

Who Regulates Better? Emotional Regulation Across Gender and School Grades

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Abstract: Recent research data shows that adolescents often experience poor emotional health. This study aims to describe the emotional regulation of students at SMAN 10 Padang. This study employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive comparative method. Two hundred and ninety students at SMAN 10 Padang were selected using proportional random sampling for the study in the 2022/2023 academic year. Data were collected using the Student Emotional Regulation Scale, developed based on the Likert scale model. The data were analyzed descriptively and then subjected to a two-way ANOVA test using JASP (Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program) software. The results indicate that students' emotional regulation at SMAN 10 Padang is moderate overall. This suggests that students at SMAN 10 Padang require intervention to improve their emotional regulation. Furthermore, the difference test showed that there were differences in emotional regulation levels between grades X, XI, and XII; no significant differences were found between males' and females' emotional regulation overall; and a significant interaction was found between grade and gender on emotional regulation ($p=.027$). This suggests that gender's influence on emotional regulation varies by grade level. The discussion focuses on the overall state of emotional regulation and the diversity of levels among Grade XI students, as well as the implications for guidance and counseling.

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Santrock, (2007), adolescence begins at age 12 and ends at age 18 or 22. It is a period of identity formation characterized by significant changes. Adolescence is a period of significant change, involving biological, cognitive, social-emotional, hormonal, and psychophysiological developments (Coret et al., 2022; Dumar et al., 2023; Ellis & Sidebotham, 2023; Parfanovych et al., 2022; Wardani & Asih, 2022). During this period, one is actively searching for oneself and experiences emotional fluctuations (Gregorová et al., 2024; Schweizer et al., 2020). During the exploration period, adolescents establish an identity that can be connected to their cognitive processes (Hurlock, 1991; RD, 2020). This period is characterized by significant changes in adolescent interactions, which are driven by a desire to explore and form their identities.

Adolescence is a time when individuals are vulnerable to emotional problems. According to World Health Organization, (2024) data from 2024, around 10-20% of adolescents worldwide experience mental health issues, including emotional disorders. According to data from the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (CDC), (2021) more than 42% of US adolescents experience significant emotional problems, such as constant feelings of sadness or hopelessness, and 29% experience poor mental health and emotional conditions. Furthermore, Indonesian adolescents are not too different from adolescents in other countries. In Indonesia, 9.9% of adolescents over the age of 15, or 706,689 people, have emotional disorders (Riskesdas, 2018). Based on these data, emotional factors appear to play a role in individuals' mental health conditions. Peterle et al., (2022) found that the prevalence of emotional and behavioral problems was 61.17%. Furthermore, the study found that emotional symptoms had the highest prevalence at 52.40%. Adolescents experience

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increased loneliness, anxiety, and sadness. They distance themselves from friends and have difficulty socializing. Additionally, Agustin & Oshinta, (2023) research shows a relationship between emotional regulation and bullying behavior tendencies in vocational students. Similarly, Sari et al., (2023) found that poor emotional regulation skills in teenagers are also caused by a relationship between self-control and bullying behavior. Next, Shtiwi, (2023) research revealed that information identity style is positively related to emotion regulation in adolescents. Based on the above explanations, emotional problems in adolescents are prevalent and affect mental health and social behavior. Therefore, emotion regulation is an important aspect to consider when developing interventions for adolescents.

Adolescents around the world face many challenges, ranging from social and economic constraints to health problems and psychological stress. They also experience challenges at school, at home, and with peers that can significantly impact their development, such as psychosocial disorders, juvenile delinquency, and aggressive behavior (Bhat et al., 2020; Kweon, 2023). Ideally, adolescents are able to regulate and control their emotions during this time. This ability is called emotion regulation (Gross & Fortd, 2024). Emotion regulation is defined as the ability to control one's emotions (Kim et al., 2024). Various factors affecting adolescent emotion regulation include age, physiology, parenting, and relationships with peers (Novita, 2022; Widyadari & Fitriani, 2023). These factors influence the cognitive understanding of emotional expression rules during adolescence (Yin, 2024). The ability to regulate emotions is essential for adolescents to face life's challenges effectively. It is important not only for mental health but also for building positive relationships with others (Ivcevic & Eggers, 2021; Parry et al., 2021; Waizman et al., 2023). Teenagers who can regulate their emotions tend to be more popular and better at interacting with friends. They also tend to have better academic grades and emotional intelligence (Gross & Fortd, 2024; R. E. Susanti, Firman & Daharnis 2021). The ability to manage, control, and regulate one's emotions is important for various aspects of life. This allows individuals to live better, more balanced lives.

Based on the described phenomenon, it can be concluded that low emotional regulation ability in adolescents is a crucial factor that can trigger interpersonal conflicts, hinder social adaptation processes, and increase the risk of psychological disorders in everyday life. Therefore, assistance from an expert is necessary, whether through classical,

individual, group, or collaborative strategies. Counselors can help students overcome their problems by implementing guidance and counseling (GC) services at school. BK is a professional service organized within educational units that includes program components, service areas, activities, and service time allocations. BK services in schools are used to address learning, personal, social, and career issues (Firman, Karneli & Hariko, 2018). This study aims to describe students' emotion regulation and review comparative differences between males and females, as well as between grade levels, related to emotion regulation at SMAN 10 Padang.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

The respondents were 290 students (R age = 15-18 years; female = 168 students) were surveyed from a population of 1,046 students at SMAN 10 Padang during the 2022/2023 academic year. The study used a quantitative approach with a comparative descriptive method. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula ($e=5\%$). Data were collected using the Student Emotion Regulation Scale which was prepared based on the Likert scale model. The data were analyzed descriptively, then continued with a two-way ANOVA test using Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) software to obtain a more comprehensive and accurate interpretation of the variables studied.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The distribution of respondents' scores based on emotion regulation research is summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Emotion Regulation (n=290).

Category	Interval		f	% f
	Score	% Score		
Very High	131-155	84 - 100	26	8.97
High	106-130	68 - 83	86	29,66
Medium	81-105	52 - 67	95	32,76
Low	56-80	36 - 51	67	23,10
Very Low	31-55	20 - 35	16	5,52
	Amount		290	100

Based on Table 1, it can be explained that the largest percentage of respondents' answer scores is in the medium category (32.76%). However, there are respondents' answer scores that are in the low (23.10%) and very low (5.52%) categories. Meanwhile, there are respondents' answer scores that are already in the high (29.66%) and very high (8.97%) categories. Based on these data, it can be concluded that the distribution of emotional regulation data of SMAN 10 Padang students is dominantly in the moderate category.

In order to draw descriptive conclusions about the picture of emotional regulation of students of SMAN 10 Padang, in Table 2 below is presented the value of one of the coefficients of the tendency of data centering (mean) and data distribution (standard deviation), both for the variable (overall) and the sub-variable of emotional regulation.

Table 2: Student's Emotion Regulation (n=290).

No	Sub Variabel	Skor			
		Total	Avrg	% average	Cat.
1	<i>Strategies</i>	4499	15.51	62.06	Medium
2	<i>Goals</i>	7920	27.31	60.69	Medium
3	<i>Impulse</i>	8982	30.97	61.94	Medium
4	<i>Acceptance</i>	6561	22.62	64.64	Medium
Total		27962	96.42	62.21	Medium

According to Table 2, students at SMAN 10 Padang are in the moderate/medium category ($\bar{x} = 32.76\%$). A review of each of the other emotional regulation sub-variables is in the moderate category. In descending order from the lowest value, the percentages of each sub-variable are as follows: goal aspect (60.69%), emotional response control (61.94%), strategy (62.06%), and emotional response acceptance (64.64%). These results indicate that students do not yet have good emotional regulation because they are still in the moderate category. This condition requires serious attention and optimization of emotional regulation improvement so that students can live better lives.

Table 3: Assumption Test Results (Descriptive).

<i>Descriptive Statistics</i>	Emotion Regulation
Valid	290
Missing	0
Mean	96.421
Std. Deviation	23.804
Shapiro-Wilk	0.985
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	0.004
Minimum	40.000
Maximum	145.000

Furthermore, normality and homogeneity tests were performed on the research assumptions using JASP 0.18.1.0 software.

The Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted to determine if the obtained data were normally distributed (Lusiana & Mahmudi, 2021). The homogeneity test was used to determine if the obtained research data had the same variance (Mulyana et al., 2020). After conducting the normality assumption test using JASP software version 0.18.1.0, the researcher found that the data were normally distributed. Since there were more than one hundred respondents, the Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.985 can be considered normal (Azwar, 2017).

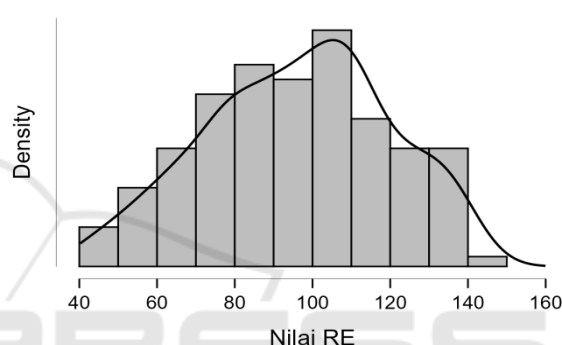


Figure 1: Descriptive Test Results in Table Form.

Furthermore, the histogram of emotional regulation (ER) data for students at SMA N 10 Padang, shown in the graph above, indicates that the curve is close to normal distribution. This is indicated by a bell-shaped curve, which has a peak in the middle and is relatively symmetrical on the right and left sides. Most values fall within the range of 80 to 120, suggesting that most students have moderate to high levels of emotional regulation. There are no extreme spikes or significant deviations; therefore, it can be assumed that the data does not contain outliers that could interfere with the assumption of normality. Thus, visually, this ER data meets the assumption of normality.

In addition to examining the descriptive table, the researcher analyzed the data using a plot graph. Figure 2 below shows a more detailed presentation.

As can be seen, most of the data points lie along the diagonal line, indicating that the residual distribution is nearly normal. Though there are slight deviations at the ends (lower and upper tails), the overall pattern aligns well with the theoretical normal line. Therefore, the assumption of residual normality is satisfied.

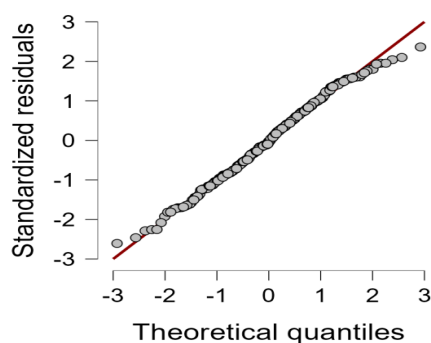


Figure 2: Assumption Test Results (Distribution Plot).

Based on the results of the variance homogeneity test using Levene's test, an F-value of 1.592 was obtained, with degrees of freedom of $df1 = 5$ and $df2 = 284$ and a p-value of 0.162. Since $p > 0.05$, there is no significant difference in variance between groups. Therefore, the data in this study meet the assumption of homogeneity of variance. This indicates that the variance of emotional regulation is uniform or equivalent between groups based on gender (male and female) and grade level (X, XI, and XII). The results of the homogeneity test are presented in more detail in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Homogeneity Test.

Test for Equality of Variances (Levene's)

F	df1	df2	p
1.592	5.000	284.000	0.162

Next, we tested the hypothesis by performing a two-way ANOVA analysis to examine differences in emotional regulation levels among adolescents based on gender and grade level. We performed the two-way ANOVA analysis using JASP software, version 0.18.1.0. The results of the test are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Hypothesis Test Two Way Anova.

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	ω^2_p
Class	12431.033	2	6215.516	11.849	< .001	0.070
Gender	126.370	1	126.370	0.241	0.624	0.000
Class * Gender	3856.124	2	1928.062	3.675	0.027	0.018
Residuals	148980.297	284	524.579	11.849	< .001	0.070

The results of the two-way ANOVA analysis showed that the significance value of emotional regulation in the class range was $p < .001$, indicating

a difference in emotional regulation levels between classes X, XI, and XII. Next, the researcher examined the level of emotional regulation in relation to gender and found that the demographic factor was not significant for male and female adolescents ($p = 0.624$). This means that there is no significant difference in overall RE values between males and females. However, the differences in values between males and females vary by class. The effect of class (X, XI, and XII) on values varies by gender. Furthermore, the interaction between gender and class ($p = .027$) indicates a significant interaction between class and gender in regard to emotional regulation. This suggests that gender's influence on emotional regulation varies by class. In other words, the effect of gender on emotional regulation scores varies by class. Figure 2 presents Raincloud Plots divided by gender and class level to illustrate these differences.

Based on the raincloud plots in Figure 2, Class X shows that most students have moderate levels of emotional regulation. Class XI shows greater diversity in students' emotional regulation abilities. Some students have high emotional regulation abilities, while others have low abilities. Class XII shows that most students have low emotional regulation. This indicates that they have difficulty managing and expressing their emotions in adaptive ways.

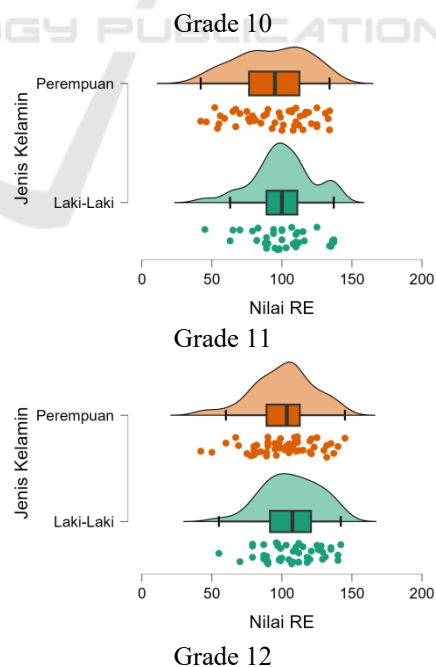


Figure 2: Raincloud Plots Two-Way ANOVA Test.

Of course, this finding is contrary to the research hypothesis, and the results of the analysis also contradict previous studies that prove that emotional regulation differs between male and female adolescent (Ratnasari & Suleeman, 2017). However, the researchers' results are in line with those of a previous study (Maharani Swastika & Prastuti, 2021), which also showed no differences in levels between male and female adolescents. This finding is significant because previous studies have indicated that demographic variables, such as gender, influence an individual's ability to regulate emotions (Hasmarlin & Hirmaningsih, 2019; Mulyana et al., 2020; Ratnasari & Suleeman, 2017).

3.2 Discussion

Emotional regulation is the ability to manage one's own emotions (Gross & Fortd, 2024). It refers to how and when a person controls their emotions (Kim et al., 2024). Adolescents with good emotional regulation skills tend to cope better with stress, resolve conflicts more easily, and improve their overall well-being (Ivcevic & Eggers, 2021). In other words, effective emotional regulation is important for maintaining mental balance, fostering healthy interpersonal relationships, and developing the ability to face life's challenges. Adolescents have opportunities to grow socially, emotionally, and in terms of their personalities, relationships, and interactions with peers (Hashmi & Fayyaz, 2022). These experiences enhance their understanding of emotions, empathy, and social skills, which are important for adolescent personal and social development (Tcharkhalashvili, 2023).

The results of the descriptive analysis of emotional regulation among students at SMAN 10 Padang were generally in the moderate category. This finding suggests that the majority of students lack the capacity to effectively regulate their emotions. As indicated by the findings in the 11th grade, a greater degree of heterogeneity was observed in the students' emotional regulation levels. This diversity is indicative of variations in the levels of emotional control, self-awareness, and coping strategies among students (Reynard et al., 2022; Silvers, 2022). The eleventh grade is distinguished by mounting academic pressure, intensive exam preparation, and the transition to a more advanced level of education. These factors have been shown to exert a substantial influence on emotional well-being. Furthermore, students in the eleventh grade encounter augmented academic obligations. These students often face more intricate learning demands, including final exam

preparation and participation in the National Science Olympiad (OSN), which can result in a notable escalation in academic pressure. This pressure can trigger stress and difficulties in regulating emotions if coping strategies are inadequate (Khan & Jameel, 2024).

In addition to academic factors, another significant cause is psychosocial changes during adolescence, including feelings of being a "senior" that trigger a need for validation from peers and teachers (Khan & Jameel, 2024; McRae & Gross, 2020). The attainment of senior status engenders an augmentation of social pressure and intricate academic expectations. As students reach their senior year of high school, they often experience heightened feelings of surveillance and expectations. This need for validation has the potential to disrupt emotional well-being due to an excessive reliance on external responses (McRae & Gross, 2020). Research has demonstrated that fragile self-esteem can precipitate more profound emotional responses when validation is not received (Tanjung Mutia & Sukmawati, 2019). This phenomenon exerts a significant influence on the selection of regulatory strategies, prompting a choice between adaptive and maladaptive approaches.

However, students' emotional conditions can also be supported by protective factors such as social support from the school environment. This is possible because one of the factors that supports good emotional regulation in students is social support from the school environment, including support from teachers, peers, and school staff. The social support provided to students plays an important role in helping them develop good emotional regulation (Kartikasari et al., 2022; Nurfarhanah et al., 2022; Vienlentina, 2021). The social-emotional growth of adolescents can be observed through parental support factors, as well as school environment factors in helping to improve social interaction skills and emotional regulation abilities in adolescents (Rachman et al., 2023). This means that during adolescence, the aspects that develop significantly are social and emotional development. Enhancing the ability to regulate positive emotions in adolescents can lead to improved academic performance, relationship quality, and overall affective well-being outcomes (Ivcevic & Eggers, 2021).

The findings presented above, supported by research results, indicate that factors influencing an individual's emotional regulation are influenced by parenting style, emotional support, peers, including age and gender. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by (Zheng, 2023), which states that parenting style and emotional support influence

emotional regulation ability. Furthermore, the study by (Nuralfiah et al., 2024) revealed that factors influencing an individual's emotional regulation originate from internal factors such as self-control and external factors such as family predictors and environmental context. Additionally, (Putri et al., 2023) demonstrated that social support at school, including teachers' active involvement in guiding students, significantly contributes to students' emotional regulation abilities. This is because a positive and supportive school environment allows students to feel safe and emotionally supported, facilitating their ability to manage emotions. Families also play an important role in the development of students' emotional regulation (Syakarofath, 2022). Positive parenting, where parents provide emotional attention and support, provides a strong foundation for students to manage their emotions at school. This indicates that if someone is surrounded by close people with positive and supportive support, it will have an impact on their emotional level. In line with this, emotional regulation is associated with better adjustment in psychologically healthy adolescents (Gross, 2007; Gross & Fortd, 2024). For example, emotional regulation skills in healthy adolescents are associated with higher social competence, more prosocial behavior, better academic achievement, and higher self-esteem.

In addition, there are still students who do not have the ability or experience difficulties in controlling their emotions, so that student emotional regulation is still found to be in the low or even very low category. There are several factors contributing to low emotional regulation in students, including physiological and psychological changes during adolescence. Adolescence is a transitional period marked by significant changes, both physically and psychologically. The significant hormonal changes during this period often lead to intense emotional fluctuations (Batubara, 2016; Hurlock, 1991). As a result of these changes, adolescents who are unable to manage or regulate their emotions tend to exhibit negative behaviors and may engage in aggressive behaviors (Febriani & Hariko, 2023; M. E. Putri et al., 2020). Aggressive behavior emerges as a consequence of impaired emotional regulation in adolescents. A notable instance of this phenomenon is cyberbullying, which refers to online harassment of individuals (Marneta & Sukmawati, 2021; Putryani et al., 2021; Saputri & Ilyas, 2020).

The ability to regulate emotions proficiently is of paramount importance for all individuals. Emotional regulation is a critical factor in adolescents' capacity to cope with the developmental challenges they

encounter. The capacity to modulate emotions is indispensable for myriad facets of life, encompassing academic performance, psychological well-being, and social interactions (Waizman et al., 2023). Overall, the ability to manage emotions not only fosters individual well-being but also enhances interpersonal relationships in both personal and social functions (Parry et al., 2021). Consequently, research (Annisa et al., 2024) has demonstrated a positive correlation between emotion regulation and self-efficacy in relation to the academic resilience of students. Consequently, an elevated capacity for emotion regulation and self-efficacy among students is associated with a heightened level of academic resilience.

In light of the aforementioned conditions, there is an imperative for comprehensive interventions that can be implemented by educators in schools, particularly counselors as providers of guidance and counseling services. Guidance and counseling services, when provided to schools, have been shown to facilitate students' self-understanding and decision-making processes, enabling them to take ownership of their choices (Firman, 2009). The provision of more intensive counseling services and stress management skills training has been demonstrated to facilitate the development of more effective emotional regulation skills in students. A multitude of counseling services have been identified as potential mechanisms for enhancing students' emotional regulation, including individual counseling services and group counseling services (Latupasjana & Firman, 2020; Nirwana, 2014; Yunika et al., 2013).

Individual counseling services involve providing assistance through counseling interviews with an expert (counselor) to individuals (clients) experiencing problems, with the aim of resolving these issues (Prayitno & Amti, 2004). Information services aim to provide individuals with the knowledge they need to engage in a particular activity, set goals or make plans. The purpose of information services is to provide individuals with knowledge about themselves and their environment (Prayitno, 2009; Syukur et al., 2019).

This aligns with research (Nuryono & N Safinatun, 2023) indicating that individual counseling is effective in enhancing students' emotional regulation. It is effective in helping students to develop better emotional regulation skills by providing a safe space in which they can openly discuss their feelings without fear of social judgement. Those who can control their negative emotions will be able to live life to the fullest, interact

well with their surroundings and manage excessive feelings that arise from within (Zonya & Sano, 2019).

In addition to individual counseling and information services, group counseling services are effective in improving student regulation. Group counseling is more commonly used to address academic, personal, social, and career issues, as well as to activate group dynamics to discuss various topics beneficial for personal development and/or problem-solving among individual participants in group activities (Fatmawati et al., 2022; Hariko et al., 2021, 2023). Group counseling is more efficient as it can serve many individuals in a shorter time (Corey et al., 2018; Neukrug, 2016). Groups are an excellent choice in counseling services to discuss intrapersonal and interpersonal issues and facilitate positive student development to create opportunities for change, often referred to as self-development groups (Berg et al., 2018; Corey et al., 2014). Groups in counseling provide a sense of community that shows individuals they are not alone and that there is hope for creating a different life, as well as helping adolescents overcome feelings of isolation.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the descriptive data analysis indicate that the overall level of emotional regulation among students at SMAN 10 Padang falls within the moderate category. This finding suggests that the majority of students are still at an intermediate stage in terms of their ability to manage emotions effectively. The findings from grade XI students exhibited a higher degree of variability, indicative of individual differences in emotional control, emotional awareness, and coping strategies employed. A comparative analysis revealed significant differences in the level of emotional regulation among students in grades X, XI, and XII ($p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that the development of emotional regulation in adolescents changes as they progress through different educational levels. Concurrently, no substantial disparities were observed between male and female students in general ($p = 0.624$), indicating that gender does not significantly contribute to variations in students' emotional regulation abilities. However, the results of the interaction test between grade and gender showed a significant value ($p = 0.027$), meaning that the effect of gender on emotional regulation is not consistent across all grade levels but is influenced by the developmental context of each grade level.

The findings of this study demonstrate that, in general, adolescents' emotional regulation is more strongly influenced by their grade level than by their gender. However, the interaction between these two factors gives rise to specific dynamics that merit further examination. These findings are significant because they provide a foundation for the development of intervention programs or counseling services that are tailored to grade level and take gender characteristics into consideration within the context of adolescent development.

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