



## **The Performance of Teachers Perceptions in Interpersonal Communication in Elementary School Students in Medan City**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Perception plays a crucial role in interpersonal communication, acting as the foundation for how individuals interpret and understand the messages they receive from others. Accurate perception enables clear communication, fostering mutual understanding and strengthening relationships, as it allows individuals to respond appropriately to the messages conveyed. On the contrary, inaccurate perceptions can result in misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and conflicts, often undermining the quality of communication. Various factors, such as personal experiences, cultural background, social context, and individual values, significantly influence how we perceive others and the situations we encounter. These influences can shape our attitudes and interpretations, sometimes leading to biased or distorted perceptions. For instance, our past experiences may lead us to make assumptions about others based on limited information, while cultural differences can affect how we interpret non-verbal cues or tone of voice. Thus, it is essential to develop self-awareness, which involves recognizing and reflecting on our own biases and perspectives. Active listening, which involves paying close attention to verbal and non-verbal cues and asking clarifying questions when needed, is also key in ensuring that we accurately perceive the messages others are trying to convey. Additionally, respecting and appreciating different points of view helps promote empathy and openness in communication, enabling individuals to understand and engage with others more effectively. By honing these skills, individuals can improve the accuracy of their perceptions, ultimately enhancing the quality of their interpersonal communication and fostering more positive and productive relationships.

**Keywords:** Perception, Interpersonal Communication

### **INTRODUCTION**

Effective interpersonal communication is a key element in shaping the learning environment, especially in elementary education. Teachers, as primary facilitators of student growth, play a significant role in helping students develop not only their academic abilities but also their communication skills, emotional intelligence, and social relationships. The way teachers perceive and engage in interpersonal communication directly influences the classroom atmosphere, establishing a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, and open dialogue. According to DeVito (2013), interpersonal communication is the process by which individuals exchange information, ideas, and feelings, and it is fundamental to building relationships and resolving conflicts. This type of communication is particularly important in elementary education, where students are still developing their social and emotional competencies.

In Medan City, where students come from a variety of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, teachers' interpersonal communication skills become even more critical. Teachers must navigate these differences with empathy, understanding, and effective communication strategies. As noted by Goleman (2006), emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills, plays a significant role in the teacher-student relationship. Teachers who are emotionally intelligent can better understand students' needs, manage classroom dynamics, and address conflicts. Misunderstandings among students, often arising from cultural or socio-economic differences, can be mitigated through proactive teacher intervention, conflict resolution skills, and promoting inclusivity.

The importance of face-to-face communication in the digital age cannot be overstated. While technology offers new ways to interact, it is the personal, face-to-face interactions in the classroom that remain essential for building strong teacher-student relationships. According to Mehrabian (1971), non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, gestures, and body language, conveys more than 50% of the emotional meaning of a message. In the classroom, teachers' ability to interpret non-verbal cues and offer emotional support is crucial in creating a nurturing and supportive learning environment. Teachers who are attuned to their students' emotional states and communication needs foster a trusting relationship, which is essential for student engagement and motivation.

This article explores the role of teachers' perceptions in interpersonal communication, with a focus on elementary school students in Medan City. By examining how teachers perceive and practice communication, this study aims to identify strategies that enhance teacher-student relationships, improve conflict resolution, and support holistic student development. In line with research by Hargie (2011), effective communication strategies such as active listening, providing constructive feedback, and demonstrating empathy can lead to improved academic and social outcomes for students. Through this understanding, actionable steps can be developed to strengthen communication dynamics in educational settings, ensuring that both teachers and students benefit from more meaningful interactions and a positive learning environment. Ultimately, this contributes to the overall growth and development of both teachers and students, enhancing the educational experience for all parties involved.

## METHOD

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach as the methodological framework. The qualitative approach was chosen to deepen understanding of the phenomena observed, explore subjective aspects, and explore meaning from the perspective of participants. This method allows researchers to detail the context, relationships, and dynamics that arise in the research context (Charismana et al., 2022). Qualitative research is the method in preparing this article. Qualitative research method is a research method that aims to understand social reality, namely seeing the world as it is, not the world as it should be, therefore everyone who uses qualitative methods must have an open minded nature or character. In addition, qualitative research methods are also referred to as an investigative approach, because everyone who uses this method always tries to collect various data and sources of correct and valuable information (Rukminingsih et al., 2020).

Qualitative research methods have 6 types of research (Ummah, 2019), namely document analysis, historical research, content analysis, case studies, enographic research, and naturalistic research. In compiling this article, the author uses the first type, namely document analysis. Document analysis is carried out by collecting various sources of data and information from books, journals/articles, newspapers, magazines, letters and similar documents which are then analyzed based on the needs of scientific work. In addition to

finding data and information, analyzing a source also adds its own insights for the reader or the one analyzing and exploring the reader's ideas about the document it analyzes.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Interpersonal Communication

Communication is a complex process that involves the exchange of information, ideas, feelings, and meanings between individuals. This process not only occurs through words, but also involves nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions and body movements. Communication can be divided into various types, one of which is interpersonal communication.

In general, communication is the process of delivering messages and receiving messages between two or more people. The message giver is referred to as the communicator and the message receiver is referred to as the communicant. The content of the message conveyed can be in the form of verbal, non-verbal, oral, or written messages.

Communication can be defined as the act of sending and receiving messages that aim to create understanding between individuals. According to DeVito, communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between two or more people, either formally or informally.

Interpersonal communication, or interpersonal communication, is the process of exchanging information, ideas, opinions, and feelings that occur between two or more people. This process usually takes place informally and unstructured, allowing each participant to use various elements of communication, both verbal and nonverbal.(Anggraini et al., 2022)

According to Joseph A. DeVito, interpersonal communication is the delivery of verbal and nonverbal messages between two or more people who influence each other. R. Wayne Pace added that this communication allows the sender and receiver of the message to interact directly and provide real-time feedback. Deddy Mulyana also states that interpersonal communication occurs in a face-to-face context, where participants can capture each other's reactions immediately.

So it can be understood that interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, and feelings that occur between two or more people. This process generally takes place directly and informally, allowing for more in-depth interaction and immediate feedback. Overall, interpersonal communication plays an important role in building healthy and effective social relationships, as well as improving an individual's ability to interact with others.

### Perception

Interpersonal communication has various important functions that contribute to interaction Perception is a cognitive process that allows a person to recognize, organize, and interpret information from the environment through the five senses (Suhairi et al., 2023). According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), perception is defined as the way a person gains knowledge using their senses. This process includes the reception of stimuli, selection, and interpretation that produce meaning from the experiences we have. Perception is influenced by a variety of factors, including personal experience, values, and social context, so even though individuals face the same stimuli, their perceptions can differ. Thus, perception plays an important role in shaping our understanding and response to the world around us.

Perception is a mental process that describes how we interpret and understand the information we receive through our five senses. In short, perception is how we “see” the world around us. (II & MUDHARABAH, n.d.)

The process of perception takes place through several interrelated stages:

1. Reception of Stimuli: Our five senses pick up information from the environment, such as light, sound, smell, taste, and touch.
2. Organization of Stimuli: Our brain processes and organizes the information received into patterns that have meaning.
3. Interpretation of Stimuli: Once the information is organized, we give it meaning based on our experience, knowledge, and beliefs.

Several factors can affect our perception, including:

- a. Physiological Factors: Physical conditions such as fatigue or the influence of drugs can affect the way we see things.
- b. Psychological Factors: Our emotions, motivations and expectations play an important role in how we interpret the information we receive.
- c. Socio-cultural Factors: The culture, norms and values in the society we live in also contribute to the way we perceive the world (Wijaya, 2013).

Perception is subjective, meaning that each individual can have a different view of something. This is due to differences in each person's experience, knowledge, and background. Perception plays a crucial role in interpersonal communication, as it determines how we understand messages conveyed by others, how we form first impressions, and how we build relationships.

### **Teachers' Perception in Building Interpersonal Relationships with Students**

Perception plays a key role in building healthy and effective interpersonal relationships. In the context of communication, perception is the way in which individuals understand, interpret, and give meaning to information received from others. By having accurate perception, a person can respond appropriately, thereby reducing the risk of misunderstanding and conflict (Nurrachmah, 2024).

Various factors, such as personal experiences, values, and social contexts, influence how a person perceives others. Positive self-perception can boost self-confidence and openness when communicating, while negative perceptions are often a barrier to interaction. Therefore, it is very important to develop an open attitude and listen attentively, in order to improve the quality of communication and strengthen interpersonal relationships.

The afternoon sun greeted the faces of Ratih and Bayu who were sitting side by side on a park bench. The aroma of warm coffee from their cups combined with the breeze carrying the scent of frangipani flowers. This meeting, which initially felt awkward, slowly began to melt. Ratih, an artist with long flowing hair, initially thought that Bayu, a programmer with thick glasses and a simple appearance, was a stiff person who was difficult to talk to. This perception was formed only from initial observations, from Bayu's body gestures which looked a little tense and his facial expression which looked serious.

However, as the conversation flowed, Ratih's perception began to change. Bayu, who initially seemed quiet, turned out to have a great sense of humor and broad insight into art, something that Ratih had never expected. Bayu's stories about his exciting work journey, interspersed with laughter, managed to destroy the walls built by Ratih's initial perception. She found warmth and depth behind Bayu's simple appearance.

On the other hand, Bayu also experienced a change in perception towards Ratih. Initially, he thought that Ratih was someone who tended to be emotional and sensitive, based on her style of dress and expressive facial expressions. However, their conversation showed Ratih's rational and wise side. Ratih listened to Bayu's story attentively, giving intelligent and empathetic responses. Bayu found intelligence and emotional depth behind Ratih's artistic appearance.

This change in perception was key in building their interpersonal relationship. From the initial prejudice based on a cursory observation, they were both able to see deeper,

understanding the other side of each other's personalities. The initially negative and limiting perceptions were slowly replaced by positive and supportive perceptions. Their relationship grew, not from perfect similarities, but from their ability to go beyond initial perceptions and find beauty in differences. The sun began to set, leaving traces of warmth in the hearts of Ratih and Bayu, a warmth born from a change in perception and deep understanding.

To build trust through communication, several important steps can be applied:

1. **Be Honest:** Honesty is the main foundation in building trust. Always tell the truth and avoid horror, even though it is difficult.
2. **Keep Promises:** Consistency in action and keeping promises made shows integrity and reliability. This is very important to strengthen trust.
3. **Listen Actively:** Listening attentively not only shows that you value the other person's opinion, but also helps you understand their perspective, which strengthens the relationship.
4. **Be Open:** Building openness in sharing information and feelings will encourage others to do the same, creating mutual trust.
5. **Be Empathetic:** Understanding and feeling what others are experiencing helps create a strong emotional bond, thus increasing trust.
6. **Communicate Problems Openly:** Facing problems with open communication allows both parties to understand each other's expectations and concerns, avoiding assumptions that can damage trust.

By implementing these steps, you can build strong trust in interpersonal relationships, both in personal and professional contexts. Perception plays a crucial role in building trust in communication. In the context of interpersonal communication, perception refers to how a person understands and interprets the messages they receive from others. Accurate perception can strengthen relationships, because it allows individuals to respond well and avoid misunderstandings. Having a positive self-perception can increase self-confidence, so that individuals become more open and effective in communicating.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion about the role of perception in interpersonal communication confirms that perception is the key to understanding and interpreting messages received from others. Accurate perception can strengthen interpersonal relationships, because it can facilitate clear communication and prevent misunderstandings. Conversely, wrong perception can disrupt the communication process and trigger conflict. Factors such as experience, values, and culture also influence how a person perceives others and the situations around them. Therefore, it is important to develop self-awareness, listen carefully, and appreciate other people's points of view in order to improve the effectiveness of interpersonal communication.

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