The Influence of Peer Support and Self-Love on the Self-Confidence of Bullying Victim Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe and analyse the influence of peer support and self-love on the self-confidence of students who are victims of bullying at SMK Negeri 3 Makassar. This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational research design. The sample was taken using a census method with 75 students. The research instrument was a questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. The study results indicate that the levels of peer support, self-love, and self-confidence are in the moderate category. Peer support and self-love positively and significantly influence students' self-confidence, with self-love having a greater influence. The study's conclusion reveals the importance of addressing the impact of bullying on students' self-confidence through a comprehensive approach, including personal strengthening and support for healthy social relationships. This study contributes to the development of guidance and counseling services. It serves as a reference for future research to explore the factors influencing adolescents' self-confidence in various social and cultural contexts.
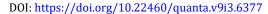
ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis pengaruh dukungan teman sebaya dan self love terhadap kepercayaan diri siswa korban bullying di SMK Negeri 3 Makassar. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan jenis penelitian korelasional. Sampel diambil secara sensus dengan jumlah 75 siswa. Instrumen penelitian berupa angket yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan regresi linear berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tingkat dukungan teman sebaya, self love, dan kepercayaan diri berada pada kategori sedang. Dukungan teman sebaya dan self love memiliki pengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kepercayaan diri siswa dimana self love memberikan pengaruh yang lebih besar. Kesimpulan penelitian mengungkap bahwa pentingnya penanganan dampak bullying terhadap kepercayaan diri siswa memerlukan pendekatan menyeluruh, mencakup penguatan personal dan dukungan relasi sosial yang sehat. Penelitian ini berkontribusi dalam pengembangan layanan Bimbingan dan Konseling, dan menjadi rujukan bagi penelitian lanjutan di masa mendatang untuk menggali lebih dalam faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi kepercayaan diri remaja dalam berbagai konteks sosial dan budaya.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a common issue in social life, and cases of bullying often occur in various environments, one of which is the school environment. Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour that occurs repeatedly and aims to hurt individuals who are considered weaker, both physically and psychologically (Lailatusa'adah, 2024). This phenomenon is a serious concern in education because it directly impacts students' social and emotional development. Global data from the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2019) indicates that approximately 70% of adolescents worldwide have experienced bullying, with 5%–21% of them aged between 15 and 24 years. In Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, this percentage is even higher, with more than two-thirds of

students reporting that they have experienced bullying (Widianita, 2023). At the national level, a report by the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) in 2021 revealed 2,982 reports of violence against children, including 1,138 cases of bullying. This figure makes Indonesia one of the countries with the fifth-highest bullying rates globally (Putri et al., 2023).

According to Sestiani & Muhid (2022), the Child Protection Unit of the Makassar City Police recorded that bullying cases were predominantly school-based, with verbal bullying being the most common form, such as calling someone by an unpleasant name or using their parents' names as insults. Additionally, physical bullying, such as extortion, hitting, and kicking, is more commonly perpetrated by male students, while pulling hair is typically experienced by female students (Marasaoly & Umra, 2022). This phenomenon indicates that the school environment, which should be a safe and supportive, has become a venue for aggressive behaviour.

The role of peers significantly influences adolescents' self-confidence, especially victims of bullying (Sır & Lok, 2024). Positive peer support, such as acceptance, empathy, and motivation, can help victims feel valued, increasing their self-confidence. Conversely, a lack of peer support can make individuals feel rejected, inferior, and even resort to aggressive behaviour to gain recognition (Winata et al., 2017; Putri et al., 2023). This shows that peer social support is an external factor that can restore the self-confidence of students who are victims of bullying (Utomo & Pahlevi, 2022) Additionally, internal factors such as self-love also play a crucial role in building self-confidence among adolescents. Self-love is the ability to accept one's strengths and weaknesses and have compassion for oneself. Individuals with high levels of self-love can better accept themselves, reduce feelings of inferiority due to negative treatment, and ultimately increase their self-confidence (Septiana & Darina, 2021; Septiawardani et al., 2023). Conversely, low self-love makes individuals more susceptible to mockery and experience a crisis of self-confidence (Takdir, Darusman, & Devi, 2025).

These two factors complement each other, where peer support is an external motivator while self-love is an internal strength. When both are in balance, bullying victims can rebuild their self-confidence and recover from trauma. This is evident in the case of WY, a victim of verbal and physical bullying, who began to regain her self-confidence after receiving support from some peers, despite the trauma still lingering. Similarly, OA, a victim of verbal bullying due to being overweight, felt less confident despite receiving support from close friends because of low self-love. Thus, it can be concluded that a combination of peer support and self-love significantly influences the self-confidence of adolescent bullying victims.

Previous studies have shown the profound psychological impact of bullying, one of which is a decrease in self-confidence among victims (Sestiani & Muhid, 2022; Mahambeng et al., 2024). Low self-confidence can lead to difficulties in social interaction, feelings of inadequacy, and long-term trauma (Utomo & Maratus, 2021). Several studies have suggested that social support, particularly from peers, can serve as a protective factor in helping victims rebuild their self-confidence (Winata et al., 2017; Waliyan et al., 2018). Such support can be empathy, social acceptance, motivation, or protection from potential further bullying. On the other hand, personal aspects such as self-love or self-acceptance also play a role in strengthening an individual's psychological resilience. Individuals with high self-love tend to accept their shortcomings, are more resilient to social pressure, and have stronger self-confidence (Septiana & Darina, 2021; Septiawardani et al., 2023). However, research that simultaneously examines the influence of both variables peer support and self-love on the self-confidence of bullying victims is still limited, especially among vocational high school students (SMK).

The urgency of this study is reinforced by empirical data from SMK Negeri 3 Makassar. Based on an initial survey of 198 students, it was found that 37.9% of students admitted to having been victims of bullying, with verbal bullying dominating (44.5%), followed by relational bullying (8.4%), physical bullying (6.8%), and cyberbullying (10.5%). These findings are further supported by interviews with students who have experienced bullying, which revealed that bullying experiences lead to a loss of self-confidence and the emergence of social trauma. While some students showed signs of recovery after receiving support from their peers, others continued to face difficulties due to low self-love. Therefore, it is important to explore the extent to which these two factors peer support and self-love contribute to the self-confidence of bullying victims, as a basis for developing counseling-based interventions in schools.

This study aims to determine the influence of peer support and self-love on the self-confidence of tenth-grade students who are victims of bullying at SMK Negeri 3 Makassar. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What is the level of peer support, self-love, and self-confidence among students who are victims of bullying? (2) To what extent do peer support and self-love, individually and together, influence students' self-confidence? This study employs a quantitative correlational approach with a sample of 75 students identified as bullying victims, using empirically validated instruments.

The contribution of this article is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between interpersonal factors (peer support) and intrapersonal factors (self-love) in the context of self-confidence among bullying victims in a secondary education setting. Theoretically, these findings enrich the literature on educational psychology and counseling services with a multidimensional approach to the psychological recovery of bullying victims. Practically, the results of this study can be used by guidance counsellors to design group or individual intervention programs that emphasise strengthening social relationships and self-acceptance among students. Thus, this approach not only helps victims recover but also promotes the creation of a more supportive and inclusive school climate.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational research design. This approach was chosen to determine the relationship between the independent variables, namely peer support and self-love, and the dependent variable, namely the self-confidence of students who are victims of bullying. This method allows re-searchers to test the influence of two independent variables simultaneously or partially on the dependent variable through inferential statistical analysis.

2.2 Research Subjects

This research was conducted at SMK Negeri 3 Makassar in the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, specifically from November to December 2024. This location was chosen based on preliminary observations and findings that this school had a high prevalence of bullying cases among tenth-grade students. The research was conducted after obtaining permission from the school and through coordination with the guidance and counseling teachers.

The population in this study consists of all 10th-grade students at SMK Negeri 3 Makassar, totalling 198 students. Based on initial identification through questionnaires and interviews with guidance counselors, 75 students were identified as bullying victims. The sampling technique used is a census or total sampling method, as the entire population meeting the criteria as bullying victims was included as the research sample.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using three closed questionnaires developed based on previous theories and research. The instruments used included: (1) A peer support questionnaire adapted from Cohen and McKay (in Inayah, 2021), consisting of five aspects: emotional support, appreciation support, instrumental support, informational support, and evaluative support; (2) The self-love questionnaire is based on aspects from Mutiwasekwa (Kuway et al., 2024), including self-awareness, self-care, self-worth, and self-esteem; (3) A self-confidence questionnaire based on aspects from Lauster (in Christiana, 2020), including: belief in one's abilities, objectivity, responsibility, rationality, and reality.

Each questionnaire uses a 4-point Likert scale, with assessment categories ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (4). The instruments have been tested for validity and reliability using SPSS. Validity was tested using Pearson's correlation technique; all items used had significant coefficient values. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with the results of the entire instrument falling into the highly reliable category ($\alpha > 0.80$).

2.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using two techniques, namely descriptive analysis and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to determine the distribution of values and trends for each variable (peer support, self-love, and self-confidence), which were shown as mean values, percentages, and categories. Meanwhile, inferential analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression to test the simultaneous and partial effects of two independent variables on self-confidence. The significance test used a level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

2.5 Research Procedure

The research began with submitting a permit to the school, followed by preliminary observations to identify students who were victims of bullying. After determining the research subjects, the researcher distributed questionnaires to students with the assistance of guidance counselors to ensure understanding of the instrument. Data were collected over approximately three months and then analysed using statistical software. The analysis

results were used to draw conclusions and formulate counseling intervention recommendations that could be implemented in schools.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

a) Overview of the Levels of Peer Support, Self-Love, and Self-Confidence

Descriptive analysis results indicate that the level of peer support perceived by students is in the moderate category, with an average score of 78.3 out of a maximum score of 100. This support includes emotional support, appreciation, information, and instrumental support. Although not classified as low, this score indicates that there is still room for improvement in peer involvement to help bullying victims feel accepted and socially secure.

Furthermore, the average score for the self-love variable was also in the moderate category, at 82.1, indicating that students have fairly good self-acceptance, but are not yet fully strong in self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-appreciation. This score is important because it reflects intrapersonal aspects that form the foundation of self-confidence.

Meanwhile, the level of self-confidence among students who are victims of bullying is also in the moderate category, with an average score of 76.5. Self-confidence in this context includes belief in one's abilities, taking responsibility, objectivity, and the ability to deal with social situations. These results indicate that bullying has a real impact on students' self-confidence, which cannot be ignored in the development of psychosocial interventions in schools.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Highest Score	Lowest Score	Average	Category
Peer Support	92	66	78,3	Medium
Self-Love	97	73	82,1	Moderate
Self-Confidence	93	67	76,5	Moderate

Categories were determined based on a measurement scale with interval ranges (low, medium, high) according to the results of instrument validation. All three showed a moderate trend, indicating the need for reinforcement from both social and personal aspects to support the psychological recovery of students who were victims of bullying.

b) The Influence of Peer Support and Self-Love on Self-Confidence

To address the second research objective, which is to examine the influence of peer support (X_1) and self-love (X_2) on self-confidence (Y), a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The analysis results indicate that both independent variables significantly influence the dependent variable, partially and simultaneously.

Table 2. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Coefficient (B)	t-count	Sig.
(Constant)	25,23	3,102	0,003
Peer Support (X_1)	0,412	2,741	0,008
Self-Love (X_2)	0,521	3,469	0,001

Peer support has a significant positive effect on students' self-confidence ($p = 0.008 < 0.05$). This means that every one-unit increase in peer support score will increase self-confidence by 0.412 points. Additionally, the self-love variable significantly positively affects students' self-confidence ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). Each one-unit increase in self-love score increases self-confidence by 0.521 points.

Furthermore, the simultaneous significance test (F-test) shows that both variables significantly affect students' self-confidence. The F-value is 18.725, and the significance is 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), meaning the regression model can predict the dependent variable. This analysis is reinforced by the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.498, meaning that 49.8% of the variation in students' self-confidence can be explained by the variables of peer support and self-love simultaneously. At the same time, the remainder is influenced by other factors not examined in this study. Thus, the results of this study indicate that both individually and collectively, peer support and self-love play an important role in shaping and enhancing the self-confidence of students who are victims of bullying.

This provides a strong empirical foundation for the development of intervention programs that emphasise the enhancement of positive social relationships and the strengthening of students' self-affection aspects.

3.2. Discussion

This study provides an in-depth understanding of the role of peer support and self-love in shaping the self-confidence of students who are victims of bullying. The three variables studied, peer support, self-love, and self-confidence in general, were in the moderate category. This shows that students who are victims of bullying have suboptimal levels of self-confidence and self-esteem and have not yet received strong social support from their peer environment. The low self-confidence experienced by victims of bullying can be linked to experiences of social rejection, verbal or physical violence that cause disturbances in their self-esteem and self-perception. These results align with Lauster's theory (Christiana, 2020), which states that self-confidence is formed through positive evaluation of oneself and perceptions of support from the surrounding environment. In this context, peer support is one of the primary sources influencing the psychological recovery of bullying victims. This support includes social acceptance, empathy, emotional assistance, and presence in difficult situations, all of which contribute to building a sense of security and being valued (Alfiana & Annas, 2025).

Research findings also indicate that peer support has a significant positive effect on students' self-confidence. This confirms the results of studies by Winata et al. (2017) and Waliyan et al. (2018), which state that supportive social relationships with peers majorly influence psychological adaptation and identity development in adolescents. When students feel supported by their peers, they can better interpret negative experiences such as bullying more constructively. Additionally, peer support can moderate the adverse effects of bullying, including feelings of isolation, helplessness, and shame (Astifionita & Vazai, 2024). However, the results of this study also indicate that this support is not yet fully optimal, so there is a need for school intervention programs to build more empathetic and supportive friendship groups, such as through peer counseling training or collaborative activities between students. Self-love has also been shown to affect students' self-confidence significantly.

These findings reinforce the research results by Septiana & Darina (2021) and Septiawardani et al. (2023), which state that self-love plays an important role in building a healthy self-concept. Individuals with high self-love tend to accept themselves completely, appreciate their potential, and have a positive attitude toward their weaknesses. In the context of bullying victims, self-love enables students to maintain their self-integrity and avoid succumbing to feelings of guilt or low self-worth due to the negative treatment they experience (Auliya & Nuril, 2023). Therefore, strengthening self-love is an essential element in psychosocial interventions for bullying victims. Counseling services aimed at self-acceptance, self-esteem restoration, and personal identity strengthening will positively impact long-term self-confidence building (Qiu-Qiang et al., 2021).

Simultaneously, peer support and self-love contributed 49.8% to the self-confidence of students who were victims of bullying, as indicated by the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.498$). This means that these two variables explain nearly half of the variation in students' self-confidence. This finding reinforces the social psychological approach that views self-confidence as the result of interaction between interpersonal and intrapersonal factors. The presence of supportive peers strengthens students' social recognition, while self-acceptance and self-esteem from within provide psychological resilience against external pressures (Khairunisa, 2024). Therefore, school guidance and counseling services need to integrate these two aspects into their service programs, both in individual counseling that focuses on strengthening self-love and group activities that promote social inclusion and strengthen positive social networks among students (Aditia et al., 2024).

Peer support plays an important role in mitigating the adverse effects of bullying on students' self-confidence. Research by Laopratai et al. (2023) shows that students who experience bullying have lower self-esteem than those who do not. However, peer support can serve as a psychological shield, boosting self-esteem and reducing the adverse effects of bullying. Students who feel accepted and supported by their peers tend to have higher self-esteem and better cope with feelings of isolation resulting from bullying.

Self-love is a concept that refers to self-acceptance and self-appreciation. Neff (2011) explains that self-love involves three main components: self-kindness, self-awareness without judgment, and feelings of connectedness with others. In the context of students who are victims of bullying, self-love can help them accept themselves as they are, without being influenced by negative judgments from others. Students with strong self-love tend to be more resilient to ridicule and mistreatment from others, which in turn helps them rebuild their self-confidence.

Self-confidence is the result of the interaction between peer support and self-love. Bandura (1997) argues that self-efficacy or self-confidence is a significant factor in shaping a person's behaviour and response to difficult situations. For students who are victims of bullying, having high self-confidence means they are better able to face social challenges, interact positively with others, and adapt to a healthier school environment. Therefore, peer

support and self-love development can enhance students' self-confidence, which is important for recovery from bullying and achieving better personal development.

The findings of this study also show different contributions from each independent variable. Although both are significantly influential, self-love has a greater influence than peer support, as the regression coefficient value indicates. This indicates that the internal aspects of students, namely how they interpret, accept, and love themselves, play a significant role in shaping self-confidence, even in the context of social pressure due to bullying. However, the role of peer support cannot be overlooked, especially since adolescents are in a phase of development that is greatly influenced by their social relationships (Beyens et al., 2016). Although the findings of this study contribute significantly to the understanding of the factors that influence the self-confidence of students who are victims of bullying, there are several limitations. This study was only conducted in one school and was limited to tenth-grade students, so the results cannot be generalised widely.

Additionally, the quantitative approach does not allow for in-depth exploration of students' subjective experiences. Therefore, future research should employ qualitative or mixed methods, expand the research scope, and consider other variables such as family support, emotional conditions, and the influence of social media on adolescents' self-confidence.

4. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study provide several significant implications, both in terms of theoretical development and practical application. Theoretically, the findings of this study support and expand the theory of self-confidence formation that stems from the interaction between intrapersonal factors (self-love) and interpersonal factors (peer support). Self-confidence is not only understood as the result of internal perceptions of oneself, but also as a product of social support experienced by individuals in their peer environment. Therefore, this study enriches theoretical studies in developmental psychology and social psychology, particularly in understanding self-confidence as a multidimensional construct interacting with others.

From a practical perspective, this research serves as a foundation for developing more holistic interventions for students who are victims of bullying. Guidance and counseling teachers can design services that focus on individual emotional recovery and develop peer-based strategies that can build solidarity and empathy among students. Group counseling, peer counseling, self-love training, and student identity strengthening programs can be integrated into personal and social guidance services. The application of this approach is expected to increase the self-confidence of bullying victims sustainably and prevent long-term psychological effects.

From a managerial perspective, the results of this study can be considered by schools, particularly educational management and policy makers in the school environment, in developing bullying prevention and response programs. Schools must create a safe, friendly, and supportive educational ecosystem, involving all school elements, including teachers, students, homeroom teachers, and student organisations. The implementation of anti-bullying policies must be balanced with character training, improving students' emotional literacy, and strengthening collaborative values in school life. In addition, school principals can provide structural support for implementing preventive and promotive counseling programs so that vulnerable students receive adequate psychosocial protection.

From a methodological perspective, this study opens up opportunities for the development of more in-depth research methods to examine the psychological dynamics of students who are victims of bullying. Although the quantitative approach in this study provides a general overview of the relationships between variables, qualitative or mixed-method approaches in the future could be used to explore more deeply how students interpret their experiences of bullying, form perceptions of social support, and build self-love. Further research should also consider mediating or moderating variables such as emotional regulation, psychological resilience, or the role of the family to achieve a more comprehensive and practical understanding of self-confidence development among adolescents.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the level of peer support, self-love, and self-confidence of bullying victims at SMK Negeri 3 Makassar is generally in the moderate category. This indicates that students who are victims of bullying have not fully received optimal social support from their peer environment and are also not yet fully able to love and accept themselves positively. This condition impacts self-confidence that has not developed optimally, as indicated by feelings of doubt, low belief in one's abilities, and limitations in dealing with social situations openly and confidently. This study also concludes that both partially

and simultaneously, peer support and self-love have a significant effect on the self-confidence of students who are victims of bullying. Self-love has a more dominant influence than peer support, but both complement each other in forming self-confidence. Simultaneously, these two variables can explain 49.8% of the variation in students' self-confidence, which means that almost half of students' ability to build self-confidence is influenced by the strength of social relationships and positive feelings towards themselves.

The overall findings of this study emphasise the importance of a comprehensive approach in addressing the impact of bullying on students' self-confidence. Self-confidence cannot only be built through strengthening personal aspects, but also needs to be supported by healthy and supportive social relationships. Therefore, interventions carried out in schools must include self-development programs and the creation of a supportive social environment so that students who are victims of bullying can recover psychologically, grow with strong self-confidence, and undergo the educational process optimally. The recommendations from this study are expected to serve as a theoretical and practical foundation for developing guidance and counseling services and a reference for future research to explore further the factors influencing self-confidence among adolescents in various social and cultural contexts.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript. Maudy Mursalin Madani contributed to the writing - original draft, data collection and interpretation of the results. Abdullah Pandang contributed to the conceptualization and review. Aswar contributed to the conceptualization and review.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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