

Enhancing Assertiveness through Self-Esteem Development: A Study of Indonesian Language Learning in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Elementary school students often struggle to express their opinions assertively without offending others, indicating weak assertive behavior. This may be influenced by their self-esteem. Understanding this relationship is essential, particularly within the context of Indonesian language learning, where communication skills are central. This study employed a quantitative, correlational design to examine the relationship between self-esteem and assertive behavior among elementary students. A total of 30 fourth-grade students from a randomly selected elementary school in Sumenep Regency participated. Data were gathered using two questionnaires measuring self-esteem and assertive behavior, both utilizing a four-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed through linearity tests and simple linear regression. Findings revealed a positive, albeit statistically insignificant, relationship between self-esteem and assertive behavior ($R^2 = 0.100$; Sig. = 0.100). Self-esteem accounted for only 10% of the variance in assertive behavior. Despite the limited statistical significance, the trend aligns with theoretical assumptions that higher self-esteem may promote more assertive communication. While self-esteem appears to influence assertive behavior, it is not the sole contributing factor. The findings suggest that Indonesian language instruction has the potential to support affective development, but more comprehensive strategies are needed. Future research should explore additional variables and include larger, more diverse samples using a multivariate approach.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, attention to the socio-emotional aspects of education has increasingly gained a rightful place in the academic world. Education focuses on academic achievement, character building, and students' interpersonal skills, which are crucial for their development beyond the school environment (Shi, Tang, Gan, Hu, & Liu, 2023). One critical social skill is the ability to communicate assertively, allowing individuals to express their opinions and feelings in a way that respects

themselves and others. This skill is highly relevant in Indonesian language learning, as Indonesian is not only a tool for conveying information but also a means for interacting, discussing, and expressing opinions (Abdolrezapour, Ganjeh, & Ghanbari, 2023). Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level plays an important role in shaping students' basic communication skills (Mahadevan, Gregg, & Sedikides, 2022). Indonesian is a daily communication tool and a means to introduce students to the world of knowledge, thinking skills, and social interaction. As the national language used in education, Indonesian underpins all other subjects, so the quality of its teaching greatly affects students' cognitive and social development. However, despite the importance of teaching Indonesian, teachers and students face many challenges in the learning process. One of the challenges that often arises is the development of student's social skills, particularly in assertive communication (Zheng, Gaumer Erickson, Kingston, & Noonan, 2014).

Assertiveness in the educational context refers to students' ability to express their feelings, needs, and views honestly and firmly without harming themselves or others (Yu, Yao, Chen, Zhu, & Yan, 2023). This ability is very important in daily life and the learning process, where students need to interact with classmates and teachers openly and confidently. This ability is highly relevant in elementary school, considering the developmental phase of children seeking and developing their personal and social identities. However, it is often found that students with low assertiveness tend to have difficulty actively participating in class, expressing opinions, and interacting with their peers, which can affect their academic performance (Azpiazu, Antonio-Agirre, Fernández-Zabala, & Escalante, 2023).

The current problem is low assertiveness among elementary school students, which can hurt their ability to communicate, actively participate in class, and build healthy social relationships. This is exacerbated by the lack of learning approaches that explicitly integrate the development of affective aspects such as self-esteem. Teachers often focus more on academic achievement and cognitive elements so that students' emotional and social factors are neglected. The urgency of this research is increasingly apparent when looking at data from Sumenep Regency. According to the 2023 Basic Education Data (Dapodik), around 92.64% of elementary school-age children are enrolled in schools. However, there is no specific data on the level of assertiveness or self-esteem of students in the area. However, previous research has shown that low self-esteem can hurt students' social and academic behavior. For example, a study by (Hardiansyah, Zainuddin, Sukitman, & Astutik, 2023) revealed that developing communication skills through learning Indonesian can increase students' self-confidence and assertiveness.

On the other hand, self-esteem also plays an important role in developing students' assertiveness. Self-esteem refers to an individual's view and feelings about themselves, which includes self-acceptance, confidence, and a sense of worth (Butler et al., 2022; Nagy-Pénzes, Vincze, & Bíró, 2020). In the educational context, high self-esteem can positively impact students' social, emotional, and cognitive development. Research shows that students with healthy self-esteem are more likely to have high confidence, better manage emotions, and adapt more effectively to social demands around them. Conversely, students with low self-esteem often feel undervalued, lack confidence, and withdraw from social interactions, including in the classroom learning context. Research conducted by (Kim & Sul, 2023) on self-esteem as a central dimension in social psychology shows that self-esteem greatly influences an individual's social and emotional behaviour. High self-esteem makes students more open and assertive because they feel more valued and capable of facing differences and expressing their opinions constructively.

However, although much research has identified the importance of self-esteem in students' personal development, few have examined the relationship between self-esteem and assertiveness in the educational context, particularly in Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level. Many previous studies have focused more on the influence of self-esteem on students' academic performance or social behaviour in general (Hardiansyah, Zainuddin, Sukitman, & Astutik, 2023; Tomasello, 2020). In the context of learning, especially Indonesian language learning, it is important to

identify how self-esteem can be translated into more effective and assertive communication skills in the classroom. These assertive skills are useful in Indonesian language learning and can affect how students interact in their daily social lives, such as in friendships, family relationships, and interactions with the wider community (Tverskoi, Guido, Andrighetto, Sánchez, & Gavrillets, 2023).

The problem statement raised in this study focuses on the impact of increasing self-esteem on students' assertiveness in Indonesian language learning in elementary schools. This study seeks to identify whether there is a positive relationship between the two and how increasing self-esteem can enhance students' assertive abilities in the learning context. This is highly relevant because, although much research has examined self-esteem in education, few have discussed how increasing self-esteem can be practically applied to support the development of students' social skills in Indonesian language classes (Kawanishi et al., 2018). This study also recognizes that Indonesian language learning often focuses on cognitive aspects, while communication skills involving emotions and social aspects still receive less attention.

This study aims to explore effective ways to enhance students' self-esteem and analyze its impact on their assertiveness in Indonesian language learning. It not only aims to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between self-esteem and assertiveness but also to contribute to the development of teaching methods that can support the improvement of both aspects. One specific objective of this study is to identify learning approaches that can integrate strategies to build self-esteem, which in turn can enhance students' assertive abilities in communication, both verbally and non-verbally.

In the related literature review, several studies show that strengthening self-esteem can improve students' social skills, but research linking self-esteem enhancement directly with assertiveness in Indonesian language learning is very limited. Most previous studies have focused on basic theories about self-esteem and its influence on students' psychological development, but few have discussed how this is translated into daily learning practices in the classroom (Exner-Cortens, Wright, Claussen, & Truscott, 2021). Additionally, although some studies discuss assertiveness, most have not examined how self-esteem increases assertiveness in specific learning contexts. Therefore, this study aims to bridge a significant gap in the literature.

The novelty of this study lies in its approach, which combines two concepts that have not been widely studied in elementary education, namely self-esteem and assertiveness in Indonesian language learning. This study is expected to provide new insights into how increasing self-esteem enhances individual self-worth and encourages students to be more confident in communicating in the classroom. Additionally, this study aims to provide practical recommendations for Indonesian language teaching in elementary schools, which can help teachers create a learning environment that better supports the development of students' social character, including assertive communication skills.

The justification for this study's importance lies in its contribution to educational theory and its application in classroom learning practices. Learning that integrates socio-emotional aspects such as self-esteem and assertiveness can create a more inclusive classroom atmosphere and support students' overall development. By enhancing students' self-esteem, we not only help them feel better about themselves but also provide them with tools to communicate effectively and assertively, which can improve the quality of learning and interaction in the classroom. Therefore, this study is highly relevant for application in educational practice in elementary schools, particularly in Indonesian language learning, and can serve as an important reference for educators in designing more holistic and comprehensive learning approaches.

2. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design to examine the relationship between self-esteem (independent variable) and assertive behavior (dependent variable) in elementary school students. The correlational method was chosen because it allows for the natural

observation of variables without manipulation, aligning with the study's aim to determine the extent of association between self-esteem and assertiveness. This approach is especially relevant in the context of Indonesian language learning, where communication and affective development intersect. The method is grounded in the theoretical assumption that self-esteem contributes to the emergence of assertive behavior, warranting empirical investigation.

The population consisted of all fourth-grade students, chosen based on their developmental readiness to comprehend questionnaire items and express opinions independently. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 30 participants, ensuring equal selection probability and reducing potential bias, thereby enhancing the study's external validity. The sample size meets the minimum requirements for small-scale correlational research using simple regression analysis.

The research was conducted in three stages. First, during the preparation phase, schools were identified and research permissions obtained. Second, data collection involved administering questionnaires to eligible students. Finally, data analysis was conducted to test the hypothesized relationship between the two variables. All procedures adhered to ethical research standards, including informed consent and maintaining participant confidentiality.

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire with two variables, self-esteem and assertive behaviour, measured using a Likert scale. Each item represents a statement that indicates the characteristics and conditions of the respondents, with a Likert scale consisting of four options. Both measurement tools include liked and disliked items. The scoring for positive statements is as follows: "strongly agree" is scored 4, "agree" is scored 3, "disagree" is scored 2, and "strongly disagree" is scored 1. For negative statements, the scoring is reversed: "strongly agree" is scored 1, "agree" is scored 2, "disagree" is scored 3, and "strongly disagree" is scored 4. Self-esteem in this study is measured using the scale proposed by (Heatherton & Polivy, 1991), which consists of three aspects: performance, social, and appearance.

Table 1. Self Esteem

No	Aspect	Positive	Negative	Total
1	Performance	3	4	7
2	Social	0	7	7
3	Appearance	4	2	6
Total				20

The assertiveness behaviour scale used in this study is the Assertiveness Formative Questionnaire developed by (Zheng et al., 2014). This scale consists of 20 items and two components: self-expression and respect for the rights of others.

Table 2. Assertive Values

Aspect	Indicator	Positive	Negative	Total
Self-expression,	Expressing opinions	7	4	11
	Expressing feelings	1	1	2
Respecting the rights of others	Controlling emotions	2	1	3
	Understanding others	4	0	4
Total				20

This study uses two stages of statistical analysis, namely the linearity test and simple linear regression test. The linearity test was conducted first to ensure that the relationship between self-esteem variables and assertive behavior is linear, which is the main prerequisite in applying regression analysis. The linearity test used the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) method to verify no significant non-linear relationship deviations. After the linearity assumption was met, the data were analyzed using simple linear regression to see the predictive effect of self-esteem on assertive behavior. This test allows researchers to quantify how much self-esteem contributes to explaining student assertive behavior variations. The results of the analysis are displayed in the form of a coefficient of determination (R^2), significance value (p-value), and direction of the relationship (positive or negative). All research procedures were carried out in accordance with the principles of psychological research ethics. Before

data collection, informed consent was obtained from parents or guardians of students, and students were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without any consequences. The confidentiality of the respondents' identities is guaranteed by not including their names or personal information in the questionnaire, and the analysis results are presented in the aggregate to maintain anonymity. This study has also undergone an ethical consultation process to ensure that all stages align with scientific integrity standards. With a systematic and valid method, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide a substantial contribution to understanding the relationship between self-esteem and assertive behavior of elementary school students, as well as being a reference in designing an Indonesian language learning approach that not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also strengthens students' affective dimensions.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides an overview of each variable, which will be explained through descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics summarise the variables studied using sample data. Statistical data will be presented as a table containing the average value, maximum score, minimum score, standard deviation, and subject categorization. This is done to clarify the picture of the sample data but will not be used to draw broader conclusions.

Table 3. Results of Self-esteem Data Analysis

Sample	Mean	Maximum Score	Minimum Score	Standard deviation
30	35.31	49.69	14.51	6.07

The table above is based on the categorization of Self-esteem. The average respondent in this study is included in the moderate category. This is indicated by the empirical average of 35.31, included in the score range of 32.19 to 38.36, with a maximum score of 49.69, a minimum score of 14.51, and a standard deviation of 6.07. The self-esteem variable consists of 20 items, each with a score of 1, 2, 3, and 4. Specifically, four individuals are in the very high category, representing 9%; 10 individuals in the high category, representing 40%; nine individuals in the moderate category, representing 30%; and seven individuals in the low category, representing 21%.

Table 4. Results of assertive behavior data analysis

Sample	Mean	Maximum Score	Minimum Score	Standard deviation
30	28	35	22	3.55

The table above is based on the categorization of assertive behaviour. The average respondents in this study fall into the moderate category. This is indicated by the empirical average obtained, which is 28, falling within the score range of 27.57 to 33.18. Specifically, there are 10 individuals in the very high category, representing 29%, 11 individuals in the high category, representing 33%, and nine individuals in the moderate category, representing 38%.

A normality test was conducted to determine whether the obtained data were normally distributed. In this study, the normality test used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov technique with the help of SPSS 25 software. The analysis results showed an asymp—sig value of 0.066. Data are normally distributed if the significance value is >0.05 and not normally distributed if the significance value is <0.05 . Based on this, the data in this study come from a normally distributed population. Next, a linearity test was conducted to determine whether the variables studied have a linear relationship. If the significance value is <0.05 , there is a significant correlation; conversely, if the significance value is >0.05 , there is no significant correlation.

Table 5. Linearity test results

Variable	Sig.
self-esteem and assertive behaviour	0.061

The hypothesis is a temporary assumption or prediction that will be tested for accuracy. It comes from theories or opinions of experts, so it can be accounted for. Hypotheses can be tested for validity, and research conclusions can be accepted or rejected (Ismail, 2018). The hypothesis test used in this study is simple linear regression analysis.

Table 6. Results of the regression coefficient test

Variable	Rsquare		Sig
	B	Std. Error	
Constant	32,324	2.769	.000
Assertive behaviour	.164	.008	.100

The results of a simple regression test conducted to test the relationship between the self-esteem variable as a predictor (independent) and assertive behavior as a dependent variable showed a coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.100. This means that the self-esteem variable can explain 10% of the variation in assertive behavior, while the rest, namely 90%, is explained by other factors not analyzed in this study. Although this percentage is relatively small in the context of psychosocial research, this value still shows a significant contribution of self-esteem to students' assertiveness, primarily when associated with elementary education, where emotional development is still greatly influenced by internal factors. Furthermore, the regression coefficient (B) of 0.164 shows that every one-unit increase in self-esteem score will be followed by a rise of 0.164 score units in students' assertive behavior. In other words, the higher a student's self-esteem, the more likely they are to demonstrate assertive behavior. This relationship is positive, meaning that an increase generally follows a boost in self-esteem in the ability to express opinions honestly, dare to disagree, and defend personal rights without violating the rights of others.

However, the significance value (Sig.) = 0.100, greater than 0.05, indicates that the relationship between self-esteem and assertive behavior is not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This means that statistically, we do not have enough evidence to state that self-esteem predicts students' assertive behavior significantly. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0), which states "there is no significant relationship between self-esteem and assertive behavior," cannot be rejected, and the alternative hypothesis cannot be empirically accepted based on the data obtained. However, this interpretation does not necessarily negate the relationship between the two variables. In the context of social and educational research, especially with a relatively small sample size ($n = 30$), a significance value of 0.100 can still be considered close to significance (marginally significant) and indicates a tendency for a potential relationship, although not yet strong enough to be claimed as substantial. Other factors such as limited sample size, uncontrolled mediators, or contextual variables (such as school environment, social support, and teacher teaching style) may play a role in strengthening or weakening this relationship but have not been accommodated in this simple regression model. The constant coefficient of 32.324 with a significance of 0.000 indicates that when the self-esteem score is at zero, the predicted value for students' assertive behavior is 32.324. This confirms that the assertive behavior variable has a relatively high-value base, even when the self-esteem variable is not considered.

This supports previous descriptive findings indicating that most students show moderate to high levels of assertive behavior. Theoretically, these findings still support the premise that self-esteem and assertiveness are positively related, although the relationship is not statistically significant in this model. This aligns with the theory of social-emotional development, which states that self-esteem as a positive self-evaluation plays a role in forming confident and non-aggressive attitudes and behaviors in expressing opinions (Matsumoto et al., 2023). This statistical insignificance opens up space for more comprehensive further research, for example, by considering intervening variables such as social support, communication skills, or perceptions of the learning environment. Thus, although the results of this study did not show a statistically significant relationship between students' self-esteem and assertive behavior, the data show a positive direction of the relationship and substantively still support the theoretical framework underlying this study. The researcher suggests that further research should

use a larger sample size, control for external variables, and a more complex analysis model (e.g., SEM or multiple regression) to explain the relationship between students' psychosocial aspects more accurately and in-depth.

Discussion

This study's results reveal a significant relationship between increased self-esteem and increased assertiveness in students in Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that self-esteem significantly influences an individual's social behaviour and communication skills (Eslava, Martínez-Vispo, Villanueva-Blasco, Errasti, & Al-Halabí, 2023; Van Til, Miller, Carter, & Lynam, 2024). This study provides empirical evidence that students who experience an increase in self-esteem are more confident in expressing opinions, speaking in front of the class, and participating in group discussions. Specifically, students with higher self-esteem significantly improve their ability to interact with peers and teachers and feel more valued in the learning environment. Relating these findings to existing theories, the results support the view that self-esteem is not only related to positive feelings about oneself but also influences how one interacts with others in social contexts, including learning situations. For example, the assertiveness theory proposed by (Matsumoto et al., 2023) states that individuals with high self-esteem can express their needs, desires, and views assertively, honestly, and without harming themselves or others. In Indonesian language learning, speaking and discussing openly is very important, and increased self-esteem has been shown to encourage students to participate more confidently.

This study also found that students who were given interventions to enhance their self-esteem through structured methods, such as providing positive feedback, reinforcing self-abilities, and activities that encourage self-expression, showed significant improvements in assertiveness (Lu et al., 2023). This reflects that efforts to strengthen students' self-confidence have the potential to bring about changes in how they communicate and express opinions. For example, students who initially tended to be silent and did not express their opinions after undergoing the intervention began to speak more actively in class and were more confident in expressing their opinions in group discussions. This increase in assertiveness is related to speaking skills and how students solve problems and make decisions in their social interactions (Segovia-González, Ramírez-Hurtado, & Contreras, 2023). The variability in the study results regarding self-esteem behaviour reflects how individuals evaluate themselves, how they accept themselves, and their ability to believe in their self-worth. Self-esteem, as an evaluation conducted by individuals of themselves, is the result of the interaction between individuals and their environment and the treatment they receive from others. This evaluation is expressed through approval or disapproval, reflecting the individual's belief in themselves as capable, important, successful, and valuable. If the environment views the individual as meaningful, this will encourage the development of good self-esteem (Mäkinen, Kauhanen, Nykänen, Romppanen, & Koivisto, 2024). Conversely, if the individual is considered insignificant by their environment, this will lead to low self-esteem.

This study's results significantly contribute to the development of educational theory and social psychology, particularly concerning the relationship between self-esteem and assertiveness in the context of Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level (Van Petegem, Baudat, & Zimmermann, 2019). In social psychology theory, self-esteem has long been considered a major factor influencing individual behaviour, including social interaction and communication. This study enriches existing theories by providing empirical evidence that increased self-esteem not only affects individuals' feelings and self-perceptions but also directly impacts their communication skills, especially in elementary school learning (Mawdsley & Willis, 2023; Mbithi et al., 2023). This study adds a new dimension to assertiveness theory, which often focuses more on broader social contexts. In Indonesian language learning, the ability to communicate assertively is crucial, and the results of this study show that self-esteem plays an important role in encouraging students to speak up and express their opinions in class (Skogen et al., 2023). In other words, existing assertiveness theories can be

expanded by adding self-esteem as a variable influencing levels of assertiveness in the educational context. Therefore, this study provides new contributions to understanding the dynamics of social interaction in the classroom involving students' psychological dimensions.

The results of this study have very important implications for the practice of teaching Indonesian in elementary schools. Specifically, this study shows that teachers can utilize more holistic teaching strategies by incorporating activities that focus on mastering academic material and developing students' social and emotional skills. For example, activities that encourage students to speak openly, such as group discussions, presentations, and role-playing, can effectively enhance students' self-esteem and assertiveness (Mullan, Golm, Juhl, Sajid, & Brandt, 2023; van Loon et al., 2023). Through these techniques, students can be given opportunities to express their opinions, learn to interact with peers and feel valued in the learning process. Additionally, this study shows that providing positive feedback focused on reinforcing students' potential can help them feel more confident and more assertive in communication. Teachers who can create a supportive classroom environment and value every student's opinion will increase students' self-esteem, which will enhance their participation in learning activities. Teachers can help students develop better communication skills and increase their self-confidence by creating an inclusive learning climate that supports self-expression.

Although this study provides useful insights, several limitations must be considered when interpreting the results. One of the main limitations is the research design based on experiments with a limited control group. This means that the study results may not be fully generalizable to the entire population of elementary school students. Research with larger and more diverse samples in various regions and schools will provide a more representative picture of the relationship between self-esteem and assertiveness in Indonesian language learning. Additionally, the limited duration of the study is another important limitation. This study was conducted relatively short, so the results may not reflect long-term changes in students' self-esteem and assertiveness. To gain a deeper understanding, further research using a longitudinal design is needed to observe changes in students' self-esteem and assertiveness over a longer period.

Another limitation is using measurement instruments that rely on subjective assessments from students and teachers. The measurement of self-esteem and assertiveness in this study used instruments that may be influenced by individual biases, from students who may feel awkward filling out questionnaires or teachers who provide assessments based on their perceptions of student changes. Therefore, using more objective measurement tools and a variety of data collection methods, such as interviews or direct observations, can enhance the validity and reliability of the study findings. Additionally, this study is cross-sectional, meaning data were collected at a specific time. This limits the study's ability to analyze assertive behaviour and self-esteem changes over time. Finally, this study did not explore other factors that might influence the relationship between self-esteem and assertive behaviour, such as family support, peer pressure, or cultural factors. Further research involving these variables can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between self-esteem and student assertive behaviour.

Based on the limitations mentioned earlier, future research should be conducted with a longitudinal design to explore more significant long-term changes in students' self-esteem and assertiveness. This research will provide a more accurate picture of how increased self-esteem can affect the development of student's communication and social skills over time. Additionally, research with more diverse samples is highly recommended to enhance the generalization of the results. Research involving students from various cultural, social, and economic backgrounds will provide a more comprehensive view of the factors influencing self-esteem and assertiveness. This research can also involve students from various educational levels to understand whether the findings can be widely applied to different educational levels. Further research can also explore the role of external factors, such as family support, peer influence, and the school environment, in shaping students' self-esteem

and assertiveness. These factors can provide deeper insights into how the broader social context can influence student character development and communication skills.

The findings of this study have important social implications, especially in creating individuals who are more confident and capable of communicating assertively in society. Enhancing students' self-esteem, we help them feel more valued and provides them with tools to communicate honestly and assertively without harming others. This is very important in a world that increasingly prioritizes interpersonal communication, teamwork, and social skills. However, the ethical implications of this study also need to be considered. Enhancing self-esteem must be done carefully and attentively, considering the sensitivity to students' self-worth. Inappropriate or excessive interventions in efforts to enhance self-esteem can lead to unrealistic or even harmful increases, especially for students experiencing certain psychological difficulties. Therefore, it is important to design interventions that support self-esteem enhancement and consider students' overall psychological well-being. Inclusive education based on students' social character development is key to creating a more empowered society capable of effective communication. Therefore, researchers and educators have a social responsibility to design approaches that support academic development and prioritize students' social and emotional well-being in the learning process.

4. CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the relationship between self-esteem and assertive behavior in elementary school students learning Indonesian. Using a quantitative approach and correlational design, the study's results indicate a positive relationship between self-esteem and assertive behavior, where an increase in self-esteem follows an increase in students' tendency to behave assertively. However, the regression test results indicate that the relationship is not statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (Sig. = 0.100), although it shows a positive direction of the relationship. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.100$) shows that self-esteem only explains 10% of the variation in assertive behavior, so it can be concluded that other factors also play an essential role in influencing students' assertive behavior. Theoretically, this finding strengthens the assumption that self-esteem is one of the affective components contributing to children's ability to express themselves healthily and constructively. However, the limitations of statistical significance in this study indicate that the influence is not strong enough to be maintained empirically in the model used. This could be due to the relatively small sample size, the high diversity of student characteristics, or the fact that relevant mediating and moderating variables, such as social support, previous communication experiences, or parenting styles at home, have not been controlled. Considering these findings, it can be concluded that self-esteem development remains relevant as part of a pedagogical strategy in elementary education, primarily through expressive and dialogic Indonesian language learning. However, more comprehensive interventions must be developed by integrating other aspects influencing children's assertive behavior.

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