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**SELF-ESTEEM, STUDY HABITS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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Self-Esteem, Study Habits and Academic Performance among University Students



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Abstract

Purpose: This study intended to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and study habits on the academic performance of students in universities.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The findings of the study revealed the existence of a contextual and methodological gap relating to self-esteem and study habits on the academic performance of university students. Preliminary empirical review found that self-esteem does not account for low or high academic performance, as most students reported enjoying a good level of self-esteem, regardless of their grades. However, the same is not true of study habits, which are tied to academic performance as shown by our results and prior research. Hence better performance is expected of students if their study techniques are to improve.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The Social Learning and Cognitive Evaluation theories may be used to anchor future studies on self-esteem and study habits on the academic performance of university students. In terms of self-esteem, improvement thereof is not an urgent matter as nearly all students claim a good level of self-esteem, hence it would be appropriate to consider other variables for future research.

Keywords: *Academic Performance, Self-Esteem, Study Habits*

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INTRODUCTION

We believe it is necessary to examine and establish the most relevant variables that lead to students' success or failure on standardized tests because grades are currently utilized as a main indicator of a school's efficacy (Bloodgett & Lanigan, 2018). Academic performance is difficult to define, which presents a major challenge for researchers. Academic performance, school performance, and academic achievement all mean roughly the same thing but are often used interchangeably. Students' success in the classroom can be broken down into two categories: academic performance and school performance (Paul & Jefferson, 2019). Academic achievement is the result of a student's efforts in school and is measured by the student's grade point average (Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White & Salovey, 2012). Bunce, Baird, and Jones (2017), on the other hand, define academic performance as the degree to which a student's knowledge in a given area or subject compares to that expected of students in that area or subject. Academic performance can also be expressed as a numerical and qualitative score, a grade that, if consistent and reliable, would reflect the amount of learning generated by the teacher-student relationship in light of the objectives established at the beginning of the course (Alva & Manuel, 2017).

School performance measurement has received persistent criticism, according to the work of Hernández (2012). As other factors (family, society, and the teacher's teaching learning activity) are most relevant to the ideal educational growth of kids, he wonders whether the grade earned in an assessment is a true reflection of the learning obtained by the pupils. Hence, it is evident that academic performance is influenced by a myriad of variables that are intricately interrelated, making it difficult to analyze. Academic success can be affected by several things, including intelligence, motivation, personality, aptitudes, interests, study habits, self-esteem, and the rapport between a teacher and their students. Differential performance refers to the degree to which a student's actual academic performance varies from what would have been expected of him or her. Academic performance that falls short of expectations is considered unsatisfactory.

Many students' triumphs and failures in the classroom can be traced back to their level of self-confidence, which is one of the numerous factors mentioned by various authors as affecting academic achievement (Batool, 2020). Hence, it is important to assess the extent to which the study population has low self-esteem and how this relates to the students' academic performance so that, if necessary, measures can be taken to raise students' self-esteem. Kahu (2013) argues that in order to better their students' education, university professors should receive training in the psychological characteristics of their pupils. According to Bolivar (2006), one's sense of identity can be molded by one's level of self-esteem, which can have both positive and negative effects on one's everyday life. A person's ability to respond to criticism depends on his or her confidence in their ability to tell the difference between criticism that is in line with his or her values and that which is not. Negative criticism can wreak havoc on a person, putting a heavy strain on his or her self-respect and possibly even leading them to believe they are a complete failure.

The majority of students enrolled in the 10th cycle of the Professional Academic School of Primary Education and Learning Problems in the second term of 2012 registered average to high self-esteem (71% of the students), which positively influenced their academic performance, according to research by Acua (2013). According to Nicho's (2013) analysis, a student's self-esteem significantly correlates with his or her academic achievement ($P = .000a = .05$), indicating a dependent relationship as well as a close and direct association. He also found that sixty percent

of students suffer from low self-esteem. While they don't put themselves down, they do believe their contemporaries deserve more respect than they do.

Improved academic achievement is mostly attributable to a student's study habits (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012). Pathak and Pathak (2015) agree, arguing that successful students have established study routines. Scholars have discovered a significant and favorable association between study habits and academic performance, as evidenced by a survey of the relevant literature (Lei, Cui & Zhou, 2018).

Over half of students enrolled in Basic Mathematics 1 classes at Universidad Tecnológica del Per failed the class in the previous academic term (2016 - II), obtaining grades below 10 points, according to a study of the university's student assessment indicators and academic records. The cumulative GPA was below the minimum passing score of 10. The goal was to address the issues facing the institution by determining if students' self-esteem and/or study habits were related to their academic success. The goal was to improve student support services and help the administration establish guidelines for faculty work that would increase educational indicators and reduce the likelihood of students dropping out or extending the length of their study beyond what they could afford. According to studies conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the dropout rate in the United States is 35%, whereas it is above 20% in Spain and up to 60% in Italy (Chamorro, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Many teachers and professors believe that there is a direct correlation between a student's level of self-esteem and the amount of academic success that they attain. This misconception is frequently brought up in discussions that take place in opposition to the provision of ability grouping for gifted pupils. Consequently, the degree of relationship between the study factors needs to be discovered so that the university and the class lecturers can come up with strategies to improve the students' academic performance. This would allow for greater academic success for the students (Vialle, Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2015).

Several studies conducted by Gao (2022); Al Awaji (2022); Perveen (2020); Muhammad (2015); Rosli (2012); Koosha (2011) and Vallone (2003) presented a contextual gap by providing findings not related to the impact of self-esteem and study habits on academic performance. Hence the research was intended to ascertain whether a relationship exists between self-esteem and study habits and academic performance of university students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Social Learning Theory

According to the Social Learning Theory, people pick up new behaviors, attitudes, and values by emulating those of others whom they have observed and modeled after. This theory can assist explain how self-esteem and study habits are influenced by social factors in the context of academic performance among university students. The context is academic performance. (Akers & Jennings, 2015)

To begin, the social learning theory postulates that individuals are more inclined to imitate actions they observe being rewarded or praised by other people. This is the central tenet of the theory. A student is more likely to adopt similar study habits and experience similar academic success if they observe their peers receiving positive feedback and high grades for studying regularly and effectively. One example of this would be if a student observes their peers studying regularly and receiving high grades. In response, the student may experience an increase in their sense of self-esteem as a result of this positive reinforcement, as they may feel more competent and successful in their academic endeavors. On the other hand, if a student sees their classmates participating in unproductive study habits or being criticized for poor academic performance, that student is more likely to pick up those same unproductive study habits and experience a decline in their sense of self-worth. This type of negative reinforcement has the potential to lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which the student's perceptions about their academic talents and chances for success end up being borne out in their actual experiences (Bandura, 2019).

In addition, social learning theory emphasizes the significance of social support as a factor that can have an effect on a person's academic success as well as their sense of self-worth. Students are more likely to develop healthy study habits and enjoy higher levels of self-esteem if they receive encouragement and support from their classmates and/or lecturers. In contrast, students who do not have access to social support or who are subjected to critical or negative feedback may feel diminished motivation, increased self-doubt, and poorer academic achievement. The theory of social learning can be helpful in explaining how the formation of self-esteem and study habits can be influenced by social factors such as classmates and instructors, which can eventually have an effect on academic success among university students (Bojuwoye, Moletsane, Stofile, Moolla & Sylvester, 2014)

Cognitive Evaluation Theory

The Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) is a motivational theory that proposes that the effect of extrinsic rewards, such as grades, praise, or other forms of feedback, on an individual's intrinsic motivation to participate in a particular activity can either be beneficial or detrimental to that individual's performance. In the context of academic success among university students, CET can contribute to an explanation of how things external to the student, such as feedback and grades, might have an effect on the student's sense of self-worth and study habits (Stirling, 2013).

According to the Cognitive Evaluation Theory, the degree to which a student feels in control of their academic achievement and the degree to which they feel competent in their academic abilities can both be influenced by the kind of rewards that are offered from the outside (Riley, 2016). For instance, if a student receives favorable feedback and high grades, they may feel more confident in their academic abilities and more inspired to continue studying and achieving academic success. This is because they have been rewarded for their hard work. They may experience an increase in their sense of self-esteem as a result of the positive comments they receive, as they may become more self-assured and successful in their academic endeavors.

On the other hand, if a student receives unfavorable comments or bad grades, they may feel less confident in their academic ability and less inspired to continue studying and achieve academic success. This can be a vicious cycle. The recipient of such unfavorable criticism may experience

a drop in their sense of self-worth as a result of beginning to question their skills and capacity for achievement as a result of this feedback.

In addition, the Cognitive Evaluation Theory proposes that the perceived locus of control is a crucial factor in determining whether or not the presence of extrinsic rewards strengthens or weakens the intrinsic motivation of an individual. If a student believes that their marks and feedback are determined by external variables, such as luck or the difficulty of the test, this might impair the student's intrinsic drive to study and succeed academically. Luck and the difficulty of the test are two examples of such elements. On the other hand, if a student believes that they have some influence over their grades and comments, they may be more driven to develop healthy study habits and achieve success in their academic endeavors (Hendijani, Bischak, Arvai & Dugar, 2016). A student's intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and study habits can be impacted by external rewards such as feedback and grades, which can ultimately have an effect on academic performance among university students. Cognitive Evaluation Theory can help explain how this can happen, and it can contribute to an explanation of how this can happen.

Empirical Review

Gao (2022) studied the gender differences in the relationship between self-esteem and depression among college students in China. This four-year study looked at how the relationship between self-esteem and depression was different for men and women among Chinese college students. The study found that college students' self-esteem dropped steadily over time, that there were strong negative links between self-esteem and depression among college students, and that the vulnerability model was supported by different relationships between men and women. The study suggests that colleges should be aware of how the relationship between self-esteem and depression is different for men and women and take more targeted steps to boost students' self-esteem to prevent depression.

Al Awaji (2022) investigated the moderating effects of self-esteem on the relationship between communication anxiety and academic performance among female health college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this cross-sectional study, 287 female college students were sent an email survey to fill out. The following questionnaires were part of the survey: General Health Characteristics, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension Scale. The results showed that 28.2% of the participants had a high level of communication fear, while only 9.8% had a low level of communication fear. The SE gave a total score of 24.3 2.14, which shows that students have a high level of self-esteem. The grade point average (GPA) of the students was linked to SE in a good way. But self-esteem, which was used as a moderator variable, didn't change the way all of the predictors related to GPA. The study's results show that different strategies need to be used to improve students' group discussions, meetings, and communication with each other for the best learning outcomes.

Perveen (2020) researched on the effectiveness of self-esteem based interventions to enhance self-esteem and academic achievement among undergraduate students. Self-esteem plays a vital role as a contributor for achievement. The goal of this study is to find out how self-esteem interventions affect academic success. A quasi-experimental design called "pretest-posttest" was used to do the research. We used a convenient sampling method to choose three groups (n=90, 12 men, 78 women, ages 22–25) from the undergraduate psychology program. Rosenberg's (1965) self-esteem

scale was used to measure self-esteem, and grades were taken from the academic division after the academic semester was over. One-way MANOVA analysis showed that the self-esteem scores of the three groups were significantly different (* $p < 0.05$). The self-esteem of the intervention group was significantly higher than that of the placebo group and the control group. There was a big difference in the scores of those in the intervention group who did better in school.

Muhammad (2015) studied the self-esteem and academic performance among students in universities in Pakistan. After a number of behavioral and academic problems, this study was done to find out how college students feel about themselves and how well they do in school. Through a method called "strategic sampling," 80 students from G. C. University Faisalabad, 40 men and 40 women, were chosen. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Academic Performance Rating Scale were given to the people who took part to find out how they felt about themselves and how well they did in school. The students' grades were compared between men and women. The statistical significance of data was tested with Pearson's Product Moment and the t-test. The results showed that there was a strong link between self-esteem and academic performance ($r = 0.879$, $p < 0.01$). Also, there was a big difference between male and female students' scores on self-esteem and academic performance. This means that female students do better in school than male students, and male students do better on self-esteem than female students.

Rosli (2012) investigated self-esteem and academic performance relationship amongst the second year undergraduate students of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur campus. A cross-sectional study was done with second-year undergraduates from the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Medicine to look at the link between self-esteem and how well they did in school. The study found that the average score on self-esteem scales was 17.443.44, with scores ranging from 0 to 30, and that the average CGPA was 3.0220.41. Pearson's correlation and linear regression were used to look at the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance. The results showed that students with higher self-esteem do better in school ($p < 0.0005$, $r = 0.32$), that the relationship between self-esteem score and body area satisfaction is significant ($p < 0.05$, $r = 0.016$), and that the relationship between self-esteem and stress is inversely significant ($p < 0.05$, $r = -0.198$). In conclusion, self-esteem is one of the most important things that affects a person's academic performance. It is even more important than stress and body image.

Koosha (2011) studied the effects of self-esteem, age and gender on the speaking skills of intermediate university EFL learners. The goal of this study was to find out if there was a link between self-esteem, age, and gender on one hand, and speaking skills on the other. In order to do this, twenty intermediate Persian English learners were chosen based on an OPT test. These were undergraduate EFL students at Islamic Azad University, Khorasgan Branch who were working toward a B.A. in teaching English as a foreign language. Two raters looked at the participants' speaking skills at the end of the required course. They used a modified version of Farhady (1995) scale to measure the five subskills of vocabulary, structure, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehensibility (Oral Production of Short Stories). Sorensen's (2005) self-esteem questionnaire, which has 50 questions, was also given to the participants. The results showed that there was a strong link between self-esteem and speaking skill, with fluency being the most important factor. There was also a negative link between age and how well someone could speak. No statistically significant link was found between gender and speaking skills. The study could help English teachers, people who want to learn English, and people who write textbooks.

Grant Vallone (2003) similarly conducted an analysis of the effects of self-esteem, social support and participation in student support services on students' adjustment and commitment to college. Universities are becoming more and more concerned with how to help underrepresented and first-generation college students stay in school, do well in college, and feel comfortable on campus. A survey was given to 118 college students to find out how their self-esteem, family support, peer support, and use of college programs affected their academic and social adjustment and their commitment to college. The results showed that students with higher self-esteem and more peer support did better in school and in their social lives. Also, students who used student support services and counseling more often said they were better at fitting in with society. Lastly, students who were more comfortable with campus life were more likely to be committed to getting a degree and to their school.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

FINDINGS

Our study came down to two knowledge gaps, that is the contextual gap and the methodological gaps. A contextual gap presents itself when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Gao (2022) conducted a study on the gender differences in the relationship between self-esteem and depression among college students in China. This longitudinal study examined gender differences in the relationship between self-esteem and depression among Chinese college students during the four academic years. The study found that the self-esteem levels of college students on average monotonically declined over years; there were significant negative correlations between self-esteem and depression for college students and lastly, the vulnerability model was empirically evidenced with heterogeneous associations by gender. On the other hand, our current study focuses on the self-esteem and study habits on the academic performance of students in universities.

Secondly, this study also presented a methodological gap, that is, for instance, Gao (2022), in his study on the gender differences in the relationship between self-esteem and depression among college students in China; adopted a longitudinal study approach whereas our current study adopted a desk research methodology.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings of the empirical research, the degree of academic success does not account for low or high levels of self-esteem. This is because the majority of students reported having a healthy level of self-esteem regardless of their grades. On the other hand, this is not the case with study habits, which, as our findings and the findings of other researchers have shown, are connected to academic performance. So, students are expected to enhance their performance in order for them to improve their study habits. Hence, it is vital for professors to help students through the variety of study strategies that are currently available, as well as to use these strategies

to make the most of the time spent studying in order to achieve better academic achievements. Methods need to be tailored to the kind of student that the university is trying to attract, as many of them are juggling work and school at the same time or, in any case, already have a degree from a technical institute or university.

Because almost all of the students report having a healthy level of self-esteem, it is not a pressing problem to work on improving their level of self-esteem; hence, it is appropriate to think about other factors when doing research in the future. Last but not least, university administrators can now make use of these findings to take immediate action to improve students' study habits in math classes, implement information lectures, either face-to-face or online, in light of the profile of students they serve, to increase student counseling and tutoring hours while focusing on study techniques, and, last but not least, to train teachers so as to enhance their teaching skills by covering all the cognitive aspects of a student, especially mathematics.

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