Reevaluating Self-Esteem: Exploring the Treatment of Item 8 of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in China

Wu Mingli[1], Nordin Mamat[2] and Yasmin Hussain[3]

[1]Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies, City University Malaysia, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia; Faculty of Preschool Education, Sichuan Preschool Educators College, 621000 Mianyang City, Sichuan Province, China, [2]Faculty of Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia, [3]Faculty of Education and Liberal Studies, City University Malaysia, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract
Self-esteem is an extremely important core issue in the field of psychological research as it has a great impact on human development, health, well-being, and life outcomes. The measurement of self-esteem is a long-standing issue in psychology. Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale is the most frequently and widely used self-esteem scale all over the world. This paper, through CNKI search, finds that 43 or 45 papers (with journal names containing the word "psychology" and key words including "self-esteem") used Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to measure self-esteem, among which, 42 papers used Chinese versions of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and most used the classic version (Ji & Yu, 1993; Wang, et al., 1999) with Item 8 translated in a positive tone and scored reversely. Through literature review, this paper finds that there are two Chinese versions of the whole scale; there is a dispute about the treatment of Item 8; there are four versions of the translation of Item 8; and there are five ways to deal with Item 8. Based on the previous study, this study proposed a new negative translation of Item 8 which is faithful to the original, consistent with the Chinese culture, and clear to understand. The reverse scoring of this translation of Item 8 is consistent with the original design of the scale by Rosenberg (1965). It is hoped that this study can provide insights into the future choice and use of Chinese versions of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the future study of self-esteem, and the future study of self-esteem scales.
Keywords: Self-Esteem, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Item 8, Translation, China

Introduction
Theoretical Foundation

Self-esteem, the self-evaluation and self-acceptance of self-competence and worth and value, is influenced by family Mao et al (2023); Krauss et al (2020); Wei (1999), school Wei

(1998) and life experiences Seaton & Carter (2020) and has a great impact on human health (Nguyen, 2019; Park & Yang, 2017), development Yu et al (2022); Huang (2022), well-being Zell & Johansson (2024); Wei et al (2010); Zhang (2007) and life outcomes (Orth et al., 2012).

The dictionary definition of self-esteem is "To esteem a thing is to prize it, to set a high mental valuation upon it; when applied to persons, esteem carries also the warmer interest of approval, cordiality, and affection" (Williams, 1979). The definition of self-esteem from the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus Online is "belief and confidence in your own ability and value" and Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary Online defines it as "respect for yourself". Encyclopedia Britannica Online says "Self-esteem (psychology), Sense of personal worth and ability that is fundamental to an individual's identity. Family relationships during childhood are believed to play a crucial role in its development. Parents may foster self-esteem by expressing affection and support for the child as well as by helping the child set realistic goals for achievement instead of imposing unreachably high standards."

It can be seen that self-esteem refers to whether one appreciates and values oneself. One's self-esteem is greatly influenced by parents and develops and changes as a result of life experiences and interactions with other people.

In the academic field, James (1890) was the first to identify self-esteem as a distinct psychological construct. He proposed that self-esteem is the degree to which an individual realizes his ambition, that is, self-esteem = success/pretension. According to Steffenhagen and Steffenhagen (1985), self-esteem includes self-concept (psychological), self-image (physical) and social concept (cultural). Tafarodi et al (1999) and Tafarodi and Swann (2001) believe that there are two dimensions of overall self-esteem: self-competence and self-liking. It is believed by many scholars Coopersmith (1967); Rosenberg (1965); Dutton et al (1997), etc.) that self-esteem refers to the self-evaluation and experience of self-worth obtained by individuals in the process of social comparison. Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as a person's set of attitudes and beliefs with which he or she interacts with the world. Shavelson et al (1976) proposed the hypothesis that self-esteem/self-concept is a multidimensional construct, which was tested and proved by (Fleming and Watts, 1980).

Self-esteem is the result of an individual's self-evaluation of his or her social role. Self-esteem is formed through social comparison and is the result of an individual's self-evaluation of his or her social role. Self-esteem first manifests itself in self-respect and self-love. Self-esteem also includes the expectation of respect from others and society.

Individuals who have insufficient self-esteem will be unable to appropriately deal with their own and others' evaluations, respond rationally and promptly to the demands or occurrences of their social environment, and relieve basic anxieties in life. To put it simply, these kinds of people are unable to carry out social life normally. Consequently, individuals who have inadequate self-esteem (i.e., low self-esteem) usually present a bad self-image to society, which specifically manifests two types of behaviours or attitudes: one is self-harming behaviours or attitudes, which are primarily self-directed. It manifests itself in the form of self-deprecation, self-pity, self-contempt, and even suicide; an alternative form consists of narcissistic or self-centred behaviours and attitudes, mainly directed towards others and the environment. Irresponsibility, apathy, egocentrism, animosity, aggression towards others, retaliation against society, and other extreme and sinful conduct may ensue, potentially culminating in crimes.

To sum up, self-esteem is how one feels about oneself and is greatly influenced by parents and life experiences. It is uni-dimensional or multi-dimensional. It has a great influence on human development and well-being.

The Measurement of Self-Esteem

Measuring self-esteem is a long-standing topic in psychology. Historically, people have adopted or developed many methods and tools for measuring self-esteem, such as the "experience sampling method", "Q sorting method", "peer evaluation method", "reaction time method", etc. In fact, most psychologists still rely on traditional self-report methods.

Zheng and Cai (2019) mentioned that the measurement of self-esteem mainly adopts the self-report method, and there are more than 200 self-esteem scales. Among them, the commonly used ones abroad are: Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale (SES), Coopersmith's (1967) Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI), Feelings of Inadequacy Scale (FIS) Janis & Field (1959), Texas Social Behavior Inventory (TSBI) Helmreich & Stapp (1974), Two-Dimensional Self-Esteem Scale (SLCS-R) Tafarodi & Swann (2001) and Body Esteem Scale (BES) Franzoi & Shields (1984), etc. The commonly used ones in China are the Self-Worth Scale (SWS) Huang & Yang (1998); Wei's (1997) Children's Self-Esteem Scale, etc. They are all self-description questionnaires.

By searching the "self-esteem scale", "measure self-esteem", "self-esteem questionnaire", and "self-esteem instrument", in the subject column and abstract column separately in the Chinese largest academic database CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), the outcome is 445 when searching "self-esteem scale" in the subject, and is 5059 when searching it in the abstract. For "measure self-esteem" as the subject, 312 outcomes and as the abstract, 92 outcomes. For "self-esteem questionnaire" as the subject, 44 outcomes and as the abstract, 209 outcomes. For "self-esteem instrument" as the subject, five outcomes and as the abstract, two outcomes. "Rosenberg self-esteem scale" as subject, 785 outcomes and as abstract, 1296 outcomes. "self-esteem inventory" as subject, two outcomes and as abstract, 54 outcomes. "Feelings of Inadequacy Scale" as subject, two outcomes and as abstract, 75 outcomes. "Texas Social Behavior Inventory" as subject, zero outcomes and as abstract, 34 outcomes. "Two-Dimensional Self-Esteem Scale" as subject, three outcomes and as abstract, 37 outcomes. "Body Esteem Scale" as subject, 38 outcomes and as abstract, 316 outcomes.

Some scholars e.g. Rosenberg (1965) think that global self-evaluation has the greatest potential for prediction whereas others e.g. Janis & Field (1959) contend that the more specific measures, which are derived from aspects of the individual, are the optimal. We do not take positions on specific issues. Instead, we recommend that researchers choose a theoretically sound and empirically sensitive measure based on the level of specificity.

Typically, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Texas Social Behaviour Scale assess general or global self-esteem; the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale, the Janis and Field Feelings of Inadequacy Scale, and The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory investigate particular dimensions of self-esteem; the Pierce-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, and the Self-Perception Profile for Children are designed specifically for children. According to Schmitt and Allik (2005), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale has been translated into 28 languages and is widely used in 53 countries around the world. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is the most popular and widely-used scale to measure self-esteem all over the world. During its use in China, the most controversial aspect is undoubtedly the handling of item 8. Some Chinese scholars Han et al (2005); Tian (2006); Shen & Cai (2008); Lin & Huang (2010) have conducted research and discussions on this matter, but in the end, no consensus has been reached. Given the high usage rate and wide application of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in China, there is an urgent need to have a unified treatment method for item 8 to make the research results

comparable. To this end, this study explores several treatment methods to select a more appropriate one.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
Original Version of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Rosenberg (1965) defines self-esteem as a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward oneself. Rosenberg's (1965) Self-esteem Scale is the most widely used measure of global self-esteem all over the world. Indeed, apart from using it to measure self-esteem, scholars also frequently use it as the standard to seek convergence when developing other measures. As can be seen in CNKI, Chinese scholars also like to use it to measure global self-esteem or to seek convergence. It contains 10 items to measure both positive and negative feelings about the self. The responses to each item are provided on a four-point Likert scale that spans from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Give "Strongly Disagree" 1 point, "Disagree" 2 points, "Agree" 3 points, and "Strongly Agree" 4 points. Five items are reversely scored. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

Although some researchers (Hensley & Roberts, 1976; Dobson et al., 1979) have identified two highly correlated factors, one of which corresponds to negatively worded items, it is believed that the scale is unidimensional (Hensley, 1977; Simpson & Boyal, 1967). Greenberg et al. (2003) find that the original version (consists of five positively worded and five negatively worded items) fits a two-factor model while the reworded version (comprised of 10 positively worded or 10 negatively worded items) fits a one-factor model, which indicates that the two dimensions (positive and negative) are merely an artifact of item wording. The Chinese scholars Wang et al (2010) have the same finding: the dimension of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is influenced by the item statement method.

Chinese Versions of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
Classical Chinese Version of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was introduced by Ji and Yu (1993) to China in the 1990s. And Wang et al (1999) include the translation of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale by Ji and Yu (1993) in their handbook: *Rating Scales for Mental Health*, which has been cited by most of the published papers since the publication of it.

The translation of Item 8 "I wish I could have more respect for myself" to Chinese is in a positive tone: "我希望我能为自己赢得更多的尊重" ["I wish I could earn more respect for myself"]. Wang et al (1998) test the validity and reliability of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and get good results, but they suggest revising the translation of Item 8 because it is translated in a positive tone with reverse scoring.

The Version of Yang et al. (1997)

Yang et al (1997) translated the book of Robinson et al. (1991/1997). In it, Item 8 is translated to a negative tone "我要是能看得起自己就好了" ["If only I could think more highly of myself"]. This implies the negative meaning that "I look down on myself", which is consistent with reverse scoring. Wang et al (2010) mentioned that the translation of Item 8 in Ji and Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999) is not so appropriate so that for Item 8, they use the version of (Yang et al., 1997). The whole scale of Yang et al (1997) is used in Tsinghua University Questionnaire System. However, the usage rate of it is not as high as that of (Ji and Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999).

The Version of Han et al (2005)

The classical translation of Item 8 is: "我希望我能为自己赢得更多的尊重" ["I wish I could earn more respect for myself"] (Ji & Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999). Han et al (2005) mentioned that most Chinese people normally understand it as: "I already have self-esteem, but it is not enough. I hope to get more." Obviously, this is a positive tone, but the original designer of the questionnaire listed this item as a reverse item. This is mainly caused by the cultural differences between China and the West. In view of the contradiction between the Chinese description of this item and the design direction of the original questionnaire, the following three solutions were proposed.

The first way is to delete Item 8 as done by (Shen et al., 2003). They thought the Chinese translation of Item 8 had the opposite direction of the original design so that they deleted Item 8, and the Cronbach α of the scale was 0.80. The second is to modify the Chinese expression of the item. That is, according to the original English version, it is translated as a euphemistic tone "我希望能再多一点自尊就好了" ["I wish I could have a little more self-esteem"]. This statement contains the meaning of "I don't have enough self-esteem now and need more self-esteem", which may eliminate the contradiction between the classical Chinese translation and the original questionnaire design. The third is to change the item to positive scoring. For example, Qian (1995) did this in his doctoral thesis "Research on the Goal Level and Self-Evaluation of Depressed People". After a comparison of positive scoring and reverse scoring, Han et al (2005) suggested changing Item 8 from reverse scoring to positive scoring.

The Version of Tian (2006)

Tian (2006) points out that our country's cultural tradition focuses on "humility is a virtue", "pride makes people fall behind, and humility makes people progress", and the spirit of continuous improvement: "the sea of learning has no limits", "there is no end to learning", etc., which makes it possible for even those who already have high self-esteem to show modesty in the hope of continuing to earn respect for themselves. It is entirely possible that, in our culture, the formulation of Item 8 is positive and active, rather than reverse and negative, as it is perceived in the West. If this is the case, then Item 8 should not be reversely scored in the Chinese version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Shen et al. (2003) also explicitly mentioned the problem, arguing that Item 8 was the opposite of the original scale design in terms of directionality, and therefore removed the question from the subsequent statistics. Tian (2006) informally interviewed some subjects about the item and found that they basically understood the item in accordance with the positive item and believed that the item reflected a positive tendency.

According to the data analysis of Tian (2006), if Item 8 was scored positively, the 10 items of the scale had good discriminatory power; the reliability was improved; and the criterion-related validity and structural validity were not much affected. However, if Item 8 was deleted, the reliability of the scale would be further improved, and the criterion validity of the scale would not be much affected, but the structural validity would be optimised significantly. Therefore, Tian (2006) suggested that it is best to remove Item 8 when using the Chinese version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, which will improve the reliability and validity of the scale; if it is scored as a positive item, the reliability of the scale can also be improved; however, it is not suitable to be treated as a reverse item in any case, otherwise, it will not only affect the reliability and validity of the scale but also affect the research results and conclusions, and it will also go against the rigorous academic attitude and research philosophy.

Yan et al (2021) adopted Tian's (2006) suggestion to use positive scoring of Item 8. Yan et al (2021) tested the self-esteem levels of 47887 students (20323 junior high school students, 15671 senior high school or technical secondary school students, and 14410 college or university students) between 13 and 22 years old from 31 provinces of China. Item analysis showed that the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale had satisfactory item discrimination (r=0.40–0.76). The confirmative factor analysis indicated good fit of the scale. The Cronbach α coefficients of the junior high school students, senior high school students, and college students were 0.87, 0.87, and 0.88 respectively, and the test-retest reliability (ICC) was 0.80, 0.74, and 0.72 respectively.

The Version of Shen and Cai (2008)

Shen and Cai (2008) compared three ways of translation of Item 8: a. a positive tone: "我希望我能为自己赢得更多的尊重"["I wish I could earn more respect for myself"] (Ji & Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999); b. a euphemistic tone "我希望能再多一点自尊就好了" ["I wish I could have a little more self-esteem"] Han et al (2005); c. a negative tone "我觉得我将来难以获得更多的尊重" ["I think it will be difficult for me to gain more respect in the future"] (Shen & Cai, 2008). It was found that the internal consistency reliability of the scales consisting of positive, euphemistic, and negative expressions were 0·82, 0·83, and 0·88, respectively. Shen and Cai (2008) looked up the word "wish" in the Oxford English Grammar Dictionary and found it leads to a clause that is in the subjunctive mood, indicating "the opposite of what is true, or a wish that is unlikely to be fulfilled in the future". In Item 8 of the English original version, the verb form in the "wish" cause is "could have", which expresses a wish that is unlikely to be fulfilled in the future. From this point of view, there is no problem in doing reverse scoring for Item 8 from the perspective of the English cultural background, because every respondent will interpret it as "a wish that is unlikely to be fulfilled in the future". However, Chinese grammar does not have the subjunctive mood, and the Chinese-speaking respondents would not think so when they are faced with the sentence "I wish I could earn more respect for myself". In addition, as a wish, respondents with both high and low self-esteem may make consistent (tend to "conform") choices when confronted with this expression, thus reducing its discriminant validity. Thus, Shen and Cai (2008) suggested using a negative tone to translate Item 8, which was supported by Lin and Huang (2010).

The Version of Wang et al (2010); Dai et al (2023)

Wang et al (2010); Dai et al (2023) are the same. They revise the version of (Ji and Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999). For Items 1 to 7 and 9 to 10, the version of Wang et al (2010) Dai et al (2023) is almost the same as (Ji and Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999). However, for Item 8, they use the version of Yang et al (1997) because the negative tone matches the reverse scoring. The usage of this version is not as much as the previous ones.

Summary of Versions

First, altogether, there are two Chinese versions of the whole scale: a. (Ji and Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999; Yang et al., 1997). Second, there are four versions of the translation of Item 8: a. a positive tone: "我希望我能为自己赢得更多的尊重"["I wish I could earn more respect for myself"] Ji & Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999); b. a negative tone "我要是能看得起自己就好了" ["If only I could think more highly of myself"] Yang et al (1997); c. a euphemistic tone "我希望能再多一点自尊就好了" ["I wish I could have a little more self-esteem"] Han et al

(2005); d. a negative tone "我觉得我将来难以获得更多的尊重" ["I think it will be difficult for me to gain more respect in the future"] (Shen & Cai, 2008). Third, there are five ways to deal with Item 8: a. to delete it Tian (2006); b. to use a positive tone to express it and do positive scoring Tian (2006); c. to use a positive tone and do reverse scoring (Ji & Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999); d. to use a negative tone and do reverse scoring Shen & Cai (2008); Lin & Huang (2010); e. to use a euphemistic tone and do reverse scoring (Han et al., 2005). The following part of the paper will discuss the usage of the scale in China in the recent three years (2022-2024) to see which version is used most frequently.

The Use of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in China in the Recent Three Years
Through searching CNKI for published papers with the keyword "self-esteem", it has been found that there are a total of 5658 papers, the earliest of which was published in 1992. And the quadratic search with the Chinese word "psychology" in the names of the journals generates 1372 articles. Among them, there are 469 research papers (including 245 academic journal papers and 224 conference abstracts). Among the 245 journal papers, there were 45 CSSCI (Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index) papers during the last three years from 2022 to 2024.

Among the 45 CSSCI papers, 43 of which used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, with a usage rate of about 95.56% of the total. It indicates that the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is still the most frequently used scale to test self-esteem levels in China. Among these 45 papers, excluding two papers that used the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children and one paper that used the original English version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale to test 209 Indians, the remaining 42 papers used the Chinese versions of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Among these 42 papers, 32 papers used the Likert 4-point scale, accounting for about 76.19% of the total; 8 papers used the Likert 5-point scale, accounting for about 19.05% of the total; 1 paper used the 6-point scale, accounting for about 2.38% of the total; and one paper used the Likert 7-point scale, accounting for about 2.38% of the total. It shows that most papers used the Likert-4 point scale.

For the number of items used, 36 of the 42 papers used 10 items, accounting for about 85.714% of the total; 5 papers used 9 items with deletion of Item 8, accounting for about 11.905% of the total; 1 paper only used 5 positive items, accounting for about 2.381% of the total. It shows that most papers used 10 items.

For the handling of Item 8, five papers, about 11.905% of the total, deleted Item 8; five papers, about 11.905% of the total, used a positive tone and did positive scoring; 31 papers, about 73.809% of the total used a positive tone and did reverse scoring; one paper, about 2.381% of the total, used a negative tone and did reverse scoring; no paper used a euphemistic tone and did reverse scoring. It shows that most papers used the positive tone and did reverse scoring as the classic Chinese version (Ji & Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999) did.

For the Chinese versions of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale used, 19 of the 42 papers used the version of Ji and Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999), accounting for about 45.238% of the total; 10 papers used Tian's (2006) version, accounting for about 23.810% of the total; 1 paper used Shen and Cai's (2008) version, accounting for 2.381% of the total; and 12 papers (accounting for about 28.571% of the total) did not specify which version was used, but all of them used 10 items, and Item 8 was reverse scored, so they presumably used the classic Chinese version of (Ji and Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999). It can be seen that most of the papers use the version of Ji and Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999) and some take Tian's (2006) suggestion to delete Item 8 or positively score it. Only one paper used the version of (Shen and Cai, 2008).

The versions of Yang et al (1997); Wang et al (2010); Dai et al (2023) were not used in CSSCI papers (with journal names containing the word "psychology" and key words including "self-esteem") in the recent three years. Therefore, the classical one is still popular.

Among the 42 papers, the Cronbach α of the scale was from 0.67 to 0.94; only one was 0.67, 11 were below 0.8; 30 were no less than 0.80; one was not reported. The five papers that deleted Item 8 reported the Cronbach α of the scale: 0.86, 0.78, 0.87, 0.84, 0.88. The five papers that positively scored Item 8 reported the Cronbach α of the scale: 0.81, 0.83, 0.91, 0.74, 0.889. The one paper that used the version of Shen and Cai (2008) reported the Cronbach α of the scale: 0.895. The one paper that used only five positive items of the version of Ji and Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999) reported the Cronbach α of the scale: 0.88. It can be seen that no matter what versions are used and how to deal with Item 8, the Cronbach α seems acceptable.

Implications for Handling Item 8

As can be seen from the above discussion, there are four versions of the translation of Item 8: a. a positive tone: "我希望我能为自己赢得更多的尊重"["I wish I could earn more respect for myself"] (Ji & Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999); b. a negative tone "我要是能看得起自己就好了" ["If only I could think more highly of myself"] (Yang et al., 1997); c. a euphemistic tone "我希望能再多一点自尊就好了" ["I wish I could have a little more self-esteem"] Han et al (2005); d. a negative tone "我觉得我将来难以获得更多的尊重" ["I think it will be difficult for me to gain more respect in the future"] (Shen & Cai, 2008). Besides, there are five ways to deal with Item 8: a. to delete it Tian (2006); b. to use a positive tone to express it and do positive scoring Tian (2006); c. to use a positive tone and do reverse scoring Ji & Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999); d. to use a negative tone and do reverse scoring Shen & Cai (2008); Lin & Huang (2010); e. to use a euphemistic tone and do reverse scoring (Han et al., 2005).

Through the data analysis of the 42 CSSCI papers (with journal names containing the word "psychology" and key words including "self-esteem") in China in recent three years (2022-2024), it is found that five papers, about 11.905% of the total, deleted Item 8; five papers, about 11.905% of the total, used a positive tone and did positive scoring; 31 papers, about 73.809% of the total used a positive tone and did reverse scoring; one paper, about 2.381% of the total, used a negative tone and did reverse scoring; no paper used a euphemistic tone and did reverse scoring. It shows that most papers used the positive tone and did reverse scoring.

Although it can be seen in the previous section of this paper that most papers used positive tone and did reverse scoring as the classic Chinese version Ji & Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999) did and no matter what versions are used and how to deal with the Item 8, the Cronbach α seems acceptable, the current study suggests using a negative tone and reverse scoring because this is consistent with the original design of the scale. This idea coincides with (Lin and Huang, 2010). And there is an urgent need to harmonise the treatment of Item 8 to make the study results comparable. On the basis of the previous translations, this paper proposes a negative translation: "虽然我希望，但是我感觉我将来也难以获得更多的自尊" [Although I wish, I feel that it will be difficult for me to gain more self-esteem in the future"]. This connotes the meaning that I feel I do not have enough self-esteem now and I wish to have more self-esteem but I know that it is difficult for me to gain more respect for myself in the future. It implies the judgement of the current self-esteem level, the hope for higher self-esteem, and the unconfidence to gain more respect for oneself in the future. This translation is faithful to the original and expresses the meaning clearly so that it will not mislead the

Chinese respondents. This translation of a negative tone should be scored reversely. The future study can use the classic Chinese version (Ji & Yu, 1993; Wang et al., 1999) and change Item 8 to this translation and check the validity and reliability of the scale. It is hoped that this can benefit the study of self-esteem and self-esteem scale.

Significance and Summary

Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale, as an instrument for measuring self-esteem level, is the most frequently used instrument in the current psychological field of China due to its high reliability and validity, concision and convenience. However, there is a dispute about how to deal with Item 8. Up to now, there is no harmonised solution. There is an urgent need to harmonise the treatment of Item 8 to make study results comparable.

Through literature review, this study finds that there are two Chinese versions of the whole scale: a. Ji and Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999); Yang et al (1997), and there are four versions of the translation of Item 8: a positive tone Ji & Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999), a negative tone Yang et al (1997), a euphemistic tone Han et al (2005), a negative tone (Shen & Cai, 2008). Besides, there are five ways to deal with Item 8: a. to delete it Tian (2006); b. to use a positive tone to express it and do positive scoring Tian (2006); c. to use a positive tone and do reverse scoring Ji & Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999); d. to use a negative tone and do reverse scoring Shen & Cai (2008); Lin & Huang (2010); e. to use a euphemistic tone and do reverse scoring (Han et al., 2005).

This study, through CNKI search, finds that most of the 42 CSSCI papers (with journal names containing the word "psychology" and key words including "self-esteem") in China in recent three years (2022-2024) used classic Chinese version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale Ji & Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999), in which Item 8 is translated in a positive tone and scored reversely. Although the Cronbach α of the scale in all the papers seems acceptable, it is suggested that the translation of Item 8 should use a negative tone and reverse scoring because this is consistent with the original design of the scale. Based on the previous translations, this paper proposes a negative translation: "虽然我希望，但是我感觉我将来也难以获得更多的自尊" [Although I wish, I feel that it will be difficult for me to gain more self-esteem in the future"]. This implies the judgement of the current self-esteem level, the hope for higher self-esteem, and the lack of confidence to gain more self-esteem in the future. This translation of a negative tone should be scored reversely.

This study provides a new translation of Item 8 of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, which is faithful to the original, consistent with the Chinese culture, and clear to understand. The reverse scoring of this translation of Item 8 is consistent with the original design of the scale by (Rosenberg, 1965). The future study can use the classic Chinese version Ji & Yu (1993); Wang et al (1999) and change Item 8 to this translation and check the validity and reliability of the scale. It is hoped that this study can provide insights into the future choice and use of Chinese versions of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the future study of self-esteem, and the future study of self-esteem scales.

Corresponding Author

Professor. Dr. Nordin Mamat
Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia
Email: nordin@fpm.upsi.edu.my

References

Coopersmith, S. (1967). *The antecedents of self-esteem.* W. H. Freeman and Company.

Dai, X. Y., Wang, M. C., & Liu, T. (2023). *Changyong Xinli Pingu Liangbiao Shouce* [Manual of commonly used psychological assessment scales]. Beijing Science and Technology Publishing Co., Ltd.

Dobson, C , Goudy, W. J., Keith, P. M., & Powers, E. (1979). Further analysis of Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale. *Psychological Reports, 44*, 639-641.

Dutton, K. A., & Brown, J. D. (1997). Global self-esteem and specific self-views as determinants of people's reactions to success and failure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 73*(1), 139-148. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.1.139

Fleming, J. S., & Courtney, B. E. (1984). The dimensionality of self-esteem: Ⅱ. Hierarchical facet model for revised measurement scales. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46*(2), 404-421.

Fleming, J. S., & Watts, W. A. (1980). The dimensionality of self-esteem: Some results for a college sample. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 39*(5), 921-929.

Franzoi, S. L., & Shields, S. A. (1984). The Body Esteem Scale: Multidimensional structure and sex differences in a college population. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 48*(2), 173-178. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4802_12

Greenberg, E., Chen, C., S., Dmitrieva, J. Farruggia, S. P. (2003). Item-wording and the dimensionality of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: Do they matter?. *Personality and Individual Differences, 35* (6), 1241-1254. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(02)00331-8.

Han, X. Q., Jiang, B., Tang, J. Y., & Wang, Y. R. (2005). Problems and suggestions in using Self-Esteem Scale. *Chinese Journal of Behavioral Medicine Science, 14*(8), 763.

Hensley, W. E. (1977). Differences between males and females on Rosenberg scale of self-esteem. *Psychological Reports, 41*, 829-830.

Hensley, W. E., & Roberts, M. K. (1976). Dimensions of Rosenberg's scale of self-esteem. *Psychological Reports, 38*, 583-584.

Huang, X. T., & Yang, X. (1998). Making a scale of self-work for young students. *Journal of Psychological Science, 21*(04), 289-292+382.

Huang Y. (2022). *The influence of senior high school students' self-esteem on their career development: the mediating role of self-identity* [Master's thesis, Yangzhou University]. Chinese Master's Theses Full-text Database. https://oversea.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD202301&filename=1022037982.nh&uniplatform=OVERSEA&v=y0zNCe2yFCryPutSX_OTv-hOI7P0T4lu1bUmBdb8gQtbobgRzT3i9b67UXqo4e56

James, W. (1890). The principles of psychology. *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, 123*(25), 596-596. https://doi.org/10.1056/nejm189012181232510

Janis, I. S., & Field, P. B. (1959). A behavioral assessment of persuasibility: Consistency of individual differences. In C. I. Hovland & I. L. Janis (Eds.), *Personality and persuasibility*, (pp. 55-68). Yale Univ. Press.

Ji, Y. F., & Yu, X. (1993). The Self-Esteem Scale. *Chinese Mental Health Journal,* (Supplement): 251-252.

Krauss, S., Orth, U., & Robins, R. W. (2020). Family environment and self-esteem development: A longitudinal study from age 10 to 16. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 119*(2), 457–478. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000263

Lin, X. Q, & Huang, Z. J. (2010). Re-discussion on the treatment method of Item 8 of the Chinese version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. *Chinese Journal of School Doctor, 24*(4), 263-265.

Mao, L. L., Liu, P., & Yang, T. H. (2023). Effects of parenting style on self-esteem level of children. *Journal of Guizhou Medical University, 48*(4), 416-421.

Nguyen, D. T., Wright, E. P., Dedding, C., Pham, T. T., & Bunders, J. (2019). Low self-esteem and its association with anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation in Vietnamese secondary school students: A cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *10*, Article 698. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2019.00698

Orth, U., Robins, R. W., & Widaman, K. F. (2012). Life-span development of self-esteem and its effects on important life outcomes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 102*(6), 1271–1288.https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025558

Park, K., & Yang, T. C. (2017). The long-term effects of self-esteem on depression: The roles of alcohol and substance uses during young adulthood. *The Sociological Quarterly, 58*(3), 429-446. https://doi.org/10.1080/00380253.2017.1331718

Qian, M. Y. (2015). A study on the goal level and self-evaluation of depressed people [Doctoral dissertation, Peking Univeristy].

Robinson, J. P., Shaver, P. R., & Wrightsman, L. S. (Eds.). (1997). *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes* (Yang Y. Y. et al., Trans.). Yuan-Liou Publishing Co., Ltd. (Original work published 1991).

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton University Press.

Schmitt, D. P., & Allik, J. (2005). Simultaneous administration of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in 53 nations: Exploring the universal and culture-specific features of global self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*(4), 623–642. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.89.4.623

Seaton, E. K., & Carter, R. (2020). Pubertal timing as a moderator between general discrimination experiences and self-esteem among African American and Caribbean Black youth. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 26*(3), 390-398. https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000305

Shavelson, R. J., Hubner, J. J., & Stanton, G. C. (1976). Selfconcept: Validation of construct interpretation. *Review of Educational Research, 46*, 407-441.

Shen, J. L., Zhang, J. Y., Tong, Y., & Zhou, L. Q. (2003). The relationship between the self-esteem of the elderly and the social support between the elderly and their adult children. *Chinese Mental Health Journal, 17*(11), 749+782.

Shen, Z. L., & Cai, T. S. (2008). Disposal to the 8th item of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Chinese version). *Chinese Mental Health Journal, 22*(9), 661-663.

Simpson, C. K., & Boyal, D. (1975). Esteem construct generality and academic performance. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 35*, 897-907.

Steffenhagen, L. A., & Steffenhagen, R. A. (1985). Self-esteem and primary demographic characteristics of alcoholics in a rural state. *Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education, 30*(2), 51-59. http://www.jstor.org/stable/45091531

Tafarodi, R. W., Lang, J. M., & Smith, A. J. (1999). Self-esteem and the cultural trade-off. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 30*(5), 620-640. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022199030005004

Tafarodi, R. W., & Swann, W. B. (2001). Two-dimensional self-esteem: Theory and measurement. *Personality and Individual Differences, 31*, 653-673.

Tian, L. M. (2006). Shortcoming and merits of Chinese version of Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale. *Psychological Exploration, 26*(2), 88-91.

Wang, M. C., Cai, B. G., Wu, Y., & Dai, X. Y. (2010). The factor structure of Chinese Rosenberg' Self-Esteem Scale affected by item statement method. *Psychological Exploration, 30*(3), 63-68.

Wang, P., Gao, H., & Xu, J. Y. (1998). The reliability and validity of Self-Esteem Scale. *Shandong Journal of Psychiatry, 11*(4), 31-32+22.

Wang, X. D., Wang, X. L., Ma, H. (1999). *Rating scales for mental health* (Revised and Expanded ed.). Chinese Mental Health Journal, 318-320.

Wei, J. B., Li, Y. Y., & Gao, L. (2010). The correlative research of self-esteem and subjective happiness of college students. *Journal of Henan Institute of Science and Technology*, (11), 93-96.

Wei, Y. H. (1997). Structural model of self-esteem and making a self-esteem scale for children. *Psychological Development and Education*, (03), 29-36.

Wei, Y. H. (1998). Impact of school factors on the development of self-esteem in children and adolescents. *Psychological Development and Education*, (02), 12-16.

Wei, Y. H. (1999). The impact of parenting styles on the development of self-esteem in children and adolescents. *Psychological Development and Education*, (03), 7-11.

Williams, E. B. (1979). *The Scribner-Bantam English dictionary* (rev. ed.). Bantam Books.

Yan, Y., Xie, X. C., Gai, X. S., Chen, X., & Wang, H. (2021). Assessment results of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) in middle school and college students in China. *Chinese Mental Health Journal, 35*(10), 863-868.

Yang, Y. Y., Zhang, X. Z., & Peng, S. Q. (1997). *Xingge Yu Shehui Xinli Zonglan* [Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes]. Yuan-Liou Publishing Co., Ltd.

Yu, W. J., Qian, Y. W., Abbey, C., Wang, H., Rozelle, S., Stoffel, L. A., & Dai, C. X. (2022). The role of self-esteem in the academic performance of rural students in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(20), Article 13317. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph192013317

Zell, E., & Johansson, J. S. (2024). The association of self-esteem with health and well-being: A quantitative synthesis of 40 meta-analyses. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506241229308

Zhang, L. (2007). *Research on the relationship between college students' self-esteem, interpersonal relationship and subjective well-being [Master's thesis, South China Normal University]. Chinese Master's Theses Full-text Database.* https://oversea.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD2008&filename=2007185727.nh&uniplatform=OVERSEA&v=YLaYy6YmqIWu4OXNFW_4AyK_I-HQ88d3BnqCgq7w0ritfDjZToPGq5m2wge6L0oo

Zheng, Z. N., & Cai, Y. (2019). The development of a computer-adaptive test for self-esteem. *Journal of Jiangxi Normal University (Natural Science), 43*(5), 448-453+489. https://oversea.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFDLAST2019&filename=CAPE201905002&uniplatform=OVERSEA&v=ADNMX7L04VgNyQJnW4UXTxwybapZIH1uSSDlFw3pC44tsuB9NRkzeYC9P58XiQbz