

# The Effect of School Climate and Peer Attachment on the Self-Esteem of Underprivileged Adolescents

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**Abstract:** Underprivileged adolescents often face challenges that affect their self-esteem, such as limited family support, unstable socio-economic conditions, and educational pressures. Although Islamic boarding schools provide educational and social support, the dormitory environment also presents challenges, including bullying. This study aims to analyze the influence of school climate and peer attachment on the self-esteem of underprivileged adolescents. This quantitative research employed a survey method and involved 60 underprivileged students at the Fathan Mubiina Tahfidz Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, who were selected using purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression analysis. The correlation test results showed that gender, school climate, and peer attachment are significantly related to the self-esteem of underprivileged adolescents. Furthermore, the multiple linear regression test results indicated that school climate and peer attachment have a significant positive effect on the self-esteem of underprivileged adolescents. Gender was also found to have a significant negative effect on self-esteem, with female adolescents having lower self-esteem compared to males. This study emphasizes the importance of creating a positive school climate and strengthening social relationships among peers to improve the self-esteem of underprivileged adolescents.

**Keywords:** Islamic boarding school; peer attachment; school climate; self-esteem; underprivileged adolescents

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescents from low socioeconomic backgrounds in Indonesia face heightened risks to their psychosocial well-being, including low self-esteem. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik [BPS], 2022) show that 10.67% of adolescents aged 10–19 years live in poverty, while records from the Ministry of Social Affairs indicate that more than 67,000 children are categorized as abandoned. "Poverty, loss of parents, and limited access to social and economic resources, conditions often referred to as *dhuafa* (Muksin, 2004), are associated with lower self-esteem and reduced life satisfaction among adolescents (Bannink, Pearce, & Hope, 2016).

Previous studies have identified both internal and external factors influencing self-esteem, with the latter including family relationships, peer relationships, and school climate (Santrock, 2011). For *dhuafa* adolescents, especially those in Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*), the social environment often becomes the primary source of psychosocial support due to limited family presence. However, boarding school settings may also pose challenges such as bullying, reported to occur in 50% of school-based bullying cases (FSGI, 2023), which has been linked to lower self-esteem (Utami et al., 2020; Undheim & Sund, 2010; Ghoul et al., 2013). A positive school climate, encompassing perceptions of fairness, safety, emotional support, and positive relationships, can reduce bullying and promote student well-being (Thapa et al., 2013; Wang & Degol., 2016).

In addition, peer attachment, characterized by intimacy, empathy, and trust (Bukowski et al., 2010), is a significant source of emotional support in adolescence. Close peer relationships in boarding schools, fostered through daily shared activities, can enhance self-esteem and resilience (Mota & Matos, 2013; Luthfi & Husni, 2020). While prior research has explored the effects of school climate and peer relationships separately, studies examining both variables together in the context of *dhuafa*

adolescents in Islamic boarding schools remain scarce. This study addresses that gap by analyzing the influence of school climate and peer attachment on the self-esteem of underprivileged adolescents in a *tahfidz Qur'an* Islamic boarding school.

The specific objectives are to: (1) describe adolescent and family characteristics, school climate, peer attachment, and self-esteem; (2) examine the relationships between these variables; and (3) assess the influence of adolescent characteristics, school climate, and peer attachment on self-esteem. By identifying key social factors that support self-esteem, the findings may inform interventions to foster positive psychosocial development in *dhuafa* adolescents within boarding school environments.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design with an explanatory approach and a cross-sectional design. This approach was chosen to examine the influence of school climate and peer attachment on the self-esteem of *dhuafa* adolescents at a single point in time. The research was conducted at the Fathan Mubina Tahfidz Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, Bogor Regency. The school was purposively selected because a significant portion of its students come from low-income families and/or non-intact families.

This information was obtained from interviews with the school management and secondary data from the school and foundation profiles. According to the official school website and foundation profile, the school implements special programs for orphans and *dhuafa* students, including caregiving and scholarship programs designed to support their education and well-being (Mubina, 2025). Additional evidence comes from the distribution of scholarships to orphans and *dhuafa* students through zakat institutions, such as the Indonesian Zakat Initiative (IZI), which has provided educational scholarships to 20 Quran-memorizing students (IZI, 2025). Data collection took place from April to May 2025.

### 2.2 Sampling

The population in this study comprised second-grade junior high school students at the Islamic boarding school. A purposive sampling technique was applied with the following inclusion criteria: (1) originating from low-income families and (2) having resided at the boarding school for at least one year. For the classification of low-income families, students were considered eligible if their family income fell below the threshold defined by the school's administrative standards for scholarship eligibility, which aligns with the national poverty line and the school's internal data for identifying *dhuafa* students. This threshold was confirmed through interviews with school officials and cross-checked with school records and foundation profiles. A total of 64 students met the initial eligibility criteria based on the school's administrative records and were invited to participate in the study. Out of these, 60 students completed the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 93.75%.

### 2.3 Measurement

Primary data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire completed by respondents under researcher supervision. The study instruments were adapted from validated scales to fit the Islamic boarding school context. School Climate was measured using the Delaware School Survey–Student (Bear et al., 2019), covering seven dimensions and showing high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.930. Peer Attachment was assessed using the Adolescent Friendship Attachment Scale (Wilkinson, 2008) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.924, while Self-Esteem was measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.861. Table 1 below outlines the variables, their operational definitions, and the specific indicators used to measure each construct.

Table 1. Operational Definition and Indicators of Personal Care Determinant Factors

Variables	Operational Definition	Dimensions
School Climate (Bear et al., 2019)	Students' overall perception of the quality and character of their school environment, including relationships, rules, safety, and engagement.	1. Relationship between Caregivers and Students 2. Relationship among Students 3. Student Involvement in the Boarding School 4. Clarity of Rules in the Boarding School 5. Fairness in the Implementation of Boarding School Rules 6. Safety in the Boarding School 7. Bullying in the Boarding School
Peer Attachment (Wilkinson, 2008)	Refers to the emotional bonds and patterns of trust, communication, and dependence formed between adolescents and their peers, categorized as secure, anxious/ambivalent, or avoidant.	1. Secure 2. Anxious/Ambivalent 3. Avoidant
Self-Esteem (Rosenberg, 1965)	Individual's perception and evaluation of their own worth and value as a person.	

#### 2.4 Data Collection

Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires completed in person by respondents under the researcher's guidance. Data collection took place over a five-day period, from March 17 to March 21, 2025, at the Fathan Mubiina Tahfidz Qur'an Islamic Boarding School, Bogor Regency. The instruments were administered in Bahasa Indonesia and adapted from validated scales to fit the boarding school context. The researcher ensured consistent procedures throughout the process, including standardized instructions and on-site assistance, so that the data collection could be replicated by other researchers following the same steps.

#### 2.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were calculated to describe respondents' individual and family characteristics, school climate, peer attachment, and self-esteem. Pearson's correlation test was used to examine the relationships between adolescent characteristics, family characteristics, school climate, peer attachment, and self-esteem. To test the hypotheses, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of the independent variables on self-esteem. All statistical tests were carried out at a significance level of 0.05.

### 3. RESULT

#### 3.1 Underprivileged Adolescents Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents include gender, age, and social status. The gender composition was relatively balanced, consisting of 31 male adolescents (51.7%) and 29 female adolescents (48.3%). The majority were 14 years old (75%), followed by 13 years old (13.3%), 15 years old (10%), and 12 years old (1.7%), with a mean age of 13.93 years and a standard deviation of 0.54 years. In terms of social status, most respondents were non-orphans (48.9%), followed by orphans (43.3%) and double orphans (8.3%). This indicates that the majority of respondents still have both parents, although a small proportion have lost one or both parents.

#### 3.2 Family Characteristics

The family characteristics of the respondents in this study include parents' age, educational attainment, occupation, and family size. The majority of fathers and mothers were in the middle adulthood age group, with an average father's age of 44.76

years and mother's age of 42.05 years. In terms of education, most fathers (53.3%) and mothers (56.7%) had completed senior high school (SMA/MA or equivalent). The occupations of living fathers were distributed across the self-employed sector (15.0%), informal workers (11.7%), and professional workers (11.7%), while a smaller proportion worked in the formal sector (6.7%). On the other hand, most mothers were housewives (31.7%), followed by those engaged in self-employment (25.0%) and informal work (21.7%). Family size was predominantly small to medium, with 48.3% of respondents coming from families of four members or fewer, and 45.0% from families of five to seven members. Only a small proportion (6.7%) came from large families with eight or more members.

### 3.3 Self-Esteem of Underprivileged Adolescents

Self-esteem is defined as the process by which individuals evaluate themselves, which can take the form of either positive or negative assessments. As shown in Table 2, most respondents in this study had self-esteem in the low category, totaling 75% (45 respondents). This indicates that the majority of dhuafa adolescents tend to perceive themselves less positively, which may affect their confidence, motivation, and ability to engage in social and academic activities effectively. The mean self-esteem score in this study was 54.5, with a standard deviation of 15, indicating considerable variation among adolescents in terms of self-esteem.

Table 2. Distribution of the sample by category, minimum and maximum values, mean, and standard deviation of self-esteem among dhuafa adolescents

<b>Self-Esteem</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Low (<60)	45	75
Moderate (60.00–79.99)	12	20
High (≥80.00)	3	5
Total	60	100
Min–Max Index		10 – 90
Mean ± SD		54,5 ± 15

### 3.4 School Climate

School climate refers to students' perceptions of the atmosphere and environment of the school as directly experienced. This perception is reflected in the study findings presented in Table 3, which show that the majority of respondents (65% or 39 respondents) rated the school climate as "fairly good," while 33.3% (20 respondents) rated it as "good," and only 1.7% (1 respondent) rated it as "poor." This indicates that most adolescents feel the school environment is sufficiently supportive, although not entirely ideal. The mean school climate index was 61.7 with a standard deviation of 14.7, and a score range of 26.6–100, reflecting generally positive perceptions, although variation among respondents was observed.

Table 3. Distribution of the sample by category, minimum and maximum values, mean, and standard deviation of school climate

<b>School Climate</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Poor	1	1,7
Fairly Good	39	65,0
Good	20	33,3
Total	60	100
Min–Max		26,6 – 100
Mean ± SD		61,7 ± 14,7

### 3.5 Peer Attachment

Attachment is a strong, stable, and enduring emotional bond between individuals that serves as a source of safety and psychological comfort. In the context of peer relationships, attachment refers to the quality of adolescents' emotional connections with fellow students with whom they frequently interact intensively, serving as a source of security, support, and a place to share. Based on the data analysis presented in Table 4, most respondents demonstrated a secure attachment type, amounting to 93.3% (56 respondents). This indicates that the majority of adolescents in this study have positive and secure relationships with their peers. Meanwhile, only 3.3% of respondents (2 respondents) showed a tendency toward anxious/ambivalent attachment, characterized by a need for closeness accompanied by concern about rejection. In addition, another 3.3% (2 respondents) fell into the avoidant attachment category, generally characterized by a tendency to maintain distance and avoid emotional closeness.

Table 4. Distribution of the sample by category, mean, and standard deviation of peer attachment

Peer Attachment	n	%	Mean ± SD
Secure Attachment	56	93,3	65,1 ± 11,8
Anxious/Ambivalent Attachment	2	3,3	61,2 ± 8,7
Avoidant Attachment	2	3,3	60,3 ± 8,9

### 3.6 Relationship Between Variables

Based on Table 5, the results of the Pearson correlation test show that gender has a significant negative relationship with the self-esteem of *dhuafa* adolescents ( $r = -0.314$ ;  $p = 0.015$ ). Based on the coding used, namely 2 for males and 1 for females, this negative correlation indicates that female adolescents tend to have lower levels of self-esteem compared to male adolescents. Furthermore, school climate has a significant positive relationship with self-esteem ( $r = 0.403$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that the more positive adolescents' perceptions of the school climate, the higher their level of self-esteem. In addition, secure peer attachment also shows a significant positive relationship with self-esteem ( $r = 0.438$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). This indicates that adolescents who feel safe and comfortable in their friendships tend to have higher levels of self-esteem.

Apart from its relationship with self-esteem, several other significant relationships should be noted. First, mother's age is significantly negatively correlated with adolescents' perceptions of school climate ( $r = -0.282$ ;  $p = 0.029$ ), indicating that the older the mother's age, the lower the adolescent's perception of the school climate. Second, father's education shows a significant negative relationship with secure peer attachment ( $r = -0.333$ ;  $p = 0.009$ ), meaning that the higher the father's education level, the lower the level of secure attachment adolescents feel toward their peers. Third, mother's education has a significant negative relationship with school climate ( $r = -0.326$ ;  $p = 0.011$ ). This indicates that the higher the mother's education level, the lower the adolescent's positive perception of school climate. Lastly, there is a significant positive relationship between school climate and secure peer attachment ( $r = 0.464$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). This means that a positive school environment is closely related to the formation of safe and supportive friendships among *dhuafa* adolescents.

Table 5 Correlation coefficients between adolescent characteristics, family characteristics, school climate, peer attachment, and self-esteem of *dhuafa* adolescents

Variable	School Climate	Peer Attachment (Secure)	Peer Attachment (Insecure)	Self-Esteem
Individual Characteristics				
Gender (2 = male; 1 = female)	-0,110	-0,049	0,175	-0,314*
Adolescent age (years)	0,089	-0,067	0,219	-0,041
Family Characteristics				
Father's age (years)	-0,096	-0,010	-0,129	-0,045
Mother's age (years)	-0,282*	-0,174	0,105	-0,081
Father's education (years)	-0,245	-0,333**	0,238	-0,072
Mother's education (years)	-0,326*	-0,163	-0,081	0,000
Family size (persons)	-0,228	-0,135	0,076	-0,064
School Climate	1	0,464**	-0,024	0,403**
Peer Attachment (Secure)	0,464**	1	-0,124	0,438**
Peer Attachment (Insecure)	-0,024	-0,124	1	-0,084

\*Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*Significant at  $p < 0.01$

### 3.7 Regression Analysis

Based on the regression analysis results presented in Table 6, the overall regression model shows significance ( $F = 2.665$ ;  $p = 0.011$ ), with an Adjusted R Square value of 0.220. This means that approximately 22.0% of the variation in the self-esteem of *dhuafa* adolescents can be explained by the independent variables included in the model. Furthermore, several variables in the model show a significant influence on the self-esteem of *dhuafa* adolescents. First, gender has a significant negative effect on self-esteem ( $\beta = -0.286$ ;  $p = 0.021$ ). Based on the coding used (2 for males and 1 for females), this finding indicates that female adolescents tend to have lower self-esteem levels compared to male adolescents.

In addition, perceptions of school climate also show a significant positive effect on self-esteem ( $\beta = 0.291$ ;  $p = 0.044$ ). This result shows that perceptions of school climate contribute significantly to improving self-esteem. Specifically, each one-point increase in perception of school climate will increase the self-esteem score of *dhuafa* adolescents by 0.291. Another variable that has a significant influence is secure peer attachment, which also shows a positive effect on self-esteem ( $\beta = 0.341$ ;  $p = 0.014$ ). Thus, an increase in secure peer attachment contributes to a rise in self-esteem score by 0.341. These results indicate that adolescents who have safe, comfortable, and mutually supportive friendships tend to have higher self-esteem.

Table 6 Regression analysis of adolescent characteristics, family characteristics, school climate, and peer attachment on the self-esteem of *dhuafa* adolescents

Variable	Self-Esteem of <i>Dhuafa</i> Adolescents			
	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. error	Standardized Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Sig.
Individual Characteristics				
Gender (2 = male; 1 = female)	-2,571	1,078	-0,286	0,021*
Adolescent age (years)	-0,219	1,006	-0,026	0,828
Family Characteristics				
Father's age (years)	-0,024	0,028	-0,122	0,392
Mother's age (years)	0,009	0,044	0,026	0,835
Father's education (years)	0,066	0,224	0,042	0,767
Mother's education (years)	0,197	0,201	0,143	0,331
Family size (persons)	0,283	0,407	0,101	0,489
Iklim Sekolah (indeks)	0,199	0,048	0,291	0,044*
Kelekatan Teman Sebaya Dimensi <i>Secure</i> (indeks)	0,199	0,079	0,341	0,014*
Kelekatan Teman Sebaya Dimensi <i>Insecure</i>	-0,006	0,213	-0,003	0,975

Variable	Self-Esteem of Dhuafa Adolescents			
	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Std. error	Standardized Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Sig.
Individual Characteristics (indeks)				
Uji F	2.665			
Sig	0.011*			
R Square	0.352			
Adjusted R Square	0.220			

\*Significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*Significant at  $p < 0.01$

#### 4. DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that there is a negative relationship between gender and the level of self-esteem in dhuafa adolescents. Gender, as an individual factor, tends to be negatively associated with self-esteem in female adolescents. Female adolescents have lower self-esteem levels compared to male adolescents, particularly during adolescence. Findings from various literature also show a clear gender gap during this developmental period. The study by bnisi et al. (2015) found that male adolescent participants had higher self-esteem than female adolescents. Consistent with the findings of Gentile et al. (2009), male participants exhibited significantly higher physical self-esteem and self-worth compared to female participants.

Furthermore, the correlation test results show that family characteristics, particularly mother's age and educational level, are significantly negatively correlated with dhuafa adolescents' perceptions of school climate. The older the mother's age, the lower the adolescent's assessment of their school environment. Older maternal age is often associated with better parenting practices, including more mature and structured disciplinary methods (Barral et al., 2022). Findings by Boivin et al. (2009) and Principe et al. (2017) indicate that such parenting practices enhance children's ability to evaluate environments more critically. Thus, dhuafa adolescents with older mothers are more likely to have a more complex cognitive framework for evaluating school climate, which may lead to more critical or lower assessments.

In addition, dhuafa adolescents whose mothers have higher educational levels tend to give lower assessments of their school environment. This finding is consistent with Yu (2023), who states that highly educated mothers tend to shape better psychological and cognitive qualities in their children but also foster higher environmental expectations. This supports the assumption that dhuafa adolescents from highly educated maternal backgrounds tend to have higher standards for school environments, which could lead to more critical or lower assessments of school climates that do not meet their expectations.

The correlation test results also show that family characteristics, particularly father's education, are significantly negatively correlated with dhuafa adolescents' secure attachment to peers. This indicates that the higher the father's educational level, the lower the adolescent's secure attachment to peers. Previous studies have shown that parental educational background, particularly fathers, influences parenting patterns. Fathers with higher educational levels tend to have high academic expectations for their children. While these expectations may encourage academic excellence, they may have a negative impact on students' mental health, self-esteem, and overall happiness, potentially leading to anxiety, depression, and burnout (Behera & Mahapatra, 2024). Such pressures may divert children's attention away from developing social relationships, including forming secure attachments with peers. Furthermore, Lan et al. (2023) stated that high academic pressure is negatively correlated with social connectedness, which is an important indicator of healthy social relationships, including the ability to form secure attachments with peers.

Furthermore, the correlation test between school climate and dhuafa adolescents' self-esteem shows a significant relationship. A positive and safe school environment provides opportunities for adolescents to feel valued, accepted, and motivated, which in turn can enhance self-esteem (Loukas, 2007). Students who have a more positive perception of school climate report higher levels of self-esteem (Coelho et al., 2020). Similar findings were also found by Way et al. (2007), who emphasized that positive perceptions of a safe and supportive school climate are strongly associated with higher self-esteem levels in students.

In addition, the correlation test shows a significant relationship between peer attachment in the secure attachment dimension and dhuafa adolescents' self-esteem. This indicates that the safer the adolescents' relationships with their peers, the higher their level of self-esteem, particularly among dhuafa adolescents. This is supported by the results of a meta-analysis conducted by Harris and Orth (2020), which revealed that peer attachment has a significant correlation with self-esteem, indicating that the quality of peer relationships plays an important role in the formation of individual self-worth. Similar findings were also shown in a meta-analysis by Gorrese and Ruggieri (2013), that having secure attachment or strong and reliable bonds with peers greatly contributes to the development of adolescents' self-confidence overall. When adolescents have close, trusting relationships with their friends, they are more likely to value themselves, which in turn helps them adjust well in social environments.

Furthermore, the correlation test also found that school climate is significantly related to peer attachment. More positive assessments of school climate, which include aspects such as teacher-student relationships, clarity of expectations, as well as safety and engagement in school, are associated with increased peer attachment. According to Acosta et al. (2019) and Vidourek (2019), higher levels of peer attachment among students are generally a result of positive perceptions of school climate. Moreover, such attachment reflects the school's success in transmitting values and norms that are internalized by students in social interactions.

Based on the multiple linear regression test results, it was found that gender has a significant negative effect on the self-esteem of dhuafa adolescents. This finding is supported by several previous studies that also show differences in self-esteem based on gender. Research by Reyhan (2018) found that gender significantly affects self-esteem and communication anxiety, where females tend to have lower self-esteem than males. Similarly, Indriasari et al. (2023) in their study found that female adolescents with negative body image tend to have lower self-esteem, indicating greater self-esteem vulnerability among female adolescents compared to males.

Furthermore, the multiple linear regression results show that school climate significantly affects dhuafa adolescents' self-esteem. This finding indicates that adolescents' perceptions of a positive school environment can substantially enhance their self-worth. This is consistent with findings by Fisher et al. (2020), which state that positive perceptions of school climate can improve students' self-esteem. Other research also notes that when students feel comfortable and valued in the school environment, they tend to show positive attitudes and mutual care, which contributes to increased self-esteem (Umaroh, 2017; Suhadianto et al., 2021). This finding aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which posits that the school, as a microsystem, has a direct impact on adolescents' psychological well-being.

In addition, secure peer attachment also proves to have a significant influence on the self-esteem of dhuafa adolescents. This confirms the importance of positive and safe social relationships in enhancing adolescents' self-confidence. Mota and Matos (2013) explain that secure attachment with peers has a positive impact on adolescents' self-esteem, where the quality of peer relationships can strengthen social skills, which in turn contributes to increased self-esteem. Students who develop secure attachments with peers are better able to express their thoughts, feelings, and emotions more openly, thereby feeling more comfortable and safe, which in turn can reduce negative emotional feelings (Lestari & Satwika, 2018). This supports Bowlby's (1988)

attachment theory, which states that secure attachment with peers helps individuals build self-confidence and emotional stability.

This study has limitations, including that some respondents demonstrated a lack of understanding of family conditions such as family income, parental education level, and parents' ages, so the researcher utilized secondary data obtained from the Islamic boarding school. In addition, this study assessed school climate from the perspective of the students and has not yet considered viewpoints from other parties involved in the educational and caregiving processes at the Islamic boarding school.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

### 5.1 Conclusions

This study involved 60 students selected based on specific criteria, namely students from families who had lost one or both parents and/or had low socioeconomic conditions. The majority of respondents were 14 years old, with a mean age of 13.93 years, and the gender distribution was nearly balanced, with 51.7% male and 48.3% female. Most respondents came from non-intact families, with 43.3% of adolescents having lost their father and 8.3% having lost both parents, while 48.9% still had both parents. In terms of family characteristics, most fathers and mothers of respondents were in the middle adulthood age group (41–60 years), with the mean father's age being 44.76 years and the mean mother's age being 42.05 years. The highest level of education for most parents was senior high school (SMA/MA), with most fathers working in self-employed or informal sectors, while most mothers worked as housewives. In terms of family size, the majority of families consisted of four members or fewer.

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between adolescent characteristics, school climate, and peer attachment (secure dimension) and the self-esteem of *dhuafa* adolescents. The correlation test showed that gender, school climate, and secure attachment had significant relationships with self-esteem. The negative relationship between gender and self-esteem indicates that female adolescents tend to have lower self-esteem than male adolescents, consistent with findings from previous studies. Furthermore, a positive and safe school climate significantly contributes to improving the self-esteem of *dhuafa* adolescents. This supportive environment allows adolescents to feel valued and accepted, which plays an important role in self-esteem development. In addition, secure attachment was also found to have a significant relationship with self-esteem, with adolescents who have close relationships with peers showing higher levels of self-esteem.

In addition, the multiple linear regression analysis revealed that gender, school climate, and secure attachment had significant effects on the self-esteem of *dhuafa* adolescents. Gender had a negative effect on self-esteem, with female adolescents tending to have lower self-esteem. A positive school climate and secure peer attachment also play important roles in improving self-esteem, with both factors strengthening adolescents' self-confidence. These findings reinforce Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which states that microsystem environments, such as school and peers, have a direct influence on adolescents' psychological well-being. Thus, school climate and peer attachment play important roles in shaping positive self-esteem in *dhuafa* adolescents.

### 5.2 Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, the school climate in the Islamic boarding school is important to support the self-esteem development of *dhuafa* adolescents. The data indicate the presence of negative perceptions of rules that are considered unfair and burdensome. Evaluation of these rules should involve students and adopt an educational and dialogical approach in enforcing discipline to create a sense of fairness. In addition, students' concerns about the risk of bullying, both verbal and

unpleasant treatment, indicate the need for strengthened protection and supervision. The establishment of an anti-bullying team, empathy and conflict resolution training, and a safe space for anonymous reporting are strategic steps to create a safe, supportive, and conducive school climate.

Furthermore, the Islamic boarding school can strengthen *dhuafa* adolescents' self-esteem by creating an inclusive environment that supports social relationships and self-empowerment of students. Peer mentoring groups, social skills training, and group counseling can help students overcome feelings of insecurity. Life skills and leadership programs also play a role in building self-confidence and independence. Strengthening relationships among students through peer mentoring or group discussions can form a positive social support network. These efforts are crucial because there are still students with anxious/ambivalent and avoidant attachment patterns, which can hinder self-esteem development if not addressed through appropriate social-emotional interventions.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct interviews or focus group discussions to gain deeper insights into participants' experiences. Research should also consider the influence of biological parents and foster parents in shaping adolescents' self-esteem. In addition, expanding the sample by comparing other Islamic boarding schools that focus on *dhuafa* students will provide more comprehensive insights into the factors influencing self-esteem. This research can also explore differences in self-esteem between adolescents who have stayed longer at the Islamic boarding school.

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