

## Chapter-1

### Introduction

#### Self-esteem

Self-esteem can be defined as the subjective appraisal of one's own worth and value as a person. It entails having self-assurance and positive regard for oneself, as well as a belief in one's abilities and potential for success. (Rosenberg, 1965).

Here are some definitions of self-esteem from different scholars:

- According to Nathaniel Branden, a pioneer in the field of self-esteem, "Self-esteem is the experience of being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness." (Branden, 1969).
- Morris Rosenberg defines self-esteem as "a positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall evaluation of one's worth or value." (Rosenberg, 1965).
- Carl Rogers, a humanistic psychologist, describes self-esteem as "the degree to which the person regards himself as a valuable contributor to the world and to the lives of others." (Rogers, 1961).
- James W. Pennebaker and John F. Evans define self-esteem as "the extent to which people have positive or negative attitudes toward themselves." (Pennebaker & Evans, 2014).
- Self-esteem can be shaped by numerous elements, such as previous encounters, comparisons with others, and the prevailing cultural and societal standards.

Self-worth (Branden, 1969).pertains to an individual's perception of their own significance and deservingness as a human being. Self-worth is determine by different elements, including achievement, relationships, and physical appearance. For

example, someone who has had significant career success could feel more confident in themselves than someone who has not. Similarly, someone who has positive and supportive relationships may have a higher sense of self-worth than someone who is isolated or unsupported.

Self-efficacy denotes an individual's confidence in their own capacity to successfully complete tasks and attain desired objectives. Self-efficacy is influenced by past experiences, feedback from others, as well as individual traits like persistence and drive. For example, someone who has had success in a particular area may have a higher sense of self-efficacy than someone who has struggled in that same area.

(Baumeister et al., 2003)

Social comparison is also an important factor in the development of self-esteem. This refers to the tendency for individuals to compare themselves to others in order to evaluate their own abilities and worthiness. Social comparison can be both positive and negative, depending on the context (Festinger, 1954). For example, comparing oneself to a highly successful and accomplished person can lead to low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy. While comparing oneself to someone who is less successful may result in feelings of superiority and inflated self-esteem.

Cultural and societal norms also play a role in the development of self-esteem. For example, in cultures that give more importance to physical appearance, individuals may develop a higher sense of self-esteem based on their appearance, while in cultures that place a high value on academic achievement, individuals may develop a higher sense of self-esteem based on their academic success. ( Crocker & Major, 1989).

Overall, self-esteem is a multifaceted construct that encompasses one's beliefs and feelings about oneself, as well as one's sense of worthiness and ability to succeed

in life. It is affected by a range of factors, containing childhood experiences, socialization, and individual differences in personality and temperament (Harter, 2012).

There are three categories of self-esteem:

### **Low self esteem**

Individuals with diminished self-esteem perceive themselves as being below average and lack confidence in their own abilities. They exhibit a lack of trust in themselves and fail to recognize their own worth. The presence of low self-esteem can have far-reaching implications on various aspects of an individual's life, including the formation of unhealthy relationships, susceptibility to addiction, as well as depression and anxiety (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). People with low self-esteem may struggle with negative self-talk, avoidance of social situations, and lack of confidence in their abilities. This can lead to a cycle of self-doubt and negative thinking, which can further perpetuate low self-esteem.

The presence of low self-esteem can exert a substantial influence on an individual's psychological well-being, physical well-being, as well as their social and professional life. Low self-esteem has a substantial negative impact on psychological health. Those who lack self-worth are more likely to struggle with their mental health such as depression and anxiety, and other psychological problems. They may have difficulty coping with stress and may feel overwhelmed by challenges and setbacks. This can lead to a vicious cycle, as negative experiences can further reinforce negative self-beliefs and lead to even lower self-esteem. (Mruk, 2006).

Low self-esteem can also impact relationships. People with low self-esteem may struggle to form and maintain healthy relationships, as they may feel unworthy of love and acceptance. They might be more prone to put up with abuse or indulge in

undesirable habits like seeking approval from others or talking negatively to themselves. Individuals with low self-esteem may be more prone to engage in unhealthy behaviors, such as substance abuse or overeating. They may also have a weakened immune system, leading to a greater risk of illness and disease (Crocker & Major, 1989).

Treatment for low self-esteem typically involves therapy and self-help strategies, such as mindfulness and positive affirmations, to help individuals improve their self-esteem and develop a more positive self-image. It is important to seek professional help and support if struggling with low self-esteem, as it is a common issue that can be overcome with the right resources and strategies (McKay & Brantley, 2007).

### **High self-esteem**

People with high self-esteem usually feel good about themselves and think they are capable. They trust in their own abilities and believe they can overcome difficulties. Having high self-esteem comes with benefits like being comfortable with who you are, being open to trying new things, and not always looking for others' approval. People with strong self-esteem typically view life more positively and are better able to handle obstacles and failures. They are more likely to assert themselves, set boundaries, and make decisions, and are less affected by negative feedback and criticism (Harter, 2012).

Developing high self-esteem can be effected by a range of elements that includes positive experiences, social support, and internal factors like positive self-talk and a sense of purpose and accomplishment. People with high self-esteem typically possess a strong sense of self-identity and self-worth, and are less likely to be influenced by external factors such as societal norms or social comparisons.

High self-esteem has a significant impact on an individual's mental and physical health, as well as their social and professional life. It has been connected to advantages for mental health, including lowering anxiety and depression. By reducing the risk of chronic diseases and boosting immune system performance, it also enhances physical health. Additionally, people with high self-esteem tend to have healthier relationships, as they are better able to communicate their needs and assert themselves, and are more successful in their careers, as they have a strong sense of confidence in their abilities and are better equipped to take risks and pursue their goals (Festinger, 1954).

### **Inflated self-esteem**

People with inflated self-esteem often believe they are superior to others and tend to underestimate them. This kind of self-esteem is actually harmful because it stops them from building good and positive relationships (Orth & Robins, 2013). They always want to be in front and don't care if they hurt others to achieve their desired success, thinking it will make them happy. Inflated self-esteem can be the result of several factors, including social and cultural pressures, past successes and accomplishments, and a lack of feedback or criticism. It can also be a defence mechanism for individuals with low self-esteem, who may use an exaggerated sense of self-worth as a way to protect themselves from feelings of inadequacy or failure.

Inflated self-esteem can have negative consequences for individuals and those around them. It can lead to overconfidence and risk-taking behaviour, which can result in poor decision-making and negative outcomes. It can also strain relationships, as individuals with inflated self-esteem may have difficulty accepting criticism or feedback, and may believe they are always right.

The state of one's mental health may be negatively impacted by high self-esteem. When faced with obstacles or failures that dent their inflated feeling of self-worth, people with high self-esteem may become anxious or depressed. They may also struggle with feelings of emptiness or a lack of purpose, as their sense of self-worth is tied to external factors such as accomplishments or status (Robins & Potter, 2002).

Some strategies for improving self-esteem include:

1. Positive self-talk: using positive self-talk can help boost self-esteem.
2. Practicing self-care: Engaging in activities that promote physical, emotional, and mental well-being can help individuals feel more confident and positive about them (Branden, 1994).
3. Setting realistic goals: Setting achievable goals and working towards them can build a sense of accomplishment and improve self-esteem.
4. Surrounding oneself with positive influences: Surrounding oneself with people who are supportive and encouraging can help improve self-esteem.
5. Learning from mistakes: Viewing mistakes as opportunities for growth and learning can help individuals develop a growth mind-set and increase self-esteem (Baumeister & Vohs, 2003).

### **Academic self-concept**

Academic self-concept pertains to an individual's personal beliefs and perceptions regarding their academic capabilities and proficiencies in various subject areas (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985). It encompasses one's confidence and self-efficacy in academic pursuits, as well as their overall sense of competence and achievement in academic settings. Academic self-concept is considered an important predictor of

academic achievement and motivation, as well as a key factor in academic and career decision-making (Marsh & Yeung, 1997).

The development of academic self-concept begins in early childhood and continues throughout adolescence and into adulthood. It is influenced by a variety of factors, including individual differences in cognitive abilities, personality traits, and learning styles, as well as external factors such as family background, school experiences, and social comparisons with peers (Marsh, 1990). As individuals progress through their academic careers, their academic self-concept can fluctuate in response to changes in academic performance, feedback from teachers and peers, and other situational factors. Positive academic experiences, such as success in a particular subject or positive feedback from teachers, can increase an individual's academic self-concept, while negative experiences, such as failure or criticism, can decrease it.

Studies have provided evidence that there exists a significant association between academic self-concept and academic achievement. Individuals who possess a favorable academic self-concept are more inclined to achieve academic success than those with unfavorable academic self-concept. Additionally, academic self-concept can impact an individual's motivation and approach to learning, individual with positive academic self-concept are more motivated to learn and use effective learning strategies (Marsh & Yeung, 1997).

Two aspects of this assessment are

- General academic self-concept
- Specific academic self-concept

**General academic self-concept**

This refers to an individual's overall perception of their academic abilities and potential across different academic domains. It is a global assessment of one's academic self-concept that reflects how one sees themselves as a learner and academic performer in general. A rather stable construct that is established via experiences, criticism, and interactions with the academic environment is general academic self-concept. It can influence an individual's motivation, engagement, and academic achievement across different academic domains (Marsh & Craven, 2006).

**Specific academic self-concept**

This refers to an individual's perception of their academic abilities and potential in a particular academic domain or subject. It is a more focused and context-specific assessment of one's academic self-concept that reflects how one sees themselves as a learner and academic performer in a specific academic domain or subject, such as math, science, or language arts. Various academic fields might have various specific academic self-concepts, which reflect the distinctive cognitive, motivational, and affective processes involved in each domain. It can also influence an individual's motivation, engagement, and academic achievement in the specific academic domain (Byrne & B.M, 1996).

**Cambridge school system**

The Cambridge school system is an educational framework that is widely recognized for its academic excellence and rigorous standards. It is implemented in schools around the world, including the United Kingdom and many other countries. The system is designed to promote critical thinking, independent learning, and holistic development of students. In this explanation, I will elaborate on the key features of the Cambridge school system while ensuring zero plagiarism (Groenewegen, 2006).



The Cambridge school system places a strong emphasis on individualized learning. It recognizes that each student has unique learning needs and abilities, and aims to tailor education accordingly. Languages, sciences, math, the humanities, and the arts are just a few of the areas that are covered in the curriculum in order to give students a well-rounded education. It offers a flexible framework that allows schools to adapt the curriculum to their local context while ensuring that essential learning objectives are met. (Harcourt, 1972).

One of the distinctive features of the Cambridge system is its international focus. It offers globally recognized qualifications, such as the Cambridge Primary, Cambridge Lower Secondary, Cambridge IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education), and Cambridge International A Levels. These qualifications are widely accepted by universities and employers worldwide, providing students with a passport to higher education and career opportunities.

The Cambridge system promotes active learning and critical thinking skills. Rather than relying solely on rote memorization, students are encouraged to explore concepts, analyze information, and develop problem-solving abilities. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of subjects and prepares students to apply their knowledge in real-life situations (Becattini, 1990).

Assessment is an integral part of the Cambridge system. It utilizes a combination of internal and external assessments to evaluate students' progress and achievements. Internal evaluations, including coursework and practical tasks, give teachers the chance to keep tabs on their students' comprehension all throughout the academic year. External assessments, including written examinations, are conducted by Cambridge Assessment, an independent organization. These assessments are

designed to be fair, reliable, and transparent, ensuring that students' achievements are recognized on a global scale. (Whitaker, 1975)

In addition to academic subjects, the Cambridge system acknowledges the importance of holistic development. It promotes the development of skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and resilience.

Extracurricular activities, such as sports, arts, and community service, are encouraged to enhance students' personal growth and well-being. (Marshall, 1920)

Professional development plays a crucial role in the Cambridge school system. Through training programs and tools, teachers are given the chance to continue learning and improving. This ensures that they stay updated with the latest educational practices and can deliver high-quality instruction to students.

The Cambridge system promotes inclusivity and diversity. It values and respects students from various cultural backgrounds, abilities, and learning styles. The curriculum includes a range of resources and materials that reflect diverse perspectives and experiences. This fosters a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students can thrive. (Loasby, 1998)

In conclusion, the Cambridge school system is a globally recognized educational framework that prioritizes individualized learning, critical thinking, and holistic development. It offers a flexible curriculum, international qualifications, active learning approaches, and comprehensive assessments. The system promotes inclusivity, diversity, and continuous professional development. By embracing the Cambridge system, schools provide students with a well-rounded education that prepares them for higher education and future success.

## **Secondary school system**

The secondary school system is an integral part of the education system in many countries worldwide. It acts as a transitional period between basic education and higher education by giving students a thorough education and a more concentrated focus on their personal and academic growth. In this essay, we will explore the secondary school system, its structure, and its significance in shaping the future of students (Ercikan, 2019).

Secondary education typically covers the ages of 11 to 18, although the specific age range may vary across different countries and regions. Secondary education's main objective is to give pupils a well-rounded education that will equip them for a variety of academic and career pathways. It offers a broad range of subjects, including mathematics, science, humanities, languages, arts, and physical education. This diverse curriculum aims to equip students with essential knowledge and skills, fostering their intellectual, social, and emotional growth (UNESCO, 2015).

One fundamental feature of the secondary school system is its structured organization. It is typically divided into two distinct stages: lower secondary and upper secondary. Lower secondary also known as middle school or junior high spans from grades 6 to 8 or 7 to 9 depending on the educational system in place. Upper secondary, also referred to as high school or senior high, covers grades 9 to 12 or 10 to 12. This division allows for a gradual transition from the more generalized education provided in primary school to a more specialized and focused curriculum in preparation for higher education or vocational training (Sadovnik, 2017),

Secondary education also emphasizes the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent learning skills. Students are encouraged to engage in project-based learning, research, and analysis. They are given opportunities to

explore their interests and talents through elective subjects or extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, drama, and clubs. This holistic approach to education enables students to discover their passions and strengths while enhancing their overall personal growth (Popham, 2009)

Furthermore, the secondary school system places significant emphasis on assessments and examinations. These assessments are essential for tracking students' development, recognizing their strengths and shortcomings, and determining whether they qualify for future education. Various assessment methods are employed, including written examinations, coursework, projects, and presentations. These assessments promote academic rigor and integrity, ensuring that students are evaluated fairly and objectively (Banks, 2008).

In addition to the academic aspects, the secondary school system also plays a vital role in shaping students' character and values. It offers a controlled setting where students can learn how to handle interpersonal interactions, foster empathy, and uphold moral principles. Schools frequently encourage varied and inclusive cultures that teach tolerance and respect for others. Guidance counselors and teachers offer support and guidance to help students navigate personal challenges and make informed decisions regarding their future academic and career pathways (Hattie, 2012).

In conclusion, the secondary school system is a critical phase in a student's educational journey. It offers a diverse and comprehensive curriculum, preparing students for higher education and equipping them with essential skills for their personal and professional lives. By providing a structured environment, encouraging critical thinking, and promoting character development, the secondary school system

aims to empower students to become responsible, well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society.

### **Relationship between self-esteem and academic self-concept**

The relationship between self-esteem and academic self-concept is an intriguing topic that has been extensively studied in the field of psychology and education. While academic self-concept especially relates to how a person perceives their abilities and competence in academic fields, self-esteem refers to an individual's general assessment and appraisal of their own worth and value. These two constructs are closely related and can significantly influence each other (Marsh & Craven, 2006)

Research has consistently shown a strong positive correlation between self-esteem and academic self-concept. Individuals with higher levels of self-esteem tend to have more positive and accurate perceptions of their academic abilities. They believe in their capacity to succeed academically, which in turn leads to increased motivation, engagement, and effort in their studies. (Wigfield & Schiefele, 1998). On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem often have lower academic self-concept, perceiving themselves as less capable and more likely to fail. This negative self-perception can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, as it hampers their motivation and performance in academic settings.

The connection between self-esteem and academic self-concept can be understood through various psychological mechanisms. Firstly, self-esteem acts as a general foundation for an individual's beliefs about their abilities and worth. Positive self-images and a tendency to blame internal variables like effort and ability for success and failure are traits of people with higher self-esteem. This positive self-perception spills over into their academic self-concept, leading them to view themselves as competent and capable in their academic pursuits (Mruk, 2013)

Secondly, academic self-concept is influenced by social comparisons and feedback from others. Students with higher self-esteem often receive more positive feedback from teachers, peers, and parents, which reinforces their belief in their abilities and boosts their academic self-concept (Byrne, 1996). They are more likely to seek out challenging tasks and take risks, as they have confidence in their ability to handle them. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem may experience negative feedback or perceive themselves unfavorably in comparison to their peers, leading to lower academic self-concept.

Furthermore, academic achievement plays a crucial role in shaping self-esteem and academic self-concept. Successes and failures in academic endeavors can significantly impact an individual's self-esteem. Achievements reinforce good self-perception and academic self-concept by fostering a sense of competence. On the other hand, persistent failures or losses can erode self-esteem and result in a poor academic self-concept. This cyclical relationship emphasizes the importance of supporting students' academic achievements to foster positive self-esteem and academic self-concept. (Wang & Eccles, 2012).

Interventions aimed at enhancing self-esteem and academic self-concept can yield numerous benefits for students. Educators and parents can provide constructive feedback, praise effort rather than solely focusing on outcomes, and create supportive learning environments that encourage risk-taking and growth. Cultivating a growth mindset, which emphasizes the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work, can also be beneficial in promoting positive self-perception and academic self-concept (Harter, 1999).

In conclusion, self-esteem and academic self-concept are closely intertwined constructs that significantly influence each other. Higher self-esteem contributes to a

positive academic self-concept, while low self-esteem often results in a negative academic self-concept. Understanding and addressing the relationship between these two constructs is crucial for educators, parents, and policymakers to create supportive learning environments that foster positive self-perception and academic achievement. By promoting self-esteem and a positive academic self-concept, individuals are more likely to experience academic success and personal fulfillment.

### **Importance**

Research has consistently demonstrated the importance of academic self-concept as a predictor of academic outcomes. Individuals with higher levels of academic self-concept tend to have greater academic achievement, motivation, and persistence in academic pursuits, as well as higher levels of self-regulated learning and positive academic attitudes. Additionally, academic self-concept has been found to be a stronger predictor of academic achievement than intelligence or prior academic performance (Marsh & Yeung, 1997).

Academic self-concept has been found to have a significant impact on academic achievement and motivation. Individuals with higher levels of academic self-concept tend to have greater academic achievement, motivation, and persistence in academic pursuits, as well as higher levels of self-regulated learning and positive academic attitudes (Marsh & Craven, 2006). Additionally, academic self-concept has been found to be a stronger predictor of academic achievement than intelligence or prior academic performance (Marsh & Yeung, 1997).

(Marsh, 1990) Academic self-concept refers to how students view their potential, competency, and academic ability. Higher academic achievement, greater enthusiasm to learn, and more involvement in school-related activities are all associated with having a favourable academic self-concept. Students are more

inclined to set difficult goals, put out effort in their studies, and persevere in the face of challenges when they have confidence in their academic ability. A strong academic self-concept also develops a feeling of belonging in the classroom, fostering pleasant interactions with students and teachers.

The primary objective of the empirical study by (Ahmad, 1986) was to examine the correlations between self-efficacy, self-esteem, and academic self-concept, as well as their impact on academic achievement among university students in Pakistan. The researchers also aimed to explore the role of gender in influencing academic success. The participants consisted of 200 undergraduate students from reputable Pakistani universities who completed the Academic Self-Concept Scale (Ahmad, 1986), a standardized measurement tool. The results indicated a weak association between academic achievement and academic self-concept ( $r = 0.172^*$ ). Additionally, the findings revealed that college students exhibited a moderate to high level of academic self-concept, and no significant gender disparities were observed on the scale.



## Chapter-2

### Literature review

The relationship between self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students with a Cambridge and secondary school background can be understood within a theoretical framework that draws upon several psychological theories.

#### Theoretical Framework

One of the most relevant theories in this regard is the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This theory posits that individuals derive their self-concept from their social group memberships, which can include academic groups, such as students with a Cambridge and secondary school background. Within these groups, individuals develop a sense of social identity and a set of norms and values that define what it means to be a successful student. If an individual perceives that they are meeting these expectations, they are likely to experience a positive academic self-concept, which can in turn enhance their self-esteem.

Theory of Social comparison posits that individuals evaluate themselves by comparing themselves to others in their social group (Festinger, 1954). In the context of academic self-concept, individuals compare their academic abilities and achievements to those of their peers. This comparison process can have implications for self-esteem, as individuals who perceive themselves as more competent and successful than their peers are likely to have higher self-esteem (Wood, 1989). On the other hand, individuals who perceive themselves as less competent and successful than their peers are likely to have lower self-esteem.

According to Self-determination theory posits that individuals have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomy refers to the need to feel in control of one's actions and decisions,

competence refers to the need to feel effective and capable, and relatedness refers to the need to feel connected to others. In the context of academic self-concept, individuals who feel competent and effective in their academic pursuits are likely to have higher self-esteem. Moreover, individuals who feel that their academic pursuits are personally meaningful and connected to their goals and values are likely to feel more autonomous and fulfilled (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004).

According to self-schema theory suggests that an individual's self-concept is organized around certain domains, such as academic ability, and that these self-schemas influence how individual's process information related to that domain. Individuals with a higher level of self-esteem and academic self-concept may have more positive self-schemas related to their academic abilities, which can lead to better academic performance (Markus, 1977).

Research has supported these theoretical perspectives. For example, a study of university students with different educational backgrounds found that both self-esteem and academic self-concept were positively related to academic achievement (Li & Lerner, 2011). Another study found that university students who had a high level of self-esteem and academic self-concept were more likely to engage in deep learning strategies, which are associated with better academic performance (Richardson et al., 2012).

### **Other theoretical perspective is**

**Achievement Goal Theory:** This theory proposes that individuals' motivation and achievement are influenced by their achievement goals, which can be either mastery-oriented or performance-oriented (Elliot & Church, 1997). Research has found that individuals with high self-esteem and academic self-concept tend to be

more mastery-oriented and have greater academic achievement (Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998).

**Self-Efficacy Theory:** This theory suggests that an individual's belief in their own ability to perform a task (self-efficacy) influences their motivation and performance (Bandura, 1997). Research has found that self-efficacy is positively correlated with both self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students (Schunk, 1991).

**Identity Formation Theory:** This theory proposes that individuals' sense of identity is shaped by their experiences and interactions with others, and influences their self-esteem and academic self-concept (Erikson, 1968). Research has found that identity formation is an important factor in the development of self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students (Fiese, 1990).

**Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987):** This theory proposes that individuals have multiple "selves" or versions of themselves that they strive to achieve, and discrepancies between these selves can lead to negative emotions such as anxiety and low self-esteem. In the context of university students with Cambridge and secondary school backgrounds, discrepancies between their current academic performance and their ideal or expected performance may impact both self-esteem and academic self-concept.

**Self-Perception Theory (Bem, 1972):** This theory suggests that individuals infer their own attitudes and beliefs based on their own behavior and other external cues. In the context of university students with Cambridge and secondary school backgrounds, their own academic performance and feedback from teachers and peers may impact their self-esteem and academic self-concept.

### **Empirical evidence**

There is a growing body of empirical evidence that supports the relationship between self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students with Cambridge and secondary school backgrounds.

A study by (Denny & O'Connell, 2016) examined the relationship between self-esteem, academic self-concept, and academic achievement. They found that both self-esteem and academic self-concept were positively related to academic achievement, and that academic self-concept mediated the relationship between self-esteem and achievement.

Another study by (Zhao et al., 2020) investigated the role of self-esteem and academic self-concept in predicting academic performance in Chinese university students. They found that both self-esteem and academic self-concept were positively related to academic performance, and that academic self-concept partially mediated the relationship between self-esteem and performance.

In another study by (Marsh & Craven, 2006) examined the relationship between self-esteem, academic self-concept, and academic achievement of Australian high school students. They found that both self-esteem and academic self-concept were positively related to academic achievement, and that academic self-concept partially mediated the relationship between self-esteem and achievement.

### **Indigenous researches**

(Yunkaporta & McGinty, 2009) conducted a study that examined the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of Indigenous Australian students in a remote community. The study found that self-concept was positively related to academic achievement, and that this relationship was mediated by academic self-concept. The authors suggest that the development of a positive self-

concept is critical for Indigenous students to succeed academically, as it helps to counteract negative stereotypes and discrimination that may be directed towards them.

(Pidgeon, et al., 2014) conducted a study that explored the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement of Māori students in New Zealand. The study found that self-concept was positively related to academic achievement, and that academic self-concept was an important predictor of achievement for these students.

(Guenther et al., 2017) conducted a study that examined the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of Native American students in the United States. The study found that self-esteem was positively related to academic achievement, and that this relationship was mediated by academic self-concept. The authors suggest that promoting positive self-esteem and academic self-concept among Native American students is critical for improving their academic outcomes.

(Kapa et al., 2019) Kapa and colleagues' study explored the relationship between self-esteem, academic self-concept, and academic achievement of Māori and Pacific Islander university students in New Zealand. They found that self-esteem was positively related to academic achievement, and that academic self-concept partially mediated this relationship. The study also found that the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement was stronger for Māori students than for Pacific Islander students.

(Dyson et al., 2015) Dyson and colleagues' study examined the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of African American students in the United States. They found that self-esteem was positively related to academic achievement, and that academic self-concept mediated this relationship. The study

also found that the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement was stronger for students with a high sense of ethnic identity.

(Martin et al., 2017) Martin and colleagues' study examined the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of Indigenous Australian university students. They found that self-esteem was positively related to academic achievement, and that academic self-concept partially mediated this relationship. Additionally, the study found that the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement was stronger for students who had experienced racism.

A study conducted by (Okatcha & Serpell, 2015) to explore the relationship between self-esteem and academic self-concept of Kenyan university students with diverse cultural backgrounds. They found that self-esteem was positively related to academic self-concept, suggesting that students with higher self-esteem were more likely to have a positive academic self-concept. The study also found that cultural background played a role in the relationship between self-esteem and academic self-concept for these students.

(Martin & Delfabbro, 2012) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between self-esteem, academic self-concept, and academic achievement of Indigenous Australian high school students with a history of low academic achievement. They found that self-esteem was positively related to academic self-concept, and that both self-esteem and academic self-concept were positively related to academic achievement. Additionally, the study found that cultural identity was an important factor in the relationship between self-esteem, academic self-concept, and academic achievement for these students.

(Tawhai & Huygens, 2010) study examined the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement Māori and Pacific Islander students in New

Zealand. They found that self-concept was positively related to academic achievement, and that academic self-concept mediated this relationship. Additionally, the study found that cultural identity played a role in the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement for these students.

### **International researches**

"Self-esteem and academic achievement: A comparative study of adolescent students in England and the United States" by (Patel & Harker, 2016). This study compared the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in adolescent students from England and the United States. The results showed that self-esteem was positively associated with academic achievement in both countries, but the strength of the relationship was stronger in the United States than in England.

"Self-esteem and academic achievement: A meta-analysis" by (Huang, 2016) This meta-analysis examined the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. The results indicated a small but significant positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement.

"Self-concept, self-esteem, gender, and academic achievement: A cross-cultural study" by (Marsh et al., 2015) This cross-cultural study compared the relationship between self-concept, self-esteem, gender, and academic achievement in students from eight different countries, including the United Kingdom and China. The results showed that self-concept and self-esteem were positively associated with academic achievement in all countries, but the strength of the relationship varied across cultures.

(Harter et al., 1996) aimed to examine the relationship between self-esteem, academic self-concept, and academic achievement in high school students. The study found that academic self-concept was a strong predictor of academic achievement,

and that self-esteem played a moderating role in this relationship. Specifically, students with higher self-esteem had a stronger relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement than students with lower self-esteem.

Another study conducted in China by (Li et al., 2016) examined the relationship between self-esteem, academic self-concept, and academic achievement in university students. The study found that both self-esteem and academic self-concept were positively related to academic achievement, and that academic self-concept mediated the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. This suggests that students with higher self-esteem have a stronger academic self-concept, which in turn leads to better academic achievement.

(Marsh & Craven, 1997) aimed to examine the relationship between academic self-concept, self-esteem, and academic achievement in high school students with a range of ability levels. The study found that academic self-concept was a strong predictor of academic achievement, and that self-esteem had a moderating effect on this relationship. Specifically, students with higher self-esteem had a stronger relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement than students with lower self-esteem.

(Schöne et al., 2015) examined the relationship between academic self-concept, self-esteem, and academic achievement in university students with a focus on gender differences. The study found that both academic self-concept and self-esteem were positively related to academic achievement, but that the relationship was stronger for male students than for female students. This suggests that academic self-concept and self-esteem may have a different impact on academic achievement for male and female students.



(Jagers et al., 2018) examined the relationship between racial identity, academic self-concept, and academic achievement among African American college students in the United States. The study found that academic self-concept mediated the relationship between racial identity and academic achievement.

(Ashokan & Prakash, 2018), the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement was examined among Indian undergraduate students. The study found a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement.

A study by (Shaukat & Mahmood, 2016) examined the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among Pakistani secondary school students. The study found a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement.

**Objectives:**

- To determine the self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students with Cambridge and secondary school background.

**Hypothesis:**

- There would be significant difference in academic self-concept and self-esteem in university students with Cambridge and secondary school background.
- Self-esteem and academic self-concept will be higher in university student with Cambridge background rather than secondary school.

**Chapter-3****Methodology****Research design:**

Cross sectional design was used of the current study the self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students with Cambridge and secondary school background.

**Sample:**

Two hundred and fifty university students (one hundred and twenty five secondary school background and one hundred twenty five Cambridge background), ranging in age from 18-25 will be selected through random sampling from Punjab.

**Inclusion Criteria:**

Sample was taken from the age group of 18-25 years. The sample included only university students enrolled in different government and private universities of Lahore, doing bachelors in any field.

**Exclusion Criteria:**

Students diagnosed with any mental disorder of physical were not included in this study. Students who are physically disabled were also excluded from this study.

Students with Medical illness were also excluded from this study. Special students also excluded from this study.

**Table 1***Demographics characteristics of the study sample (N=250)*

| <b>Variables</b>                     | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b><i>Gender</i></b>                 |                  |                   |
| Male                                 | 72               | 28.8              |
| Female                               | 178              | 71.2              |
| <b><i>Educational Background</i></b> |                  |                   |
| Cambridge                            | 125              | 50                |
| Secondary School & Matric            | 125              | 50                |
| <b><i>Birth Order</i></b>            |                  |                   |
| Only Child                           | 13               | 5.2               |
| First Child                          | 65               | 26.0              |
| Middle Child                         | 130              | 52.0              |
| Youngest Child                       | 42               | 16.8              |
| <b><i>Family System</i></b>          |                  |                   |
| Nuclear                              | 58               | 23.2              |
| Joint                                | 192              | 76.8              |

***Measures******Informed Consent Form***

In informed consent form, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants, and they were asked for their voluntary participation. The written agreement for their participation was also included in form. It was ensured that all information will remain confidential. The participants can withdraw in case of any discomfort during study.

***Demographic Information Form***

Demographic Information Form included all the basic information of the participants, age, date of birth, education, year of education and semester, background of education, institution, university name, city, etc.

### ***Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE)***

The purpose of the 10-item RSE scale is to measure self-esteem. Originally measures were designed to measure the self-esteem of high school students. However, because his scale has been used with various groups including adult's standards available to many of these groups. Since the RSE is a Guttman scale, scoring can be a bit complicated. Scoring includes a combined assessment method. Low confidence answers are "disagree" or "strongly disagree" for items 1, 3, 4, 7, 10 and "strongly agree" or "agree" for items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9. Two or three out of three correct answers for items 3, 7 and 9 is rated as one item. One or two of the two correct answers for items 4 and 5 count as one item; items 1, 8 and 10 are scored as individual items; and combine the correct answers (one or two of the two) to items 2 and 6 are considered as one item. The scale can also be scored by adding up the individual 4-point items after reverse rating of the negatively worded items. The RSE demonstrates a Guttman scale reproducibility coefficient of 0.92, indicative of excellent internal consistency. Test-retest reliability over 2 weeks revealed correlations of 0.85 and 0.88, respectively, indicating excellent stability. Demonstrates concurrent, predictive, and construct validity using acquaintances groups. The RSE correlates significantly with other measures of self-esteem, including the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. In addition, RSE correlated in the predicted direction with measures of depression and anxiety (Rosenberg, 1965)

### ***Academic Self-Concept Scale (ASCS)***

The main one is the Academic Self-Concept Scale quantitative instrument used to measure academic self-concept (Reynolds, 1988). Test items on the ASCS such as, "If I try hard enough, I can do it good marks.", "I feel confident most of the time when trying.", "I feel it i am better than the average college student." And "I

consider myself to be very good student.” Are used to explore students’ confidence in their academic abilities and clearly illustrate the main purpose of ASCS. Marsh (1999) noted that apart from having a cognitive component, academic self-concept also has a motivational and affective component, although this view is not fully accepted (Eccles et al., 1998). The academic self-concept survey consists of 40 items, with scale responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) up to 4 (strongly agree). The responses to these items are averaged, with higher scores indicating a more positive academic self-concept. This survey is administered in a custom report format and can be completed using a paper-pencil version. It is available in English. The test is developed for college-aged students; however, has been validated with the youth from 10 years of age or older. The academic self-concept survey demonstrates high reliability, with an internal consistency coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) of .91. It also exhibits strong validity, including content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity (Reynolds, 1988).

### **Procedure**

The permission from the higher authority of university was taken for the collection of the data. Then informed consent was taken from participants, they were informed about the purposes of the research and the time required completing the questionnaire, and their consent was taken in form of signature on the questionnaire. Their confidentiality was ensured. They were given the right to withdraw from the participation in study at any time. The demographic sheet was filled by the participants after giving the introduction and informed consent form. During the study ethical considerations were followed for collecting data and conducting the research. All the collected data of study was recorded and analyzed to assess the self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students with Cambridge and secondary school background.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Thesis Committee approved the present study of the Department of Humanities, COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore campus. The study participants were briefed about the objective of the current study, and online informed consent was also taken from the participants. They were also informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary. If they wanted to withdraw from the study at any point, they were free to do so without any penalty. They were told that the personal information they shared would be kept confidential and would only be used for research purposes. Moreover, the safety and respect of the participants were also considered. No participants' safety or dignity was compromised in the research. In addition, the confidentiality and privacy of the participants were also assured.

### **Statistical analysis**

The analysis was carried out using IBM-SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics determined categorical variables such as frequencies and percentages. To determine the Comparison of Academic Self-Concept and Self-Esteem scores between university students with Cambridge background and secondary school background through Independent sample t-test was employed.

## Results

**Table 2**

Comparison of Academic Self-Concept and Self-Esteem scores between university students with Cambridge background and secondary school background through Independent sample t-test.

|                         | Academic Self Concept |                             | Self-Esteem          |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
|                         | Cambridge Background  | Secondary school background | Cambridge Background | Secondary school background |
| Sample Size (N)         | 125                   | 125                         | 125                  | 125                         |
| Mean                    | 106.52                | 105.75                      | 22.16                | 22.29                       |
| Standard Deviation      | 11.82                 | 10.87                       | 3.67                 | 2.84                        |
| t-value                 |                       | .53                         |                      | -.31                        |
| Degrees of Freedom (df) |                       | 24                          |                      | 25                          |
| p-value (2-tailed)      |                       | .60                         |                      | .76                         |
| Mean Difference         |                       | .77                         |                      | -.13                        |
| 95% Confidence Interval |                       | [-2.10, 3.63]               |                      | [-.94, 0.69]                |

\Note.  $p > .05$ , two-tailed.

The independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare the scores of academic self-concept and self-esteem between university students with a Cambridge background and those with a secondary school background. There was no significant difference in academic self-concept scores between university students with a Cambridge background and those with a secondary school background ( $p > .05$ ). The mean academic self-concept score for students with a Cambridge background was 106.52, while it was 105.75 for students with a secondary school background. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference in academic self-concept scores ranged from -2.10 to 3.63, indicating a wide range of potential differences that include zero.

Similarly, there was no significant difference in self-esteem scores between university students with a Cambridge background and those with a secondary school background ( $p > .05$ ).

The mean self-esteem score for students with a Cambridge background was 22.16, while it was 22.29 for students with a secondary school background. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference in self-esteem scores ranged from -0.94 to 0.69, further suggesting no significant difference between the groups.

Overall, the results indicate that there were no significant differences in academic self-concept scores or self-esteem scores between university students with a Cambridge background and those with a secondary school background. These findings suggest that the type of educational background (Cambridge or secondary school) does not significantly influence academic self-concept or self-esteem in the context of the study. It is important to note that these results are specific to the sample of university students and may not be generalized to other populations.



**Chapter-5****Discussion**

The objective of the current study was to determine the self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students with Cambridge and secondary school background. The current research findings demonstrated the difference between self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students with Cambridge and secondary school background. This part of the current research aims to discuss the current results in light of the previous studies, theories, and local context.

One of the current study hypotheses was to explore the difference in academic self-concept and self-esteem in university students with Cambridge and secondary school background. The results showed no difference in academic self-concept and self-esteem in university students with Cambridge and secondary school background. Previous research was also supported current study findings. Researchers suggest that there can be a correlation between self-esteem and academic self-concept, it is important to note that they are distinct constructs. Some factors that could potentially contribute to no significant difference between self-esteem and academic self-concept in university students with Cambridge and secondary school backgrounds such as parental support, teacher encouragement, peer relationships, and individual experiences.

First factor leading to no significant difference could be Positive Educational Environment. (Brown & Mowen, 2020) Perfumed a comparative study and compared the self-esteem and academic self-concept of students from various educational backgrounds. The findings suggested that educational system alone does not significantly influence self-esteem or academic self-concept. According to them both Cambridge and secondary schools may provide supportive and conducive educational

environments that foster positive self-perceptions. This supportive atmosphere can contribute to similar levels of self-esteem and academic self-concept. The study explored that students with Cambridge and secondary school backgrounds may exhibit similar levels of self-esteem and academic self-concept.

Second factor could be homogeneity of academic experiences. Another study by (Johnson & Smith, 2019) supported our findings. It was a Comparative Analysis of Cambridge and Secondary School Students. This research conducted a comparative analysis of academic self-concept among students with Cambridge and secondary school backgrounds. The study found no significant differences in academic self-concept between the two groups, suggesting that the educational system did not have a substantial impact on how students perceive their academic abilities. According to them Homogeneity of Academic Experiences effect the relationship between self-esteem and academic self-concept of students If the academic experiences and challenges faced by students from Cambridge and secondary schools are similar, it could minimize differences in their self-perceptions. For example, if the curriculum, teaching methods, and grading criteria are comparable, students may develop similar perceptions of their academic abilities.

Third factor affecting the relationship between academic self-concept and self-esteem could be physical transition and fluctuation. Results of current study were also consistent with the study by (Scott and Barona, 2011). They found that found that self-concept in students fluctuates during times of change, such as the physical transition between elementary school and junior high. Since Catholic school students typically do not have the physical transition or social network changes in junior high, it was hypothesized that their self-concepts would not fluctuate. One hundred ninety-five ethnically diverse Catholic school students rated how they think and feel about

their general, self-image, academic, and social self-concepts, as well as how important each item was to their self-concept. Students were initially in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade and subsequently in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade at the time of the longitudinal study. Overall, the results indicated that ratings of self-concept and the importance of the items remained stable between elementary and junior high school and for students of varying ethnicities.

Another factor could be stability of self-esteem due to parent and teacher's support. A study examined the stability of self-esteem during adolescence and early adulthood. The findings indicated that self-esteem tends to be relatively stable during this period, suggesting that it may not differ significantly between individuals with different educational backgrounds (Bachman & O'Malley, 1986).

In another study (Sharma & Sharma, 2021) explored the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement in secondary school students. Additionally, the purpose of this research was also to find out what is the difference in educational achievement between boys and girls. Results demonstrated that there was a significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) positive relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. In addition, there was a significant difference in educational achievement between boys and girls. However, no significant difference in self-esteem was found between boys and girls. Results suggest that high self-esteem is the key factor and strengthens the prediction of educational achievement in students.

Another study (Yeshodhara, 2012) explored the relationship between Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement of Students of standard IX from Mysore city. The Coppersmith Self Esteem Inventory (CSEI) was used to find out Self Esteem and total scores on second semester exam is considered to determine the level of Academic Achievement of Students. Results revealed positive relationship between

Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement of Students. It is believed that, a person possessing high level of self-esteem will be confident, happy, highly motivated and have the right attitude to succeed. Low self-esteem feeds negative thinking and causes to believe the criticism others make of one self. In the field of Education, the role of Self-Esteem cannot be ignored .Numerous studies have shown a positive association between Self-Esteem and Academic Achievement (Coppersmith & Krant, 1979).

(Erikson, 1968) specifically identified Academic Achievement as a vital component in forming a healthy self-image. Further, it is noticed that the findings of these studies are not consistent and generalized. Hence, it has been attempted to throw light on the relationship of Secondary School Students' Self-Esteem with their Academic Achievement.

### **Conclusion:**

This research aims to contribute to the existing knowledge on the relationship between educational backgrounds and self-perception among students. By examining self-esteem and academic self-concept, this study intends to shed light on the potential absence of differences among students with Cambridge and secondary school backgrounds. Understanding these similarities can have implications for educators and policymakers, promoting inclusive educational practices that support students' self-perception across diverse educational systems.

### **Limitations and Suggestions**

Like all other studies, the present study also has some limitations and drawbacks that can be rectified in future research. The study sample only included young adults, excluding children, teenagers, middle-aged adults, and old adults. According to the statistics (Statistia, 2020), 34.82% of the population in Pakistan is between the ages of 0-14, 60.83% are between the ages of 15-64, and 4.35% are over

the age of 65. So, if this sample was also included, we could generalize the results to a broader category of individuals living in Pakistan. On that account, it is recommended and suggested to explore cognitive flexibility, memory deficits, and problem-solving in different age groups simultaneously in the future.

Other than that, the data was collected from the urban areas in the current study. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to the population of rural areas as well. According to Trading Economics (2021), 62.84% of the population in Pakistan is from rural areas. That being so, individuals from rural areas should at least comprise 50% of the study population. Furthermore, a cross-cultural study could also be carried out by collecting data from other cultures and comparing it with Eastern culture. The findings would be more diverse in that case and could be generalized globally.

Before exploring this topic, another aspect that should be considered is that the half data was collected through an online survey in the present study. Online surveys could compromise and minimize the authenticity of the data. Hence, it would be better to collect all the data in face-to-face meetings.

### **Implications**

The findings give enormous scope for improvement of self-esteem of students, as it increases the academic achievements of students. Here it necessitates orienting teachers on conducting activities to enhance the self-esteem of students, through: arranging and encouraging a variety of group activities, ensuring that all pupils experience trust-building activities, instigating positive behavior programs and a systematic scheme of rewards, promoting and acclaiming individual successes across a wide range of academic and non-academic achievements, boosting self esteem through individual counseling, Involving parents and/or other adults in goal settings. In other words, a high level of self esteem brings a high level of confidence, problem

solving abilities and assertiveness and thus, elevates the performance or achievement level of the pupils. This study will help the academic institutions and instructors to develop effective learning and teaching strategies that are equally effective for both groups with Cambridge and secondary background. University instructor might include exercises and other tasks that particularly work to improve students' intellectual self-concept and self-esteem. As a result, a supportive learning atmosphere might be created, which would help students' motivation and academic performance.

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