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Long Distance Interpersonal Communication Between Parents and Children in Supporting Studies in Final Year Communication Science Students at Telkom University

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze how interpersonal communication of long- distance relationships between parents and children supports studies in final year students of communication science at Telkom University. This study is a descriptive qualitative study using a phenomenological approach. The object of this study is the phenomenon of interpersonal communication involving parents and children of Telkom University students. The population in this study were final year students of Communication Science, Faculty of Communication and Business at Telkom University with a total of 20 respondents from outside Bandung City. Data collection was carried out through interview and documentation methods. The results of this study indicate that interpersonal communication between parents and children is carried out via whatsapp and video calls which have helped and maintained the emotional closeness of both of them while away from home. Most final year students feel helped by the communication they do with their parents in various aspects such as openness, empathy, support, positive feelings and similarities. Although there are still some obstacles in various aspects such as the aspect of openness where students tend not to be too open because they feel the need to be independent or do not want to burden their parents; the aspect of empathy where their parents are less able to understand their academic conditions; the aspect of support where there are still those who do not get enough support from their parents due to busy factors; and aspects of similarity where there are still parents who have different views from their children.

Keyword: Interpersonal Communication, Parents, Children, Final Year Students

INTRODUCTION

As social beings, communication is a fundamental element in human life. Communication activities occur every time someone interacts with each other, whether with family, at work, or in the wider community. This interaction creates social relationships that allow the exchange of information, understanding, and feelings. Therefore, communication can be considered as a vital result and tool in building and maintaining social relationships. Without communication, relationships between individuals and groups will not be well established, which in turn will affect social dynamics, cooperation, and community development.

This understanding emphasizes that communication is inherent in human life, both in individual capacity and as part of a larger social group. Communication involves the process of sending messages from one individual to another with the aim of conveying information or influencing attitudes, views, or behavior. This can be done directly through verbal conversation or indirectly through various types of media (Effendy, 2015).

Communication is a fundamental element in human life as a social being. In daily routines, social interaction with the surrounding environment, including friends and family, is inevitable for every individual. Good communication that occurs between friends, people around, especially those closest to them, including parents, has its own characteristics. Interpersonal communication between parents and children plays a key role in providing the necessary support. Interpersonal skills can recognize and respond to feelings, attitudes and behaviors, motivations and even the desires of others (Oktari, 2021). Through effective communication, parents can provide encouragement, advice, and emotional assistance that can increase children's motivation and academic performance. Every child wants emotional closeness with their parents, even hoping to always be together if possible. However, in reality, the relationship between parents and children is often hampered by physical distance, especially when children have to go to another place to continue their studies. This separation raises new challenges, where the lack of physical presence of parents can result in lack of supervision of children. As a result, one of the causes of low child achievement is the lack of proper family functioning (Harmaini, 2013)

In the digital age, long-distance relationships (LDR) between parents and children are becoming increasingly common. In such situations, interpersonal communication plays a very important role in maintaining and improving the relationship between the two. Effective interpersonal communication has the potential to increase understanding, trust, and collaboration between parents and children, as well as help them face the challenges that arise due to the geographical distance that separates them. In the current era of globalization and advances in information technology, communication has become easier and can be done without distance and time constraints. Modern communication technologies such as telephones, video calls, and text messages have become the main tools in bridging the distance between parents and children (Hidayat, 2012). However, the effectiveness of this communication is still influenced by various factors, such as the frequency of communication, openness, and trust between the two parties. Long-distance relationships still present their own challenges, especially in the context of interpersonal communication between parents and children. In long-distance relationships, this interpersonal communication often faces obstacles that can affect its quality and effectiveness. These obstacles include differences in time zones, the busyness of each party, and the limitations of the communication media used.

For final year students who are completing their studies, parental support is very important to achieve academic success. Final year students of Communication Science at Telkom University are no exception, they need moral and emotional support from their parents to face various academic pressures and challenges. Based on the results of the initial survey, some of the challenges faced in maintaining long-distance communication between parents and final year students include students are often difficult to contact due to academic and other activities, parents often do not understand what their children feel, this is especially felt when students share stories about their academic challenges, some students feel sensitive to parental questions about academic progress such as theses and internships. These problems can cause students to feel less supported by their parents. In overcoming these obstacles, it is important for both parties to raise awareness of the importance of effective interpersonal communication.

Several previous studies have shown that the intensity of communication between parents and children affects the level of closeness between them. Research by students who communicate intensively with parents tend to have closer relationships. Factors that support the

process of long-distance communication between parents and children include the availability of communication facilities and tools such as telephones, the availability of credit for communication, free time, mutual understanding of communication boundaries, an open attitude to each other's situations, and a calm environment. On the other hand, inhibiting factors include physical constraints, economic constraints, and time constraints (Viola & Wijayani, 2021).

Telkom University is one of the private universities in Bandung that has a number of students from outside the city of Bandung, from outside the province of West Java, and even from outside the island of Java. Based on data from Telkom University Student Affairs, the number of final year students in the Communication Science study program is 458 active students, with details of 424 regular class students and 34 international class students. Of the 458 active students, researchers conducted pre-research with three sources related to the intensity of communication between parents and children and the moral and emotional support of parents for their children to face various academic pressures and challenges.

METHOD

Regarding the type of research used in this study, this study uses a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. According to Moleong in Amruddin Qualitative research aims to understand the phenomena of what is experienced by research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and others holistically by describing them in the form of words and language (Amruddin, 2022). Qualitative research consists of a series of material interpretation practices that make the world visible. In this case, qualitative research involves a naturalistic interpretive approach to the world. In this case, it can be interpreted that qualitative researchers examine objects in their natural environment and try to interpret or interpret phenomena based on the meaning that society gives to them.

Descriptive qualitative research in this study aims to explain the phenomenon of interpersonal communication between parents and children when having long-distance relationships. In addition, qualitative research in this study uses a phenomenological approach, which is a scientific study that examines an event experienced by an individual, a group of individuals, or a group of living things (Moleong, 2019). The use of a phenomenological approach is carried out because this study examines events experienced by several individuals, namely final year students of Communication Science at Telkom University who are undergoing long-distance communication with their parents, which is expected to motivate final year students in completing their thesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data obtained by the researcher from the results of the interviews conducted, the researcher will first describe the researcher's efforts in obtaining interview results from informants. In the interview process, the researcher used a two-way dialogue with the informants, where the informants came from various regions who were studying at Telkom University, especially in the Communication Science study program who had the status of final year students who were working on their thesis.

The interviews conducted focused on how long-distance interpersonal communication between parents and children supports the studies of final year Communication Science students at Telkom University.

The sources or informants in this study were final year students of Communication Science study program of Telkom University who came from outside Bandung City totaling 20 people with classification of 10 women and 10 men. The twenty sources came from Java Island (Pangandaran, Jakarta, Bekasi, Bogor, Cirebon, Semarang, Majalengka, Banyuwangi, South Tangerang, Cilacap, and Karawang) and outside Java Island (Bali and North Sulawesi).

Based on the research results, there are several things that need to be known in analyzing how long-distance interpersonal communication between parents and children supports studies in final year students of Communication Science at Telkom University. Interpersonal communication can be interpreted as the process of exchanging messages between individuals to create and maintain shared meaning (Suwatno, 2019).

In the discussion related to long-distance interpersonal communication carried out by final year students of Communication Science with their parents in supporting their studies at Telkom University, it should be noted in advance that a long-distance relationship is a type of relationship where individuals must move to another place for a specific purpose, thus creating a relationship that is built between one individual and another individual must adapt to differences in time and distance. With this physical absence, they will face a long-distance relationship which of course has several challenges so that the ability to manage emotions and longing is needed so that the relationship can survive (Ayu, 2021).

In the context of long-distance interpersonal communication, parents have acted as a source of messages to their children, where the message is communicated through the encoding process, via chat, call, or video call. The media used in sending messages can be a telephone or social media platform. The child who receives the message acts as the recipient. After receiving the message, the child will also provide feedback to their parents. This is as in the research of Nagagini et al (2023) that students from out of town need to utilize digital communication media channels, as well as in the research of Dharmawan (2022) that students from out of town predominantly use electronic media such as WhatsApp with Voice call and Video call features in communicating with their parents.

Dimension of Openness

In terms of openness, most parents of final year Communication Science students at Telkom University are open in discussing academic issues, especially those related to their theses. This is shown through free two-way communication and mutual understanding. Most female informants (8 out of 10) feel they can be open with their parents, while the rest only talk about general things because they are busy or reluctant to burden them. The same thing was also found in male informants, with 6 people being open and 4 others tending to be closed because of being busy or wanting to be independent.

The main inhibiting factors in openness are limited time and activities, both from students and parents, as explained in the research of Nagagini et al. (2023). Research by Putra et al. (2020) and Febrian et al. (2023) also shows that students from out of town tend to be more independent and selective in sharing personal information, for fear of burdening their parents or receiving negative responses.

However, in contrast to previous findings, this study found that students' openness is not only limited to news or college activities, but includes deeper aspects such as finances, health, spirituality, and academics. This is in line with the findings of Wengku et al. (2023), which stated that communication between parents and children remains dominant in long-distance relationships even though they are separated by physical distance.

Dimensions of Empathy

In terms of empathy, the majority of parents of final year Communication Science students at Telkom University showed the ability to understand their children's conditions, especially in facing the challenges of completing their thesis. This empathy is reflected in the willingness of parents to put themselves in their children's shoes and respond with understanding to the academic situation they face.

As many as 6 out of 10 female informants felt that their parents were quite empathetic, while 4 others felt less understood, especially in the context of the pressure of completing their thesis. From the male informant's side, 7 out of 10 stated that their parents showed empathy, while 3 others felt burdened by parental expectations without a deep understanding of their condition. This study confirms the findings of Dharmawan (2022) that physical distance and psychological conditions can affect communication patterns and levels of empathy between parents and children. Parents often push their children to complete their final assignments in order to return home immediately, without fully understanding the academic pressures experienced by children away from home. Different from the research of Wengku et al. (2023) who highlighted the dominance of parental communication in long-distance relationships, this study found that many parents were actually able to adjust their responses to their child's psychological and academic conditions, indicating deeper empathy.

Support Dimensions

Support from parents is one of the important aspects felt by final year Communication Science students at Telkom University, especially in facing the challenges of completing their thesis. This support is interpreted as providing encouragement, validation of ideas, and motivation that contributes to achieving study goals.

Most female informants (7 out of 10) felt they received adequate support from their parents, while 3 others felt less supported. Meanwhile, from male informants, 8 out of 10 stated that their parents provided support in the form of moral encouragement and attention, while 2 others felt that their parents were less involved or did not provide enough support during the thesis completion process.

These results are in line with research by Wengku et al. (2023), which shows that although communication between parents and children remains dominant in long-distance relationships, physical distance can be an obstacle for parents in fully understanding their child's condition. This study confirms that parental support plays an important role in maintaining the academic motivation of students living away from home, although not all students feel it equally.

Positive Feeling Dimensions

The positive aspect in communication between final year students and their parents seems quite dominant. The majority of students, both male and female, feel emotional support in the form of encouragement and positive thoughts from their parents, especially when facing academic challenges such as their thesis. This positive feeling is interpreted as communication that begins with an open mind and is free from negative prejudice, which creates a healthy and constructive interaction atmosphere.

As many as 8 out of 10 female informants and 8 out of 10 male informants stated that their parents were able to provide a positive feeling during their studies. The rest felt that their parents were less able to provide positive emotional encouragement, especially in situations of academic pressure.

This finding is in line with the results of research by Ramadhani (2024) and Nursaptini (2020), which showed that healthy communication between parents and children living away from home can strengthen family relationships and foster harmony. This study also shows that the positive feeling dimension is key to maintaining long-distance emotional relationships. This is different from the findings of Wengku et al. (2023), which focuses more on the intensity of parental communication without emphasizing the emotional quality of the content of the communication.

Dimensions of Similarity

The aspect of similarity between parents and final year students of Communication

Science at Telkom University is an important factor in strengthening interpersonal communication, especially when facing academic challenges such as a thesis. Similarities in terms of views, attitudes, or experiences make communication feel more intimate and effective.

Most female informants (8 out of 10) and male informants (8 out of 10) stated that they had similar views with their parents regarding their studies and conditions abroad. The rest felt that there were differences in perspective, especially regarding the approach to completing a thesis or dealing with academic pressure.

This study is in line with Pramesti (2024), who stated that the effectiveness of communication between parents and children can form a sense of openness, empathy, and support. However, there are still parents who do not fully feel equal to their children abroad. This finding also supports the research of Wengku et al. (2023) which emphasizes the dominance of communication patterns in long-distance relationships between parents and children.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of previous research and discussions on how long-distance interpersonal communication between parents and children supports studies in final year students of Communication Science at Telkom University, it can be concluded that interpersonal communication between parents and children in supporting studies in final year students of Communication Science at Telkom University through the use of communication technology such as WhatsApp and video calls has helped and maintained emotional closeness between parents and children in the diaspora, most final year students feel helped by the communication they do with their parents in various aspects such as openness, empathy, support, positive feelings and similarities.

Although there are still some obstacles in various aspects such as the aspect of openness where students tend not to be too open because they feel the need to be independent or do not want to burden their parents; the empathy aspect where their parents are less able to understand their academic conditions; the support aspect where there are still those who do not get enough support from their parents due to busy factors; and the similarity aspect where there are still parents who still have different views from their children.

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