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## **Relationship Between Self-Esteem and the Tendency to Bully with Gender as a Moderator**

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### ***Abstract***

*The purpose of this research is to elucidate and explain the relationship between self-esteem and the tendency to bully, with gender as a moderator. This research uses a quantitative approach with a correlational method. The measurement tools in this study are the self-esteem scale developed based on the aspects proposed by Rosenberg and the Bullying scale developed based on the aspects proposed by Ken Rigby. The sample size was 90 students. The sampling was conducted using the purposive sampling method. The research results show that the significance value of the self-esteem variable and the bullying variable is  $0.047 < 0.05$ , indicating that the variables are correlated. The correlation level between the variables is 0.210, which means the correlation between the variables is weak. The conclusion can be interpreted that the higher the self-esteem, the lower the tendency for bullying behavior. Conversely, the lower the self-esteem, the higher the tendency for bullying behavior.*

**Keywords:** *Self-Esteem, Bullying, Gender*

### **Introduction**

Education plays a very important role in enhancing human resources in the effort to realize the ideals of the Indonesian nation to enlighten the nation's life and

achieve general welfare. In the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, it is emphasized that education is carried out to achieve the following goals: national education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of the nation that are beneficial in the context of enlightening the nation's life, aiming to develop the potential of students to become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, noble in character, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.<sup>1</sup>

One of the primary functions of education, by developing potential in the world of education, has been designed in such a way as to produce quality individuals, but in reality, it has not yet met expectations. One of the phenomena that has drawn attention in the world of education today is violence in the school environment. Schools, which should be places for children to acquire knowledge and help in shaping good and positive personal character, on the other hand, have become places for the practice of violent actions. The school environment has become a fertile ground for the growth of bullying behavior and is increasingly featured in the media.<sup>2</sup>

Bullying is not an unfamiliar issue for students, a problem that often occurs and should have been resolved, but as time goes by, this bullying problem is becoming more rampant, especially among teenagers.<sup>3</sup> Bullying behavior is defined as aggressive actions carried out repeatedly by an individual or group due to an imbalance of power between the parties involved. Bullying is also defined as an

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<sup>1</sup> Indonesia, P. R. (2003). Law of the Republic of Indonesia number 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system. Jakarta: Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education

<sup>2</sup> Febriyani, Y. A., & Indrawati, E. S. (2016). Peer conformity and bullying behavior among XI IPS students. *Jurnal Empati*, 5(1), 138-143

<sup>3</sup> Pangesti, R. D. (2021). Individual Counseling in Enhancing Students' Self-Confidence Due to Verbal Bullying at SMP NEGERI 2 NGEMPLAK SLEMAN YOGYAKARTA (Doctoral dissertation, UIN SUNAN KALIJAGA YOGYAKARTA).

emotional, verbal, and physical attack that occurs repeatedly against an individual or group that is unable to defend themselves.<sup>4</sup>

Bullying can occur in three forms: physical, verbal, and relational bullying. Physical bullying can include harmful behaviors such as hitting, choking, punching, elbowing, kicking, biting, spitting, damaging the victim's clothing and belongings. Verbal bullying can take the form of giving nicknames, insults, slander, harsh criticism, humiliation, sending text messages containing threats of violence, making rude phone calls, and making statements with sexual innuendos or sexual harassment. Relational bullying can involve systematically undermining the victim's self-esteem through insults, deliberately isolating the victim, and damaging friendships.<sup>5</sup>

Bullying behavior often occurs when someone has deficiencies, whether physical or mental, and the impact of bullying on students includes loss of appetite, headaches, shame, and fear of socializing in their environment. Therefore, it is very important to minimize the level of bullying in the educational environment. The act of bullying at one of the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in East Lombok went viral on social media. In a 43-second video, a student was recorded hitting a classmate while other students watched, resulting in the bullied student sustaining a head injury. A bullying case occurred at SMK 3 Pujut, where upperclassmen bullied a junior. The victim was kicked by a group of upperclassmen, with some hitting the victim's head and kicking their buttocks. This causes the bullying victim to feel afraid, traumatized, and unsafe in carrying out their usual activities.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hasibuan, R. L., & Wulandari, R. L. H. (2015). The effectiveness of rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) in improving self-esteem among middle school students who are victims of bullying. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 11(2), 103-110.

<sup>5</sup> Hasibuan, R. L., & Wulandari, R. L. H. (2015). The effectiveness of rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) in improving self-esteem among middle school students who are victims of bullying. *Jurnal Psikologi*, 11(2), 103-110.

<sup>6</sup> Maulana, M. A., Hanurawan, F., & Karmiyati, D. (2021). *Group Psychotherapy Handbook for Overcoming Bullying Cases in Schools*.

Students who are repeatedly bullied will develop a low self-esteem and a negative perception of others. Hanurawan explains that the impact received by victims when they experience bullying includes: decreased self-esteem, anxious and generally negative mood, difficulty concentrating, psychosomatic symptoms usually marked by stomach or head pain, difficulty sleeping, disrupted eating patterns, depression up to increased risk of suicide, social anxiety, emergence of resentment or aggressive behavior projected onto other objects, decreased coping ability, and appearance of post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. Bullying in schools is still a problem in the Indonesian education system. This shows that bullying behavior must be stopped to create positive mental health for teenagers. Bullying still occurs frequently around us, which causes students to withdraw from their social environments. One of the causes of bullying is low self-esteem. Self-esteem is a positive or negative response of an individual towards themselves. So when an individual has high self-esteem, that person has a positive response towards themselves. Conversely, if someone has low self-esteem, they perceive themselves as inferior and do not have a positive response.<sup>7</sup>

Self-esteem is one of the important elements for human life. Self-esteem becomes the forefront in shaping self-image and individual charisma to attract the attention of others, making it one of the basic needs of an individual. Self-esteem is very important for a child and influences their personality; children who often receive praise grow into enthusiastic, optimistic individuals with motivation and good character. On the other hand, the opposite condition will occur in children who often experience unconstructive criticism; they will grow into individuals with low self-confidence, so high self-esteem helps students as one way of searching for identity.<sup>8</sup>

Students with high self-esteem will automatically have high self-confidence,

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<sup>7</sup> Rosenberg, m. (2015). *Society and the Adolescent Self – Image*. United States: Princeton University Press.

<sup>8</sup> Maynawati, Aldila Fitri Radite Nur. (2015). Development of a counseling model using reframing techniques to improve the self-esteem of junior high school students at SMP Negeri Kota Semarang.

high optimism, a sense of usefulness, and a feeling that their presence is needed in their environment. Moreover, teenagers with high self-esteem can achieve the accomplishments that they and most people desire, and at the next stage, they will be genuinely motivated to reach their aspirations. Meanwhile, teenagers with low self-esteem will be more prone to negative behavior because self-esteem can influence a person.<sup>9</sup>

If a child's self-esteem is fulfilled, then automatically the child will be protected from negative behaviors and other deviant actions, including bullying.<sup>10</sup> Self-esteem as a need that must be fulfilled by humans. The need for self-esteem, according to Maslow, is divided into two parts: (1) self-respect or self-esteem, which includes the desire to achieve competence, self-confidence, personal strength, adequacy, independence, and freedom. Individuals want to know or be sure that they are valuable and capable of overcoming all challenges in their lives. (2) Recognition from others, including achievements, in this case, individuals need recognition for what they do<sup>11</sup>

Research conducted by Ceilindri & Budiani on self-esteem and conformity with bullying behavior shows that there is a negative relationship between self-esteem and bullying behavior. The higher the self-esteem an individual has, the less often bullying behavior is exhibited; conversely, the lower the self-esteem an individual has, the more often bullying behavior is exhibited.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Aziz, A. S., & Christiana, E. Self-Esteem in Students Victimized by Bullying, Perpetrators of Bullying

<sup>10</sup> Maghfiroh, L., & Pratiwi, T. I. (2020). The Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Family Support with Achievement Motivation in Eighth Grade Students at SMP NEGERI 30 SURABAYA. *Jurnal BK UNESA*, 11(3), 303-311

<sup>11</sup> Setyaputri, N. Y. (2022, August). Raising Self Esteem in Teenagers: An Effort to Strengthen Students' Character. In the Proceedings of SEMDIKJAR (National Seminar on Education and Learning) (Vol. 5, pp. 915-922).

<sup>12</sup> Ceilindri, R. A., & Budiani, M. S. (2016). Self-esteem and conformity with bullying behavior among junior high school students. *Journal of Theory and Applied Psychology*, 6(2), 64-7070.

Vintyana reinforces the research findings on the relationship between self-esteem and the tendency for bullying behavior, showing that there is a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and the tendency for bullying behavior. The higher the individual's self-esteem, the lower the tendency for the individual to engage in bullying behavior; conversely, the lower the individual's self-esteem, the higher the tendency for the individual to engage in bullying behavior.<sup>13</sup>

A study conducted by the NGO Plan International and the International Center For Research on Women (ICRW) released in early March 2015 showed that 84% of children in Indonesia experience violence at school, a figure higher than the regional trend in Asia, which is 70%. Another piece of data indicated that the number of children involved in bullying at school increased from 67 cases in 2014 to 79 cases in 2015.<sup>14</sup>

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with the Guidance and Counseling Teacher at SMP Tahfiz Al-Batthawi Kerongkong, it was found that there were cases of bullying, both verbal, psychological, and physical, which caused the victims to become gloomy, lazy to go to school, fearful, prefer to be alone, lack self-confidence, and have weak learning motivation, leading to discomfort in their activities. Thus, the information from the Guidance and Counseling Teacher indicates that bullying has occurred, which is in line with the low self-esteem of the students<sup>15</sup> If this condition continues without intensive handling efforts, it can endanger the adolescent's age and affect the student's future..

Another factor that must be considered is gender. The American Association of School Administrators states that factors influencing the occurrence of bullying

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<sup>13</sup> Vintyana, S. R. A. (2015). *The Relationship between Self-Esteem and the Tendency of Bullying Behavior among Students of SMP Kristen I Magelang* (Doctoral dissertation, Program Studi Psikologi FPSI-UKSW)

<sup>14</sup> Rohman, M. Z. (2016). *The relationship between age, grade level, and gender with the tendency to become a victim of bullying.*

<sup>15</sup> Guidance Counselor Kerongkong, August 12, 2023, 08:00 – 09:00

include individual factors such as gender. Amanda explained that gender plays a role in the occurrence of bullying and the relationship between peer harassment because boys are more likely to engage in physical bullying, while girls tend to be involved in social bullying, such as inclusion and exclusion among their friends.<sup>16</sup> One of the factors related to bullying behavior among adolescents in schools is gender. The gender factor is influential because the activities differ; boys are more likely to engage in physical fights, such as hitting, kicking, and even brawling, while girls are more inclined to gather, form cliques, and engage in conversations like gossiping, backbiting, and teasing, among other things<sup>17</sup>

Based on this phenomenon, it is deemed necessary to implement something that is expected to reduce the tendency for bullying through self-esteem in students, aiming for a learning process that directs towards rational thinking abilities so that students can avoid stress, depression, and can realistically accept and appreciate their own potential as well as adapt to their environment. In order for an intervention to be effective, it must use methods that are acceptable and appropriate for the client. Teenagers who are victims of bullying have several characteristics, namely they more often experience negative emotions.<sup>18</sup> Having irrational thoughts about themselves, such as feeling useless, weaker, believing they deserve to be bullied, thinking that everyone views them negatively, and feeling incapable of achieving success in their lives.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Rohman, M. Z. (2016). The relationship between age, grade level, and gender with the tendency to become a victim of bullying.

<sup>17</sup> Ilham, R., Hunawa, R. D., & Hunta, F. I. (2021). The Incidence of Bullying Among Adolescents and Related Factors. *Jambura Nursing Journal*, 3(1), 39-48.

<sup>18</sup> Hunt, B. R. A. N. D. O. N., & Guindon, M. H. (2010). Alcohol and other drug use and self-esteem in young adults. *Self-esteem across the lifespan: Issues and interventions*, 219-229.

<sup>19</sup> Elliott, M. (Ed.). (2002). *Bullying: A practical guide to coping for schools*. Pearson Education

## Research Method

This type of research uses the Correlational quantitative method, which according to Sugiyono, correlational research is a type of research characterized by problems in the form of correlational relationships between two or more variables.<sup>20</sup> This type of research emphasizes determining the level of relationship, which can also be used for making predictions. The population in this study consists of 90 students from SMP Tahfiz Al-Batthawi Kerongkong. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique for determining samples based on certain considerations<sup>21</sup>. This type of research emphasizes determining the level of relationship, which can also be used for making predictions. The population in this study consists of 90 students from SMP Tahfiz Al-Batthawi Kerongkong.

The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a technique for determining samples based on certain considerations. The sample in this study consists of 70 individuals from a population of 90 students. The questionnaire in this study uses 2 surveys, namely the bullying survey adapted from Rigby with 17 items<sup>22</sup>, and the Self Esteem Scale consisting of 10 items, all of which are valid, so no items were discarded with a Cronbach's Alpha value  $> 0.6$ , and the self-esteem survey adapted from Rosenberg with 10 items<sup>23</sup>. The Bullying Scale consists of 17 items, all of which are valid, so no items were discarded with a Cronbach's Alpha value  $> 0.6$ .

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<sup>20</sup> Sugiyono. (2016). *Quantitative, Qualitative, and R&D Research Methods*, 24th Edition. Bandung: Alfabeta.

<sup>21</sup> Sugiyono, (2019). *Educational Research Methods*. Bandung. Alfabeta

<sup>22</sup> Robani, M. A. A. *The Influence of Self-Concept and School Climate on Bullying Behavior in Childhood* (Bachelor's thesis, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta: Faculty of Psychology, 2016)

<sup>23</sup> Maroqi, N. (2019). Construct validity test on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale instrument using the confirmatory factor analysis method (CFA). *Journal of Psychological and Educational Measurement of Indonesia (JP3I)*, 7(2), 92-96



Hypothesis testing in this study uses Pearson product-moment correlation to determine the strength of the relationship between the dependent variable (Self Esteem) and the independent variable (Bullying), where the variable considered influential will be kept constant (control variable).

## Results and Discussion

Before conducting data analysis using the Pearson product-moment correlation technique, a normality assumption test was first performed to determine whether the scores of the Self Esteem and Bullying variables are normally distributed. In addition, a linearity test was conducted to determine the relationship between the two variables, namely the Self Esteem variable and Bullying. The homogeneity test was also conducted as a prerequisite for data analysis using One-Way ANOVA. The normality test was performed on the Self-Esteem and Bullying variables to determine whether the research variable scores obtained are normally distributed. Data testing was conducted using the Kolmogorov Smirnov procedure. Data is normally distributed if the probability or significance is greater than 0.05,  $p > 0.05$ . Here are the results of the normality test in this study.

Tabel 1. Normality Test One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) <sup>c</sup>	.200 <sup>d</sup>
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Based on the results of the normality test above, it is known that the significance value of the Self-Esteem variable and the Bullying variable is  $0.20 > 0.05$ , so it can be concluded that the residual values are normally distributed. Linearity testing was conducted on the Self-Esteem variable and the Bullying variable to determine the relationship between the two variables. The results of the linearity test for the Self-Esteem variable and the Bullying variable show that the linear F value is 1.257 with a significance of 0.262, indicating a linear relationship between the data of the Self-Esteem variable and the Bullying variable. Below is the table of the linearity test results

Table 2. Linierity Test

Deviation from Linearity	F	Sig.
	1.25	0.26

The homogeneity test was conducted on emotional maturity and career decision-making against gender as a moderating variable for students.

Table 3. Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

	Based on trimmed mean
Bullying	0.38
Self esteem	0.61

Based on the homogeneity test on the Self-Esteem and Bullying variables against gender as a moderating variable, the Bullying Variable Levne statistic value is 762 with a significance of 0.385 and the Self-Esteem Variable Levne statistic value is 252 with a significance of 0.617. According to the criteria, if the statistical value is greater than  $>0.05$ , the data is considered homogeneous.

After conducting the assumption test, the hypothesis test was carried out using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique to examine whether there is a relationship between self-esteem and bullying with the help of SPSS Version 22. Based on the analysis results, it is known that the significance value of the Self-Esteem variable and the Bullying variable is  $0.047 < 0.05$ , indicating that the variables are correlated. The correlation level between the variables is 0.210, which means the Self-Esteem variable and the Bullying variable have a weak correlation. Here is the table of the data analysis results using the Pearson product-moment correlation.

Table 4. Results of Person Product Moment Correlation Data Analysis

Variable	Pearson correlation
Bullying	0.04
Self esteem	

Comparative Hypothesis Test, If the probability is greater than the significance level ( $p > 0.05$ ), then there is no difference between the Self-Esteem and Bullying of male and female students. If the probability is less than the significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ), then there is a difference between the Self-Esteem and Bullying of male and female students. Before conducting data analysis using the one-way ANOVA technique, there are several conditions that must be met, namely: the samples consist of independent groups, the variance between groups must be homogeneous, and the data of each group must be normally distributed.

Table 5. Anova

Variable	F	Sig.
bullying	3.742	.056
selfesteem	3.508	.064

This study aims to explain the relationship between self-esteem and the tendency for bullying behavior. Based on the analysis of data from two tested hypotheses, it was found that one of the two research hypotheses was rejected. The first hypothesis in this study was rejected, and the second hypothesis in this study was accepted, based on the significance value of the self-esteem variable  $p = 0,064 > 0.05$  and the bullying variable of  $p = 0.056 > 0.05$ . Based on this correlation value, it can be said that the correlation between the variables is weak with a negative correlation direction. This indicates that the higher an individual's self-esteem, the lower the tendency for that individual to engage in bullying behavior.

The results of this study can be supported by various previous studies indicating that there is a relationship between self-esteem and the tendency to engage in bullying, one of which is the research conducted by Intan Yunita Pratiwi, which found a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and the tendency to engage in bullying behavior. The bullying behavior can occur because the perpetrator has low self-esteem, which tends to lead them to bully others to cover up their own deficiencies. Individuals with low self-esteem are driven to do things that can make

them feel recognized and gain attention by bullying others<sup>24</sup>.

Students with low self-esteem are more likely to become victims of bullying. This is supported by research conducted by Mauliy Zain Bunayya, which states that students with low self-esteem are often made victims of bullying<sup>25</sup>. The bullying actions carried out by male or female students have different influences, as shown by the research conducted by Hasan Basri Ramadan, which stated that gender has a significant impact on bullying behavior. The male gender has a higher average than females with a significant level, from this result, it can be concluded that males are more likely to engage in bullying behavior than females<sup>26</sup>. Based on research conducted by Zainab Husin Mulachela, there is a significant relationship between self-esteem and bullying behavior. This relationship is inversely proportional, meaning that if self-esteem is high, bullying behavior tends to be low and vice versa. This is because adolescents with high self-esteem feel satisfied with what they have, resulting in confidence, pride, strength, and a sense of usefulness<sup>27</sup>. Additionally, there is a difference in bullying behavior between male and female adolescents, with male adolescents being more likely to engage in bullying actions compared to female adolescents. This study is also in line with another study conducted by Leny Priyanti, which found that bullying behavior affects a person's self-esteem because bullying can hurt others and is repeated continuously, impacting self-esteem<sup>28</sup>. Individuals

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<sup>24</sup> Intan, Y. P. (2023). The Relationship Between Self-Esteem And The Tendency Of Students' Bullying Behavior At Sma Negeri 6 Bandar Lampung In The 2022/2023 Academic Year

<sup>25</sup> MAULY ZAIN, B. U. N. A. Y. Y. A. (2023). The Relationship Between Self-Esteem And The Tendency Of Bullying Behavior Among Students At Sma Negeri 8 Bandar Lampung In The 2022/2023 Academic Year

<sup>26</sup> Ramadan, H. B. (2018). The influence of school climate, conformity, and self-esteem on bullying behavior in early adolescents (Bachelor's thesis, Faculty of Psychology, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta).

<sup>27</sup> Mulachela, Z. H., & Prasetyaningrum, J. (2017). Bullying Behavior in Adolescents Viewed from Self-Esteem and Gender (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta).

<sup>28</sup> Priyanti, L., Nito, P. J. B., & Ariani, M. (2023). Bullying Actions are Related to Self-Esteem in High School Adolescents. *Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 11(3), 545-554

who have been victims of bullying usually have low self-esteem, characterized by feelings of inferiority. The feelings that emerge are those of low self-esteem, such as being easily prone to feeling or admitting mistakes, inability to express oneself, inconsistency, frequent feelings of hopelessness, lack of courage to fight back or defend oneself, being more sensitive, and tending to be quiet.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted. The research findings indicate a significant relationship between self-esteem and the tendency for bullying at SMP Tahfizd Al-Batthawi. Based on the significant value of the self-esteem and bullying variables, which is  $0.047 < 0.05$ , the variables are said to be correlated with a weak correlation level based on the correlation value of 0.210. The researchers conclude their recommendations for practical and theoretical purposes for those who will study similar variables. For future researchers interested in developing studies on Self-esteem, it is advised to consider other factors that influence Self-esteem as well as the characteristics of the sample or other categories.

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