

“Nandur Kabecikan, Ngundhuh Kawibawan”: A Conceptual Review of School Children's Self-Confidence in The Perspective of Javanese Cosmology and Transcultural Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Background: School children's self-confidence is commonly measured using indicators of assertiveness and verbal initiative derived from individualistic psychology. However, in Javanese culture, self-confidence is expressed through social harmony, proper manners, and self-control, which are often misunderstood as low self-esteem. The philosophy of nandur kabecikan, ngundhuh kawibawan (planting goodness, harvesting dignity) provides an alternative perspective that views self-confidence as a result of cultivating goodness that eventually leads to dignity and social recognition. **Objective:** This literature review aimed to synthesize empirical evidence regarding the construction of school children's self-confidence within Javanese cosmology and identify its implications for transcultural mental health nursing. **Methods:** A literature review was conducted on empirical articles published between 2014 and 2024. Literature searches were performed through Google Scholar, Garuda, Neliti, DOAJ, and Scopus databases. From 46 identified articles, six relevant studies examining self-confidence, self-esteem, and psychological well-being among children and adolescents with Javanese cultural backgrounds were included. Data were analyzed using a narrative-thematic approach. **Results:** Three themes emerged: internal foundations through self-compassion and self-regulation; socialization processes through parenting and family affection; and cultural identity outcomes reflected in psychological well-being and self-esteem. These findings indicate that self-confidence is relational, moral, and context-dependent. Self-confidence among Javanese children develops through family-based cultivation of goodness and results in socially recognized dignity rather than self-promotion. **Conclusion:** Transcultural mental health nursing should incorporate culturally relevant values in assessment and intervention.

Keywords: self-confidence, Javanese culture, school children, Javanese cosmology, transcultural nursing.

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INTRODUCTION

Self-confidence in school-aged children constitutes one of the essential pillars for mental health development, academic success, and social competence. Generally, mainstream psychology, largely born from Western traditions, defines self-confidence as an individual's belief in their own capabilities, expressed through assertiveness, verbal initiative, and the courage to display personal strengths (Bandura, 1997). However, this operational definition is not entirely universal. When applied to collectivist cultures such as Javanese society, the construct of self-confidence can manifest very differently, even paradoxically.

Javanese society inherits a cosmology that places social harmony (rukun) and proper demeanor at the center of social life. Indigenous psychology offers the perspective that the Javanese self-concept is fundamentally relational and moral. Self-worth is not measured solely by personal achievement, but rather by the extent to which a person can maintain harmony and contribute positively to their community (Subandi, 2011). Within this framework, self-confidence finds its unique expression in school-aged children. One of the most representative

Javanese philosophies to explain this phenomenon is "Nandur kabecikan, ngundhuh kawibawan", planting goodness, reaping authority (Endraswara, 2006). This proverb teaches that true authority is not the result of loud self-promotion, but rather the fruit of consistent moral conduct. By planting virtues, a child not only reaps social respect but also builds a solid inner conviction because they have acted in alignment with the highly valued value system.

Based on this perspective, it can be assumed that self-confidence takes a relational, ethical form integrated within social networks. In the school environment, a Javanese child who behaves according to unggah-ungguh (proper etiquette), readily helps without being asked, and speaks politely will be regarded by their community as a student sing duwe kawibawan (a student who has self-worth and is respected). Their self-confidence grows from the awareness that they are "good" in the eyes of parents, teachers, and peers. Conversely, a child who is excessively vocal and aggressive may be labeled ora duwe tata (lacking manners), which undermines social acceptance and ultimately weakens their self-confidence.

This situation becomes increasingly complex in the modern era when schools also promote assertiveness and courage to express opinions as indicators of high-achieving students. Javanese children find themselves at the crossroads of two value streams that can potentially create identity confusion and psychological pressure, which, if not understood culturally, may lead to misdiagnosis as social anxiety disorder or low self-esteem (Chen & French, 2008). For mental health nursing, the transcultural paradigm emphasizes that assessment and intervention will be effective and humane only if they align with the client's world of meaning (Leininger, 2002). Mental health nurses working with school-aged children in Java cannot simply adopt self-confidence enhancement programs originating from individualistic cultures. They need to explore and strengthen the seeds of self-confidence, as encapsulated in the philosophy of nandur kabecikan, ngundhuh kawibawan.

Unfortunately, to date, nursing literature that specifically examines the construction of self-confidence in school-aged children within Javanese cosmology remains fragmented. Philosophical studies on Javanese ethics are rarely explicitly linked to child mental health indicators, while transcultural nursing research focuses more on adult mental disorders. Therefore, a systematic literature review is needed to map, critique, and synthesize existing evidence. This review aims to illuminate how the philosophy of nandur kabecikan, ngundhuh kawibawan shapes the construction of self-confidence in school-aged children within Javanese society, while also formulating implications for mental health nursing practice grounded in local wisdom.

METHODS

This study employs a literature review method, a systematic approach to identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing previous research findings to answer the research questions (Snyder, 2019). Literature searches were conducted through Google Scholar, Garuda, Neliti, DOAJ, and Scopus databases. Keywords used included "kepercayaan diri anak budaya Jawa," "self-confidence Javanese children," "harga diri anak Jawa," "Javanese self-esteem students," and "pola asuh Jawa kepercayaan diri," combined with Boolean operators.

The inclusion criteria established were: (1) empirical research articles (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods); (2) discussing variables of self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy, or psychological well-being in children or adolescents with Javanese cultural background; (3) published within the 2014–2024 range; and (4) available in Indonesian or English and accessible in full text. Opinion articles, non-empirical essays, and research without participants from Javanese cultural background were excluded.

From the initial search process, 46 potential articles were obtained. After screening for duplicates and applying criteria rigorously, six research articles were identified as the most relevant. These six articles were analyzed narratively using a thematic approach. The analysis

included extracting essential data, identifying cross-article themes, and synthesizing findings within the framework of Javanese cosmology, particularly the philosophy of "nandur kabecikan, ngundhuh kawibawan."

Characteristics of Selected Articles:

1. **Nugroho and Afriwilda (2024)** examined self-compassion among 561 secondary school students of Javanese ethnicity. Survey results showed that students' self-compassion was at a moderate level and tended to be lower among males, indicating the need for strengthening self-acceptance as a foundation for self-confidence.
2. **Na'imah and Tanireja (2017)** explored the sources of student well-being among Banyumas Javanese adolescents using a mixed-methods approach. Findings highlighted the role of cultural values and social support as foundations for well-being that also support self-confidence.
3. **Trismayangsari, Hanami, Agustiani, and Novita (2023)** qualitatively mapped Javanese cultural values that shape self-control. Politeness, honesty, and discipline were identified as core values that foster self-control and, consequently, self-confidence derived from inner strength.
4. **Angela and Monika (2024)** examined the relationship between parenting styles and self-confidence among 311 high school students in Jakarta. A strong positive correlation was found between both maternal ($r = 0.742$) and paternal ($r = 0.811$) parenting styles and students' self-confidence, confirming the role of parenting as a vehicle for cultivating "*kabecikan*" (goodness).
5. **Thontowi (2025)** investigated the influence of familial ethnic socialization on the self-esteem of Banyumasan Javanese adolescents, mediated by ethnic identity ($N=453$). The study demonstrated that transmission of ethnic values through family strengthens cultural identity, which further enhances adolescent self-esteem.
6. **Nainggolan and Saroinsong (2023)** examined the relationship between paternal love affirmation and children's self-confidence in East Java. Results showed a significant relationship, emphasizing the importance of the father figure in building children's self-confidence in alignment with Javanese parenting philosophy.

RESULTS

Synthesis of the six research articles yielded three interrelated main themes, illustrating the construction of self-confidence in school-aged children with Javanese cultural background. These themes are: (1) Int

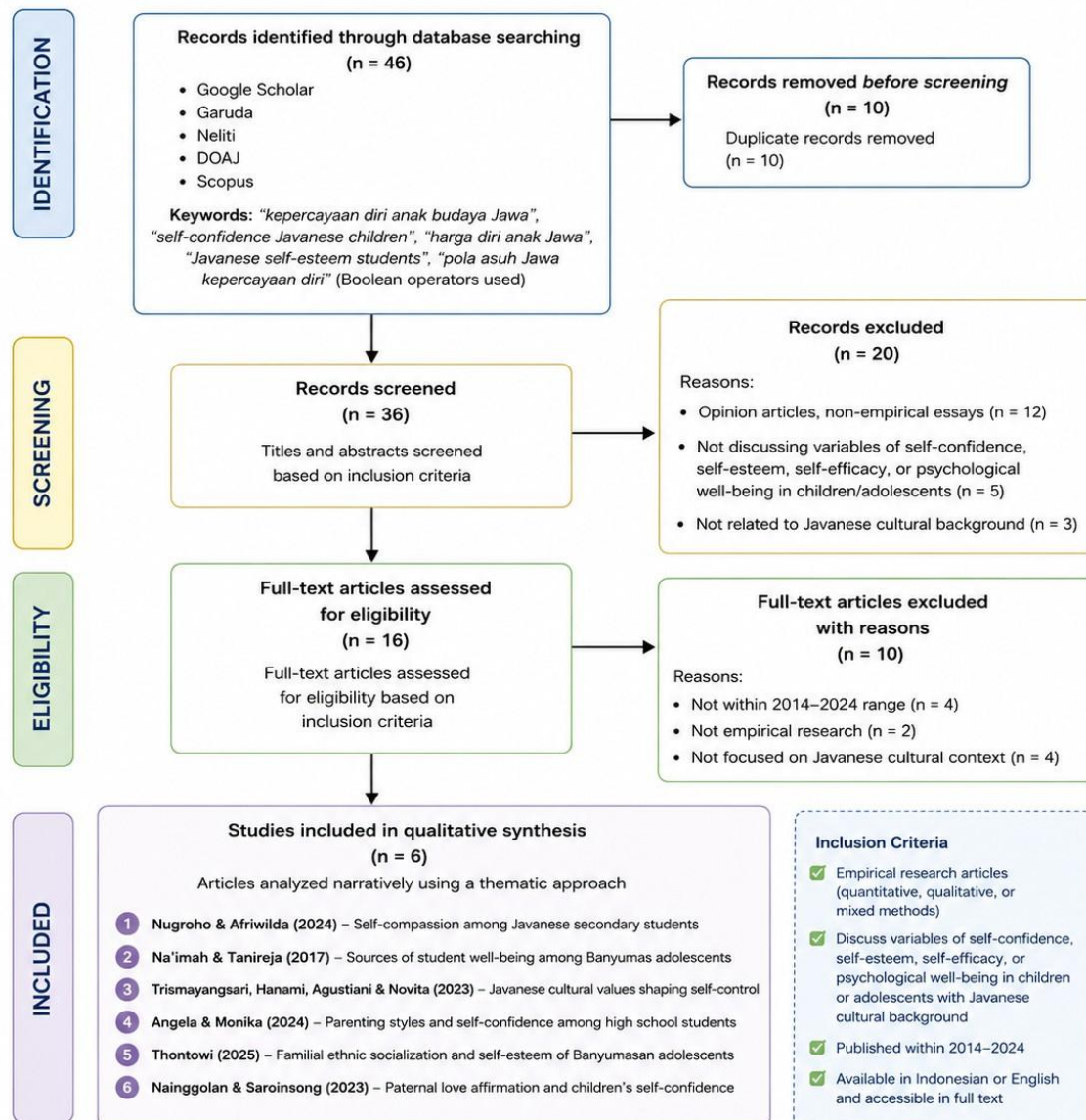
Theme 1: Internal Foundation: Self-Compassion and Self-Control

Two articles directly highlight the internal psychological dimensions that form the foundation of self-confidence in Javanese children. Nugroho and Afriwilda (2024) found that self-compassion levels among 561 Javanese secondary school students were at a moderate level and tended to be lower among males. Self-compassion in this context encompasses the ability to accept oneself, recognize failure without judgment, and maintain emotional balance—a capacity aligned with the value of *nrimo* (acceptance), yet not passive, but active in managing pressure. Meanwhile, Trismayangsari et al. (2023) qualitatively revealed that core Javanese cultural values such as politeness (*tata krama*), honesty, discipline, and trustworthiness shape strong self-control. This self-control is not restraint per se, but rather an inner strength that enables children to refrain from impulsive behavior and adhere to social propriety. These two findings underscore that the foundation of Javanese children's self-confidence begins from within: the ability to love oneself appropriately and to manage oneself according to moral order.

ernal Foundation: Self-Compassion and Self-Control; (2) Socialization Vehicle: Parenting and Love Affirmation as "*Nandur Kabecikan*"; and (3) Fruits of Cultural Identity: Psychological Well-Being and Self-Esteem as "*Ngundhuh Kawibawan*."

PRISMA FLOW DIAGRAM

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Note: PRISMA 2020 flow diagram adapted for literature review.

Theme 2: Socialization Vehicle: Parenting and Love Affirmation as "*Nandur Kabecikan*"

Two subsequent articles demonstrate that the family serves as the primary field for planting goodness (*nandur kabecikan*), which will later cultivate authority. Angela and Monika (2024) proved a strong positive correlation between both maternal ($r = 0.742$) and paternal ($r = 0.811$) parenting styles and self-confidence among 311 high school students in Jakarta. The parenting style in question encompasses dimensions of support, openness, and value inculcation, aligning with the Javanese parenting philosophy of *asah*, *asih*, *asuh* (honing potential, loving, and guiding). More specifically, Nainggolan and Saroinsong (2023) found a significant relationship between paternal love affirmation and children's self-confidence in East Java. This affirmation

is not merely praise, but consistent recognition and encouragement from the father figure, who in Javanese culture is positioned as a role model who *mikul dhuwur, mendhem jero* (upholds the child's dignity and conceals their shortcomings). The father's role of affirming with love, and the mother's role of nurturing with affection (*tresna*), become seeds of virtue that make children feel valued and worthy.

Theme 3: Fruits of Cultural Identity: Psychological Well-Being and Self-Esteem as "*Ngundhuh Kawibawan*"

The remaining two articles capture the final outcomes of the self-confidence formation process in school-aged children: psychological well-being and self-esteem reinforced by cultural identity. Na'imah and Tanireja (2017) explored the sources of student well-being among Banyumas Javanese adolescents, finding that warm family relationships, social acceptance, and internalization of Javanese values were the main contributors to student happiness. This psychological well-being is an indicator that children are not only physically and academically capable, but also mentally healthy because they live in alignment with cultural guidance. More deeply, Thontowi (2025) demonstrated that familial ethnic socialization significantly influences the self-esteem of Banyumasan Javanese adolescents through the mediator of strong ethnic identity. This means that the more families instill Javanese values, the more children feel proud and connected to their identity, which subsequently enhances their self-esteem. In the context of Javanese cosmology, this condition is what is called *ngundhuh kawibawan*: children reap authority not because they stand out, but because they stand firmly on a solid cultural identity recognized by their community.

Overall, these six findings form a common thread: healthy self-control and self-acceptance (*nrimo* and self-compassion) constitute fertile soil; family parenting and affirmation serve as fertilizer; and ethnic identity and psychological well-being become the harvest of authority, manifested in the form of calm self-esteem respected by the environment.

DISCUSSION

The mapped findings confirm that self-confidence in school-aged children within Javanese culture possesses unique characteristics that cannot be fully explained by Western theories. Bandura (1997) emphasizes self-efficacy expressed through initiative, vocalness, and individual achievement. However, the findings in this review actually demonstrate that Javanese children's self-confidence grows from inner harmony and adherence to values, not from verbal or competitive self-promotion. This is what is conceptualized in this paper as *kepercayaan diri anak sekolah* (school-aged children's self-confidence), a belief in self-worth that originates from the awareness of having lived according to *kabecikan* (moral goodness) and the rules of *unggah-ungguh* (proper etiquette).

The concept of *nandur kabecikan, ngundhuh kawibawan* (Endraswara, 2006) serves as an appropriate analytical lens for interpreting the three thematic findings. *Nandur kabecikan* is reflected in the findings of Angela and Monika (2024) and Nainggolan and Saroinsong (2023) regarding parenting and paternal affirmation; parental actions of continuously guiding with love constitute the planting of goodness seeds. These seeds are received by the child's internal foundation of self-compassion (Nugroho & Afriwilda, 2024) and value-based self-control (Trismayangsari et al., 2023). Children who can accept their circumstances and manage their emotions based on principles of etiquette are essentially nurturing those seeds to grow into strong plants. Ultimately, *ngundhuh kawibawan* manifests in high psychological well-being (Na'imah & Tanireja, 2017) and self-esteem reinforced by ethnic identity (Thontowi, 2025). Children reap social recognition not because they are the loudest, but because they behave *becik* (well), which naturally brings respect and honor from their environment.

Thus, school-aged children's self-confidence possesses three distinguishing characteristics from conventional concepts. **First**, its source is relational morality. While individualistic concepts place self-confidence on personal attributes (intelligence, appearance), Javanese children derive self-confidence from relationship quality and collective assessment that they are *pantes* (worthy) and *duwe unggah-ungguh* (possess proper etiquette) (Subandi, 2011). **Second**, its expression is contextual and controlled. Self-confidence is not lost when children are silent or do not comment much; on the contrary, a measured silence in contexts requiring *sungkan* (respectful hesitation) represents a form of self-strength (Geertz, 1960; Magnis-Suseno, 1984). **Third**, it is transformative through parenting. Cultural socialization within the family becomes the most central transmission mechanism, as emphasized by Thontowi (2025) and aligned with Javanese philosophy that *wiwitan saka kulawarga* (it begins from the family).

These findings carry important implications for transcultural mental health nursing. Based on Leininger's Culture Care Theory (2002), nursing interventions will be effective if they align with the client's cultural values and practices. In the context of Javanese school-aged children, mental health nurses need to avoid individualistically biased assessments, such as directly labeling quiet children with little initiative as lacking self-confidence or socially anxious. Instead, in-depth exploration should be conducted to assess whether the child's calmness is actually a manifestation of healthy self-control, and whether their behavior is positively received by their Javanese community. Self-confidence enhancement interventions can be designed by strengthening self-compassion (Nugroho & Afriwilda, 2024) through mindfulness practices that accommodate *nrimo* values, as well as inviting parents to implement the *asah, asih, asuh* parenting style, which has been proven to enhance self-confidence (Angela & Monika, 2024). School-based programs can also involve ethnic identity affirmation to improve students' self-esteem, as indicated by Thontowi's study (2025).

On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that today's Javanese children grow up at a cultural crossroads: at home and in their social environment, they internalize harmony values, yet at school and on social media, they are encouraged to be assertive, critical, and competitive. The encounter of these two currents can create psychological tension that Chen and French (2008) refer to as cultural mismatch. Mental health nurses need to be sensitive to the risk of identity conflict and help children find healthy integration, becoming individuals who are self-confident without losing their Javanese roots, enabling them to *empan papan*, knowing how to position themselves appropriately in various contexts.

CONCLUSION

This literature review concludes that self-confidence in school-aged children within Javanese culture is formed as a distinctive construct. This self-confidence does not originate from vocal or competitive self-promotion as defined by individualistic psychology, but rather grows integratively from internal foundations, socialization vehicles, and the harvest of cultural identity. The internal foundation, consisting of moderate self-compassion that needs enhancement (Nugroho & Afriwilda, 2024) and self-control grounded in noble values such as politeness, honesty, and discipline (Trismayangsari et al., 2023), prepares fertile inner soil. The family, through *asah-asih-asuh* parenting (Angela & Monika, 2024) and paternal love affirmation (Nainggolan & Saroinsong, 2023), serves as the field for planting *kabecikan*. These seeds of goodness then reap *kawibawan* in the form of psychological well-being (Na'imah & Tanireja, 2017) and solid self-esteem supported by strong ethnic identity (Thontowi, 2025). This entire process reflects the Javanese philosophy of "nandur kabecikan, ngundhuh kawibawan" (Endraswara, 2006) and confirms that Javanese children's self-confidence is relational, moral, and contextual (Subandi, 2011).

Theoretically, the concept of school-aged children's self-confidence enriches the treasury of indigenous psychology and corrects the individualistic bias that has dominated understanding of children's self-esteem. Practically, within the framework of transcultural nursing (Leininger, 2002), mental health nurses need to abandon uniform assessments that equate silence with low self-confidence, and instead begin appreciating calmness and social propriety as expressions of healthy self-confidence. Recommended interventions include strengthening self-compassion, revitalizing parenting based on local wisdom, and affirming ethnic identity in school settings. The main limitation of this study lies in the limited number of empirical studies and the variation in Javanese subcultures that have not been mapped in depth. Future research in mental health nursing is highly recommended to develop culturally valid instruments for school-aged children's self-confidence and to test intervention models based on local wisdom to maintain child mental health rooted in their cultural identity.

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