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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPATHY AND PEER SOCIAL SUPPORT WITH INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION TOWARD STUDENTS OF BINJAI STATE MADRASAH ALIYAH (MAN).

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### Abstract

*This study aims to determine the relationship between empathy and peer social support with interpersonal communication toward the students of Binjai State Madrasah Aliyah (MAN). The approach in this study is a quantitative research approach with a type of correlation research. The subjects of this study were the students of class X and XI State Madrasah Aliyah( MAN) Binjai totaling 592 students. The sample in this study amounted to 85 students. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling. Data collection techniques carried out in this study were using three scales that consist of an empathic scale, a scale of peer social support and a scale of interpersonal communication. The data analysis technique used to answer the hypothesis of this study is multiple regression. The result of this study indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between empathy and peer social support with interpersonal communication as evidenced by the coefficient  $R_{x_1,2y} = 0.733$  and  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). The percentage of effective contributions from the two independent variables of empathy and peer social support with interpersonal communication was 53.7%. From this result, it is known that there are still 46.3% contributions from other factors not discussed in this study. From the result of the calculation of the mean hypothetical and empirical mean obtained empathy, peer social support is in the high category. It is recommended for the students to continue to improve their sense of empathy towards others and to give each other social support to their peers.*

**Keywords:** *Empathy, Peer Friend Social Support, Interpersonal Communication.*



## **A. Introduction**

Interpersonal communication is the delivery of messages by one person and the reception of messages by other people or a small group of people, with various impacts and with the opportunity to give feedback immediately. Brooks & Heath (Hargie& Dickson, 2004) defines interpersonal communication is the process of information, meanings and feelings that are shared to people through exchange in verbal and nonverbal messages (The process by which information, meanings and feelings are shared by persons through the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages). Hargie& Dickson (2004) argue that interpersonal communication is when two people meet and start a social meeting that can be accounted. (When two people meet and initiate a social encounter can be accounted for). Responsible here means there is a process of interaction and exchange of information in it.

Individuals communicate every day to find out the symptoms that occur in their environment. The Continuous and continuous interpersonal relations will give enthusiasm, respond each other without any manipulation, not only about winning or losing inargueing but about understanding and accepting with others in society. Interpersonal communication with others who are too often not only growing a positive attitude, but alsonegative attitudes can appear like suspicion (JalaluddinRachmat, 2003: 129).

In fact, in everyday life there are often found various conflicts and the differences that appear due to misunderstandings in communication. One of the factors is misunderstanding in communication is the way the recipient captures a message different from what is intended by the sender, because the sender fails to communicate the intent correctly and can cause a person to become isolated (Supratiknya, 1995: 34). As the effect of this isolation it is worried that it can lead to various problems in communication, such as the difficulty of communicating feelings effectively.



The good interpersonal communication in the school environment plays a major role in helping to optimize the ability of students, and it can be used as a means to help students overcome the problems that come out that disrupt their daily lives. Interpersonal communication that is well intertwined between the school components can create a warm, comfortable relationship in their daily lives, and can create a family atmosphere between school members. Students are part of the community that is required to be able to communicate with other people in the environment where students interact.

Most senior high school / MA age students are included in the early adolescence category and are a full period of self-seeking. Signs of this period are usually manifested in changes in attitudes and behavior, for example there are changes in expression when talking, how to perform, acting and others.

Based on the result of interviewing that was conducted with the counseling teacher (Guidance and Counseling) State Madrasah Aliyah Binjai on January 31 st 2018 gets the result showed that many students who had low interpersonal communication were still experiencing problems in interpersonal communication. When discussing or being asked to give opinions, students tend to be quiet and not to express their opinions. The difficulties of students in expressing their opinions and expressing their feelings it is caused that these students are less skilled in communicating with others. Then it is supported by the result of interview with MAN Binjai students on February 2 nd, 2018, information was obtained that the students were still afraid to express other opinions when discussing. This is caused of the students feel inferior and also feel afraid of being wrong. So they prefer to be quiet and passive in the discussion activities. Then the students also still have difficulty saying disagreement about something, so they accept it with a sense of compulsion. However, some students dare to express their thoughts, opinions and desires to the teacher collectively with other students. In addition, it is not uncommon to also experience offense among fellow students which results in disputes with friends, which usually occur



because of differences of opinion. When making observations at school, the researchers found two children who were given advice by a counselor, they seemed to be defending each other and allegedly had a dispute between them causing a dispute between the two. Then to friends mock each other, and still lack of caring (empathy) between fellow friends and there are still some students who are still lacking in building relationships with others for example discriminating in terms of friendship. Then less open to fellow friends, there are still many who are reluctant to share stories about the problems they face with their friends.

The impact that arises from low interpersonal communication activities is the difficulty of expressing the feelings of students towards other students or the teacher regarding the problems they are facing, then also reluctance in conducting communication interactions in learning activities, the emergence of inferiority and often causing conflicts among fellow students because there are misunderstandings that could lead to disputes. Some of these things are the problems of interpersonal communication in students at Binjai MAN.

One aspect that affects the effectiveness of interpersonal communication according to Devito (in BabbyHasmayni 2016: 59) is empathy.

Empathy is indispensable in interpersonal communication competencies. Hardjana (in Nuzul, 2008) said that interpersonal communication works well, everyone needs to have the competence (skill) of interpersonal communication both socially and verbally, and one of the competencies possessed in communication is empathy. Empathy means the ability to share and understand others and feel as if they are like other people. This is also reinforced by the opinion of Reardon (1987) in his book entitled *Interpersonal Communication: Where Minds Meet*, which says that in interpersonal communication competencies a sense of empathy is needed.



People who empathize show acceptance of feelings, thoughts and perceptions that may conflict with others.

Empathy in students is an important part of social competency. Empathy is also one of the elements of social intelligence. He is detailed and closely related to other components, such as basic empathy, alignment, empathic accuracy and social understanding. Basic empathy that is having feelings with other people or feeling non-verbal emotional signals. Alignment that is listening with full receptivity, harmonizing with someone. Empathic accuracy that is understanding the thoughts, feelings and intentions of others and social understanding that is knowing how the social world works.

Social roles include attitudes to help, mutual cooperation, mutual cooperation between humans. This attitude arises because there is an urge to feel what others feel. This attitude is often called the tendency of empathy. Like what Hoffman said (in Goleman, 2006: 147) that "by participating in feeling what others feel can encourage someone to provide assistance".

There are many positive aspects if every student has empathy in interpersonal communication every day. Each student will be happy to communicate with other students, because empathy will improve a good relationship in communicating with other students in the family, community and in the school itself.

In line with the results of the study of NuzulFitri (2008) states that there is a significant contribution of empathy to interpersonal communication competencies in first-level students that is equal to 53.7%.

The results of this study indicate that empathy is very influential in interpersonal communication competencies. These results are in accordance with the opinion of Hardjana (2003) who said that interpersonal communication skills work well every person needs to have the competence (skill) of interpersonal communication both socially and



verbally, one of the competencies possessed in communication is empathy.

Besides empathy, another aspect that influences the effectiveness of interpersonal communication according to Devito (in Rachmat 1998, 171) is supportness. Effective interpersonal relationships are relationships where there is a supportive attitude (supportiveness) (Hasmayni, 2014: 60).

Gottman & Parker (in Santrock, 2003: 227) states that peers have six functions, including (1) togetherness, such as someone willing to spend time with friends and together in activities; (2) stimulation, such as providing interesting, fun, and entertainment information; (3) physical support, such as giving time, ability-ability, and help; (4) ego support, such as providing hope, encouragement, and feedback that helps adolescents to maintain an impression of themselves as capable, attractive and valuable individuals; (5) social comparison, such as providing information about how to relate to others; and (6) attention, such as providing a warm, close, and trusting relationship with another friend.

Peers are a source of important emotional support throughout the teenage transition. The intensity and time spent with friends is greater in adolescence than other times in the life span (Papalia, Old, & Feldman, 2008).

Peers or peer groups according to Goleman (in Desmita, 2010) are a small group whose members are relatively the same and between them are intimacy. Peer groups or peer groups according to Santrock (2003) are children or adolescents who have the same age or the same maturation. (Slavin, 2009) revealed that peer groups are an interaction with people who have similarities in age and status, so that in interacting someone prefers to join people who have the same thoughts, hobbies and circumstances. Peer groups are an important part of adolescent growth and development in the formation of attitudes. Among them influence each other both in the form of attitudes and behaviors that will ultimately



provide personal values in the family, society and in determining a choice of Hertherington & Parke (Desmita, 2010).

Peer social support is the support given to individuals by groups in the form of physical and psychological comfort so that individuals feel loved, cared for, valued as part of a social group. Aspects of peer social support refer to the aspect of social support from Sarafino & Smith (2010) which divides social support into four aspects, namely a) emotional or esteem support, b) tangible or instrumental support, c) informational support, and d) companion ship support.

Peers can provide support by providing physical comfort such as accompanying sad times, helping to do difficult tasks, and giving help by doing a job. In addition to physical comfort, peers can provide psychological comfort by making conditions so that someone becomes part of a social group. Such support can be in the form of empathy, affection, attention, positive appreciation, and advice. Such conditions will give individuals a sense of acceptance, warmth and understanding so that they can help individuals to improve abilities in interpersonal relationships.

## **B. Methods**

The subjects used in this study were students of class X and XI MAN Binjai. The research sample was selected using 85 random sampling. The data collection method used in this study is to use the scale of interpersonal communication, empathy scale and scale of peer social support. The scale of interpersonal communication is based on five aspects of interpersonal communication by Devito (1) openness, (2) empathy, (3) support, (4) positive attitude and (5) equality. Then the Empathy Scale is arranged based on aspects developed by Davis, namely: 1). Empathic Concern 2). Perspective Taking. 3). Fantasy. 4). Personal Distress. The scale of Peer Friend Social Support is based on aspects developed by the House, namely: 1) Emotional Support, 2) Award Support, 3) Instrumental Support, 4) Informative Support.





### C. Research Result

Distribution normality test was analyzed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test formula. The results show that the three variables were analyzed following the normal distribution. As a criterion, if  $p > 0.050$  then the distribution is declared normal, conversely if  $p < 0.050$  the distribution is declared abnormal (sujarweni, 2014).

**Table 1. Summary of Distribution Normality Test Results**

V	R	K-S	SD	P	K
E	80,62	1,300	6,687	0,068	N
DTS	106,8	1,283	11,215	0,074	N
KI	103,50	1,155	11,773	0,139	N

**Information:**

R =Average value

KS =The coefficient of Kolmogorov-Smirnov

SD =Standard Deviation (Standard Deviation)

P =Significance

**Table 2. Summary of Linearity Test Results**

Koer	F Different	P Different	Inform
X1 - Y	6,097	0,751	Linear
X2 - Y	126,105	0,124	Linear

**Information**

X1 = Empathy

X-2 = Peer Friend Social Support

Y = Interpersonal Communication

F Different = Linearity coefficient

P Different = Significance





**Table 3. Summary of Calculation of Multiple Regression Analysis**

V	(R <sub>xy</sub> )	(R <sup>2</sup> )	p	BE <sup>0</sup> %
X1 - Y	0,235	0,055	0,005	5,5%
X2 - Y	0,709	0,503	0,000	50,3%
X1.X2 - Y	0,733	0,537	0,000	53,7%

**Information:**

X1 = Empathy

X2 = Assertiveness

Y = Interpersonal Communication

R<sub>xy</sub> = The coefficient of the relationship  
 between X1, X2, and Y

R<sup>2</sup> = Determinant coefficient X1, X2 towards  
 Y

**Table 4. Results of Calculation of Hypothetical Mean Values and Empirical Mean Values**

V	SD	Average Value		Inform
		Hipo	Emp	
E	6,687	67,5	80,62	Hight
DTS	11,22	87,5	106,8	Hight
KI	11,22	85	103,5	Hight

Based on the comparison of the two average values (mean hypothetical and empirical mean), it can be stated that the subject of this study has high empathy, peer support is high while interpersonal communication is high. Thus it can be stated that the hypothesis proposed in this study is accepted.

**D. Discussion**

The results of the analysis with multiple regression analysis methods, it is known that there is a significant positive relationship between empathy and social support with interpersonal communication.



This can be seen from the results of data analysis using version 17 of the SPSS (Statistic Packages for Social Science) program for Windows.

The results of this study indicate that there is a positive relationship between empathy and interpersonal communication seen from the coefficient of  $r_{x1y} = 0.235$  with  $p = 0.005 < 0.050$ . This means that the higher the empathy, the higher the interpersonal communication. The determinant coefficient ( $R^2$ ) of the empathy relationship with the dependent variable of interpersonal communication is equal to  $(R^2) = 0.055$ . This shows that interpersonal communication is formed by empathy with a contribution of 5.5%. This magnitude proves that empathy is related to interpersonal communication in students. If students have good empathy and positivity towards their students, students will easily understand their feelings and understand what others have experienced so well that students can position themselves well when interacting with others. The existence of mutual understanding, understanding the feelings of others will lead to emotional closeness can even strengthen affection between them which gives rise to closeness with each other and avoid conflict or misunderstanding so that it will make interpersonal communication in students run very well.

Conflicts that often occur in the world of education today and are warm cases that often occur between students, namely bully cases. For students and the community, sometimes bully is an ordinary joke. A joke show without bullying his friend like a vegetable without salt. Bully objects are usually physical deficiencies, giving negative labels to victims, or saying inappropriate words even to the point of physical violence.

The results of this study are in accordance with those stated by Devito (2011), one of the important aspects of interpersonal communication is empathy. In line with Hardjana (2003) said that interpersonal communication works well, everyone needs to have the competence (skill) of interpersonal communication both socially and verbally, and one of the competencies possessed in communication is empathy. Because empathy can feel what is being felt by others. Having



empathy will create a good relationship in interpersonal communication wherever they are and communicate with anyone.

Even in the research conducted by Nuzul (2008) the results were that the contribution of empathy to interpersonal communication was quite large at 53.7%. Nuzul stated that empathy is very important in interpersonal communication. Because empathy can be felt by others. With empathy will create a good relationship in interpersonal communication wherever they are and communicate with anyone. One of them is to show an attitude of acceptance and attention that will create a good communication climate. Consistently someone needs to maintain an atmosphere that allows someone to express themselves freely in communication, so that people who communicate will feel welcome and cared for. This form of communication is called empathy communication, which is communication to first understand other people, understand the character and purpose, purpose or role of others.

Based on the results of the study, the results of scale filling by respondents indicate that the highest indicator is the indicator "giving reaction / response to changes in conditions / actions of others", including in Fantasy's aspect, whose item statement is "When I see friends not excited when following the lesson I will ask him ". Here it shows that giving a response or reaction to changes experienced by friends, which means having the ability to know the condition of the other person, will provide readiness to ourselves to provide the expected responses so that communication is well established. According to Goleman (Wahyuningsih, 2004) a person's ability to recognize others or care, shows the ability of one's empathy. Individuals who have the ability to empathize are better able to capture hidden social signals that signal what is needed by others so that they are better able to accept other people's perspectives, be sensitive to others, and are better able to listen to others.

Based on this, it proves that empathy is very important and supports interpersonal communication in order to understand the perceptions and needs of others (Mayers& Reynolds 2002).



Furthermore, it is known that there is a significant positive relationship between peer social support and interpersonal communication, where the coefficient of  $r_{xy} = 0.709$  with  $p = 0.000 < 0.050$ , this means that the higher peer social support, the higher the interpersonal communication. The determinant coefficient ( $R^2$ ) of peer social support relationships with the dependent variable of interpersonal communication is  $R^2 = 503$ . This shows that interpersonal communication is formed by peer social support with a contribution of 50.3%. by means of the higher the peer social support obtained by students, the better the interpersonal communication in students.

The existence of peers is very important for the lives of students, for that students must get good acceptance and support from their peers. Acceptance and good support from peers is something that can help the communication between them work well. Because with strong social support from peers will make students feel valued and loved by their environment.

Thus peer social support that students have includes emotional support, award support, instrument support, and information support. All of this support can help students become more confident so that they are able to do good interpersonal communication.

Peer social support is one of the successes of interpersonal communication, this is also consistent with what was stated by Devito (2011) one aspect of interpersonal communication is support, where support is an effective interpersonal relationship there is a supportive attitude between one individual and another. Interpersonal relationships are derived from the existence of social interactions between individuals with each other. The support discussed here is support from peers.

This research is also in line with research conducted by Dhillal et al (2016) which obtained results of 16.9% of student interpersonal communication can be explained from the perception of peer social support.



Dhilla et al (2016) also stated that if students get good peer social support, students will easily carry out assignments in social relations especially in interpersonal communication skills.

Based on the results of the study, the highest scale is in the aspect of award support, the statement item is: "At school I get the information I need from peers."

Thus it shows that there are still many students providing support in the form of providing information with peers, which students are expected to be easy to carry out tasks in social relations especially in interpersonal communication skills.

From the results of the study using the method of multiple regression analysis, it is known that there is a positive relationship between empathy and peer social support with interpersonal communication seen from the determinant coefficient ( $R^2$ ) = 0.537 with  $p = 0,000 < 0.050$  and the coefficient of  $r_{x12y} = 0.733$ , meaning there are positive influences empathy and peer social support with interpersonal communication, the higher the empathy and peer social support, the better the interpersonal communication of the students of MAN Binjai. Contribution of empathy and peer social support to interpersonal communication simultaneously was seen from the determinant coefficient ( $R^2$ ) 0.537 or 53.7%.

This contribution shows that in MAN Binjai, peer social support is more related to interpersonal communication than empathy with interpersonal communication. These results indicate that peer social support is a greater factor for students to be considered in interpersonal communication than empathy.

Idrus (2009) research shows that the better the interaction between students and their peers, indicated by the acceptance of students in their peer groups, the higher the interpersonal competencies that students have.



This study directly supports the opinion put forward by Hartup (1992) who revealed that peer relationships greatly contribute to individual cognitive and social development.

Gottman& Parker (in Santrock, 2003: 227) states that peers have six functions, among others (1) togetherness, such as someone willing to spend time with friends and together in activity; (2) stimulation, such as providing information that is interesting, fun, and entertaining; (3) physical support, such as giving time, abilities, and help; (4) ego support, such as providing hope, encouragement, and feedback that helps adolescents to maintain an impression of themselves as capable, attractive and valuable individuals; (5) social comparison, such as providing information about how to relate to others; and (6) attention, such as providing a warm, close, and trusting relationship with another friend.

In general, based on the calculation of the mean hypothetical and mean empirical, interpersonal communication of MAN Binjai students has a hypothetical mean of 85, the empirical mean is 103.50 and the standard deviation is 11,773, this indicates that interpersonal communication possessed by MAN Binjai students is high. Interpersonal communication of MAN Binjai students who are in this high category shows that on average students have good interpersonal communication and schools must continue to strive to maintain students to have good interpersonal communication.

Peer social support that is owned by students of MAN Binjai has a hypothetical mean of 87.5, the empirical mean is 106.78 and the standard deviation is 11.215, this shows that peer social support owned by students of MAN Binjai is high. The high level of peer social support in students of MAN Binjai shows that they can build good interpersonal communication.



## E. Conclusion

This study aims to look at the relationship between empathy and peer support with interpersonal communication. Then this study found that there was a significant relationship between empathy and peer support with interpersonal communication.

Seeing the positive relationship between empathy and peer social support with interpersonal communication, as well as interpersonal communication that is in a high category, should be maintained and students must still have empathy and mutual support among good peers in order to improve the quality of communication among others towards a better again. Advice to schools If the school wants good interpersonal communication, the school needs to pay more attention to the needs of students by developing a sense of empathy through activities that can trigger empathy for others and conduct activities that are useful to further strengthen relationships. among peers among fellow students. With this in mind, it is expected that interpersonal communication of MAN Binjai students will be better and the achievement of the expected goals.

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