Original Article

The Effect of Emotional Maturity on Self Harm Behavior in Adolescent

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Abstract. The increasing prevalence of self-harm behavior among adolescents presents a serious concern for schools and mental health practitioners, creating an urgent demand for research that explores underlying psychological determinants, including the role of emotional maturity in shaping students' coping responses to emotional distress. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm behavior among tenth and eleventh-grade adolescents at SMK Negeri 16 Jakarta. This study employed a quantitative correlational design using a survey approach. Emotional maturity and self-harm behavior were measured using Likert-scale questionnaires. A total of 108 students from three classes participated in the study. The data were analyzed using simple linear regression. The results showed a significant relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm behavior. These findings indicate that higher emotional maturity is associated with a lower likelihood of self-harm behavior among students at SMK Negeri 16 Jakarta.

Introduction

Social media is an internet-based means of communication without limitations of space and time, allowing users to interact easily either personally or in groups. This can influence teenagers' behavior by following various trends on social media. One type of content that has become quite popular among teenagers is the Barcode trend. The Barcode trend is a form of self-harm content that has attracted significant attention from social media users because it shows photos of cut wounds shaped like barcodes on the wrists of these individuals. This practice is mostly carried out by teenagers and is specifically categorized as an act of self-harm that is currently widespread among the younger generation.

Based on data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA) in March 2023, it was revealed that 49 students in a single school engaged in self-harm. Of these, 40 students made a single cut, while nine students engaged in repeated self-harm. In addition, according to the international data analytics and research organization YouGov, around 36.9 percent of Indonesians have intentionally engaged in self-harm, with 20.21 percent of them being teenagers. The age group most at risk of self-harm is between 14 and 15 yearsold, and the incidence tends to decrease after reaching the age of 18 (Brager-Larsen et al., 2022). This fact highlights that adolescence is the most critical period related to self-harm behavior (Normalasari et al., 2025)

The latest data also shows that 20.21% of them are teenagers who have committed self-harm in Indonesia (Faradiba et al., 2024). In a webinar organized by researchers on September 16, 2023, with the theme "Why Do People Engage in Self-Harm," it was revealed that 300 teenagers admitted to intentionally engaging in self-harming behaviors.

Repeated self-harm behavior with increasing intensity is linked to the risk of suicide, making it highly dangerous. This behavior is largely dominated by young people aged 18–24 years, accounting for 45%. The more time spent on social media, the greater the tendency for vulnerable teenagers to engage in self-harming behavior. Self-harm or self-destructive behavior is usually characterized by marks or scars on the hands after injuring oneself, biting oneself, burning parts of the body, eye damage, and damaged skin (Kahan & Pattison, 1984).

Self-harm, known as the act of injuring oneself, is defined as a mental health condition in which a person deliberately harms their body as a way to relieve emotional stress (Sibarani et al., 2021). One common way to express emotions is by injuring oneself using sharp objects such as razor blades or box cutters (Elvira & Sakti, 2022). The most common forms of self-harm include cutting the skin, having negative self-blaming thoughts, and hitting one's own head (Kusumadewi et al., 2020). Other types of this behavior include injuring the skin with sharp objects, burning the body, creating wounds, hitting oneself, pulling out hair, and ingesting harmful substances (Yuliyana, 2023). Self-harm is a harmful act in which a person deliberately injures themselves in various ways, but without the intention to commit suicide (Al-Haya & Alfaruqy, 2023). This act is often referred to by various terms, such as self-harm (self-torture), self-mutilation, non-suicidal self-injury, and cutting (Yuliyana, 2023).

According to Strong, there are three distinct categories of self-harm behavior by Croyle et al. (2007) : 1) Superficial Self-Mutilation, which involves actions such as forcefully pulling out one's own hair or cutting the wrists with sharp objects. Although this type is considered the mildest form, it should not be underestimated because it can lead to suicide attempts; 2) Stereotypic Self-Injury, which serves as a form of defence to cope with emotional pain by experiencing physical sensations. This often occurs in individuals with neurological disorders. Examples include repeatedly banging one's head against a wall; 3) Major Self-Mutilation, the most extreme form, in which injuring body organs can lead to permanent damage.

Several studies have confirmed that acts of self-harm do indeed occur in Indonesia. A study conducted by Estefan & Wijaya (2014) found that the subjects developed a unique perception of their life problems by inflicting physical wounds on themselves as a way to relieve the emotional pain they felt. As a result, there was a change in the subjects' response to dealing with problems, which became maladaptive through self-harm. Another study by Takwati (2019) showed that the emotional regulation process carried out by subjects IM and II involved cutting their wrists, which led to feelings of satisfaction for those subjects.

In this study, the main focus is the influence of emotional maturity on self-harm behavior among vocational high school students who are entering adolescence and experiencing an emotional transition period. The introduction outlines growing concerns about how the level of emotional maturity in teenagers significantly affects the prevalence of self-harming behavior. Previous research has shown a significant negative relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm behavior, meaning that the higher the emotional maturity, the lower the likelihood of engaging in self-harm, and vice versa. The research was conducted on late adolescents (aged 18–21), specifically active students at Satya Wacana Christian University. The study found that emotional maturity accounted for 57% of the influence on self-harming behavior, while the remaining 43% came from other factors (Epivania, 2023). This study seeks to investigate how emotional maturity can act as a contributing factor to self-harm behavior among teenagers.

Hurlock (1949) states that adolescents' emotions often become uncontrolled and irrational, which can lead to very strong negative consequences. However, in general, year by year there is an improvement in emotional behavior among adolescents. Adolescent emotions can be controlled if they achieve emotional maturity. Research shows that students with high emotional maturity are better able to restrain themselves from engaging in self-harm behavior and have

good self-control. By focusing on emotional maturity, this study aims to broaden the understanding of how strengthening internal psychological traits can reduce the occurrence of self-harm behavior among students. Future research could explore additional psychological or environmental variables such as mental disorders, feelings of loneliness, authoritarian parenting patterns, or family problems that may interact with emotional maturity to shape the values influencing self-harm behavior.

Based on a preliminary study conducted through a survey at SMK Negeri 16 Jakarta, it was found that many students have not yet achieved emotional maturity, which leads them to engage in self-harm behavior. Therefore, the researcher aims to identify the factors that influence students at SMK Negeri 16 Jakarta to engage in self-harm, as well as how emotional maturity affects self-harm behavior.

Method

This study is descriptive quantitative research conducted on 10th–11th grade students at SMKN 16 Central Jakarta. The research sample consisted of 108 students (25% male and 75% female), aged between 16 and 18 years. Based on emotional maturity, 4 students (approximately 3.70%) were categorized as having very high emotional maturity; 55 students (approximately 50.93%) were in the high category; 48 students (approximately 44.44%) were in the moderate category; and 1 student (approximately 0.93%) was in the low category. Meanwhile, regarding self-harm behavior, a very high frequency was reported among 78 students (approximately 72.22%), and a moderate frequency was reported among 30 students (27.78%). The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling.

Participant

The population refers to all elements in a study, both objects and subjects, that share specific characteristics. In principle, the population includes all members of a group who live together in a particular place and are intentionally used as the basis for drawing conclusions in the final results of a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this research, the students of SMKN 16 Central Jakarta were chosen as the population. The targeted population consists of 10th–11th grade students at SMKN 16 Central Jakarta for the academic year 2024/2025, totalling 108 students.

Example Procedure

In collecting samples from the population for participant selection, according to Sugiyono (2013), the sample is considered a representation of the number and characteristics of the objects being studied. This is important to ensure that the measurement of self-harm behavior carried out has a reliable quality, where each item can accurately measure the intended aspect, and each individual response reflects relevant abilities or characteristics (Syahputra, Evitarini, & Sugara, 2024) Using an appropriate sampling method is essential to obtain an unbiased sample. In educational research, sampling procedures are also applied. Collecting data from all students across Indonesia would require considerable time, cost, and effort. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Based on the calculations, the sample in this study consists of 108 students.

Material And Apparatus

Data collection was carried out using two questionnaires developed by the authors based on established theoretical frameworks. The emotional maturity instrument was constructed with reference to the components proposed by Patra et al. (2023), consisting of 25 items assessing emotional stability, control, and independence. Meanwhile, the self-harm risk instrument was developed based on the indicators adapted from Thesalonika & Apsari (2021), originally consisting of 30 items that measure emotional distress and difficulties in coping, without requesting descriptions of harmful actions. Both instruments utilized a four-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

In the instrument development process, validity plays a fundamental role because it relates to the accuracy and validity of the test in reflecting the variables being studied. The higher the validity, the more accurately the instrument describes the phenomenon being measured (Syahputra et al., 2025). Prior to implementation, the instruments underwent validity and reliability testing using SPSS version 20. The emotional maturity instrument retained 20 out of 25 items with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.870, indicating strong internal consistency. The self-harm risk instrument retained 27 out of 30 items, achieving a Cronbach's alpha of 0.937 categorized as very strong. These results confirm that both instruments developed by the authors are valid and reliable for measuring the intended psychological constructs in adolescent participants.

Procedure

Bahan The materials and equipment used by the researcher in this study included a mobile phone to distribute questionnaires via Google Forms. The independent variable in this study is emotional maturity, while the dependent variable is self-harm. The purpose of this research is to examine how the level of emotional maturity influences the level of self-harm behavior. The role of the researcher during the study was to provide instructions for completing the Google Form, which contained statements with response options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Then, students filled out the Google Form according to their own conditions and behaviors.

Design or Data Analysis

This study employed a quantitative survey design. The data were analyzed using simple linear regression to examine the effect of emotional maturity on self-harm risk indicators among adolescents. Prior to the regression analysis, required assumption checks (normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity) were performed and met the acceptable criteria; therefore, the analysis proceeded without issue. The detailed results of these tests are not included to maintain brevity.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study include a description of the characteristics of the variables emotional maturity and self-harm, as well as an analysis of the effect of emotional maturity on self-harm, which will be tested using linear regression as the hypothesis test. However, before that, the distribution characteristics of the data based on gender can be visually presented through the following scatterplot diagram.
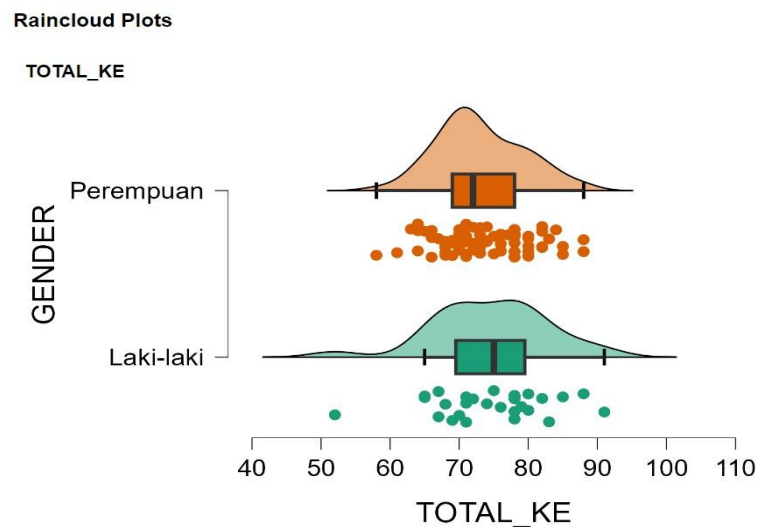
Raincloud Plots

TOTAL_KE

Figure 1. Data Distribution Characteristics based on Gender

The image above is a Raincloud Plot depicting the distribution of emotional maturity scores by gender, namely females (marked in orange) and males (marked in bluish-green). This plot combines three visual components: data distribution (violin plot), mean and dispersion (boxplot), and individual respondent distribution (dots). In general, self-efficacy scores in both groups show a nearly similar range, around 50 to 100. However, the median self-efficacy score in the male group is slightly higher than in the female group. The distribution of scores in male respondents appears more spread out with a tendency to the right (positively skewed), indicating the presence of several individuals with very high emotional maturity scores. Meanwhile, the distribution of scores in the female group appears more symmetrical and denser around the midpoint. Although there is no visually significant difference between the two groups, this trend indicates that males have a slightly higher level of emotional maturity in general than females. To confirm the significance of this difference, further statistical analysis such as a t-test or regression is required.
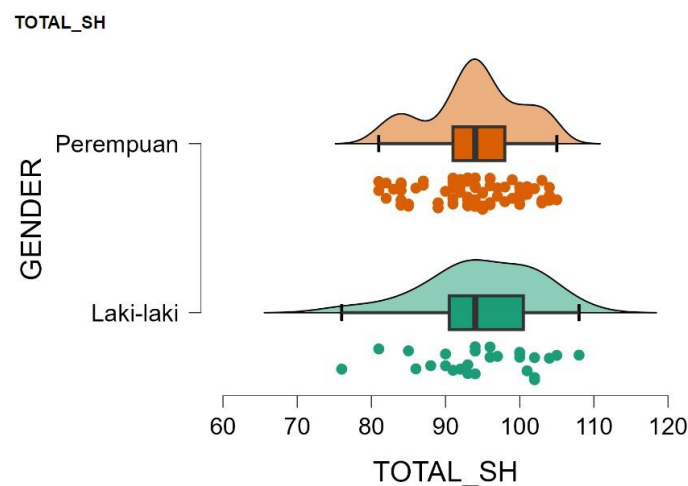
TOTAL_SH

Figure 2. Data Distribution Characteristics based on Gender

The image above is a Raincloud Plot that illustrates the distribution of self-harm behavior scores based on gender, with females represented in orange and males in teal. This visualization combines a violin plot, which shows the data distribution pattern; a boxplot, which displays the median and interquartile range; and individual dots representing each respondent. Overall, self-harm scores in both groups range from approximately 70 to 115. However, it can be seen that the median self-harm score among males tends to be higher compared to females. The distribution of scores in males also appears more skewed to the right, indicating the presence of several individuals with very high self-harm behavior scores. In contrast, the score distribution among females appears more concentrated and symmetrical around the central value, with a narrower spread compared to males. These findings suggest that, overall, males in this sample tend to exhibit higher self-harm behavior than females. Nevertheless, to determine whether this difference is statistically significant, further analysis such as an independent t-test or regression is required.

Subsequently, an in-depth analysis was conducted on the descriptive statistics and the influence of emotional maturity on self-harm behavior through linear regression, with the findings systematically and thoroughly explained as follows. Based on the results of the emotional maturity questionnaire distributed to 108 students of SMKN 16 Central Jakarta, consisting of 20 statement items, the lowest score was 36 and the highest score was 87, with an average of 50.93%. This score was then used as the basis for determining the categorization of emotional maturity data, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution and Percentage from Emotional Maturity

Hose	Category	Frequency	Percentage
>87	Very High	4	3,70%
72 – 87	Tall	55	50,93%
53 – 71	Currently	48	44,44%
37 – 52	Low	1	0,93%
<36	Very Low	0	0%
Total		108	100%

Based on the descriptive table above, it can be seen that out of the 108 respondents assessed, 4 students (approximately 3.70%) were found to have a very high level of emotional maturity, while 55 students (around 50.93%) were at a high level of emotional maturity, 48 students (approximately 44.44%) had a moderate level, and 1 student was in the low emotional maturity category. This indicates that, in general, the students' level of emotional maturity falls into the high category. This finding suggests that most students demonstrate good emotional regulation abilities. Here he is That categorization from self-harm variable research data:

Table 2. Frequency Distribution and Percentage from Self Harm

Hose	Category	Frequency	Percentage
>115	Very High	0	0%
94 – 115	Tall	78	72,22%
72 – 93	Currently	30	27,78%
49 – 71	Low	0	0%
<49	Very Low	0	0%
Total		108	

Based on the table above, it can be seen that out of the 108 respondents surveyed, 78 students (72.22%) showed a high tendency toward self-harm, 30 students (approximately 27.78%) fell into the moderate category, and none were in the low category. These results indicate that self-harm is a relatively dominant tendency among the students studied. To further understand the relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm behavior, the researcher conducted a simple linear regression analysis. This analysis aims to determine whether emotional maturity has an effect on self-harm behavior among 10th–11th grade students at SMKN 16 Central

Jakarta. Before presenting the calculation results, the relationship between the two variables can be visualized through the scatter plot in Figure 2 below.
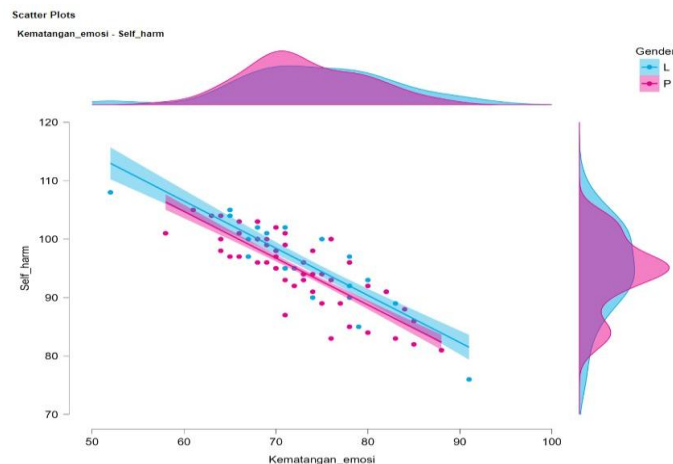

Figure 3. Scatter Plot emotional maturity and self-harm behavior

The scatter plot in Figure 3 above illustrates a negative relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm behavior among male (blue) and female (pink) respondents. Erwinda and Kurnaedi (2024) found that there were significant differences in self-harm behavior among Instagram users based on age. The higher the level of emotional maturity, the lower the tendency to engage in self-harm. This pattern is consistent across both genders, as indicated by the downward slope of the regression lines. The histograms at the top and right of the plot show the data distribution, where most respondents have emotional maturity scores in the range of 60–80 and self-harm scores between 90–105. These results suggest that emotional maturity serves as a protective factor against self-harm behavior. The next step is to quantitatively analyze the relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm through a simple linear regression test. This analysis aims to determine the extent to which emotional maturity contributes to the tendency of self-harm behavior among students. A summary of the model results is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Coefficient from Determination Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.835[a]	.698	.695

Based on the model summary results, the R value (.835) represents the strength of the association, while the direction of the relationship is determined by the Beta coefficient. The R-squared value is 0.698, which means that 69% of the variation in self-harm can be explained by the emotional maturity variable, while the remaining 31% is influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study. This indicates that emotional maturity has a strong contribution to self-harm behavior in this research. For more detailed information on the regression analysis, please refer to table 4 below.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results (ANOVA)

Model	Sum Of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1196.609	1	3150.429	244.448	.000[b]
Residual	13514.19	106	12.888		
Total	14710.8	107			

From the output above, the calculated F value is 244.448 with a significance level of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted, indicating that there is a significant effect between emotional maturity and self-harm. This means that the emotional maturity variable has the ability to predict the self-harm variable. To strengthen this finding numerically, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted which is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Regression Equality Results (Coefficient)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	152.687	3.742		40.806	.000
Kematangan Emosi	-.793	.051	-.835	-15.635	.000

Based on Table 15 above, the simple linear regression equation is as follows Y = 152.687 + (-0.793) X. When emotional maturity is 0, the predicted self-harm score is 152.687 (the constant value). The regression coefficient of -0.793 indicates that for every 1-unit increase in emotional maturity, the self-harm score decreases by 0.793. This relationship is negative, meaning emotional maturity functions as a protective factor the higher the emotional maturity, the lower the self-harm risk.

The analysis results show that emotional maturity has a significant effect on self-harm behavior among 10th-11th grade students at SMKN 16 Central Jakarta. This is supported by the results of a simple linear regression test with the equation $\hat{Y} = 152.687 - 0.793X$ and a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a significant negative relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm behavior. However, this analysis only shows statistical association, not a direct causal effect. All measured dimensions showed a regression coefficient significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), meaning that an increase in the dimensions of emotional maturity is followed by a decrease in students' self-harm behavior.

Based on the empirical data, 4 students (approximately 3.70%) were found to have a very high level of emotional maturity, while 55 students (around 50.93%) were at a high level of emotional maturity, 48 students (approximately 44.44%) had a moderate level, and 1 student was in the low emotional maturity category. This indicates that, in general, the students' level of emotional maturity falls into the high category. Meanwhile, 78 students (72.22%) showed a high tendency toward self-harm, 30 students (approximately 27.78%) fell into the moderate category, and none were in the low category. These results indicate that self-harm is a relatively dominant tendency among the students studied. This finding suggests that self-harm remains a significant tendency despite the relatively high emotional maturity levels of the students. It highlights the importance of emotional maturity in reducing self-harm behavior among adolescents, but also shows that emotional maturity alone may not be sufficient as a protective factor in all situations.

Based on the model summary, the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.835, indicating a strong relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm. However, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.698, which suggests that 69.8% of the variation in students' self-harm behavior can be explained by emotional maturity. This value reflects statistical variance explained in the model, not the actual proportion of real-world influence. Therefore, interpretation of this number must be cautious. The remaining 30.2% is influenced by other factors beyond emotional maturity, such as family conflict, symptoms of depression, exposure to negative social media content, peer pressure, or stressful school environments, which should be examined in future research.

This finding is supported by Patra et al. (2023), who stated that factors influencing self-injurious behavior include loneliness, emotional maturity, self-concept, family, age, personality,

and emotional intelligence. Among these factors, emotional maturity plays a particularly significant role. Emotional maturity is considered a strong influence in individuals who engage in self-injurious behavior, as individuals who are able to control or manage their emotions are more likely to have good emotional regulation, which in turn reduces the tendency to engage in self-harm.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research, which showed a significant negative relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm behavior. This means that the higher the level of emotional maturity, the lower the tendency for self-harm behavior, and vice versa. The study was conducted on late adolescents (ages 18–21), specifically active students at Satya Wacana Christian University. The contribution of emotional maturity to self-harm behavior was found to be 57%, while the remaining 43% was influenced by other factors (Epivania, 2023).

Another study conducted by Shofia et al. (2024) showed similar results. The research was carried out on 128 adolescents (both female and male) aged 14-15 years from Grade VIII at SMPN 1 Kesamben Jombang. Another study conducted on adolescents aged 12-21 years at Villa Pamulang, Bojongsari, Depok, also revealed a relationship between emotional maturity and self-harm behavior among adolescents (Siswanto, 2021).

Research Limitations

This study is limited to a sample of vocational high school (SMK) adolescents, which may not fully represent the patterns of emotional maturity and self-harm in the broader population, such as university students or adults. Additionally, the sample had an unequal number of male and female participants. Therefore, the generalization of these research findings can only be applied to vocational high school adolescents and cannot be fully extended to all age groups. Future research should address the limitations of this study by exploring more effective methods for sampling and engaging elementary school children (Syahputra, Evitarini, & Sugara, 2024)

Implications of Guidance and Counseling

The results of this study indicate that emotional maturity has a significant and negative effect on students' self-harm behavior. Therefore, this finding serves as an important foundation for guidance and counseling teachers to design services that strengthen students' emotional maturity. In this way, school counseling programs can focus on enhancing emotional regulation skills to help students progress to higher levels of maturity. In addition, special monitoring and support should be provided to students with low emotional maturity to prevent further issues such as excessive stress or self-harm tendencies.

Given the substantial contribution of emotional maturity to self-harm amounting to 69.7% this condition serves as a critical indicator for schools and counselors to place greater focus on both preventive and curative efforts, especially for students in the high self-harm tendency group. The high percentage of students in the high self-harm category (72.22%) indicates the need for psychological interventions and mental health strengthening programs in schools. Programs such as individual counseling, emotional regulation training, confidence-building, and improving communication between students and teachers can serve as important initial steps.

Furthermore, when linked to the previous data on emotional maturity, it appears that although the majority of students have moderate to high levels of emotional maturity, this has not been entirely effective in reducing self-harm tendencies. This suggests that while emotional maturity does play an important role, other factors such as academic pressure, family issues, or peer influence may also contribute to self-harm behavior.

Conclusion

This study concludes that adolescents with higher emotional maturity tend to have a lower risk of engaging in self-harm. Emotional regulation, the ability to manage negative emotions, and resilience in facing stress appear to be essential protective factors that reduce self-harm tendencies. However, the presence of self-harm even among students with relatively good emotional maturity suggests that other psychological and environmental influences also play an important role. These findings underline the importance of strengthening emotional skills in school-based mental health programs, including counseling support and preventive interventions. Nonetheless, this study was conducted only with vocational high school students in one school, so its findings should be interpreted carefully before being generalized. Future research is recommended to investigate additional contributing factors such as family dynamics, peer pressure, social media exposure, and mental health conditions so preventive strategies can address adolescent self-harm more holistically.

Acknowledgements

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