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# Exploring the Mediating Role of Spiritual Fortitude in the Relationship between Self-Esteem and Flourishing Among Indonesian Adolescent Victims of Bullying

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## Abstract

This study examined the relationship between self-esteem and flourishing among adolescent victims of bullying, with spiritual fortitude as a potential mediator. Drawing on a sample of 1,126 Indonesian adolescents aged 15–23, the research utilized the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Flourishing Scale, and the Spiritual Fortitude Scale-9 to assess these constructs. Findings revealed that self-esteem significantly predicted flourishing, aligning with previous studies that highlight self-esteem's role in fostering resilience and psychological well-being. Additionally, spiritual fortitude emerged as a significant partial mediator, indicating that while self-esteem provided a foundation for resilience, spiritual fortitude enhanced adolescents' capacity to find meaning and stability amid adversity. This study employed a correlational design, and the mediation analysis followed regression-based procedures, although no bootstrapping was conducted. Key limitations included the cross-sectional nature of the data, reliance on self-report measures, and lack of analysis regarding frequency or power imbalance in bullying experiences. These results underscored the importance of integrating psychological and spiritual interventions to support adolescent mental health, particularly in addressing the challenges posed by bullying. Further implications for mental health interventions are discussed.

## Keywords

Self-esteem, spiritual fortitude, flourishing, bullying, adolescents

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# Explorando el Papel Mediador de la Fortaleza Espiritual en la Relación entre la Autoestima y el Florecimiento entre Adolescentes Víctimas del Acoso Escolar en Indonesia

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## Resumen

Este estudio examina la relación entre la autoestima y el florecimiento entre las víctimas adolescentes de acoso escolar, con la fortaleza espiritual como un posible mediador. Basándose en una muestra de 1.126 adolescentes indonesios de entre 15 y 23 años, la investigación utiliza la Escala de Autoestima de Rosenberg, la Escala de Florecimiento y la Escala de Fortaleza Espiritual-9 para evaluar estos constructos. Los hallazgos revelan que la autoestima predice significativamente el florecimiento, en consonancia con estudios previos que destacan su papel en la promoción del bienestar psicológico. Además, la fortaleza espiritual surge como un mediador parcial significativo, lo que indica que, aunque la autoestima proporciona una base para la resiliencia, la fortaleza espiritual mejora la capacidad de los adolescentes para encontrar sentido y estabilidad en medio de la adversidad. Este estudio utilizó un diseño correlacional, y el análisis de mediación se realizó mediante procedimientos de regresión, aunque sin bootstrapping. Las principales limitaciones incluyen el carácter transversal de los datos, la dependencia de medidas de autoinforme y la falta de análisis sobre la frecuencia o el desequilibrio de poder en las experiencias de acoso. Estos resultados subrayan la importancia de integrar intervenciones psicológicas y espirituales para apoyar la salud mental adolescente, especialmente frente a los desafíos del acoso escolar.

## Palabras clave

Autoestima, fortaleza espiritual, florecimiento, bullying, adolescentes

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Bullying cases in Indonesia have repeatedly occurred across various educational levels, including elementary, junior high, senior high schools, and universities. For instance, an elementary school student in Depok was assaulted by classmates due to the prevailing culture of seniority (Ramadhanty & Maulana, 2024). This culture forced new students to endure violence from older peers who had previously faced similar treatment. In 2024, a junior high school student in Malang experienced a brutal assault by classmates, leading to a fatal brain hemorrhage (Wismabrata, 2024). Similarly, senior high school students in Tangerang often faced physical violence as part of school gang traditions normalized by peer pressure (Rahmawati & Putra, 2024). A tragic university-level case occurred in Semarang, where a medical student undergoing specialist training died by suicide after facing severe violence and harassment from senior students, which was seen as a required initiation of the training (Nur, 2024).

Bullying had become a persistent issue in Indonesia, affecting individuals from adolescence to adulthood. Cases of bullying continued to rise over the years (Borualogo & Casas, 2022). Research studies indicated that the growing number of cases requires urgent preventive measures (Noboru et al., 2021). Victims of bullying are often at risk of developing suicidal thoughts, particularly adolescents (Dwiyanti et al., 2022). One potential prevention method is "flourishing," which acts as a mediator between emotional intelligence and suicidal ideation in adolescent bullying victims (Rey et al., 2019). Flourishing is a multidimensional construct referring to optimal psychological functioning that encompasses both hedonic (positive emotions) and eudaimonic (meaning, purpose) aspects of well-being (Seligman, 2011). Within the PERMA framework (Seligman, 2011), flourishing involves five elements—Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment—providing a useful structure for understanding how self-esteem and spirituality may contribute to well-being. This study adopted Diener et al.'s (2010) operationalization, which emphasizes self-perceived success in life domains including meaning, relationships, and engagement.

One way to improve well-being in terms of happiness that is hedonic or eudaimonic in nature is through self-esteem. In previous research (Du et al., 2017) it was found that self-esteem could support subjective well-being, by producing better life satisfaction, positive affect, finding meaning in life, and happiness. Another study (Singhal & Prakash, 2020) also supported self-esteem as a shaper of psychological well-being, in which positive self-esteem could help students overcome psychological problems that arise through positive assessments of themselves, therefore, life problems can be seen objectively. Self-esteem refers to an individual's acceptance of themselves, personal valuation, and subjective respect for their being (Morganett, 2005). It involves assessing the gap between one's current self-perception and the ideal self they aspire to become. The extent of this discrepancy reveals the individual's self-esteem level (Piskin, 2004). Furthermore, self-esteem reflects personal attributes such as self-acceptance, personal appreciation, overall acceptance of one's identity, and self-love (Adams & Gullota, 1989). Rosenberg (1965) described self-esteem as an individual's positive or negative attitude toward themselves, emerging from a process of self-evaluation. The outcome of this evaluation determined the individual's level of self-esteem, making it a core aspect of how they judge their self-worth.

The association between self-esteem and flourishing is supported by evidence demonstrating that self-esteem significantly contributes to individuals' psychological well-being. Previous research identified that self-love and pro-socialness are positively correlated with flourishing, suggesting that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to experience greater flourishing (Rahe & Jansen, 2023). Similarly, other research emphasized that flourishing is a state of positive mental health characterized by positive emotions, social connectedness, and personal growth. This framework suggests that individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to experience flourishing, as it enhances their ability to cope with stress, maintain psychological health, and achieve personal fulfillment (Edwina et al., 2022). These findings underscore the idea that fostering self-esteem is essential for sustained well-being, as individuals who flourish are better equipped to engage positively with life and contribute to their communities.

Based on previous research, there were several studies examining self-esteem and flourishing (Edwina et al., 2022; Rahe & Jansen, 2023), however, there were no research studies examining the relationship between self-esteem and flourishing in adolescent victims of bullying. When examining flourishing, it is essential to consider the role of spirituality. A common method for assessing spirituality involves measuring spiritual fortitude, which captures the spiritual capacity that helps individuals withstand challenges and find meaningful purpose through relationships with God, others, and themselves (Van Tongeren et al., 2019). As it has been associated with the development of individual well-being (Ryff, 2021). Research indicates that spirituality may serve as a protective factor against the adverse impacts of bullying experienced by adolescent victims (Shaver et al., 2022). A common method for assessing spirituality involves measuring spiritual fortitude, which captures the spiritual capacity that helps individuals withstand challenges and find meaningful purpose through relationships with God, others, and themselves (Van Tongeren et al., 2019).

The relationship between self-esteem and spiritual fortitude has been explored in various studies, indicating that self-esteem significantly influences an individual's spiritual resilience. For instance, research found that self-esteem was positively correlated with spiritual intelligence, suggesting that individuals with higher self-esteem might possess greater spiritual resources to cope with stress (Pinto et al., 2024). Additionally, self-esteem was discussed as a spiritual discipline, emphasizing its role in personal development and spiritual well-being (Provencio & McElroy-Heltzel, 2024). While self-esteem contributes to one's spiritual fortitude, it is essential to recognize that they are distinct yet complementary constructs. Self-esteem pertains to one's perception of self-worth, whereas spiritual fortitude involves the capacity to endure adversity through spiritual means. Understanding the interplay between these factors can provide valuable insights into how individuals utilize their self-perception and spiritual strength to navigate life's challenges.

Spiritual Fortitude (SF) refers to an individual's capacity to draw strength from spiritual beliefs and practices to navigate and grow through life's adversities. Van Tongeren et al. (2019) describe SF as encompassing three core dimensions: spiritual endurance, spiritual enterprise, and redemptive purpose. Spiritual endurance involves using spiritual convictions to persevere through prolonged hardships. Spiritual enterprise emphasizes maintaining moral principles and making ethically sound decisions despite facing challenges. Redemptive purpose relates to finding deeper meaning and renewed life purpose through difficult experiences. Unlike

resilience or grit, SF emphasizes spiritual and religious beliefs as foundational sources of strength rather than focusing solely on goal achievement. Research indicated that SF offers valuable psychological benefits, particularly in helping individuals reinterpret suffering and experience personal growth during tough times (Zhang, 2022).

Spiritual fortitude thus represents a spiritually grounded resilience, enabling individuals to face adversity with purpose and integrity. It extends beyond the concepts of grit or resilience by incorporating moral steadfastness, spiritual endurance, and belief in finding meaning through struggles. Studies suggested that SF can mitigate the psychological impacts of crises such as personal losses or natural disasters, offering a unique form of emotional and mental support (Boone, 2017).

Despite extensive research on self-esteem, there was a notable gap in the literature regarding its direct impact on flourishing among adolescent victims of bullying. While studies demonstrated a relationship between self-esteem and general well-being, few explored how self-esteem influences flourishing specifically within this vulnerable group. For instance, a systematic review found correlations among self-esteem, bullying, and cyberbullying, indicating that self-esteem was linked to being a victim of cyberbullying (Agustiningsih et al., 2024). Additionally, research suggested that self-esteem and bullying victimization influence adolescents' affective well-being, with gender moderating these effects (Romero-Reignier et al., 2022). However, without stronger empirical evidence, the role of self-esteem in promoting flourishing remained speculative, underscoring the need for further research to clarify this relationship. Addressing this gap could significantly enhance our understanding of adolescent mental health in the context of bullying.

Additionally, flourishing among adolescents is an under-researched topic, especially compared to adult populations. Existing studies on adolescent flourishing primarily focus on general well-being and life satisfaction, without delving deeply into the distinct psychological challenges faced by adolescents who have experienced bullying (Witten et al., 2019). This lack of targeted research limited the development of effective interventions tailored to enhance flourishing in this demographic. Given the increasing awareness of mental health challenges among adolescents, there was an urgent need to explore the factors that can foster flourishing in bullied adolescents (Logan et al., 2023; Rey et al., 2019). Therefore, addressing the gap in adolescent-specific research made this topic a valuable avenue for study.

Finally, spiritual fortitude may offer a deeper understanding of whether self-esteem can independently influence flourishing or requires a mediator. Spiritual fortitude, characterized by the ability to endure hardships with a sense of meaning, might mediate the relationship between self-esteem and flourishing (Van Tongeren et al., 2019). While self-esteem is a key psychological construct, it may not be sufficient alone in fostering flourishing unless complemented by spiritual fortitude, which helps individuals find purpose amidst adversity (Shaver et al., 2022). Examining this mediating role can shed light on whether self-esteem has a direct effect on flourishing or works through other mechanisms, such as spiritual fortitude.

The relationship between spiritual fortitude and flourishing was well-supported by evidence linking spirituality to overall well-being. McEntee et al. (2013) found that spirituality was a crucial component of flourishing, enhancing both social and psychological functioning. This study identified spirituality as a unique contributor to flourishing by fostering positivity and resilience, which aligned with core dimensions of well-being, such as social connectedness and

emotional stability. Furthermore, VanderWeele (2021) highlighted that participation in religious communities and spiritual practices positively impacted mental and physical health, life satisfaction, and moral character. These elements are essential to flourishing, as they enable individuals to find meaning and sustain well-being even in adversity. Together, these studies suggested that spiritual fortitude could serve as a foundation for flourishing by providing the moral and emotional resources needed to endure challenges, thereby supporting overall psychological and social well-being (McIntee et al., 2013; VanderWeele, 2021)

Understanding the dynamics between self-esteem and flourishing is essential for developing strategies to enhance adolescent well-being. Adolescents with high self-esteem tend to exhibit greater resilience and psychological health, which are key components of flourishing. Research indicated that self-esteem was positively correlated with various aspects of well-being, including autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose in life. (Ryff, 2015). Furthermore, studies showed that self-esteem can act as a protective factor against involvement in bullying, particularly for victims (Shemesh & Heiman, 2021). By examining the relationship between self-esteem and flourishing, researchers can gain valuable insights into promoting optimal mental health outcomes among adolescents, especially those exposed to bullying. In parallel, spiritual fortitude, which enables individuals to endure hardship by drawing on spiritual resources, demonstrated protective effects on well-being (Van Tongeren et al., 2019). This research seeks to understand how these constructs interact to foster flourishing, defined as optimal psychological and social well-being, among adolescents who have been subjected to bullying. By examining this relationship, the researcher can better understand the unique role of both psychological resilience and spirituality in supporting mental health outcomes in vulnerable populations.

The proposed mediating role of spiritual fortitude draws on meaning-making theory (Wong, 2017) and the religious coping model (Pargament, 2007), which emphasized the human tendency to reframe suffering through spiritual or existential interpretations. Self-esteem enhances internal resources such as self-worth and resilience (Orth & Robins, 2014), while spiritual fortitude allows individuals to endure hardship with a sense of redemptive purpose and spiritual endurance (Van Tongeren et al., 2019). These dual resources may work synergistically—self-esteem prepares individuals to face adversity, and spiritual fortitude gives it interpretive meaning, promoting flourishing.

Importantly, the cultural specificity of spiritual fortitude must be acknowledged. In Indonesia, where religion is constitutionally embedded and spiritual discourse is common in daily life, constructs like redemptive purpose and spiritual endurance may resonate more deeply than in secular Western contexts. Spiritual fortitude here likely encompasses religious rituals, faith-based resilience, and collective beliefs about divine purpose—highlighting a culturally situated form of psychological adaptation (Koenig, 2018; Ryff, 2021). Therefore, the present study situates spiritual fortitude not only as an individual trait but also as a culturally mediated construct that reflects Indonesian adolescent meaning systems.

In this framework, self-esteem is conceptualized as an internal psychological resource that fosters emotional resilience and promotes adaptive functioning (Orth & Robins, 2014). When individuals with high self-esteem encounter adversity, their positive self-view may activate deeper spiritual capacities. Spiritual fortitude, in turn, functions as a meaning-based coping resource that helps individuals reinterpret suffering through a lens of purpose, endurance, and

redemptive growth (Pargament, 2007; Wong, 2017). Rather than serving as a passive outcome, spiritual fortitude acts as an active cognitive-spiritual process that mediates the transformation from self-worth to sustained well-being. These constructs interact to facilitate flourishing, especially in the domains of meaning, engagement, and accomplishment as articulated in Seligman's PERMA model (2011). This conceptual linkage is particularly relevant in collectivist and religious cultural contexts like Indonesia, where spiritual interpretations of adversity are deeply embedded in both personal and communal narratives. As such, the integration of self-esteem and spiritual fortitude provides a culturally grounded mechanism for understanding how adolescents may achieve flourishing in the face of bullying.

Therefore, based on the phenomena and in line with the objective of the study, the following hypothesis were formulated:

H1: Self-esteem significantly contribute to flourishing in adolescent victims of bullying.

H2: Spiritual fortitude significantly influence flourishing in adolescent victims of bullying.

H3: Spiritual fortitude significantly mediate the relationship between self-esteem and flourishing in adolescent victims of bullying.

## Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a survey research design that included a rating scale question in the form of a questionnaire. The type of sampling used in this research is convenience sampling. The sample criteria used in this study were adolescents aged 17–23 years who were studying in Indonesia and have experienced bullying in their life. To find out whether respondents were individuals who experienced bullying, screening questions were conducted to screen for bullying experience. There are three types of bullying experiences as screening statements, and respondents can answer yes or no to whether or not they have experienced bullying in their lives. The following are the five statements: (1) A friend says something mean and hurtful to you (verbal bullying). (2) Being ignored, ostracized, or abandoned by your friends (social bullying). (3) A friend kicks, hits, or pushes and threatens you (physical bullying). (4) The spread of fake news about you so that your friends don't like you (verbal bullying). (5) Getting other cruel and hurtful treatment towards you (physical bullying). If the respondent answered "no" to all five statements of bullying experiences, then he/she cannot be a respondent in this study. If he/she responded "yes" to one of the statements, then he/she was classified as bullying victim of the type of bullying they experienced (either as verbal, physical, or social bullying. For those responding "yes" to more than one statements, they would be classified as bullying victims of either a) Verbal and physical bullying, b) social and physical bullying, c) verbal and social bullying, or d) all types of bullying). To ensure construct validity, bullying experiences were operationalized not only based on the presence of negative acts but also required participants to indicate that such behaviour occurred repeatedly and involved a perceived power imbalance (e.g., due to social status, age, or group size). These two elements are essential features of bullying according to established definitions (Gredler, 2003).

## Participants

The data obtained were 1126 student respondents, with most respondents being Protestant Christian and female. Most respondents in this study answered that they had experienced all types of bullying, consisting of verbal, social, and physical bullying. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Pelita Harapan (Approval No. 143/LPPM-UPH/VII/2024). All participants provided informed consent and were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation.

While the majority of participants identified with a religious affiliation, responses from non-religious participants were also included. However, to ensure meaningful responses to the Spiritual Fortitude Scale, participants who reported having no spiritual beliefs or marked all SF items as “strongly disagree” were reviewed. No exclusion was made solely based on religious identity, as spiritual fortitude was conceptualized in this study to reflect both religious and non-religious spiritual resilience.

**Table 1**  
*Demographic Data*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Number (N)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Gender		
<i>Male</i>	336	29.8
<i>Female</i>	790	70.2
Education Level		
<i>High School, Grade 10</i>	201	17.9
<i>High School, Grade 11</i>	147	13.1
<i>High School, Grade 12</i>	292	25.9
<i>College/University</i>	486	43.2
Religion		
<i>Protestant Christian</i>	643	57.1
<i>Catholic</i>	204	18.1
<i>Islam</i>	147	13.1
<i>Buddhist</i>	115	10.2
<i>Confucianism</i>	11	1.0
<i>Hindu</i>	3	0.3
<i>Other Beliefs</i>	3	0.3
Types of Bullying		
<i>Verbal</i>	88	7.8
<i>Social</i>	173	15.4
<i>Physical</i>	69	6.1
<i>Verbal+Social</i>	170	15.1
<i>Verbal+Physical</i>	177	15.7
<i>Social+Physical</i>	380	33.7
<i>All Types of Bullying</i>	69	6.1

## Measures

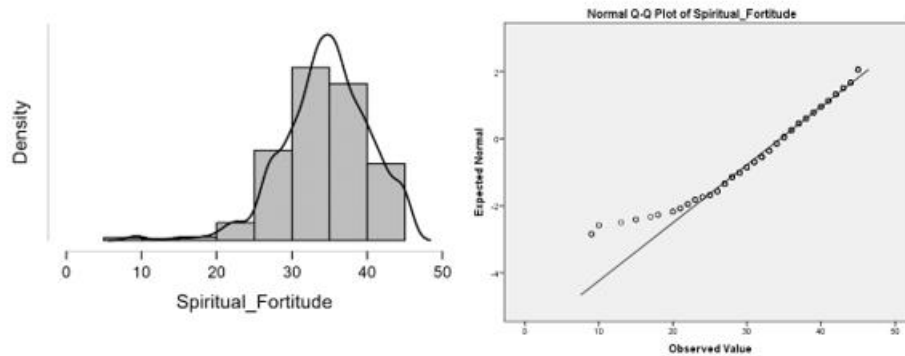
The research utilized three primary measurement instruments to assess the variables of self-esteem, flourishing, and spiritual fortitude.

1. Self-Esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), an 10-item instrument designed to capture respondents' perceptions of their self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The RSES has shown good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values typically around  $\alpha = 0.85$ .
2. Flourishing was measured using the Flourishing Scale (FS), an 8-item instrument designed to capture respondents' perceptions of their success in key areas such as relationships, purpose, and self-esteem (Diener et al., 2010). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The scale has demonstrated strong reliability and validity in prior research (Nurcahyo & Valentina, 2024). The Indonesian version of the FS has demonstrated good reliability ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ; Nurcahyo & Valentina, 2024).
3. Spiritual Fortitude was evaluated using the Spiritual Fortitude Scale (SFS-9), a 9-item measure focusing on three dimensions: spiritual endurance, spiritual enterprise, and redemptive purpose (Van Tongeren et al., 2019). Responses were rated on a Likert scale and the scale has demonstrated strong psychometric properties in studies of adversity and spiritual well-being. Although the scale includes three conceptual dimensions, analyses were conducted on the total composite score of spiritual fortitude due to its high internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ; Van Tongeren et al., 2019). Subscales were not analyzed separately in this study.

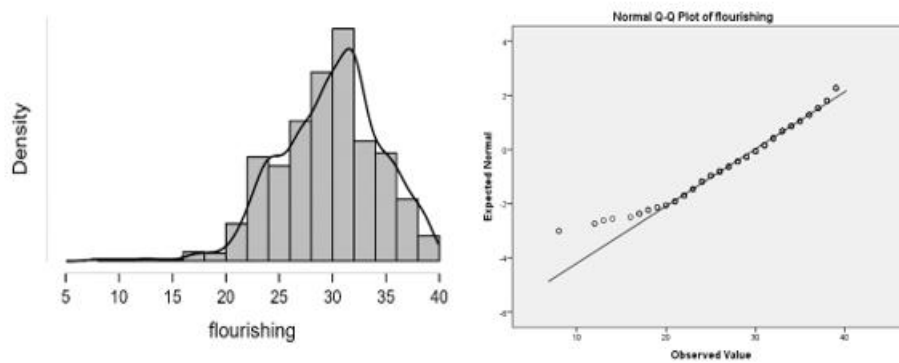
## Results

Before assessing the relationships between variables, it is essential to test for normality, as many statistical analyses assume that the data follows a normal distribution. In this study, normality tests were conducted to ensure that the distributions of the main variables—Self-Esteem, Spiritual Fortitude, and Flourishing—all met these assumptions. Normality was evaluated using both distribution plots and Q-Q (Quantile-Quantile) plots, which visually compare the distribution of the data to a normal distribution. These plots help in identifying any deviations from normality, such as skewness or kurtosis, which could affect the validity of subsequent analyses.

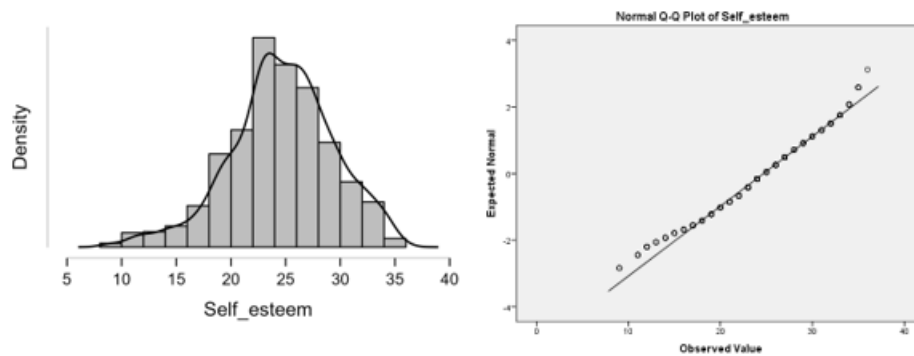
**Figure 1**  
*Normality Distribution Plot and QQ Plot for Spiritual Fortitude*



**Figure 2**  
*Normality Distribution Plot and QQ Plot for Flourishing*



**Figure 3**  
*Normality Distribution Plot and QQ Plot for Self-Esteem*



The normality tests for the three main variables showed that all variables followed a normal distribution. The distribution plots and Q-Q plots for Self-Esteem, Spiritual Fortitude, and Flourishing revealed no significant departures from normality, indicating that the data was suitable for further statistical analysis.

**Table 2***Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, Kurtosis and Bivariate Correlations Among Variables*

Scale	M	SD	$\alpha$	Skewness	Kurtosis	SE	SF	FS
SE	24.70	4.77	.82	-.34	.30	---		
SF	34.51	5.78	.80	-.69	1.58	.44**	---	
FS	29.90	4.73	.80	-.47	.66	.65**	.64**	---

The findings in Table 2 display the descriptive statistics for Self-Esteem (SE), Spiritual Fortitude (SF), and Flourishing (FS), which include measures of normality through skewness and kurtosis, along with reliability and correlation coefficients among the variables. The skewness values for SE (-0.34), SF (-0.69), and FS (-0.47) are close to zero, indicating that the distributions are fairly symmetrical, with minimal skew and thereby supporting a normal distribution. Similarly, kurtosis values for these variables—SE (0.3), SF (1.58), and FS (0.66)—are slightly positive (leptokurtic), meaning that the distributions have a somewhat more peaked shape compared to a perfect normal curve, but still fall within an acceptable range. This supports the assumption of data normality, making the dataset suitable for regression analysis. In addition, the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for each scale also indicate good internal consistency, with Self-Esteem at 0.82, Spiritual Fortitude at 0.80, and Flourishing at 0.80.

Correlations among SE, SF, and FS are positive and statistically significant, with SF correlating with SE at 0.44 and FS at 0.64, while FS correlates with SE at 0.65. These significant positive correlations imply that self-esteem and spiritual fortitude have a direct association with flourishing, a relevant finding as it underscores how these factors interrelate in fostering well-being among adolescents.

To assess multicollinearity between the predictors, a collinearity diagnostics analysis was conducted. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3***Collinearity Diagnostics for Predictors of Flourishing*

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions	SE	SF
1	1	2.967	1.000	0.00	0.00	0.00
	2	0.019	12.356	0.21	1.00	0.17
	3	0.014	14.706	0.79	0.00	0.83

As shown in Table 3, none of the condition indices exceeded the critical threshold of 30. While Dimension 3 had the highest index (14.71), it did not simultaneously involve high variance proportions for both self-esteem and spiritual fortitude. Therefore, the results suggest that multicollinearity is not a concern in this regression model.

To examine whether spiritual fortitude mediates the relationship between self-esteem and flourishing, a mediation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS macro version 4.1 for SPSS (Hayes, 2022), employing Model 4. This model estimates both the direct effect of self-esteem on flourishing and the indirect effect through spiritual fortitude. The analysis used 5,000 bootstrap samples to calculate bias-corrected confidence intervals for indirect effects and

applied heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors (HC3) to account for potential violations of homoscedasticity. This approach is considered more robust and statistically rigorous than traditional causal step methods, such as those proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). As a further illustration of the mediation process, the regression pathways with and without the mediator are depicted in Figure 4 and Figure 5, respectively.

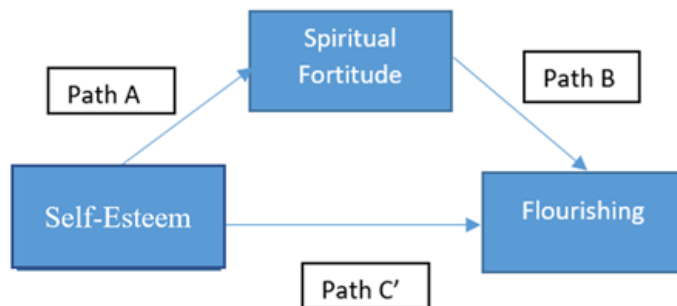
**Figure 4**

*Regression Analysis without Mediator*



**Figure 5**

*Regression Analysis with Mediator*



The summary of the mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro can be seen in Table 4, which presents the coefficients, significance values, and confidence intervals for both direct and indirect effects.

**Table 4**

*Summary of Mediation Analysis Using PROCESS Macro (Model 4, Bootstrap = 5000)*

Path	Coefficient (b)	SE (HC3)	t	p	95% CI (LLCI – ULCI)
SE → SF (a path)	0.5316	0.0403	13.177	.000	[0.4525, 0.6108]
SE → FS (c path / total effect)	0.6462	0.0241	26.818	.000	[0.5989, 0.6935]
SF → FS (b path)	0.3576	0.0259	13.791	.000	[0.3067, 0.4084]
SE → FS (c' path / direct)	0.4561	0.0249	18.322	.000	[0.4073, 0.5050]
Indirect Effect (a × b)	0.1901	0.0201	—	—	[0.1528, 0.2318]
Std. Indirect Effect (a × b)	0.1916	0.0187	—	—	[0.1560, 0.2301]

As summarized in Table 3, the total effect of self-esteem (SE) on flourishing (FS) was significant ( $b = 0.6462$ ,  $SE = 0.0241$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.5989, 0.6935]). When spiritual fortitude (SF) was introduced as a mediator, the direct effect of SE on FS decreased to  $b = 0.4561$  ( $SE = 0.0249$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.4073, 0.5050]), while the indirect effect of SE on FS via SF was  $b = 0.1901$  (BootSE = 0.0201, 95% Bootstrap CI [0.1528, 0.2318]). The completely standardized indirect effect was also statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.1916$ , 95% CI

[0.1560, 0.2301]). Because the indirect effect confidence interval did not include zero, this provides evidence for partial mediation.

The model explained approximately 57.8% of the variance in flourishing ( $R^2 = 0.578$ ). Based on this value, the Cohen's  $f^2$  effect size was calculated as 1.37, indicating a large effect size and a strong contribution of the predictors to flourishing. Additionally, SE significantly predicted SF ( $b = 0.5316$ ,  $SE = 0.0403$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.4525, 0.6108]), and SF significantly predicted FS ( $b = 0.3576$ ,  $SE = 0.0259$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI [0.3067, 0.4084]). These results fulfilled the necessary statistical criteria for establishing a mediation model.

To address potential violations of homoscedasticity, heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors (HC3) were used in all regression estimates. The results showed that the standard error for the effect of self-esteem on spiritual fortitude was 0.0403, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.4525, 0.6108], and remained highly significant ( $p < .001$ ). For the final model predicting flourishing, the HC3 standard errors were 0.0249 for self-esteem (95% CI [0.4073, 0.5050]) and 0.0259 for spiritual fortitude (95% CI [0.3067, 0.4084]), both significant at  $p < .001$ . The total effect of self-esteem on flourishing also remained stable under HC3 correction ( $b = 0.6462$ ,  $SE = 0.0241$ , 95% CI [0.5989, 0.6935],  $p < .001$ ).

The consistency of these standard errors and the tight confidence intervals indicate that the use of HC3 did not substantially alter the inference, suggesting that the assumption of homoscedasticity was not meaningfully violated. The application of HC3 thus strengthened the robustness of the mediation analysis.

### **Hypothesis Evaluation**

H1 accepted, Self-esteem significantly predicts flourishing (total effect  $b = 0.6462$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

H2 accepted, Spiritual fortitude significantly predicts flourishing ( $b = 0.3576$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

H3 accepted, There is a statistically significant indirect effect of self-esteem on flourishing through spiritual fortitude ( $b = 0.1901$ , 95% Bootstrap CI [0.1528, 0.2318]), indicating partial mediation.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study provided valuable insights into the role of self-esteem and spiritual fortitude in fostering flourishing among adolescent victims of bullying, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of resilience and well-being within this vulnerable group. As demonstrated in the results, self-esteem was a significant predictor of flourishing, corroborating previous research that highlights self-esteem's pivotal role in enhancing mental well-being and resilience (Orth & Robins, 2014). Adolescents with higher self-esteem were better equipped to navigate the psychological challenges associated with bullying, as their positive self-perceptions enabled them to engage in adaptive coping strategies and pursue meaningful life goals, ultimately enhancing their flourishing. This finding aligned with prior studies indicating that self-esteem is a critical determinant of psychological well-being and life satisfaction. Other studies further suggested that self-esteem functions as a protective factor, buffering individuals from the negative impacts of adversity. For example, a study by Mann et al. (2004) found that

self-esteem consistently predicted flourishing in diverse cultural contexts, reinforcing its importance in promoting resilience and positive mental health outcomes. Additionally, a study by Parola and Marcionetti (2023) found that self-esteem positively predicted flourishing among adolescents, highlighting its role in promoting optimal functioning. Moreover, a study by Taylor (2022) found that self-esteem was positively associated with flourishing among college students, further supporting the link between self-esteem and well-being. These findings underscored the significance of self-esteem as a foundational resource for flourishing by fostering resilience, a sense of self-worth, and the ability to maintain a positive outlook despite challenging circumstances.

Spiritual fortitude significantly influenced flourishing. This study found that spiritual fortitude, or the ability to draw on spiritual beliefs to endure challenges, plays a critical role in promoting well-being. Research indicated that spiritual support and practices contributed positively to flourishing by providing individuals with a sense of meaning and psychosocial well-being. According to Kefenie et al. (2021), religious support from church communities significantly enhanced well-being, helping individuals manage psychosocial stress and fostering a supportive environment conducive to flourishing. Similarly, Destalia et al. (2024) demonstrated that spirituality and social support positively affected students' flourishing, suggesting that spiritual practices can help individuals achieve personal growth and emotional stability, essential aspects of well-being. Additionally, Krause and Hayward (2014) found that religious involvement and practical wisdom strengthened individuals' resilience and self-rated health, indicating that spiritual fortitude can further enhance psychological resilience. These findings collectively suggested that spiritual fortitude supports flourishing by providing individuals with a meaningful framework to navigate adversity, enhancing resilience and overall well-being (Destalia et al., 2024; Kefenie et al., 2021; Krause & Hayward, 2014).

The findings indicated that spiritual fortitude partially mediated the relationship between self-esteem and flourishing, suggesting that spiritual resilience played a crucial role in helping individuals find meaning and emotional stability amid adversity. This finding aligned with previous research emphasizing the protective function of spiritual traits for psychological well-being, particularly during challenging times. For instance, Van Tongeren et al. (2019) who developed and validated a measure of spiritual fortitude, highlighted its significance in adjusting to and thriving amidst adversity. Additionally, Parola and Marcionetti (2023) found that self-esteem positively predicted flourishing among adolescents, highlighting its role in promoting optimal functioning. Moreover, research suggested that spiritual values contribute to psychological well-being by helping individuals make decisions, manage stress, and overcome depression during life's challenges (Logan et al., 2023).

These findings underscored the importance of fostering both self-esteem and spiritual fortitude to promote flourishing, especially in the face of adversity. The present findings aligned with existing literature that highlights the significant roles of self-esteem and spiritual resources in fostering adolescent well-being, especially in adverse circumstances. Research suggested that spirituality acted as a protective factor and provided meaning, particularly for youth facing significant challenges (Koenig, 2018; Pargament, 2007). According to Pargament (2007), spirituality helps individuals find purpose and strength in difficult times, which resonates with this study's findings of spiritual fortitude as a partial mediator between self-esteem and flourishing. Koenig (2018) similarly emphasized the importance of spirituality in

resilience, noting that it could help adolescents by interpreting adversities constructively, therefore, enhancing their coping abilities. The concept of "meaning-making resilience" by Wong (2017) underscored this, suggesting that spiritual beliefs encourage a forward-looking perspective and motivate positive coping strategies. Together, these insights supported the potential value of integrating both spiritual and psychological approaches in interventions to foster resilience and flourishing among adolescents experiencing bullying. The construct of spiritual fortitude, while developed in Western psychological literature, may take on unique cultural significance in Indonesian society, where spiritual and religious coping are deeply woven into everyday life. The findings suggested that spiritual fortitude may operate differently across cultures, and future research should consider contextualizing this construct further in localized meaning systems.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, this study confirmed that self-esteem significantly contributed to flourishing among adolescent bullying victims, supporting the first hypothesis (H1) that self-esteem fostered resilience and well-being in this vulnerable population. Results further revealed that spiritual fortitude exerted a significant influence on flourishing, aligning with the second hypothesis (H2) and highlighting its role as a crucial factor in enhancing adolescents' capacity to find meaning and stability in the face of adversity. Additionally, spiritual fortitude was found to partially mediate the relationship between self-esteem and flourishing, validating the third hypothesis (H3). This suggests that while self-esteem independently supported flourishing, spiritual fortitude offered an additional layer of resilience, reinforcing the role of self-esteem by anchoring it to a broader, spiritually grounded sense of purpose.

However, this study had several limitations, including the reliance on self-reported data, which may be susceptible to response bias, and the use of convenience sampling, which limits the generalizability of findings across different populations. Moreover, the cross-sectional design of the study restricted our ability to infer causality among the variables. Future research would benefit from employing longitudinal approaches to better understand the causal pathways between self-esteem, spiritual fortitude, and flourishing over time. Expanding the sample to include adolescents from diverse backgrounds could further enhance the applicability of the findings, and exploring additional mediators or moderators, such as social support or cultural influences, could offer a more comprehensive view of the factors that contribute to adolescent flourishing in the context of bullying experiences. Additionally, the classification of bullying experiences relied on self-report, which, although enhanced with frequency and power imbalance criteria, may still be subject to individual interpretation. Future studies should use validated bullying inventories with behavioral frequency scales for greater precision.

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