

WHICH ONE BETTER GUIDES ENGLISH LEARNERS: LOCALS OR NATIVES?

Suehartono Syam^{1*}, Uman Suherman AS², Mamat Supriatna³, Nandang Budiman⁴,
Sudharmono⁵

^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

⁵ IAI Al-Amanah Jenepono, Jenepono, Indonesia

*Corresponding email: suehartonosyam@upi.edu

Abstract

Self-esteem is an individual's evaluation of themselves that reflects a sense of worth and value. Self-esteem can be classified into two categories: high self-esteem and low self-esteem. Individuals with high self-esteem and a strong sense of self-worth tend to demonstrate better academic performance, experience less anxiety, and optimal psychological well-being. Conversely, low self-esteem tends to manifest as self-rejection, dissatisfaction with one's own condition, vulnerability to stress, and difficulty achieving psychological well-being. The urgency of this research stems from the need to map students' self-esteem levels to foster globally competitive students through high-quality guidance and counseling services at the UPT BK Unima in North Sulawesi. The research objectives are to determine the self-esteem profile of students based on self-esteem level categories, to identify differences in students' self-esteem levels based on gender, and to identify differences in self-esteem levels based on students' origin/geographic status. The research method employed a survey approach involving all FIPP students at Unima North Sulawesi. The research instrument utilized Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. The inventory was tested in three stages: construct validity, content validity, and reliability. The study sample consisted of 130 FIPP students at Unima. The results of the study indicate that students' self-esteem generally falls into the moderate category, regardless of gender or demographic background. This moderate category may indicate psychological vulnerability, meaning that students may feel valued or, conversely, feel worthless depending on internal and external factors. Further research is needed to develop guidance and counseling programs at universities to help students improve their self-esteem.

Keywords: self-esteem; guidance; counseling; education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem refers to a person or individual's perceived value. Rosenberg defines self-esteem as an individual's behavior that reflects their perception or assessment of themselves, particularly regarding the extent to which they perceive themselves as valuable or worthy as a human being (Patria & Silaen, 2020). Meanwhile, Coopermith (1967) explains that self-esteem is an individual's self-assessment, reflecting self-respect and belief in their own abilities, worth, success, and importance. The essence of self-esteem is a person's self-assessment, reflecting feelings of worth, significance, and value, and a strong belief in their own abilities.

Self-esteem is a crucial component of students' mental health and academic performance. Yu et al. (2022) reported that higher self-esteem can improve academic performance. Self-esteem not only impacts academic performance but also positively impacts anxiety, depression, and attention deficit disorder (Henriksen, Ranoyen, Indredavik, & Stenseng; 2017). Unfortunately, research specifically examining the self-esteem profile of students in North Sulawesi is still very limited, particularly in terms of distribution (low, medium, high) and demographic factors such as gender, origin (local vs. inter-regional), and so on.

One relevant study examined the relationship between self-esteem and impulsive buying among out-of-town students from North Sulawesi studying in Salatiga. Data collected from 62 respondents using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale revealed a positive correlation ($r = 0.143$), but it was not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$), thus rejecting the hypothesis (Naharia; 2021). This study indicated that self-esteem had a relationship with impulsive buying, but this was not significant. This study did not further explore the dynamics of self-esteem and impulsive buying, thus not providing a comprehensive picture of self-esteem.

Furthermore, research outside the North Sulawesi context provides broader perspectives, such as the positive relationship between self-esteem and academic resilience in undergraduate thesis students in Makassar ($p < 0.05$) (Hasmi, Gismin, & Aditya; 2023), which can influence well-being and mental health (Muris, & Otgaar; 2023). Further research reports that low self-esteem can contribute to anxiety (Holas et al., 2021). However, both studies were conducted outside of North Sulawesi and therefore cannot replace the need for contextual, local data.

Rahmania et al. found that self-esteem significantly influenced subjective well-being among working mothers in Tasikmalaya City (Rahmania, Wyandini, & Nurendah; 2023). Mahendika & Sijabat found a positive relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being, including aspects of coping, resilience, and social support, although social support and coping strategies played a more dominant role (Paradise & Kernis; 2002). A longitudinal meta-analysis showed that high levels of self-esteem significantly predicted reduced symptoms of depression (coefficient -0.16) and anxiety (-0.08), even when controlled for baseline levels of the disorder (Orth, & Robins; 2022).

The above studies demonstrate the need to further explore the self-esteem profiles of college students in North Sulawesi. There has been no research that explicitly describes the level of self-esteem of students in this region, three categorizations of self-esteem, namely low, medium and high, as well as demographic influences such as gender or area of study origin (international vs local).

Based on the background that has been described, the problem formulation in this study is: a) What is the self-esteem profile of students in North Sulawesi based on self-esteem level categories? b) What is the level of self-esteem of students in North Sulawesi based on gender? c) What is the level of self-esteem based on the origin/geographical status of students? The results of this study are expected to enrich the regional psychology literature and help formulate appropriate interventions to support students' personal and academic development.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative study using a survey research approach. The survey approach was used to obtain student self-esteem data using a self-esteem inventory. The

instrument used was the Coopersmith self-esteem inventory adapted into Indonesian with answer options using the Gutman scale model. Before use, the instrument was first tested for grammar, validity, and reliability. The instrument's validity testing steps are necessary to ensure the reliability of the data obtained. Next, the inventory was distributed using a Google Form sent through student WhatsApp (WA) groups. The population of this study were students studying at the Faculty of Education and Psychology, Manado State University in North Sulawesi. During the data collection process, the researcher collected data from 130 students. The data analysis used descriptive data analysis to determine the students' self-esteem profiles.

3. RESULT

This study aims to determine the self-esteem profile of students in North Sulawesi based on self-esteem level categories (low, medium, high), to determine differences in self-esteem levels of students in North Sulawesi based on gender, to determine differences in self-esteem levels based on student origin status (local students vs. out-of-town students). The following are the results of the analysis of student self-esteem data to answer the research formulation that has been formulated. The results of the study are as follows:

Table 1: Self-esteem profile of students in North Sulawesi

No	Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage
1	High	39 – 59	12	9.2%
2	Medium	19 – 38	116	89.2%
3	Low	0 – 18	2	1.6%
Total			130	100%

The overall student self-esteem profile can be seen from the descriptive analysis in Table 1, which indicates that the majority of students have moderate self-esteem. Table 1 shows that 9.2% of students have high self-esteem, 89.2% have moderate self-esteem, and 1.6% have low self-esteem. Table 1 also shows that two of the 130 students surveyed still have low self-esteem. Although the percentage of students in the low self-esteem category is small, it is important to consider this to ensure that these students achieve at least moderate self-esteem. This is necessary because low self-esteem can lead to more serious psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, and attention deficit disorder.

After determining the overall level of student self-esteem, a more detailed analysis was conducted by incorporating gender as a variable. Several studies have shown that student self-esteem differs from a gender perspective. To confirm this, this study also analyzed gender as a variable. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Self-esteem profile of male students

No	Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage
1	High	39 – 59	4	15.4%
2	Medium	19 – 38	20	76.9%
3	Low	0 – 18	2	7.7%
Total			26	100%

Table 2 shows that the highest level of self-esteem for male students was in the moderate category, with 20 out of 26 students (76.9%), followed by the high category (15.4%), and the low category (7.7%). It appears that student self-esteem is spread across

all categories, although the majority are in the moderate category. However, self-esteem among male students was also found to be in the low category, with a relatively high percentage, reaching nearly 10%.

After identifying the level of self-esteem among male students, the next step was analyzing the variable of female gender. The results of the analysis of self-esteem among female students can be seen in Table 3. The following is a summary of the analysis of self-esteem levels among female students.

Table 3: Self-esteem profile of female students

No	Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage
1	High	39 – 59	0	0%
2	Medium	19 – 38	26	100%
3	Low	0 – 18	0	0%
Total			26	100%

Based on the table above, it was found that all female students fell into the moderate category. A perfect score of 100% was achieved. The self-esteem of female students is certainly interesting. This contrasts with male self-esteem, which was spread across all self-esteem categories, though generally in the moderate category.

In addition to gender in relation to self-esteem, this study also included other variables, namely demographic variables. The demographic variables in this study refer to students from outside North Sulawesi studying in North Sulawesi, as well as native North Sulawesi students studying in North Sulawesi. This variable is important for researchers, considering that every student who wants to leave their hometown to pursue knowledge naturally has high motivation and self-esteem. To confirm this assumption, Table 4 presents the results of the self-esteem analysis of students from outside North Sulawesi studying in North Sulawesi.

Table 4: Profile of students from outside North Sulawesi

No	Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage
1	High	39 – 59	4	6.9%
2	Medium	19 – 38	52	89.7%
3	Low	0 – 18	2	3.4%
Total			58	100%

Table 4 presents the profile of students from outside North Sulawesi studying in North Sulawesi: 6.9% of students fall into the high category, 89.7% fall into the medium category, and 3.4% fall into the low category. Generally, students from outside North Sulawesi have moderate self-esteem, with 52 out of 58 students reporting moderate self-esteem. This data indicates that students from outside North Sulawesi have high self-esteem on average, although 2 out of 58 students (3.4%) have low self-esteem.

Next, the self-esteem levels of students from North Sulawesi were analyzed to compare student self-esteem across demographic variables. The results of the self-esteem analysis for students from North Sulawesi are presented in Table 5 below:

Tabel 5: Self-esteem profile of students from North Sulawesi

No	Category	Interval	Frequency	Percentage
1	High	39 – 59	8	11.2%
2	Medium	19 – 38	64	88.8%
3	Low	0 – 18	0	0%
Total			72	100%

Based on Table 5, it can be seen that students from North Sulawesi generally have self-esteem that is in the medium category with a result of 88.8%, then in the high category 11.2% and no students are in the low category. This finding illustrates that students from North Sulawesi and studying in North Sulawesi have good self-esteem, as shown by the absence of students in the low category. In contrast, students from outside North Sulawesi and studying in North Sulawesi have quite good self-esteem, although there are still students in the low category.

4. DISCUSSION

This study reveals a picture of self-esteem in students in North Sulawesi based on gender and geographic variables. This study compares the level of self-esteem in female and male students as well as demographic variables, namely students from within (native residents) and outside (migrants) of North Sulawesi. The findings show that student self-esteem is generally in the moderate category. This finding indicates that self-esteem in students is still experiencing changes considering that self-esteem development begins from adolescence. Orth and Robins (2014) self-esteem development begins in adolescence until the age of 50/60 years then experiences a gradual decline with age. Self-esteem in the moderate category can increase along with positive experiences experienced by students during their college activities. Coopersmith (in Ghufroon & Risnawati, 2010) the formation of self-esteem can be influenced by several factors, namely experiences of success, significance, increased performance, and strength. Self-esteem can also be increased through involvement in all campus or family activities, showing attention to problems being faced, showing concern, having clear rules, measured freedom, readiness to help others, and obeying the rules (Santrock, 2007).

Improving self-esteem is necessary to mitigate psychological issues that can disrupt students' academic activities. Bai and Liu (2026) found that increasing academic self-efficacy and self-esteem in adolescents can improve mental health. This study also revealed that self-esteem exhibited strong temporal stability and significantly reduced depressive symptoms gradually over time. Efforts to promote self-esteem are an effective approach to preventing academic anxiety in students due to high academic demands.

Research conducted by Rahma and Setiasih (2021) found that social media use can improve self-esteem. Intense Instagram use significantly correlates with self-esteem. High levels of Instagram use lead to a positive self-image. Behera and Khuntia (2025) examined appearance anxiety, self-objectification, mental health, mental resilience, and self-esteem. Their results showed that the negative impacts of appearance anxiety and self-objectification on mental health can be mitigated by improving self-esteem and mental resilience.

Findings on the gender variable revealed differences in self-esteem between male and female students. Female self-esteem was generally in the moderate category, while male self-esteem was spread across all categories: high, moderate, and low, although predominantly in the moderate category. This finding aligns with Kling et al. (1999) that men tend to have higher self-esteem than women in certain cultural contexts. The results of this study raise speculation that women tend to perceive themselves as being in a safe or neutral position. This condition may be influenced by culture or geography in a particular region, particularly in North Sulawesi, which was the object of this study. The dynamics of self-esteem in men and women are inseparable from several variables such as social environment, physical activity, and life satisfaction. Liu and Liu (2025) examined

the effects of physical activity on mental health and life satisfaction, mediated by self-image and self-esteem. The results showed that physical activity can improve mental health and life satisfaction through the mediation of self-esteem. The impact of physical activity on self-esteem was significantly stronger in women than in men.

Another variable in this study was geography, which resulted in differences in self-esteem between students from outside and within North Sulawesi. The self-esteem of students from North Sulawesi tended to be higher than that of students from outside North Sulawesi. Even the self-esteem of students from outside North Sulawesi was still in the low category. This dynamic occurs due to the pressure of environmental adaptation, which can affect self-esteem (Yusniar et al., 2023). The low self-esteem of students from outside North Sulawesi can be influenced by social support due to living far from family environments. Orth and Robins (2014) found in their research that students with social support and good academic achievement tend to have higher self-esteem.

5. CONCLUSION

Research on student self-esteem is also reviewed from a gender and geographic perspective. In general, students in North Sulawesi have self-esteem in the medium category, and some students also have low self-esteem. The study also found that between male and female students in general have medium self-esteem, although the self-esteem of female students is striking because all female students have self-esteem in the medium category. In the context of student origin/demographics, it was found that student self-esteem is in the medium category for both local and out-of-town students.

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