

Communication Dynamics and the Transformation of Martial Arts Educational Values: The Role of Group Conformity and Demographic Factors in Shaping Aggressive Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Martial arts education is not only a physical training process but also a social learning environment where communication, group interaction, and shared norms shape students' behavior. Within martial arts communities, conformity to group norms may influence how students interpret discipline, courage, and aggression. This study aims to examine the influence of group conformity and demographic characteristics (age and gender) on aggressive behavior among martial arts students in East Java. Using a quantitative survey design, data were collected from respondents through a validated Likert-scale questionnaire. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the influence of the independent variables. The findings show that conformity has a negative, statistically significant effect on aggressive behavior, suggesting that adherence to positive group communication norms can reduce aggression. Age shows a positive and significant effect, while gender does not have a significant partial effect. Simultaneously, conformity, age, and gender explain the variance in aggressive behavior. These findings highlight the importance of communication dynamics and positive group norms in martial arts training environments as mechanisms for reducing aggressive tendencies among students.

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INTRODUCTION

Martial arts education is an educational approach that aims to enhance personal safety, foster psychological empowerment, and prevent violence through physical and mental training. Empirical studies have demonstrated that empowerment self-defense effectively reduces the risk of sexual violence and boosts self-confidence and self-efficacy, particularly among women and adolescents (Hollander & Beaujolais, 2024). Innovative approaches, such as virtual simulations and profession-based martial arts, also enhance individuals' preparedness for potentially dangerous situations (Apo & Redei, 2021). Education focused on physical techniques, such as situational awareness, body control, and self-protection skills, also plays a significant role in shaping students' character. In addition to functioning as a physical training environment, martial arts education also operates as a social communication space where values, norms, and behavioral expectations are transmitted

through interaction (Lafuente et al., 2021; Mickelsson, 2025). Communication between instructors and students, as well as interactions among peers within training groups, play an important role in shaping how martial arts participants interpret discipline, courage, and self-control (Sinulingga et al., 2024). Through repeated interpersonal communication, verbal instructions, and shared training experiences, students gradually internalize group norms that guide their behavior, including how they respond to conflict or potentially aggressive situations.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that pedagogically designed martial arts education effectively reduces aggressive attitudes, enhances self-control, and fosters a nonviolent orientation by internalizing values such as discipline, respect, and responsibility (Tejero-González et al., 2011). The integration of character education through instructor example, moral reflection, and the creation of a positive training climate has been shown to foster students' confidence, social awareness, and prosocial behavior (Schwamberger & Curtner-Smith, 2017). Furthermore, other studies have demonstrated that empowerment-based approaches to self-defense and responsibility-oriented physical education models can substantially enhance students' self-efficacy, cooperation, and social orientation (Brunsdon, 2025; Thompson, 2014). Martial arts education has undergone a shift in values due to changes in the times and in pedagogical orientation. While it still emphasizes self-control and conflict avoidance, modern martial arts education increasingly emphasizes empowerment, courage, readiness to face threats, and an active response to attacks (Hollander & Cunningham, 2020). This shift raises concerns about the potential blurring of adaptive courage and aggressiveness, particularly if not balanced with adequate education in emotional control and martial ethics. Holmes (2021) suggests that martial arts trainees may experience increased courage and situational anger during simulated attacks, even if the anger is controlled aggression. This could lead to an escalation of aggressiveness if emotional control and value reflection are not systematically managed in the educational process.

Aggressiveness is a behavioral pattern characterized by the intent to inflict physical, verbal, or social harm upon others. A complex interplay of individual, social, and situational factors influences this behavior. Previous research has demonstrated that low emotion regulation, non-adaptive parenting styles, and violent experiences are significant contributors to the development of aggressive tendencies in both adolescents and adults (Poorolajal et al., 2020; Sakanaka et al., 2020). In educational contexts, aggressive tendencies may also be influenced by social interaction patterns, peer influence, and communication processes within groups. In the context of martial arts education, aggressiveness emerges as a pivotal issue. The acquisition of self-defense techniques can be misconstrued as endorsing aggressive behavior if not appropriately contextualized. Students' aggressiveness is influenced by self-concept, parenting practices, and less supportive educational environments (García-linares et al., 2014; Zafra et al., 2019). Conversely, approaches that emphasize discipline, emotional control, and nonviolent values have demonstrated the capacity to mitigate aggressive attitudes and foster prosocial behaviors effectively.

Aggressiveness also closely relates to group interactions because individual behavior is strongly influenced by norms, dynamics, and social identities within groups. Group norms can reinforce or suppress aggressiveness, especially when individuals adjust their behavior to align with dominant group expectations (Berger et al., 2011). From a communication perspective, group interaction serves as a mechanism for exchanging, reinforcing, and shaping values, expectations, and behavioral standards among members. Through these communication dynamics, individuals may adopt attitudes and behaviors consistent with the group's dominant norms. In educational settings, group interaction has been shown to encourage student conformity through social pressure mechanisms, friendship dynamics, and task dependence within groups. Students tend to adapt their attitudes, opinions, and behaviors to group norms in order to gain social acceptance and avoid

rejection (Beran et al., 2014). Repeated interactions with peers strengthen these conformity tendencies and shape collective behavioral expectations within the group.

Based on this description, there appears to be a significant gap, especially related to how the transformation of values in martial arts education from the orientation of self-control to the emphasis on courage and active response interacts with group conformity and demographic characteristics in shaping students' aggressive behavior. The lack of empirical studies in East Java further underscores the urgency of this research. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of conformity and demographic characteristics, particularly age and gender, on aggressive behavior among martial arts students in East Java. Social Learning Theory posits that individual behavior is influenced by observing, imitating, and receiving reinforcement within social settings. Bandura (1977) suggests that people acquire behaviors not only through personal experience but also by observing others and noting the outcomes of their actions. This process of learning by observation allows individuals to adopt behaviors that are seen as acceptable or rewarded in their social context.

In educational settings, Social Learning Theory underscores the significance of interactions between teachers and students, as well as the impact of peers on behavior formation. Students often look to the actions of teachers, senior members, or classmates as benchmarks for their own behavior. When behaviors such as discipline, emotional regulation, and respect are consistently modeled and reinforced, students are likely to emulate them. In martial arts education, the training environment offers chances for observational learning through demonstrations, instructions, and participant interactions. Students learn not only physical skills but also observe how instructors convey values such as self-control, responsibility, and conflict resolution (Lafuente et al., 2021; Yu & Mantuhac, 2024). Through ongoing interaction and communication within the training group, these values can be internalized and shape how students react to potentially aggressive situations. Conversely, if aggressive behavior is deemed acceptable within the group, individuals might also replicate such actions through the same learning process. Thus, Social Learning Theory serves as a valuable framework for understanding how aggressive behavior among martial arts students can either develop or be curbed through observation, interaction, and communication within the training environment.

Group Communication Theory explores how interactions within groups influence individual attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors through message exchange, shared meanings, and social influence (Ganat, 2024). In group environments, communication processes are crucial in forming norms, expectations, and behavior patterns that guide members' actions. Individuals within a group often modify their behavior to align with shared norms to maintain acceptance and cohesion (Spears, 2020). Through discussions, feedback, encouragement, or subtle social cues, group members create a social setting in which behavioral expectations are continually negotiated and reinforced (Hogg & Reid, 2006). Consequently, group communication serves as a mechanism for developing conformity and collective identity. In martial arts education, training groups serve as social communication systems in which instructors and students interact regularly. Through verbal instructions, demonstrations, and peer interactions, participants exchange information and reinforce shared values like discipline, respect, and self-control (Boudh, 2021). These communication processes help establish group norms that shape students' understanding of appropriate behavior during training and social interactions. Group communication dynamics can also affect the emergence or suppression of aggressive behavior. When group communication emphasizes ethical values, emotional regulation, and respect for others, students are more likely to adopt non-aggressive behavioral norms (Phung & Goldberg, 2021). Conversely, if aggressive behavior is implicitly accepted or reinforced within group interactions, members may adjust their behavior to align with group expectations. Thus, Group Communication Theory offers a valuable perspective for understanding how interaction and

communication within martial arts training groups shape conformity processes and influence students' aggressive behavior (Boudh, 2021; Kuśnierz et al., 2025; Mangwanda, 2019).

Conformity is a form of social influence in which individuals adjust their attitudes, opinions, or behaviors to align with a group's norms or views. This adjustment can occur due to the urge to be socially accepted (*normative influence*) or because of the belief that the group has more correct information (*informative influence*). Neurocognitively, conformity is related to mechanisms of reinforcement learning in the brain, especially in the *ventral striatum* and *medial prefrontal cortex*, which process the difference between personal and majority opinion as a "social wrong" that needs to be corrected (Klucharev & Shestakova, 2021). Previous research has shown that crisis contexts reinforce conformity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, risk perception, fear emotions, and individual knowledge have been shown to increase the tendency to follow the majority's behavior, both in social compliance and consumption behavior (Li et al., 2021; Yao, 2019). In the digital context, conformity also increases in online environments, influenced by group size, interaction intensity, and age stereotypes, where individuals tend to follow opinions considered more competent (Wijenayake et al., 2021; Wijenayake & Goncalves, 2025). Psychological factors also play a role. Individuals with high moral competence tend to be less conformist, while emotions actually increase acceptance of social norms and obedience to the majority (Mofakhami, 2021; Prade & Saroglou, 2023). Overall, previous research confirms that conformity is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by social context, technology, emotions, and neurocognitive mechanisms (Capuano & Chekroun, 2024).

Age, in the context of martial arts education, refers to the stages of an individual's biological, psychological, and social development that affect physical readiness, emotional maturity, cognitive ability, and how learners respond to the values, norms, and practices of martial arts practice. Previous research has shown that age is an important factor in determining the meaning and impact of martial arts education. In children and adolescents, martial arts function as an educational tool that supports motor development, balance, and body coordination (Kowalczyk et al., 2025), while strengthening cognitive and emotional aspects such as self-control, emotion regulation, self-confidence, and reducing aggressive tendencies (Castillo et al., 2024; Bailey et al., 2025). At this stage, age is also closely related to personality formation and the internalization of moral values, and martial education, including traditional martial arts, has been shown to contribute to more balanced personality development, such as increased attitudes of discipline, responsibility, and respect for others (Lin et al., 2024). In addition, age-appropriate learning approaches, such as game-based methods, are effective in increasing social interaction and cooperation among children (Giardullo et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, in the adult and elderly age groups, martial arts education is more interpreted as an effort to maintain physical health and neuromuscular balance, increase mobility, and support mental well-being and independence (Mustafa et al., 2022). However, research also confirms the importance of adjusting intensity and exercise techniques with age to minimize the risk of injury (Liebau et al., 2025). Thus, age is not only a demographic characteristic, but also a determinant factor that influences the goals, methods, and implications of martial arts education in shaping behaviors, including aggressive behaviors, contextually and sustainably. Gender in the context of martial arts education refers to biological differences between males and females, whereas gender is understood as a social construct that shapes an individual's roles, identities, expressions, and behavioral expectations within a martial arts training environment. Previous research has shown that martial arts education is a social space in which gender is not only "owned", but also "performed" (*doing gender*) through interactions, practice norms, and pedagogical practices (Johansson et al., 2025). In this context, martial arts are often associated with masculinities such as strength, courage, and aggressiveness, but studies show that these activities are not seen as inappropriate for women and can instead challenge established gender stereotypes (Umgaev, 2015). For women, participation in

martial arts can increase their sense of physical and psychological empowerment, strengthen confidence and body control, although the impact is often still individual and has not completely shaken the broader social gender structure (Hamilton, 2020; Velija et al., 2013). In addition, martial arts education is also an important space for non-binary and transgender gender inclusion, although they still face the challenges of cisgender and heteronormative normativity, thus requiring a more sensitive and inclusive pedagogical approach (Kavoura et al., 2022). Another study confirms that the design of gender-responsive martial arts programs, including for girls and mothers, can improve leadership, discipline, and social participation without negating their gender identity (Hayhurst et al., 2014; Leberman & Hurst, 2022). Thus, gender in martial arts education is not just a demographic variable but a sociocultural factor that influences learning experiences, power relations, participation patterns, and behavior formation, including aggressive behavior, and must be critically understood in the development of equitable and transformative martial arts education.

Aggressive behavior is behavior that is carried out to hurt others, both physically, verbally, and socially. Aggression can manifest as physical aggression (direct violence), verbal aggression (threats or insults), or relational or social aggression, such as ostracization and the spread of rumors (Krahé, 2022). This behavior does not stand alone; the interaction among psychological, situational, and biological factors influences it. Aggression is closely related to cognitive and affective processes. Individuals with hostile attribution bias tend to interpret ambiguous situations as threats, making it easier to react aggressively. Recent studies have shown that anger traits trigger reactive aggression through hostile attribution bias, particularly in adolescents, and cognitive interventions are effective in lowering them (Lin et al., 2024). In addition, personality traits such as neuroticism, impulsivity, and hostility are also important predictors of aggressiveness (Dong et al., 2022; Hornsveld & Kraaimaat, 2023). From a situational perspective, exposure to violence through the media, bullying, and victimization experiences increases aggressive tendencies. *The General Aggression Model* (GAM) posits that exposure to violent video games can increase aggression through mechanisms such as anger, hostility, and moral disengagement (Yao, 2019). Pro-bullying attitudes and impulsivity reinforce the link between adolescents' experiences of violence and aggression (Lawrence, 2024). Biologically, aggression is influenced by the regulation of emotions, the nervous system, and hormones, although these factors interact with social contexts (Foell & Patrick, 2021). Recent studies confirm that aggression is multidimensional and dynamic. In fact, exposure to violent media with a prosocial context can reduce aggressiveness in certain individuals (Santos et al., 2025). Thus, understanding aggression demands an integrative approach to effective prevention and intervention.

Martial arts education (*self-defense education*) is an educational approach that aims to equip individuals with physical, cognitive, and psychological skills to protect themselves from threats, while increasing confidence and situational awareness. Martial arts education no longer focuses on physical techniques alone, but integrates technology, empowerment approaches, and sensitivity to the needs of diverse groups. Previous research has shown that integrating digital technology into martial arts education, such as applications, sensors, simulations, and virtual reality (VR), can improve learning effectiveness and enhance exercise accessibility. This approach allows for real-time feedback and more adaptive training than traditional methods (Apo & Redei, 2021). In addition, technology can bridge the limitations of space and time in modern martial arts education. Approach *Empowerment Self-Defense* (ESD) is a key focus of current research. ESD emphasizes empowerment, assertiveness, and change in social power relations, especially for women. Empirical research shows that ESD significantly lowers the risk of sexual violence and increases self-efficacy and courage to face risky situations (Hollander & Cunningham, 2020). Martial arts education within this framework does not encourage aggressiveness, but rather controlled resistance oriented towards self-protection. From a psychological perspective, martial arts training has been shown to increase confidence, decision-

making under pressure, and emotional control in the face of threats (Hayhurst et al., 2014). Recent research also highlights the importance of group dynamics in martial arts classes that play a role in creating a supportive environment and reinforcing learning (Brecklin & Middendorf, 2014). However, recent studies confirm that martial arts education is still often marginalized in formal violence prevention programs. In fact, empirical evidence suggests that the integration of martial arts education into public health-based prevention programs can have a significant protective impact (Cermele et al., 2022). Therefore, contemporary martial arts education should be positioned as a holistic educational intervention that balances physical, ethical, and psychosocial empowerment.

Conformity communication significantly influences the aggressive behavior of martial arts students, as individuals tend to adjust their attitudes and behaviors to align with prevailing group norms. In martial arts groups, communication patterns that emphasize uniformity and group cohesion may encourage members to imitate dominant behaviors, including aggression. Recent empirical studies show that conformity to permissive group norms towards aggression can encourage the emergence of aggressive behavior. Otsubo et al. (2024) show that individuals exhibit greater aggression when members of their group are also aggressive, especially among those with a high fear of social rejection. These findings are relevant to the context of martial arts education, where students may mimic the aggressive behavior of seniors or instructors if aggression is perceived as part of a group identity. In addition, Puzanova et al. (2022) assert that students' conformity levels are influenced by psychosocial factors such as suggestivity and affiliation needs, which can reinforce the tendency to follow group norms without critical evaluation. In a martial arts training environment, group dynamics play a major role in shaping participant behavior, as shown by Brecklin and Middendorf (2014), who found that group interactions greatly influence trainees' responses and behaviors. Thus, if the norm in the martial arts group emphasizes aggressiveness over self-control and ethics, conformity may increase students' aggressive behavior.

Age has a significant influence on the aggressive behavior of martial arts students, as it relates to emotional development, self-control, and the search for social identity. Recent empirical studies show that as adolescence progresses, aggressiveness tends to increase (Sniras, 2024). It was found that students aged 14–15 years showed higher levels of physical and verbal aggression than those aged 12–13 years in the context of physical education, a context relevant to martial arts training, which also involves physical activity and competition. These findings are in line with previous research showing an increase in physical aggression from lower to higher grade levels, suggesting that maturity is associated with greater emotional intensity and greater courage in expressing aggression (Shaikh et al., 2014). In more mature age groups, such as college students and young adults, aggressiveness is still influenced by age but is also mediated by psychological factors such as self-control and emotional intelligence; emotionally mature individuals tend to be able to suppress aggressive behavior despite being at an age with a high potential for aggression (Baaklini, 2018). In addition, longitudinal research shows that without proper interventions, aggressiveness in adolescence can continue into young adulthood, while personality-based programs are effective in lowering aggression in the long term. (Lawrence, 2024). In the context of martial arts education, these findings confirm that age plays an important role in shaping students' aggressive behavior, underscoring the need for a pedagogical approach tailored to the stage of development and emphasizing self-control and martial ethics.

Gender has a significant influence on the aggressive behavior of martial arts students, both in terms of the form of aggression and the underlying psychological mechanisms. In general, men tend to show higher physical aggression than women, while women express aggression more in verbal form and emotional anger (Ifeanacho & Emmanuel, 2018; Padgett & Tremblay, 2020). Recent findings reinforce this pattern in the context of physical education and martial arts (Guo, 2025). It was found that in physical education students, physical aggression in men was associated with a low level of

agreeableness, while in women aggression was more influenced by neuroticism and emotion regulation. In the context of martial arts training, males generally show higher effectiveness in actual defensive responses, which can increase the tendency to instrumental aggression when faced with conflict (Williams & Hebl, 2005). In contrast, research shows that martial arts training has a very significant psychological impact on women, such as increased self-confidence, decreased symptoms of trauma, and reduced hostility, which has the potential to suppress maladaptive aggressiveness (Holmes et al., 2021). Recent studies have also shown that physical activity can reduce aggressive behavior by increasing self-control, with stronger effects in women than in men (Yue et al., 2025). Thus, gender differences affect not only the level of aggressiveness but also the form, triggers, and responses to martial arts education, so the training approach needs to be pedagogically sensitive to gender.

Conformity, age, and gender simultaneously influence the aggressive behavior of martial arts learners by interacting to shape individual responses to group norms, psychological development, and social roles. In terms of gender, research consistently shows that men tend to display higher physical aggression than women, while women express aggression more verbally or internally (Ifeanacho & Emmanuel, 2017; Sniras, 2024). In the context of martial arts, these differences can affect the way participants interpret and execute defensive responses (Williams & Hebl, 2005). Age also plays an important role; Older adolescents exhibit higher levels of aggression and hostility than younger adolescents, along with increased emotional intensity, affiliation needs, and social identity searches (Kozina, 2012). Meanwhile, conformity reinforces age- and gender-based influences through adjustments to group norms. Martial arts participants tend to mimic aggressive behaviors that are considered normal or valued in their training groups, especially when self-control and emotion regulation are still developing (Baaklini, 2018). Recent empirical studies show that both individual and social factors significantly influence adolescent aggressiveness; low self-regulation and self-control, which are often influenced by group pressure, are directly correlated with increased aggressiveness (Kaveh et al., 2025). Thus, the aggressive behavior of martial arts learners cannot be explained by a single factor; rather, it results from the simultaneous interaction of social conformity, developmental stages, and gender differences.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, explanatory research design. The quantitative method was chosen because the study aims to examine the causal relationship between conformity and aggressive behavior in an objective, measurable, and statistically testable manner. The subjects of this study were martial arts students in East Java, with a total sample of 115 respondents drawn from martial arts education communities. The sampling technique selected respondents who actively participated in martial arts training, ensuring that the collected data were relevant to the research focus. The purpose of this study was to analyze the effect of conformity on aggressive behavior among martial arts students. In addition, the study sought to determine the extent to which conformity contributes to explaining variations in aggressive behavior. In this research, conformity communication was the independent variable (X), and aggressive behavior was the dependent variable (Y). Age and gender were included as demographic variables to enrich the analysis and provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the findings based on respondents' characteristics.

The research instrument used was a questionnaire based on a mixed Likert scale consisting of both favorable (positive) and unfavorable (negative) statements. This scale was designed to measure the levels of conformity and aggressive behavior quantitatively. Data were collected by distributing questionnaires to respondents who met the research criteria. Prior to conducting the main analysis, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability to ensure that each item accurately and

consistently measured the intended variables. The collected data were analyzed using validity and reliability tests as preliminary steps to ensure the instrument's quality. The main analysis used simple linear regression to determine the effect of conformity on students' aggressive behavior. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the extent to which conformity contributed to explaining the variance in aggressive behavior. The results were then interpreted by accounting for differences in age and gender to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig.(2-tailed)	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig.(2-tailed)
X1	.480**	0.000	Y5	.680**	0.000
X3	.307**	0.001	Y6	.651**	0.000
X4	.617**	0.000	Y8	.568**	0.000
X5	.548**	0.000	Y9	.421**	0.000
X6	.581**	0.000	Y10	.728**	0.000
X7	.525**	0.000	Y11	.691**	0.000
X8	.205*	0.028	Y12	.417**	0.000
X9	.573**	0.000	Y13	.711**	0.000
X10	.637**	0.000	Y14	.686**	0.000
X11	.551**	0.000	Y15	.605**	0.000
X12	.403**	0.000	Y16	.521**	0.000
X13	.664**	0.000	Y17	.694**	0.000
X16	.501**	0.000	Y18	.706**	0.000
X18	.312**	0.001	Y19	.435**	0.000
X19	.449**	0.000	Y20	.703**	0.000
X21	.368**	0.000	Y21	.528**	0.000
X23	.616**	0.000	Y22	.530**	0.000
X24	.224*	0.016	Y23	.573**	0.000
X25	.419**	0.000	Y24	.639**	0.000
X26	.321**	0.000	Y25	.706**	0.000
X27	.222*	0.017	Y26	.642**	0.000
X29	.429**	0.000	Y27	.596**	0.000
X30	.396**	0.000	Y28	.495**	0.000
X32	.243**	0.009	Y29	.692**	0.000
X33	.361**	0.000	Y30	.753**	0.000
X34	.424**	0.000	Y31	.316**	0.001
X35	.601**	0.000	Y32	.736**	0.000
Y1	.486**	0.000	Y33	.515**	0.000
Y2	.548**	0.000	Y34	.495**	0.000
Y3	.692**	0.000	Y35	.587**	0.000
Y4	.757**	0.000	Y36	.713**	0.000

Based on the validity test results in Table 1 using Pearson's correlation, all items in the conformance communication (X) and aggressive behavior (Y) variables show a positive correlation coefficient with the total score and have a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) < 0.05. The number of respondents was 115, with a table value of 0.183, so all items with a Pearson Correlation > r table are

declared valid. In the conformity communication variable (X), the item correlation values range from 0.205 to 0.664, indicating a low-to-strong relationship, with items X13, X10, X4, and X23 having the highest correlations and representing the conformity construct most strongly. Meanwhile, for the aggressive behavior variable (Y), the correlation ranged from 0.316 to 0.757, indicating a moderate to very strong relationship, with Y4, Y30, Y32, Y10, and Y36 showing the highest correlations with the variable's total score. These findings indicate that each statement item can consistently and relevantly measure the construct in question, both for conformity and aggressive behavior. Thus, all items of the research instrument were deemed suitable for further analysis, including reliability testing and hypothesis testing via regression analysis.

Table 2. Results of Reliability Test

Item	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
X	0.731	28
And	0.755	36

Based on the results of the reliability test in Table 2 using Cronbach's Alpha, the conformity communication variable (X) obtained an alpha value of 0.731 with 28 items. In contrast, the aggressive behavior variable (Y) yielded an alpha value of 0.755 with 36 items. The value of *Cronbach's Alpha* is above the minimum of 0.70 for both variables, so it can be concluded that the research instrument has a good level of reliability. This shows that the items in each variable have adequate internal consistency and measure the same construct stably. Thus, the conformity and aggressive behavior instruments were deemed reliable and feasible for further data analysis, including testing the relationships and influences among variables in this study.

Table 3. Linear Regression Test Results

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	143.389	22.962		6.245	.000
Gender	-7.196	3.978	-.157	-1.809	.073
Age	10.244	3.494	.254	2.932	.004
X	-.581	.169	-.297	-3.440	.001

Based on Table 3, conformity communication, gender, and age are associated with aggressive behavior among martial arts learners. A constant value of 143,389 indicates that when conformity, gender, and age are zero, the aggressive behavior score is 143,389. The conformity communication regression coefficient (X) of -0.581 and significant (Sig. = 0.001) indicates that each increase of one unit of conformity decreases aggressive behavior by 0.581 units, assuming the other variables are constant, which means that the higher the level of conformity to positive group norms, the lower the tendency of the learner's aggressive behavior. The sex coefficient of -7.196 , with a significance value of 0.073, indicates a negative influence, but it is not statistically significant at the 5% level, so the sex difference does not have a meaningful influence on aggressive behavior in this model. Meanwhile, an age coefficient of 10,244 and a significant (Sig. = 0.004) effect indicated that an increase of 1 unit in age was associated with an increase of 10,244 units in aggressive behavior, suggesting that older learners tended to show greater levels of aggressiveness. Thus, conformity and age were shown to have a significant effect on aggressive behavior, whereas gender did not.

Table 4. Determinant Coefficient Test Results

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
.421a	0.177	0.155	0.177	7.949	0.000

The determination coefficient measures how well an independent variable explains the variation in the dependent variable. The results of the analysis in Table 4 show an R-square of 0.177, indicating that 17.7% of the variation in learners' aggressive behavior can be explained by a combination of conformity, age, and sex variables included in the regression model. Meanwhile, the other 82.3% of the variation was explained by factors outside of the research model, such as family environment, parenting, training intensity, type of martial arts flow, competition experience, coach influence, and other individual psychological factors. The value-adjusted R-square of 0.155 indicates that, after adjusting for the number of independent variables and sample size, the model's effective contribution to explaining aggressive behavior is 15.5%. This value indicates that although the contributions of conformity, age, and gender variables are moderate, the model still has sufficient and relevant explanatory power to understand learners' aggressive behavior in martial arts education. Overall, the results of this study's determination coefficient confirm that aggressive behavior is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced not only by conformity factors and demographic characteristics, but also by various other contextual factors that warrant further investigation in future studies. The F test was used to find out whether the independent variables included in the regression model, namely conformity communication, age, and gender, simultaneously had a significant influence on the dependent variable, namely the aggressive behavior of martial arts learners. Based on the results of the regression analysis, an F-value of 7.949 was obtained, with a significance level of 0.000, which is smaller than the significance limit of 0.05. These results show that the regression model used in this study is statistically significant, indicating that conformity communication, age, and gender together affect students' aggressive behavior. Thus, a hypothesis that states the simultaneous influence of independent variables on aggressive behavior is acceptable. The significance of the F test also indicates that the regression model is suitable as an analytical tool for explaining the relationship between variables in the context of martial education.

Based on the results of this study's analysis, the first hypothesis, conformity communication has a significant effect on the aggressive behavior of martial arts students, was accepted, as the regression test showed that the conformity variable had a regression coefficient of -0.581 and a significance value of $0.001 (< 0.05)$. This means that conformity significantly affects the aggressive behavior of martial arts students. The direction of negative influence indicates that the higher the level of student conformity with prevailing group norms, especially positive norms, the lower the tendency to aggressive behavior is. Thus, conformity communication plays a protective role in suppressing the aggressive behavior of martial arts students. These results are in line with [Otsubo et al. \(2024\)](#), who showed that conformity to permissive group norms towards aggression can encourage the emergence of aggressive behavior. The second hypothesis, that age has a significant effect on the aggressive behavior of martial arts students, is accepted because the age variable has a regression coefficient of 10.244 with a significance value of $0.004 (< 0.05)$, which shows a significant influence of age on the aggressive behavior of martial arts students. A positive coefficient indicates that older age is associated with increased aggressive behavior. These findings suggest that age differences are an important factor influencing the level of aggressiveness, which can be related to aspects of psychological development, training experience, and intensity of involvement in martial arts activities. These results are in line with previous research showing that, without appropriate interventions, aggressiveness in adolescence can persist into young adulthood, while personality-based programs have been shown to be effective in reducing aggression in the long term ([Lawler et al., 2024](#)).

The third hypothesis, gender has a significant effect on the aggressive behavior of martial arts students, was rejected. The analysis showed that the gender variable had a regression coefficient of $-$

7.196 and a p-value of 0.073 (> 0.05). Although the direction of influence is negative, statistically the influence of gender on aggressive behavior is not significant. Thus, gender differences were not shown to have a meaningful influence on the aggressive behavior of martial arts students in this study. The results of this study are not in line with previous studies, which stated that in general, men tend to show higher physical aggression than women, while women express aggression more in verbal forms and emotional anger (Padgett & Tremblay, 2020). The fourth hypothesis, conformity communication, age, and gender simultaneously had a significant effect on the aggressive behavior of martial arts students, was accepted. The F test yielded a calculated F value of 7,949 with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05). This suggests that conformity, age, and gender together significantly influence the aggressive behavior of martial arts students. Thus, the regression model was deemed feasible and capable of explaining simultaneous variations in aggressive behavior, although the total contribution was in the moderate range, as indicated by the R-Square value of 0.177. The results of this study are in line with previous research, which found that conformity strengthens the influence of age and gender by facilitating adjustment to group norms. Martial arts participants tend to mimic aggressive behaviors that are considered normal or valued in their training groups, especially when self-control and emotion regulation are still developing (Sanchez-Ruiz & Baaklini, 2018). Overall, the results of hypothesis testing confirm that conformity and age are factors that significantly affect the aggressive behavior of martial arts students, either alone or together with gender, while gender alone does not show a significant influence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of hypothesis testing, this study concludes that conformity communication and age significantly influence aggressive behavior among martial arts students, whereas gender does not show a significant partial effect. Conformity communication was found to have a negative and significant effect on aggressive behavior, indicating that the higher the level of conformity to positive group norms, the lower the tendency for students to display aggressive behavior. Meanwhile, age demonstrated a positive, significant effect, suggesting that older age is associated with higher levels of aggressive behavior. Simultaneously, conformity communication, age, and gender collectively had a significant effect on aggressive behavior, with a coefficient of determination of 17.7%, which falls into the moderate category. These findings highlight the importance of fostering communication about positive group norms within martial arts training communities as a preventive strategy to reduce aggression, as well as the need for coaching approaches that consider age-related developmental factors. The practical implications of this research suggest that pencak silat trainers and educational institutions should design character-building programs, strengthen emotional regulation, and monitor group norms to minimize the potential for aggressive behavior among students.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI or AI-assisted technologies were used in the writing process of this manuscript.

CONFLICTING INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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