



Apr 23rd, 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

# The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and the Amount of Social Comparison

Josh Birk  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Jennifer Contarino  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Esther Franco  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Tressa Gipe  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Jeff Melton, Faculty Advisor  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc>

---

Birk, Josh; Contarino, Jennifer; Franco, Esther; Gipe, Tressa; and Melton, Faculty Advisor, Jeff, "The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and the Amount of Social Comparison" (1994). *John Wesley Powell Student Research Conference*. 10. <http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/jwprc/1994/posters/10>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by The Ames Library, the Andrew W. Mellon Center for Curricular and Faculty Development, the Office of the Provost and the Office of the President. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Commons @ IWU by the faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@iwu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@iwu.edu).

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND THE AMOUNT OF SOCIAL COMPARISON

Josh Birk, Jennifer Contarino, Esther Franco, Tressa Gipe,  
Jeff Melton\*, Dept. of Psychology, IWU

The relationship between self-esteem and amount of social comparison has not been previously investigated. According to social comparison theory, the primary motivation for engaging in social comparison is to reduce uncertainty about the self. Previous research has found that low self-esteem (LSE) individuals are uncertain about themselves. Therefore, it may be hypothesized that LSE individuals engage in much social comparison. However, LSE individuals by definition have a relatively unfavorable opinion of themselves. Therefore, it seems plausible that they will avoid social comparison for fear of comparing unfavorably. These hypotheses were examined in two studies. In experiment 1, students who had completed several inventories of self-esteem and personality received their graded psychology test. A folder containing classmates' test scores was left for them to examine while the experimenter left the room. A hidden experimenter recorded how long the student spent looking at the scores. In Experiment 2, students who had taken inventories similar to those in Experiment 1 completed anagrams which were either difficult or easy and a dot estimation task. The amount of time they subsequently spent looking at other students' scores was recorded.