

Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students

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ABSTRACT

Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy are both considered pillars of Self-concept itself, and students pursuing their higher education are often faced with multiple and increasingly difficult tasks that require them to competently deliver from each task. It is important to note that prior research has shown evidence that elevated levels of self-efficacy are seen in individuals who do well in their higher education. It is also of equal importance to note that self-efficacy and self-Esteem are both impacted by multiple domains of an individual's life, Social, cultural, psychological, academic, and physical. This study examines the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among college students while also exploring potential differences between undergraduate and postgraduate groups. The sample consists of 60 participants, equally distributed between undergraduate and postgraduate students. Two standardized tests are employed to measure self-esteem and self-efficacy, both of which are self-reported through Google Forms. The findings reveal a significant relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among college students. However, no significant differences are observed in self-efficacy and self-esteem between undergraduate and postgraduate groups. The study contributes to our understanding of self-efficacy and self-esteem among college students, highlighting the importance of promoting positive self-perceptions and psychological well-being in educational settings.

Keywords: *Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem*

Self-efficacy and self-esteem are two important psychological constructs that play a significant role in individuals' beliefs, perceptions, and overall well-being. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks and achieve desired outcomes, while self-esteem encompasses the overall evaluation and feelings of self-worth. Understanding the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem is crucial, particularly within the context of college students, as it can shed light on factors influencing their academic performance, psychological well-being, and personal development.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive association between self-efficacy and self-esteem, indicating that individuals who perceive themselves as capable and competent in various domains tend to have higher levels of self-esteem. Such individuals are more likely

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to set and achieve challenging goals, demonstrate resilience in the face of obstacles, and experience positive emotions and satisfaction with their accomplishments. Conversely, individuals with low self-efficacy often exhibit lower levels of self-esteem, leading to feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and reduced motivation to pursue goals.

While the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem has been extensively examined in general populations, there remains a need to explore this association specifically among undergraduate and postgraduate college students. College represents a critical period in an individual's life, characterized by academic challenges, personal growth, and identity formation. Understanding how self-efficacy and self-esteem interact within this specific context can have important implications for promoting students' academic success, psychological well-being, and overall adjustment to college life.

Moreover, investigating potential differences in self-efficacy and self-esteem between undergraduate and postgraduate students can provide valuable insights into how these constructs may vary across different academic stages. Identifying any disparities can inform the development of targeted interventions that address the unique needs and challenges faced by students at different educational levels.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among undergraduate and postgraduate college students. Additionally, it seeks to determine whether there are significant differences in self-efficacy and self-esteem between these two groups. By exploring these research questions, this study intends to contribute to the existing literature on self-efficacy, self-esteem, and college student well-being, while also providing practical implications for educational institutions and counseling services.

The relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem in young adults has been the subject of numerous studies. Research has consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem, with individuals who have high self-efficacy beliefs also reporting higher levels of self-esteem. Research has also shown that self-efficacy and self-esteem are important predictors of a wide range of outcomes in young adults. For example, higher levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem have been associated with better academic outcomes, such as higher grades and graduation rates, as well as better mental health outcomes.

Overall, this research intends to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among college students, highlighting its relevance for their academic success, psychological well-being, and personal development. By identifying the factors that contribute to positive self-perceptions and self-worth, this study aims to inform interventions and support programs that can enhance students' self-efficacy beliefs and self-esteem, ultimately promoting their overall well-being during their college years.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a key component of social cognitive theory, developed by Albert Bandura in the 1970s. According to Bandura, individuals who have high self-efficacy beliefs tend to approach tasks with confidence and persistence, which can lead to better performance and outcomes. Self-efficacy beliefs are thought to be developed through a variety of experiences, such as feedback, social comparison, and mastery experiences, and can vary across different domains, such as academic, social, and athletic. Bandura (Bandura, 1986) defined self-

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efficacy as: 'People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances.' Upon analyzing this definition, we see that it is considered as the judgment of one's capabilities and may or not necessarily correspond to the reality of the individual. This added dimension of how one views themselves can also have a positive effect that if there does exist a slight overestimation in a certain domain of self-efficacy in the person's mind, then it may create space for growth towards that estimation.

According to self-efficacy theory, individuals gather data to assess their efficacy beliefs from four main sources:

- Enactive mastery experiences (actual performances);
- Observation of others (vicarious experiences);
- Verbal and nonverbal persuasion techniques;
- Physiological and affective states

from which individuals partly judge their capableness, strength, and vulnerability to dysfunction."(Bandura, 1997). Enactive mastery experiences, out of these four information sources, have been found to be the most persuasive source of efficacy information because they offer the most direct, real proof that a person may amass the personal resources necessary for success.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem, on the other hand, is a broader construct that encompasses an individual's overall evaluation of their worth as a person. Self-esteem can be influenced by a variety of factors, such as social comparison, achievement, and feedback from others. Low self-esteem has been associated with a variety of negative outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and poor academic and career outcomes. One of the pioneers in this field, Rosenberg (1965), argued that self-esteem comprises a person's overall opinion of themselves. He added that, a person with higher levels of self-esteem respects and values themselves. Similarly, Sedikides and Gress (2003) defined self-esteem as an individual's perspective or subjective appraisal of one's own self-worth, emotions of self-respect and self-confidence, and the amount to which the individual has positive or negative opinions about oneself.

The American Psychological association explains self-esteem as the degree to which the qualities and characteristics contained in one's self-concept are perceived to be positive. A person's physical self-image, perception of their accomplishments and abilities, values, and perceived success in upholding them, as well as how others perceive and react to them, are all reflected in it. One's level of self-esteem increases with how positively they are perceived collectively as having these traits and qualities. Low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness are common depressive symptoms, whereas a moderately high level of self-esteem is seen as an essential component of mental health.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Self-efficacy and self-esteem are two important constructs in psychology that have received extensive attention in the literature, particularly in the context of young adults. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific task or achieve a specific goal, while self-esteem refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their self-worth. Both

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constructs are believed to be important predictors of a wide range of outcomes, including academic achievement, career success, and mental health.

Another study by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among young adults. Participants were German university students who completed self-report measures of self-efficacy and self-esteem. The results indicated a positive association between self-efficacy and self-esteem ($r = .51, p < .001$).

Numerous studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem in young adults. For example, Bandura (1977) found that individuals who had high self-efficacy beliefs also had high levels of self-esteem. Similarly, a study by Zimmerman and Schunk (2011) found that self-efficacy was a significant predictor of self-esteem in young adults. Specifically, individuals who had higher levels of self-efficacy also had higher levels of self-esteem. Another study conducted by (Hajloo, 2014), on 140 undergraduate students, revealed a clear relationship between self-esteem and self-efficacy.

Another study by Bandura and Locke (2003) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem in the context of work performance. The study involved a sample of employees from a variety of occupations who completed self-report measures of self-efficacy and self-esteem. Results showed a positive association between self-efficacy and self-esteem ($r = .45, p < .001$).

One possible explanation for the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem is that individuals who have high self-efficacy beliefs tend to feel more competent and capable, which in turn leads to higher levels of self-esteem (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). This idea is supported by research that has found that self-efficacy is positively related to job performance and self-esteem (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

Moreover, research has shown that self-efficacy beliefs can be developed through various means, such as feedback, social comparison, and mastery experiences (Bandura, 1997). This suggests that interventions designed to increase self-efficacy beliefs may also have positive effects on self-esteem in young adults. For example, a study by Van der Bijl and Shortridge-Baggett (2001) found that a self-efficacy intervention significantly improved self-esteem in a group of college students.

Another study by Scholz et al. (2002) examined the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem in the context of physical activity. Participants were university students who completed self-report measures of self-efficacy and self-esteem related to physical activity. Results showed a positive association between self-efficacy and self-esteem ($r = .59, p < .001$).

However, there are also some studies that have found a weak or non-existent relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem in certain contexts. For example, a study by Chen and Hwang (2014) found that self-efficacy was only weakly related to self-esteem in Chinese college students. This may be due to cultural differences in the way self-esteem is conceptualized and measured.

Furthermore, research has shown that the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem may be moderated by other factors. For example, a study by Hosseini et al. (2016) found

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that the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem was stronger for individuals who had higher levels of emotional intelligence.

Overall, the literature suggests that there is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem in young adults, and that interventions designed to increase self-efficacy beliefs may have positive effects on self-esteem. However, the relationship may not be universal across all contexts and cultures, and more research is needed to fully understand the underlying mechanisms and potential moderators of this relationship.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Quantitative approach was followed for the study. The present study utilized a correlational research design to explore relationships between variables without the researcher exerting control or manipulation over them. Correlation analysis was employed to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between two or more variables. A correlation can be either positive, indicating that the variables move in the same direction, or negative, indicating that the variables move in opposite directions.

Statement of the Problem

The aim of the study was to check whether there exists a relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem in Undergraduate and Postgraduate students, and to compare the Levels between them.

Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem Among Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students.
- H02: There is no significant difference in Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Undergraduate and Postgraduate students.

Sample

The Sample of the present study consisted of 60 Young Adults (30 Undergraduate and 30 Postgraduate Students). They belong to the age group of 17 and 23 years. Purposive sampling technique was applied for the collection of samples of 60 Young Adults (30 Undergraduate and 30 Postgraduate Students) from the city of Bengaluru. Quantitative approach was followed for the study. Correlational Research design was implemented for this study.

Instruments

Two measures were used in this study,

1. **General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)** was developed by Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995) and is used to study the level of Self-Efficacy. The research employs a standardized instrument consisting of 10 items designed to measure self-efficacy. Participants are requested to rank their responses based on the statement that resonates with their personal experiences the most. This ranking process generates a self-efficacy score ranging from 10 (indicating low levels of self-efficacy) to 40 (reflecting a high level of self-efficacy). The internal reliability of the General Self-Efficacy (GSE) scale has been established through Cronbach's alpha coefficients, typically falling between .76 and .90. Response options range from 1 (not at all true) to 4 (exactly true), enabling participants to indicate the degree of alignment with

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each statement. The total score is obtained by summing the scores from all the responses.

2. **State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES)** was developed by Heatherton, T. F. & Policy, J. (1991) and is used to study the level of self-Esteem. The present study utilizes a 20-item scale to assess an individual's self-esteem within a specific timeframe. These 20 items are further categorized into three distinct components: performance self-esteem, social self-esteem, and appearance self-esteem. Participants provide responses to the items using a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely), thereby capturing their subjective evaluation of each component.

Inclusion Criteria

- Young adults who are currently pursuing their higher education in either Under Graduation or Post Graduation.
- All Genders were included in the study.

Exclusion criteria

- Individuals who are pursuing their Schooling or above Postgraduate level of education were excluded from the study.

Procedure

After selecting the measures, the data collection method was employed. The questionnaires and information sheets were carefully prepared and organized in advance. The study commenced by selecting individuals who are pursuing their undergraduate and Postgraduate as participants. Prior to their involvement, informed consent was obtained from each participant, and they were provided with a Google form link to complete the questionnaire. Clear written instructions were provided, and participants were encouraged to seek clarification regarding any aspect of the study. The questionnaires were self-administered by participants who possessed the ability to read and write. On average, the administration of the scale took approximately fifteen to twenty minutes.

The Purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Undergraduate and Postgraduate students. The Data was collected through Google forms using the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) by Schwarzer, R., & Jerusalem, M. (1995), and State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES) by Heatherton, T. F. & Policy, J. (1991). A total of 60 young adults, consisting of 30 undergraduate students and 30 postgraduate students, were included in the sample. These individuals, aged between 17 and 23 years, were selected from Bengaluru. The raw data obtained from the participants was entered into Microsoft Excel and subsequently imported into SPSS 25 for statistical analysis.

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem Among Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students.

Table 1: Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Undergraduate Students.

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2
Self-Efficacy	30	27.90	5.422	-	.464**
Self-Esteem	30	62.90	12.628	.464**	-

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed)

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Table 1 indicates the Pearson correlation results showing the relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Undergraduate students of the study, the results show that among the 30 Students the correlation observed was $r=.464$, $p<.01$. Which indicates that there exists a significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Undergraduate Students.

Table 2: Correlation between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Postgraduate Students.

Variables	n	M	SD	1	2
Self-Efficacy	30	30.57	5.237	-	.797**
Self-Esteem	30	68.13	20.499	.797**	-

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed)

Table 2 indicates the Pearson correlation results showing the relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Postgraduate students of the study, the results show that among the 30 Students the correlation observed was $r=.797$, $p<.01$. Which indicates that there exists a significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Postgraduate Students.

From the above results the researcher concluded that **the study rejects the Null Hypothesis.**

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem Among Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students. Hence, there is a significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem amongst Undergraduate and Postgraduate students.

Table 3: Independent Sample T test of Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students.

Scale	Under Graduate Students		Post Graduate Students		t	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Self-Efficacy Scale	27.90	5.422	30.57	5.237	1.937	58	.058
Self-Esteem Scale	62.90	12.628	68.13	20.499	-1.191	58	.239

Table 3 Shows results of Independent sample T test conducted to compare the means scores achieved on the Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem scales amongst Undergraduate and Postgraduate students. The Results revealed that there was no significant difference between the undergraduate (M=27.90, SD=5.42) and postgraduate students (M=30.57, SD=5.237) in Self-Efficacy. And that there is no significant difference between Undergraduate (M=62.90, SD=12.628) and Postgraduate (M=68.13, SD=20.499) in Self-Esteem.

Therefore, Accepting the null hypothesis.

H₀2= There is no significant difference in Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Undergraduate and Postgraduate students.

Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem among Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students

The current research aimed to explore the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among undergraduate and postgraduate college students, while also examining any potential differences between the two groups. The findings of this study indicated a significant relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among both undergraduate and postgraduate students, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to exhibit higher levels of self-esteem. The positive correlation between self-efficacy and self-esteem implies that individuals who believe in their abilities and have confidence in their competence tend to have a positive self-regard and overall positive evaluations of themselves.

Moreover, the absence of a significant difference in self-efficacy and self-esteem between undergraduate and postgraduate students highlights the universality of this relationship across different educational levels. This finding suggests that the link between self-efficacy and self-esteem is not influenced by the specific academic stage or level of achievement. Thus, regardless of whether individuals are pursuing their undergraduate or postgraduate studies, their beliefs in their abilities and their overall self-esteem appear to be similarly influenced.

The convergence of these results underscores the importance of fostering self-efficacy beliefs and self-esteem among college students, regardless of their academic level. Strategies aimed at enhancing self-efficacy can be beneficial in promoting self-esteem, as individuals who perceive themselves as capable and competent are more likely to experience positive self-evaluations. Such interventions may include providing support and resources to develop skills, fostering a growth mindset, and encouraging goal-setting and achievement.

CONCLUSION

- The results interpreted showed that there was a significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem amongst Undergraduate and Postgraduate students.
- The Study revealed that there is no significant difference between the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students' Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem. But it was noted that the self-esteem in Postgraduate students ($M=68.13$, $SD=20.499$) was comparatively higher than self-esteem in Undergraduate students ($M=62.90$, $SD=12.628$).

Implications

The findings of this study have several implications for both research and practice.

Firstly, the significant relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among undergraduate and postgraduate college students highlights the interconnected nature of these constructs. Understanding this relationship can provide insights into the factors that contribute to individuals' self-perceptions and overall well-being. Researchers can further investigate the underlying mechanisms and processes that mediate or moderate this relationship, allowing for a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Secondly, the lack of significant differences in self-efficacy and self-esteem between undergraduate and postgraduate students suggests that interventions aimed at enhancing self-efficacy and self-esteem can be beneficial for individuals at various academic stages. Educational institutions and counseling services can prioritize the development of self-efficacy beliefs and self-esteem as part of their student support programs, irrespective of the students' academic level. This can involve implementing workshops, counseling sessions, or

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online resources that focus on building self-efficacy and self-esteem to promote overall student well-being and success.

Additionally, the findings emphasize the importance of considering self-efficacy and self-esteem as integral components of individuals' psychological well-being, particularly within the college context. Recognizing the influence of these constructs can guide educators and administrators in creating supportive environments that nurture students' belief in their abilities and foster positive self-regard. Providing opportunities for skill development, mentorship programs, and encouraging a growth mindset can all contribute to enhancing self-efficacy and self-esteem among college students.

Furthermore, the present study underscores the value of considering both self-efficacy and self-esteem when designing interventions or programs aimed at promoting positive self-perceptions and psychological functioning. Addressing these constructs simultaneously can lead to more comprehensive and effective interventions that target both individuals' beliefs in their abilities and their overall self-worth.

In conclusion, the implications of this study extend to both research and practice domains. Understanding the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among undergraduate and postgraduate students can inform future research endeavors, guide the development of targeted interventions within educational settings, and ultimately contribute to the enhancement of students' psychological well-being and academic success.

Limitations of the Study

The present study, although contributing valuable insights into the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among college students, has several limitations that should be taken into account.

- **Small Sample Size:** the sample size of 60 participants, equally distributed between undergraduate and postgraduate students, may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a larger population. The small sample size decreases the statistical power of the study and increases the likelihood of Type II errors. To establish stronger generalizability, future research with larger sample sizes should be conducted.
- **Self-Report Measures:** the utilization of self-report measures via Google Forms to assess self-esteem and self-efficacy introduces potential biases and limitations. Self-report measures are susceptible to response biases, including social desirability bias or participants' subjective interpretations of the items. This could impact the accuracy and validity of the collected data. Moreover, self-reported measures may be influenced by participants' mood, context, or cognitive biases, leading to measurement error.
- **Cross-Sectional Design:** Furthermore, the reliance on cross-sectional data collected at a single time point limits the ability to establish causal relationships or examine changes over time. Longitudinal designs would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic nature of the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among college students. By collecting data at multiple time points, researchers can better understand the directionality of the relationship and potential changes in these constructs over time.
- **Limited Generalizability:** the study's focus on college students from a specific geographic location may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other cultural

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contexts or educational settings. Cultural factors, societal expectations, and educational systems can vary across regions and may influence individuals' self-perceptions and self-esteem. Therefore, caution should be exercised when applying the findings to diverse populations or cultural contexts.

In conclusion, while the study provides valuable insights into the relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem among college students, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations associated with the small sample size, the use of self-report measures via Google Forms, and the absence of specific information about the standardized tests used. Future research should aim for larger and more diverse samples, utilize longitudinal designs, select reliable and valid measures, and consider multiple methods of data collection to enhance the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the findings.

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Conflict of Interest

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