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## Principal's Strategy in Implementing Organizational Communication at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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### Abstrak

Strategi komunikasi menjadi modal utama bagi kepala madrasah dalam membentuk iklim belajar kondusif di madrasah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa strategi kepala sekolah dalam menerapkan komunikasi organisasi di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Kesuma LKMD Kecamatan Namorambe. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif analitis. Pengumpulan data menggunakan metode observasi, wawancara dan studi dokumen. Hasil penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pelaksanaan strategi komunikasi organisasi (vertikal, horizontal, diagonal) yang terdapat di MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma kategori baik, sebagaimana terlihat dalam kondisi berikut: (1) Komunikasi vertikal yang terdapat di madrasah belum cukup baik, disebabkan karena kurangnya kehadiran kepala sekolah pada proses kegiatan belajar mengajar; (2) Komunikasi horizontal yang terdapat di madrasah Jatikesuma sudah cukup baik. Tingginya interaksi antara sesama anggota setingkat dan masih lemahnya kerjasama organisasi menunjukkan interaksi yang dilakukan lebih kepada komunikasi non formal. (3) Komunikasi diagonal yang terdapat di madrasah terlaksana dengan baik, karena semua anggota organisasi yang berbeda tingkat kedudukan diberi kebebasan melakukan komunikasi, baik berbentuk formal maupun non formal.

**Kata Kunci:** Kepemimpinan Kepala Madrasah, Komunikasi Organisasi.

### Abstract

*The communication strategy is the main capital for the head of the madrasa in forming a conducive learning climate in the madrasa. This study aims to analyze the principal's strategy in implementing organizational communication at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Kesuma LKMD, Namorambe District. This study used a qualitative approach with an analytical descriptive method. Collecting data used the method of observation, interviews, and document study. The results of this study conclude that the implementation of organizational communication strategies (vertical, horizontal, diagonal) in MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma is in a good category, as seen in the following conditions: (1) Vertical communication in madrasas is not good enough, due to the lack of presence of the head schools in the process of teaching and learning activities; (2) Horizontal communication in the Jatikesuma madrasah is quite good. The high level of interaction among members of the same level and the still weak organizational cooperation indicates that the interaction is carried out more on non-formal communication. (3) Diagonal communication in madrasas is carried out well because all members of the organization at different levels of position are given the freedom to communicate, both formal and non-formal.*

**Keywords:** Madrasah Principal Leadership, Organizational Communication.

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication is the essence of human social interaction. In the context of education, communication is an important matter in the learning process, because teachers and students exchange information, regarding scientific insights, skills, and also the internalization of wisdom values. The communication in question can be in the form of verbal or non-verbal, visual, formal and non-formal, direct or indirect communication, certain images or symbols, and even signal communication that is translated to contain meaning (Firdanianty, 2016: 37-47).

Various types of communication reflect the many variations that can be made between individuals and groups. Various communications can be used according to the condition or situation of the ongoing conversation. The government and private institutions with certain fields have something in common, namely as a place for individuals to interact and work together to achieve common goals, including in the field of education (Larasati, 2017).

Communication that takes place usually connects superiors (leaders) and subordinates (members). Harmonious communication between the two is a matter that can support or hinder the process of achieving organizational goals. In the context of education, the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of organizational stages depend on how the principal of the school or madrasa builds communication between "madrasa residents" (Tantiani, 2015).

The effectiveness of communication will make members happy and willing to devote themselves and help improve the quality of madrasas from period to period. Uniquely, the effect of communication in a madrasa is significant, that is, it can change the behavior of subordinates, initially active members can become passive (lazy), and even members who were originally inactive can become active because of motivation and inspiration from the leadership of the institution (Ika, *et.al.*, 2022).

The urgency of communication is to make decisions or points of agreement that are mutually beneficial. Every decision certainly generates risks, and while decision-making involves many people, on this basis it is feared that not all will accept the decision. The main alternative of problem-solving is of course based on communication because communication is the essence of leadership actions. Through communication, ideas, and ideas between individuals can be bridged and even collaborated as a vision, mission, target, or even a common goal (Abdullah, *et.al.*, 2014).

Planning, implementing, organizing, and evaluating educational institutions requires effective communication from madrasa management. This is because effective communication will present policies or decisions with mutual agreement, as well as display a transformational leadership figure or behavior. In this context, the implementation of education does not only involve students, the community around the madrasa, and guardians or parents of students. More than this, education involves many parties from various locations. For this reason, effective information management and communication strategies are needed, namely the era of digitalization which explains to the public about internet-based madrasas and social media (other supporting application features) (Martha, *et.al.*, 2022).

The success of a madrasa is not only measured by the level of quantity (number) of students, but also by the quality aspect. This emphasizes that educational institutions must be ready to accept various challenges of the progress of the times, and also be prepared to create innovations to demonstrate the development and readiness of institutions for changing times. There are several communication networks, both one-way and many-way, that can be used by organizations as a strategy to help control the communication process depending on the needs of individuals, organizations, and institutions (Bintoro, 2016).

The importance of a communication strategy to help the development of an organization involves all stakeholders in achieving the vision and mission of the institution. So, good communication must be established between all aspects involved in the organization to establish cooperation. Good communication is not a place

to bring down one member to another, not a place to oppress or discriminate between one member and another. Many misinterpret communication within the organization, for example conveying messages to bring down the interlocutor or to discriminate against relationships that are considered dangerous within an organization (Azzahra, *et.al.*, 2019).

Errors in conveying messages can destroy the image of each organization, conflicts caused by communication errors can cause all members of the organization to face pressure and an imbalance occurs in the process of the organization's wheels in achieving the goals set. The attitude of wanting to win alone caused by the egoism of a member of the organization greatly affects the communication delivered so it has an impact on decreasing member performance (Putri, 2015).

To achieve effective and directed communication, organizational leaders must be able to determine the direction and goals of the organization, especially in communication. More intensive communication within the organization will form a good organizational culture and cooperation, and achieving this requires a professional leader as the highest authority in the organization (Aini, 2014; Latuconsina, 2019). This problem occurs in many organizations, including in MI Kesuma LKMD, Namorambe District. This institution is a private educational institution under the auspices of the foundation. There is much that needs to be improved in this educational institution, such as leaders who are less consistent, the need for efficient organizational structures, budget transparency, communication strategies between stakeholders that seem unclear, and so on.

In fact, relevant research on the strategy of school principals in implementing organizational communication has been studied from various perspectives. Among them are discussing aspects of the implementation of national education standards (SNP) in the learning process in schools (Sriwahyuni, *et.al.*, 2019), the madrasa principal's strategy in realizing effective communication between school organizational administrators (Fadhli, 2021), the principal's leadership strategy for survive and be innovative in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 (Aryawan, 2019), the strategy of the head of the madrasa in creating a conducive learning climate (Karmila, 2022), the managerial practice of the head of the madrasa and its impact on teacher performance (Ariyanti, 2020), the effectiveness of communication in schools or madrasas (Jaya, 2021), the communication strategy of the madrasa head in responding to criticism from student guardians of the internal policies of the madrasa (Tambunan, *et.al.*, 2017), the coaching strategy carried out by the school principal towards the religious culture of the school community (Arif, 2020), the leadership strategy in an effort to create increased discipline in schools (Ansori, *et.al.*, 2021), and the madrasa head's communication strategy in managing the pattern of conflict at school (Dani, 2016).

Based on the introduction above, it is understood that the literature review above leaves a gap analysis as an effort to find novelty in this research with previous research. The novelty of this research is in the aspect of the study of the strategy applied by the head of the madrasah in a unit of basic education institutions. Furthermore, to find out what the existing organizational communication strategy is and how it is implemented in the school. This is what underlies the author to conduct research on "*School Principal's Strategy in Implementing Organizational Communication at MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma*". Through this research, it is hoped that the implementation of the madrasa principal's strategy regarding effective communication in madrasas will be obtained, so that it becomes an innovative force for the progress and improvement of the quality of the institution.

## **METHOD**

The approach used by researchers in this study is a qualitative research approach. In qualitative research, the phenomenological approach is very dominant. In this context, researchers seek to gather information about the topics discussed in a comprehensive manner. This research was conducted at MI Kesuma LKMD which is located at Jl. Jatikesuma No. 345, Jati Kesuma, Namorambe District, Kab. Deli Serdang, from November 2022-January 2023. This study focuses on analyzing the principal's strategy in implementing organizational

communication at MI Kesuma LKMD Namorambe. In seeking this information, researchers will collaborate with, among others: the Headmaster, Head of Administration, Deputy Principal of the Madrasah, and Teachers of MIS Kesuma LKMD Namorambe. In order for this research to obtain correct and accountable data, the research team made several methods for collecting relevant data, the methods used were observation methods, interview methods, and documentation (Assingkily, 2021). Data analysis was using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data was obtained after a triangulation test on the method aspects and research data sources.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data obtained by the researcher from the results of interviews with school principals and distributing questionnaires to data sources then described to form the complete data results. Interpretation of data from research results through questionnaires, interviews, and observations shows the determination and implementation of organizational communication strategies in each network at MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma as follows:

### Vertical Communication Strategy (up and down)

Vertical Communication Strategy (up and down) Vertical communication, namely communication from top to bottom (downward communication) and from bottom to top (upward communication) is the communication from superiors to subordinates and from subordinates to superiors reciprocally (two-way traffic communications). Vertical communication within the organization really has a sizable contribution in the course of the organization. Communication from the top leadership to the subordinates is very necessary for making relevant the goals of the organization to be carried out by the subordinates. The clearer and more intense the communication carried out by the leadership, the less likely there is a misunderstanding of the message in the implementation of the tasks conveyed by the leadership (Arni, 2009).

Downward communication usually does not always run smoothly, because it is influenced by various factors, including the following: Openness, Trust in messages, Message overload, Timing, and Filtering. What is meant by upward communication is messages that flow from subordinates to superiors or from lower levels to higher levels (Rosadi, 2017). Organizations that have a clear and directed form of communication make all stakeholders feel they have the work they are responsible for and this will make organizational members feel the closeness between top management and subordinates and vice versa.

The superior's wisdom in opening the communication network conveyed by subordinates, the more efficient the superiors are in making decisions from the communications they receive and all deficiencies in the organizing process will be controlled. Leaders' openness in communication will also assist in building vertical relationships between superiors and subordinates. Suggestions, criticisms, opinions, complaints, and so on are conveyed by subordinates to superiors as a sign of attention from subordinates to the organization and if there is feedback from superiors, it will be a decision. and new strategies to be implemented (Ruliana, 2014). Regarding the form of vertical communication, Arni (2009) classifies it in the table below:

**Table 1. Upward Communication**

Oral	Written
1. Face-to-face reports and conversations.	1. Reports.
2. Interview.	2. Individual letter.
3. Telephone.	3. Objection.
4. Conference meeting.	4. Suggestion system.
5. Social affairs.	5. Investigation of attitudes and statements.
6. Union channels.	6. Trade union publications.

**Table 2. Downward Communication**

Oral	Written
1. Personal instructions.	1. Instructions and orders.
2. Lessons, compensation, and committee meetings.	2. Letters and memos.
3. Interviews, coaching	3. Bulletin board.
4. Telephone, cinema, slide.	4. Posters.
5. Social affairs, including trade union activities.	5. Handbooks and manuals.
6. Whistle, bell, and so on.	6. Annual report.
7. Chat, hearsay.	7. Publication of trade unions.

Vertical communication within the organization, for superiors, is very functioning in controlling the performance of subordinates and for subordinates is very useful in conveying aspirations and solutions that are owned in building relationships to achieve organizational goals. The main function of upward communication is to supply information to upper management levels about what is happening at lower levels (Zulaekhah, 2014).

Based on the research data sources, it was concluded that the vertical communication strategy in the school had not been implemented properly, because all forms of policy could be decided upon and communicated by the vice principal of the school (head of department/department). The results of this questionnaire are different from the results of the interviews which show that organizational communication between superiors and subordinates is going well and communication is carried out every day between the top management and the lowest members.

Lack of intensive presence has an impact on the implementation of the vertical communication strategy, both in the use of the right vertical (downward) communication structure or media in making direct leadership policies or decisions, and becomes an obstacle for subordinates in communicating with the leadership (upward), all needs, suggestions, and complaints cannot be conveyed directly to the leadership during the KBM, there is still a lack of use of upward communication media due to the difficulty of getting direct and fast feedback.

### **Horizontal Communication Strategy**

Implementation of a horizontal communication strategy at MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma which shows a sufficient percentage in both verbal and non-verbal forms. The frequency is quite good determined based on the results of the questionnaire and can be justified by the principal on the interview results, because not all members of the organization are at school every day. Based on the researcher's analysis of data sources, the high intensity of non-formal communication and a small proportion of it occurs in formal communication between members of one level of position and the low level of formal communication shows that coordination and cooperation among members of one level of position are still not optimal.

**Table 3. Horizontal Communication**

Oral	Written
1. Lectures, conferences, and committee meetings.	1. Letters, memos, reports.
2. Telephone.	2. Noticeboards and posters.
3. Social affairs, including trade union activities.	3. Handbooks and manuals.
4. Rumors.	4. Annual report.
	5. Publication of trade unions.

The use of horizontal communication media which only relies on the command line on the structure and written media/pamphlets so that most of the feedback in formal communication is in the form of actions and feedback is rarely given verbally, except in non-formal communication, it is more often giving direct feedback/orally and even then still have to select appropriate information to give feedback.

### **Diagonal Communication Strategy**

Horizontal communication is communication horizontally, for example between staff members and staff members, middle-level employees with middle-level employees, or lower-ranking employees with lower ranks.

Horizontal communication relationships that are horizontal in nature are carried out by members of the organization at the same position or position level. This communication is not the same as vertical communication which is more formal.

This communication is usually carried out by members of the organization more in informal situations, for example, conversations at break time discussing personal, work issues, and this communication is rarely done at formal times, and usually when formal is done in jobs that require coordination with fields (departments) other (Wahab, 2008). Communication between fellow members of the organization who have the same position of authority does not only occur between departments and between other departmental subordinates but also horizontal communication occurs between one group within one department. Horizontal communication within departments that have the same position usually occurs in the implementation of teamwork (Maulida, 2020).

The implementation of the diagonal communication strategy at MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma was well implemented even though it had different functions and levels of position. This difference is not an obstacle for members to carry out this communication. From the results of questionnaires and interviews as well as researchers' observations, the implementation of this communication was quite high and the principal also revealed that the implementation of organizational communication did not only occur in vertical and horizontal communication, but also in diagonal communication.

This communication is very helpful for members of the organization who have a higher level (teachers) in carrying out their duties. For example, in writing letters or other assistance and members who have lower levels do not mind and even feel valued, because it is important to be present in a subordinate position (administrative staff). Diagonal communication more often uses face-to-face media and structurally and feedback is carried out directly.

### **Organizational Communication Effectiveness at MI LKMD Jatikesuma**

Relations between all individuals contained within the internal organization besides using vertical and horizontal forms of communication can also use diagonal communication. Diagonal communication also has a fairly high contribution within the organization although sometimes this communication occurs outside of the organization's communication planning.

Diagonal communication which is often also called cross-communication (cross-communication) is communication within an organization between a person and another person who differ from each other in position and part. For example, communication takes place between subject teachers and administrative staff. Cross-communication between organizational members who have lower levels in one department and organizational members in other departments who have higher positions and are regulated in a formal structure. Although the functions and duties of these communicators are different, they really help the organization's communication process in achieving organizational goals.

Communication carried out by individuals usually occurs a lot in this diagonal communication which is cross between different positions and departments. All of that can happen because every department has the same goals, refers to the vision and mission, and is regulated in the organizational system. So the organization does not only need vertical or horizontal communication but also requires diagonal communication as well to help other departments for other members in conveying their opinions or complaints to be conveyed to top management (Mukhlisin, 2017).

From the results of interviews and questionnaires conducted by researchers regarding organizational communication strategies at MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma both vertical, horizontal, and diagonal communications have not shown good enough effectiveness in the implementation of organizational communication, which is due to the lack of attention of the school principal to organizational communication and resources which exists. The lack of attention from the school principal has an impact on weak interaction, coordination, and formal cooperation between members of the organization to achieve goals, and the

implementation of member communication relies more on closeness and personal abilities in establishing cooperation.

From the observations, there are several problems that can interfere with the achievement of organizational goals in these educational institutions, including *First*, communication by the school principal to his subordinates or vice versa is often hampered due to the lack of time the leader is present in the process of teaching and learning activities, as school leaders should another school. *Second*, the communication made for decision-making, after being mutually agreed upon, turns out to be in practice not as appropriate as what has been decided and the ethics of respecting fellow members of the organization is still minimal.

*Third*, egotism in conducting meetings to reach consensus often leads to differences in perceptions that carry over to the outside of the meeting, so that in carrying out organizational strategies and systems they are individualistic and require a rather long process to stabilize them again. *Fourth*, the organizational structure as a medium of communication is still not clear, there is a line of coordination between the leadership and the lowest members. If the lines of coordination are clear enough, a leader can control communication as an organizational process by using the right strategies and tools to achieve good communication.

*Fifth*, communication from one of the heads of the assistant departments of the school principal in reporting audit results or reports related to organizational efficiency that has been carried out is often delegated to subordinates, who should be the authority of the head of the field to face the school leadership to report it. The six budget transparency contained in these schools is still centralized which are managed by a school treasurer with leadership control. Not everyone in the organization can know the real data on the school budget as well as the head of the assistant principal complains because the leader's attitude is that it is difficult to allocate the budget for smaller areas, such as the student council activity budget.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that the implementation of organizational communication strategies (vertical, horizontal, diagonal) in MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma, as follows: (1) Vertical communication in MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma is still not good enough, due to the lack of presence of the principal in the process of teaching and learning activities. (2) Horizontal communication in MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma is quite good. The high interaction between members of the same level and the weak organizational cooperation shows that the interaction is carried out more on non-formal communication. (3) Diagonal communication in MI Kesuma LKMD Jatikesuma is implemented well because all members of the organization with different levels of position are given the freedom to communicate, both formal and non-formal. Of the three communications, forming an understanding of the author which shows that the determination of the organizational communication strategy is not in accordance with the coordination structure, and its implementation is together and the freedom of communication of the members of the organization.

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