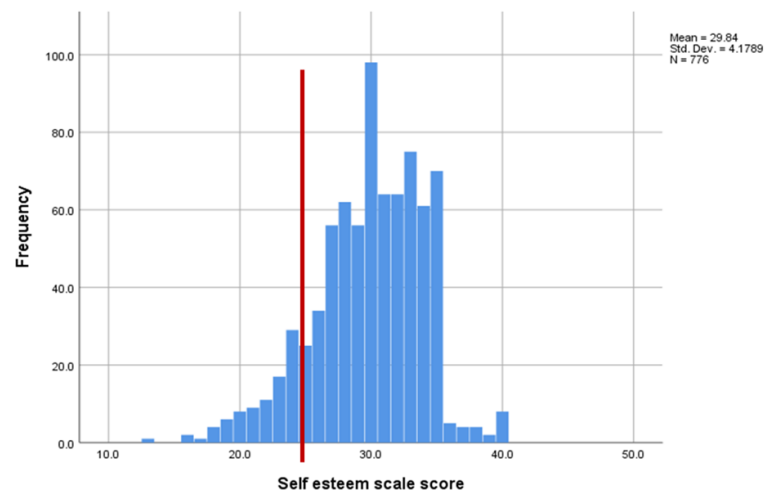


College Student–Esteem Research Study

Helping university administrators design interventions & programs to increase student self-esteem.

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College can be an anxious time for young people who suddenly find themselves immersed in complex adult responsibilities and social interactions. This transition can often yield low self-esteem that affects individual academic achievement. Based on recent literature, part of our study explores how universities in Idaho provide self-esteem resources to help students become successful in their college experiences. A literature review demonstrated that a mere 15% of current research had actually applied intervention experiments to measure self-esteem in students. Several of Idaho's mental-health programs offered at different universities support the basis of current experiments that academic research has demonstrated to be effective. Typically, notifications about available resources are limited to their college-websites, so these messages fail to be received by students given their trends of internet use. This gap in communication cannot verify if available resources (supported by current research), might effectively improve the self-esteem among these college populations. Suggestions we provide to circulate information and awareness messages that commonly align with student lifestyles & habits, could allow university administrators to take advantage of the social contexts and characteristics these colleges have to offer.



The RSES –not to be used for diagnosis, can identify potential issues that may need to be explored. The distribution above shows the cut-off of 25 points for students who may be experiencing low self-esteem. Our study's results indicated 14.6% of the students who responded to the surveys (i.e. 133 out of a 776 sample) fell below the 25 point-threshold.

Our study includes data from analyzing 800+ completed student questionnaires, exploring self-esteem levels & potential group differences (major, status, gender, etc.) at one U.S. Northwest university. We applied the commonly-used Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Data used for this study came from two different collection efforts: one in an online RSES survey for computer science students, and the other, in a paper format for students in a statistics class. The dataset was reviewed for invalid & missing responses, cleaned, & exported to SPSS for analysis. See Table 1 (Fig. 1) for the mean of self-esteem scores reported by major/field and (Fig. 1.2) for race, (next page).

Table 1: Self-esteem scores by Major (sorted by self-esteem)

Major/field of study?	N	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Criminal Justice	3	31.66	2.421	26.915	36.419
Business	25	30.84	0.839	29.194	32.486
Physics	6	30.66	1.712	27.306	34.027
Theater	2	30.50	2.965	24.68	36.32
Communications	9	30.44	1.398	27.701	33.188
Anthropology	4	30.25	2.096	26.135	34.365
Education	138	30.18	0.357	29.481	30.882
Engineering	54	30.18	0.571	29.065	31.305
Environmental Science	4	30.00	2.096	25.885	34.115
Unanswered	39	29.97	0.671	28.656	31.292
Health and Health Science	44	29.88	0.632	28.646	31.127
Computer Science	320	29.81	0.234	29.356	30.276
Chemistry and Biology	45	29.77	0.625	28.551	31.005
History	12	29.50	1.210	27.124	31.876
Psychology	16	29.00	1.048	26.942	31.058
Language	8	28.75	1.482	25.84	31.66
Political science	10	28.70	1.326	26.097	31.303
Graphic Design	16	28.62	1.048	26.567	30.683
English	8	27.62	1.482	24.715	30.535
Math	13	27.38	1.163	25.102	29.667

Fig. 1

Table 2: Self-esteem scores by Race (sorted by self-esteem)

What is your race	N	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Black or African American	13	31.538	1.152	29.277	33.8
Unanswered	32	30.469	0.733	29.029	31.908
American Indian or Alaska Native	34	30.118	0.712	28.719	31.516
White	632	29.941	0.165	29.617	30.266
Asian	11	29.182	1.252	26.723	31.64
Prefer not to answer	54	27.833	0.565	26.724	28.943

Fig. 1.2

Our study's results support current literature that suggests college students are experiencing low self-esteem. An online search found several wellness intervention programs exist at major Idaho universities. For students to begin improving personal levels of self-esteem, college health/wellness interventions and programs as available, must provide notifications that harmonize with student lifestyles & academic contexts (see Fig. 3). Listed information indicated that these schools obtain effective health programs and resources that are currently-supported by academic research to increase student self-esteem (Strage and Sorkhabi 2016), (Winograd and Tryon 2009). However, it was further recognized that vital information about wellness programs seem to only notify students online. Depending on their individual attempts to access college sites to search for wellness programs, is unlikely given the college-student practices of internet-use (Kalpidou, et al. 2011), (Wilt et al. 2016). Only a select few of Idaho's universities apply additional means & ways to confront students about vital health information separate from their websites. In order for all universities to distribute information more effectively to begin improving their population's self-esteem, similar efforts need to be practiced. To ensure these awareness messages are circulated to align with college student lifestyles, it is necessary to consider student-characteristics and college contexts. Thus, two separate university-practices that actively distribute health/wellness information can be a combined practice for all universities to adopt, to ensure their messages are retrieved by student-populations. These two practices require mental health workshops presented by college peers as trained counselors in an academic course context. See conclusion.

Fig. 3 Idaho's post-secondary website information and criteria for health/wellness programs available.

Conclusion: As college students associate with their peers more comfortably (Bagdasarov et al. 2008), (Gaines and Burnett 2014), wellness messages should be distributed from them too. From the diverse and many atmospheres that complete a university, these contexts often vary in attendance, according to students' characteristics and fields of studies. However, one characteristic all college-enrollees have in common is they must complete general-education courses, which requires attendance. Therefore, if information from one of their associated peers can be delivered during a health/wellness workshop demonstrated in class, students may be more attentive and in-turn, gain insight about the resources and programs that have been designed to increase levels of self-esteem. Becoming aware of this information during their initial college semesters, (e.g. in a Freshman seminar course) could even prevent students from accruing unhealthy behaviors that often instigate low measures of self-esteem throughout the rest of their college experience. As self-esteem correlates with academic success and achievement (Kelly 2007), (Nordstrom, Goguen and Hiester 2014), this intervention if practiced properly, could foster college student success as they transition into their adult-selves.

An Idaho University	Navigable Websites	Updated Websites	Website Resources	Fully Free Services	Program Designs	Referable Actions
A	X	X	X	X	X	X
B	X	X			X	X
C	X	X	X	X	X	X
D	X	X			X	X
E	X		X	X		X
F	X				X	X

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