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## Original Article

# Analysis of Self-esteem and Academic Achievement among the Midwifery Students of Mashhad School of Nursing and Midwifery in 2013

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** The students' academic achievement is of paramount significance for their future accomplishments. Academic achievement is associated with various effective factors, one of which is self-esteem. The current study was conducted to assess the correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement of the midwifery students at Mashhad University of Medical Sciences in 2013.

**Methods:** This analytical study was carried out on the midwifery students of Mashhad School of Nursing and Midwifery in the first semester of the academic year 2013-2014. The participants were selected through census sampling. The instruments for data collection included a personal and academic information questionnaire and Rosenberg self-esteem scale. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS-16 software using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficient.

**Results:** The mean of grade point average of the students was  $16.31 \pm 1.05$  (Mean $\pm$ SD). Total mean score of self-esteem was reported to be  $16.54 \pm 2.34$ . The majority of students were reported to have a moderate self-esteem (84.9%). The results of Pearson correlation test showed no significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** The findings indicated no significant correlation between the students' self-esteem and their academic achievement. Other factors such as cultural, emotional and psychological conditions in the society, however, seem to be associated with academic achievement and self-esteem. Hence, more comprehensive studies are recommended to be carried out in this regard.

**Keywords:** Self-esteem, Students midwifery, Academic achievement

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## Introduction

The students' academic achievement plays a pivotal role in their future success (1). It is also a significant parameter in higher education assessment (2, 3). Academic achievement is defined as the predetermined educational objectives the students are expected to accomplish during their learning attempts (2). Disregarding the academic achievement, which is followed by academic failure, reduces the knowledge and efficiency of the students (1) and imposes numerous damages and irreversible harms on the individual, family and community directly and indirectly (1, 4). Academic achievement is influenced by different factors such as personal, social, academic, educational and psychological characteristics (1). Analyzing these factors and determining the effect of each on academic achievement leads to the recognition of factors affecting the growth and development in any community and organization (1).

Psychological factors, including self-esteem, are the factors that affect academic achievement (5). Self-esteem is part of a person's self-concept (6, 7). On the other hand, self-esteem is defined as how people think of themselves, how much they love themselves, how much they are pleased with themselves, and how they sense themselves socially and academically (8). In fact, by self-esteem, it is meant how much the ideal self is similar and compatible with the real self (9). Further, the level of self-esteem affects all levels of a person's life, including thinking manner, feeling and performance (10, 11). The results of the study by Alves-Martins et al (2002) showed that people with higher self-esteem had a higher resistance against life problems than those with low self-esteem, so they would have a higher possibility of success (12).

Hosseini et al (2007) indicated that people with higher self-esteem enjoyed a more favorable academic status (8). However, other scholars cast doubt on the direct correlation of self-esteem and academic achievement and believe that moderate or high self-esteem does not have a tremendous impact on academic achievement, but low self-esteem has an inhibitory effect on self-confidence and academic achievement (13). Moreover, the findings of Tamannaifar et al (2010) demonstrated no significant correlation between the students' self-esteem and their academic achievement (14).

Hence, given the significance of this issue and the conflicting results presented so far, the current study was carried out to evaluate the correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement among the midwifery students of Mashhad University of Medical Sciences (MUMS) in 2014.

## Methods

This analytical study was performed on the midwifery students of Mashhad School of Nursing and Midwifery in 2014, who were selected through census sampling. The study sample comprised of the undergraduate midwifery students studying in the third, fifth and seventh semesters ( $n=53$ ) at Mashhad School of Nursing and Midwifery in the first semester of academic year 2013-2014. The data collection instruments included a personal and academic information form and Rosenberg self-esteem scale.

The personal and academic information included age, residence, marital status and total grade point average of the students at the end of the academic year. The validity of the mentioned questionnaire was confirmed by content validity. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale consists of 10 general statements, five statements with negative words and five statement with affirmative words, and each item is scored based on a four-option scale; completely agree, agree, disagree and completely disagree. The scores of this scale range from 0 to 3, with 30 as the total maximum score. The scores  $>25$  indicate high self-esteem, 15-25 show moderate self-esteem and  $<25$  indicate low self-esteem (15). The content validity of this scale has been confirmed by various studies (8, 15), and its reliability has been approved by Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=0.89$ ).

The study proposal was confirmed by the university committee of ethics. Having obtained the written permission from the university, the researcher embarked upon sampling. The personal and academic questionnaire and Rosenberg self-esteem scale were completed by the students (out of their class hours) in 10 minutes. The collected data were fed into SPSS-16 software and analyzed by descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficient (first the normality of quantitative variables was determined and then the data were analyzed). The confidence level of 95% and significance level of 0.5 were considered for all tests.

## Results

The students' mean age was  $32.14 \pm 1.08$  (Mean $\pm$ SD) and their mean grade point average was reported to be  $16.31 \pm 1.05$ . About 63.3% of the students were single and 55% of them lived in dormitories. The students' mean self-esteem was  $16.54 \pm 2.34$  and grade point average was  $16.31 \pm 1.05$ . Self-esteem was reported to be moderate in 84.9% and low in 15.1% of the students. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient showed no significant correlation between total self-esteem and academic achievement ( $p = 0.91$ ,  $r = 0.01$ ). Moreover, no significant relationship was found between academic achievement

and personal and academic variables, including age, marital status and residence ( $p>0.05$ ).

## Discussion

The findings of the present study showed no significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement, and self-esteem was reported to be moderate in the majority of the students. Also, the results of the studies carried out by Salmalian et al (2014) and Zare et al (2007) indicated no significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement (16, 17). However, Hosseini et al (2007), El-Anzi (2005), Ross and Broh (2000) and Kamali et al (2009) reported a positively significant relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement (8, 18, 19, 20). A meta-analysis showed that self-esteem has an indirect effect on academic achievement because depression and fear of failure in people with low self-esteem cause a sense of inability and lack of competence, demotivates them to make attempts, and affects their performance (21).

Moreover, the findings of Moulavi et al regarding the factors affecting academic motivation demonstrated that self-esteem is an influential factor in increasing academic motivation. In fact, high self-esteem can enhance the students' academic motivation and low self-esteem can demotivate them (22). The people with high self-esteem are more resistant to the life problems and possess higher levels of perseverance, thereby having a higher chance of success (20). On the other hand, more competence is not limited to higher academic achievement and score at university. University is a socioacademic environment in which some of the students encounter such problems as lack of interest in their major, learning disability, incorrect selection of courses, a sense of obligation in accepting the educational regulations, residential problems at dormitory, economical needs and concerns about future career (16). Also, the findings of the current research revealed no significant correlation between the students' academic semester, marital status and residence, and self-esteem and academic achievement, which is in line with the results of the study conducted by Hosseini et al (2007) (8). To examine such relationships, more targeted studies with larger sample size and concentration on these variables are required to be performed. Since there may be other factors that affect the students' self-esteem and academic achievement, further studies are suggested to consider other confounding factors that can influence self-esteem and academic achievement.

## Conclusion

The results of this study indicated no significant correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement and the majority of students were reported to have a moderate level of self-esteem. Thus, it is necessary to take the students' self-esteem into account and apply specific strategies to enhance their self-esteem and consequently their academic achievement. It seems that other factors involved with cultural, emotional and psychological conditions of society affect self-esteem and academic achievement; therefore, more comprehensive studies are recommended to be carried out in this regard.

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