



ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

## Impact of Self-Worth Perception on Achievement Motivation among University Students

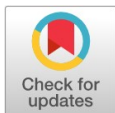
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**Abstract**— The present research aims to highlight the impact of self-worth perception on achievement motivation among university students. The Sample, which was collected by the simple random sampling was consisted of 50 male and 79 female University students (N=129). The study is cross-sectional in nature. Two instruments were used to check self-worth and achievement motivation. One was Students' Motivation scale and the other was Contingencies of self-worth scale. The results of the data, analyzed through the SPSS, showed that self-worth is significantly predicts and positively correlated with the achievement motivation of university students. Moreover, there was also a significant difference on the basis of gender. Results revealed that female students have high self-worth and academic motivation as compared to male students.

**Index Terms**— Self-worth; Achievement motivation; Students; Bahawalpur

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### Introduction

An individual's evaluation of himself or herself as a valuable, capable human being deserves respect and consideration. Positive feelings of self-worth tend to be associated with a high degree of self-acceptance and self-esteem. Individual's tendency to protect their sense of self-worth as the motive of avoiding failure and hence approaching success. Such theory commonly applies to students in the school and university context where frequent evaluation of one's ability and comparison between peers exist. A majority of students believe that being academically competent is a way of maintaining self-esteem, thus try to maximize their academic competence and avoid failure. The effort an individual puts in for the maximization of academic competence to protect self-worth is often defined as a "double-edged sword"; while it is an essential factor of success, it can also result in feelings of worthlessness and incapability if one fails (Covington, 1984).

It is also recommended by many theorists that students self-worth which is dependent on their academics are at the risk of under-performance (Burhans & Dweck, 1995; Covington, 1984; Crocker, Brook, Niiya, & Villacorta, 2006; Crocker & Park, 2004; Nicholls, 1984). It is believed by many theorists that it could be motivating to have one's self-worth on his or her academic achievements, but it could also be stressful, cause reduction in inner motivation, increased anxiety and can damage self-regulatory behavior. To prove oneself worthy and valuable, he or she represent the success and hide the failure, in other words, this domain contains their self-validation goals (Crocker & Park, 2004). This need is not only for the acknowledgment from others but also for one's self-satisfaction of being worthy and valuable.

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Self-worth and self-esteem are often synonymous. When students are overinflated for their academic achievements, by their adults, their self-esteem can become exaggerated. That's why it is very necessary to build a mature concept of self-worth of students that will positively improve academic motivation of students (Kohn, 1994; Laraib, Hashmi, et al., 2018; Yaemjamuang, 2017). Therefore, it is evident from previous literature that self-worth has a significant role in the social and academic developmental perspectives (Byrne, 1984; Kohn, 1994).

### Objectives of the study

- To see the impact of self-worth on the achievement motivation of the university students.
- To check the gender differences among the impact of self-worth on achievement motivation of the university students.

### Research gap

The review of available literature identified the gap that there is a body of literature available on self-esteem and its role on academic motivation, but the role of self-worth in this regard is missing. Considering this gap, the present study investigated the impact of self-worth perception on academic achievement motivation of university students. It has also been identified that little attention has been given to the fact that how the self-worth perception has influenced academic motivation of students when they have a high level of self-worth. The research study focused on the following questions:

### Research questions

- Does self-worth have an impact on the achievement motivation of the university students?
- Does the gender difference exist among the impact of self-worth on achievement motivation of the university students?

### Review of Literature

The most famous paradigm in psychology is self-esteem/self-worth (Byrne, 1984). This is the most emphasized and discussed research concept, not only in the psychology/clinical psychology, but also in other disciplines. An extensive review conducted a decade ago, concluded that greater self-esteem and self-worth yields pleasurable emotional states and improved creativity, which causes the attainment of motivation, better performance in job and management (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). The definition of self-esteem is as "the value or worth a person thinks he has about his self". It is an individual's appraisal and reflection about his value and self-worth. According to researchers that the measurement of the self-esteem is a very complex task, it is a challenging concept to appraise and explore (Pals, 1999; Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995).

Similarly, it was also predicted that self-worth was a comprehensive, stable and precise self-concept (Harter, 2006; Valtin & Wagner, 2004). An individual's complete optimistic assessment of the self, formed mostly on the self-esteem or self-worth (Rosenberg et al., 1995). It is an inner feeling of an individual about one's self. Few researchers argued that it is composed of dichotomous extents, one is competence and the other is worth (Gecas, 1982; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983). The first extent, competence yields to the degree on which someone perceives he/she is proficient and competent. The second extent is worth, which yields to the degree to which a person feels himself worthy and valuable.

Several examiners conducted a great amount of research on the self-esteem sphere (Crocker, 2002; Crocker, Luhtanen, Cooper, & Bouvrette, 2003). It was revealed earlier that the prospect of academic self-esteem regulates the outcomes of failure and achievement. Individuals need to have faith that they are valued and worthy creatures, this craving motivates their behavior (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004). Self-worth plays a significant role in improving academic motivation (Crocker, 2002). The present research focuses on the importance of self-worth in academic motivation of students.

Based on the literature, the study hypothesizes the following:

*H<sub>1</sub>*: High self-worth perception will lead to high achievement motivation.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: Self-worth perception will have an impact on achievement motivation.

*H<sub>3</sub>*: The Achievement motivation will have a greater effect on female students than male students.

*H<sub>4</sub>*: Self-worth will have a greater effect on male students than female students.

### Theoretical framework

Covington's self-worth theory has been used in this study. It was anticipated by the self-worth theory that the greatest human need is seeking the self-acceptance and self-worth which is dependent on the capability to compete (Covington, 1984, 1998; Covington & Beery, 1976).

Mostly the students perceive that their self-worth is dependent on their academic achievements, it is possible that they link their positive self-worth with high academic achievements and negative self-worth with the lower academic achievements (Crocker et al., 2003). Numerous earlier theories clinched that those students whose self-worth is dependent on higher academic achievements, will try to perform better because their self-esteem got boosted by the good performance and decreases with the bad performance. The students, whose self-worth is not relied on the academic performance, will get lesser motivation from this phenomenon (Major & Schmader, 1998; Osborne, 1995; Steele, 1997).

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research design**

A correlational research design was applied to study the impact of self-worth perception on achievement motivation among university students.

### **Demographic sheet**

Name, age, gender and education were included in the demographic sheet.

### **Instruments**

Contingencies of self-worth scale (Crocker et al., 2003): This is 7 point Likert type scale containing 35 items, measuring the seven spheres which are assumed to be vital sources of self-esteem. Items are divided into the following categories (five items per category):

- Others' approval
- Physical appearance
- Outdoing others in competition
- Academic competence
- Family love and support
- Being a virtuous or moral person
- God's love

For current sample, the Cronbach's alpha was (.86) for the analysis of reliability of this scale. It also confirmed that the self-worth as a significant predictor of achievement motivation and contribute 63% variance in achievement motivation.

Student's Motivation Scale (Martin, 2001): Student motivation scale used in this study to see the achievement motivation of University students. It is a dichotomous scale consisted of 22 items. In this study the mean score of achievement motivation was found higher among female students (M=212.2) as compared with the male students (M=204.60). The Cronbach's alpha for the current sample is (.93) for the analysis of reliability of this scale.

### **Procedure**

The main study of the research was conducted on university students. In order to fulfill the requirements of the current study sample was taken randomly from university students' population. First, the students of university were approached and then brief instructions about questionnaire were given to all the participants. Only willing persons were included in research during data collection. It was made clear to all participants that their information will be retained confidential and will only be consumed for research purpose. Almost all the respondents completed the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

Random sampling was used to collect the data from university students of undergraduates, graduates and masters level students. Only those who voluntarily participated were included in the study. Total 129 students were participated in the study with 50 males and 79 females.

Table I  
Frequency distribution of demographic variables (N=129)

Respondent's Characteristics		f (%)
Gender	Male	50 (38.8)
	Female	79 (61.2)
Education	BS	66 (51.2)
	MSc	63 (48.8)

The above Table I showed the frequency of demographic variables. The sample of this research was collected from both Male and Female students. In education, data were taken from both BS and M.Sc. students.

Table II  
Reliability analysis of all study's variables (N=129)

Variables	M	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Achievement Motivation	24.12	15.70	.93
Self-worth	12.93	2.15	.86

In this Table II the results revealed that all scales used in this research found reliable instruments and confirmed the acceptable ranges of Cronbach's alpha (.86 to .93) for the analysis of reliability.

Table III  
Inter-correlation among self-worth and achievement motivation (N=129)

Variables	Self-worth	Academic achievement
Self-worth	-	.78**
Achievement Motivation		-

\*\*p < .01

The results of above Table III showed that self-worth was significantly ( $p < .01$ ) and positively correlated ( $r = .78$ ) with academic achievement of students. This means as the level of self-worth increases than student's Achievement Motivation also increases.

Table IV  
The impact of self-worth on achievement motivation (N=129)

Predictors	Model 1 B	Achievement Motivation
		95% CI
Constant & .67 & [48.40, 87.0]		
Self-worth	3.1**	[2.71, 3.55]
R2	.63	
F	220.9**	

\*\*p < .01; B for unstandardized regression coefficient; CI for confidence intervals.

The table IV results found that self-worth was a significant predictor of achievement motivation and contribute 63% variance ( $R^2 = .63$ ) in Academic achievement. It means that as the independent variable i.e. is self-worth increases the level of dependent variable i.e. academic achievement also increases.

Table V  
Comparison between gender (male & female) sample through independent sample t-test among achievement motivation (N=129)

Variable	Male(n = 50)		Female (n =79)		t	p	95%CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Achievement Motivation	204.60	46.17	212.2	36.7	2.37	.04	.40	4.41

The above Table V indicates the gender (male & female) differences in academic achievement. The mean score of Achievement Motivation was found higher among female respondents as compared to male respondents.

Table VI

Comparison of self-worth between gender (male & female) sample through independent sample *t*-Test (N=129)

Variable	Male(n = 50)		Female (n =79)		t	p	95%CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Achievement Motivation	45.56	10.53	44.2	10.2	1.37	.02	.35	3.21

The above Table VI indicates the gender (male & female) differences in self-worth. The mean score of self-worth was found higher among male respondents as compared to female respondents.

**Discussion**

The 1st hypothesis stated “high self-worth perception will lead to high achievement motivation”. The results for this hypothesis were shown in Table 3 which showed that the self-worth is significantly and positively correlated ( $p < .01$ ) to achievement motivation of the respondents. Hence, 1st hypothesis is supported. The findings of the present result are consistent with the previous researches (Bray, 2001; Fathi-Ashtiani, Ejei, Khodapanahi, & Tarkhorani, 2007; Walter Jr, 2003).

The 2nd hypothesis concerned “self-worth perception will have an impact on achievement motivation”. By testing this hypothesis the results found in Table IV which revealed the self-worth as a significant predictor of Academic achievement and contribute 63% increase ( $R^2 = .63$ ) in Academic achievement. It means that self-worth has significant ( $p < .01$ ) impact on Academic achievement. The current findings revealed that those students, who have greater academic motivation, tend to develop higher level of self-worth. It was also supported by previous researches that escalation in self-worth is positively correlated with the escalated achievement motivation (Wiggins, Schatz, & West, 1994).

The 3rd hypothesis stated “Achievement motivation had a great effect on female students than male students”. Independent *t*-test was applied to analyze this hypothesis. The results showed that achievement motivation is higher of female students than in male students. Literature also supports this hypothesis (Valentine, DuBois, & Cooper, 2004).

The 4th hypothesis concerned that “self-worth had a great effect on male students than female students”. Independent sample *t*-test was carried out to analyze this assumption. Table 6 showed that the mean score of self-worth was found higher among male students than in female respondents. Hence, the current results are supported by many researches (Nagar, Sharma, & Chopra2, 2008; Pullmann & Allik, 2008; Tella, 2007). Therefore, it can be concluded that self-worth plays a vital; role in the determination of achievement motivation of the students.

**Future implications & Recommendations**

More research is needed to endorse these conclusions and to inspect whether they have any inferences for dealing with students to expand their educational performance. Lastly, there is a need to develop and assess programs for counselors, teachers and school administrators to train them about the hands on techniques of boosting the self-worth of the students.

**Conclusion**

Consequently, the connection between self-worth and academic motivation of the students is indispensable. Results revealed that self-worth has an impact on the academic motivation. When a student realizes that they can overcome their failure by the persistent efforts, it will stop them by developing the approach of hopelessness. Teachers must apply the strategies to construct and enhance the self-worth/self-esteem, which will indirectly boost their academic motivation.

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