

# Characteristics of the Relationship Between Academic Performance and Self-Confidence Among Students in the Humanities and Technical Fields in Modern Educational Environments

Rashid Jabbarov<sup>1</sup>, Aysel Abdullayeva<sup>2</sup>, Nuray Mammadova<sup>3</sup>, Fidan Akifzade<sup>4</sup>, Nazrin Mammadova<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Doctor of psychology, professor, Baku State University, Odlar Yurdu Universty, Baku, Azerbaijan,  
Email: rashid.cabbarov@mail.ru

<sup>2</sup>Psychology student of SABAH Groups, Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan,  
Email: ayselabdullayeva44@icloud.com

<sup>3</sup>Psychology student of SABAH Groups, Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan,  
Email: memmedovanuray35@gmail.com

<sup>4</sup>Psychology student of SABAH Groups, Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan,  
Email: fidanakifzada@gmail.com

<sup>5</sup>Psychology student of SABAH Groups, Baku State University, Baku, Azerbaijan,  
Email: nazrinmammadova90@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

This article explores the relationship between students' academic performance and self-confidence. Self-confidence helps individuals demonstrate their knowledge, skills and abilities and express themselves adequately and correctly. Confident individuals are more successful at realizing their potential. The purpose of this study is to determine whether there is an interaction between the self-confidence and academic performance of students studying in the fields of the humanities and technical sciences. The study was conducted among students in the technical and humanitarian fields at Baku State University. During the research, the self-confidence scale and the academic performance scale were used. The research showed that if  $p > 0.05$ , we can conclude that the results are normally distributed. Moreover, when  $p < 0.05$ , the dependency between the variables is significant, and if it is greater than this value, the dependency is insignificant. According to the results of the study, the significance level is  $< 0.001$ , meaning it is less than 0.05. The research demonstrated that regardless of whether the field is technical or humanitarian, there is a significant correlation between self-confidence and academic achievement, and this correlation is mutual.

**Keywords:** self-confidence, self-regulation, academic achievement, academic performance, positive self-confidence

## INTRODUCTION

Academic performance rises based on successful learning. Learning is a complex concept. It stems from the influence of cognitive and emotional factors, which are the main sources of individual differences. Brown (2000) and Skehan (1989) indicate that the affective domain is the emotional aspect of human behavior, encompassing various personality traits such as emotions, motivation, attitude, anxiety, personality, and self-confidence. Among these, "self-confidence" is one of the most powerful variables influencing learning. It is one of the main drivers for people and can have either a positive or negative impact on their lives (Brown, 2000; Skehan, 1989).

Dörnyei (2005) notes that the concept of self-confidence is closely linked to "self-esteem," and both share a common emphasis on how individuals perceive their own abilities (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 211). Glenda and Anstey (1990) point out that many researchers use the terms "self-confidence," "self-esteem," "self-worth," and "self-satisfaction" interchangeably. In general, self-confidence is a psychological and social phenomenon in which individuals evaluate themselves based on certain values. It can lead to various emotional states, stabilizing as it develops but remaining variable depending on personal circumstances (Reasoner and Rubio, 2004).

Carver et al. (1994) define self-confidence as "the individual's self-evaluation or assessment, liking or disliking oneself, and acceptance or rejection of oneself" (Higgins, 1996). Corsini (1994) views self-confidence as "how one feels about oneself" or "an individual's sense of personal worth and ability" (Corsini, 1994).

Many researchers define self-confidence as the extent to which an individual believes they are competent, significant, and valuable (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Coopersmith (1981) adds that self-confidence is "a set of attitudes and judgments that an individual carries while viewing the world. It encompasses one's expectations of success or failure" (Harris, 2009).

It is also important to note that general self-confidence develops during childhood and emerges from the accumulation of personal experiences (Harris, 2009; Brown, 1994). Literature on the formation of general self-confidence suggests that it is derived from several factors. The most important are:

1. Personal experiences. Successful experiences boost the development of high self-confidence, while failure experiences have the opposite effect.

2. Social messages from others. Society, home, school, and peers are crucial for the development of self-confidence. Observing positive attitudes from others can lead to the development of high self-confidence, while exposure to negative attitudes can lower it (Glenda & Anstey, 1990; Pierce et al., 1989; Brockner, 1988; Bandura, 1982).

Stets and Burke (2005) show that every identity-control system consists of four main conceptual elements: identity standard, comparator, output, and input (Stets and Burke, 2005).

It is essential to consider that self-confidence is dependent on identity norms. Identity norms serve as a guide for individuals to maintain meanings and expectations. Perceptions of self-related meanings in a social environment serve as input to the system. These input perceptions are compared by the comparator to the meanings in the identity standard. The output of the system is meaningful behavior that seeks to adjust the situation to align the perceived meanings with the self-related ones. This is the self-verification process (Stets and Burke, 2005).

Additionally, self-confidence is closely tied to role behaviors. Role behaviors (self-verification process) ensure behavior that aligns with the self-related meanings in the situation and the meanings and expectations of the identity standard. The steps taken to achieve this goal are called role behaviors, and these behaviors shape the social structure the role is part of. Perceptions of behaviors related to the identity the individual seeks to verify become significant for the verification of that identity (Cast & Burke, 2002).

Consequently, if a student believes that "engaging in academic work" is part of their role, they will behave in a way that reflects this, and the meanings in the situation will become significant for the verification of that identity. Again, because it is related to the verification of that identity, such a student will begin to pay attention to the amount of time they spend on academic work. The main "goal" in identity theory is to align the meanings observed in the situation with the internal meanings of the identity standard, emphasizing the strong connection between goals and achievements. It is believed that students with a high sense of self-worth tend to have higher academic achievements. Consequently, it is logical to consider self-esteem as a direct result of academic achievement (Bandura, 1986; Pajares & Graham, 1999).

In general, self-confidence, achievement, and career interests are widely discussed topics in the field of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education and research. In the academic context, self-confidence expresses a student's belief and confidence in their ability to perform or succeed in certain academic tasks and activities (Bandura, 1986; Pajares & Graham, 1999).

Various studies show that students' self-confidence is strongly correlated with academic achievement, participation, effort, motivation, course selection, and future career choices (Bandura, 1997; Webb-Williams, 2018; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Zimmerman, 2000). Additionally, research shows that students with high self-confidence are more successful at developing and adhering to a work schedule, tracking their progress, and setting academic goals compared to students with average or low self-confidence (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). There are significant relationships between a student's self-confidence, achievement, career interests, and future decisions.

Moreover, the dependency of academic performance on self-confidence has been studied in various directions. Scientific self-confidence differs from mathematical self-confidence in the context (i.e., science versus mathematics). However, scientific self-confidence, like mathematical self-confidence, reflects the student's assessment of their ability to perform tasks and activities (Aurah, 2017).

Although the results of various studies differ, most studies conclude that there is a significant relationship between scientific self-confidence and scientific achievement (Aurah, 2017; Juan, Reddy, & Hannan, 2014; Pajares, 2002; Sabah & Hammouri, 2010; Singh, Granville, & Dika, 2002). Furthermore, it has been found that when positive (i.e., high self-confidence and high scientific achievement) conditions exist, this

relationship is strongly related to students' decisions to pursue science-related majors and careers (Britner & Pajares, 2006; Lyons, 2006; Norman & Hyland, 2003).

Analysis of the research shows that self-confidence consists of three main elements: cognitive—knowing one's abilities; performance—the ability to do something; and emotional—feeling comfortable with the previous two aspects (Britner & Pajares, 2006; Lyons, 2006; Norman & Hyland, 2003).

Johnson (2003) found that "confident students generally perform well when they practice effectively and efficiently, and by performing well, they gain confidence, which creates self-reinforcing behavior in a positive direction and enhances students' belief in their abilities." Practice helps students perform better and become more confident (Johnson, 2003).

Barry and Hallam (2002) noted that "musical practice can be undertaken for the development of technical skills, learning new music, refining musical expression, or memorizing a piece." In practice, "performers work to strengthen their individual strengths and eliminate their weaknesses" (Jorgensen, 2004). Johnson (2003) also notes that "as students age, anxiety becomes a greater factor in their performance, and a few problems during performance can dramatically reduce a student's confidence" (Johnson, 2003). In other words, anxiety is one of the reasons for students' low self-confidence experiences. Ritter (2008) suggests that performers lacking confidence may not yet have developed the necessary skills to play effectively, leading to feelings of inadequacy in unfamiliar situations. It is evident that academic performance and self-confidence are topics of discursive significance. The primary aim of this article is to identify the relationship between academic performance and self-confidence among students studying in the humanitarian and technical fields and to clarify the psychological foundations of developing self-confidence based on this relationship.

#### LITRATURE REVIEW

While investigating existing problems, an important point we encounter is the need for more research on the relationship between self-concept and performance. Researchers examining the connection between self-concept and performance have shown that self-esteem and academic self-efficacy are significant predictors of performance (Lane, Lane, & Kyprianou, 2004).

Rosenberg (1965) defined global self-esteem as a positive or negative attitude towards oneself. Researchers attempting to explain the relationship between self-esteem and feelings of success or failure have found that individuals with low self-esteem perceive success as a threat because they doubt their ability to replicate that success in the future. Conversely, individuals with high self-esteem view the situation as one that can be repeated (Baumeister et al., 1993).

Research indicates that the relationship between self-esteem (SE) and academic achievement (AA) has been widely studied (Neff & Vonk, 2009). Some researchers have explored the connection between SE and AA, revealing that high levels of SE contribute positively to AA. However, other studies have found no significant relationship between SE and AA (Pullmann & Allik, 2008).

Mohammad (2010) examined the relationship between self-esteem (SE) and academic achievement (AA) among preschool students. The results indicated that high levels of SE are a significant factor in predicting students' AA (Mohammad, 2010). Arshad, Zaidi, and Mahmood (2015) studied SE and AA among university students, selecting a total of 80 students using a purposive sampling method. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and an Academic Achievement Rating Scale were used to assess SE and AA. Correlation and t-tests were employed to test the hypotheses, revealing a significant relationship between SE and AA ( $r=0.879$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) (Arshad et al., 2015).

Abdullah (2000) conducted a study at a Nigerian university to explore the relationships among achievement motivation, self-enhancement, locus of control, and academic performance in university students. The goal was to determine how these criterion variables affect students' academic performance. A total of 1,335 male and female university students from seven faculties participated in the study, selected through stratified random sampling. The results of multiple regression analysis indicated that subjective independent variables do not predict objective academic performance measures (Abdullah, 2000). Psychosocial evidence suggests that a lack of achievement motivation and low self-enhancement can create a reluctance in students to strive for high academic performance and contribute positively and effectively to national development. The connection between self-enhancement and academic achievement is widely accepted as a validated fact by many educators. This belief is often used as an argument against providing talent groupings for gifted students (Abdullah, 2000).

Hampton and Mason (2003) investigated the effects of gender, learning disability (LD) status, and sources of self-efficacy on self-esteem and academic achievement within Bandura's self-efficacy theory framework. The study involved 278 middle school students and employed structural equation modeling. The results indicated that LD status influenced self-efficacy indirectly through the source variable; gender did not have a direct or indirect effect on self-efficacy; and sources of self-efficacy directly impacted self-

esteem, which in turn affected academic performance. The structural model fit the data well and explained 55% of the variance in academic achievement (Hampton and Mason, 2003).

In another study, the school experiences and academic achievements of 46 adolescents from homeless families and 87 adolescents from families receiving public assistance were examined. Measurements taken after the homeless students were provided with stable housing indicated that both groups placed high value on education and were similar in cognitive abilities, as assessed by the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children—Revised (WISC-R) similarity subtest. Previously homeless students exhibited higher school mobility, more grade retention, and reported poorer school experiences according to their mothers, as well as lower post-secondary education plans based on their own reports. Both groups performed poorly on standardized tests of academic achievement. Homelessness was associated with further declines in achievement during periods of maximum housing instability; however, no lasting effects were observed five years later (Rafferty et al., 2004).

This study investigated the role of personality as a predictor beyond traditional indicators of college achievement, such as high school grades and SAT scores. In a sample of undergraduates ( $N = 131$ ), conscientiousness—measured through self-reports and peer ratings using the Big Five Inventory—was significantly associated with both first-year and senior GPA. A model that included traditional predictors and peer-rated conscientiousness explained 18% of the variance in first-year GPA and 37% of the variance in senior GPA. Conscientiousness alone accounted for unique variance in senior GPA, even when first-year GPA was included in the model. Thus, conscientiousness is a reliable and unique predictor of college performance, and peer evaluations may be useful for its assessment (Wagerman and Funder, 2007).

In several studies, the development of self-regulatory beliefs and their contributions to academic achievement and retention probability were examined in a sample of 412 Italian students aged 12 to 22 (48% male and 52% female). Latent growth curve analysis revealed that self-regulatory beliefs gradually decreased from middle school to high school, with a more pronounced decline observed in males. The smaller the decrease in self-regulatory beliefs, the higher the high school grades tended to be, and when socioeconomic status was considered, the likelihood of school retention increased accordingly (Caprara et al., 2008).

Mutually cross-lagged models indicate that high levels of self-regulatory beliefs in middle school contribute to academic performance and self-regulatory beliefs in high school, which partially mediate the effect of middle school grades on high school grades and school retention probability. Socioeconomic status influenced high school grades through middle school performance and contributed to school dropout both directly and indirectly (Caprara et al., 2008).

Thijs and Verkuyten (2008) investigated the relationship between perceived peer victimization and academic adjustment among a diverse sample of 1,895 fourth-grade students. The hypothesis posited that students' academic self-efficacy mediates the negative relationship between experiences of victimization and academic achievement outcomes. To test this hypothesis and explore potential differences between ethnic minority and majority group children, multilevel analyses were conducted. The results revealed that peer victimization was negatively associated with both relative and test-based indicators of academic achievement. These relationships were similar across different school classes. As expected, the link between victimization and achievement was mediated by perceived academic self-efficacy, indicating that victimized students performed worse academically because they viewed themselves as less capable. The low perceived self-efficacy of victimized children was partly related to lower overall self-esteem and depressive mood. The results were largely consistent for both ethnic minority and majority group children (Thijs and Verkuyten, 2008).

Lane, Lane, and Kyprianou (2004) examined the relationships among self-efficacy, self-esteem enhancement, past success experiences, and academic performance in a sample of 205 graduate students. Participants completed measures of past success experiences, self-esteem enhancement, and self-efficacy at the beginning of a 15-week course. The average grade obtained by each student in the modules they attended was used as a performance measure. Correlational results indicated significant relationships between self-efficacy and self-esteem enhancement. Multiple regression results showed that self-efficacy mediated the relationship between performance experiences and academic performance. The findings support the predictive value of self-efficacy measures in educational settings (Lane et al., 2004).

## METHODOLOGY

### Design

The primary design of the study is focused on identifying the relationship between self-confidence and academic achievement, as well as the degrees of mutual influence between them. To this end, both quantitative and qualitative samples and measurements were used. The approach employed in the study

is aimed at enhancing a person's integrative qualities, including the self-confidence necessary for creating performance, through academic achievement. Moreover, within the framework of a variable-centered approach, we can learn that the anticipated relationship between self-confidence and academic performance can be explained. This is because an increase in self-confidence through academic performance can enable students to feel secure in real-life situations and create a foundation for positive behaviors toward others.

### Participants

In the study, students from various disciplines were selected through random sampling. A total of 50 students (30 girls and 20 boys) from each course (III-IV) were selected, with 100 students participating in the study overall. Of these, 60 (60%) were young women, and 40 (40%) were young men. All regularly attending students of both genders participated in 100% of the classes. They were presented with information through various methods, and their consent was obtained before the research was conducted.

### Instruments

Several methods were used in the study. One of them was the evaluation of the participants' GPA (Grade Point Average). Another method employed was the self-confidence scale. The self-confidence scale consists of 5 questions, each rated on a scale of 1 to 5. The total scores range between 5 and 25.

### Data collection

The study was conducted in September 2024 among third- and fourth-year students from various faculties at Baku State University. The research began with an empirically obtained and validated approach to the problem. Subsequently, permission was requested from the students to obtain the necessary information through a documented presentation, as required by the participants. The research results were processed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) based on the calculation of normal distribution (according to the scores collected from academic indicators). In our opinion, a qualitative analysis of the relationship between social media and self-confidence reveals the developmental directions for building social relationships and individual performance.

### Ethical criteria

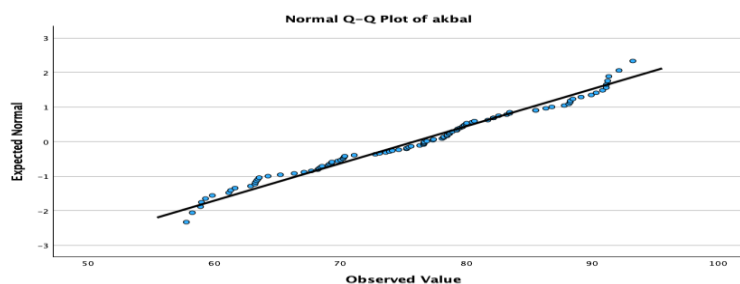
Before conducting this research, the existing ethics committee was actively engaged. Additionally, the international ethical aspects of beneficence and non-maleficence were taken into consideration for the participants in our study. It was explained to the participants that the results aimed to achieve beneficial outcomes for them without any intention of causing harm under any circumstances. Similarly, the physical and mental well-being of the participants was not compromised during the study.

### RESULTS

During the research, an initial analysis of the normal distribution based on the scores determining academic achievement was conducted. As seen in Table 1, the significance level (Sig) was indicated as 0.2. If the significance level is greater than  $P > 0.05$ , we can conclude that the results are normally distributed. This can also be observed in the hyperbolic curve. Similarly, as shown in the accompanying graph, the scores obtained by individuals were either on or close to the normal distribution curve.

**Table 1.** Calculation of Normal Distribution (Based on Students' GPA Scores)

Akademik performans	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
	.071	100	.200*	.971	100	.027

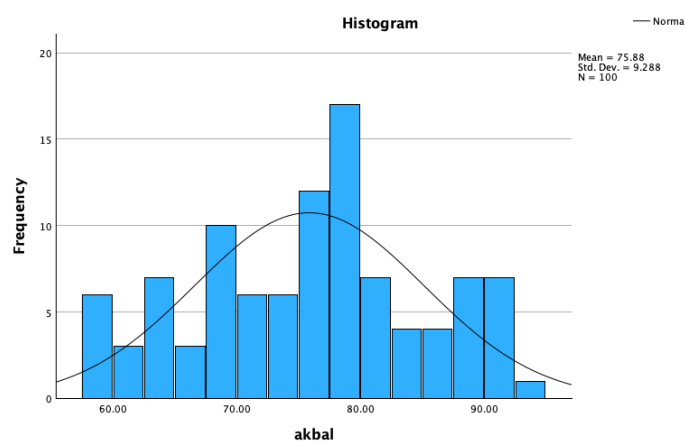


**Figure 1.** Visualization of Individuals' Scores on the Normal Distribution Curve

**Table 2.** Indicators of Students' Academic Achievement

		Case Number		Value
akbal	Highest	1	39	93.21
		2	96	92.11
		3	94	91.30
		4	42	91.21
		5	9	91.12
	Lowest	1	38	57.78
		2	43	58.25
		3	76	58.90
		4	66	58.98
		5	37	59.30

Based on the GPA, the highest score achieved by the students was 93.21 out of 100, while the lowest score was 57.78.



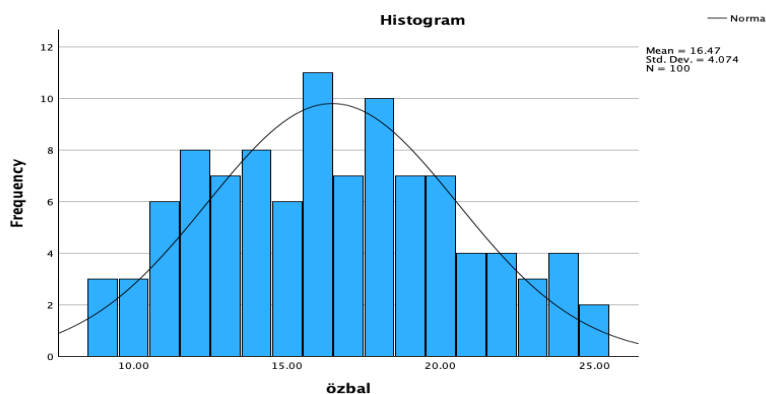
**Figure 2.** Visualization of Normal Distribution on the Hyperbola

**Table 3.** Calculation of Normal Distribution (Based on Self-Confidence Scale Results)

Özgüvən bal	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
	.078	100	.140	.975	100	.059

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

As seen in Table 2, the significance level (Sig) is indicated as 0.140. If the significance level is greater than 0.05, we can conclude that the results are normally distributed. This can also be observed in the hyperbolic curve. Furthermore, as shown in the accompanying graph, the scores obtained by individuals were either on or close to the normal distribution curve.



**Figure 3.** Visualization of Self-Confidence Scores' Normal Distribution on the Hyperbola

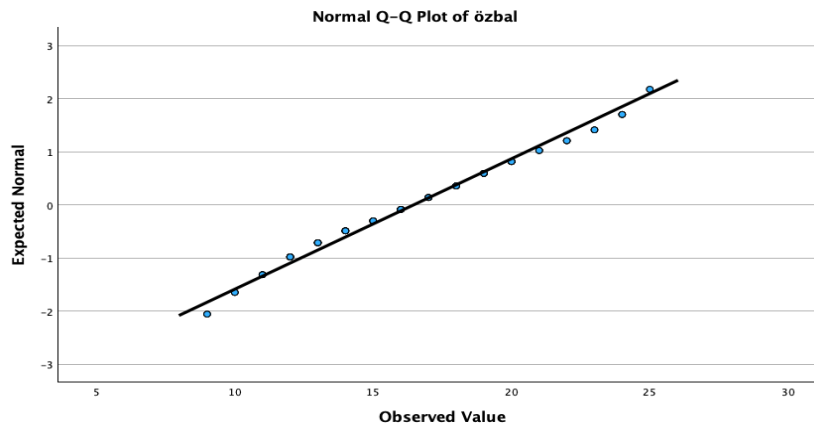


Figure 4. Visualization of the Distribution of Self-Confidence Scores on the Normal Curve

Table 3. Indicators of Self-Confidence Test Results

Extreme Values				
			Case Number	Value
özbal	Highest	1	9	25.00
		2	39	25.00
		3	5	24.00
		4	6	24.00
		5	16	24.00 <sup>a</sup>
	Lowest	1	98	9.00
		2	89	9.00
		3	35	9.00
		4	60	10.00
		5	55	10.00 <sup>b</sup>
a. Only a partial list of cases with the value 24.00 are shown in the table of upper extremes.				
b. Only a partial list of cases with the value 10.00 are shown in the table of lower extremes.				

Based on Table 3, the highest score on the self-confidence scale was 25 out of 25, while the lowest score was 9.

Table 4. Correlation Indicators Between Academic Achievement and Self-Confidence(Pirson)

		akbal	özbal
akbal	Pearson Correlation	1	.836**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	100	100
özbal	Pearson Correlation	.836**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

As shown in Table 4, according to the Pearson criterion, when the significance level (Sig) is less than 0.05, the dependence between the quantities is considered significant, whereas a value greater than 0.05 indicates that the dependence is not significant. The results of the study indicate that the significance level is < 0.01, which is less than 0.05. In conclusion, there is a significant dependence between academic achievement and self-confidence.

Table 5. Correlation between academic performance and self-esteem (Spearman)

		akbal	özbal
Spearman's rho	akbal	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.856**
			<.001

		N	100	100
	özbai	Correlation Coefficient	.856**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

As shown in Table 5, according to the Spearman criterion, when the significance level (Sig) is less than 0.05, the dependence between the quantities is considered significant, while a value greater than 0.05 indicates that the dependence is not significant. The results of the study indicate that the significance level is <0.001, which is less than 0.05. In conclusion, there is a significant dependence between social media addiction and self-confidence. Thus, the research demonstrates that there is a correlation between academic performance and self-confidence, and this dependence is significant.

## DISCUSSION

Our research indicated that there is a significant relationship between students' academic indicators and their self-confidence. However, this relationship is not comprehensive; rather, it reveals connections that align with the substructure of academic indicators and positive forms of self-confidence. Several studies corroborate this finding. Omidullah Akbari and Javed Sahibzada (2020) determined that only a few students possess low self-confidence, while the majority have strong self-confidence. Furthermore, students' self-confidence impacts their learning in various areas, including participation, goal setting, fostering interest in lessons, reducing fear, feeling comfortable with teachers and classmates, and sharing their opinions related to the lessons in class.

However, different results have emerged in other studies (Omidullah and Sahibzada, 2020), highlighting the methodological differences in this research. Another definition associates self-esteem more with perception than with reality (Jabbarov et al., 2020; Zeigler-Hill, 2013). For instance, this may refer to an individual's belief about being intelligent and attractive, but it does not necessarily determine whether that individual genuinely possesses those traits (Baumeister et al., 2003).

## Limitations and Further Research

While the conducted research aligns with several studies, it has certain limitations. These limitations primarily stem from the involvement of fewer respondents during the selection process, as well as the study being confined to a single university. Naturally, the data was collected within a limited timeframe and accompanied by a restricted number of participants. Nevertheless, the findings of this study can reinforce existing approaches in this field within a specific national-ethnic environment and cultural context, providing different perspectives for future research through larger sample sizes in quantitative analyses.

## CONCLUSION

Academic indicators have a strong influence on individuals' self-confidence. This effect is reciprocal. Our research has revealed that students with high academic indicators can enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem as a result. However, it is important to note that in the modern era, individuals are assessed using various evaluation methods. This assessment scale may not always be suitable for every student. Therefore, children should be made aware of the overall assessment system, and their awareness levels regarding the enhancement of academic indicators should be increased.

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