Self-Actualization and Anxiety in Early Adult Female Victims of Domestic Violence During Childhood

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Abstract. *Domestic violence (DV) is one of the forms of violence that affects not only adults but also children. Experiencing or witnessing DV in childhood can have long-term psychological impacts, such as the development of an anxious personality in adulthood. As individuals grow, they need to fulfill specific needs to achieve self-actualization, including safety needs. Individuals with high anxiety are most likely to have a threatened sense of security. Thus, the anxiety is predicted to be related to self-actualization. This research aims to investigate the relationship between self-actualization and anxiety in adult women who were victims of DV during childhood, with a total of 240 early adult women. The data analysis method is quantitative correlational. The findings revealed a correlation coefficient of -0.523 with a significance value of 0.000 (p < 0.05), indicating a negative correlation between self-actualization and anxiety in early adult women who experienced DV during childhood.*
Keywords: *Anxiety, Self-Actualization, Domestic Violence*

Introduction

Violence is a complex phenomenon that violates human values and human rights. It can occur between individuals and countries in different contexts, including the private and public spheres. Violence can cause harm to many parties and is, therefore, unacceptable. One form of Violence that occurs frequently is domestic Violence, or what is often referred to as domestic abuse. Based on Article 1 of Law No. 23/2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence, the definition of domestic Violence is any act against a person, especially women, which results in physical, sexual, or psychological misery or suffering and domestic neglect, including threats of acts, coercion or unlawful deprivation of independence within the household. Domestic Violence, also known as Domestic Abuse, includes not only the relationship between husband and wife but also any party in the household, including children (Santoso, 2019).

Violence is common in Indonesian society, including domestic violence. Data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection shows that recorded cases of violence reached 15,330 cases, with 13,656 female victims (SIMFONI-PPA, 2023). Wardhani (2021) also

added that 11.4% of women from the entire Indonesian society have experienced violence. In terms of age, data on violence cases from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection show that the most common victims are adolescents and children (SIMFONI-PPA, 2023). The number of adolescent victims aged 13-17 years was 5,835 victims, and the number of victims who were children aged 0-12 years was 4574 victims. Then, it was recorded that domestic violence was the highest type of violence case in 2023 based on the place of occurrence, reaching 9,147 cases (SIMFONI-PPA, 2023). These data show that the phenomenon of domestic violence is still prevalent in Indonesian society, especially among children and women. One of the most talked about domestic violence phenomena in Indonesia in 2022 was the domestic violence case of singer Lesti Kejora. In this case, Lesti Kejora was shouted at, choked, and dragged by her husband, Rizky Billar (Salakory et al., 2023). According to Wardhani (2021), four types of violence occur in households, namely physical violence, psychological violence, economic violence, and sexual violence.

In terms of scope, in addition to husband and wife, victims of domestic violence may include children, other family members, and any party living in the same house (Inu Wicaksono dalam Siregar et al., 2023). Dodaj (2020) argues that children who witness domestic violence are also victims of domestic violence. He added that the presence of children in domestic violence situations can hurt the cognitive, physical, psychological, and behavioral development of children, so this can be categorized as a severe form of violence. The Istanbul Convention, as a representative council in Europe dealing with issues of violence against women and domestic violence, also recognizes that people who witness or are exposed to domestic violence are also victims, as it is classified as psychological violence (Carnevale et al., 2020).

Many factors cause the phenomenon of domestic violence. Setiawan et al. (2023) suggest that the factors that cause domestic violence are psychological, social factors, cultural factors, environmental factors, individual, gender, and family history. Domestic violence has both short-term and long-term negative effects on the victims. According to Setiawan et al. (2023) the short-term impact felt by victims can be in the form of physical injury, health problems, pregnancy, and economic impact, such as loss of employment. On the other hand, the long-term impact felt by victims of domestic violence can be in the form of mental disorders such as anxiety, depression, sleep disorders, social and relational disorders such as withdrawal from the environment, psychological trauma, and long-term mental disorders (Santoso, 2019). Purwanti & Tridewiyanti (2019) added that the effects of domestic violence on children are also not much different, namely physical and emotional suffering and difficulties in social relationships. Apart from experiencing

it directly, children who are exposed to domestic violence because they witness domestic violence are also victims who receive adverse severe effects (Dodaj, 2020). Gregory et al. (2020) argue that children who witness domestic violence in the home tend to lack a sense of safety, both physically and emotionally. Gregory et al. (2020) add that the effects experienced by children exposed to domestic violence can carry over into adulthood—for example, the emergence of sleep disorders caused by fear and anxiety.

According to Hawari (2013 in Indriyati et al., 2021), anxiety is a feeling of insecurity, stress, and constant worry about something that confuses the mind. Factors that cause anxiety, according to Adler and Rodman, are unpleasant experiences that occurred in the past and also an irrational view of things (Silalahi et al., 2023). According to Spielberger (1972), anxiety is divided into 2, namely, state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety is a feeling of fear, nervousness, or discomfort characterized by movements in the autonomic nervous system caused by dangerous situations. It refers to a person's feelings at the time of the threat. Meanwhile, trait anxiety is a disposition or trait that tends to feel relatively stressed, worried, and uncomfortable (Çiğdem & Odacı, 2020). In victims of domestic violence, anxiety and fear tend to appear and are caused by a lack of feeling safe (Gregory et al., 2020). According to Setiawan et al., (2023), this is because domestic violence can cause psychological trauma, which causes a person to lack confidence and become cautious or closed to the environment. He also added that victims of domestic violence tend to have fear and anxiety because they feel that their safety and that of their family is threatened (Setiawan et al., 2023). This indicates that there is a lack of need for safety in victims of domestic violence. Abraham Maslow revealed the theory of the hierarchy of needs, where the need for security is one of the primary human needs to be able to achieve self-actualization (Feist et al., 2018).

Maslow (1970) explains that self-actualization is the fulfillment or maturity of the self, which includes realizing the full potential of the self by maximizing the abilities and becoming fully oneself. According to Feist et al. (2018), the characteristics of individuals who have achieved self-actualization are that they have unshakable self-esteem even when they experience bad things from others, such as rejection or abandonment. This self-actualization is the highest level in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. In this theory, Maslow initiated the levels of human needs that need to be met, namely physical needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs, and then at the top is the need for self-actualization (Feist et al., 2018). Abraham Maslow states that basic needs, such as physical needs and a sense of safety, must first be met before higher needs in the hierarchy can be met (Montag et al., 2020).

Victims of violence, both those who experience it and those who witness it, experience anxiety that can impact their sense of safety (Gregory et al., 2020). This is also supported by the opinion of Setiawan et al., (2023) that victims of domestic violence tend to feel that the need for safety in themselves and their families is threatened, which can cause ongoing anxiety. According to Paterson-Young (2021), the lack of fulfillment of safety needs and the presence of anxiety in victims of violence can hinder the process toward each level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs to achieve self-actualization. In children, the psychological effects of violent events, such as anxiety, depression, or other psychological disorders, can also hinder development and slow the process toward the peak of self-actualization in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Paterson-Young, 2021).

Islami (2018) studied the relationship between self-actualization, social anxiety, and introverted personality among middle school students in Banjarmasin City. The results of the study showed that there is a significant negative relationship between self-actualization and social anxiety (Islami, 2018). The study found a relationship between self-actualization and social anxiety. The research subjects were also ordinary high school students. Therefore, the author is interested in examining the relationship between self-actualization and anxiety in general rather than social anxiety. With also different subjects, which are early adult female victims of domestic violence during childhood. Women became the subject of this study because, based on data from (SIMFONI-PPA, 2023), as many as 13,656 women were recorded as victims of violence.

The purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between self-actualization and anxiety in early adult female victims of domestic violence during childhood. This study focuses on the level of self-actualization and the level of anxiety in the present as a result of past domestic violence events. Anxiety in general, is a variable that differs from previous research conducted by Islami (2018) where the variable used is social anxiety. In this case, the researcher wants to know if there are differences in the results regarding the relationship between self-actualization and general anxiety in different subjects. This research is expected to provide benefits in terms of knowing whether the anxiety of early adult women who were victims of domestic violence in their childhood has anything to do with self-actualization. The results of this study are expected to reflect the importance of understanding the psychological factors that contribute to the self-actualization of an early adult individual. This study hypothesizes that there is a negative relationship between self-actualization and anxiety in early adult female victims of domestic violence during childhood. In other words, the higher the anxiety, the lower the self-actualization.

Methods

This research uses a quantitative correlational method to identify the relationship between certain variables. This method was chosen because it is consistent with the research objectives and will be able to answer the research question well, which is whether there is a relationship between self-actualization and anxiety as the variable of focus in this study. The characteristics of participants involved in this study are adult women between the ages of 20 and 40 who experienced or witnessed domestic violence in their childhood. The form of domestic violence experienced/witnessed can be in the form of physical, sexual, or psychological violence and neglect within the household. With these characteristics, the population of this study reached 240 women. The participants selected were those who met the inclusion criteria, namely those who experienced or witnessed domestic violence between the ages of 0-12 years. The instrument of this study was a questionnaire that included questions about the demographic data of the participants as well as measurement tools for each variable. The data collection process was conducted online by distributing the questionnaires related to issues of women, violence, and children through social media and communities to ensure a representative population.

The instrument used to measure anxiety in child victims of domestic violence is the State and Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) by Spielberger (1972). This instrument has 40 questions divided into two dimensions, namely state anxiety and trait anxiety, with each dimension having 20 items. The reliability of the STAI is measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient method, and the results show a value of 0.928 in the state anxiety dimension and 0.909 in the trait anxiety dimension. This shows that the reliability of the STAI is high or very high for each dimension. Then, the self-actualization variable is measured by the Short Index of Self Actualization (SISA), which can also be referred to as the Self Actualization Scale (SAS) by Jones & Crandall (1986). This measuring instrument has 15 questions, with seven positive and eight negative questions. This measuring instrument has a reliability value of 0.670 based on the research previously conducted by Shang et al. (2023). Before the researchers conducted a reliability test on this measuring instrument, revisions were made in translation adaptations into Indonesian, which were then validated by expert judgment. The reliability test results using the same method, namely Cronbach's Alpha, show a value of 0.697, which means the reliability value is increasing. This study processed quantitative data using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 software. The data processing process began with validity, reliability, and normality tests and continued with the Pearson correlation test. The Pearson correlation test was chosen to be able to identify the relationship between the variables of self-actualization and anxiety.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Below are descriptive statistics results from the research questionnaire.

Table 1.
Demographic Data of the Participants

Characteristics	Total	Percentage
Age		
20-25 years old	193	80,4%
26-30 years old	35	14,6%
31-35 years old	9	3,7%
36-40 years old	3	1,2%
Domicile		
Java Island	202	84,2%
Sumatra Island	19	7,9%
Borneo Island	10	4,2%
Sulawesi Island	7	2,9%
Papua Island	1	0,4%
Nusa Tenggara Island and Bali	1	0,4%
Place of Residence		
Parents' Home	144	60,0%
Private Boarding House	29	12,1%
Boarding House Provided by Parents	27	11,3%
More	26	11,2%
Private Home	10	4,2%
Rent	3	1,2%
Living Together		
Nuclear Family	121	50,4%
On your own	42	17,5%
More	38	15,8%
Extended Family	21	8,8%
Friends or Partners	18	7,5%
Sibling Order		
First Child	102	42,5%
Youngest Child	54	22,5%
Middle Child	53	22,1%
Only Child	31	12,9%
Marriage Status		
Single	208	86,7%
Marry	30	12,5%
Divorcee	2	0,8%
Last Education		
High School	146	60,8%
S1	70	29,2%
Diploma	16	6,7%
Junior High School	5	2,1%
S2	2	0,8%
Elementary School	1	0,4%

Characteristics	Total	Percentage
Current Occupation (Based on frequency ranking)		
Diploma or undergraduate students	106	
Private Employee	51	
Part-timers	22	
More	21	
Housewife	20	
Not Working	18	
Entrepreneurship	11	
Teacher	9	
Doctor/Psychologist/Professional Worker	5	
Civil Servant/TNI/Police	3	
Master or doctoral student	1	
Leisure Activities (Based on frequency ranking)		
Relax, only at home	145	
Sports/Art/Hobby Routine	85	
More	32	
Outdoor Recreation	46	
Joining an Organization/Community	44	
Attend Workshop or Training	37	
Conditions for Victims of Domestic Violence in Childhood		
Experiencing & Witnessing	103	42,91%
Experience	91	37,91%
Watch	46	19,16%
Types of Domestic Violence in Childhood (Based on frequency ranking)		
Psychological Abuse	193	
Physical Violence	175	
Economic Violence	87	
Sexual Violence	36	
More	6	
Timing of Domestic Violence in Childhood		
At the age of 0-5 years old	42	17,5%
At the age of 6-12 years old	198	82,5%
Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Childhood (Based on frequency ranking)		
Father	185	
Mom	91	
Siblings in the same house	39	
Grandparents	27	
Uncle/Aunt	27	
More	20	
Siblings not in the same house	15	
Intensity/Length of Domestic Violence		
1 to 3 times a week	145	60,4%
3 to 5 times a week	48	20%
More than 5 times a week	47	19,6%

Characteristics	Total	Percentage
What to do after experiencing domestic violence (Based on frequency ranking)		
Not Telling Anyone	209	
Storytelling to Family Members	19	
More	19	
Storytelling to Relatives/Friends/Teachers	15	
Reporting to the Authorities	1	
Current Situation with Perpetrators		
Still living/meeting with the perpetrator	152	63,3%
No longer living/meeting with the perpetrator	88	36,7%
Whether or Not Domestic Violence is Still Happening		
Not Happening	180	75%
Still Happening	60	25%
Impact Felt till Now (Based on frequency ranking)		
Trauma/Trust Issue	221	
Having Disturbing Thoughts	181	
Loss of Self-Confidence	161	
Self-Hate	136	
Being shy or timid	133	
More	32	
Physical Impact (Permanent injury, physical disability, etc.)	25	

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that most of the participants in this study were 20-25 years old, with a percentage of 80.4% of the total number of participants. A total of 198 participants, with a percentage of 82.5%, experienced domestic violence in their childhood, precisely at the age of 6-12 years. The most common type of domestic violence is psychological violence, which amounted to 80.4%, with a total of 193 participants who experienced it.

Descriptive Analysis

Categorization was used to describe the level of anxiety and self-actualization of the participants. This study uses a mean difference test to determine the empirical mean. If it is found that the empirical mean is greater than the hypothetical mean, it can be categorized as high. Conversely, if the empirical mean is less than the hypothetical mean, it can be categorized as low.

Table 2.
Overview of Participants' Self-Actualization Level

Min	Max	Hypothetical Mean	Empirical Mean
19	50	37,5	35,9

Table 2 shows that the description of the participants' level of self-actualization based on the empirical mean is below the hypothetical mean. In other words, the participants' self-actualization tends to be below average, so it is low.

Table 3.
Overview of Participant Anxiety Levels

Min	Max	Hypothetical Mean	Empirical Mean
56	157	100	119,91

Based on Table 3, the description of the participants' anxiety level based on the empirical mean is above the hypothetical mean. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants' anxiety level tends to be above average, which means that the participants' anxiety level is high. The participants' anxiety level is then divided into two dimensions, namely state anxiety (current anxiety) and trait anxiety (trait anxiety).

Table 4.
Overview of Participant Anxiety Levels Based on Dimensions

Dimensions	Min	Max	Hypothetical Mean	Empirical Mean
State Anxiety	26	80	50	59,10
Trait Anxiety	30	79	50	60,67

Table 4 shows a description of the participants' anxiety level, which is divided into two dimensions, namely state anxiety and trait anxiety. The empirical mean of both dimensions is above the hypothetical mean. Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants' state anxiety and trait anxiety are above average or tend to be high.

Assumption Test

The assumption test performed in this study is the normality test. The normality test determines whether the data obtained are typically distributed. Previously, researchers calculated unstandardized residuals to test the normality of both variables simultaneously. Then, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method is used in IBM SPSS Statistics 23 software. If the significance coefficient $p > 0.05$, the data are typically distributed. Below are the results of the data normality test performed.

Table 5.
Test of Normality

	Sig. (2-tailed)	Explanation
Unstandardized Residual	.200	Normally Distributed

Based on the normality test results of the total anxiety and self-actualization scores, a p-value of 0.200 was obtained, indicating that the data were normally distributed.

Hypothesis Test

In this study, Pearson's correlation test was conducted to evaluate the relationship between self-actualization variables and anxiety variables in early adult female victims of domestic violence during childhood. IBM SPSS Statistics 23 software supported Pearson's correlation test, and the results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6.
Pearson Correlation Test Result

Variable	*Pearson correlation (r)*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Self-Actualization and Anxiety	-.523**	.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Based on the correlation test results conducted to see the relationship between self-actualization and anxiety, the correlation coefficient value is -0.523 with a significance value of p-value of 0.000, which means $p < 0.05$. The Pearson correlation value shows that there is a significant negative relationship between self-actualization and anxiety. This negative direction indicates that when anxiety levels are higher, self-actualization is lower. Conversely, when anxiety is low, self-actualization will be higher. In addition, this study also tested the correlation between self-actualization and each dimension of anxiety, namely state anxiety and trait anxiety. The test results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7.
Pearson Correlation Test Results by Dimension

Variable	*Pearson correlation (r)*	Sig. (2-tailed)
Self-Actualization and State Anxiety	-.441**	.000
Self-Actualization and Trait Anxiety	-.567**	.000

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Based on Table 7, the results of the correlation test between the self-actualization variable and the anxiety variable of the state anxiety dimension, as well as between the self-actualization variable and the anxiety variable of the trait anxiety dimension. The correlation test results between self-actualization and state anxiety show a correlation coefficient of -0.441 with a significance value of p-value of 0.000, which means $p < 0.05$. Thus, it can be interpreted that there is a negative relationship between Self-actualization and State Anxiety dimension. The correlation test between self-actualization and trait anxiety dimension shows a correlation coefficient value of -0.567 with a significance value of p-value of 0.000, which means $p < 0.05$. This means that there is a negative relationship between self-actualization and the dimensions of trait anxiety. It can be concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between self-actualization and both dimensions of anxiety, namely state anxiety and trait anxiety.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate a significant negative relationship between self-actualization and anxiety. This is evidenced by the data processing results, namely the correlation coefficient value of -0.523 and a significance value of p-value of 0.000, which means $p < 0.05$. It can be concluded that the higher the level of anxiety, the lower the level of self-actualization. The results of this study are consistent with a previous study conducted by Islami (2018). This study investigated the relationship between social anxiety, self-actualization, and introverted personality among junior high school students in Banjarmasin City. One of the findings of this study conducted by Islami (2018) is that there is a significant negative relationship between self-actualization and social anxiety.

An individual who has experienced or witnessed domestic violence generally tends to have anxiety and fear that often arises; this is due to the safety of themselves or their family being threatened (Setiawan et al., 2023). Gregory et al. (2020) also added that victims of domestic violence tend to have fear and anxiety due to a lack of feeling safe in themselves and their environment. This indicates that there is a lack of need for a sense of security in victims of domestic violence. The need for safety in Abraham Maslow (1970) Hierarchy of Needs is the second basic need that must be satisfied before moving on to the next need. At the top level is self-actualization, which is the highest need of an individual.

This study found a picture of high anxiety in participants who were early adult female victims of domestic violence during childhood. When asked about the effects they have felt to date, participants reported that they tend to be easily anxious. This is consistent with the theory that victims of domestic violence tend to have anxiety or concerns (Setiawan et al., 2023). There were also participants diagnosed with anxiety disorders. This is supported by the statement of Yanti & Agustina (2022) that children who experience domestic violence may feel psychological disorders such as anxiety disorders, cognitive disorders, or depression. According to Azijah & Adawiyah (2020) events and experiences that occur in childhood have a significant impact on shaping an individual's personality in adulthood. Thus, children who experience or witness domestic violence and then feel fear and anxiety have a great potential to shape a personality that tends to be anxious as an adult. Consistent with this theory, it is known from the results of this study that the trait anxiety of the participants is high. This is also supported by the data on the age of the participants when domestic violence occurred. Most of the domestic violence experienced or witnessed by the participants occurred when the participants were 6-12 years old. This study also found that participants' state anxiety was high even though the domestic violence had occurred a long time

ago, and the majority of participants reported that it had never happened again. This is because domestic violence has an impact that makes a person always feel anxious and continue to feel that their safety is threatened (Setiawan et al., 2023). State anxiety is described as a current state of anxiety, where if participants have a high state anxiety score, it means that they are currently still feeling that anxiety (Spielberger, 1972).

The research participants chose that the impact of domestic violence experienced was the emergence of trauma and trust issues for the perpetrators. The perpetrators of domestic violence experienced by the participants during their childhood in this study were mostly their parents, namely the father and mother. It was also found that the majority of the participants were still living with the perpetrators, who mainly were their parents. Growing up with a bad childhood experience caused by someone who still lives with them today, there is a fear or worry that the violence could happen again at any time. In addition to feeling traumatized, many of the participants felt a loss of self-confidence.

The self-actualization of the participants in this study tended to be low or below average. This is supported by the data that the impact felt by the participants so far has been a loss of self-confidence. As previously discussed, self-actualization is the fulfillment or maturation of the self, which includes realizing one's full potential by maximizing one's abilities and becoming one's most entire self (Maslow, 1970). Of course, to maximize your abilities and become yourself, you must believe in yourself. The lack of self-confidence in participants can be an obstacle to maximizing their potential. Maslow (1970, in Papalia et al., 2020) added that an individual tends to move toward satisfying his or her basic needs first and then higher-level needs until self-actualization is achieved. If basic needs are not satisfied, the possibility of satisfying the highest level of the hierarchy of needs is very low (Maslow, 1970 in Papalia et al., 2020). Most of the participants were 20-25 years old. This may also be one of the reasons why the self-actualization of the participants tends to be low. In Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory (1968, in Papalia et al., 2020), the age of 20-25 is the age of young adulthood or young adulthood, when individuals search for intimacy or deep relationships. In the hierarchy of needs theory, participants are still in the process of fulfilling social needs, one of which is affection for others (Maslow, 1970 in Feist et al., 2018). In addition, most participants are still in the education process, so they have yet to achieve their complete self-actualization goals fully.

Ultimately, the results of this study provide a further understanding of the relationship between self-actualization and anxiety in early adult female victims of domestic violence in their childhood. The limitation of this study is that it focuses only on subjects who experienced or

witnessed domestic violence during childhood. The results of this study cannot be generalized and applied widely. The phenomenon of domestic violence may occur in a person during their childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Suggestions for future research to examine subjects who experienced or witnessed domestic violence in adolescence or adulthood. The subjects of this study also focused only on female victims, so further research is recommended to examine related issues by including subjects that include all genders to be able to see differences in the level of self-actualization and anxiety.

Conclusion

In this study, researchers successfully explored the relationship between self-actualization anxiety and psychological impact, specifically in the context of early adult women who experienced domestic violence in their childhood. The research findings support the hypothesis that there is a significant negative relationship between anxiety and self-actualization in early adult female victims of domestic violence in their childhood. This confirms that the higher the level of anxiety, the lower the level of self-actualization.

This study also found that the phenomenon of domestic violence in childhood caused quite diverse psychological effects, such as trauma, trust issues, loss of individual self-confidence, self-hatred, and the emergence of a timid/anxious personality. The participants' high anxiety was described not only as trait anxiety but also as state anxiety.

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