



“I Feel Stronger When My Family Stands Together”: Family Cohesiveness and Self-Confidence among High School Students

Agitha Wigati Yulistyo Maradika^{1*}, Ayong Lianawati¹

¹Guidance and Counseling, Universitas PGRI Adi Buana Surabaya

*Correspondence author: agithawigati33@gmail.com

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Student self-confidence is a psychological aspect influenced by various factors, one of which is family cohesiveness. This study aims to examine the relationship between family cohesiveness and self-confidence of 10th grade students of SMA Al-Islam Krian. The study used a quantitative approach with a correlational design, involving 132 students selected through a simple random sampling technique. The instruments used were a family cohesiveness scale based on David H. Olson's theory and a self-confidence scale based on Peter Lauster's theory, with data analysis using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test. The results showed a correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.378$ with $p > 0.05$, which indicates a positive but not statistically significant relationship, with a low level of correlation. This finding indicates that family cohesiveness has a limited relationship with student self-confidence, so there are other factors that play a role in its formation.

Introduction

Self-confidence is a critical psychosocial resource that enables senior high school students to participate actively in academic, interpersonal, and developmental contexts (Liu et al., 2024). During adolescence, students are required to negotiate identity formation, emotional regulation, peer adjustment, academic decision-making, and future planning (McGuire et al., 2022). Students with higher self-confidence are more likely to express their opinions, take learning risks, communicate assertively, and perceive challenges as manageable rather than threatening. In contrast, students with low self-confidence tend to show hesitation, fear of failure, social withdrawal, and negative self-evaluation, which may reduce their engagement in learning activities. Recent studies indicate that adolescents' self-related development is closely associated with family functioning, self-esteem, self-concept clarity, and psychological adjustment (Clark et al., 2021). Therefore, self-confidence should be understood not merely as an individual trait, but as a developmental outcome shaped by family, school, and broader relational experiences.

The family remains the earliest and most enduring microsystem in which adolescents develop emotional security, self-worth, and confidence. Through daily interaction, adolescents learn whether their ideas are valued, whether their emotions are accepted, and whether they are supported when facing academic or interpersonal challenges (Wikle & Hoagland, 2020). Warm, responsive, and cohesive family relationships provide psychological safety that allows adolescents to explore their abilities and construct a more positive sense of self. Conversely, emotionally distant or poorly functioning families may limit adolescents' opportunities to receive affirmation, guidance, and constructive feedback. Empirical evidence shows that family adaptability, family functioning, and family support contribute to adolescents' psychological well-being through mechanisms such as social support, self-efficacy, resilience, and self-esteem (Farmakopoulou et al., 2024). This suggests that self-confidence develops more optimally when students experience the family as a secure, responsive, and emotionally available environment.

Family cohesion refers to emotional bonding, connectedness, mutual support, and a sense of belonging among family members. In cohesive families, adolescents are more likely to feel accepted, listened to, and valued, which strengthens their internal belief that they are capable and worthy (Kráčmarová et al., 2019). Such relational

experiences are important because confidence is built through repeated interpersonal confirmation, not only through individual achievement. When adolescents perceive that their family provides emotional closeness and supportive communication, they tend to develop stronger self-regulation, social responsibility, and adaptive coping. Recent studies show that family cohesion is related to adolescents' emotion regulation, social responsibility, behavioral adjustment, resilience, and self-esteem (LaMontagne et al., 2023). Thus, family cohesion may serve as a protective relational mechanism that supports the growth of students' self-confidence in both school and social contexts

However, adolescents' self-confidence may be weakened when family cohesion is low or when family interactions are marked by conflict, criticism, emotional neglect, or poor communication. Students who rarely receive emotional validation from family members may gradually develop uncertainty about their abilities and fear of being negatively evaluated by others. In school settings, this may appear as reluctance to speak, avoidance of leadership roles, dependence on others' approval, and difficulty making independent decisions (Li & Wu, 2026). Family dysfunction can also increase adolescents' vulnerability to depression, anxiety, bullying victimization, and other forms of psychosocial distress. Recent studies confirm that impaired family processes are associated with poorer mental health, lower self-esteem, weaker resilience, and reduced adaptive functioning among adolescents (Yang et al., 2022). These findings indicate that low family cohesion does not only affect family relationships but may also influence students' confidence, emotional regulation, and readiness to face academic challenges

In contemporary family life, maintaining cohesive relationships has become increasingly challenging due to parents' work demands, digital distraction, reduced shared time, and changing patterns of family communication (Meeus et al., 2020). Although many parents attempt to provide material support, adolescents also require emotional presence, attentive listening, affirmation, and guidance to develop confidence and emotional security. When communication within the family becomes limited or one-directional, adolescents may feel less important, less understood, and less confident in expressing themselves. Studies on adolescent adjustment indicate that family adaptability, social support, self-efficacy, and parent-child communication are important predictors of emotional well-being and confidence-related development (Rahal & Fosco, 2025). These findings imply that the quality of family interaction is not peripheral, but central to students' psychological readiness to participate in school life. Therefore, efforts to improve students' self-confidence should include strategies that strengthen parent-child communication and emotional connectedness within the family.

Based on the above discussion, investigating the relationship between family cohesion and students' self-confidence is both theoretically and practically important. Theoretically, this relationship explains how emotional bonding within the family contributes to adolescents' self-evaluation, self-concept clarity, self-efficacy, and psychological adjustment (Bas et al., 2021). Practically, the findings may guide school counselors, teachers, and parents in designing preventive and developmental interventions that strengthen students' confidence through family-based support. For senior high school students, this issue is particularly important because they are preparing for academic transition, career exploration, social independence, and more complex decision-making. Recent evidence suggests that family functioning, cohesion, and adaptability are closely associated with self-concept clarity, social responsibility, self-efficacy, and mental health outcomes among adolescents (Song et al., 2025). Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between family cohesion and self-confidence among senior high school students as a basis for improving counseling services, parent engagement, and student well-being programs.

Methods

Design

A quantitative correlational design was considered appropriate for this study because it aimed to examine the degree and direction of the association between family cohesiveness and adolescents' self-confidence (Cowan et al., 2025). Rather than testing the effects of a specific intervention or assigning students to treatment and comparison groups, this design allowed the researcher to investigate naturally occurring variations in family and psychological experiences (Rajabi et al., 2023). This is particularly relevant in educational and developmental research, where family-related variables are often sensitive, contextual, and ethically difficult to manipulate experimentally. The use of a correlational design also enabled the study to preserve participants' natural school and family contexts (Kaya et al., 2025). Through statistical analysis, the researcher could determine whether adolescents who reported higher levels of family cohesiveness also tended to demonstrate stronger self-confidence. In this sense, the design provides empirical evidence regarding the relational pattern between the two variables, while still acknowledging that correlational findings do not establish causal conclusions.

Furthermore, correlational research is valuable as an initial basis for developing future psychological and educational interventions. Evidence of a meaningful association between family cohesiveness and self-confidence may help counselors, teachers, and parents better understand the role of family relationships in adolescents' personal development. Such findings may also inform subsequent longitudinal, experimental, or intervention-based studies designed to strengthen adolescents' self-confidence through family- and school-based support programs. Similar correlational approaches have been widely applied in adolescent and educational psychology to examine links between family functioning, family cohesion, self-esteem, self-concept clarity, and mental health outcomes.

Participants

The participants were 132 tenth-grade students enrolled in the regular program at SMA Al-Islam Krian, Indonesia. The sample was selected using simple random sampling, allowing each member of the population an equal opportunity to participate in the study. The demographic characteristics of the participants were categorized based on gender and age. Most participants were within the typical age range of tenth-grade senior high school students, namely 15 to 16 years old. This demographic information was used to describe the background characteristics of the respondents and to provide a clearer profile of the study sample. The detailed demographic profile of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics profile from research participant.

Demographic	Total	%
Gender		
- Male	47	35,61%
- Female	85	64,39%
Age		
- 15 years	75	57,58%
- 16 years	55	41,67%
- 17 years	1	0,76%

Based on Table 1, the study involved 132 tenth-grade students, consisting of 47 male students (35.61%) and 85 female students (64.39%). This distribution indicates that female participants were more dominant than male participants in the study sample. In terms of age, most participants were 15 years old, with a total of 75 students (57.58%), followed by 55 students aged 16 years (41.67%). Only 1 student (0.76%) was 17 years old. These findings show that the participants were generally within the typical age range of tenth-grade senior high school students in Indonesia. Therefore, the demographic profile of the participants was considered appropriate for examining adolescents' self-confidence in the school context.

Data Collection

Data were collected using two Likert-type psychological scales. The first instrument measured family cohesiveness and was developed based on David H. Olson's theory, covering four dimensions: family communication, family satisfaction, family strengths, and family stress. The second instrument measured self-confidence and was developed based on Peter Lauster's theory, consisting of five dimensions: belief in one's own abilities, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, and realistic-rational thinking. Prior to the main analysis, both instruments were examined for validity and reliability. The validity test indicated that 27 out of 40 items on the family cohesiveness scale were valid, while 29 out of 43 items on the self-confidence scale met the validity criteria. Reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient of .638 for the family cohesiveness scale and .792 for the self-confidence scale. These results indicated that both instruments demonstrated acceptable reliability for use in the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS. The analysis proceeded in several stages, including a normality test to examine data distribution and a linearity test to assess whether the relationship between the variables met the assumption of linearity. Pearson's product-moment correlation was then applied to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between family cohesiveness and students' self-confidence.

Results

The prerequisite assumption tests reported in the methods section indicated that the data met the assumptions of normality and linearity. These findings confirmed that the dataset was appropriate for further analysis using parametric statistical procedures. In addition, the descriptive analysis provided an initial overview of students' family cohesiveness and self-confidence levels. After these assumptions were fulfilled, hypothesis testing was conducted using Pearson's product-moment correlation. This analysis was intended to examine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the relationship between family cohesiveness and students' self-confidence. The correlation results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the pearson product-moment correlation test.

Variables	N	r	Sig. (p)	Direction	Interpretation
Family cohesiveness and students' self-confidence	132	.378	> .05	Positive	Low to moderate positive correlation; not statistically significant

The results showed that the correlation coefficient between family cohesiveness and students' self-confidence was positive, with an r value of .378. This coefficient indicates that higher levels of family cohesiveness tend to be associated with higher levels of self-confidence among students. Conceptually, this finding suggests that students who perceive stronger family communication, satisfaction, strengths, and lower family stress may develop more positive beliefs about themselves. Family cohesiveness may provide emotional security, social encouragement, and a sense of belonging that supports students' confidence in academic and social contexts. However, the statistical test indicated that this relationship was not significant. Therefore, the observed association should be interpreted cautiously and should not be generalized as a strong empirical pattern within the study population.

Table 3. Interpretation of Correlation Coefficients

Coefficient Interval	Interpretation
0,00-0,199	Very Low
0,20-0,399	Low
0,40-0,599	Moderate
0,60-0,799	Strong
0,80-1.000	Very Strong

Based on the interpretation guideline presented in Table 3, the correlation coefficient of .378 falls within the range of .20 to .399. This range indicates a low level of correlation between family cohesiveness and students' self-confidence. Although the direction of the relationship is positive, the magnitude of the association remains limited. This means that family cohesiveness may contribute to students' self-confidence, but its contribution is not dominant. Self-confidence is likely shaped by multiple factors beyond the family context, including peer relationships, school climate, academic experiences, personal achievement, and individual psychological characteristics. Thus, family cohesiveness should be understood as one possible supporting factor rather than the primary determinant of students' self-confidence.

The non-significant result further indicates that variations in students' self-confidence cannot be sufficiently explained by family cohesiveness alone. In the context of tenth-grade students at SMA Al-Islam Krian, other developmental and environmental influences may play a more direct role in shaping confidence. Adolescents at this stage are increasingly influenced by peer acceptance, teacher feedback, academic pressure, and opportunities for self-expression. As a result, even students from cohesive families may still experience low self-confidence when they face negative social comparison, academic difficulties, or limited opportunities to demonstrate competence. Conversely, students with less cohesive family experiences may still develop confidence through supportive friendships, school engagement, or personal resilience. This complexity helps explain why the correlation, although positive, did not reach statistical significance.

Overall, the findings suggest that family cohesiveness has a positive but weak association with students' self-confidence. The result provides an important reminder that self-confidence is a multidimensional psychological construct that develops through the interaction of personal, familial, and school-related factors. For counseling and educational practice, interventions aimed at strengthening students' self-confidence should not focus exclusively on

family factors. Schools may need to provide programs that enhance self-efficacy, communication skills, peer support, achievement motivation, and emotional regulation. At the same time, family-based support remains relevant because a cohesive family environment can create a stable emotional foundation for adolescent development. Future studies are encouraged to involve broader samples and additional variables to obtain a more comprehensive explanation of students' self-confidence.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that family cohesiveness has a positive but weak and statistically non-significant relationship with students' self-confidence. This result suggests that students who perceive stronger family connectedness may tend to report higher self-confidence, although the strength of this association remains limited (Bakir et al., 2023). Family cohesiveness may offer emotional security, relational stability, and interpersonal warmth, but these conditions do not necessarily produce strong confidence in academic and social functioning (Zhang & Qian, 2024). Recent studies have shown that family cohesion and family functioning are associated with adolescents' self-concept, self-esteem, adjustment, and mental health outcomes (Aktu, 2024; Tomini et al., 2026; Zhang & Qian, 2024). However, the present study indicates that the influence of family cohesiveness may not operate directly or strongly in every adolescent context. This suggests that self-confidence should be viewed as a multidimensional outcome shaped by family, peer, school, and personal factors. Therefore, the weak and non-significant correlation found in this study provides a more nuanced explanation of adolescent confidence development (Abidah et al., 2025).

This finding differs from studies suggesting that family factors play a significant role in strengthening adolescents' positive self-evaluation. In some contexts, cohesive families provide emotional validation, open communication, and psychological safety that support adolescents' sense of worth and competence (Zhong et al., 2023). Recent research has also emphasized that family cohesion, family functioning, and family climate are closely related to adolescents' emotional adjustment and well-being (Orozco-Vargas et al., 2024; Zhibin et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the discrepancy between previous findings and the present study may be explained by differences in constructs, measurement, and participant characteristics. Self-esteem and self-confidence are related but not identical psychological variables. Self-esteem refers to global self-worth (Pan et al., 2024), whereas self-confidence reflects belief in one's ability to perform, respond, or succeed in specific situations (Bilgin & Koç, 2026). Thus, cohesive family relationships may support general self-worth but may be insufficient to build confidence without mastery experiences in school and social contexts.

The present finding also suggests that adolescents' self-confidence may be shaped more directly by contextual experiences outside the family. School-based activities provide students with opportunities to demonstrate competence, receive feedback, take responsibility, and develop social recognition (Ferriz et al., 2022). Extracurricular participation, for example, can strengthen students' sense of belonging, emotional adjustment, and confidence through repeated experiences of achievement and peer interaction. Recent studies have shown that extracurricular and leisure activities are associated with school belonging, reduced anxiety, self-esteem, and student participation outcomes (Hanh et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2024). These findings support the interpretation that confidence develops not only through emotional closeness at home but also through active engagement in meaningful social environments. Students who participate in structured school activities may gain more opportunities to practice communication, cooperation, leadership, and problem solving (Willis et al., 2025). Therefore, external engagement may explain why family cohesiveness in this study showed only a weak and non-significant relationship with self-confidence.

Peer support is another important factor that may help explain the limited association between family cohesiveness and students' self-confidence. During adolescence, students increasingly seek acceptance, recognition, and emotional validation from peers rather than relying solely on family relationships (Amadori et al., 2025). Supportive peer relationships can provide encouragement, social comparison, informational assistance, and opportunities to develop interpersonal competence (Kwon & López-Pérez, 2022). Recent studies have shown that peer support contributes to adolescents' self-efficacy, emotional experience, learning engagement, motivation, and positive psychological functioning (Shao et al., 2024; Zou et al., 2023). When students feel accepted by peers, they may become more willing to express opinions, participate in classroom activities, and take social risks. These experiences may strengthen confidence even when family cohesiveness is not highly influential. Thus, peer support may function as an alternative or complementary source of self-confidence formation among adolescents.

Internal psychological resources may also contribute to students' self-confidence more strongly than family cohesiveness. Academic resilience, self-efficacy, motivation, and perceived support enable students to manage stress, recover from setbacks, and maintain confidence in challenging situations (Li et al., 2025). Students with stronger academic resilience tend to interpret academic difficulties as opportunities for growth rather than as threats to their self-worth. Recent studies have shown that academic resilience is closely associated with self-efficacy, motivation, perceived support, academic adjustment, and academic performance (Tan et al., 2024; Yi et al., 2025). These findings indicate that students' confidence may depend not only on external relational support but also on internal beliefs about their ability to cope and succeed. In this study, the weak correlation may reflect the presence of unmeasured internal variables that influence students' confidence more directly. Therefore, future studies should examine academic resilience and academic self-efficacy as mediators or moderators in the relationship between family cohesiveness and self-confidence.

Theoretically, the findings support an ecological and interactional understanding of adolescent self-confidence. Confidence does not emerge from a single developmental source but from the interaction between family relationships, peer support, school experiences, and personal psychological resources (An & Lee, 2023). This interpretation is consistent with recent studies showing that family cohesion, perceived social support, self-efficacy, coping, and adolescent adjustment are interconnected in complex ways (Batte et al., 2024). In the context of SMA Al-Islam Krian, family cohesiveness may provide an emotional foundation, but other developmental contexts may be more proximal to students' daily confidence-building experiences. The non-significant result should therefore not be interpreted as evidence that family is irrelevant. Rather, it suggests that the role of family cohesiveness may be indirect, conditional, or dependent on other psychological and environmental variables (Wang, 2025). Hence, adolescent self-confidence needs to be examined through a multidimensional model rather than through a single-variable explanation.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by showing that family cohesiveness has a positive but weak and non-significant association with students' self-confidence. This finding extends previous research by emphasizing that confidence among senior high school students cannot be explained solely by family dynamics. Instead, it is likely influenced by the combined role of peer relationships, school engagement, social support, self-efficacy, resilience, and meaningful participation in school life. Recent studies further confirm that peer support, school belonging, social support, and self-efficacy are important psychological and contextual resources for adolescent and student development (Kwon et al., 2025). From a practical perspective, school counselors should design confidence-building interventions that integrate peer support, mastery experiences, resilience training, and family involvement. Such interventions may be more effective than approaches that focus only on improving family cohesion. Future studies should involve larger samples, additional mediating variables, and more complex statistical models to clarify how family and school factors jointly shape students' self-confidence.

Conclusions

This study concludes that family cohesiveness is positively associated with students' self-confidence; however, the relationship is statistically non-significant and falls within the low correlation category. This finding indicates that family cohesiveness is not the only factor related to students' self-confidence. Students' confidence may also be shaped by other external factors, such as peer social support and participation in extracurricular activities. In addition, internal factors, particularly academic resilience, may contribute to students' ability to maintain confidence when facing academic and social challenges. Therefore, self-confidence should be understood as a multidimensional construct influenced by the interaction of family, school, peer, and individual psychological factors. The implications of this study highlight the importance of structured and continuous guidance and counseling services in schools. School counselors are encouraged to design intervention programs that strengthen peer social support and develop students' internal psychological resources as part of efforts to enhance self-confidence. Group guidance services using brainstorming techniques may be applied to encourage students to express their opinions, share ideas, and develop openness within a supportive group dynamic. In addition, role-play techniques can be integrated to train students' communication skills, assertiveness, and confidence in social interaction. Thus, the systematic and sustained implementation of group guidance interventions has the potential to support the development of students' self-confidence within the school environment.

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Agitha Wigati Yulistyo Maradika: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing Original Draft; **Ayong Lianawati:** Supervision, Validation, Writing Review and Editing.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Ethical Approval

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