Building Self-Confidence among Elementary Students in Parepare City through a Social-Educational Intervention Program

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Abstract. Self-confidence plays a vital role in children's psychological development and influences their academic, social, and emotional achievements. However, many elementary school students struggle with low self-confidence, which can hinder their learning motivation and personal growth. This community service program was conducted at UPTD SD Negeri 5 Parepare to enhance students' self-confidence through a social-educational intervention. The program was designed with three stages: preparation, implementation, and reflection. Activities included interactive and reflective learning experiences adapted to the students' developmental levels. The materials addressed self-awareness, setting realistic goals, positive self-talk, stepping out of the comfort zone, maintaining appearance, building positive social environments, and learning from experiences. The implementation revealed significant improvements in students' engagement, self-expression, and self-awareness. Pre- and post-activity reflections indicated that students became more confident in participating, expressing ideas, and interacting with peers. The findings suggest that integrating social and educational strategies into character education can effectively foster self-confidence among elementary students. This program demonstrates the potential of social-educational interventions to strengthen personal growth and learning motivation in young learners.

Keywords: Self-confidence; Elementary students; Social-educational intervention; Character education; Personal growth

1. Introduction

Self-confidence is a fundamental element in children's psychological development, shaping their academic, social, and emotional achievements (Allobaney et al., 2022; Gomes et al., 2017; Sholiha & Aulia, 2020). It functions as an internal resource that enables children to navigate life's challenges. Gomes et al. (2017) defines self-confidence as the ability to feel positive about what one can do, without being preoccupied by limitations, while remaining open to continuous learning (Lestari, 2019). This quality reflects independence, composure, adaptability, and self-actualization (Sihotang & Herawati, 2023). Children who possess strong self-confidence are usually more willing to voice their opinions, explore new experiences, and confront difficulties with optimism. Conversely,

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children with low confidence often display withdrawal, heightened anxiety, and difficulties in social as well as learning situations. For this reason, confidence must be nurtured consistently from an early age through appropriate educational and social support. Drawing on Bandura's social cognitive theory, confidence is considered essential in motivating children's learning processes (Adamovic et al., 2022; Fuadah, 2019). With well-structured guidance, confidence can be cultivated early to support both behavioral and emotional development (Trecy Rosefine et al., 2024).

The elementary school years mark a pivotal stage in which children begin forming more complex self-perceptions. They start to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, compare themselves with peers, and realize the importance of social acceptance. Schools therefore serve as a strategic context for instilling positive values and nurturing confidence through meaningful and enjoyable learning. Parents, teachers, and the broader school environment play central roles in creating conditions that support this growth. Students with healthy confidence tend to be more motivated, resilient, and willing to embrace challenges. For them, failure is not a threat but an opportunity to learn, while their enthusiasm to achieve continues to grow (Jelita, 2024). Such children are typically more sociable, adaptive, and capable of mastering new skills, enabling them to better excel academically and socially (Wahyuni & Nasution, 2017). Given the significance of this stage, stimulation and support for self-concept development should be continuously encouraged (Kamaruddin et al., 2022).

Despite its importance, many children still face obstacles in building confidence. Family dynamics, negative past experiences, social pressure, and unsupportive environments often hinder their development. Some students remain hesitant to speak in class, avoid asking questions, or feel inferior when compared to their peers. If left unaddressed, these barriers may negatively affect cognitive, emotional, and social development in the long term. A lack of confidence not only limits creativity and productivity but also disrupts communication and relationships, eventually influencing academic performance (Ginting, 2023). As Nita and Agustika (2023) emphasized, self-confidence is a necessary asset for children to overcome future challenges.

Based on this context, an educational initiative was organized at UPTD SD Negeri 5 Parepare with the aim of strengthening students' confidence through interactive and reflective activities tailored to their developmental needs. The program addressed several key aspects of self-confidence, including self-recognition, realistic goal-setting, positive self-talk, stepping beyond comfort zones, personal appearance, and fostering supportive peer environments. This initiative was not only intended to enhance children's confidence in daily school life but also to involve teachers and parents as active partners in supporting children's holistic growth. This article therefore presents the program's design, implementation, and outcomes as a practical contribution to the field of character education for elementary school students.

2. Methods

This program was designed to strengthen the self-confidence of 20 elementary school students at UPTD SD Negeri 5 Parepare, conducted on May 16, 2025. The participants were students in grades 4 and 5, aged 9–11 years, took part in a social-educational intervention that emphasized both interactive learning and reflective practice. The learning materials covered various themes, including self-recognition, goal-setting, positive self-talk, leaving the comfort zone, personal appearance, creating supportive

social interactions, and learning from experience (Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020; Allo & Priawan, 2019; Bozgun & Akin-Kosterelioglu, 2023).

The activity was structured into three main phases namely preparation, implementation, and reflection. During the preparation stage, the facilitators designed learning materials, arranged the necessary media, and prepared supporting tools to ensure the activities would be engaging and age-appropriate. The implementation phase took place in a single day, utilizing participatory strategies such as discussions, educational games, simulations, and guided reflections to actively involve the students in the process.

Evaluation was conducted through direct observation of students' engagement and the analysis of pre- and post-activity reflection notes. In the final reflection stage, students were encouraged to share their insights and develop simple action plans to apply the principles of self-confidence in their daily lives, both in school and at home. This stage was crucial in reinforcing the lessons learned and ensuring that the outcomes extended beyond the program itself.

3. Results and Discussion

This community service program was conducted in three stages namely preparation, implementation, and reflection. Each stage was interconnected to achieve the main objective, namely enhancing the self-confidence of elementary school students through interactive and developmentally appropriate educational activities.

3.1. Preparation Stage

The preparation stage began with intensive coordination between the service team and UPTD SD Negeri 5 Parepare. This coordination involved the school principal and homeroom teachers to ensure that the activity aligned with the school's academic calendar and daily schedule. Establishing strong communication and shared responsibility was crucial for gaining the school's full support and fostering a sense of ownership among teachers.

One of the major challenges during this stage was selecting an appropriate time for the program so that it would not disrupt the students' regular learning activities. In addition, the availability of resources and materials was another important concern. To address these issues, the team applied flexible scheduling, identified priority needs, and prepared backup materials in case of unexpected constraints.

The next step was the development of teaching content that reflected the program's goal of building self-confidence. The materials were designed to be simple, relevant, and age-appropriate, covering essential topics such as self-awareness, realistic goal setting, and self-reflection. To make the sessions more engaging, the content was supported by interactive learning tools.

Various media were prepared to complement the teaching materials, including presentation slides, reflection cards, worksheets, and simple educational props. These media were carefully selected to match the developmental level of elementary students and encourage active participation. The aim was not only to transmit knowledge but also to stimulate students' curiosity and creativity.

The service team conducted a site visit to examine the classroom setting and anticipate logistical needs. This included checking the seating arrangement, lighting, availability of teaching tools, and overall safety of the venue. By doing so, the team was

able to minimize potential disruptions and ensure that the environment would be conducive to meaningful learning. Careful planning at this stage provided a strong foundation for the effective delivery of the program.

Table 1 Activities in the Preparation Stage

Step	Activities Conducted	Outcomes
Coordination with school	Meetings with the principal and homeroom teachers to align schedule and objectives	School support and teacher involvement
Flexible scheduling	Adjusting program time to avoid conflict with regular classes	Smooth implementation without disrupting lessons
Content development	Designing simple, relevant, and age-appropriate learning materials	Materials aligned with students' developmental needs
Media preparation	Creating slides, reflection cards, worksheets, and simple props	Interactive media to enhance student engagement
Site visit and logistics	Inspecting classroom, seating, lighting, and equipment	Safe, organized, and conducive learning environment

Table 1 summarizes the main steps taken during the preparation stage. Coordination with the school ensured alignment with the academic schedule and secured support from both the principal and teachers. Flexible scheduling allowed the activity to run without interfering with regular lessons, while content development focused on creating simple yet meaningful materials suitable for elementary students. The preparation of media such as slides, reflection cards, and worksheets provided interactive tools to engage participants actively. Finally, a site visit and logistical planning guaranteed that the classroom environment was safe, organized, and conducive to learning, thereby laying a strong foundation for the successful implementation of the program.

3.2. Implementation Stage

The implementation stage of the program was conducted in one day and involved 20 students from grades 4 and 5, aged between 9 and 11 years. The program was designed to suit the developmental needs of elementary school students, combining fun, interaction, and meaningful learning experiences. The focus was on cultivating self-confidence through structured activities that were both practical and reflective in nature.

The teaching materials centered on seven important aspects of self-confidence: recognizing and accepting oneself, setting realistic goals, practicing positive self-talk, stepping outside of one's comfort zone, maintaining personal appearance, building a positive social environment, and learning from experience. Each of these themes was carefully chosen because they directly relate to everyday challenges faced by children in both school and social contexts.

To maximize student engagement, the program applied a participatory learning model. Storytelling was used to convey values in a relatable manner, while small group discussions encouraged collaboration and the sharing of personal experiences. Educational games and role-playing provided an enjoyable way to internalize lessons,

whereas reflective drawing and writing exercises gave students an opportunity to express themselves in creative forms.

These methods did more than transfer knowledge; they were intended to shape attitudes and encourage students to practice confidence in real-life situations (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2017). For example, when engaging in role-play, students were able to simulate speaking in front of peers, which helped reduce anxiety and increase their willingness to share ideas. Educational games, on the other hand, promoted teamwork, perseverance, and adaptability.

Figure 1 Documentation of Educational Activities

Figure 1 illustrates the active participation of students during the program. It shows moments when students were engaged in group discussions, interactive games, or reflective activities, capturing their enthusiasm and collaborative spirit. The documentation provides visual evidence of the lively atmosphere and the effectiveness of participatory methods in fostering student involvement.

The students responded positively to this approach, showing a high level of enthusiasm throughout the sessions (Pečiuliauskienė, 2023; Salim, 2022). They participated actively, asked questions, shared personal reflections, and even demonstrated increased courage in expressing their opinions. These outcomes reflected not only an improvement in their immediate confidence levels but also an indication of deeper character development that could continue to grow with consistent support.

The success of the implementation stage was closely tied to the solid groundwork established during the preparation phase. Careful planning ensured that the materials, media, and logistics were ready, allowing the program to run smoothly without unnecessary disruptions. This preparation created an environment where students could focus on learning and participating, rather than being distracted by technical or organizational issues. A well-prepared structure gave the facilitators confidence and flexibility in delivering the activities, which in turn increased the overall effectiveness of the program.

Equally important was the use of participatory methods that actively involved the students in the learning process. Techniques such as storytelling, discussions, role-

playing, and games allowed children to learn not just by listening, but by doing and reflecting. These approaches align with experiential learning theories, which emphasize that real understanding emerges when learners connect new knowledge with personal experiences. By practicing self-expression and collaboration in a safe space, students were able to build confidence in ways that traditional lecture-based methods might not achieve.

The combination of strong preparation and participatory methods produced results that went beyond knowledge acquisition. Students not only gained a better cognitive understanding of self-confidence but also began to adopt behaviors that reflected growth in their attitudes and self-belief. This dual impact on both mind and behavior demonstrates the value of integrating social-educational strategies into character education. It highlights that confidence-building is most effective when students are directly engaged in meaningful activities that connect to their daily lives.

Figure 2 Delivery of Educational Activity Materials; a. Explanation of Educational Activity Materials; b. Practice of Educational Activities

Figure 2 illustrates two complementary parts of the program: first, the facilitator's explanation of educational materials using interactive media such as slides and reflection cards to introduce concepts like self-recognition, goal setting, and positive self-talk (Figure 2A), and second, the students' active practice through role-playing, educational games, and group activities that allowed them to apply these concepts in real situations (Figure 2B). Together, the two stages demonstrate how the combination of structured material delivery and hands-on practice effectively supported the development of students' self-confidence.

3.3. Reflection Stage

The reflection stage was a crucial component of the program, serving both as an evaluation tool and as an opportunity for students to internalize their learning experiences. At the end of the session, students were asked to write down two things: one lesson they considered the most meaningful and one aspect of themselves they would like to improve. This simple yet reflective exercise encouraged students to pause, think critically, and articulate their insights in their own words.

From the collected responses, it was observed that many students reported greater confidence in speaking up and sharing their opinions. Several also expressed a stronger awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses, showing early signs of self-recognition and goal setting. These reflections confirmed that the activities not only transferred knowledge but also created space for students to develop self-awareness and positive self-perception.

Another important finding was the increased willingness of students to express their emotions and desires. Some noted their wish to be braver in facing challenges, while others highlighted the importance of building supportive friendships. This demonstrated that the program went beyond surface-level engagement and began to touch on deeper aspects of character building, including emotional resilience and social awareness.

Despite these encouraging outcomes, the reflection stage also made clear the limitations of the program. Conducted in just one day with only 20 participants, the results cannot be generalized to a wider population of elementary students. Moreover, the short timeframe limited the program's ability to measure long-term behavioral change. Nonetheless, the reflections provided valuable preliminary evidence of effectiveness and indicated areas for improvement in future implementations.

The reflection stage not only served as a tool for assessing the program's impact but also acted as a developmental exercise for the students themselves. By encouraging them to consciously recognize what they learned and what they wished to improve, the stage reinforced self-regulation and critical thinking. This highlights the importance of reflection as an integral part of educational interventions aimed at character development.

Table 2 Observed Changes After the Program

Aspect of Change	Description of Change	Number of Students (n=20)
Speaking Confidence	More courage to speak in front of peers and teachers.	15
Self-Expression	Increased ability to share opinions, feelings, and personal experiences.	13
Goal Awareness	Clearer articulation of personal goals and areas for self-improvement.	12
Social Interaction	Better collaboration and stronger willingness to build supportive friendships.	11
Emotional Openness	Greater comfort in expressing emotions and reflecting on experiences.	10

Table 2 highlights specific changes observed in students after the community service program. The most significant shift was in speaking confidence, with 15 students showing more courage in expressing themselves publicly. Thirteen students demonstrated better self-expression, while 12 articulated clearer personal goals. Social interaction also improved, as 11 students indicated stronger collaboration and peer support. Finally, 10 students reported increased emotional openness, reflecting the program's impact on their ability to share feelings and reflect on personal growth.

4. Conclusions

The community service activity conducted at UPTD SD Negeri 5 Parepare demonstrated that a well-prepared social-educational approach is effective in fostering self-confidence among elementary school students. Careful preparation such as coordination with the school, flexible scheduling, and the development of interactive learning media ensured that the program ran smoothly and created a supportive environment for students. During implementation, interactive methods including storytelling, group discussions, games, role-playing, and reflective drawing or writing helped students actively engage with key aspects of self-confidence namely self-recognition, goal setting, positive self-talk, stepping out of comfort zones, maintaining personal appearance, building social support, and learning from experience. The results showed clear behavioral and attitudinal shifts, with students demonstrating greater courage, improved self-expression, and stronger collaboration.

The reflection stage further confirmed these outcomes by encouraging students to articulate meaningful lessons and areas for personal improvement. Findings indicated measurable changes: 15 students reported increased speaking confidence, 13 improved self-expression, 12 clearer goal awareness, 11 better social interaction, and 10 greater emotional openness. While these results cannot be generalized widely due to the one-day duration and small sample size, they align with experiential learning and social-cognitive theories that emphasize reflection, practice, and social support in character development. To sustain and expand these positive impacts, future programs should include long-term evaluation, regular follow-ups, and teacher training so that confidence-building strategies are consistently reinforced within the school environment.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Acknowledgments

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