



The Impact of Verbal Violence by Peers on Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy and Career Adaptability among Senior Secondary School Students

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Abstract. Adolescence is a critical stage for identity formation, social development, and career preparation. In Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), intensive peer interactions offer vital social support but can expose students to verbal violence like ridicule. While research often examines social support in career development, peer verbal violence remains understudied as a psychosocial risk factor for Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) and career adaptability in these unique settings. Grounded in Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Career Construction Theory, this quantitative correlational study investigated the relationships among peer verbal violence, CDMSE, and career adaptability. Utilizing purposive and stratified random sampling, data were collected from 156 senior high school students via validated Likert-scale instruments and analyzed using Spearman's rank correlation. The findings revealed that peer verbal violence was significantly and negatively associated with CDMSE ($r = -0.831, p < .001$) and career adaptability ($r = -0.913, p < .001$). Increased exposure to verbal violence correlated with lower career decision-making confidence and reduced adaptability to future career transitions. These results support the SCCT proposition that adverse social environments act as contextual barriers undermining self-efficacy, which directly links to career adaptability within Career Construction Theory. This study contributes to career development literature by extending these theories to the continuous peer environment of *pesantren*. Consequently, educational institutions must strengthen anti-bullying policies, cultivate positive peer dynamics, and design comprehensive counseling interventions to enhance students' career self-efficacy and adaptability.

Keywords: Verbal violence; peer verbal bullying; career decision-making self-efficacy; career adaptability; boarding school students.

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Introduction

Adolescence, particularly during senior high school, represents a critical developmental stage characterized by important developmental tasks, including identity formation, the development of social relationships, and preparation for the transition to higher education and the workforce. During this period, students are expected to develop the ability to explore career options, make independent career decisions, and adapt to future changes and challenges. Psychologically, individuals' readiness to cope with career-related tasks, transitions, and challenges is reflected in their level of career adaptability, which comprises four dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Recent studies have consistently demonstrated that career adaptability and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) are two fundamental psychological competencies that play a crucial role in successful career planning and the transition from secondary education to higher education (Salim et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2025). Furthermore, studies involving Indonesian adolescents and university students have reported that career adaptability is positively associated with various forms of self-efficacy and serves as an important predictor of individuals' readiness to navigate educational and occupational transitions (Aminah et al., 2024; Jessica & Kembaren, 2024). Therefore, strengthening the psychological resources that facilitate career decision-making and career adaptability has become a critical aspect of preparing students to successfully navigate the increasingly complex, dynamic, and competitive environments of higher education and the labor market.

In the context of Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) education, residential life presents social characteristics that differ substantially from those of conventional schools. Students live together in dormitories where they engage in academic activities, character development programs, religious practices, and intensive social interactions with their peers on a daily basis. Such intensive interactions provide considerable opportunities to foster social support and a strong sense of community. However, they also increase the likelihood of interpersonal conflicts, peer group dominance, and various forms of peer verbal bullying. Studies on adolescent bullying have shown that verbal bullying remains prevalent in educational settings and is often perceived as a normal part of peer group dynamics, causing it to be overlooked as a form of psychological violence (Maalikh et al., 2024). Recent evidence further indicates that verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying in educational environments, frequently targeting students' physical appearance, socioeconomic background, and social identity (Pasaribu, 2025). The residential nature of *pesantren* provides a distinctive social context for examining how peer interactions serve not only as a source of social support but also as a potential psychosocial risk factor that shapes adolescents' career development. Because students interact continuously within the boarding school environment, both positive and negative peer experiences are likely to exert a more substantial influence on their psychological development than those experienced in conventional non-residential schools.

Verbal violence is a form of psychological aggression manifested through ridicule, insults, negative labelling (name-calling), threats, yelling, and sarcastic remarks that undermine an individual's self-esteem. Compared with physical violence, the effects of verbal bullying are often more subtle but can be equally, if not more, psychologically damaging and destructive. Previous studies have consistently shown that victims of bullying are at greater

risk of experiencing diminished psychological well-being, reduced self-confidence, lower self-efficacy, and difficulties in developing the adaptive capacities required to cope with future developmental challenges (Virlia et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2025). Furthermore, other studies have reported that experiences of both verbal and nonverbal bullying contribute to lower levels of adolescents' self-confidence and hinder the development of a healthy sense of identity during this critical stage of development (Yulsefani et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings indicate that verbal violence extends beyond its adverse effects on psychological well-being and may also compromise key developmental processes associated with career readiness. Exposure to verbal violence may diminish adolescents' capacity to evaluate career alternatives, formulate career goals, and adapt effectively to the evolving demands of higher education and the labor market. Accordingly, verbal violence should be regarded as a significant psychosocial risk factor that may impede the development of essential career competencies during adolescence.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design. The correlational design was adopted to examine the relationships between peer verbal violence, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE), and career adaptability through objective measurement and statistical analysis (Hamdani & Satwika, 2026). This approach is particularly appropriate for investigating the psychosocial dynamics within Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) settings, where students engage in intensive and continuous peer interactions. Such interactions are known to play a significant role in shaping individuals' career self-efficacy and career adaptability through both supportive social experiences and adverse interpersonal encounters (Salim et al., 2023).

The correlational design was selected because the primary objective of this study was to examine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the relationships among the study variables rather than to establish causal relationships. Accordingly, the findings were interpreted as statistical associations between peer verbal violence, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE), and career adaptability. This research design is consistent with the study's objective of investigating the relationships among these variables within the unique social environment of students residing in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*).

Participants

The study population consisted of all senior high school students enrolled at XYZ Islamic Boarding School who resided in the school dormitories. A total of 156 students met the eligibility criteria and were included as research participants. The participants were selected based on their demographic characteristics as senior high school students living in a residential boarding school environment, where they are routinely exposed to intensive and continuous peer interactions that may influence their psychosocial and career development.

The inclusion criteria for this study were as follows: (1) being an active senior high school student enrolled in the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), (2) having resided in the boarding school dormitory for at least one academic semester, and (3) voluntarily agreeing

to participate in the study by providing informed consent. These criteria were established to ensure that all participants had experienced a relatively high level of daily peer interaction, making them an appropriate population for investigating the relationship between peer verbal violence, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE), and career adaptability.

Participant Recruitment Procedure

Participants were recruited using a combination of purposive sampling and stratified random sampling techniques. This sampling procedure was employed to ensure that the selected participants adequately represented the target population in accordance with the study objectives. In addition, the sampling strategy was designed to obtain a sufficient sample size to meet the statistical requirements for correlational analysis (Sabillah & Zubair, 2025).

Purposive sampling was initially applied to identify students who met the predefined inclusion criteria. Subsequently, stratified random sampling was conducted based on grade level to ensure proportional representation of students from Grades 10, 11, and 12. The combination of these sampling techniques was expected to enhance the representativeness of the sample while minimizing the potential for sampling bias.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using three validated and reliable Likert-scale instruments. The first instrument was the Peer Verbal Violence Scale, which was used to assess the extent of participants' exposure to verbal violence perpetrated by their peers. The second instrument was the Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) Scale, which measured participants' confidence in their ability to engage in career exploration, planning, and decision-making, reflecting the critical role of self-efficacy in career development (Graziella & Sulistiyansih, 2026). The third instrument was the Career Adaptability Scale, which assessed participants' career adaptability across four dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence (Stefana & Papu, 2025). This instrument was based on the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), which has been adapted and validated for use within the Indonesian population (Widyawati et al., 2025; Nurfitriana et al., 2021).

All research instruments employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to the main data collection, the instruments underwent a comprehensive validation process, including content validity assessment through expert judgment, followed by empirical validity and reliability testing in a pilot study involving 30 participants with characteristics comparable to those of the target population. All questionnaire items met the established validity criteria and were therefore retained for the main study. The reliability analysis demonstrated excellent internal consistency across all instruments. The Peer Verbal Violence Scale, consisting of 15 items, yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.963. The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) Scale, comprising 10 items, demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.956, while the Career Adaptability Scale, consisting of 12 items, produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.973. These reliability coefficients indicate that all instruments possessed excellent internal consistency, confirming their suitability for measuring the constructs investigated in this study.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, minimum scores, and maximum scores, were employed to describe participants' demographic characteristics and research variables. Prior to hypothesis testing, the data distribution was examined and indicated that the assumptions for parametric correlation were not fully satisfied. Therefore, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho) was applied to examine the relationships between peer verbal violence, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE), and career adaptability. Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 level ($p < .05$).

Results

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

A total of 156 senior high school students residing in an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) participated in this study. As presented in Table 1, the participants comprised 51 tenth-grade students (32.7%), 56 eleventh-grade students (35.9%), and 49 twelfth-grade students (31.4%). In terms of gender, the sample included 80 male students (51.3%) and 76 female students (48.7%).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Characteristics	Category	n	%
Grade Level	Grade 10	51	32.7
	Grade 11	56	35.9
	Grade 12	49	31.4
	Total	156	100
Gender	Male	80	51.3
	Female	76	48.7
	Total	156	100

The demographic distribution indicates that the participants were relatively well balanced across grade levels and gender, suggesting that the sample adequately represented the characteristics of the target population.

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

The descriptive statistical analysis showed that the mean score for peer verbal violence was 21.86 (SD = 7.256), while the mean score for Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) was 33.33 (SD = 5.960). The mean score for career adaptability was 45.38 (SD = 6.740), indicating the highest average score among the three study variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Peer Verbal Violence	156	15	48	21.86	7.256
Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE)	156	17	47	33.33	5.960
Career Adaptability	156	27	59	45.38	6.740

As shown in Table 2, scores for peer verbal violence ranged from 15 to 48, with a mean of 21.86 (SD = 7.256). Scores for Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) ranged from 17 to 47, with a mean of 33.33 (SD = 5.960). Meanwhile, career adaptability scores

ranged from 27 to 59, yielding the highest mean among the study variables ($M = 45.38$, $SD = 6.740$).

Profile of Peer Verbal Violence

The distribution of participants according to their level of exposure to peer verbal violence is presented in Table 3. The majority of participants (92.9%) were classified as experiencing a moderate level of peer verbal violence, whereas 7.1% were categorized as experiencing a high level. No participants were classified as having a low level of exposure.

Table 3. Distribution of Participants by Level of Peer Verbal Violence

Level	n	%
Low	0	0.0
Moderate	145	92.9
High	11	7.1
Total	156	100

As shown in Table 3, the findings indicate that most students residing in the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) experienced a moderate level of peer verbal violence. Only a small proportion of participants (7.1%) reported a high level of exposure, while none were classified in the low category.

Profile of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE)

The distribution of participants according to their Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) levels is presented in Table 4. The majority of participants (91.7%) were classified as having a high level of CDMSE, while 8.3% were categorized as having a moderate level. No participants were classified as having a low level of CDMSE.

Table 4. Distribution of Participants by Level of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE)

Level	n	%
Low	0	0.0
Moderate	13	8.3
High	143	91.7
Total	156	100

As shown in Table 4, most participants demonstrated a high level of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE), indicating strong confidence in their ability to engage in career exploration, evaluate career alternatives, and make appropriate career decisions. Only a small proportion of participants (8.3%) were classified as having a moderate level of CDMSE, whereas none fell into the low category.

Profile of Career Adaptability

The distribution of participants according to their career adaptability levels is presented in Table 5. The findings indicate that the majority of participants (96.8%) were classified as having a high level of career adaptability, whereas only 3.2% were categorized as having a moderate level. No participants were classified as having a low level of career adaptability.

Table 5. Distribution of Participants by Level of Career Adaptability

Level	n	%
Low	0	0.0
Moderate	5	3.2
High	151	96.8
Total	156	100

As shown in Table 5, the vast majority of participants demonstrated a high level of career adaptability. These findings suggest that most students were well prepared to cope with career-related developmental tasks, adapt to educational and occupational transitions, and respond effectively to future career challenges. Only a small proportion of participants (3.2%) exhibited a moderate level of career adaptability, while none were classified in the low category.

Relationship Between Peer Verbal Violence and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE)

The relationship between peer verbal violence and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) was examined using Spearman's rank-order correlation (Spearman's rho). The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of $r_s = -0.831$ with a significance level of $p < .001$, indicating a very strong and statistically significant negative correlation between the two variables. These findings suggest that higher levels of peer verbal violence were associated with lower levels of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) among the participants. A summary of the correlation analysis is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Spearman Correlation Between Peer Verbal Violence and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE)

Variable	r_s	p	explanation
Peer Verbal Violence – CDMSE	-0,831	<0,001	Very strong negative correlation

Relationship Between Peer Verbal Violence and Career Adaptability

The relationship between peer verbal violence and career adaptability was also examined using Spearman's rank-order correlation (Spearman's rho). The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of $r_s = -0.913$ with a significance level of $p < .001$, indicating a very strong and statistically significant negative correlation between the two variables. These findings suggest that higher levels of peer verbal violence were associated with lower levels of career adaptability among the participants. A summary of the correlation analysis is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Spearman Correlation Between Peer Verbal Violence and Career Adaptability

Variable	r_s	p	explanation
Peer Verbal Violence – Career Adaptability	-0,913	<0,001	Very strong negative correlation

Overall, the results demonstrated that peer verbal violence was significantly and negatively correlated with both Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) and career adaptability. These findings indicate that participants who reported higher levels of peer verbal violence tended to report lower levels of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) and career adaptability.

Discussion

Although the descriptive findings indicated that most participants were classified as having high levels of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) and career adaptability, while the majority experienced a moderate level of peer verbal violence, these distributions do not contradict the correlation results. Descriptive categorization summarizes participants based on predefined score intervals, whereas correlation analysis examines the

relationships among variables using the full range of individual scores. Consequently, substantial variability within each category may still produce strong negative correlations. Therefore, the relationships observed in this study are more appropriately interpreted based on the correlation coefficients than on the categorical distributions of the variables.

The findings of this study demonstrated that peer verbal violence was significantly and negatively associated with Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) and career adaptability among senior high school students residing in an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*). Participants who reported higher levels of peer verbal violence tended to report lower levels of confidence in making career decisions as well as lower career adaptability. These findings highlight the important role of the peer social environment in adolescents' career development, particularly within residential educational settings where peer interactions occur continuously (Offando & Sukma, 2024; Firmansyah & Sukma, 2025).

The first major finding revealed a very strong negative relationship between peer verbal violence and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) ($r_s = -0.831$, $p < .001$). This finding suggests that repeated exposure to ridicule, insults, negative labeling, and other forms of verbal aggression may undermine students' confidence in their ability to explore career options, formulate career goals, and make appropriate career decisions. These findings are consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which proposes that self-efficacy is a central cognitive mechanism influencing career exploration, goal setting, and career decision-making. According to SCCT, negative environmental experiences may function as contextual barriers that weaken individuals' efficacy beliefs and consequently reduce their engagement in career-related behaviors (Khatijatusshalihah et al., 2022; Wijaya & Virlia, 2024).

The present findings are also consistent with previous studies demonstrating that bullying victimization is associated with reduced self-efficacy, diminished self-confidence, and poorer psychological well-being among adolescents (Arif et al., 2024; Arofa et al., 2018). Such adverse psychological outcomes may limit the development of personal resources necessary for effective career planning and decision-making (Utami & Haryati, 2023). Within the context of Islamic boarding schools, where students interact intensively throughout daily academic, religious, and residential activities, repeated exposure to verbal violence may have an even greater psychological impact because negative peer experiences are likely to occur continuously rather than occasionally.

The second major finding revealed a very strong negative relationship between peer verbal violence and career adaptability ($r_s = -0.913$, $p < .001$). This finding indicates that students who experienced higher levels of peer verbal violence tended to report lower career adaptability. According to Career Construction Theory, career adaptability comprises four psychosocial resources—concern, control, curiosity, and confidence—that enable individuals to cope successfully with career-related tasks, transitions, and future uncertainties. Continuous exposure to negative peer interactions may weaken these adaptive resources by reducing students' confidence, limiting their sense of control over future career planning, and discouraging them from exploring career opportunities (Cahyani, 2023; Lestari & Ama, 2024).

These findings are supported by previous studies indicating that supportive peer relationships facilitate career adaptability, whereas hostile peer environments impede adolescents' ability to adapt to educational and occupational transitions (Sari & Sarianti, 2026; Offando & Sukma, 2024). Repeated experiences of verbal aggression may therefore reduce students' psychological readiness to cope with uncertainty and future career challenges.

From a counseling perspective, these findings suggest that career guidance services within Islamic boarding schools should extend beyond the provision of career information. School counselors should collaborate with boarding school administrators to implement comprehensive bullying prevention programs and create supportive peer environments. Integrating career counseling with peer counseling, social-emotional learning, and religious values-based interventions may help strengthen students' psychological resources while promoting healthier career development (Arif et al., 2024; Offando & Sukma, 2024).

Theoretically, this study extends the application of Social Cognitive Career Theory and Career Construction Theory to the context of Islamic boarding schools. The findings support the proposition that negative peer interactions function as contextual barriers that weaken Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy and career adaptability. They further reinforce the importance of the social environment as a determinant of adolescents' career development by demonstrating that adverse interpersonal experiences are associated with reduced confidence in career decision-making and diminished adaptive career resources (Wijaya & Virlia, 2024; Firmansyah & Sukma, 2025; Zai & Brahmana, 2026).

Novelty of the Research

This study offers a novel contribution by examining peer verbal violence as a psychosocial risk factor associated with both Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) and career adaptability among senior high school students living in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). Previous studies have predominantly focused on the positive effects of social support on career development, whereas limited attention has been given to the detrimental role of peer verbal violence within boarding school environments characterized by intensive and continuous social interactions. Furthermore, this study integrates Social Cognitive Career Theory and Career Construction Theory to explain how adverse peer interactions may undermine career-related psychological resources, thereby extending the application of both theories to the *pesantren* context.

Implications and Contributions

The findings contribute theoretically by extending the application of Social Cognitive Career Theory and Career Construction Theory to the context of Islamic boarding schools, demonstrating that negative peer interactions function as contextual barriers that weaken career decision-making self-efficacy and career adaptability. Practically, the results provide empirical evidence for school counselors, teachers, and boarding school administrators to develop comprehensive anti-bullying policies, peer-support programs, and career counseling interventions aimed at strengthening students' psychological resources for career development. These findings may also serve as a reference for future studies investigating

psychosocial determinants of career development among adolescents in residential educational settings.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the correlational design does not permit causal inferences regarding the relationships among the variables. Second, all data were collected through self-report questionnaires, which may be susceptible to social desirability and response bias. Third, the participants were recruited from a single Islamic boarding school, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal, experimental, or mixed-methods approaches and include broader samples from multiple boarding schools. In addition, future studies may examine mediating or moderating variables, such as social support, resilience, psychological well-being, and school climate.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that peer verbal violence was significantly and negatively associated with Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) and career adaptability among senior high school students residing in an Islamic boarding school (pesantren). Students who reported higher levels of peer verbal violence tended to report lower confidence in making career decisions and lower levels of career adaptability. These findings emphasize the importance of a supportive peer environment in fostering adolescents' psychological resources for career development.

The findings have important practical implications for educational institutions and boarding school administrators. Strengthening anti-bullying policies, implementing continuous psychoeducational programs, and promoting empathic communication may help create a safer and more supportive boarding school environment that facilitates students' psychological well-being and career development. Furthermore, school counselors are encouraged to develop comprehensive career guidance programs integrated with bullying prevention, social-emotional learning, and early psychological assessment to strengthen students' Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE) and career adaptability.

Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal, mixed-methods, or experimental designs to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships identified in this study. Further investigations should also examine potential mediating or moderating variables, such as social support, resilience, psychological well-being, and school climate, to better explain the mechanisms linking peer verbal violence with adolescents' career development.

Author Contributions

C.R. conceptualized the study, collected the data, performed the statistical analysis, and drafted the manuscript. D.H.R. supervised the research design, contributed to data interpretation, and critically revised the manuscript. M. provided academic supervision,

validated the theoretical framework, and reviewed the final manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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