

Self-Esteem in School Management Students with Special Reference to Gender and Age

Basile Mulwani Makelele *

Department of Psychology, University of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo

*Corresponding author: basilemulwani@yahoo.fr

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Abstract Currently, higher education and university students constitute a sensitive group facing psychological issues, given the educational and socio-economic crisis affecting several countries. Students in health and humanities, especially those in psychology and school management, are more vulnerable compared to students in other fields because they work with a dynamic being conditioned by the multiple changes in their environment. Assessing their self-esteem helps evaluate their psychosocial behaviors as a dynamic element of conation that signals the nature of mental health. Our research problem is formulated as follows: (i) What is the level of self-esteem among school management students at ISP/L'shi? And (ii) what factor most influences the development of self-esteem in these students? The objectives of this study are to: (i) measure the level of self-esteem among school management students, and (ii) determine, between age and gender, the factor that most influences the development of self-esteem in these students as future school managers. The observation method was materialized by Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) as the data collection technique. Content analysis and the chi-square statistical test were used for data analysis. Our study sample consisted of 72 students (44 females and 28 males; aged 19 to 32) attending the School Management and Training Institutions program at the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Lubumbashi. The results show notable disparities in self-esteem based on gender, indicating that men tend to display more negative self-esteem than women. There is a significant correlation between students' gender and their self-esteem. Regarding age, the results suggest that older students tend to have weaker self-esteem. In conclusion, these findings call for a thoughtful consideration of approaches to self-esteem management and development in the educational context to promote the mental health and personal development of future school managers.

Keywords: *self-esteem, student, gender differences, age differences, school management*

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1. Introduction

1.1. Problem and Objectives

In the current context of an educational and socio-economic crisis, higher education students, especially those in School Management and Training, face increasing psychological challenges. This reality emphasizes the crucial importance of measuring and understanding their self-esteem, a dynamic indicator of conation that reveals mental health. Although young adult university students are generally healthy and satisfied with their lives, this period represents a significant vulnerability during which various health issues can develop [1].

Currently, higher education and university students are particularly sensitive to psychological issues due to the educational and socio-economic crisis affecting several countries. Students in health and humanities, especially in psychology and management, are vulnerable compared to students in other fields.

This article addresses the following issue: What is the level of self-esteem among students in school management, and what strategies can be deployed to promote their psychological well-being and the harmonious development of their personality as future educational managers? The study, conducted among 72 students in School Management and Training at the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Lubumbashi (ISP/L'shi), uses Rosenberg's self-esteem scale as a data collection tool. The article also explores reflections on approaches to managing and developing self-esteem in the educational background. Ultimately, this study provides a valuable contribution to understanding the psychological challenges of students in school management and opens the way for innovative thinking on improving their mental well-being.

1.2. Imperative of the Study on Self-Esteem in School Management Students

In a context where higher education students face psychological challenges exacerbated by the global educational and socio-economic crisis, the study of self-

esteem emerges as an essential imperative. In that way, we examine the profound implications of this study, highlighting the crucial importance of understanding the level of self-esteem among students in school management. This knowledge not only provides insights into the specific challenges these future educational managers face but also constitutes a fundamental pillar for the development of strategies to improve their psychological good fortune and nurture their educational leadership.

Self-esteem, as a dynamic indicator of conation, proves to be a key to decrypting the nature of the mental health of students in school management. The results of this study, supported by Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, reveal significant nuances, highlighting specific concerns related to gender and age. These findings emphasize the urgent need for in-depth reflection on approaches to managing and developing self-esteem in the educational context.

Beyond its exploratory aspect, this study is of paramount importance in laying the groundwork for a broader discussion on educational policies and initiatives aimed at supporting the mental health of students in school management. The results, revealing significant percentages of students with low self-esteem, call for concrete actions to establish educational environments conducive to the harmonious development of the personalities of future school managers.

Thus, this research serves as an indispensable lever to guide educational decision-makers, mental health professionals, and academic institutions toward effective strategies that promote the psychological well-being of students in school management and, by extension, contribute to the formation of resilient and balanced educational leaders.

1.3. Study of Self-Esteem

1.3.1. Notions of Self-Esteem

In a more traditional sense, self-esteem would refer to the perception that each individual has of their own worth, to what extent they love, accept, and respect themselves as a person (global self-esteem) [2]. However, the definition of the concept of "self" varies among authors and schools of thought. Should it be considered as the person as a whole, including their essence, or rather as their personality, i.e., the adaptations they have developed to cope with different contexts and circumstances [3]?

The concept of self encompasses all the representations that the individual has of themselves [4]. This notion itself is defined as "an organized structure of knowledge containing traits, values, episodic and semantic memories related to the self, and controlling the processing of information relevant to the self" [5].

Self-esteem, as a concept, does not have a universally accepted definition [6] emphasize that, although widely used (and criticized) in scientific literature, as well as in everyday language, the concept of self-esteem remains difficult to define unambiguously. According to William James, it represents the cohesion between a person's aspirations and successes, a definition widely adopted and reworked by other authors [7].

Carpenito [8] suggested an interesting perspective by defining self-esteem as the result of the comparison

between the concept of self (what one is or believes to be) and the ideal self (what one is or could be). Self-esteem revolves around the qualities that the individual attributes to themselves and how others judge them. This evaluation has an emotional dimension, with high self-esteem being associated with confidence and pride [9].

Various approaches to the concept coexist. Rosenberg [10] preferred a unidimensional approach, considering self-esteem as a global measure, while Coopersmith [11] opted for a multidimensional approach, taking into account different evaluations based on domains. According to dispositional theories, self-esteem is considered a relatively stable personality trait [12].

Despite these nuances, most authors agree to define self-esteem as the evaluation an individual makes of their own value or as the evaluative aspect of the concept of self [13]. This evaluation is based on self-awareness and self-knowledge in relation to a norm or an ideal. The smaller the gap between the concept of self and the ideal self, the higher the self-esteem, and vice versa. This evaluative process also has an emotional dimension, with high self-esteem being associated with confidence and pride [9].

In the end, self-esteem is defined as how "each person loves, accepts, and respects themselves as a person" [14]. It can be defined more concisely as the "personal judgment of value expressed in the attitudes that the individual has towards themselves" [11]. Thus, behind these classic definitions of self-esteem, there are presuppositions and theoretical options that sometimes differ, requiring clarification about its generality (or specificity) in terms of structure and its positioning in relation to the self [15].

The intricate interplay of factors influencing an individual's self-esteem is a subject of profound exploration. The insights presented here are sourced from the work of Christina Doré [16], offering a valuable perspective on the multifaceted nature of self-esteem.

Table 1. Analysis of the Self-Esteem concept

Attributes	Precursors	Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-value • Self-acceptance • Sense of competence and self-attitude • Self-respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-confidence • Dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-assertion • Enhanced interpersonal relationships • Resilience

Source: Christina Doré [16]

In this analysis, we delve into the core components that shape the concept of self-esteem, unraveling its attributes, precursors, and consequential outcomes. Table 1 presents a comprehensive breakdown, examining the elements such as self-value, self-acceptance, sense of competence, and self-attitude, along with their antecedents, including self-confidence and dignity. Additionally, the study highlights the far-reaching consequences of a well-nurtured self-esteem, manifesting in self-assertion, improved interpersonal relationships, and heightened resilience.

1.3.2. Self-Esteem in an Educational Context

In the educational context, the relationship between self-esteem, academic performance, educational aspirations, perseverance, and adaptation during transitions is complex [17]. Some question the direct correlation between high self-

esteem and academic success, as demonstrated by students repeating a grade who do not necessarily show decreased self-esteem [18]. Turning to alternative educational approaches can lead to high self-esteem through positive pedagogy [6].

Challenging the direct correlation between high self-esteem and academic success, illustrated by examples such as repeating students, reinforces the need to avoid simplistic generalizations. Observing the non-decrease in self-esteem in these students suggests that contextual nuances must be considered for a thorough understanding.

The mention of alternative educational approaches introduces an interesting perspective, demonstrating that different educational approaches can positively influence self-esteem. Choosing a positive pedagogy can contribute to raising students' self-esteem, suggesting that contextual factors can play a crucial role in understanding these complex relationships.

Divergent models of Marsh & Parker [19] and Harter [20] revealed the complexity of the links between self-esteem and academic performance. The circular model suggests that high self-esteem facilitates social adaptation and can lead to academic success, while low self-esteem can generate difficulties. In contrast, Harter's linear perspective emphasizes how academic performance can directly influence self-esteem.

The circular model reference highlights the complex interplay of self-esteem, social adaptation, and academic success. Emphasizing how high self-esteem facilitates social adaptation and showcasing challenges stemming from low self-esteem, the author draws attention to educational experience variability. Conversely, Harter's linear perspective reveals a direct link between academic performance and self-esteem, prompting consideration of diverse interpretations in the dynamics between self-esteem and academic achievement. This underscores the intrinsic complexity of their relationship.

The correlation between self-esteem and academic success remains complex, with an ambiguous causal direction. Some suggest that self-esteem impacts performance through engagement and adaptation strategies, influencing success or failure depending on the level of self-esteem [6]. Dony [21] underlined the facilitating role of positive self-esteem in career choices, while Creed, Prideaux & Patton [22] observed a correlation between low self-esteem and career indecision.

A nuanced perspective emerges on the relationship between self-esteem and academic success, considering the complexity of this correlation and the difficulty of establishing a clear causal direction. Self-esteem can influence performance through engagement and adaptation strategies, highlighting the variation in outcomes based on the level of self-esteem. The facilitating role of positive self-esteem in career choices adds a practical dimension, underscoring the influence of self-esteem on important decisions for academic paths. On the other hand, the correlation between low self-esteem and career indecision underscores the potential implications of self-esteem for the clarity of academic goals.

1.3.3. Some Studies on the Relational Dynamics Between Self-Esteem and Gender

Many studies have examined gender and age differences in self-esteem. Although there were conflicting results in

earlier studies in that some studies found higher self-esteem for men and other studies found no significant difference at all, several meta-analyses and recent longitudinal studies suggest that men tend to have slightly higher self-esteem than women. However, the difference is rather small and not consistent across the life-span [23].

Self-esteem can vary based on the gender of the student, influenced by various social, cultural, and individual factors. Here are some research studies that address this specific issue.

Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell [24] examined gender differences in self-esteem. Their contribution provided an in-depth overview of the variation in self-esteem between men and women.

Möller-Leimkühler [25] explored socio-cultural and clinical barriers influencing self-esteem in men, with a focus on depression. His contribution analyzed socio-cultural and clinical factors affecting male self-esteem.

Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs [26] disapproved assess the connection between self-esteem and various aspects of well-being, including gender differences. Their contribution offered a comprehensive assessment of the link between self-esteem and well-being, with particular attention to gender differences.

Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfried, & Freitas [27] focused on the development of self-esteem in men in relation to masculine norms. Their contribution highlighted the development of self-esteem in men, taking into account masculine social norms.

Blazquez-Alonso, Alegre, & Pelegrin [28] explored the influence of gender and academic level on the self-esteem of university students. And their contribution provided insight into specific factors influencing self-esteem in university students in relation to gender and academic level.

These references provide an overview of research on self-esteem in relation to gender. As always, it is important to consider the diversity of individual experiences and acknowledge that gender differences are often influenced by complex factors.

1.3.4. Some Studies on the Relational Dynamics Between Self-Esteem and Age

Here are some studies that should provide a solid foundation for exploring the relationship between self-esteem and age across different life stages. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the diversity of individual experiences and understand that other factors may also influence the development of self-esteem.

Skinner, et al. [29] examined changes in students' academic self-perceptions during the transition to high school, this study explores how these changes can impact students' self-esteem at a crucial point in their educational development. Moreover, Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins [30] examined the stability of self-esteem over time, covering different life periods, including adolescence and adulthood.

The longitudinal study by Orth, Trzesniewski, & Robins [31] explored the development of self-esteem across different age cohorts, providing insights into general trends. Erol, & Orth [32] investigated the development of self-esteem during the adolescent and young adult years.

Orth, Robins, & Widaman [33] examined the lifelong development of self-esteem and its effects on significant

outcomes. Meanwhile, Orth, & Robins [34] provides an overview of self-esteem development processes and explores how it evolves throughout life.

These studies provide a diverse perspective on self-esteem development in adolescents and young adults, encompassing stability, connections with parent-child communication, peer relationships, and associations with depression and anxiety. Numerous studies investigate the relationship between self-esteem and students' age. Here are examples of studies examining the relational dynamics between these two aspects.

1.4. Factors of Self-Esteem

1.4.1. Self-Esteem at Different Life Stages

During childhood, children's self-esteem is often influenced by interactions with parents, peers, and teachers. Successes and failures in early school and social experiences can play an essential role.

Adolescence is often characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social changes that can impact self-esteem. Adolescents may be sensitive to how they are perceived by their peers, shaping their self-esteem through these interactions.

Young adults can build their self-esteem based on educational and professional achievements, romantic relationships, and increasing independence. Self-esteem can be influenced by identity exploration and comparison with peers.

Family and professional responsibilities can influence self-esteem in middle adulthood. Professional accomplishments, maintaining positive relationships, and personal satisfaction can contribute to a balanced self-esteem.

In mature and older adulthood, physical changes related to aging can sometimes influence self-esteem, especially if society values youth. Reflection on life, past achievements, and relationships can also play a role in self-esteem in older individuals.

It is important to note that these generalizations can vary from person to person, and the impact of age on self-esteem also depends on other factors such as personality, life experiences, and social support.

Overall, self-esteem is a dynamic aspect of personal development that can be influenced by experiences and transitions at different life stages. Adjustments to self-esteem may be necessary to cope with the unique challenges and opportunities associated with each life period.

Self-esteem intensity can fluctuate with age, given distinct challenges, opportunities, and experiences in various life stages. It's crucial to recognize that these generalizations may differ among individuals, and each person may experience varying levels of self-esteem at different life stages. A general perspective follows:

- *Childhood* (6-12 years): Self-esteem can be greatly influenced by interactions with family, teachers, and peers. Successes and failures in the school and social context can have a significant impact.
- *Adolescence* (13-18 years): This is often a period where self-esteem can be particularly volatile due to physical, emotional, and social changes. Adolescents may be sensitive to peer judgments and social acceptance, strongly influencing their self-esteem.

- *Young adults* (19-40 years): Identity exploration and educational and professional achievements can play a central role. Individuals may feel pressure to succeed in their careers, maintain meaningful relationships, and achieve certain social milestones.
- *Middle adulthood* (41-60 years): Self-esteem can be influenced by personal satisfaction, professional accomplishment, and the quality of family relationships. Professional and family responsibilities can also play a central role in self-perception.
- *Mature age and aging* (60 years and older): Physical changes related to aging can influence self-esteem, especially if society values youth. Reflection on life, past achievements, and relationships can take on significant importance.

It is essential to note that self-esteem can be influenced by specific life events, transitions, and individual factors such as resilience and personal perception. Some individuals may develop stronger self-esteem as they mature and overcome challenges, while others may face fluctuations based on life experiences.

The intensity of self-esteem at each life stage is a personal and complex experience, and individuals can benefit from social support, personal development, and self-acceptance to foster positive self-esteem at any age.

The relationship between the intensity of self-esteem and students' age can be complex and vary from person to person. However, certain general trends can be observed.

During adolescence, young people undergo significant physical, emotional, and social changes. These transformations can influence self-esteem, especially regarding physical appearance and peer acceptance. Adolescents develop their personal identity and seek to gain autonomy. How they perceive their own worth and competence can affect their self-esteem [35,36,37].

Interactions with peers, family, and friends consistently influence self-esteem across all age groups. Academic, professional, or personal accomplishments can positively affect self-esteem, irrespective of age. Students' self-esteem is shaped by diverse factors throughout their educational path. Recognizing the complexity and individual nature of this relationship is essential, as it depends on the interplay of personal experiences, achievements, and challenges faced by each student. Fostering the cultivation of healthy and balanced self-esteem remains crucial at every life stage.

1.4.2. Gender Differences in Students' Self-Esteem

Self-esteem can be influenced by various factors, including gender differences. Here is an overview of general trends observed in the literature regarding self-esteem and gender differences in students:

a) Overall Self-Esteem

Research on overall self-esteem, as indicated by many studies conducted by scholars [24] [38-42], reveals a nuanced picture of gender differences, particularly during adolescence. Contrary to popular perceptions, these studies suggest that, on average, girls may exhibit slightly lower self-esteem than boys through their developmental stage. It's important to note, however, that this discrepancy

is not uniform across all facets of self-esteem. Different domains, such as academic, social, and physical aspects, contribute to a more intricate understanding of self-esteem dynamics.

The significance of taking into account diverse facets of self-esteem is emphasized in understanding the complete intricacy of gender variations. For instance, academic self-esteem may exhibit notable differences between genders, whereas social or physical self-esteem could manifest distinct patterns. Societal expectations, cultural influences, and individual experiences are potential contributors to these disparities. Analyzing distinct aspects of self-esteem individually enables researchers to glean insights into the factors molding adolescents' self-perceptions, thereby fostering a more holistic comprehension of gender-related variations in self-esteem.

Moreover, acknowledging the dynamic aspect of self-esteem is essential. Adolescence, characterized by swift cognitive, emotional, and social transformations, impacts self-perception. Consequently, the identified distinctions might not be fixed and could undergo changes. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable perspectives on the trajectory of gender-specific self-esteem across life stages. In conclusion, tackling the intricacies of self-esteem disparities necessitates a comprehensive approach that accounts for the interplay of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors influencing individuals' self-perception.

b) Academic Self-Esteem

Scholarly investigations into academic self-esteem, drawing from several studies [23] [43-46], unveil intriguing nuances in the context of gender differences. The research suggests that girls, on average, may exhibit a tendency to be more critical of their academic abilities, particularly in fields where they perceive themselves as underrepresented or face societal stigmatization. This phenomenon could be rooted in social and cultural expectations that may impact girls' confidence levels in specific academic domains.

Conversely, boys might demonstrate higher academic self-esteem, particularly in subjects traditionally associated with masculinity. Societal norms and stereotypes could contribute to this trend, influencing how individuals perceive their competence in various academic pursuits. The intersection of gender roles and academic performance becomes apparent in this context, shedding light on how societal expectations can shape self-perception within educational settings. Understanding these dynamics is essential for educators and policymakers aiming to foster an inclusive learning environment that supports all students in realizing their academic potential.

The observed gender differences in academic self-esteem underline the need for targeted interventions to address the unique challenges faced by individuals of different genders. Efforts to promote self-efficacy and positive academic self-perception should be mindful of these nuanced variations. Moreover, creating an educational environment that challenges traditional gender stereotypes and fosters a sense of belonging for all students can play a crucial role in mitigating disparities in academic self-esteem. By recognizing and addressing

these dynamics, educators can contribute to a more equitable and supportive educational experience for students of all genders.

c) Social Self-Esteem

Social self-esteem, as illuminated by research from scholars [41-42] [47-48], highlights the intricate relationship between interpersonal connections and individuals' self-worth. While both genders are influenced by their social interactions, the nuances lie in the importance attributed to these relationships and the sensitivity to social norms. Studies suggest that girls, on average, may place a greater emphasis on interpersonal relationships, finding a significant source of their self-esteem in the quality of friendships and social connections. This emphasis on social bonds could be linked to societal expectations that may encourage girls to prioritize communal and relational aspects of life.

In contrast, boys may navigate social self-esteem with different considerations, potentially placing more emphasis on individual achievements or group dynamics that align with traditional masculinity norms. The varying degrees of sensitivity to social expectations between genders underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing social self-esteem. Educators, parents, and mental health professionals should be attuned to these dynamics to provide tailored support that recognizes and respects the diversity of individuals' social needs and preferences.

Acknowledging the importance of social self-esteem in both genders is crucial for fostering positive mental well-being. By understanding the distinct ways in which individuals derive self-worth from social interactions, interventions can be developed to enhance social skills, promote healthy relationship dynamics, and create environments that nurture positive social self-perception. This recognition can contribute to the development of comprehensive strategies aimed at bolstering social self-esteem across diverse gender identities, ultimately fostering more resilient and emotionally healthy individuals.

d) Physical Self-Esteem

Physical self-esteem, as examined in studies by scholars [40,47] [49,50], is intricately entwined with societal beauty ideals that cast a pervasive influence on individuals. The research indicates that both girls and boys contend with distinct pressures related to physical appearance, albeit manifesting in different ways. For girls, the societal emphasis on an idealized feminine beauty standard can create a pronounced impact on their physical self-esteem, as they may feel an increased pressure to conform to these expectations. This scrutiny of appearance can have profound effects on their self-worth and body image during crucial developmental stages.

Boys, on the other hand, grapple with pressures often linked to muscularity and conforming to traditional ideals of physical strength. Societal expectations regarding the masculine physique may contribute to boys feeling compelled to achieve and maintain a certain level of muscularity, impacting their perception of physical self-worth. These pressures can manifest in various ways, including engagement in specific fitness regimes or the

consumption of certain products aimed at enhancing physical appearance. Understanding these gender-specific dynamics is essential in addressing the diverse challenges individuals face in developing a positive and healthy physical self-esteem.

Initiatives to enhance positive physical self-esteem should involve tactics that question and reshape prevailing societal beauty norms, cultivating an embrace of varied body types and appearances. Educational initiatives and interventions must additionally stimulate critical evaluation of media depictions of beauty and endorse body positivity. Acknowledging and tackling these societal influences empowers educators, parents, and health professionals to establish environments fostering robust physical self-esteem across all genders. This method is fundamental for nurturing a culture that esteems individuals for their distinctive qualities rather than adhering to restrictive and impractical beauty standards.

e) Response to failures and social pressure

The response to failures and social pressure represents a critical aspect of individuals' self-esteem, with various studies such as [47] [51,52,53] shedding light on gender-specific patterns. Research suggests that girls, on average, may experience heightened social pressure, particularly in response to failures, which can significantly impact their self-esteem. The societal expectation for girls to adhere to certain standards and norms may contribute to a heightened sensitivity to perceived shortcomings, leading to more negative responses to failures. This can manifest in increased self-criticism and a greater emotional toll on their self-esteem.

Conversely, boys may exhibit more competitive responses to failures or downplay the impact of setbacks on their self-esteem. Societal expectations often emphasize resilience and the ability to bounce back from challenges, which could contribute to boys adopting a more competitive stance when faced with failures. This response may be rooted in cultural norms that encourage boys to embrace a "tough" and stoic attitude, potentially minimizing the perceived impact of setbacks on their self-worth. Understanding these gender-specific responses is crucial for designing effective interventions that address the unique emotional needs and coping mechanisms of individuals across genders.

Educational and support systems should be attuned to these gender-specific patterns in responding to failures and social pressure. Providing a supportive and inclusive environment that acknowledges the diverse ways individuals may react to challenges can contribute to fostering resilience and positive self-esteem. Moreover, promoting open conversations about failure, resilience, and the importance of seeking help when needed can empower individuals of all genders to navigate setbacks in a healthy and constructive manner. By recognizing and addressing these gender-specific responses, educators and mental health professionals can contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals who are better equipped to handle life's challenges.

f) Cultural and social factors

The intricate interplay of cultural and social factors plays a pivotal role in shaping gender differences in self-esteem, as highlighted in some studies [41] [47,54,55].

Gender stereotypes, deeply embedded in cultural narratives, often prescribe specific expectations and behaviors for individuals based on their gender. These stereotypes contribute to the development of societal norms that influence how self-esteem is constructed and perceived in girls and boys. For example, traditional gender norms may dictate that girls prioritize relationships and boys emphasize individual achievement, shaping their self-esteem in distinct ways.

Family expectations also play a crucial role in molding gender-specific self-esteem. Families, as primary socializing agents, transmit cultural values and norms to their children. The expectations placed on girls and boys within the family unit can significantly impact their self-esteem. For instance, families that place a high value on academic achievement may inadvertently contribute to differences in academic self-esteem between genders. Recognizing and challenging these ingrained expectations is essential for fostering an environment that supports the development of positive self-esteem regardless of gender.

Social norms, another influential factor, set the standards for acceptable behavior within a given society. These norms may create pressures that individuals internalize, shaping their self-esteem in alignment with societal expectations. Understanding the impact of cultural and social factors on self-esteem is essential for promoting gender equity and fostering environments that allow individuals to develop authentic and resilient self-perceptions. By challenging restrictive gender norms and promoting inclusivity, societies can contribute to a more supportive and empowering context for individuals of all genders to navigate and develop their self-esteem.

It is essential to note that these general trends do not uniformly apply to all individuals, and there is significant variability within each gender. Individual, familial, cultural, and environmental factors interact in complex ways to shape the self-esteem of students.

1.4.3. Similarities and Differences in Self-Esteem in Female and Male Students

Self-esteem is a complex and multifaceted aspect of human psychology, crucially influencing various dimensions of an individual's life. The examination of self-esteem in female and male students unveils both commonalities and distinctions that contribute to a nuanced understanding of the factors shaping their self-perception. Academic pressures, interpersonal relationships, and social performance emerge as shared elements influencing self-esteem in students, irrespective of gender. Simultaneously, differences arise in specific academic pressures, peer relationships, career choices, and stress management strategies, shedding light on the unique challenges and experiences faced by female and male students. This exploration delves into the intricacies of self-esteem in the academic realm, aiming to illuminate the similarities and differences that contribute to the holistic understanding of self-esteem in students.

a) Similarities in Self-Esteem in female and male students

- *Academic pressures:* Expectations for academic success can exert pressure on self-esteem, both among female and male students.

- *Interpersonal relationships:* Friendships, family relationships, and social interactions influence self-esteem regardless of gender.
- *Social performance:* The perception of social performance, whether measured by academic or social criteria, can similarly affect self-esteem in both female and male students.

b) Differences in Self-Esteem in female and male students

- *Specific academic pressures:* Female students may sometimes feel particular pressures regarding academic excellence, as studies occasionally suggest they may feel more underrepresented in certain fields. On the other hand, expectations related to academic performance can also be high for male students, especially in fields traditionally associated with masculinity.
- *Peer relationships:* Social dynamics between female and male students can vary depending on the cultural and educational context. For example, peer relationships may be influenced by specific gender norms in certain contexts.
- *Career choices:* Expectations regarding careers may differ. Female students may sometimes face challenges related to gender stereotypes in career choices, while male students may feel pressure to choose professional fields traditionally associated with masculinity.
- *Competition and collaboration:* Pressures related to competition and collaboration may be felt differently. Female students may sometimes be encouraged to adopt more collaborative behavior, while male students may feel pressures to demonstrate leadership or competitive skills.
- *Stress management:* The way female and male students manage stress related to academic demands may vary. Some research suggests that women may be more inclined to seek social support during periods of stress, while men may have different stress management strategies.

So, the exploration of self-esteem in female and male students reveals a delicate interplay of shared experiences and distinct challenges. While academic pressures, interpersonal relationships, and social performance form common ground, differences arise in the specific academic expectations, peer relationships, career choices, and stress management strategies. Recognizing these nuances is pivotal for educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals in developing strategies that cater to the diverse needs of students, fostering an environment that nurtures positive self-esteem. By acknowledging both the similarities and differences, we can work towards creating educational spaces that empower all students to thrive academically and personally, regardless of their gender.

Thus, self-esteem in both boys and girls can be influenced by various factors, including gender-related elements.

Although the factors influencing self-esteem in girls and boys share some similarities, there are also differences related to social expectations and gender norms. Here is a general comparison, but it is important to note that these trends do not apply universally to all individuals, and there is significant variability within each group.

Table 2. Factors influencing Self-Esteem in girls and boys

Beauty standards	Beauty standards often portrayed by the media and society can exert significant pressure on girls. Self-esteem may be affected by conformity to these standards, influencing their perception of physical appearance. Male beauty standards, often characterized by muscularity and leanness, can also impact the self-esteem of boys. Pressures to meet these standards can lead to concerns related to body image.
Social and academic performance	Some girls may feel pressure to excel in their studies, which can influence their self-esteem. Boys may feel pressure to succeed in certain areas or avoid activities considered "feminine" to maintain a positive self-esteem in accordance with gender norms.
Behavioral norms	Girls may encounter specific expectations regarding behavior, such as being perceived as more empathetic or cooperative. Pressures to meet these expectations can affect self-esteem if they feel unable to conform to these norms. The pressure to conform to masculinity norms can sometimes create internal conflicts. Boys may be discouraged from openly expressing their emotions, which can influence their self-esteem if they feel compelled to hide a part of their identity.
Interpersonal relationships	Friendships, family relationships, and social interactions can have a significant impact on girls' self-esteem. Positive social support can enhance self-esteem, while conflicting relationships or negative experiences may diminish it. Family, peer, and teacher support can play a crucial role in the development of self-esteem in boys. Positive relationships and emotional support can help strengthen a healthy self-esteem.
Autonomy and Independence	Girls may also feel pressure regarding their autonomy and independence. Expectations for independent and assertive behavior can influence self-esteem, especially if these expectations conflict with traditional gender norms.
Self-confidence	Developing self-confidence is a crucial aspect of self-esteem. Encouraging girls to take initiatives, develop skills, and explore new areas can positively contribute to their self-esteem.

2. Methods, Field, and Investigation Instrument

2.1. Field of Investigation

The Higher Pedagogical Institute (ISP) of Lubumbashi is an advanced education institution located in the Democratic Republic of Congo, specifically in the city of Lubumbashi. Higher pedagogical institutes are generally dedicated to the training of teachers and educators. They offer pedagogical training programs to prepare students to teach in primary and secondary schools. These institutions play a crucial role in the development of the education system by training education professionals. The ISP of Lubumbashi, as an educational institution, was established to meet the teacher training needs in the region.

Apart from the University of Lovanium, the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Lubumbashi is the third public institution to be established in 1959, immediately after the Official University of Congo, UOC in 1956, now the University of Lubumbashi, and the Free University of Kisangani in 1958.

The missions of the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Lubumbashi are:

- To provide the country with highly trained teachers

with general and specialized training, proven moral and pedagogical qualities;

- To instill in future teachers an awareness of their role as political mentors, the nobility of their mission, and the dignity of their person;
- To organize research in the field of pedagogy to discover methods that can improve the quality of primary and secondary education;
- To disseminate the results of this research by writing and distributing textbooks adapted to these two levels of education;
- To confer legal degrees in accordance with legislative and regulatory provisions on the award of these degrees. It can award scientific diplomas and those that are specific.

2.2. Population and Study Sample

The methodology of our research is based on a careful selection of the study population, consisting of second-year students in school management and training at the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Lubumbashi. This choice stems from a thoughtful methodological approach aimed at ensuring the relevance of the results for our specific research objectives.

We opted for a reasoned sampling technique, specifically a non-probabilistic purposive sampling. This approach is justified by the need for intentional selection, aligned with the criteria of our study. It allows a focus on specific characteristics within the population, thus responding more precisely to our research questions.

Focusing our investigation on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, a proven instrument to assess this complex psychological concept, we administered this tool to all students present during a specific session scheduled for Friday, May 28, 2021, at 2:00 PM. This precise temporal methodology aims to collect comprehensive and representative data from the targeted population, thus ensuring the reliability and validity of the results.

By concentrating our efforts on this rigorous methodological approach, we aim to provide meaningful conclusions that will significantly contribute to the understanding of self-esteem within this specific student cohort. This research should not only enrich the academic literature on the subject but also offer practical insights for educational stakeholders and pedagogical leaders in the development of programs aimed at improving students' self-esteem.

Table 3. Sample characteristics

Age/years Gender	29 to 33	23 to 28	19 to 22	Total	%
Female	0	14	30	44	61,1
Male	1	19	8	28	38,9
Total	1	33	38	72	
%	1,4	45,8	52,8		

The sample characteristics are based on a thorough analysis of the gender and age variables among the 72 subjects examined. Regarding the gender variable, the sample consists of 44 female students, representing 61.1% of the population, while 28 male students make up the remaining 38.9%. This gender distribution provides a balanced representation, enabling a comprehensive

exploration of dynamics related to self-esteem within the student cohort.

Concerning the age variable, the sample exhibits significant diversity. One student, or 1.4%, is 32 years old, offering a unique perspective among the participants. The majority of participants, 33 students (45.8%), fall within the age range of 23 to 28 years, reflecting a significant age group. In parallel, 38 students (52.8%) are in the age range of 19 to 22 years, ensuring a broad representation of experiences related to self-esteem during the university period.

These detailed sample characteristics provide a solid foundation for an in-depth analysis of the relationships between self-esteem, gender, and age within the studied population. This diversity will allow a nuanced exploration of factors influencing self-esteem, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of psychological dynamics within the studied group.

2.3. Research Instruments

The research methodology adopted for the present study employed a quantitative assessment approach, specifically measuring the level of self-esteem among school management students. This method was chosen for its ability to provide quantitative data, facilitating a rigorous statistical analysis of the results.

2.3.1. Overview of the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale

The methodology of this research relies on the administration of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (abbreviated as RSE) [10] to assess the self-esteem of school management students at the Higher Institute of Pedagogy (ISP) in Lubumbashi. This instrument, consisting of ten items, provides a comprehensive measure of self-esteem in young adults, focusing on different dimensions of their self-perception.

The use of scale offers a comprehensive approach to assess self-esteem from various perspectives. This variety of instruments allows for an in-depth exploration of school management students' perceptions, ensuring a nuanced understanding of this crucial psychological dimension within the studied population.

This methodological choice was motivated by several factors that make it a relevant instrument for evaluating the level of self-esteem among young adults, specifically French-speaking students in school and training institution management.

The Rosenberg Scale, in its French version, offers the advantage of providing an overall self-esteem score. This global measure is crucial for a comprehensive assessment of the self-esteem of young adults, encompassing dimensions such as academic, family, social, and general self-esteem. This instrument has a validated translation, ensuring the relevance and accuracy of the results within the targeted population.

A notable aspect of the Rosenberg Scale is its ease of administration due to its limited number of items, making it an efficient data collection tool. However, it is worth noting that this instrument focuses exclusively on general self-esteem, not taking into account the possibility of inflated self-esteem, an important element that some researchers have raised.

The reliability analysis of the scale, measured by Cronbach's alpha, yielded significant results, with coefficients of .88 at T1, .87 at T2, and .86 at T3. These values demonstrate a high internal consistency of the instrument, thereby enhancing the credibility of the measures obtained across different time phases of the study.

In summary, the use of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale in this research is based on a robust methodology, incorporating elements of cultural validity and benefiting from a robust empirical foundation to measure the self-esteem of school management students at the ISP in Lubumbashi.

2.3.2. Administration Procedure of the Scale

The scale administration process unfolded methodically, aiming to ensure the accuracy and diversity of participants' responses. Participants, constituting the student population in school management at the Higher Institute of Pedagogy in Lubumbashi, were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with ten statements. These statements, integrated into the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, were designed to evaluate different aspects of their self-esteem.

The response method was structured with four modalities, ranging from "Completely Disagree" (1) to "Completely Agree" (4). This scale allowed participants to nuance their responses, reflecting the diversity of their perceptions and feelings towards the proposed statements. Such diversity was crucial for obtaining rich and meaningful data, enabling an in-depth understanding of how school management students evaluate their self-esteem.

Normal scoring was applied for some items, while reverse scoring was used for others. This methodological decision was made to introduce a dimension of complexity in the assessment, ensuring that participants remain attentive to the statements and do not respond mechanically or systematically. Thus, each item was carefully designed to provoke thoughtful and authentic reflection, capturing the subtlety of nuances in self-perception.

This detailed approach in the scale administration methodology ensures the validity of the collected responses. It goes beyond simple raw scores by capturing the complexity of individual self-esteem assessments. By focusing on nuanced participant responses, this methodology enhances the quality of the collected data, providing a solid foundation for the analysis and interpretation of results in the context of research on the self-esteem of school management students.

2.3.3. Data Exploration Technique

Descriptive analysis played a crucial role in processing the data collected through the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale from school management students at the Higher Institute of Pedagogy in Lubumbashi. This analytical approach aims to provide a detailed and in-depth understanding of the fundamental characteristics of the data, without seeking to establish causal relationships or generalize beyond the studied sample.

By focusing on the variety of responses, descriptive analysis identified specific items that elicited divergent opinions among participants. These results provided valuable insights into understanding particular dimensions

of self-esteem that may vary significantly within the student population in school management.

Moreover, this analytical methodology was also applied to explore the distribution of overall self-esteem scores obtained by students. By examining the distribution of these scores, descriptive analysis contributed to identifying general trends within the student cohort, highlighting possible variations in self-perception.

In summary, descriptive analysis was a crucial component of data processing in this study, providing a solid foundation for understanding the diversity of self-perceptions among school management students. By focusing on specific data characteristics, this analytical approach went beyond simple statistical aggregations, thus offering a nuanced understanding of self-esteem within this specific cohort.

2.3.4. Chi-square Statistical Technique

The statistical technique of the chi-square test (denoted as χ^2), employed in the quantitative analysis of data in this study, is justified to examine associations between categorical variables, as seems to be the case here with variables such as gender, self-esteem, and age. This provides information on trends and correlations within the studied student population.

The chi-square test is suitable for assessing relationships between categorical variables, such as gender and self-esteem. In this analysis, the chi-square test is used to compare the distribution of self-esteem levels between male and female students.

Similarly, the use of the chi-square test to examine the relationship between age and self-esteem is justified. The chi-square test assesses whether the distribution of self-esteem levels differs significantly across age groups.

The analysis results are presented clearly, with specific percentages for each self-esteem category based on gender and age. The comparison of calculated chi-square values with tabulated values is performed, allowing for the determination of whether the observed differences are statistically significant.

Conclusions based on the results of the chi-square test are explained, explicitly indicating whether the observed differences are statistically significant or not.

3. Results

The results of the study conducted among school management students at the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Lubumbashi (ISP/Lubumbashi) unveil a complex and nuanced panorama of self-esteem within this specific cohort. The in-depth exploration of the collected data reveals significant trends, highlighting notable variations in self-esteem levels, as well as influential factors such as gender and age.

The in-depth exploration of self-esteem among students at ISP/Lubumbashi reveals a varied distribution of self-esteem levels within this population. The results detail that 37.5% of students have low self-esteem, indicating potential challenges related to self-confidence and self-image. A similar percentage, 34.7%, shows moderate self-esteem, suggesting a more balanced self-perception.

However, the notable presence of 15.3% of students with very low self-esteem highlights a significant proportion of the student population facing more pronounced difficulties.

Table 4. Self-Esteem of school management students

Self-esteem	No	%
High	09	12,5
Medium	25	34,7
Low	27	37,5
Very low	11	15,3
Total	72	100

On the other hand, the 12.5% of students displaying high self-esteem indicate positive self-confidence and evaluation. These results underscore the diversity of self-esteem experiences among school management students, emphasizing the need for differentiated approaches to psychological support and personal development within this student cohort.

Table 5. Self-Esteem of school management students by gender

Gender Self-esteem	Feminine		Masculine		Total
	No	%	No	%	No
High	06	13,6	03	10,7	09
Medium	15	34,1	10	35,7	25
Low	15	34,1	12	42,9	27
Very low	08	18,2	03	10,7	11
Total	44	100	28	100	72

The detailed examination of self-esteem based on gender, as illustrated in Table 5, reveals significant trends within the student population at ISP/Lubumbashi. The results indicate that 42.9% of male students have low self-esteem, while this percentage is slightly lower among female students, at 34.1%. This disparity also extends to levels of very low self-esteem, with 18.2% for female students compared to 10.7% for male students. In contrast, male students seem to slightly surpass female students in terms of high self-esteem, with 13.6% for female students and 10.7% for male students.

Statistical analysis, using the chi-square test (denoted as χ^2), symbolized by the calculated chi-square value of 3.1538 compared to the tabulated value of 7.8147, leads to the conclusion that the test is not significant. This suggests that, although disparities exist between genders in terms of self-esteem, these differences are not statistically significant. However, the overall percentage of men (53.6%) experiencing negative self-esteem is slightly higher than that of women (52.3%), indicating a general trend towards less positive self-esteem among men within this student population.

Table 6. Self-Esteem of school management students by Age

Age/years Self-esteem	29 to 33		23 to 28		19 to 22		Total
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No
High	00	0,0	03	9,1	06	15,8	09
Medium	00	0,0	11	33,3	14	36,8	25
Low	00	0,0	13	39,4	14	36,8	27
Very low	01	100	06	18,2	04	10,5	11
Total	01	100	33	100	38	100	72

The analysis of students' self-esteem by age group, presented in Table 6, reveals significant insights into the

relationship between age and self-perception within the student population at ISP/Lubumbashi. The results clearly demonstrate a correlation between age and the level of self-esteem.

A 32-year-old student exhibits a very low self-esteem, illustrating a potentially negative impact associated with advanced age. Students aged 23 to 28 show a notable trend, with 18.2% having a very low self-esteem compared to 10.5% among students aged 19 to 22. Regarding low self-esteem, this trend continues, with 39.4% among students aged 23 to 28 compared to 36.8% among those aged 19 to 22.

The statistical technique of χ^2 (chi-square), symbolized by the calculated value of 202.573 compared to the tabulated value of 12.5916, indicates statistical significance. Thus, it can be asserted that age exerts a notable influence on self-esteem, with an increasing correlation: the older the individual, the more their self-esteem appears to weaken. This correlation is particularly striking in the case of the 32-year-old student, emphasizing a marked trend towards decreased self-esteem with age within this specific student population.

4. Discussion of Results

The in-depth analysis of self-esteem results within the student population at ISP/Lubumbashi highlights significant complexity in the students' self-perception. These observations provide profound insights and avenues for understanding the dynamics specific to this student cohort.

Firstly, the distribution of self-esteem levels reveals marked diversity within this population. With 37.5% of students showing low self-esteem, 34.7% moderate self-esteem, 15.3% very low self-esteem, and 12.5% high self-esteem, these results suggest that self-esteem is a variable and nuanced experience among school management students. It is crucial to consider these nuances when devising appropriate intervention and support strategies.

Examining the distribution of self-esteem levels, it is evident that this student population exhibits marked diversity, with significant percentages of low, moderate, very low, and high self-esteem. These results underscore the importance of understanding individual psychological dynamics within this group of school management students.

This aligns with the findings of a study by Makoudi [56], which showed that, for Rosenberg's self-esteem scale, the self-esteem level in the private system is on average subdivided into 29% high, 7% moderate, 36% low, and 28% very low. In contrast, the public system on average is subdivided into 31% high, 38% very low, 8% moderate, and 23% low.

Addressing the gender dimension reveals significant disparities. The results indicate that men exhibit more negative self-esteem than women, with 42.9% of men displaying low self-esteem compared to 34.1% of women. This difference highlights the potential impact of gender on the formation of self-esteem within this population. However, it is essential to note that these differences are not statistically significant, suggesting that other factors may also influence self-perception, independent of gender.

Thus, the current results remain mixed compared to those of our predecessors. This aligns with numerous

studies [58,59] that have shown that women's self-esteem is significantly lower than that of men. However, the commonality is that self-esteem differs based on gender.

Gender analysis reveals significant disparities, indicating that men tend to express more negative self-esteem than women. This observation raises relevant questions about the impact of gender in building self-esteem within this specific cohort. This aligns with the findings of the Quebec Institute of Statistics [60], which found that the proportion of young people with a high level of self-esteem is higher in boys than in girls. In the same way, Orth, Trzesniewski, and Robins [31] noted that Women had lower self-esteem than men in young adulthood, but their trajectories converged in old age.

The gender-related difference appears to be subject-specific rather than global [61]. Boys exhibit similar levels of self-efficacy across different academic domains.

Regarding the influence of age, a significant trend emerges. Older students seem to have lower self-esteem, with 39.4% of students aged 23 to 28 exhibiting low self-esteem compared to 36.8% of students aged 19 to 22. This pattern is reinforced by the specific case of a 32-year-old student showing very low self-esteem. These results suggest that age may play a substantial role in the formation of self-esteem within this student population.

Statistical analysis confirms the relevance of age influence on self-esteem, emphasizing that, as students age, their self-esteem tends to weaken. However, it is crucial to note that although these trends are significant, other variables not examined in this study could also contribute to the formation of self-esteem. Conversely, the non-significant test for gender indicates that, while differences exist, they are not statistically significant, underscoring the need to consider other potential factors, such as socio-economic context, family experiences, and cultural influences.

Strikingly, age-based analysis suggests a notable relationship between students' age and their self-esteem. The results indicate that, as students get older, their self-esteem appears to weaken. This correlation raises significant implications for understanding psychological dynamics specific to different stages of student life.

This reality differs for adolescent students; for instance, the Quebec Institute of Statistics [60] found that the proportion of young people with a high level of self-esteem is higher at age 16 than at age 13.

Therefore, these results suggest that self-esteem within the student population in school management is a complex phenomenon, influenced by an interplay of factors such as gender and age. They emphasize the importance of considering these nuances to inform educational interventions and psychological support, contributing to a better understanding of self-esteem dynamics within this specific cohort. In conclusion, these results offer a profound perspective on the complex dimensions of self-esteem within this student population in school management, highlighting the importance of a nuanced understanding of these psychological factors to guide effective educational interventions.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the in-depth exploration of self-esteem

among school management students at the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Lubumbashi (ISP/Lubumbashi) sheds light on a complex mosaic of self-perceptions within this particular cohort. The results reveal a marked diversity in self-esteem levels, with significant proportions of low, moderate, very low, and high self-esteem within this student population.

The comparative examination by gender highlights notable disparities, indicating that men tend to display more negative self-esteem than women. This observation raises crucial questions about the potential influence of gender factors in the development of self-esteem during school management training.

Furthermore, the age-based analysis reveals a significant correlation between students' age and their self-esteem. The results suggest that the older students are, the more their self-esteem tends to weaken, emphasizing the importance of considering the temporal dimension in understanding the psychological dynamics specific to different stages of student life.

These overall findings urgently underscore the need to design educational and intervention approaches that take into account the diversity of individual experiences regarding self-esteem within this specific population. By better understanding the factors influencing self-esteem, educators and education professionals can develop tailored strategies to foster an educational environment conducive to the positive development of self-perception among school management students at ISP/Lubumbashi.

As a result, recommendations emerge to enhance the psychological well-being of students, including the implementation of psychological support programs, awareness campaigns, personal development workshops, the promotion of diverse educational programs, the creation of an inclusive environment, and the establishment of a regular monitoring system for self-esteem levels. These measures aim to establish an educational environment conducive to psychological development, emphasizing the importance of inclusion, psychological support, and the promotion of self-esteem.

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