The Effect of Self-Esteem on Academic Burnout in Junior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effect of self-esteem on academic burnout among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Tasikmalaya using a quantitative correlational approach. The research population consisted of 340 students, and a sample of 115 was selected via simple random sampling. Data were collected using self-esteem and academic burnout instruments and analyzed using simple linear regression. The results indicate that students' self-esteem is generally in the high category, while academic burnout is in the low category. Furthermore, self-esteem has a significant effect on academic burnout, with a coefficient of determination of 0.532, accounting for 53.2% of the variance in academic burnout. The findings conclude that self-esteem plays a vital role in reducing students' academic burnout. This study underscores the need to strengthen school guidance and counseling services to enhance students' self-esteem as a preventive measure and to promote academic well-being.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh self-esteem terhadap academic burnout pada siswa kelas dua SMP Negeri 10 Kota Tasikmalaya dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif korelasional; populasi penelitian berjumlah 340 siswa dan sampel sebanyak 115 siswa ditentukan melalui teknik simple random sampling, dengan pengumpulan data menggunakan instrumen self-esteem dan academic burnout yang dianalisis melalui regresi linier sederhana. Hasil analisis menunjukakn bahwa tingkat self-esteem siswa berada pada kategori tinggi dan academic burnout berada pada kategori rendah, serta self-esteem berpengaruh signifikan terhadap academic burnout dengan koefisien determinasi sebesar 0,532 yang menunjukkan kontribusi pengaruh sebesar 53,2%. kesimpulan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa self-esteem berperan penting dalam menekan kelelahan akademik siswa. Penelitian ini memberikan impliaski perlunya penguatan layanan bimbingan dan konseling di sekolah untuk meningkatkan self-esteem sebagai upaya preventif dan pengembangan kesejahteraan belajar siswa

1. INTRODUCTION

Schools serve as a medium for developing students' potential, meaning that every activity students undertake involves a learning process. This learning process leads to changes in behavior that result from experiences and interactions with the environment and tend to be relatively stable (Hidayati et al., 2022). Early adolescence is a critical developmental phase marked by challenges for middle school students, as they face increasingly complex academic demands, social expectations, and identity exploration. One negative consequence of poorly managed academic pressure is academic burnout, defined as emotional exhaustion, cynicism toward learning, and reduced confidence in academic abilities (Schaufeli et al., 2002). This issue has become a serious problem in many schools, including SMP Negeri 10 Kota Tasikmalaya, where several students exhibit signs of learning fatigue, declining motivation, and apathy toward academic tasks.

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Adolescents at the middle school level ideally should have an understanding of their own potential, reflected in traits such as self-confidence, rational and logical thinking, creativity, innovation, independence, healthy lifestyles, and responsibility. Students' engagement in exploring learning materials within their environment directly influences the academic outcomes they achieve (Hastutiningtyas, 2021). Smith and Jones (2022) support this perspective, stating that "adolescents who struggle to manage their emotions tend to have lower academic performance and reduced engagement in learning activities." These findings highlight the importance of emotional support and stress-management strategies in helping adolescents cope with educational challenges.

Zhang et al. (2014) explain that academic burnout is influenced by two primary factors: individual factors and external environmental factors. Individual factors include personality traits such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, locus of control, and trait anxiety. External environmental factors primarily involve excessive academic demands. According to Alizadeh (2016), self-esteem is one of the most important factors affecting students' mental health and coping abilities in facing various life challenges, including those related to their educational experiences.

Self-esteem, as a personality aspect, plays a crucial role in an individual's adaptation to external pressures. Coopersmith (1967) defines self-esteem as an individual's evaluation of themselves, formed through social interactions and the treatment they receive from their environment. Students with high self-esteem tend to have positive self-perceptions, manage stress effectively, and demonstrate mental resilience when facing academic challenges. Conversely, students with low self-esteem are more prone to self-doubt, easily feel overwhelmed, and are at higher risk of experiencing academic burnout.

Research on the relationship between self-esteem and academic burnout has been conducted in various contexts. Fathi et al. (2023) found that self-esteem acts as a protective factor against academic burnout symptoms in secondary school students in Iran. Similarly, a study by Ayu & Pramesti (2022) in Indonesia found that students with higher self-esteem tend to experience lower academic fatigue. Additionally, Lee & Lee (2023) reported that self-esteem significantly mediates the relationship between academic stress and academic burnout in adolescents.

Based on the discussion above, this study aims to examine the effect of self-esteem on academic burnout among middle school students. While some studies have found a negative relationship between self-esteem and academic burnout, others have reported no significant effect. Therefore, further research is needed to clarify this relationship (Madigan & Curran, 2021). According to Li (2023), academic burnout contributes to lower achievement, increased stress, and mental health issues among students, underscoring the importance of identifying influencing factors, such as self-esteem. Cultural and academic environmental differences may affect the dynamics of self-esteem and academic burnout, so findings from one context cannot always be generalized (Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2014).

Smith and Brown (2023) support this view, stating that students with high self-esteem tend to use better coping strategies and are better able to handle stress related to academic demands. Furthermore, research by Johnson et al. (2022) shows that interventions to improve students' self-esteem can enhance mental health and academic performance. Although many studies have examined the relationship between self-esteem and academic burnout, most focus on high school or college students, while research on middle school students remains very limited. Middle school students are at a distinct psychological developmental stage, making them highly vulnerable to emotional and social changes that can affect self-esteem and burnout differently compared to older age groups (Yanto, 2024).

This research is important because psychological and educational theories continue to evolve, and new studies can provide deeper insight into how self-esteem influences academic burnout (Smith, 2020). According to Garcia (2022), changes in social and cultural contexts may affect the relationship between self-esteem and burnout, and new research can explore how these factors interact. This study is novel for focusing on middle school students, a population that has been under-researched in the context of self-esteem and academic burnout.

The objectives of this study are to identify the characteristics of self-esteem and academic burnout among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Kota Tasikmalaya, and to examine the effect of self-esteem on academic burnout in this population. The theoretical contribution of this study is expected to expand knowledge regarding the impact of self-esteem on academic burnout and provide a reference for future research. In practice, the findings can help schools design guidance programs to enhance students' self-esteem and reduce academic burnout, providing insight into current levels of self-esteem and burnout to inform interventions. For school counselors, the study offers guidance on supporting students in building self-esteem to mitigate learning fatigue, ultimately improving educational quality and outcomes.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the relationship between self-esteem and academic burnout among middle school students. The research design used was correlational. According to Creswell (2023), correlational research is a type of quantitative design used to determine the relationship or association between two or more variables without manipulating or providing treatment to the variables under study.

2.2 Participant

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 10 Tasikmalaya, located at Jalan RAA. Wiratanuningrat No. 12, Tawangsari, Tawang District, Tasikmalaya City. The chosen site is suitable for this research because it exhibits phenomena related to students' self-esteem and academic burnout. Furthermore, no previous research has examined the influence of self-esteem on academic burnout among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Tasikmalaya during the 2024/2025 academic year.

The study population consisted of all eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Tasikmalaya in the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 340 students. Eighth-grade students were selected because early adolescence is a developmental stage characterized by changes that can be sources of academic or environmental pressure, and students often experience instability in self-evaluation. This makes eighth-grade students a relevant group for studying how self-esteem plays a role in managing pressures that could lead to academic burnout.

The sampling technique used was simple random sampling, a commonly used method for selecting a random sample from the entire population without stratification. The sample size was determined using Isaac & Michael's (2023) table, which guides sample size selection while accounting for the acceptable margin of error.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using instruments for self-esteem and academic burnout. The self-esteem instrument was adapted from the self-esteem scale developed by Sri Nurrizki Putri Krisnadi (2023) and is based on Coopersmith's (1967) theoretical construct. The scale consists of 25 validated items with a reliability coefficient of 0.83, indicating good reliability. The academic burnout instrument was developed by the author based on Schaufeli's (2002) theoretical construct and consists of 21 validated items with a reliability coefficient of 0.84, which is considered good. Both instruments used a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and classical assumption tests, including tests for normality, linearity, and homogeneity. Hypothesis testing was conducted using simple linear regression analysis and determination of the coefficient of determination. The collected data were analyzed with SPSS version 22 for Windows.

Simple linear regression was selected because it is suitable for examining the extent to which the independent variable, self-esteem (X), predicts the dependent variable, academic burnout (Y). This analysis aims to provide a clear understanding of how self-esteem reduces academic burnout among middle school students.

2.5 Research Procedure

The research procedure involved several systematic steps to obtain accurate and relevant data for the study's objectives. The steps included: 1) Identifying the research problem and preparing the research proposal; 2) Conducting a literature review and developing the theoretical framework; 3) Formulating research objectives, hypotheses, methods, and population; 4) Collecting data; 5) Processing data; 6) Analyzing data; 7) Interpreting results and concluding; 8) Preparing the research report.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Based on the descriptive statistical analysis, each variable included data from 115 respondents. The self-esteem variable had a minimum score of 25, a maximum score of 100, a mean score of 62.5, and a standard deviation of

10.41. Meanwhile, the academic burnout variable had a minimum score of 21, a maximum score of 84, a mean score of 52.5, and a standard deviation of 8.75.

Table 1. Descriptive Data of Self-Esteem Variable

No.	Score Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	High 75–100	121	80.13%
2	Medium 54–74	30	19.86%
3	Low 25–53	0	0%

Table 2. Descriptive Data of Academic Burnout Variable

No.	Score Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	High 63–84	2	1.32%
2	Medium 44–62	73	48.34%
3	Low 21–43	76	50.33%

A simple linear regression analysis was used in this study to examine the effect of self-esteem on academic burnout among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Tasikmalaya. The results indicated that self-esteem had a significant adverse effect on academic burnout, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.532, accounting for 53.2% of the variance in academic burnout; the remaining 46.8% was influenced by other variables or factors.

3.2. Discussion

The study's results indicate a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and academic burnout among students at SMP Negeri 10 Kota Tasikmalaya. This means that the higher a student's self-esteem, the lower their level of academic burnout. These findings are consistent with the regression analysis, which shows a negative regression coefficient, indicating that self-esteem acts as a protective factor against academic pressure. Students with a positive self-assessment tend to handle academic demands with greater emotional stability, reducing fatigue, apathy, and helplessness during the learning process.

Coopersmith (1967) stated that self-esteem consists of four main components: power, competence, significance, and virtue. In the context of junior high students, power reflects students' perceptions of their ability to influence their environment and situations around them; competence is manifested in their belief in their ability to complete school tasks and succeed in exams; significance reflects students' perception that teachers, parents, and peers value them; and virtue represents a sense of moral worth that helps students feel better about themselves and fosters social responsibility. Field data indicate that students with high self-esteem exhibit a range of positive characteristics that contribute to academic success and psychological well-being. Support from family, a positive school environment, and healthy social interactions play a crucial role in developing high self-esteem.

During adolescence, especially for junior high students, self-esteem is strongly influenced by relationships with parents, teachers, peers, and academic experiences. Students with high self-esteem are generally better at managing emotions, more confident in facing challenges, and less likely to give up when encountering academic difficulties (Lailatusa'adah, 2024). They also tend to employ healthier coping mechanisms, effectively managing academic stress. Conversely, students with low self-esteem often doubt their abilities, give up easily, and interpret failures as personal deficiencies rather than part of the learning process.

According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), academic burnout has three main dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced academic efficacy. Exhaustion appears when students feel overwhelmed by the workload; cynicism manifests as indifference toward lessons and a lack of motivation to study; and reduced academic efficacy is characterized by the perception of being unable to complete school tasks. Field data show that junior high students with low levels of burnout exhibit positive characteristics that support academic and psychological well-being. Active engagement in learning, strong social support, effective time management, and a positive attitude toward education all help prevent burnout.

Young & Hoffmann (2023) explain that self-esteem is related to multiple aspects of an individual's life, including academic success. Self-esteem refers to the global evaluation individuals make of themselves, both positive and negative, which results in feelings of self-worth and personal efficacy. Happy & Widjajanti (2014) note that students who perceive themselves positively develop high self-esteem, understanding their own value and

fostering confidence as a reflection of their abilities, skills, and personal qualities. Conversely, students with negative self-perceptions develop low self-esteem, feel less capable, and tend to be pessimistic about their abilities.

This study's findings demonstrate that self-esteem functions as a protective factor, enabling students who feel good about themselves to better cope with academic pressure. High self-esteem strengthens students' resilience, allowing them to view academic challenges as manageable rather than overwhelming. Overall, both theoretical and empirical evidence support the conclusion that high self-esteem acts as a psychological buffer, reducing the likelihood of burnout among students.

The influence of self-esteem on academic burnout among junior high students confirms that self-esteem is a critical psychological factor in mitigating academic fatigue. The finding that self-esteem significantly affects academic burnout indicates that students with positive self-esteem are better able to manage learning pressures, maintain motivation, and respond adaptively to academic demands. Conversely, low self-esteem increases vulnerability to emotional exhaustion, cynicism toward learning, and decreased academic performance.

In this context, school guidance and counseling services play a crucial strategic role in developing and strengthening students' self-esteem (Syah et al., 2025). School counselors can act through preventive, curative, and developmental services, such as classroom guidance, group counseling, and individual counseling focused on reinforcing self-concept, confidence, and academic coping skills (Iloakasia, 2024). Through planned and ongoing interventions, guidance and counseling services help students recognize their potential, manage academic stress, and foster a positive attitude toward learning (Zulhakim et al., 2025).

The importance of guidance and counseling services goes beyond supportive functions; they are integral to preventing academic burnout and promoting the psychological well-being of junior high students. Strengthening counselors' role in developing students' self-esteem is expected to create a healthier, more conducive, and sustainable learning environment, enabling students to achieve optimal academic and personal development.

4. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study contribute to strengthening the theoretical understanding of the influence of self-esteem on academic burnout, demonstrating that self-esteem significantly affects students' burnout levels. This study supports Coopersmith's (1967) concept of self-esteem as an internal psychological factor that influences an individual's resilience under pressure. Moreover, it extends the application of Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) academic burnout theory to the context of junior high school students (SMP), rather than focusing solely on university students or employees, thereby highlighting that academic burnout is also relevant to study during early adolescence.

In practice, the findings provide a foundation for school guidance and counseling (BK) teachers to design programs to develop self-esteem as a preventive measure against burnout. BK teachers can integrate individual or group counseling services that focus on enhancing the four components of self-esteem: power, competence, significance, and virtue. Additionally, these findings are valuable for parents, emphasizing the importance of fostering children's self-esteem early through emotional support, recognition of their efforts, and the creation of positive communication patterns. For students, understanding the significance of self-esteem can motivate them to develop a more positive self-perception, thereby better preparing them to face academic pressures.

For school management (principals and administrative teams), the study highlights the importance of fostering a school environment conducive to students' self-esteem development. Schools can implement policies that support character-building programs, recognize both achievements and efforts, and foster an inclusive climate that values self-acceptance and diverse student potential. Furthermore, school management should provide training for teachers to enhance their sensitivity in identifying signs of burnout and encourage collaboration among BK teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents to prevent academic burnout through self-esteem enhancement programs.

From a methodological perspective, this study demonstrates that simple linear regression is appropriate for analyzing the influence of self-esteem on academic burnout among early adolescents. However, the research is limited to a correlational quantitative design and therefore cannot capture the dynamic changes in self-esteem and burnout over time. Future studies are recommended to employ longitudinal designs to observe changes in self-esteem and academic burnout over time. Additionally, the use of mixed methods, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, could provide a deeper understanding of students' subjective experiences related to self-esteem and the contextual factors influencing academic burnout.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that self-esteem has a significant effect on academic burnout among second-grade students at SMP Negeri 10 Tasikmalaya in the 2023/2024 academic year. The results of the simple linear regression analysis indicate a negative regression coefficient, meaning that the higher a student's self-esteem, the lower their level of academic burnout. Conversely, students with low self-esteem are more vulnerable to learning exhaustion, cynicism toward academic activities, and a sense of being unable to complete school tasks (reduced academic efficacy).

These findings align with Coopersmith's (1967) assertion that self-esteem reflects an individual's evaluation of themselves in terms of power, competence, significance, and virtue, with individuals possessing high self-esteem tending to cope more effectively with pressures and challenges. Similarly, Schaufeli et al. (2002) explain that academic burnout arises when students experience emotional exhaustion due to excessive academic demands. However, individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to have effective coping mechanisms to manage such stress.

Thus, self-esteem can function as a protective factor, helping students manage academic stress and prevent burnout. This study's results are also consistent with previous research demonstrating the influence of self-esteem on academic burnout (Laurance, 2014). Therefore, enhancing students' self-esteem is an important aspect to consider in efforts to prevent academic burnout in schools. Interventions aimed at improving self-esteem, such as personal development programs and emotional support, can help students feel valued and confident, thereby reducing their risk of burnout (Krisnadi, 2023).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The author is fully responsible for the entire research process, including the formulation of the research problem, design of the study, data collection and analysis, and the preparation of this scientific article. The author also conducted the literature review, interpreted the research findings, and drafted the conclusions and recommendations presented. All contributions were carried out independently, without involvement from any other authors.

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 study.

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