



## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-ACTUALIZATION IN SCHOOLS' LEARNING COMMUNITY DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF KURIKULUM MERDEKA.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The learning process is something that cannot be separated from a teacher's life. Teachers are expected to be able to develop all the potential and talents they have as a form of self-actualization. However, there are still teachers found to be passive in the learning community. The purpose of this research is to determine the relationship between teacher self-esteem and self-actualization ability in a learning community in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the Southwest Aceh District. The research used a correlational study design with a cross-sectional study approach ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). The respondents amounted to 103 individuals, selected using the total sampling technique. The instruments used were a self-esteem questionnaire (Rosenberg Self-esteem) with 10 statement items and a self-actualization questionnaire (Peak Experiences Self-Actualization) with 28 statement items. Data analysis was conducted using univariate and bivariate analysis (Spearman Rank Correlation test). The research results found the mean self-esteem score to be 19.89, a standard deviation of 3.346, and a self-esteem score range of 11-29. As for self-actualization, low self-actualization (28.2%), approaching self-actualization (25.2%), moderate self-actualization (28.2%), and high self-actualization (18.4%) were obtained. There is a strong relationship between teacher self-esteem and self-actualization ability in the learning community in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum ( $p=0.000$ ,  $r= +0.633$ ). The results of this research indicate that the learning community can influence teacher self-esteem to sharpen and achieve self-actualization.

**Keywords:** *Self-esteem, Self-actualization, learning community.*

## INTRODUCTION

The formation of a learning community is an innovation as a means to develop teachers' professionalism. A learning community is defined as an environment for teachers to share experiences and knowledge to enhance the quality of student-centered learning (Khusna & Priyanti, 2023).

In the implementation of the new curriculum paradigm, the formation of a learning community becomes highly significant. This is because all activities within the Merdeka curriculum are designed to be carried out through collaboration that focuses on improving teaching and has a direct impact on students. A Learning Community in the Merdeka curriculum is a group of teachers, educational staff, and other educators who share the same enthusiasm and concern for transforming learning through regular interactions in a forum to actively participate in discussing and solving various learning issues based on student performance.

In building a Learning Community, there are several main objectives to be applied. These include educating community members by collecting and sharing information related to questions and practice-related issues, facilitating community members to continue learning, promoting the improvement of members' competencies through discussions and sharing, and integrating the learning acquired through the community into daily work. (Source: <https://ditsmp.kemdikbud.go.id/>)

Considering the objectives mentioned above, the presence of a learning community as a means for teachers to develop their competence becomes highly crucial. In reality, is it possible for a learning community to effectively enhance competence if its members face challenges in self-actualization?

Previous research conducted on learning communities by Anwar (2011) revealed that the learning organizations that teachers participate in can influence teachers' performance in teaching. Another study conducted by Mitchell and Sickney (2019) in Canada showed that schools with learning communities have a positive impact compared to those without such communities.

Given the importance of learning communities in enhancing teacher competence, this research aims to examine the relationship between teacher self-esteem and self-actualization ability within a learning community during the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum.

Engaging in self-actualization is synonymous with limitless skill development. The fundamental nature of human beings is to strive for self-

actualization or constructive self-improvement. Individuals are naturally inclined to achieve self-actualization, and those who can self-actualize can attain happiness and satisfaction compared to those who do not experience self-actualization (Rogers, 1965, as cited in Videbeck, 2008).

In order to achieve self-actualization, participants in a learning community, namely teachers, need to have self-esteem. Self-esteem is not a unified construct and has been divided to measure two aspects consisting of 5 items: self-competence and self-liking. Self-competence (SC) is understood as an individual's instrumental value. Schmitt and Allik (2005) define self-competence as "feeling confident, capable, and effective." Self-liking (SL) is defined as genuine self-worth (Sinclair et al., 2010). Schmitt and Allik (2005) define self-liking as "feeling that you are good and socially relevant."

Crocker & Park (2004) historically stated that in psychological studies, high self-esteem is beneficial, while low self-esteem is detrimental. Self-esteem is associated with self-focus, interpersonal relationships, and goal achievement, and high self-esteem can lead to disadvantages in terms of loss of connection, increased competitiveness, and low concern for the welfare of the group. However, other perspectives from Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs (2003) suggest that self-esteem is only beneficial for enhancing initiative and happiness.

According to Dewi (2007), increased competitiveness and initiative are positive characteristics of individuals who self-actualize. Other characteristics of self-actualization include being honest, open, being oneself, and the ability to express opinions based on genuine thoughts and emotions without being influenced by others.

This is the crucial aspect of this research: that teachers, as educators, need to possess all the characteristics mentioned above. In reality, when it comes to developing a learning community as a platform for teachers to self-actualize, some teachers are still passive in discussions. One possible reason for teachers being passive in discussions is a lack of self-confidence. This lack of self-confidence may stem from doubts about expressing their opinions in front of an audience, such as a fear of being ridiculed, a fear that what they say is not appropriate, a fear of making mistakes, a fear of hurting someone's feelings, and so on (Osborne, 1992, as cited in Wahyuni, 2014).

Robbinson (1995, as cited in Nasimah, 2009) stated that self-confidence is related to a person's self-esteem. Someone with good self-confidence is likely to have good self-esteem. Self-esteem is an individual's self-assessment as either low or high, which is evident in how they value their existence and significance. A high self-assessment involves self-acceptance, recognizing

one's strengths and potential, and accepting one's shortcomings. Conversely, a low self-assessment means being dissatisfied with oneself, not appreciating one's strengths.

Given the importance of self-esteem in self-actualization, this research aims to explore the relationship between teacher self-esteem and self-actualization ability in a learning community during the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum.

## **METHODS**

This research utilizes quantitative methods, relying on numerical data as the fundamental research data. Therefore, the research instruments in this study are based on quantitative methods to collect data. The research instruments used are questionnaires with closed-ended statements. A questionnaire is a list of questions or statements used for structured interviews by the researcher with the respondents. The list of questions or statements is organized in such a way that respondents can only provide answers by marking symbols or checkboxes from the provided answer choices (Siregar, 2013). In this research, the questionnaire consists of two groups of statements

Questionnaire A contains statements related to teacher self-esteem regarding the implementation of the learning community. The researcher adopted the Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) questionnaire developed by Rosenberg (1965), which consists of 10 statement items. It uses a Likert scale for assessment, with favorable responses rated as strongly agree (3), agree (2), disagree (1), and strongly disagree (0), while unfavorable responses are rated as strongly agree (0), agree (1), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (3). The researcher then tested the questionnaire's validity and reliability, and all statement items were found to be valid and reliable.

Questionnaire B contains statements regarding teacher self-actualization ability in the implementation of the learning community within the Merdeka curriculum. The researcher adopted the Peak Experience Self-Actualization Inventory (PESAI) questionnaire developed by Wilsow and Kneisl (1983), which comprises 28 statement items. It uses a Likert scale with different ratings based on the scoring established by Wilsow and Kneisl (1983). The researcher also tested the validity and reliability of this questionnaire, and all statement items were found to be valid and reliable.

The assessment for Questionnaire A uses a Likert scale, which is employed to measure the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of an individual or a group of individuals regarding a specific phenomenon (Sujarweni, 2014). In this research, it is used to assess the characteristics of teacher self-esteem

within the learning community. The Likert scale assigns scores as follows: strongly agree = 3, agree = 2, disagree = 1, strongly disagree = 0.

As for the assessment of Questionnaire B, it is used to evaluate the self-actualization ability of teachers within the learning community during the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum. It also utilizes a Likert scale with the following scoring: very often (5), often (3), sometimes (1), and never (0).

The research population encompasses the entire research subjects or objects under investigation (Notoatmodjo, 2010). In this study, the population comprises all the teachers who are part of the learning community in the schools involved in the Aceh Barat Daya regency, including those from different cohorts, such as cohorts 1, 2, and 3.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents in this study are teachers aged between 30-50 years old. The age range of 30-50 years falls within the category of adulthood. Adults are individuals who are not dependent on others. During this stage, individuals have primary tasks to accomplish, such as building a career, establishing close relationships like friendships and marriages, and starting to form their own families (Atwater & Duffy, 2005).

The purpose of the discussion is to interpret and describe the significance of your findings in light of what was already known about the research problem being investigated, and to explain any new understanding or insights about the problem after you've taken the findings into consideration. The discussion will always connect to the introduction by way of the research questions or hypotheses you posed and the literature you reviewed, but it does not simply repeat or rearrange the introduction; the discussion should always explain how your study has moved the reader's understanding of the research problem forward from where you left them at the end of the introduction.

**Table 1.** Frequency Distribution of Teacher Respondents Based on the year,

| <i>No.</i> | <i>Year</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percentage</i> |
|------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1.         | I           | 37               | 35.9%             |
| 2.         | II          | 48               | 46.6%             |
| 3.         | III         | 18               | 17.5%             |
| Total      |             | 103              | 100               |

## Results of Univariate Analysis

Univariate analysis explains the characteristics of self-esteem and self-actualization ability within the learning community. For self-esteem, it is presented by calculating the mean, standard deviation, minimum value, and maximum value. Meanwhile, self-actualization values are calculated using frequency and percentages.

### Description of Teacher Self-Esteem Characteristics

The distribution of self-esteem characteristic scores of teachers in the learning community during the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum can be seen in the following table:

**Table 2.** Distribution of Teacher Self-Esteem Characteristic Scores in the Learning Community

| <i>Respndents.</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Standard Deviation</i> | <i>Min-Max</i> |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Self-esteem        | 19.89       | 3.346                     | 11-29          |

Based on the table above, the mean score is 19.89, the standard deviation is 3.346, the minimum score is 11, and the maximum score is 29. The percentage of respondents' answers to self-esteem item questions can be observed in the table below:

**Table 3.** Percentage of Respondents' Answers to Self-Esteem Item Questions

| <i>No</i> | <i>Statement</i>                                | <i>SS<br/>(Strongly Disagree)</i> | <i>S<br/>(Disagree)</i> | <i>TS<br/>(Agree)</i> | <i>STS<br/>(Strongly Agree)</i> |
|-----------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1         | Overall, I am satisfied with myself             | 21.4                              | 64.1                    | 14.6                  | 0                               |
| 2         | Sometimes I think I am not a good person at all | 20.4                              | 56.3                    | 22.3                  | 1                               |
| 3         | I feel I have some good qualities about myself  | 12.6                              | 80.6                    | 6.8                   | 0                               |
| 4         | I can do many things as well                    | 15.5                              | 73.8                    | 10.7                  | 0                               |

|    |  |      |      |      |      |
|----|--|------|------|------|------|
|    | as most other people   |      |      |      |      |
| 5  | I feel I don't have much to be proud of about myself   | 16.5 | 69.9 | 13.6 | 0    |
| 6  | I sometimes feel very useless when solving problems in the learning process                    | 10.7 | 69.9 | 19.4 | 0    |
| 7  | I feel that I am valuable, at least as valuable as other people                                | 32   | 60.2 | 7.8  | 0    |
| 8  | I feel I am not appreciated in the seven jump learning process, I hope I can be more respected | 2.9  | 27.2 | 52.4 | 17.5 |
| 9  | Overall, I feel like a failure in solving problems during the seven jump learning method       | 22.3 | 68.9 | 7.8  | 1    |
| 10 | I have a positive attitude towards myself  | 35   | 60.2 | 3.9  | 1    |

In item number 7, 32% of respondents strongly agree, and the statement with the most agreement from respondents is item number 3 at 80.6%.

### Description of Teacher Self-Actualization Ability in the Learning Community

The measurement of self-actualization is based on the score values in the Peak Experience Self-Actualization Inventory questionnaire by Wilsow and Kneisl (1983). The score ranges are as follows:

- 0-79: Low self-actualization
- 80-111: Approaching self-actualization
- 112-149: Moderate self-actualization
- 150-200: High self-actualization

The frequency distribution of respondents based on their self-actualization ability in the learning community can be seen in the table below:

**Table 4.** Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Teachers' Self-Actualization Abilities in the Learning Community

| No | Self-Actualization             | Frequency (n) | Percentage (%) |
|----|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1  | Low Self-Actualization         | 29            | 28.2%          |
| 2  | Approaching Self-Actualization | 26            | 25.2%          |
| 3  | Moderate Self-Actualization    | 29            | 28.2%          |
| 4  | High Self-Actualization        | 19            | 18.4%          |
| 5  | Total                          | 103           | 100%           |

The table above shows that out of 103 respondents, the majority of them have moderate self-actualization abilities, which is 29 individuals (28.2%), and 29 individuals (28.2%) have low self-actualization abilities. The following table displays the percentage of responses to the self-actualization questions:

**Table 5:** Percentage of Respondents' Answers to Self-Actualization Item Questions.

| No | Statement  | SS<br>(Strongly Disagree) | S<br>(Disagree) | TS<br>(Agree) | STS<br>(Strongly Agree) |
|----|--|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Accurately assess others in the learning process | 4.9                       | 49.5            | 45.6          | 0                       |
| 2  | Seek others' mistakes in the learning process    | 0                         | 38.8            | 57.3          | 3.9                     |



|    |   |      |      |      |     |
|----|---|------|------|------|-----|
| 3  | Accept uncertainty in the learning process  | 1    | 41.7 | 55.3 | 1.9 |
| 4  | Accept others' opinions, even if you disagree with them                                   | 6.8  | 50.5 | 41.7 | 1   |
| 5  | Have creative ideas in the learning process   | 5.8  | 45.6 | 48.5 | 0   |
| 6  | Enjoy doing unplanned and unprepared activities   | 7.8  | 38.8 | 44.7 | 8.7 |
| 7  | Get involved in other people's problems   | 4.9  | 14.6 | 70.9 | 9.7 |
| 8  | Able to express their opinions and not rely on others                                     | 3.9  | 38.8 | 56.3 | 1   |
| 9  | Able to speak honestly in expressing opinions   | 13.6 | 62.1 | 24.3 | 0   |
| 10 | Maintain local habits and traditions in the learning process                              | 2.9  | 48.5 | 42.7 | 5.8 |
| 11 | Get support from friends before making decisions in the learning process                  | 8.7  | 55.3 | 33   | 2.9 |
| 12 | Able to make decisions on their own   | 12.6 | 50.5 | 36.9 | 0   |
| 13 | Enjoy discussing and solving problems and socializing with others in the learning process | 20.4 | 55.3 | 24.3 | 0   |

|    |  |      |      |      |   |
|----|--|------|------|------|---|
| 14 | Enjoy every learning process in the seven-jump method  | 13.6 | 49.5 | 36.9 | 0 |
| 15 | Feel inspired after seeing or hearing others express their opinions in the seven-jump learning process   | 22.3 | 56.3 | 20.4 | 1 |
| 16 | Have empathy or a compassionate attitude towards what others feel  | 21.4 | 50.5 | 28.2 | 0 |
| 17 | Help others to develop and become better   | 15.5 | 42.7 | 41.7 | 0 |
| 18 | Have deep and meaningful relationships with some friends   | 22.3 | 46.6 | 31.1 | 0 |
| 19 | Feel that tasks are assigned based on their abilities and competencies in the seven-jump learning process  | 12.6 | 49.5 | 36.9 | 1 |
| 20 | Do things they like  | 31.1 | 39.8 | 29.1 | 0 |
| 21 | Easily laugh at humanistic humor, respect and uphold human values. Do not laugh at humor that is demeaning, degrading, or even derogatory towards others | 20.4 | 47.6 | 32   | 0 |
| 22 | Look forward to moments of   | 23.3 | 45.6 | 31.1 | 0 |

|    |  |      |      |      |     |
|----|--|------|------|------|-----|
|    | experiencing new things  |      |      |      |     |
| 23 | Like peak experiences (experiences without fear, doubt, etc.) and unusual experiences    | 21.4 | 41.7 | 35.9 | 1   |
| 24 | Believe that honesty is a good attitude in the learning process                          | 39.3 | 57.3 | 2.9  | 0   |
| 25 | Believe that they should always speak the truth in the learning process                  | 37.9 | 55.3 | 5.8  | 1   |
| 26 | Have a high dedication and sacrifice for life or social purposes in the learning process | 18.4 | 50.5 | 31.1 | 0   |
| 27 | Accurately assess others in the learning process   | 4.9  | 49.5 | 45.6 | 0   |
| 28 | Seek others' mistakes in the learning process  | 0    | 38.8 | 57.3 | 3.9 |

#### Bivariate Analysis Results

#### The Relationship Between Teacher Self-Esteem and Self-Actualization Ability in the Learning Community

Below, the analysis of the relationship between teacher self-esteem and self-actualization ability can be seen in the following table.

**Table 5:** Relationship Between Teacher Self-Esteem and Self-Actualization Ability in the Learning Community

| Self-esteem Score | Self-actualization |      |          |      |       | P-value | R     |
|-------------------|--------------------|------|----------|------|-------|---------|-------|
|                   | Low                | Near | Moderate | High | Total |         |       |
|                   | N                  |      |          |      |       |         |       |
| 11-29             | 29                 | 26   | 29       | 19   | 103   | 0.000   | 0.633 |

Based on the table above, the statistical test results yielded a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that there is a relationship between the teacher's self-esteem variable and self-actualization ability within the learning community ( $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the correlation coefficient, denoted as  $r$ , was found to be 0.633. This value suggests a strong relationship between the self-esteem variable and self-actualization because it falls within the range of correlation coefficients between 0.41-0.70. Additionally, the correlation coefficient in this study is positive (+), meaning that the relationship between self-esteem and self-actualization is proportional. If the self-esteem variable increases, the self-actualization variable is also likely to increase, and vice versa.

According to Riwidikdow (2013), to determine the presence of a relationship, the significance value is considered. If  $\text{Sig} > 0.05$ , then  $H_0$  (null hypothesis) is accepted, and if  $\text{Sig} < 0.05$ , then  $H_0$  is rejected. In this study, the obtained p-value is 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that  $H_0$  is rejected, which means there is a relationship between teacher self-esteem and self-actualization ability in the learning community. Additionally, the correlation coefficient, denoted as  $r$ , was found to be 0.633, indicating a strong relationship because it falls within the range of correlation coefficients between 0.41 and 0.70. Furthermore, the positive (+) correlation coefficient suggests that the relationship between self-esteem and self-actualization is proportional, such that an increase in self-esteem is likely to correspond to an increase in self-actualization, and vice versa.

The higher the self-esteem score, the higher the self-actualization, and this is because in this study, individuals with high self-esteem characteristics have high scores on items No. 3 and No. 7, "I feel I have a number of good qualities about myself," and "I feel that I am valuable, at least as valuable as others." These factors influence the attainment of self-actualization. This aligns with Rogers' opinion (as cited in Ginting, 2011), which states that factors affecting self-actualization include positive self-acceptance (self-esteem), improvement, and maintenance.

Respondents' answers indicate that teachers need to have self-confidence to develop their existence within the learning community. This item is related to the respondents' answers of "very often" in terms of self-actualization, particularly the statement "Believing that honesty is a good attitude in the teaching and learning process." The relationship lies in the fact that someone who feels as valuable as others has self-confidence. Self-confidence is crucial as a foundation for achieving self-actualization. This is evident in the self-actualization item where 39.3% believe that honesty is a good attitude in the teaching and learning process. Individuals with high self-confidence are more likely to act honestly, including being truthful about what they know, don't know, and want to know as a first step in seeking further information.

Self-actualization is the pinnacle of realizing one's full potential to sharpen one's abilities. Self-actualization in the learning process can be achieved by developing one's skills when solving problems, which includes the ability to express opinions, critically and deeply analyze problems, be creative, make decisions independently without being influenced by others, and take responsibility for all decisions made (Pajouhandeh, 2013). The results of this study indicate that 28.2% of the respondents have low self-actualization abilities, 25.2% have self-actualization abilities approaching the ideal, 28.2% have moderate self-actualization abilities, and 18.4% have high self-actualization abilities. This illustrates that the majority of teachers have low to moderate self-actualization in the learning community.

Characteristics that indicate someone has achieved self-actualization include the ability to perceive reality more efficiently, self-acceptance and acceptance of others as they are, spontaneity, simplicity, fairness, a focus on problem-solving, detachment (a need for solitude), autonomy (independence from culture and the environment), ongoing freshness and appreciation, social awareness, interpersonal relationships, democratic qualities, meaningful and ethical humor, creativity (the ability to express opinions and develop their potential without the help of others and confidence in their abilities), independence, and peak experiences (honesty, sincerity, simplicity, and openness) (Maslow, 1943 in Asmadi, 2008).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research and the discussion presented above, it can be concluded that the statistical test results of the relationship between teachers' self-esteem and their self-actualization abilities yield a p-value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected. This indicates that there is a relationship between teachers' self-esteem and their self-actualization abilities in the learning community during the implementation of the independent curriculum. Furthermore, the correlation coefficient obtained

from the analysis is a value of ( $r = 0.633$ ). This means that the relationship between self-esteem and self-actualization is strong, as it falls within the range of correlation coefficients between 0.41 and 0.70. Moreover, the correlation coefficient in this study is positive (+), signifying that the relationship between self-esteem and self-actualization is proportional. If self-esteem increases, self-actualization also increases, and vice versa. Therefore, to achieve the success of a learning community established in schools, it is essential to enhance the self-esteem of teachers to attain better self-actualization.

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