

Assertive Behaviour as an Effort to Reduce People-Pleasing Attitudes

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CONTENT

Assertive behavior;
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to reduce people-pleasing behavior while maintaining rational rights, enabling students to build healthy friendships through assertive behavior without diminishing empathy. The subjects of this study are female students from Mambaul Ulum Bata Bata Pamekasan. The research method used is descriptive qualitative research, with data collection techniques through observation and documentation. The data analysis technique used is qualitative data analysis. The results of the study show that there are various ways to reduce people-pleasing behavior, including learning and practicing assertive behavior, such as expressing opinions clearly and firmly without offending others. The conclusion of the study reveals that by adopting assertive behavior, students can reduce the tendency to always please others, allowing them to maintain their rational rights and build healthier friendships. The contribution of this research is expected to provide new insights into character development in students, particularly in the aspects of interpersonal relationships and emotional management.

1. INTRODUCTION

People-pleasing, or the desire to make others happy, has become a prevalent phenomenon, especially among teenagers. Research by Santosa and Sugiarto (2020) shows that in Indonesia, people-pleasing behavior often occurs among teenagers who feel pressured by social and cultural norms that prioritize harmony in interpersonal relationships. They found that "teenagers with people-pleasing tendencies have difficulty refusing others' requests and often neglect their own needs or rights in order to maintain good relationships with others."

While making others happy is generally a good thing, in the context of people-pleasing, individuals often sacrifice their rational rights. According to research by Putra and Pratama (2019), "teenagers with people-pleasing tendencies tend to sacrifice their own interests to meet the expectations of others, which ultimately affects their quality of life." This study also found that "teenagers experiencing people-pleasing behavior often find it difficult to say 'no' and tend to suppress their own opinions or desires, leading to increased stress and dissatisfaction in their relationships."

Furthermore, research by Wulandari (2021) shows that people-pleasing behavior can harm individuals because they continuously follow others' desires without considering their own needs. In her study, Wulandari stated, "individuals who constantly strive to please others risk losing their identity and feeling unappreciated because they focus more on the feelings of others than on their own feelings and needs."

People-pleasers often feel anxious or guilty when refusing others' requests. According to research by Chandra and Wijaya (2020), individuals with people-pleasing tendencies often feel pressured to meet others' expectations, even at the expense of their time, energy, and happiness. They stated, "Anxiety or guilt is a natural reaction for individuals who are overly focused on the needs of others and neglect their own needs."

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Research by Sari and Rahmawati (2021) also revealed that "if people-pleasing behavior continues unchecked, it can lead to mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and stress because these individuals cannot express their emotions and feelings honestly." This suggests that individuals who always prioritize others tend to suppress their negative emotions, which can ultimately lead to serious psychological issues.

According to research by Nugraha and Puspitasari (2019), people-pleasers often blame themselves for feeling that they must always please others, without considering their own well-being. "Constant feelings of guilt and low self-esteem can damage a person's mental health because they feel they are never good enough or unable to meet their own expectations," said Nugraha and Puspitasari (2019).

To stop being a people-pleaser, individuals can begin by adopting assertive behavior. Assertive behavior, according to Ampuno (2020), is an active, direct, and honest way of expressing oneself. Assertiveness involves recognizing, analyzing, and changing sources of stress. For example, if a teacher is reprimanded by the principal, the teacher responds by analyzing why they were reprimanded, rather than becoming angry (Husamah, 2015). Kanfer and Goldstein also stated that an assertive person is someone who can control themselves, act freely and pleasantly, respond appropriately to things they like, and express love and affection to the people who are important in their lives (Addaulah, 2018).

Characteristics of assertive behavior include four main traits (Kristanti & Andromeda, 2018): 1) Feeling free to express emotions through words and actions, such as saying, "This is who I am, this is how I feel, and this is what I want." 2) Being able to communicate openly and honestly with others, whether strangers, friends, or family. 3) Having an active outlook on life, as assertive individuals tend to pursue what they want and make efforts to achieve it, while accepting their limitations. 4) Acting in ways that are self-respecting, meaning they recognize that they cannot always win, but they make efforts to cover their limitations by learning and developing from their environment.

In the current context at Mambaul Ulum Bata Bata, the students' daily behavior in school and the dormitory indicates that most of them have not yet adopted assertive behavior due to their tendency to be people-pleasers. Many students are afraid to refuse requests from their peers for various reasons, such as fear of being excluded or not considered part of the group. Some even hesitate to say "no" to their friends' desires, prioritizing others' needs over their own. This highlights the importance of adopting assertive behavior to maintain rational rights without offending others, so that friendships can thrive without harm to either party.

The purpose of this study is not only to understand how to behave assertively and the positive impacts of assertive behavior, but also to address the negative impacts of people-pleasing. The importance of assertive behavior in this context is beneficial for people-pleasers to express themselves honestly while being considerate of others' feelings, thus preventing conflicts and misunderstandings in the future.

2. METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to examine assertive behavior as an effort to reduce people-pleasing tendencies among students. The type of research is descriptive qualitative, aiming to describe or illustrate the current state of the research subjects or objects based on observable facts and events that occur in the field.

The research subjects are students from the Faculty of Tarbiyah, Guidance, and Islamic Education Counseling. The selection of this research object is based on the relevance of students as subjects who often face social dynamics in friendships, both within the campus environment and in daily life.

In this study, the data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is conducted to directly observe students' behavior in social interactions and their reactions to situations that may trigger people-pleasing behavior. Interviews are used to gather in-depth information about students' experiences and perspectives on assertive behavior and people-pleasing, as well as how they manage both in their social relationships. Documentation is used to collect additional data, such as written notes, journals, or materials relevant to the research topic, which can provide further insight into the topic being studied.

The data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation are analyzed using qualitative data analysis methods. The analysis techniques used include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is carried out by filtering relevant information, while data presentation is done in a narrative form to describe the findings obtained from the field. Conclusions are drawn based on the patterns or themes that emerge from the analyzed data.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Assertive behavior has its own purpose, which is to enable individuals to build healthy friendships through assertive behavior without diminishing empathy. The research findings indicate that there are various ways for individuals to practice assertiveness to reduce people-pleasing behavior, such as students learning and practicing assertiveness, like expressing their opinions clearly and firmly without offending others. Students should also maintain empathy while working on becoming more assertive. The positive impact of assertiveness is that it encourages students to behave assertively to reduce people-pleasing tendencies, allowing them to maintain rational rights and build healthier friendships.

Being assertive is an essential skill that allows you to express your thoughts, feelings, and needs honestly and directly without ignoring the rights of others. Here are some ways to become more assertive: 1) Understand your rights: Recognize that you have the right to express your needs, opinions, and feelings. You also have the right to say "no" without feeling guilty. 2) Recognize your feelings: Before communicating your feelings assertively, you need to understand and recognize what you're feeling. 3) Use "I" statements: When expressing yourself, use statements that begin with "I" to communicate how you feel. Example: "I feel frustrated when you speak in the middle of the meeting." 4) Practice saying no: Don't be afraid to decline requests that are beyond your capacity or desires. Do so politely but firmly. 5) Set boundaries: Establish clear boundaries in relationships and social situations. Communicate these boundaries clearly and assertively with others. 6) Use assertive non-verbal communication: Good eye contact, an upright posture, and a firm voice can strengthen your message. 7) Avoid over-apologizing: Avoid apologizing too often or without clear reasons, as it helps you appear more confident and assertive. 8) Practice: Assertiveness is a skill that can be improved with practice. Try applying it in everyday situations and reflect on the results for future improvement. 9) Manage stress and emotions: Learning to manage stress and negative emotions helps you remain calm and assertive in challenging situations. 10) Take direct action: If you identify a problem or situation that needs addressing, take action promptly in a constructive and assertive way.

Assertive behavior has various positive impacts that can influence many aspects of an individual's life. Here are some major impacts of assertiveness: 1) Increased self-confidence: By becoming more assertive, you become more capable of expressing your needs and desires, which in turn boosts your self-confidence. 2) Healthier relationships: Assertive behavior enables honest and open communication, which strengthens interpersonal relationships both personally and professionally. 3) Reduced stress: Expressing your feelings and needs clearly can reduce frustration and stress caused by unresolved conflicts. 4) Better decision-making: Being assertive allows you to express your views and preferences, contributing to more effective decision-making. 5) Increased self-respect and respect for others: Assertive behavior helps build respect for oneself and others, as you acknowledge and value the rights and feelings of all parties involved. 6) Conflict resolution skills: Assertiveness enables you to handle conflicts constructively and non-confrontationally, helping resolve issues more effectively. 7) Increased productivity and job satisfaction: In the workplace, assertive behavior can improve communication and teamwork, leading to higher productivity and job satisfaction. 8) Development of social skills: Assertive behavior helps develop essential social skills, such as empathy, active listening, and negotiation. 9) Better mental health: By reducing stress and conflict, and boosting self-confidence and self-esteem, assertive behavior can contribute to better mental well-being. 10) Achievement of personal and professional goals: Assertiveness enables you to set and achieve your goals more effectively, as you are better able to communicate and pursue what you want.

By developing assertive behavior, individuals can experience numerous benefits in their daily lives and improve the quality of their relationships with others.

The "people pleaser" behavior (someone who constantly tries to please others) can have various negative psychological and physical impacts. Here are some of the main negative effects of this behavior: 1) Loss of identity: People pleasers often neglect their own needs, desires, and feelings to please others, leading to a loss of self-identity and self-esteem. 2) Stress and exhaustion: The continuous effort to meet others' expectations can be exhausting and cause excessive stress, as these individuals tend to take on more responsibilities than they can handle. 3) Poor mental health: This behavior can lead to various mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and low self-worth, as the individual feels they are never good enough. 4) Imbalanced relationships: People pleasers often find themselves in unhealthy relationships where they give without receiving, leading to an imbalance in the relationship. 5) Dissatisfaction and frustration: As they continuously try to please others, they may feel unsatisfied and frustrated because their own needs and desires are not being met. 6) Difficulty making decisions: When too focused on others' desires, people pleasers may find it difficult to make decisions that are best for themselves. 7) Loss of respect from others: Others may begin to take them for granted or lose respect because they always cater to others' desires and

rarely say "no." 8) Sacrifice of physical health: Excessive stress and exhaustion can negatively impact physical health, such as sleep issues, headaches, and digestive problems. 9) Decreased productivity: By focusing too much on others, people pleasers may struggle to stay focused on their tasks and goals, reducing personal productivity and success. 10) Feelings of guilt and shame: They may feel guilty or ashamed if they cannot meet others' expectations, which can worsen feelings of low self-esteem.

Assertive behavior is aimed at enabling individuals to build healthy relationships by expressing themselves honestly and firmly without disregarding others' rights. According to Alberti and Emmons (2008), assertive behavior is the ability to express feelings, opinions, and needs directly and clearly without hurting others. This helps reduce people-pleasing behavior, where one tends to sacrifice personal desires to please others. The research findings show that there are several ways to be more assertive, such as expressing opinions clearly and firmly without offending others while maintaining empathy for others' feelings (Lange, 2003). The positive impact is that it encourages students to behave assertively in an effort to reduce people-pleasing tendencies, enabling them to establish healthy relationships while maintaining their rational rights (Steiner, 2006).

Assertive behavior also has positive impacts that can enhance self-confidence, healthier relationships, and reduced stress. According to Dufrene and McQuillen (2015), the ability to express opinions and needs honestly can strengthen interpersonal relationships, reduce anxiety, and increase satisfaction in relationships. Furthermore, this behavior also contributes to better decision-making, increased self-respect, and the ability to resolve conflicts constructively.

People pleasers, or individuals who try to please others, tend to neglect their own needs and feelings, leading to negative psychological and physical consequences. As Smith (2012) explained, this behavior often results in stress, exhaustion, anxiety, and low self-esteem, as individuals overly focus on others' desires and feel inadequate or unappreciated. Addressing this behavior requires awareness of personal needs and feelings, as well as the ability to say "no" firmly and politely (Gordon, 2000).

Overcoming people-pleasing behavior requires deep steps, starting with recognizing and acknowledging personal needs and feelings. This process involves introspection to understand personal boundaries and values, which are often overlooked when individuals focus too much on meeting others' expectations. The next step is learning to say "no" firmly but politely, which is challenging for many people who are used to trying to please everyone. The ability to refuse clearly and honestly helps individuals protect their time and energy while maintaining healthy relationships. Additionally, building self-confidence and self-esteem is crucial in overcoming this behavior, as many people who are prone to people-pleasing tend to feel that their self-worth depends on others' approval. By boosting self-confidence, individuals can more easily set healthy boundaries without feeling afraid or guilty. Overall, overcoming people-pleasing behavior requires the courage to prioritize personal needs without disregarding others' feelings, as well as the acceptance that not everyone can be pleased without sacrificing one's well-being.

4. CONCLUSION

Efforts to become more assertive can begin with a clear understanding of people-pleasing behavior and the importance of assertiveness. A people pleaser is an individual who tends to sacrifice their own needs and feelings to please others, often neglecting their rational rights. Understanding this is crucial to help students realize that they do not need to constantly meet others' expectations, especially if it harms their well-being. One way to become assertive is by maintaining rational rights without diminishing empathy toward others. Students can practice assertive behavior by politely but firmly refusing others' requests, allowing them to set personal boundaries without offending the other person.

The research findings show that there are many strategies that can be applied to reduce people-pleasing behavior through assertiveness, such as learning and practicing the expression of opinions clearly and firmly. However, it is important to remember that, while students strive to be more assertive, they must still maintain empathy for others' feelings. Empathy and assertiveness can coexist, enabling students to communicate honestly and firmly while maintaining healthy relationships and respecting others' feelings. The positive impact of assertive behavior is that it helps students reduce people-pleasing tendencies, allowing them to preserve their rational rights and build healthier, more balanced friendships.

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