

## **Bachelor's thesis review (supervisor's evaluation)**

Defence date: September 12, 2024

Thesis title: *The relationship between reciprocal friendships and self-esteem in school aged children*

Author: Anežka Kunčická

Supervisor: Ellen Zakreski

Opponent: Zsófia Csajbók

Supervisor's recommended grade (pre-defence): 1 (excellent)

### **Overview**

Using a cross-sectional research design, this thesis examines how the number of reciprocal friendships is associated with self-esteem and whether this association is moderated by age or gender in a sample of Czech school children. The investigation found no significant relationship between self-esteem and the number of reciprocal friends, although the total number of friends (reciprocal or non-reciprocal) was associated with higher self-esteem. Neither age nor gender significantly moderated the relationship self-esteem and number of reciprocal friends, however consistent with past research, self-esteem was lower in older children, and lower in girls relative to boys.

It was a pleasure to work with this dedicated and conscientious student, who played an important role in data collection, and showed a high degree of maturity, independence, perseverance, and willingness to learn and improve throughout the preparation of her thesis. While she initially planned to write her thesis in Czech, she certainly succeeded in producing a very well-written thesis in English.

### **Theoretical section**

The introduction is well-organized and cogent. The hypotheses are clearly stated and justified. With very little guidance, the student was able to find a large number of relevant research articles, interpret these papers correctly, and integrate them. She provides a comprehensive and detailed account of self-esteem, friendship and how they develop, and brings in relevant theories. The student makes it clear why her thesis topic is important by discussing how friendships and self-esteem affect numerous health and developmental outcomes. She does a great job explaining why reciprocal friendships may be more beneficial than friendships in general, and why the relationship between self-esteem and reciprocal friendships may vary with age or gender.

### **Empirical section**

The procedure, measures and analyses are clearly and accurately described.

Although the student was new to statistics, she learned about multiple regression (including the analysis of statistical interactions), which is challenging for undergraduate students. Results are reported correctly and their relevance to the hypotheses are clear. The use of tables and figures facilitates comprehension of the results.

The findings of this study are thoroughly and accurately discussed and put into context with the larger literature. The student provides a range of compelling explanations for the null findings including the identification of several important limitations. She suggests numerous meaningful improvements to the methodology outlining interesting opportunities for future research. While

some sentences in the discussion could have been better connected, the discussion is coherent and well-structured.

**Interesting topics for discussion**

1. Why do you think self-esteem was related to the total number of friends, but was not significantly related to the number of reciprocal friendships?
2. If you were to further investigate the relationship between reciprocal friendships, self-esteem, or age, what would be your next study?

September 4, 2024

Ellen Zakreski, PhD

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Zakreski", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.