

# The Effectiveness of Assertiveness Skills Training on Emotional Self-Awareness and Interpersonal Difficulties among Male High School Students

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| E d i t o r                                                                                                                                                           | R e v i e w e r s                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <b>Izet Pehlić</b><br>Full professor for Educational sciences, Islamic pedagogical faculty of the University of Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina<br>izet.pehlic@unze.ba | <b>Reviewer 1:</b> Mahdi Khanjani<br>Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.<br>Email: khanjani_m@atu.ac.ir<br><b>Reviewer 2:</b> Zahra Yousefi<br>Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Isfahan Branch (Khorasgan), Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran. Email: Z.yousefi1393@khuif.ac.ir |

## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “Efforts were made to maintain homogeneity between the two groups regarding demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and general physical characteristics” (pp. 4, lines 327–330) is insufficiently detailed. The manuscript should report baseline demographic characteristics of both groups and provide statistical comparisons (e.g., independent-samples t-tests or chi-square tests) to demonstrate group equivalence prior to the intervention.

In the Methods section, the authors report that “40 male students were selected through purposive sampling” (pp. 4, lines 321–323). However, no inclusion or exclusion criteria are presented. The manuscript should clearly specify eligibility criteria, recruitment procedures, screening methods, and reasons for participant selection to improve transparency and replicability.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics only for the experimental group (pp. 5, lines 441–447). This is a substantial methodological limitation. Descriptive statistics for both experimental and control groups at pretest and posttest should be reported to permit proper interpretation of group differences and intervention effects.

In the Findings section, the authors note that “the mean score of emotional self-awareness in the experimental group increased from 87.50 to 107.55” (pp. 6, lines 456–458). However, no corresponding posttest descriptive statistics for the control group are provided. Without these values, readers cannot determine whether improvements are attributable to the intervention or natural developmental changes over time.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The description of the intervention states that participants received “a structured assertiveness skills training program” (pp. 5, lines 392–394), yet the manuscript does not provide the number of sessions, session duration, facilitator qualifications, or treatment manual. A detailed intervention protocol should be included, either in the main text or as supplementary material, to allow replication and evaluation of treatment fidelity.

The paragraph describing the Emotional Self-Awareness Questionnaire (pp. 4, lines 336–360) reports psychometric properties from previous studies but does not provide reliability coefficients obtained in the current sample. The authors should report Cronbach’s alpha (or preferably McDonald’s omega) for the total scale and subscales within the present study population.

Regarding the QIDA measure, the authors indicate that “only four dimensions were utilized” (pp. 5, lines 377–380). The rationale for excluding the “Interpersonal Responsibility/Self-Control” dimension requires stronger justification. Furthermore, evidence should be provided demonstrating that removing this dimension does not compromise construct validity or alter the psychometric structure of the instrument.

The sentence “The control group did not receive any psychological training during the intervention period” (pp. 5, lines 409–410) raises concerns regarding attention effects and expectancy bias. The authors should discuss why an active control condition was not used and acknowledge the possibility that observed improvements may partly reflect nonspecific treatment factors such as participant engagement or facilitator attention.

In the Data Analysis section, the authors state that “the assumptions underlying covariance analysis... were evaluated” (pp. 5, lines 418–420). However, results for homogeneity of regression slopes, Levene’s test, Box’s M test, and covariance matrix assumptions are not reported. These assumption tests should be presented to support the appropriateness of MANCOVA.

The statement “all significance values exceeded 0.05, indicating that the distributions of emotional self-awareness and interpersonal difficulties did not significantly deviate from normality” (pp. 6, lines 467–470) is inadequate because the actual Shapiro–Wilk statistics and p-values are omitted. These values should be reported in a dedicated assumption-testing table.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.