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State University (UNP)**

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# Descriptive Analysis of Students' Empathy Ability Padang State University (UNP)

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## Abstract

Empathy is one aspect of social and emotional intelligence that has an important role in a person's life. Empathy makes a person sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, encourages helping people who are in distress or pain, and helping someone to treat them with compassion. The ability to empathize with other people must be developed continuously throughout human life. This paper aims to discuss more deeply the description of the empathy of Padang State University (UNP) students, then look at the differences in empathy between male and female students. Data were collected using a scale of empathy measurement to 165 undergraduate students (S1). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tests and comparative tests using the T-test formula. Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that the empathy of Padang State University (UNP) students is in the low category and the empathy of male students is lower than female students. Advice was given to UNP student development organizations in order to increase student empathy through proper student coaching programs.

## Keywords

emotional intelligence, empathy, social intelligence

## 1 Introduction

Empathy is an aspect of emotional intelligence and social intelligence that has an important role in a person's life. In general, empathy is defined as knowledge about how to understand other people's feelings. It can also be said that empathy is a realization and understanding of the feelings, needs, and sufferings of others (Chaplin, 2006). Goleman (1995) states that empathy is a "basic human skill". Empathy is an emotion that disturbs a child's conscience when seeing the distress of others. Empathy makes a person sensitive to the needs and feelings of others, encourages him to help someone who is in distress or pain, and helps him treat people with compassion. Empathy is the ability to share core life with others, which is fundamental to the success of human and community relations (Dziobek et al., 2008). In line with this, Hoffman (1984) in Goleman (1995) also concluded that empathy has a relationship with one's concern for others.

Shapiro (2001) suggests that empathy is one aspect of emotional intelligence that provides a significant contribution to one's success in life. Furthermore, in the aspect of social relations, the development of empathy is very relevant in developing individual human aspects. Feelings of empathy can be one of the most significant components for building social bonds between individuals. Empathy can also be said to be the ability to share your core life with others. In terms of social relationships, empathy can be one of the most significant components for building social bonds between individuals. Empathy for sharing core life with others is fundamental to the success of human and community relations (Dziobek et al., 2008).

Empathy in human life is related to individual behavior in the form of positive and negative behavior. Positive behavior is related to a person's willingness and willingness to act in terms of helping other people's difficulties, giving rise to prosocial attitudes (M. H. Davis, 1994). Then negative behavior is behavior or actions that cause anti-social action, as a result of a lack of empathy (Eysenck, 1981).

Meanwhile, the reality that can be observed today is that the sense of empathy has diminished in many circles of society, including students. As stated by Syaodih (2007) that Indonesia is faced with a multidimensional crisis that touches various basic human life structures. Not only related to economic

and political aspects, but also social, cultural, and moral aspects including empathy. Therefore, empathy is needed by various fields of work such as nurses, teachers, salespeople, and other areas of life (Goleman, 1995). As soon as the importance of empathy is in the field of life, the ability to empathize with others must be developed continuously throughout life. Through this research, we can find out the level of empathy of Padang State University students and the difference between male students and female students. The results of this study can be used as a basis for developing a student empathy development program through the right lecturer.

## 2 Methods

This study was designed using a quantitative descriptive research design. Descriptive research aims to describe, explain, and validate social phenomena that are the subject of research. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to reveal the description and differences in empathy between male and female students at Padang State University. The population of this study was all students of Padang State University at the S1 level of education in the educational and non-educational pathways. The instrument used in data collection for students' empathy abilities was the IRI model of empathy scale modified by the researcher himself. The measurement scale of this model uses a scale range of 1-4, with alternative answers to Very Fit (SS), Fit (S), Not Fit (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). The research sample was taken at random free with a total of 165 undergraduate (S1) students.

To test the accuracy and reliability of the instruments used, trials were carried out on respondents by taking the study population or students who were not used as the research sample. Furthermore, the test results of the instrument were analyzed by performing statistical tests with validity and reliability tests. To test the validity of the items, an instrument trial was conducted on research subjects who were not the samples of this study. The data obtained through these trials were analyzed empirically by correlating the item scores and the total scores using the Pearson Model Product Moment correlation technique (Hatch & Farhady, 1982). The reliability test or the consistency of the instrument or measuring instrument of this study uses the item consistency test which is the consistency of the respondent's answer to an item in the Alpha coefficient measure (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1985; Cronbach, 1990). To see the description of the empathy of UNP students, a quantitative descriptive statistical analysis was used with the percentage formula, while to see the differences in the empathy of male and female students, the T-test statistical analysis was used. The data is processed through computer assistance with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Program for Windows Release 25.0.

## 3 Discussion

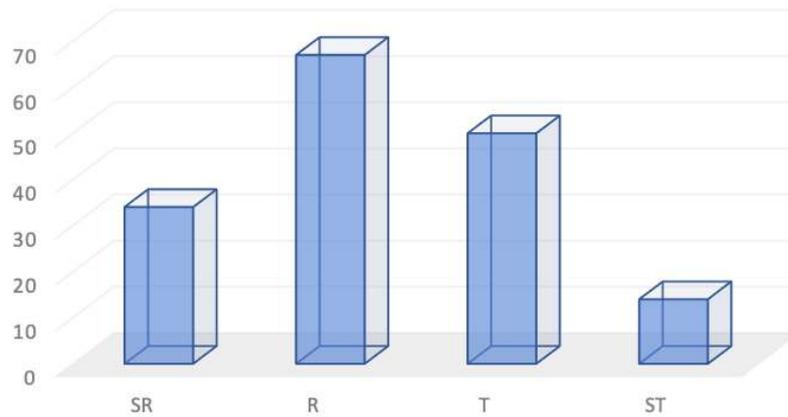
### 3.1 General Description of the Empathy of Padang State University Students

Based on the results of data analysis using the percentage and percentage formulas, it is illustrated that the empathy of students varies and can be seen in **Table 1**.

**Table 1** General Description of the Empathy of Padang State University Students

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
148 - 158	Very High	14	8,5
137 - 147	High	50	30,3
126 - 136	Low	67	40,6
115 - 125	Very Low	34	20,6
Total		165	100

Based on **Table 1**, it can be seen that the empathy of Padang State University students is predominantly in the low category. Namely in the score range 126-136. This means that out of the 165 Padang State University students studied, 67 (40.6%) obtained scores in the range of 136-146 score intervals. For a clearer description of the distribution of these respondents, please see the Histogram in **Fig. 1** below.



**Fig. 1** The Histogram of Student Empathy at the State University of Padang

Furthermore, it can be seen that students' empathy abilities are based on the two main components of empathy, namely the cognitive component and the affective empathy component. Then each of these components is also divided into two aspects. The cognitive component consists of perspective-taking and fantasy aspects, while the affective component consists of empathy aspects of attention (empathic concern) and aspects of personal distress. The empathy ability of Padang State University students based on these four aspects can be seen in the further description below.

### 3.2 Specific Description of Student Empathy in Various Components

#### 3.2.1 . Description of Student Empathy in Perspective-taking Aspects

Student empathy on the perspective-taking component aspects of Padang State University students can be seen in **Table 2**.

**Table 2** Description of the Empathy of Padang State University Students on the Aspect of Perspective Taking

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
40 - 44	Very High	17	10,3
35 - 39	High	50	30,3
30 - 34	Low	70	42,4
25 - 29	Very Low	23	13,9
Total		165	100

In **Table 2**, it is illustrated that the empathy ability of Padang State University students in the perspective-taking aspect is dominant in the low category. This is evidenced by the highest frequency of scores by respondents in the 30-34 score range. This means that out of 165 UNP students, 89 people (53.9%) have low empathy in terms of perspective-taking. For a clearer picture of the perspective-taking aspects, it can be seen in the histogram in **Fig. 2**.

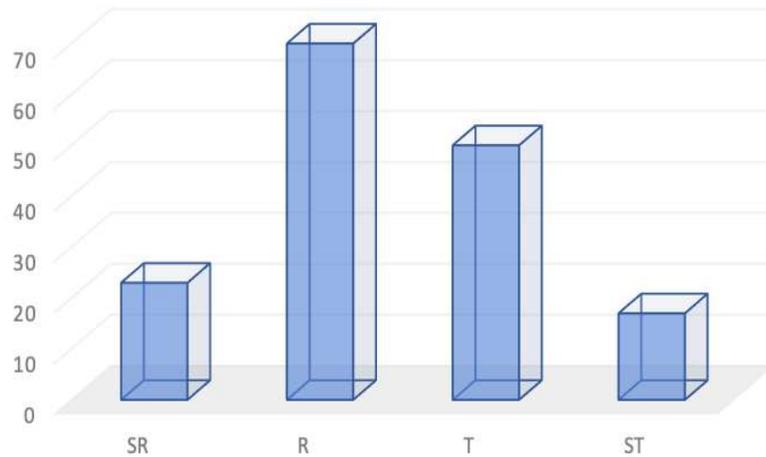


Fig. 2 The Histogram of Student Empathy at the State University of Padang on the Aspect of Perspective Taking

### 3.2.2 Description of the Empathy of Padang State University Students in the Aspect of Fantasy

The empathy of Padang State University students on the fantasy aspect can be seen in **Table 3**.

**Table 3** Description of the Empathy Ability of Padang State University Students on the Aspect of Fantasy

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
41 - 45	Very High	8	4,8
36 - 40	High	63	38,2
31 - 35	Low	71	43,0
26 - 30	Very Low	23	13,9
Total		165	100

Based on **Table 3**, it can be described as the empathy ability of Padang State University students in the fantasy aspect. The dominant component of UNP student fantasy is in the low category. This is proved by the highest frequency of obtaining respondents' scores in the range of scores of 31-35. This means that out of 165 UNP students, 71 people (43.0%) have low empathy in terms of fantasy. For more details, this picture can be seen in the histogram in **Fig. 3** below.

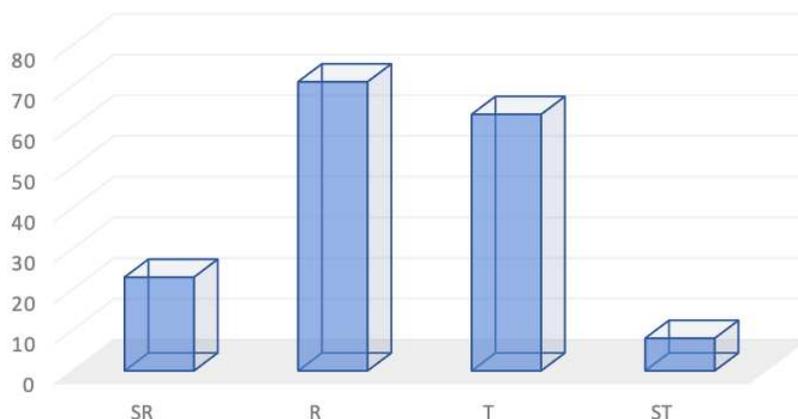


Fig. 3 The Histogram of the Empathy of Padang State University Students on the Aspects of Fantasy

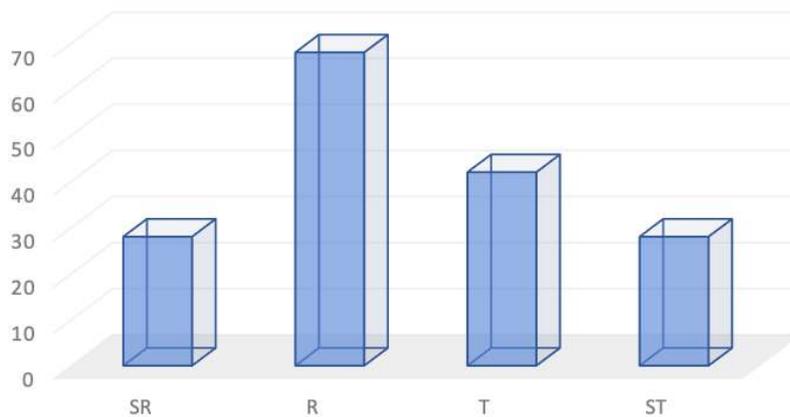
### 3.2.3. Description of the Empathy of Padang State University Students in the Aspect of Attention (Empathic Concern)

The empathy of Padang State University students in the aspect of attention-taking (empathic concern) can be seen in **Table 4** below.

**Table 4** Description of the Empathy Ability of Padang State University Students on Emphatic Concern Aspects

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
41 - 44	Very High	28	16,9
37 - 40	High	42	25,5
33 - 36	Low	68	41,2
29 - 32	Very Low	28	29,1
Total		165	100

Based on **Table 4**, it can be seen that the empathy ability of Padang State University students in the dominant aspect of concern (empathic concern) is in the low category. This is indicated by the highest frequency of scores obtained by respondents is in the range of scores of 33 - 36. This means that 68 out of 165 UNP students (41.2%) have low abilities in the attention-taking component (emphatic concern). For more details, this picture can be seen in the histogram in **Fig. 4** below



**Fig. 4** Histogram of empathy of Padang State University students on the aspects of the attention-taking component (empathic concern)

### 3.2.4 Description of the Empathy of Padang State University Students on the Aspects of Personal Distress

The empathy of Padang State University students on the aspect of Personal Distress (PD) can be seen in **Table 5** below.

**Table 5** Description of the Empathy of Padang State University Students in the Aspect of Personal Distress

Score Interval	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
39 - 44	Very High	19	11,5
33 - 38	High	45	27,3
27 - 32	Low	83	50,3
21 - 26	Very Low	18	10,9
Total		165	100

Based on **Table 5** above, it is illustrated that the empathy ability of Padang State University students in the aspect of personal distress is dominant in the low category. This is indicated by the highest frequency obtained by respondents in the score range 27-362. This means, out of 165 UNP students as many as 83

people (50.3%) have low personal distress (PD). For more details, this picture can be seen in the histogram in Fig. 5 below

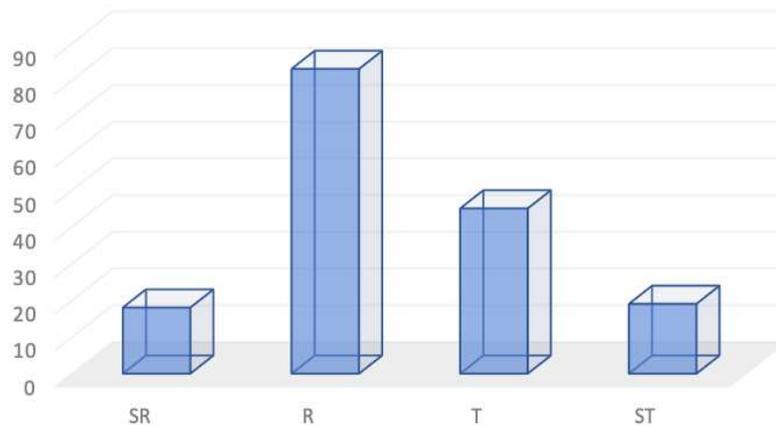


Fig. 5 Histogram of the Empathy Components of Padang State University Students on the Aspects of Personal Distress

### 3.3 Hypothesis Test Results

The research hypothesis has been formulated in the form of a working hypothesis (H1), namely: "there is a significant difference between the empathy of male students and female students at Padang State University." Testing this hypothesis is by using a comparative test analysis, namely the T-test. The comparative analysis (T-test) obtained was -3.569 with a significant level of 0.001 or less than the tolerance given 0.05. Based on such calculations, the working hypothesis (H1) is accepted. In other words, it can be said that the empathy of male students and female students differed significantly. This can be seen from the data analysis that the mean score of female students was 136.5 and the mean value of male students was 128.9. higher than male student empathy.

Based on the results of the descriptive analysis of frequencies and percentages, it was found that the level of empathy of Padang State University students was dominant in the low category. The low level of student empathy is thought to be caused by several factors that influence it. This is in accordance with the opinion of Dziobek et al (2008) that the development of empathy is influenced by various factors including self-factors (innate factors) and the influence of the environment that facilitates it.

The results showed that there were differences in the level of empathy of male students and female students. This is parallel with the research of Marcus 1987 (in Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987) which concluded that one of the factors affecting the level of student empathy is gender in addition to other demographic factors such as age and socioeconomic conditions. Other factors that influence are physical conditions and psychological factors. Children of the female sex have a higher social behavior tendency than boys (Holmgren, Eisenberg, & Fabes, 1998). Strayer and Robert (1997) also stated that girls have a higher empathy continuum score than boys.

Empathy as an aspect of emotional intelligence provides a significant contribution to one's success in life. Shapiro (2001) states that empathy affects social attitudes and behavior. The results of research in the field of psychology show that empathy in human life is related to positive and negative behavior (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2004). Positive behavior, namely the willingness and willingness to act in terms of helping other people's difficulties. This will lead to a pro-social attitude. Negative behavior is behavior or action that causes anti-social action as a result of a lack of empathy (Cox, 2001; Eysenck, 1981).

Empathy development can take place throughout human life. Dziobek et al (2008) stated that based on the level of development and the stages of the development process, empathy can be developed from birth and can be developed again during human life. Empathy can also be developed from the household or within the family, in schools starting from pre-school, middle school, and college, and then it can be developed in the community. Developing empathy cannot be taught like skills lessons. Therefore empathy can only be facilitated through the promotion of attitudes and behaviors. Empathy can also be facilitated by modeling behavior through the learning process (Davis, 1990).

So we can conclude that the lack of empathy is something that should be a concern. Empathy can be developed throughout human life either through family, school, or community. Behavioral promotion is

one of the things that can facilitate the development of empathy in a person. Based on the description above, the findings of this study need attention by policymakers at the State University of Padang, both by lecturers and administrative support staff because the role of empathy is very large in a person's life.

## 4 Conclusions

Based on the results of research and discussion, we can conclude the following: (1) In general, the empathy ability of Padang State University students is dominant in the low category. Specifically, based on the four components of empathy, namely the perspective-taking component, the fantasy aspect of the attention aspect (empathic concern), and personal distress (personal distress) are also predominantly in the low category; (2) There is a significant difference between the level of empathy of male students and the empathy of female students. The empathy of female students is higher than that of male students.

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