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The Influence of Spirituality on the Resilience of Victims of Online Gender-Based Violence in Early Adulthood: Self-Esteem Mediation

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Abstract. Easy internet access and rising usage intensity have contributed to the rise in Online Gender Based Violence (OGBV), with early adult showing the highest internet use. Resilience has an important role for victims to deal with the negative impact. Spirituality is one predictor of resilience, but previous findings show a weak relationship between the two, so a mediator variable is needed. Spirituality, which also affects self-esteem, may help enhance resilience. Using a quantitative method, this study aims to determine the role of self-esteem in mediating the effect of spirituality on resilience in early adult victims of OGBV. A total of 116 OGBV victims aged 18–25 and living in West Java were selected through purposive sampling to complete the CD-RISC, SWBQ and SLCS-R scale questionnaires online. Data were analyzed using path regression and bootstrapping with Process Macro for SPSS 4.2. The results showed that there was a significant effect of spirituality on resilience in early adult victims of OGBV by 0.0135 ($p < 0.05$). Then there is a significant effect of self-esteem on resilience in early adult victims of OGBV by 0.0000 ($p < 0.05$). Then it is proven that there is a role of self-esteem in mediating the effect of spirituality on the resilience of early adult victims of OGBV by 0.8463 ($p < 0.05$). Spirituality contributes 56.82% to resilience through self-esteem, and the remaining 43.18% is explained by other variables excluded from the study. Practically, strengthening spiritual aspects can be an effective intervention to improve the self-esteem and resilience in OGBV survivors.

Keywords: Resilience; spirituality; self-esteem; online gender based violence; early adult.

INTRODUCTION

The ease of access to the internet that is currently felt brings many benefits, but on the other hand, it actually triggers and contributes to the presence of a new type of crime phenomenon, one of which is Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV). OGBV is one of the negative impacts caused by technological developments and the increasing use of the internet. According to a survey conducted by APJII (2024), the number of internet users in Indonesia is expected to increase to 221.56 million, representing 79.50% of the total population.

Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV) is a form of violence that leads to an attack on a person's gender or sexuality through technology such as cell phones, the internet, social media, or email (Adkiras et al., 2021). According to Awanisa et al., (2023) OGBV can occur due to the relationship of gender power between the victim and the perpetrator. Power relations themselves are hierarchical, unequal, and dependent on social, cultural, economic, and knowledge status,

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which gives one party greater power (Su'ada & Hannah, 2023). Violent activities in online spaces can be in the form of the use of sexually nuanced language, threats of rape and murder, indecent comments, sexual innuendo, or ridicule (Fenton et al., 2024).

The Female National Committee reported that OGBV cases in Indonesia increased by 40.8% in 2024 compared to the previous year (KOMNAS Perempuan, 2025). Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network SAFEnet (2024) recorded an increase in complaints of OGBV cases from July to September 20, totaling 599, with the majority of victims being women (47.4%) rather than men (42.7%). Women are the group most at risk of experiencing OGBV due to a patriarchal culture that views women's status as inferior (Su'ada & Hannah, 2023). This condition is in line with international findings, where the United Nations Population Fund (2025) reported that around 60% of women around the world have experienced OGBV. However, it is possible that men can also experience OGBV. It is just that most of the male victims do not report their experiences because there is a social stigma that makes their masculinity doubted (Rifqi et al., 2024).

Based on region, West Java Province is known to have the highest number of OGBV complaints during July to September 2024, totaling 142 (SAFEnet, 2024). In addition, an internet penetration survey conducted by APJII (2024) found that West Java has the highest internet penetration rate in Indonesia at 19.24%. The high number of complaints may be due to the availability of easily accessible service institutions to handle cases, allowing more victims to report their experiences (KOMNAS Perempuan, 2024).

As for age, it was recorded that the highest OGBV victims were in the age group of 18-25 years (SAFEnet, 2024). It is because this age group spends more time on the internet and is considered a generation that grew up in the era of digitalization, so that the perpetrators consider the early adult group as a vulnerable and appropriate target (Khoiriyah et al., 2024; Martínez-Bacaicoa et al., 2024; Powell & Henry, 2019). The high level of digital activity in early adulthood makes this group vulnerable to experiencing OGBV. Although internet use does not directly cause sexual violence, there is a correlation between internet use and an increased risk of technology-facilitated sexual violence (Mu'azzaroh & Cahyanti, 2023).

Although this type of violence is basically carried out in the online realm, OGBV's actions can extend and have a direct impact on the real world. The impact of OGBV on victims tends to be long-term because digital footprints are difficult to remove, anonymous perpetrators are difficult to detect, and the ITE Law does not guarantee protection for victims (Isnawati et al., 2022). The rapid spread of explicit content online can cause trauma for victims due to the social stigma they face (Zaltina & Nurtjahyo, 2024). Thus, the experience of OGBV has profound effects on the victim's life, including shame, depression, anxiety, fear, economic loss, self-isolation, limiting oneself on the internet, PTSD, and somatic symptoms (Patel & Roesch, 2022; Putri et al., 2022).

The experience of OGBV can have adverse psychological effects, but in fact, humans can bounce back or be resilient (Ford & Ivancic, 2020). Resilience is the ability to adapt to difficulties using the skills and capacities one possesses, with a positive approach (Djuri et al., 2024). Resilience is crucial for victims in dealing with violent trauma (Ferguson & Brausch, 2022). Victims of OGBV need resilience to overcome the grief, fear, and despair that arise from the suffering they feel (Martínez-Bacaicoa et al., 2024). Resilience helps the victim maintain their health and recover physically, psychologically, and socially after experiencing a traumatic event (Kaisar & Kurniawan, 2022). Supporting this, the study by Wahyudi et al. (2023) shows that the more resilient a person is in the face of the negative impact of violence, the higher their psychological well-being. Likewise, as revealed by Kusristanti et al., (2020) the more resilience they have, the smaller the risk of victims experiencing PTSD symptoms. In contrast, victims who have low levels of resilience tend to be unable to cope with experiences of violence positively, making it difficult to escape the repeated cycle of violence (Afifah & Merdiaty, 2024).

Resilience can be affected by both internal and external factors. One internal factor that drives resilience is spirituality (Sukadana, 2025). Spirituality refers to the ways individuals explore and express meaning and purpose, and to their experiences of relationships with the present, themselves, others, nature, and something transcendent (Schwalm et al., 2022). Spirituality plays an important role in survival and recovery from crises, including violent experiences, because it can provide peace of mind and strength, enabling victims to face life's challenges (Dewi & Hamzah, 2019; Pertek, 2022). Yudhawati (2020) explained that individuals with spirituality will be aware of existential problems in their lives and feel able to face them or, at least, reconcile with them. Spirituality increases resilience through relationships, life values, personal meaning, and coping (Schwalm et al., 2022). However, although spirituality can affect resilience, some studies report a weak relationship between the two variables (Edis & Bal, 2024; Karahan et al., 2024; Morato et al., 2023). These findings indicate that it is necessary to consider other factors that can affect resilience, beyond spirituality, such as self-esteem.

Self-esteem is known to play a protective role against adverse impacts on cognition, emotions, and behavior, enabling individuals to cope with stressful situations (Moltafet & Sharifi, 2021). The explanation is supported by the findings of Mouatsou & Koutra (2023) which show that self-esteem affects the regulation of emotions and stress, thereby contributing to the development of resilience. In line with Maslow's work in (Asfami et al., 2020), high self-esteem fosters a sense of confidence, enabling individuals to feel confident in their strengths and abilities and to be motivated to face the difficulties they encounter (Muvariz et al., 2020). Murti & Wibowo (2024) also found that individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to view themselves positively, thereby fostering resilience.

Kielkiewicz et al., (2020) stated that spirituality also contributes to the formation of self-esteem. There are many areas of spirituality, such as happiness, spiritual practice, the search for meaning in life, virtual existence, beliefs, and prayer, that can affect how an individual views and treats himself or herself, known as self-esteem (Chen & Ma, 2023). A positive concept of God, seen as able to provide emotional support and accept individuals unconditionally, can foster an awareness of purpose, meaning, and identity, which are the main components of self-esteem (Craig et al., 2022; Gábová et al., 2021; Singh & Imran, 2024).

These studies show that self-esteem can serve as a mediator in the influence of spirituality on resilience, with a similar model conducted by Borji et al., (2019) on students in Iran, who found that the indirect influence of spiritual health on resilience, mediated by self-esteem, was greater than the direct influence without mediation. In other words, self-esteem, as a mediating variable, amplifies the influence of spiritual health on resilience. However, until now, there has been no study that specifically examines the role of self-esteem as a mediator in the influence of spirituality on resilience in early adulthood OGBV victims. In fact, cases of OGBV are increasing sharply and have a long-term impact on the victims. The research gap provides strong originality for this research. Therefore, this study aims to prove the role of self-esteem in mediating the influence of spirituality on the resilience of early adulthood OGBV victims. In line with this goal, the hypothesis proposed is that there is a role of self-esteem in mediating the influence of spirituality on the resilience of early adulthood victims of OGBV.

METHOD

This study involved early adulthood OGBV victims in West Java as a research population, because it is the area with the highest OGBV complaints and the most significant internet penetration in Indonesia. However, because the total number of unidentified populations is large, the researcher uses a sample to represent the research population. The minimum sample size was calculated using

G*Power 3.1.9.7 software with an *F-test* analysis. In calculating the sample size, the effect size (f^2) is set at 0.15, the significance level at 0.05, the statistical power at 0.95, and the number of predictors at 2, in accordance with the provisions of the mediation research model (Sofyani, 2023). Based on the calculation results, the minimum sample size was determined to be 107 respondents.

The samples in this study were selected using the purposive sampling technique, a method based on the researcher's specific criteria (Sugiyono, 2013). Purposive sampling was selected because the topic of OGBV is sensitive, and many victims are reluctant to reveal their experiences, so it is necessary to select respondents based on characteristics that align with the research objectives. The inclusion criteria in this study include: (1) having experienced Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV), (2) aged 18-25 years, and (3) domiciled in West Java. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria are respondents who do not complete the questionnaire or who double-fill it.

In this study, data were collected via an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Respondents are first asked to read and give consent through Informed Consent at the beginning of the questionnaire. This research has also obtained ethical clearance from the Health Research Ethics Commission of Dr. Moewardi Hospital Surakarta, with number 338/11/HREC/2025. After providing consent, respondents were asked to provide demographic data, including their initials, age, occupation, domicile, and experience with OGBV, before completing the main research instrument.

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), which has been adapted into Indonesian by Andriani & Listiyandini, (2017) is used to measure resilience across five dimensions (Connor & Davidson, 2003). These dimensions are personal competence, high standards, and persistence; trust in instincts, tolerance to negative influences, and stress-boosting effects; positive acceptance of change and healthy relationships with others; control; and spiritual influence. This scale consists of 22 items and has a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.933. One example of an item in CD-RISC is "I tend to get back on my feet after experiencing pain or difficulty".

Spirituality variables were measured using the Spiritual Well-Being Questionnaire (SWBQ), which was adapted to Indonesian by (Rena, 2023) based on the domains of spirituality (Gomez & Fisher, 2003) personal, communal, environmental, and transcendental. The SWBQ measuring tool consists of 14 items, with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability test result of 0.829. One example of an item on this scale is "I like to reflect on the meaning of every event that happens in life".

Furthermore, this study uses the Self-Liking/Self-Competence Scale (SLCS-R), which has been adapted into Indonesian by Maharani (2022), to measure self-esteem along two dimensions from (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). These dimensions are self-liking and self-competence. This scale consists of 14 items, with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.938. One example of an item in the SLCS-R is "I am proud of what I have."

In testing the hypothesis, the researcher used path regression analysis techniques and bootstrapping via the Process Macro for SPSS 4.2 (model 4), developed by Andrew F. Hayes. Before conducting the hypothesis test, an assumption test was performed to assess the data quality. The results indicated that the data were not normally distributed, that a linear relationship existed, that there was no multicollinearity, and that there was no heteroscedasticity. The bootstrapping method is widely recognized as one of the most valid and practical approaches for testing the effects of mediating variables (Hayes, 2009). This study uses IBM SPSS version 26.0 for data processing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collection yielded 116 respondents who met the inclusion criteria. The majority of

respondents were female (78.4%), compared to men (21.6%), and 47.4% of the total respondents were students. On average, respondents experienced two to three forms of OGBV, with the most experienced forms being sexual messaging (22%), defamation (13%), and cyberbullying (12%). The most commonly used social media platform for OGBV in this study is WhatsApp. The respondents' relationship with the perpetrator was mostly strangers (69%), spouses/ex-partners (12%), and friends (9%). Most respondents experienced OGBV in the last year (72%), from the time of filling out the questionnaire, with an incidence duration between 1 and 14 days (78%).

Table 1.
Demographic data (N=116)

	Characteristic	Sum	Percentage
Gender	Man	25	21.6%
	Woman	91	78.4%
Work	Student/Student	55	47.4%
	Taking Care of the Household	4	3.4%
Form OGBV*	Government Employees	3	2.6%
	Private Employees	43	37.1%
	Self employed	6	5.2%
	Entrepreneur/Entrepreneur	4	3.4%
	Freelancers	1	0.9%
	Cyber Breach	23	8%
	Impersonation	21	7%
	Cyber Stalking	18	6%
	Dissemination of Destructive Content	20	7%
	Illegal Content	14	5%
	Defamation	39	13%
	Cyber Recruitment	6	2%
	A Deceiving Approach	23	8%
Genesis Platform*	Cyber Trading	3	1%
	Pornography Engineering	8	3%
	Sexual Messaging	63	22%
	Dissemination of Intimate Content Without Consent	8	3%
	Cyber Harassment	36	12%
	Sexual Extortion	9	3%
	WhatsApp	51	26%
	Posted on Instagram	46	23%
	X	31	16%
	Telegram	29	15%
Relationship of the Performer*	TikTok	7	4%
	Posted on Facebook	28	14%
	Other	4	2%
	Foreigner	92	69%
	Friend	13	10%

Characteristic		Sum	Percentage
Time of Occurrence	Spouse/Ex-Spouse	16	12%
	Co-worker/School	12	9%
Duration of Event	< 1 year ago	84	72%
	Last 1–3 years	15	13%
Duration of Event	> 3 years ago	17	15%
	1-14 Days	91	78%
	15-30 Days	13	11%
	> 1 Month	7	6%
Uncertain		5	4%

*Note: Respondents can choose more than one answer

The researcher conducted a descriptive statistical analysis to determine the conditions of resilience, spirituality, and self-esteem in early adult OGBV victims and obtained the following results.

Table 2.
Results of statistical descriptive analysis

Variable	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Resilience	116	57	110	89.24	13.834
Spirituality	116	38	70	51.72	6.551
Self-Esteem	116	34	70	52.99	9.540

The mean score and standard deviation obtained are then used to categorize the level according to Azwar's norm (2012). Based on the results of the categorization analysis, generally, early adulthood OGBV victims have a moderate level of resilience, spirituality, and self-esteem.

Table 3.
Categorization of respondent values

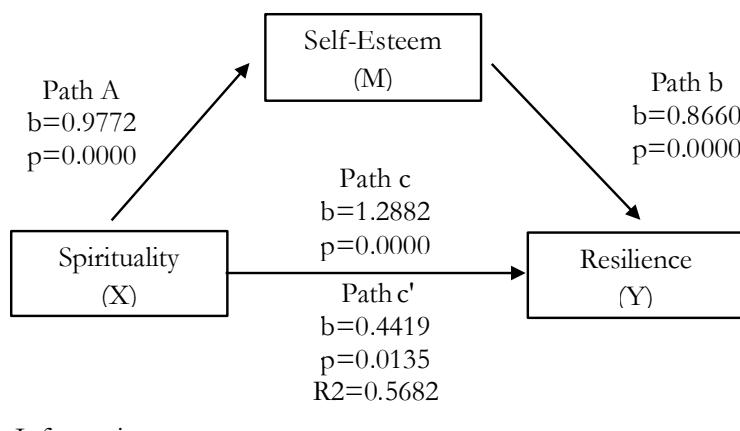
Variable	Categorization		Composition	
	Category	Score Range	Sum	Percentage
Resilience	Low	X < 75.407	20	17.2%
	Moderate	75.407 ≤ X < 103.076	73	62.9%
	High	103.076 ≤ X	23	19.8%
Spirituality	Low	X < 45.173	21	18.1%
	Moderate	45.173 ≤ X < 58.275	77	66.4%
	High	58.275 ≤ X	18	15.5%
Self-Esteem	Low	X < 43.451	21	18.1%
	Moderate	43.451 ≤ X < 62.532	69	59.5%
	High	62.532 ≤ X	26	22.4%

The results of the hypothesis test showed that there was an influence of spirituality (X) on resilience (Y) in early adulthood OGBV victims. This finding is supported by a significance value of 0.0135 ($p < 0.05$) and a coefficient of determination of 0.4419. That is, there is a significant positive influence between spirituality and resilience. If spirituality in early adulthood OGBV victims

increases, then resilience in early adulthood OGBV victims also increases, and vice versa.

Furthermore, a significant positive influence of self-esteem (M) on the resilience (Y) of early adulthood OGBV victims with a significance value of 0 was also obtained. 0000 ($p < 0.05$), and the coefficient of determination is 0.8660, which means that the higher the level of self-esteem possessed by victims of early adulthood, the higher their resilience will be, and vice versa.

Testing the role of self-esteem mediation in the influence of spirituality on resilience among early adulthood victims of GBV showed that the indirect effect of spirituality on resilience was greater than the direct effect, unmediated by self-esteem ($0.8463 > 0.4419$; $p < 0.05$). The bootstrapping result with a 95% confidence interval yields BootLLCI and BootULCI values of 0.5713–1.1816, which do not include 0, thus reinforcing the finding that self-esteem has a mediating effect. The mediation effect is partial, occurring when the influence of independent variables on dependent variables is both direct and indirect, and it remains significant but weakens when the mediator variable is included in the analysis (Ibrahim, 2021).



Information:

Path a = direct effect X to M

Path b = direct effect M to Y

Path c = total effect X to Y

Path c' = direct effect X to Y

Figure 1.
Test Result Path Analysis Process Macro

Table 4.
Mediation analysis results

Line	Effect	LLCI	ULCI	Information
Indirect Effects Spirituality → Self-Esteem → Resilience	0.8463	0.5713	1.1816	Partial mediation

Based on the results of the analysis above, spirituality has been proven to be able to affect the resilience of OGBV victims of early adulthood either directly or indirectly through self-esteem. This finding aligns with Borji et al., (2019) findings that show self-esteem is shaped by spirituality and that, through this self-esteem, individual resilience tends to increase. The experience of spirituality, which includes belief in God's help, enables individuals to control their lives, making it easier for them to set life goals, realize their potential, and be grateful for their lives (Mahensa et al., 2022). Faith in God and the belief in the existence of purpose and meaning in life are crucial for fostering the ability to adapt to problems (Sadeghifard et al., 2020). This result is also supported by (Ozcan

et al., 2021), who stated that spirituality can be an effective coping mechanism; individuals with coping spirituality can accept and process their emotions and thoughts by taking time to reflect on and improve themselves, thereby reducing negative psychological impacts.

In addition, self-esteem is the main component in forming the self-concept of victims of violence, so that they can become more optimistic individuals with themselves, realize their abilities, feel proud of themselves, easily open up to others, think positively about the surrounding circumstances, and dare to make decisions quickly and confidently (Savitri et al., 2023). In the context of OGBV, self-esteem helps victims improve their ability to effectively address problems through self-confidence, thereby promoting adaptive coping (Jankowiak et al., 2021). Individuals with high self-esteem tend to assess themselves positively, which in turn fosters psychological resilience and improves emotional well-being (Pertiwi et al., 2022). With resilience, the victim can reflect and review the stressors of the experience of violence that makes the pressure due to the impact of the violence not just seen as a threat but as a challenge that can be faced, so that the victim will have a high capacity to tolerate negative feelings and be able to cope well with stressful situations (Deliviana, 2021; Yubero et al., 2023).

In their report, Borji et al., (2019) argue that increasing resilience through protective factors, such as spirituality and self-esteem as internal abilities, is more effective than focusing solely on risk factors. The influence of spirituality on resilience, as measured by self-esteem, was significant, with an R2 value of 0.5682, indicating that spirituality can explain 56.82% of the variance in resilience through self-esteem and 43. The remaining 18% is explained by other variables that were not studied. Other factors that can encourage resilience, in addition to spirituality and self-esteem, include gender, age, physical condition, psychological condition, temperament, intelligence, sense of humor, family support, group support, and parental support (Yuliana & Khoirunisa, 2023).

In addition, researchers conducted further analysis of differences in average resilience scores by gender and occupation to enrich the research results. Before conducting the differential test, the researcher first tested the normality assumption in the gender and occupation groups. Since the assumption of normality is not met, a non-parametric statistical test is used. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to review differences in resilience by gender. Based on the test results, the significance value was 0.017 (sig. < 0.05), indicating significant differences in resilience by gender. Male respondents had a higher mean rank score of 72.74 compared to women's 54.59. This result indicates that men who experience OGBV have higher resilience. These findings are in line with studies conducted by Sigurdardottir (2021) the University of Wisconsin, which found that women victims of violence have lower levels of resilience and subjective well-being than male victims. It can be because women are known to experience psychological distress and chronic stress more often and lower self-esteem than men (Matud et al., 2020).

Table 5.
Results of different resilience tests by gender

Gender	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Sig.
Male	72.74	1818.50	781.500	-2.392	0.017
Female	54.59	4967.50			

To determine differences in resilience by work, the researcher conducted a Kruskal-Wallis test. The results of this test showed a significance value of 0.226 (sig. > 0.05), indicating that there was no significant difference in resilience among OGBV victims when viewed from a work perspective. (Maulinda & Purnamasari, 2020) also reported no difference in resilience by work

type. Although workload negatively impacts an individual's resilience, other factors, such as the length of the working period, can affect the level of work stress. Individuals with longer working hours are considered more experienced and more resilient in dealing with work pressure (Hanana et al., 2024; Rose & Palattiyil, 2020).

Table 6.
Results of different resilience tests based on the type of work

Work	Mean Rank	Kruskal-Wallis	Sig.
Students	52.11	8.167	0.226
Taking Care of the Household	71.75		
Government Employees	56.00		
Private Employees	61.14		
Self employed	83.33		
Entrepreneurs	57.50		
Freelancers	106.00		

Based on these results, this study has limitations because, although it does not set criteria based on a specific gender, the majority of respondents are women. Therefore, the next researcher is expected to balance male and female respondents better so that the findings are more representative of all genders. In addition, the researcher is expected to consider other variables beyond self-esteem that are likely to affect the relationship between spirituality and the resilience of OGBV victims, such as the meaning of life, optimism, and social support.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study meet the purpose of the study and prove that there is a role of self-esteem in mediating the influence of spirituality on the resilience of early adulthood victims of OGBV. Self-esteem partially and significantly mediated the influence of spirituality on resilience, with spirituality increasing resilience through self-esteem by 56.82%, and other variables explained the remaining variance.

Based on these findings, OGBV victims are expected to increase their resilience through spiritual activities such as journaling, meditation, participation in spiritual communities, outdoor activities, praying, and worshiping. This finding can foster connection with oneself, others, the environment, and the transcendental, thereby helping victims of GBV build meaning and purpose in life and accept the negative experiences they have endured. That way, the victim will have positive self-esteem until they are finally able to adapt and rise from the impact of OGBV. Not only that, but victims are also advised to seek social support through the community or professional help. The findings in this study are useful as information for victims of OGBV to build resilience through spirituality and self-esteem to overcome difficult situations experienced. In addition, these findings also enrich the literature on positive psychology and trauma psychology in the context of OGBV.

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