
Original Article

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL BULLYING AND SELF-ESTEEM
AMONG STUDENTS AT MAN 8 JOMBANG INDONESIA**

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ABSTRACT

Background: The incidence of Bullying in the school environment is a common problem experienced by adolescents and impacts their psychological condition, especially self-esteem. Victims of bullying tend to experience decreased self-confidence and social development barriers.

Objectives: This study aims to analyze the relationship between bullying in the school environment and self-esteem in adolescents at MAN 8 Kabupaten Jombang.

Methods: Quantitative research with a cross-sectional approach. The population was 120 students with a sample of 42 respondents using systematic sampling. Data were collected using the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and food recall 24 hours. Analyzed using the Spearman Rank test.

Results: As many as 24 respondents (57.1%) experienced Bullying, dominated by verbal Bullying (66.7%). As many as 22 respondents (52.4%) had low self-esteem. The Spearman Rank test showed a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) with a correlation coefficient of -0.917, indicating a very strong negative relationship between Bullying and Self-Esteem.

Conclusion: There is a significant relationship between Bullying in the school environment and Self-Esteem in adolescents at MAN 8 Kabupaten Jombang. The higher the level of Bullying, the lower the adolescent's Self-Esteem. Prevention of Bullying and improvement of Self-esteem need to be carried out through support from the school, family, and social environment.

Keywords: Bullying, Self-Esteem, Adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

The adolescent phase is identified with a critical period with many challenges, obstacles, and pressures to be experienced. Adolescent changes in the socio-emotional aspect can include independence, a desire to spend more time with peers, and during this adolescent phase, conflicts with parents also begin. Relationships with peers are indeed important during adolescence, but not a few cases of peer aggression, such as bullying, have also been found (Nafsa & Rita Tarigan, 2025)

Based on preliminary results conducted at MAN 8 Jombang, researchers interviewed 2 guidance and counseling teachers who said there were definitely students reporting bullying incidents, and also interviewed 19 teenagers, 7 of whom were victims of bullying. (Preliminary study MAN 8 Jombang, 2026)

METHODS

Study Design

This study used a correlational research design with a cross-sectional approach, titled “The Relationship between Bullying in the school environment and Self-Esteem among teenagers at MAN 8 Jombang”. The research design aims to analyze the relationship between bullying as the independent variable and self-esteem as the dependent variable among teenagers. (Sugiono 2022)

Settings

This study was conducted at MAN 8 Jombang on Wednesday 20 May 2026 – Thursday 21 May 2026.

Research Subject

The population in this study was 120 students from class X MAN 8 Jombang with a sample of 42 selected using the Systematic Sampling technique. The inclusion criteria include: (1) Male and female students from class X MAN 8 Jombang Regency, (2) Students who are willing to be respondents by signing an informed consent form, (3) members of the population totaling 120 consisting of class Xa with 42 students, class Xb with 44, and class Xc with 38 students. Sampling was carried out by giving a sequential number to all members of the population in each class. Furthermore, the sample was selected using multiples of three, so that the numbers selected were 3, 6, 9, 12, and so on. The use of multiples of three aims to ensure that the selection is carried out systematically and provides a relatively equal opportunity for members of the population to be selected, students who do not comply with the research protocol or guidelines and those who do not fill out the questionnaire completely are included in the exclusion criteria. (Notoatmodjo, 2021)

Instruments

The questionnaire used consisted of the Olweu Bully/Victim Questionnaire-Revised (OBVQ-R) for measuring Bullying and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (RSES) for measuring Self-esteem. The OBVQ-R consists of 15 items with a scoring system of 0 = did not occur and 1 = occurred, resulting in a total score of 0-15. Respondents with a score of 0 were categorized as not experiencing bullying while self-esteem was measured using the RSES which consisted of 10 items with a four-level Likert scale, namely strongly agree 4, agree 3, disagree 2, and strongly disagree 1. In negative statements the score was reversed. The total RSES score was categorized as low 10-20, moderate 21-30, and high 31-40.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study was conducted using a non-probability sampling technique with a systematic sampling method. Data were obtained through questionnaires distributed directly through Google Forms to measure bullying and self-esteem levels in adolescents. In addition, researchers also provided education and conducted interviews as part of the data collection process. Data collection was carried out while maintaining privacy and confidentiality of respondents' identities and answers. Participation was voluntary, and

respondents had the right to stop filling out the questionnaire if they felt uncomfortable. Data were used only for the benefit of the researcher and without revealing the respondents' identities.

Data Analysis

The analysis in this study includes univariate and bivariate analysis, univariate analysis to describe the characteristics of respondents and variable distribution, while bivariate analysis is used to determine the relationship between bullying and self-esteem in adolescents. The statistical test in this study is the Spearman rank test because the bullying and self-esteem variables use an ordinal scale so that it does not require the assumption of normal data distribution.

Ethical Considerations

This study has obtained ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee with Reference Number 01074-KEPKSHJ on behalf of the principal researcher Luluk Syafitri. The research conducted was titled "The Relationship between Bullying in the school environment with Self-Esteem of Adolescents at MAN 8 Jombang Regency".

RESULTS

Based on the research results, most respondents had experienced Bullying, namely as many as 24 respondents (57.1%), while 18 respondents (42.9%) had not experienced Bullying. Based on the research results, most respondents had low self-esteem, namely as many as 22 students (52.4%), while moderate self-esteem was found in 8 students (19.0%) and high self-esteem in 12 students (28.6%). These results indicate that more than half of the adolescents do not yet have a positive self-assessment of their abilities, worth, and value in the school environment. The results of the analysis of the relationship Bullying in the school environment with Self-Esteem of adolescents at MAN 8 Jombang Regency showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), so H1 was accepted. The correlation coefficient value of -0.917 indicates a very strong negative relationship.

DISCUSSION

Bullying

Based on the research results, most respondents had experienced Bullying, namely as many as 24 respondents (57.1%), while 18 respondents (42.9%) had not experienced Bullying. These results indicate that the incidence of Bullying is still quite high in the school environment. The research conducted by Wahani et al. (2025) explains that adolescents who are victims of Bullying are at risk of experiencing various psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, feeling worthless, and decreased self-confidence. This finding is in line with the theory of Olweus (1993) in Najmi & Habiby (2026) which states that Bullying intentionally and repeatedly committed, accompanied by an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim, can cause negative impacts on the victim's psychology.

Bullying Behavior is influenced by various factors, including the school environment, peers, parental upbringing patterns, as well as weak supervision and anti-bullying policies in schools D. Wulandari et al. (2024). These findings are also supported by Fradisa et al. (2025) who stated that middle school students, especially grade X, have a higher vulnerability to bullying because they are in a transitional phase and adapting to a new environment.

Self-Esteem

Based on the research results, most respondents had low self-esteem, namely as many as 22 students (52.4%), while moderate self-esteem was found in 8 students (19.0%) and high self-esteem in 12 students (28.6%). These results indicate that more than half of the adolescents do not yet have a positive self-assessment of their abilities, worth, and value in the school environment.

Rosenberg (1965) defines Self-Esteem as an individual's evaluation or assessment of themselves, either positively or negatively, reflecting how much someone values themselves. Although Self-Esteem originates from self-assessment, its formation is also influenced by the social environment and interactions with others Astrawan (2025)

The formation of Self-Esteem is also influenced by external factors, especially social support from parents and the environment. (Havsari et al., 2024) explains that emotional support, attention, and good communication from the family contribute to increased self-confidence, motivation to learn, and student engagement in school.

The Relationship between Bullying in the school environment and Self-Esteem of adolescents at MAN 8 Jombang Regency

The results of the analysis of the relationship Bullying in the school environment with Self-Esteem of adolescents at MAN 8 Jombang Regency showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), so H1 was accepted. The correlation coefficient value of -0.917 indicates a very strong negative relationship, meaning the higher the level of Bullying, the lower the Self-Esteem of adolescents. The form of Bullying most experienced by respondents was Verbal Bullying, namely as many as 16 respondents (66.7%)¹ -0,917 16

The results of this study are in line with the research conducted by Putri Pratiwi et al., (2021) which explains that adolescents who experience Bullying tend to have difficulty adapting to the social environment. Exposure to repeated negative treatment can affect how adolescents view themselves, thus forming a negative self-concept and impacting low Self-Esteem.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that the incidence of Bullying in the school environment of MAN 8 Jombang Regency is still relatively high, with more than half of the respondents experiencing Bullying. Most adolescents also have Self-Esteem in the low category. Analysis using the Spearman Rank test showed a significant relationship between Bullying and Self-Esteem ($p = 0,000$; $p < 0.05$), so the research hypothesis was accepted. The correlation coefficient value of -0,917 indicates a very strong negative relationship, meaning the higher the level of Bullying experienced by adolescents, the lower the level of Self-Esteem they possess. Based on its form, Verbal Bullying is the type most often experienced by respondents compared to other forms of Bullying

SUGGESTION

This research is expected to be a reference source for development regarding Bullying and Self-Esteem in adolescents. Furthermore, schools are expected to optimize bullying

prevention programs Bullying through education and mentoring to create a learning environment that supports the development of adolescent Self-Esteem.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish a causal relationship between school bullying and self-esteem. Although a strong negative correlation was observed, the findings cannot determine whether bullying contributes to lower self-esteem or whether adolescents with lower self-esteem are more vulnerable to bullying experiences. Second, the study was conducted at a single Islamic senior high school in Jombang, East Java, Indonesia, with a relatively small sample of 42 students selected from a population of 120 students. Consequently, the findings may not be generalizable to adolescents in other schools or geographical settings with different social, cultural, and educational characteristics.

Third, the use of self-reported questionnaires to assess bullying and self-esteem may have introduced information bias, including recall bias and social desirability bias. Students may have underreported or overreported their experiences because of concerns about confidentiality, embarrassment, or the sensitivity of bullying-related questions. Fourth, the study did not report evidence of reliability and validity testing of the instruments in the specific study population, which limits the assessment of measurement consistency and appropriateness in this context. In addition, the categorization of bullying and self-esteem scores may have reduced the detail available for interpreting individual differences in these variables.

Fifth, the analysis focused on the bivariate relationship between bullying and self-esteem without adequately accounting for potential confounding factors, such as family support, peer relationships, socioeconomic circumstances, school climate, and previous psychological difficulties. These factors may influence both bullying experiences and self-esteem and could partly explain the observed association. Finally, data collection was conducted over a short period, and the study did not include longitudinal follow-up or qualitative exploration of students' experiences. Therefore, the findings cannot establish changes in self-esteem over time or provide an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms through which bullying may be associated with adolescents' self-esteem. Future studies should involve larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and multivariable analyses to clarify the temporal relationship between bullying and self-esteem and improve the generalizability of the findings.

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