

Factor analysis of the effectiveness of assertive training techniques in reducing adolescent conformity behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by physical, emotional, and social transitions, during which conformity to peer norms frequently emerges as a dominant behavioral pattern. While moderate conformity can foster social skills and prosocial behavior, excessive conformity often undermines adolescents' self-concept and autonomy, leading to negative outcomes, such as bullying, substance use, and diminished academic achievement. This study examined the effectiveness of assertive training techniques in mitigating negative conformity behavior among adolescents. Employing a qualitative literature review, 145 articles published between 2019 and 2024 were initially identified through Google Scholar, with eight articles meeting the inclusion criteria for an in-depth analysis. The findings consistently reveal that assertive training techniques enhance adolescents' ability to resist peer pressure, improve interpersonal communication, strengthen self-concept, and reduce dependency on social approval. The review highlights three critical factors shaping the success of assertive training interventions: (1) individual factors, such as self-confidence and interpersonal skills; (2) environmental factors, including supportive group dynamics in counselling settings; and (3) methodological factors, such as structured role-play, simulations, and staged training implementation. Complementary approaches, such as sociodrama, have also been found to be effective in addressing conformity by fostering awareness of group dynamics. Despite promising outcomes, the reviewed studies faced methodological limitations, including small sample sizes and limited control group comparisons. This study underscores the potential of assertive training as a preventive and corrective counselling strategy to address adolescent conformity, while also calling for future research employing more rigorous experimental designs to strengthen the empirical evidence and broaden practical applications in educational and counselling contexts.

Keywords: Assertive Training, Conformity, Adolescent, Social transitions, Counselling

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1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial period in human development. Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood, where a person experiences many changes in himself, such as physical, emotional, and social. This is in line with Hurlock who states that adolescence is a transition from one phase to the next which will find many changes in itself such as physical form, emotions, behaviour, social and also find many problems (Amanah et al., 2023). Adolescence is a time when people seek identity and acceptance from their social environment, such as their peers. This often makes them try to conform to group behavior and norms to be accepted by the group. This event is known as conformity, which is a person's tendency to adjust or change behaviour to be in line with their social group (Putu Karunia Meilani & Hizkia Tobing, 2023).

Conformity is the impact of behavior that arises from social group associations that appear to follow the attitudes or behaviors of others. Conformity in adolescents has both positive and negative impacts. One positive impact is the increase in social skills, prosocial behavior, and achievement motivation. But on the other hand, excessive conformity in adolescents can also have negative impacts such as bullying, smoking behaviour, and consumptive behaviour (Putu Karunia Meilani & Hizkia Tobing, 2023). Moreover, excessive conformity also has an impact on adolescents' self-concept where they sacrifice their personality and values to be accepted by their social group (Nur, 2022).

Conformity has many negative impacts on adolescents' lives. The results of a study conducted (Bismil Selvia et al., 2023) showed that conformity has an influence on learning motivation and academic achievement significantly, namely there is a negative relationship between high conformity and weak learning motivation and achievement. From this, it is important for adolescents to improve their assertive skills to have the courage to express and convey the contents of their thoughts and feelings firmly and honestly without being afraid of group demands.

Assertive training is an effective technique in increasing adolescents' assertive behaviour by training individuals to enable them to express their positive or negative feelings directly to reject the demands and pressures of their social groups that they feel are not in accordance with their personal souls and values (Prabowo & Asni, 2018). Research conducted by (Putra & Apsari, 2021) shows that assertive training techniques are proven effective for improving assertive skills and individual self-adjustment with their environment.

In the context of conformity, assertive behavior is important for adolescents. It helps adolescents cope with conformity pressures from their environment and social groups. Through good assertive skills, it will help adolescents behave well and be more adaptive to the environment, maintain self-integrity, and encourage better retrieval (Nur Afiah & Fitriani Nengsi, 2022). The urgency of this research is further strengthened by the high prevalence of negative conformity behaviour among adolescents, which often leads to risky actions such as bullying and substance abuse (Ainiyah & Cahyanti, 2020). Peer conformity can trigger bullying behaviour with the higher the conformity, the more potential for bullying behaviour (Jasmani et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of assertive training techniques in reducing adolescent conformity behavior is influenced by several factors, such as individual characteristics, environment, group dynamics, and stages of implementation. This study specifically aims to identify the success factors of the application of assertive techniques to reduce adolescents' negative conformity behavior. This in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of assertive training techniques is expected to provide an overview and insight for counsellors in planning programs and providing services with assertive training techniques to reduce adolescent conformity behavior.

Several studies have shown the effectiveness of assertive techniques in reducing conformity behavior. The study conducted by (Akbar et al., 2020) concluded that assertive techniques in group counselling proved effective in reducing the level of peer conformity. This is also reinforced by research conducted by (Majdi, 2024) which states that the application of assertive techniques is proven to effectively reduce conformity behaviour in adolescents.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research method used in the preparation of this article is a qualitative approach with a literature review. A literature review is a type of research that involves efforts to collect information relevant to the topic or problem being studied. A literature review is a research method that involves collecting data related to a particular topic and then processing, identifying, selecting, reviewing, and evaluating the results of previous research. The purpose of this method is to provide a thorough understanding of existing knowledge or research, as well as reveal new findings generated through the literature review (Ihksan et al., 2023).

The literature review procedure consists of five stages, starting from the collection of literature and ending with the discussion of this study. The stages were as follows: (1) Searching for literature relevant to the research topic, this data source was obtained using the Publish or Perish software with the Google Scholar database; (2) Identifying and selecting literature based on time constraints, namely in the last five years, namely 2019-2024 with Indonesian language articles, 145 articles were obtained that were in accordance with the topic; (3) Analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating the selected literature, narrowing it down to eight articles; (4) Drawing conclusions from the study results; and (5) Discussing the results of the study that have been obtained.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The assertive training technique is applied to reduce conformity behavior. The following eight articles were analyzed in this study (see Table 1):

Table 1. Article Analyzed

Title	Method	Result
Effectiveness of Behavioural Counselling to reduce Negative Conformity with Assertive Training Technique (Agustin, 2022)	Classroom Action Research	Assertive training techniques are effective in reducing negative conformity behaviour in students who are used to not being able to resist peer pressure and are not assertive in expressing their wishes honestly and openly.
The Effect of Assertive Training on Student's Interpersonal Communication and Peer Conformity (Akbar et al., 2020)	Experimental	The results showed that the assertive training technique was effective for improving communication and reduce the level of peer conformity.
Effectiveness of Assertive Training Counselling Techniques in Reducing Conformity Behaviour in Peer Groups (Majdi, 2024)	Experimental (one-group pretes-posttest design)	The use of assertive training techniques is effective in reducing conformity behaviour.
Effectiveness of Assertive Training Techniques to Reduce Conformity in Class VIII Student of SMPN 9 Banjarmasin (Aida, 2020)	Experimental (pre-experimental design)	Assertive training techniques in group counselling services are effective in reducing student conformity.
The Effectiveness of Group Counselling Services with Assertive Training Techniques to Reduce Negative Conformity in Students (Fadillah et al., 2023)	Pre-Experimental Design	Counselling service group counselling services with assertive training techniques are effective to reduce negative conformity of students Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Banjarmasin.
Application of Group Counselling to Prevent Negative Conformity Behaviour of Students of SMK Negeri 5 Semarang (Suhendri, 2018)	Quantitative	There are positive changes in students who initially had very high negative conformity behaviour, but after being given group counselling services, students' conformity behaviour became low.
Sociodrama Technique in Group Guidance Services to Reduce Peer Conformity (Asri Widiyanti, 2021)	Experimental	The sociodrama technique in group guidance services is effective to reduce peer conformity in class XI students at SMAN 12 Banjarmasin.

Title	Method	Result
Group Counselling Services Assertive Training Techniques in Handling Negative Self-Concept in Students (Maharani & Ningsih, 2015)	Experimental	There is an increase in handling the negative self-concept of students before and after being given group counselling services with assertive training techniques on students.

3.1 Effectiveness of Assertive Techniques to Reduce Adolescent Conformity Behaviour

Research on the effectiveness of assertive training techniques in various counselling contexts shows consistent results, namely that these techniques are effective in reducing negative conformity behavior, increasing self-concept, and improving students' interpersonal skills. Of the eight articles analyzed, the research method used was a quantitative approach with an experimental or quasi-experimental design that showed significant changes in the subjects' behavior before and after the intervention.

The study conducted (Aida, 2020) showed findings of a significant decrease in adolescent conformity behavior after being given assertive training. This finding is also reinforced by the results of research conducted (Akbar et al., 2020) which conveyed that assertive techniques can effectively reduce conformity behaviour in adolescents and can even improve adolescents' interpersonal communication skills. This confirms that assertive training techniques can not only effectively reduce conformity behavior but can also improve a person's various self-skills that support the ability to assert assertive behavior.

Conformity behavior has a detrimental impact on adolescents and others. Such as becoming a person who lacks confidence, is not independent, tends to depend on others and tends to commit deviant behaviour such as bullies and aggression (Alam, 2023). Assertive training techniques are designed to help adolescents to have the ability to firmly accept reality, state and make decisions, be independent without having a sense of dependence on others and be able to behave according to their own arguments without pressure from others or their social groups (Pratiwi & Setiawati, 2014). Assertive training techniques also have a positive impact on adolescents' self-concept. Assertive training techniques show effective results in helping adolescents recognise their identity, accept their shortcomings and strengths (Maharani & Ningsih, 2015).

This literature review also presents another view of some techniques used to reduce adolescent conformity behavior. One of these is the sociodrama technique. Sociodrama is a technique of demonstrating or playing a role with the topic of social problems that aims to provide understanding and ability in solving them (Azizah & Pratiwi, 2017). The application of sociodrama techniques in an effort to reduce conformity behaviour has proven effective (Asri Widiyanti, 2021). Sociodrama provides opportunities for adolescents to understand group dynamics, while assertive training focuses on building adolescent skills to have assertive and independent behavior.

3.2 Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Assertive Training Techniques in Reducing Adolescent Conformity Behaviour

The effectiveness of assertive training techniques in reducing conformity behavior is influenced by several key factors that can be grouped into individual, environmental, and training methodology. Individual factors, such as level of self-confidence, negative self-concept, and interpersonal communication skills, determine the success of this intervention. In a study (Maharani & Ningsih, 2015b) adolescents with a negative self-concept who had difficulty expressing their opinions showed a significant increase in self-acceptance after undergoing training. This is in line with the findings of (Aida, 2020), which showed that students with low social skills managed to increase the courage to resist peer pressure through this training.

In terms of environmental factors, research by (Suhendri, 2018) and (Fadillah et al., 2023) shows that social group pressure is the main trigger for negative conformity behaviour. A supportive group counselling environment, as implemented in assertive training, provides space for participants to learn from others' experiences, increase their sense of solidarity, and strengthen their self-confidence. Group

dynamics also encouraged students to develop courage in the face of social pressure, resulting in significantly reduced negative conformity behavior.

In terms of methodology, research by (Asri Widiyanti, 2021) and (Majdi, 2024) highlighted the importance of a systematic training structure. Role-play, simulation, and group discussion methods have proven effective in helping students practice assertive skills first-hand. The duration and intensity of sessions are also key factors; training designed in several stages allows students to internalize the skills that are taught. However, most of these studies face limitations in terms of sample size and the absence of a control group, which may affect the validity of the results.

4. CONCLUSION

From this literature review, it can be concluded that the application of assertive techniques is effective in reducing negative adolescent conformity behavior. This effectiveness is influenced by several factors, including individual factors such as self-concept, self-confidence, and interpersonal communication skills, which impact adolescents' readiness to apply assertive behavior. Second, environmental factors include support from group dynamics that provide a comfortable and safe space for adolescents to apply and practice assertive skills. Third, methodological factors such as collaboration with other techniques such as sociodrama, role playing, group discussion, and simulation, which aim to improve adolescents' assertive skills in dealing with environmental or social group pressure, courage to make decisions, and independence without feeling dependent on others. However, the articles reviewed had limitations in terms of sample size and research design, such as the absence of a control group, which affects the validity of the results. Therefore, to strengthen the results of this study, further research should be conducted using an experimental design with a stronger control group.

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable

Informed Consent Statement

Not Applicable

Authors' Contributions

Not Applicable

Disclosure Statement

The Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author for privacy reasons.

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Notes on Contributors

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A Master's student in Guidance and Counseling at State University of Malang, with strong research interests in the fields of Guidance and Counseling, Education, and Educational Psychology, particularly focusing on the development of innovative counseling approaches, the enhancement of educational practices, and the exploration of psychological aspects that support effective learning and personal growth.

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