

## Assessment of Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy among Nursing Students at University of Kerbala

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### Abstract

**Background:** Self-esteem and self-efficacy are essential psychological constructs that significantly influence nursing students' academic performance, clinical competence, and overall well-being. Understanding the relationship between these variables is crucial for enhancing educational outcomes and professional readiness in nursing education.

**Aim:** This study aimed to assess the levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy among nursing students at the University of Kerbala and to examine the correlation between these two variables.

**Methods:** A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional design was conducted among 74 nursing students selected through a convenience sampling at the University of Kerbala between October 5 and November 5, 2025. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of three parts: demographic characteristics, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the General Self-Efficacy Scale. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficient.

**Results:** The findings revealed that 63.5% of participants had moderate self-esteem, 33.8% had high self-esteem, and only 2.7% had low self-esteem. Regarding self-efficacy, 74.3% of students demonstrated high levels, 23% moderate levels, and 2.7% low levels. A statistically significant correlation was found between self-esteem and self-efficacy ( $r = 0.522$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating a positive relationship.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that most nursing students exhibited moderate to high levels of self-esteem and high levels of self-efficacy. The significant positive correlation between the two variables.

**Keywords:** Self-esteem; Self-efficacy; Nursing students; Correlation study



## 1. Introduction

Self-esteem refers to a person's subjective assessment of their own value according to Hank and Baltes-Götz (2019), which is one of the most significant human needs, as per Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, is very significant for motivation towards self-actualization and self-success in social interactions and relationships (Murad, 2020). As per Mobius et al. (2011), self-belief and the capacity to love oneself depend on a person's feeling of having a sense of value and significance, which constitutes self-esteem. Development of self-esteem occurs when a person feels important (Moradi et al., 2022). In all phases and aspects of life, relationships, experiences, and circumstances affect a person's self-esteem (Morales-Sánchez et al., 2021). Self-esteem development occurs due to a variety of factors such as family, teachers, success, looks, environment, and cultural level (Saiphoo et al., 2020). Self-esteem among students can be adversely affected due to the complexity of the profession of nursing and midwifery, the dynamic changes in the healthcare system, and the complexity associated with acquiring skills to meet the requirements of the profession (McCarthy et al., 2018). In demanding professions such as nursing, high levels of self-esteem are often associated with effective coping skills. The identification of factors that influence self-esteem can help in the development of strategies for enhancing students' resilience and job satisfaction (Lahoud et al., 2019). Social cognitive theory, as described by Bandura (1977), defined self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their capacity to plan and execute a course of action for completing tasks or actions necessary for a specific form of performance. This theory suggests that individuals can differ in their level of self-efficacy for a given domain of academic performance. Self-efficacy plays a major role in academic performance as it bridges theory and practice by facilitating the development of clinical skills. It has a direct influence on students' problem-solving skills as well as their capacity for decision-making in a clinical setting. It also enhances stress resistance and problem-solving skills (Walsh et al., 2020). Students who exhibit high levels of academic self-efficacy are more likely to take up challenging tasks (Matovu, 2020). Therefore, it is important to develop strategies that build students' confidence to foster their self-efficacy (Hwang & Oh, 2021). Students who exhibit a positive perception of their capacity to execute tasks in a clinical setting are more likely to exhibit positive performance in a clinical setting, such as decision-making, problem-solving, as well as providing effective care for patients. The assessment of self-efficacy can help in evaluating students' learning as well as identifying students who are in need of assistance (Yiin et al., 2024).

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Design of the Study

Descriptive study was conducted to assess level of self-esteem and self-efficacy and Correlation between Self- esteem and Self-Efficacy among nursing students at the University of Karbala, during the period of the study from 5 October 2025 to 5 November 2025.

### 2.2. Administrative Arrangement

Official approvals were obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research/University of Karbala/College of Nursing.

### 2.3. Ethical Consideration

The Ethics Committee consent form, was obtained from the College of Nursing, University of Karbala. The confidentiality and privacy of participants were of paramount importance. All participants were fully informed of the study's aims and objectives. Verbal consent was obtained from

each participant before any information was collected. The questionnaire included a clear note stating: "Dear participant, if you agree to participate in this research, please complete the questionnaire." The confidentiality of all information provided by participants was guaranteed.

## 2.4. Setting of the Study

An accessible sample of nursing students from the University of Kerbala was selected within the aforementioned period.

## 2.5. Instrument of the Study

The researchers adopted a simple modified instrument for the present study, it was composed of three parts, which are:

**Part I:** The student's demographic information including age, gender, marital status, Stage of study, and Monthly income.

**Part II:** Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), a 10-item scale that captures participants feelings toward themselves. Scores ranging from 10 to 40, and higher scores indicating a higher level of self-esteem, a score below 15 was considered low self-esteem, and above 15 was considered high self-esteem.

**Part III:** General Self efficacy Scale developed by (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). It consists of (10) items. Scores of the scale were classified as low (10-16.66), moderate (16.67-23.33), and high (23.34-30).

## 2.6. Sample of the study

A non-probability sample was selected by using convenience method, it consists of 74 nursing students. The sample is collected at Kerbala University, the period of the study ranging from 5 October 2025 to 5 November 2025.

## 2.7. Exclusion criteria

Nursing students in the first stage of the nursing bachelor's teaching program.

## 2.8. Limitations

Small sample size and single institution setting may restrict generalizability of findings.

## 3. Results

**Table 1.** Distribution of Participants According to Demographic Characteristics.

Demographic characteristics	Subgroup	f.	%
Age group	25 and less than	61	82.4
	More than 25	13	17.6
	Total	74	100.0
Gender	Male	22	29.7
	Female	52	70.3
	Total	74	100.0
Stage of study	Third stage	26	35.1
	fourth stage	48	64.9
	Total	74	100.0

<b>Demographic characteristics</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>f.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	53	71.6
	Married	19	25.7
	Divorced	2	2.7
	Total	74	100.0
<b>Monthly income</b>	Sufficient	7	9.5
	Barely sufficient	31	41.9
	Insufficient	36	48.6
	Total	74	100.0

F=frequency, %= percentage

The demographic information, is shown in Table 1. Majority age of the participants was (25 years and less than 82.4 % of total sample, and more than half of study sample were females 70.3 %. The Stage of study for nurses students shows that 64 .9% of them are fourth stage and 35.1% are Third stage. The marital status refers that 71. % of sample are Single and 25.2% of them are married. Regarding monthly income, 41.9% of nurses are perceived barely sufficient monthly income and 36% of them perceive insufficient monthly income.

**Table 2.** Distribution of Students According to Levels of self-esteem Level.

<b>Levels of self-esteem</b>	<b>Scores</b>	<b>f.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mean± S.D</b>
<b>Low level</b>	25 - 33.33	2	2.7	
<b>Moderate level</b>	33.34 - 41.67	47	63.5	<b>1.58± 0.470</b>
<b>High level</b>	41.68 - 50	25	33.8	
<b>Total score</b>	<b>25- 50</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

F=frequency, %= percentage, S. D=Standard deviation

Table 3 shows that 33.8% of nursing students at the University of Karbala have a high level of self-esteem, while 2.7% fell into the low self-esteem category. The remaining 63.5% of the sample have a moderate level of self-esteem. The overall mean score for self-esteem was 1.58± 0.470.

**Table 3.** Distribution of Students According to self-efficacy Level.

<b>Levels of self-efficacy</b>	<b>Scores</b>	<b>f.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Mean± S.D</b>
<b>Low level</b>	1-2	2	2.7	
<b>Moderate level</b>	2-3	17	23.0	
<b>High level</b>	3-4	55	74.3	<b>3.28± 0.483</b>
<b>Total score</b>		74	100.0	

F=frequency, %= percentage, S. D=Standard deviation

Table 3 shows that 74.3% of nursing students at the University of Karbala have a high level of self-efficacy, while 2.7% fell into the low self-efficacy category. The remaining 23% of the sample have a moderate level of self-efficacy. The overall mean score for self-efficacy was 3.28 ± 0.483, indicating a generally high average level among the cohort.

**Table 4.** The Correlation between Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy.

	Self-Efficacy	r	p. value	Result
Self-Esteem		0.522	.000	HS

R=pearson, HS= high significant

Pearson's correlation analysis showed a statistically significant relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem ( $r = 0.522$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates a positive correlation between self-efficacy and self-esteem.

#### 4. Discussion

Self-esteem acts as an important determinant of subjective well-being and life satisfaction according to (He et al., 2019), while revealing strong connections to mental health, burnout, and turnover intention. The aim of this study is to examine the level of self-efficacy and self-esteem of undergraduate nursing students and the interrelation between the two. The self-perceptions of nursing students are of significant importance in understanding health, academic performance, and possible implications for patient care (Baumeister et al., 2003).

The majority of the nursing students in this study were found to be 25 years of age or less, amounting to 82.4% of the total population. The results are in agreement with Valizadeh et al. (2016), who carried out a study to evaluate self-esteem in nursing students in Iran and reported that the average age of the population was 20.6 years.

The results are close to Watson et al. (2017), who carried out a study to assess the stressors experienced by nursing students in Pakistan and reported that the average age of the population was 22.3 years. Low self-esteem in nursing students has been linked to increased levels of anxiety and depression, difficulties in managing stress, avoidance of tasks, procrastination, lack of persistence, social withdrawal, and poor interaction with others (Nguyen et al., 2019).

According to the current study, 63.5% of the students showed moderate levels of self-esteem, 33.8% showed high levels of self-esteem, and 2.7% showed low levels of self-esteem. This is supported by the study of Toqan et al. (2023), which found that 73.3% of B.Sc. nursing students showed normal levels of self-esteem, while Bibi et al. (2024) found that 61% of undergraduate nursing students showed low levels of self-esteem. Self-efficacy is significantly related to motivation, persistence, and proactive problem-solving, since individuals who are high in self-efficacy are more motivated and determined to accomplish their goals (Voica et al., 2020).

Bandura (1977) posits that individuals who are low in self-efficacy tend to avoid situations that might cause them to fail. In order to develop nursing students' clinical knowledge and skills, self-efficacy is a significant factor that contributes to the development of self-confidence (Shin et al., 2017). In the bedside nursing process, clinical self-efficacy is the ability of individuals to plan and provide nursing care independently (Lewallen & Van Horn, 2019).

The perception of one's ability to accomplish a task is called clinical self-efficacy (Bourgeois et al., 2011; Nazari et al., 2025) found that nursing students showed high levels of academic self-

efficacy, while the current study found that 74.3% of the students showed high levels of self-efficacy, 23% showed moderate levels, and 2.7% showed low levels of self-efficacy.

Dogu et al. (2022) found that more than half of the students showed moderate levels of self-efficacy, i.e.,  $62.72 \pm 11.04$ , while Soiy Anusornteerakul et al. (2025) found that nursing students showed moderate levels of self-esteem.

Regarding the correlation of study participants' self-efficacy and self-esteem, it is clear that there is a strong correlation between nursing students' self-efficacy and self-esteem, since the study found that there is a strong correlation between nursing students' self-efficacy and self-esteem, which is supported by the study of Naikare and Ganapathy (2025). Shrestha (2019) and Athira et al. (2017) found that there is a robust correlation between nursing students' self-efficacy and self-esteem. The positive correlation observed ( $r = 0.52$ ) highlights the potential shared underlying factors, such as supportive educational environments and stress management capabilities

## 5. Conclusion

The study concluded that most nursing students exhibited moderate to high levels of self-esteem and high levels of self-efficacy. The significant positive correlation between the two variables highlights the importance of developing educational strategies that enhance both constructs to improve students' academic success and clinical performance.

## 6. Recommendations

Educational and counseling programs should be conducted to improve self-esteem and self-efficacy of the Nursing students.

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