The Effect of Self-Efficacy and Assertive on Students’ Business Negotiation and Communication Skills in Vocational High Schools (VHS)

Abstract

Communication and negotiation provide significant contribution to the success and achievement of an organization. This study aims to examine factors influencing students’ negotiation and communication in the Online Business and Marketing Department of VHS. The data used a questionnaire of 426 respondents consisting of VHS students throughout Central Java, then processed using inferential statistical analysis with WARP PLS-SEM. The researchers obtain several findings, that is self-efficacy and assertive variables do not have significant contribution to the business communication variable. In contrast, self-efficacy and assertive variables have significant contribution to the negotiation variable. Similarly, both variables found have no indirect effect on the business communication variable. Eventually, this study finds that students’ communication skills during their study go hand in hand with knowledge and attitudes.

Keywords: Assertive, Social Skills, Communication, Negotiation, Self-efficacy.

Introduction

Communication is a psychological and social process when two or more people exchange attitudes, emotion, and information through the system of symbols, signs, or behaviors to create better understanding in an organizational structure (Ang et al., 2013; Chen and Tseng, 2016; Varey et al., 2002). Besides conveying informative messages, in communication, one needs to pay attention to its persuasiveness. It is because communication not only expresses what is written and spoken but also characters and ways of messages are conveyed to the interlocutors. Words are speeches delivered to listeners to do activities and actions. The listeners not only listen to statements said by the speakers but also read and assess their attitudes. The main requirement for effective communication is a strong character built on a strong ethical foundation and personal integrity. Abilities that speakers should have to make effective communication is the ability to be a listener, deliver message or information, and use various media appropriately (Conrad and Newberry, 2011).

Communication is a competence and survival skill needed by students to live as good citizens and survive in their future work (Wagner, 2010). It becomes one of the interpersonal skills that emphasizes critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, collaboration and adaptive leadership, initiation and entrepreneurship, effective communication in


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spoken and written productivity and accountability imaginatively, and the ability to access, analyze, and synthesize information (Barry, 2012; McKinsey & Company, Wagner et al., 2005; Wagner, 2010). Several surveys done outside the United States (US) identified interpersonal skills, such as communication and problem solving, as the skills of new workers (Martin-Raugh et al., 2020). The report of NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2016) mentions the top five skills to master by new workers, namely leadership attitude, ability to work in a team, communication skills (written), problem-solving skills, and communication skills (verbal). Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2016) study findings describe four learning dimensions in the 21st century: information, communication, ethics, and social influences (Ananiadou and Claro, 2009).

Communication skills are abilities to communicate effectively with others using a verbal, written, and other non-verbal media, such as expressions (Fien et al., 2009). These abilities are a crucial success and essential for one's success at work. Some studies strengthen this statement that communication skills give significant contributions to business organization career success (Du-Babcock, 2006; Rue and Byars, 2000). Stout (2014) states that the continuous development of communication skills is the primary purpose of professional learning in business education. The world economic forum also reports that one of the financial challenges is the demand for higher service orientation, such as conflict resolution, communication, and compromise skills, negotiation, and networking skills (Hecklau et al., 2016).

According to the above competencies, communication is a crucial competence since it underlies other skills. Studies on communication in business are exciting as it goes hand in hand with changes and demands in the world of work. Moreover, some components to develop in communication are verbal and written communication skills, emotional self-control, interpersonal skills, initiating open discussion, and providing motivation (Conrad & Newberry, 2011). A business communicator must be able to convey ideas in both oral and written. However, the literature reviews found that the graduates of middle school, diploma, and higher education lacked communication skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Trilling and Fadel, 2009).

As an institution that advances understanding, attitudes, and work habits, VHS equips its graduates with various competencies of hard skill and soft skills. The soft skills taught to VHS graduates are based on the needs of industry, such as communication and negotiation. The graduates of Online Business and Marketing study program are specially equipped with skills to compete and professionalism as an entrepreneur and sales marketing. These profiles are in line with what is stated by the American Marketing Association (AMA) that a professional marketer's negotiation skills are required. These skills help them compromise products with clients, make agreements, work expectations, and bargain to gain benefits to both parties. Negotiation is a process of two or more groups that have the same or different interests coming together to reach an agreement (Beest et al., 2008; Fells, 2009; Thompson et al. 2010; Thompson and Hastie, 1990). It is a process where people who have different needs try to reach a specific agreement by giving and taking for each other (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Negotiation in the industrial world is not merely aimed at finding solutions and submitting complaints with fellow partners regarding salary and work systems. It is also a means of formulating and findings democratic collective agreements from the rules and working conditions. Besides, negotiation is a process done by two or more groups who share the same or different interests to come together to reach an agreement (Lewicki et al., 2010). Negotiation competence supports the effectiveness of communication in business. It will be done well and provide solutions for problems if the individuals have excellent communication skills.

In the same way, communication is considered successful if individuals have excellent negotiation skills. These skills can be assessed from four aspects: the ability to separate personal feelings from the problem at hand, focus on interests rather than positions, gather choices before making a final decision, and ensure that results are based on objective criteria (Jackman, 2005). Individual negotiation ability is influenced by patience, self-confidence, and communication skills (Mcguire, 2004).

A negotiator should be qualified in communication and social skills. Social skills enable individuals to interact effectively with others. By using these skills, the individuals can understand the right moment to listen and speak, treat others, and themselves honorably professionally. This behavior is in line with Bandura's theory (Bandura, 1978) that trust, sportsmanship behavior, openness, and self-efficacy are factors influencing communication skills. Self-efficacy is a social skill to perform self-defence in accomplishing a task under particular circumstances.

Self-efficacy was first introduced by Albert Bandura, a significant figure of social learning theory, in 1977. Then, in 1986, Bandura comprehensively and systematically discussed
the mechanisms of self-efficacy, which further contributed to the critical part of his social learning theory (Huang, 2020). Studies revealed that the improvement of students’ self-efficacy leads to significant academic progress (Huang, 2020; Prassa and Stalikas, 2020). Bandura’s self-efficacy theory shows that human behavior is influenced by outcome factors and antecedent factors of action. After gaining appropriate knowledge and skills, self-efficacy becomes the determining factor (Bandura, 2006).

Individuals who believe they have skills will be able to deal with condition and problems which may arise. This belief manifests the way of thinking, self-motivating power, and ability to sense surrounding conditions. Self-efficacy is one’s assessment of himself during the accomplishment of a particular task to achieve the desired results (Brenowitz et al., 2003). It has an essential role in career decisions and personal performance. Sometimes, individuals fail to finish a job due to a lack of confidence. Bandura (1978) divides self-efficacy into three dimensions, namely magnitude, generality, and strength. This efficacy is formed from experiences of knowledge, social modelling of the environment, social persuasion, and individual physical and emotional conditions (Chen and Tseng, 2016; Curhan et al., 2006).

Another social skill to master is assertive or one’s ability in expressing what is in his mind and feeling directly, honestly, and clearly, while still respecting others’ rights and feelings state that aspects of assertive cover expressing feelings and opinions clearly, expressing beliefs and thoughts openly, upholding personal rights, while respecting the rights of others (Hong et al., 2004; Kavale and Forness, 1996; Little et al., 2017) Also, Poyrazli (2002) mentions that one aspect of assertiveness is the ability to communicate with others. Individuals who have an assertiveness attitude make others feel comfortable to communicate because they are able to convey their ideas appropriately without threatening listener’s face, express themselves, their views, express their desires, and feelings directly, honestly, and spontaneously without threatening themselves and the rights of others (Novalia and Dayakinski, 2013; Poyrazli, 2002; Schwartz, 2006; Sriyanto and Novianto, 2018).

From an educational perspective, assertive is a domain of social skills among cooperation, responsibility, self-control, and empathy (Sivin-Kachala and Bialo, 2009). Thus, assertive is an ability to express rights and needs positively without violating others’ rights. Individuals who attain assertive have confidence, get respect from others within communication that is direct, open, and honest (Sriyanto et al., 2014). Assertive is beneficial for individuals to maintain honesty in communication, perform self-control, and improve decision-making ability (Sriyanto and Novianto, 2018; Sriyanto et al., 2019). Assertive behavior is useful to facilitate socialization in one’s surroundings, avoid conflict through honesty, and solve problems effectively (Dincyurek et al., 2009).

Based on the above facts and empirical data, it was essential to investigate whether there was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and assertive on business negotiation and communication. Hence, the objective of this study is to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and assertive on the negotiation and communication skills of Vocational High School students majoring in the Online Business Marketing department.

**Method**

**Sample Determination and Instrument Development**

Since the objective of this study is to describe the relationship between variables, thus the approach used in this study is quantitative. This relationship covered independent variables, namely self-efficacy (X₁) and assertive (X₂), and negotiation as a moderating variable (Y₁), while business communication as the dependent variable (Y₂). Additionally, this study's subjects were the students of the Online Business Marketing Study Program in VHS throughout Central Java, Indonesia, amounted to 426 respondents. The respondents were spread across nine regencies/cities. The data were collected using a questionnaire. To sample the respondents, the researchers used a stratified random sampling technique in which all students got a chance to be the sample as long as all students have learned the materials of negotiation and business communication in the Eleventh and Twelfth grades.

The assertiveness variable was developed based on the concepts of skills and self-expression, which are honest, direct, and respectful to others’ rights. This instrument was developed based on an adaptation of The modified Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS). Meanwhile, the self-efficacy variable was operationalized based on Bandura’s concepts (1977). All measurements of variables used the modified Likert scale with the score range of 1-5. Other than that, the variable of negotiation was developed based on Jackman’s (2005), theory, and McGuire’s (2004) theory. The variable of communication used to measure students’ communication skills were developed based on Conrad and Newberry’s (2011) concepts.
Measurement and Data Analysis

The variables of business negotiation and communication were measured using a Likert scale with the score range of 1-5 indicating agree/disagree. Each item came up with the size ranging from extreme preference, namely strongly disagree and strongly agree based on the proxy of measurement scale. After that, the first thing the researchers did was obtaining a proper measurement scale construction via a pilot test. Then, the results of this test were used as a guide in the field testing. Then, it was followed by inferential statistical analysis using WARP PLS-SEM, covering these elements: conceptual model, algorithm analysis method determination, resampling method determination, path diagrams drawing, inner model and outer model evaluation and estimation using WARP PLS mode A basic algorithm to obtain the value of t statistics, reporting analysis results (Kock, 2019).

Results

Evaluation Model

The results of the statistical test on measurement model evaluation in the WARP PLS analysis was carried out to test the construct validity and reliability (Kock, 2019). The assessment at this stage was aimed at determining the value of each instrument item used to measure the construct of manifest/indicator variable on the latent variables [self-efficacy (SC), assertive (ASS), negotiation (NG), business communication (BC)]. The construct validity test (Table 1) consists of convergent validity and discriminant validity and construct reliability.

Table 1.
Loading factors, cross-loadings, AVE, and Composite reliability factors

| Item | SC_1 | SC_2 | SC_3 | SC_4 | SC_5 | SC_6 | SC_7 | SC_8 | SC_9 | SC_10 | SC_11 | ASS_1 | ASS_2 | ASS_3 | ASS_4 | ASS_5 | ASS_6 | ASS_7 | ASS_8 | ASS_9 | NG_1 | NG_2 | NG_3 | NG_4 | NG_5 | NG_6 | NG_7 | NG_8 | BC_1 | BC_2 | BC_3 | BC_4 | BC_5 | BC_6 | BC_7 | BC_8 | BC_9 | BC_10 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|-------|------|-------|
| AVE before elimination | 0.269 | 0.423 | 0.450 | 0.450 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 | 0.401 |
| AVE after elimination | 0.507 | 0.539 | 0.523 | 0.523 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 | 0.516 |
| Composite reliability before elimination | 0.772 | 0.837 | 0.866 | 0.866 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 | 0.842 |
| Composite reliability after elimination | 0.804 | 0.888 | 0.867 | 0.867 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 | 0.870 |

Source: process data WARP PLS-SEM, 2019
Table 1 presents the results of the convergent validity of the self-efficacy variable. As its AVE (Average Variance Extracted) was below the cut value of 0.5, it was eliminated. After the researchers reduced items SC_1, SC_2, SC_3, SC_4, SC_6, SC_9, SC_10, the AVE value of the self-efficacy variable increased above the cut value of 0.507. Therefore, the self-efficacy variable only had three items that met convergent validity, namely details SC_5, SC_7, and SC_8. Similarly, the reliability test results showed that its value of composite reliability was above the cut value of 0.7, namely, 0.772. After the elimination, the amount increased to 0.804. Again, the same thing happened to the assertiveness variable that gained AVE value of 0.423 or below the cut value and further needed elimination in the smaller variables, namely items ASS_1 and ASS_2. Once this process was done, the AVE value increased to 0.439. Thus, the assertiveness variable obtained seven variables fulfilling the criteria of convergent validity, namely items ASS_3, ASS_4, ASS_5, ASS_6, ASS_7, ASS_8, ASS_9. Likewise, in the reliability test, the composite reliability value of this variable was above the cut value of 0.7, which was 0.837, but after the elimination, the amount increased to 0.888.

The variable of negotiation obtained AVE value below the cut value, namely 0.450. Therefore, the smallest factor loading value on that variable, NG_2, and NG_3 needed to be eliminated. After being removed, the AVE value increased to 0.523. The valid items of this variable covered NG_1, NG_4, NG_5, NG_6, NG_7, and NG_8. In the same way, before the elimination, its value of composite reliability was above 0.7 or, specifically, 0.866, but after the elimination was done, the value increased to 0.867. The last variable also experienced the same thing that its AVE value was below the cut value of 0.401 that it needed some elimination in items BC_1, BC_2, BC_3, BC_4, BC_5. After the removal, the AVE value increased to 0.516. As a result, items BC_6, BC_7, BC_8, BC_9, and BC_10 met the convergent validity criteria. As with the earlier results, the reliability test showed that the composite reliability value was above 0.7 or 0.843, but after the elimination, the value increased to 0.870.

After the researchers performed some elimination in the concurrent validity analysis, the next step was discriminant validity analysis. This validity is valid if the correlation value of the latent variable with the square root AVE diagonally shows the highest value on that variable compared with the correlation on other variables. The illustrations in Table 2 show all items in the variable met the criteria of discriminant validity because of the correlation on the diagonal variable having a value greater than the other values both of the variables of self-efficacy, assertiveness, negotiation, and business communication.

Table 2.
Correlations among l vs. with sq. rts. of AVEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-efficacy</th>
<th>Assertive</th>
<th>Negotiation</th>
<th>Business communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>0.712</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>0.146</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td>0.332</td>
<td>0.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>0.229</td>
<td>0.332</td>
<td>0.723</td>
<td>0.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business communication</td>
<td>0.144</td>
<td>0.132</td>
<td>0.411</td>
<td>0.718</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Inner Model (Goodness of Fit Test and Hypothesis Test)

After the researchers analyzed the outer model in the form of construct validity and reliability analyses, the next step was the goodness of fit of the model using Model fit and quality indices. This analysis consists of 10 indices, namely Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R-squared (ARS), Average Adjusted R-Square (AARS), Average block VIF (AVIF), Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF), Tenenhaus GoF (GoF), Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR), R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR), Statistical suppression ratio (SSR), and Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR). Table 3 shows the results of the goodness of fittest.

Table 3.
Model fit and quality indices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indexes</th>
<th>Cut value</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average path coefficient (APC)</td>
<td>P&lt;0.005</td>
<td>0.212</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average R-squared (ARS)</td>
<td>P&lt;0.005</td>
<td>0.187</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)</td>
<td>acceptable if &lt;= 5, ideally &lt;= 3.3</td>
<td>0.182</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average block VIF (AVIF)</td>
<td>acceptable if &lt;= 5, ideally &lt;= 3.3</td>
<td>1.116</td>
<td>Ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)</td>
<td>acceptable if &lt;= 5, ideally &lt;= 3.3</td>
<td>1.191</td>
<td>Ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)</td>
<td>all &gt;= 0.1, medium &gt;= 0.25, large &gt;= 0.36</td>
<td>0.312</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)</td>
<td>acceptable if &gt;= 0.7, ideally = 1</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>Ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)</td>
<td>acceptable if &gt;= 0.9, ideally = 1</td>
<td>0.992</td>
<td>ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)</td>
<td>acceptable if &gt;= 0.7</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>ideal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)</td>
<td>acceptable if &gt;= 0.7</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>ideal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The criteria constructed in Table 3 show that all indices indicated good, ideal, and medium criteria. These findings show that the structural model constructed in this model was empirically suitable to interpret the results of hypothesis testing. After obtaining the suitable structural model empirically, the researchers performed hypothesis testing. Table 4 shows the results of the path coefficient and hypothesis testing.

Table 4.
Path Coefficient, P-value (Direct, Indirect, Total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship between variables</th>
<th>Path Coefficient</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NG</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>0.399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NG</td>
<td>0.267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASS</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NG</td>
<td>0.332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>NG</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASS</td>
<td>NG</td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>0.018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Based on Table 4, the regression results of self-efficacy on business communication were β = 0.042 and p-value = 0.193. Since the p-value was above the cut value of 0.05, it empirically failed to explain that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on business communication. Conversely, the regression result of self-efficacy on negotiation were β = 0.267 and p-value = <0.001. Since the p-value was below the cut value of 0.05, it empirically proved that self-efficacy had a positive and significant effect on negotiation.

Meanwhile, the assertiveness variable obtained β = -0.018 and p-value = 0.353 in Warp PLS regression. These results showed that assertiveness did not significantly affect business communication. However, the assertiveness variable acquired β = 0.332 and p-value = <0.001, meaning that it empirically had a positive and significant effect on negotiation.

Empirically, the results of negotiation values got a positive and significant effect on business communication, namely β = 0.399 and p value = <0.001, while the mediation test also showed that empirically the relationship of self-efficacy through negotiations on business communication on indirect effects gained β = 0.106 and p value = <0.001, while the total effect gained with β = 0.149 and p value = 0.001. These proved that negotiation empirically made a significant contribution in mediating the effect of assertive on business communication. In detail, the graph of hypothesis testing can be seen in the following figure (Figure 1).
Discussion

Self-efficacy is a social skill must be possessed by an individual. The individual who possesses self-efficacy will have beliefs in accomplishing all their tasks. A study by Huang (2020) argues that "Academic self-efficacy was defined as how confident an individual was that he or she would be able to complete or perform a certain academic task", meaning self-efficacy is an individual's belief to accomplish any tasks given to him. This belief enables the individual to accomplish the tasks under particular circumstances. In communication, self-efficacy provides a great contribution to an individual's communication skills. The individual who has self-confidence will express and convey his goals during his communication with his environment (Lee & Ciftci, 2014). Moreover, studies by Zahroh (2014), Wang (2019), and Saslaw et al. (2017) reveals a significant and positive relationship between self-efficacy and communication.

The results of the empirical tests of this study found that self-efficacy and assertiveness did not have any significant effect on communication. According to Bandura (2006), self-efficacy development is influenced by four factors, namely, the experience of past achievements, alternative experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. Self-efficacy influences one's way of thinking, feeling, motivation, and activity choice. It also influences goals, choices, efforts, and resilience in coping with problems and further influences individuals' achievement and performance (Huang, 2020). Those four factors also determined business communication in this study. Bandura (1978) divides self-efficacy into three dimensions, namely magnitude, the extent to which individuals can accomplish their works starting from the easiest one to the hardest one; generality, the ability that individuals have, and strength, the amount of strength of an individuals' beliefs. Self-efficacy is constructed from experiences of knowledge, social modeling of the environment, social persuasion, and the individual's physical condition and emotions.

Relating to learning implementation, self-efficacy contributes to learning outcomes. Sihalolo's study (2018) mentions that self-efficacy has a positive effect on learning outcomes. The learning outcomes cover the domains of cognitive, affective, and skill. Unfortunately, the findings of this study are not in line with the previous study because it was found that VHS students’ self-efficacy throughout Central Java did not affect their business communication skills. The findings are in line with a study by Listiyan (2015), which concludes that there is a negative and significant relationship between self-efficacy and communication. Communication is influenced by several factors, such as knowledge, language skills, environment, and physical condition. Regarding this theory, it is known that one's knowledge is the major factor in communication. Students who have not yet understood how to communicate well in business both verbally and nonverbally will have difficulties communicating. Another factor, language skills are highly related to growth. Vocational High School students who are considered as adolescents are assumed to experience difficulties in using formal language, especially those in business communication matter. It is because the business world requires individuals to be skillful in communication, both verbal and non-verbal communication.

Another social skill discussed in this study was assertive, a condition in which an individual is assertive. In this way, the individual is required to be honest with himself when expressing feelings and arguments that he should be proportional and non-manipulative, avoid taking advantage of, and harm others. Assertiveness is beneficial to bridge a person and his environment to interact effectively (Sriyanto et al., 2014). All individuals share the urgency of this attitude in developing relationships with others. Through assertiveness, individuals can respect themselves and others, be confident, and develop self-control. In business communication, assertiveness is needed. When students have an assertiveness, they will be able to share what they want and think to others while still maintain and respect others. Fansterheim (Novalia and Dayakisini, 2013) mentions that one aspect of assertive behavior can communicate with others.

The findings of this study are different from several previous studies that assertive did not affect students’ business communication skills. In this way, it can be understood that communication skills, particularly in business are not only influenced by social skill aspects. Students who are still in the development age are still in the process of attaining assertive. They should understand that knowledge of how to communicate should be very influential on the ability to communicate. However, in reality students in general put forward academic values rather than developing soft skills.

Students’ assertive are influenced by several factors, including gender (Dincurek et al., 2009; Fukuyama, Mary A.; Greenfield, 1983), which sets a tendency for men to be more assertive than to women. Society considers that men have a more spontaneous attitude, are independently competitive, personally oriented. Therefore, it is inevitable that men are assumed
to have higher self-confidence than women. In this study, 74% of samples taken were women, while the rest were men. The second factor is age (Schmid, Leonard, Ritchie, & Gwadz, 2015). When a person is getting older, his assertive will also grow hand in hand throughout his life. This study took a sample of students of the eleventh and twelfth grades of Vocational School aged between 15-18 years. In these periods, adolescents experience a lot of psychological development. It surely influences their personality and pride. Apart from the previous two factors, one’s assertiveness is also influenced by socioeconomic factors and parental attitudes. Studies on learning found that learning that emphasizes communication skills can increase learners’ assertive (Fuspipta, Susanti, & Eka Putri, 2018; Mansour, Jamama, Al-Madani, Mattukoyya, & Al-Anati, 2020).

Communication in business is a determining factor in the success of a business. Through good communication, business doers can sell their products better and avoid any misunderstanding between two parties. In addition, business act besides marketing requires good communication so that consumers can accept the products offered. Within this condition, communication is inseparable from negotiation. Good negotiation will result in effective communication because it is a negotiation process (Faes et al., 2010; Martin-Raugh et al., 2020).

Communication and negotiation skills need to be integrated into the curriculum and learning in VHS to improve graduates’ confidence in meeting the workforce’s demands. Self-efficacy and assertiveness need to be considered as internal factors in developing competencies that become the focus interest of learning. Accordingly, according to industry 4.0 challenges, social literacy must be focused on communication improvement.

Conclusion

The findings of this study are exciting because VHS projected to be able to develop negotiation and communication competencies, still has difficulties communicating using the formal language for negotiation. Meanwhile, individuals’ communication skills, both verbally and nonverbally, are the main requirements in business because communication skills are fundamental for all levels. Future studies are suggested to distinguish the effect on males and females because psychologically, their characteristics at these periods of age are still unstable and different.

References


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