

IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS IN ENHANCING INTERACTION WITH PEERS

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Abstrak: Keterampilan interpersonal merupakan kompetensi penting yang mendukung komunikasi dan interaksi sosial yang efektif di kalangan mahasiswa. Meskipun dapat berkembang secara alami melalui pengalaman sosial, banyak mahasiswa masih mengalami kesulitan dalam menerapkannya pada interaksi sehari-hari dengan teman sebaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi keterampilan interpersonal dalam meningkatkan interaksi teman sebaya serta mengidentifikasi hambatan yang dihadapi mahasiswa Program Studi Bimbingan dan Konseling Islam Fakultas Dakwah dan Komunikasi UIN Ar-Raniry. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan wawancara terhadap empat informan yang dipilih secara purposive. Analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterampilan interpersonal berperan penting dalam meningkatkan kualitas interaksi teman sebaya melalui sikap keterbukaan, empati, kerja sama, toleransi, tanggung jawab sosial, dan komunikasi yang efektif. Keterampilan tersebut membantu mahasiswa membangun hubungan positif, mengurangi kesalahpahaman, dan memperkuat kerja sama. Namun, mahasiswa masih menghadapi hambatan berupa kesulitan menyampaikan pendapat, memulai percakapan, menerima perbedaan pandangan, dan memberikan kritik secara konstruktif. Oleh karena itu, penguatan keterampilan interpersonal perlu dilakukan melalui pelatihan praktis, simulasi, dan pembiasaan kerja kelompok.

Kata Kunci: Keterampilan Interpersonal, Interaksi Teman Sebaya, Mahasiswa

Abstract: Interpersonal skills are important competencies that support effective communication and social interaction among university students. Although they can develop naturally through social experiences, many students still face difficulties in applying them in their daily interactions with peers. This study aims to analyze the implementation of interpersonal skills in enhancing peer interaction and to identify the challenges faced by students of the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, UIN Ar-Raniry. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through observations and interviews with four purposively selected informants. Data analysis was conducted through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that interpersonal skills play an important role in improving the quality of peer interaction through openness, empathy, cooperation, tolerance, social responsibility, and effective communication. These skills help students build positive relationships, reduce misunderstandings, and strengthen cooperation. However, students still face obstacles such as difficulties in expressing opinions, initiating conversations, accepting differing viewpoints, and providing constructive criticism. Therefore, strengthening interpersonal skills needs to be carried out through practical training, simulations, and habituation of group work.

Keywords: Interpersonal Skills, Peer Interactions, College Students

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are inherently social creatures who cannot survive in isolation without the presence and interaction of others. From early life to adulthood, individuals continuously engage in communication processes that shape their identity, behavior, and social development. These interactions occur in various contexts, including family, educational environments, and peer groups. In the contemporary global era, where communication is increasingly complex and mediated by digital platforms, the quality of interpersonal interaction has become a critical factor in determining social harmony and individual success. Within this framework, interpersonal skills emerge as a fundamental competence that significantly influences the effectiveness of human relationships. Interpersonal skills refer to the ability to communicate, understand, and respond appropriately to others in both formal and informal settings, making them essential for maintaining healthy and productive social connections.

Social interaction itself is the foundation of all human relationships, involving reciprocal communication between individuals, between individuals and groups, or among groups. Every form of interaction is shaped by differences in personality, background, experience, and perception. These differences often lead to varying interpretations in communication processes, which may either strengthen relationships or create misunderstandings. Therefore, effective interpersonal engagement becomes crucial in ensuring that interactions remain constructive and mutually respectful. In

academic environments, particularly among university students, interpersonal skills are not only necessary for academic collaboration but also for emotional regulation and conflict resolution in peer relationships. The absence or weakness of these skills often results in communication breakdowns, misunderstandings, and interpersonal conflicts.

Several scholars have emphasized the importance of peer interaction as a significant factor in social development. Peer interaction refers to close social relationships among individuals of similar age groups that involve openness, cooperation, and frequent communication. Mahmudah (2018), drawing on Partowisastro and Ahmad Asrori, explains that peer interaction includes emotional openness, collaboration, and consistent communication patterns that influence individuals within a group. Similarly, Narwoko and Suyanto define social interaction as a reciprocal process in which individuals or groups influence one another. Without such interaction, social life cannot be sustained. The quality of these interactions is influenced by multiple factors such as cultural background, social environment, values, and personal history, which collectively shape the way individuals respond to one another in social contexts (Dwi et al., 2023).

Ideal social interaction is characterized by positive engagement that leads to cohesion rather than conflict. In this regard, interpersonal communication skills play a central role in determining how effectively individuals participate in social exchanges. According to Padmavathi,

Lalitha, and Pathasarathy (as cited in Garvin, 2017), interaction skills include initiating conversation, maintaining dialogue through questioning and factual sharing, expressing feelings, joining conversations, following topics initiated by others, managing topic changes, expressing opinions, and responding appropriately when communication breakdowns occur. These indicators demonstrate that interpersonal communication is a complex set of behaviors that requires both cognitive and emotional competence.

Interpersonal skills are broadly defined as the ability to communicate effectively, influence others, demonstrate empathy, solve problems, lead groups, and build cooperative relationships. They also involve the capacity to recognize and appropriately respond to the feelings, attitudes, behaviors, and intentions of others (Siby & Joesoef, 2022). This ability is essential in creating harmonious social relationships because it enables individuals to understand and adapt to the emotional and psychological states of others. Research by Riggio (2017) demonstrates that individuals with well-developed interpersonal competence—such as emotional expressivity, social sensitivity, and effective social control—tend to achieve higher levels of academic performance, leadership effectiveness, and psychosocial adjustment. These competencies enable individuals to build positive relationships, communicate respectfully, and engage in socially responsible behavior within both academic and professional environments. In line with this, Goleman's framework of emotional

intelligence also emphasizes key social abilities such as empathy, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management, which collectively support effective communication, collaboration, tolerance, and ethical interaction in diverse social contexts (Syahputra, 2022).

In educational settings, peer relationships play a crucial role in shaping students' social and psychological development. Peers are generally defined as individuals of similar age and developmental stage who share social experiences and emotional closeness (Desmita, 2010; Santrock in Wulandari & Hakim, 2015). Peer groups serve as environments where individuals learn cooperation, identity formation, and problem-solving skills. Studies such as Brown and Larson (2009) emphasize that peer groups play a central role in adolescents' social and psychological development, particularly in shaping self-concept, identity formation, and adaptive social behavior. Peer relationships provide a context in which individuals can exchange ideas, negotiate meanings, and develop problem-solving skills through continuous social interaction. When individuals experience acceptance and recognition within their peer group, they are more likely to develop positive self-perceptions, emotional stability, and prosocial attitudes, while reducing tendencies toward social anxiety and negative judgments of others. In this sense, interpersonal skills function not only as tools of communication but also as a fundamental foundation for creating a healthy and supportive social environment.

Despite the recognized importance of interpersonal skills, various studies indicate that challenges remain in their application, particularly among students. Previous research has contributed valuable insights but still presents limitations. Sofia and Irma (2026) examined active listening in enhancing interpersonal empathy among peers; however, their study was limited to literature review and lacked empirical validation. Bestari et al. (2022) focused on basic communication skills in peer counseling within online counseling contexts, but their study was restricted to formal counseling settings rather than natural peer interactions. Agustin et al. (2025) analyzed assertive training through group counseling to improve interpersonal communication skills, yet their quantitative approach was unable to capture in-depth psychological processes, behavioral barriers, and adaptive strategies experienced by students. Collectively, these studies have not comprehensively explored interpersonal skill implementation in everyday peer interaction contexts, particularly from the perspective of students as active social actors.

Based on preliminary field observations, it was found that many students still experience difficulties in applying interpersonal skills effectively in peer interactions. These difficulties include challenges in initiating conversations, expressing opinions confidently, and responding appropriately to others' ideas. In some cases, these issues are not caused by a lack of knowledge but rather by habitual communication patterns and limited social experience. Such conditions may negatively

affect peer relationships and reduce the quality of social interaction in academic environments. Therefore, there is a need for deeper exploration of how interpersonal skills are actually implemented in real-life student interactions, especially within Islamic higher education contexts.

This study is novel in that it seeks to explore the implementation of interpersonal skills in enhancing peer interaction in a holistic, contextual, and in-depth manner from the perspective of Islamic counseling students as active participants in social interaction. Unlike previous studies that focus on isolated skills, specific interventions, or formal counseling settings, this research integrates multiple dimensions of interpersonal competence within natural peer environments. The main objective of this study is to analyze how interpersonal skills are applied by students in their daily interactions and how these skills contribute to improving the quality of peer relationships.

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the development of interpersonal communication theory and educational practice, particularly within Islamic higher education. Practically, the findings are expected to provide insights for educators, counselors, and institutions in designing strategies to enhance students' social competence. Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on interpersonal communication by offering a more comprehensive understanding of how interpersonal skills function in real social contexts. Ultimately, strengthening interpersonal skills among students is

expected to foster more harmonious, empathetic, and collaborative academic environments, thereby contributing to both personal development and institutional quality improvement.

METHOD

This study employed a field research design using a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method. A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of interpersonal skills in enhancing peer interaction among students. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore social phenomena comprehensively by examining participants' experiences, perceptions, behaviors, and interactions within their natural settings. According to Sugiyono (2016), qualitative research seeks to generate descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behaviors, allowing researchers to understand phenomena from the participants' perspectives.

The descriptive-analytical method was utilized to systematically investigate and describe the actual conditions of the research subject based on facts and realities found in the field. This method was considered appropriate because the study focused on understanding how interpersonal skills are implemented in daily interactions among students, the challenges they encounter, and the perceived impacts of such skills on peer relationships. Through this approach, the researcher was able to analyze participants' experiences and behaviors in a contextual and holistic manner rather than relying on numerical measurements.

Research participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling refers to a participant selection strategy based on specific considerations and predetermined criteria relevant to the research objectives. This technique was chosen to ensure that the selected informants possessed sufficient knowledge and experience regarding interpersonal interactions within their peer groups. The study involved four informants who were considered capable of providing rich and relevant information concerning the implementation of interpersonal skills, including the obstacles encountered and the impacts generated in peer interactions.

Data were collected through observation and semi-structured interviews. Observation was conducted to obtain direct information regarding students' interpersonal behaviors and interaction patterns within their social environment. Meanwhile, interviews were used to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, and interpretations related to interpersonal skills and peer relationships in greater depth. The combination of these techniques enabled data triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the findings.

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three interconnected stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing relevant information obtained from the field. Data display was carried out by systematically presenting the data to facilitate interpretation and pattern identification.

Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified throughout the research process to ensure the validity and consistency of the findings. Through these procedures, the study was expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how interpersonal skills contribute to improving peer interaction among students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Interpersonal Skills in Interactions with Peers

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it was found that the implementation of interpersonal skills plays a very important role in improving the quality of student interactions with peers. Interpersonal skills are one of the main aspects that determine individual success in building healthy, harmonious, and productive social relationships in the academic environment. Students with good interpersonal abilities tend to find it easier to communicate, adapt to social settings, and establish effective collaboration with their peers. Research findings show that most informants have attempted to apply various aspects of interpersonal skills, such as openness, empathy, positive attitudes, social responsibility, cooperation, tolerance, and polite communication in daily life.

The study results indicate that openness is one of the key elements in building effective interaction. Students who are able to be open are more receptive to feedback, better at understanding differing viewpoints, and less likely to harbor negative prejudice toward others. This openness enables more honest and trustworthy

communication, thereby strengthening friendships. These findings align with Rokhim et al. (2023), who explain that the effectiveness of interpersonal communication is determined by several core aspects: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. These five aspects form an essential foundation for creating healthy and productive communication among individuals.

In addition to openness, empathy also emerges as a dominant component in the implementation of students' interpersonal skills. Based on interviews, most informants showed a tendency to listen first before responding to their peers' opinions. They strive to understand the situation, feelings, and perspectives of others before giving a response. This attitude reflects the ability to put oneself in another's position, which is the essence of empathetic behavior. These findings reinforce the study by Sofia and Irma (2026), which emphasizes that active listening skills play an important role in enhancing empathy in peer-to-peer interpersonal communication. Active listening enables individuals to grasp messages more deeply, thereby reducing misunderstandings and potential conflicts in social interactions.

In the context of social responsibility, students demonstrated concern for peers experiencing difficulties, both academically and non-academically. Informants stated that helping peers in need is a form of social responsibility that every student should possess. This attitude reflects an awareness that group success is determined not only by individual ability but also by mutual support

and cooperation. According to Riggio (2017), individuals with strong interpersonal competence generally show the ability to build positive relationships, participate in social activities, and demonstrate concern for others' needs. Therefore, social responsibility becomes an important indicator in the development of students' interpersonal skills.

Research findings also show that the ability to cooperate is a highly influential factor in improving the quality of peer interactions. In group assignments, students emphasized the importance of open communication, clear task distribution, and willingness to complement each other's shortcomings. They recognized that diversity of character within a group is not a barrier but a source of strength that can be harnessed to achieve common goals. These findings are consistent with Saleh et al. (2025), who explain that students' social skills and interpersonal competence can develop optimally through learning activities that encourage collaboration and active interaction. Ainiyah (2022) also found that group-based learning models enhance students' interpersonal abilities through continuous processes of communication, negotiation, and cooperation.

Tolerance toward differences was also clearly evident in this study. Students acknowledged that they often interact with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, habits, and personalities. In facing these differences, most informants sought to remain open, nonjudgmental, and respectful of diversity. They also avoided using words or jokes that might offend others. This

attitude shows that interpersonal skills are not only about speaking ability but also about wisely managing social relationships. Brown and Larson (2009) explain that peer relationships play a crucial role in individual social development, serving as a medium for learning diversity, building social identity, and developing adaptability in heterogeneous environments.

The findings also reveal that students strive to deliver criticism and feedback to peers in a polite and constructive manner. Most informants preferred to give criticism privately rather than in public, in order to protect their peers' feelings and dignity. They also focused criticism on behaviors that needed improvement, rather than on personal character. This ability reflects strong emotional intelligence in managing social relationships. According to Goleman (1995), individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to manage emotions effectively, show empathy, build positive relationships, and communicate well in various social situations.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the implementation of interpersonal skills contributes significantly to improving the quality of student interactions with peers. Interpersonal skills help students build more harmonious relationships, increase self-confidence, reduce potential conflicts, and strengthen cooperation in academic settings. These findings reinforce the view that interpersonal skills are among the essential soft skills students need to face social and professional challenges. As Syahputra (2022) argues, mastery of interpersonal skills not only supports the development of students'

soft skills but also plays a vital role in shaping character, communication ability, and readiness for the future workforce. Thus, the implementation of interpersonal skills must continue to be developed through various academic and social activities so that students can build more effective and meaningful relationships with their peers.

Barriers to the Implementation of Interpersonal Skills Among College Students

Although students understand the importance of interpersonal skills in building healthy social relationships, the research findings show that their application in daily life still faces various obstacles. These barriers arise not only from limited communication abilities but are also influenced by emotional, psychological, and social factors that shape how students interact with peers. This indicates a gap between conceptual understanding of interpersonal skills and the actual ability to apply them in real social situations. In other words, students generally know how to interact effectively, but they still struggle when confronted with conditions that demand self-control, assertive communication, and direct conflict resolution.

Based on interviews, one of the most frequent obstacles is difficulty in accepting differing opinions during group discussions. Some students admitted they tend to defend their own views when faced with arguments that differ from those of their peers. This condition shows that active listening and the ability to accept others' perspectives have

not yet fully developed. Healthy interaction requires the ability to understand different viewpoints and a willingness to negotiate meaning in communication. These findings align with Maizura et al. (2024), who found that one of the main weaknesses in students' interpersonal communication skills is the low ability to listen reflectively and respond constructively to differences of opinion. When individuals focus more on defending their own views than on understanding others' perspectives, the likelihood of conflict and misunderstanding increases.

Another barrier relates to social responsibility in friendships. Some students stated that they feel burdened when they must continually help peers in difficulty, especially when those peers show little effort to improve their own situation. This reflects a dilemma between the desire to help and the need to maintain balance in personal responsibilities. In interpersonal contexts, social concern is indeed important, but the ability to set healthy boundaries is also necessary so that relationships do not create psychological pressure. This finding shows that interpersonal skills involve not only the ability to build relationships but also the ability to manage expectations and responsibilities proportionally.

In terms of group cooperation, the study found that obstacles often arise from imbalanced participation among members. Some students complained about peers who were too passive, thereby burdening others with more work. Conversely, some members were overly dominant, reducing opportunities for others to contribute. Such conditions often create tension within groups

and hinder effective collaboration. These findings are consistent with Fauziah et al. (2025), who showed that low interpersonal communication skills can reduce active participation in groups, making collaboration less optimal. Furthermore, Fauziah et al. (2025) explain that effective peer interaction is a key factor in building collaborative knowledge. When interaction quality declines, the exchange of ideas and joint problem-solving also face obstacles.

Another barrier identified relates to tolerance of cultural, behavioral, and personality differences. Some students admitted difficulty in accepting peers' behaviors that they considered contrary to their personal values or norms—for example, speaking too loudly, habitual lateness, or communication styles perceived as impolite. This shows that social tolerance is not only about conceptually accepting diversity but also about managing emotional responses when facing real differences in daily life. These findings reinforce Utami (2024), who concluded that peer interaction plays an important role in enhancing adolescents' interpersonal competence, but often faces obstacles due to low ability to accept differences and adapt to diverse personalities.

The greatest barrier found in this study is the ability to deliver criticism and feedback directly. Most students preferred to remain silent or complain to others rather than speak openly to the peer concerned. They admitted fearing that criticism might damage friendships or cause greater conflict. This shows that assertive communication remains a serious challenge among students.

Yet assertive communication is a crucial component of interpersonal skills, as it enables individuals to express opinions, needs, or disagreements honestly without hurting others' feelings. These findings relate to Agustin et al. (2025), who showed that assertive training can improve interpersonal communication skills and help individuals' express opinions more confidently and constructively.

In addition, the study found obstacles such as difficulty initiating conversations, awkwardness when interacting with new peers, lack of confidence in expressing opinions, and inability to respond appropriately in conversations. These barriers indicate that some students still experience social anxiety in certain communication situations. This can reduce the quality of social interaction and limit opportunities to build broader relationships. Novitasari et al. (2026) found that the quality of peer interaction has a significant relationship with the development of students' social skills. The lower the quality of interaction, the greater the likelihood that individuals will struggle to develop social and interpersonal competence.

Overall, the findings show that barriers to implementing interpersonal skills among students stem not only from limited theoretical understanding but more from difficulties in applying these skills in complex social situations. Challenges such as difficulty accepting differing opinions, reluctance to deliver criticism, problems in group cooperation, lack of tolerance for differences, and awkwardness in initiating communication all hinder the quality of peer

interaction. These findings suggest that developing students' interpersonal skills should focus not only on increasing knowledge but also on practical training that provides opportunities to practice assertive communication, conflict resolution, teamwork, and adaptability in diverse social contexts.

The Impact and Strategies for Strengthening Interpersonal Skills in Peer Interactions

The research findings indicate that interpersonal skills have a significant impact on the quality of students' social relationships in peer interactions. Students who are able to apply interpersonal skills effectively tend to have higher adaptability to social environments, build healthy relationships, and create a comfortable and productive communication atmosphere. These abilities not only support harmonious social relationships but also contribute to students' academic and psychological development. In higher education settings, which are rich in collaborative activities, interpersonal skills serve as essential capital that enable students to actively participate in discussions, group work, student organizations, and various other social activities.

Based on interviews, students with strong interpersonal skills demonstrated higher levels of confidence in communicating with peers. They were more willing to express opinions, share ideas, and establish relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds. This ability helps students expand their social networks and

build positive relationships within the campus environment. These findings align with Syahputra (2022), who explains that interpersonal skills are among the key soft skills contributing to the development of students' communication, leadership, cooperation, and self-confidence. Individuals with strong interpersonal skills tend to adapt more easily to various social situations and face communication challenges more effectively.

Beyond enhancing confidence, interpersonal skills also contribute to reducing interpersonal conflicts. The study shows that students who can understand others' perspectives and emotions are better able to regulate their own emotions and avoid misunderstandings in social interactions. They prefer dialogical and consultative approaches when facing differences of opinion rather than confrontational methods that may lead to conflict. These findings reinforce Siby and Joesoef (2022), who argue that interpersonal skills are closely linked to conflict resolution abilities in early adulthood. The capacity to understand others' emotions, needs, and viewpoints enables individuals to find more constructive solutions when dealing with social relationship problems.

Another positive impact is seen in the improvement of cooperation among students. Informants acknowledged that interpersonal skills helped them establish more open communication, appreciate group members' contributions, and complete tasks more effectively. Relationships built on mutual respect and trust foster a more conducive and

collaborative learning environment. These findings are consistent with Renata et al. (2025), who found that quality peer interactions strengthen students' interpersonal communication and enhance cooperation effectiveness in educational settings. Similarly, Qoni'ah et al. (2024) showed that intensive peer interaction can improve students' communication skills and active participation in the learning process.

The study also reveals that interpersonal skills play a role in fostering mutual respect among students. The ability to understand peers' diverse personalities, cultures, and social backgrounds helps students develop greater tolerance. Those with strong interpersonal skills are not only able to communicate effectively but also create inclusive and comfortable social environments for others. These findings align with Dwi et al. (2023), who emphasize that peer interaction contributes significantly to the development of positive social behaviors, including cooperation, respect for differences, and building harmonious relationships with the surrounding environment.

Nevertheless, the study found a gap between students' theoretical understanding and their practical ability to apply interpersonal skills. Most informants understood the importance of active listening, respecting differences, and delivering constructive criticism. However, when faced with real situations involving emotional pressure or conflicting interests, they struggled to apply this knowledge consistently. This suggests that mastery of

interpersonal skill concepts does not necessarily translate into effective application in daily life. This condition supports Bestari (2022), who explains that interpersonal communication skills require continuous practice to be effectively applied in complex social situations.

The gap between knowledge and practice indicates that developing interpersonal skills cannot rely solely on theoretical learning. Students need direct experiences that allow them to practice communication, empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution in real situations. Therefore, strategies to strengthen interpersonal skills must be designed systematically and sustainably. One strategy is interpersonal communication training focused on active listening, assertive communication, and constructive feedback. Such training can help students both understand and practice effective communication techniques in diverse social contexts.

In addition to formal training, conflict resolution simulations and case studies can serve as effective tools for enhancing students' interpersonal skills. Through simulations, students gain opportunities to face social situations resembling real conditions, enabling them to learn how to manage emotions, understand others' perspectives, and find appropriate solutions to emerging conflicts. Agustin et al. (2025) found that practice-based and experiential approaches improve interpersonal communication skills more effectively than theoretical instruction alone. Thus,

simulation activities should be integrated into strategies for developing students' social skills.

Another important strategy is the habituation of group work in academic and organizational activities. Environments that provide opportunities for intensive student interaction help them naturally develop communication, cooperation, and social adaptation skills. These findings are supported by Saleh et al. (2025), who state that interpersonal competence can develop optimally through learning activities that encourage collaboration, discussion, and active participation. By continuously engaging in group activities, students gain more opportunities to internalize interpersonal values in daily life.

Overall, the findings show that interpersonal skills have broad positive impacts on the quality of students' peer interactions, ranging from increased confidence and adaptability to improved cooperation and conflict management. However, gaps remain between theoretical understanding and practical application. Therefore, strengthening interpersonal skills must be pursued through strategies that are practical, reflective, and sustainable. In this way, students will not only understand interpersonal skill concepts academically but also be able to implement them effectively in everyday social life. Continuous development of interpersonal skills will serve as a crucial foundation for creating a harmonious, collaborative, and productive higher education environment.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of interpersonal skills plays a significant role in enhancing peer interaction among students of the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Program at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, UIN Ar-Raniry. The study revealed that students generally demonstrate important interpersonal competencies, including openness, empathy, positive attitudes, social responsibility, collaboration, tolerance, and respectful communication. These competencies contribute to the development of harmonious relationships, effective teamwork, increased self-confidence, and a more supportive academic environment.

However, the study also identified several obstacles that hinder the effective application of interpersonal skills in daily interactions. These challenges include difficulties in accepting differing opinions, communicating criticism constructively, initiating conversations, expressing ideas confidently, managing emotions during conflicts, and adapting to diverse cultural backgrounds and personal characteristics. The findings further reveal a gap between students' theoretical understanding of interpersonal skills and their ability to apply those skills consistently in real-life situations.

The study concludes that interpersonal skills are essential for fostering positive peer relationships and improving students' social competence. Therefore, strengthening these skills requires not only theoretical instruction but also continuous practical training through communication

workshops, conflict-resolution simulations, collaborative learning activities, reflective discussions, and student organizational involvement. Such efforts can help students internalize interpersonal competencies and apply them effectively in various social contexts, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more collaborative, inclusive, and productive higher education environment.

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