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Negotiating Moral Values through Interpersonal Communication: Student–Teacher Interaction in an Islamic Boarding School
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Negotiating Moral Values through Interpersonal Communication: Student–Teacher Interaction in an Islamic Boarding School

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran komunikasi interpersonal *santri* dengan guru dalam menumbuhkan perkembangan moral (*akhlak*) di Pondok *Pesantren Al-Barohin*. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana komunikasi interpersonal berfungsi sebagai medium pendidikan moral dan karakter dalam kehidupan sehari-hari di lingkungan *pesantren*. Pengumpulan data dilakukan selama empat bulan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi dengan melibatkan tujuh informan yang terdiri atas guru, *santri*, dan pengasuh *pesantren*. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi interpersonal *santri* berperan signifikan dalam perkembangan *akhlak* ketika ditandai oleh keterbukaan, empati, sikap mendukung, sikap positif, dan kesetaraan. Pola komunikasi yang dialogis dan partisipatif mampu menumbuhkan kepercayaan timbal balik, memperkuat relasi guru dan *santri*, serta mendukung internalisasi nilai-nilai moral Islam seperti kedisiplinan, tanggung jawab, dan kesadaran diri. *Santri* tidak hanya diposisikan sebagai penerima pasif ajaran moral, tetapi sebagai agen komunikatif aktif yang berkontribusi secara bermakna dalam proses pendidikan *akhlak* melalui interaksi yang berkelanjutan dengan guru. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa komunikasi interpersonal yang efektif antara *santri* dan guru menjadi fondasi penting bagi keberlanjutan pendidikan *akhlak* di *pesantren* serta menegaskan pentingnya agensi *santri* dalam komunikasi pendidikan berbasis nilai.

Kata kunci: Guru, Komunikasi Interpersonal, Perkembangan *Akhlak*, Pondok *Pesantren*, *Santri*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of students' interpersonal communication with teachers in fostering moral development (*akhlak*) at *Al-Barohin* Islamic Boarding School. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, this research examines how interpersonal communication functions as a medium for moral and character education in the daily life of an Islamic boarding school. Data were collected over a four-month period through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, involving seven informants consisting of teachers, students, and a boarding school caregiver. Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that students' interpersonal communication plays a significant role in moral development when characterized by openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. Dialogical and participatory communication patterns foster mutual trust, strengthen teacher-student relationships, and support the internalization of Islamic moral values such as discipline, responsibility, and self-awareness. Students are positioned not merely as passive recipients of moral instruction but as active communicative agents who contribute meaningfully to the moral education process through continuous interaction with teachers. This study concludes that effective interpersonal communication between students and teachers forms a fundamental foundation for sustainable moral education in Islamic boarding schools and highlights the importance of student agency in value-based educational communication.

Key words: *Interpersonal Communication, Islamic Boarding School, Moral Development Student, Teachers*

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INTRODUCTION

The development of communication in the digital era has significantly transformed how individuals build social and emotional relationships, including in educational contexts (Sumarlan & Anis, 2025). Digital media intensify exposure to diverse value systems, interactional styles, and authority relations, often generating moral ambiguity and challenges to traditional forms of guidance. In Islamic educational environments, particularly Islamic boarding schools, interpersonal communication remains central to shaping character, moral values, and spiritual relationships between teachers and students (Keikazeria & Ngare, 2020). Islamic boarding schools function not only as institutions of religious instruction but also as moral communities in which *akhlakul karimah* is cultivated through sustained interpersonal engagement.

In this context, communication operates not merely as a medium for knowledge transmission but as a site where moral values are continuously negotiated, interpreted, and embodied in everyday interaction (Cohen & Soukup, 2023). The effectiveness of moral education therefore depends less on the presence of communicative interaction than on how authority, exemplarity, and moral guidance are enacted and responded to in practice, particularly in teacher–student relationships (Sibaweh & Hanan, 2022). While existing studies emphasize the normative importance of interpersonal communication in Islamic education, limited attention has been paid to how moral values are interactionally negotiated amid digital-era disruptions that reshape students' expectations, communicative habits, and moral reference points (Nurfadhilah, Kamalludin, & Milla, 2022). This gap highlights the need for empirical analysis of everyday communicative practices through which moral authority is maintained, contested, or reconfigured within Islamic boarding schools.

In practice, interpersonal communication within Islamic boarding schools does not always operate optimally. Differences in social background, perspective, and message interpretation often create communication barriers between teachers and students (Azis, Sari, Tiara, Hoerudin, & Fardiah, 2022). Limited openness and one-way communication patterns may reduce the effectiveness of moral value transmission (Nomleni, 2023), (Syamsudin, 2023), (Fikhratul, Rahmi, & Ariani rosadi, 2023). These challenges are intensified by social change and modernization, which influence students' interaction patterns (Ståhl & Kaihovirta, 2019). Consequently, moral education cannot be understood solely from teachers' message delivery but must also consider students' responses, interpretations, and participation (Fahmi, MS, Isnawijayani, & Zinaida, 2024). Therefore, examining interpersonal communication processes and their influence on students' moral development is essential (Sumarlan, Muktiyo, Pawito, & Rahmanto, 2025).

Al-Barohin Islamic Boarding School in Majenang District, Cilacap Regency, integrates formal and non-formal education grounded in Islamic values with a strong emphasis on character development through intensive teacher–student interaction. Interpersonal communication functions not only as a means of instruction but also as a medium for strengthening moral values and students' spirituality (Harrison & S., 2023). Despite close relationships built through learning and mentoring activities, communication challenges persist, including limited student openness, low feedback, and differing interpretations of moral messages. These conditions highlight the importance of examining interpersonal communication from students' perspectives. Despite close relationships built through learning and mentoring activities, communication challenges persist, including limited student openness, low feedback, and differing interpretations of moral messages. These conditions highlight the importance of examining interpersonal communication from students' perspectives.

Previous studies on interpersonal communication in Islamic boarding schools have predominantly focused on the role of teachers or *ustadz* as primary communicators. Research conducted by (Febionika, 2020), (Azzahrani, 2023), and (Tarmizi, 2023) demonstrates that teachers' communication patterns particularly empathy, openness, and persuasive approaches significantly influence students' moral development. However, despite these contributions, existing studies largely adopt a teacher centered analytical perspective, resulting in limited attention to students as active communicative agents. Consequently, students' interpersonal communication

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roles in moral education remain theoretically and empirically underexplored, even though effective character education depends on students' ability to respond, interpret, and internalize conveyed values.

Addressing this research gap, the present study examines students' interpersonal communication toward teachers at Pondok *Pesantren Al-Barohin* in fostering moral development. This study aims to identify forms of student communication, examine their contribution to moral formation, and explore interpersonal values constructed through daily interactions. By positioning students as active participants rather than passive recipients, this research offers a novel perspective on moral education and provides a more comprehensive understanding of students' interpersonal communication as a crucial element of character education in Islamic boarding schools. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically to interpersonal communication scholarship in value-based and religious education contexts and empirically to the development of more dialogical and participatory moral education practices. This study focuses on moral education in Islamic boarding schools as a process that emerges through continuous and reciprocal interpersonal communication between students and teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines theoretical perspectives and prior studies related to interpersonal communication in educational contexts, particularly Islamic boarding schools. It begins with a discussion of interpersonal communication in education, followed by Joseph A. DeVito's interpersonal communication theory as the primary analytical framework. The review then highlights empirical studies linking interpersonal communication and moral development in Islamic boarding schools. This structure integrates perspectives on communication, moral education, and religious values to frame students' interpersonal communication as an active, value-oriented, and spiritually grounded educational process.

Interpersonal Communication in Education

Interpersonal communication refers to direct interaction between individuals involving the exchange of messages, meanings, and emotions. Joseph A. DeVito, (2013) defines it as a transactional process in which participants mutually influence one another through verbal and nonverbal communication. In educational settings, interpersonal communication is fundamental to building effective pedagogical relationships. In value-based and religious education, it also mediates the negotiation and internalization of moral and spiritual values.

Beyond academic transmission, interpersonal communication shapes students' attitudes, values, and character (Riyanto, 2023). Positive teacher–student relationships create supportive learning environments, enhance motivation, and strengthen emotional engagement (Huda, 2022). Thus, interpersonal communication bridges cognitive learning with moral and religious development. Thus, interpersonal communication bridges cognitive learning with moral and religious development.

DeVito's Interpersonal Communication Theory

Joseph A. DeVito (2013) identifies five core elements of effective interpersonal communication—openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality—which are often treated as normative indicators of communicative quality. In the context of moral and religious education, however, these elements do not operate as stable or universally attainable conditions but are continuously negotiated within specific cultural and institutional settings. In Islamic boarding schools, interpersonal communication is shaped by the ethical principle of *adab* and entrenched hierarchical relations between teachers (*ustadz*) and students (*santri*) (Muslimin & Zuhriyah, 2022), generating productive tensions with DeVito's notion of communicative equality. Equality in this context does not imply symmetrical authority or unrestricted expression but is selectively enacted through respectful listening, moral attentiveness, and relational care within asymmetrical roles.

Rather than functioning as analytical "buckets," DeVito's framework is employed in this study to examine how such tensions are managed in everyday interaction. Openness and empathy may be encouraged in pedagogical dialogue, while limits are simultaneously placed on contestation and

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critique to preserve moral authority and discipline. These contradictions illuminate how effective interpersonal communication in *pesantren* settings is less about eliminating hierarchy than about balancing moral guidance with relational sensitivity. From a Digital Society perspective, this negotiation becomes increasingly complex as students' engagement with digital devices and social media introduces alternative communicative norms characterized by horizontality, immediacy, and expressive freedom. While *pesantren* interactions emphasize restraint and reverence, digital communication environments often normalize equality and visibility, potentially disrupting established patterns of interpersonal authority. This tension points to the need for future research examining how interpersonal moral communication is sustained, adapted, or contested when offline pedagogical interaction intersects with digitally mediated practices.

Interpersonal Communication and Moral Development in Islamic Boarding Schools

Islamic boarding schools possess distinctive characteristics in which interpersonal communication plays a central role in moral development. Teacher–student interactions extend beyond classrooms into dormitory life, religious activities, and spiritual mentoring, making communication a primary medium for internalizing Islamic moral values(Keikazeria & Ngare, 2020).

Previous studies confirm the influence of teachers' interpersonal communication on students' moral development. (Febionika, 2020) and (Azzahrani, 2023) demonstrate that empathetic, open, and participatory communication strengthens Islamic character and religious behavior. However, these studies largely position teachers as dominant communicators, leaving students' active communicative roles underexplored. In character education, students function not merely as message recipients but as active interpreters of moral values. Therefore, examining students' interpersonal communication toward teachers is essential to understanding moral education as a reciprocal and value-based process in Islamic boarding schools. Moral values are negotiated through dialogical and reciprocal student-teacher interactions, positioning students as active participants rather than passive recipients of moral instruction.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 1994) to explore students' interpersonal communication with teachers in fostering moral development at *Al-Barohin* Islamic Boarding School, Majenang District, Cilacap Regency. Fieldwork was conducted over four months, from January to April 2025, enabling prolonged engagement and sustained observation of everyday communicative interactions within the boarding school environment. A qualitative approach was selected to capture lived experiences, interactional meanings, and communication dynamics as they occur naturally in the context of Islamic boarding school education.

Al-Barohin Islamic Boarding School was selected as a research site due to its strong institutional emphasis on moral education (*akhlak* formation), the intensity of daily teacher–student interaction, and its relevance as a typical *pesantren* setting where interpersonal communication functions as a primary pedagogical mechanism. Rather than positioning the site as exceptional, the case is treated as analytically representative of *pesantren* environments that prioritize moral authority, hierarchical relations, and continuous interpersonal engagement.

Research Object and Subjects

The object of this research is interpersonal communication between students and teachers in the process of moral development. The research subjects included students, teachers, and an Islamic boarding school caregiver directly involved in educational and moral development activities. A total of seven male informants participated, consisting of three teachers, one caregiver, and three students representing junior, middle, and senior levels.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on active involvement in interpersonal communication, direct experience in moral development processes, and willingness to provide relevant information. Selection also considered role diversity, length of experience, and interaction intensity to ensure rich and comprehensive data.

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Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three primary techniques:
1. Participant observation to examine verbal and nonverbal communication patterns during learning activities, moral guidance, and daily interactions,
2. In-depth interviews with students, teachers, and caregivers using semi-structured guidelines to explore experiences and perceptions of interpersonal communication,
3. Documentation, including institutional archives, student guidelines, activity records, and other supporting materials related to moral education.
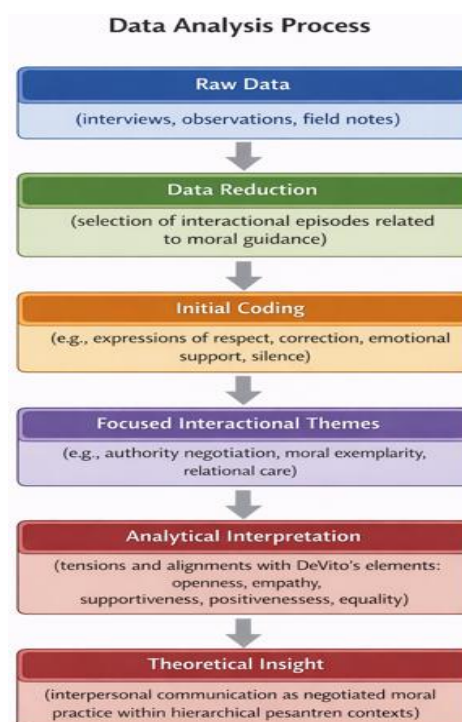
Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, (2014), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data were organized and categorized thematically, presented in narratives and tables, and interpreted by identifying recurring patterns and meanings related to students' interpersonal communication with teachers.

To enhance analytical transparency, this study visualizes the data analysis process through a flowchart illustrating the gradual abstraction from raw empirical materials to theoretical insight. The analysis began with raw data in the form of interviews, observations, and field notes documenting everyday teacher–student interactions in the *pesantren* context. Through data reduction, interactional episodes directly related to moral guidance and interpersonal communication were selected for closer examination.

These episodes were subjected to initial coding that captured recurrent communicative actions such as expressions of respect, correction, emotional support, and strategic silence. The analysis then progressed to the identification of focused interactional themes, including authority negotiation, moral exemplarity, and relational care, which reflect patterned communicative practices rather than isolated behaviors. In the final analytical stage, these themes were interpreted in relation to DeVito's interpersonal communication elements to examine points of alignment and tension. This process enabled the development of theoretical insight into interpersonal communication as a negotiated moral practice situated within hierarchical *pesantren* structures, rather than as a direct application of predefined communicative categories.

Figure 1. Data Analysis Process from Raw Interactional Data to Theoretical Insight

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This flowchart illustrates the analytical stages employed in this study, showing how raw qualitative data were progressively reduced, coded, and thematically interpreted to generate theoretical insights. DeVito's interpersonal communication elements functioned as sensitizing concepts guiding interpretation, rather than as fixed classificatory categories.

Data Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, this study applied source and method triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing data from students, teachers, and caregivers (Jick, 1979). while method triangulation was conducted through cross-checking observation, interview, and documentation data. Member checking was also implemented to confirm interpretations with informants and ensure alignment with empirical realities (Talib, Ali, College, & Studies, n.d.)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that interpersonal communication between students and teachers at Al-Barohin Islamic Boarding School occurs intensively across multiple contexts, including classroom instruction and daily interactions within the dormitory environment. These interactions are not confined to the transmission of instructional content but function as a continuous process through which moral and spiritual values are cultivated and internalized (Mittwede & K, 2020). Educational interaction in the pesantren thus extends beyond formal pedagogy and operates as a formative social practice embedded in everyday life.

"We try to make sure that students are not afraid to speak. If there is something they do not understand, we ask them to be honest and say so. We want them to learn with a calm heart." (Teacher, G1)

Teachers play an active role in cultivating open and warm communication. They function not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral guides and attentive listeners. This dual role positions teachers as communicative role models whose attitudes shape students' moral orientations. Teachers' openness encourages students to express their opinions, ask questions about unclear issues, and share personal experiences. Conversely, students demonstrate high levels of respect and obedience toward teachers through polite behavior, gentle speech, and courteous expressions in their daily interactions.

"The ustaz here do not just give orders; they are also willing to listen to us. If we have personal problems, we can talk without being afraid of getting scolded." (Student, W2)

Communication openness is also evident in non-formal activities such as religious gatherings, worship guidance, and group discussions. These informal settings function as strategic spaces for strengthening emotional bonds between teachers and students. These interactions outside formal classrooms enable teachers and students to develop stronger emotional bonds. The relationships formed are not merely academic but also personal and spiritual in nature.

"Sometimes the ustaz come to the dormitory late at night just to make sure we are all doing well. That makes us feel cared for." (Senior Student, W3)

In addition to openness and empathy, support emerges as an important element of interpersonal communication in the Islamic boarding school. Teachers provide praise, motivation, and prayers for students who demonstrate improvements in behavior or discipline. Such supportive communication acts as moral reinforcement that strengthens students' intrinsic motivation. Such forms of support foster enthusiasm and strengthen students' self-confidence in their learning processes.

"If a student shows positive changes, such as being more disciplined or diligent in performing night prayers, we give praise and prayers. That is how we show support." (Teacher, G2)

"When the ustaz says that I can do it, I become more motivated. It feels like I am appreciated and trusted." (Student, W4)

A positive communication atmosphere is clearly observable in daily interactions. Teachers and students greet one another warmly, accompanied by smiles and friendly salutations. This positive interactional climate reinforces students' emotional attachment to the Islamic boarding school environment. This condition makes the Islamic boarding school feel like a second home for

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students, allowing moral values to be conveyed more naturally.

"We want this Islamic boarding school to feel like a second home for students. When the atmosphere is positive, they more readily accept advice and become open to change." (Caregiver, G3)

Another prominent finding concerns the balance between teacher authority and student participation in communication. Although teachers remain respected as spiritual guides, they adopt a dialogical approach that provides space for students to express their opinions. This dialogical communication reflects an egalitarian interaction pattern without diminishing institutional authority. This sense of equality fosters two-way communication grounded in mutual respect without diminishing the value of *adab*.

"The ustaz never force their opinions. If we have ideas, they listen first and explain gently if something is not quite right." (Student, W5)

Tabel 1.
Informant Profile and Focus of Interview Findings at *Al-Barohin* Islamic Boarding School

Informant Code	gender	Position in Islamic Boarding School	Length of Stay / Teaching	Focus of Interpersonal Communication Findings	Supporting Verbatim Quotes
G1	Male	Senior religious teacher	10 years	**Open communication.** Teachers create an open and interactive atmosphere so that students feel confident in expressing their opinions and learning difficulties.	*"We try to ensure that students aren't afraid to speak up. If there's something they don't understand, we ask them to be honest. We want them to learn with a calm mind."*
W2	Male	Active students at the Tsanawiyah level	3 years	**A sense of security and trust.** Students feel free to speak and open up to their teachers without fear.	*"The Ustadz here doesn't just give orders, but also listens to us. If we have personal problems, we can talk about them without fear of being scolded."*
W3	Male	Senior students / dormitory administrators	4 years	**Teachers' empathy for their students.** Teachers demonstrate personal and emotional concern beyond academic activities.	*"Sometimes the ustadz comes to the dormitory at night just to make sure we are all well. It makes us feel cared for."*
G2	Male	Guru pembimbing *akhlak*	8 years	**Support and motivation.** Teachers provide appreciation, praise, and prayers as a form of moral reinforcement for	*"If a student shows positive changes, such as being more disciplined or diligent in attending night prayers, we*

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				students.	*praise them and offer prayers. That's our way of showing support."*
W4	Male	*Santri* menengah	2 years	**A sense of appreciation and self-motivation.** Students feel more enthusiastic and confident after receiving teacher support.	*"When the religious teacher says I can do it, I feel motivated again. It feels like I'm valued and trusted."*
G3	Male	Pengasuh *pesantren*	15 years	**Positive communication and a family atmosphere.** Teachers strive to create a warm and loving Islamic boarding school environment.	*"We want this Islamic boarding school to feel like a second home for the students. If the atmosphere is positive, they will be receptive to advice and open to change."*
W5	Male	*Santri* junior	1 years	**Equality and participation.** Teachers provide space for dialogue and respect students' opinions without compromising on manners.	*"Ustadz never forced his opinion. If we had an idea, he would listen to it first and explain it slowly if anything was inappropriate."*

Table 1 presents the characteristics and key findings derived from seven informants, consisting of three teachers and four students at *Al-Barohin* Islamic Boarding School. The data indicate that interpersonal communication within the Islamic boarding school is built through complementary interactions between teachers and students. Teachers (G1, G2, G3) play a central role in shaping an open, supportive, and positive communication climate through personal engagement, motivational support, and the cultivation of a familial atmosphere. Meanwhile, students (W2, W3, W4, W5) report communication experiences characterized by feelings of safety, empathy, appreciation, and equality in their interactions with teachers. Verbatim interview excerpts further reinforce that this two-way communication pattern fosters mutual trust and strengthens *akhlakul karimah* values within the Islamic boarding school environment. Thus, the table illustrates a clear linkage between the five core elements of Joseph A. DeVito's interpersonal communication theory openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality in educational communication practices oriented toward students' moral development.

The findings confirm that interpersonal communication plays a significant role in fostering students' moral development at Al-Barohin Islamic Boarding School. Communication between teachers and students functions not only as a medium for knowledge transmission but also as a means of internalizing moral and spiritual values. These findings reinforce Joseph A. DeVito's view that interpersonal communication is a process of mutual message exchange that shapes meaningful interpersonal relationships (Joseph A. DeVito, 2013). In the context of Islamic boarding school education, effective communication serves as a fundamental foundation for creating a learning climate oriented toward Islamic values.

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Field findings reveal that communication openness between teachers and students is a key element in establishing healthy interpersonal relationships. Teachers at Al-Barohin Islamic Boarding School actively cultivate an open communication climate that encourages students to express their feelings, ask questions, and share perspectives. As reflected in informant G1's statement, openness functions as a bridge that allows students to articulate learning difficulties without fear. This aligns with (Joseph A. DeVito, 2013) concept of openness, which emphasizes honesty and transparency in interpersonal interaction. Such openness strengthens trust and emotional closeness, enabling moral responsibility and honesty to be internalized through mutual trust.

Beyond openness, empathy emerges as a crucial element in maintaining harmonious communication between teachers and students. Interviews with students (W3) reveal that teachers frequently demonstrate personal concern beyond formal instructional activities, such as visiting dormitories to ensure students' well-being. This behavior reflects the application of empathy in interpersonal communication and fosters feelings of safety and appreciation. In moral development contexts, empathy serves as a mechanism for instilling compassion (rahmah) and social care, which are central to Islamic teachings. This finding supports previous research by (Febionika, 2020) and (Tarmizi, 2023), which emphasizes that empathetic communication by ustaz directly influences students' discipline and moral exemplarity.

Support and motivation also emerge as constructive dimensions of interpersonal communication. Teachers function not only as educators but also as sources of moral and emotional reinforcement. Informant G2 explained that providing praise and prayers to students who demonstrate positive behavioral changes constitutes a form of communicative support. This finding corresponds to the supportiveness element in DeVito's theory, wherein supportive communication creates a sense of security and encourages individual growth. For students, such communication enhances self-confidence and motivation for self-improvement, as articulated by informant W4. This demonstrates that moral development in Islamic boarding schools is fostered not only through normative instruction but also through emotionally supportive communication.

Another important aspect identified in this study is the role of positive attitudes in shaping a conducive communication climate. Teachers and students at Al-Barohin Islamic Boarding School interact within a warm and familial environment. As emphasized by informant G3, the Islamic boarding school seeks to function as a "second home" for students, where they feel accepted and valued. This reflects the implementation of the positiveness element in DeVito's theory (Joseph A. DeVito, 2013), which emphasizes maintaining an optimistic, respectful, and encouraging communication climate. Positive teacher attitudes shape students' emotional experiences, enabling more effective internalization of moral values. This finding is consistent with Azzahrani's (2023) research, which found that positive and participatory communication in Islamic boarding schools strengthens students' religious behavior.

Equality also emerges as an important dimension of interpersonal communication at Al-Barohin Islamic Boarding School. Although the institutional structure positions teachers as authoritative figures, teacher–student relationships are not rigidly hierarchical. Instead, teachers act as dialogical partners who provide space for students to express their opinions, as reflected in informant W5's experience. The equality element in DeVito's theory explains that egalitarian communication fosters mutual respect and active participation. In the Islamic boarding school context, equality does not negate etiquette (adab), but rather reinforces trust between teachers and students. Values of brotherhood and deliberation cultivated through egalitarian communication demonstrate that Islamic education can remain participatory without losing its traditional foundations.

Overall, these findings confirm that the five elements of interpersonal communication proposed by (Joseph A. DeVito, 2013)openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality are not merely theoretical constructs but are practically enacted in daily life at Al-Barohin Islamic Boarding School. Each element complements the others in shaping two-way communication grounded in Islamic and humanistic values. Teachers act as moral facilitators, while students become active participants in the moral development process. This humanistic, open, and spiritually

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grounded interpersonal relationship constitutes the foundation of the Islamic boarding school's success in cultivating noble moral character among students. Theoretically, these findings strengthen the relevance of DeVito's theory within Islamic educational contexts; practically, they provide a basis for Islamic boarding schools to develop more empathetic, participatory, and spiritually grounded models of moral communication.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that interpersonal communication plays a decisive role in fostering students' moral development at *Al-Barohin* Islamic Boarding School. Moral development is shaped not solely by teachers' positions as moral exemplars, but more critically by the quality of teacher-student interactions characterized by openness, empathy, supportiveness, positiveness, and equality. These five elements constitute an integrated communication pattern that systematically facilitates the internalization of moral and spiritual values within daily educational practices. In line with DeVito's framework, these elements are consistently enacted across learning activities, spiritual guidance, and everyday interactions, thereby strengthening mutual trust, enhancing students' intrinsic motivation, and sustaining a supportive moral learning environment.

Theoretically, this study extends the application of DeVito's interpersonal communication theory (Joseph A. DeVito, 2013) within the specific context of Islamic boarding school education, affirming its conceptual relevance and adaptability in value-based and faith-oriented settings. Practically, the findings indicate that Islamic boarding schools should deliberately reinforce participatory and humanistic communication practices by prioritizing empathy, emotional support, and open dialogue, while simultaneously preserving institutional authority and ethical norms integral to Islamic education.

Future research is encouraged to examine interpersonal communication in Islamic boarding schools by incorporating the influence of digital media and conducting comparative analyses across traditional and modern institutions. Such approaches are expected to generate deeper insights into evolving communication dynamics and to further advance interpersonal communication theory within culturally and spiritually grounded educational contexts.

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