

Interpersonal Communication between Supervisors and Students in the Formation of Students' Characters

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ABSTRACT

The problem of interpersonal communication between mentors and students is a matter of great concern in character formation at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School. This study aims to determine the interpersonal communication approach of mentors and students in character formation, to determine the interpersonal communication strategy of mentors and students in character formation, and to determine the supporting and inhibiting factors of interpersonal communication between mentors and students in character formation at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach). The data source was taken from ten informants through in-depth interviews selected using purposive sampling techniques, some informants are teachers and dormitory mentors and some are students at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School. The results of the study indicate that the interpersonal communication approach between mentors and students in character formation is by conducting personal, persuasive and motivational communication as well as communication like a family. The interpersonal communication strategy between mentors and students in character building is by implementing rewards and punishments, implementing the 1 day 1 child program, and holding evaluation meetings.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication plays a very important role in social interaction. The use of communication, both verbally and non-verbally, can have a great influence on an environment, so effective communication is needed to drive the running of an organization (Eko & Putranto, 2019). One of the most frequently used forms of communication by humans is interpersonal communication or what is commonly called interpersonal communication. According to Devito, interpersonal communication is the process of

sending messages from one person and being received by another person with a direct feedback effect (Kourkouta, Iliadis, Frantzana, & Vakalopoulou, 2018). Simply put, interpersonal communication can be interpreted as a form of communication involving two or more people who can still be identified or even known to the people involved (Aldiab, Chowdhury, Kootsookos, Alam, & Allhibi, 2019).

As an educational institution, Islamic boarding schools still focus on instilling knowledge and values. Therefore, communication processes are unavoidable in carrying out their main tasks and functions as educational institutions that even with the boarding system (dormitory) allow students and teachers to interact 24 hours and tend to prioritize a sense of brotherhood and togetherness (Roqib, 2021). This uniqueness makes Islamic boarding schools an educational institution with a very high intensity of interaction and communication.

One of the Islamic boarding schools that implements such educational methods is the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School. Since its establishment until now, Ar Risalah Islamic Boarding School has become a leading Islamic educational institution in West Sumatra. The institution has been equipped with various adequate facilities such as laboratories in various fields, health clinics and sports buildings. Added to that are various supporting programs such as Outbound, Science and Quran Study Club, Islamic Art Appreciation, and various other extracurricular fields (Solihin, Hasanah, & Fajrussalam, 2020). A series of achievements have also been achieved by its male and female students. This year alone, they have managed to win five medals at the National Student Language Olympiad, 1st Place in the West Sumatra Calligraphy Competition, 1st Place in the Musabaqah Hifzhil Quran (MHQ), and a series of other achievements.

Due to the various developments and achievements that have been achieved by the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School, the researcher is interested in exploring how the interpersonal communication approach is, especially in the application of character building. At the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School, old norms and values are still the basis for the daily lives of students. However, it is supported by the adoption of a modern system, both in learning methods and their application (Latif, 2021). The development of various Islamic educational institutions has become an alternative as well as a source of pride for the community in an effort to educate a young generation with Islamic character and broad insight. Including the existence of the Ar Risalah Islamic Boarding School which has become one of the Islamic educational institutions that has achieved in the fields of science and moral education of its students (Budiyaniti, Ahmad, Suhartini, & Parhan, 2021).

This study aims to determine the interpersonal communication approach of mentors and students in character formation, to determine the interpersonal communication strategy of mentors and students in character formation, and to determine the supporting and inhibiting factors of interpersonal communication between mentors and students in character formation at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School. Supporting factors for interpersonal communication between mentors and students are training for mentors, support from parents and foundations. While the inhibiting factor is the existence of a small number of mentors who are not firm enough with the students.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research method, where qualitative research is conducted to build knowledge through understanding and discovery. The approach used is a descriptive approach, which is a process of research and understanding based on a method that investigates a social phenomenon and human problems. At the time of this study, the researcher created a complete picture, examined words, detailed reports and conducted studies in natural situations. Qualitative research is carried out

in scientific conditions and has a discovery nature (Topal, 2022). In qualitative research, researchers are key instruments. Therefore, researchers must have a very broad theoretical background and insight so that they can ask, analyze and contribute to the objects being studied to be very clear. This research was conducted from March to May 2025, located at SMP Pondok Pesantren Ar Risalah Padang, Sumatra. The analysis technique in this study uses the Miles Humberman concept through data presentation, reduction, and drawing conclusions.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As an effort to campaign for the importance of character education, the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School has instituted a rule known as the term Ten Character Characteristics of Citizens, which contains: Having straight beliefs; Conscious and correct in worship; Having noble character; Have a culture of healthy living; Broadminded; Be serious; Value time; Independent; Love of the homeland; Grace to the universe.

The set of rules is considered as a guideline for the attitudes and behaviors that must be followed by every male/female student at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School. The Ten Citizen Characters are the foundation for the daily lives and activities of the students, so these rules have been introduced since the beginning of a male/female student entering as a new student at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School (Arif, bin Abd Aziz, Harun, & Maarif, 2023). In addition to these mandatory rules, the character building method at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School is also integrated into standard regulations in various programs and extracurricular activities. From a character education perspective, extracurricular activities can help shape character by teaching values such as discipline, perseverance, respect, and honesty through interactions with peers and mentors (Bukit, Marcela, & Ernawati, 2023). At the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School, almost every extracurricular activity provides a large space for every senior student to become a mentor by sharing knowledge and experience with their junior students. To emphasize the character education side, all extracurricular activities are carried out without disturbing prayer hours. Therefore, all extracurricular activities there are carried out from after Asr prayers until before Maghrib. Even if an extracurricular club is going to face a competition or match, usually there will be an additional schedule after Isha prayers until 9 pm.

There is also the Student Character Development Group Program (KPKS). This program groups each male/female student into small groups of 15 people each. Group members are mixed from various classes, both at the junior high and high school levels. Each group will be led by 1 mentor, either from the mentor, school teacher, or senior high school and high school students who are considered to have exemplary behavior. The groups of male/female students that have been formed in the KPKS Program are then scheduled to gather every two weeks (Muzakki & Nurdin, 2022). The objects of this group meeting are quite broad, such as discussions, introspection and mutual motivation. Everything can be discussed together, from matters of worship to personal matters. They are formed with the aim of facilitating the exchange of ideas, experiences, and understanding between its members on certain topics. Each group member can share their knowledge and experiences, allowing individuals to learn from each other. The existence of these groups is also expected to increase learning motivation, because members can support and encourage each other (Fatimah, 2019). Led by a mentor, each group in the KPKS Program is expected to participate in discussions to develop communication and collaboration skills and to help each other.

In the practice of the education system there, each student is also required to fill out the Yaumi Charity Report every day. The Yaumi Charity Report is a daily report containing a number of checklists of worship and moral activities carried out by each male/female student. In the report list, there are a number of variables that must be carried out by each student, starting from congregational prayers to social interaction actions in the school environment (Harahap & Sahputra, 2023). Each of these variables must be filled in by each student themselves, whether they do the things listed in the list. The main purpose of this report is to monitor the spiritual, moral and moral progress of the male/female students and as a means of self-evaluation in improving the quality of worship and faith. In addition to covering daily worship, the Yaumi Charity Report also includes variables of good activities such as social activities or other good deeds carried out, such as helping others or doing good to the surrounding environment (Amin, Utaya, Bachri, Sumarmi, & Susilo, 2020). The male/female students are also required to fill it out themselves, so as to hone honesty in each individual so that the report truly reflects reality. This report must be submitted every day to the supervisors (Musrif/ musrifah) so that it can be used as student evaluation material and instructions for providing appropriate direction and guidance to male/female students (Tafari & Kamaludin, 2023).

In addition to daily routine activities, the character education pattern at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School also regulates annual agendas, namely: Camp Character. The activity is in the form of a three-day camping activity outside of school, which is scheduled at the end of the even semester. Camp Character or character camp has two functions, namely as a form of healing for male and female students who are in the school environment for a whole year and as a means of instilling character education values with an outdoor concept (Tohri, Rasyad, Sururuddin, & Istiqlal, 2022). Character camp provides them with direct experience in dealing with real situations outside the classroom. They learn how to interact with others, solve problems, and overcome challenges, all of which are important aspects in character formation. In addition, character camp is also expected to form strong relationships by focusing on activities that contain elements of collaboration, cooperation, and team support that are important in achieving common goals, thereby increasing a sense of togetherness and social involvement (Taufik, 2020).

In a camp atmosphere, the students will learn to work in groups, encouraging them to take initiative, manage their own time, and overcome challenges independently. Through activities such as lectures and collective activities, character camps help students understand and internalize values such as honesty, cooperation, perseverance, and respect (Sugiarti & Husain, 2021). Camps held in the open air will also provide opportunities for students to appreciate the beauty of nature and increase environmental awareness. This can also be an opportunity for them to overcome fears and challenges in the open air, which is a valuable lesson for life.

The character building process at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School is not only regulated through a set of rules and programs, but is also applied continuously through various activities and organizations of its students. There are two student organizations at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School, namely BES-AR (School Executive Board-Ar Risalah) and MPS (School Representative Council). Both organizations carry out executive and legislative functions on matters relating to the procedures for the lives of students in the Islamic boarding school environment. Each organization carries out its functions separately, both in the male and female student communities, and at the junior high and high school levels. The BES-AR organization, its administrators are replaced every year and are the administrators allocated to each class. The BES-AR administrators are students who are in class VIII at the junior high school level and class XI at the high school level. With such a system, each

generation will get a period of management, where they will choose and agree among themselves the individuals who will be trusted to serve as their administrators. This is also a learning experience for the male/female students to agree in making joint decisions to determine individuals who are considered appropriate as managers of the organization during their generation period.

Structurally, BES-AR has three types of divisions that differentiate their respective functions and roles. First, the Ruhiyah Division, which is the division that handles student discipline in carrying out worship. Second, the KSLH Division (Discipline of Facilities and Environment), which is the division that handles enforcement of rules, regulations, discipline in teaching and learning, and environmental cleanliness. Finally, the URBAS Division (Language Affairs), which is the division that handles the discipline of male/female students in matters of language use in the Islamic boarding school environment. Each division has its own coordinator and members, who are responsible for the tasks and roles according to their duties. In the Ruhiyah Division, its members play a role in supervising the implementation of worship, both obligatory and sunnah, of other male/female students. Covering matters such as ensuring that each student performs congregational prayers, reads the Quran at least once a day, and so on. Meanwhile, in the KSLH Division, its members play a role in supervising the implementation of rules, student discipline, and the cleanliness of the Islamic boarding school environment by male/female students every day. And in the URBAS Division, its members play a role in supervising the use of foreign languages in the Islamic boarding school environment. This is because every male/female student is required to use Arabic and English in their daily interactions, both between fellow students and with teachers and employees in the Islamic boarding school environment (Jaenullah, Utama, & Setiawan, 2022). The use of this language is regulated according to the class level of the male/female student, with different portions of the day.

Based on the duties and roles of the BES-AR administrators, it is clear that they are made "chosen students" who are burdened with the responsibility to supervise the behavior of fellow students within the pesantren. This means that they will face their juniors, peers and seniors. For every violation found, the BES-AR administrators will give certain punishments to the violating students. These punishments range from physical punishments such as being ordered to do push ups, to non-physical punishments such as being ordered to pick up trash or clean the toilet (Hergüner, Yaman, Sari, Yaman, & Dönmez, 2021). Thus, the administrators of this organization are given more authority with their respective roles. Patterns and systems like this certainly reflect a separate learning process for administrators and other students. For administrators, the roles and authorities they have can encourage them to learn to be role models, make decisions and be firm. Meanwhile, for other male/female students, they also learn to be responsible for their own actions, admit mistakes and accept punishment sincerely, and so on.

In addition, there are also other student organizations at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School, namely MPS. This organization itself is more legislative in nature, where its members focus on supervising the performance of the BES-AR management and becoming a liaison between the management and other students. MPS members consist of representatives from each class, both at the junior high and high school levels, as many as two people each. In this organization, its members are also encouraged to learn many things in character building such as learning to be wise, listening to aspirations and being honest in acting.

Student organizations often provide opportunities for individuals involved in them to take on leadership roles. Through these experiences, they learn about responsibility, fairness, and how to influence others in a positive way. In addition, being in an organization also helps to create strong

bonds. It allows them to feel the support and solidarity of their peers, which can be an important foundation for strengthening values such as brotherhood, trust, and mutual respect (Jamilah, 2021). Involvement in an organization also provides a sense of belonging to the school and its community. When students feel involved and have a sense of responsibility for the school environment, they are more likely to maintain cleanliness, safety, and discipline. Character education is not only about teaching moral values, but also about helping students develop their overall personality. Organizations offer experiences that allow them to grow holistically, strengthening moral and leadership values along with developing other academic and practical skills (Baharun & Ummah, 2018).

At the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School, the communication pattern of the instructors prioritizes a personal approach. If a certain problem occurs, then each instructor is required to call the student and then talk to him/her in private. Interpersonal communication through a private talk approach is one form of communication used by the instructors at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School. The advantage of this approach is that it can create a close relationship between the instructor and the students through more open and honest communication when alone. The instructor is also helped to identify the nature and character of each student by speaking with full openness and honesty when talking privately so that he/she can provide more appropriate direction and guidance according to the needs of each student.

This approach is also in line with the Catalyst Strategy. Conceptually, this strategy emphasizes on communicators who are accepted and desired by the affected person without any publicity of rewards or punishments. This method relies on the effectiveness of individuals in acting on their own initiative and trying to achieve the desired response by being a listener. This is evident in the personal approach taken by the instructor to achieve a response that is received positively by the students (Gosdin et al., 2021). To do this, the instructor must take the initiative to communicate, and the one-on-one talking approach tends to make the instructor listen more to the students he approaches.

The instructors at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School also practice persuasive and motivating communication patterns. This is considered important because persuasive communication emphasizes gentle invitations so that every male/female student can feel empathy and receive better input. The persuasive and motivating communication approach is also in line with the motto of the instructors at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School, namely "Discipline Without Shouting".

The presence of students in Islamic boarding schools makes them far from their family environment. There are times when students need emotional and spiritual encouragement and support at certain times as encouragement during the period of studying at Islamic boarding schools. Based on this, the instructors at Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School also always try to use a communication approach that can replace family functions, so that the instructors position themselves as parents or friends for students (Chusni, Saputro, Budi Rahardjo, & Suranto, 2020). This is also in line with the Catalyst Strategy theory, where this strategy emphasizes the communicator's efforts to try to get the desired reaction to feel accepted and desired by the party he wants to influence. The mentors try to place themselves in family functions to feel accepted and according to the needs of the students for affection and attention from their family values.

In implementing character building, the instructors at Ar Risalah Islamic Boarding School Padang also prepared several specific strategies. One of them is by implementing rewards and punishments in enforcing discipline among male/female students. This means that there are rewards in the form of prizes for male/female students who obey certain rules, or punishments for rule breakers. This is considered a method that can motivate, build discipline and build a sense of responsibility among

male/female students for their own behavior and attitudes. The existence of rewards is a form of appreciation for the good values in character shown by male/female students. While punishmentIt is a form of punishment for disobedience and a form of learning for mistakes made.

The implementation of this strategy is also in line with the Carrot Strategy, where the strategy states that there is an element of reward/punishment given by the communicator to the other party to increase the probability of obtaining the desired response. The purpose of this strategy is to change the level, direction, and substance of behaviors (Hidajat, Haeruman, Wiraningsih, & Pambudi, 2023). The instructors who implement this strategy also contain elements of reward or punishment so that they are responded to according to what is desired by the students. Likewise, the purpose of implementing this strategy is to change the behavior of the students to the desired character and attitude.

To further intensify interpersonal communication between the mentors and the students, Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School has its own policy. The mentors are required to call and talk to one child face to face every day. If on average each mentor is responsible for 30 students, then this policy requires each child to communicate directly at least once a month with their respective mentors. Each mentor has an average of thirty students so that each student will get a quota to be called every month. This activity is carried out routinely, so that it becomes one of their strategies to be able to build close relationships while assessing and understanding the character of each student.

When analyzed, this strategy is also in accordance with the concept of Catalyst Strategy, namely the emphasis on communicators who want to try to get a reaction so that it is accepted and desired by the person affected rather than publishing threats of rewards or punishments. The instructors routinely call one student to talk personally, with the aim of getting close relationships and intimate acceptance by the students. To further maximize the character building system of the students there, the mentors are also required to hold a meeting or evaluation meeting together every month. In the evaluation meeting, the mentors will discuss the results of the Amal Yaumi Report and various notes from personal communication with the students. The main focus of the evaluation meeting is on the development of the ongoing character building process at the Islamic boarding school and its impact on the students. The evaluation meeting is important because it is the only activity that requires all mentors to attend and sit together to discuss the development of students and the character building process there (Zebua, 2021). This also indicates that the entire character building process at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School is an evaluation material to be further developed in the future.

The existence of this routine meeting when analyzed is in line with the concept of the Siamese Twin Strategy, which is a strategy that is the result of an established relationship and the existence of an element of dependency between communicators. In the evaluation meeting, the discussion is based on the results of the mentor's notes from the communication relationship that has been established with the students (Abdurahman et al., 2023). Likewise, each party has a reciprocal dependency, where the students depend on the mentor as the party who will supervise and guide them and the mentors depend on the openness and honesty of the students in filling out the Yaumi Amal Report and one-on-one chats.

Based on the results of observations and interviews found in the field, there are several things that can be used as supporting factors for the implementation of interpersonal communication between instructors and students in the character formation process at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School. One of them is the existence of various trainings given to the instructors so that they consistently provide knowledge that is very useful for them in carrying out their duties and roles in the Islamic boarding school environment. Then there is also the support and full trust of the parents of the students

so as to maximize the performance of the instructors in disciplining and shaping the character of the students. Do not forget the full support from the foundation, starting from funding, procurement of various facilities and their willingness to synergize by absorbing the aspirations of educators to continue to improve the education system at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, there are also several things that are considered as factors that hinder the process of interpersonal communication between the instructor and the students in forming their character. One of the shortcomings of having a fairly young instructor is that there is a less assertive attitude when communicating and disciplining the students. This lack of assertiveness has an impact on the reactions of several students who do not really pay attention or consider the instructor. If left unchecked, this can certainly have a negative impact on character formation efforts at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted by the researcher at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School regarding interpersonal communication between mentors and students in character formation, it has been revealed that the interpersonal communication approach between mentors and students in character formation at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School is with a personal approach, a persuasive and motivational approach, and an approach to placing oneself as a family. The interpersonal communication strategy between mentors and students in character formation at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School is by implementing rewards and punishments, implementing the 1 day 1 child program, and holding evaluation meetings. Supporting factors for interpersonal communication between mentors and students in character formation at the Ar Risalah Padang Islamic Boarding School are the provision of training for mentors, support from parents and support from the foundation. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factor is that a small number of mentors show a less assertive attitude towards male/female students.

There are also some suggestions that researchers can put forward based on the results of this study. To the supervisors, to always consistently develop effective communication patterns towards male/female students in order to maximize efforts to form the character of the next generation. To the students, to always try to build Islamic character and morals with a disciplined attitude and high enthusiasm for learning. Parents, to be able to cooperate and involve themselves in the efforts of educational institutions in forming the character of children and adolescents.

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