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A Comparative Study of the Public and Private Sector Universities Students' Self Esteem

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Abstract

Present research was designed to measure the differences between self-esteem of master level students of private and public sector universities. In this study, Factor Loadings Self Esteem Scale developed by Rifai (1999) was used for the measurement of self-esteem. A sample of 100 university students was collected through stratified random sampling; among them 56 were male and 44 female students. Students' age ranged from 20-30 years and their income level ranged from 40,000 to 80,000 per month.

The psychometric properties of the scale showed that it was a reliable and valid tool for the measurement of the self-esteem of university students. Statistical tests including mean, SD, correlation, and ANOVA were used to test the research hypotheses.

Results revealed that there is a significant difference between levels of self-esteem of the students of private and public sector universities (private mean= 85.5, public mean=72.). It also indicated that demographic variables, of gender, semesters, discipline, and family income affect in determining the level of self-esteem among the university students.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Self-Acceptance, Academic Competence, Physical & Social Acceptance, and Self-competence, Private and Public Sector.

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Human beings have the capability of being conscious of their unique existence (self), the degree of liking or disliking themselves is known as self-esteem. Rogers (as cited in Rathus, 2001) defined self as a center of experiences; he believes that people have a positive feelings about themselves, as they become aware of themselves, they develop a need of esteem for the self and use different set of dimensions in defining and judging themselves according to the sets of values.

Maslow considered self-esteem as the basic need for human beings which include internal and external esteem factors such as self-respects, autonomy, achievement, (internal) status, recognition and attention (external) (as cited in, Robbins 2002). Coppersmith (1967) focused on the enhancement of self-esteem; he analyzed four basis of self-esteem that is competence, significance, virtue, and power. Brandon defined self-esteem as competence and worthiness (as cited in Mruk, 2006). Psychologists defined self-esteem in both terms i.e. “competence” and “worth.” Kreitner & Kinicki (2003) defined self-esteem as a belief about one’s own self-worth based on an overall self-evaluation.”Competence and worthiness are considered as two dimensions of self-esteem. White found that one dimension of self-esteem is a sense of competence which enhances another separated dimension of self-esteem that is self-worth and based on social value.

Tafarodi and Swann (1998) categorized two interdependent but distinguish dimensions such as, self-competence and self-liking. They defined self-competence as the sense of one’s own proficiency and self-liking refers to the sense of one’s own worth as a social being. Self-competence is the positive awareness of one’s self as productive and successful experiences to achieve a target. Self-liking is evaluation of one’s own worth as a social being and internalization of standards of good and bad. Self-competence can be determined by the correlating the targets or intensions with the result of actions to achieve those goals. Self-liking, in contrast, is determined by transmission of values at social level. Self-competence and self-liking are correlated to each other. When one act more competently, more approval he or she gets from others. Humans live in a community. We have common needs, standards and goals. When we successfully achieve these goals, we get more social approval from group members. Individual’s perception of competence is based on the group members’ judgment of individual’s competence. People who are competent, they are more sensitive about their acceptance from others because individual’s approval by others creates a sense of self liking. It increases individual’s self-esteem. So, those who are more competent tend to be high in self-liking.

In most of the researches two levels of self-esteem are measured by psychologists that are low level of self-esteem and high level of self-esteem. Mruk (2006) stated that low self-esteem becomes the cause of many mental disorders. Rosenberg and Owens (as cited in Mruk, 2006) identified the chief characteristics of low self-esteem. People with low self-esteem have feeling such as hyper sensitivity, lack of self-confidence, being more concerned with protecting against a threat than actualizing possibilities and enjoying life, lack of risk taking, depression, loneliness and so forth. Strict and harsh behavior of parents can cause low self-esteem.

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High self-esteem is mostly associated with positive abilities and characteristics. These positive aspects have played major role in making the self-esteem as an important psychological concept. Contemporary research on high self-esteem suggests that all forms of high self-esteem are not positive. Most of the positive characteristics are still associated with high self-esteem. These characteristics can be separated into two general types; those that help to maintain the self and those that allow the self to actualize. These two positive functions of self-esteem are known as self-maintenance and self-growth or enhancement. The maintenance function of self-esteem has capacity to act as a device for reducing the effect of anxiety or stress. High self-esteem is helpful in dealing with stress and avoiding anxiety that allows a person to continue functioning in the face of stress.

Academic competence as multidimensional construct composed of the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of a learner that contribute to academic success. James (as cited in Mruk, 2006) suggested that self-esteem is determined by how successful we are in achieving our goals. In this context teachers also play important role in developing positive sense of academic competence. When teachers are helpful and caring and emphasize on learning and getting good semesters, they tend to have mastery oriented students. Teachers can enhance students' academic competence by providing constructive feedback and encouragement. It is important for teachers to use motivational strategies and evaluate students' performance.

Academic achievements have an effect on student's self-esteem, better academic performance and positive feedback increase academic competence. Moreover there is a relationship between students' achievement and self-esteem, and that enhancement in self-esteem leads to progress in students' achievements. The parental and teacher roles in students' achievement are more important. Those students who judge themselves as valuable, competent and effective to face problematic situation and complete their tasks successfully, their self-esteem is high. Students with high self-esteem are more confident about doing anything what they want to do. They perform well in their academic activities and do not disappoint when they fail in achieving their goals. On the contrary, students with low self-esteem are less confident, disappointed, frustrated in difficult situation and do not perform well in their academic activities. So it can say that students' self-esteem is combined with personal goal setting and has impact on students 'academic achievement.

Pakistan has two sectors of education, private sector and public sector. In each sector many students are enrolled. These students get admission in different subject areas according to their different backgrounds and abilities to learn selected subjects. Students with high self-esteem are more confident but the students with low self-esteem are less confident. Socio economic status also has its effects on levels of self-esteem. Students who belong to high social economic status have higher self-esteem. In an educational context, there is a relationship between students' achievement and self-esteem, enhancement in self-esteem leads to progress in students' achievements. It is also the basic root for further education and is beneficial for further career. In this context, parents, teachers and peer group's roles are vital in developing positive self-esteem.

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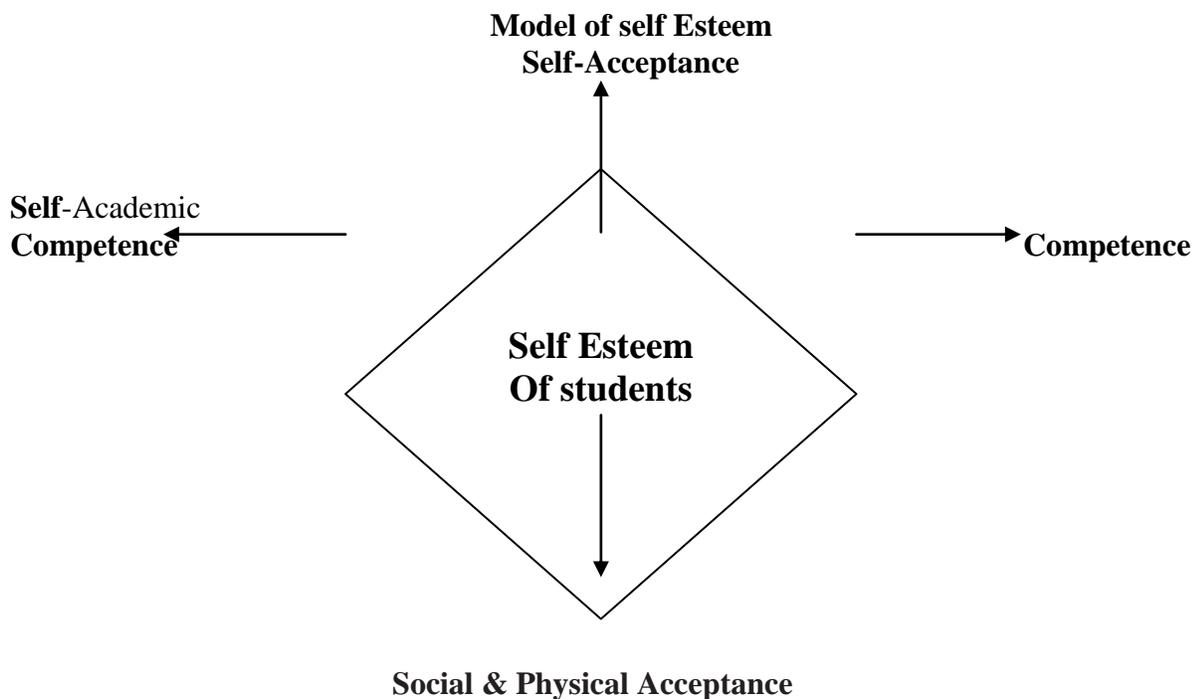
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In Pakistani contexts, only a few researches are available which measured the self-esteem of students at secondary school level and graduate level but no research is available in which the self-esteem of university students was measured. Therefore, the intention of present research is to measure the self-esteem of students in relation to different demographical variables at the university level.

Theoretical Framework of Study

The main objective of this study was to compare the self-esteem of private and public sector university students. For this, demographic variables such as gender, semesters, discipline, and family income are seen to be more important for the purpose of our research because these variables have great impact on the development of self-esteem. In the present study effects of these independent variables had been explored on the self-esteem of university students.



Four dimensions of self-esteem include self-acceptance, academic competence, physical & social acceptance, and self-competence (Rifai, 1999). Self-acceptance refers to feelings of liking about our self. Self-competence is defined as the sense of one’s own efficacy derived from multiple experiences of successful achievement of goals. Physical & social acceptance is defined as individual’s acceptance of physical appearance and his acceptance by others. Academic competence reflects students’ feelings of adequacy to complete their academic tasks successfully.

Problem Statement

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The problem under investigation is to weigh the self-esteem of students studying at Master level in the public and private sector universities; it further aims to measure the differences in the students' self-esteem due to demographic variations such as gender, discipline, and family income and semesters.

Objectives

1. To measure the differences between self-esteem of Master level students of the private and the public universities.
2. To investigate the role of certain demographic variables such as gender, family income level discipline and semester in determining the self-esteem of master level students of private and public sector universities.

Hypotheses

On the basis of objectives of the study, following hypotheses were formulated.

1. Private sector universities' students have higher self-esteem than public sector University students.
2. Male university students have higher self-esteem than female university students.
3. Students with higher socio economic status have higher self-esteem than the students who belong to lower socio-economic status.
4. Students of management sciences have higher self-esteem than students of social sciences & humanities.
5. Students of 3rd and 4th semesters have higher self-esteem than students of 1st, and 2nd semesters.

Method

Sample

A stratified random sample of 100 university students was collected from National University of Modern Languages; Islamabad, International Islamic University, Foundation University and Preston University. Among them 56 were male and 44 female students, their ages ranged from 20 to 30 years. All students were studying at the Master level in the departments of social sciences, management sciences, and humanities. Their family income ranged from 40,000 to 80,000 rupees per month.

Research Instrument

In present research for the measurement of self-esteem "Factor Loadings Self Esteem Scale" developed by Farida Rifai in 1999 was used. It was consisted of 29 items and based on four factors, i.e., self-acceptance, academic competence, physical & social acceptance, and self-competence. The reliability and validity of the scale was determined in pilot testing on a sample

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of 50 university students. The alpha reliability of the scale was .82 and split half reliability was .80. Results indicated that item no. 2, 3, and 13 were not significantly correlated with total scale. Therefore these items were excluded from the scale and rest of 26 was retained in scale for the measurement of the self-esteem of the university students.

Procedure

The respondents contacted at their university and information about purpose of study was provided, after their approval they were handed over the Factor Loading Self-esteem scale and requested to fill it in one setting. The assurance of confidentiality and anonymity was provided to them that information collected by them would be kept off the record and only be used for research purposes.

Results

The data was analyzed with the help of statistical techniques to arrive at the conclusion such as the coefficient of correlation mean, SD, alpha reliability, and analysis of variance with the help of SPSS .16. The psychometric properties of questionnaire were determined and items total correlations were computed in order to determine the construct validity of research questionnaire. All 26 items had significant correlation with the total score. The correlation coefficient ranges from .67 to .90.

Table 1

Inter-Scales Correlations of Respondents Scores on Factor Loading Self Esteem Scale
(*N* = 100)

Subscales	1	2	3	4
Self-Acceptance				
Academic Competence	.73*			
Physical & Social-Acceptance	.67*	.73**		
Self-Competence	.89**	.61**	.84**	
Total	.76**	.79**	.66**	.86**

p* < .05. *p* < .01

Table 1 describes the inter-scale correlations of self-esteem scale. The scores ranged from .61** to .89**. The result indicates that all subscales of factor loading self-esteem scale have significant correlation with each other and with the total scale.

Table 2

University-wise Comparison on Factor Loading Self Esteem Scale (N= 100)

Sub scales	Private University (n=50)		Public University (n=50)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Acceptance	30.7	3.3	26.3	4.3
Academic Competence	20.4	2.1	15.3	2.2
Physical & Social Acceptance	17.1	4.0	16.0	2.3
Self-Competence	17.3	2.3	15.4	3.1
Total	85.5	11.7	72.0	11.9

Table 2 show the students' mean scores on factor loading self-esteem scale. The result indicates students of private sectors universities scored higher on the all factors of self-esteem as well as on the total scale of as compared with the students of public sector universities.

Table3

One way Analysis of Variance of Students Scores on Factor Loading Self Esteem Scale for the variable of type of university (N= 100)

	df	F	Sig
Self-Acceptance	98	8.537	.004
Academic Competence	99	6.760	.011
Physical & Social Acceptance	98	5.666	.019
Self-Competence	98	5.617	.020

*p < .05

Table 3 presents the difference between students' scores for variable of type of university. Results indicate that there are significant differences between students' scores on the variable of type of university.

Table 4**Gender –Wise Comparison of Respondents Scores on Factors Loading Self Esteem Scale
(N=100)**

Subscales	Private Sector (n= 50)		Public Sector (n= 50)					
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Acceptance	29.1	4.2	24.6	4.1	27.4	3.3	20.6	3.2
Academic Competence	19.3	1.3	17.4	2.5	17.1	2.2	15.1	1.3
Physical &Social Acceptance	17.5	3.1	18.6	5.1	16.3	2.1	17.3	1.1
Self-competence	20.3	1.1	16.2	2.2	19.0	2.2	18.1	3.3
Total	86.2	9.7	75.8	13.9	79.8	9.8	71.1	8.9

Table 4 represents the gender wise differences of public and private university students. The result shows that male students of private sector have higher mean scores on all subscales of self-esteem. Female students of private university have higher mean scores on self-acceptance, academic competence and physical & social acceptance. Overall female students of public sector universities have lower self-esteem.

Table 5

Discipline-wise Comparison of Students Scores on Factor Loading Self -Esteem Scale
(*N= 100*)

Subscales	Private Sector (n= 50)		Public Sector (n=50)	
Humanities				
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Acceptance	22.1	2.5	18.4	3.3
Academic Competence	16.0	1.2	15.1	2.2
Physical & Social Acceptance	17.3	6.1	15.3	1.1
Self-Competence	18.1	2.1	16.4	2.1
Total	73.5	11.9	64.2	8.7
Management Sciences				
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Acceptance	28.1	3.2	26.1	4.2
Academic Competence	17.2	2.2	15.4	1.3
Physical & Social Acceptance	19.2	3.3	16.3	1.2
Self-Competence	20.4	2.1	18.1	3.5
Total	84.9	8.00	75.9	10.1
Social Sciences				
	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Acceptance	22.2	4.2	16.4	3.2
Academic Competence	17.1	1.3	15.3	2.1
Physical& Social Acceptance	15.6	2.2	18.0	3.4
Self-Competence	16.5	3.1	14.2	2.1
Total	71.4	10.8	63.9	10.8

Table 5 represents that public and private universities students of management sciences have higher self esteem as compared to students of humanities and social sciences.

Table 6
Family Income- Wise Comparison of Respondents Scores on Factor Loading Self Esteem Scale

Scale (N= 100)

Subscales	Private Sector (n= 50)		Public Sector (n= 50)		Private Sector (n= 50)		Public Sector (n= 50)	
	Rs.40000-50000				Rs.50000-60000			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Acceptance	26.2	2.2	28.2	4.3	28.0	4.4	30.2	4.2
Academic Competence	17.3	2.5	15.3	2.0	14.3	1.0	16.1	3.1
Physical & Social Acceptance	17.2	3.5	15.3	1.3	18.1	2.3	15.1	2.3
Self-Competence	18.1	2.3	16.2	3.3	17.2	1.0	12.4	1.4
Total	78.8	10.5	75.0	10.9	77.6	8.7	73.8	10.9
	Rs. 60000-70000				Rs. 70000-80000			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Acceptance	31.2	3.6	23.5	1.3	30.5	4.3	27.2	3.6
Academic Competence	17.3	1.1	13.0	2.2	18.5	1.1	15.4	2.4
Physical & Social Acceptance	17.1	1.1	15.1	1.2	22.1	7.2	12.3	1.1
Self-Competence	17.4	2.2	12.1	1.1	17.2	3.1	15.1	3.4
Total	82.9	8.0	63.7	5.8	88.3	15.7	69.	10.5

Table 6 shows the family income wise differences in the students' scores on factor loading self-esteem scale. The result indicates that students with higher income families have higher self esteem as compared with students with low income families.

Table 7

**Semester-wise Comparison of Students Scores on Factor Loading Self-Esteem Scale
(N= 100)**

Subscales	Semesters							
	1		2		3		4	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Self-Acceptance	26.2	4.1	28.1	4.4	29.1	4.2	27.3	3.3
Academic Competence	15.3	2.2	16.6	2.1	16.2	2.8	22.3	2.3
Physical & Social Acceptance	16.6	4.3	17.5	3.5	20.1	4.1	18.6	3.5
Self-competence	15.2	3.1	16.2	2.4	16.3	2.6	20.2	2.1
Total	70.3	13.7	77.4	12.4	81.4	13.7	88.4	11.2

Table 7 represents the semester wise comparison between students' scores on Factor Loading Self Esteem scale. Results show that students of 3rd semester have higher mean scores on self-acceptance and physical & social acceptance, while students of 4th semester have higher mean scores on academic competence and self-competence. Overall students of final semester have higher self esteem as compared with students of other semesters.

Discussion

In this research the main objective was to measure the differences between self-esteem of Master level students of public and private universities. Second objective was to investigate the role of certain demographic variables such as gender, socio-economic status discipline, and semester, in determining the self-esteem of master level private of public universities students.

In this study various hypotheses were formulated to test the research objectives. The first hypothesis of the present study was that private sector universities' students have higher self-esteem than public sector universities' students. The result revealed that private university students have higher self-esteem than public university students. The reason may be that students of private university have high family income than students of public university. So, high socio economic status provides them more confidence. Another fact is that students of private university get better educational facilities, more chances of their vocational and professional growth than students of public university.

The second hypothesis of the study was that male students have higher self-esteem than female students. Results of the present study confirmed this hypothesis. Results of present study also revealed that male students have higher scores on self-acceptance, academic competence and self-competence. But female students have higher scores on physical & social acceptance.

The third hypothesis was that students with higher socio economic status have higher

self-esteem than students belong to lower socio economic status. Results indicated that students having higher family income have higher scores on Factor Loading Self Esteem scale. One of the reasons is may be that in this materialistic world, high socio economic status, money and the financial stability boost more confidence in oneself.

The fourth hypothesis was that students of management sciences have higher self-esteem than students of social sciences and humanities. Results accepted this hypothesis. The reason may be that students of management sciences have more concerned with marketing and for this purpose they have more planning and communicating skills. They have more task oriented activities.

The fifth hypothesis as that student of 3rd and 4th semesters has higher self-esteem than students of 1st, 2nd semesters. Results of the study also indicated that students of 7th and 8th semesters have higher self-esteem as compared to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th semesters. The reason may be that students who are at the final semesters of their education, more focus on their future. They want to be more successful in their professional life.

Conclusions

On the basis of the results, following conclusions were drawn.

1. Students of private sector universities have higher self-esteem than students of public sector universities.
2. Overall male students have higher self-esteem than females but female students have higher scores on physical & social acceptance scale whereas, male students have higher score on self-acceptance, self-competence and academic competence.
3. Students from higher income families possess higher self-concept as compared with students with less income families.
4. Students of management sciences have higher self-esteem than students of social sciences and humanities.
5. Students of 3rd^h and 4th semesters have higher self-esteem than the students of 1st and 2nd semesters.

Recommendations

Present study explored various facts regarding the self-esteem of the university students. Findings of the study can help educational psychologists, planners, parents and administrators to introduce effective teaching strategies to enhance self-esteem of university students. Results indicated that students of public university have lower scores on self-esteem scale. So it is recommended that public universities may provide better educational facilities and more Opportunities for vocational and professional development of students. Government sector universities can introduce counseling and guidance services to their students so they may be able to boost their self-esteem.

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Result of present study showed that gender affects the self-esteem of students. So it is recommended that educational institutions may provide equal opportunities for male and female students. It is also recommended that educational institutions may provide moral education and different educational activities for both male and female students to eliminate the sense of deprivation.

Results indicated that students of social sciences and humanities have lower self-esteem than students of management sciences. So it is recommended that educational institutions may provide more task oriented activities to students of social sciences and humanities. Institutions may be developed professional skills related to their fields.

Present study showed that the level of family income also affects the self-esteem of university students. So, it is recommended that educational institutions may reduce the class difference among students by providing equal educational activities.

Results revealed that students of 3rd and 4th semesters have higher self-esteem than students of 1st and 2nd semesters. So, it is recommended that teachers may use motivational strategies at the beginning of the Master program to encourage the students to get involved in their studies. This will also help to heighten their self-esteem. It is recommended that students counseling & guidance services may be provided in all private sector educational institutions as well as in the government sector universities. It is recommended that university management may provide training to the teachers on how they can enhance the self-esteem level of their students.

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