

THE ROLE OF SELF-CONFIDENCE IN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT: AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY OF BAKU

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ABSTRACT

This study reflects the observational experience carried out at the secondary schools in Baku during February–May 2025. The study aimed to apply theoretical knowledge in a real school environment, to better understand the responsibilities of a psychologist, and to gain practical skills for future professional work. The experience included classroom observations, consultations, diagnostic tests, seminars, and individual sessions with adolescents. A central focus of the study was the role of self-confidence in personality development. The study explores theoretical perspectives from humanistic and developmental psychology, alongside practical findings from work with students facing issues such as low self-esteem, social anxiety, perfectionism, and stress. It highlights how family environment, school relations, peer influence, and social media shape adolescent self-confidence, and how its absence can lead to psychological difficulties, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Through real cases encountered during the study, the study emphasizes that self-confidence is not merely “belief in oneself” but a fundamental psychological resource shaping identity, emotional stability, and life purpose. The reflections underline the importance of psychological support, empathy, and early interventions in strengthening adolescents’ resilience. Overall, the study not only contributed to professional growth but also reinforced the author’s personal commitment to the psychology profession.

I. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the industrial practice was to apply the theoretical knowledge the researcher had learned during my university years in a real school environment, to better understand the responsibilities of a psychologist, and to feel prepared to work in this field in the future. During the practice, the researcher observed the teaching process, witnessed teacher–student and even parent–child relationships, conducted psychological conversations, seminars, trainings, consultations, diagnostic activities, and participated in the educational process. These experiences contributed greatly to both personal and professional development. Throughout this period, the researcher ability was improved to work with the school community, communicate with students, and make correct decisions in difficult situations. The greatest gain from this practice was realizing how much effort, attention, and love the profession of psychology requires.

Self-confidence is recognized as a cornerstone of personality development, influencing how individuals in Azerbaijan engage with education, career, and social interactions. In the Azerbaijani context, cultural expectations and values emphasize resilience, self-expression, and creativity as pathways for young people to establish strong personalities. Research highlights that fostering self-confidence among students not only nurtures their aesthetic

and intellectual capacities but also strengthens their ability to express individuality within society's collective framework (Rustamova, 2024). This alignment of self-belief with cultural development strategies reflects the broader importance of confidence in shaping character, communication skills, and overall personal growth (Sharma & Joshi, 2023).

Moreover, self-confidence plays a pivotal role in preparing Azerbaijani youth to adapt to rapidly changing social and economic conditions. Scholars have noted that the integration of confidence-building practices in educational settings directly contributes to cultivating independent and active individuals (Rustamova, 2024). Such practices are essential for overcoming challenges posed by globalization and modernization, as they enable individuals to make informed decisions, maintain a sense of identity, and contribute positively to national development. Thus, in Azerbaijan, self-confidence is not only a personal trait but a critical component of broader personality development, linking individual growth with societal progress (Kaya & Delen, 2022; Yadav & Singh, 2022).

The rationale of this study lies in the growing recognition of self-confidence as a crucial determinant of psychological well-being, academic success, and social adaptation. Self-confidence is not only linked to higher levels of motivation and resilience but also plays a key role in shaping interpersonal skills and self-identity, which are fundamental components of personality development (Rustamova, 2024). In Azerbaijan, where rapid social transformation and modernization place increasing demands on youth, cultivating self-confidence becomes essential for preparing individuals to actively participate in social, cultural, and professional spheres. Moreover, research emphasizes that self-confidence facilitates creative expression and fosters aesthetic and moral growth among students, thereby contributing to holistic personality development (Rustamova, 2024). This context underscores the importance of investigating how self-confidence influences personality development in Azerbaijani society, aiming to provide evidence-based insights that can guide educational strategies, youth policies, and psychosocial support systems (Hussain & Anwar, 2021).

II. METHOD

Participants

This was an observational study (Kawulich, 2005). The study was conducted at secondary schools located in Baku, one of the leading institutions distinguished for its high-quality education. Around 3,000 students study here. The secondary schools have Azerbaijani, Russian, and French departments, as well as students in the IB (International Baccalaureate Program). Both technical and humanitarian subjects, especially foreign languages, are emphasized. The school provides favorable conditions for students' all-round development. The teaching staff is sincere, professional, and dedicated, serving as a role model for me. However, some teachers also suffered from "burnout syndrome" due to long-term emotional strain. The discipline, organization, and use of modern teaching methods at the school greatly contributed to the success of this study. During this period, the researcher felt more confident, developed a stronger love for my specialty, and confirmed once again that truly see in this profession. The study started on February 17, 2025, and continued until May 23, 2025. During this time, the researcher worked as a trainee psychologist at secondary schools. From the very beginning, the researcher tried to adapt to the school environment and worked under the guidance of the school psychologist.

Measures

Initially, the researcher studied the psychological service system of the school, familiarized myself with the psychologist's daily work plan, and the methods and techniques used. Through individual conversations, observations, consultations, and simple psychological tests when necessary, the researcher tried to understand students' cognitive processes and emotional states and provided psychological support where needed. Typical adolescent issues such as low self-esteem, social isolation, emotional tension, and uncertainty about the future were observed. Additionally, the researcher conducted awareness-raising activities on topics such as "Who is a psychologist?", "What is self-confidence?", "Managing stress", "Exam anxiety", "Addictions", "Who am I?", "Psychosocial consequences of early marriage", "Bullying", "What is the autism spectrum?", "Career choice", "What is the meaning of life?" and others. Based on methods, tests, and psychological strategies were applied, the

researcher successfully worked with children and adolescents, helping them recognize responsibilities, resolve conflicts, and discover inner strengths (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Procedure

Through practice, the researcher gained practical experience in understanding psychological discomforts and behavioral issues observed in class, along with their causes. The researcher also participated in conversations with teachers and parents, trying to understand their perspectives and gather information to form a holistic approach. This study allowed me not only to apply theoretical knowledge but also to see how the psychology profession functions in real school life. Working with children and adolescents, listening to them, trying to understand, and providing even a little help gave me great satisfaction. Each experience became a valuable lesson and created a strong foundation for my future professionalism. The following factors were investigated by using observational method.

- The role of self-confidence in personality development
- The essence and significance of self-confidence (Maslow, Rogers, Erikson, cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychological and social perspectives)
- Factors leading to lack of confidence (family environment, negative experiences, social influences, media, peer relations)
- Psychological consequences of low self-confidence (depression, anxiety, social phobia, perfectionism, stress-related disorders, self-harm and suicide risk) (Beck & Alford, 2009).
- Ways to build confidence (positive thinking, therapy, supportive relationships, new skills)
- Case studies of students (Huseyn, Said, Narmin – anonymized) with personal reflections from the author
- Final conclusion emphasizing that confidence is not only believing in oneself but also a foundation for meaningful life, social integration, and personal growth.

III. RESULTS

During the study at the secondary schools, the researcher realized that self-confidence is not merely “believing in oneself,” but a fundamental pillar of personality that makes it possible to understand life and the future. In every test, method, and observation the researcher conducted with children and adolescents, the nuances related to their self-confidence stood out to me. At this age, every individual has an inner struggle, unanswered questions, and a battle to find themselves. The researcher was both a witness and, at times, a companion in these struggles. For instance, Huseyn (pseudonym), a 10th-grade student, was consumed by distorted religious concepts, distracted from his studies, and struggling with sleep problems. His questions about heaven, hell, God, and the meaning of the world were not just theoretical—they were part of his search for identity and his reason for existence. Social judgment and inner conflicts weakened his self-confidence. Through our conversations, the researcher tried to help him discover his inner values by focusing on meaning, choices, and personal worth. Another 10th-grade student, Said (pseudonym), came to me feeling hopeless and misunderstood, even by his loved ones. Our consultations achieved strong results, especially after working briefly on the “self-concept.”

Narmin (pseudonym), a 16-year-old girl, carried a different silent storm. Her parents’ divorce and her mother’s struggles pushed her to appear “the strongest.” She rejected herself, considered herself unattractive, though she was kind and sensitive. Through exercises such as the “David Burns word technique” and writing a “Letter to My Future Self,” we worked on reducing her inner critical voice and encouraging self-acceptance. For her, strength once meant hiding emotions, but she gradually learned that real strength also lies in asking for help, sharing pain, and learning to love herself. These real-life experiences showed me that self-confidence is not built through positive thinking alone. It develops with time, care, emotional support, and above all, the value an individual gives to themselves. In personality development, self-confidence is a foundation: on it are built free choice, emotional stability, and a meaningful life. The knowledge and experiences the researcher gained during this study strengthened my belief that being a psychologist is a path that requires sensitivity, depth, and profound responsibility.

IV. DISCUSSION

Adolescents often remain silent, suppress emotions, and struggle to express themselves. These “silent stories” reveal their schools, labyrinth-like inner world, sometimes full of heartache. Each silence, each unanswered question, and each sigh carries a hidden need. Self-confidence grows not only through open speech but also through listening to this inner voice. The role of psychological support is to recognize these silences, respect them, and uncover the adolescent’s hidden needs (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Murberg & Bru, 2001). Understanding this delicate connection between self and self-confidence plays a decisive role in the adolescent’s journey of self-discovery (Baumeister et al., 2003; Harter, 2012). Becoming a psychologist is not only about acquiring theoretical knowledge but also about personal transformation. It is a continuous process of questioning oneself, facing inner conflicts, and learning from experience. Working with adolescents allowed me to discover new aspects of myself, as their challenges and questions also fueled my professional and personal growth. This path is long and sometimes difficult, but it represents one of the most meaningful sides of both profession and humanity (Alavi & Gill, 2021). From my individual observations and practical work, the researcher learned that every adolescent carries invisible psychological wounds that deeply affect their lives. As a psychologist, my mission is to see these wounds, understand their causes, and provide the right support. Empathy, patience, and professionalism are essential tools in this process.

The idea that *“self-confidence grows not only through open speech but also through listening to this inner voice”* highlights the dual role of external expression and internal reflection in personal development. Speaking publicly and expressing oneself openly fosters courage, articulation, and social presence, which are vital to self-confidence (Cristin, 2024). However, research shows that internal dialogue—sometimes termed “self-talk” or “inner voice”—is equally significant in shaping confidence, as it provides a framework for self-regulation, positive thought practices, and resilience (Finley, 2025). Listening attentively to one’s inner voice cultivates self-awareness and helps align external communication with internal convictions, creating authenticity and balance in self-expression (Osiya International University, 2025). Together, these processes reinforce that confidence is not solely a product of outward speech, but also a reflective practice of engaging with one’s internal dialogue.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, addressing self-confidence issues in adolescents requires an individual approach, compassion, scientific methods, and continuous psychological support. Through this study, the researcher discovered not only others but also myself, and I believe that in the future the researcher will continue this path faithfully to help many more like Huseyn, Narmin, Said, and Leyla. Understanding the delicate connection between humans and self-confidence is vital not only in psychological support but also in educational and social relationships. Adolescence is a time of searching for identity and asking, “Who am I?” Finding the answer to this question is key to happiness. For that, adolescents need time, space, and a supportive environment. Only then will silence turn into expression, insecurity into confidence. Recognizing this sensitive link between the person and self-confidence is therefore one of the main aims of both psychology and education.

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