

Character Education and Friendship on Students' Self-Esteem

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Submitted: 2022-06-04. Revised: 2022-07-19. Accepted: 2022-08-05

Abstract. This study aimed to demonstrate that character education and friendship are factors that influence or foster self-esteem in adolescents. To validate the statement, 250 students in Semarang participated and are involved in this study. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested. The major hypothesis was that character education and friendship have an effect on self-esteem in adolescents. The first minor hypothesis was that character education has an effect on students' self esteem and the second minor hypothesis was that friendship has an effect on self-esteem in adolescents. The results of data analysis show that all hypotheses are accepted. Furthermore, based on the results, the researchers suggested that character education and friendship dimensions should be considered in an intervention program intended to promote the potential of education character and friendship as a means of fostering self-esteem in adolescents as a foundation for growth and development in the future.

Key words: character education, friendship, self-esteem, adolescents

How to Cite: Sugiarti, R., Erlangga, E., Purwaningtyastuti, P., & Wisudaningtyas, A. (2022). Character Education and Friendship on Students' Self-Esteem. *Journal of Nonformal Education*, 8(2), 162-170.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15294/jne.v8i2.36776>

INTRODUCTION

A life journey that shapes one's personality tend to be based on their experiences from childhood to adolescence and adulthood (An et al., 2020; Chung et al., 2020). In other words, personality is formed throughout life; including self-esteem as part of the personality. Self-esteem in this case refers to one's assessment of themselves by analyzing how far their behavior meets his ideal which can be a measure of teenagers' self-esteem (Rini Sugiarti et al., 2021; Rini Sugiarti & Erlangga, 2017). Self-esteem is a person's thoughts, feelings, and views of themselves. It can be said that self-esteem is based on how much someone values, approves, values, and likes themselves. Self-esteem is related to one's dignity and honor. Having healthy self-esteem may affect adolescents' motivation, mental welfare, as well as quality of life in general.

An adolescent with positive self-esteem will be able to regard themselves as an individual that possesses abilities, significance, worth, and competence (Itahashi et al., 2020; Jenkins et al., 2018). For example, when a teenager possesses healthy and positive self-esteem, he/she would feel confident when appointed to lead an activity (Huey et al., 2020; Seim et al., 2021) or their group. On the other hand, a teenager with negative self-esteem tends to believe that other people are better than them and be fixated on their own weaknesses (García et al., 2019; Rascher, 2010), or even be afraid of failure when trying something new and have trouble accepting a compliment

(Cooper et al., 2019; Karaer & Akdemir, 2019; Khambati et al., 2018). Adolescents who receive warm character education support tend to have better self-esteem (Leventhal et al., 2015) and better mental health (Dulek et al., 2021). Studies have also shown that self-esteem is part of growing personality and can be observed through behavior displayed in daily life; including in terms of socializing with peers (Dare et al., 2020; Gómez-Odrizola & Calvete, 2021).

Meanwhile, in reality, many teenagers are having trouble with low self-esteem (Rascher, 2010; R. Sugiarti et al., 2018). Teenagers with low self-esteem are having difficulty accepting themselves as they are and lack confidence. Low self-esteem is even known to increase the risk anxiety and depression in a person. Unhealthy self-esteem in teenagers may lead to depression, inhibit personal development, and even lead one to unhealthy behavior. Childhood experiences tend to shape self-esteem during teenage life. Parents, teachers, and childhood friends as well as associates have a strong influence on how self-esteem develops. One of the factors that influence the formation of self-esteem is character education at home (N. Ali et al., 2020; Cui et al., 2019; Fuentes et al., 2020). Research shows that poor character education in the family may affect the development of self-esteem later during adolescence. Furthermore, bad association can also lead to low self-esteem in teenagers (Huber et al., 2020; Marini et al., 2019; Mu-barok et al., 2021).

Significance of Study

Previous studies have shown that self-esteem develops throughout life, starting from childhood until a person enters adolescence, adulthood and during social life (Garcia et al., 2020; Golombok et al., 2017; Rini Sugiarti et al., 2021). Character education plays an important role in shaping self-esteem in adolescents. In a family that emphasizes strong personality grows, children grow comfortably and have self-worth (Shek et al., 2021). Psychological well-being of adolescents is present in families that emphasize warmth and positive character building in their homes (Cooper et al., 2019; Golombok et al., 2017; Olatunji & Idemudia, 2021). On the other hand, adolescents who show low self-esteem and lack of harmony in their relationships are more often found in families with poorer character education (Olatunji & Idemudia, 2021; Saurabh & Ranjan, 2020). Some studies (Angelhoff et al., 2021; García et al., 2019) found that adolescents with antisocial and withdrawal behavior because of low self-esteem tend to have problems in social life (Garcia et al., 2020; Martínez et al., 2021). Adolescents with low self-esteem are also found in families with relatively poor character education (Schnitker et al., 2021; R. Sugiarti et al., 2018; Rini Sugiarti et al., 2020). Self-esteem in adolescents is formed due to various factors such as experiences, perceptions, limitations, opinions, parenting (Huber et al., 2020) and socialization with associates (Marini et al., 2019; Munir & Malik, 2020). Empirical evidence also demonstrates significant variability in the level and rate of development of self-esteem in adolescence through friendship (Magnusson & Låftman, 2019; Munir & Malik, 2020; Saurabh & Ranjan, 2020).

Research Objectives and Hypotheses

Based on the background above, the study aimed to test empirically the effect of character education and friendship on self-esteem in adolescents. Specifically, the hypothesis proposed in this study was that character education and friendship have a significant effect on self-esteem in adolescents. Positive character education and friendship will result in high self-esteem in adolescents; and vice versa.

METHODS

Research Design

Research design provides a procedure for obtaining the information needed to develop or solve a research problem. Research design is the basis for conducting research. This study used a quantitative research design. It used a descriptive quantitative ap-

proach by determining the extent to which the character education and friendship variable affect self-esteem in students.

The definition of quantitative research design is research based on empirical experience by collecting numerical data that can be calculated. Quantitative data is information data in the form of numeric symbols or numbers. Quantitative research requires researchers to explain how one variable affects other variables; based on data analysis in the form of numbers. Furthermore, when the independent variable affects the dependent variable, it can be said that the independent variable causes or affects the dependent variable.

The independent variables in this study were character education and friendship; and the dependent variable in this study is self-esteem. This study uses a quantitative descriptive approach with the aim of knowing how much influence each variable of character education and friendship has on students' self-esteem.

Population and samples

The population in this study was high school students in Semarang. Upon verification, 250 samples of adolescent students in Semarang were identified. The 250 students incidentally participated in the study for 3 months starting from December 2021 to February 2022.

Instruments

The measuring instrument used in this study was scale. The self-esteem scale in this study was a scale in the Dependent Variable category. Character Education and Friendship Scales were scales in the Independent Variable category. Both scales from Independent Variables, namely Character Education Scale and Friendship Scale were tested for their effect on the Dependent Variable namely the Self-Esteem Scale.

Procedures

The self-esteem scale, character education scale and friendship scale were simultaneously distributed to the research subjects through Google Forms. In 3 months, 250 research subjects have filled and returned the scales distributed. After the data were collected, the researchers analyzed using confirmatory analysis and a simple linear regression analysis

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data in this study were analyzed using a simple regression analysis technique and confirmatory analysis.

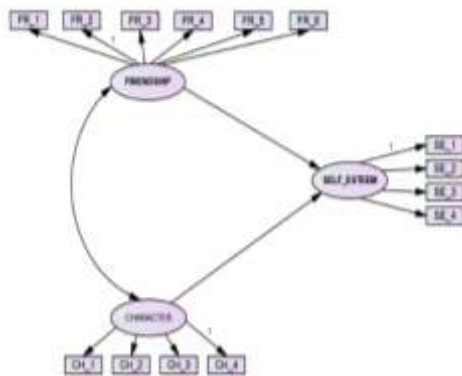


Figure 1. The Conceptual Model

a. Confirmatory Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis is the stage of measuring the indicators that make up the latent variables in the research model. Following are the significance test results of each indicator in forming exogenous variables.

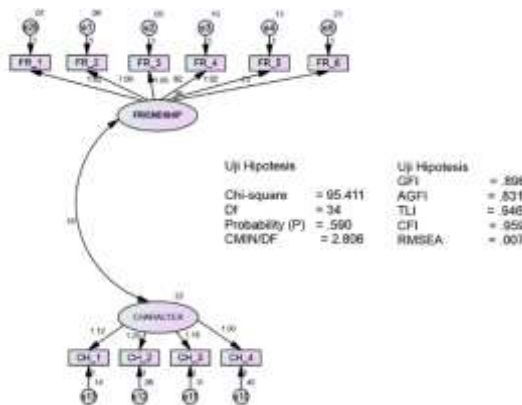


Figure 2. Confirmatory Exogen Variables

From the results of confirmatory analysis of exogenous variables (character education and friendship), the following Chi-Square, Probability (P), RMSEA, CFI, TLI values were obtained.

Table 1. Results of Confirmatory Analysis of Exogen Variables

Measure Goodness of Fit	Acceptance Limit Goodness of Fit	Result	Description
Chi Square	the smaller the better	95.411	Good
Probability (P)	$P \geq 0,05$	0.590	Good
RMSEA	$RMSEA \leq 0,08$	0.007	Good
CFI	$0,80 \leq CFI \leq 1$	0.959	Good
TLI	$0,80 \leq TLI$	0.946	Good

From the results of confirmatory factor analysis of exogen variables consisting of character education and friendship, all indicators had a standardized regression weight value of >0.5 and a significance of <0.05 . Therefore, measurement of the character education and friendship variable can be performed using each indicator developed. The following is the results of significance test of each indicator in forming endogen variable.

b. Model Test Results

Overall model testing was performed using SEM which was also used to analyze the proposed hypothesis. The results of model testing through structural model testing are shown in Figure 2. Based on the results of the processed data, it can be seen that all the constructs used to form a research model have met the predetermined goodness of fit requirements. This means that the model fits the sample data. The test results on the loading factor value for each indicator can be seen in Table 2.

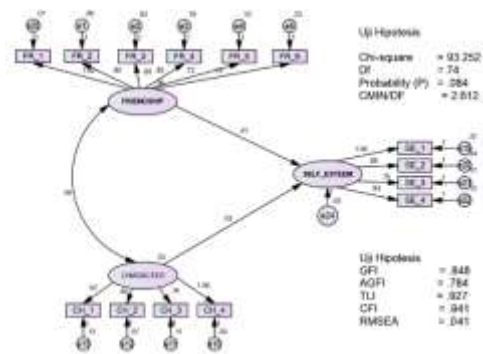


Figure 3. Fit Model

Table 2. Results of Confirmatory Analysis of Exogen Variables

Measure Goodness of Fit	Acceptance Limit Goodness of Fit	Result	Description
Chi Square	the smaller the better	93.252	Good
Probability (P)	$P \geq 0,05$	0.084	Good
RMSEA	$RMSEA \leq 0,08$	0.041	Good
CFI	$0,80 \leq CFI \leq 1$	0.941	Good
TLI	$0,80 \leq TLI$	0.927	Good
AGFI	$AGFI \geq 0,90$ Good Fit $0,80 \leq AGFI \leq 0,90$ Marginal Fit	0,848	Marginal Fit

Based on the results of the feasibility test of the model presented in table 2 above, overall, the test criteria are in a good category or meet the required assessment criteria, so it can be concluded that this research model is not different from the estimated population/model is considered good (accepted). After assessing the assumptions, hypothesis testing was performed by calculating Critical Ratio (CR) value and the probability of a causal relationship. In the table below the results of the hypothesis testing are collectively presented.

Effect analysis was performed to analyze the effect strength of each construct, whether direct, indirect, and total effects. The direct effect was the coefficient of all coefficient lines with an arrow at one end.

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

	Std Estimate	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
SELF_ESTEEM <--- FRIENDSHIP	.501	.407	.062	6.539	***
SELF_ESTEEM <--- CHARACTER	.525	.531	.104	5.128	***
FRIENDSHIP <---> CHARACTER	.693	.198	.036	5.504	***

Table 4. Standardized Direct Effects

	FRIENDSHIP	CHARACTER
SELF_ESTEEM	.590	.574

The regression equation was:

$$\hat{Y} = 0.042 X_1 + 0.001 X_2 + \text{Error}$$

Model Interpretation

1. The relationship between character building and self-esteem in adolescents

Based on the data analysis, character education was found to have an effect on self-esteem with a value of 0.525 or 52.5%. It means that the first minor hypothesis of this study is accepted. It shows that the more positive the character education given, the more positive the self-esteem.

The result corroborates the ecology system theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner that focuses on the social context of where children live and people that affects their development (Fulantelli et al., 2021; Soule, 2021). Microsystems as sub-systems in ecological theory show that there is a direct interaction effect on child development (T. Ali et al., 2021; Jackman et al., 2022; YÜKSEL DOĞAN & AYTEKİN, 2021), consisting of individual family, peers, school and environment (den Boer et al., 2021;

Geniené et al., 2021). Bronfenbrenner's ecology theory emphasizes on the environmental system synergy on individual development, whether cognitively (Fulantelli et al., 2021; Geniené et al., 2021), socio-emotionally, or in terms of capacity and personality characteristics, or active participation, which are vital elements in child development.

This result is in line with the studies by (Golombok et al., 2017; Marini et al., 2019) demonstrating that character education has a significant effect on the development of self-esteem in adolescents. Through the cultivation of character education, parents can improve the quality of adolescents by exploring the potential abilities that exist within them so that later positive self-esteem could be formed (Adigun, 2020; Batool & Ghayas, 2020; Martins et al., 2020; Wilson et al., 2019). Understanding character values in the family will produce positive self-esteem in adolescents (Magnusson & Låftman, 2019; Situmorang & Salim, 2021). In other words, to improve self-esteem in adolescents, character education should be provided by parents at home (Cui et al., 2019; Weijers et al., 2018). Of course, character development cannot be achieved overnight. It takes process and time (Schiffirin et al., 2019; Women & Abuse, 2010). During this process, parents are required to be patient. However, studies have demonstrated that character education by parents has a positive effect on self-esteem in adolescents (Angelhoff et al., 2021; F. Chen et al., 2020; Seim et al., 2021; Rini Sugiarti et al., 2021).

Students who have positive self-esteem will behave assertively in their relationships, because they are confident to communicate their opinions, ideas, and needs honestly and as they are in accordance with what they want, feel, and think without fear of being rejected by others.

2. The relationship between friendship and self-esteem

The effect of friendship on self-esteem was indicated by a value of 0.501 or 50.1%. It shows that the more positive the friendship, the better the self-esteem, thus, the second minor hypothesis of this study is accepted.

This result is also in line with Bronfenbrenner's theory stating that the quality of a child's relationship and the environment in which they interact can affect the growth and development of the child's personality (Jackman et al., 2022; Soule, 2021). Through his ecology theory, he emphasizes the importance of understanding a child's interactions in various environmental contexts, which are also known as ecological systems (T. Ali et al., 2021; Geniené et al., 2021). The component of the ecological system, mesosys-

tem, can explain the dynamics of the effect of friendship on self-esteem development in adolescents. Mesosystem covers interactions between different microsystems where a child lives (Fulantelli et al., 2021; Leventhal et al., 2015). In essence, mesosystem is a system formed from microsystems and involves the relationship between home and school, peers and family or between family and school (Chu et al., 2021).

Hanging around with peers with good relation may reduce pressure in children (Genienè et al., 2021), advance the development cognitively, and particularly improve self-esteem in adolescents (N. Ali et al., 2020; Simonsmeier et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021). Friendship will allow adolescents to interact, socialize and provide encouragement and motivation to other peers emotionally (R. Sugiarti et al., 2018; Rini Sugiarti et al., 2020; Zhu & Shek, 2020). The presence of peer groups can have an effect on adolescent personality development; including in improving their self-esteem. Friendship helps teens deal with stress and helps them recover from various health problems quickly. Spending time with friends positively and sharing can make a person look better because it makes them feel more valuable (Choi et al., 2018; García et al., 2019; Leventhal et al., 2015).

Therefore, it can be concluded that friendship has a significant effect on the development of self-esteem in adolescents. The closest people in daily life will greatly affect the formation of self-esteem. When children are in a school environment with friends who often make fun of them, the environment is not good for the growth of healthy self-esteem. Conversely, peers and close friends can also develop healthy self-esteem. This is due to a mutually supportive social atmosphere, mutual respect for one's efforts and results (Rini Sugiarti et al., 2022).

3. The effect of character building and friendship on self-esteem in adolescents

The effect of character education and friendship on self-esteem was $0.501 \times 0.525 = 0.2630 = 26.30\%$. This shows that character education and friendship simultaneously have a fairly insignificant effect (26.30%) on self-esteem in adolescents.

This result is in line with the field theory put forth by Kurt Lewin. He argues that behavior is the result of action between forces, both those originating from within the individual such as: goals, needs, psychological pressures and those from outside the individual (Burnes, 2019; Lindorfer, 2021). This theory has been implemented by Lewin in various psychological and sociological symptoms, including the behavior of infants and children, adolescence, mental retardation, minority group problems, differences in character and

dynamics of individual behavior. The dynamics and development of personality are related to the psychological environment because individuals and the environment are parts of the life space that depend on each other (J. Chen et al., 2021; Roşca, 2020; Yang et al., 2017). Life space contains all possible facts that can determine individual behavior. Life space comprises everything that must be known to understand the concrete behavior of individual humans in a certain psychological environment at a certain time (Lindorfer, 2021).

In particular, the results of this study are also converging in line with the theory of ecosystem synergy proposed by Brofenbrenner. As elaborated previously, Brofenbrenner argues that the development of a teenager is affected by environmental contexts. The reciprocal relationship between the teenager and the environment will shape their behavior (Chu et al., 2021; Soule, 2021). The microsystem is the condition behind which children live and interact with other people and institutions closest to their lives, such as parents, peers, and schools. The microsystem environment is the smallest and most direct environment faced by children, namely the environment in which they live and meet with people who interact directly (Rini Sugiarti et al., 2022).

The microsystem includes home, school or day-care, peer groups or community environment of a child. Interactions within the microsystem generally require personal involvement with family, classmates, teachers, or caregivers who influence children, including in terms of developing their self-esteem (N. Ali et al., 2020; Bigos & Michalik, 2020; Genienè et al., 2021; Women & Abuse, 2010). How people in the environment interact with the child affects how he grows up and develops. Likewise, how the child reacts to the people in the microsystem affects how the people treat the child (T. Ali et al., 2021).

Self-esteem as part of personality is influenced by the interaction of parental character education and children's friendships in their daily lives (Leventhal et al., 2015; Romm & Metzger, 2021). The results of this study are in line with the findings of (Shek et al., 2021; Sundgot-Borgen et al., 2020; Zhu & Shek, 2020) showing that the development of self-esteem in adolescents is in line with the character education model in the family and their experience with their associates (Abraham et al., 2018). A adolescent is able to refuse other people's requests if they don't feel like doing it, doesn't always think about negative experiences in the past, can express his needs, accepts his own weaknesses and strengths, and has high lasting self-confidence. This positive self-esteem is heavily affected by how the environment shapes them

(Garcia et al., 2020; Queiroz et al., 2020; Seim et al., 2021).

CONCLUSIONS

Behavior is the result of action between forces, both those originating from within the individual such as: goals, needs, psychological pressures and those from outside the individual. The social contexts where an adolescent lives and of people around them affect the development of the adolescent's personality; including in terms of their self-esteem development.

It can be concluded that character education in the family and friendship have an effect on the development and formation of self-esteem in adolescents.

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