



# The role of self-compassion to form interpersonal communication between parents and adolescents

Elok Halimatus Sa'diyah<sup>1</sup>, Fina Hidayati<sup>2\*</sup>, Muallifah Muallifah<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, Faculty Psychology, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, Airlangga University, Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia  
\*finahi@psi.uin-malang.ac.id

**Abstract.** Interpersonal communication is the ability to establish relationships with openness, full of empathy and equality. In the context of parents with teenagers, this communication ability is characterized by accepting all conditions of adolescents and being open in communicating so that there is a two-way flow of communication between parents and adolescents full of empathy. Interpersonal communication is influenced by personal factors owned by parents, one of which is self-compassion, which is the ability to love themselves, to make parents able to realize the emotions felt and accept the condition of adolescents with all the shortcomings and behaviours that arise (Long & Neff, 2018; Hollis Walker et al., 2011; Moreira et al., 2018). This research uses the quantitative method. Through purposive sampling techniques obtained, 287 people, namely 98 fathers (M age = 40 years) and 189 mothers (M age = 39 years), had adolescent children (M age = 14 years). The research instruments used were ICS (interpersonal communication scale) by Campbell ( $\alpha = 0.760$ ) and SCS (self-compassion scale) by Neff ( $\alpha = 0.705$ ). The analysis using smart PLS showed that self-compassion directly influences interpersonal communication, which is  $\beta = 0.3999$  (39.9%) with  $p = 0.000$ . The results show that self-compassion possessed by parents can form interpersonal communication with adolescents. Parents will have openness, empathy and accept the condition of adolescents unconditionally.

**Keywords:** Self-Compassion, Interpersonal Communication, Adolescent.

## 1 Introduction

Adolescence is a period of development with high curiosity, emotions that tend to explode, the search for self-identity, and peer influence are dominant adolescent development [1]. The problems experienced by adolescents are ultimately very vulnerable to emotional problems, such as difficulty concentrating, academic problems, anxiety and up to the tendency of juvenile delinquency [2]. Therefore, during this stage of development, parents have a big role in helping adolescents grow and develop more adaptively by approaching it through effective communication [3].

Interpersonal communication can help family members. In this case, parents and adolescents have a more positive relationship quality, so two-way communication is established that can provide feedback for the behaviour raised by adolescents [4]. Parental communication with more open and empathetic adolescents is proven to make adolescents more open to parents, reduce symptoms of deviant behaviour, and improve psychological well-being [1], [5], [6].

Interpersonal communication in the family that is established between parents and adolescents is one of the important factors in determining its development; the expected communication is effective. Effective communication can lead to understanding and pleasure, influence attitudes, and harmonious relationships [7]. In their research, Larasati and Marheni [7] stated that communication with adolescents carried out by parents could avoid the emergence of emotional problems experienced by adolescents during their development. Because with good emotional control, adolescents can have better social skills. These skills are reflected in the ability to communicate affectionately and positively, and there is a reciprocal relationship with parents [8] (Iyoq, 2017). Parents with good interpersonal communication are also proven to positively impact the development of adolescent self-concept and their ability to understand others [1].

Interpersonal communication is very important and is used as a tool in daily activities in the family, workplace and community. Rini [9] states that interpersonal communication has two functions, the first is a social function, and the second is decision-making. As a social function, it means pleasure, showing bonds with others, and building and maintaining relationships. In comparison, the decision-making function is to decide whether to do or not do something at a certain moment.

Communication is a tool used by every human being in everyday life. Communication is inseparable from the reflection of the individual in self-disclosure to others. Parents who have anxiety will communicate with adolescents in less effective ways, such as; authoritarian, non-empathetic and one-way communication [10]. However, parents with good love and self-acceptance can communicate with adolescents [11].

Self-compassion is one of the personal aspects in parents that can affect interpersonal communication skills [11]–[13]. Self-compassion is the basis for parents to conduct interpersonal communication with adolescents. With self-compassion, parents can provide attention, establish empathetic communication and not easily judge every adolescent behaviour [14].

From the above problems, this study was conducted to determine self-compassion's effect on parents' interpersonal communication skills with adolescent children. The hypothesis in this study is that there is a significant influence between self-compassion on interpersonal communication in parents who have children in adolescence.

## 1.1 Self-compassion

Neff defines self-compassion as attention directed at oneself during difficult conditions that are happening against the individual's will, as well as failures caused by mistakes and disabilities. Gilbert & Choden [15] wrote that self-compassion is the ability to be sensitive and aware of painful experiences experienced by oneself and others and the strong ability to escape from these sufferings. With self-compassion, individuals can have qualified mental health with self-encouragement more adaptively in the face of various difficulties to reduce anxiety to depression [16].

Self-compassion in individuals has three forming aspects: doing good to oneself, common humanity and mindfulness [17]. Self-compassion is a form of parental self-acceptance, both cognitively and emotionally. Parents who have self-compassion will accept their condition of themselves from all the suffering that is being experienced and change it as a positive emotion, so that with this self-acceptance, it has an impact on parental acceptance of the surrounding environment, especially adolescents with various conditions without judgment for all behaviours that arise [18].

Self-compassion produces resources that expand the ability to comfort yourself and support yourself when faced with difficult problems and able to get through better. Thus, for parents, self-compassion is a basic ability to strengthen and maintain the well-being of themselves and their families by encouraging parents' ability to overcome obstacles during difficult times they face [19], [20].

## 1.2. Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is sending and receiving messages between two or more people, formal or informal. Interpersonal communication requires perpetrators to meet face to face between individuals by carrying verbal and non-verbal messages so that each can understand the other and interact effectively [21]. Relational norms in interpersonal communication are characterized by familiarity with each other. Moreover, that familiarity is characterized by five aspects: togetherness, interdependence (each other gets support, resources, understanding, actions, and those involved agree on the dependence), trust, commitment and mutual care [22].

Interpersonal communication owned by parents is said to be effective, not only determined by verbal abilities but in its implementation occurs a combination of a set of non-verbal abilities, such as; the listening process, the ability to give certain emphasis to special moments with adolescents, the ability to appreciate and understand (empathize) in adolescent behaviour [3]. Therefore, interpersonal communication is effective in the family because, in the family, it is patterned based on a certain scheme that greatly determines how its members communicate. In this

case, the main thing is parental interpersonal communication towards forming children's character in adolescence [7], [9].

Interpersonal communication owned by parents will make effective communication, both verbally and non-verbally, with a positive, empathetic and open attitude, thus impacting the better quality of parent-adolescent relationships [3], [23].

## 2 Method

### 2.1 Research Procedures and Participants

This study used a quantitative approach to determine the effect of self-compassion on interpersonal communication in parents with adolescent children. The study's respondents were parents living in Malang City, taken through purposive sampling techniques with criteria of fathers or mothers who have adolescent children (13-17 years). The total respondents in the study were 287 people, consisting of 98 fathers (M age = 40 years) and 189 mothers (M age = 39 years) and adolescents (M age = 14 years).

### 2.2 Measures

Pada penelitian ini, instrument yang digunakan untuk mengukur interpersonal communication adalah ICS (Interpersonal Communication Scale) by Campbell (2006). Terdapat dua aspek interpersonal communication, yaitu 4 item mewakili external perception and 3 item internal severance. The available answer options are: never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4), and almost always (5). His statement refers to the interpersonal aspect of interpersonal communication in parents mentoring their adolescents.

Parental self-compassion was measured using the SCS (Self-Compassion Scale) by Neff (2003). This scale consists of 24 items consisting of three aspects: self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness. The available answer options are: never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), often (4), and almost always (5).

Analysis techniques using smart PLS programs to determine the effect of self-compassion on interpersonal communication of parents with adolescent children.

## 3 Results

The results of statistical tests with the help of smart PLS obtained on the interpersonal communication scale, seven items had a loading factor score of  $>0.6$  with Cronbach's

alpha of 0.761; and on the self-compassion scale, a loading factor score of  $>0.5$  was obtained with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.705. More details can be seen in Table 1:

**Table 1.** Interpretation of Reliability and Validity Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Outer Loading
Interpersonal Communication	0.761	0.610-0.773
Self-compassion	0.705	0.517-0.682

Furthermore, hypothesis testing was carried out to determine the effect of self-compassion on interpersonal communication between parents and adolescents. The results showed that the self-compassion variable significantly influenced parental interpersonal communication by  $\beta = 0.449$  or 44.9% with a p-value of 0.000 or  $p < 0.05$ . For more details, here are the details in Table 2:

**Table 2.** Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis Test		
Self-compassion -> Interpersonal Communication	$\beta = 0.449$ (44.9%)	$p = 0.000$

According to the results of the hypothesis test, it is proven that there is a significant influence between self-compassion owned by parents on interpersonal communication skills applied to adolescents. This means that the higher the level of self-compassion of parents, the more interpersonal communication applied to adolescents will be more effective. This also applies the other way around; the lower the self-compassion possessed by parents, the interpersonal communication skills applied by parents to adolescents are also less effective.

## 4 Discussion

Self-compassion has a significant influence on interpersonal communication. The results of previous research show that self-compassion is inseparable from compassion for people around, especially people with children, so parents who have compassion are not selfish, and care about children's needs, empathize, and parents who have children of high age will have better relationship quality [12], [24], [25]. With self-compassion, parents have better mental health, so they can accept all conditions of themselves and their adolescents on every obstacle experienced without any conditions so that an open and caring relationship is established that improves the psychological well-being of both [24].

Self-compassion is the ability of parents to accept all obstacles and suffering experienced so that it can also prevent negative emotions in the parent-adolescent relationship. For example, affection can buffer anxiety, anger, and fear in

parent-adolescent relationships [14]. Other studies have shown that self-compassion can reduce anxiety in the face of social interactions and withdrawal symptoms in individuals. Hence, it helps a person start a more effective relationship. That way, self-compassion overcomes negative psychological states to improve the quality of parent-adolescent relationships [18]

Self-compassion can increase comfort and social support in relationships between individuals to understand the difficulties experienced by others [12]. Parents with compassion can understand the difficulties experienced by their adolescents, so they will be more concerned and pay attention to the difficulties experienced. Conversely, parents who lack compassion will have no skills in understanding adolescent emotions, are selfish, have verbal aggressiveness and do not hesitate to use harmful verbal attacks on the parent-adolescent relationship. This will have an impact on emotional disorders experienced by adolescents [9].

Compassion can elicit positive feelings such as happiness and optimism in parents, promoting a healthy parent-adolescent relationship and sponsoring effective communication. Compassion will make parents more sensitive and empathize with the difficulties faced in adolescence with problems that are so complex in their time [7]. Another study also has the same results as this, which shows that compassion can improve the maintenance of relational relationships with the closest people, such as parent-adolescence, by having more quality relationships [26].

Parents with interpersonal communication skills can establish positive relationships with their adolescents through interactions that show that they know each other, have mutual commitment, and understand and love each other [21]. Adolescents at this age need communication in an open, two-way way, equality, full of empathy, and mutual support. This is because the characteristics of adolescents have entered an operational and realistic way of thinking, emotions that are still unstable and explosive, so the approach used must be more effective and different from the previous age [7].

Interpersonal communication between parents and adolescents has a control function, where parents can control children through informational advice to adolescents. Because research by Hidayati et al. [27] shows that adolescent emotional problems are influenced by informational support that is considered lacking, this means communication that can provide direction about various obstacles experienced by adolescents and can help their adolescents' problem-solving [27] Adolescents need parental support through verbal and non-verbal communication that reflects that they are understood and given love.

Interpersonal communication becomes one of the bases individuals must have in interacting with their social environment. The main thing is in a family environment, such as parent-adolescence. This is important because communication patterns in this

family can help the social skills of adolescents, which is the main developmental task at this stage.

Self-compassion owned by parents can build interpersonal communication between parents and adolescents positively and significantly. Self-compassion influences 0.449 or 44.9% on the formation of parental interpersonal communication. This shows that other factors can affect parents' interpersonal communication skills besides self-compassion, which is 55.1%. Further research is recommended to look at parenting skills possessed by parents in improving the quality of parent-adolescent relationships, mainly to create more effective communication patterns.

## 5 Conclusion

This study's results found that parents' self-compassion influences interpersonal communication between parents and their adolescents. With self-compassion owned, it will impact positive self-acceptance so that parents in communication will have more high empathy, not be selfish, communicate in two directions, and be attentive and loving. This will improve the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship better. The results of this study can be used as the basis for future research related to intervention programs for parents to improve interpersonal communication skills and implement effective communication for adolescents. For future research, it is recommended to involve participants who are more specific to parents with extended family or with certain parenting skills to get a more diverse perspective on interpersonal communication theory.

## References

- [1] P. W. Widiarti, "Konsep Diri (Self Concept) Dan Komunikasi Interpersonal Dalam Pendampingan Pada Siswa Smp Se Kota Yogyakarta," *Informasi*, vol. 47, no. 1, p. 135, 2017, doi: 10.21831/informasi.v47i1.15035.
- [2] T. M. Achenbach, L. Dumenci, and L. a Rescorla, *Ratings of relations between DSM-IV diagnostic categories and items of the CBCL/6-18, TRF, and YSR*. Vermont Research, 2001. [Online]. Available: <http://www.childbehaviorchecklist.com/research/DSM6-18ratings.pdf>
- [3] R. Estlein, "Parenting as a Communication Process: Integrating Interpersonal Communication Theory and Parenting Styles Conceptualization," *J. Fam. Theory Rev.*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 21–33, 2021, doi: 10.1111/jftr.12407.
- [4] K. Carr, "Communication and Family Resilience," in *The International Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Communication*, 2015, pp. 1–9. doi: 10.1002/9781118540190.wbeic198.
- [5] M. A. Lippold, L. G. Duncan, J. D. Coatsworth, R. L. Nix, and M. T. Greenberg, "Understanding How Mindful Parenting May Be Linked to Mother–Adolescent Communication," *J. Youth Adolesc.*, vol. 44, no. 9, pp. 1663–1673, 2015, doi: 10.1007/s10964-015-0325-x.
- [6] E. I. Mutia and M. Ridha, "Relationship Of Self-Disclosure With Interpersonal Communication Of High School Teenagers," *J. Neo Konseling*, vol. 1, no. 4, p., 2019,

- doi: 10.24036/00184kons2019.
- [7] K. Larasati and A. Marheni, "Hubungan antara komunikasi interpersonal orangtua-remaja dengan keterampilan sosial remaja," *J. Psikol. Udayana*, vol. 6, no. 01, p. 88, 2019, doi: 10.24843/jpu.2019.v06.i01.p09.
- [8] N. A. Iyoq, "Efektivitas komunikasi orang Tua pada anak dalam membentuk perilaku positif (studi deskriptif di Kelurahan Sungai Pinang dalam Kecamatan Sungai Pinang)," *eJournal Ilmu Komun.*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 39–50, 2017.
- [9] W. Rini, "Komunikasi Interpersonal Orang Tua Dengan Kenakalan Remaja," *Psikoborneo J. Ilm. Psikol.*, vol. 8, no. 3, p. 513, 2020, doi: 10.30872/psikoborneo.v8i3.5380.
- [10] B. D. Syrotchen, "Stress, Social Support, and Mindfulness in Parents of Children with Neurodevelopmental Deficits: A Quantitative Analysis," *Walden University*. 2019.
- [11] F. Hidayati, E. H. Sa'diyah, and V. A. Melinda, "Interpersonal Communication Model on Parenting with Adolescents," *J. An-Nafs Kaji. Penelit. Psikol.*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 37–48, 2023, doi: 10.33367/psi.v8i1.3021.
- [12] P. Long and K. D. Neff, "Self-compassion is associated with reduced self-presentation concerns and increased student communication behavior," *Learn. Individ. Differ.*, vol. 67, no. February, pp. 223–231, 2018, doi: 10.1016/j.lindif.2018.09.003.
- [13] M. Ocampo, "Self-Disclosure through Self-Compassion: A Window on the Mind of Teachers," *JALT Postconf. Publ.*, vol. 2020, no. 1, p. 45, 2021, doi: 10.37546/jaltpcp2020-06.
- [14] H. Moreira and M. Cristina Canavarro, "Mindful Parenting is Associated with Adolescents' Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Through Adolescents' Psychological Inflexibility and Self-Compassion," *J. Youth Adolesc.*, vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 192–211, 2020, doi: 10.1007/s10964-019-01133-9.
- [15] G. Dizon and J. M. Gayed, "Examining The Impact Of Grammarly On The Quality Of Mobile L2 Writing," *JALT CALL J.*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 74–92, 2021, doi: 10.29140/JALTCALL.V17N2.336.
- [16] K. D. Neff, "The Self-Compassion Scale is a Valid and Theoretically Coherent Measure of Self-Compassion," *Mindfulness (N. Y.)*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 264–274, 2016, doi: 10.1007/s12671-015-0479-3.
- [17] K. D. Neff, "The Self-Compassion scale." doi: 10.24854/jpu02020-337.
- [18] H. Moreira and M. C. Canavarro, "Psychometric Properties of the Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting Scale in a Sample of Portuguese Mothers," *Mindfulness (N. Y.)*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 691–706, 2017, doi: 10.1007/s12671-016-0647-0.
- [19] K. D. Neff, "Chapter 6: The Science of Self-Compassion Kristin D. Neff," *Compassion and Wisdom in Psychotherapy*. pp. 79–92, 2012.
- [20] J. S. Wrench, N. M. Punyanunt-Carter, K. S. Thweatt, O. T. Library, and O. S. U. N. Textbooks, "Y," in *Interpersonal Communication: A Mindful Approach to Relationships. LibreTexts*,
- [21] J. a DeVito, "The Interpersonal Communication Book," in *PsycCRITIQUES*, vol. 32, 2008, p. 2009. [Online]. Available: [http://repository.usu.ac.id/bitstream/123456789/29067/4/Chapter II.pdf](http://repository.usu.ac.id/bitstream/123456789/29067/4/Chapter%20II.pdf)
- [22] C. Sue Campbell, "Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance," *Hum. Relations*, vol. 53, no. 6, pp. 747–770.
- [23] H. Hasniar, M. Qadaruddin, and N. Nurhikki, "Self Disclosure Dalam Membentuk Level Hubungan Interpersonal Perspektif Gender Di Asrama Putra Dan Putri Stain Parepare," *Komunida Media Komun. Dan Dakwah*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 77–96, 2018, doi: 10.35905/komunida.v8i1.602.
- [24] L. Hollis-Walker and K. Colosimo, "Mindfulness, self-compassion, and happiness in non-meditators: A theoretical and empirical examination," *Pers. Individ. Dif.*, vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 222–227, 2011, doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2010.09.033.



- [25] C. R. Lathren, S. S. Rao, J. Park, and K. Bluth, "Self-Compassion and Current Close Interpersonal Relationships: a Scoping Literature Review," *Mindfulness (N. Y.)*, vol. 12, no. 5, pp. 1078–1093, 2021, doi: 10.1007/s12671-020-01566-5.
- [26] L. R. Salazar, "The relationship between compassion , interpersonal communication apprehension , narcissism and verbal aggressiveness Merhamet , kişilerarası iletişim kaygısı , narsizim ve sözel saldırganlığın ilişkisi," vol. 4, no. 1. pp. 1–14, 2016.
- [27] F. Hidayati, N. Hartini, and A. Chusairi, "The Effect of Parental Support on Juvenile Delinquency in East Java," *rd Int. Conf. Psychol. Stud. ( ICPsyche )*, vol. 3, pp. 159–165, 2022.

**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

