

# Communication of Overseas Daughters with Their Parents

Rafa Indira Dini<sup>1</sup> Rina Sari Kusuma<sup>2,\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> *Communication Science, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia*

<sup>\*</sup> *Corresponding author. Email: Rinasari.Kusuma@ums.ac.id*

## ABSTRACT

Currently, many young people are willing to do anything to continue their studies, including leaving their houses. This study aims to identify the interpersonal communication of daughters with their parents who convey long-distance care because they move to other islands to continue their higher education and minimize conflicts that will occur. This research employed a descriptive qualitative method with an interpersonal communication approach and descriptive analysis as the data analysis. The subjects of this study were four female students from Kalimantan who were studying at the Faculty of Communication and Informatics, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as a data collection technique. The results of this study indicate (1) communication was done almost every day between daughters and their parents, especially with mothers, (2) there was an exchange of messages that could occur from daughters to parents or vice versa, and (3) the attitude that daughters showed to their parents was always being honest, open, and understanding each other. Hence, habits would be formed and make complete trust from parents to their daughters. Furthermore, (4) daughters continuously attempted to negotiate to perceive problems from two sides without hurting each other's feelings and thoughts. Consequently, communication that was performed every day would lead to supervision from parents by negotiating conflict properly. Over time, it would also increase the level of parental trust to minimize conflicts that will occur in the future.

**Keywords:** *daughters, interpersonal communication, parents, leaving the house*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many universities have respectable accreditation and offer various excellent majors located on the Java island. It is reinforced by data from the Ministry of Education and Culture's website, which stated that a number of public and private universities have successfully joined the Webometrics Rank 2021 ranking. Webometrics Rank is a worldwide university ranking organization established in July 2012. Current data show the Top 10 best universities in Indonesia located on Java island [1]. It becomes the reason many youths go to school on the Java island and are willing to leave their original domicile. Students leave their houses to obtain a higher quality of education. Thus, the process of maturation and the journey to success will be spent on the Java island. Problems that arise and are experienced by children during adulthood are to choose to break family ties and build their independence [2]. It should be a parent's vigilance to keep and supervise their children to have healthy relationships and achieve all parents' goals when their daughter decides to go overseas.

Luckily, nowadays, sophisticated communication technology has emerged to quickly become a connecting tool that connects overseas students with their families at home. Hence, they can stay connected every day. Proper relations between overseas students and families make the students rarely feel lonely [3]. Communicating is essential in relationships because relationships, especially in the family itself, are the first education for children; it is parents who will provide and generalize socializing existing norms in the surrounding community, and children become the expectations of their parents [4]. Interpersonal communication between parents and their children will lead to openness, trust, close feelings, and support. It is appropriate if the family wants a sense of warmth, harmony, and intimacy together in a family relationship [5]. The existence of openness in communication will lead to reciprocal feelings between one another; the same will happen if parents give positive vibes to their daughters, their daughters will also behave the same [6]. When daughters and parents have a

harmonious relationship, each other's wishes and requests can go well.

It is impossible if a relationship has no conflicts. The emergence of conflict does not recognize young-old, far-close, male-female, and know-not-know. Thus, effective communication is necessary to negotiate conflicts that occur. In family relationships, communication is needed to overcome conflicts in the family to provide advice and suggestion that educate, are helpful, and make each other pleased [7].

Based on this background, researchers are interested in examining the long-distance communication that should be done between daughters and their parents to stay in care. It is because taking care of daughters before marriage becomes the parent's responsibility. Furthermore, women are also very sensitive and vulnerable in criminal and sexual matters. The formulation of the problem in this study is how long-distance communication between daughters and their parents is to stay in their care. This study aims to identify the interpersonal communication of daughters with their parents remotely. Several relevant previous studies strengthen this research: long-distance communication between parents and their children in parenting and overcoming conflicts. The first is the research entitled "*Komunikasi keluarga dalam hubungan jarak jauh pada mahasiswa perantau di Kota Lhokseumawe*" (Sari & Fitri, 2018). The findings showed that in communicating, parents tended first to contact their daughter than daughter firstly contacted their parents. From the results of interviews, 50% of informants choose not to tell all the things and problems they face [4]. The second is the research entitled "*Perilaku Komunikasi Antara Mahasiswa Rantau dengan Orang tua*" (Avilla Barus, 2018). The result revealed that there was a change in communication between children and their parents after leaving. It caused conflict, and some students became more closed with their parents [8].

The similarity of previous research with this research is that both studies discuss long-distance communication relationships in the family. The method used was also similar. As for the difference, this research emphasized parents and daughters were from Kalimantan studying at the Communication Studies, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. This research also discussed the existence of negotiations to reduce conflict. Research on this issue deserves to be explored because many young people today are willing to do anything to continue their studies, including leaving their houses. The communication that occurs when away from houses needs to be considered. Thus, parental care that has previously happened with frequent meetings will still occur even though they are separated by distance and rarely meet face-to-face. It is expected that daughters will

not cause new problems, while the hopes and goals of going to university can be achieved.

### **1.1 Family Communication Concept**

Family relationships can function best when family members work to understand and regulate their communication patterns, recognizing that developing and maintaining relationships is essential and requires effort. The meaning of interpersonal communication in the family is a reciprocal relationship between family members to share various things and meanings [9]. Members develop the capacity to adapt, create connections, and manage conflict. Finally, members are self-aware by striving to achieve practical communication goals [10]. Parents can expand their presence virtually when there is a limited distance for face-to-face communication, which at the same time strengthens the role of kinship. Virtual presence can compensate for their absence directly, and communication technology has become an integral part of their lifestyle to indirectly affect family relationships [3].

### **1.2 Interpersonal Communication**

Interpersonal communication is the process of sending and receiving messages with other people or between a small group of people with some immediate effect and feedback. [9]. In this case, communication includes communicators who convey both verbal and non-verbal messages to the communicant who immediately reacts in the form of verbal and non-verbal actively, dynamically, and reciprocally [11]. The family is the main role that is responsible for shaping the quality of children's communication well. The family is also the most important socialization place for children to influence their personality in controlling themselves and have an impact on their motives for talking to others [12]. The purpose of giving meaning to the family's social environment is related to a relationship that will always support, care for, and respect each other [6].

The beginning of interpersonal communication is because there is a message to be conveyed. Thus, both parties create effective communication. The effectiveness of interpersonal communication that can be obtained is the existence of openness, empathy, support, positive attitude, and equality [13]. To achieve this, all communication in the family should take place reciprocally, from parents to children and children to parents.

### **1.3 Research Theory**

The Relational Dialectics Theory developed by Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery (1998) was used to

strengthen this research [10]. This theory states that a family relationship is never static; the relationship will continue to move and develop. There will be fun, sad, and even complicated and challenging parts in the process. People in a relationship will continue to feel the push and pull of different desires. Basically, people want good or lead to change to get virtue. However, in this case, there will still be opposites not only when talking about two different goals, but also there will always be contradictions or conflicts in achieving a goal. Thus, it is problematic to say that a relationship is linear. It is not always bad and should be avoided [10].

The theory of relational dialectics shows that communication is crucial to manage and negotiate contradictions or conflicts that occur during relationships, so communication has a vital position in this theory [14].

This theory is used to reveal how daughters and their parents adapt to each other to negotiate conflicts and achieve family goals. Relational dialectical theory helps understand and appreciate the central role of communication in creating and directing ever-changing family relationships [10]. The relation between theory and research is that there are many possibilities if girls have to live far away from their parents and are forced to undergo long-distance communication assisted by technological advances. Thus, as the daughters, they still have to keep in touch with their parents so that their lives remain under the supervision and responsibility of their parents.

A conflict occurs because of the different desires of each other [15]. Therefore, to create a harmonious relationship, this study discussed communication that can negotiate conflicts or contradictions in a relationship, especially in family communication patterns between daughters and parents.

**2. METHODS**

This study used a qualitative descriptive method with the approach of interpersonal communication and descriptive analysis as data analysis. The subjects of this study were four active students of the Faculty of Communication and Informatics, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, batch 2018, who came from Kalimantan. The primary data collection technique was conducted by interviewing the subject about the communication between daughters and their parents remotely using existing technology and conflicts that usually occur. Data triangulation was used for data validation by comparing or re-checking the degree of confidence in different data sources obtained. The analysis technique used was an interactive model by Miles and Huberman (1984), which interactively analyzes qualitative data, is conducted continuously until

it is finished, and finally obtains the data. There are three steps: reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions [16]. After obtaining the data according to the research criteria, it was compared to the prediction patterns in various previous journals with similar discussions.

**3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**3.1 Result**

The interview technique was performed via telephone because of the situation and conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. The following are the data of informants who are willing to be identified:

**Table 1.** Informant Table

No	Name	Faculty	Origin
1	Rheyna Chalima Pramesti Y	Communication Studies	South Kalimantan (Banjarmasin)
2	Nadya Ayu Widya	Informatics	Central Kalimantan (Pangkalan Bun)
3	Chantika Pangkalan Nurpermatas ari J	Communication Studies	Kalimantan Barat (Pontianak)
4	Novita Nor Sahara	Communication Studies	Central Kalimantan (Bun)

From the results of interviews with four informants, it is identified that they came from the middle to upper economic level. They stated that they often did interpersonal communication via WhatsApp communication media. Informants regularly shared information and experiences with their parents while leaving their houses. Things or topics of conversation in long-distance interpersonal communication between informants and their parents included personal information, such as lecture info, the surrounding environment, and individual needs. Communication via WhatsApp frequently happened when parents initially contacted the informant.

The results of this study showed three categories in the communication of daughters who moved to Java with their parents, namely:

### 3.1.1. *Daughter long-distance relationships conflict with parents*

From the interviews, it was found that most of the informants did not experience extreme conflicts with their parents, but some informants stated so.

“...I often come home late at night for organizational meetings or hang out with friends, so I often get scolded by my parents. I am threatened, my pocket money will be reduced. However, I can handle it because I will re-explain it gently to my parents...” (informant 1)

“...There is no big conflict. Maybe, it is just going home late because there is an activity. Then, I explain honestly if there is an activity...” (informant 3)

Conflicts between informants and parents were only conflict in daily activities, especially activities that are done until late at night. Informants realized that conflicts also arose from their actions, but with detailed explanations to parents, parents could understand their children's activities and did not realize previous threats.

### 3.1.2. *Conflict resolution between daughters and their parents in long-distance communication*

All informants from the results of this research interview stated that they had a good relationship with their respective parents. Between daughters and their parents, they could become communicators so that there was no special reason for contacting each other or sending messages.

“...It depends. Sometimes if I need it first, I call first. Sometimes they call me first. However, if I miss them, I often call first...” (informant 4)

The long-distance communication practice done by overseas daughters is more often with mothers than fathers.

“...take turns calling mother and father, but mostly with mother...” (informant 3)

“...commonly, the call can take up to an hour or even two hours because I like to tell stories. Making calls can be done every day, especially with my mother.” (informant 1)

Informants explained that their mothers are more open to telling all activities and expressing their emotions to their mothers.

The pattern of communication between father and daughter is minimal compared to the communication pattern between mother and daughter. Mother-daughter communication interactions are more open than father-daughter communication interactions. Mothers and daughters are more likely to talk about various topics at a deeper level than fathers and daughters [17].

“...If I often go out, mother will worry, especially I am a girl. Going out often becomes a conflict when I go

out at night. Nevertheless, I always make sure it is okay. Here, I work as well as study...” (informant 2)

It happened to informant 2, who said that her mother was more worried that the informant often went out at night. Nonetheless, such conflict problems could be resolved by explaining to parents and convincing them that they would not do things that deviate or disappoint their parents. The informant explained if she went out with positive activities such as study or work.

From the results of this study, all of the informants agreed that they would overcome the conflicts that occurred with their parents, namely by explaining to the parents slowly in detail. Negotiation of this conflict is performed to restore a harmonious relationship, and if there was a threat from parents, it would not happen. The negotiations also highlighted the reciprocal nature of the communication that occurred by proposing that both the daughter and the parents could exchange messages in the interaction based on the adequacy of their functional communication and according to the process of understanding the message between the two [18].

“...Continuing to communicate with parents is an essential factor, and I have been away for a long time. So, we finally get used to it ...” (informant 4)

Informant 4 also stated that communicating with parents is an essential factor in long-distance relationships to maintain the integrity and harmony of family relationships. Hence, daughters will gain the trust of their parents.

### 3.1.3. *Forms of long-distance communication that daughters did with their parents*

Communication over long distances may bring various obstacles, such as time problems and poor network. Thus, there is a need for trust and mutual understanding between daughters and their parents. The different place between daughters and their parents automatically changes parenting strategies.

“...The most challenging obstacle is the network, especially during the rainy season, and busy in each activity. Miscommunication often occurs because it is done via telephone. For example, if I am grumpy, it can be a misunderstanding. Well, my parents think I am angry when I talk to them, but I am not. They do not know my condition here that if I am not in the mood...” (informant 4)

Obstacles that occur from daughters' communication with their parents often lead to unexpected conflicts. Although they are not extreme conflicts, if the conflict is not resolved immediately, it will cause more problems. Moreover, there is a difference between the place of residence of daughters and their parents, so they cannot meet easily.

“...The difference between the boarding house and home is that it is stricter at home, and in the boarding house, it is more adaptable to my activities. The difference is just if you want to go out. If you are in a boarding house, it is more flexible and easier...” (informant 2)

Parenting for their daughters mainly occurred via the WhatsApp application on mobile phones every day. Parents usually contacted their daughters or vice versa.

“...Communication via WhatsApp is usually done in the morning, afternoon, and evening. Commonly, parents initially contact in communication. The communication is on the phone for about 15 minutes plus video calls every day...” (informant 2)

The form of communication between daughters and their parents can affect daughters' emotional development and independence. Problems in communication often occur and can affect relationships between individuals, including family relationships. Appropriate communication can shape the daughters' positive behavior so that parents are expected to have effective communication skills to support parenting and education efforts for children in the family [19].

### **3.2 Discussion**

In the sudden long-distance communication between daughters and parents, there is a change in communication that causes some misunderstandings that trigger conflicts. It is essential to repair the relationship when a conflict occurs so that a similar conflict will not happen again and take precautions for future conflicts.

This research explained that the informants would immediately fix the conflicts that occur so that parents continue to fulfill their material needs, and the threats that were spoken of do not happen. Daughters who are easier to communicate what is happening in their overseas environment to their parents can make it easier for them to still take messages and advice from parents, such as things to do and not to do.

Daughters need to trust their parents in telling stories about everything that happened. So, they can be an initial step to create a sense of comfort and guarantee the harmony of long-distance relationships [20]. Distrust of daughters to their parents or vice versa may cause conflicts that lead disharmony in family relationships. There are two points related to the conflict of family relations with the relational dialectical theory.

1. Conflict is an essential issue in life that is closely related. It is unavoidable, and communication is needed to be well controlled in a relationship.
2. The importance of communication in relationships is to resolve or negotiate conflicts that occur because not all conflicts will have a negative impact

but can also have a positive impact if managed and appropriately communicated. Therefore, communication is very much needed in a relationship, especially in the maturation process of teenagers who are still in the care of their parents [10].

Based on the results of the explanations of all informants, it is known that the conflict experienced by daughters from a long-distance relationship, one of which is with their parents, was the need for space or privacy, which was not always understood by parents. It includes not replying to parents because of busyness and could not always tell their true feelings at home on certain days. In fact, it means that parents wanted their daughter's self-disclosure so that effective communication could be established. It often became a conflict between each other.

There is a conflict between the different wishes of parents and daughters. So, there need to be conflict negotiations to bridge the conflict that looks at the problem from two sides. The goal is to express feelings and thoughts without hurting each other. Negotiating the conflict involves re-explaining the cause of the problems that arise from daily debates. Concerning the relational dialectical theory, communication plays a vital role in providing solutions to every problem in a daughters' relationship with their parents.[5].

The following conflict prevention that can be done in line with this research is to strive for effectiveness in interpersonal communication, such as openness by always telling all of its activities openly and honestly and having an equal relationship by trying to contact each other every day to provide news and understand each other. The miscommunication that occurs is a natural issue because parenting strategies are only done over the phone. The emergence of empathy to be more sensitive about what is being felt or is happening and always being positive in thought and behavior will initiate support so that the relationship will feel closer. The existence of openness in communication will lead to reciprocal feelings. It will be the same if parents give positive vibes to their daughters, their daughters will also act the same [6].

### **4. CONCLUSION**

The conclusions from this study regarding obstacles to long-distance communication show a pattern of similarities with previous research, which stated that the obstacles that occur were usually due to poor networks and time problems due to each other's busyness.

The informants of this study also stated that there was no change in communication after they left because their relationship was well maintained. However, one informant stated that there was a change in communication after leaving because they often had

miscommunication via telephone. When a conflict arose, the way for all informants to negotiate was to give honest explanations to parents about what really happened, and the attitude of parents who understand each other made the relationship harmonious again. This study fully supports previous research, which stated that parents will always contact their overseas children by telephone, and parenting occurs through daily communication, which can be in the form of motivational speeches, messages, advice, prohibitions, and threats [21].

In negotiating conflicts between overseas students and their parents, there is a similar pattern that was previously predicted that the informants from this study also stated that it was crucial to have communication at all times with their parents, even though they were separated by distance [22]. Negotiating conflicts that are always appropriately and correctly performed makes daughters who go abroad give their parents complete trust. Thus, it is highly effective in minimizing conflicts that will occur in the future and making the relationship always harmonious. Remote parenting is not a problem because of the mutual openness, support, empathy, positive attitude, and equality between parents and daughters.

The limitation in this study is that it only utilized the results of interview explanations from daughters because using direct observation when informants and parents communicate is impossible during a Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected that there will be further research by adding parents as informants and direct observations as complementary data.

## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

This article is the result of a case study conducted with the Faculty of Communication and Informatics student informants' batch 2018 from the Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. I am Rafa Indira Dini as the writer, drafter of ideas, and the person who searched for data as the article script, and Rina Sari Kusuma as writing supervisor.

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