

## The relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity of junior high school students

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**Abstract:** Interpersonal communication skills play a crucial role in helping students navigate social interactions effectively. This study aimed to analyze the relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity among 7th-grade students at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung. Using a quantitative method with a correlational design, the study involved a sample of 41 students selected through probability sampling. The instruments included a scale for interpersonal communication skills and a positive conformity scale. The findings revealed that the average level of interpersonal communication skills among students was high, while their positive conformity levels ranged from moderate to high. Data analysis showed a correlation coefficient of  $R = 0.574$  with a significance level of  $p < 0.00$ , indicating a significant positive relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity. In conclusion, the better a student's interpersonal communication skills, the higher their level of positive conformity.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Communication Skills; Positive Conformity; Student Behavior; Correlational Study

### Introduction

Communication is an essential process integral to human existence, encompassing the transfer of information, ideas, and emotions from one individual to another (Al-Hamad et al., 2024; Bozdag, 2023; Bühler et al., 2024; Dong & Huang, 2023). It serves as a bridge that connects people, enabling them to interact, collaborate, and establish meaningful relationships. At its core, communication involves a dynamic exchange of energy and information between sensory inputs and the brain, where it is processed and interpreted (Almusaed et al., 2024; Bibri et al., 2024; Sultana et al., 2024; Zolyomi & Snyder, 2023). This process is not only biological but also profoundly interactive, as it fosters a mutual influence between individuals and their surrounding environments (Azzaakiyyah, 2023; Durairaj et al., 2023; Muhajirah, 2020; Yusufovich, 2020). Communication is foundational to human society, as it lays the groundwork for shared understanding and cooperation.

In the realm of Islamic teachings, the value of communication transcends its practical applications, being viewed as a divine gift bestowed uniquely upon humans. Islam recognizes the ability to communicate as a remarkable trait that distinguishes humans from other creatures (Ali Ahmed Mohamed Ali et al., 2024, 2024; Permana, 2024; Sunday et al., 2024). This capability allows individuals to express their thoughts, emotions, and aspirations while forging connections with others (Ahsan, 2023; De Haas, 2021; Patrick & Hollenbeck, 2021; Shatila et al., 2024; Watters & Northey, 2020; Weisz & Cikara, 2021). The Quran and Hadith emphasize the importance of effective communication, particularly in upholding truth, respect, and understanding (Quadri et al., 2023). Communication in Islam is not merely a tool for interaction but a moral responsibility that fosters societal harmony and individual well-being (Ali, 2024; Nisa et al., 2023; Riaz et al., 2023).

In the context of education, communication assumes a pivotal role in shaping the experiences and relationships of students (Kuo et al., 2024). Among the various forms of communication, interpersonal communication stands out as a critical skill that enables

individuals to establish and maintain healthy relationships (Akyazi et al., 2023). Interpersonal communication refers to the ability to effectively convey messages, understand others' perspectives, and respond appropriately in social interactions (Ribino, 2023).

The importance of interpersonal communication skills is highlighted by research conducted at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung. The study assessed the interpersonal communication skills of 7th-grade students, revealing the distribution of their abilities through a questionnaire. Table 1 summarizes the findings:

**Table 1. Percentage Data from the Distribution of the Interpersonal Communication Skills Questionnaire for 7th Grade Students at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung**

Category	Σ	Percentage
Very High	4	10%
High	30	73%
Moderate	5	12%
Low	2	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>

Interval =  $(X - Y) / 4$

Explanation:

X: Maximum value

Y: Minimum value

Based on Table 1, 73% of students fall into the high category, indicating that most possess good interpersonal communication skills. However, individual differences are evident, as 10% of students are in the very high category, 12% are moderate, and 5% are low. These findings emphasize the need to enhance interpersonal communication skills among students in the moderate and low categories.

Interpersonal communication skills also play a significant role in influencing conformity, particularly positive conformity. Conformity, as a social phenomenon, is an inherent aspect of school settings where students adjust their behaviors, attitudes, or views to align with group norms. Positive conformity is especially vital as it fosters respect, social harmony, and adherence to moral values.

To understand this further, the study also explored the levels of positive conformity among the students. Table 2 presents the findings from the positive conformity questionnaire:

**Table 2. Percentage Data from the Distribution of the Positive Conformity Questionnaire for 7th Grade Students at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung**

Category	Σ	Percentage
Very High	1	2%
High	18	41%
Moderate	22	53%
Low	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100%</b>

Interval =  $(X - Y) / 4$

Explanation:

X: Maximum value

Y: Minimum value

As shown in Table 2, the majority of students fall into the high (41%) and moderate (53%) categories, while none fall into the low category. This distribution indicates that students tend to exhibit positive conformity behaviors, reflecting their adaptation to the social norms of the school environment.

The connection between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity is crucial, particularly in the context of guidance and counseling. Counseling services in schools play a pivotal role in enhancing students' social skills, including their communication abilities. Interpersonal communication skills, encompassing verbal and non-verbal communication, active listening, and empathy, are fundamental in shaping how students interact with peers and adults (Wiedermann et al., 2023).

Recent studies highlight the importance of these skills in promoting positive behaviors, social cohesion, and academic success. Positive conformity, which involves aligning with constructive peer behaviors, is increasingly linked to good communication skills. Research shows that students with strong interpersonal communication skills often influence their peers positively, fostering healthy social norms and cooperative behaviors (Altassan, 2023; Wesarg-Menzel et al., 2023).

By gaining a deeper understanding of students' positive conformity profiles, schools can create more effective strategies to nurture a culture that supports interpersonal communication and social development. This study aims to bridge the gap by analyzing the relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity among 7th-grade students at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung.

## Method

This study aims to examine the relationship between students' interpersonal communication skills and their conformity behavior. To achieve this objective, a quantitative research method with a correlational design was employed. The quantitative method, often referred to as the traditional approach, has long been established as a standard methodology in scientific research. It is grounded in the philosophical framework of positivism and involves investigating research subjects within a specified population or sample. This method relies on structured research instruments and employs rigorous quantitative or statistical data analysis techniques to test the formulated hypotheses.

The type of analysis used in this study is correlational. Correlation analysis is a statistical approach designed to examine the relationship between two or more variables. In this context, the independent variable is interpersonal communication skills (which influence other variables), while the dependent variable is conformity behavior (which is influenced by the independent variable). This research was conducted at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung, located at Jalan KH. Ahmad Dahlan No. 24-22, Pahoman, Teluk Betung Utara District, Bandar Lampung City, Lampung. The population consisted of 409 seventh-grade students. A probability sampling method was used to ensure that every member of the population had an

equal chance of being selected as a sample. Among the various probability sampling techniques, this study employed simple random sampling to provide unbiased representation.

The primary instrument for data collection was a questionnaire, considered an effective tool for identifying, describing, and comparing the various variables and information related to the research objectives. Questionnaires were designed to measure both interpersonal communication skills and conformity behavior, ensuring validity and reliability in capturing accurate and meaningful data for analysis. This methodological approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the variables and to ensure that the findings are grounded in robust and systematic analysis.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **1. Field Orientation**

Field orientation is necessary before conducting any research to gather information regarding the issues to be studied at the research location. The research titled "**The Relationship Between Interpersonal Communication Skills and Positive Conformity Behavior of Students at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung**" was conducted in May 2024 at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung. Before obtaining the research results, the researcher sought permission from Mrs. Misnawati, S.Pd, the counseling teacher at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung, and explained the planned implementation of the study. The researcher also conducted an interview with the counseling teacher to understand the students' interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity behavior.

### **2. Research Preparation**

Proper preparation is essential for the smooth conduct of research. During the research process, the researcher was required to handle and prepare all administrative requirements, including obtaining permission letters from the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teaching at UIN Raden Intan Lampung. After conducting the research, the researcher received a response letter from MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung. Before starting the research, the researcher had to prepare measurement tools for data collection. This study used two questionnaires as instruments: the interpersonal communication skills questionnaire, based on Joseph A. DeVito's theory with indicators of openness, empathy, support, positive feelings, and equality, and the positive conformity questionnaire, based on David O. Sears, Shelley E. Taylor, and Letitia Anne Peplau's theory, with indicators of cohesion, agreement, and obedience. Both questionnaires used a Likert scale.

**Table 3. Data Indicators of Interpersonal Communication Skills**

No.	Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Item (+)	Item (-)
1	Openness	a. Open to learning from others and receptive to new ideas or viewpoints. b. Strives to respect others' opinions, cultures, or backgrounds. c. Open to sharing information.	7, 14, 18	8
2	Empathy	a. Showing empathy in communication, meaning attempting to understand others' feelings and perspectives.	4, 11	3
3	Support	a. Offering help, support, or advice when needed. b. Speaking positively and motivating others.	9, 10, 13	12, 17
4	Positive Feeling	a. Having self-confidence and believing in what is being said. b. Listening, understanding, and responding well.	1, 5, 15	6
5	Equality	a. Mutual respect.	2	16

**Table 3** shows the indicators of interpersonal communication skills, which consist of five main indicators and their sub-indicators. The **openness** indicator includes sub-indicators such as openness, empathy, support, positive feelings, and equality. These indicators are used to assess the interpersonal communication skills of the 7th-grade students at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung.

**Table 4. Data Indicators of Positive Conformity**

No.	Indicator	Sub-Indicator	Item (+)	Item (-)
1	Cohesion	a. Imitating behaviors that are similar to others. b. Adjusting oneself to the majority group.	1, 2, 4, 21	5, 6, 11
2	Agreement	a. Agreeing or approving of group actions or views. b. Trusting the information, norms, or actions of the group.	8, 9, 12, 14, 16, 22	3, 10, 17, 26
3	Obedience	a. The individual's desire to merge with the group. b. Following the group's opinions.	7, 18, 20, 24	13, 15, 19, 23, 25

Table 4 shows the indicators of positive conformity, consisting of three main indicators and their related sub-indicators: cohesion, agreement, and obedience. These indicators are used to measure positive conformity among the 7th-grade students at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung.

### 3. Research Implementation

This study uses a **probability sampling** technique, specifically the **simple random sampling** method. Based on the data provided by the school, the total population for this study consists of 409 students. To determine a representative sample size, 10% of the population was selected, resulting in 40.9, which was rounded up to 41 students as the research sample. This sample was taken from the 7th grade at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung. The use of the **simple random sampling** method ensures that every student in the population has an equal chance of being selected as part of the sample. Therefore, the 41 students selected are considered sufficiently representative of the larger population.

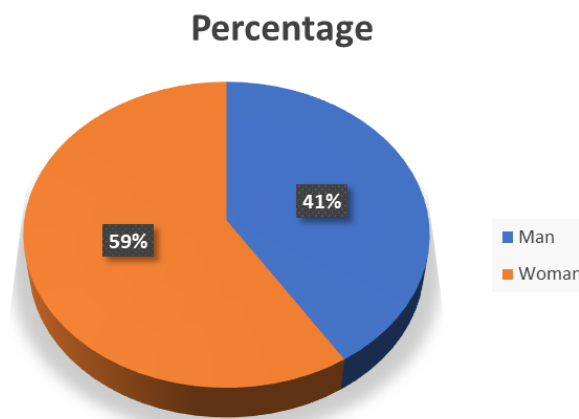
The data collection process was carried out on May 29, 2024, by distributing two questionnaires to the 41 respondents. The questionnaires used in this study cover two main aspects: interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity. Each respondent was asked to complete both questionnaires fully. Data collection was done carefully to ensure the validity and reliability of the obtained information. Respondents were selected randomly to represent the population being studied, and clear instructions were provided to minimize errors in completing the questionnaires.

Once all the questionnaires were collected, the next step in the research process was **data analysis**. This analysis involves examining, processing, and interpreting the data gathered to answer the research questions and test the formulated hypotheses. The data analysis process is important for identifying any patterns and relationships that may exist between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity among the respondents. The results of this analysis will then be used to draw conclusions and provide relevant recommendations related to the research objectives.

After collecting the data, the next step is to convert the numerical data according to the rules set in the blueprint created for each response. For the questionnaires measuring interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity, the evaluation was done using a numerical scale from 1 to 4. For responses considered **favorable** (positive or advantageous), scores were assigned in descending order from 4 to 1. Meanwhile, for responses considered **unfavorable** (negative or disadvantageous), scores were assigned in ascending order from 1 to 4. Afterward, the scores for each item in the questionnaires were summed up to obtain a total score. This approach allows for a more objective evaluation of interpersonal communication skills and the level of positive conformity, by assigning appropriate weights based on the quality of the responses given.

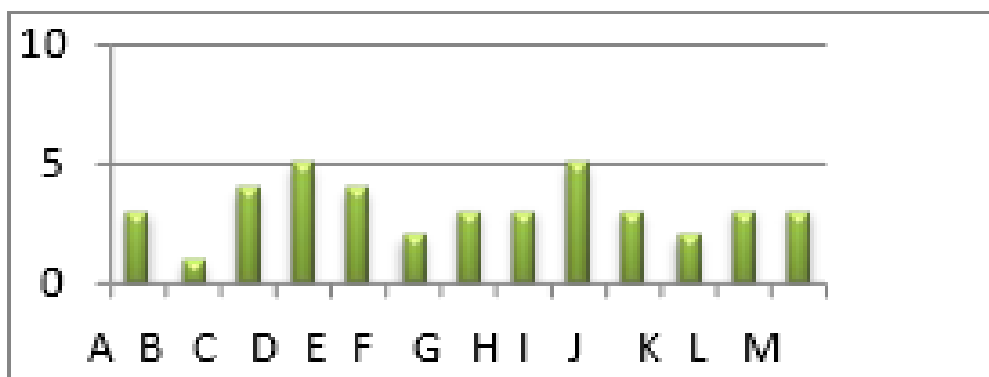
#### 4. Data Analysis Results

Description of Frequency Based on Respondents' Gender Category:



**Figure 2.** Gender Pie Chart

Based on the data presented in the diagram, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents are female. The number of female respondents reaches 24, representing about 59% of all respondents involved in this study. Conversely, the number of male respondents is 17, accounting for about 41% of the total respondents. Description of Frequency Based on Respondents' Class Category:



**Figure 3.** Respondent Class *Column* Diagram

Based on the data shown in the diagram, it can be seen that the participants in the data are divided into various classes, with the distribution as follows: Class A has 3 students, Class B has 1 student, Class C has 4 students, Class D has 5 students, Class E and G each have 4 students, Class F has 2 students, and Classes H, J, L, and M each have 3 students, while Classes I and K each have 5 students.

The next step in this research is to conduct assumption testing, which aims to ensure that the data collected is of good quality and meets the necessary standards for further analysis. This process is crucial to verify that the data conditions meet the required criteria, allowing for subsequent testing to be performed with higher accuracy and validity. Therefore, this assumption test serves as an initial step in ensuring data quality and facilitates further analysis with a higher level of accuracy and validity.

In this study, the normality test procedure is used to determine whether the distribution of the independent and dependent variables follows a normal distribution. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov technique is used to perform the normality test. To determine whether the data follows a normal distribution, the criterion used is that the significance value (sig.) should be greater than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Thus, if the significance value is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data follows a normal distribution.

This normality test was conducted using SPSS software, which allows for the examination of the normality of each variable distribution in the study. By using SPSS, the researcher can ensure that the data used in this study follows a normal distribution, allowing the results of the analysis to be interpreted more accurately.

Here is the table of normality test results:

Table 5. Data on the results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov normality test

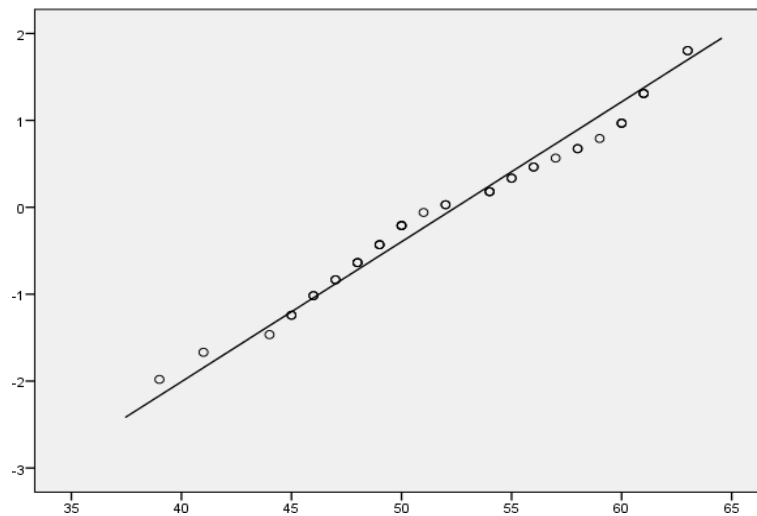
Variable	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Information
Interpersonal Communication Skills	,118	41	,167	Normal
Positive Conformity	,110	41	,200*	Normal

Source: SPSS 22 Processed Data

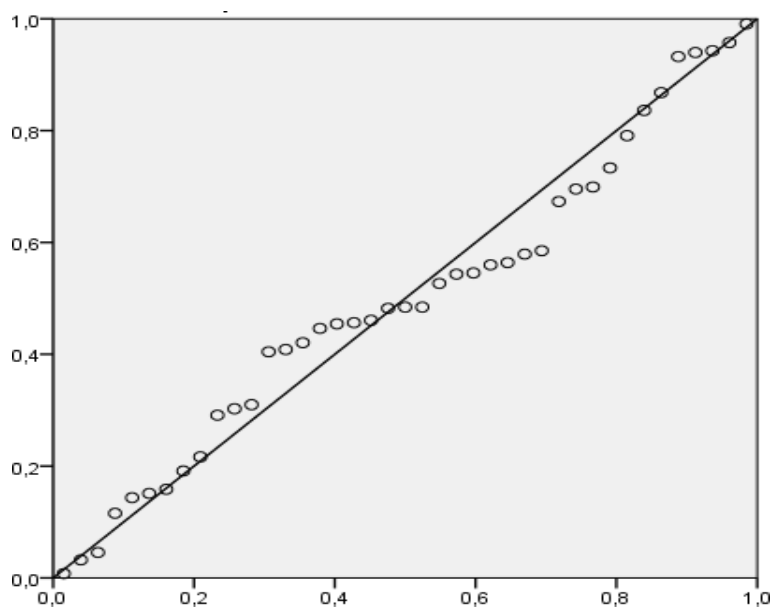
Based on the above data regarding the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, the significance value (Sig.) for interpersonal communication skills is 0.167, and for positive conformity, the significance value (Sig.) is 0.200.



The "Normal" description indicates that both variables (Interpersonal Communication Skills and Positive Conformity) have data distributions that meet the normality assumption based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, with significance values not smaller than 0.05.



**Figure 3.** Visualization of Normality Test of Interpersonal Communication Skills Variables



**Figure 4.** Visualization of Positive Conformity Variable Normality Test

Based on the Q-Q plot graphs displayed above, it can be observed that the data points approach the diagonal line. This indicates that the data in this study follows a normal distribution. This conclusion is drawn from the Q-Q plot visualizations, which indicate the alignment of the data distribution with the expected normal distribution.

This test is conducted to determine whether the independent and dependent variables have a linear relationship. The independent variable in this study is interpersonal communication skills, while the dependent variable is positive conformity. The data for both variables are tested using SPSS. The criterion for linearity is met if the F-calculated value is smaller than the

F-table value, or if the probability value of 0.05 is smaller than the significance value ( $0.05 < \text{Sig}$ ), indicating that the regression model is linear. If the probability value of 0.05 is larger than the significance value ( $0.05 > \text{Sig}$ ), then the regression model is not linear.

**Table 6.** Data on Linearity Test Results

Variable	Mr.	Information
Interpersonal Communication Skills and Positive Conformity	0,443	Linear

Source: SPSS 22 Processed Data

Based on the analysis with a significance value of 0.443, it was found that the relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity in this sample is linear. This means that there is a direct relationship pattern between the two variables.

This finding indicates that any increase or decrease in interpersonal communication skills can affect the level of positive conformity in the individuals participating in this study. In other words, changes in interpersonal communication skills have a significant impact on positive conformity, following a consistent linear pattern.

## 5. Hypothesis testing

After completing the assumption test stage, the next step is to conduct hypothesis testing to determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between the interpersonal communication skills variable (X) and positive conformity (Y). In this hypothesis test, the researcher uses Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation technique, assisted by SPSS statistical software. The Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation technique is used to analyze the relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity. Thus, the researcher can determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between these two variables.

In this hypothesis testing, the researcher uses SPSS statistical software to analyze the data and determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity.

Here is the table of hypothesis testing results showing the correlation between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity:

Table 7. Correlation Test Results Data

	KKI	KP
KKI Pearson Correlation	1	,574**
Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
N	41	41
KP Pearson Correlation	,574**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
N	41	41

Source : SPSS 22 Processed Data

Table 7 contains the correlation matrix, showing the relationship between the two main variables, Interpersonal Communication Skills (KKI) and Positive Conformity (KP), using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The analysis results indicate that there is a significant positive correlation between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity, with a correlation coefficient of 0.574 and a very low significance level ( $p < 0.00$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity. This indicates that the higher an individual's interpersonal communication skills, the more likely they are to exhibit positive conformity. Conversely, if an individual has low interpersonal communication skills, their positive conformity tends to be low as well. This shows that there is a significant positive relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity.

In the context of this study, the findings indicate that interpersonal communication skills play a significant role in enhancing positive conformity in individuals. Therefore, this research underscores the importance of interpersonal communication skills in improving positive conformity.

## **6. Discussion**

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity among 7th-grade students at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung. The study involved 41 students selected using simple random sampling. The results of the interpersonal communication skills questionnaire revealed that 10% of the students were in the very high category, 73% in the high category, 12% in the moderate category, and 5% in the low category. Similarly, the positive conformity scale showed that 2% of students fell into the very high category, 41% in the high category, and 53% in the moderate category, with no students in the low category.

The analysis demonstrated a positive relationship between interpersonal communication skills and positive conformity. The findings suggest that students with strong interpersonal communication skills are more likely to exhibit higher levels of positive conformity, while those with lower communication skills tend to show lower levels of conformity. This highlights the role of interpersonal communication skills in fostering positive social behaviors and adaptability within the school environment.

These results underscore the importance of improving interpersonal communication skills to enhance students' ability to conform positively to social norms, which can contribute to a harmonious school environment. Students with good communication skills are better equipped to interact positively with peers, adapt to group dynamics, and exhibit behaviors that align with constructive social values.

However, this study has certain limitations. The data collection period was relatively short, which may limit the generalizability of the findings over a longer time frame. Additionally, the reliance on questionnaires might not fully capture students' actual feelings or behaviors. To address these limitations, future research should consider combining questionnaire methods with observational studies or interviews to obtain more comprehensive data and a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied.

## **Conclusion**

This study concluded that interpersonal communication skills have a significant positive relationship with positive conformity among 7th-grade students at MTS Negeri 1 Bandar Lampung. Students with strong interpersonal communication skills are more likely to adapt well and exhibit positive behavior in social and school environments. These results highlight the crucial role of interpersonal communication skills in fostering students' positive conformity and social interactions.

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