



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONCEPT AND PEER INTERACTION AND ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG GRADE X STUDENTS AT SMA NEGERI 2 TUBAN

Muhammad Alfin Dwi Prayoga¹, Muetya Firda Ramadhani², Zamroni^{3*}, Usdika Siswanto⁴

State University of Malang, Jl. Semarang No. 5 Malang, East Java, Indonesia

*Author of correspondence, Email: zamroni.fip@um.ac.id

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the relationship between self-concept and peer interaction with assertive behavior among 10th-grade students at SMA Negeri 2 Tuban. The research employed a quantitative correlational approach using a survey method. The sample consisted of 104 students, selected from a population of 323 through simple random sampling. The instruments used were the Self-Concept Scale, Peer Interaction Scale, and Assertive Behavior Scale. Data analysis included a series of tests such as normality test, linearity test, and multiple regression analysis. The results showed that self-concept and peer interaction significantly influenced students' assertive behavior ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the more positive the self-concept and the better the peer interaction, the higher the students' assertive behavior. These findings are expected to serve as a basis for developing guidance and counseling services focused on fostering students' self-concept and social relationships.

Keywords: Self-Concept; Peer Interaction; Assertive Behavior

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a crucial and challenging stage of development. During this phase, teenagers begin to search for their identity, develop independent thinking patterns, and form more complex social relationships. It is also a period in which adolescents are typically still pursuing their education at the secondary level. Education is a process of providing an environment that enables students to interact with their surroundings in order to develop their inherent abilities (Fahri & Qusyairi, 2019). In addition to engaging in academic pursuits at school, students are also fulfilling their social developmental tasks, one of which is building relationships with peers. In communication, one important behavior that adolescents need in order to clearly and firmly express their needs, desires, and feelings to others is the ability to behave assertively (Nabilah & Rosalina, 2019). For adolescents, assertive behavior plays a vital role in facilitating social interaction, avoiding conflict by being honest and straightforward, and resolving their own problems effectively (Astutik, 2020).

Putri and Sugiasih (2019) explain that it is not easy for adolescents to carry out their tasks and roles, as many struggle with the inability to behave assertively. Therefore, in their development, adolescents must learn to behave assertively—meaning to uphold their individual rights to act and express opinions without harming or disadvantaging others, to always respect others, and to be able to express their feelings honestly and comfortably. Alberti and Emmons (2017) define assertiveness as an individual's ability to communicate their feelings, desires, and thoughts to others, which helps them achieve happiness in life, build healthy relationships, and express their needs, emotions, and ideas while respecting both their own feelings and those of others.

Problems related to assertive behavior are still commonly found among adolescents or students, as many of them struggle to behave assertively—whether with family members, teachers, or peers. This issue is highlighted in a study by Purita, Nugraha, and Gusniarti (2015), which reported that many teachers expressed concern over students' lack of confidence in voicing their opinions in class, their low participation, and disinterest in joining extracurricular activities at school.

Assertive behavior is not something that individuals are born with or that emerges suddenly during development. Rather, it is formed through a learning process as a response to various social situations encountered. Therefore, assertive behavior can develop over time as individuals consistently learn and strive to enhance their assertiveness skills (Putri & Wahyuni, 2018). Adolescents with a positive self-concept will tend to have a positive and optimistic attitude toward their experiences and be able to appreciate themselves. Conversely, adolescents with a negative self-concept may feel incapable, view themselves as weak, and develop a pessimistic outlook.

In relation to students' assertive behavior, the researcher conducted direct observations during the delivery of classroom guidance services. This aimed to observe how students behave assertively when communicating with their peers. As part of the assessment process, an initial questionnaire was distributed to 104 students. The results showed that 66% of the students (69 students) were categorized as non-assertive, based on their tendency to choose statements such as "I stay quiet when I disagree with a friend," or "I feel uncomfortable refusing a request even when I don't want to do it." Meanwhile, 34% of the students (35 students) were categorized as assertive, indicated by responses such as "I can say no politely," or "I am able to express disagreement in a respectful manner." These findings suggest that the majority of students still struggle to express themselves firmly, politely, and confidently. Yet, these skills are crucial in the adolescent world, which is often filled with social pressures such as negative peer influence, friendship conflicts, or differences of opinion with peers.

According to Merida (2024), low assertive behavior in adolescents is often caused by a poor self-image or negative self-concept. This reinforces the importance of self-concept in shaping assertive behavior during adolescence

Self-concept is defined as an individual's perception and evaluation of themselves, which significantly influences how a person thinks, acts, and behaves. It encompasses one's beliefs, views, and assessments about oneself. Self-concept refers to how individuals see themselves overall, including their beliefs, self-impressions, perceptions of how others view them, and their aspirations (Novita, 2021). According to Ainun (2023), adolescents with a positive self-concept generally tend to have high self-confidence, are not easily discouraged, and are less likely to experience anxiety in social interactions. In contrast, adolescents with a negative self-concept are more prone to low self-esteem, anxiety, and lack of confidence. Afif and Listiara (2020) state that a positive self-concept enhances adolescents' assertiveness, while a negative self-concept diminishes their ability to behave assertively. Adolescents with a positive self-concept are more capable of accepting and understanding themselves, which in turn boosts their confidence in social interactions and helps them express their opinions assertively.

In addition to internal factors such as self-concept, external factors like peer interaction also play an important role in the development of assertive behavior. Peer interaction is a process of mutual influence between individuals. Through interaction with peers, students can become more creative, intelligent, cooperative, and empathetic, while also developing their social skills (Verdiyanti, 2023). Peer interaction refers to a reciprocal relationship or response that occurs within a group of friends who share similar characteristics.

The interaction between students and their peers in their environment can shape their personality, as adolescence is a stage when students tend to be curious about their surroundings and eager to try new things. Peers form a social environment that can influence students, especially considering that they spend around eight hours a day at school, resulting in close and intensive peer relationships. This peer presence can indirectly affect students' way of thinking, behavior, and academic performance (Nurlaili, 2020). In building relationships with peers, one essential behavior that students need to develop is assertiveness. For adolescents, assertive behavior plays a vital role in facilitating social interaction, avoiding conflict through honesty and openness, and enabling them to solve their problems effectively.

The study by Astuti and Muslikah (2019) found a positive and significant relationship between self-concept and assertive behavior, although the degree of correlation was low. The higher a student's self-concept, the higher their level of assertive behavior; conversely, a lower self-concept is associated with lower assertiveness. These findings are consistent with the results of Merida (2024), which showed that self-concept has a significant relationship with assertive behavior among adolescents in Pangempon Village, Bawang District, Batang Regency, with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant relationship between self-concept and assertive behavior. Nabilah and Rosalina (2019) also reported a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and assertive behavior in their study, with the result ($r_{xy} = 0.620$; $p < 0.01$). Self-esteem contributed 38.4% to assertive behavior, while the remaining 61.6% was influenced by other factors. Meanwhile, the research by Hasanah et al. (2022) revealed that peer interaction has an influence on students' assertive behavior, with a significance value of $p < 0.05$, indicating that peer relationships significantly affect assertive behavior among students at SMK Putra Jaya Stabat. The R square value was 0.297, meaning that peer interaction contributed 29.7% to assertive behavior, while 70.3% was influenced by other variables not examined in the study.

Previous studies have shown a significant positive relationship between self-concept and peer interaction with assertive behavior among adolescents. The higher the adolescent's self-concept, the more assertive behavior they tend to exhibit, and vice versa. Therefore, understanding the relationship between self-concept and peer interaction in relation to assertive behavior is important to explore, particularly among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 2 Tuban, as it can serve as a foundation for developing character and social development programs in schools. Based on this issue, the researcher intends to further examine the relationship between self-concept and peer interaction with students' assertive behavior. Hence, the researcher will conduct a study titled: "The Relationship between Self-Concept and Peer Interaction with Assertive Behavior among Grade XI Students at SMA Negeri 2 Tuban."

2. Method

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design aimed at examining the relationship between self-concept and peer interaction with assertive behavior among Grade X students at SMA Negeri 2 Tuban. The method used in this research was a survey method using scales or questionnaires. The population consisted of all Grade X students at SMA Negeri 2 Tuban, totaling 323 students, while the sample comprised 104 students from four classes, selected using a simple random sampling technique. This study focused on three variables: two independent variables—self-concept (X1) and peer interaction (X2)—and one dependent variable, namely students' assertive behavior (Y).

The instruments used in this study were Likert-type scales consisting of three separate scales: the Self-Concept Scale, the Peer Interaction Scale, and the Assertive Behavior Scale. The

Self-Concept Scale consisted of 7 items, the Peer Interaction Scale consisted of 8 items, and the Assertive Behavior Scale consisted of 9 items. All three instruments were confirmed to be valid and reliable. The items were categorized into favorable statements (those that support the aspect being measured) and unfavorable statements (those that do not support the aspect being measured).

The Self-Concept Scale refers to the aspects proposed by Siswoyo (2012), which include physical, social, moral-ethical, and psychological dimensions. The Peer Interaction Scale is based on the aspects outlined by Partowisastro (2007), namely an individual's openness within the group, cooperation within the group, and the frequency of interactions within the group. The Assertive Behavior Scale refers to the aspects proposed by Alberti & Emmons (2017), which include the ability to express opinions, act according to one's own desires, defend personal rights, respect the rights of others, and express feelings honestly and comfortably.

Each statement included four response options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). For favorable items, scores ranged from 4 to 1, and for unfavorable items, the scoring was reversed, ranging from 1 to 4. The data analysis techniques used in this study included normality testing, linearity testing, and multiple regression analysis. The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data were normally distributed. The linearity test aimed to assess whether the variables had a linear correlation. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the independent variables (self-concept and peer interaction) and the dependent variable (assertive behavior) of Grade X students at SMA Negeri 2 Tuban.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

Assumption testing was conducted as a prerequisite for using regression analysis with two predictors. The assumption tests carried out in this study were the normality test and the linearity test.

1. Normality Test

The normality test for the distribution of the peer interaction variable yielded a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value = 0 and a significance (p) = 0 ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the distribution is normal. For the self-concept variable, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value = 0 and the significance (p) = 0.00 ($p > 0.05$), also indicating a normal distribution. The normality test result for the dependent variable, assertive behavior, yielded a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value = 0.771 and a significance (p) = 0.00 ($p > 0.05$), indicating that the distribution is normal.

2. Linearity Test

The linearity test aims to determine the linear relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The self-concept variable and the assertive behavior variable have a linear correlation, as indicated by the Deviation from Linearity value = 0.925 and a significance (p) = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$).

The peer interaction variable and the assertive behavior variable have a linear correlation, as indicated by the F Linearity value = 0.569 and a significance (p) = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). If the Sig. Linearity value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the linearity assumption is met. Therefore, it can be concluded that both independent variables (self-

concept and peer interaction) meet the linearity assumption, as indicated by the significance values for both variables being less than 0.05.

The independent variables used in this analysis are self-concept (Y) and peer interaction (X), while the dependent variable is assertive behavior (Z). The regression analysis was conducted using the enter method. No variables were excluded, as indicated by the absence of values in the "Variables Removed" column.

The simultaneous influence of the self-concept and peer interaction variables on assertive behavior is evident from the table above, which shows a significance (sig) value in the F-test of 0.000. Since $\text{sig. } 0.000 < 0.05$, based on the decision rule for the F-test, it can be concluded that self-concept (X1) and peer interaction (X2) simultaneously have a significant effect on assertive behavior (Y). Therefore, the requirement for using the coefficient of determination in linear regression analysis has been met.

The regression equation and the existence or absence of a partial (individual) influence of the self-concept and peer interaction variables on assertive behavior. Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that the significance values for the self-concept and peer interaction variables are $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that both hypotheses are accepted; H1 and H2 are accepted.

3.2 Discussion

The results of this study aimed to examine the relationship between self-concept and peer interaction with assertive behavior among tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 2 Tuban. Based on the research conducted, the results of the normality and linearity tests indicated that the data were normally distributed and that the relationships between variables were linear. Therefore, the analysis proceeded with multiple regression testing. The results of the regression analysis revealed that both self-concept and peer interaction simultaneously have a significant influence on students' assertive behavior. The multiple regression test showed that the significance value (Sig.) in the F-test was 0.000. Since this value is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), it can be concluded that self-concept (X1) and peer interaction (X2) simultaneously have a significant effect on assertive behavior (Y). This means that the two independent variables together can explain the changes in the dependent variable. These findings are consistent with previous studies, providing evidence of a strong relationship between the variables, particularly the substantial contribution of self-concept to students' assertive behavior (Utomo, 2024).

Thus, assertive behavior in students is influenced not only by internal factors such as self-concept but also by external factors, one of which is interaction with peers. Riskiyah et al. (2025) explain that peers play a crucial role in the development of assertive behavior, as they create a space where individuals can practice expressing opinions, receiving constructive criticism, and engaging in healthy discussions.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research which states that self-concept and peer interaction have a positive and significant relationship with assertive behavior in adolescents. The study by Astuti and Muslikah (2019) showed a significant and positive relationship between self-concept and assertive behavior among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 3 Temanggung. This means that the higher the students' self-concept, the more likely they are to behave assertively, and conversely, the lower the self-concept, the less assertive their behavior (Astuti & Muslikah, 2019). Similarly, the findings of Hasanah et al. (2022) indicated that peer interaction has an influence on students' assertive behavior, with a

p-value < 0.05, showing a significant relationship between peer interaction and assertive behavior among students at SMK Putra Jaya Stabat, and an R-square result of 0.027. Healthy and supportive peer interactions help encourage adolescents to express their opinions and develop assertive skills in everyday social situations, both in the classroom and outside of school.

Based on the above explanation, it can be interpreted that the higher a student's self-concept and the quality of peer interactions, the higher the level of assertive behavior demonstrated. Students with a positive self-concept tend to be more confident, optimistic, and able to express their opinions assertively. Meanwhile, healthy interactions with peers also encourage students to be more outspoken, cooperative, and respectful toward others. Partially, the results of the regression analysis show that each variable, both self-concept (X1) and peer interaction (X2), has a significant relationship with assertive behavior (Y), as indicated by the significance value of each variable being 0.000 (< 0.05). Thus, it can be stated that the more positive a student's self-concept and the better their peer interactions, the more likely they are to exhibit higher levels of assertive behavior. Therefore, these findings highlight the importance of schools and guidance counselors in fostering positive self-concept and creating a socially healthy environment among students. Counseling programs, confidence-building workshops, and group activities that promote positive peer interactions can be effective strategies to enhance assertive behavior in adolescents. In doing so, students are expected to grow into confident individuals who can express themselves assertively and build healthy, harmonious social relationships with their peers.

4. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the research hypotheses are accepted. There is a significant relationship between self-concept and peer interaction with assertive behavior among Grade X students at SMA Negeri 2 Tuban. The results of the linear regression analysis indicate a significant positive relationship between self-concept and assertive behavior (sig = 0.000 < 0.05), as well as between peer interaction and assertive behavior (sig = 0.000 < 0.05). Therefore, it can be concluded that both self-concept and peer interaction have a significant relationship with assertive behavior.

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