SELF ESTEEM AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG FIRST SEMESTER AND LAST SEMESTER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Hina Gulzar[1], **Dr.Ghulam Dastgir***[2], **Zanub Ansari**[3], **Dr.Khuda Bakhsh**[4], **DR.Muhammad Atif Zahid**[5]

Abstract

The current study investigated the relationship between self-esteem and social adjustment among first- and last-semester university students. It was hypothesized that self-esteem has a positive relationship with social adjustment among university students. It was also hypothesized that self-esteem predicts social-adjustment among university students. Additionally there is difference in self-esteem and social-adjustment between first and last semester university students. The target population of the study was students. 190 university students including 87 males and 103 females were comprised by using purposive sampling strategy. Their age range was 17-26 years. The study's evaluation tools included the College Adjustment Test (CAT; Pennebaker, 2013) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965). Findings of Pearson product moment correlation indicated that self-esteem has a strongest positive relationship with the social adjustment of the university students. Hierarchical regression analysis indicated that after controlling the demographics' self-esteem also significantly positively predicted social adjustment of university students. Furthermore findings of independent t-test. demonstrated that the students of last semester students have better self-esteem and social adjustment than the first semester students. The findings can be implemented in educational setting and for policy makers for making necessary changes in education system as per need of the students.

Introduction

Due to scientific production, student life is a crucial time. The main resource and future leaders of any country are its students. Numerous elements, particularly when pupils are placed in unfamiliar situations, influence students' personalities and ability to adapt to any environment (Naseer & Rafique, 2021). One of the concepts that significantly affect how pupils acclimatize in any academic setting is self-esteem. It relates to how someone feels about themselves. It contains components of personal description such as self-assurance, pride, respect, self-worth, and self-respect. It is crucial to a child's academic success, social development, and sense of personal responsibility.

---

[1] M.Phil Scholar, University of Narowal. Email: Hinamalikawan101@gmail.com
[2] Lecturer Education, University of Narowal,Narowal Pakistan. Email: Ghulam.dastgir@uon.edu.pk
[3] M.Phil Scholar, Institute of Applied Psychology, University of Punjab, Lahore. Email: Zanub.mphil14@gmail.com
[4] Associate professor, Govt.college University Faisalabad,Faisalabad. Email: khudabakhsh@gcuf.edu.pk
[5] atifbaloch074@gmail.com

People who have strong self-esteem typically feel more self-assured and perform better in school than people who have poor self-esteem (Duru & Balkis, 2017; Zedda, Thibodeau, & Lefebvre, 2018; Abdel-Khalek, 2016; Ali, Naseer & Nadeem 2021).

The action of improving one's behavior over time to foster a more harmonious relationship between children and their surroundings is referred to as adjustment. Adjustment is necessary for a person to survive in either their physical or social environment. There is a need to alter them and adjust the environment, just as there are always changing environmental conditions. Accordingly, adjustment refers to the upkeep of a harmonious relationship between a person and the elements that make up his or her physical or social environment (Gablinske, 2014; Lim & Lee, 2017). In a healthy environment, societies provide skills, psychological requirements, and effective life adjustments. Other aspects like delicate feelings of physical and educational dimensions are included in social adjustments. The best social adjustment qualification criterion, though (Alam & Azad, 2016; Davis & Ahn 2019; Muhammad Aqeel & Rehna, 2020; Baker et al., 2020; Fornander & Kearney, 2020; Kearney & Graczyk, 2020; Maynard et al., 2018; Naseer, Mussarat and Malik, 2022; Naseer & Perveen, 2023).

It is widely acknowledged that a person's social and psychological health is intimately related to their sense of self-worth and ability to adjust to social situations (Mejas et al., 2020). Numerous studies have recently concentrated on people's self-esteem to solve problems, specifically how to reduce anxiety and boost the positive aspects of adaptability and knowledge in the host community, particularly to adjust to unfamiliar environments. In several studies, self-esteem is analytical of adaptation. Students with higher self-esteem generally performed better when it came to domain-specific adjustment. Self-esteem is thought to be the most important component of fundamental self-evaluations, displaying the entire worth that a person takes on themselves (Gebregergis et al., 2020).In the setting of Pakistan, this study examines the relationship between self-esteem and social adjustment to one's surroundings in first- and last-semester university students. The study assists parents and institutions by giving guidance on how to raise children in a healthy, tranquil atmosphere with a positive attitude and attention that may result in strong self-esteem and proper social adjustment in later life. The study specifically emphasizes the importance of students' sense of self-worth in assisting them in adjusting to the new environment and ultimately leading to high accomplishment.

Objectives of the Study

To assess the relationship between self-esteem and social adjustment among first and last-semester university students.

To seek self-esteem as a predictor of social adjustment among first and last-semester university students.

To evaluate the differences in self-esteem and social adjustment of the first and last semesters.

Review of Related Literature

The word "self" does not include a description or appraisal of the self that is either good or negative; rather, it explains the self in terms of the functions and characteristics that an individual holds. However, a person's self-esteem is based on the assessment they give to their self-description. "Maslow" is one of the most well-known researchers of self-esteem. He put it in the hierarchy of psychological needs because he thought that self-esteem contains self-respect, which is comprised of competence, inner strength, fulfillment, and independence. it contains praise from other people, which carries prestige, acceptability, emphasis, and fame. Each phrase represents distinct aspects of self-awareness despite the challenges academics experienced in coming to a consensus on a single definition of self-esteem, which is frequently used interchangeably (Ahmed, 2023;Zedda, Thibodeau, & Lefebvre, 2018;Wang & Wu, 2019; Filippello et al., 2019).

In his hierarchy of wants, Abraham Maslow emphasizes the need for self-esteem and how it plays a crucial role in our lives. He said that all humans have needs that are innate and are systematically structured in ascending (order) hierarchy of arrangement. Maslow's hierarchy of needs illustrates how essential self-esteem is in terms of being a fundamental source of motivation for people. According to Maslow, a person requires both internal and external praise. Both of these requirements must be met for a person to achieve self-actualization (Mello, Monteiro, & Pinto, 2018).

According to Ghatak& Singh, (2019) each person's motivation requires a different hierarchy. Maslow created a five-tiered pyramidal structure, or "hierarchy of needs," to organize human requirements. These are the levels:

Physiological: Basic needs including food, shelter, receiving a paycheck, and other necessities are referred to as "physiological needs" by (Ghatak& Singh 2019).

Safety: This covers stability, security, and security for instance, according to (Ghatak & Singh 2019), permanent employment offers stability and security in one's life.

Love and belonging (LB): This encompasses close relationships, acknowledgment, consideration for others, and tenderness. If employees feel their jobs are secure or secured, only then will they spend time socializing with their coworkers (Singh & Ghatak, 2019).

Self-Esteem (SE): involves the demand for acknowledgment. For instance, (Ghatak & Singh, 2019) state that praise, self-assurance/self-reliance, and independence are significant employee motivators in addition to pay.

Self-actualization (SA): The 'development needs' are described at this level. When given the chance to enroll in particular courses or studies, for instance, certain employees are genuinely excited, and they later receive sufficient recognition for their efforts and labor (Singh & Ghatak, 2019).

The process through which people discover how to fit in and adhere to the standards, beliefs, and expectations of their society or social environment is referred to as social adjustment. It entails developing the abilities, attitudes, and behaviors required to function well within a certain social group or community (Davis &Ahn, 2019; Turner et al., 2017; Lalfakzul, 2015; Dutra-Thomé, & McWhirter, et al., 2015).According to Aqeel & Akhtar (2017), social adjustment needs to be kept within certain bounds. In other words, we may say that the direction we as teachers aim to instill adjustment abilities in our students is towards social adjustment. We should emphasize the student's transition to university life as lecturers. The teacher must assist the student in adjusting to the circumstances at the institution. To do this, we should contribute to enhancing the university's social climate.   An issue that has attracted the attention of many therapists is social change as a crucial indicator of brain health. The most important aspect of growth is social development, which is acquired through relationships with others, especially with parents, peers, and teachers. The surveying measure of social development is the individual's change in relationship with both self and others (Kizilcec et al., 2017; Ababu et al., 2018; Mehboob & Shahzad, 2019).

Research Methodology

The study explored the relationship between self-esteem and social adjustment of among first-semester and last-semester university students. This study was a quantitative study and co-relational research design was used to evaluate this phenomenon. The sample was comprised of $N= 190$ university students from areas of social science and natural science both boys and girls form the concerned universities. Only those participants were selected who fulfill the inclusion criteria as with the age range 17-26 years and having residence. Descriptive statistics will be used to determine the participants' demographic characteristics.

Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables (N=190).

Variables	Frequencies (%)	Mean (SD)
Gender		
Boy	87(45.8%)	
Girl	103(54.2%)	
Age		21.88(2.02)
Dep		
Natural Sciences	75(39.5%)	
Social Sciences	115(60.5%)	
Semester		
First	93 (48.9)	
Last	97(51.1)	
Father occupation		
Govt.	89(46.8%)	
Private	21(11.1%)	
Business	67 (35.3%)	
Retired	13(6.8%)	

Mother Occupation	
Working	41(21.6%)
House wife	149(78.4%)
Family system	
Nuclear	126(66.3%)
Joint	64(33.7%)

Assessment Measures

Demographic Information Sheet for participant information.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) for self-esteem measurement and The College Adjustment Test (CAT; Pennebaker, 2013) was used to investigate social-adjustment of the university students.

Results

After collecting the data by concerned questionnaires and relevant sample the data was analyzed by different descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

Table 1 *Psychometric Properties for the Self-Esteem and Social-Adjustment Scales*

Scale	M	SD	Range	Cronbach's α
Self-Esteem Scale	23.77	4.50	10-40	.84
Social-Adjustment Scale	84.88	16.10	19-133	.82

Note. EA-AIRQ = Emotional Availability of Adult Interpersonal Relationships Questionnaire

The results of 1 table showed that Cronbach's alpha for Self-esteem scale is .84 and Social Adjustment scale has .82 respectively.

Table 2 *Inter-Correlation of Descriptive Statistics, Self-Esteem, and Social-Adjustment among University Students (N=190).*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	M	SD
1.Gender	1	-.12	.17*	.07	-.23**	-.06	-.03	-.01	.54	.49
2. Age	-	1	-.12	-.14	.09	-.35**	.22***	.25***	21.88	2.02
3. Dep.	-	-	1	.14	-.07	-.12	.19***	-.01	.61	.49
4. Semes.	-	-	-	1	.13	.10	.09	.03	1.51	.50
5. MO.	-	-	-	-	1	.11	-.10	-.17**	.78	.41
6. FS	-	-	-	-	-	1	-.08	-.03	.34	.48
7. SE	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	.37***	23.77	4.50
8. SA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	84.88	16.10

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, Gender= (male=0, female=1), Edu. = Dep. (Social sciences=0, Natural sciences=1)

Semester (1st semester=1, last semester=2), MO=Mother Occupation, FS=Family System, SE= Self Esteem, SA=Social-adjustment

Table 2 indicated that demographics of the participants as age has a positive significant relationship while mother occupation has a negative significant relationship. Findings also indicated that self-esteem also has a strongest positive relationship with the social adjustment of the university students.

Table 3 *Regression Coefficient of Demographic and Self-Esteem on Social-Adjustment among University Students (N=190).*

	Model 1			Model 2		
Variables	B	B	SE	B	β	SE
Constant	62.15		12.96		47.12	12.86
Age	1.69	.21**	.55	1.21	.15**	.54
Mother Occupation	-6.54	-.16**	2.70	-5.77	-.14**	2.59
Self Esteem				1.06	.29***	.24
R^2				.16***		
ΔR^2				.16***		

Note: N=190, Working = 0, House Wife = 1 *p<.05, **p<.05

The findings of table 3 demonstrated that demographic characteristics of students as age and gender significantly predicted of social adjustment of university students. Findings also indicated that after controlling the demographics' self-esteem also significantly positively predicted social adjustment of university students.

Table 4 *Comparison of First and last semester University Students in Self-Esteem and Social Adjustment (N=190)*

	First Semester (n=93)		Last Semester (n=97)				
Scales					t(190)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Self-Esteem	25.01	3.14	27.78	2.11	6.66	.05	.3
Social Adjustment	22.98	2.16	28.23	1.36	9.37	.05	.3

The findings of table 4 indicated that the first semester students' self-esteem (*M*= 25.01, *SD*=3.14) and social-adjustment (*M*= 22.98, *SD*= 2.16) was compared with the last semester university' students' self-esteem (*M*= 27.78, *SD*= 2.11) social-adjustment (*M*= 28.23, *SD*= 1.36). It demonstrated that the students of last semester students have better self-esteem t (93) = 6.66, p = .05, and social adjustment t (97) = 9.37, p = .05 than the first semester students.

Discussion

Arshi, (2022) an individual's total assessment and sense of their value is referred to as self-esteem. People who have higher self-esteem typically have a more favorable opinion of them and are more

self-assured. Contrarily, social adjustment describes how well a person integrates into their social environment and communicates with others in a variety of social contexts. People who are socially adjusted typically have better interpersonal connections and handle social obstacles with ease. Although there is a link between self-esteem and social adjustment, this does not necessarily imply that raising one's self-esteem will automatically result in increased social adjustment or the other way around. The complex process of social adjustment is influenced by several variables, such as personality, social skills, upbringing, and life experiences.

A comparison was done and also finds similarities between the indigenous s and international studies in this section. Indigenous studies discuss about this research (Rounaghi et al., 2018; Arshad Uzair 2017; Medina 2018; Akhter 2013; Ahmad & Ali 2018; In Medina's 2018; Nasaescu et al., 2020; Zuffian et al., 2018; Patel et al., 2018 ; Alharthi, 2020; Arshad Uzair 2017). And international studies discuss about this research (American Addiction Centre, 2019; Pugazhenthi, 2019; DeBono & Muraven, 2014; Deng et al., 2013; Barger, 2013; Aquila ,2019; Tait, 2018; Pugazhenthi, 2019; Restrepo & Cardona, 2023; Joly & Petrovic, 2022; Ashley & Kahu, 2022; Guo & Zhang, 2021; Johnson & Gitay, 2022; Ozer, 2022; Koo, 2022; Sharma, 2022; Friedlander 2017). This study by Khan & Yar (2014) examines the idea of self-esteem from a gender-based viewpoint to examine the variances and factors that affect self-esteem in various genders. Self-esteem, which is a person's subjective assessment of their value and abilities, is essential in determining one's mental health and general well-being. However, cultural expectations and gender roles frequently have differing effects on how pupils develop and maintain their sense of self-worth. Additionally, the increased exposure to a variety of events and difficulties throughout their time in college may aid in personal development and the creation of a more positive self-perception. On the other hand, students from the previous semester might have developed a strong sense of self and confidence as a result of their college experience, leading to high self-esteem.

Conclusion

The current study was conducted on first and last semester university students in order to seek the effect of self-esteem on social adjustment. The study findings revealed that self-esteem has a positive connection with the social adjustment of the university students. Self-esteem was also found as significant predictor of social adjustment among university students. The study also indicated that students of last semester students have better self-esteem and social adjustment than the first semester students.

Recommendations

Carry out a longitudinal study that tracks a student from their first semester of college through their final semester. Using this method, researchers will be able to monitor changes in self-esteem and social adjustment over time and spot any patterns or trends that might appear.

Contrast first-semester students' levels of self-esteem and social adjustment with those of last-

semester students. By comparing the two groups, it is possible to determine whether there are any notable differences between them and whether there are any particular crucial stages when self-esteem and social adjustment may be more sensitive to change.

Examine the effects of demographic variables on university student's social adjustment and self-esteem, such as gender, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic level. Knowing how these elements affect a situation might help with more focused interventions and support systems.

Examine the link between scholastic achievement and social adjustment. Determine whether having high self-esteem in the first semester leads to greater social adjustment and whether later semesters' increases in social adjustment are accompanied by higher self-esteem.

Evaluate the impact of psychological support programs and interventions on university students' self-esteem and social adjustment. It could be advantageous to implement these programs early in the first semester and assess their long-term effects.

Examine how one's sense of self and capacity for social connection are impacted by peer relationships and faculty support. A supportive campus atmosphere can be created by understanding how social interactions with peers and faculty members impact these variables. Analyze how technology and social media affect university students' social adjustment and sense of self. Look into the effects of students' online interactions and presence on their offline relationships and self-perception.

Take into account how cultural influences affect social adjustment and self-esteem. To detect potential cultural variances in these dimensions, compare findings across various cultural contexts.

Examine the relationship between social adjustment, self-esteem, and outcomes related to mental health, such as anxiety and depression. Having an understanding of these linkages can help develop comprehensive strategies for promoting students' well-being.

Examine how resiliency and coping skills help people adjust socially and to challenges in their personal and academic lives. Students can successfully navigate the academic environment by developing appropriate coping mechanisms.

We can better comprehend the dynamic relationship between self-esteem and social adjustment among first- and last-semester university students by addressing these issues in future research.

Reference

Abdel-Khalek, A. M. (2016). Introduction to the psychology of self-esteem. *Self-esteem: perspectives, influences, and improvement strategies*, 1-23.56-67.

Ahmed, D. (2023). The relationship between self-esteem and the learning motivation in Social Sciences students at the University of Tiaret.

Ahn, M. Y., & Davis, H. H. (2019). Four domains of students' sense of belonging to university. *Studies in Higher Education*, *45*(3), 622-634.

Ali, S., Naseer, S., & Nadeem, A. (2021). Perceived teachers' support and academic

achievement: Mediating role of students' satisfaction with online learning in medical and non-medical students during COVID-19. *Journal of Psychiatry*, *22*(9), 1-10.

Baker, R. S., Berning, A. W., Gowda, S. M., Zhang, S., & Hawn, A. (2020). Predicting K-12 dropout. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, *25*(1), 28-54.

Duru, E., & Balkis, M. (2017). Procrastination, self-esteem, academic performance, and well-being: A moderated mediation model. *International Journal of Educational Psychology: IJEP*, *6*(2), 97-119.

Dutra-Thomé, L., Koller, S. H., McWhirter, E. H., & McWhirter, B. (2015). Application of the future expectation scale for adolescents (FESA) in Brazil. *Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica*, *28*, 331-339.Engagement, T. S. A Longitudinal study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *70*, 149-171.*Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(13), 8007.

Filippello, P., Buzzai, C., Sorrenti, L., Costa, S., Abramo, A., & Wang, K. T. (2021). Italian version of the Family Almost Perfect Scale: psychometric characteristics and relationships with academic engagement, self-esteem, and personal perfectionism. *Applied Developmental Science*, *25*(4), 351-363.

Gablinske, P. B. (2014). A case study of student and teacher relationships and the effect on student learning.

Gebregergis, W. T., Mehari, D. T., Gebretinsae, D. Y., & Tesfamariam, A. H. (2020). The predicting effects of self-efficacy, self-esteem and prior travel experience on sociocultural adaptation among international students. *Journal of International Students*, *10*(2), 339-357.

Kearney, C. A., & Graczyk, P. A. (2020). A multidimensional, multi-tiered system of supports model to promote school attendance and address school absenteeism. *Clinical child and family psychology review*, *23*, 316-337.

Lalfakzuali, C. (2015). Self-esteem and religiosity among young Mizo adults: A comparative gender study. *International Journal of Education and Psychological Research*, *4*(3), 83-86.

Lim, Y., & Lee, O. (2017). Relationships between parental maltreatment and adolescents' school adjustment: Mediating roles of self-esteem and peer attachment. *Journal of child and family studies*, *26*, 393-404.

Maynard, B. R., Heyne, D., Brendel, K. E., Bulanda, J. J., Thompson, A. M., &Pigott, T. D. (2018). Treatment for school refusal among children and adolescents: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *28*(1),

Mejías, J. A., Jurado, M. M., Tafoya, S. A., Romo, F., Sandoval, J. R., &Beltrán-Hernández, L. (2020). Effects of group psychotherapy on depressive and anxious symptoms, self-esteem and social adaptation in college students. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, *20*(1), 46-56.

Mello, Z. R., & Worrell, F. C. (2014). The past, the present, and the future: A conceptual model of time perspective in adolescence. In *Time perspective theory; Review, research and application: Essays in honor of Philip G. Zimbardo* (pp. 115-129). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Naseer, S., & Rafique, S. (2021). Moderating role of teachers' academic support between students' satisfaction with online learning and academic motivation in undergraduate students during COVID-19. *Education Research International*, *2021*,

1-9.

Naseer, S., Mussarat, R., & Malik, F. (2022). Personality Traits and Academic Achievements of Undergraduate Students: The Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, *37*(1).

Naseer, S., & Perveen, H. Z. (2023). Perspective Chapter: Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning Courses.

Phan, H. P., & Ngu, B. H. (2018). An examination of social and psychological influences on academic learning: A focus on self-esteem, social relationships, and personal interest. *Social Psychology of Education*, *21*, 51-73.

Turner, R., Morrison, D., Cotton, D., Child, S., Stevens, S., Nash, P., & Kneale, P. (2017). Easing the transition of first year undergraduates through an immersive induction module. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *22*(7), 805-821.

Wang, J., & Wu, Y. (2019). Self-esteem modulates the ERP processing of emotional intensity in happy and angry faces. *Plos one*, *14*(6), e0217844.

Zedda, M., Thibodeau, S., & Lefebvre, S. (2018). Self-esteem and sense of social efficacy: personal characteristics related to students' academic performance. In *Congress of the Quebec Society for Research in Psychology (SQRP), Québec, Canada.*