

# HASIL CEK\_2021-Effect between Big Five Personality and Gender on Assertive Behavior in Students

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Effect between Big Five Personality and Gender on Assertive Behavior in  
Students

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to see the effect of big five personality and gender on assertive behavior in students. This study utilizes a quantitative method using the International Personality Item Pool Big Five Maker 50 (IPIP-BFM-50) measuring instrument and an assertive behavior scale. The subjects in this study were 100 people, consisting of 50 female students and 50 Ahmad Dahlan University students consisting of 67 classes 2018 and 33 classes 2019. The data analysis technique in this study used covariance analysis technique which was operated by the help of "SPSS version 16.0 for windows". The results of the analysis of covariance for the big five personality variable extraversion factor showed  $F = 4.914$  with  $P$  of 0.029 ( $P < 0.05$ ), agreeableness factor  $F = 11.717$  with  $P$  of 0.001 ( $P < 0.01$ ), conscientiousness  $F = 4.379$  with  $P$  of 0.039 ( $P < 0.05$ ), emotional stability  $F = 15,261$  with  $P$  of 0.000 ( $P < 0.01$ ), openness/intellect  $F = 0.023$  with  $P$  of 0.880 ( $P > 0.05$ ) for the gender variable obtained  $F = 1.698$  with  $P$  of 0.196 ( $P > 0.05$ ). The results of this study indicate that there is a big five personality effect toward student's assertive behavior and there is no difference in assertive behavior based on gender.

**Keywords:** assertive behavior, big five personality, gender,

## Introduction

Bearing the title as a student, both a matter of pride and a challenge. The period of being a student is the most suitable moment for someone to develop their potential. In general, the highest position in education is occupied by student. Student brings the paradigm of individual behavior from teenager to their actual role or function, so being student is a process of individual mindset developing to be more serious in carrying out their functions (Nasari & Darma, 2015).

Students are the agent of changes, who should have high critical thinking and be braver in expressing something. In fact, there are a lot of students realize that they are still lack in deciding something or how to behave (Anindyajati & Karima, 2004). This thing happens because the experiences gained during college emphasize on ideas development and the logical skills. Meanwhile, the ability to develop the potential and become the agent of change, student needs logical skill and also needs the ability to express ideas, feelings, and needs, and protects individual rights but still not ignoring other people's rights. Therefore, students really need to behave assertively. Assertive behavior is needed in carrying out the role as a student and also in socializing with the age-appropriate environment and with the public effectively.

Alberti and Emmons (2002), stated that assertive behavior describes a positive personality so that it can appear personal pleasure and improve the quality of relationship with other people in communication. Assertive behavior is the individual's ability to convey their desire honestly without hurting themselves and others (Jay, 2007). From these two definitions, assertive behavior is an

individual's way of expressing feelings in a firm and honest manner to others related to what they feel in good language, not offending or imposing their will, and still respecting others.

Assertive behavior is the most effective way of communication but is not often used (Anfajaya & Indrawati, 2016). Someone who has high assertive behavior will tend to find it easier to find solutions to the problems they face effectively, those with high assertive behavior are also more confident in doing things in their life (Anfajaya & Indrawati 2016). In contrast, individuals who have low assertive behavior are lack in expressing feelings directly and openly because they tend to keep things that should be said. Things like this can affect mental health, even the tendency to depression. In addition, people with low assertive behavior are also prone to be aggressive because they are lack in understanding the assertive behavior itself, so they cannot distinguish assertive behavior and aggressive behavior. For the example is a case that happened in early 2018, the Head of BEM UI was desperate to give a yellow card to President Joko Widodo to be able to convey his aspirations. This is not a form of assertive behavior, but it is an aggressive act.

One part of communication ethics is telling the truth and being honest. Allah always commands mankind to be pious and speak the truth. The basic principle of communication ethics in Islam is the proper utterances. Islam also highly upholds honesty, individuals are judged by their honest words. Being honest means telling the truth according to your heart and words, and based on reality. Islam teaches Moslem to always speak straightforwardly and correctly, in surah Al-Ahzab verse 70 Allah says which means: "*O you who believe, fear Allah and speak the truth*"

Researchers conducted interviews with several Ahmad Dahlan University students, based interviews, the average student was unable to behave assertively in reasons of protecting the other's feeling, such as many students can not say no when their friends ask the answers on assignments or during the exams, and when doing group assignments, they can't be brave to warn a friend who doesn't do the assignment according to their part, beside that, during the class or discussion many students also unwilling to express opinions or ask questions directly to the lecturer so that sometimes students don't understand the material presented. Students are also afraid that when they are trying to defend their opinion they are considered to behave aggressively, and afraid of being wrong when they show opinion, beside that the researcher also made observations in class C, students of 2017 Psychology Study Program, Ahmad Dahlan University, during the learning process in class, only few students which tended to be active in class or in campus organizations dared to express their opinions. When the students do not understand the materials presented by the lecturer, no student dares to convey it because they feel shame.

Students must have assertive behavior for several reasons, namely assertive attitudes and behavior make it easier for students to establish relationships and socialize effectively with their peers or outside their environment. Assertive students tend to be easier to deal with problems faced during the courses because they are able to express and convey what they feel openly and do not hold back, so there is no psychological repression and this can reduce the risk of students depression. One way to find out assertive behavior in students is to look at their relationship with other people in daily activities. An example is when students are able to express their objections to other people's invitation without offending and without feeling guilty, dare to have opinions when in class, and dare to convey to the lecturer when they feel they do not understand the materials being studied.

Alberti and Emmons (2002) stated that gender, personality type, level of education, self-esteem, culture, and certain environmental situations are factors that influence assertive behavior. In this study, researchers are interested in exploring personality type and gender as variables that influence assertive behavior. Feist and Feist (2008) states that a personality is a form of relatively permanent and unique characteristics that consistently lead to individual behavior. A sedentary personality tends to motivate individuals to behave in accordance with the goals and demands given. Personality is a reflection of a person's behavior. *Big five personality* is one of the well-known personality types in psychology. *Big five personality* divides personality into five factors,

namely *extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness* (Feist & Feist, 2010).

Besides being influenced by personality, gender also influences assertive behavior. Alberti and Emmons (2002), stated that the duties and education of men and women have been differentiated since childhood by society. Since childhood, boys must be firm, brave, and competitive, in contrast to girls who are taught to be gentle, sensitive, and accept orders so that boys are more assertive than girls.

Juliano (2015), states that masculine (male) and feminine (female) have a comparison of communication styles. Therefore, men and women have different characteristics when communicating. In general, in society, men dominate the conversation and are more expressive than women. In a conversation, women tend to tell something convoluted, while men are more concise and clear. Men will say what they want to say with the assumption that the message conveyed is clear and on purpose. Men will immediately ask when they want something, while women tend to ask a lot of questions when speaking which shows doubts in expressing themselves. Feminists are more concerned with building relationships and showing positive responses, while masculines are oriented towards completing tasks, showing themselves, and gaining power. Specifically, women are more interested in relationships or closeness, while men are more interested in status and power.

Other differences between men and women can also be seen based on verbal and non-verbal communication. Women talk more about personal things. Women have wider vocabulary to describe their emotions, while men usually talk about general topics in conversation, men make conversations as a form of a command, convey information, and seek approval. Based on non-verbal communication, men will show appropriate expressions according to what is conveyed, while women are more expressive but they have less control (Juliano, 2015).

This study was conducted to see whether assertive behavior in Ahmad Dahlan University students can be influenced by the *big five personality* and gender. The hypothesis proposed in this study is that there is a role for *big five personality and gender on assertive behavior in students*.

### **Assertive Behavior**

Lloyd (1991), describes assertive behavior as an active, honest, direct, and open attitude in communication. This behavior can show individual respect for oneself and other people so that it can make people respect individual freedoms, needs, and desires as well as the freedoms, needs, and desires of other individuals. *Assertive* behavior concerns all aspects of human life and behavior, but from all aspects, there are three aspects as the best representative they are aspects of communication, aspects of empathy, and aspects of action (Getol, 2012).<sup>19</sup>

Some assertive behavior aspects above are described through *aspects of assertive behavior* according to Alberti and Emmons (2002) as follows:

1. Do something according to your own will. Includes the ability to make decisions, set goals, foster initiative and self-confidence.
2. Be honest and express your feelings comfortably. Includes the ability to express emotions, express disapproval, show a sense of friendship, and accept and acknowledge feelings of fear or anxiety.
3. Able to defend yourself. Includes skills in defending opinions, being assertive, saying "no" when it is necessary, and the ability to respond openly to anger and criticism from others.
4. Able to express an opinion. Includes skills in expressing opinions and ideas, making changes, taking responsibility for violations against oneself, and responding to violations of others.
5. Respect the rights of others. includes the ability to express opinions, input, or criticism without threatening, hurting, demeaning, and cornering others.

Lloyd (1991) states that assertive behavior can be influenced by several factors including:

1. Gender. The formation of individual character since childhood tends to make women less assertive, since childhood women are required to obey more and have fewer opportunities to express thoughts and feelings than men.
2. Pride. Individual belief in oneself accompanied by feelings of worth strengthens the justification for the abilities of the individual. Acceptance that exists in the individual increases self-esteem so that it leads to social freedom.
3. Level of education. Education determines an individual's perspective on something. Individuals with a high level of education tend to have broader thinking skills, so that opportunities for self-development are more open because individuals will behave as expected by society, namely direct, honest, and open attitudes and do not violate applicable norms.
4. Personality type. Personality is a reflection of the behavior shown by the individual. Certain personality types in individuals will lead to behavior that is different from other individuals.
5. Culture. Behavior that appears is also influenced by customs and culture. Culture is usually born as an indication of limits on the behavior of each individual.

Analysis related to human nature was carried out by Allport and Odbert for the first time in the 1930s until it later developed into the *big five personality theory* introduced by Lewis R. Goldberg and previously this five-factor model of personality theory has been studied by Cattell. Goldberg (in Ramdhani, 2012) in his research states that every individual has differences in each of their characteristics. Goldberg defines the *big five personality* as a personality classification that is formed based on a *lexical approach*, namely grouping words, and everyday language to describe the most basic differences in individuals (Ramdhani, 2012).

Robbins and Judge (2014), revealed that the personality of each individual is different. The *big five personality factors* represent the characteristics of most individuals. The five factors in the *big five personality* are called the *five-factor model*. Individuals can find out their personality by comparing these five factors.

Based on the explanation above, it is concluded that the *big five personality* are a personality type that describes the characteristics of individuals in their lives through five factors, namely *extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness*.

Goldberg (in Akhtar & Azwar, 2019) explains that the *Big Five Personality* has five factors, namely:

1. *Extraversion* is a factor that measures the way an individual is energized, active, socially supported, and happy. Characteristics of individuals with high scores are cheerful, fun like to talk and gather. While individuals who tend to be closed, quiet, individualistic, passive, and less able to express emotions have low scores.
2. *Agreeableness* is a personality factor that shows a positive attitude towards others. Individuals who easily trust others are humble, caring, and trustworthy are individuals who have high *agreeableness*. While individuals with low scores tend to be stingy, cynical, rude. cold towards others and hard to believe
3. *Conscientiousness* is a personality factor that shows a pattern in achieving goals and doing tasks. Individuals who are hardworking, punctual, able to endure adversity, and are careful usually have high scores. On the other hand, individuals who are lazy, careless, disorganized, aimless, and give up easily are individuals with low scores.
4. *Emotional stability* is a personality factor that shows an individual's emotional stability. Individuals with high *emotional stability scores* are individuals who are calm, can control their emotions, and are satisfied with themselves. While individuals who have low scores usually have emotional, temperamental, and full of anxiety.
5. *Openness/Intellect* is a *big five personality* factor that sees individual openness to new things, independence, and creativity. Individuals who are creative, imaginative, have high curiosity, and broad-minded are individuals who have high scores, while individuals who are usually boring, formal, and indifferent to something have low scores.

## Gender

According to Hungu (in Budiyanti, 2019), gender or sex is a biological difference from birth between men and women. Biologically, men and women have different forms of reproductive organs, hormone levels, and chromosomes, for example, women can produce eggs and have menstruation, while men can produce sperm.

Lippa (2005) said that there is a stereotype about some characteristics in the difference of men and women. Men known as independent, not emotional, competitive, dominate, arrogant and aggressive. Women known as soft, lovely, sensitive, not independent, and full of worry. In the biological process which may influence men psychology produce testosterone and progesterone hormone which can increase aggressiveness, so that in activity, men tend to be stable, rational, and more initiative in communication, besides, men tend to lead the conversation (Liliweri, 2011). Women produce estrogen hormone which may influence the psychology and emotion so that women are more sentimental and more sensitive (Suhardin, 2016). Besides, Bestable (2002) also show there are a lot of difference most of the culture, role or function on men and women. Men are usually more assertive, dominate, active and destructive than women.

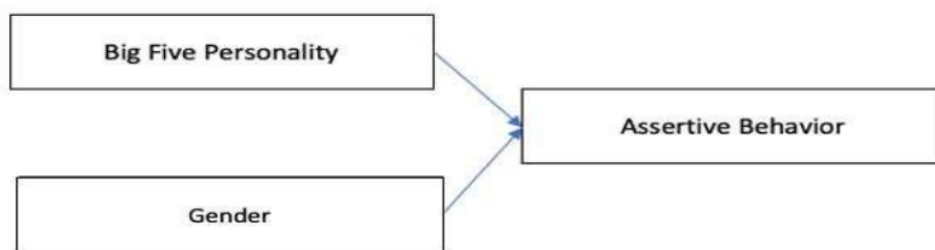


Fig.1 Theoretical framework of the study

## Method

The research method used in this study is a quantitative approach. The instruments used are the assertive behavior scale and the *International Personality Item Pool Big Five Maker 50* (IPIP-BFM-50) which have been adapted and translated into Indonesian by (Akhtar & Azwar, 2019). The subjects of this study were active undergraduate students of the 2018 and 2019 batches from seven faculties at Ahmad Dahlan University. This research uses a *non-probability sampling technique*, namely the *purposive sampling technique*. Data collection was carried out online by distributing a google form containing a research scale to active undergraduate students of 2018 and 2019 in seven faculties and 20 study programs at Ahmad Dahlan University. Researchers spread the scale through *WhatsApp media* by distributing it to class groups and organizational groups. All calculations for the analysis of this research data use the program "SPSS version 16.0 windows".

## Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of *big five personality* and gender on assertive behavior. There are two factors of the *big five personality* variable that have very significant influence on assertive behavior, namely the *agreeableness* factor with  $P$  of 0.001 ( $P < 0.01$ ) and *emotional stability* with  $P$  of 0.000 ( $P < 0.01$ ). *Five personality* have a significant influence on assertive behavior, namely *extraversion* with a  $P$  of 0.029 ( $P < 0.05$ ) and *conscientiousness* with a  $P$  of 0.039 ( $P < 0.05$ ). One factor in the *big five personality* that do not have a significant effect on assertive behavior is the *openness/intellect* factor with a  $P$  of 0.880 ( $P > 0.05$ ).

The results of the fifth regression test of the big five personality factors showed that the *big five personality* had a very significant correlation with assertive behavior. Thus, hypothesis testing can be carried out using covariance analysis techniques by including the five factors in the *big five personality variables* as covariables. The results of the regression analysis test are shown in Table 13 below.

**Table 1. Regression Analysis Test Results**

Variable	P	R2 -	Description
Assertive Behavior	0.002	0.092	Very significant
<i>Extraversion</i>			
Assertive Behavior	0.000	0.147	Very significant
<i>Agreeableness</i>			
Assertive Behavior	0.002	0.095	Very significant
<i>Conscientiousness</i>			
Assertive Behavior	0.002	0.098	Very significant
<i>Emotional stability</i>			
Assertive Behavior	0.003	0.089	Very significant
<i>Openness/Intellect</i>			

The gender variable obtained  $F = 1.698$  with a  $P$  of  $0.196$  ( $P > 0.05$ ) meaning that there was no difference in assertive behavior based on gender, so it was concluded from the two independent variables which had an influence on assertive behavior, namely the *big five personality variable* with a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of  $0.337$  or  $33.7\%$  assertive behavior influenced by the *big five personality*. While the gender variable does not affect assertive behavior. The results of the covariance analysis test are shown in Table 14 below.

**Table 2. Covariance Analysis Test Results**

variables	F	sig "p"	Description
<i>Extraversion</i>	4,914	0.029	Received
<i>Agreeableness</i>	11,717	0.001	Received
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	4,379	0.039	Received
<i>Emotional stability</i>	15, 261	0.000	Received
<i>Openness/Intellect</i>	0.023	0.880	Rejected
Gender	1,698	0.196	Rejected

Based on the results of the analysis using the covariance analysis technique, only the *big five personality variables* have an influence on assertive behavior, while the results for the gender variable show that male and female assertive behavior is the same, it means that gender doesn't influence on assertive behavior, so the hypothesis is rejected.

## Discussion

The results of this study indicate that personality type has an influence on assertive behavior. It can be seen from the analysis results that four of the five *big five personality factors* namely *extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability*, have an influence on assertive behavior, while the *Openness/Intellect variable* has no effect on assertive behavior.

*Agreeableness* and *emotional stability* factors have a very significant influence on assertive behavior. This can happen because of the characteristics of *agreeableness* and *emotional factors*. Individual with high *agreeableness scores* can usually express empathy, optimism, honesty, kindness, understanding, humility, and selflessness (Bagherian & Kraskian, 2019). This is the same as the aspect of assertive behavior, namely telling the truth, being able to empathize, not being selfish, and being

able to respect others. Individuals with high *emotional stability* are usually calm, unemotional, and have self-controlled. While those who have low scores are usually emotional, anxious, and temperamental. Individual with these characteristics are in contrast<sup>2</sup> the characteristics of assertive behavior and tend to behave aggressively. This is in accordance with the results of research conducted by (Bagherian & Kraskian, 2019).

Factors that have a significant influence on assertive behavior are *extraversion* and *conscientiousness* factor. Individual who have a high level of extraversion are sociable, good at socializing, like crowds, and talk a lot, individuals<sup>3</sup> with this personality will be better able to express their opinions because they have good social skills. The results of this study are in line with Hikmah's research, (2015) which states that the extroverted personality type has a significant relationship with assertive behavior. In addition, Asterina (2012) in her research also states that there is a significant relationship between personality type and assertive behavior. Individuals with high *conscientiousness* are usually hardworking, diligent, disciplined, assertive, and ambitious. Individuals with this personality will be more daring to express their opinions because they have a firm nature. This is in line with the research by Bagherian and Kraskian, (2019) which states that *conscientiousness* has an influence on assertive behavior. Bagherian and Kraskian (2019) mentions that *conscientiousness* or awareness is the highest predictor of assertiveness. Individuals who have high awareness are organized, reliable, ambitious, energetic, and strong-willed individuals. Extroversion (E) includes people who are sociable, enjoy parties, have many friends, need to talk to others, and do not like to study alone or in solitude. They are more interested in excitement and stimulation, are risk-takers and curious and are usually optimistic (Bagherian & Mojambari, 2016). This is in line with research by Yaghoobinejad and Ahour (2019) stated the variance in postgraduate students' assertiveness is explained by five personality characteristic (i.e., Openness, Neuroticism, Extroversion, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness) and which one of these characteristics significantly predict the students' assertiveness.

One of the five *big five personality factors* has no influence on assertive behavior, namely the *Openness/Intellect* factor, in line with research (Bagherian & Kraskian, 2019). Bagherian and Kraskian (2019) stated that there was no effect of *Openness/Intellect* on assertive behavior. This can happen because individuals with these factors like diversity, high curiosity, and independence, so are not too concerned with interpersonal relationships with other people, these characteristics are certainly not in accordance with the characteristics of assertive behavior that describe positive relationships or interactions with others. Another thing that can also cause there is no influence of *Openness/Intellect* on assertive behavior is the influence of generations, the subject of this research is Generation Z, where this generation is interested in something that is considered new, unique, and *out of the box* in accordance with the character of *openness* (Christiani & Ikasari, 2020). This generation is also synonymous with independence and individualism so sometimes it is more concerned with and focuses on personal freedom, this is a possibility that causes *openness* not to affect assertive behavior.

Ozor and Mgbenkemdi (2019) stated a moderate positive correlation exists between assertive behaviour and extraversion among the Nigerian Police Officers. This is because as the score on assertive behavior increased, the score on extraversion also increased and vice versa. Furthermore, a moderate negative correlation exists between assertive behaviour and neuroticism among the Nigerian Police Officers. This is because, as the score on assertive behavior increased, the score on neuroticism decreased and vice versa. In conclusion, individuals should be socialized or trained during their early childhood development to inculcate in the individuals personality trait known as extraversion. This will help to harmonize or build the individual's psychological well-being that will ensure good interpersonal relationships<sup>3</sup> with others in the environment.

The results showed that there was no difference in the assertive behavior of men and women. This result contradicts the research of Harsida (2020) which states that there is a very



significant difference between the assertive behavior of students and students at Ar-Raniry State Islamic University. In addition, Alberti and Emmons (2002) in their theory also states that gender affects assertive behavior. Men are more assertive than women.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Hasnabuana and Sawitri (2015) which states that there is no difference in assertive behavior between men and women, which means that there is no influence of gender on assertive behavior. Amas (2017) in his research also states that the assertive behavior of men and women is the same, meaning that there is no difference. Amas (2017) says that this can happen because there are other factors that influence assertive behavior, in accordance with another statement by Alberti and Emmons (2002) that assertive behavior is also influenced by other factors, namely education level, parenting, cultural factors, and environmental situation. Based on the exposure in research conducted by Amas (2017) regarding the cause of the absence of differences in assertive behavior based on gender, there are other factors that influence assertive behavior more. Researchers also suspect that there are other factors that have more influence on student assertive behavior, such as personality type and culture. The current culture no longer focuses on gender roles, where it is no longer taboo that many women are able to do things that previously could only be done by men such as work and lead (Arigbabu, *et al.*, 2011). In addition, the lecture process at each faculty or even between generations can also affect assertive behavior, where faculties that use the discussion method more in-class learning are likely to be more active and assertive than faculties that use the lecture method a lot. Generational differences also tend to have an influence, on the subjects in the research on average born in 2000 and 2001 who are Generation Z. Generation Z does not translate itself based on gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation (Christiani & Ikasari, 2020), meaning that gender roles also do not affect the way of communication, including assertive behavior. There is no difference in students' assertive behavior in learning in term of parenting authoritarian, permissive and authoritarian parents (Angraini *et al.*, 2019). The findings of research support the finding that for both genders mild assertive behavior and the transformational leadership style is associated with leader effectiveness (Zijlstra, 2020).

## Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted, it is concluded that the big five personality as role in assertive behavior and gender do not have a role in assertive behavior, this is based on the results of the analysis which shows that there is no difference in assertive behavior between men and women.

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