



## Research Article

# Bullying, Self-Esteem, and Speaking Proficiency: A study on Marine cadets

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## ABSTRACT



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Bullying is widespread in educational institutions globally and impacts children and adolescents. It entails dominant or majority individuals targeting weaker or dissimilar individuals through physical, verbal, or exclusionary methods. This study employed a quantitative technique and a correlational research design to ascertain the relationship between students' experiences of bullying, their speaking ability, and self-esteem. The study participants consisted of cadets enrolled in GE-PC (Purposeful Communication) during the second semester of the 2022–2023 academic year. The cadets were enrolled in the College of Maritime Education at Jose Rizal Memorial State University, pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation and a Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering. The findings indicate that respondents infrequently experienced bullying on average. The responders may possess a profound deficiency in self-respect, which significantly impacts their self-esteem, despite their adequate speaking abilities. They also exhibited a deficiency in fluency. Moreover, a significant correlation existed between speaking proficiency and experiences of bullying, as well as between students' self-esteem and instances of bullying. Occurrences of consistent mockery coupled with sporadic bullying undermine initial convictions. Enduring manifestations of bullying disclose fundamental tendencies despite their infrequency. Despite the respondents' favourable self-perception, their confidence in task performance is questionable. Robust verbal communication abilities, along with speech fluency challenges, suggest a correlation between speaking competence and experiences of bullying, which affect self-esteem. This study indicates that marine programs can address covert bullying through the implementation of explicit policies, awareness initiatives, and support networks. Workshops may be organized to improve practical skills and cultivate resilience. Exercises, feedback, and stress management are recommended to enhance speaking proficiency. For impacted youngsters, peer networks, communication training, and anti-bullying legislation foster a supportive environment.

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## Introduction

Bullying is a widespread issue that affects teenagers and adolescents in educational settings globally. When pupils viewed as weak, submissive, or different are subjected to physical or verbal mistreatment, or ostracism by peers in a strong position—either due to majority status or power dynamics. Bullying, often referred to as peer victimization, is a distinct form of aggression characterized by an imbalanced power dynamic, when a more dominant student deliberately inflicts injury on a less powerful student. Bullying is characterized by a power disparity and recurrent actions, involving deliberate verbal, psychological, or physical maltreatment (Olweus, 2005, as cited in Mbah, 2020).

Victims of bullying often exhibit low self-esteem, despite a positive correlation between social skills and self-esteem (Dou et al. 2022). The principal causes of this form of violence are imbalanced power dynamics and recurrent violent behavior. Bullying in educational institutions manifests in numerous forms, including verbal abuse such as name-calling and ridicule, indirect harassment like cyberbullying and spreading stories, and physical aggression encompassing beatings, bodily injury, and sexual assault (Pigozi & Machado, 2015). Due to the diverse manifestations of bullying and shifting demographics, statistics on bullying can exhibit significant variability and inconsistency. Several variables, including as age, gender, and socioeconomic

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level, can affect the frequency of bullying occurrences and complaints. Trends in bullying are equally influenced by changes in these demographic characteristics (Dou, 2022). Consequently, it is essential to consider these various traits and their influence on bullying experiences to understand the prevalence of bullying. Lee and Vaillancourt (2019) assert that bullying and victimization may stem from various characteristics, including physical appearance, weight, race or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and disability. Educators and scholars are concerned about the impact of bullying on children's academic performance, which subsequently influences academic success, despite the myriad of adverse consequences associated with bullying. Most research indicates that peer bullying correlates with inadequate academic performance across various educational levels and countries (Huang, 2022; Murphy et al., 2022). The atmosphere significantly influences students' motivation to learn, hence impacting their wellness. Students residing in a nurturing atmosphere exhibit greater confidence and encouragement in their academic pursuits. The collegiate experiences of Marine Transportation students are significantly influenced by their robust connections with friends, family, and the community. Velasco et al. (2015) assert that surroundings tailored to the specific needs of individual students promote active learning, increase motivation, and improve performance. Moreover, Huang (2022) discovered that the impact of bullying victimization and the bullying environment on academic performance in reading, mathematics, and science was partially mediated by children's sense of belonging within the school setting. Mbah (2020) indicates that school bullying persists in most schools, impacting academic performance and attendance. Victims often report incidents to teachers, yet bullying remains prevalent, particularly by senior students targeting juniors, leading to school abandonment and poor academic attitudes among victims. Research by Orpinas (2015) highlights exclusion from school activities as a prevalent social behavior recognized by students, teachers, and parents. José (2017, as cited in Mbah, 2020) underscores peer victimization's link to depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, leading to school avoidance and decreased academic engagement and performance. These observations can be elucidated in two manners. Wang et al. (2020) indicate that children subjected to bullying often withdraw from intellectual and social activities due to discomfort at school (Li et al., 2020). Karadag & Özyıldırım (2024) assert that these youngsters perform academically inferior to their non-bullied counterparts (Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010), experience diminished feelings of belonging at school (Murphy et al., 2022), and exhibit a higher propensity for dropping out (Fry et al., 2018). Success is unattainable without self-confidence. Bullying is one reason pupils struggle to communicate in English (Al Uqshori, 2005, as cited in Wulandari et al., 2022). Conversely, self-esteem is an individual's evaluation of their own value or significance and is a crucial element of satisfaction. Adolescents with robust self-esteem are more likely to have self-belief and cultivate positive relationships with others. A multitude of studies has established the correlation between victimization and diminished self-esteem. A meta-analytic investigation revealed that elevated self-esteem correlated with a reduced prevalence of bullying victimization and criminal behavior. A separate study indicated that inadequate self-esteem correlates with racial/cultural victimization and self-victimization (Martinez et al. 2020).

Existing studies on bullying lack specificity regarding its impact on student self-esteem and speaking performance, leaving a gap in understanding crucial for school staff. Furthermore, bullying research within maritime education settings is scarce, hindering effective intervention. Addressing these gaps could enhance support for cadets' well-being and academic success by

informing targeted interventions and fostering a comprehensive understanding of bullying dynamics in this unique environment.

The College of Maritime Education has identified peer bullying linked to teacher violence, highlighting the urgent need for clear protocols. This study seeks to evaluate the extent of bullying, its impact on students' self-esteem, and their communication skills. The findings will be crucial in designing targeted seminars, workshops, and activities aimed at mitigating bullying's effects on self-esteem and verbal expression. Findings can help identify at-risk students, guide the development of effective anti-bullying programs, empower teachers with evidence-based strategies, and advocate for policy changes that prioritize the well-being and academic success of all cadets. Furthermore, the study's insights will aid in formulating robust college policies and procedures for effectively addressing and preventing bullying incidents, ultimately fostering a safer and more supportive educational environment.

### Objectives of the Study

This study examined the correlation between speaking performance, bullying, and self-esteem among college students enrolled in GE-PC (Purposeful Communication) during the second semester of the College of Maritime Education's BS in Marine Engineering and BS in Marine Transportation programs, during the second semester, A.Y. 2022–2023.

Specifically, it answers the following specific questions:

1. To what extent have the respondents experienced bullying?
2. How much do pupils think of themselves?
3. How well do kids perform when speaking?
4. Do the respondents' self-esteem and the extent of their bullying experience have a significant relationship?
5. Do the respondents' speaking performance and the extent of their bullying experience have a significant relationship?

### Theoretical Consideration

This study is anchored on the cognitive-behavioral theory of Aaron Beck (1960 as cited in Wong 2021). CBT is a psychological therapy that focuses on how thoughts, feelings, and behaviors interact and influence each other. It's based on the premise that our thoughts often shape our emotions and behaviors. Someone worried that he or she may fail at a test will feel anxious about it and turn in poor performance. CBT looks to identify these thought patterns and challenge them. Recognizing that thoughts are not always accurate and can be distorted allows us to replace them with more positive and realistic ones. This promotes better emotional health and behavior.

CBT sees the relationship between our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as an interconnected one. Therefore, our thoughts can cause emotional states, while emotional states can determine reactions or behaviors. Each person makes meaning out of an experience through the interaction of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors evoked by a given event. (Scott & Beck, 2008, as cited in Wong, 2021). An individual's cognition in a certain context might elicit distinct emotions and shape the conduct exhibited by that individual. This hypothesis posits that negative emotions and thoughts stemming from bullying experiences significantly influence an individual's behavior, including their speech patterns. For example, a student who is bullied may develop negative thoughts about themselves, such as feeling worthless or unintelligent. These negative thoughts can lead to feelings of sadness, anger, or anxiety. These negative emotions, in turn, can impact the student's behavior, such as avoiding social situations or struggling to speak in front of others. CBT can help them improve their emotional well-being and behavior. This can be particularly beneficial for individuals who have experienced bullying, as it can

help them overcome the negative effects of their experiences and build resilience.

Social capital theory as developed by Pierre Bourdieu and cited by Dou et al. (2022) supports the present study as well. The benefits derived from social connections are referred to as social capital. This theory holds that people invest in social ties in order to gain access to the resources these relationships hold. In a school context, the idea can be used. Because they have no friends to turn to, bullied teenagers have very low social status and little social capital. Social capital is acquired more easily by bullies who in turn abuse their social status as a form of bullying in order to acquire social capital. (Evans & Smokowski, 2016). Here's a thing regarding social capital theory: It comprehends the presence of a link between bullying, self-esteem, and speaking performance in maritime cadets. It states that social networks and relationships of individuals can act as an asset, granting them resources and support that directly influence their outcomes. This awareness can help the researchers figure out ways and means to promote an enhancement of positive social capital and attenuate the adverse effects caused by bullying.

Republic Act 10627, popularly known as the Anti-Bullying Act as referred to in Geronimo et al. (2020), is another legislation in support of this research. This act is a Philippine law addressing bullying cases occurring in the school setting. It stipulates that bullying is any unwanted aggressive act or behavior that requires a second or more occurrence against another person or group, with the intent to injure or cause harm. The act prohibits any bullying behavior within any school setting and requires the establishment of anti-bullying committees in schools, the implementation of anti-bullying programs, and penalties on persons who commit bullying.

Bullying often leaves painful scars in its aftermath and has a serious detrimental impact on a person's self-esteem. One's beliefs and sense of worth are undermined by persistent bullying. According to García et al. (2019), self-esteem is the evaluative component of the self-concept and is described as the individual's sense of self-worth and self-respect (Hutz & Zanon, as cited in Monteiro et al., 2019). The one-dimensional RSES consists of 10 items that gather information on an individual's feelings toward self-acceptance, self-competence, and self-esteem (Hutz & Zanon, 2011 as cited in Monteiro et al., 2019).

Despite continuous efforts to lessen it, public schools continue to face significant victimization. Despite the widespread perception that schools offer a safe environment, bullying has a negative effect on many pupils. Bullying is no longer thought to be a harmless school-related issue. This is becoming more widely recognized as a global issue that significantly affects children's and teenagers' social and emotional health (Hidalgo and España, 2021). Furthermore, bullying, known as "mobbing" in Scandinavia, can occur when a group of people attack a single person or when a single attacker targets a group. These behaviors include spreading gossip, being aggressive both verbally and physically, being shunned by others, and engaging in cyberbullying (Olweus, 2005, as cited in Mbah, 2020).

Moreover, bullying comprises three primary elements: (1) the intention to do harm; (2) repeated occurrences over time; and (3) an imbalanced power relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. Olweus (1978, cited in Ferraz De Camargo et al. 2023) characterizes bullying as antagonistic, unpleasant, relentless, and unreasonable conduct that the victim perceives as uncontrollable. Researchers globally have employed this word (UNESCO, 2019). Bullying may manifest as verbal, physical, or social aggression and can occur in diverse settings. Face-to-face bullying manifests in various forms, including verbal, physical, and social abuse. Cyberbullying refers to verbal and social harassment occurring in

online environments (Cross et al., 2009, as cited in Ferraz De Camargo et al., 2023). Covert bullying denotes subtle, aggressive, and concealed non-physical actions that remain hidden from parents, teachers, and other adults, whereas traditional bullying encompasses overt behaviors that are easily observable, such as being kicked, struck, or having personal belongings stolen or destroyed (UNESCO, 2019). A physical assault on the victim, including actions such as striking, kicking, pushing, shoving, spitting, throwing things, or any other conduct that inflicts physical harm on the victim or their property, is termed physical bullying. The victim of verbal bullying is often subjected to verbal taunts. These include derogatory names, mockery, provocation, and insults (Tan, 2022). Students subjected to bullying throughout their formative years may experience enduring consequences. Perpetrators of bullying may also experience mental health challenges, such as anxiety and depression. Alongside persistent emotional and mental health challenges, interpersonal animosity can result in physical harm and disability. Aluede (2011) asserts that many risky behaviors throughout adolescence are affected by socioeconomic level and are strongly associated with adverse health outcomes, social marginalization, academic failure, and poor mental health in adulthood.

Numerous studies have demonstrated a correlation between low self-esteem and victimization. Research of municipal schools revealed that bullying was more prevalent among children with low self-esteem (53.7%), and both victims and perpetrators exhibited lower average self-esteem scores (Brito & Oliveira, 2013). A meta-analytic study indicated that elevated self-esteem correlates with a reduced incidence of bullying victimization and criminal behavior. A separate study indicates that self-victimization and racial/cultural victimization are also associated with low self-esteem (Martinez et al., 2020). Victims of cyberbullying are more prone to psychological distress and diminished self-esteem compared to individuals who have encountered bullying in educational or other environments (Cenat et al. 2014). The findings align with a Chinese study indicating that bullying victimization is more prevalent among adolescents with psychological disorders. This study revealed that loneliness, social anxiety, and self-esteem were specific predictors of cyberbullying victimization, while stress was a distinct predictor of traditional bullying victimization (Chu et al. 2019). Moreover, Taylor et al. (2013), in a study referred to in Howcroft (2013), demonstrated that persons with high self-esteem tend to know very well their personal traits, forge goals and feedback use through it. They, therefore, tend to remember their experiences positively, which strengthens their self-esteem. On the other hand, low self-esteem persons have vague self-conception and poor self-perception. Also, they have unrealistic goals, a pessimistic view, unfavorable memories, and negative reactions to criticism. Such persons tend not to be very much giving feedback, caring, and tend to have sad or overthinking.

Moreover, this study is supported by the communicative competence theory of Michael Halliday. This theory suggests that effective communication involves more than just grammatical accuracy. It also includes factors such as appropriateness, fluency, and coherence. This theory suggests that language learning is facilitated by producing language output. By speaking regularly, learners can improve their fluency and accuracy. These theories provide a framework for understanding and improving speaking performance. By applying these theories, teachers and learners can develop effective strategies to enhance language learning and communication skills. The idea of communicative competence includes the knowledge that proficient language use in social situations requires both linguistic structure knowledge and an awareness of contextual usage norms (Hymes, 1972, as cited in Whyte 2019).

Communicative Competence Theory offers means by which the bullying phenomena could influence self-esteem in addition to the speaking performance of marine cadets or so taught. It contends that other than not providing an efficient communication based on grammar, another set of criteria needs to be marked: appropriateness, fluency, coherence plus much more. Bullying can affect all spheres of bad social interaction, so occasionally it might prevent a cadet from communicating appropriately. Most often isolated bullied victims will have less access to practice and feedback on their communication skills. Furthermore, detrimental to a cadet's communication skills will be low self-esteem. People with poor self-esteem generally lack conviction in precisely expressing oneself, which usually results in hesitancy, avoidance, or even anger during social contacts. The performance of a cadet could directly be hampered by bullying. For instance, a bullied kid would feel uncomfortable or afraid of speaking before members of an audience, which would result in a significant lack of coherence and flow.

### Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to determine the extent to which students' experiences with bullying are related to their self-esteem and speaking ability. 68 cadets and cadets pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation and a Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering from Jose Rizal Memorial State University's College of Maritime Education took part in GE-PC (Purposive Communication) during the second semester of the 2022–2023 academic year. In addition to examining respondent demographics (sex, age, and year level), this study assessed bullying behaviors and self-esteem using standardized questionnaires. Ten items in the bullying assessment were changed from Bradshaw et al. (2006), according to Kulp (2013). The items were assessed on a four-point Likert scale, where 1 meant "strongly disagree" and 4 meant "strongly agree." The following categories—never, seldom, frequently, and not being harassed—were determined by the responses. Bullying behavior includes name-calling, threats of physical harm or assault, teasing, picking on, or making fun of, pushing or shoving, hitting, slapping, or kicking, having emails, messages, or blogs written about the student, having rumours or lies spread about the student, being singled out or ignored, receiving sexual remarks or gestures, and having items stolen. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Survey (SES) was used to gauge the students' sense of self. This survey consisted of ten items that evaluated students' attitudes, sense of worth, and level of self-satisfaction. A four-point Likert scale will be used to score each item, with 0 denoting strong opposition and 3 denoting strong agreement. The following interpretation will be applied to the findings: Scores are calculated as follows: For items 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7, the responses are strongly disagreed (0), disagree (1), agree (2), and severely agree (3). Strongly disagree (3), disagree (2), agree (1), and very agree (0) are the answers for valence-reversed items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10. The following standards are used to evaluate students' self-esteem. 3.26–4.00—Very High Self-esteem; 2.52–3.25—High Self-esteem; 1.76–2.51—Low Self-esteem; 1.75–1.75—Very Low Self-esteem.

The two surveys showed the validity, reliability, and internal consistency of the instrument's subscales in measuring the level of bullying and self-esteem, with Cronbach's alphas for these variables being 0.89 and 0.84, respectively. Following pilot testing, the self-esteem and bullying Cronbach's alphas were 0.85 and 0.86, respectively. The poll was distributed to the students' email addresses via Google Forms. The researchers gave out the questionnaire in person to responders who couldn't finish the Google form.

Another factor taken into account was the respondents' speaking abilities. Navigation, ship maintenance, onboard training, life at sea, safety measures on board, bullying, cyberbullying, and corporal punishment were among the topics on which respondents were asked to select and then debate. Language (grammar and structure), pronunciation (clearness and intelligibility), delivery (volume, tempo, pauses), and fluency (speech and speed) were all evaluated using a rubric. The findings were divided into four categories: exceptional (4), good (3), satisfactory (2), and needs improvement (1). The performance evaluation of the respondents was aided by two professors who hold doctorates in English and related languages. Respondents received an explanation of the "informed consent agreement" form prior to the study's execution. A frequency count, a percentage distribution, an average score, and a T-test were used to evaluate the data while maintaining the utmost level of confidentiality.

### Results and Discussion

This section delves into the empirical findings derived from data collected among maritime cadets and cadettes, aiming to shed light on the prevalence of bullying experiences, their impact on self-esteem, and the implications for speaking performance.

Table 1

*Bullying Experience of the Respondents*

Descriptors	AWV	Description
Teasing, picking on, or making fun of you	2.35	Rarely Bullied
Calling you bad names	2.03	Rarely Bullied
Spreading rumors or lies about you	2.05	Rarely Bullied
Ignoring or leaving you out on purpose	1.82	Rarely Bullied
Pushing or shoving you	1.74	Not Bullied
Threatened to hurt or hit you	1.8	Rarely Bullied
Stealing your things	1.69	Not Bullied
Hitting, Slapping, or kicking you	1.6	Not Bullied
Making sexual comments or gestures	1.49	Not Bullied
Emailing, messaging, posting a blog about you on the internet	1.32	Not Bullied
<b>Mean</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>Rarely Bullied</b>

Table 1 showed the bullying experiences among the respondents. The study showed that the respondents were periodically bullied. This means that bullying instances among respondents were very few and far in between, thus making it an area with a low prevalence of bullying experiences in the studied group. Results of the study show that the majority of the respondents did not strongly encounter bullying behaviors. However, a closer look in the results indicated that most respondents experienced some sort of informal bullying, such as teasing, picking on, or making fun of them. Despite the initial finding that respondents were rarely bullied, this close analysis showed that particular types of bullying, such as teasing and mockery, were actually quite prevalent for the participants. One implication of this finding is that a holistic grasp on bullying requires scrutiny beyond surface evaluations.

At first glance, responses to a survey conducted in Bulgaria about school bullying do not seem to indicate much prevalence of this phenomenon, but a closer analysis instead reveals that types of bullying, such as teasing and mockery, are fairly common. Thus, it becomes evident that different forms of bullying should be looked into as well as designed interventions that specifically target the little forms of... Indeed, subtle forms of bullying could

be combated at maritime programs by instituting well-defined policies on teasing and mocking, awareness raising campaigns on respectful behavior, developing solid support systems for victims, encouraging healthy relationships among students, and as well as instituting ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure policy efficacy and student's overall wellbeing. Such recommendations, therefore, would go a long way in assisting maritime programs to create a safer and more supportive environment for cadets and cadettes. Thus cadets and cadettes would be better well-being and performance, academically speaking.

The study's findings are in line with those of Salamanca and Rollo (2024), who discovered that the most common kind of verbal bullying is when someone is called a filthy, disgusting name. On average, 2.83 and 2.82 students from Lanton and New Society, respectively, encountered that once a week. Physical appearance taunting was the second most common type, with an average of 2.82 children from Lanton and 2.81 pupils from New Society engaging in the activity once a week. The least frequent kind of verbal bullying was receiving racial remarks, which happened once a day on average for 1.93 and 1.95 children from Lanton and New Society, respectively. Thus, it is evident from the data that verbal bullying happens often in both schools and calls for both preventative and quick responses.

Table 2

*Level of Students' Self-esteem*

Descriptors	AWV	Description
I feel that I'm a person of value, equal to others	3.34	Very High Self-esteem
I feel that I have several good qualities	3.19	High Self-esteem
*I feel that I am a failure	2.21	Low Self-esteem
I am able to do things as well as most other people	3.04	High Self-esteem
*I feel I do not have much to be proud of	1.75	Very Low Self-esteem
I have a positive attitude about myself	3.31	Very High Self-esteem
I am satisfied with myself	3.33	Very High Self-esteem
*I wish I could have more respect for myself	0.85	Very Low Self-esteem
*I feel useless at times	1.74	Very Low Self-esteem
*At times I think I am no good at all.	1.57	Very Low Self-esteem
<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>Low Self-esteem</b>

The data set out in the second table show the level of self-esteem among respondents. The study presented evidence for a rather low self-esteem of the respondents. The implication is that the majority of the study participants perceive themselves negatively, whereas they do have low confidence levels and feelings of worth.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that "I wish I could have more respect for myself" was scored the lowest. This implies that for the participants surveyed, the statement "I wish I could have more respect for myself" received the lowest rating, inferring there is a serious battle with self-respect. Therefore, several participants might be feeling a lack of appreciation for themselves, exhibiting an area of serious concern in their self-esteem. Such an inadequate rating may indicate further problems that require intervention, which may reflect on the participants' negative self-image and undue pressure from outside forces.

Workshops, training exercises, or courses aimed at programs to foster healthy self-esteem would be greatly helpful by incorporating skills training, goal-setting, and positive affirmations. Skills training helps participants obtain useful skills to buoy their confidence from all walks of life, from communication to problem-solving; goal-setting helps to provide a sense of achievement once these milestones are crossed off, further validating their self-worth. Maritime education programs could, through the implementation of these recommendations, help students get over their feelings of inadequacy and build confidence in their capacity, eventually enabling them to succeed in academia and their professional endeavors.

Table 3

*Speaking Capabilities of the Respondents*

Elements	AWV	Description
Delivery	2.42	Satisfactory
Pronunciation	2.49	Satisfactory
Language	2.40	Satisfactory
Fluency	2.35	Satisfactory
Mean	2.42	Satisfactory

Table 3 revealed the level of speaking performance among the respondents. The study revealed that the students were satisfactory in terms of their speaking performance in terms of delivery, pronunciation, language, and fluency. This means that the students demonstrated the competence in verbal communication skills. They were able to convey their thoughts, ideas, and information verbally, indicating a strong command of communication techniques and language proficiency. This competence in verbal communication is valuable for their academic endeavors and future careers in the maritime industry, where effective communication is essential.

However, looking closely at the data, it revealed that the respondents got low in fluency. It means that, despite overall satisfactory speaking capabilities, the respondents scored poorly in regards to fluency. Fluency refers to the smoothness and naturalness of speech, including the ability to speak without hesitation, pauses, or interruptions. This indicates that while they had competence over other aspects of speaking performance like delivery, pronunciation, and language use; but they seem to have trouble keeping a smooth and uninterrupted flow of speech with regard to fluency. Recommendations for addressing the proficiency of maritime students in speaking aspects but struggles with fluency include fluency exercises, structured practice, feedback, modeling, vocabulary expansion, stress management, and technology integration. These measures aim at promoting fluency without taking away the competence of other speaking skills which will be beneficial to maritime education programs.

According to Wulandari et al. (2022), pupils' confidence in their ability to talk was mediocre. According to Lauster (2012), medium-level confidence is often high and falls within normal ranges (Wulandari et al., 2022). Students may be insecure, lack confidence, and be concerned about their reputation. Even if they still understand what they are saying, pupils can still lack confidence while speaking English in front of an audience. Furthermore, they fear ridicule from their peers and may experience anxiety when speaking in English. With a value of 0,005, or less than 0.05, bullying has a considerable impact on pupils' confidence in their speaking abilities. The study's hypothesis (H1) was confirmed and verified when it was demonstrated that bullying (X) has an impact on students' confidence (Y) in their speaking abilities.

Table 4 presents the relationship between bullying experience and self-esteem of the students. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between the two variables. This means

that there's a notable statistical connection between experiencing bullying and self-esteem levels among the students. This implies that those who experience bullying tend to have lower self-esteem, as evidenced by the statistical relationship observed in the study. Potentially, maritime education institutions can implement anti-bullying policies, raising awareness and providing support, creating peer networks, conducting skills training, fostering a favorable environment, monitoring incidents, and supporting open communication toward the goal of creating a safe and supportive learning environment. The institution can conduct workshops, seminars, or counselling services for the purpose of supporting students in need or raising awareness about bullying. Such activities help to train students in the skills of communication, conflict resolution, and assertiveness for the purpose of addressing and reacting to bullying. If such a course of action is taken, maritime education institutions would likely lessen the detrimental effects of bullying on the self-worth of students and create a learning environment that is supportive of their success and well-being.

Table 4

*Relationship between Bullying Experience and Self-esteem*

Indicators	Mean	SD	r-value	P-value	D
Bullying Experience and Self-esteem	1.79	1.04	0.32	.001	HO: Rejected

According to a study conducted in municipal schools, bullying was more common among young people (53.7%) who had poor self-esteem, and both the victim and the bully had lower average self-esteem scores (Brito & Oliveira, 2013). A meta-analytic study discovered a correlation between low criminal behavior and low bullying victimization among people with strong self-esteem. According to another study, self-victimization and racial/cultural victimization are likewise linked to low self-esteem (Martinez, et al., 2020). Apart from conventional bullying, being a victim of cyberbullying is associated with a higher likelihood of psychological discomfort and low self-esteem than experiencing bullying in schools or other environments (Cenat, et al. 2014). This result is in line with research from China that found bullying victimization among teenagers with psychological issues was more common. This study discovered that stress was a specific predictor of traditional bullying victimization, while loneliness, social anxiety, and low self-esteem were specific predictors of cyberbullying victimization. (Chu, et al. 2019).

Table 5

*Relationship between Bullying Experience and Speaking Performance*

Indicators	Mean	SD	r-value	P-value	D
Bullying Experience and Speaking Performance	1.79	1.04	0.18	.01	HO: Rejected

The relationship between students' speaking skills and bullying experiences is displayed in Table 5. The results of the study showed a strong relationship between the two variables. This implies that pupils' speaking abilities and their experiences with bullying are statistically correlated. Essentially, there were differences in the patterns of speaking competence levels between children who were bullied and those who were not. Numerous factors, such as excessive social media use, peer and family

environments, anxiety, low self-esteem, and social interaction disorders, might have an impact on bullying behavior in adolescents. According to Craig et al. (2020) and Martinez-Montegudo et al. (2020), children who bully classmates they perceive as weak and easy targets may also grow more aggressive, daring, rebellious, and seek out social support for bullying classmates. Bullied individuals frequently have higher levels of anxiety, which has a major effect on their ability to speak clearly. Because they are afraid of being judged or subjected to more mockery, this worry may cause them to hesitate, stutter, or think incoherently. As a result, they have a much harder time expressing themselves clearly and efficiently. Chuang (2009 as referenced in Daymiel et al. 2022) asserts that oral presentations might cause students to feel anxious, afraid, and afraid to speak. Individual student traits including shyness, self-assurance, physical attractiveness, and performance anxiety in front of peers are additional influences (Al-Nouh, AbdulKareem, & Taqi, 2015 as referenced in Daymiel et al. 2022).

The school might offer workshops and targeted instruction in communication skills to help bullied pupils gain confidence and overcome speech-related obstacles like language anxiety. Teachers and staff may also learn how to recognize bullying symptoms and how to act quickly when they are noticed. These suggestions are intended to address both the more general objective of creating a welcoming and inclusive school atmosphere as well as the direct effects of bullying on speaking abilities.

**Conclusion**

Bullying incidents among responders were rare, suggesting a low incidence. However, mockery and taunting were common, undercutting initial impressions. Despite being rare, some forms of bullying persisted within the group under investigation, revealing hidden trends in their experiences. Participants in the study have a poor opinion of themselves, showing a lack of confidence and a feeling of low value. Many individuals could have a severe lack of self-esteem, highlighting a serious problem with their self-esteem. This low score could be a sign of underlying issues that need to be addressed, such a poor self-perception or outside influences. Students showed proficiency in verbal communication by skillfully expressing their ideas and thoughts. They were proficient in language usage, pronunciation, and delivery, but they had trouble maintaining a steady stream of speech. This indicates a strong command of communication techniques, although there is room for improvement in terms of speech delivery fluidity. The study found a statistically significant correlation between self-esteem and bullying events. The results show that students' self-esteem is greatly impacted by their experiences with bullying. Studies found a statistically significant relationship between pupils' verbal skills and their experiences of bullying. In essence, children who experienced bullying showed distinct verbal proficiency patterns or levels that were different from those of children who did not experience bullying.

**Recommendation**

1. The GAD director may propose explicit policies on teasing and mockery, conduct awareness training, establish support systems for victims, foster positive relationships, and implement monitoring mechanisms to assess policy effectiveness and student welfare, thereby creating a safer and more respectful environment.
2. The Dean of the college may coordinate with the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences in conducting workshops, training sessions, or courses focused on developing practical maritime skills, communication skills, leadership abilities, and guest lectures focused on building self-efficacy and resilience, providing strategies for setting and achieving goals, overcoming challenges, and fostering a positive mindset.

3. The instructors/professors teaching communication arts and purposive communication courses may provide fluency exercises, structured practice, feedback, modeling, vocabulary expansion, stress management, and technology integration. These measures aim to enhance fluency while maintaining competence in other speaking skills, benefiting maritime education programs.
4. Maritime education institutions may combat bullying by instituting anti-bullying policies, promoting awareness and support, fostering peer networks, and providing skills training. They can create a positive environment, monitor incidents, and encourage open communication. Workshops, seminars, and counseling services can raise awareness and support affected students, while training in communication, conflict resolution, and assertiveness empowers effective responses to bullying.
5. The college may provide targeted communication skills training and workshops for students who have experienced bullying to help them build confidence and overcome any speech-related challenges, and may educate teachers and staff to be vigilant for signs of bullying and intervene promptly to address any instances observed.

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#### Conflict of interests:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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