

The Relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Social Support of Students at STIKES Katolik St. Vincentius a Paulo Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

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Effective communication can build healthy and harmonious relationships between individuals, both in formal settings such as between lecturers and students, and in informal settings such as between fellow students. This interpersonal communication will have an impact on social support, which starts from good interpersonal communication, becoming an important element to help students overcome stress and improve their well-being. The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between interpersonal communication and social support of Catholic Students of St. Vincentius a Paulo Surabaya. The type of quantitative research is correlation with a cross-sectional design. The research location was at the STIKES Katolik St. Vincentius a Paulo Surabaya in December 2024. The population of students was 424 people with a sample of 206 people, using simple random sampling. The measuring instrument for social support was the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List-40 (ISEL-40) and the interpersonal communication skills scale questionnaire with the Pearson statistical test. The results were 74.8% moderate interpersonal communication, 70.4% moderate social support. The Pearson statistical test $p = 0.000$ positive correlation coefficient 441, namely there was a moderate relationship between interpersonal communication and student social support. The better the interpersonal skills, the better the social support of students. Educational institutions can create a conducive environment to create effective interpersonal communication of students, both formal (students with lecturers) and informal (between students) so that social support can be created well in the academic environment and provide various communication training for students.

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1. Introduction

Surabaya, the second largest metropolitan city in Indonesia, has multicultural characteristics, with students from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds (Prakasita and Harianto 2017). Surabaya offers a rich social ecosystem with diverse student communities and organizations (Aminah, Susanti, and Soekartun 2018). However, existing

data show that several challenges remain for students, especially in terms of social adjustment and academic pressure. A survey conducted by the East Java Education Bureau in 2023 showed that approximately 30% of students in Surabaya had difficulty establishing effective interpersonal communication in higher education environments (Badan Pusat Statistika 2024). Furthermore, according to a report from the Surabaya Health Service, the stress level of students in Surabaya is quite high, especially among health students. This factor is exacerbated by the lack of adequate social support systems in some educational institutions (Hasibuan, Alfikri, and Faishal 2023; Herlina et al. 2023).

Interpersonal communication is a fundamental aspect of human social life, including in higher education environments. Effective communication can build healthy and harmonious relationships between individuals, both in formal settings such as between teachers and students, and in informal settings such as between peers (Amar 2024). In a campus environment, interpersonal communication skills not only affect academic performance, but also the emotional wellbeing of students. This interpersonal communication will impact social support, which starts from good interpersonal communication, becoming an important element in helping students overcome stress and improve their wellbeing (Ningrum and Sukmayanti 2014). Therefore, interpersonal communication is an important aspect that can form harmonious social relationships between students (Agustin and Claretta 2024). Social support is an important factor that influences students' mental and emotional health (Priasmoro 2020). Social support can take the form of emotional support, information, appreciation, or instrumental assistance received from people around us, such as family, friends, and colleagues (Tri and Hartati 2013). Students who feel they have social support tend to be better able to cope with academic and daily life challenges than those who do not feel supported (Octavia and Sugiarti 2023).

This research was conducted among students at STIKES Katolik St. Vincentius a Paulo Surabaya, to investigate interpersonal communication relationships and social support for students, considering the need to adapt to high academic demands and complex social environments. The ability to establish good interpersonal communication allows students to build supportive social networks, which can contribute to their life on campus.

2. Method

This type of research is a correlation research with a cross-sectional design. The research location at STIKES Katolik St. Vincentius a Paulo Surabaya in December 2025. The population of this study consisted of students at St. Vincentius a Paulo Catholic College of Health Sciences, Surabaya. Vincentius a Paulo Surabaya, a total of 424 students. The sampling method using simple random sampling is to determine the sampling randomly. Sampling using Slovin's formula (Sugiyono 2019):

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

$$n = 424 / (1 + 424 \times [(0.05)^2])$$

$$1.06$$

$$n = 424 / 2.06 = 205.8 = 206$$

Social Support Questionnaire (Interpersonal Support Assessment Checklist/ISEL) measurement instrument 40-item Interpersonal Support Assessment Scale (ISEL-40) (Cohen and Hoberman, 1983). Validity and reliability tests of the ISEL-40 showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha: 0.452–0.752) and good test-retest reliability (intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC): 0.631–0.847). The ISEL-40 is a valid and reliable instrument to measure social support (Delistamati et al. 2006).

The Instrument category uses the formula below (Anwar 2016).

Size: $X \geq M + SD$

Middle: $M - SD \leq X \leq M + SD$

Low: $X \leq M - SD$

Information:

M = Average

SD = standard deviation

Instrument for measuring interpersonal communication skills. The validity test is significant at 5% if the calculated $r > r$ from the table (0.312). The results of the validity test using Pearson correlation showed that the items declared valid had an r value of 0.378 - 0.799 for 29 items. In addition, a reliability test was conducted with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.910 which presents a very high reliability qualification (Sari 2022). Instrument category uses the formula below (Anwar 2016).

Size: $X \geq M + SD$

Middle: $M - SD \leq X \leq M + SD$

Low: $X \leq M - SD$

Information:

M = Mean

SD = Standard Deviation

Bivariate analysis aims to test the relationship between variables. Data normality test is carried out using the Kolmogorov Smirnov Test. Pearson Correlation Test with a strong 5% probability level ($p = 0.05$). Above this level, your null hypothesis is considered true and is a parametric test used to determine the relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Student Social Support at STIKES Katolik St. Vincentius a Paulo Surabaya.

Correlation value according to Amruddin et al. (2022) is:

Correlation strength value (ρ) = 0.000 – 0.199 = very weak

Correlation strength value (ρ) = 0.200 – 0.399 = weak correlation

Correlation strength value (ρ) = 0.400 – 0.499 = moderate correlation

Correlation strength value (ρ) = 0.600 – 0.799 = strong correlation

Correlation strength value (ρ) = 0.800 – 1.000 = very strong correlation

The direction of positive correlation (+) is in the same direction, the larger the value of x_i , the larger the value of y_i . The direction of negative correlation (-) is in the opposite direction, the larger the value of x_i , the smaller the value of y_i .

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study conducted in December 2024 among the student respondents of STIKES Katolik St. Vincentius a Paulo Surabaya. Data collection was carried out after obtaining approval from the research location and the willingness of the respondents to this research. The following data were obtained in this study; a total of 206 respondents were willing to participate in the research.

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents

Variable	Total N (%)	M±SD	Range
Age		22.52 ± 5.89	17-45
Teenager	173 (84)		
Mature	33 (16)		
Gender			
Male	44 (21.4)		
Female	162 (78.6)		

Source: primer data

The respondents are in the age group of adolescents and adults with an age range of 17-45 years, most of the respondents are in the age group of adolescents 84%. The gender of the respondents was predominantly female (78.6%).

Table 2. Interpersonal communication of respondents

	N	%	
Interpersonal communication	Low	24	11.7
	Currently	154	74.8
	Large	28	13.6
	Total	206	100.0

Source: primer data

The interpersonal communication ability scale of most respondents was in the middle range of 74.8%.

Table 3. Social support of respondents

	N	%	
Social support	Low	27	13.1
	Currently	145	70.4
	Large	34	16.5
	Total	206	100.0

Source: primer data

More than 50% of respondents have social support of the order of 70.4%.

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of communications and age of respondents

Communications	Usia		Total (%)
	Teenager (%)	Mature (%)	
Low	20 (83.8)	4 (16.6)	24
Currently	135 (87.6) (78.03)	19 (12.3) (57.57)	154
Large	18 (64.2)	10 (35.7)	28

Total	173	33	206
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Source: primer data

The interpersonal communication skills of adolescent respondents are better than those of adult respondents, most of whom account for 78.03% of adolescents with moderate interpersonal communication skills.

Test the normality of the variables using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test because the number of respondents > 30 with significance (p) > 0.05 is normally distributed. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the interpersonal communication variable $p = 0.065$ mean that it is normally distributed. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the social support variable $p = 0.075$ mean that it is normally distributed. Thus, using the Pearson statistical test with the result $p = 0.000$ means that there is a relationship between interpersonal communication and social support of students. Correlation coefficient + 441 (moderate). The better the interpersonal skills, the better the social support of students.

This study shows that the interpersonal communication skills of most respondents (78.03% of them are adolescents) are better than those of adult respondents with moderate interpersonal communication skills. The respondents at the adolescent age in this study were students who were still completely dependent on their parents, where their dependence and/or attachment to their parents was greater than the adult level of students who already had their own family, job, and livelihood and were no longer dependent on their parents. This is similar to research showing that adolescents with different types of attachment to parents have different characteristics of self-esteem and specificity in their interpersonal relationships, which concludes that the attachment system to parents is important for developing an adolescent's psychological well-being (Sadovnikova 2016; Wang, Roaché, and Pusateri 2018). Parents play an important role in adolescents' communication skills.

Adolescents have better interpersonal communication skills supported by the existence of digital technology as a means of communication (Gebremariam, Dea, and Gonta 2024). Digital communication allows adolescents to be more flexible and not limited by distance and location, which becomes a factor in interpersonal communication skills.

However, each human being is unique, in that even if they have the same influencing factors, they will always be different in their way of thinking and behaving, as there will be more specific cultural specifications that will greatly influence their communication behavior. Interpersonal skills are influenced by early interaction patterns (Sari 2022), knowledge of interaction in communication, including experience and habits, influence the interpretation of communication, both for the communicator and the communicator. This influence is inherent in the way of thinking, feeling and doing things, which is called culture. Culture is communication and communication is culture. Culture cannot live without communication and communication cannot live without culture (Ammaria 2017). Thus, a person's interpersonal communication skills vary greatly depending on various influencing factors. The environment and situation greatly influence a person's communication patterns, social growth, and cultural differences in life experiences, and also influence the atmosphere of communication (Rakhmaniar 2024). Thus, individuals influence communities in their communication patterns and communities influence individuals in their interaction and communication patterns.

Good interpersonal communication skills of individuals create a personal ability, especially soft skills, to build relationships with individuals or groups (Sundari 2024). A person's ability to perform interpersonal communication is a two-way communication

delivered by the sender to the receiver through some media and creates an effect, one of the effects of which is building relationships with other individuals or groups. People with good interpersonal communication skills are synonymous with good personal abilities to build relationships. Agustin and Claretta (2024) also expressed that interpersonal communication with friends can increase self-acceptance in terms of psychological health.

People who have good interpersonal communication skills will be more confident in building relationships with other people. Armed with a foundation of self-confidence, the ability to build relationships with people with good interpersonal skills will create an atmosphere around their lives that will provide them with social support. This is in line with the research results obtained using the Pearson statistical test, the significant result is 0.000, which means that there is a relationship between interpersonal communication and moderate social support of students where the positive correlation coefficient is 0.441. The better the interpersonal skills, the more improve the social support of students. The same research according to (Karabulut, Ayar, and Karasu 2023; Lin and Lachman 2023; Ningrum and Sukmayanti 2014) stated that there is a positive relationship between interpersonal communication skills and social support, where increased social support occurs alongside increased communication skills.

Effective student skills can build healthy and harmonious relationships between individuals, both in the formal interpersonal communication of students, namely between students and teachers, and informally between peers (Amar 2024). Students' ability in interpersonal communication will affect their emotional well-being and ultimately their academic success (Ningrum and Sukmayanti 2014). Interpersonal communication among students is an important aspect that can form harmonious social relationships among students and in the academic atmosphere of educational institutions (Agustin and Claretta 2024) which can ultimately create social support for students themselves.

Social support provides opportunities for social interaction between individuals (such as social gatherings and communal meals) and can also strengthen bonds and increase perceptions of belonging to a supportive environment (Davies, Knoll, and Kyranides 2024). Social support is an important factor influencing students' mental and emotional health (Priasmoro 2020). Among students, 70.4% of social support falls within the moderate range. Social support can take the form of emotional support, information, appreciation, or instrumental assistance received from people around us, such as family, friends, and colleagues (Tri and Hartati 2013). Students who feel they have social support tend to be better able to cope with academic and daily life challenges (Octavia and Sugiarti 2023). Aspects of meaningful social support networks are important elements for students and can enhance opportunities for closer interpersonal relationships with others, which can improve students' mental health, quality of life, and independence (Gyasi, Phillips, and Abass 2019). Environmental social support can reduce psychological distress and buffer the effects of stress triggers, while support from friends/parents has a limited effect on stress management (Chen, Zou, and Gao 2021).

Analyzing the impact of students' effective interpersonal communication skills will increase the social support of students in their academic process. Social support is very important to reduce the psychological stress experienced by students (Poots and Cassidy 2020). Students will always face challenges in various aspects (Shao et al. 2020) with good social support, challenges can be overcome (Wang et al. 2024). Social support is a preventive measure for people with physical, mental and intellectual limitations. Seeing the huge impact

of students' interpersonal communication skills on the social support and well-being of students, the researcher recommends educational institutions to provide facilities and support to students through various communication trainings to improve students' interpersonal communication skills.

4. Conclusion

Most of the interpersonal communication is in the moderate range of 74.8%. More than 50% of the respondents' social support was in the moderate range of 70.4%. There is a moderate relationship between interpersonal communication and social support of students. The better the interpersonal skills, the better the social support of students.

Educational institutions can create an environment conducive to the creation of interpersonal communication between students, both formal (students and teachers) and informal (between students) so that social support can be well created in the educational environment and provide various training on communication skills for students.

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