

THE ROLE OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION IN DEALING WITH YOUTH IMPOSTOR SYNDROME DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

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Psychological problems are often found in the adolescent phase with an age range between 17-24 years and unmarried. These problems are related to impostor syndrome. It is very important for parents to know the phenomenon of impostor syndrome and how to communicate with children who experience this phenomenon. This study aims to determine the factors and impacts of impostor syndrome, as well as explain the role of family communication in dealing with impostor syndrome for adolescents during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research design uses a qualitative approach with a purposive sampling technique that selects samples based on criteria. Then, the data collection technique uses semi-structured interviews. The results of this study describe several factors that cause a teenager to experience impostor syndrome during the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects. In dealing with this phenomenon there are patterns of communication that can be done.

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1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic which has been going on for more than a year has given rise to various psychological phenomena that have an impact on psychological problems. Data on the official PDSKJI (Indonesian Psychiatric Association) website in 2020 stated that after five months of the pandemic had passed, research found that around 71% of women and 29% of men experienced psychological problems. Among them 64.8% of people experience anxiety, 61.5% of people experience depression, and 75% of people experience trauma. These psychological problems are most commonly found in the age group ranging from 17-29 years and > 60 years (PDSKJI, 2022).

The National Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN) revealed that the age range for the adolescent phase is between 17-24 years and unmarried. This phase has the opportunity for psychological problems to occur because it is a period of transition or transition from child to adult (Diananda, 2019). These various psychological problems have the potential to have a relationship with impostor syndrome. (DiGiulio, 2021) on the today.com website stated that impostor syndrome during this pandemic has gotten worse. The article states that this pandemic has caused almost all activities to be carried out virtually, both in school and work environments.

People who are in the condition of impostor syndrome feel less confident that the things they get from people around them don't match what they achieve, even though it's the opposite (Charleson, 2023). Indirectly, people who experience this delude themselves into having these thoughts. According to the results of research conducted by Josa (2019) it was found that around 89% of people who experience impostor syndrome affect their daily activities so that many of them decide to give up the habits they like because they always feel anxious and not enough than they have to feel this condition.

According to King & Cooley (1995), family dynamics are the main means of having impostor syndrome when parents have high expectations for the success and perfection of their children. This often occurs during the developmental period of adolescents who are in school. Some families often compare their children's achievements with those of their siblings or friends and even praise them excessively. Family should be the people who are the biggest drive in motivation to be successful, but in fact, it's the opposite.

Therefore, it is very important for parents to know this phenomenon and understand how to communicate well with children about this condition. Communication is the main spear in the family. The existence of delivery errors can change the overall meaning of what parents really want to convey to their children. Based on these phenomena and problems, the researcher carries the title *The Role of Family Communication in Dealing with Adolescent Impostor Syndrome during the Covid-19 Pandemic*. Researchers believe that there are still many people who do not understand this psychological condition, so that family communication between parents and children is sometimes still not effective in conveying it. This is certainly useful to assist families in carrying out good and effective communication in overcoming and preventing these psychological problems. Based on this background, the focus of this research is to find out about the factors that cause and the impact of impostor syndrome that occurs in adolescents during the Covid-19 pandemic and what is the role of family communication in dealing with impostor syndrome in adolescents during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Method

The research design used in this study is a qualitative approach with a case study method. Qualitative research is a research method that produces descriptive data with written and spoken words from the behavior of the people being observed (Suwendra, 2018). With this approach, the researcher describes, examines, and evaluates the descriptive data that has been processed from the results of interviews with informants. The case study method is an in-depth exploration of an event or problem that occurs by collecting various information and then processing it to get a solution so that the problem is resolved (Sugiyono, 2014). This method digs deeper into the phenomenon of impostor syndrome in adolescents during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Selection of research data samples using non-probability sampling technique. Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique that does not provide equal opportunity for each population to be selected as a sample (Sugiyono, 2014). The sampling technique used was a purposive sampling technique in which the sample was selected based on the criteria that best fit the impostor syndrome theory of Clance & Imez (1978).

In data collection, the researcher used a semi-structured interview technique with six informants to dig deeper into the subject's experiences regarding the impostor syndrome phenomenon and family communication used to deal with it during the Covid-19 pandemic. The criteria for informants in this study were domiciled in the city of Bandung, aged 11-21 years, and had participated in competitions in any field and level. Interviews are conducted online or online via Zoom Meeting Conference for 15-30 minutes with prepared questions.

The data analysis technique used for data from informants obtained using the Miles and Huberman (2018) model by going through four stages; data collection, which was carried out by semi-structured interviews. Then data reduction is carried out by summarizing, choosing the main things, focusing on important things, looking for themes and patterns, and removing unnecessary ones (Creswell, 2013). Then carry out the data display in a descriptive form and draw conclusions to finally do the reporting form. In this study, researchers analyzed the role of family communication for adolescents who experienced the impostor syndrome phenomenon during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reference literature sources used in this study include Sage, Zlibrary, Scencedirect, Cambridge, Springer, and the BBC.

3. Results and Discussion

This research was conducted by interviewing subjects who had criteria aged 11-21 years, domiciled in the city of Bandung, and had participated in competitions in any field and level. The number of data sources in this study is based on the consideration that qualitative research seeks to find and obtain in-depth information rather than the breadth and amount of information (Mulyadi, 2011). The informants in this study consisted of three teenagers and three parents. The three teenagers are people with impostor syndrome, so they were interviewed to find out the factors and impact of impostor syndrome on them. In addition, three parents were interviewed to find out the role of family communication in dealing with impostor syndrome in their children.

a. Impostor Syndrome factors and impacts

The results of interviews with three informants who are teenagers have been conducted to produce various answers because the three come from different backgrounds. First, HV is a student of the Faculty of Engineering from a well-known private university in the city of Bandung with a background of parenting from both authoritarian parents. HV tends to be afraid

when he gets an evaluation, and feels doubts about what he has received. Second, DS is a student of the Faculty of Earth Sciences and Technology from a state university in the city of Bandung with a relatively high level of stringency in Indonesia. DS comes from a family that demands him to always be the best so he felt pressured by this situation. Even though DS believed in his own abilities, the lack of appreciation from his parents made DS have time to blame himself for the failures that befell him. Third, IS, a student at the Faculty of Creative Industries from a well-known private university in the city of Bandung, comes from a family whose parenting style is not too demanding and does not force the child's wishes. IS feels more confident when he gets an achievement and evaluation from others as a form of concern for himself in order to improve himself in the future.

Impostor syndrome is a psychological phenomenon that causes a lack of confidence in the achievements achieved. A person suffering from this syndrome feels that they do not deserve the success they have achieved. The term impostor syndrome was first introduced by two clinical psychologists namely Pauline R. Clance and Suzzane A. Imes in 1978 (Hawley, 2019).

Based on the results of an interview with HV, he is a Civil Engineering student from a prestigious private university in the city of Bandung. However, due to his incompatibility with the major he chose, he moved to a well-known public university in the city of Malang. HV himself chose to major in Public Administration based on his interest in bureaucratic activities. As a freshman, HV often sees his success in getting into the department and university he wants to be just luck. Apart from that, he also felt afraid and anxious about the routine he would undergo during lectures due to the changing roles and the academic environment which still seemed new. Therefore, these anxiety pressures can cause symptoms of impostor syndrome.

According to Zorn in (Ali et al., 2015) suggests that impostor syndrome occurs in new students due to several factors including not being familiar with new roles, competitiveness among students, isolation at high levels of education, and other pressures that are often found in academic culture. . Thus, higher education is the highest academic environment culture that has a major influence on the phenomenon of impostor syndrome, especially for new students who often doubt their own abilities so they compare themselves with other friends.

Furthermore, HV received parenting from his authoritarian father and always demanded that he get perfect scores. HV often takes part in softball competitions, but sometimes he feels doubtful when he wins a championship and thinks that other teams have more right to win. Actually HV believes that the achievements he gets are in accordance with his abilities. However, HV still feels afraid when receiving evaluations from other people. In addition, according to HV, he does not always feel depressed and insecure. This is because the parenting style of both parents has changed since their father fell ill, so that the parenting style of the parents, which was initially full of interventions, becomes more appreciative and respects whatever decisions they make.

In the end HV no longer felt anxious or depressed thanks to his parents who now always give positive affirmations. This of course shows that the pattern of family communication as a support system through both verbal and non-verbal communication can support HV to get out of the impostor syndrome bondage he has been experiencing. Constructivism communication patterns by parents also contribute greatly in understanding children's achievements and abilities without the need to compare them with others.

Furthermore, the results of interviews with DS Geodesy Engineering students from the most prestigious public universities in the city of Bandung with a high level of stringency throughout Indonesia show that since he was in high school he has had ambitions to qualify for

his current dream university by participating in various science Olympiad competitions. in order to improve yourself. DS also admits that he often feels alienated from his surroundings because he drifts into his own world full of ambition. However, DS also did this to get validation from the people around him, especially his parents, who often compared DS with the other two siblings. In an academic context with highly competitive competition, individuals with the tendency of impostor syndrome have achievement motivation as self-evident because they feel ashamed and afraid if they fail in achieving themselves (Patzak et al., 2017).

DS also experienced failure during lectures when his exam results got low grades even though he felt he had prepared to study as much as possible. Therefore, DS was confined and blamed himself for the failures experienced. This shows that individuals who experience impostor syndrome tend to believe success as a form of luck and believe failure as a factor of their own inability. After becoming a student at his current dream university, DS also often thinks that the success he gets is influenced by relationships and the luck of prayer so that it is not entirely the result of his own abilities. Individuals who have a tendency to impostor syndrome downplay the meaning of the success they get by assuming that the achievements obtained are not as difficult as imagined and are the luck of helping others (Young, 2005).

The results of the interview with DS showed that he was required to always be the best by his parents by making his two older siblings as role models so that DS could do better. Of course, someone who has impostor syndrome is afraid of failure (September et al., 2001). This happens when faced with a situation of fear of failure and not getting an appreciation from both parents, making a child feel that he has failed, which leads to blaming and isolating himself. In addition, impostor syndrome tends to cover up their perceived deficiencies by setting unrealistically high standards as a form of challenging themselves (Clance, 1985). As a child who is required to achieve achievements, DS never hesitates when getting an achievement. This is because, often feel dissatisfied with the achievements that have been obtained and want bigger and wider achievements. In addition, DS is a person who feels unhappy when criticized by others. This is because for him an evaluation is evidence that shows he has a deficiency so that DS feels like a failure and blames himself. DS felt that his parents were less expressive in giving an appreciation. This was shown by both DS' parents who only gave appreciation when they were able to achieve big achievements and looked down on small achievements that meant so much to him that DS felt that all his hard work was not appreciated by his parents. Therefore, DS expects good communication with his family so they can respect one another.

Based on the results of an interview with IS, a Visual Communication Design student who is enthusiastic about the field of posters and comic strips so that he has participated in all competitions in this field as a form of contribution to the college and his family. This shows that individuals who experience impostor syndrome tend to have achievement motivation to be the best, ambitious, perfectionist in carrying out achievement tasks in order to meet the expectations of others. Individuals who experience impostor syndrome have a great need to please others (Castro et al., 2004). IS also underestimates his own abilities by considering the success he gets in comic competitions to be just luck, whereas if he experiences failure it shows his shortcomings. (Young, 2005) suggests that individuals who experience impostor syndrome tend to downplay the meaning of success in achievement tasks that are considered easy so that the impostor has the belief that other people can easily obtain the achievements that have been achieved by themselves. (Clance & O'tool, 1987) suggests that individuals who experience impostor syndrome tend to look highly on the abilities of others and underestimate their own abilities.

At first, IS was not supported to develop his talent in the arts and was not required to always be a champion, so IS felt free to express himself. In addition, IS is not afraid when getting an evaluation from other people because for him it is a form of concern for the people around him. Furthermore, IS also feels normal when his parents often compare him with other children because for him this is a form of evaluation so that he can develop better. Even though the family can influence the occurrence of impostor syndrome by comparing it with other people and giving certain labels to children so that children find it difficult to maintain their self-image in the eyes of their parents. Therefore, parents should apply cognitivism communication in emphasizing the learning process rather than results. Furthermore, IS itself hopes for family communication as a support system by means of which parents can fully appreciate all the efforts they have made.

Based on the results of interviews with the three informants, there are several factors that cause a person to develop impostor syndrome, the most frequently found is the result of parenting parents who demand that children must always be perfect, but not matched by appreciation from parents. Furthermore, a competitive environment is also a factor that can cause a child to get impostor syndrome. In addition, the interview results also show that being compared with other people is something that has the potential to cause impostor syndrome.

Furthermore, the factors found from the interview results have an impact on the lives of those with impostor syndrome. This is shown when they experience failure resulting in fear, anxiety, and feeling useless so that they confine themselves. In addition, they will feel insecure about their own abilities and bring up any deficiencies they have when they get an evaluation from other people. Of course, this is different from children who always get support from their parents, which makes them more confident in their abilities.

(Bussotti, 1990) previously found that impostor syndrome is associated with a lack of perceived support and communication between families. Therefore, based on the results of the interviews, it shows that every child wants to establish proper family communication patterns such as mutual support for one another or the family as a support system, more oriented to the learning process than results, getting appreciation for the slightest achievement, and not expecting a parenting style. demanding parents also impose the will of a child.

b. The role of family communication

The pattern of proper family communication is to support each other or the family as a support system and also parents always appreciate all the achievements of their children. This communication process is an application of interpersonal communication theory in which parents convey information, feelings, and the meaning of what they think through verbal and non-verbal messages (Manning, 2020). It is not only what is said but how it is said and the non-verbal messages sent through tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and body language that make a teenager feel supported by his family.

Parents should be more oriented to the learning process than results. In the process of communication between parents and their children, they must always emphasize the learning process, this is in accordance with the theory of cognitivism communication. Basically learning is an interaction between a child's mental self and its environment so that it will have an impact on the development process, namely change and behavior (Greene & Hall in Copley & Schulz, 2013)

Every child certainly does not expect a parenting style that requires a lot of demands and also imposes the will of a child. Every child has their own cognitive side. Every child acts according to the conceptual framework that exists in his mind. Therefore, not everything that parents want will go in the same direction as what children want and do. In accordance with

constructivism communication theory, it is very important for parents to understand what their child's achievements are and also their behavior without having to compare them with other people's achievements (Delia, 1977).

IS parents build family communication by inviting their children to tell stories in every free time so they know what their children like and dislike and their expectations. When his son faced a problem, he always listened in full. If what is done is correct and positive, then praise and support are given. If wrong, then invited to re-evaluate what needs to be done to solve it and always remind him to always ask Allah for guidance. When his child gets an achievement, he always tries to show a positive attitude and a feeling of happiness in the form of support and praise. He perceives that the struggle is a tough struggle. If his child fails, then he continues to provide support and remind him that he has tried his best according to his abilities and the need for an evaluation of his failures so that it can be used as a lesson. IS parents never make high demands. He just wants his son to always try his best. IS parents are process-oriented parents.

If the child makes a mistake, then he is reminded and returned to the right direction. IS parents never compare their children, because they feel that when they do that, their children are motivated to be someone else. But after looking back, it turned out that it actually offended his son's pride and didn't even want to accept and listen. He also assumed that what was better was comparing current achievements with those of the past. Because by looking at the past maybe it could get even better. According to IS's parents, family communication is important so that misunderstandings do not occur, they can equalize perceptions, and respect each other. Through these actions, IS's parents try to be positive about all the feelings shown by their children by providing support for all the processes that have been carried out because they consider all the efforts that IS has made to be the maximum struggle based on their interests. So IS parents also try to understand that no human being is perfect because every individual must have attitudes that are not liked by others. Thus, IS parents began to be awakened not to compare their children with other people because each individual has their own uniqueness in expressing themselves. So of course this also has an impact on building a more constructed pattern of family communication.

HV parents build communication with their children by getting their children used to telling stories under any circumstances. When I was a teenager I communicated more via chat. When his child faces a problem, he communicates in the form of interaction with friends which enters his daily life so that his child does not feel indoctrinated. He put forward to listen more and find solutions together. When his son gets an achievement, then he fully supports it.

HV parents tend to make demands on their children in the form of completing assignments and always praying on time. HV parents are more process oriented. HV parents always support whatever decision HV makes. HV parents sometimes compare their children to their neighbors' children in their daily lives, but because lately their children are trying more, they don't compare. HV parents responded that family communication is important. Therefore, HV parents try to apply openness and equality in family communication in order to be able to express thoughts, feelings and reactions to other family members. Thus, for the sake of self-acceptance one must be able to be honest and authentic in order to have close relationships and good communication. This is also what HV parents do through a communication approach such as friends to their children to express opinions and feelings openly. Furthermore, the similarities that are built in family communication aim to solve problems that occur wisely with familiarity and closeness between parents and children so that communication can run effectively because parents can read the perspectives and needs of their children.

At first, DS's parents often demanded and forced themselves to DS to be the same as their two siblings. However, in the end, DS parents build communication with their children by providing motivation and support regarding what DS wants. DS parents also often give advice and take DS out for a walk in order to defuse the conflict of problems that are being faced. Furthermore, DS parents always provide support to their children to always be number 1 so that DS can develop properly. However, as time goes by, DS parents often appreciate all the business processes that DS does well with any results. Therefore, DS parents consider family communication to be very important as the main spear in order to be able to interact properly between parents and children.

Finally, DS parents try to build empathy and support in communicating with their children. Empathy here is useful for the ease of proper communication between parents and children. So that makes children feel valued and free to express their feelings and desires. Therefore, parents can also understand the interests and abilities of their children. Furthermore, a supportive attitude in family communication plays a role in building and preserving relationships with fellow parents. The greater the acceptance of parents to themselves and the greater the acceptance of parents to their children, the easier it will be for parents and children to perpetuate effective family communication. This can be seen from DS's parents who try to appreciate all the processes they do and invite them to spend time together to preserve an efficient pattern of family communication.

Based on the description above, family communication indicators include openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality (DeVito, 2007). Therefore, through these indicators, family communication should be the mainstay in dealing with impostor syndrome, which is often experienced by adolescents, especially in the immediate environment, namely the family. Through the description of the results of the research above, it can also be understood that the research we are conducting is trying to find alternative solutions in dealing with impostor syndrome in adolescents through the role of family communication patterns which are often neglected.

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the impostor syndrome that occurs in adolescents during the Covid-19 pandemic is caused by various factors including the expectations of parents or the environment that are too high, frequent comparisons, ignoring the slogans that have been achieved, having an attitude that is too perfect, sad, and competitive, living in a competitive environment and doubting one's own abilities.

The effects of impostor syndrome include the emergence of excessive fear and anxiety, always feeling lacking and unworthy of praise, not believing in one's abilities or achievements (fake), sinking and feeling like a failure when expectations are not met, and always blaming oneself. Over faults and excesses. To deal with the impostor syndrome phenomenon, it is found that there is a role for family communication that can be carried out in several patterns of family communication including: the family as a support system, the learning process is absorbed compared to the results, not demanding much to be like others, and appreciation of all pressures.

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