



The Effect of Emotional Regulation on Self-Esteem Among High School Students

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of emotional regulation on the self-esteem of students at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang during the 2025/2026 academic year. This study employed a quantitative, associative-causal research design. The study population consisted of 106 10th- and 11th-grade students at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang during the 2025/2026 academic year. The sample consisted of 53 students selected using simple random sampling. Data collection tools included an emotional regulation questionnaire and a self-esteem questionnaire. Data analysis was performed using simple linear regression with the SPSS version 26 for Windows software. The t-test results showed a calculated t-value of 2.978 with a significance level of $0.004 < 0.05$; therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. The regression equation obtained is $Y = 55.046 + 0.360X$, indicating that every increase in emotional regulation is followed by an increase in students' self-esteem. The coefficient of determination (R-squared) of 0.148 indicates that emotional regulation contributes 14.8% to students' self-esteem, while 85.2% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional regulation and the self-esteem of students at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang for the 2025/2026 academic year.

Keywords: Emotional regulation; self-esteem; students

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui pengaruh regulasi emosi terhadap harga diri siswa SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang Tahun Pelajaran 2025/2026. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian kuantitatif asosiatif kausal. Populasi penelitian berjumlah 106 siswa kelas X dan XI SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang Tahun Pelajaran 2025/2026. Sampel penelitian berjumlah 53 siswa yang dipilih menggunakan teknik simple random sampling. Alat pengumpulan data berupa angket regulasi emosi dan angket harga diri. Teknik analisis data menggunakan regresi linear sederhana dengan bantuan program SPSS versi 26 for Windows. Hasil uji t menunjukkan nilai t hitung sebesar 2,978 dengan nilai signifikansi sebesar $0,004 < 0,05$ sehingga H_a diterima dan H_0 ditolak. Persamaan regresi yang diperoleh adalah $Y = 55,046 + 0,360X$, yang menunjukkan bahwa setiap peningkatan regulasi emosi akan diikuti oleh peningkatan harga diri siswa. Nilai koefisien determinasi (R Square) sebesar 0,148 menunjukkan bahwa regulasi emosi memberikan kontribusi sebesar 14,8% terhadap harga diri siswa, sedangkan 85,2% dipengaruhi oleh faktor lain di luar penelitian ini. Berdasarkan hasil penelitiandapat disimpulkan bahwa terdapat pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan antara regulasi emosi terhadap harga diri siswa SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang Tahun Pelajaran 2025/2026.

Kata kunci: Regulasi emosi; harga diri; siswa

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Introduction

Adolescence represents a critical developmental transition from childhood to adulthood, characterized by substantial biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes (Denich & Ildil, 2015). Among the socio-emotional developments that emerge during this period is the formation of self-esteem (Santrock, 2012). Self-esteem is particularly important during adolescence because students are increasingly involved in social relationships, academic activities, and situations that require them to evaluate their own abilities and personal worth. According to Coopersmith (as cited in Utami et al., 2024), self-esteem refers to an individual's evaluation of themselves and their perceived competence, significance, success, and worth. Thus, self-esteem reflects how individuals perceive and value themselves through their attitudes toward their own abilities, strengths, and limitations.

In the educational context, students' self-esteem is closely associated with how they respond to academic and interpersonal experiences. Students with positive self-esteem generally demonstrate greater confidence in their abilities, interact more constructively with others, and adapt more effectively to the school environment. When confronted with unsatisfactory academic results, for example, students with positive self-esteem are less likely to interpret failure as evidence of personal inadequacy. Instead, they may regard the experience as feedback that encourages them to improve their learning efforts. In contrast, students with negative self-esteem may perceive themselves as incapable or unworthy, doubt their abilities, and become more vulnerable to difficulties in academic and social adjustment. Such students may respond to failure by blaming themselves, withdrawing from challenges, or avoiding further attempts because of concerns about experiencing failure again. These contrasting responses suggest that self-esteem is not merely a matter of self-perception but may also influence how students cope with challenges encountered in the school environment.

One psychological factor that may contribute to the development and maintenance of self-esteem is emotion regulation. Emotion regulation enables students to manage emotional responses when they encounter disappointment, anger, embarrassment, anxiety, frustration, or other experiences that do not correspond with their expectations. Students who can regulate their emotions effectively are more capable of maintaining emotional control, accepting unpleasant experiences, and considering problems rationally before responding. Such abilities may help prevent temporary negative experiences from developing into persistent negative judgments about

the self. Conversely, difficulties in emotion regulation may cause students to become overwhelmed by negative emotional states, increasing the possibility of impulsive reactions, withdrawal, or excessive self-blame. These emotional responses may subsequently influence the way students evaluate their own worth and competence.

The theoretical relationship between emotion regulation and self-esteem is supported by previous research. Mandoa and Robea (as cited in Ramba et al., 2023), argue that self-esteem is associated with emotion regulation because individuals who can manage their emotional responses are more likely to respond adaptively to challenging situations and maintain positive evaluations of themselves. In a similar vein, Muarifah et al., (2024) found that emotion regulation has a significant effect on students' self-esteem. Students with stronger emotion regulation abilities tend to manage emotional responses more effectively and are less likely to engage in behaviors that may undermine their self-esteem. Ramba et al., (2023) likewise reported that emotion regulation influences students' self-esteem, with higher emotion regulation abilities being associated with more positive self-esteem. These findings indicate that emotion regulation constitutes a relevant psychological factor in understanding variations in students' self-esteem.

Emotion regulation is an essential ability for students, particularly during adolescence, a developmental period characterized by intense emotional changes that may not yet be fully stable. Gross (2014) explains that emotion regulation involves the processes through which individuals influence their emotions, including how and when emotions arise and how they are experienced and expressed. Santrock (2012) further describes emotion regulation as a process involving the control and modulation of emotional states to achieve personal goals and support appropriate social functioning. This ability is especially relevant during adolescence because emotional experiences during this developmental period can be intense and may not yet be fully stable. Students who possess adequate emotion regulation may therefore be better equipped to respond constructively to interpersonal and academic difficulties. For instance, when involved in a conflict with a peer, they may calm themselves, evaluate the situation, and seek an appropriate resolution rather than responding through aggressive or avoidant behavior. Conversely, students with limited emotion regulation may respond impulsively by expressing anger excessively, withdrawing from social interactions, or suppressing their emotions without addressing the underlying problem. Repeated experiences of this kind may

contribute to unfavorable self-evaluations and, consequently, weaken self-esteem.

Although previous studies have demonstrated a relationship between emotion regulation and self-esteem, the existing evidence does not fully explain how this relationship is manifested among students in specific school contexts. Previous research has primarily established the general influence or association between emotion regulation and self-esteem, but contextual evidence concerning students at the senior high school level in Kupang remains limited. This contextual limitation is important because students' emotional experiences and self-evaluations may be shaped by the particular social and educational environment in which they study. Therefore, empirical investigation within a specific school setting is needed to determine whether the relationship identified in previous studies is also evident among students at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang.

Preliminary evidence from an interview with a guidance and counseling teacher at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang in January 2026 further indicates the relevance of this issue. The teacher reported that students' emotion regulation abilities vary and have not yet developed optimally. Several students reportedly experience difficulties regulating their emotions when dealing with interpersonal problems. Some respond by speaking in a raised tone, venting their anger, or avoiding the situation, while others isolate themselves and become reluctant to interact with their peers when facing personal problems. These behaviors suggest that some students continue to experience difficulties in controlling and expressing their emotions appropriately.

The same preliminary interview also revealed indications of negative self-esteem among several students. These indications included a lack of confidence when responding to teachers' questions, perceptions of being less capable than peers, reluctance to express opinions because of fear of being wrong, and a tendency to give up easily after experiencing failure. The coexistence of emotion regulation difficulties and negative self-esteem indicators provides a meaningful empirical basis for examining whether emotion regulation contributes to students' self-esteem in this particular educational setting.

The distinct contribution of the present study lies in examining the effect of emotion regulation on self-esteem specifically among students at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang during the 2025/2026 academic year. Rather than treating emotion regulation and self-esteem as isolated psychological characteristics, this study examines their relationship within an actual school context in

which both phenomena have been identified through preliminary field information. The findings are expected to provide context-specific empirical evidence that can support guidance and counseling services, particularly in designing interventions that strengthen students' capacity to regulate emotions as part of efforts to maintain or improve positive self-esteem.

Based on the foregoing argument, the research question is: Is there an effect of emotion regulation on the self-esteem of students at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang during the 2025/2026 academic year? Accordingly, this study aims to determine the effect of emotion regulation on the self-esteem of students at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang during the 2025/2026 academic year. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically by enriching empirical understanding of the role of emotion regulation in students' self-esteem and by providing useful information for guidance and counseling teachers in developing appropriate services to support students' emotional and socio-emotional development.

Method

Research Design and Setting

This study used a quantitative approach with a causal associative and ex post facto design. The study examined the effect of emotion regulation (X) on students' self-esteem (Y) without providing any experimental treatment. The research was conducted at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang, located at Jl. Adi Sucipto No. 44, Maulafa District, Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, from January to June 2026.

Participants, Sample, or Data Sources

The population consisted of 106 Grade X and XI students at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang during the 2025/2026 academic year, comprising 30 students from Grade X A, 28 from Grade X B, 26 from Grade XI A, and 22 from Grade XI B. A total of 53 students were selected as the sample, representing 50% of the population. Sampling was conducted using probability sampling with a simple random sampling technique.

Instruments and Measures

Data were collected using two closed-ended questionnaires measuring emotion regulation and self-esteem. Both instruments used a Likert scale and consisted of 35 items each. Emotion regulation was measured based on students' ability to manage and control their emotional responses, while self-esteem was measured based on students' perceptions of their own worth and competence.

Instrument validity was tested using Pearson Product-Moment correlation with IBM SPSS

Statistics version 26 for Windows. The validity criterion was based on a significance level of 5%, with an r-table value of 0.265 for 53 respondents. All items on both questionnaires were declared valid. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The emotion regulation questionnaire obtained a coefficient of 0.901, while the self-esteem questionnaire obtained 0.857, indicating that both instruments were reliable.

Procedure and Research Ethics

Data collection began with research permission at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang, followed by the administration of the emotion regulation and self-esteem questionnaires to the 53 selected students. Respondents completed the questionnaires according to their actual conditions and experiences. The completed questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and prepared for analysis. Participant information and responses were kept confidential and used only for research purposes.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using simple linear regression with IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 for Windows. Emotion regulation was treated as the independent variable (X), and self-esteem as the dependent variable (Y). The analysis was used to determine whether emotion regulation had a statistically significant effect on students' self-esteem. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = 0.05$, with $p < 0.05$ indicating a significant effect and $p > 0.05$ indicating a non-significant effect.

Results and Discussion

Results

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 1. Results of the Simple Linear Regression Test

Model	Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	55.046	11.654		4.723	.000
Emotional Regulation	.360	.121	.385	2.978	.004
a. Dependent Variable: SELF-ESTEEM					

Based on the values in the Unstandardized Coefficients (B) column in the table above, the following formula for the simple linear regression equation is obtained:

$$Y = 55.046 + 0.360X$$

The regression equation can be interpreted as follows:

- The constant (a) of 55.046 indicates that if the Emotional Regulation variable (X) is constant or equal to zero (0), then the value of the students' Self-Esteem variable (Y) is 55.046.
- The regression coefficient for the Emotional Regulation variable (b), which is 0.360, is positive. This indicates that emotional regulation has a direct positive effect on students' self-esteem. In other words, if students' emotional regulation skills improve, their self-esteem will also increase. Every 1-unit increase in emotional regulation is estimated to increase students' self-esteem by 0.360 units. Conversely, if emotional regulation decreases, students' self-esteem also tends to decrease.

Hypothesis Testing

The t-test was used to determine definitively whether the Emotional Regulation variable has a significant partial effect on the Self-Esteem variable, and to serve as the basis for drawing conclusions regarding the research hypotheses. The decision criterion is that if the Sig. value is < 0.05 , then H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.

Referring back to the analysis results in Table 1, the calculated t-value for the Emotional Regulation variable is 2.978 with a significance value (Sig.) of 0.004. Since the significance value is less than the 5% level ($0.004 < 0.05$), the statistical test decision is to reject H_0 and accept H_a .

Based on the results of the partial hypothesis testing (t-test) shown in Table 4.1, the t-value for the emotional regulation variable was found to be 2.978. This value was then compared with the critical t-value at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) with $N = 53 - 2 = 51$, resulting in degrees of freedom ($df = 51$) of 1.675. Through this comparison, it was found that the calculated t-value was greater than the critical t-value ($2.978 > 1.675$). This result is further supported by a significance value (Sig.) of 0.004, which falls below the specified tolerance threshold ($0.004 < 0.05$); therefore, statistically, the decision is to reject H_0 and accept H_1 .

This empirically proves that there is a positive and significant effect of Emotional Regulation on Self-Esteem among students at Sint Carolus High School in Kupang for the 2025/2026 academic year. Thus, the better or higher a student's ability to regulate their emotions, the higher their level of self-esteem will be.

Analysis of the Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

The analysis of the coefficient of determination is used to determine the percentage of the contribution of the independent variable (Emotional Regulation) in stimulating or influencing the dependent variable

(Self-Esteem). The results of the summary analysis can be seen in Table 2:

Table 2. Results of the Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.385 ^a	.148	.131	12.762
a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Regulation				
b. Dependent Variable: Self-Esteem				

Table 2 above shows that the contribution or magnitude of the influence of Emotional Regulation on students' self-esteem is 14.8%. Meanwhile, the remaining 85.2% is explained or influenced by other variables outside the scope of this study that were not examined by the researchers. It is strongly suspected that this dominant remaining influence stems from factors affecting self-esteem, which consist of physical, psychological, and social environmental factors.

Discussion

Based on the results of the research data analysis presented earlier, it was found that there is a positive and significant effect of Emotional Regulation on the Self-Esteem of students at Sint Carolus High School in Kupang for the 2025/2026 academic year. This positive relationship indicates that the direction of the influence between the two variables is in the same direction, meaning that the higher the students' level of emotional regulation, the higher their level of self-esteem. Conversely, if students' emotional regulation is low, their level of self-esteem tends to decrease.

These findings are supported by several relevant previous studies. Research conducted by Muarifah et al. (2024) concluded that emotional regulation has a significant influence on the self-esteem of high school students in Yogyakarta. How students perceive their ability to manage emotions has a linear impact on their personality dimensions and the optimal development of their self-esteem at school. In line with this, research by Ramba et al. (2023) also showed that the ability to manage emotional responses amid exposure to external pressures proved to be a strong predictor in maintaining the

stability of students' self-esteem so that it remains in the high category.

The findings of this study align with the theoretical concept in psychology proposed by Gross (2014) regarding emotional regulation theory, which explains that individuals with good emotional regulation skills are able to recognize, manage, and express their emotional responses appropriately in accordance with the demands of their environmental situation. During adolescence or school years, emotions tend to fluctuate rapidly due to developmental transitions and academic and social pressures. When students are able to apply effective emotion regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal rather than emotional suppression, they are less likely to feel overwhelmed when facing failure, criticism, or conflict at school. The ability to manage these negative emotional outbursts ultimately forms a psychological shield that reinforces a positive acceptance of their own capabilities which is the essence of healthy self-esteem.

This relationship is reinforced by Rosenberg (2015) theory of self-esteem, which states that self-esteem is a form of positive or negative self-evaluation. Students with well-developed emotional regulation skills tend to exhibit high levels of self-control and emotional awareness. A positive assessment of one's ability to manage stressful situations (academic stress) leads to an increase in self-efficacy. According to Baumeister (2018), individuals who feel empowered and successful in managing their negative emotions will view themselves as valuable and competent. It is this sense of competence that serves as the primary foundation for boosting students' self-esteem scores.

Although the influence of emotional regulation was statistically significant based on the t-test, with a significance value of 0.004 (< 0.05), the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.148. This indicates that emotional regulation contributed 14.8% to the variance in students' self-esteem, while the remaining 85.2% was attributable to other factors not included in the research model. This finding is reasonable because self-esteem is influenced by multiple dimensions, including physical, psychological, and social-environmental factors.

Overall, the findings of this study offer practical contributions to the field of school guidance and counseling. The researchers demonstrated that to foster students' character including strong self-confidence and self-esteem schools must not focus solely on academic achievement. Psychological interventions such as training in emotional regulation, stress management, and guidance on

managing mood also need to be integrated on a regular basis by guidance and counseling teachers. Through these trained emotional skills, students will be more adaptable in dealing with social dynamics at school and will have a much more positive self-image.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that emotion regulation has a positive and significant effect on the self-esteem of students at SMAK Sint Carolus Kupang during the 2025/2026 academic year. The results of the simple linear regression analysis showed a significance value of 0.004 (< 0.05) with a positive regression coefficient of 0.360. This finding indicates that better emotion regulation is associated with higher levels of self-esteem among students.

Emotion regulation contributed 14.8% to students' self-esteem, while the remaining 85.2% was associated with other factors outside the scope of this study. These findings confirm that the research hypothesis concerning the effect of emotion regulation on students' self-esteem was supported. The results highlight the importance of developing students' emotion regulation skills as one aspect that may support the development of positive self-esteem.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions (Optional)

The authors contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data collection, data analysis, writing of the original draft, and review and editing of the manuscript. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

Generative AI Disclosure

The authors used generative AI-assisted tools during the preparation of this manuscript for language refinement and editing. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, originality, integrity, and final content of the article.

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