

## Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Relationship Between Self Esteem and Depression Among Senior High School Students

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### Abstract

With the spread of COVID-19, learning methodology has advanced to the present level of technology, and online learning has increased worldwide. Thus, the Philippines' situation with this learning modality influences mental health disorders, notably self-esteem, which is associated with depression. Moreover, this study investigates the relationship between self-esteem and depression among senior high school students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between self-esteem and depression ( $r=.014$ ).

**Keywords:** Depression, Self-Esteem, Online Learning, COVID-19 Pandemic, Senior High SchoolStudents

### Introduction

With the outbreak of COVID-19, learning pedagogy has entered the current level of technology, and online learning has emerged across the world (Salvador, 2020). With that being said, Tus (2021) pronounced that the state of the Philippines with this learning modality yields impacts on mental health conditions, specifically the self-esteem linked to depression. In addition, Małgorzata and Song (2021) declared that self-esteem is an essential psychological construct for healthy personality grooming. Consequently, these researchers also highlighted that people tend to provide judgments about their values and worth. Thus, Aronson, Wilson, Akert, and Sommers (2016) noted that a person's appraisal of his context with society pertains to self-esteem.

Furthermore, Ahmed et al. (2022) expressed that self-esteem is how people deem themselves and how much their opinion matters to them. This researcher also highlighted the issue concerning students' portrayal using other people. According to Henriksen (2017), people with high self-esteem think they are valuable and worthy; on the other hand, people with low self-esteem think they do not matter greatly. Using the study by Park (2017), threats to self-worth, feeling humiliated or shamed, experiencing failure, or suffering losses might lead to lower self-esteem. Moreover, these things can also provoke other psychological problems, including depression. Azmi et al. (2022) stated that a total of 41% of students experienced low self-esteem with a plausibility of depression. Further, the study appeared to impart that males were more prominent in developing low self-

esteem than females.

Hunt (2018) stated that social media has had a significant impact on people's self-esteem since the outbreak and continues to do so now. Boateng (2021), indicates that students use social media sites for information, communication, and connection building and maintenance. However, the majority of people make comparisons with others on an upward and downward scale. In addition Muqaddas (2017), stated that people who compare themselves to others and their lifestyles feel less obligated and grateful for their blessings as a result of upward comparisons as a result, it's impossible to keep individuals away from social media for an extended period of time, particularly students who use Facebook on a regular basis.

According to Ahmed et al. (2021), lower self-esteem is positively associated with social media addiction. Facebook addiction was positively related to depression and those who have suffered severe depression are frequently addicted to social media, specifically Facebook. Study findings also reveal that academic performance (CGPA) has a poor impact on social media dependence even after adjusting for different variables.

As articulated in study of Quynh and Hoang (2021) students in Vietnamese university have moderate self-esteem are now no longer affected by depression as expected, the male college students suggested substantially better self-esteem than their female fellows; however, the female college students reported higher levels of depression than the male ones. The effects additionally discovered that self-esteem turned negatively correlated with depression.

Moreover, this study investigates the relationship between self-esteem and depression among senior high school students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, this study will be based on the course of actions mitigating the chances of developing low self-esteem and contribute to the knowledge of the development of depression among students.

### Research Question

This study investigates the relationship between self-esteem and depression among senior high school students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it sought to answer the following question:

1. Is there a significant relationship between self-esteem and depression among senior high school students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?

## Literature Review

### Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is characterized as "a certain attitude and a recognition of oneself", which influences intuition and feelings towards oneself and others. Self-esteem is also related to social support (Choi et al., 2019). Exceptional self-esteem is related to several well-being conditions, such as high happiness and life fulfillment (Duffy et al., 2014). The critical effect of interpersonal connections on adolescents' self-esteem may be due to a few variables, counting the expanding capacity to create important mental connections with others and the plausibility to memorizing around oneself and one possesses working in particular contexts (Compare et al., 2013; Buonomo et al., 2017).

The affiliation between push, self-esteem, and misery is effortlessly predictable when considering, on the one hand, the impacts of self-esteem on adjustment and well-being and on the other hand, the inconvenient affiliation between self-esteem and interpersonal stressors (Babore et al., 2016).

In the study conducted by Yap et al. (2014), low self-esteem may be associated with the next probability of rising issues such as sadness, self-destructive contemplations, adolescent pregnancy, eating disorders, and trouble in social connections. low levels of self-esteem may compound the effects of other vulnerability factors within the improvement of depression in young people (Cimino et al., 2015).

Social networking sites offer assistance to individuals

to form social comparisons which increase their mental distress of individuals and lower their overall level of self-esteem (Chen & Lee, 2013).

Numerous eyewitnesses and researchers believe that due to the extent of the utilization of social networking sites, individuals have become the victims of lower self-esteem and self-growth. In this way, self-esteem is by definition a subjective construct and does not essentially reflect a person's objective characteristics and competencies. It is vital to recognize self-esteem from narcissism, as both develop and include positive self-evaluations (Orth et al., Paulhus et al. 2016).

The conceptualization of self-esteem as a subjective assessment is steady with how self-esteem is ordinarily assessed, utilizing self-report measures (Donnellan et al., 2015). A few accessible studies show that adolescent self-esteem predicts expanding parental warmth when parenting is assessed by child report, but not when evaluated by parent report or when method factors are controlled for (Brummelman et al., 2015; Krauss et al., 2020).

Given the high level of media and scientific attention, we must better grasp the real-world consequences of self-esteem. If high self-esteem is advantageous, then mediations that boost self-esteem in children, adolescents, and adults may improve their chances of success in critical life areas like relationships, school, and employment. In any event, if high self-esteem is merely a byproduct of life success (i.e., life victory leads to greater self-esteem rather than vice versa), then efforts to boost self-esteem (whether through prayer, treatment, or self-help literature) are fruitless (Baumeister & Vohs, 2018).

### Depression

Depression is the foremost common mental well-being condition within the general population, characterized by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of blame or low self-worth, disturbed rest or appetite, tiredness, and destitute concentration (Lim et al., 2018). Depression is depicted as a common and serious temperament clutter that results in tireless feelings of sadness and hopelessness and a loss of interest in activities that one once delighted in (American Psychiatric Affiliation, 2013).

Dealing with exclusion or a lack of social support may worsen depression for a few students; patients with clinical depression respond to social avoidance with more pronounced negative feelings than those without clinical depression (Jobst et al., 2015).

Depression and uneasiness can disable students' academic performance and social functioning, cause a significant burden on academics, and possibly influence their future career openings (Farrer et al., 2013).

Gacek and Krzywoszanski (2021) stated that Girls with special needs had more severe anxiety and depression symptoms than boys. In terms of the impact of the sum of experienced nuisances on anxiety, the researchers found no significant differences between girls and boys. In the general population, sex differences in anxiety and depression levels are expected.

Based on the study of Magklara, Bellos, Niakas et al. (2015), only a small percentage of depressed adolescents seek professional guidance. One of the main reasons is said to be financial difficulties. In this study, adolescents with depression had significantly higher alcohol, cigarette smoking, and cannabis use rates. Alcohol dependence became their coping mechanism, but it has been discovered that alcohol use disorders can not only negatively impact the situation, but can also cause depression.

### Self-Esteem and Depression

In the study of Makhubela (2019), low self-esteem was found to be a significant cause of depression, with stressful life events acting as a partial mediator. Support for the susceptibility effects of low self-esteem on depression emerged, and this support was consistent across gender groups. Low self-esteem could be a symptom that someone is on the verge of having a depressive mood.

According to Azizi et al. (2013), medical students, particularly army university students, are at significant risk for mental problems. The correlation between self-esteem and depression among nursing students at a Tehran medical institution was explored in this study. The findings reveal that there is a strong relationship between self-esteem and depression, and that increasing self-esteem lowers depression scores. It is thus conceivable to apply self-esteem-building techniques to enhance students' mental health.

Self-esteem and narcissism had no effect on depression; people who have high self-esteem are less likely to acquire depression, regardless of whether or not they are narcissistic. Because the data support the vulnerability paradigm of low self-esteem and depression, they have important theoretical implications.(Orth et al., 2016)

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study used a descriptive-correlational design to assess the link between self-esteem and depression among senior high school students. According to McCombes (2022), the main goal of descriptive research is to accurately and thoroughly describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. It can answer the questions of what, where, when, and how, but not why. A descriptive research design can employ a wide range of research methods to investigate one or more variables.

### Respondents

The respondents of this study were 150 senior high school students enrolled in public schools during the school year 2021-2022. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this research study used a convenience sampling technique via Google Forms, and the researchers later gathered and analyzed all of the data.

### Instruments of the study

A survey is used as a data collection tool in this research. The study utilized two instruments to investigate self-esteem and depression among the respondents, The Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale by Rosenberg (1965) and DASS-21. The respondents were given questions to answer, which the researchers assigned to them.

The Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale - 21 Items (DASS-21) is a collection of three self-report measures meant to examine depression, anxiety, and stress. The depression scale measures dysphoria, despair, life devaluation, self-deprecation, lack of interest/involvement, anhedonia, and lethargy. The DASS-21, is a quantitative measure of distress that Syd Lovibond and Peter Lovibond designed to measure the emotional states of depression among respondents. Thus, the study only employed the depression scale to measure the respondents' level of depression.

Meanwhile, the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale has 10 tests to see if it's relevant, but it's not equally discriminating and is connected to self-esteem in different ways. Item response theory was used to evaluate a commonly used self-report instrument for gauging individual self-esteem. The Rosenberg scale is used to assess self-esteem and is determined by summing the individual four-point items after the

negatively phrased questions have been changed. It is a ten-item scale that assesses both positive and negative feelings about oneself to determine overall self-worth. It is claimed that the scale is one-dimensional. All questions are graded on a four-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

### Procedures

Participants voluntarily participated in this study after providing informed consent. They were given the questionnaire in private, and there was no need for them to write down their demographic profiles. They were requested to fill in the blanks with the necessary information, follow the instructions and with the student's agreement and consent, they are free to answer the survey that may take for 10 to 15 minutes. Furthermore, their profiles will be handled privately in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. (RA 10173). The participants were provided time to respond to the questionnaire since the researchers needed to consider the privacy of the participants. The data collected in this study will be measured using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which will serve as the foundation for interpretation and analysis.

### Ethical Considerations

The participants were informed about the study's objectives, ethical guidelines were established and tight implementation on the whole process. The survey questionnaire was circulated via Google Form due to the COVID 19 pandemic situations. Furthermore, online platforms were used to put the ethical standards into action. The materials were chosen based on the study requirements and the techniques of data collecting were also looked into. The Google Forms-created survey questionnaire was shared on various social media platforms. The data collection was guided and approved under the guidance of the research professor. An agreement was included in the first section of the survey form to guarantee that the researchers received the respondents' information and permission before answering the question and the results corresponded well. With the factors listed above, the phrasing used in the questionnaire was bilingual (Filipino and English) speakers. As a result, ethical considerations were made apparent.

### Result

This section will show you the findings with the help

of a research question. The Pearson correlation coefficient was also calculated using SPSS. With this, the mean and the relationship between variables were compared and specified.

### Relationship between Self-Esteem and Depression

It focuses on the relationship between self-esteem and depression. In this table, it reveals the statistical analysis ( $r = .014$ ), that the variables showed a significant relationship between self-esteem and depression. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 1

*Relationship between Self-Esteem and Depression*

CORRELATION		
	<i>Self-Esteem</i>	<i>Depression</i>
<i>Self-Esteem</i>	-	.014*
<i>Depression</i>	.014*	-

In connection with the result of the study, Zhou, Li, Tian, and Huebne (2018), stated that self-esteem has a strong association with depression among early adolescents. Low self-esteem is a predictor of depression in early adolescence, and rejection responsiveness and loneliness play a mediating role. They also suggested that implementing the understanding of the methods or plans to address low self-esteem could reduce depression levels in early adolescents. Effective interventions include providing training better to interpret oral and behavioral signs in social interactions and developing more effective social skills to boost social confidence.

### Discussion

The information gathered in this study demonstrated how the two variables are associated with one another. The responses of 150 students were analyzed and provided as the framework for the findings on self-esteem and depression. This study discovered that self-esteem has a positive relationship with depression. As a result, this study concludes that students with low self-esteem are more likely to suffer from depression. Despite experiencing depression, providing a positive environment with good companionship will boost their confidence.

Despite the fact that some studies obtained



contradictory results and dismissed the relationship between these two variables, several studies remained consistent and supported this study. Furthermore, boosting students' self-esteem is beneficial to their situation, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic. Giving them social support will also help in their social and communication development.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has been found to have a special effect on students' self-esteem and depression. This study suggests that monitoring the students' current situation will prevent the risk of experiencing depressive symptoms.

## Conclusion

To conclude, the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased depressive symptoms in students, especially on students' self-esteem. According to the findings, there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and depression that's affecting the senior high school student in terms of their academic performance. In conclusion, the findings suggested that students should be given immediate consideration and support. Self-esteem is associated with depression which causes academic stress that significantly affect students quality of life and links to suicidal ideation.

According to the findings of this study, students require immediate consideration and support. We must look for preventive management strategies that have been shown to be effective during a pandemic. The findings of our study could help policymakers develop risk-control procedures as part of their future pandemic-prevention strategy. Furthermore, students must be trained to shift their mindset about their educational experience to a positive side, with stress-related growth. An adaptive mindset can assist students in becoming acquainted with new learning methods.

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