



# The Impact of Friendship Circles on the Self-Confidence of Junior High School Students

Alfiyah Husna Amalina Sugiardi, Agnes Stevanny Nainggolan, Sukma Ayu Putri Titah  
Dewi, Adi Atmoko\*

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

\*Author of correspondence, Email: [adi.atmoko.fip@um.ac.id](mailto:adi.atmoko.fip@um.ac.id)

## Abstract

Junior High School students who fall into the middle adolescence category, aged 14-17 years, start searching for their identity as they enter puberty, facing difficulties in making decisions and controlling emotions. At this age, teenagers look for a group of friends who match their interests, hobbies, and lifestyle. The 2024 Teaching Assistance Team from the State University of Malang found that this phenomenon also occurred at the UM Laboratory School, where several students had their own friendship groups, both small and large, encompassing multiple classes. These observed friendship groups had a significant impact worth researching. The aim of this research is to understand the phenomenon of friendship among students and its impact on their self-confidence. The research method used is phenomenological, combining observation, interviews, and documentation. The results reveal that friendship impacts individual students, although differences in perspectives among subjects were also noted.

**Keywords:** teenagers; self-confidence; friendship; teenagers; self-confidence; friendship

## 1. Introduction

During adolescence, individuals seek validation from peers of the same age. At this stage, teenagers have a high curiosity, often acting impulsively and ignoring prohibitions from unfamiliar people. School peer groups provide both positive and negative support. Emotional support positively impacts students by boosting their confidence and self-belief. Adolescents develop self-confidence by recognizing their own qualities. Conversely, those with low self-confidence exhibit pessimism, hesitation in tasks, public speaking anxiety, withdrawal, and minimal involvement in activities or groups (Triningtyas 2015).

The stage in adolescence is a phase, where individuals experience a transition from childhood in which there are changes, one of which is in terms of friendship levels peer. Sarwono (2018: 17) adolescence is a period transition from childhood to adulthood characterized by development in biological, psychological, cognitive, intellectual, emotional life, and social life. Young women often form groups with other young women who have hobbies the same or one frequency in the chatting topic. Flavor accepted into a group create a feeling of comfort within yourself individual. Individual who experience necessary discomfort make an effort to adapt to organize himself so that he can cope the discomfort (Maryatmi, 2016). Therefore, good friendship is considered important for a happy teenage self Friends share information and experiences for specific agreed-upon purposes. Fitria Nur (2014) describes a friendship circle as a place where one can express their identity, crucial for recognition by others. Adolescents are selective in choosing their friendship groups to follow both positive and negative behaviors of their friends (Apostolou Vesta 2022). Friendship circles play a vital role in shaping students ethics and character. Interactions with peers influence personal development, values, and attitudes. Through friendships, they learn empathy and social engagement, understanding and addressing others needs and feelings. Conflicts and interpersonal issues arise from friendship

breakups, teaching constructive communication and conflict resolution skills, essential for building self-confidence.

According to Kumara (in Ghufon 2014:34), self-confidence is a personality trait involving self-belief in one abilities. Similarly, Afiatin and Andayani (in Ghufon 2014:34) define self-confidence as a belief in one capabilities, strengths, and skills. Ghufon (2014:35) describes self-confidence as the belief in one ability to perform tasks independently.

Based on the opinions of Iswi Dharmajaya (2014:48) and Sarastika (2014:43) it can be concluded that someone who has self-confidence has the following characteristics: (1) believes in his own abilities and is not influenced by other people, (2) behaves calmly, not easily anxious and optimistic in acting, (3) dare to express opinions; (4) dare to act and take advantage of every opportunity faced (5) have positive feelings towards oneself and others.

This research aims to determine the phenomenon of friendship circles, especially in the junior high school teenage phase, to find out whether or not it has an impact on each individual self-confidence. Initial interviews with a guidance and counseling teacher at UM Laboratory School, identified as D, revealed that in class IX, there are friendship circles or gangs of female students from six different classes. Based on expert opinions, self-confidence is an optimistic attitude of belief in one ability to handle situations. This study uses a qualitative approach to deeply understand the impact of friendship circles.

## 2. Method

This approach focuses on individual personal experiences, the research subjects are people who directly experience events or phenomena that occur, not individuals who only know about a phenomenon indirectly or through certain media. According to Sugiyono (2015:29), descriptive analysis describes or analyzes research findings without broader conclusions. The analysis process uses the Colaizzi Model with the following stages: 1). Describe the phenomenon under study. 2). Collecting descriptions of phenomena through participants opinions or statements through in-depth interview techniques and observation and make transcripts. 3). Re-read the interview transcript and quote meaningful statements from all participants. 4). Describe the meaning in significant statements. 5). Organizing a collection of meanings formulated into theme groups. 6). Read all existing categories, compare and look for similarities between categories. 7). Write a complete description. 8). Meeting participants to validate the description of the analysis results. 9). Combine validation data into a description of the analysis results.

The research conducted, the researchers collected data at the junior high school, which is a private-based junior high school that is still under one foundation within the campus of the State University of Malang. The subjects targeted for the research were female students in the ninth grade, aged 14-15 years, totaling 9 people. The chosen research topic is unique as it presents many problems in every school, but in the selected school, the researchers found a friendship circle that can be called a gang. Based on the interviews conducted with the related teacher, it was mentioned that there were several students who stood out in this circle or gang, so the researchers plan to conduct further observation and interviews with the subjects. Research techniques include observation, interviews, and documentation conducted during Teaching Assistance activities in the school's prayer room, classes, library, and cafeteria.

Systematically, the stages of Colaizzi method data analysis that the researcher will carry out are as follows: 1. Describe the phenomenon under study. The method that the researcher will use is after introducing himself to the participants, the researcher will take an approach in order to build a relationship of mutual trust, 2. Read to all participants a description of the

phenomenon being studied. Descriptions of participant interview results are prepared in verbatim manuscript form. After the verbatim manuscript was prepared, the researcher read all the verbatim with the aim of truly understanding the participant experience as a whole and understanding the participant perspective on the phenomena experienced. 3. Isolate important statements. This process is carried out by coding participant statements that have important meaning which are included verbatim. Participant statements are considered significant if they contain information related to the research objectives. After all significant statements have been identified, the next step is to separate these statements from other statements that are not significant, by entering all significant statements into the data analysis table. 4. Formulate the meaning of each important statement. In this process the researcher carries out an internal process to interpret the meaning of the statement from the participant perspective.

The meaning of each statement is interpreted so that the essence of the statement is known. In this interpretation process the researcher fully uses the participant point of view and puts aside all the researcher personal knowledge, assumptions and experiences. 5. Categorize each meaning unit into one theme/meaning group. This process is carried out by collecting statements that have the same context of meaning. Data analysis from statements that have the same meaning context are collected into one meaning category. One meaning category can consist of several statements, or it can also only consist of one statement that has a special and unique meaning. 6. Integrate each theme into a complete description. The description is arranged based on the themes and subthemes that have been identified. Each identified theme is organized into a short paragraph that is able to explain the participants perceptions. 7. Validate the analysis results with participants.

The results obtained from the data analysis process were then handed over to the participants to be read again and checked for suitability with what the participants experienced and felt. Participants are given the freedom to make changes to the research results if they feel there is something that does not match their experience. To further improve accuracy and reliability of research results, researchers do not only validate participants. The researcher also validated these results with other qualitative researchers, in this case the research supervisor, as well as fellow students who used qualitative methods in their research. 8. Refine the analysis results with data obtained during the validation process.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Result**

Results from observations and interviews conducted by the research team with subjects at UM Laboratory School from March to June 2024 are as follows:

a. Subject V\*\*\*\*

The subject started school at age 4, directly entering kindergarten. They had difficulty making friends upon entering school, particularly in primary school. During adolescence in junior high, the subject selectively chose friends. They have 2 close friends and 8 others in their friendship circle. This circle formed from merging three smaller circles, with gossip and rumors prevalent among them. One dominant and bossy friend made the subject uncomfortable. The subject wishes to graduate to leave this toxic circle. The friendship has negatively impacted the subject's behavior, including worship habits and speech, with only one supportive friend academically.

b. Subject D\*\*\*

The subject first attended school at age three in preschool. They easily made friends by being approachable and initiating conversations. However, fear of being judged made

them selective in choosing friends. Currently, they have ten friends, with two close friends, feeling comfortable in gatherings. Friendship is essential for support in difficult times. Despite experiencing loneliness when excluded, the subject finds emotional and academic support from friends. The subject parents are aware of their friendships, which boost the subject self-confidence within the circle, though it wanes outside school.

c. Subject W\*\*\*\*

The subject started junior high school at the age of 13. In school, the subject has two very close friends who are in the same class. They spend every day together at school. Outside of school, they do not meet often because their homes are not close to each other. The subject feels very comfortable being friends with them. The subject feels motivated to go to school because of them. When they first met in 7th grade, the subject easily became friends with them without changing their character to get close to them. The subject shared that they once had a misunderstanding and did not speak for a week. However, the subject tried to initiate a conversation first, and they became close again as usual. The subject feels that their friendship is genuine and without lies. Additionally, the subject feels that since knowing them, their self-confidence has increased. These two friends encourage the subject to be braver in doing things, such as speaking up in class and participating in extracurricular activities.

d. Subject I\*\*

The subject started school at the age of three in preschool. With the long time in school, the subject stated that it was not easy to make friends. Especially with their introverted nature, the subject chose to remain silent and wait for someone to talk to them. In junior high school, the subject has about nine to ten friends, and from all of them, two are closer. The subject expressed that they feel comfortable being friends with their current circle. Having friends in school is important for the subject because with friends, they can chat and do school assignments together, and the subject feels more motivated to come to school to meet their friends. Having many friends, chatting together, or just pouring out their heart is the key to a strong and closer friendship. Usually, the subject gathers with their friends only at school, except for one person because their homes are close. The support within the subject friendship is very good; it is not uncommon for them to strengthen and encourage each other when one of them is in trouble. The influence of the subject friendship circle brings neutral behavior, sometimes bringing good behavior and sometimes bad. The friendship is known by their parents, and the parents also know each other. Of the nine friends, two are quite close to the subject parents. With close friends, the subject feels no change in themselves. This is due to their introverted nature, so when with their circle, they feel confident, but when alone, they revert to their original nature. When there is a conflict with friends in the circle, the subject chooses to remain silent and if there is an opportunity, will apologize. Close friends also help the subject to be optimistic in doing something, such as participating in a flag-raising competition. The subject says that having many friends makes it easier to do assignments together. And from the subject circle, their friends never demand any change in the subject to be accepted in the circle.

e. Subject O\*\*

The subject started school at the age of 4 or 5 in preschool. The subject stated that when they entered junior high school, they easily made friends. The subject has close friends in each class, both 7th, 8th, and 9th grade. There is one friend who is really close, but many friends in the circle. From the one close friend who is also one of the nine considered just friends, the subject once felt hurt because of jokes, but over time the

subject got used to it. Friendships are also important for the subject because they can be study and discussion partners. The closeness between friends occurs because of common discussion topics, but this closeness has also had a negative influence, such as trying things like smoking and vaping. This has become a solution for some friends in the circle when there are problems, including the subject, but it only happens once or twice.

f. Subject A\*\*\*\*\*

The subject started school in preschool. At their current age, the subject states having two close friends, but also mentions having a class circle of 3-4 people. The total number of friends forms a circle from different classes. The subject feels close to other friends since 8th grade. Their friendship became close because of common interests and conversation topics. Friends in their circle never pressure or force the subject. Of the 2-4 people mentioned above, the subject also states having another circle of nine people. Despite having many friends, the subject still feels lonely and lacks academic support and encouragement. For the subject, the circle of nine people has a positive impact. But on the other hand, in decision-making, the subject relies heavily on their friends suggestions. Having a friendship circle makes the subject feel optimistic and makes it easier to do assignments. There is no need for the subject to change themselves to be accepted by their nine-person circle.

g. Subject T\*\*\*\*\*

The subject has been attending UM Laboratory Junior High School since the age of 13. The subject is a student who can be said to be very sociable and makes friends easily. When the subject wants to be friends with someone, they can immediately adapt and easily become friends with that person. The subject has eight very close friends at school. Not only are they friends at school, but the subject also often hangs out with them outside of school, such as going to tourist places, having coffee, studying together, participating in extracurricular activities together, and much more. It can be said that the subject depends on these eight people because the subject says that they cannot go anywhere alone and must always be accompanied by one of them. The subject feels very comfortable with them because the subject always feels supported in school in all matters. When the subject has a problem, their friends always provide solutions, and the subject feels very safe when near them. The subject always feels happy to have friends like them. With them, the subject never feels lonely.

h. Subject N\*\*\*\*\*

The subject N started school at the age of three. The subject states that with the long time in school, it is not easy to have a friend, because the subject has to introduce themselves every time they meet new people. Currently, the subject has seven casual friends and two close friends. When with their circle, the subject feels comfortable chatting or just pouring out their heart. For the subject, friendship is important when attending school to gain relationships. Also, having friends makes the subject feel enthusiastic when going to school. For the subject, openness and keeping secrets strengthen friendships. The subject admits that they rarely gather outside school due to some friends having strict parents. In their friendship, when the subject has personal or academic problems, the circle is very supportive, encouraging the to overcome their problems with enthusiasm and advice. The subject circle has no influence on them because the subject is indifferent and does not care, so as long as they are not directly addressed, they act normally. The subject circle and their relationship are known by their parents. And the closest to the subject parents are two close friends. Having close friends increases the subject confidence. Also,

having a circle makes it easier for the subject to collaborate on school assignments. Until now, the subject admits never having changed anything about themselves to be accepted by their circle.

i. Subject C\*\*\*\*\*

The subject started junior high school at the age of 13. The subject is a student who finds it very easy to socialize. When the subject wants to be friends with someone, they easily approach and blend in with that person. The subject has eight close friends and considers only two of them to be very close. The subject feels motivated to attend school because of their friends. Having friends like them makes the subject feel confident and safe. Confidence, for example, when the subject is involved in school and extracurricular activities, friends always support them, making the subject feel confident in performing these activities. Feeling safe, for instance, when someone is mean or naughty to the subject, the subject feels calm and safe because their friends always defend them. Whenever the subject has a problem, they always share it with their friends, but they prefer to share more with just two friends. The eight- person friendship allows the subject to be themselves without pretending to be someone else. The subject feels they never change their personality to be accepted by their friends. The subject states that they might not change their personality, but only adjust their speech slightly to avoid hurting their friends feelings.

### 3.2 Discussion

#### A. The Influence of Friendship Circles on the Developmental Tasks of Junior High School Students

Basically, humans are both individual and social creatures (DeLoach, 2018). Where individuals are defined as the unity of their spiritual and physical aspects, while social creatures are defined as creatures who must live with other humans because they cannot carry out their own activities. Moreover, in this adolescent phase, humans are required to be able to leave behind their childish mindset and move on to a new mindset towards the adult phase, so that in this case humans will begin to explore the outside world more widely and freely according to their wishes. Apart from that, humans will naturally carry out and learn social interactions naturally based on their feelings and emotional changes (Husein, 2021).

Peer relationships play an important role in the lives of young people. These peer relationships focus on how a person can be attracted to friendship with friends of the same age, background, or destiny . A group of people or friends who are already close can be called a circle of friends. Arianto (in Jonathan et al., 2022) states that friendship is a combination of several individuals with close relationships that at some point can form mutual respect and support for each other. From the results of observations and interviews, researchers obtained information that UM Laboratory Junior High School students, especially the subjects interviewed, always feel positive when with their circle of friends, whether in terms of support in playing, studying, or being there when needed. This also influences some subject self- confidence, making them more optimistic in doing things.

Influence from friends also plays a role in the realization of values. Friends or close people usually have almost the same characteristics or hobbies as each other. In friendship, it is usually easy to understand each other and provide understanding, this is because in friendship they will trust each other. The developmental tasks of

adolescents at the junior high school level, there is the task of maturity in relationships with peers. This includes how to socialize, respect, and control emotions. According to Amir et al. (2020), friendships influence a person's behavior and lifestyle. If someone has a good group of friends, they are likely to behave well, and vice versa. Pratiwi and Satiningsih (2022) state that during adolescence, often described as a time free from parental guidance, it is crucial to have maturity in forming friendships with others, especially peers.

Besides its social impact, having a friendship circle also positively affects the emotional stability of adolescents. Adolescents naturally learn the emotions of their peers, matching those that align with their conscience and distancing themselves from those that do not resonate with them. In this context, a circle of friends can also build self-confidence in adolescents. The support from friends boosts their self-confidence, giving them the courage to express their feelings. The following is the explanation. The characteristics of good relationships are as follows: 1) there is acceptance of oneself, 2) there is acceptance of each other's privacy, 3) there is mutual understanding and listening to each other, 4) there is mutual understanding and listening. . supportive relationships when difficulties arise, and 5) will remind each other when they make mistakes. Apart from that, there are also benefits from establishing a good friendship environment, including: 1) as a path to success, 2) provides motivation not to give up easily, 3) always gets positive things, 4) will value time more, and 5) easy to get a solution when there is a problem.(Putra et al., 2019)

#### B. Self Confident

Self-confidence in adolescents is seen in their attitude of accepting themselves as they are (Ifdil, I., Denich, A.U., Ilyas, A., 2017). From several interviews conducted, it is known that most of the teenagers self-confidence at the relevant school within their circle of friends is quite good. However, many of the subjects said that their self-confidence emerged when hanging out with their friends.

According to Lauster (2008 in Syam A Amri, 2017), self-confidence is an attitude or belief in one own abilities, so that when taking action one is not too anxious, feels free to do something according to one wishes and is responsible for one actions. polite in responding to other people wishes, have the desire to achieve and know your own strengths and weaknesses. Self-confidence also does not grow by itself, but there are also factors from healthy interaction processes in an individual social environment and this takes place gradually and continuously, so that a person self-confidence continues to emerge (Hakim, 2002 in Riyanti, C., Darwis , RS, 2020).

According to Mendelson, the quality of friendship is determined by how the relationship functions well, so that it can make individuals involved in friendship relationships feel confident, appreciated, and help each other when resolving various conflicts regarding the problems they experience. The following are several factors that can shape a person self- confidence: Factors that influence self-confidence include: Internal factors, consisting of: Self- concept, pride, physical condition, life experience. And then for external factors, consisting of: work ways to increase self-confidence include: Improve self-concept, self-concept is an individual view and characteristics of himself, improve social interaction skills along improve your skills.(Andiwijaya Liauw, 2019).

The nine subjects interviewed shared their stories about the conditions and experiences of having close friends, who can be considered their circle, at school. The subjects felt both positive and negative influences, but the positive aspects were more dominant.

From the research conducted, it can be concluded that students or subjects who are part of a friendship circle experience different changes, both when with their circle of friends and when not. However, from the subjects' backgrounds and responses, their self-confidence does not entirely form when they are alone, but when they are with their circle of friends, each individual possesses that power of confidence due to mutual support.

#### 4. Conclusion

((tidak ada))

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