

# The Correlation between Levels of Self-Esteem, University Commitment and Academic Performance among Undergraduate Students

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*Abstract*— Factors that influence academic performance are various. This paper in particular discusses how self-esteem and study university commitment are related to students' performance at University Malaysia Pahang. Participants for this study were 194 undergraduate students represented by 77 Males and 117 Females. SPSS package version 22 was employed to estimate the correlation between the variables. The selected variable for the study was measured using Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSES) developed by Rosenberg, 1965. University commitment furthermore was measured by using Brittany Davis scale, 2014, which was derived from Allen and Meyers's. Students' academic performance was derived through students' GPA. The score of the level of self-esteem is counted according to the positive item method. The results of the study revealed significant relationships between the levels of self-esteem and academic performance, but there were no significant relationships between university commitments and academic performance. The findings suggested recommendations to ascertain student's performance by manipulating sources of esteem where possible.

*Keywords*— *self-esteem; university commitment; academic performance*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is generally regarded as an estimation in which people express approval or disapproval of themselves and make judgments about their personal value [1]. Thus, self-esteem is an attitude about the self and is related to personal beliefs about skills, abilities, social relationships, and future outcomes [2]. Individuals who have high self-esteem generally like to take more challenging goals than do individuals with low self-esteem [3]. Self-esteem showed in Heatherton and Wyland [2] classic definition of self-esteem:

The evaluation of the Pearson: expresses an attitude of approval and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. Bekirogullari and Rahmani [4] defined self-esteem as a standard by which a person judges her/himself, an estimate, a feeling, and an emotion. Salmela-Aro and Nurmi [5] investigating and knowing young adults' self-esteem during university studies would predict their career characteristics and evaluation components of work. Salmela-Aro and Nurmi [5] found self-influenced by academic achievement. There are many factors affects the students' academic performance, such as self-esteem and university commitment. Here we are going to talk about the correlation between self-esteem and academic performance. Students make universities worth and make it valuable. Students are most essential asset for any University. Student academic performance linked to the social and Economic development of the country in direct and indirect way. Students' performance has an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will be responsible of the flourishing become for the country's social and economic sustainability [6]. Mushtaq and Nawaz Khan [6], found that students' Performance is significantly and positively correlated with academic

environment. The students who are actively engage in the learning process are observed to have a positive correlation with their GPA. Okoko [7] indicates that enhancing students' self-esteem by itself can actually increase grades. Studies done by Bozkurt, Demirok and Jenaabadi [8] additionally, showed positive and significant relation between self-esteem and academic performance. More studies nevertheless, have reached the conclusion that academic performance and self-esteem are positively correlated [9]. Fallis [10] found that self-esteem is related to some components of success. Some researchers argue that students who perform higher in school have positive self-esteem, while others argue that positive self-esteem is a necessary pre-requisite for academic performance [11]. Research also shows that feeling worthless can cause depressing, and depression generally leads to low performance [12]. Also Cast and Burke [13] said: people who feel worthy, able and competent are more likely to achieve their goals than who feel worthless and incompetent.

And now we will talk about the University commitment and academic performance. The most essential outcomes for any university is the student retention, and research has shown it to be a very challenging problem for many universities, especially in times of economic hardship [14]. In order to remain successful universities, a university must retain a number of students every year [15]. Research has indicated university commitment, may be one of strongest predictors of student retention [14]. Bekirogullari, Haftkhavani, Faghiharam and Araghieh [16], in their research differentiate between the three types of general commitment and clarify the effect of each component on the academic performance of the students. They reported high correlation between commitment and students' performance. The three types of commitment are:

- Affective commitment which is the first component of Allen and Meyer's it defines the component of affective commitment as an employee's want or desire to stay at an organization.
- Continuance commitment is the second component of Allen and Meyer's. Continuance commitment can be described as an individual's need to stay at an organization. Davis [14] suggests that continuance commitment is present when an individual perceives a profit associated with continued participation and a cost associated with leaving.
- Normative commitment, the final component of Allen and Meyer's, this component reflects one's sense of responsibility to an organization. Moynihan, Boswell and Boudreau [17] articulates that individuals who exhibit normative commitment believe staying with their organization is the "right" and moral thing to do.

Organizational Commitment concept becoming prevalent is because of its significant relationship to organization's effectiveness and efficiency [16]. Organizational Commitment has been defined as a psychological condition (which related to the levels of self-esteem) that describes some kind of a desire for staying and the need for offering services at an organization, and can affect many problems as academic withdraw[16].

A research by Jaros [18], which was done in China reported that as the employees' commitment increases their performance were improved. Bekirogullari, Haftkhavani, Faghiharam and Araghieh [16] concluded that the behaviour which being desirable has a positive effect on the organizational commitment, and this will lead to the improvement of performance. They have also found out that there was a significant correlation between emotional commitments with good results. They suggested that the most important results of the commitment are:

- 1- Increase the intention to stay longer in the organization and reduction the withdrawal
- 2- Better performance and better results

Individuals that are committed to the value and goals of an organization have a higher morale and lower turnover, increased job satisfaction, and increased productivity [19, 20]. Knowing what drives the commitment of individuals, got tangible results faster.

Commitment can directly affect persons psychology and emotional attachment to their organization, jobs, work groups or teams, peers and supervisors [21]. Values has gotten from Individuals commitment to the organization can Summarize by: exert extra effort, desire organizational membership, protect establishment goals and values [22, 23]. Commitment is related positively to the desirable work outcomes like (student's satisfaction, motivation and performance), and related negatively to absenteeism and turnover [21]. For that, Students who are committed to their university, continue with that university especially when they have high affective commitment [19]. They feel proud to be a member and a part of the university, respecting its values and accomplishments. Commitment students improve their team performance, pre-social behavior and group cohesion. It is also enhanced individual performance and satisfaction [24]. Furthermore, Govindarajo and Kumar [25] research suggested that in any education industry attrition is the biggest problem which research should focus on and find the best way to minimize the attrition. The research also found that the rate of the attrition increases every year for many reasons like the crisis which face the world now days.

Also we found it is important to study the correlation between Self-esteem and university commitment. There are several empirical investigations that show the relationship between the levels of self-esteem and people attitudes. The findings showed a significant and positive relationship between self-esteem and commitment and showed that individuals with high levels of self-esteem are more committed to their organization than those with low self-esteem [26]. Similarly, when organizations recognize their employees, they would put their endeavor to meet their needs for approval, esteem, and affiliation to the organization [26].

When people meet their socioemotional needs, they will do their jobs better [26]. According to the social exchange theory which developed by Soulen [27], each party has perceptions and expectations regarding the behaviour of the other party, thus employees will obligate to the organization, when they perceived organizational support [26].

Pierce and Gardner [28] had found that people with higher levels of self-esteem were more tending to have positive attitudes toward their organization and do better than others who have lower levels of self-esteem. people expected to enhance their commitment to the organization, when psychological satisfaction is associated with organizational support [26] When the organization improves the followers' self-esteem, followers will believe that they are significant worthy and valuable to the organization [28]. This study specifically aimed to investigate the relationship between the levels of self-esteem and the academic performance among undergraduate student at university Malaysia Pahang, also did an investigation on the relationship between the university commitment and academic performance among undergraduate students at university Malaysia Pahang. Finally we investigated the relationship between the levels of self-esteem, and university commitment among undergraduate students at university Malaysia Pahang.

## 2. Methods

Research design: the study used correlational design and quantitative approach. The decision to use this design was due to the fact that a correlational design enables the researcher to discover the correlation between two variables or more through using correlational statistics in addition this approach can show not only the positivity or the negativity between variables but also the strength or the weakness. While for data analysis was used the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version (22)

Participants: The target participants of this study are undergraduate students who enrolled in the final year of bachelor degree and this study will conduct on 194 students enrolled at university Malaysia Pahang (UMP). The sample was predominantly female (M= 77, F=117). The student sample was predominantly Malaysian, and some Chinese. The student sample was predominantly from the faculty of chemical engineering 87 participants, with 85 from civil engineering, 1 mechanical engineering, 4 technology engineering, and 17 from other engineering faculties.

This study predicted three hypothesis and the following hypotheses have been formulated:

- Hypothesis1. There would be a significant relationship between levels of self-esteem and academic performance
- Hypothesis2. There would be a significant relationship between university commitment and academic performance.
- Hypothesis3. There would be a significant relationship between the levels of self-esteem and university commitment.

And we used three scales to measure three variables. The first one was: Self-esteem scale. This scale it is a self-report Likert scale measuring the general feelings of the participants about themselves and was used in over 1000 studies. Example of those scale are "I feel I have a number of good qualities"; "At times, I think I am no good at all". The items were rated on a four-point Likert scale (1, totally disagree; 4, totally agree). Thus, the scale with higher scores reflecting more positive evaluations of persons' self-esteem. The possible total score can range from a minimum of 10 to maximum of 40 The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scale for the current research participants were 0.747 which is close to 1, 0 and consistent.

The second one was used to measure the University commitment. Using an instrument adapted from the organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1990) and was tested by Davis [14]. Succeeding the original Organizational commitment scale, University commitment also measures three components: affective, continuance, and normative. It has 24 items which were rated on a 7 point likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree and its reliability coefficient is 0.938 which showed high consistency in measurement [14].

The third one was the Students' performance, and it was measured via responses given by participants to question related to their latest university grade point average (GPA). The researcher used the latest university GPA of participants because they were at their last semester of their degree.

## 3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine if there are significant correlation between self- esteem, university commitment and the academic performance of undergraduate students who are at the final year of their degree. Results are presented and discussed.

Table 1: obtained value, Pearson correlation, of self-esteem and academic performance of undergraduate students at UMP

<b>Correlations</b>			
		<i>participant's GPA</i>	<i>Self-esteem</i>
Participant's GPA	Pearson Correlation	1	0.151*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-----	0.036
	N	194	194
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	0.151*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.036	-----
	N	194	194

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The obtained value of  $p = 0.036$  are found to be significant at 0.05 levels. It shows that self-esteem has significant correlation on academic performance. At the look of  $r(192) = 0.151$ . Thus our hypothesis that there is a significant correlation between self-esteem and academic performance is accepted.

Table 2: The correlation between university commitment and academic performance of undergraduate students in the final year.

<b>Correlation</b>			
		<i>participant's GPA</i>	<i>University commitment</i>
Participant's GPA	Pearson Correlation	1	0.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-----	0.706
	N	194	194
University commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.027	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.706	-----
	N	194	194

The obtained value of  $p = 0.706$  are found to say there is no significant correlation between university commitment and students' GPA. Thus our second hypothesis that there would be a significant correlation between university commitment and academic performance has been rejected.

Table 3: The correlation between self-esteem and university commitment Of undergraduate students at the final year of their degree are presented and discussed

<b>Correlation</b>			
		<i>Self-esteem</i>	<i>University commitment</i>
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	0.158*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-----	0.028
	N	194	194
University commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.158*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.028	-----
	N	194	194

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The obtained value of  $p = .028$  are found to be significant at 0.05 levels. It shows that self-esteem has significant correlation on university commitment. At the look of  $r(192) = 0.158$ . Thus our third hypothesis that there is a significant correlation between self-esteem and university commitment has been accepted.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to test the correlation between self-esteem, university commitment and academic performance among the undergraduate students at university Malaysia Pahang. According to this purpose three hypotheses

were examined. We appreciate that the objectives of this study have been successfully met as the above presented results answered the research question and confirmed the hypotheses except the second one. The observed correlations (self-esteem and academic performance) was positively recorded which means student who has high self-esteem will get high performance, while the ones who has low self-esteem, will get low academic performance and this consistent with the findings of Bekirogullari and Rahmani [4]. However, Komarraju and Nadler [29] found a negative correlation between Performance and self-esteem among his sample which was undergraduate students, the present research indicated that this correlation was weak, but positive, and need to do more research to see why the correlation was not so strong and what are the factors which affect the two variables. Regarding the second hypothesis, it was found out that our results did not indicate any significant relationship between university commitment and students' GPA. This result supports Medallon [21] conclusion that commitment and performance are generally unrelated, and if the students commitment to the university is high not necessary to be high with academic performance. Thus the lack of the correlation between university commitment and student performance was believed associated with other factors such as university environment, social and economic. Moreover, Davis [14], also indicated a positive correlation between self-esteem and university commitment. Whereas Soulen [27] and Moynihan, Boswell and Boudreau [17] showed significant relationship between the two variables. In their meta-analysis, Soulen [27] reported that the confidence interval around the mean correlation between commitment and performance included zero However; their conclusion is based on the attitudinal definition of organizational commitment and does not distinguish between the affective and continuance dimensions of commitment and it is important in the future studies to analyses the three components of the university commitment and determine what strength of each component. Recent research has demonstrated that the distinctions among the bases of commitment may be crucial to understanding the relationship between commitment and performance. Although. The findings germane to the third research hypothesis, indicating that self-esteem is correlated with commitment, which showed when the student have high self-esteem will have at the same time high commitment to the university, were in line with the following studies. Rill, Baiocchi, Hopper, Denker and Olson [30] and Poorgharib, Abzari and Azarbajani [31], maintained that there was a relationship between self-esteem on the one hand and commitment on the other. Moreover, Poorgharib, Abzari and Azarbajani [31] also indicated a positive correlation between commitment and self-esteem.

## 5. CONCLUSION

From the above results we can conclude that there is a significant correlation between levels of self-esteem and students' GPA. By contrast, there is no significant relationship between university commitment and students' GPA. Meanwhile there is a significant correlation between self-esteem and university commitment. The results most importantly provide evidence for the importance of the correlation of self-esteem and GPA. On the other hand, the correlation between university commitment and GPA was not significant.

However, by implementing rewards system, academic assistance, special rewards, scholarship and other university supports, including training and re- training might show the students that the university cares for them. In return, students should developed sense of belonging increase students' self-esteem as well as their level of university commitment. Our findings recommend further studies on university commitment components and academic performance, how to keep enhancing students' self-esteem.

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