



# The Effectiveness of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy in Improving Interpersonal Communication and Confidence

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**Abstract.** The study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) approach in increasing junior high school students' interpersonal communication and self-confidence. This study is an experimental study using a quasi-experimental design. The design is a time-series design that uses one experimental group measured repeatedly. The sample in this study was determined using a purposive sampling technique, and seven students met the predetermined criteria. Data was collected using an interpersonal communication scale and a self-confidence scale whose reliability was tested using the Cronbach Alpha formula. The data analysis used was nonparametric statistics using the Wilcoxon Match Pair Test to determine changes in scores on repeat measurements. This study found that: (1) the REBT approach showed its effectiveness in improving interpersonal communication skills in research subjects (sig.  $p = 0.018 < 0.05$ ); and (2) the REBT approach proved effective in increasing self-confidence (sig.  $p = 0.016 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be interpreted that using the REBT approach effectively improves interpersonal communication skills and self-confidence in junior high school students.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Communication · Self-Confidence · Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) Technique

## 1 Introduction

Students at the (junior high) level are categorized as early adolescents, around 12–15 years old, as a part of the developmental transition from childhood to adulthood, which involves changes in biology, cognition, and social emotion. Santrock [1] reveals that adolescents are characterized by growth, sexual, and psychological development to determine thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Development in adolescents is very important for adjusting to the surrounding environment. Likewise, with cognitive development in adolescents, as revealed by Jahja [2], cognitive development is a change in learning abilities, memory, thinking, reasoning, and language. This is in accordance with the opinion of Piaget [3] that adolescents actively develop their cognitive abilities through the information obtained. Still, they are not immediately taken for granted, but adolescents

have been able to distinguish between things or ideas that are more important than others. Adolescents can develop these ideas to give rise to new ideas. Adolescent thinking tends to be abstract, logical, and idealistic.

Individual developmental tasks from adolescence to adulthood are essential for achieving goals to support emotional maturity and behavior that is directly in line with the age and sex of each individual [4]. Therefore, the prohibition of developmental mandates in adolescence will become the prohibition of developmental assignments in the next period. Maximizing the demands of developmental tasks needs to be balanced with mastering the level of interpersonal communication and one's self-confidence. This will increase interaction and support from the surrounding environment, such as family, friends, teachers, and society, for task development. Interaction with other people requires interpersonal communication skills and high self-confidence. This is reinforced by the opinion of Bunker [5] that people who have high self-confidence, in general, will find it easier to participate personally and more efficiently in interpersonal communication with others.

In the learning process, interpersonal communication skills are needed for students to achieve their developmental tasks. Students with high self-confidence will find it easy to express opinions without doubt and fear so that communication with others will be smooth. According to Bunker [5], people who have high self-confidence, in general, will find it easier to participate personally and more easily in interpersonal communication with others. Conversely, if students have low self-confidence, their interpersonal communication skills will not be smooth. This is reinforced by Ewen [6]. People with low self-confidence do not believe in their own abilities, have weak communication skills, and pay little attention to the success they have achieved, and consider their failure as confirmation that the individual is not capable.

Self-confidence takes the important role in the personality development. With confidence, one will be able to increase one's courage in good interpersonal communication [7]. People with a high level of confidence expect what they do to work smoothly and take responsibility for failure. Increased interpersonal communication and self-confidence will have a positive effect that will encourage interpersonal communication to be effective for individuals [8]. Both psychology and pedagogy view communication as a complicated social activity [9]. According to Stady and Kipner [10], the main problem in interpersonal communication is the fear of worries and negative reactions to oneself about what is conveyed and how one conveys it, which depends on the judgment of others. This is reinforced by the opinion of Hakim [11] that negative understanding is one of the characteristics of students who lack self-confidence. This kind of negative understanding is obtained by students with negative thinking patterns, who always look at everything in a negative way, such as feeling unable to do something that is expected, worthless, afraid and worried for no reason, always comparing themselves with others, and feeling stupid in doing things. Something you want, and so on. In line with the research of Murat and Odzemir [12] negative effects of anxiety on students, such as lack of confidence, lack of social relationship skills, and feelings of failure.

Based on the results of the analysis, these problems are related to interpersonal communication and low self-confidence in students. This is in accordance with the phenomenon found in SMP Negeri 12 Yogyakarta, that there are some students who have

low levels of interpersonal communication and self-confidence both in the learning process and in interaction with peers. This can be seen from students who are easily anxious when dealing with friends and teachers who do not like to mingle with classmates. For example, avoiding eye contact when speaking, there are students who are embarrassed to ask questions or express opinions, often aloof and quiet, sometimes nervous and anxious when asked to explain the material given by the teacher. The results of the research shown by Wahyuni [13] that self-confidence affects communication anxiety in public. If individuals have low self-confidence, it will have an impact on one's anxiety in public communication. Conversely, if the individual is more confident, it will have an impact on the lower anxiety of a person communicating in public. Based on a preliminary study conducted at SMP Negeri 12 Yogyakarta using Google Form in grade VII, it was found that the problem was related to interpersonal communication and low self-confidence. Students who have low self-confidence will avoid communication and choose to be silent for fear of the negative judgments of others about themselves, so that students are not confident in their abilities and have an impact on the level of achievement of student learning outcomes. This shows that problems related to interpersonal communication and student self-confidence are an important concern. Therefore, guidance and counseling teachers are expected to help students overcome problems related to interpersonal communication and low self-confidence.

Guidance and counseling teachers or advisors can assist students in improving their behavior [14], since some students require support from others to make adjustments. Group counseling services are one option that encourages student interaction to address issues through group dynamics. Group members experiencing difficulties can use group therapy as a service [15]. Group counseling services also assist students in creating and implementing plans and problem-solving [16, 17]. Students must employ group counseling strategies. The REBT is one counseling method that can provide therapeutic services to teach pupils how to combat irrational beliefs and replace them with more sensible ones.

The REBT is a technique that teaches students to understand cognitive inputs that cause emotional disturbances, try to change students' irrational thoughts, or learn to anticipate the benefits or consequences of behavior [18]. REBT aims to eliminate symptoms associated with more specific cognitive, emotional, and behavioral problems such as anxiety, depression, avoiding social situations, and public speaking [19]. The REBT approach can also promote and alter the illogical people's attitudes, perceptions, conceptual frameworks, beliefs, and perspectives so that individuals can evolve and achieve their fullest self-realization. Various studies explain that REBT can help change cognitive processes and irrational beliefs and overcome multiple psychological problems such as personality disorders, mood swings, and panic attacks [20].

## 2 Method

The study utilized a time series design and was experimental. In this design, the experimental group was the only group operated (without the control group). The study's experimental investigation only involved one group, but repeated measurements were undertaken [21]. One hundred sixty-eight kids in the seventh grade mainly composed

the study's population. Purposive sampling was utilized as the sampling method in this study. Students in the seventh grade were the criteria for choosing the sample for the analysis. It was apparent from this that they struggled with interpersonal communication and had low self-confidence. The scale for interpersonal communication was used [22, 23]. The interpersonal communication scale has five indicators, namely: 1) openness; 2) empathy; 3) support; 4) positive feelings; and 5) equality or resemblance. Additionally, five indicators comprise the self-confidence scale, including 1) self-confidence; 2) optimism; 3) objectivity; 4) responsibility; and 5) rational and practical thinking. The self-confidence measure has 34 items, whereas the interpersonal communication scale has 36. This work used non-parametric statistics and the Wilcoxon Match Pair Test for data analysis.

### 3 Findings and Discussions

The study's results demonstrated the experimental group's increased interpersonal communication following treatment. The outcomes of the study of hypothesis testing shown in Table 1 demonstrate this.

Based on the information in Table 1, the Wilcoxon test findings on interpersonal communication in the experimental group indicated a marked increase in communication between the three measurement intervals in the pre-test and post-test one, the P value 0.05 was 0.044, and post-test two. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is an increase in interpersonal communication in the experimental group before and after receiving treatment (P value 0.05 is 0.018 and post-test three acquired P value 0.05 is 0.018) (Table 2).

Based on the information in Table 1, the Wilcoxon test findings on interpersonal communication in the experimental group indicated that there was a marked increase in communication between the three measurement intervals in the pre-test and post-test

**Table 1.** Wilcoxon Interpersonal Communication Test Results

Measurement	Mean	SD	Min	Max	p
Post-test 1	71,71	1,5	70,00	74,00	0,044
Post-test 2	78,00	2,94	72,00	81,00	0,018
Post-test 3	104,30	6,6	96,00	110,00	0,018

**Table 2.** Wilcoxon Confidence Test Results

Measurement	Mean	SD	Min	Max	P
Post-test 1	80,14	14,6	71,00	102,00	0,018
Post-test 2	106,68	0,9	108,00	108,00	0,017
Post-test 3	110,43	1,9	108,00	133,00	0,016

1, the P value 0.05 is 0.044, and post-test 2. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is an increase in interpersonal communication in the experimental group before and after receiving treatment (P value 0.05 was 0.018 and post-test 3 acquired P value 0.05 was 0.018).

Interpersonal communication is related to self-confidence. If students have good interpersonal communication skills, their confidence will also be good. One of the most crucial aspects of interpersonal communication is self-confidence. Research conducted by [24] reveals that students who have high self-confidence have a realistic view of themselves and their abilities, thus making them diligent in trying. Students who have high self-confidence will be easily recognized and get to know others, because with a sense of self-confidence it will be easier to get along with the environment. Conversely, if students have low self-confidence, they can reduce their strength, feel helpless, and eventually have a negative view of themselves. Individuals who have negative perceptions and feel insecure tend to be closed in communication, making them difficult to work with and unable to understand themselves and others [5]. The importance of interpersonal communication and good self-confidence to make it easier for students to express their opinions and be able to show their abilities without any doubt and fear so that communicating with others will be smooth.

The REBT technique provides students with interpersonal communication and high self-confidence and can change students' irrational beliefs towards being more rational. This is in line with the results of research by [25] showing the REBT technique can help students overcome irrational thoughts related to career decisions, and can also use instruments to explore careers [26]. The provision of this rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) technique can make students behave positively in assessing themselves and others with a rational mindset. With the provision of REBT, techniques can reduce irrational beliefs and cognitive anxiety based on research results [27]. The REBT technique can strengthen the counselee's rational beliefs so that it has a positive impact on the counselee's behavior [28]. The findings of this research are aimed at motivating students to comprehend rational thoughts in order to act constructively in everything they undertake.

This study focuses on students' irrational beliefs and the factors that influence interpersonal communication and low self-confidence. Additionally, guidance and counseling teachers can employ the REBT technique's to assist students who are struggling with interpersonal communication and low self-confidence. Therefore, interpersonal communication and student self-confidence can improve appropriately and contribute to knowledge in counseling and advising.

## 4 Conclusion

The REBT method successfully enhances students' self-confidence and interpersonal communication skills. The REBT technique aids students in replacing illogical, irrational patterns of thinking with logical, rational ones. The findings support the premise that interpersonal communication and self-confidence are essential, as seen by the disparities in the experimental group's outcomes in these areas before and after receiving treatment.

Group counseling using rational-empathic behavior therapy (REBT) as an alternative to overcome interpersonal communication and low self-confidence in students. So,

guidance and counseling teachers should use group counseling with rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) techniques and individual groups to deal with similar problems. Further research on the topic can examine guidance and counseling programs, specifically to enhance seventh-grade students' interpersonal communication skills and self-confidence by using group counseling services with REBT.

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