RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT
The goal of self-esteem is to cultivate positive feelings and thoughts about oneself throughout life. Self-esteem, in its simplest form, is a person's opinion and evaluation of themselves, which can be positive or negative, good or bad, and enjoyable or painful. The present study was carried out to measure the association between self-esteem and academic performance among the university going adolescents of South Punjab (Dera Ghazi Khan). The purpose was also to measure gender differences between the study variables. A total of 84 participants (41 female students and 43 male students) were included in the study and selected through the purposive sampling technique. To measure the academic performance of students, their CGPA was used while Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale was used to assess their self-esteem. T-test analysis was used to explore the gender differences among the study variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlational Analysis was used to measure the association between self-esteem and academic performance. The results demonstrated significantly positive correlation between self-esteem and academic performance. In addition, gender differences were found in terms of self-esteem as female participants had high self-esteem as compared to their male counterparts. However, gender differences were found to be insignificant in terms of academic performance. More studies, on larger samples are needed to make the results generalizable on general population. In addition, academic institutes must hire psychologists in order to ensure a support system to the students who suffer with low self-esteem. This would eventually have a positive impact on their academic performance as well.
Keywords: Self-esteem, Academic Performance, Gender Differences

INTRODUCTION

A person's self-esteem reflects his or her opinion of and satisfaction with themselves. A person's level of self-esteem reflects his or her estimation of his or her own importance in the world. When we talk about how much someone values their own abilities and appreciates themselves, we're talking about their self-esteem (Bowker, 2006). Self-esteem is defined as an individual's judgement about his/her self-worth. This construct comes into play when young children start perceiving their self-worth and compare it with each other on multiple tasks. As the child progresses to adolescence, they start comparing their perceived self-worth with their ideal self-image. Hence, this comparison becomes very crucial for adolescents because this stage is accompanied with constant development and change. Therefore, development of self-esteem has been found to be one of the most important stages of development during adolescence (Aryana, 2010).

Generally, high self-esteem helps adolescents to view themselves as capable of achieving new things. Many studies have found that one of the best ways to improve a student's academic performance is to enhance their self-esteem. Many researches have also demonstrated that those

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students who have high academic performance, have higher self-esteem, self-confidence and personal responsibility (Aryana, 2010).

Rosenberg (1965) defines self-esteem as a set of both positive and negative evaluations of an individual about his/her own self. Self and self-esteem are two different constructs as they constitute two different dimensions of a personality. The cognitive part of the personality is "the self", whereas self-esteem is the psychological and affective dimension of the personality. The concept of self-esteem includes personality traits of individuals, their abilities, social relationships, skills, feelings along with their idea about their academic performance. It also includes the sense of feeling satisfied with their ideas of their academic performance (Koruk, 2017).

Personality traits are considered as the most influential factors on academic performance specially among students. Self-esteem is seen as an important personality trait that correlates with the academic performance of students. This sense of self or self-esteem is cultivated in an individual's interactions with his/her surroundings. Hence, it is defined as the way people think about themselves in their academic and social spheres and how close their real and ideal self is. Students with high self-esteem have been found to be more successful in their academic performance as they complete their assignments on time and are resistant to the issues and problems they face in their academics (Mirzaei-Alavijeh et al., 2018).

In addition, gender differences have also been found in self-esteem. Numerous studies have pointed out these gender differences during adolescence as individuals have been found to adopt gender roles during this stage. Self-esteem of males is thought to be associated with independence and autonomy while in females, it is associated with sensitivity or interdependence. Since, gender differences are present in terms of goals related to academic performance, differences in their academic performance has also been expected. Females have been found to score higher in school and have high academic performance as compared to males (Aryana, 2010). Academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish differ tasks given to them by teachers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Abdullah (2000) has conducted an empirical study to investigate association among self-esteem, motivation and academic performance of university going students in Nigeria. The aim of the study was to investigate the association between these variables and the influence of them on student's academic performance. It has been found that students with low self-esteem, have low motivation and hence their academic performance was also low. This demonstrates a positive relationship between self-esteem and academic performance (Abdullah, 2000).

Another study investigated the association between self-esteem and academic performance among University going students of Pakistan. The data was collected from Government College University, Faislabad. The researchers reported significant association between academic performance and self-esteem. It was also found that females had high academic performance while males were high on self-esteem as compared to their female counterparts (Arshad et al., 2015). D'Mello et al. (2018) also investigated the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among University students. They used descriptive research design to carry out this study. The results of the study were somewhat different from the literature reviewed previously. Gender differences were present in terms of self-esteem. However, females were found to have higher self-esteem as compared to males. In addition, the researchers didn't find any significant correlation between the study variables. Another study investigated the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance and found positive association between self-esteem and academic performance/ achievement (Mirzaei-Alavijeh et al., 2018). Koruk (2017) also explored the effect of self-esteem on the academic performance of students. The findings of his study also support the previously reviewed literature as they found significantly positive association between the study variables.

The research of Akinleke (2012) aimed to uncover the relationship between test anxiety and self-esteem as it relates to academic achievement. Students in their last year of the National Diploma (NDII) programme at the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro (n = 250) were included in the study. Two questionnaires were presented to them, each of which took around 45 minutes to complete. The research was conducted in a standard school setting during the school day. Grade Point Averages (GPAs) from the previous year were collected in addition to the information gathered from the

students via surveys. A comparison was made between the GPA information and the survey results. The correlation between high self-esteem and good grades was also shown in this research, with low-anxiety students having better GPAs overall than high-anxiety students. In light of these results, people involved in education should make policies to help students deal with anxiety and start projects to make it easier for students to learn and understand difficult material. This will help students do better in the classroom.

Self-esteem is said to develop, manifest, and manifest differently amongst the sexes. Several academics looked at the correlation between students' gender and their sense of self-worth. Despite previous studies finding that men and women had quite different levels of self-esteem (SarAbadaniTafreshi, 2006; Hossaini, 2002), this author found the opposite to be true. She studied 240 pre-university students in Shiraz to determine the correlations between self-esteem, parenting, and gender. In order to get some answers, we employed Cowper Smith's self-esteem test. This finding disproves the hypothesis that high school pupils' sense of self-worth is influenced by their gender. Despite this, Zareh's (1994) research on the connections between high school students' motivation, self-esteem, and gender discovered a strong correlation between the two. One hundred and fifty pupils (each consisting of 75 males and 75 females) were assigned based on a random procedure. For this study, we used Cowper Smeit's self-esteem survey as the primary data collection instrument.

Aims of the Study

The literature review shows that relationship between self-esteem and academic performance: a gendered perspective. While other studies have looked at how different instruments and student and gender-related factors affect students' GPAs, this one takes a more nuanced approach by focusing on issues specific to Pakistan. One of the primary goals of this research was to look into any possible connection between students' levels of self-esteem and their academic success. Applying the Persian translation of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES, Tevakkoli, 1995) to students' CGPAs, the current study will provide a more accurate approximation of the genuine link between self-esteem and academic success. We hypothesised that students would demonstrate a connection between self-esteem and academic achievement on the basis of the following hypothesis: students' self-perceptions of their own self-esteem would correlate positively with their test scores and grade point averages.

1. There is likely to be a positive association between self-esteem and academic performance.
2. Students are likely to have gender differences in self-esteem.
3. Gender differences are likely to be present in academic performance among students.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study design for the present study is cross-sectional research design. The number of participants included in the study was 84 (which was equally distributed across both genders). The data was collected from Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan. Purposive sampling technique was used to approach the participants and to collect their responses. The age range of participants was from 16-19 years that fall under the developmental stage of adolescence.

Variables

Academic Performance. The outcome of education is called academic performance. It is the extent to which a student, his/her resource persons and their institution achieve the educational goals of that student (Annie et al., 1996).

Self-esteem. The judgment and approach of a person towards himself/herself is called self-esteem. It is an overall evaluation of an individual about his/her own self-worth. It could be positive as well as negative (Hewitt, 2009).

Measures

The academic performance of students was measured using their overall cumulative grade point average (CGPA) in University. Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale was used to measure their self-esteem.

Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

The scale consists of 10 items. The responses are measured on a Likert scale of four points. Item number 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9 are reversely scored. The tool measures both negative and positive self-esteem. Self-esteem is scored by adding the scores on these 10 items. The more an individual scores on the scale, the higher would be their self-esteem (Arshad et al., 2015).

Academic Performance

The students' performance in university were graded on a scale from 0 to 5. GPAs were requested from the participants. average grade point average for the semester in which the survey was given.

Procedure

A total of 100 forms were divided into two groups. 50 forms were distributed among the female students whereas 50 forms were distributed among the male students. The participants were the students of initial semesters. Their age range was 16-19 years. Out of 100, 97 students completed the forms. The collected data was refined. The forms in which there were missing responses were excluded from the study. Those students who were above or below the age of the selected range were also excluded from the study. Hence, the refined data consisted of 84 participants (41 females and 43 males). The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS 2.0. Pearson Product Moment Correlational Analysis was used to measure the association between Self-esteem and Academic Performance. T-test analysis was used to find gender differences between the study variables i.e. self-esteem and academic performance.

RESULTS

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to determine statistical significance using Pearson's product moment correlation and t-test.

TableNo. 1 Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Self-esteem and Academic Performance

Variables	Academic Performance	Self Esteem
Academic Performance	-	.252*
Self-Esteem	-	-

*$p<0.05$

Results indicate a significantly positive correlation r (84) =.252, $p<0.05$ between academic performance and self-esteem among students with the effect size of r = 0.06 which was calculated by coefficient of determination R^2 and this represent small effect size. Our hypothesis is supported by our data and we can say that academic performance shares about 6% of variability in a student's self-esteem.

Table No. 2 Comparing Gender Differences in Self-esteem

Male (n=43)		Female (n=41)				95% Cl	
M	SD	M	SD	t-value	p-value	LL	LL
26.1	2.90	27.6	3.20	-2.27	.025	-2.84	-.19

*Note. *p<.05. SE=Self-esteem, , CI= confidence interval. LL= lower limit. UL= upper limit*

Table 2 depicts that on average, males had less score on self-esteem scale (M = 26.1, SD =2.90), than females (M = 27.6, SD = 3.20) and this difference with 95% CI [-2.84, -.19], was statistically significant t (n= 84) =-2.27, p = .025). Moreover, it did represent a medium-sized effect d = 0.5.Cohen's d has been used to measure the effect size. Results indicate that there are significant gender differences in self-esteem and our hypothesis is supported by our data.

Table No. 3 Comparing Gender Differences in Academic Performance

Male (n=43)		Female (n=41)				95% Cl	
M	SD	M	SD	t-value	p-value	LL	LL
3.44	.283	3.36	.429	1.017	.312	-.076	.237

*Note. *p<.05. AP=Academic Performance, , CI= confidence interval. LL= lower limit. UL= upper limit*

Table 3 depicts that on average, females had less score on academic performance (M = 3.36, SD =.429), than males (M = 3.44, SD = .283). However, this difference with 95% CI [-.076, .237], was statistically non-significant t (n= 84) =-1.017, p = .312; In addition, the effect size is small d = 0.22 and is calculated by Cohen's d. Results indicate that there are no significant gender differences in academic performance and our hypothesis is not supported by our data.

DISCUSSION

Results of the present study indicate that there is a positively significant association between self-esteem and academic performance. The effect size of the relationship has been found to be moderate. This finding is in line with another study that investigated the association between self-esteem and academic performance among the students of health sciences in Malaysia. The results indicated positive association between self-esteem and academic performance. The effect size of the relationship was also moderate (Rosli et al., 2012). Another study conducted in Lamerd city investigated the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among students. The results showed positively significant association between the two variables and hence, their findings were also supported the findings of the present study (Doodman et al., 2017).

One study carried out in Kenya also explored the association between self-esteem and academic performance among students. The results depicted positive association between self-esteem and academic performance. According to the results, higher the self-esteem, higher would be the academic performance. Hence, previous literature also supports the findings of the present study (Ogot, 2017).

The present study also found gender differences in self-esteem. Females have been found to have higher self-esteem as compared to males. These findings are not in line with the previous literature (Bleidorn et al., 2016; Diseth et al., 2014). It might be possible that since the culture of South Punjab is collectivistic. Females might have been nurtured more as compared to males. Cultural factors might be responsible for this difference. Further studies are required to explore the reasons for this difference.

No gender differences have been found in academic performance in the present study. Literature has been inconsistent in terms of gender differences in academic performance. One study explored gender differences in academic performance and females were found to be high in academic performance as compared to males (Pomerantz et al., 2002). Another study carried out in Turkey found that females while entering the University have less scores as compared to males. However, after entering into the University, they exhibit high academic performance as compared to males (Dayioğlu & Türüt-Aşik, 2007). In conclusion, no gender differences have been found in academic performance among the students of South Punjab. One possible reason for that could be the small sample size of the present study. More studies are need to bridge this gap between the inconsistencies in literature.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study found positive association between self-esteem and academic performance. Gender differences were also found in self-esteem and females have been found to have high self-esteem as compared to their male counterparts. However, no gender differences were found in academic performance. It is needed that more studies must be carried out to explore these variables with large data size. Along with that, cultural and age factors must also be explored to understand the associations behind these results.

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