Synergy of Communication between Teachers, Students, and Parents in Creating a Positive Learning Environment: a Case Study at SMP Dr. Tjipto Semarang

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the forms and dynamics of communication among teachers, students, and parents in creating a positive learning environment at SMP Dr. Tjipto Semarang. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The data analysis involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicate that communication among teachers, students, and parents has been taking place, yet it has not reached an ideal synergistic form. Teacher–parent communication remains formal, one-way, and reactive. Teacher–student communication tends to focus on academic aspects but lacks comprehensive emotional support. Meanwhile, parental participation in school activities remains relatively low due to time constraints, bureaucratic culture, and the absence of an integrated digital communication system. Nevertheless, several supporting factors were identified that could be strengthened, including the leadership of the principal, informal involvement of parent liaisons, and collaborative school activities. This study emphasizes the importance of fostering a culture of empathetic, participatory, and partnership-based communication as a foundation for building an inclusive and sustainable educational ecosystem. The implications of this research may serve as a reference for developing more effective educational communication strategies at the secondary school level.

Keywords: *synergy, communication, teachers, students, parents, positive learning environment*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bentuk dan dinamika komunikasi antara guru, siswa, dan orang tua dalam mewujudkan lingkungan belajar yang positif di SMP Dr. Tjipto Semarang. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi, yang dianalisis yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan serta verifikasi . Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi antara guru, siswa, dan orang tua telah berlangsung, namun belum mencapai bentuk sinergis yang ideal. Pola komunikasi guru–orang tua masih bersifat formal, satu arah, dan reaktif. Komunikasi guru–siswa cenderung fokus pada aspek akademik, namun belum mencakup dukungan emosional secara menyeluruh. Sementara itu, partisipasi orang tua dalam kegiatan sekolah relatif rendah karena kendala waktu, budaya birokratis, dan belum tersedianya sistem komunikasi digital

yang terintegrasi. Kendati demikian, ditemukan faktor pendukung yang dapat diperkuat, seperti kepemimpinan kepala sekolah, keterlibatan informal orang tua penghubung, serta kegiatan kolaboratif sekolah. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya membangun budaya komunikasi yang empatik, partisipatif, dan berbasis kemitraan sebagai fondasi terciptanya ekosistem pendidikan yang inklusif dan berkelanjutan. Implikasi dari penelitian ini dapat menjadi acuan pengembangan strategi komunikasi pendidikan yang lebih efektif pada jenjang sekolah menengah.

Kata Kunci: *Sinergi, Komunikasi, guru, siswa, orang tua, sinergi, lingkungan belajar Positif.*

INTRODUCTION

A positive learning environment is a crucial element in supporting an effective educational process. In school-based educational practice, the success of the teaching and learning process is not solely determined by the curriculum and teaching methods, but also by the harmonious social relationships among teachers, students, and parents. Open and synergistic communication among these three components plays a key role in creating a conducive learning atmosphere that fosters students' self-confidence, learning motivation, and discipline (Komalasari & Saripudin, 2021). When communication is built in a harmonious and supportive manner, education becomes more holistic—touching not only the cognitive aspect, but also the affective and social development of students. In the post-pandemic context, collaborative relationships between home and school are becoming increasingly important, especially to ensure continuity in education and students' emotional well-being (Frontiers, 2025).

From an Islamic perspective, the importance of communication and collaboration in education is emphasized in the words of Allah SWT: "And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression" (Q.S. Al-Maidah [5]: 2). This verse forms the basis for the need for synergistic cooperation among all educational components—teachers, students, and parents—in shaping a generation rooted in virtue and piety. The Prophet Muhammad SAW also said, "Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock" (Narrated by al-Bukhari, no. 893). This hadith reinforces the shared responsibility in education, including the duty of parents and teachers to guide students, as well as students' active participation in learning as a form of trust. Therefore, educational communication that is directed and harmonious serves as a tangible implementation of this trust.

Based on preliminary observations conducted at SMP Dr. Tjipto Semarang in March 2025, it was found that some teachers experienced challenges in maintaining intensive communication with students' parents. Although the school provides regular meetings such as parent-teacher conferences, interactions between teachers and parents tend to be formal and limited to specific occasions. On the other hand, students reported rarely receiving feedback from their parents regarding their academic development at school; many were even unaware that their parents had ever communicated with their teachers. One teacher remarked, "Parents often only come when there's a problem, not to establish proactive communication." (Pre-research observation, 2025). This reveals a weak

communication bridge between school and home, resulting in a lack of continuous academic and emotional support.

Previous studies have shown that synergy between teachers and parents can influence students' motivation and achievement. Ouralita et al. (2023) found that interpersonal communication directly impacts elementary students' learning motivation, while Puspitasari et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of two-way communication in fostering students' interest in learning. At the secondary level, Sari and Nasution (2025) highlighted the importance of parental involvement in shaping students' character and discipline. However, most previous studies have focused only on two-party relationships (teacher–student or teacher–parent) and have not specifically addressed integrated three-way communication. Thus, a knowledge gap remains regarding how these three parties establish sustainable communication synergy in creating a positive learning environment. This research seeks to address that gap by proposing the need for an integrative communication synergy model that contributes to the development of a positive learning atmosphere, particularly in junior high schools and in urban-suburban school contexts such as SMP Dr. Tjipto Semarang.

This study offers a novel perspective by examining the harmonious communication patterns between teachers, students, and parents in building a positive learning environment, particularly at the junior high school level in Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research not only captures real-life conditions but also proposes a communication model based on practical experiences. The theoretical framework includes interpersonal communication theory (DeVito, 2013), educational ecology theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and the school-family-community involvement model (Epstein, 2002), all contextualized within current educational dynamics. The study also considers insights from global research, such as that of Ovati et al. (2024), which highlights the importance of inclusive communication in multiethnic and collaborative educational environments.

The primary focus of this study is to analyze the patterns of synergistic communication among teachers, students, and parents in realizing a positive learning environment at SMP Dr. Tjipto Semarang. The study aims to: (1) describe the forms of communication established among the three parties; (2) evaluate the barriers and supporting factors in the communication process; and (3) formulate an effective and applicable communication synergy model based on field findings. As such, this research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a collaborative, inclusive, and sustainable educational communication culture.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was conducted at SMP Dr. Tjipto Semarang, located in a semi-urban area with heterogeneous social characteristics. The school was purposively selected based on preliminary observations indicating a strong institutional will to enhance collaboration with parents, despite challenges in establishing consistent and structured communication. In qualitative research, the research site and

participants are chosen based on their potential to provide rich and relevant information (Sugiyono, 2020). The researcher acted as the primary instrument, directly involved in both data collection and analysis. As an instrument, the researcher engaged actively through reflective processes, participated in social interactions, and maintained integrity and research ethics throughout the study (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

The subject of the study was the communication patterns among teachers, students, and parents in the context of student learning and development. Informants were selected using purposive sampling—a sampling technique based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. The informants included three teachers (homeroom teachers and Islamic education teachers), six students from grades VII and VIII who were considered academically and socially active, and six parents with varying levels of involvement in school activities. Additionally, the school principal and the vice principal for student affairs were included as key informants. This purposive technique allowed the researcher to select individuals who had the most insight into the phenomenon under investigation (Moleong, 2019). The diversity of backgrounds and roles among informants provided depth and a comprehensive perspective on the communication phenomena studied.

Data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The interviews followed a semi-structured guide, offering flexibility while allowing informants to share their personal experiences in greater detail. Observations were conducted during teaching and learning activities, routine school events, and parental forums such as parent-teacher meetings, aiming to capture communication practices in natural settings. Documentation complemented the data through records such as student-teacher communication books, meeting minutes, and digital communication (e.g., WhatsApp class groups). These three methods were triangulated to enhance the validity and credibility of the data (Patton, 2002).

Data analysis was conducted interactively and cyclically following the three stages outlined by Miles and Huberman (2014): data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved organizing, filtering, and focusing data into relevant thematic categories. The data display was arranged in descriptive narratives and thematic matrices to reveal communication patterns. Conclusions were drawn inductively, incorporating member checks and cross-source validation. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source and method triangulation, along with an audit trail to guarantee traceability. This analytical process allowed the researcher to generate findings that are authentic, contextually grounded, and theoretically valuable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Result
Forms of Communication between Teachers, Students, and Parents

Based on field findings, the communication among teachers, students, and

parents at SMP Dr. Tjipto Semarang demonstrates that interaction is taking place, yet it has not reached the expected level of effectiveness. The communication appears unstructured and lacks planned synergy, occurring more reactively in response to urgent needs rather than as part of a sustainable developmental strategy. The lack of alignment in the communication flow among the three parties indicates that the existing synergy has yet to touch the transformational aspects of education and remains primarily administrative and functional. This dynamic underscores the importance of adopting a more human-centered and strategic approach to building partnership-based communication.

Teacher–Parent Communication

Teacher–parent interaction is still dominated by formal channels such as parent–teacher meetings, written media like student–teacher communication books, and digital communication via WhatsApp groups. However, interview data reveal that such communication is mostly incidental, only occurring in response to students' academic or behavioral issues. Teachers reported that their communication has not yet addressed the values development and holistic growth of students due to limited frequency and depth of interaction. One teacher stated: *"Usually, we contact parents only when there's a problem or when the student's grades drop. Regular communication rarely happens, except during report card distribution"* (Islamic Education Teacher Interview, April 12, 2025).

Meeting minutes from parent–teacher meetings support this claim, showing that 80% of the agenda is one-way communication from school to parents, with very little participation from parents during Q&A sessions. This lack of two-way dialogue reflects the school's dominant role as an information provider, while parents' voices remain insufficiently accommodated.

Teacher–Student Communication

Direct classroom observations indicated that teachers applied a communicative approach by creating an open and engaging learning atmosphere. Teachers did not merely deliver material but also asked questions, gave feedback, and responded positively to student inquiries. This reflects a warm and constructive teacher–student relationship. However, interviews with students revealed that this relationship was largely limited to academic matters. When facing personal or emotional issues, students did not always feel comfortable confiding in their teachers. *"The teachers here are easy to talk to, especially about lessons. But when I have problems at home, I don't really know who to talk to,"* said one Grade VIII student (April 13, 2025).

Moreover, some students were unaware of whether their teachers had ever communicated with their parents. The statement *"I don't know if my parents ever talked to my teacher. I don't think they have,"* (Grade VII student, April 13, 2025) highlights a weak communication link involving students as active agents. Students have not yet assumed the role of mediators who recognize the importance of a strong school–home connection.

Parent–School Communication

Parents play a crucial role in fostering a positive learning climate; however,

findings indicate that many parents struggle to maintain consistent communication with the school. Work-related responsibilities are the dominant factor limiting parental participation in both formal and informal school forums. Although the school has provided a WhatsApp group as a digital communication channel, parent engagement remains low. *"Sometimes I miss important information because I check WhatsApp at night. It would be helpful if there were reminders or a fixed schedule for school updates,"* said one parent (April 14, 2025).

Observations of the WhatsApp group revealed that most messages were one-way announcements, with minimal interaction or follow-up discussions. This suggests that the potential of digital technology as a collaborative, two-way communication tool has not been fully utilized. Parents are not yet treated as equal partners in the educational process, but rather as passive recipients of information from the school.

Barriers and Supporting Factors in Communication
Communication Barriers

The communication barriers among teachers, students, and parents at SMP Dr. Tjipto can be categorized into three main aspects: structural, cultural, and technical. Structural barriers are reflected in the limited time and energy available to both teachers and parents. Teachers carry a heavy administrative workload and teaching responsibilities, while most parents—many of whom are factory workers—face time constraints that hinder consistent communication with the school. *"I work until the evening, sometimes even at night. So I rarely attend school meetings. I hope there could be online meetings or more flexible communication options,"* (Parent Interview, April 14, 2025).

Cultural barriers stem from the lack of an open and participatory communication culture between the school and parents. Communication is often perceived as the school's sole responsibility rather than a shared obligation. Meanwhile, technical barriers include the absence of a well-documented, integrated digital communication system. Most communication is conducted manually, with no digital or systematic tracking mechanism for student progress.

Supporting Factors in Communication

Despite these challenges, several factors offer a foundation for strengthening communication among teachers, students, and parents. First is the school principal's commitment to improving communication systems in a more structured and digitally based manner. Plans to use simple platforms such as Google Forms or other educational apps indicate an awareness of technology as a practical solution. The principal stated, *"We are working toward a more integrated communication system. Hopefully, in the future, parents can be more actively involved,"* (Interview, April 15, 2025).

Second, the informal role of parent liaisons serves as a significant social asset. These individuals act as intermediaries and reminders to fellow parents, especially when important messages from teachers are overlooked. Third, collaborative school activities—such as classroom bazaars, religious gatherings, and student performances—create effective opportunities for interpersonal engagement. In these informal settings, communication becomes more fluid, less bound by protocol, and more conducive to building rapport. Observations during

the student performance event on April 6, 2025, revealed that parents felt more comfortable speaking with teachers without the pressure of formalities.

These supporting factors suggest that if communication strategies are designed with consideration for the community's socio-economic conditions, integrate accessible technologies, and expand informal interaction spaces, communication among teachers, students, and parents can evolve beyond mere information exchange. It can grow into a collaborative relationship that meaningfully contributes to the creation of a holistic and positive learning environment.

Discussion
Teacher–Parent Communication from the Perspective of Educational Communication

Communication between teachers and parents at SMP Dr. Tjipto still follows a conventional, top-down pattern. This contradicts the principles of educational communication, which emphasize an equal and dialogical relationship between two parties who both play essential roles in a child's education. DeVito (2013) explains that effective interpersonal communication is marked by empathy, openness, and mutual listening. However, field findings indicate that communication only occurs when problems arise, rather than as a continuous and humane relationship-building process. This aligns with recent findings by Fitriyah & Khusniati (2023), who note that teachers tend to contact parents only when specific issues arise, not to build a long-term partnership. Yet according to Abdullah et al. (2022), regular partnership-based communication can increase parental involvement in children's learning, which in turn positively impacts students' motivation and performance. Therefore, there is a need to enhance teachers' interpersonal communication skills through technical training such as the use of positive language, open-ended questioning techniques, and skills for building empathy both digitally and in person.

In addition, it is crucial to establish a structured digital communication system. As highlighted by Alavi & Dabbagh (2021), digital education platforms such as Google Classroom, ClassDojo, or WA Broadcast Education have been shown to improve family engagement in learning when used purposefully and inclusively. In the context of SMP Dr. Tjipto, this approach can begin with periodic reporting through digital forms, allowing parents to respond quickly to their child's development.

Teacher–Student Communication and the Development of an Affective Ecosystem

Observations and interviews reveal that the relationship between teachers and students is relatively positive in academic terms but remains weak in the affective dimension. Many students do not feel comfortable sharing personal problems or emotions with their teachers. This indicates that teacher–student communication has not yet fulfilled the function of emotional scaffolding, as emphasized in the social-emotional learning model by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2023).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), teachers are part of a child's

microsystem, significantly shaping their daily experiences. If teachers fail to build warm and open communication, students lose an important source of psychosocial support. Setiawan & Nisa (2023) affirm that students who lack a trusted space to talk at school tend to experience emotional pressure and academic stress, which negatively affects their performance. Therefore, teachers need to create a *safe communication zone* in the classroom, where students are not only encouraged to discuss grades or assignments but also given space to express their thoughts and feelings freely and without fear. A *counseling-based communication* approach is vital, especially at the junior high school level when students are in an emotional transition phase. Teachers must also recognize that they serve as key mediators between students' inner and outer worlds, and thus, communication must address both cognitive and affective aspects.

Parent–School Communication and Integration of the Epstein Model

Parent–school communication, as reflected in the findings, remains trapped in a one-way, administrative pattern. However, the ideal model of family involvement as developed by Epstein (2002) includes six types of participation: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. At SMP Dr. Tjipto, only two of these are observed to some extent: communication (albeit limited) and volunteering (through informal events such as school performances and parent religious gatherings).

The Epstein model is reinforced by recent research by Huda et al. (2024), who conclude that parental involvement in school decision-making directly enhances children's confidence and learning engagement. Yet in practice at SMP Dr. Tjipto, parents are not involved in strategic forums such as school program planning, class policy-making, or learning evaluations. Parents are still seen as supporters rather than equal partners.

To address this, the school needs to redesign its communication strategy. One initiative could be the establishment of a *Parent–Teacher Partnership Forum* with regular meetings and interactive agendas. Informal activities such as religious gatherings or bazaars can be reframed as strategic communication spaces, rather than merely social events. Rahmawati & Wijaya (2022) suggest that when informal activities are structured as spaces for idea-sharing and joint evaluation between teachers and parents, both the social and functional aspects of communication can operate in harmony.

Barriers, Supports, and Structural Implications of Educational Communication

The communication barriers at SMP Dr. Tjipto are not merely technical but also structural and cultural. Teachers' heavy workloads, parents' inflexible working hours, and the absence of a participatory communication culture are key factors weakening home–school connections. According to Azizah & Wardani (2023), one-way and bureaucratic communication patterns create relational imbalances between schools and families, ultimately undermining collaborative support for children's education.

Nevertheless, this study also found significant supporting factors: school leadership commitment, informal parent liaisons, and collaborative events. This

aligns with research by Nurulita & Sugihartono (2022), who emphasize that successful educational communication is strongly influenced by communicative school leadership and the support of educational community actors. In this regard, school principals must go beyond merely delivering information—they must become inspirational communication leaders who foster a spirit of cross-stakeholder collaboration.

The implications of these findings show that communication synergy among teachers, students, and parents cannot be built solely through platforms or media. More importantly, communication must be cultivated as a *school culture*—a value-based ecosystem that encourages openness, empathy, and collective responsibility. Implementation strategies may include empathy-based communication training for teachers, digital classroom communication forums, and the development of regular reporting systems that allow parents to provide real-time feedback.

Table of Key Research Findings

Aspect	Findings
Teacher – Parent	Communication is infrequent, one-way, mostly through meetings/WhatsApp
Teacher – Student	Active in learning, but emotionally distant
Parent – School	Parents rarely involved, due to busy work schedules
Barrier	Limited time, no integrated digital system
Support Factor	Active school principal, collaborative activities available

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion regarding the synergy of communication between teachers, students, and parents in fostering a positive learning environment at SMP Dr. Tjipto Semarang, three main conclusions can be drawn:

The communication pattern among teachers, students, and parents has been established, but it is not yet synergistic or sustainable. The existing communication remains predominantly one-way, reactive, and administrative, lacking in equal and dialogical engagement. Teacher–parent communication typically occurs only when problems arise, rather than forming a continuous partnership. Teacher–student interaction is effective in instructional contexts but has yet to create a safe space for addressing students' emotional needs. Parents remain largely passive due to time constraints, limited digital literacy, and the absence of a collaborative communication culture.

Communication barriers stem from three main aspects: structural, cultural, and technical. Structural barriers include the teachers' heavy workloads and parents' busy schedules; cultural barriers involve the dominance of bureaucratic communication and the lack of a reflective communication culture; and technical

barriers arise from the absence of an integrated digital communication system. These barriers disrupt the continuity of information and weaken shared support for student learning.

There are supporting factors that can be optimized to build synergistic communication. These include the principal's commitment to establishing a digital communication system, the informal yet active role of parent liaisons, and collaborative school activities such as religious gatherings and student performances. When developed strategically and consistently, participatory, empathetic, and dialogical communication can serve as a foundation for building a positive, inclusive, and transformative educational ecosystem.

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