

Wajiha Kanwal \* Tahir Aziz † Muhammad Usman Saqib ‡

## Impact of self Esteem in the Context of Higher Education Rawalpindi and Islamabad University Students

**Abstract** Self-esteem describes a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value. It is often seen as a personality trait, which means that it tends to be stable and enduring. Self-Esteem can involve a variety of beliefs about self, such as the appraisal of one's own appearance, beliefs, emotions and behavior. The target population of this study was the students of universities at Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Data was collected through a stratified random sampling technique. Two universities were selected, and an equal number of students from each university was targeted to constitute a sample of 510 respondents. Data were analyzed with various statistics, which provided an insight that students differ in terms of self-esteem. It was concluded that Younger students (1st and 2nd semester) experience higher self-esteem than the older students; younger students also have higher scores on self-acceptance and self-competence, and academic competence, while older students (3rd & 4th semester) have a higher score on physical and social competence.

**Key Words:** Self Esteem Rawalpindi & Islamabad Universities

### Introduction

The concept of self can directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously regulate students intellectual processes in relation to their own intentions, setting of goals and conscious choices; in fact, it can say that self-choose direct one's thoughts and determine to drive toward the attainment of goals. University student's behavior is based on different factors, which are known as individual differences; among them, self-esteem is major constructs that play a vital role in creating individual differences ([Wahab & Eita, 2015](#)).

Education significantly affects individuals' cognitions, temperament or adjustment; through the process of education, knowledge, cultural norms, values and skills are transmitted from one generation to another. Dewey defined it as "a process of modernization or reformation of experience which adds to the meaning of experiences which increases the ability to direct the course consequently" (as cited in Samponath Pannersevlam and Santhanam, 1990).

Education is a basic foundation that brings changes in the societal configuration, economy and overall approach of the state. Education plays a significant role in monetary enlargement, and its main foundation is to improve interconnected problems and accelerates the flow of readiness amongst students to obtain knowledge and skills ([Hyun & Jeon, 2015](#)). It assists students in completing acquaintance with new techniques and methods for national enlargement, which is according to societal needs. Therefore, countries continue to upgrade the education system as a social enhancement strategy. Developed countries mainly place even more stress on education in order to fortify the capabilities and self-reliance of their youth ([Naseri et al., 2015](#)).

The concept of self-esteem has its origins in the 18th century, first expressed in the writings of David Hume. The Scottish enlightenment thinker shows the idea that it is important to value and think well of yourself because it serves as a motivational function that enables people to explore their full potential.

The task force set up committees in many California counties and formed a committee of scholars to review the available literature on self-esteem. This committee found very small associations between low self-esteem and its assumed consequences, ultimately showing that low self-esteem is

\* Chairperson/ HOD/ Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Wah, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: [dr.wajihakanwal@uow.edu.pk](mailto:dr.wajihakanwal@uow.edu.pk)

† PhD Scholar, Department of Education, University of Wah, Punjab, Pakistan.

‡ PhD Scholar, Department of Education, University of Wah, Punjab, Pakistan.

not the root of all societal problems and not as important as the committee had originally thought. However, the authors of the paper that summarized the review of the literature still believe that self-esteem is an independent variable that affects major social problems. The task force disbanded in 1995, and the National Council for Self-Esteem and later the National Association for Self-Esteem (NASE) was established, [by whom?] taking on the task force's mission. Vasconcellos and Jack Canfield were members of its advisory board in 2003, and members of its Masters' Coalition included Anthony Robbins, Bernie Siegel, and Gloria Steinem.

## Theories

Many early theories suggested that self-esteem is a basic human need or motivation. American psychologist Abraham Maslow included self-esteem in his hierarchy of human needs. He described two different forms of "esteem": the need for respect from others in the form of recognition, success, and admiration, and the need for self-respect in the form of self-love, self-confidence, skill, or aptitude. Respect from others was believed to be more fragile and easily lost than inner self-esteem. According to Maslow, without the fulfilment of the self-esteem need, individuals will be driven to seek it and unable to grow and obtain self-actualization. Maslow also states that the healthiest expression of self-esteem "is the one which manifests in the respect we deserve for others, more than renown, fame, and flattery". Modern theories of self-esteem explore the reasons humans are motivated to maintain a high regard for themselves. Sociometer theory maintains that self-esteem evolved to check one's level of status and acceptance in ones' social group. According to Terror Management Theory, self-esteem serves a protective function and reduces anxiety about life and death.

Carl Rogers (1902–1987), an advocate of humanistic psychology, theorized the origin of many people's problems to be that they despise themselves and consider themselves worthless and incapable of being loved. This is why Rogers believed in the importance of giving unconditional acceptance to a client, and when this was done, it could improve the client's self-esteem. In his therapy sessions with clients, he offered positive regard no matter what. Indeed, the concept of self-esteem is approached since then in humanistic psychology as an inalienable right for every person, summarized in the following sentence:

Every human being, with no exception, for the mere fact to be it, is worthy of unconditional respect of everybody else; he deserves to esteem himself and to be esteemed.

This concept was much researched in the Western context but in the Pakistani cultural context is still unfamiliar and unknown. As university students are a national asset, in fact, they are the future professionals if they trained and groomed carefully, positive thinking and positive behavior can be expected from them. Universities are producing graduates and are devotedly working on their academics (Farhan & Khan, 2015). It is expected that in future, they will work with a true professional spirit, so the presents study is designed to unravel the impact of self-esteem among private and public sector Master university students. A high level of self-esteem leads to good academic performance (Arshad et al., 2015).

Experiences in a person's life are a major source of how self-esteem develops. In the early years of a child's life, parents have a significant influence on self-esteem and can be considered the main source of positive and negative experiences a child will have. Unconditional love from parents helps a child develop a stable sense of being cared for and respected. These feelings translate into later effects on self-esteem as the child grows older. Students in elementary school who have high self-esteem tend to have authoritative parents who are caring.

Although studies thus far have reported only a correlation of warm, supportive parenting styles (mainly authoritative and permissive) with children having high self-esteem, these parenting styles could easily be thought of as having some causal effect on self-esteem development. Childhood experiences that contribute to healthy self-esteem include being listened to, being spoken to respectfully, receiving appropriate attention and affection and having accomplishments recognized and mistakes or failures acknowledged and accepted. Experiences that contribute to low self-esteem include being harshly criticized, being physically, sexually or emotionally abused, being ignored, ridiculed or teased or being expected to be "perfect" all the time.

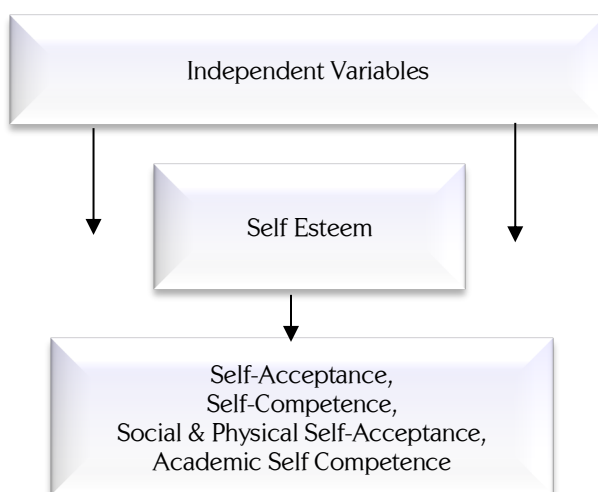
During school-aged years, academic achievement is a significant contributor to self-esteem development. Consistently achieving success or consistently failing will have a strong effect on students' individual self-esteem. However, students can also experience low self-esteem while in school. For example, they may not have academic achievements, or they live in a troubled environment outside of school. Issues like the ones previously stated can cause adolescents to doubt themselves. Social experiences are another important contributor to self-esteem. As children go through school, they begin to understand and recognize differences between themselves and their classmates. Using social comparisons, children assess whether they did better or worse than classmates in different activities. These comparisons play an important role in shaping the child's self-esteem and influence the positive or negative feelings they have about themselves. As children go through adolescence, peer influence becomes much more important. Adolescents make appraisals of themselves based on their relationships with close friends. Successful relationships among friends are very important to the development of high self-esteem for children. Social acceptance brings about confidence and produces high self-esteem, whereas rejection from peers and loneliness brings about self-doubts and produces low self-esteem.

Adolescence shows an increase in self-esteem that continues to increase in young adulthood and middle age. A decrease is seen from middle age to old age with varying findings on whether it is a small or large decrease. Reasons for the variability could be because of differences in health, cognitive ability, and socioeconomic status in old age. [No differences have been found between males and females in their development of self-esteem. Multiple cohort studies show that there is not a difference in the lifespan trajectory of self-esteem between generations due to societal changes such as grade inflation in education or the presence of social media.

High levels of mastery, low risk-taking, and better health are ways to predict higher self-esteem. In terms of personality, emotionally stable, extroverted, and conscientious individuals experience higher self-esteem. These predictors have shown us that self-esteem has trait-like qualities by remaining stable over time, like personality and intelligence. However, this does not mean it can not be changed. Hispanic adolescents have slightly lower self-esteem than their black and white peers, but then slightly higher levels by age 30. African Americans have a sharper increase in self-esteem in adolescence and young adulthood compared to Whites. However, during old age, they experience a more rapid decline in self-esteem.

The detailed theoretical framework is given below in a graphic representation.

### Theoretical Frame Work of Study



The present study was intended to measure the impact of self-esteem in the context of higher-level university students.

## Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study was to examine the impact of self-esteem among higher-level university students, study further explore the effects of biographic variations such as birth order, no of siblings, no of the semester in determining the level of self-esteem among higher-level university students.

## Objectives of the Study

- 1 To determine the level of self-esteem components among university students in various semesters.
- 2 To observe the birth order wise comparison of self esteems components among university students.
- 3 To measure the sibling's wise self-esteem of university students.

## Research Questions

- 1 How students of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester are holding higher self-esteem as compared to the students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> semester?
- 2 What is the difference between self-esteem components among older and younger students?
- 3 How students with fewer siblings possess higher self-esteem than students with more siblings?

## Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to:  
Universities located at Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

## Population

For investigation, the ideal population was all universities students studying at the Master level, but due to inadequate time & resources, it was not possible for the researcher to gather data from all of them. For that reason, only 10 universities located at Rawalpindi & Islamabad on the sample of 510 students were selected as a sample of the study.

## Sample

In this study, two universities, one from Rawalpindi and the other from Islamabad, were selected randomly to target the sample. Equal numbers of students were selected from each university. So a total 510 number of students consisted as a sample of the study.

## Research Instruments

In this study, one standardized research instrument, Factor Loading Self Esteem Scale (FLSES), developed by Farida Rifai (1999), was available, constructed in the local setting of Pakistan. So FLSES was preferred for its application to judge the four components of self-esteem among students.

## Results

**Table 1.** Semester Wise Comparison of Students' Self Esteem Components

Semester		Self-Acceptance	Self-Competence	Academic Competence	Physical & Social Acceptance	Total
1	M	44.8	11.9	11.2	11.6	79.5
	SD	2.8	1.9	1.9	2.4	9
2	M	39.2	12.9	10.5	12.4	75.0
	SD	1.8	2.9	3.8	2.3	10.8
3	M	37.4	10.4	9.8	13.2	70.8
	SD	2.1	1.08	1.47	3.2	7.85
4	M	35.3	11.8	11.1	12.3	70.5
	SD	1.8	1.2	1.9	1.2	6.1

Table 1 shows the semester- wise comparison of university students 'self-esteem measured through the Factor Loading self-esteem scale. Findings show that students studying in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester have higher mean scores on self-acceptance and self-competence, while students studying in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester have higher mean scores on academic competence and students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester have a higher mean score on physical and social competence. Overall it can be seen from the table that students who are studying at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semesters are holding higher self-esteem as compared to the students of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> semesters.

**Table 2.** Birth Order- Wise Comparison of Self Esteem Components

Birth order		Self-Acceptance	Self-Competence	Academic Competence	Physical & Social Acceptance	Total
1	M	38.0	12.4	12.3	14.0	76.7
	SD	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.8	6.5
2	M	39.5	12.8	10.05	13.53	75.88
	SD	2.03	2.08	4.2	3.4	11.71
3	M	38.3	11.9	11.6	12.4	73.76
	SD	1.9	2.7	1.5	2.3	8.4
4	M	37.6	10.7	10.3	13.10	71.7
	SD	2.04	2.1	2.9	1.4	8.44
5	M	37.4	11.7	9.6	10.5	69.2
	SD	3.3	0.9	1.3	2.1	7.65
6	M	31.7	12.2	9.4	9.8	63.1
	SD	1.4	0.4	1.2	2.3	5.3
7	M	35.2	10.1	10.3	13.3	68.9
	SD	1.1	1.2	1.2	2.3	5.8
8	M	30.5	11.8	10.0	10.8	63.1
	SD	2.1	2.2	1.2	1.1	6.6

Table 2 represents the differences between students' scores on the variable of birth order. The result shows that students having 6<sup>th</sup> birth order have a higher mean score on self-acceptance while students having 2<sup>nd</sup> birth order having a higher mean score on self-competence and physical and social acceptance; students having 1<sup>st</sup> birth order have a higher mean score on Academic competence. The total means scores of students having 2<sup>nd</sup> birth order are higher than students born on other birth orders. Overall, students born on 1<sup>st</sup> birth order experienced higher self-esteem as compared to those who were born on other birth orders.

**Table 3.** Siblings-Wise Comparison of Self Esteem Components

No. of Siblings		Self-Acceptance	Self-Competence	Academic Competence	Physical & Social Acceptance	Total
1	M	38.7	12.5	10.41	13.1	74.71
	SD	2.2	2.6	1.7	3.1	9.6
2	M	38.87	11.84	10.90	11.7	73.31
	SD	2.8	1.6	1.7	2.6	8.7
3	M	39.4	12.4	11.8	14.09	78.69
	SD	1.3	1.4	1.2	2.3	6.2
4	M	39.1	11.8	10.03	13.65	74.58
	SD	1.8	1.2	6.6	1.7	11.3
5	M	36.95	12.2	9.8	12.3	71.25
	SD	1.3	1.8	1.8	1.1	6
6	M	38.3	10.5	10.9	11.18	70.88
	SD	1.9	1.5	2.5	2.7	8.6
7	M	35.7	10.3	10.6	14.9	71.5
	SD	1.2	1.3	1.6	1.4	5.5
8	M	35.34	12.37	10.7	12.9	71.31
	SD	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.0	5.1

Table 3 presented differences between university students' scores on a variable number of siblings. The results make it clear that students with 3 siblings have higher self-esteem than students with other numbers of siblings.

## Discussion

The study was primarily designed to examine the research objectives, which included; exploring the impact of self-esteem among higher-level university students, to determine the impact of demographic variables such as birth order, no of siblings, no of the semester of higher-level universities students. Research Questions were also formulated to test the above-mentioned research objectives. Result of the study showed that overall students of 1<sup>st</sup> semester have higher self-esteem, gradually self-esteem decreases because students those are studying at 4<sup>th</sup>-semester experience lower self-esteem as compared to other students.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> research question of the study was that older students have higher self-esteem than younger students. Results of the study also confirmed this question. The reason may be that mature student are more focused and goal-directed; due to their sense of responsibility and behavioral maturity, they proved to be a good learner. Due to a better understanding of the subject matter, they may receive self-appreciation as well as aspiration from others which consequently arouse achievement motivation in them.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> research question stated that students with fewer siblings possess higher self-esteem than students who have more siblings. Finding confirms this hypothesis found that students with more siblings have lower mean scores on self-esteem than students with fewer numbers of siblings. Literature review finding was contrary to this result, as explored by Pepler, and Corter (1982) that people with more number siblings have higher self-esteem, prosocially and competitive behavior as compared to people with less number of siblings or being an only child.

## Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. Younger students (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester) experience higher self-esteem than the older students; younger students also have higher scores on self-acceptance and self-competence, and academic competence, while older students (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> semester) have a higher score on physical and social competence.
2. Overall 1<sup>st</sup> born students have higher self-esteem than students born on other numbers; students having 6<sup>th</sup> birth order have a higher score on self-acceptance while students having 2<sup>nd</sup> birth order have higher self-competence and physical and social acceptance. Students having 1<sup>st</sup> birth order have a higher score on academic competence.
3. Students with less no of siblings have higher score on the factor loading self –esteem scale as compared to a higher no of siblings.

## Recommendations

The study provided us valuable information that people with higher self-esteem are recognized as who can have more achievement in all given situations. This type of behavior could be a predictor of success in multifaceted or complicated circumstances. The result of the present study narrates about students individual differences in term of their self-esteem. The result would be helpful for students, teachers, university management, parents of university students and the overall community. The study provided us with the unique relationship between unseen causes of university student's behavior. In universities, students have diverse personalities, and some are doing it in an excellent way while others are doing it imprecisely. Positive self-esteem plays an important role in determining students achievement orientations; therefore, in university, an environment may be promoted, which may be enhanced the positive self-esteem of the students comprising of diverse backgrounds and personalities.

Teachers may show enthusiastic behavior in the classroom and focus on building relationships with students; they may have this idea that students are their investments. For this, teachers must focus

on students efforts inside to failures; they can inculcate and foster hope in students. Teachers ought to give genuine well in time feedback to students, try to build it around accomplishment and mistakes, and motivated them to redo their work if required. To boost students self-esteem, teachers may celebrate the small success of students and ask the students for feedback. Moreover, students may also have the opportunity to have their voice in academics expectation and consequences; this will also lead them towards higher self-esteem.

Moreover, in order to meet the present-day challenges, self-confidence is very important; if students are academically sound and having self-confidence, then students can face the challenges of life effectively. It is a fact that due to various personal and psychological problems some students have high self-esteem, and some have moderate or lower self-esteem it may be the duty of the teachers that, with appropriate pedagogical and motivation practices, inculcate higher self-esteem among university students. Awareness is vital for learning and development in order to enhance student's higher self-esteem, and university management can organize workshops and seminars on the significance of these topics.

### **Applied Significance**

Overall this study is considerable because it increases our understanding of hidden keys of successes that is our concept about ourselves, and our self-esteem can determine our behavior towards life. With the help of carefully intended home surroundings and class environment, optimistic changes can be brought in students' behavior. There is a requirement that students, parents, teachers and university management may realize the significance of this ignorant area; with cognizant systematic changes in the teaching-learning process, we can build our potential professionals, which will accordingly change the future of our nation.

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