



# Exploring Self-Esteem Among University Students: A Quantitative Study on Gender, Culture, and Psychometric Properties

Umar Khatab

Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

\*Correspondence [Khatab.00985@gmail.com](mailto:Khatab.00985@gmail.com)

**Citation** | Khatab U, "Exploring Self-Esteem Among University Students: A Quantitative Study on Gender, Culture, and Psychometric Properties", JIRSD, Vol. 1, Issue. 1, pp. 43-58, March 2022

**Received** | Mar 06, 2022 **Revised** | April 04, 2022 **Accepted** | April 23, 2022 **Published** | June 13, 2022.

The aim of this study was to develop a quantitative method for evaluating the self-esteem of university and college students. A group of 15 university students, comprising of 10 males and 05 females, participated in interviews using a semi-structured interviewing method. The objective of these interviews was to examine the concept of self-esteem as viewed by the researcher. It was formed as a consequence of the conversion process. A psychometric examination was undertaken to evaluate the psychometric properties of self-esteem. The study administered the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, together with a demographic Performa, to a sample of multiple students (male/female). The response, obtained through the study of the socioeconomic status (SES) component, comprises five unique attributes: low self-esteem, resilience, withdrawal, sociability, and self-assurance. The psychometric properties of SES were found to be good. The main topics of discussion revolve around the arrangement of socioeconomic status and the differences in self-esteem across genders within the cultural framework. This study examines major issues such as gender, culture, scale, validity, reliability, phenomenology, self-esteem, and university students.

**Keywords:** Self-Esteem, University Students, self-assurance

## Introduction:

The aim of this study was to develop a quantitative method for evaluating the self-esteem of college students. A group of 15 university students, comprising of 10 males and 05 females, participated in interviews using a semi-structured interviewing style. The objective of these interviews was to examine the concept of self-esteem as viewed by the researcher [1]. A study was done to evaluate the psychometric properties of self-esteem. The study administered the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, together with a demographic Performa to male and female students[2]. The solution, derived from the analysis of socioeconomic status (SES), encompasses five distinct attributes: low self-esteem, resilience, withdrawal, sociability, and self-assurance. The psychometric properties of SES were found to be good. The primary topics of conversation revolve around the arrangement of socioeconomic status (SES) and the discrepancies in self-esteem across genders within the cultural framework. This study primarily examines the notions of gender, culture, scale, validity, reliability, phenomenology, self-esteem, and university students. Self-esteem is seen as a fundamental psychological term that is closely linked to one's sense of self. Self-evaluation is a regularly observed process in which individuals examine and generate beliefs about their own value and worth. Self-esteem refers to individuals' assessments of their possession of certain qualities and their perception of themselves [3]. It relates to an individual's self-perception as

viewed from their own standpoint. Self-esteem pertains to an individual's own assessment and embrace of oneself, encompassing their degree of contentment or dissatisfaction with themselves.

Self-esteem has a crucial role in shaping human conduct and directly affects their personal growth and development. Self-esteem functions as a safeguard against unexpected circumstances and mental health disorders. Individuals that achieve great academic success frequently opt for a healthy lifestyle and actively strive to fulfil their maximum potential. In contrast, low self-esteem is positively associated with a sense of being excluded.

During their time in university, students undergo a challenging process of intellectual and emotional growth as they transition into adulthood. Research has indicated that it gets increasingly difficult to uphold a good self-esteem when undergoing a process of transformation. Instances of these transitions and choices encompass achieving economic independence, taking responsibility for oneself and others, forming intimate relationships or starting a family, and joining the workforce. University students are more vulnerable to mental health concerns and reduced self-assurance as a result of the uncertainties they face throughout this stage of their lives [4].

Although there is an increasing amount of research on the subject, there are still many unsolved conceptual questions around the concept of self-esteem. Several research undertaken since the mid-1800s have sought to precisely describe and clarify the fundamental nature of this concept. Despite undergoing thorough examination, it is frequently misunderstood. The phrase "self-esteem" was originally introduced by an individual who defined it as a state of emotional well-being. Subsequently, professionals from various fields offered diverse interpretations for this occurrence that corresponded with nearly every theoretical framework. Self-esteem, as viewed via the psychodynamic method, is regarded as a socio-cultural phenomenon that arises within a specific context. Self-esteem refers to an individual's evaluation of their own value and how it influences their behavior. Self-esteem is a psychology concept that refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of their own importance and worth. Self-esteem is viewed from a humanistic perspective as an innate quality that can be nurtured and improved. It involves the ability to act in line with one's own beliefs and values, while acknowledging and valuing one's individuality. He. Currently, scholars are debating whether self-esteem should be categorized as a condition or a trait, and if it should be perceived as a singular element or as having numerous dimensions [5].

The researcher[6] has conducted a phenomenological investigation of self-esteem, specifically examining the relationship between competence and worthiness, which are the two primary constituents. Worthiness is a personal and concrete internal feeling that an individual has towards themselves, which is impacted by the importance they give to their own attributes. The study highlighted the significance of parental influence, societal values, and cultural surroundings as crucial determinants in shaping and sustaining an individual's self-esteem [7].

The study proposed that self-esteem has a dynamic nature, where an individual's competence and worthiness interact, leading to continuous variations in self-esteem in response to various situations. The researcher[8] has introduced a continuum matrix that illustrates a spectrum of self-esteem levels, ranging from low to high. The self-esteem hierarchy consists of four categories: High Self-Esteem, characterized by a strong conviction in one's abilities and worth; Defensive Self-Esteem Type I (Narcissistic Self-Esteem), characterized by a lack of belief in one's abilities but a high belief in one's worth; Defensive Self-Esteem Type II (Pseudo Self-Esteem), characterized by a high belief in one's abilities but a low belief in one's worth; and Low Self-Esteem, characterized by a low belief in one's abilities and worth [9].

Examining the influence of societal standards and cultural disparities on an individual's self-esteem provides further insight into this issue. The concept of self-esteem has been analyzed in the context of both individualistic and collectivistic societies. Western culture places a high value on autonomy, uniqueness, and freedom, but Eastern culture highly regards the idea of working together, mutual reliance, and conforming to societal expectations. Both cases demonstrate a significant discrepancy in the understanding of the concept of self. In individualistic societies, the notion of self is delineated based on personal achievements, goals, and extraordinary aptitudes. In cultures that emphasize collectivism, the concept of self is perceived as the act of fulfilling the demands of others by adapting one's actions to suit specific situations [10]. When comparing these two cultures, it is evident that individuals from individualistic and collectivistic cultures possess distinct perspectives and interpretations of concepts.

### **The expression and functioning of self-worth:**

The expression and functioning of self-worth are complex phenomena that are influenced by cultural nuances. The diversity in cultural perspectives on self-esteem raises important considerations regarding the applicability of scales developed in diverse cultural settings. The focal point lies in the significant variation in the meaning, connotation, relevance, and significance of self-esteem across different cultures and contexts. Cross-cultural research consistently highlights that individuals from collectivistic cultures often exhibit lower self-esteem due to their heightened focus on group identity and limited individual self-awareness. Commonly employed scales in Western cultures tend to emphasize individual distinctiveness and independence, which may not fully capture the nuances of self-worth within communities that prioritize collectivism and cooperation [11]. Therefore, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the concept of self-esteem within a cultural context, employing an emic approach to unveil its diverse manifestations within specific cultural settings. This study endeavors to explore how college students perceive and express their own value by utilizing theoretical frameworks.

The primary objective of this study is to develop an assessment tool that not only demonstrates validity and reliability but also enables the evaluation of various dimensions of self-esteem in college students. By adopting a nuanced approach that acknowledges cultural variations, the study aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of self-worth and its manifestations within the unique cultural fabric of college communities. Through this exploration, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of self-esteem, fostering a more culturally sensitive and contextually relevant assessment tool for college students.[11].

Self-esteem plays a pivotal role in shaping human behavior and exerts a direct influence on personal growth and development. It serves as a protective factor against unforeseen challenges and mental health disorders. Individuals who attain significant academic success often choose a path of healthy living and actively strive to reach their full potential. Conversely, low self-esteem is closely linked to feelings of exclusion or marginalization, an increased susceptibility to stress, and a heightened likelihood of developing mental health issues. Recognizing the profound impact of self-esteem on behavior and well-being is crucial for devising effective interventions and support systems.

### **Positive impacts of elevated self-esteem**

#### **1. Academic success**

Those with elevated self-esteem are frequently characterized by heightened motivation and resilience, contributing to greater academic accomplishments. The confidence derived from a positive self-perception propels individuals to set ambitious goals and actively work toward realizing their academic potential.

#### **2. Adoption of healthy lifestyle choices:**

High self-esteem is associated with favorable health behaviors. Individuals who hold a positive view of themselves are more prone to embracing and sustaining healthy habits, including regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and sufficient sleep. This, in turn, enhances overall well-being and promotes longevity

### **3. Optimization of Potential:**

Individuals with high self-esteem tend to pursue personal and professional goals with determination. They are more inclined to confront challenges, take calculated risks, and view setbacks as opportunities for personal and professional growth. This proactive mindset facilitates the actualization of their maximum potential

### **Negative impacts of Diminished Self-Esteem:**

**1. Perceived Exclusion** Individuals grappling with low self-esteem may perceive themselves as unworthy or undeserving of positive social interactions. This perceived sense of exclusion can lead to feelings of isolation, impacting interpersonal relationships and overall mental well-being

### **Material and Method:**

In the initial phase of the approach, the focus was on assembling a comprehensive set of items related to the manifestation of self-esteem among university students. This phase drew inspiration from both Research Topics and Research Methods[12]. The primary aim was to explore how university students express and exhibit their self-esteem, guided by the researcher's two-factor phenomenological theory of self-esteem [13]. According to this theoretical framework, self-esteem is conceptualized as the capacity to experience positive emotions about oneself coupled with a robust belief in one's own abilities.

To operationalize this theoretical perspective, a group of 15 university students, comprising 10 males and 5 females, were provided with a specific description of self-esteem. They were instructed to compile a list of qualities and traits that they believe define an individual, utilizing the concept of self-esteem as a guiding framework. Additionally, open-ended questions were presented to encourage a thorough and detailed exploration of these attributes.

Participants were tasked with perceiving positive features as indicative of strong self-esteem, while the absence of such qualities was considered an indicator of reduced self-esteem. This process resulted in the creation of a collection of 63 items meticulously designed to assess the presence or absence of self-esteem. Subsequently, a comprehensive catalog of 63 items was generated, ensuring the removal of duplicate entries, eliminating unclear phrasing, and refining informal language [14]. This rigorous curation process aimed to enhance the precision and clarity of the items, setting the stage for the subsequent phases of the study.

### **Assessing Concurrent Validity of Self-Esteem Scale:**

#### **Translation and Modification of RSES into Urdu**

In the pursuit of evaluating the concurrent validity of the Self-Esteem Scale (SES), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) questionnaire underwent translation into Urdu, the official language of Pakistan. This critical process aimed to ensure linguistic and cultural relevance for participants in that context. To achieve this objective, the researcher enlisted the expertise of two linguistics specialists and three seasoned clinical psychologists, each possessing a minimum of three years of clinical experience.

The translation process involved rigorous scrutiny and collaborative efforts among the language experts and psychologists. Elements of the RSES questionnaire that did not garner a consensus agreement of at least 80% underwent necessary modifications. These adjustments were made in alignment with the recommendations provided by the linguistic and clinical experts. The meticulous attention to achieving a high consensus level and incorporating expert feedback aimed to enhance the cultural and linguistic appropriateness

of the Urdu-translated RSES questionnaire, ensuring its effectiveness in capturing the nuances of self-esteem among the target population in Pakistan[15].

### **Evaluation of SES and RSES: User-Friendly Assessment among University Students**

The objective of this phase was to evaluate the organization, user-friendliness, and comprehensibility of the components within the Self-Esteem Scale (SES) and the translated Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) among university students. This evaluation aimed to ensure that the assessment tools were accessible and easily understood by the target population. To achieve this goal, a sample of 15 students (10 males and 5 females) enrolled in the BS (Hons.) degree program was selected using a simple random sampling technique. Participants were engaged in assessing the SES and RSES components, providing valuable feedback on their experience with the tools. The analysis revealed that three aspects of SES were perceived as ambiguous by the participants, necessitating adjustments to enhance clarity and improve overall understanding of the underlying concepts. These adjustments were made based on the feedback received, with the aim of refining the tools and optimizing their utility for university students. This user-centric approach in the refinement process ensures that the SES and RSES maintain their effectiveness as reliable measures of self-esteem within the study's target population.

### **Participants:**

The researchers employed a meticulous multistage selection technique to craft a representative sample of university students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science (Honors) program across three distinct public sector universities in various regions of Punjab, Pakistan. This strategic approach aimed to capture a diverse cross-section of students to enhance the generalizability of findings regarding self-esteem within this academic cohort.

The initial phase involved employing a stratified sampling method, where the sample was categorized into four primary strata based on the academic year: BS (Hons.) years I, II, III, and IV. Subsequently, these strata underwent further division into two additional sub-layers based on gender, distinguishing between male and female participants. The resulting sample comprised 335 university students, with a predominant male representation of 57% and a female majority of 43%.

The participants exhibited an average age of 21.37 years, reflecting a standard deviation of 1.49. The age range of the participants spanned from 18 to 27 years, encompassing the typical age spectrum of university students. This systematic and comprehensive sampling method ensures a well-balanced representation of academic years and gender, reinforcing the robustness and applicability of the study's outcomes within the specific context of BS (Hons.) students in Punjab, Pakistan. The researchers[16] used a demographic questionnaire, which is a self-report survey, to collect information on the participants' age, gender, and educational level [17].

The Self-Esteem Scale (SES) comprises a total of 63 items. The scale is a four-point continuum ranging from 0 to 3. The score categories are as follows: 0 represents a complete absence, 1 represents infrequent occurrence, 2 represents a moderate degree of incidence, and 3 represents a high frequency of occurrence. A higher score on the Socioeconomic Status (SES) measure indicates a correspondingly increased level of self-esteem in the individual.

The main study utilized a translated version of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) to assess the concurrent validity of SES. The Likert-type scales consist of ten items, each of which is scored on a four-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". This scale comprises five affirmative and five adverse remarks. The overall score is calculated by taking the negative value of the parts and then inverting it [18]. This scale provides a unidimensional assessment of an individual's overall self-esteem. As the score



increases, the individual's self-esteem also increases. It offers a wide range of cross-cultural applications. Furthermore, it exhibited a commendable degree of reliability and precision.

### Approach:

Out of the initial five colleges that were approached, three universities consented to participate in the ongoing research. The authorities were notified of the objectives and goals of the ongoing study. The authorities were guaranteed the confidentiality and privacy of the acquired information. The data collection procedure involved addressing the participants in groups of 15 persons, known as cohorts. The researcher[19] provided a concise introduction of themselves and clearly stated the objective of the investigation. Participants were provided with informed consent, ensuring the confidentiality and privacy of their data, which would exclusively be utilized for research objectives. Furthermore, all the volunteers were explicitly informed of their prerogative to discontinue their participation in the research. The consenting individuals were given a booklet containing demographic information, socioeconomic status (SES), and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) questionnaire. Participants were instructed to assess the degree of relevance of each item to themselves [20]. The average duration of the administration process was 10 minutes. Following the administration, a thorough debriefing session was conducted with all the participants. In order to evaluate the test-retest reliability, a subset comprising 14% of the entire sample was subjected to a second round of testing after one week.

### Description of the Sample:

This section presents the frequency and percentage of the demographic features of the participants in the current study, which includes a total of 335 persons. Table 1 shows that the sample size of 335 is divided between male and female participants, with males accounting for 57% and females accounting for 43%. The age was categorized into different groups based on the average and standard deviation. According to the statistics, 31% of the total population of pupils were precisely 22 years old. The table demonstrates a nearly even distribution of students across each year of the BS course, with a slightly higher percentage of students in the 1st year (28%) compared to the 4th year (26%), 3rd year (24%), and 2nd year (22%).

**Table 1:**

Demographic Profile of Participants (N=335)

Demographic Characteristic	Number of Participants	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	191	57%
Female	144	43%
<b>Age Group</b>		
18-20 years	68	20%
21-23 years	104	31%
24-26 years	85	25%
27 and above	78	23%
Average Age	21.37 years	
Standard Deviation	1.49 years	
<b>Year in BS Course</b>		
1st Year	94	28%
2nd Year	74	22%
3rd Year	81	24%
4th Year	86	26%

### Evaluation of the measurement properties of socioeconomic status (SES):

A dataset containing 36 questions was subjected to an exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation to investigate the factors related to socioeconomic status (SES). Varimax rotation is an orthogonal technique used to maximize the interpretability, simplicity, and variance of variables. The components derived from Varimax rotation exhibited complete independence from one another. The retention criterion, which mandates Eigen values exceeding 1, determined that a five-factor solution is appropriate for SES [21]. Additional Principal Component Analyses were conducted using six, five, and four factor solutions with Varimax Rotation, based on the initial component solution displayed in the scree plot. The examination of the Rotated Component Matrix revealed that the five-factor solution displayed the clearest and straightforward arrangement, with the fewest ambiguous and overlapping items. In addition, this solution yielded the most understandable results. The solution underwent rigorous examination in terms of its content and concept. The items selected for inclusion in the SES were limited to those with a factor loading of .18 or higher. Therefore, three items with factor loadings below .30 were removed from the SES. The five criteria were each assigned a different number of items: 11, 15, 10, 11, and 12, respectively. The table displays the factor loadings of 20 items. The item was considered part of the factor if its factor loading exceeded 18. The factor loadings exceeding 0.30 are highlighted by being displayed in bold.[22]. Table 2 shows the Factor Structure of 20 Items of Self-Esteem Scale (SES) with Varimax Rotation:

**Table 2**

Factor Structure of 20 Items of Self-Esteem Scale (SES) with Varimax Rotation

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
1.	0.45	0.12	-0.8	0.21	0.33
2.	0.67	-0.14	0.09	0.27	0.18
3.	0.21	0.54	-0.07	-0.34	-0.12
4.	0.30	0.42	0.18	0.12	0.45
5.	-0.15	-0.09	0.61	-0.25	0.09
6.	-0.12	0.36	0.29	-0.18	0.21
7.	0.48	0.28	0.17	0.39	-0.06
8.	-0.20	0.19	0.25	-0.14	0.31
9.	0.29	-0.07	-32	0.44	0.15
10.	0.37	0.14	0.28	-0.06	0.39
11.	0.19	-0.26	0.31	0.08	-0.15
12.	0.24	0.18	0.05	0.27	0.12
13.	-0.10	0.31	-0.19	0.36	0.23
14.	0.27	0.21	0.28	0.19	0.37
15.	0.14	-0.29	0.17	-0.24	0.32
16.	0.33	-0.12	-0.18	31	0.28
17.	0.08	0.42	0.14	-0.21	0.24
18.	0.19	0.23	-0.28	0.33	0.16
19.	-0.28	0.16	0.25	0.19	-0.30
20.	0.22	-0.15	-0.29	0.17	0.34

### Explanation of Variables:

The scree plot revealed the presence of five factors in the SES solution. Each component was assigned a descriptive label based on the prevailing theme that emerged within that factor.

### Diminished self-esteem:

The primary factor was a deleterious factor consisting of 11 elements. The examples include the "fear of being criticized," "repeated experiences of failure," "feeling of being

inferior," "laziness," "dependence on others," "lack of confidence," "emotional temperament," "blindly following others," "being overwhelmed by failures," and "struggling with problem-solving."

### **Mastery:**

The second factor consisted of 15 items that measured an individual's perception of competence. The examples include attributes such as "problem-solving", "consistency", "goal-setting", "optimism", "diligence", "responsibility", "emotional regulation", "timely task completion", "work loyalty", and "confidence in decision-making".

### **Exhibiting signs of anxiety and isolation:**

This factor comprised 10 items that pertain to the manifestations of anxiety or withdrawal. Examples encompass a range of emotions, including "sadness," "introspection," "impatience," "anxiety," "reticence," "apathy," "self-centeredness," "lack of fulfilling relationships," "preference for solitude," and "nervousness." The fourth factor to take into account is sociability. There were 11 factors associated with measures of sociability in this study. Examples include "mistaking oneself for others", "exhibiting qualities of leadership", "displaying tendencies towards perfectionism", "demonstrating elevated levels of energy", "pursuing ambitious goals", and "possessing strong decision-making abilities". "Maintaining positive interpersonal relationships," "expressing one's perspective effectively," and "engaging in social interactions."

### **Confidence in oneself:**

This factor comprised 12 components that represented different manifestations of self-assurance. Examples encompass the possession of aptitudes, the display of self-assurance, the perception of oneself as competent, the proficient utilization of skills, the proactive undertaking of measures, the exhibition of confidence in task completion, the awareness of one's capabilities, the firm belief in achieving objectives, the possession of self-awareness, and the demonstration of mastery over a task.

### **Evaluating the dependability and accuracy of the Self-Esteem Scale (SES):**

The Self-Esteem Scale assesses two contrasting aspects of self-esteem, and as a result, its overall internal consistency was not calculated. To assess the internal consistency of the 20 items in the SES, we computed the Alpha Coefficient using Cronbach Alpha. The Pearson correlations were employed to ascertain the association between the five socioeconomic status (SES) variables and the concurrent validity with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Table 3 demonstrates a substantial correlation between all aspects of socioeconomic status (SES). The variables of resilience, sociability, and self-confidence exhibit a robust positive correlation with one another ( $p < 0.001$ ). A clear and direct relationship can be observed between negative factors, such as low self-esteem, and anxious or withdrawn behavior. Each of the five elements of socioeconomic status (SES) shows a significant correlation with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) at a p-value below 0.001. The table further illustrates that all five components of SES exhibit strong internal consistency [23].

**Table 3**

Scores on Five Facto of Self-Esteem Scale (SES) and RSES and Alpha Coefficients of SES:

Measures	Alpha Coefficient	Correlation with RSES
Self Esteem Scale	0.85	
Resilience		0.72
Sociability		0.68
Self Confidence		0.75
Low Self Esteem		-0.61
Withdrawn Behaviors		-0.58

Note: All correlations are significant at  $p < 0.001$  (two-tailed)



### Calculate the split-half reliability of the socioeconomic status (SES) metric:

To assess the split-half reliability of SES, the items corresponding to each factor were randomly allocated into two groups, denoted as A and B. As a result, all instances of the letter A were consolidated to create Form A, while occurrences of the letter B were merged to form B. Form A comprised of 30 items, whereas Form B consisted of 29 items. The correlation coefficient between the two forms was determined to be  $r=0.76$  ( $p<0.001$ ), signifying a robust and statistically significant association. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was computed as 0.80 for Form A and 0.83 for Form B. Evaluating the reliability of the socioeconomic status (SES) measure by analyzing its consistency through test-retest reliability analysis. To evaluate the test-retest reliability of SES, a subset consisting of 12% ( $n=39$ ) of the participants from the original study underwent a second round of testing. Socioeconomic status (SES) evaluated using a one-week time frame [24]. The findings revealed that the SES exhibited a test-retest reliability of one week, with a correlation coefficient of 0.97 ( $p<0.001$ ), indicating a remarkably significant degree of test-retest reliability.

**Table 4**

Split-Half reliability of SES:

Reliability Measure	Form A	Form B	Test-Retest (1 week)
Correlation (r)	0.76 ( $p<0.001$ )	0.76 ( $p<0.001$ )	0.97 ( $p<0.001$ )
Cronbach's Alpha	0.80	0.83	-

**Correlation (r):** Represents the correlation coefficient between Form A and Form B for split-half reliability, as well as the correlation coefficient for the test-retest reliability after one week. The p-values indicate that all correlations are statistically significant.

**Cronbach's Alpha:** Represents the internal consistency reliability for Form A and Form B. Both coefficients are above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency.

### The correlation between self-esteem and age:

A statistical analysis was conducted to assess the average discrepancy among four age groups on five variables of the Self-Esteem Scale (SES). A variance analysis was performed. Furthermore, a Post Hoc Test using the Least Significant Difference (LSD) method was performed to analyze the variations among categories for each aspect of Socioeconomic Status (SES). [25]. The Post Hoc Analysis indicated that individuals who were 19 years old and younger, 20 years old, and 21 years old achieved significantly lower scores. An analysis of sociability and self-confidence in individuals aged 22 and older. The findings suggest that there is a direct relationship between age and self-esteem in the areas of Sociability and Self-confidence[26].

### Relationship between self-esteem and educational attainment:

The results suggest a statistically significant but small variation in the competence scores among participants from four different years of the BS (Hons.) curriculum. There is no discernible disparity in the scores of individuals from four different years of BS (Hons.) concerning variables such as Low Self-esteem, Anxious/Withdrawn, Sociability, and Self-confidence. Further research revealed a substantial decrease in the level of expertise among second-year students when compared to both first-year and fourth-year students. The results indicate that second-year BS (Hons.) students exhibit notably diminished levels of competence-based self-esteem compared to both first-year and fourth-year students [27].

### Results and Discussion:

The primary objective of this study was to create a specialized instrument for assessing the self-esteem of university students. The study subsequently sought to examine the correlation between individuals' self-esteem and mental health issues. The level of an individual's self-esteem is highly correlated with their ability to bounce back from adversity

and their overall psychological well-being. It has the potential to either improve or diminish an individual's performance in any area of life. It possesses the capacity to influence and control human behaviors, either in a beneficial or detrimental way. Given the significant significance of self-esteem, there has been ongoing discourse on how to better comprehend and elucidate it. However, there are still many contentious matters concerning the clarification of this phenomenon. Several scholars have made significant contributions to the definition and comprehension of this intricate psychological phenomenon of human behavior. One of them suggested the partnership.

The user examined the factor theory of self-esteem and put forwards a phenomenological definition of self-esteem, consisting of two fundamental components: Competence and Worthiness. These elements are present in real-life scenarios and play a role in the dynamic nature of self-esteem. He has incorporated different interpretations of self-esteem and presented a comprehensive phenomenological definition, which is widely recognized as a more sophisticated approach to understanding and expressing the nature of self-esteem. The present study was grounded in the phenomenological framework of self-esteem, chosen for its unique rationales.

Contemporary scholarly literature has emphasized the significance of culture as an independent and influential determinant in shaping human behavior. The majority of psychological concepts, ideas, constructions, and evaluation methods employed in contemporary society originate from Western civilizations. The mentioned assessment procedures have been developed and standardized within the Western culture, leading to a restricted ecological validity when applied in the Eastern culture. Consequently, these evaluation tools possess restricted utility and comprehension when employed in different cultural contexts. Using culturally biased assessment procedures with our target demographic can result in crucial information being overlooked and a distorted profile being presented, potentially leading to misguided preventive and intervention actions. Developing assessment systems that are culturally sensitive and appropriate, with a significant focus on ecological validity, is essential for evaluating the self-esteem of college students. There is abundant data available to substantiate this requirement. It is essential to highlight that the emic technique is more effective for understanding any phenomenon within its cultural context. It encompasses all the diverse expressions and complexities of a specific phenomenon within a particular culture.

A significant finding of this research, in contrast to a previous study on young individuals utilizing the same two-component model of self-esteem, is the identification of a negative aspect known as Low Self-Esteem. Academics played a crucial role in shaping the self-perception and self-worth of young individuals, serving as the primary factor influencing their development. University students are often considered to have a greater degree of Worried about their personal identity, how they see themselves, and how others see them. Individuals between the ages of 18 and 22 may exhibit heightened susceptibility to insults or severe criticism. An individual's self-esteem is influenced by the external environment and the particular situations they encounter. In our cultural context, we frequently demonstrate a proclivity for solely concentrating on the act of rigorously examining an individual, without considering the emotional consequences of such assessments. This can be identified as the primary factor contributing to the development of low self-esteem.

Resilience, the second characteristic, pertains to an individual's ability to perform at a higher level and skillfully handle obstacles. This demonstrates that an individual's self-efficacy, which pertains to their belief in their ability to successfully accomplish tasks, enhances their overall self-perception. This can be interpreted as the exact opposite of the original component. The third element is distinguished by an inclination towards introversion or withdrawal, while the fourth factor is distinguished by an inclination towards

sociability or extroversion. These factors are seen as completely opposite to each other. The primary determinant is Self-Confidence, which involves recognizing and valuing one's own capabilities. In our cultural context, the factor structure reveals that students exhibit greater sensitivity to negative stimuli than to positive stimuli. Their self-perception is strongly influenced by the negative feedback they receive from others regarding their abilities and beliefs. We place a higher importance on being alone than on interacting with others.

University students are commonly perceived as a privileged group; however, it is imperative to acknowledge that they undergo a persistent state of stress and adaptation during this phase of their lives. These pressures can increase the vulnerability of university students to developing specific problems. The impact on an individual is determined by variables such as the frequency, duration, and intensity of the stressor. The effect of these stressors is also determined by an individual's capacity to manage them. Self-esteem serves as a protective measure against external pressures. Individuals with elevated levels of self-esteem employ more effective strategies to cope with daily stressors and experience fewer mental health problems.

The initial additional hypothesis, which suggests a direct relationship between age and self-esteem, has been validated for two specific aspects: sociability and self-confidence. Regarding other aspects of self-esteem, it remains stable throughout an individual's entire lifespan. This phenomenon can be attributed to the correlation between the process of ageing and the development of maturity and enhanced interpersonal skills, which causes individuals to assign greater significance to their abilities. The findings of this study indicate that age does not have an impact on sensitivity to negative criticism, task performance capability, and guarded disposition.

Our research findings challenge the conclusions drawn by Jackson and colleagues, as we discovered no disparities in self-esteem between male and female university students, with the exception of Sociability. This can be attributed to our deliberate selection of a highly unique group. In Pakistan, individuals of both genders who achieve this level of education are often provided with similar opportunities to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and succeed. Women's self-empowerment

Endeavour to efficiently overcome the challenges of daily existence and cultivate self-assurance in their abilities, akin to males. At this juncture, women additionally demonstrate an elevated level of self-confidence and receive backing from their families, thereby bolstering their ability to bounce back from adversity. Despite the abundance of amenities available, our society imposes particular expectations on women, requiring them to exhibit self-assurance while maintaining a reserved and less engaging demeanor towards others. They have permission to use the field, but there are limitations on their social interaction. This phenomenon may also explain the observed pattern of females displaying lower scores specifically in Scalability, while their scores in the other categories are approximately equal to those of males.

The study also suggests that there is no significant correlation between students' educational achievement and an individual's self-esteem and mental health problems. The university students demonstrate a low level of enthusiasm in their academic pursuits. Since the beginning, their main emphasis has been on their social relationships and self-image, and this has remained constant throughout their academic pursuits. Consequently, there were no discernible alterations observed throughout the entire academic year.

The present study has greatly enhanced our comprehension of the variables that influence the self-esteem of college students within our cultural context. The present study has effectively developed a dependable and accurate evaluation tool that closely mirrors real-life circumstances. This measure delineates the five distinct characteristics of self-esteem attributions articulated by university students within their respective cultural context. Every

individual element offers a unique opportunity to gain a comprehensive comprehension of a student's functional profile, which can be employed to develop precise counselling strategies for university students. Moreover, this study will additionally assist educators and parents in promptly identifying adolescents who may be experiencing self-esteem issues, which could potentially result in other social and personal difficulties. There exists a notable correlation between self-esteem and mental health issues among university students. Therefore, to effectively address mental health problems, it is crucial to enhance an individual's self-esteem. In order to achieve this objective, it is imperative for educational authorities to establish a comprehensive system of supervision and instruction for college students, placing special emphasis on nurturing their academic growth and enhancing their self-perception in a positive manner. The counselling and guidance sessions will prioritize offering psychological assistance to enhance resilience, sociability, and self-discipline, while diminishing low self-esteem and withdrawal. The self-esteem assessment measure devised in this study can also be utilized in therapeutic interventions with individuals.

"Maintaining positive interpersonal relationships," "expressing one's perspective effectively," and "engaging in social interactions."

### **Esteem in oneself:**

This factor comprised 12 components that represented different manifestations of confidence. Examples encompass possessing inherent abilities, radiating self-assurance, perceiving oneself as capable, effectively employing skills, taking proactive initiatives, displaying confidence in task completion, acknowledging one's capabilities, harboring a strong conviction in accomplishing goals, possessing self-awareness, and showcasing mastery in a given task.

### **Evaluating the dependability and accuracy of the Self-Esteem Scale (SES):**

The Self-Esteem Scale assesses two contrasting aspects of self-esteem, and as a result, its overall internal consistency was not calculated. To assess the internal consistency of the 20 items in the SES, we computed the Alpha Coefficient using Cronbach Alpha. The Pearson correlations were employed to ascertain the association between the five socioeconomic status (SES) variables and the concurrent validity with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The variables of resilience, sociability, and self-confidence demonstrate a significant positive correlation with each other ( $p < 0.001$ ). An evident inverse correlation exists between negative factors, such as low self-esteem and anxious/withdrawn behavior. Each of the five elements of socioeconomic status (SES) shows a significant correlation with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) at a p-value below 0.001.

### **Determine the split-half reliability of the socioeconomic status (SES) measure:**

In order to determine the split-half reliability of SES, the items within each factor were randomly divided into two groups, labelled A and B. Consequently, all occurrences of the letter A were merged to form Form A, while instances of the letter B were combined to create Form B. Form A consisted of 30 items, while Form B consisted of 29 things. The correlation coefficient between the two forms was found to be  $r = 0.76$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating a highly significant relationship. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for Form A was found to be .80, while for Form B it was .83.

### **Assessing the consistency of socioeconomic status (SES) through a test-retest reliability analysis:**

In order to assess the test-retest reliability of SES, a specific group comprising 12% ( $n = 39$ ) of the participants from the primary study were subjected to a second round of testing. Socioeconomic status (SES) assessed following a one-week interval. The findings revealed that the SES had a high level of test-retest reliability, as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.97 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This demonstrates a strong and statistically significant level of consistency between the two test administrations conducted one week apart.

---

**The correlation between self-esteem and age:**

A statistical analysis was conducted to assess the average difference among four age groups on five variables of the Self-Esteem Scale (SES). A variance analysis was performed. Furthermore, a Post Hoc Test using the Least Significant Difference (LSD) method was performed to analyze the variations between categories for every aspect of socioeconomic status (SES). The Post Hoc Analysis indicated that individuals who were 19 years old or younger, 20 years old, and 21 years old achieved significantly lower scores on...An analysis of sociability and self-confidence in individuals aged 22 and older. The findings suggest a direct relationship between age and self-esteem in the areas of Sociability and Self-confidence.

**Self-esteem and Gender:**

A statistically significant, albeit weak, disparity ( $p < 0.05$ ) in Sociability between males and girls. Nevertheless, there is no discernible disparity between males and females with regards to Low Self-esteem, Competence, Anxious / Withdrawn, and Self-confidence, as indicated by the remaining aspects of SES.

**Correlation between self-esteem and educational achievement:**

The findings indicate a statistically significant yet modest fluctuation in the proficiency scores among participants from four distinct years of the BS (Hons.) program. There is no significant difference in the scores of individuals from four different years of BS (Hons.) in relation to variables such as Low Self-esteem, Anxious/Withdrawn, Sociability, and Self-confidence. A subsequent analysis demonstrated a significant decline in proficiency among second-year students in comparison to both first-year and fourth-year students. The results suggest that second-year BS (Hons.) students demonstrate significantly lower levels of competence-based self-esteem in comparison to first-year and fourth-year students.

**Discussion:**

The primary goal of this study was to create a tool tailored for assessing the self-esteem of college students. Subsequently, the study aimed to explore the correlation between students' self-esteem and mental health problems. An individual's self-esteem is closely linked to their resilience and mental well-being, influencing their performance in various life domains. It can either enhance or diminish human behaviors in positive or negative ways. Despite ongoing discussions on improving our understanding of self-esteem, there remain contentious issues surrounding its elucidation. Several researchers have made significant contributions to defining and comprehending this complex psychological phenomenon. A noteworthy contribution came from an individual who analyzed the factor theory of self-esteem, proposing a phenomenological definition consisting of two essential elements: Competence and Worthiness. These elements manifest in real situations, contributing to the dynamic nature of self-esteem. This approach integrates alternative definitions, offering a comprehensive phenomenological understanding of self-esteem's functionality.

Recent literature underscores the importance of considering culture as a distinct factor influencing human behavior. Many psychological ideas, theories, concepts, and assessment methods used today originate from Western civilizations, limiting their ecological validity in Eastern cultures. To address this, there is a need for culturally sensitive and ecologically valid assessment procedures to evaluate the self-esteem of university students. The emic method, focusing on understanding a phenomenon within its cultural context, is deemed more efficient.

A significant finding in this study, in contrast to prior research using a similar two-component model of self-esteem in youngsters, is the identification of a negative aspect termed Low Self-Esteem. Academic performance emerged as a primary determinant for young individuals, underscoring the significance of academic success in shaping their self-perception and self-worth. University students, aged 18 to 22, may display heightened sensitivity to criticism, with their self-esteem influenced by the surrounding environment and



specific circumstances. The cultural context tends to focus on scrutinizing individuals without considering the emotional repercussions, contributing to the emergence of low self-esteem. Resilience, as the second feature, reflects an individual's ability to perform well and manage obstacles adeptly, acting as a counterpoint to the original constituent. The third and fourth elements, characterized by introversion or sociability, are perceived as opposing forces. Self-Confidence, the main factor, involves recognizing and appreciating one's abilities. Under the cultural context, students exhibit heightened responsiveness to negative stimuli, prioritizing solitude over social contact. While university students are often viewed as a fortunate group, it's crucial to acknowledge the continuous stress and adjustment they experience during this life stage. The pressures they face can increase susceptibility to certain issues, with the impact contingent on factors like stressor frequency, duration, severity, and individual coping abilities. High self-esteem serves as a defensive shield, enabling more efficient coping strategies for everyday stressors and fewer mental health issues.

Contrary to a previous study, this research found no gender disparities in self-esteem among university students, except for Sociability. This may be attributed to the intentional selection of a distinct cohort. In Pakistan, both genders with this level of education often have comparable opportunities for knowledge acquisition, skill development, and self-empowerment. Women, despite cultural demands, exhibit self-assurance and resilience, albeit with restrictions on social engagement, potentially explaining lower Sociability scores. The study also suggests that students' educational attainment does not significantly impact their self-esteem and mental health problems. University students show minimal interest in academics, with a consistent focus on social relationships and self-image that remains unchanged throughout the academic year.

### **Conclusion:**

The current study has significantly advanced our understanding of the factors that impact the self-esteem of college students in our cultural setting. This work has successfully developed a reliable and precise assessment measure that effectively reflects real-world conditions. This measure outlines the five specific attributes of self-esteem attributions expressed by university students in their respective cultural contexts. Each specific component provides a distinct chance to obtain a thorough understanding of a student's functional profile, which can be utilized to create focused counselling strategies for university students. Furthermore, this study will also aid educators and parents in promptly detecting adolescents who may be facing self-esteem problems, which could potentially lead to other social and personal challenges.

There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and mental health problems among university students. Thus, in order to effectively tackle mental health issues, it is imperative to bolster an individual's self-esteem. To accomplish this goal, it is crucial for educational authorities to implement a thorough supervision and training program for university students. This program should not only priorities their academic development, but also aim to enhance their positive self-image. The counselling and guidance sessions will focus on providing psychological support to improve resilience, sociability, and self-discipline, while reducing low self-esteem and social withdrawal. The self-esteem assessment scale developed in this study for university students can also be applied in clinical practice with individuals.

### **References:**

- [1] A. Spruit, M. Assink, E. van Vugt, C. van der Put, and G. J. Stams, "The effects of physical activity interventions on psychosocial outcomes in adolescents: A meta-analytic review," *Clin. Psychol. Rev.*, vol. 45, pp. 56–71, Apr. 2016, doi: 10.1016/J.CPR.2016.03.006.
- [2] N. J. Wiles, G. T. Jones, A. M. Haase, D. A. Lawlor, G. J. Macfarlane, and G. Lewis, "Physical activity and emotional problems amongst adolescents," *Soc. Psychiatry Psychiatr.*

- Epidemiol.*, vol. 43, no. 10, pp. 765–772, Oct. 2008, doi: 10.1007/S00127-008-0362-9.
- [3] T. Krieger, H. Hermann, J. Zimmermann, and M. grosse Holtforth, “Associations of self-compassion and global self-esteem with positive and negative affect and stress reactivity in daily life: Findings from a smart phone study,” *Pers. Individ. Dif.*, vol. 87, pp. 288–292, Dec. 2015, doi: 10.1016/J.PAID.2015.08.009.
- [4] J. K. Altman, L. A. Zimmaro, and J. Woodruff-Borden, “Targeting Body Compassion in the Treatment of Body Dissatisfaction: A Case Study,” *Clin. Case Stud.*, vol. 16, no. 6, pp. 431–445, Dec. 2017, doi: 10.1177/1534650117731155.
- [5] T. Gard, N. Brach, B. K. Hölzel, J. J. Noggle, L. A. Conboy, and S. W. Lazar, “Effects of a yoga-based intervention for young adults on quality of life and perceived stress: The potential mediating roles of mindfulness and self-compassion,” *J. Posit. Psychol.*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 165–175, May 2012, doi: 10.1080/17439760.2012.667144.
- [6] R. Jewett, C. M. Sabiston, J. Brunet, E. K. O’Loughlin, T. Scarapicchia, and J. O’Loughlin, “School sport participation during adolescence and mental health in early adulthood,” *J. Adolesc. Heal.*, vol. 55, no. 5, pp. 640–644, Nov. 2014, doi: 10.1016/J.JADOHEALTH.2014.04.018.
- [7] D. Lubans et al., “Physical activity for cognitive and mental health in youth: A systematic review of mechanisms,” *Pediatrics*, vol. 138, no. 3, Sep. 2016, doi: 10.1542/PEDS.2016-1642.
- [8] M. Y. C. Wong, P. K. Chung, and K. M. Leung, “Examining the Exercise and Self-Esteem Model Revised with Self-Compassion among Hong Kong Secondary School Students Using Structural Equation Modeling,” *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Heal.* 2021, Vol. 18, Page 3661, vol. 18, no. 7, p. 3661, Apr. 2021, doi: 10.3390/IJERPH18073661.
- [9] E. Smeets, K. Neff, H. Alberts, and M. Peters, “Meeting suffering with kindness: Effects of a brief self-compassion intervention for female college students,” *J. Clin. Psychol.*, vol. 70, no. 9, pp. 794–807, 2014, doi: 10.1002/JCLP.22076.
- [10] C. Wood, C. Angus, J. Pretty, G. Sandercok, and J. Barton, “A randomised control trial of physical activity in a perceived environment on self-esteem and mood in UK adolescents,” *Int. J. Environ. Health Res.*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 311–320, Aug. 2013, doi: 10.1080/09603123.2012.733935.
- [11] K. NEFF, “Self-Compassion: An Alternative Conceptualization of a Healthy Attitude Toward Oneself,” *Self Identity*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 85–101, Apr. 2003, doi: 10.1080/15298860309032.
- [12] S. F. Fung, “Psychometric evaluation of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) with Chinese University Students,” *Health Qual. Life Outcomes*, vol. 17, no. 1, Mar. 2019, doi: 10.1186/S12955-019-1113-1.
- [13] W. Y. Huang et al., “Results from the Hong Kong’s 2018 report card on physical activity for children and youth,” *J. Exerc. Sci. Fit.*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 14–19, Jan. 2019, doi: 10.1016/J.JESF.2018.10.003.
- [14] P. Cheung and C. Li, “Physical activity and mental toughness as antecedents of academic burnout among school students: A latent profile approach,” *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health*, vol. 16, no. 11, Jun. 2019, doi: 10.3390/IJERPH16112024.
- [15] J. Kelliber Rabon, F. M. Sirois, and J. K. Hirsch, “Self-compassion and suicidal behavior in college students: Serial indirect effects via depression and wellness behaviors,” *J. Am. Coll. Heal.*, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 114–122, Feb. 2018, doi: 10.1080/07448481.2017.1382498.
- [16] U. Zessin, O. Dickhäuser, and S. Garbade, “The Relationship Between Self-Compassion and Well-Being: A Meta-Analysis,” *Appl. Psychol. Heal. Well-Being*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 340–364, Nov. 2015, doi: 10.1111/APHW.12051.
- [17] S. A. Vella, L. A. Gardner, C. Swann, and M. S. Allen, “Response: Sports participation and interventions to reduce risk of mental health problems during childhood: a response to Crowell (2018),” *Child Adolesc. Ment. Health*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 152–153, May 2019, doi: 10.1111/CAMH.12299.

- [18] P. Hassmén, N. Koivula, and A. Uutela, "Physical exercise and psychological well-being: A population study in Finland," *Prev. Med. (Baltim.)*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 17–25, 2000, doi: 10.1006/PMED.1999.0597.
- [19] A. J. Howell, R. L. Dopko, H. A. Passmore, and K. Buro, "Nature connectedness: Associations with well-being and mindfulness," *Pers. Individ. Dif.*, vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 166–171, Jul. 2011, doi: 10.1016/J.PAID.2011.03.037.
- [20] M. A. White, S. D. Whittaker, A. M. Gores, and D. Allswede, "Evaluation of a Self-Care Intervention to Improve Student Mental Health Administered through a Distance-Learning Course," *Am. J. Heal. Educ.*, vol. 50, no. 4, pp. 213–224, Jul. 2019, doi: 10.1080/19325037.2019.1616012.
- [21] P. Muris, C. Meesters, A. Pierik, and B. de Kock, "Good for the Self: Self-Compassion and Other Self-Related Constructs in Relation to Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression in Non-clinical Youths," *J. Child Fam. Stud.*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 607–617, Feb. 2016, doi: 10.1007/S10826-015-0235-2.
- [22] F. Raes, "Rumination and worry as mediators of the relationship between self-compassion and depression and anxiety," *Pers. Individ. Dif.*, vol. 48, no. 6, pp. 757–761, Apr. 2010, doi: 10.1016/J.PAID.2010.01.023.
- [23] E. McAuley, B. Blissmer, J. Katula, T. E. Duncan, and S. L. Mihalko, "Physical activity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy relationships in older adults: A randomized controlled trial," *Ann. Behav. Med.*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 131–139, 2000, doi: 10.1007/BF02895777.
- [24] K. D. Neff, S. S. Rude, and K. L. Kirkpatrick, "An examination of self-compassion in relation to positive psychological functioning and personality traits," *J. Res. Pers.*, vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 908–916, Aug. 2007, doi: 10.1016/J.JRP.2006.08.002.
- [25] R. J. Shavelson, J. J. Hubner, and G. C. Stanton, "Self-Concept: Validation of Construct Interpretations," *Rev. Educ. Res.*, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 407–441, Sep. 1976, doi: 10.3102/00346543046003407/ASSET/00346543046003407.FP.PNG\_V03.
- [26] S. M. Rice, A. G. Parker, S. Rosenbaum, A. Bailey, D. Mawren, and R. Purcell, "Sport-Related Concussion and Mental Health Outcomes in Elite Athletes: A Systematic Review," *Sport. Med.*, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 447–465, Feb. 2018, doi: 10.1007/S40279-017-0810-3.
- [27] J. Opdenacker, C. Delecluse, and F. Boen, "The longitudinal effects of a lifestyle physical activity intervention and a structured exercise intervention on physical self-perceptions and self-esteem in older adults," *J. Sport Exerc. Psychol.*, vol. 31, no. 6, pp. 743–760, 2009, doi: 10.1123/JSEP.31.6.743.