Interpersonal Communication Skills of Teachers and Students: Building a Foundation for Meaningful Learning

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Abstract

Interpersonal communication is one of the elements of communication that is often carried out by humans, not just to provide information to each other but also as a means to familiarize fellow human beings so that a sense arises to give each additional attention, motivation, pleasure so that they can help someone to tell their problems. This study aims to describe the interpersonal communication skills of teachers and students in the learning process and the obstacles encountered in interpersonal communication at school. The research method used is qualitative research, where data was collected through interviews and field observations. This research found that many teachers still faced various obstacles in communication and interpersonal relationships in the learning process, but various factors caused these obstacles. However, the barriers encountered can be solved with good communication. This study implies that stakeholders of educational institutions need to hold various training sessions so that teachers have good interpersonal communication skills.

Keywords: Communication, skill, teachers, students, meaningful, learning

Introduction

In everyday life, humans are always inseparable from communication activities because communication is one of the essential things in human interaction. With communication, many things can be resolved or helped as a bridge to find a way out or solve a problem. Communication cannot be avoided in daily human life; even though humans are created as perfect beings, humans also have nature as social beings (Astawa et al., 2017). Communication can be understood as a one-way action that goes straight from the communicator to the communicant. However, communication can also be understood as an interactive action involving both parties actively between the communicator and the communicant. If one serves as the message's sender, then one serves as the message's recipient. In the organization,

communication is essential. Through a good communication process within the organization, a goal set by the organization will be attainable (Alawamleh et al., 2020).

Interpersonal communication is described as communication between two individuals in which these individuals physically interact with each other, giving feedback to one another (Widiastuti et al., 2019). Interpersonal communication refers more to the process of closeness, the intimacy of the communication, to convey the message to have an immediate effect. Therefore, interpersonal communication begins with a psychological approach, building closeness and familiarity. Interpersonal communication is conveying specific information, thoughts, and attitudes between two or more people who change messages either as communicants or communicators to achieve mutual understanding about the issues to be discussed, ultimately resulting in behavior changes (Han & Xu, 2020).

Interpersonal communication is carried out between a person and others in a society or organization by using certain communication media and language easily understood to achieve specific goals (Widiastuti et al., 2021). Interpersonal communication is face-to-face or face-to-face communication, allowing each actor to capture other people's reactions directly, both verbally and non-verbally; the particular form is dyadic, involving one or two people. Interpersonal communication serves to get to know other people with their respective characteristics. Interpersonal communication is training ourselves to empathize with others, one of which is interpersonal communication, interpersonal communication functions as a form for us to empathize with each other and is a step that can be considered a solution to a sense of empathy that is starting to be eroded by lifestyle and the competitive pressures of a global society (Mantra & Kumara, 2018).

Interpersonal communication processes how the communicator conveys the message to the communicant to create a similarity of meaning between the communicator and the communicant. Interpersonal communication aims to develop effective communication, including transmitting information from one party to another (Handayani & Widiastuti, 2019). Interpersonal communication is a channel of information and a series of meaning-exchange activities that must be passed in conveying information reciprocally and sustainably so that interpersonal communication can run well. Therefore, effective interpersonal communication will be created by paying attention to the systematics of interpersonal communication (Lee, 2022).

Teachers in the learning process need to communicate appropriately with other teachers and students (Mantra et al., 2019); the obstacles at school often occur due to low interpersonal communication skills. As a result, the results of teacher assignments are usually not maximum and cause the purpose of learning cannot be achieved as desired. Schools are formal educational institutions that systematically carry out guidance, teaching, and training programs to help students develop their potential. Effective communication is characterized by a pleasant learning atmosphere, using language that is easy to grasp and understand, messages conveyed can arouse students' attention or interest, and messages can foster an appreciation for students. Therefore, teachers need to interact with students in the learning process. Communicating emphatically affects the emotional state of students and their empathy. Teachers can understand

the state of students by fostering a learning atmosphere with jokes to increase student enthusiasm in learning activities (Mantra & Maba, 2018).

Improper interpersonal communication will negatively impact many ways, not only at school but also in public. Interpersonal communication carried out by students at school can provide support, openness, cooperation, mutual respect, and equality between students and teachers to facilitate the learning process (Amin et al., 2022). Social attitudes influence student interpersonal communication. Many students lack good social attitudes in communicating, so when interacting, students tend to withdraw in association, try to communicate as little as possible, and only speak when pressed. Through learning at school, students learn academically and establish communication with others (Handayani et al., 2021).

One big challenge in communicating in one educational organization is how to convey information or share ideas throughout the elements of the school to obtain appropriate feedback. This challenge arises because teachers are reluctant to express their thoughts and opinions because they need a better relationship with the principal. On the other hand, school principals rarely communicate ideas openly, so teachers need help to convey their thoughts directly. To understand what happens when communicating with each other, the principal needs to get to know himself and others more closely. In addition, mastering interpersonal communication can open up self-knowledge to begin to understand other people and be able to interact positively. Therefore, this study uncovered the teachers' interpersonal communication skills and challenges in conducting school learning activities.

Literature Review

Understanding the dynamics of teacher-student communication becomes crucial as education moves toward more meaningful and student-centered learning techniques. This review of the research looks at the importance of interpersonal communication skills in learning environments and how they help provide meaningful learning opportunities.

The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Educational Settings

A key component of education is interpersonal communication, which links the dissemination of knowledge and students' comprehension. Effective communication affects the learning environment through verbal and nonverbal interactions (Khuman, 2024). Strong interpersonal skills teachers typically foster more welcoming and encouraging learning environments, which raise student motivation and engagement. Open, sympathetic, and reciprocal communication builds trust and teamwork, which creates the foundation for an engaging educational process (Okon, 2011).

The interactions with their teachers strongly impact students' academic performance and socioemotional growth. Students' sense of belonging and academic perseverance are improved by positive communication practices such as active listening, constructive criticism, and emotional responsiveness (Mahmud, 2014). Conflict resolution and classroom management are also directly related to interpersonal communication abilities. Effective

teachers employ communication techniques to resolve misunderstandings, negotiate classroom norms, and set clear expectations. Teachers who possess greater interpersonal competency create a more stable learning environment where meaningful learning may flourish (Kiptiony, 2024).

Interpersonal Communication and Meaningful Learning

Meaningful learning necessitates a stronger bond between the student and the material and goes beyond memorization. Interpersonal communication is essential to facilitate this process. Meaningful learning occurs when students can connect new material to their pre-existing knowledge systems (Bastiaansen & Duerden, 2024). Dialogic and interpersonal contact frequently facilitate this process. Clear and sympathetic teachers can better gauge their pupils' past knowledge and adapt new material accordingly. Furthermore, the socioemotional environment required for meaningful learning is fostered by interpersonal communication. Students learn the most when they feel appreciated, safe, and respected (Muehleisen, 2025).

Students are more inclined to take intellectual risks, ask questions, and participate fully in class when they feel their teachers genuinely care about them. These behaviours are all critical to deep learning. Building a collaborative learning community is facilitated by interpersonal communication's reciprocal nature (Hargie, 2021). Thus, interpersonal communication is a dynamic process that enables the co-construction of information and the development of meaningful learning experiences rather than just acting as a conduit for instruction.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative research design to reveal teachers' interpersonal communication skills and challenges encountered by the teachers in conducting learning activities. The data were collected from interviews with teachers teaching at an educational institution. All the data were first put into the proper headings and categories; then the data were selected to ensure that only relevant data were analyzed. The data were descriptively analyzed and presented elaborately with appropriate arguments, factual theories, and phenomena. After all data were analyzed appropriately, the findings were presented descriptively to provide a deeper understanding related to teachers' interpersonal communication skills and challenges encountered by the teachers in conducting learning activities.

Result

Several excerpts from interviews were presented in this study to provide a clear understanding of the teachers' interpersonal communication skills; those excerpts were then discussed briefly as follows.

"In carrying out the learning task already, of course, I faced various obstacles and difficulties. I communicated with my friends to reduce the burden on my feelings" (Teacher A)

"I am an inexperienced teacher; I experienced many problems while studying. Therefore, I communicate with friends who are more experienced so I can reduce my feelings, and I can teach better" (Teacher B)

"I feel more relieved and more relaxed when facing various obstacles in learning after communicating with other teacher friends" (Teacher C)

"When I face it, I still try to share it with friends so that this problem becomes a burden for me. By communicating with friends, I feel more relaxed and less stressed" (Teacher D)

When communicating with other people, of course, someone has various kinds of hopes and goals. One is to convey information to other people so that the person knows something; interpersonal communication also aims to share personal experiences with others about sad things. Another purpose of interpersonal communication is to cooperate between a person and another to achieve a specific goal or do something useful for both; interpersonal communication can also be used by someone to express feelings of disappointment or mistakes to others. Disclosure of all forms of disappointment or annoyance appropriately will indirectly reduce the burden on the mind; through interpersonal communication, one can motivate others to do something good and positive. Motivation is a strong urge from within a person to do something.

"I try to communicate politely with my friends at school, especially when I communicate with the principal; I have to be more polite" (Teacher A)

"I always try to communicate politely and be friendly with my fellow teachers and also with the principal" (Teacher B)

"I always try to speak politely and use kind words for my relationship with friends, always good at school" (Teacher C)

"I never say harsh words because harsh words can damage our relationship at school. Therefore, I always speak politely" (Teacher D)

Based on these excerpts, it is essential to have an open attitude between school principals and teachers to produce effective interpersonal relationships and good cooperation. The connections must be grown and abandoned by improving cooperative relations between various parties.

"I always open up with my friends at school so that Kitab Isa works well. I always communicate well to make friends feel good" (Teacher A)

"I was always positive at school, not talking about things negatively about friends, so that Susana works and our relationship is always good" (Teacher B)

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> *"I am trying to behave well with full empathy about the condition of friends who are experiencing distress, and I try to help by communicating openly"* (Teacher C)

> *"By communicating openly and positively at school, the Bible works more comfortably, and we are always open to all the difficulties we face"* (Teacher D)

Openness in interpersonal communication can be understood as a desire to open oneself to interact with others. The quality of transparency refers to the extent to which the communicator is open to the communicant and vice versa, the willingness of the communicator to react honestly to incoming stimuli and acknowledge existing feelings and thoughts; empathetic people can understand the motivations and experiences of other people, their emotions and attitudes towards the future. Empathy is the effort of each party to feel what others feel and understand others.

In interpersonal communication, a positive attitude is defined as a person's ability to view themselves positively and respect others. A positive attitude cannot be separated from appreciating efforts to encourage and understand the importance of others. Positive reinforcement generally takes the form of praise or rewards and consists of expected behaviour. Interpersonal communication will be effective if the atmosphere is equal. This means that both parties acknowledge that what is conveyed is equally valuable. And there is a tacit acknowledgement that both parties are similarly helpful and useful, and each has something.

Obstacles in interpersonal communication prevent interpersonal communication from running smoothly; therefore, efforts are also needed to overcome these obstacles. It is not easy to carry out interpersonal communication effectively because obstacles often interfere with the course of communication. Barriers in the delivery of messages will undoubtedly cause the process of interpersonal communication to be ineffective.

> *"I often experience internal obstacles in communicating interpersonal skills at school because I don't understand technical communication interpersonal skills"* (Teacher A)

> *"I often experience problems in choosing words that are appropriate for the atmosphere and conditions of other students and teachers"* (Teacher B)

> *"I always try to be good in communicating with students and teachers, but I often find it difficult to determine the right attitude to communicate well"* (Teacher C)

> *"I often find it difficult to choose words and determine the right attitude in communicating with students and teachers. However, I try to remain polite so that other people"* (Teacher D)

Barriers to interpersonal communication in organizations can be divided into three, namely technical barriers, semantic barriers, and behavioural barriers. The communication process at school only sometimes goes well; of course, there will be many obstacles. Interpersonal communication barriers often arise because interpersonal communication is the key to organizational success, considering the many people involved. These obstacles are not a block in the organization because all challenges can be resolved adequately and appropriately.

Discussion

Communication is the relationship and interaction between educators and students during the teaching and learning process, or, in other words, the active relationship between teacher and student. Interpersonal communication is exchanging information between people, usually between two people who can be immediately known back. Therefore, this communication pattern is needed in the learning process because students need to communicate well with teachers, friends, and their environment. The teaching and learning process also determines the success that is carried out at school through good communication and enables students to learn (Pavlidou et al., 2022).

The teachers have to educate students based on existing theories. The teacher is an essential factor in determining the success of children in learning, as someone who is the leading actor in the implementation of communication in the teaching and learning process in the school environment. One of the roles of the teacher that must be carried out is to convey information and knowledge to each learner. Interpersonal communication is one of the tools teachers use to communicate information to students. It is one of the primary special needs and the main guideline for how the teaching and learning process can run as expected (Lawton & Rosenberg, 2022).

The attitude of openness in conveying information is very influential in the interpersonal communication carried out by teachers and students; with an attitude of transparency by a teacher, the information provided will work well because the teacher conveys nothing that is not true to students. Both create and maintain relationships, such as retaining a teacher-student relationship so that individuals involved in interpersonal communication can form a bond and maintain a more meaningful connection between teacher and student. Teachers have an essential role in creating and maintaining relationships with their students because if relationships between a teacher and students go well, it will impact the teacher's effectiveness in implementing interpersonal communication (Sholeh, 2022).

In communicating, the most crucial thing is conveying a message, and there is reciprocity. To achieve this, one of the most essential things is ethics in communication; to convey a message, there needs to be a harmonious relationship between the communicator and the communicant, a pleasant sense of understanding and understanding of each other. Concerning interpersonal communication, dyadic communication, communication where people are limited, and communication which is essentially more dominant in mastering and solving problems in human life, ethics in interpersonal communication must be considered. Ethical goals communication is interpersonal, controlling the actions between individuals who build relationships so that the goals and messages of interpersonal communication are carried out.

Overcoming interpersonal communication barriers can be done by increasing feedback so that, in this way, it can be easier to find out whether the message or information has been received, understood, and implemented. Messaging must be customized with the recipient's condition and repetition to ensure that the message can be understood using simple language

so that everyone can understand the message's contents. Effective timing and managing the flow of this information need attention so that the messages conveyed by the recipient are ready to hear and listen effectively, so that interpersonal communication between subordinates and superiors can occur properly.

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Based on some of these opinions, it can be concluded that in overcoming constraints, Interpersonal communication in schools has several solutions to minimize, namely creating intimate relationships with both superiors and subordinates. In addition, if you want to achieve interpersonal communication goals effectively, you need to understand the nature of interpersonal communication appropriately to determine the type of media and the method used.

Conclusion

Interpersonal communication is communication between two individuals in which these individuals physically interact with each other, giving feedback to one another. Interpersonal communication is a two-way social interaction to exchange ideas and information. Within the organization's scope, especially in the school environment, interpersonal communication greatly influences the activities carried out in implementing teaching and learning activities. Teachers need interpersonal communication in carrying out their duties to provide information to students.

One big challenge in communicating in one educational institution is how to convey information or share ideas throughout the elements of the school to obtain appropriate feedback. Teachers still experience interpersonal communication obstacles through technical, semantic, and behavioral barriers. However, obstacles can be solved with communication and good interpersonal skills. This study has implications that teachers' interpersonal communication skills need to be improved through various trainings so that teachers have high communication skills at school. It is necessary to create a conducive learning atmosphere.

Declaration of conflicting interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this work.

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