

LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN LAHORE

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

Background: Student's self-confidence about their study is important indicator to judge their ability to choose a good career and decisions about themselves. No local study is present to assess confidence of undergraduate students in Pakistan. **Objective:** To assess level of self-confidence about study among undergraduate students. **Methodology:** This was a descriptive cross sectional survey done on 359 undergraduate students in community of Lahore, Pakistan. After taking consent, their demographic information was taken. "Academic Confidence Scale ACS" scale was used to assess confidence level in 15 items. Data was entered and analyze using SPSS 24. Mean and standard deviation was given for numbered and frequency and percentage was given for categorical data. **Results:** Among 359 students, there were 231 (64%) females and 128 (46%) males with an average age of 21.23 years. They were "confident" in confidence in giving a presentation to a small group of fellow students or friends (80.77%), in completing the assignment based on required criteria (69%) and in their confidence in seeking help for unclear concepts (65%). Overall, mostly they were either confident or more confident, followed by less confident in all

questions. **Conclusion:** This study concludes that undergraduate students are generally confident about their studies including their ability to understand, communicate, teamwork and examination.

INTRODUCTION

Confidence is defined as a belief of validating our thoughts about ourself or others, performance or knowledge and is described as a subjective feeling.¹ Confidence is also defined to be our belief to a certain degree about an action or thought to be correct.² There is a close relationship of confidence to terms like presence, expectancy, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and also trust. Person with growing confidence is often perceived as a competent person. As described by Amy Cuddy in a research done by her, "presence of confidence is not a part of pretending that you are competent; but it is first believing then revealing abilities and skills one truly has in themselves".³ Yet there should be carefulness about not substituting competence with confidence and not confusing confidence

with arrogance. Many people believe confidence to be certainty in one's self to achieve a certain task or a certain performance as well as control or influence an outcome. Confidence also is associated with belief that individuals can overcome problems and obstacles in way of an objective.⁴ In past decades many methods have been developed to measure level of confidence objectively in humans.¹ Humans as well as animals have been reported to have a sense of confidence in their decision making. Although there are many biases about confidence, the fact that humans and animals can perceive a decision to be correct is impressive task that shows brain can compute and analyze probabilities as well as their distributions. However, there is lack of data on how confidence is computed.² Current neuroscience is still lacking in data of how brain codes

confidence. Some researchers report that circuit involved in decision making is same as involved in confidence¹ There are mixed conclusions in research regarding confidence and skills in performance in a clinical setting.⁵ In a clinical setting confidence cannot equate competency or replace progressive skills mastery that is demonstrated in clinical proficiency.⁶ Research recommends recognizing connection of building confidence for improving competence by blended techniques of learning.⁷ Several studies have compare confidence with comp-etyency; however there are only few studies that compare confidence to achievement of experi-ential or clinical performance outcomes.⁸ It is therefore important to assess the level of confidence among students. As undergraduate students have to make decisions about their lives, careers and work, it is important for them to be confident and well informed about these decisions. However, no studies have assessed this in local population. Hence the objective of this study is to see frequency of confidence and level of confidence among undergraduate students about their study in community.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design: Descriptive cross sectional

Study setting: Study was conducted in different areas of Lahore from community.

Sample size: The data was collected from 359 undergraduate students in different fields of study taking 37%⁹ level of confidence in getting good grades. "Academic Confidence Scale ACS" scale¹⁰ freely available on internet was used to collect data.

Sample Selection Criteria

Inclusion criteria

- Undergrad students enrolled in any college/ university
- Age 18-24 years
- Both genders

Exclusion criteria

- Students with any know psychiatric abnormality
- On medical for any mental related issues

Data collection procedure

Data was collected after taking consent and demographic information. All data was collected from different areas of Lahore community. ACS scale with 15 questions on 5 point likert scale was used to get information about self-confidence. All students were requested to fill form and return. There was 100% response rate and data was checked for its reliability using Chronbach's Alpha, that was 0.71.

Data analysis

Data was entered in SPSS version 25 and was analyzed using mean, standard deviation for numeric and frequency, percentages for non-numeric data.

RESULTS

Among 359 students, there were 231 (64%) females and 128 (46%) males with an average age of 21.23 ± 4.34 years. 20% respondents were doing MBBS, 14.2% were doing any of the fields of engineering (BSE), 11.7% were doing Pharm-D, 7.7% were doing B.Com, 5.5% were doing BBA and rest of the students were from others category of BA/BS. 72.4% were from private sector universities and 27.6% were from private universities. Responses of students against all 15 items of ACS scale are given in table-1. They were "confident" in confidence in giving a presentation to a small group of fellow students or friends (80.77%), in completing the assignment based on required criteria (69%) and in their confidence in seeking help for unclear concepts (65%). Overall, mostly they were either confident or more confident, followed by less confident in all questions.

Table-1: Responses of Students against “Academic Confidence Scale (ACS)”

QUESTIONS	Not confident at all	Less Confident	Confident	More confident	Extremely confident
Students' confidence of getting good grades in their assignments	3 (0.8%)	25 (6.9%)	144 (40.1%)	109 (30.3%)	78 (21.7%)
Students' confidence on performing well in exams	15 (4.1%)	42 (11.6%)	201 (55.9%)	91 (25.35%)	10 (2.78%)
Students' confidence on being well prepared for their upcoming classes	11(3.06%)	40 (11.14%)	154 (42.9%)	80 (22.28%)	74 (20.61%)
Students' confidence on having debate with their classmates	36 (10.02%)	45 (12.53%)	185 (51.53%)	60 (16.71%)	33 (9.19%)
Students' confidence of being able to understand the materials discussed by the lecturer	20 (5.57%)	22 (6.12%)	231 (64.1%)	54 (15.04%)	32 (8.91%)
Students' confidence in academic debate with their peers	59 (16.4%)	130 (3.62%)	160 (44.51%)	10 (2.78%)	0 (0%)
Students' confidence in completing the assignment based on required criteria	45 (12.54%)	48(13.37%)	250 (69.6%)	16 4.45%	0 (0%)
Students' confidence in seeking help for unclear concepts	26 (7.24%)	68 (18.94%)	234 (65.7%)	21 (5.84%)	10
Students' confidence in giving a presentation to a small group of fellow students or friends	8 (2.22%)	25 (6.96%)	290 (80.77%)	20 (5.71%)	16 (4.45%)
Students' confidence in seeking help from their lecturers	30 (8.35%)	24 (6.67%)	219 (61.01%)	8(2.22%)	78 (21.34%)
Students' confidence in planning appropriate revision schedules for their lessons	26 (7.24%)	35 (9.74%)	175 (48.75%)	44 (12.17%)	79 (22.2%)
Students' confidence in solving exam question	25 (6.9%)	30 (8.35%)	186 (51.7%)	23 (6.4%)	95 (26.47%)
Students' confidence in responding to questions asked by the lecturer	10 (2.78%)	12 (3.34)	156 (43.6%)	136 (37.8%)	45 (12.1%)
Students' confidence of being able to manage their workload to meet coursework deadlines	13 (3.62%)	31 (8.63%)	177 (49.303%)	31 (8.63%)	107 (29.80%)
Students' confidence in studying effectively independently	8 (2.22%)	12 (3.34%)	150 (41.3%)	130 (36.7%)	59 (16.5%)

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to find out how much confident our undergraduate students are regarding their studies. We found most of them are either confident or more confident. Some were less confident. Very few were either not confident at all or extremely confident. So the students have average confidence. One study reports that organizations with higher confidence perform better than organizations with lower confidence as calculated by overall patient experience

perception and performance. As reported by researchers the patient healthcare experience was rated to be lower than patients by workforce but hospitals having greater degree of confidence had better patient health care experience. Also organizations in which employees have a sense of providing better patient care experience have more chances to retain their employees. Although there are gaps in levels of confidence between senior leaders those that are farthest to bed side and providers

and staff those closest to bed side with later group having lower level of confidence in patient experience as compared to previous one. As recommended by researchers elevating confidence in later group improves patient care experience.¹¹

Furthermore, for team efficacy and confidence there is an important role of leadership confidence. Researchers reported middle managers to have higher level of confidence than that of front line members of team. For organizational improvements and patients' healthcare perceptions of experience, there must be growing leadership confidence and employing empowerment behaviors, along with confidence building, as well as competencies centered around patient. There is a role of organizational culture in team confidence as well as individual competence making up in team.^{12,13} The design of curriculum of medical school is such that to ensure every graduate becomes knowledgeable, professional and skillful, which leads to Self-confidence development on a conscious level. Self-confidence is described to be a belief that one's abilities can tackle responsibilities with competencies and without presence of self-doubt. Self confidence is a bridge between gap of performance and knowledgeable. One study shows the self-assessed level of confidence in students of medical field before professional examination of physiology. There was a high confidence level (6.98 ± 1.75 ranging from 4-10), that is an indication of achieving success in physiology examination and somewhat indicator of interest in subject. Also this study did not have a significant difference of self assessed confidence in off campus and on campus students ($P=0.653$) although students that were on-campus reported a higher confidence level (7.25 ± 2.18 as against 6.94 ± 1.71).¹⁴

In another study it was reported that confidence that was self-perceived of students significantly improved after medical course's two clinical years, while having stable patient centered

attitudes. These students having positive attitudes of high level to that of patient centredness before actual clinical placements could be explained partly by their previous patient centered care exposure in first year of clinical environments that were simulated, as well as their maturity of being students of graduate level.¹⁵ In a study questionnaire was utilized for survey of confidence levels in newly graduates in the year 2012 in of performing total 17 essential selected procedural skills, utilizing a rating scale of 1-5 with 4-5 as 'satisfactory' as with learning experience by them, with categories of 0, <5, 5-10 and >10 cases. A total of ninety-nine graduates of medical field completed provided questionnaire (62.7%). The average levels of confidence of procedures that were essential ranged from; 3.35 to 4.57, highest being in suturing of wound and lowest being in resuscitation of newborn. Confidence was related significantly to that of clinical experience. Medical graduates more than 90% had experience in more than 10 cases depicted in procedures satisfactory confidence, but newborn resuscitation was exceptional case. 70% or more medical graduates with experience in 5-10 cases, were confidently performing all the procedures with exception of endotracheal intubation.¹⁶

One other research conducted cross-sectional study that was descriptive after ethical approval among first year to that of fifth year students in medical field conducted from month December 2020 to month of April 2021. 190 subjects were selected in the study utilizing sampling technique that was stratified and random. Rosenberg scale of self-esteem was used in this study for measuring participant's self-esteem. Participants received via email the Google Forms questionnaires. Then Google sheet was used to enter data and analyzed later using SPSS 27. Chi-square testing was done for identifying if self-esteem scores had potential differences among several variables. While p -value < 0.05 was statistically significant in this study. 74.4% or

majority of students of medical field had self-esteem of normal level. Although, 18.9% students of medical field had low level of self-esteem, and among those, students of third-year suffered most (30.77%). Also, there was lower self esteem level in females than in males in this study. There should be interventions for boosting the self-esteem level for helping medical students in becoming efficient and confident doctors.¹⁷

CONCLUSION:

This study concludes that undergraduate students are generally confident about their studies including their ability to understand, communicate, teamwork and examination.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

SA: Article write up

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