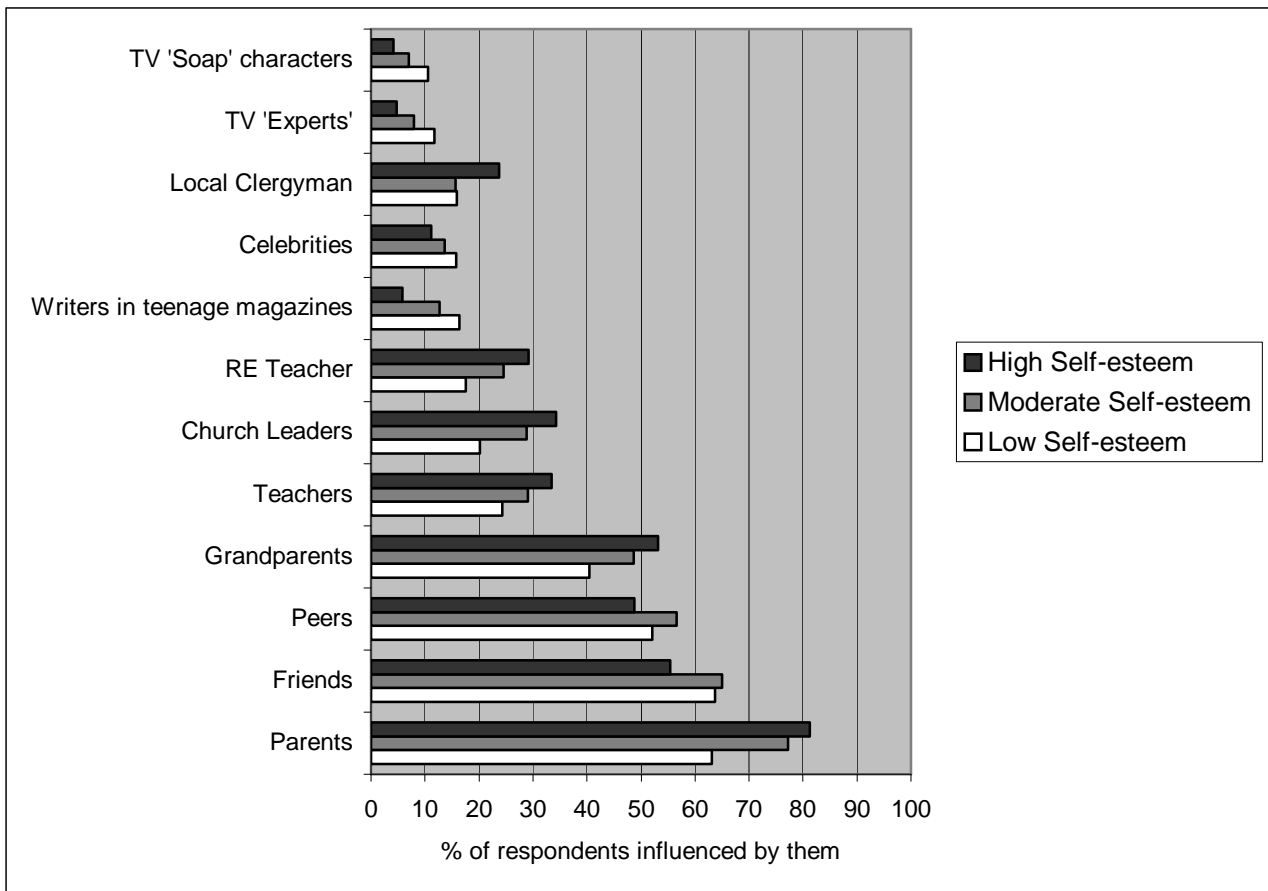


- Figure 13 shows that parents are those who the pupils say have most influence on them when deciding what is right and what is wrong. 77% of Year 12 pupils agree that in making decisions about what is right and wrong they are influenced by their parents.
- 62% of the pupils say they are influenced by their friends in deciding what is right and what is wrong.
- 54% of the pupils say they are influenced by their peers and 50% believe they are influenced by their grandparents
- Less than a third of the pupils say they are influenced by their teachers and 30% believe they are influenced by church leaders.
- Just over a quarter of Year 12 pupils say they are influenced by their RE teacher

while 18% agreed that they are influenced by their local clergyman.

- 13% of the pupils say that they are influenced in deciding what is right and wrong by celebrities, 11% say they are influenced by writers in teenage magazines and 8% say they are influenced by TV 'experts'.

Figure 14 By Self-esteem: People of Influence



- Figure 14 shows that greater percentages of the pupils with high self-esteem say that in deciding what is right and wrong, they are influenced by parents, grandparents, church leaders, teachers, RE teacher, and the local clergyman, than those with moderate or low self-esteem.
- Greater percentages of the pupils with moderate self-esteem say they are influenced by peers and friends, than those with high or low self-esteem.
- Greater percentages of the pupils with low self-esteem say they are influenced by writers in teenage magazines, celebrities, TV 'experts' and TV 'soap' characters, than those with moderate or high self-esteem.

Section G

Self-esteem and Media Exposure

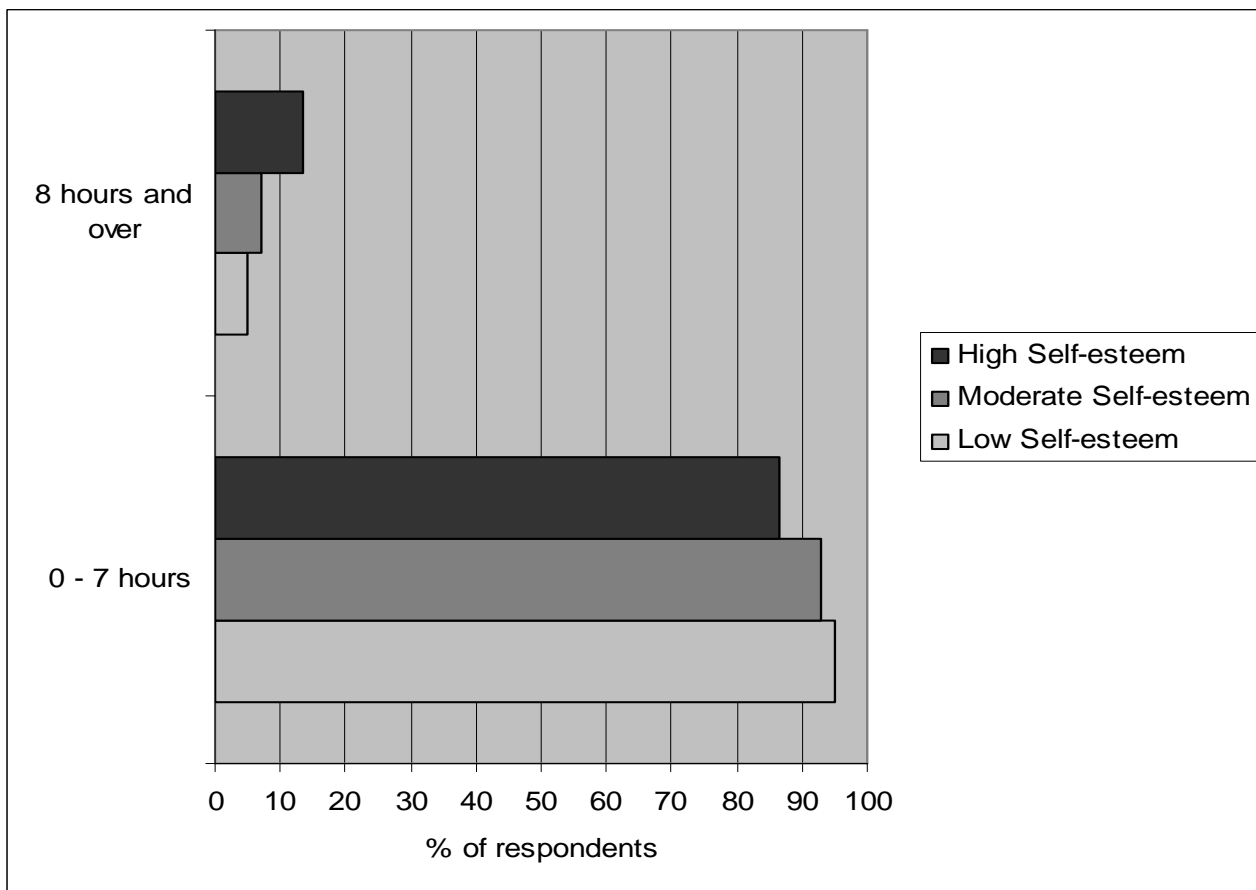
In the questionnaire administered to young people in Northern Ireland, the respondents were asked about their exposure to the media. They were asked to indicate the number of hours spent each week on viewing different types of TV programmes, reading different types of material and on various types of Internet use. The relationship between the time spent on these activities and the self-esteem of respondents was tested. No significant relationship was found between self-esteem and reading and self-esteem and Internet use. A significant relationship was found, however, between self-esteem and a number of types of programmes watched by the respondents.

Under 'Viewing Habits' the respondents were asked to indicate how many hours per week they spend watching the following types of TV programme: news, sport, 'soaps' (e.g. 'Neighbours'), current affairs (e.g. 'Panorama'), films and other.

Individual TV Programme Types and Self-esteem

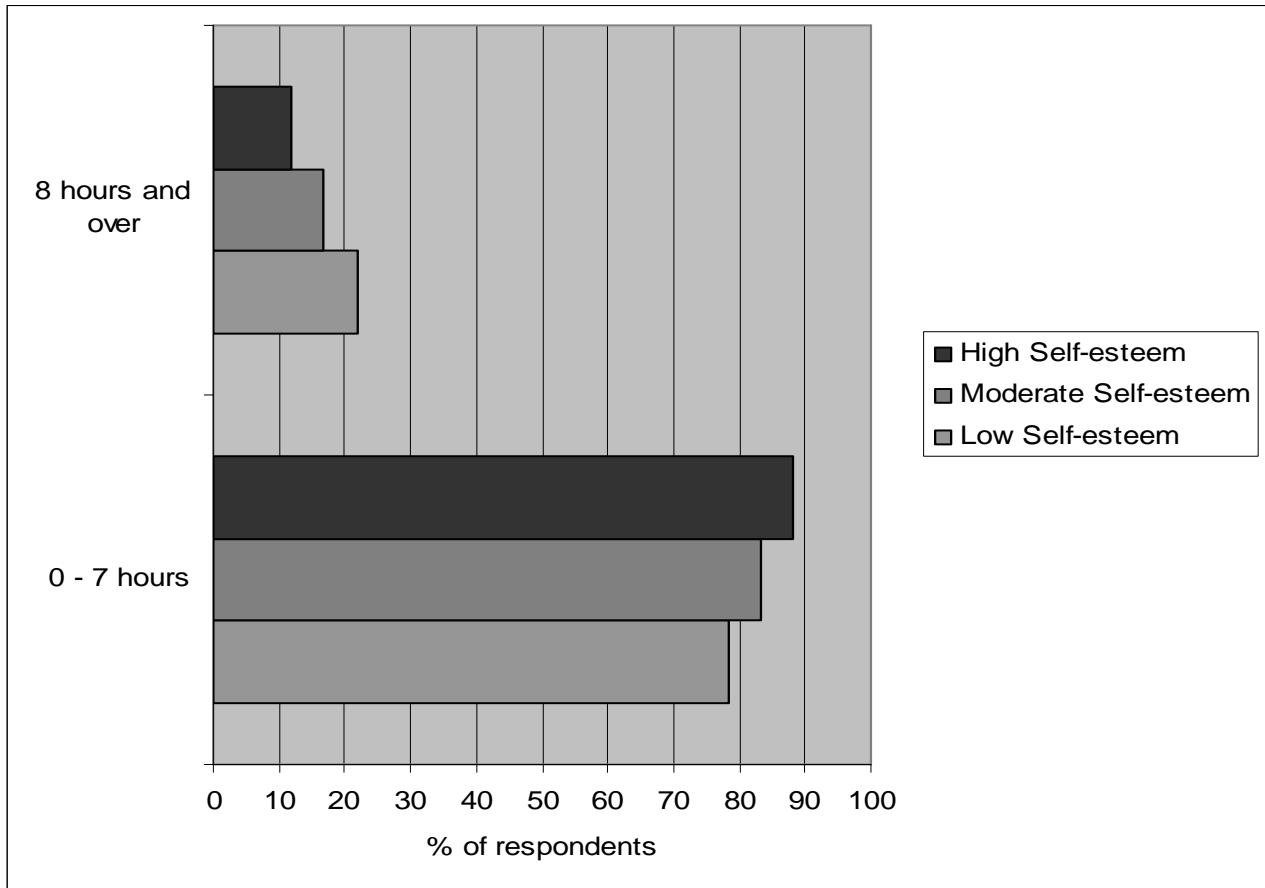
The relationship between time spent on watching various types of TV programmes and the self-esteem of the respondents was tested. Although a significant relationship was not found between self-esteem and watching news, films or 'other' types of TV programmes, significant relationships were found between self-esteem and time spent watching sports programmes, 'soaps' and current affairs programmes. (An almost imperceptible significant difference (<1%) exists in current affairs viewing.)

Figure 15 By Self-esteem: Viewing of TV Sports Programmes



- Figure 15 shows that more people with high self-esteem, than those with moderate or low self-esteem, watch 8 hours or more of sports programmes per week.

Figure 16By Self-esteem: Viewing of TV 'Soaps'



- Figure 16 shows that more young people with low self-esteem, than those with moderate or high self-esteem, watch 8 hours or more of TV 'Soaps' per week.

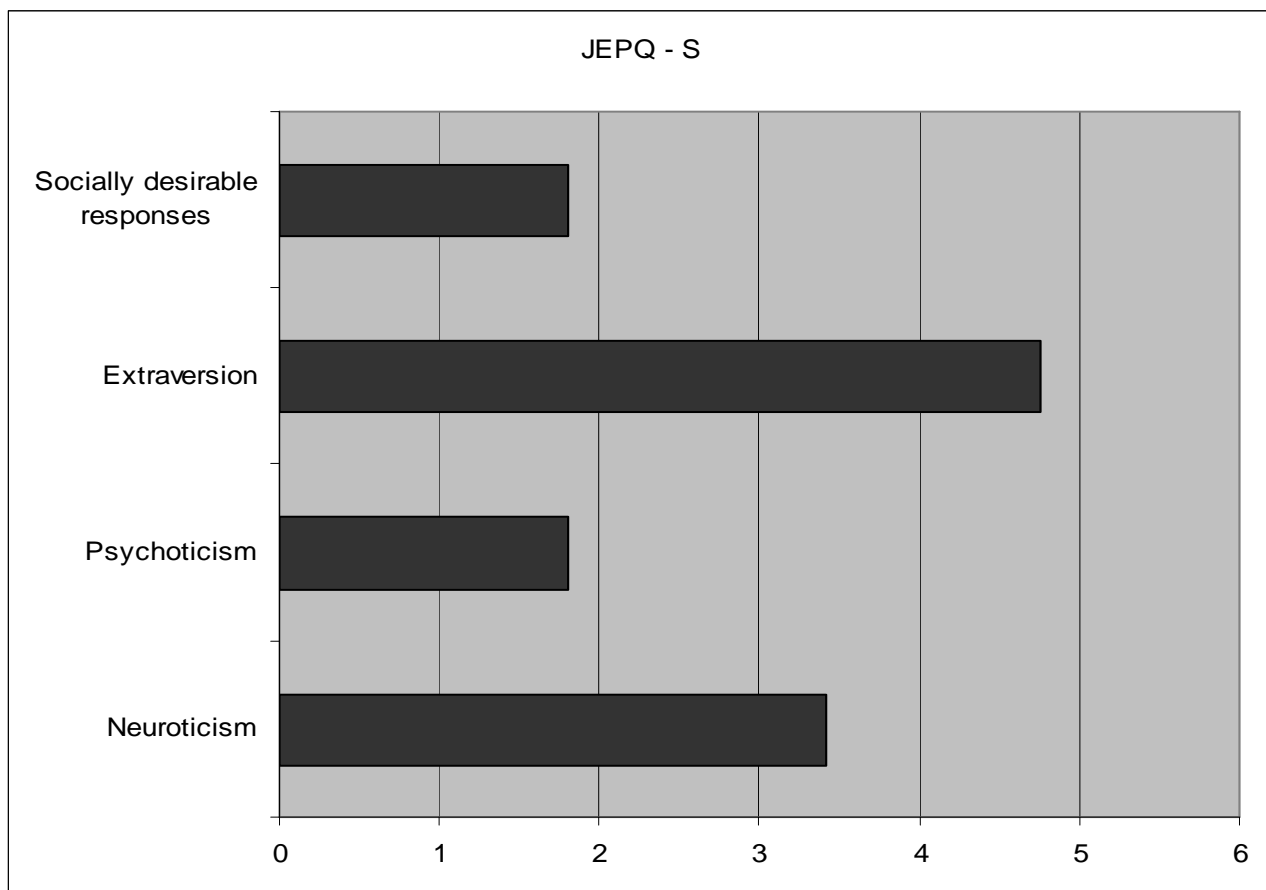
Section H

Dimensions of Personality in Young People in Northern Ireland

The Junior Eysenck Personality Questionnaire – Short Form (Francis & Pearson, 1988) was used to examine dimensions of personality in the young people in this Northern Ireland survey. This particular measure was used to allow comparison with similar data from England and Wales. It comprises four scales of six items each, with a 'Yes', 'No' response format. The scales measure 'extraversion', 'neuroticism', 'psychoticism' and 'socially desirable responses' (known as the Lie Scale). Examples of items are: 'Are you rather lively?' (extraversion), 'Are your feelings rather easily hurt?' (neuroticism), 'Would you like other children to be afraid of you?' (psychoticism), 'Have you ever broken any rules at school?' (social desirable responses). A full list of the questions and their categorisation can be found in Francis and Pearson (1988).

The results of analysis of the responses of the pupils who participated in the study are presented below, followed by their comparison with results from the England and Wales study (Francis & Robbins, 2005).

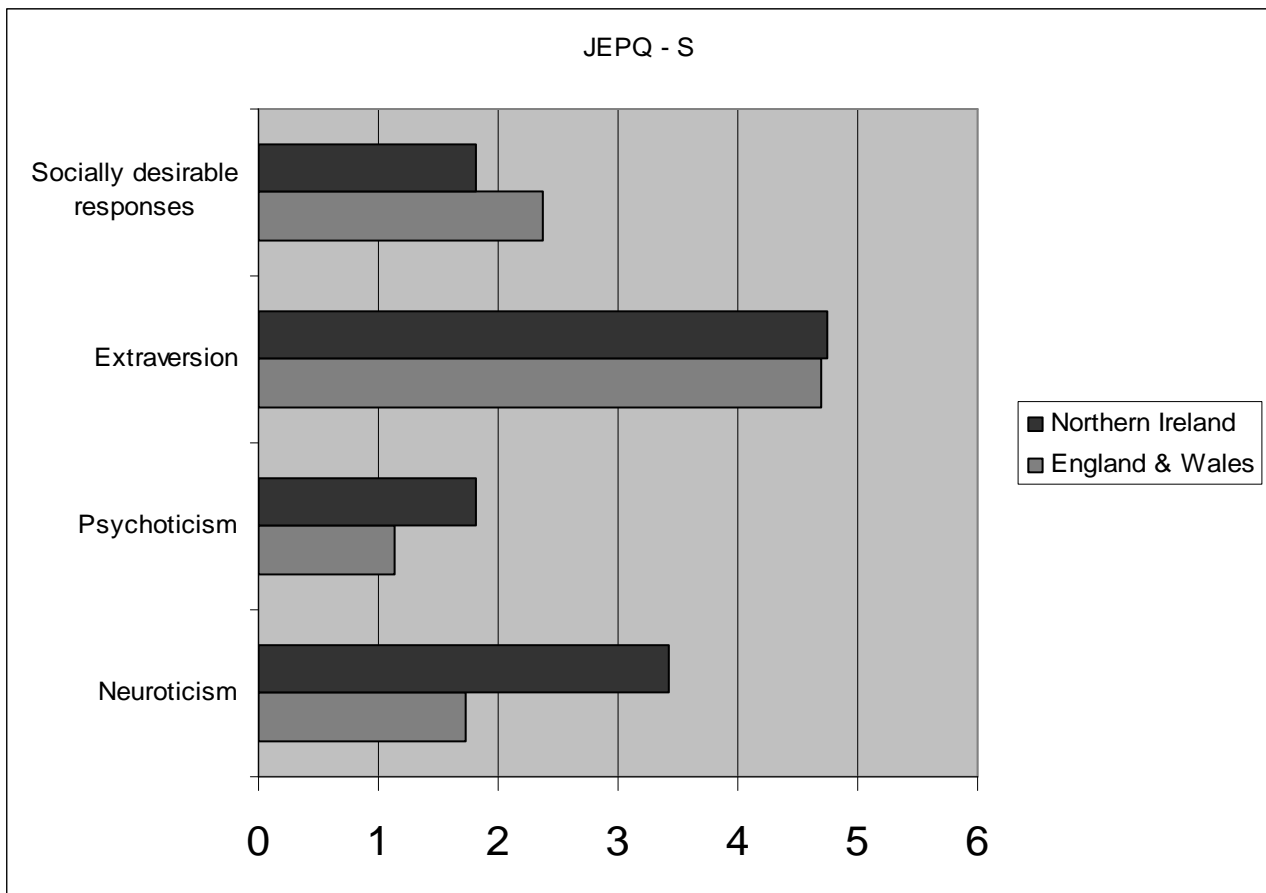
Figure 17 Dimensions of Personality among Pupils Surveyed in Northern Ireland



- Each dimension of personality is measured on a scale of 0 – 6 with 0 the lowest point of the scale and 6 the highest point. The graph presents the mean score of the sample for the four dimensions of personality. The scores are interpreted as follows: 0 - 2 = low; more than 2 - 4 = moderate; more than 4 - 6 = high.

- The mean scores for the pupils included in this survey were as follows: a high extraversion score (i.e. between 4 and 6), a moderate neuroticism score (between 2 and 4), a low psychoticism score (between 0 and 2) and a low socially desirable response score (between 0 and 2).

Figure 18 Dimensions of Personality Young People Surveyed in England and Wales and in Northern Ireland



Each dimension of personality is measured on a scale of 0 – 6 with 0 the lowest point of the scale and 6 the highest point. The graph presents the mean score of each sample for the four dimensions of personality. The scores are interpreted as follows: 0 - 2 = low; more than 2 - 4 = moderate; more than 4 - 6 = high.

- Figure 18 shows that both young people in this Northern Ireland study and those in England and Wales have high extraversion scores; there is no significant difference between the two groups on the extraversion scale. (Pupils in Northern Ireland were just as likely to answer ‘Yes’ to a question such as ‘Are you rather lively?’ as were the pupils surveyed in England and Wales.)
- The young people in this Northern Ireland study have moderate neuroticism scores, whereas young people in the England and Wales study have low neuroticism scores. (Pupils in this study answered ‘Yes’ more frequently to questions such as ‘Are your feelings easily hurt?’) This is the personality dimension where the biggest significant difference between the two samples occurs.
- Both groups of young people have low psychoticism scores, but the scores of the Northern Ireland group are significantly higher than those of the England and Wales sample. (Pupils in this survey answered ‘Yes’ more often to questions such as ‘Would you like other people to be afraid of you?’)

- On the scale that measures the tendency to give socially acceptable answers, young people in England and Wales have moderate scores, whereas young people in this Northern Ireland study have low scores. (Pupils in this study were more likely to answer 'yes' to a question such as 'Have you ever broken any rules at school?').

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