

## Interpersonal Communication Model Between Teachers and Visually Impaired Students to Achieve Achievement at SLB A Karya Murni Medan

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyze the communication model applied by teachers in guiding visually impaired students to achieve achievements at SLB A Karya Murni. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, employing in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation techniques. The research results indicate that interpersonal communication is built through five indicators, namely openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality. In addition to verbal communication, teachers also use nonverbal communication, including kinesthetic messages (facial, gestural, postural), proxemics, artifacts, and paralinguistics. The communication barriers found include students' visual limitations, students' closed nature, and lack of initiative in responding to messages. The findings indicate that the communication model used is the interactional model, which involves a continuous two-way message exchange process between teachers and student. This research formulates a new model called the Adaptive Emotional Interaction Communication Model (KIEA), which is a communication model designed based on the unique needs of visually impaired students, emphasizing elements of adaptive two-way interaction both verbally and nonverbally. This model is formed from five main components: adaptive openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and humanistic equality

## **INTRODUCTION**

Blindness is a physical limitation where an individual has one or both of the senses of sight that cannot function as a channel to capture light stimuli from outside, this is caused by a disorder in the nerves that connect to the eyes. Blindness is divided into two classifications (Kauffman et al., 2024), namely Total Blindness and Low Vision Blindness. Special Schools (SLB) are schools that are specially designed according to the needs in the educational services provided. (Anjerini, et al., 2023).

Education not only focuses on the development of academic knowledge but academic skills that cover most of the general education curriculum but also motor skills, pro-social behavior, communication, adaptive/daily life, work skills, and so on. (WHO, 2023). Academically and non-academically, students with special needs will have creativity and interests and experience personality development through Special Schools. (Syaffira & Aprianti, 2023).

Education is a means to form skills and improve individual quality. The success of educational goals can be measured from the results achieved by students. In the world of education, this success can be seen from the ability of students to master the material given by the teacher, the completion of tasks and achievements that have been achieved by students.

Learning achievement is knowledge or skills developed by subject matter, usually indicated by test scores or numerical values assigned by the teacher. Blind students in developing talents and skills need strong encouragement to achieve, which can be given by teachers through the application of effective interpersonal communication. Teachers have an important role in student development and are expected to be able to educate and guide students so that students can experience development to gain abilities and knowledge. The educational process carried out by teachers goes well, so it will have the potential for students to develop skills to produce achievements. An achievement can be produced in the previous process such as struggle, challenges and skills.

Teachers who are less able to teach well and who do not master the material being taught can cause a dislike for what is being taught and a lack of encouragement to master it on the part of students. On the other hand, teachers who are good at teaching can cause students to like the material they teach so that without being told, students increase their knowledge in that field by reading books, magazines and other printed materials. (Rino et al., 2020). In addition, to describe a situation, teachers use different intonations so that blind students understand the conditions that exist during the learning process. Interpersonal communication will also help teachers understand children's needs when receiving learning, knowing children's deficiencies, and knowing what type of learning is most appropriate for the child. (Salsabila et al., 2024).

The communication model describes how the communication process takes place, including the flow of message delivery from the sender to the recipient through certain channels (Wibowo, 2013). The application of the right communication model can make the interaction between teachers and blind students effective and support the achievement of students' academic and non-academic achievements. The achievements they achieve not only reflect their academic abilities or skills, but also reflect their success in building self-confidence and the ability to overcome the challenges faced. Support from the educational environment and family can create motivation for students to continue to excel. (Irawan et al., 2024). This support plays an important role in forming intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that supports academic achievement. (Ummat et al., 2022).

Blind students who can develop their potential to produce achievements in various fields show that teachers play an important role not only in the learning process but also in non-formal education such as during extracurricular activities. Interpersonal communication of teachers, both verbal and non-verbal, has helped people with disabilities such as the blind to be able to produce various achievements and be accepted in society and participate in various competitions on the national stage and win medals.

Many previous studies have focused more on interpersonal communication in the learning process of children with special needs without examining in depth how the interpersonal communication model of teachers with blind students achieves achievement. This shows the need to explore further how the interpersonal communication model, both verbally and non-verbally, is carried out by teachers to blind students to achieve achievement. By examining the interpersonal communication model of teachers in achieving the achievement of blind students, this study is expected to provide new insights into the dynamics of the right interpersonal communication model that can be used as a reference to be applied to blind students in other SLBs. The results of the study will provide practical contributions for teachers and educators in developing more effective interpersonal communication models, as well as creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. In addition, this study can also provide a basis for developing educational policies that are more responsive to the needs of students with special needs, so that they can improve the achievement and quality of education for blind students in SLB A Karya Murni and other schools.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The most classic communication model is the Aristotle model. There are 3 basic parts of communication in this model, namely the speaker, message and listener. The Aristotle communication model is a communication model used to influence others. This model is very simple because it does not contain other elements. which are known in the communication model, such as: channels, feedback, effects, and obstacles or communication disorders. One of the weaknesses of this model is that communication is considered a static phenomenon. Another weakness of this model is that nonverbal aspects of persuasion are not discussed. (Deddy, 2010). The five components above are elements that must be present in the communication process. Lasswell when designing this model, Lasswell was greatly influenced by his thoughts on the structure and function of communication in society. (Severin & Tankard, 2010). The communication model proposed by Lasswell is a structured and systematic communication model.

Interpersonal communication is face-to-face communication between humans that allows participants to capture other people's reactions directly, both verbally and non-verbally. (Deddy, 2010). Interpersonal communication can produce feedback or responses quickly. (Stephen W & Karen A, 2016). Communicators and communicants go through 6 interpersonal communication processes, first having the will to communicate, second Encoding by the sender of the message, third the sender of the message or communicator, fourth receiving the message, fifth is Decoding by the communicant or recipient of the message, and finally feedback. (AW, 2011).

Written communication tends to be more organized and follows the applicable rules or standards if oral communication is susceptible to external interference and is greatly influenced by the nature of the perpetrator. An example of written communication is when a teacher creates teaching materials for his students, the material must be delivered in good and correct language, according to the context and purpose, and in accordance with applicable language rules (Nurbani, 2019).

Educational communication has a very important role in determining the success of education. Educational communication is the process of traveling messages or information that penetrates the field or events of education (Abdullah et al., 2024). Communication that takes place in the world of education will provide value and cause various changes. Educational Communication is needed to ensure the success of the education provided by teachers to students (Akib & Perkasa, 2022). Teachers in providing proper services and education to children with special needs are by guiding them to be confident and able to interact with their friends (Kusmiati & Khoirotunnisa, 2020).

Nonverbal Communication is a form of communication that does not use words, but uses signs, symbols, facial expressions, body gestures or other behaviors to convey messages. Nonverbal Communication has a great influence and we often do it naturally. Nonverbal Communication involves almost all of our senses. There are several channels of nonverbal communication, namely body gestures, body or physical appearance, facial expressions, eye communication, touch/haptics, paralinguistics, silence, spatial orientation and personal distance (Devito, 2016). Symbolic interaction theory emphasizes the relationship between symbols and interactions, and the core of this approach is the individual. Lexy J. Moleong, (2014) another important thing about symbolic interaction is the construct of self.

Self-assessment is obtained from interaction with the environment. Therefore, self is the result of a person's perception of themselves and then develops meaning through the interaction process. Building achievement for children with special needs requires a holistic and individual approach. Efforts to build achievement for children with special needs (ABK) require a holistic approach that emphasizes meeting individual needs, environmental support, and inclusive and adaptive educational strategies. In the context of special education, teachers act as facilitators who not only teach academic material, but also build motivation, self-confidence, and student independence (Dalimunthe et al., 2023). One effective effort is to provide education that is inclusive and appropriate to their needs. This involves adjusting the curriculum and teaching methods that can help children understand the material in an easier way. For example, the use of learning aids, visual-based teaching, or multisensory approaches can improve their understanding and involvement in the learning process. Thus, these children feel more capable and motivated to achieve.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a descriptive research method with a qualitative approach. This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method, because the researcher has the aim of describing, depicting, writing, depicting, explaining, explaining, answering and analyzing how the interpersonal communication model both verbally and non-verbally by teachers towards blind students at SLB A Karya Murni Medan. As for descriptively, the data collected is in the form of words, pictures, and not numbers. This is due to the application of qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are used in this study to analyze the actual conditions according to the results that have been obtained in the field which are natural, so direct involvement of researchers in the field is required (Sentana, 2007). The selection of informants in this study was based on several criteria that had been determined by the researcher, which is usually called Purposive Sampling. This technique includes people who are selected based on certain criteria made by researchers based on research objectives. The criteria for selecting informants in this study are as follows:

1. Have direct experience in guiding blind students in achieving achievements in the SMPLB environment
2. Play an active role in the learning process, both formal (class) and non-formal (extracurricular)
3. Have a minimum work period of 2 years at SMPLB

This study aims to analyze the interpersonal communication model of teachers verbally and non-verbally towards blind students at SLB A Karya Murni to achieve achievements.

The researcher determines informants from people who have been selected according to the objectives of the study, where the informants in this study are:

1. Homeroom teachers of blind students at the SMPLB level at SLB A Karya Murni
2. Extracurricular teachers at SMPLB A Karya Murni
3. Achieving Students at SMPLB A Karya Murni

The homeroom teacher and extracurricular teachers here act as the main informants. The reason for choosing the homeroom teacher and subject teacher as the main informants for the researcher is because in the process of forming achievement, the homeroom teacher is the figure who is most intensely involved with blind students. Meanwhile, in developing skills to achieve achievement, extracurricular teachers are teachers who play an important role in honing the abilities of blind students. In this study, the interview technique used by the researcher was a semi-structured interview using a question guide that functions as a controller so that the interview process does not lose direction. However, if in the middle of the interview a new question arises that is not yet on the list of questions that have been prepared, then this new question can be included in the list of questions. This interview method was conducted with informants at SLB A Karya Murni, which had been determined by the researcher. In-depth interviews were conducted with the aim of collecting information or data regarding the research object.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Interpersonal Communication between Teachers and Blind Students to Achieve Achievement**

Interpersonal communication is an important foundation in the educational process, especially in the relationship between teachers and blind students. Communication at the Karya Murni Special School (SLB) uses communication not only as a means of conveying information, but also as a medium for forming emotional relationships, providing motivation, and building student self-confidence. Teachers as the main communicators play a crucial role in creating an inclusive, supportive learning atmosphere that is able to encourage the achievement of academic and non-academic achievements of blind students.

Verbal communication between teachers and blind students is the main means in the learning process. Due to the limited vision of blind students, the delivery of information orally becomes very dominant. Teachers use clear, structured language that is adjusted to the level of understanding of students. Intonation of voice, speed of speech, and use of simple words are important aspects in verbal communication. Meanwhile, non-verbal communication plays a very significant complementary role in the interaction between teachers and blind students. Although students cannot directly capture visual cues such as facial expressions or hand gestures, they are very sensitive to other non-verbal elements such as tone of voice (paralinguistic), touch (kinestics), interaction distance (proxemic), and the use of objects or learning aids (artifactual). Teachers often use gentle touch on the shoulder or hand as a form of emotional support. All of these elements create an emotionally safe environment for blind students, where they feel valued, cared for, and motivated to learn.

The communication process occurs when humans interact with each other in communication activities, conveying messages to realize communication motives (Fitriany, et al, 2022). Communication in the world of education not only functions to convey information but also becomes a factor in creating an effective and inclusive learning environment. Optimizing innovative strategies can support the education process to be better with higher education quality standards (Soeratman, S, 2017).

In educational communication, a student's success in achieving achievement is not only determined by the student's internal factors, but is also greatly influenced by the quality of interpersonal communication between teachers and students (Dalimunthe & Ananda, 2024). Interpersonal communication is an important element in the educational process. Interpersonal communication consisting of two forms, namely verbal communication and nonverbal communication, is an important part of the interaction between teachers and students to achieve achievement.

At SLB A Karya Murni Medan, verbal communication plays a crucial role in the process of assisting blind students to achieve achievement, both in academic and non-academic fields. The verbal communication that occurs is divided into two main forms, namely oral communication and written communication. Both act as a means of exchanging symbols between teachers and students in the context of education with the aim of conveying understanding, motivation, support, and appreciation. The verbal communication that occurs between teachers and blind students at SLB A Karya Murni has reflected the 5 principles of effective interpersonal communication, namely openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality. (DeVito, J. A, 2019)

This is in line with the theory of symbolic interaction put forward by George Herbert Mead, that symbols include spoken words which are the main means for individuals to form meaning in social relationships. Students' views of themselves show that they feel more motivated when they receive direct encouragement through words from the teacher. Encouraging words, advice, and praise are forms of verbal symbols that strengthen students' self-confidence. In this interaction process, students capture the verbal symbols used by the teacher as a form of attention and recognition of their abilities. This shows that the symbolic meaning captured by students from oral communication has a very important role for them to show their best potential.

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### **Nonverbal Communication of Teachers and Blind Students to Achieve Achievement**

Distinctiveness, in the context of personal branding, is about how an individual successfully displays unique attributes, qualities, or value propositions so that he or she is easily distinguished from other individuals, especially competitors. Without distinctiveness, a candidate risks getting lost in the crowd and failing to attract initial attention. The formation of Rico Waas' personal branding, shows an understanding and effort to apply three pillars, namely creating uniqueness by showing age attributes, appearance, and a combination of certain traits (McNally & Speak, 2002).

There is also an effort to build relevance by adjusting the image and message to align with the needs and demographic characteristics of the Medan community. Finally, there is an awareness of the importance of consistency in conveying the designed image. The ultimate success of this personal branding depends on how well these three elements are executed synergistically, authentically, and sustainably in the field. The perception formed in the minds of the Medan community will be the real judge, personal branding is essentially what other people say and feel about you when you are not in the room (Ritonga et al., 2023). If these three pillars are successfully upheld solidly, then the foundation for strong and influential personal branding will be formed.

Nonverbal communication is an important aspect in building interpersonal relationships between teachers and blind students at SLB A Karya Murni Medan. Due to the visual limitations of blind students, the teacher's nonverbal communication expression is not only a complement, but also the main medium in creating understanding, trust, and emotional bonds. Based on the results of the study, it was found that the teacher's nonverbal communication includes five main categories, namely kinesthetic messages (facial, gestural, and postural), prosemic messages, artifactual messages, and paralinguistic messages.

Teachers do not only convey meaning through words, but also through objects that have symbolic meaning for blind students. This strengthens the idea of "mind" in symbolic interaction, where humans use significant symbols to represent meaning and plan actions. For example, poetry is used by teacher Sandika as a medium of communication with students, which shapes the way the students themselves think and respond to the world around them.

In addition, the aspect of appearance, both from the students' and teachers' perspectives, is a form of indirect but significant communication. As conveyed by the teacher to Cioenta and Yuni, appearing neat when performing in the competition is a form of respect for the process and shows the mental readiness of students. Teachers carry out continuous evaluation and monitoring of student development in order to identify obstacles experienced by students, thus allowing for adjustments to more targeted learning strategies (Kurniawan et al., 2024). Communication barriers are conditions caused by interference in the message delivery process, resulting in communication not taking place optimally according to the expectations of both the communicator and the communicant (Hendrayani, et al, 2019). The message conveyed also cannot be received in its entirety or understood according to the initial purpose, so that the effectiveness of communication is disrupted

The results of this study are in line with research by Nurfaindah (2024) which highlights the importance of nonverbal communication, such as touch and voice intonation, in interactions with students with special needs, including the blind and Blaweni and Hidayat's research (2022) found that teachers at SLBN 1 Sumbawa must adjust communication methods by not only relying on visual symbols, but also strengthening verbal and paralinguistic aspects so that the meaning can still be understood by blind students. In the context of symbolic interaction, this obstacle shows that the symbols used in communication, for example, touch as a symbol of attention or support, cannot always be exchanged

universally because their meaning is influenced by certain social norms and cultural values. Therefore, teachers need to replace these symbols with other symbols that still have the same meaning but are socially accepted.

### **Interpersonal Communication Model of Teachers and Blind Students to Achieve Achievement**

The interpersonal communication model of teachers and blind students in achieving achievement at SLB A Karya Muni can be seen using an interactional communication model that describes communication as a process in which communication participants exchange positions as message senders and message recipients and form shared meaning by sending and receiving feedback in a physical and psychological context. Unlike the linear communication model, in the interactional communication model there is an element of feedback that makes the communication process more interactive because it takes place in two directions.

The interpersonal communication model that occurs between teachers and blind students at SLB A Karya Murni Medan does not only take place in one direction from the teacher to the student, but is formed as a dialogical relationship in which the teacher and student both become senders and recipients of messages alternately, according to the context of the situation, emotional needs, and characteristics of each individual

The communication model that developed at SLB A Karya Murni can be understood as an interactional model, which places communication as a reciprocal and mutually influencing process. In the context of blind students, this process is reinforced by the use of various symbolic media, both verbal (words, sounds, intonation) and nonverbal (movements, facial expressions, touch, and use of space), which form shared meanings and perceptions. Teachers not only convey information, but also capture subtle responses from students, such as changes in tone of voice, facial expressions, or body language as indicators of students' readiness to learn or emotional conditions.

For example, Gispar Banjarnahor uses a gradual approach to build student comfort. This approach shows that communication is not built instantly, but requires sensitivity to the social symbols used by students in responding to social stimuli.

This model is in line with the concept of George Herbert Mead's symbolic interaction theory, where meaning in communication is not automatically attached to symbols, but is formed through the process of social interaction. Blind students, for example, form perceptions of the teacher's speech, tone of voice, or touch through symbolic interpretations influenced by their previous experiences. The mind in Mead's theory plays an important role in enabling students to understand and interpret messages received internally, then respond to them according to the meaning they construct.

The role-taking process is also seen in this interaction, where teachers often try to put themselves in the shoes of students to understand their visual limitations, as well as emotional conditions that are not always expressed explicitly. Conversely, students can also understand the motivation given by teachers as a form of care and trust. For example, Robinson Tarigan explained that he not only gave instructions, but also guided by directly touching the student's body to demonstrate movements, because students could not see examples visually. In accordance with the theory, the interactional model refers to a communication model developed by social scientists who use a symbolic interaction perspective, with the main figure being George Herbert Mead, one of whose students was Herbert Blumer.

In this context, Blumer put forward three premises that are the basis for this model. First, humans act based on the meaning given by individuals to their social environment (verbal symbols, nonverbal symbols, physical environment). Second, meaning is directly related to the social interactions carried out by individuals in relating to their social environment. Third, meaning is created, maintained, and changed through the process of interpretation carried out by individuals in relating to their social environment. Since individuals are constantly changing, society is changing through interaction, so it is interaction that is considered the important variable determining human behavior, not the structure of society. The structure itself is created and changed by human interaction.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Interpersonal communication between teachers and blind students at SLB A Karya Murni takes place intensively through verbal and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication between teachers and blind students is carried out through two main forms, namely verbal communication (oral and written) and nonverbal communication, each of which contains elements of openness, empathy, support, positive attitudes, and equality. In the communication process, a number of obstacles were found, both from the teacher and student side. The main obstacles come from students' visual limitations which make it difficult to read facial expressions or nonverbal cues of teachers, as well as psychological obstacles such as feelings of inferiority, fear of failure, or difficulty expressing emotions. On the other hand, some teachers still experience challenges in identifying students' emotions accurately because not all expressions are conveyed verbally or explicitly. The interpersonal communication model that is most visible in the practice of interaction between teachers and blind students at SLB A Karya Murni is the interactional communication model, namely a two-way model in which messages from teachers receive responses or feedback from students, and vice versa. This model relies on the context of the classroom or intensive practice, allowing for meaningful reciprocal relationships. However, the interactional model does not fully address the unique needs of blind students who require emotional touch and special sensory adaptations. Teachers are expected to continue to improve interpersonal communication skills, especially in using effective non-verbal communication such as kinestics, proxemics, and

paralinguistics to create a conducive learning atmosphere for blind students. Teachers should be more open and empathetic in interacting with blind students in order to build positive and trusting relationships, so that the learning process can take place more optimally. It is recommended that teachers conduct regular training or workshops on inclusive communication and special teaching strategies for students with special needs, especially the blind.

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