
SELF-ESTEEM AS PREDICTOR OF QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examined self-esteem as predictor of quality of life among undergraduates in Anambra State. The objectives of the study were to ascertain the predictive value of self-esteem on quality of life among undergraduates; find out the predictive value of self-esteem on quality of life among male and female undergraduates; and ascertain the predictive value of self-esteem on quality of life among students of lower (100 – 200) and higher (300 – 400) levels of study in public universities in Anambra State. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 55,416 undergraduates from two public universities in Anambra State. A sample of 1662 respondents was selected using proportionate stratified sampling technique. The instruments used for data collection were Self-Esteem Evaluation Rating Scale (SEERS) and Quality of Life Scale (QLS). The instruments were face validated by three experts and the reliability of the instruments were determined using Cronbach Alpha co-efficient which yielded coefficient values of 0.76 for SEERS and 0.82 for QLS. Simple regression analysis was used in analyzing the data. The findings of the study revealed that self-esteem ($r = 0.792$, $p = 0.000$) positively predicted quality of life of undergraduates. The findings also revealed that self-esteem of male ($r = 0.460$, $p = 0.0000$), female ($r = 0.276$, $p = 0.000$), students of lower (100 – 200) levels of study ($r = 0.275$, $p = 0.000$) and students of higher (300 – 400) levels of study ($r = 0.164$, $p = 0.000$) positively predicted quality of life of undergraduates. The study concluded that self-esteem positively predicted quality of life of undergraduates. Based on the findings, it was recommended that an intervention program should be provided for school personnel by school management by focusing on equipping their knowledge and skills in handling students with low self-esteem and poor quality of life. With the said intervention program, the students' low self-esteem will be reduced and students' quality of life improved.

Key Words: Self-Esteem, Quality of Life, Undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

The importance of healthy self-esteem in ensuring quality of life particularly among undergraduates cannot be overemphasized. University years are unique time in life, and offer a lot of opportunities to make change and exploration such as active social life and independent living. University students face many problems such as separation from their families, entrance into a new environment and adaptation to educational standards which might affect their quality of life. The quality of life of the undergraduates particularly in developing country like Nigeria is at very low ebb due to the poor state of the economy. The people are exposed to poor housing, inadequate health infrastructures, poor educational facilities and poor commute infrastructure. This has reduced the quality of life enjoyed by the students.

Quality of life is the degree to which an individual is healthy, comfortable, and able to participate in or enjoy life events (Lee et al, 2022). The term *quality of life* is inherently ambiguous, as it can refer both to the experience an individual has of his or her own life and to the living conditions in which individuals find themselves. Hence, quality of life is highly subjective. Whereas one person may define quality of life according to wealth or satisfaction with life, another person may define it in terms of capabilities (for example, having the ability to live a good life in terms of emotional and physical well-being). A disabled person may report a high quality of life, whereas a healthy person who recently lost a job may report a low quality of life. Within the arena of health care, quality of life is viewed as multidimensional, encompassing emotional, physical, material, and social well-being (Jose et al, 2021).

Kazemi et al (2017) views quality of life as the individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture in which they live and the value system they have in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected by a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, and their relationship to salient features of their environment (Elgin & Hector, 2020). Humaira, Noreena and Maria (2022) viewed quality of life an individual perception of his own situation in life in the context of culture, and the extent of incompatibility of this with his goals, expectations and interests for mental health, independence and personal and social relationships, individual self-circumstances of his life.

Self-esteem has traditionally been defined by Akram (2017) as a stable sense of personal worth and worthiness. Self-esteem is related to similar notions like self-respect, self-worth and self-regard that all encompass the individual's beliefs about his or herself. Self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds toward himself. It is the overall evaluation of oneself in either a positive or negative way (Veni & Merlene, 2017). Self-esteem therefore refer to the overall self or to specific aspects of the self, such as how people feel about their social standing, racial or ethnic group, physical features, athletic skills, job or school performance. It indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself or herself to be competent and worthy of living. Simply put, self – esteem is essentially one's feeling of self-competence and self-worth. Self- esteem is a feeling that guides individuals' behaviour. It is a driving force behind motivation (Vasiliu, 2015). Hence, self-esteem is the ability of an individual to deal with different challenges of life. It is the feeling of being worthy to do something extra ordinary, to enjoy the right and the ability to do hard work. It is the belief that one has to be competent and worthy enough to achieve something in life. Simply speaking, it is a feeling of self-competence and self-worth.

Besides, self-esteem is seen to be shaped both by the degree of discrepancy between a person's goals and the accomplishments, and by the degree of emotional support perceived from parents and peers. Self-esteem would also develop out of a person's experience with success and failure. This would mean that if a person succeeds in a certain task and gets a positive feedback from the others about the performance, he would develop a greater self-esteem. However, when the discrepancy is large, this person will see himself as failing to live up to the own goals or values and thus result in a lower self-esteem. A positive self-evaluation is a vital predictor of one's general well-being and degree of adaptation to the social context, as well as a powerful factor in protecting against psycho-social risks in adolescence. In other words, a negative self evaluation of a person will be seen to cause psycho-social risks in adolescence. Magro et al (2018) found that the development of full human potential is enhanced through high self esteem for people of all ages. Self –esteem is also a vital factor that affects the level of proficiency in all fields of endeavour. Therefore, self-esteem in a person plays an important role in improving a person's competency and proficiency which eventually can develop the person to his or her full human potential. Self-esteem reflects an individual's overall subjective emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is the decision made by an individual as an attitude towards the self. Dogan (cited in Arshad et al, 2015) noted that it encompasses beliefs about oneself as well as emotional states, such as triumph, despair, pride, and shame. It is a significant psychological element causal to health and quality of life.

Self-esteem is a fundamental part of a person's quality of life. Self-esteem has influence on undergraduate quality of life. Someone with positive self-esteem is more capable of accepting his conditions and remains positive in running his/her life. Also, someone with positive self-esteem may easier attain higher quality of life than someone with negative self-esteem. Mohammad (2020) supported this statement by arguing that self-esteem relates positively to quality of life. Vasiliu (2015) in his study reported that self-esteem influences the quality of life of students. This implies in this stage of life, self-esteem is one of the most significant element related to and dynamically influencing undergraduate students' quality of life and this can be influenced by the gender of the student.

Gender is the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioural characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between the feminine and masculine (female and male) population. Gender constitutes a structure of social practice that establishes relations of power, attitudes and hierarchies, not only among people, but also among groups and institutions, which would simply overcome the analysis or individual perception of being female or male. This category permits an understanding of socially predefined roles for men and women as perpetrators of unequal hierarchical relations (Steinfeldt et al, 2012).

Gender, is generally asserted to influence how self esteem predicts quality of life. A study by Naderi et al (cited in Madu, 2017) indicated that, there are significant gender differences in self esteem and it showed that gender has the strongest unique effect on student self esteem. However in another research, it showed that female and male students did not show any significant difference in self esteem Rozumah et al (cited in Ferreira et al, 2017). Vasiliu (2015) found significant differences between male and female on the influence of self-esteem on quality of life. Mohammad (2020) study indicates that there is a significant difference between male and female on the relationship between self-esteem and quality of life. Apart from gender, students academic level is an important factor when considering how self-esteem predicts quality of life among undergraduate students in Anambra state.

The students are classified as new and old students based on their year of study. The newly admitted students are usually found at 100 -200 levels while the older ones are found in 300-400 or 500 depending on a person's course of study. The younger students tend to live a more restrictive life and are still adjusting to the new environment while the older students have adjusted fully to the academic environment. To this end, the level of self-esteem of young and old students and how it affects the quality of their life may not be the same as will be proved by the result of the present study. Against this background, this study examined self esteem as predictor of quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

METHOD

Correlational research design was adopted in this study. The rationale for adopting this design was to ascertain the predictive ability of self-esteem on quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The study was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria. Anambra State is one of the 36 states of the federation and is located in the South-East geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The State has two public universities, four private universities, two colleges of education and two polytechnics. But this study will concentrate on the undergraduates of public universities in Anambra State. The public universities covered in this study include Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam. The undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam were studied. The students of these public institutions were considered for the study because of the observed poor living conditions of undergraduates occasioned by stress and their negative feelings about self.

The population of the study consisted of 55,416 undergraduates (37,182 UNIZIK and 18,234 COOU comprising 32,231 females, 23,185 males, 28,875 lower level students and 26,541 higher levels students in public universities in Anambra State). The sample for the study was 1662 undergraduates, comprising 695 males, 967 females, 866 lower level students and 796 higher levels students selected from the population. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample for the study. Stratification was based on gender and level of study. Simple random sampling was used to select the three faculties from each of the university. Out of the 14 faculties in UNIZIK, Faculty of Education, Management Sciences and Engineering were selected while out of the 15 faculties in COOU, Faculty of Social Sciences, Arts and Law were selected. Thereafter, 3% of the students in the six faculties were sampled.

Self-Esteem Evaluation Rating Scale (SEERS) and Quality of Life Scale (QOLS). Self-Esteem Evaluation Rating Scale (SEERS) was developed by Swainathan (2016) to measure the self-esteem of the individual. The researcher adapted the instrument. The instrument is made up of two sections: A and B. Section A elicited demographic information of the respondents such as school, gender and level of study while Section B which contains 21 items sought information on self-esteem of the respondents. The items were placed on 5-point response format of Always (A), Most of the Time (MT), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R) and Never (N). The range of scores were weighted as 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The second instrument is Quality of Life Scale (QOLS) developed by World Health Organization (2018). This was developed to measure an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. The instrument was adapted by the researcher. The questionnaire contains 26 items which elicited information on quality of

life of the respondents. The items were placed on a 5 point scale of Not at all (NA), A Little (AL), A Moderate Amount (MA), Very Much (VM) and An Extreme Amount (EM). The range of scores were weighted as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

The face and construct validity of the instruments were established by the researcher. The face validity was ascertained by two experts who are lecturers in the Guidance and Counselling and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation, all from the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. The instruments were trial-tested in a single administration on a representative sample of 40 undergraduates (randomly selected from Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) and University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus (UNEC). Twenty undergraduates (10 males and 10 females) from ESUT and twenty students (10 males and 10 females) from UNEC were selected. The institutions were chosen for reliability test because they share similar characteristics with universities used for this study. The scores obtained were collated to determine the internal consistency of the items in each of the instruments. Cronbach Alpha Co-efficient was used. The computation yielded reliability coefficients of 0.76 for Self-Esteem Evaluation Rating Scale and 0.82 for Quality of Life Scale.

The data collected were analyzed using simple regression. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used for data analysis. Muijs' in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggestion for assessing the goodness of fit of regression model using squared regression coefficient (R^2) and Beta weight (β) was adopted in this study. For R^2 : 0 – 0.1 weak; 0.1 – 0.3 modest fit; 0.3 – 0.5 moderate fit; > 0.5 strong fit. To ascertain whether a predictor is significant, probability value (p-value) was used. Simple regression was used for data analyses because it is the best statistical tool that can measure variables in a predictive study such as the present one.

RESULTS

The results of the empirical analyses are analyzed below.

Table 1: Simple Regression Analysis of Self-Esteem as Predictor of Quality of Life among Undergraduates

	<i>B</i>	SE	β	P-value
Constant	18.353	.441		0.000
Self-Esteem	.792	.021	.517	0.000
R	.117			
R^2	.614			
Adj. R^2	.513			
<i>F</i>	19.057			0.000

Table 1 analyzed the predictive value of self-esteem on quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The Table indicated that the simple regression coefficient (R) is 0.792 while the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.614. This showed that 61.4 percent of the variations in quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State are predicted by the variation in students' self-esteem. Using Muijs' criteria, self-esteem significantly predicted quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The beta weight ($\beta = 0.517$) is an indication that self-esteem positively predicts quality of life among undergraduates, such that a unit increase in self-esteem will leads to 0.517 increase in the quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

Table 1 above indicated that the F-ratio associated with these is 19.057 and the P-value = 0.000. Therefore, since P-value is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, we reject the stated hypothesis. The study therefore concluded that self-esteem is a significant positive predictor of quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

Table 2: Simple Regression Analysis of Self-Esteem as Predictor of Quality of life Among Male and Female Undergraduates

		<i>B</i>	SE	β	P-value
Male	Constant	18.603	.650		.000
	Self-Esteem	.460	.031	.577	.000
	R	.077			
	R ²	.546			
	Adj.R ²	.514			
	F	53.862			.000
Female	Constant	18.373	.612		.000
	Self-Esteem	.276	.329	.597	.009
	R	.097			
	R ²	.569			
	Adj.R ²	.548			
	F	66.881			.000

Table 2 measured the predictive value of self-esteem on quality of life among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The Table showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) for male students is 0.460 while the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.546. This showed that self-esteem predicts 54.6 percent of the variations in the quality of life of male undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. Using Muijs' criteria, self-esteem strongly predicts quality of life among male undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The beta weight value of 0.577 indicated that self-esteem positively predicts quality of life among male undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. This indicates that a unit increase in self-esteem will likely lead to 0.460 increases in the quality of life of male students.

Table 2 also showed that the regression coefficient (R) for female students is 0.276 while the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.569. This further showed that self-esteem predicts 56.9 percent of the variations in the quality of life of female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. Using Muijs' criteria, self-esteem strongly predicts quality of life among female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The beta weight value of 0.597 showed that self-esteem positively predicts quality of life among female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. This revealed that a unit increase in self-esteem will lead to 0.276 increases in quality of life among female undergraduates. This suggested that the predictive value of self-esteem on quality of life is stronger in male students than female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra.

Table 2 indicated that the F-ratio associated with male and female students is 53.862 and 66.881 respectively while the P-value is 0.000 and 0.000 respectively for male and female students. Since the P-values are less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is inferred that self-esteem is not a significant predictor of

quality of life among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

Table 3: Simple Regression Analysis of Self-Esteem as Predictor of Quality of life Among Students of Lower (100 – 200) and Higher (300 – 400) Levels of Study

		<i>B</i>	SE	β	P-value
Lower Level of Study	Constant	18.420	.615		.000
	Self-Esteem	.275	.029	.495	.000
	R	.095			
	R ²	.619			
	Adj.R ²	.588			
	F	16.531			.011
Higher Level of Study	Constant	18.558	.649		.000
	Self-Esteem	.164	.031	.580	.038
	R	.080			
	R ²	.536			
	Adj.R ²	.505			
	F	14.303			.008

Table 3 measured the predictive value of self-esteem on quality of life among students of lower (100 – 200) and higher (300 – 400) levels of study in public universities in Anambra State. The table showed that the simple regression coefficient (R) for students in lower (100 – 200) level of study is 0.275 while the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.619. This showed that self-esteem predicts 61.9 percent of the variations in the quality of life of students in lower (100 – 200) level of study in public universities in Anambra State. Using Muijs' criteria, self-esteem moderately predicts quality of life among students in lower (100 – 200) level of study in public universities in Anambra State. The beta weight value of 0.495 indicates that self-esteem positively predicts quality of life among students in lower (100 – 200) level of study in public universities in Anambra State. This indicated that a unit increase in self-esteem will likely lead to 0.275 increases in the quality of life of students in lower (100 – 200) level of study.

The table also showed that the regression coefficient (R) for students in higher (100 – 200) level of study is .164 while the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.536. This shows that self-esteem predicts 53.6 percent of the variations in the quality of life of students in higher (100 – 200) level of study in public universities in Anambra State. Using Muijs' criteria, self-esteem strongly predicts quality of life among students in higher (100 – 200) level of study in public universities in Anambra State. The beta weight value of 0.580 showed that self-esteem positively predicts quality of life among students in higher (100 – 200) level of study in public universities in Anambra State. This showed that a unit increase in self-esteem will lead to 0.164 increases in quality of life among students in higher (100 – 200) level of study. This suggested that the positive predictive value of self-esteem on quality of life is stronger in students in higher (100 – 200) level of study than students in lower (100 – 200) level of study in public universities in Anambra.

Table 3 indicated that the F-ratio associated with male and female students is 16.531 and 14.303 respectively while the P-value is 0.011 and 0.008 respectively for students in lower (100 – 200) levels of study and higher (300 – 400) levels of study. Since the P-values are less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it is inferred that self-esteem is a significant predictor of quality of life among students of

lower (100 – 200) and higher (300 – 400) levels of study in public universities in Anambra State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study as shown on Table 1 indicated that self-esteem predicts quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. This implies that self-esteem is a significant predictor of quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The finding of this study is in consonance with the views of Jadranka et al (2016) who asserted that self-esteem is factor associated with the quality of life. This also agreed with the findings of Kazemi et al (2017) that there was a significant positive relationship among dimensions of quality of life and self-esteem. Similarly, Hemati and Kiani (2016) study showed a significant relationship between self-esteem and quality of life.

The findings of the study as shown in Table 2 indicated that self-esteem predicts quality of life among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. This shows that self-esteem is a significant predictor of quality of life among male and female undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. This implies that the quality of life of undergraduates can be positively influenced by the male and female students' self-esteem. The study collaborate the views of Oliveira et al (2017) that there was a significant positive correlation between quality of life and self-esteem. Similarly, Humaira et al (2022) found that self-esteem is a significant predictor of quality of life among male and female students.

The result in Table 3 shows that self-esteem predicts quality of life among students in lower (100 – 200) level of study in public universities in Anambra State. This indicates that self-esteem is a significant predictor of quality of life among students of lower (100 – 200) and higher (300 – 400) levels of study in public universities in Anambra State. The result of this study disagrees with the findings of Vasiliu (2015) whose study found significant differences between male and female the influence of self-esteem on quality of life.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the self-esteem as predictors of quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State. The data generated were subjected to statistical analysis. The study found that self-esteem is a significant predictor of quality of life among undergraduates. Self-esteem is a significant predictor of quality of life among male and female undergraduates. Self-esteem is a significant predictor of quality of life among students of lower (100 – 200) and higher (300 – 400) levels of study in public universities in Anambra State. Based on the foregoing, the study concluded that self-esteem predicts quality of life among undergraduates in public universities in Anambra State.

The study recommends that intervention program should be provided for school personnel by school management by focusing on equipping their knowledge and skills in handling students with low self-esteem. With the said intervention program, the perceived low self-esteem will be reduced and students quality of life improved. Furthermore, measures to tackle low self-esteem should be embedded in the school guidance and counselling programmes by the ministry of education and the school management. This programme should have in place appropriate packages aimed at adjusting the identified weaknesses in order to improve the quality of life of undergraduates. Counsellors in public universities should factor in self-esteem assessing students' quality of life; this will help them in understanding how to guide students through designing programmes that will improve their self-esteem.

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