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The Role of Study Habits in the Relationships Among Self-Esteem, Self-Control, and Academic Performance: The Case of Online English Classes

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***Abstract*—This paper investigates the influences of self-esteem and self-control on Chinese students' academic performance taking online English classes. This paper also studies the role of study habits in the relationships among self-esteem, self-control, and academic performance. Data were gathered through validated instruments utilized in the past literature from the 103 Chinese students taking online English classes. Our findings reveal that higher self-esteem and self-control have positive and significant implications for academic achievement. Moreover, study habit mediates the relationship between self-esteem, self-control, and academic achievement. Lastly, the importance and relevance of the determinants of academic performance have been elaborated.**

***Index Terms*—self-esteem, self-control, study habits, academic performance, online classes**

I. Introduction

Scholars considered many factors to determine academic performance. Students' academic achievement has an integral part in the teaching and learning process (Olutola et al., 2016). Its goal is to create an adequate intervention to foster success and keep away from failure in the academic context (Robbins et al., 2004). Some of the studies reflected on self-esteem, self-control, and study habit to predict academic performance. Even though existing studies were explaining the implications of different factors on academic achievement, students' variation of success remains (Stadler et al., 2016).

Self-esteem is one of the determinants of academic achievement (Baumeister et al., 2003; Learyet al., 1995). In the 19th century the concept of self-esteem was first put forward in the book of the Principles of Psychology by William James, the founder of functionalist psychology. He believed that self-esteem is the degree to which an individual achieves his ambition, and proposed a formula to express self-esteem, namely, self-esteem = success/ambition.

Self-esteem is an individual's judgment of self-worth, perception of self-ability and acceptance of the whole self (Rosenberg, 1965). Alves-Martins et al. (2002) mentioned that in the context of education, the study of self-esteem is essential to give a full explanation of students' behavior in various situations. It mirrors the self-worth evaluation of an individual (Leeson et al., 2008). The studies of scholars like Marsh and Craven have provided positive evidence.

Aside from self-esteem, self-control is another determining factor to explain academic performance. Learning self-control is the ability of students to consciously control their emotions, desires and behaviors according to social requirements and certain internal standards in order to achieve their academic goals in the learning process. Self-control relates to academic performance because it is an endless challenge for students to choose between study and entertainment. According to Duckworth et al. (2019), self-control refers to "the alignment of thoughts, feelings, and actions with enduringly valued goals in the face of momentarily more alluring alternatives." An individual can voluntarily control the automatic response to achieve long-term goals regarding its values and standards (Baumeisteret al., 2007). Hence, students should resist short-term temptations and concentrate on achieving their long-term goal to obtain an academic degree. During this course, self-control plays an essential role in achieving positive outcomes, desirable social conduct, and educational achievements (De Ridder et al., 2012).

Another determinant is study habit. Study habit is a common construct explaining academic performance. Study habits reflect on student engagement in the appropriate studying routines that occur in a conducive context (Crede & Kuncel, 2008). Those are typically students' means and behavior in planning their private studies outside the school hours to gain mastery of the subject matter (Azikwe, 1998). Students should observe the practical implication of study habits on academic performance to achieve great success at any education stage (De Escobar, 2009).

The past literature has augmented our knowledge and understanding of the factors affecting academic performance, such as self-esteem and self-control, particularly on the traditional and face-to-face mode of learning. However, these factors have limited explanations for students' academic performance in the online learning environment. Study habit is usually used as a predictor for schoolwork performance in the past literature. This construct might explain the link between self-esteem, self-control, and students' online learning achievements. In addition, as far as the researcher's knowledge, no published studies have investigated the relationship between self-esteem and self-control and academic

achievement when learning habits are used as an intermediary to explain this phenomenon. Hence, an empirical study was developed to address these gaps and contemplate: How do self-esteem and self-control relate to Chinese students' academic performance taking online English classes? Moreover, it reflects on: How does study habit influence self-esteem, self-control, and academic performance of Chinese students taking online English classes?

The present condition of the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic creates a new normal setting and wherein online classes are set up in the university. This action serves as a precautionary measure to avoid and minimize the transmission of the virus. This paper examines the effects of study habits on the relationship between self-esteem, self-control, and Chinese students' academic performance in their online English classes. Adapting to the new normal, this study conjectures that students' academic performance in their online classes depends on self-esteem and self-control and can be induced by the good study habits of students. This conjecture is motivated by the past literature's findings, which contemplated in the context of the traditional offline learning mode. Taking the students of Huaiyin Institute of technology as an example, this paper studies the participation in online English course of Chinese students. English is not the main language use by these students. Hence, this study conjectures that self-esteem implies their academic performance. Moreover, students are studying online facing the challenge of short-term temptations through the unlimited access of the internet, which can hinder the achievement of their long-term goal (De Ridder et al., 2012). Consequently, this study contemplates the beneficial impact of high self-control over the academic performance of these students.

The paper's remainder is organized as follows: Section 2 will review relevant literature regarding self-esteem, self-control, and academic performance, before developing hypotheses and outlining the conceptual framework. Section 3 will discuss the methodology and analysis applied. Section 4 will present and discuss results, while Section 5 will make a conclusion and provide recommendations for future studies.

II. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

This study contemplates the different theories explaining the phenomenon regarding self-control, self-esteem, study habits, and academic performance. Self-control is choosing an alternative that is more valuable than an immediate outcome with less value (Ainslie, 1975), and an individual with high-self-control could resist temptation because of recognizing the foregone benefits. On the other hand, self-esteem is another essential factor explaining academic achievement (Marsh et al., 2006). Leeson et al. (2008) mentioned that self-esteem is a channel for evaluating his self-worth. Based on social identity theory, Robinson and Tayler (1991) explained that students' low self-esteem could induce low academic achievement.

Furthermore, study habit is a way for the student to assess their efficiency. Ayodele and Adebiyi (2013) explained that good studying habit creates a favorable implication on academic performance. Ajzen (1991) explained this phenomenon through the theory of planned behavior, in which he stated that attitude and subject norms as well as perceived behavioral control jointly shape an individual's behavioral intentions and behaviors. These theories have been contemplated by scholars and advanced their research to explain the phenomena.

Previous literature explains that high self-esteem helps create better academic achievement. For instance, Alves-Martins et al. (2002) analyzed the strategies pursued to protect self-esteem and found that students' unsatisfactory academic performance can be explained by less good behavior in school. Another study has been conducted by Tremblay et al. (2000) and analyzed the strategies employed by underachievers to maintain their self-esteem at an acceptable level. Their study conjectures that optimistic self-representations maintain self-esteem in a non-academic slant of self-concept about the devaluation of academic ability. They also mentioned that younger students have less maintenance of self-esteem by devaluing education experiences. Di Giunta et al. (2013) explored personality characteristics, self-esteem, and self-efficacy as determinants of students' academic performance. Their findings revealed that conscientiousness, openness, and self-esteem were positively interlinked. These factors mediate the effect of individual conscientiousness and self-esteem, which have a favorable implication on students' academic performance.

On the other hand, Baumeister et al. (2003) explained that high self-esteem is not an indication of good performance. The-high self-esteem is one of the components in the outcome of good performance in school. They mentioned that students' low academic performance has an indirect implication about the feelings of personal devaluation. Their conjecture supports the notion of Leary et al. (1995) that high self-esteem is a global perception of an individual implicating in all domains of performance.

This study conjectures that high-self-esteem plays a beneficial role in students' academic performance taking online English classes. Hence, the following hypothesis was developed.

H1: Self-esteem has a positive and significant relation to academic performance.

Moreover, other literature explained the connection between self-control and academic performance. The previous findings revealed that higher self-control has a positive influence on academic performance. Stadler et al. (2016) analyzed the influence of self-control on students' education performance beyond their general cognitive ability. Their findings revealed that self-control holds an essential value to explain students' objective and subjective academic performances. Duckworth and Seligman (2005) revealed that high self-control positively affected academic performance and surpassed the effect of IQ. They mentioned that a significant factor for students lack in intellectual

potential is their failure in self-control. Regarding this phenomenon De Ridder et al. (2012) illustrated that self-control has a link to university and work performance.

This study conjectures that high-self-control has a beneficial impact on students' academic performance taking online English classes. Hence, the following hypothesis was developed.

H2: Self-control has a positive and significant relation to academic performance.

In this study, we conjecture that self-esteem and self-control imply Chinese students' study habits taking online English classes. Study habit is a skill that induces students' learning capabilities (Ahmed et al., 2018). Sherefat and Murthy (2016) mentioned that it is one of the essential issues in educational research. Hence, the following hypothesis was developed.

H3: Self-esteem has a positive and significant influence on study habits.

H4: Self-control has a positive and significant influence on study habits.

Furthermore, previous literature discussed the relation between study habits and academic performance. Sherafat et al. (2016) revealed that the study habits facilitate higher academic performance. Ahmed et al. (2018) studied the effect of self-esteem and study habit on students' academic performance and discovered that self-esteem and study habits have a positive and significant effect on academic performance. Aluede and Onolemhemhen (2001) examined the implication of study habit counseling on secondary school students' academic performance in the English language. Their findings showed that there would be an improvement in the academic performance of students when good study habits are ingrained in students. Alimohamadi et al. (2018) identified the effect of study habits on nursing students' academic achievement. Their result revealed that there is a positive relationship between study habits and academic performance. They mentioned that this issue should be contemplated by education authorities to evaluate the students' learning process.

This study conjectures that study habit has a beneficial impact on Chinese students' academic performance taking online English classes. Hence, the following hypothesis was developed.

H5: Study habit has a positive and significant relation to academic performance.

In the past literature, factors such as self-esteem and study habit have been used to explain academic achievement (Ahmed et al., 2018). Galla and Duckworth (2015) studied the influence of habit and self-control on positive life outcomes. They contemplated the mediating effect of habit on the phenomenon. They found that study habits mediate the influence of self-control on after class assignment completion, and two long-term academic outcomes measured objectively. In this study, we conjecture that study habit can explain the connection among self-esteem, self-control, and academic performance. We propose that one of the causes why students with higher self-esteem and better self-control with less effort has more significant academic performance in online learning due to their study habits. Hence, the following hypotheses were developed.

H6: Study habit mediates the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance.

H7: Study habit mediates the relationship between self-control and academic performance.

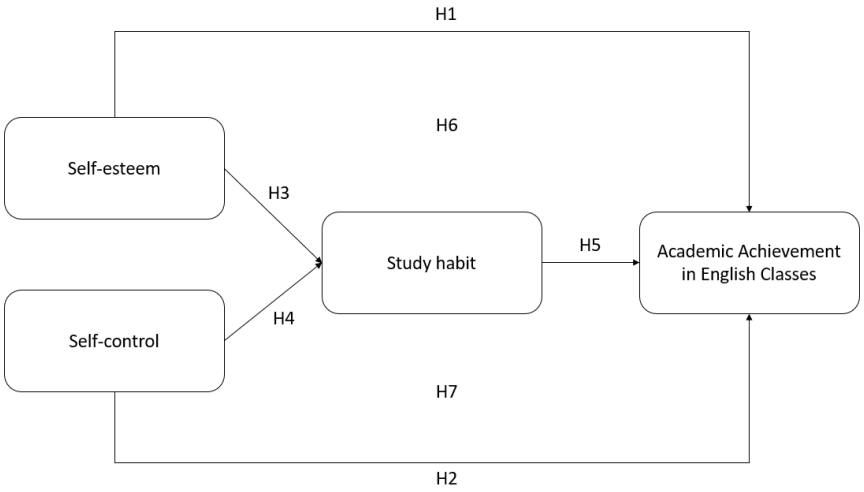

Figure. 1 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study. It indicates the study's dependent variable, such as self-esteem and self-control, the dependent variable of the study, which is the academic performance of Chinese students taking English classes. Moreover, it shows the mediator variable of the study, which is the study habit.

III. Methodology

This study investigates the influences of self-esteem and self-control on Chinese students' academic performance taking online English classes. In addition, this study studies the role of study habit in the relationships among these variables. A descriptive research design was adopted. This study collects data from a sample of respondents to represent

and make a generalization on the study population. (what year level: year of 2018, school: Huaiyin Institute of Technology, country: China; the population of Chinese students in the university: over 20,000). In this study, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select the respondents.

In this study, the researcher arranges the survey instrument according to the objectives of the study. It is composed of scales to measure the study's independent variables, such as self-esteem and self-control and study habit for the mediator variable. The instrument has a designated section for academic performance in English classes, which serves as the study's dependent variable. The students' profiles, such as gender and the types of devices used in online learning, were also gathered and considered a control variable to avoid any other plausible explanations in testing the connection between the independent and dependent variables of the study.

Validated and reliable instruments were employed to measure the variables. Following the study of Ciarrochi et al. (2007) and Baumeister et al. (2003), the self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1979) was utilized. This scale estimates global self-esteem, which offers a general view of the self (Baumeister et al., 2003). They also mentioned the excellent reliability and validity of this scale. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale is the widely used self-report instrument in the field to evaluate individual self-esteem. In terms of self-control measurement, the modified version of the low self-control scale of Grasmick et al. (1993) by Rocque et al. (2013) was used. This scale contains 12 items with a four-point Likert-type scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Rocque et al. (2013) mentioned that this scale demonstrates enough estimate features and validity. Furthermore, this study adopts the study habit scale developed by Olutola et al. (2016), which comprises twelve items with a four-point Likert-type scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. This questionnaire had a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.81. The dependent variable of the study is academic performance. Richardson et al. (2012) mentioned that a grade point average (GPA) is the most commonly employed estimates of academic achievement because it measures various course assessments throughout a student's education journey. We calculate the average value of the four English classes as an estimate of academic performance.

An online survey was utilized to gather data from the students of the university. These data were arranged and analyzed to attain the objectives of the study. In the descriptive level, frequency, percentage, and mean were used. In the inferential level, this study employs multivariate regression to examine the association of self-esteem and self-control on academic performance and the mediating effect of study habit in the relationship among the variables. We include several factors as control variables that are known to affect academic performances, such as gender and the device used in online learning. We consider a dummy variable for these control variables and assign a 1 if the respondent is male and 0 otherwise. In addition, we assign a value of 1 if the device use is a personal computer or laptop, and 0, otherwise. Furthermore, this study follows Baron and Kenny's (1986) causal steps approach wherein the mediator variable regresses on the dependent variable. The dependent variable is regressed on the mediator and independent variables.

IV. Results and Discussions

Table 1 shows the average values of each item per scale employed in this study. In terms of the self-esteem scale, Table 1 shows an average of 3.05 with a verbal interpretation of "agree," an indication that Chinese students taking online English classes have higher self-esteem. Items SE2, SE5, SE6, SE8, and SE9 are reverse scored. On the other hand, the low self-control scale shows an average of 1.47 with a verbal interpretation of "strongly disagree," indicating that Chinese students taking online English classes have higher self-control. Moreover, Table 1 shows that in terms of study habits, the mean value is 2.70, which indicates that the respondents have good habits in studying.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PER ITEM OF SELF-ESTEEM, LOW SELF-CONTROL, AND STUDY HABIT SCALES

Items		Average	Verbal Interpretation
Self-esteem			
SE1	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	2.69	Agree
SE2	At times I think I am no good at all.	2.79	Agree
SE3	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	2.46	Disagree
SE4	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	2.31	Disagree
SE5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	2.84	Agree
SE6	I certainly feel useless at times.	3.61	Strongly Agree
SE7	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	3.65	Strongly Agree
SE8	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	3.68	Strongly Agree
SE9	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	4.00	Strongly Agree
SE10	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	2.45	Disagree
Average		3.05	Agree
Self-control			
SC1	I act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think	1.85	Disagree
SC2	I do whatever brings me pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal	1.86	Disagree
SC3	I'm more concerned with what happens to me in the short run than in the long run	2.39	Disagree
SC4	I like to test myself every now and then by doing something a little risky	1.88	Disagree
SC5	Sometimes I will take a risk just for the fun of it	1.23	Strongly Disagree
SC6	Excitement and adventure are more important to me than security	1.01	Strongly Disagree
SC7	I try to look out for myself first, even if it means making things difficult for other people	1.05	Strongly Disagree
SC8	If things I do upset people, it's their problem not mine	1.01	Strongly Disagree
SC9	I will try to get the things I want even when I know it's causing problems for other people	1.00	Strongly Disagree
SC10	I lose my temper pretty easily	1.85	Disagree
SC11	When I'm really angry, other people better stay away from me	1.17	Strongly Disagree
SC12	When I have a serious disagreement with someone, it's usually hard for me to talk calmly about it without getting upset	1.35	Strongly Disagree
Average		1.47	Strongly Disagree
Study Habits			
SH1	I always do my assignment on time	3.23	Agree
SH2	I always read my books even if there is no Exam	2.65	Agree
SH3	I read my book everyday	2.46	Disagree
SH4	I go through my books after every lesson	2.52	Agree
SH5	I always ahead of my teacher	2.50	Agree
SH6	I always have group discussion with my colleagues	3.15	Agree
SH7	I have a personal time table which I try to follow	2.60	Agree
SH8	I am not easily distracted by friends when it is time to study	2.69	Agree
SH9	When I miss anything while copying notes, I try to correct it immediately after the class	2.49	Disagree
SH10	I am easily distracted by noise or radio when it is time to study	2.99	Agree
SH11	I try to read other materials to get more information on the topics taught in the class	2.50	Disagree
SH12	I read my class work during holiday period	2.65	Agree
Average		2.70	Agree

Table 2 indicates the summary statistics of the variable applied. Academic performance reveals a mean value of 3.36 which shows that majority of the respondents have B scores. Self-esteem, self-control, and study habits show 3.05, 1.47, and 2.70 mean values, respectively. Gender reveals a mean value of 0.74 whereas device use shows 0.33 mean value.

TABLE 2
SUMMARY STATISTICS

Variables	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Academic performance	3.36	3.25	1.14	1.00	6.00
Self-esteem	3.05	3.20	0.48	1.70	3.90
Self-control	1.47	1.42	0.15	1.33	2.17
Study habit	2.70	2.67	0.79	1.00	4.00
Gender	0.74	1.00	0.44	0.00	1.00
Device	0.33	0.00	0.47	0.00	1.00
N =103					

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between variables. We examine the correlation matrix to identify any strong relationships and determine any relations between the variables of interest and other variables that may cause multicollinearity in our subsequent regressions. The correlation matrix shows a strong correlation between self-esteem, self-control, and study habits. Hence, we conduct a separate regression analysis of each variable. In addition, Table 3 shows that academic performance has a positive correlation with self-esteem and study habits ($p < 0.01$), whereas academic performance shows a negative correlation with self-control at ($p < 0.01$).

TABLE 3
CORRELATION AMONG VARIABLES

	Academic performance	Self-esteem	Self-control	Study habit	Gender	Device
Academic performance	1.00					
Self-esteem	0.93***	1.00				
Self-control	-0.57***	-0.59***	1.00			
Study habit	0.97***	0.96***	-0.53***	1.00		
Gender	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.04	1.00	
Device	-0.25**	-0.25**	0.25**	-0.24**	0.09**	1.00

Note: ** indicates significance, two-tailed, at the 5% level; ***, indicates significance, two-tailed, at the 1% level.

Table 4 presents the multivariate regressions of the mediating effect of study habits on the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance. Table 4 shows that Self-esteem has a positive and significant relationship with academic performance ($p < 0.01$). This result supports the study's conjecture that students' higher self-esteem has beneficial implications on the academic performance of students taking online English classes, consistent with H1. In addition, Table 4 shows that self-esteem has a positive and significant effect on study habits ($p < 0.01$). This result supports the hypothesis of the study that students' higher self-esteem has beneficial implications on the study habits of students taking online English classes, consistent with H2.

Similarly, a positive and significant effect is revealed in the relationship between study habits and academic performance ($p < 0.01$). When study habits were controlled in the analysis of self-esteem and academic performance relationship, Table 4 shows that self-esteem has an insignificant effect. In contrast, study habits show a positive and significant effect on academic performance ($p < 0.01$). This outcome reveals that study habits fully mediate the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance, findings which accept H4. This result indicates that self-esteem has a relation to academic performance because of study habits, similar to Ahmed et al.'s (2018) findings.

TABLE 4
MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS OF THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF STUDY HABIT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	Academic performance	Study Habit	Academic performance	Academic performance
Self-esteem	2.20	1.57		0.10
	(25.09) ***	(33.73) ***		(0.47)
Study Habit			1.39	1.33
			(36.91) ***	(9.95) ***
Gender	-0.08	-0.02	-0.05	-0.05
	(-0.90)	(-0.50)	(-0.73)	(-0.76)
Device	-0.03	0.01	-0.05	-0.05
	(-0.36)	(0.28)	(-0.84)	(-0.78)
Constant	-3.26	-2.06	-0.36	-0.51
	(-11.60) ***	(-13.81) ***	(-3.01) ***	(-1.49)
F	227.02***	405.82***	488.51***	363.56***
Adjusted R^2	0.87	0.92	0.93	0.93

Note: Values per column are the unstandardized coefficients, while t statistic values are in parenthesis. *** indicates significance, two-tailed, at the 1% level.

Table 5 presents the multivariate regressions of the mediating effect of study habits on the relationship between self-control and academic performance. Table 5 shows that self-control has a negative and significant relationship with academic performance ($p < 0.01$). This study reflects on the low self-control scale. Consequently, the lower the response of the students, the higher the effect on academic performance. This result supports the study's conjecture that higher self-control of students has beneficial implications on the academic performance of students taking online English classes, consistent with H5. In addition, Table 5 shows that self-control has a negative and significant effect on study habits ($p < 0.01$). This result supports the hypothesis that higher self-control of students has beneficial implications on the study habits of students taking online English classes, consistent with H6. However, a positive and significant effect is revealed in the relationship between study habits and academic performance ($p < 0.01$), which supports H3. When study habits are controlled in the analysis of self-control and academic performance relationship, Table 5 shows that self-control has a negative and significant effect. In contrast, study habits show a positive and significant effect on academic performance at ($p < 0.05$) and ($p < 0.01$), respectively. This outcome reveals that study habits partially mediate the relationship between self-control and academic performance, findings which support H7. This result indicates that self-control causes academic performance because of study habits and some other reasons.

TABLE 5
MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS OF THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF STUDY HABIT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONTROL AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	Academic performance	Study Habit	Academic performance	Academic performance
Self-control	-4.05	-2.61		-0.55
	(-6.41) ***	(-5.80) ***		(-2.51) **
Study Habit			1.39	1.34
			(36.91) ***	(31.46) ***
Gender	0.07	0.09	-0.05	-0.05
	(0.35)	(0.59)	(-0.73)	(-0.72)
Device	-0.29	-0.19	-0.05	-0.03
	(-1.41)	(-1.33)	(-0.84)	(-0.47)
Constant	9.36	6.54	-0.36	0.59
	(10.00) ***	(9.82) ***	(-3.01) ***	(1.49)
F	16.99***	14.08***	488.51***	387.48***
Adjusted R^2	0.32	0.28	0.93	0.94

Note: Values per column are the unstandardized coefficients, while t statistic values are in parenthesis. ** indicates significance. Two-tailed, at the 5% level; ***, indicates significance, two-tailed, at the 1% level.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This paper investigates the influences of self-esteem and self-control on Chinese students' academic performance taking online English classes. It also studies the role of study habits in the relationships among self-esteem, self-control, and academic performance. It conjectures that self-esteem and self-control positively affect academic performance, and study habit influences these relationships.

Our main findings reveal that self-esteem and academic performance have a positive relationship. Similarly, a positive relationship is present in the relationship between self-control and academic performance. These findings indicate that their representation of oneself and self-discipline have a beneficial impact on students' academic performance taking online English classes. This evidence is similar to the findings from the past literature. Moreover, good study habits show a positive influence on academic performance and influence the relationships among self-esteem, self-control, and academic performance. These findings suggest that the impact of high self-esteem on academic performance is caused by the good study habit of Chinese students taking online English classes. In contrast, study habits and other factors explain the relationship between high self-control and Chinese students' academic performance taking online English classes.

This study infers several implications based on our findings. The present study integrates study habit as a mediator variable to explain the phenomenon and address the gaps in the past literature. Theoretically, it advances the knowledge about the phenomenon in social identity theory, self-control theory, and the theory of planned behavior. Our evidence contributes to the cognizance of the determinants of academic performance in the context of online learning. Moreover, educational policymakers may contemplate the findings to formulate some action plan to help students enhance their academic performance, particularly classes held online. Future research about this issue may contemplate other factors and boundary conditions to understand better the implications of self-esteem and self-control on academic performance.

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