

Impact of the Anti-Intellectual Attitudes to the Level of Self-Esteem of Senior High School Students from Fiat Lux Academe-Cavite, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Anti-intellectualism, the manifestation of disrespect and lack of interest of individuals for intellectual pursuits and critical thinking, has become a constant thread not only in the corporate world but also among students. Its long-term effect will be very excruciating, especially in the Philippine economy. This quantitative correlational research investigated the extent of relationship between the anti-intellectual attitudes and level of self-esteem or the individual's overall

sense of self-worth or personal value of one hundred and ninety-four (194) senior high school students from Fiat Lux Academe-Cavite, Philippines. The researchers made use of the Student's Anti-Intellectualism Scale and State Self-Esteem Scale to measure the two variables. Analyzed data revealed an average level of attitude of anti-intellectualism and a moderate level of self-esteem among the participants. Furthermore, there is a significant, inverse, and moderate correlation between the two variables (Pearson= -0.50; Spearman Correlation = -0.44). Thus, students with high level of self-esteem have low anti-intellectual attitudes. Conversely, students exhibiting low level of anti-intellectual attitudes tend to have higher self-esteem. The researchers also utilized other statistical techniques such as the *t* Statistic and linear regression.

Keywords — Social Science, quantitative research, anti-intellectualism, linear regression, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Curiosity, in human's nature, is fed through one's intellectual pursuits, but with the constant thread of changes happening, these pursuits are diminishing causing deficiencies in a person's knowledge, understanding, and, in a greater impact, his/her overall being.

The term "anti-intellectualism" emerged in the United States in the early decades of the 20th century and had become a long tradition of the country (Lecklider, 2017). It was first described as a social phenomenon by Richard Hofstadter in 1963, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his book, "Anti-Intellectualism in American Life". Hofstadter defined anti-intellectualism as a negative attitude towards intellectual activities and those who engage in them. He also describes how the vast underlying foundations of anti-elite, anti-reason and anti-science have been infused into America's political and social fabric.

It also refers to student's lack of interest and disrespect for intellectual pursuits, critical thinking, and a preference for practical memorization style learning and has been observed at all schooling levels including higher education (Trout, 1997). A rising problem that prevents our community to progress and develop.

The anti-intellectual attitude of the students may impact their academic performance. Frequently, students with anti-intellectual attitudes display academic dishonesty and consistency (Triki, Nicholls, Wegener, Bay & Cook,

2012). However, student's anti-intellectual attitudes can be lowered through the education process, and how anti-intellectual attitude can predict academic success (Elias, 2008).

The attitude of anti-intellectualism has spread widely in the Philippines. The Philippines then became a country of many faces, a place of false and misguided beliefs, and culture seemingly against the betterment of its people and society (Manaig, 2017).

For hundreds of years of being under foreign occupation, Filipino insecurities have been through the roof – giving birth to the crab mentality, machismo, and perhaps, this anti-intellectualism. This phenomenon became the new social issue in the Philippines that is slowly spreading. Although some may refer to it as nothing to worry about, the long-term effect of this problem will be heavy especially to our economy (Reymundo, 2015).

In an article written by Tomas Santos (2016), he stated that Filipino's expression such as "*Edi ikaw na magaling!*" or a sarcastic way of saying "You're the best!" and "*Edi wow!*" are now viewed as common responses to people who presumably share more information than what is needed. More than the intention of poking fun, it makes a good conversation to get halted by such responses. Instead of engaging people in meaningful conversations, they take such sharing of ideas as an offense.

According to Sta. Romana (2015), the causes of anti-intellectualism are low self-esteem, low intelligence, personality, past experiences, and family background (Mindanao State University, 2017).

The issue of anti-intellectualism is not just on people who are in the corporate world but also on students. Usually, when a student in a class is able to answer the teacher's questions or pass the exams, he/she receives acknowledgement and praises from others. However, apart from the good things most people say, there seems to be few who hate the idea of other people overshadowing them. When a person downgrades any form of intellectual display, that person practices anti-intellectualism (Fortuno & Cuason, 2017). The purpose of this research is to know how anti-intellectual attitude is related to students' self-esteem.

In psychology, the term self-esteem is used to describe a person's overall sense of self-worth or personal value (Cherry, 2017). It is how an individual values himself and his perception of how valuable he is to the world and others. Appraisal of one's appearance, beliefs, emotions, and behaviours and other variety of principles about self-are involved in self-esteem.

According to the website Teens Health, written by D'Arcy Lyness (2015), people with high self-esteem feel worthy of being valued and accepted not only

by others but also by themselves even if they make mistakes. Additionally, they believe in and think positively about themselves even when they do not succeed at first and see their good qualities, such as being kind, capable, or fun to be around. They also take pride in the things they do.

On the other hand, people with low self-esteem think negatively about themselves. They focus on the times they fail rather than the times they succeed. They also feel self-critical and are hard on themselves, feel insecure or inferior, think of themselves as defective or not deserving of good things. Additionally, individuals with low self-esteem expect that other people will not accept them, consequently, allow other people to mistreat them and doubt their ability to do well or succeed at thing. These characteristics imply that the subjective experience of manifesting a high or low level of self-esteem is important on how an individual perceives the world around him.

Given the information above, it can be inferred that only a few studies have been conducted to investigate the nature of anti-intellectual attitudes. Previous research studied academic self-efficacy of Business Students as a predictor of anti-intellectualism but there are still no other research that focused on self-esteem. In this study, the researchers will investigate the extent of relationship of Filipino senior high school students' anti-Intellectualism attitude and level of self-esteem. This paper will answer the question whether self-esteem and its sub components: performance, social and appearance self-esteem affects the Anti-intellectual attitude of senior high school students.

FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Socio-metric Theory developed by Mark Leary in 1999, a director of the Interdisciplinary Behavioral Research Center at Duke University and professor of psychology and neuroscience and with the Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development created by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. The Socio-metric Theory proposed that humans have evolved a form of psychological meter or gauge, which monitors the degree to which other people value and accept them. Leary named this monitor a socio-metric and posited that this evaluation of the individual's level of acceptance by others is a determinant of self-esteem (Hoyle, Kernis, Leary & Baldwin, 1999). It was created as a response to a psychological phenomenon experienced by someone. Therefore, self-esteem is an internal representation of social acceptance and rejection. It can be conceptualized as a subjective experience that has evolved to encourage behaviors that restore social relationships. The Socio-Metric Theory provides a framework

in further understanding the nature of self-esteem and its relation to emotional and behavioural problems (Reis, & Sprecher, 2009).

The Piaget's theory of Cognitive Development (1936) on the other hand, is a comprehensive theory that deals with the nature of knowledge and how do humans progressively acquire, construct and use it. He concluded that cognitive development is the result of interaction of heredity and environmental factors. He believed that children construct understanding of the world around them, experiences discrepancies between what they already know and what they did discover in their environment and then adjust their ideas accordingly. Furthermore, Piaget disagrees that intelligence is a fixed trait among individuals (McLeod, 1970).

This study intends to measure the relationship between the attitudes of anti-intellectuals and their self-esteem. Furthermore, the researchers will focus on the nature of anti-intellectualism to gain knowledge and understanding regarding the topic of this study. This paper will also explore the attitudes of the anti-intellectuals and measure the degree of their anti-intellectual attitude. Moreover, this research will examine the subcomponents of self-esteem of each participant such as the performance, social, and appearance self-esteem.

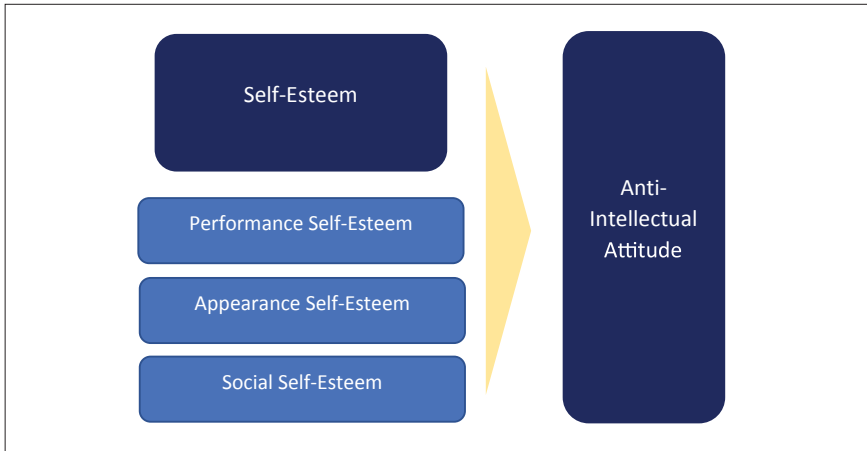


Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm showing Self-Esteem and its subcomponents (Performance, Appearance, and Social Self-Esteem) affect Anti-Intellectual Attitude.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate (1) the extent of relationship between anti-intellectual attitude and level of self-esteem of the participants, (2) the significant relationship between the subcomponents of self-esteem (social, appearance, and performance self-esteem), and anti-intellectual attitude, (3) the difference of the level of self-esteem and anti-intellectual attitude of SHS students across age and gender, lastly, (4) the effect of involvement of the participants in school clubs/organizations to the level of their self-esteem.

The researchers aimed to determine the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable in a population. Since the purpose of this research is to measure the relationship between anti-intellectual attitudes of students and their level of self-esteem, the independent variable, one that is being controlled, used in this study is the level of self-esteem of students. On the other hand, the variable that is expected to change as a result of the influence of the independent variable is the anti-intellectual attitudes of students.

METHODOLOGY

A non-experimental, correlation type of quantitative research was utilized to measure the relationship between the variables but without the manipulation of the independent variable. The researchers made use of this to discover the causal relationship between the anti-intellectualism attitude of the students and their level of self-esteem. Typically, this also implies that a non-experimental researcher must rely on correlations, surveys or case studies, and cannot demonstrate a true cause-and-effect relationship.

Four different research instruments were utilized in this study. The informed consent (see Appendix A), which was given to each of the participants that indicates their full awareness in participating in the research and that they fully understand the demands and accept the request of the researchers to become the study's participants; the personal data sheet (Appendix B) that includes questions pertaining to basic information of the participants like their name, age, grade, track and strand, and some questions which are related to the research topic; the request letter which was given to and signed by the vice principal of Fiat Lux Academe-Dasmariñas Campus to formally ask permission to conduct the study inside the said institution and lastly, the research questionnaires.

The Eigenberger and Sealander's (2001) Student's Anti-Intellectualism Scale (SAIS) was utilized to measure the anti-intellectual attitude (DV) of the participants. It is a 25-item, 7-point Likert scale questionnaire composed of positive and negative statements in which the participants would choose whether to agree or disagree. Positive statements are reversed scored. Reliability of the SAIS is .88. To measure level of self-esteem of the students, the researchers made use of Polivy's State Self-Esteem Scale (1991). It is also composed of positive and negative statements that are scored from 5 to 1. Negative statements are reversed scored. This 20-item questionnaire is further divided into three (3) subcomponents namely, appearance self-esteem, social self-esteem and performance self-esteem. This self-esteem scale is 90% reliable.

An email was sent to the owners of the scales to formally utilize their questionnaires. For the SAIS, the researchers sent a message to Karen A. Sealander, one of the researchers who developed the scale. However, no permission is required for the SSES. The research instruments mentioned except for the scales were validated by a registered Psychometrician.

The research questionnaires together with the informed consent were distributed to a total of three hundred and fifteen (315) students at Fiat Lux Academe, Dasmariñas Campus in school year 2017-2018. However, only one hundred and ninety-four (194) qualified and were used for the actual study. Participants of this research include ninety-two (92) male students and ninety-nine (99) female students, three (3) students did not indicate their gender. Age range is 15-19 years old. In addition, the participants were composed of Academic Track and Technical, Vocational and Livelihood Track students and most of them are Grade 11 learners with a total number of one hundred and twenty-one (121). Data were collected on the 14th and 15th of September 2017. The survey took no more than twenty (20) minutes for them to finish.

A pilot study was conducted before to the actual survey. A total of thirty-one (31) students from Fiat Lux Academe participated in the pre-study. During the survey, the researchers distributed and presented the aforementioned instruments. The pilot lasted for about thirty (30) minutes.

A quantitative approach to data analysis is used in this study. After gathering the desired data, the researchers made use of the descriptive statistical analysis on the sample groups to obtain a clear understanding of the population such as computing for the measures of the central tendency and standard deviation. Statistical data analysis in the form of correlation coefficient was also performed. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation is used in this study since it is the

most common and most useful statistics that measure the degree of relationship between the variables. The Spearman Correlation was also utilized which evaluates the monotonic relationship between two continuous or ordinal variables. It can also be used to validate the consistency of the results of this study. Linear Regression was also performed to predict the value of the dependent variable from the independent variable. Furthermore, the hypothesis test was also used to quantify the linear relationship between the two variables.

The computed correlation is further analyzed and interpreted using a graphical representation in the form of scatter plot that would show how much the independent variable affects the dependent variable.

To ensure that the survey was conducted as thoroughly and ethically as possible, the students were made aware that their identities and answers would remain confidential as stated in the informed consent administered to each one of them. The said instrument is also distributed to guarantee that all the participants are chosen to participate in their own free will and that they have been fully informed regarding the procedures and objectives of the research paper. The surveyed students were free from coercion, meaning they are not forced to join the said research and were allowed to back out from study as long as they want. It is also ensured that those who were surveyed were unharmed whether physically or mentally. Lastly, all the questions that were asked were all relevant to the research topic, and their answers will be used for the research purposes only.

The scope of this study directly involved those high school students, specifically, senior high school learners of Fiat Lux Academe- Dasmariñas campus of academic year 2017- 2018. The researchers chose this group of participants since they are most likely be associated with anti-intellectualism. The expected participants of this research will only include senior high school students of the said institution. This study is limited only to the intended participants thus the results would only cover the expected participants. Limitations to this include the non-senior high school students of any other school except for the intended institution.

Interpretation of the r-value

r – value	Interpretation
± 0.00 - ± 0.30	negligible correlation
± 0.30 - ± 0.50	low correlation
± 0.50 - ± 0.70	moderate correlation
± 0.70 - ± 0.90	high correlation

± 0.91 - ± 0.99

very high correlation

± 1.00

perfect correlation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Measures of Central Tendency and Standard Deviation

Variables	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Independent Variable	2.96	3.00	3.15	0.34
Dependent Variable	3.54	3.60	3.60	0.51

Table 1 shows that the average score of the participants in the anti-intellectualism scale (DV), is 3.54 out of 7.00 (average) The participants have a middle anti-intellectualism score of 3.00 and have a common score of 3.6. Regarding to self-esteem (IV), the participants have an average score of 2.96 out of 5.00 (average). The median score is 3.00 and common score is 3.15. These results imply that the participants manifest an average level of anti-intellectual attitude and a moderate level of self-esteem. Also, the standard deviation of 0.34 and 0.51 for the independent and dependent variable, respectively, indicate that the scores of the participants fall closely to the mean.

Table 2. Relationship Between Anti-Intellectual Attitude and Level of Self-Esteem

	R	R ²	R _s	t-value	p value at α .05 level of significance	Interpretation
Level of Self-Esteem	-0.50	0.25	-0.44	0.92	5.56E-14	Significant

Dependent Variable: **Anti-Intellectual Attitude**

Table 2 reflects the extent of relationship and the influence of the level of self-esteem of the participants to their anti-intellectual attitudes. The r-value of -0.50, obtained upon the utilization of Pearson R Correlation, indicates that there is a moderate correlation between the two variables resulting to a 25.56% influence of the level of self-esteem to the anti-intellectual attitude of the students.

Furthermore, the extent of moderate relationship between the two variables is supported by the R_s-value of -0.44, which was obtained using the Spearman Correlation. The linear regression equation of $y = -0.75x + 5.818$ can be used to calculate the predictive value of the independent variable.

The t-value of 0.9277 in their level of self-esteem significantly relates it to their anti-intellectual attitudes at α .05 level of significance. This implies that the level of self-esteem of the students is a predictor of their degree of anti-intellectual attitude. Moreover, students exhibiting low level of self-esteem are most likely to manifest anti-intellectual attitudes; conversely, students exhibiting high level of self-esteem were least likely to manifest anti-intellectual attitudes.

The result from table 2 is in parallel with two of the literature cited in the previous section. Chemers, Garcia and Hu (2001) suggested that anti-intellectualism was related to academic self-efficacy and that both variables were related to academic performance. Students with high academic self-efficacy and therefore more confidence in their academic abilities were less likely to have anti-intellectual attitudes. According to Triki *et al.* (2012), students high in anti-intellectual attitudes and those with low academic self-efficacy were more likely to engage in academic dishonesty, and are often the ones who consistently downgrade intellectuals and their work.

The result is also anchored by the Sociometric Theory of Mark Leary (1999) which states that self-esteem is an internal representation of social acceptance and rejection. Additionally, Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory reflects in this result. The participants with higher level of self-esteem have a good interaction with their environment and feel socially accepted that leads to their lower manifestation of anti-intellectual attitude. Consequently, their knowledge progressively develops over time.

Table 3. Relationship between the three subcomponents of self-esteem and the anti-intellectual attitude

Subcomponents of Self-Esteem	R	R ²	Standard Deviation	t-value	p value at α .05 level of significance	Interpretation
Performance	-0.39	0.1521	0.487	-0.0362	1.62E-08	Significant
Social	-0.15	0.0225	0.594	-0.0446	0.027659	Significant
Appearance	-0.29	0.0841	0.598	-0.0448	4.01E-05	Significant

Dependent Variable: **Anti-Intellectual Attitude**

Table 3 shows the relationship between the three subcomponents of self-esteem— performance, social, and appearance self-esteem— to the anti-intellectual attitude of the participants. The calculated r-value of -0.3917 implies that performance self-esteem is moderately correlated to the anti-intellectual attitude of the participants. The t-value of -0.0362 of the performance self-

esteem further implies a significant correlation to the anti-intellectual attitude at α .05 level of significance.

However, the other subcomponents of self-esteem which are social and appearance self-esteem are not correlated with the anti-intellectual attitude after calculating an r-value of -0.15 and 0.29, respectively. This indicates that social and appearance self-esteem do not affect the anti-intellectual attitude of the students.

The results in Table 3 supported the study of Journal of Educational Psychology (Chemers, Garcia & Hu, 2001) which states that anti-intellectual attitude and self-efficacy are both related to academic performance.

Table 4. Level of Anti-Intellectual Attitude and Level of Self-Esteem According to Age and Gender

Category	Subcategory	Anti-intellectual Attitude	Self-esteem
Age	15	3.80	3.10
	16	3.49	3.01
	17	3.63	2.94
	18	3.52	3.00
	19	4.04	2.86
Gender	Male	3.66	2.96
	Female	3.41	2.96

Table 4 presents the level of anti-intellectual attitude and level of self-esteem of the participants across age and gender. The table shows that participants of 19 years of age have the highest level of anti-intellectual attitude of 4.04 over 7.00 and the lowest level of self-esteem which is 2.86 over 5.00. The male participants have the higher level of anti-intellectual attitude of 3.66. However, the male and female participants have an equal level of self-esteem of 2.96 (average).

The result (Table 4) opposes the Age and Gender Differences in Self-Esteem—A Cross-Cultural Window (Bleidorn et al., 2016) which states that the level of self-esteem of men is higher compared to female. However, the results supported the other findings of the said study wherein it is stated that the level of self-esteem increases from late adolescence to middle adulthood.

Table 5. School Club/Organizations Participation and Level of Self-Esteem

	Average Level of Self-Esteem
School Club/Organization Member	2.979104
Non School Club/Organization Member	2.915899

Table 5 presents the average level of self-esteem of the participants who are members of school clubs and/or organizations, and those who are not. It can be inferred that there is no large difference between the two average levels of self-esteem. However, involvement in school clubs and/or organizations affects the level of self-esteem of the participants. Furthermore, students involved in clubs and organization exhibit higher level of self-esteem compared to students that are not part of any school organizations and clubs.

Result in Table 5 is anchored by the Student-Involvement Theory that is proposed by Alexander W. Astin in 1984. His theory expounded considerable findings of research on student development. This theory implies that the higher the student involvement, the quantity and quality of physical and psychological effort that a student exerts in school, the greater will be the improvement of personal development. Improvement in personal development leads to higher level of self-esteem.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the participants are manifesting an average level of anti-intellectual attitudes and a moderate level of self-esteem. A critical aspect of the study is that the self-esteem of the students is significantly related to their anti-intellectual attitudes. Students exhibiting higher level of self-esteem are least likely to manifest anti-intellectual attitudes. Conversely, students exhibiting lower level of self-esteem are most likely to manifest anti-intellectual attitudes. Moreover, among the three subcomponents of self-esteem, only performance self-esteem correlates, at a low level, to the anti-intellectual attitude.

Additionally, the level of anti-intellectual attitude and self-esteem varies across age and gender. SHS students of age 19 years old manifest higher level of anti-intellectual attitude whereas they also manifest the lowest level of self-esteem among the other ages. The male and female SHS students have an equal level of self-esteem; however, male students have higher level of anti-intellectual attitude compared to female students. Furthermore, SHS students that are involved in school clubs and/or organizations have higher level of self-esteem compared to other students who don't participate in such.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The findings of this study may be translated to brochures, posters, and video advertisements to help in preventing further occurrence of anti-intellectualism

not only among students but among every individual.

This research can also be part of an institution's academic basis on how it would determine which socio-academic problem to prioritize. It can be translated into PowerPoint presentations used by the teachers, a module used in homeroom classes, and specialized action plan used to target issues arising in the academe.

Having it presented on the aforementioned releases will enlighten the readers on how their self-esteem affects their anti-intellectual attitudes and, perhaps, foster collective intellectual growth – a solution to the deteriorating effect of anti-intellectualism.

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