

**Relationship of Homesickness with Self-Esteem and Academic Performance among Hostellers Students**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Homesickness is a common emotional challenge faced by students living in hostels, often impacting their self-esteem and academic performance. While hostel life promotes independence and growth, it can also introduce psychological stressors that affect students' overall well-being.

**Objective:** To assess the association between homesickness, self-esteem, and academic performance among female hosteller students at Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS), Jamshoro.

**Methodology:** A comparative cross-sectional study was conducted among 306 female students residing in hostels at LUMHS. Data were collected using standardized tools, including the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), Utrecht Homesickness Scale (UHS), and Academic Performance Scale (APS), along with students' CGPA records. Non-parametric statistical tests, including Spearman's rho, were used due to the non-normal distribution of the data.

**Results:** The majority of participants (50.32%) reported moderate levels of homesickness, while 55.88% had higher self-esteem and 71.56% exhibited excellent academic performance based on CGPA. Spearman's correlation analysis showed a moderate positive correlation between self-esteem and academic performance ( $r_s = .312$ ,  $p = .001$ ), a moderate negative correlation between homesickness and academic performance ( $r_s = -.298$ ,  $p = .002$ ), and a moderate negative correlation between homesickness and self-esteem ( $r_s = -.361$ ,  $p = .000$ ). All results were statistically significant at  $p < .01$ .

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that higher self-esteem is associated with better academic performance, while greater homesickness is linked to lower self-esteem and academic achievement. These findings highlight the importance of emotional support systems, counseling services, and peer mentorship programs to promote psychological adjustment and academic success among hostel-residing students.

**Keywords:** Homesickness, Self-Esteem, Academic Performance, Hosteler Students, University Students, Psychological Well-Being.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Hostel life plays a critical role in shaping the academic, emotional, and social development of students, particularly those pursuing higher education away from home. For many students, staying in a hostel is their first prolonged experience of independence. This transition from home to hostel can be both enriching and challenging. On one hand, hostel life fosters personal growth, self-discipline, and a sense of responsibility.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it may present students with various stressors such as homesickness, adjustment difficulties, and loneliness, which can affect their academic performance and mental well-being.<sup>2</sup> Living in hostels often requires students to adapt quickly to new environments, peer groups, and routines. While some students thrive in these settings due to increased social interactions and peer support, others may experience anxiety, depression, and emotional distress, especially if support systems are lacking.<sup>3</sup> Hostel life expands students' social circles, exposing them to multicultural groups and fostering traits such as confidence, punctuality, responsibility, and adaptability.<sup>4</sup> However, it also presents challenges, including peer pressure, social disturbances, homesickness, and adjustment issues, which can negatively affect mental health and academic performance.<sup>5</sup> Female students, in particular, may experience greater adjustment difficulties and lower quality of life in hostel settings.<sup>5</sup>

Living in a hostel presents university students with a unique set of emotional and psychological challenges that can significantly impact their well-being and academic performance. Homesickness is a prevalent emotional challenge among hostel students, particularly those newly admitted to university. This emotional state is characterized by feelings of longing for home, which can result in heightened stress, loneliness, and depressive symptoms.<sup>6</sup> High levels of perceived stress are common, often triggered by strict hostel rules, academic pressure, lack of familiar support systems, and adjustment to new environments. Emotional stress is often more significant than environmental stress, especially for new hostel residents.<sup>7</sup> Hostel students generally show lower levels of emotional and social adjustment compared to those living at home, which can negatively affect their mental health.<sup>8</sup> Attachment styles influence emotional reactivity and interpersonal issues, such as being overly dependent, aggressive, or socially inhibited. Female students may experience more interpersonal challenges, such as being too open or caring.<sup>9</sup> Emotional distress, particularly from homesickness and loneliness, frequently results in sleep problems, further affecting mental health and daily functioning.<sup>10</sup> However, while the individual relationships between self-esteem and academic performance have been well-documented, the combined influence of homesickness, self-esteem, and academic performance, particularly among hostel-residing students, remains insufficiently explored. Most existing studies tend to examine these variables in isolation, without considering how emotional challenges such as homesickness may interact with self-perception and academic outcomes. This represents a significant gap in the current body of knowledge.

### **Aim**

The aim of the study was to assess the relationship of homesickness with self-esteem and academic performance among hostellers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Study Design and Setting**

A comparative cross-sectional study was conducted from May to October at Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences (LUMHS), Jamshoro, Pakistan. The university hosts a culturally diverse population in its on-campus hostels, providing an appropriate setting to examine the relationship between homesickness, self-esteem, and academic performance.

### **Study Population and Sampling**

The target population comprised female students residing in LUMHS hostels. Using Raosoft software, a sample size of 306 was determined from an estimated hostel population of 1500, with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria:

#### **Inclusion**

- Female students from any discipline, currently enrolled and residing in LUMHS female hostels.
- Willingness to participate.

#### **Exclusion**

- Students living at home, with relatives, or in independent housing.
- Male students.
- Students diagnosed with mental health conditions (particularly depression or anxiety).
- Unwilling participants.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Ethical approval was obtained from the LUMHS Ethical Review Committee and the Advance Study Research Board, along with permission from the hostel provost. After explaining the study objectives, informed written consent was obtained. A structured questionnaire was administered in person within hostel premises at convenient times. Completed forms were collected immediately to ensure data integrity and confidentiality.

### **Study Instruments**

The study utilized a adopted questionnaire consisting of four sections. The first section collected demographic information, including participants' age, year of study, place of origin, and duration of hostel stay. The second section assessed academic performance using the Academic Performance Scale (APS), a validated instrument with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89 and a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.85. In addition, the most recent cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of each participant was recorded to provide an objective measure of academic achievement. The third section measured self-esteem using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), a widely recognized 10-item tool rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," where higher scores indicated greater self-esteem. The fourth section evaluated homesickness through the Utrecht Homesickness Scale (UHS), which captures the emotional and psychological impact of being away from home, including feelings of longing, loneliness, and adjustment difficulties. Higher scores on the UHS reflected greater levels of homesickness.

### **Data Management and Analysis**

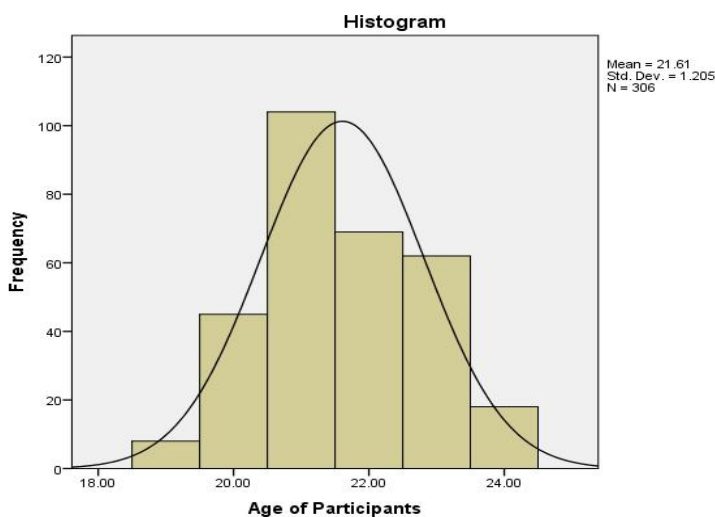
Data were double-checked for completeness and entered into SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics (mean, SD, frequency, percentage) summarized demographic and main variables. Normality was assessed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, both indicating non-normal distribution.

Spearman's rank-order correlation was applied to examine relationships among homesickness, self-esteem, and academic performance. A  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant.

### Ethical Considerations

All participants provided written informed consent. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by omitting names from data forms and securing records. The study adhered to institutional ethical standards.

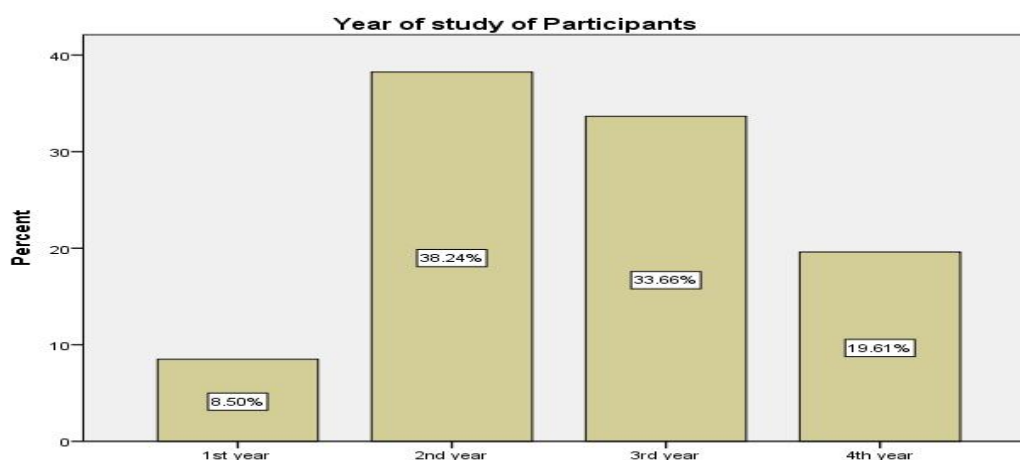
### RESULTS



**Figure 1: Age distribution among Participants**

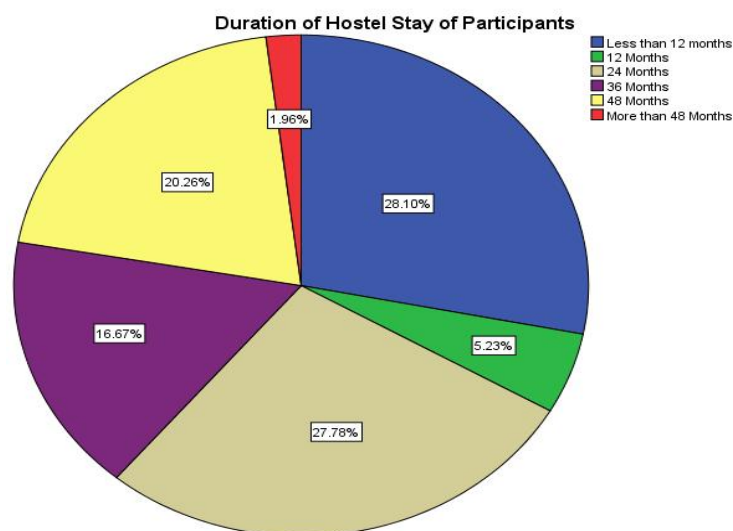
The above histogram visualizes the age distribution of the participants. The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 25 years, with a mean of 21.61 years ( $SD = 1.205$ ). As shown in the histogram, most participants are between 20 and 22 years of age.

**Figure 2: Year of Study distribution among Participants**



The above bar graph explains the year-wise distribution of participants in the study. The highest proportion of respondents was 2nd-year students (38.24%), followed closely by 3rd-year students (33.66%). Students in their 4th year made up 19.61% of the sample, while only 8.50% were in their 1st year.

**Figure 3: Duration of hostel stay distribution among participants**



The above pie chart shows, the duration of hostel stay among participants varied. The largest group (28.10%) had stayed in the hostel for less than 12 months, while 27.78% reported duration of 36 months. Those who had stayed for 48 months comprised 20.26% of the sample, followed by 24 months (16.67%) and 12 months (5.23%). Only a small percentage (1.96%) had stayed for more than 48 months.

**Table 1: Correlation of Homesickness with self-esteem and academic performance**

|                |                      |                         | Academic Performance | Self Esteem | Homesickness |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Spearman's rho | Academic Performance | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000                | .312        | -.298        |
|                |                      | Sig. (2-tailed)         |                      | .001        | .002         |
|                | Self Esteem          | Correlation Coefficient | .312                 | 1.000       | -.361        |
|                |                      | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .001                 |             | .000         |
|                | Homesickness         | Correlation Coefficient | -.298                | -.361       | 1.000        |
|                |                      | Sig. (2-tailed)         | .002                 | .000        |              |

Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to examine the relationships among academic performance, self-esteem, and homesickness, due to the non-normal distribution of the data. A moderate positive correlation was found between academic performance and self-esteem ( $r_s = .312, p = .001$ ), indicating that higher self-esteem is associated with better academic performance. A moderate negative correlation was observed between academic performance and homesickness ( $r_s = -.298, p = .002$ ), suggesting that students who experience greater homesickness tend to have lower academic performance. Additionally,

self-esteem and homesickness were found to be moderately negatively correlated ( $r_s = -.361, p = .000$ ), indicating that higher levels of homesickness are associated with lower self-esteem. All correlations were statistically significant at  $p < .01$ , supporting the hypothesized relationships among the psychological and academic variables.

## DISCUSSION

In the current study, figure 1 shows participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 years, with a mean age of 21.61 years ( $SD = 1.205$ ). The age histogram depicts a clear concentration of respondents between 20 and 22 years, indicating a relatively narrow, early-adulthood cohort. A study conducted at Kinnard College Lahore on 300 hostel residents aged 16–25 (mean = 22.15,  $SD = 1.83$ ) aligns closely with the current demographic profile.<sup>11</sup> Their cohort also clustered around early twenties, underscoring that homesickness research almost invariably involves young adult hostellers in tertiary education contexts. These consistencies reinforce that early adulthood is the most relevant stage for research on homesickness and academic adjustment. It also supports the external validity of our study context. The Figure 2 shows year-wise distribution. In terms of academic year distribution, the majority of participants were from the second (38.24%) and third years (33.66%), followed by fourth-year (19.61%) and first-year students (8.50%). This pattern aligns with findings from prior research conducted by Arsalan et al., where second- and third-year students were more prevalent in hostel-based studies.<sup>12</sup> The relatively low representation of first-year students may reflect their ongoing adjustment to university life, as well as greater levels of homesickness and reluctance to engage in academic research. Figure 3 shows the duration of hostel stay varied among participants, with the largest proportion (28.10%) staying for less than 12 months, followed by 27.78% with 36 months of stay. Notably, only a small percentage (1.96%) had resided in the hostel for more than 48 months. This variation is crucial in understanding the psychological adjustment of hosteller students, as duration of stay has been shown to influence levels of homesickness. Students who had recently transitioned to hostel life, particularly those with less than 12 months of stay, may be more prone to homesickness due to emotional detachment from family, unfamiliarity with their new environment, and a lack of established peer relationships. This aligns with a longitudinal study on first-year college students conducted by English et al. (2020), who reported that the initial phase of separation from home is associated with heightened emotional distress and adjustment difficulties among college students.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, students with longer hostel stays may have undergone emotional and social adaptation, thus experiencing reduced homesickness and improved self-regulation. Recent evidence supports that with time, students tend to develop resilience, coping mechanisms, and supportive peer networks that buffer against the negative psychological effects of homesickness.<sup>14,15</sup> Table 1 revealed statistically significant relationships among the key variables, academic performance, self-esteem, and homesickness, providing empirical support for the hypothesized associations. A moderate positive correlation was observed between academic performance and self-esteem, indicating that students with higher self-esteem tend to achieve better academic outcomes. This aligns with recent studies suggesting that self-esteem enhances academic motivation, self-efficacy, and resilience, which are crucial for sustained academic success.<sup>16–18</sup> conversely, a moderate negative correlation was found between academic performance and homesickness, suggesting that greater homesickness is associated with lower academic performance. This finding reinforces prior research, which has shown that emotional distress and feelings of disconnection caused by homesickness can interfere with cognitive focus and academic engagement.<sup>19,20</sup> additionally, self-esteem and homesickness were also negatively correlated, indicating that students experiencing higher levels of homesickness are more likely to have reduced self-esteem. This is consistent with recent literature suggesting that separation from familiar environments can diminish one's sense of self-worth, particularly if students struggle to build new social connections or lack effective coping strategies.<sup>21–23</sup> the reciprocal relationship between homesickness and self-esteem suggests a psychological vulnerability that may further impact academic performance.



## CONCLUSION

The study findings demonstrated a moderate positive correlation between self-esteem and academic performance, indicating that students with higher self-esteem tend to perform better academically. Conversely, homesickness was moderately negatively correlated with both self-esteem and academic performance, suggesting that higher levels of homesickness are associated with lower self-worth and academic achievement.

## LIMITATIONS

Its cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences between homesickness, self-esteem, and academic performance; future longitudinal studies would be better suited to capture variations and trends over time. Additionally, the research was confined to a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other institutional or regional contexts. The use of a non-probability purposive sampling technique may have introduced selection bias, thereby reducing the representativeness of the sample. Furthermore, the exclusive focus on female hostelers precludes any exploration of gender-based differences in the studied variables. Finally, the study relied on self-reported measures, which are susceptible to response biases such as social desirability or the underreporting of emotional challenges, potentially affecting the accuracy of the data.

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