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**THE RELATIONSHIP OF SELF ESTEEM AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

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**A B S T R A C T**

**Background:** Children's mental health is a condition where children are physically, psychologically, spiritually, and socially healthy so that they can socialize well, control their emotions, influence positive thinking, and handle stress. School-age children are in a period of forming self, moral, social, and emotional concepts, so if the child's growth and development are not achieved then the child cannot be controlled emotionally. **Objective:** This research aims to determine the relationship between self-esteem and peer relationships on the mental health of school children. **Method:** This research is a quantitative research with a cross-sectional method. The population in this study were students in grades 4-6 at SDN Kangeran 1 Pamekasan Regency with a total of 73 students. This research used Stratified Random Sampling techniques and obtained a sample of 73 students. The instruments used are the MHC-SF (Mental Health Continuum Short Form) to measure peer relationships and the RSES to measure self-esteem which consists of 10 Likert items. **Results:** Based on the Spearman test results, it was found that the p-value was 0.03 (<0.05). This means that there is a relationship between self-esteem and peer relationships. **Conclusion:** this research concludes that there is a relationship between self-esteem and peer relationships.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Mental health has historically been conceptualized in a unidimensional sense, which is characterized by the absence of social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Complete mental health is characterized by the presence of well-being and the absence of

psychopathological symptoms (Arslan & Allen, 2022). The appropriate psychological growth and development process for school-age children is that they can complete the tasks given, have a sense of competition, enjoy being in groups with peers having friends, and taking part in group activities.

Characteristics of children who are not by the psychosocial growth and development process are children who are withdrawn, disruptive, have difficulty concentrating, and behavior that is backward from their age stage, for example, thumb sucking, bed wetting, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, unreasonable fear, irritability, refusing to go to school, being angry and fighting (Khasanah et al., 2019; Malfasari et al., 2020). Mental health problems for school-aged children are currently quite high. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the prevalence of mental disorders in children reaches 10-15% in the world, in 2016 almost 20% of children aged 2-11 years had mental health problems in the form of behavioral disorders and developmental disorders. , while at the age of 12-17 years, children experience feelings of sadness, and persistent feelings of hopelessness, and commit suicide (Subekti et al., 2020; Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2022). WHO reports the prevalence of poor health in children under 15 years of age who often experience depression (WHO, 2017). The results of the Mental Health of Children and Young People (MHCYP) survey in 2022 stated that 18.0% of children aged 7 to 16 years may have mental disorders. The number of children who had mental health problems in 2017 was 12.1% and increased in 2020 to 16.7%, the level of mental health problems may remain stable between 2020, 2021, and 2022 (National Health Services, 2022). In Indonesia, the number of children with mental disorders at the national level cannot be found, but through one of the government programs which is the Minimum Service Standards (SPM) in health screening carried out by the health service for students who have just entered school every year, namely in 2016 increased from the previous year, as much as 11.5% in 2015 and increased to 20.4% in 2016 (Prihatiningsih &

Wijayanti, 2019) Peer relationships are one of the factors that can help children's growth and development, where children can socialize well in his environment. Good peer relationships can influence children's mental health, when children support each other, whereas if children experience conflict and victimization by their friends, this will cause mental health problems (Long et al., 2021). If school-age children experience inappropriate psychosocial growth and development, they will withdraw, like to disturb their friends, be unable to concentrate, and become irritable, this will affect the child's self-concept so that the child will experience low self-esteem (Khasanah et al., 2019; Malfasari et al., 2020). The child's growth and development process can be influenced by peer relationships at school and home, children often carry out verbal violence against their friends, such as physically insulting them or lowering their level of cognitive intelligence, thus making children become withdrawn (Putrikasari & Atmaja, 2022). The child's growth and development process can affect mental health, where when a child has poor peer relationships, the child will experience obstacles to the growth and development process. Self-esteem consists of two parts, namely positive and negative, children who experience positive self-esteem have characteristics, namely an active attitude and being able to express themselves well, having achievements in academics and being able to establish social relationships, being able to accept criticism well, trusting perceptions. self has self-confidence based on his abilities, is not fixated only on the difficulties he faces, is not easily influenced by other people's assessments of him, can adapt to new environments so that he is easy to adapt, and has good behavior (Aini, 2018; Kususanto & Chua 2015). Negative self-esteem in school-aged children often experiences less than perfection, fear of failure in building social relationships,

despair, depression, and feeling isolated and not cared for (Ohgino et al., 2022). Elementary school-age children are a potential age for development in all cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Children begin to learn to understand values and adhere to the rules set by their family, school, and social environment. Apart from that, child development prioritizes cognitive abilities which have an impact on increasing children's competitive spirit

## II. METHOD

The research design used was a cross-sectional approach. The population in this study were students in grades 4-6 at SDN Kangenan 1 Pamekasan Regency with a total of 73 students. This research used the Stratified Random Sampling technique, obtaining a sample of 73 students. The independent variable in this research is self-esteem and the dependent variable is peer relationships. The inclusion criteria in this study were children who were willing to sign informed consent and consisted of grades 4, 5, and 6. Exclusion criteria consisted of children who had physical limitations, hearing impairment, speech impairment, and visual impairment. The test used is the data normality test first, after that the data is not normally distributed so the Spearman test is used. Instruments The instrument for measuring peer relationships, namely the MHC-SF (Mental Health Continuum Short Form) has met the requirements as a valid and reliable questionnaire. This questionnaire consists of 14 questions which are divided into 3 aspects, namely: first, there

are 3 questions about emotional well-being, 6 questions about psychological well-being, and 5 questions about social well-being. Each question item has 6 answer choices that describe how often the individual experiences what has been described, during the last month, the answers are never (score 0), once or twice (score 1), once a week (score 2), about two or three times a week (score 3), almost every day (score 5). Validity tests are carried out to see to what extent a questionnaire can be used to measure. Content Validity of the questionnaire must be based on assessment and expressed by the Content Validity Index (CVI). A value  $\geq 0.80$  or higher is said to be the MHC-SF questionnaire (Matondang, 2021). The RSES questionnaire contains 10 Likert items consisting of 2 components, namely favorable and unfavorable. Favorable component with four answer categories, namely strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). Unfavorable component with four answer categories, namely strongly agree (1), agree (2), disagree (3), and strongly disagree (4). The score range on this questionnaire is 1-40, with 10 statements designed equally to be positive and negative, negative self-esteem with a score of 1-20, and positive self-esteem with a score of 21-40. The validity and reliability tests on this questionnaire are 0.74 for rehabilitation and 0.87 for validity. acceptable internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.861) (Rosenberg, 2015; Lutfiyah & Takwin Bagus, 2018; Chou et al., 2020).

## III. RESULTS

Characteristics students at SDN Kangenan 1 Pamekasan classes 4,5, and 6 consist from age and type sex . As for characteristics respondents as following :

Table 1 Distribution characteristics respondents according to age and type sex

Characteristics Respondent	N (%)
Age	
11-12 Years	34 (46.6%)
9-10 Years	36 (49.3%)
Gender _	
Man _	29 (39.7%)
Woman	41 (56.2%)

Source: Primary Data 2022

Table 1 shows that the average age is 9-10 years as many as 36 (49.3%) and 11-12 years as many as 34 (46.6%) with type sex the most namely women as many as 41 (56.2%) while man \_ as many as 29 (39.7%).

Data normality test results on variables study shown in table 2.

Table 2 Normality test characteristics respondents and research variables on health soul child

Questionnaire	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
Connection Friend peer	0,000
Self esteem	0,000

Based on the Kolmogorov Smirnov test in table 2, it is obtained that mark significance to the relationship Friend peers and self-esteem namely  $< 0.05$  which means the data is not normally distributed . Therefore That For know relationship between these two variables Spearman test was carried out .

Table 3 Relationships questionnaire connection Friend peer with *self esteem* in mental health child

	Connection Friend peer	
	P value	Value (r)
Self esteem	0.030	0.255

Based on the Spearman test in table 3, it was found that The p value is 0.03 ( $<0.05$ ). It means There is connection self-esteem with connection Friend peer .

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Children who are in the search phrase their identity will evaluate themselves more through the eyes of others. The assessment of other people will have a big influence on teenagers' lives because it is directly related to their increasing need for self-esteem. Someone who has low self-esteem will tend to tie themselves to their peer group to be considered and recognized in their group environment.

This can be an initial trigger for mental health problems, namely becoming a victim of bullying. Research shows that self-esteem will influence the process of thinking and behaving (Ratna, 2018). The findings from this research are that children's self-esteem will be good when children do not deal with the problems they are experiencing alone so that children can tell their friends or ask for help. This is in line with the results of other research which explains that children's self-esteem greatly influences peer relationships, children who like to be alone and do not want to mingle with their friends will affect the learning process and cause children's learning outcomes to decline (Kaliampos et al., 2022). This also has the potential for students to form superior groups or gangs with other friends. Therefore, peers are also the cause of verbal bullying behavior or mental health problems by providing a negative influence (Putri et al., 2021; Najah et al., 2022). Self-esteem is an individual's assessment of himself which is shown to accept or reject himself, and the extent to which the individual believes that he is capable, meaningful, successful, and valuable. Individuals with high self-esteem have feelings that come from unconditional self-acceptance, even though they make mistakes, defeats, and failures, they still feel important and valuable (Lestari, 2020). In research conducted by Nurmallasari (2015), the results of the analysis of the research data obtained can be concluded that there is a very significant positive relationship between peer relationships and self-esteem in adolescents with lupus. The higher the peer relationships, the higher the self-esteem of adolescents with lupus, and vice versa. School-aged

children can evaluate and judge themselves based on the standards found in their environment. Children's self-assessment influences how children value themselves, which is called self-esteem. Therefore, it is very important to instill and increase self-esteem in children, because self-esteem develops to build a psychological model of the self. An attitude of self-respect can help children believe that they are positive people and can be developed. However, in reality, to achieve this, children still experience several problems (Badriyyah et al., 2021; Islamiah et al., 2015). Peer social support is the support given to individuals by their peer group in the form of physical and psychological comfort so that the individual feels loved, cared for, and appreciated as part of a social group. Through social support, peers can provide an overview of individuals fulfilling the dimensions of psychological well-being. Strengthened by Pratikta's (2020) statement which states that the quality of relationships full of empathy, trust, warmth, unconditional positive regard, kindness, harmony, and wisdom is very important to support individual progress. Thus, social support from peers can help increase psychological well-being in a new environment (Dewinta Agnes, 2021).

The mental health problem of children who experience poor self-esteem is that children often feel they are not appreciated by their friends and are not confident in what they do. Children experience teasing between friends, the teasing is physical, saying each other's parents' names so that the child feels annoyed. This is in line with previous research where school-age children who experience bullying will be a risk factor for

depression and children will experience low self-esteem, if children cannot control their emotions they will experience aggressive behavior (Zhong et al., 2021).

## **V. CONCLUSION**

This research concludes that there is a relationship between self-esteem and peer relationships.

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