

The Role of Self-Confidence and Interpersonal Communication Skills in Improving Peer Interactions Among High School Students

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Abstract: This study aims to understand the importance of self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills in improving peer interactions in high school students through a literature review. The study used a qualitative method with a library research approach sourced from relevant journals, books, and scientific articles. The results of the study indicate that good self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills can help students be more active in socializing, adapt easily, and be able to build positive social relationships with peers. Conversely, low self-confidence and communication skills can hinder students' social interactions in the school environment. Thus, self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills play an important role in supporting the creation of good peer interactions in high school students.

Keywords: Self-confidence; Interpersonal communication skills; Peer interaction; High school students; Teenagers

INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence is a fundamental aspect of adolescent psychological development, closely related to an individual's belief in their ability to face life's challenges. Self-confidence is the belief within an individual that they are capable of behaving appropriately to achieve desired outcomes (Krisphianti et al., 2021). In an educational context, students with high self-confidence tend to be more courageous in expressing their aspirations, actively participate in the learning process, and exhibit good social adaptation skills. Therefore, developing self-confidence is crucial because it supports academic success while optimally improving the quality of students' social interactions.

However, the reality in many high schools shows a different picture. Field observations in several high schools identified that many students chose to remain silent when asked to express their opinions, avoided eye contact with classmates, or withdrew from social groups. This situation is further exacerbated by the influence of the digital environment, which makes some adolescents more comfortable communicating via devices than interacting face-to-face (Fitriani & Rahmawati, 2023). Students with low self-esteem tend to remain silent when asked to express their opinions and feel embarrassed when confronted with others (Krisphianti et al., 2021). This condition is reinforced by the findings of Putu Hari Suta & Silooy (2024), who stated that individuals with low self-esteem often feel doubtful and afraid of negative judgment from their environment, thus hindering the formation of healthy social relationships.

Besides self-confidence, interpersonal communication skills are a vital instrument in students' social lives. These skills encompass an individual's ability to convey and receive messages effectively, both through verbal and non-verbal channels (Hartini & Chumaeson, 2021). In the modern educational era, communication skills are not merely a means of exchanging information, but also a key factor in building collaboration and empathy within the school environment. Students with strong interpersonal communication skills are more likely to create harmonious relationships, convey ideas systematically, be active listeners, and provide appropriate social responses (Riziq & Irmawati, 2024). Conversely, students with minimal communication skills tend to be passive and experience social isolation, and are vulnerable to interpersonal misunderstandings that lead to conflict (Mubarok et al., 2024).

Peer interaction itself is a reciprocal process between individuals of equal maturity, serving as a social laboratory for adolescents to learn to cooperate and resolve conflicts (Titaningrum & Nurjannah, 2021). Through these interactions, students develop empathy and receive emotional support, which are

essential for their mental well-being (Andangjati et al., 2021). However, many students still struggle with healthy interactions due to low self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills, resulting in social passivity and group isolation still frequently encountered in high school settings.

Previous studies have primarily examined self-confidence and interpersonal communication through correlational and predictive relationships. Puspitasari et al. (2022) identified a significant positive relationship between self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills among vocational high school students, while Eoh and Monika (2023) similarly reported a strong positive correlation between self-confidence and interpersonal communication among high school students. Using a predictive approach, Silooy et al. (2023) demonstrated through simple linear regression that self-confidence significantly contributed to students' interpersonal communication. In addition, Azhari and Nursalim (2022) examined self-confidence and interpersonal communication simultaneously in relation to school refusal among high school students. Although these studies provide important empirical evidence regarding the relationships between self-confidence, interpersonal communication, and related student outcomes, their research objectives and analyses primarily focus on statistical associations between variables rather than explicitly distinguishing the functional roles of self-confidence and interpersonal communication within peer interaction. The present review therefore offers a different analytical perspective by positioning self-confidence as an internal psychological drive that provides students with the courage and readiness to initiate social interaction, while interpersonal communication skills function as the mechanism through which such internal readiness is expressed, regulated, and maintained in actual peer relationships. Thus, the novelty of this review lies not merely in combining the two concepts, but in explaining their complementary functions in the formation of positive peer interactions among high school students.

Based on this perspective, this study aims to analyze the role of self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills in improving peer interactions among high school students and to synthesize how these two dimensions complement each other in supporting positive peer relationships.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative literature review using a library research approach to examine the role of self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills in improving peer interactions among high school students. The literature search focused primarily on empirical studies published between 2020 and 2026. Relevant literature was retrieved from Google Scholar. The search was conducted using combinations of English and Indonesian keywords related to the main concepts of the study. The English search terms included "self-confidence," "interpersonal communication skills," "peer interaction," "peer relationships," "high school students," and "adolescents." The Indonesian equivalents included "kepercayaan diri," "komunikasi interpersonal," "interaksi teman sebaya," "hubungan teman sebaya," "siswa SMA," and "remaja." These terms were combined using Boolean operators, for example "self-confidence" AND "interpersonal communication" AND "peer interaction," "self-confidence" AND "high school students," and "interpersonal communication skills" AND "peer relationships."

The literature selection was conducted using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies were included when they were published between 2020 and 2026, available in full text, written in Indonesian or English, involved adolescents or high school-aged students, and examined self-confidence, interpersonal communication, peer interaction, or relationships among these concepts. Studies were excluded when they were duplicates, did not provide sufficient methodological or empirical information, focused on populations outside the adolescent or high school context, or were not directly relevant to the variables discussed in this review. Older theoretical references were used only to support established conceptual definitions when necessary and were not counted as empirical studies included in the literature synthesis.

The literature selection and analysis procedures were conducted systematically to ensure transparency and consistency. The selection process consisted of four stages: identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. A total of 18 records were initially identified from the selected databases. After removing three duplicate records, 15 titles and abstracts were screened for relevance to the research objectives. Twelve articles proceeded to the full-text eligibility assessment, and 10

studies that met the predetermined inclusion criteria were retained for the final synthesis. Thus, the review process progressively narrowed the literature from the initial identification stage to the final set of studies considered most relevant to self-confidence, interpersonal communication skills, and peer interaction among high school students.

Data from the 10 selected studies were extracted into a literature review matrix containing the author and year of publication, research method, participants or sample, variables or research focus, and main findings. Content analysis was then conducted through several sequential stages. First, each selected article was read to identify findings relevant to self-confidence, interpersonal communication skills, and peer interaction. Second, relevant findings were coded according to the main concept represented in each study. Third, codes with similar meanings were grouped into broader categories. Fourth, findings across studies were compared to identify similarities, differences, and recurring patterns. Finally, the resulting categories were synthesized into three major themes: (1) the role of self-confidence in peer interaction, (2) the role of interpersonal communication skills in peer interaction, and (3) the integrated role of self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills in improving peer interaction among high school students. This procedure enabled the review to move beyond summarizing individual studies by developing a comparative and thematic interpretation of the available evidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Synthesis of Selected Studies on Self-Confidence, Interpersonal Communication, and Peer Interaction

Author/Year	Method	Sample/Participants	Variables/Research Focus	Main Findings
Krisphianti et al. (2020)	Instrument validity and reliability study	50 vocational high school students in Kediri	Self-confidence measurement	The study produced 21 valid self-confidence scale items with a reliability coefficient of 0.814, supporting the instrument's use for measuring students' self-confidence.
Yuliani & Syahriman (2020)	Quantitative correlational study	76 Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 09 Bengkulu	Peer social interaction and social acceptance	Peer social interaction had a positive and significant relationship with social acceptance, with $r = 0.91$ and $p < 0.05$.
Andangjati et al. (2021)	Quantitative correlational study	52 Grade XI students	Peer social interaction and social acceptance	A significant positive relationship was found between peer social interaction and students' social acceptance ($p = 0.001$).
Rahmawati et al. (2022)	Quantitative correlational study	45 Grade XI MIPA students of SMA Negeri 2 Rembang	Self-confidence and interpersonal communication	Self-confidence was positively related to interpersonal communication, with $r = 0.542$. Higher self-confidence was associated with better interpersonal communication.
Puspitasari et al. (2022)	Quantitative correlational study	63 Grade XII vocational high school students	Self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills	A significant positive relationship was found between self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills, with $r = 0.635$.
Azhari & Nursalim (2022)	Quantitative correlational study	119 Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 3 Surabaya	Self-confidence, interpersonal communication, and school refusal	Self-confidence and interpersonal communication were jointly associated with school refusal, with a multiple correlation coefficient of $r = 0.798$.
Eoh & Monika (2023)	Quantitative correlational study	High school students aged 15–18 years	Self-confidence and interpersonal communication	A strong positive and significant relationship was found between self-confidence and interpersonal communication, with $r = 0.937$ and $p < 0.05$.
Silooy et al. (2023)	Quantitative study using simple linear regression	109 Grade X DPIB students of SMK Negeri 4 Semarang	Self-confidence and interpersonal communication	Self-confidence positively predicted interpersonal communication. The R^2 value of 0.306 indicated that self-confidence explained 30.6% of the variance in interpersonal communication.

Damayanti et al. (2023)	Quantitative correlational study	207 Grade XI students of SMA Negeri 1 Karanganyar	Self-confidence and interpersonal communication	Self-confidence had a positive and significant relationship with interpersonal communication, with $r = 0.397$ and $p < 0.05$.
Widyarto et al. (2023)	Quantitative correlational study	50 adolescents at UPT PSBR Blitar	Self-confidence and social interaction	Self-confidence was positively associated with social interaction, with $r = 0.411$ and $p < 0.05$.

The studies summarized in Table 1 demonstrate a consistent pattern in which self-confidence is positively associated with interpersonal communication and social interaction, while positive peer interaction is closely related to social acceptance. Most of the reviewed studies employed quantitative correlational designs, although several used regression analysis or instrument validation. Collectively, these findings indicate that self-confidence contributes to students' psychological readiness to engage socially, whereas interpersonal communication skills support the expression of this readiness during actual interactions. However, previous studies have largely examined these relationships statistically and separately. The present review extends these findings by synthesizing self-confidence as an internal psychological drive and interpersonal communication skills as an actualization mechanism that jointly support positive peer interaction among high school students.

Self-confidence In Improving Peer Interaction

Based on a literature review of various empirical studies published since 2021, consistent data has been found regarding the characteristics, indicators, and actual impact of self-confidence on adolescents in school settings. Self-confidence is positioned as a strong belief within an individual that they have the capacity and potential to behave appropriately to achieve desired developmental outcomes (Krisphianti et al., 2021). This internal belief is not merely a feeling of optimism, but rather a psychological construct that shapes students' perspectives on themselves and their social environment.

A series of scientific findings consistently demonstrate the power of these internal variables in adolescent social dynamics. An instrument development study by Krisphianti et al. (2021) confirmed that positive self-concept, independence, and courage to express ideas are three key indicators underlying the psychological stability and self-confidence of students during school activities. These findings suggest that students with stronger self-confidence are more likely to participate actively in academic and social interactions. Students who possess these three indicators tend to be more active in raising their hands when teachers ask questions, are willing to speak in front of the class, and are more willing to introduce themselves to new friends in the school environment.

Furthermore, Eoh and Monika (2023) in their correlation study explained that there is a very strong positive relationship between self-confidence levels and the social adaptability of high school students, where fluctuations in self-confidence are proven to be directly proportional to students' courage to appear in public. Synchronized with these findings, an experimental study by Siregar et al. (2021) indicated that group counseling interventions using self-instruction techniques effectively increased the self-confidence of students experiencing social barriers, which automatically increased the frequency of their social engagement in class. The real implications of these findings can be seen in schools when structured group guidance programs successfully transform students who were previously quiet and withdrawn into more courageous participants in class discussions and extracurricular activities.

The opposite condition has also been empirically proven. Putu Hari Suta and Silooy (2024) through a qualitative descriptive study proved that low self-confidence triggers chronic feelings of insecurity that cause students to project an excessive fear of rejection from their environment, so they prefer to withdraw from social interactions before they have a chance to mingle. This phenomenon is very easy to identify in high school classrooms, namely when there are students who always eat alone in the cafeteria, never ask questions to the teacher, or refuse to join study groups for fear of being seen as incompetent by their peers. Chairunnisa et al. (2024) confirmed this finding by stating that students with high levels of self-confidence show significantly lower levels of social anxiety, so they appear more assertive, open, and flexible in following group dynamics.

Recent research by Hidayat and Saputra (2025) found that students with low self-confidence tend to experience social performance anxiety, which hinders their ability to lead study groups. This

internal aspect of self-confidence ultimately serves as a crucial psychological shield. According to Lauster's theory (as cited in Irawati, 2014), individuals with stable self-confidence act without excessive anxiety, are able to express their desires freely yet politely, and objectively understand their strengths and weaknesses. These characteristics provide high school students with the mental readiness to enter diverse friendship circles at school without the fear of being negatively judged by their peers.

Thus, self-confidence plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of peer interactions. Students with high self-confidence tend to be more active in communication, able to express their opinions effectively, and demonstrate a more open attitude in social relationships. Conversely, students with low self-confidence tend to experience barriers to interaction, such as a lack of courage to speak up and a preference for social withdrawal. Therefore, self-confidence not only serves as an internal driving force but also a determining factor influencing students' ability to adapt and build positive social relationships in the school environment.

Interpersonal Communication Skills in Improving Peer Interaction

Interpersonal communication skills are positioned as external technical tools that ensure the exchange of social messages between adolescents is accurate, effective, and meaningful. Literature reviews indicate that these skills are not simply conversational activities, but rather complex, multidimensional competencies. Referring to the thinking of Hartini and Chumaeson (2021) and Riziq and Irmawati (2024), studies on interpersonal communication in adolescents include five main interrelated indicators.

The first indicator is openness, characterized by students' courage to share personal information honestly and their willingness to accept feedback from peers without defensiveness. In practice, this indicator is seen when students are willing to share their learning difficulties with classmates or are willing to accept constructive criticism in group work without being offended. The second indicator is empathy, which is the ability to feel what others feel and understand their peers' perspectives when facing a problem at school (Andangjati et al., 2021). Students with high empathy, for example, will readily approach a friend who appears gloomy and offer help without being asked.

The third indicator is supportiveness, demonstrated through positive social responses, motivation, and non-threatening behavior during discussions. Fourth is positiveness, demonstrated through polite verbal language and warm non-verbal sensitivity, such as eye contact, friendly intonation, and open facial expressions (Hartini & Chumaeson, 2021). Fifth is equality, which is respecting differences of opinion and not unilaterally dominating the conversation, thus creating an inclusive, dialogue-oriented atmosphere. These five indicators can be observed in daily classroom activities, such as during group presentations, literacy discussions, or question-and-answer sessions, where student communication patterns vary widely.

Previous research conducted by Pratiwi et al. (2021) demonstrated through regression analysis that interpersonal communication skills significantly influence adolescents' conflict resolution skills; communicative students tend to resolve friendship issues through discussion and negotiation, rather than physical confrontation or cyberbullying. This finding is relevant to a common phenomenon in schools, where disputes between students that are not resolved communicatively often escalate into bullying or social exclusion, which can have long-term consequences. Meanwhile, Fitriani and Rahmawati (2023) added that excessive gadget use among high school students negatively correlates with their interpersonal communication skills in real life, resulting in stiffer responses during face-to-face interactions. This aligns with observations that generations accustomed to communicating via text messages often struggle to maintain eye contact or respond spontaneously in face-to-face conversations.

This opinion is supported by Nugroho et al. (2025), who found that students who are active in extracurricular activities have significantly more mature levels of openness and empathy, two key communication indicators, than students who are not active in organizations. This indicates that the development of interpersonal communication skills occurs not only in the classroom but also through social experiences outside the classroom, such as student council (OSIS), scouting, or arts and sports activities. Conversely, adolescents' failure to meet interpersonal communication indicators, such as being passive or misinterpreting the intent of messages, is often the main trigger for acute misunderstandings and social isolation at school (Maulana, 2021). Sharpening this aspect is crucial because erroneous

communication patterns among high school adolescents are prone to triggering the disintegration of friendship circles and social rejection, which ultimately leads to decreased motivation to learn.

Based on this theoretical study, it can be concluded that interpersonal communication skills play a crucial role in enhancing peer interactions. Students' ability to effectively convey and receive messages, both verbally and nonverbally, is a key factor in building smooth communication and fostering positive social relationships. Students with strong interpersonal communication skills are more likely to understand their conversation partners, convey ideas clearly, and respond appropriately in every interaction. Conversely, poor interpersonal communication skills can hinder social interactions, such as difficulty expressing opinions, lack of participation in discussions, and

misunderstandings. Therefore, the better students' interpersonal communication skills, the more effective peer interactions will be within the school environment.

The Role of Self-Confidence and Interpersonal Communication Skills in Improving Peer Interaction

Peer interaction is defined as a reciprocal interpersonal relationship between individuals of similar maturity, age, and developmental status (Titaningrum & Nurjannah, 2021). In the developmental phase of high school adolescents, this interaction plays a very central role and encompasses several distinct theoretical dimensions. The first dimension is its function as a platform for identity formation or a social laboratory, a place where adolescents test their values, explore new social roles, and learn to collaborate and resolve conflicts outside the authority of parents or teachers. The second dimension is as a primary source of emotional support, where friendship groups serve as a place to share academic anxieties and gain existential recognition, which is essential for adolescent mental health (Andangjati et al., 2021). The third dimension relates to criteria for social acceptance; according to Yuliani and Syahrman (2021), the quality of peer interaction is directly proportional to a student's level of social acceptance at school.

The reality on the ground shows that not all high school students have good peer interactions. Sociometric research by Utami and Handayani (2022) describes the phenomenon of high school students who are categorized as "rejected" or "neglected" in their peer circles showing symptoms ranging from mild depression to a drastic decline in academic achievement. This condition is commonly found in various schools, namely students who sit alone, do not have a fixed study group, or whose names are rarely mentioned during discussion groups. Ramadhan et al. (2024) added in their latest study that an inclusive and collaborative classroom climate plays a strong mediating role in strengthening bonds between peers, minimizing the gap between exclusive groups that often triggers jealousy and social anxiety.

The synthesis of the reviewed studies indicates that self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills should not be understood merely as two parallel factors associated with peer interaction. Their roles appear to be functionally complementary (Silooy et al., 2023).. Self-confidence provides the internal psychological readiness needed for students to initiate interaction, express opinions, and participate in social situations. However, this internal readiness requires interpersonal communication skills to be translated into effective social behavior through openness, empathy, supportive responses, positive communication, and respect for equality. In this sense, interpersonal communication skills function as an actualization mechanism that allows self-confidence to operate effectively within peer relationships. The contribution of the present review therefore lies in integrating these two dimensions into a functional explanation of peer interaction, rather than treating them solely as separate correlational variables.

This synergistic relationship is strongly supported by empirical research by Lestari et al. (2022), who conducted a path analysis and found that self-confidence indirectly influences adolescents' social adjustment through interpersonal communication skills. This means that self-confidence is merely a static potential that can only be highly effective for social interactions if actualized through communication skills.

Findings across the reviewed studies further support the complementary relationship between self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills. Students experiencing difficulties in these dimensions may show greater barriers in expressing opinions, interpreting interpersonal messages, and participating effectively in peer relationships (Krisphianti et al., 2021; Mubarak et al., 2024). On the other hand, guidance and counseling intervention programs that combine assertive training and group communication techniques have been shown to be effective in reversing social isolation in students who

were previously victims of bullying (Kusuma et al., 2026). These findings should be interpreted as evidence synthesized from previous studies rather than as direct observations conducted by the present authors.

If a student experiences an imbalance or only has one aspect, social barriers will inevitably occur (Silooy et al., 2023). Students who have high self-confidence without the balance of good communication skills tend to appear overly dominant, egocentric, and lack active listening skills, potentially triggering interpersonal conflict because they are perceived as insensitive by their peers. Conversely, students who have the potential for good communication skills but lack self-confidence will be trapped in chronic passivity; they know how to respond appropriately to messages, but an internal fear of rejection leads them to choose silence and ultimately withdraw from school social interactions (Krisphianti et al., 2021; Putu Hari Suta & Silooy, 2024). Both of these profiles are actually easy for teachers to recognize in the classroom, and both require different interventions, but they need to be implemented simultaneously.

The optimal integration of these two variables creates the profile of adolescents with high social intelligence and self-worth. In group learning activities or intra-school organizations, students with this combination of aspects will emerge as solution-oriented figures capable of facilitating teamwork, appreciating the contributions of others, and skilled at negotiating amid differences (Mubarok et al., 2024; Siahaan et al., 2025). Furthermore, research by Saputra et al. (2021) shows that high levels of positive peer interaction (mutual support) are linearly correlated with increased student achievement motivation in school. This means that investing in developing students' self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills not only impacts the quality of their social interactions but also indirectly boosts their academic achievement.

The reality of high school students being passive in discussions, reluctant to speak in front of the class, or having difficulty working in groups demonstrates the suboptimal effectiveness of simultaneous interventions on these two dimensions. These findings should serve as a wake-up call for all education stakeholders. Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers have a vital responsibility to intervene simultaneously in both aspects through group guidance services, assertive training, and programmed individual counseling (Andangjati et al., 2021; Yuliani & Syahrman, 2021). Furthermore, subject teachers can play a role through cooperative learning methods that naturally build students' self-confidence and communication skills in a real-life academic context.

Based on this overall study, it can be concluded that self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills play a crucial and synergistic role in enhancing peer interactions. Self-confidence serves as an internal drive for individuals to engage in interactions, while interpersonal communication skills support the smoothness and quality of the communication process. Therefore, the higher a student's self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills, the more optimal their social interactions within their peer group at school.

CONCLUSION

Based on the theoretical study and discussion that has been described, it can be concluded that self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills play a crucial role in enhancing peer interactions among high school students. Self-confidence serves as an internal drive that influences students' courage in interacting, while interpersonal communication skills support the ability to convey and receive messages effectively, thus creating good social relationships. The results of the discussion indicate that there are still students with suboptimal self-confidence and communication skills, characterized by a passive attitude, lack of courage to speak, and difficulty in interacting. Therefore, it is recommended that students be more active in developing self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills, and teachers and schools can provide support through learning activities and self-development programs to improve the quality of peer interactions in the school environment.

Research results show that students with high self-confidence and strong interpersonal communication skills tend to be more active in interactions, able to work collaboratively, adapt easily, and have positive social relationships in the school environment. Conversely, students with low self-confidence and communication skills tend to experience obstacles in social interactions, such as being less confident in speaking up, being passive in discussions, and having difficulty establishing

relationships with peers. Self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills complement each other in improving the quality of peer interactions. Self-confidence provides the courage to initiate interactions, while interpersonal communication skills help maintain and develop social relationships so they continue to run smoothly. Thus, the higher self-confidence and the better the interpersonal communication skills that students have, the more optimal the peer interactions that are formed in the school environment.

Therefore, schools, especially guidance and counseling teachers, are expected to provide self-development services and programs that support students' self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills. Furthermore, students are expected to be more active in developing their potential, expressing their opinions, and fostering positive communication to foster healthy and harmonious social relationships within the school environment

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