



SOCIAL COMMUNICATION AS A MEANS OF INCREASING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION IN ACEH

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Abstract

Social communication plays a crucial role in increasing community engagement in education, especially in regions with strong cultural characteristics like Aceh. However, limited access to information and low digital literacy pose challenges in optimizing the role of social communication in education. This study aims to identify effective social communication strategies to enhance community involvement in education in Aceh. The research employs field research methods, using data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis of education policies. The findings indicate that community-based and local wisdom-driven social communication is more effective in fostering awareness and participation than modern communication media. Key factors influencing the effectiveness of social communication include the role of religious leaders, social organizations, and community-based discussion methods. Furthermore, the study reveals persistent challenges in utilizing digital communication technologies to support community participation in education. Therefore, adaptive policies that integrate community-based communication and digital technology are needed to expand access to educational information. The primary contribution of this research is to provide insights into how social communication can be optimized as a strategy to enhance community involvement in education while offering recommendations for education policies grounded in local wisdom.

Keywords : Social Communication; Community Engagement; Education

Abstrak

Komunikasi sosial memegang peran penting dalam meningkatkan keterlibatan masyarakat dalam dunia pendidikan, terutama di daerah yang memiliki kekhasan budaya kuat seperti Aceh. Namun, keterbatasan akses informasi dan rendahnya literasi digital menjadi tantangan utama dalam mengoptimalkan peran komunikasi sosial dalam pendidikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi strategi komunikasi sosial yang efektif guna mendorong partisipasi masyarakat dalam pendidikan di Aceh. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian lapangan dengan teknik pengumpulan data seperti wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen kebijakan pendidikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi sosial yang berbasis komunitas dan kearifan lokal lebih efektif dalam meningkatkan kesadaran dan partisipasi masyarakat dibandingkan dengan media komunikasi modern. Faktor-faktor penting yang memengaruhi keberhasilan komunikasi sosial antara lain peran tokoh agama, organisasi sosial, serta forum diskusi berbasis masyarakat. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menemukan masih adanya kendala dalam pemanfaatan teknologi komunikasi digital untuk mendukung keterlibatan masyarakat dalam pendidikan. Oleh karena itu, dibutuhkan kebijakan yang adaptif dengan mengintegrasikan komunikasi berbasis komunitas dan teknologi digital agar akses informasi pendidikan dapat lebih luas dan merata. Kontribusi utama dari penelitian ini adalah memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana komunikasi sosial dapat dioptimalkan sebagai strategi untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan masyarakat dalam pendidikan, sekaligus memberikan rekomendasi kebijakan pendidikan yang berakar pada nilai-nilai lokal dan budaya setempat.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi Sosial; Keterlibatan Masyarakat; Pendidikan.



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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main pillars in building an advanced and competitive society. Through education, individuals can acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to improve their quality of life and contribute to social and economic progress.¹ The success of an education system is not only determined by government policies or the quality of educational institutions, but also by the extent to which the community plays an active role in supporting and developing the learning environment. Therefore, community involvement is a key factor in creating a more inclusive and sustainable education system.

In the context of education, community involvement is not only limited to participation in school activities, but also includes moral, social, and material support for students and educators. Awareness of the importance of the role of the community in education can encourage the creation of a conducive and more effective learning environment. When the community is actively involved, they can help overcome various educational challenges, such as low access to resources, limited facilities, and lack of motivation to learn in students.² Thus, the role of the community in supporting education is an aspect that cannot be ignored.

Social communication is one of the main factors contributing to increasing community involvement in education. Through good communication, information about the importance of community participation in education can be more easily understood and accepted by various parties. Open and interactive communication allows for the exchange of ideas, concepts, and solutions to problems faced in the world of education.³ In addition, social communication can also build collective awareness about the importance of education as an investment for the future of the younger generation.

The effectiveness of social communication in increasing community involvement is highly dependent on the methods and media used. Communication approaches involving various channels, such as community discussions, social campaigns, and the use of information technology, can strengthen the relationship between the community and educational institutions.⁴ In addition, openness in communication between educators, parents, and the community will create an environment that is more supportive of educational development. With effective

¹ G.-J. Hwang, *Building Markets: Distributional Consequences of Social Policy in East Asia* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789901085>.

² Nurhakim and T. Ningsih, "Pengaruh Peran Komite Sekolah dalam Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan di SDN 2 Cilangkap," *Didaktik: Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD STKIP Subang* 8, no. 2 (2022): 2212–27, <https://doi.org/10.36989/didaktik.v8i2.539>.

³ D.S.B.H. Naqvi, "Community Involvement in School Education," *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 6, no. 3 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjia.v6i4.958>.

⁴ Hajarni and M. Zainabon, "Strategi Komunikasi Islam dalam Menghadirkan Pesan yang Mudah Dicerna," *Insight Journal: Jurnal Komunikasi, Psikologi dan Konseling* 1, no. 1 (2025).

communication, various parties can work together to present the best solutions to improve the quality of education.

Increasing community involvement in education in Aceh can be realized through optimizing social communication as the main means of building awareness and collaboration.⁵ As a region with strong cultural and religious values, a communication approach that is in accordance with the social characteristics of the Acehnese people can have a more significant impact. Collective awareness and solid cooperation will encourage the formation of a better education ecosystem. Thus, through effective social communication, it is hoped that the Acehnese people can be more active in supporting and contributing to the progress of education in their region.

Although social communication has been recognized as an important factor in increasing community involvement in education, its effective implementation is still not fully understood. Many communication initiatives are carried out without a clear strategy, so that their impact on community participation in education is not optimal. Most social communication efforts are still sporadic and not systematically structured in supporting education, especially in areas with unique social and cultural characteristics such as Aceh. Therefore, a deeper understanding is needed on how social communication can truly be an effective means of encouraging community involvement in education.

Specific research on how social communication can influence the level of community involvement in education in Aceh is still limited. Most previous studies have focused more on general aspects of education without specifically discussing the role of social communication in increasing community participation. In addition, existing research tends to generalize the approach without considering the social context, culture, and local values that influence Aceh. This has led to a lack of understanding of the most effective communication mechanisms to be applied in the Acehnese community environment in encouraging their active involvement in education.

There has been no in-depth study that identifies the most effective social communication strategies in increasing community participation in the education sector in Aceh. Various forms of social communication, such as face-to-face communication, digital media, or discussion forums, may have different effectiveness depending on the situation and social conditions of the local community. However, without comprehensive research, it is difficult to determine which communication method is most appropriate to implement to increase community involvement in education. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed to understand the social communication

⁵ L. Dabbish and R. Kraut, "Awareness Displays and Social Motivation for Coordinating Communication," *Information Systems Research* 19, no. 2 (2008): 221–38, <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.1080.0175>.

strategies that can be optimized as a means of encouraging community participation in education, especially in Aceh.

Previous studies have shown that social communication plays an important role in building awareness and increasing community participation in various aspects of life, including education.⁶ Through effective communication, the community can understand their role in supporting the education system and contribute to creating a better learning environment. Several studies have also revealed that high community involvement in education is directly proportional to the improvement in the quality of learning and student achievement. However, research that specifically discusses how social communication can be optimized to increase community involvement in education is still very limited, especially in the cultural and social context of Aceh.

Although there has been much research on social communication in education, studies that discuss the most effective strategies in increasing community involvement in Aceh are still minimal. The social and cultural characteristics of the Acehnese people, who have strong Islamic values and close community ties, require an appropriate communication approach so that educational messages can be received and responded to well. In addition, the dynamics of communication in society that are different from other regions require a more contextual strategy based on local experiences. Therefore, a study is needed that can identify the most appropriate social communication methods to increase community participation in education in Aceh.

This study aims to identify and analyze social communication strategies that can optimize community involvement in education in Aceh. By understanding how social communication can be used effectively, it is hoped that this study can contribute to the development of community-based education policies. This study will also fill the gap in previous research by offering a more specific perspective on the dynamics of social communication in the context of Acehnese society. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for the government, educational institutions, and the community in designing more effective communication strategies to increase community participation and support for education.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a field research method to identify and analyze the role of social communication in increasing community involvement in education in Aceh. Field research is an approach carried out by collecting data directly from the community through observation, interviews, and documentation.⁷ This method aims to gain a deeper understanding of the social

⁶ L. Cabyova et al., "The Use of Social Networks Facebook and Instagram in the Digital Communication Strategy of Educational Institutions," *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development* 8, no. 10 (2024): 10, <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i10.5633>.

⁷ N. Hasnunidah, *Metodologi Penelitian Pendidikan* (Media Akademi, 2017).

communication practices applied in society and the factors that support or hinder their involvement in education. With this approach, research can produce findings that are more contextual and relevant to the social reality in Aceh.

Data collection was conducted through several main techniques, namely in-depth interviews with community leaders, educators, and parents of students, observations of social communication activities in educational environments, and document analysis related to educational policies and programs in Aceh. Interviews were conducted semi-structured to explore the perspectives and direct experiences of respondents regarding the role of social communication in the world of education. Observations were conducted by observing social interactions that occur in the community, especially in activities related to education, such as parent-teacher meetings, community discussions, or community-based programs. In addition, documentation was used to strengthen the data by reviewing various regulations, reports, and educational policies that have been implemented in Aceh.

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-qualitative approach, where data obtained from field research were analyzed thematically to identify effective social communication patterns in increasing community involvement in education. The collected data were categorized based on main themes, then analyzed in depth to understand the relationship between social communication and community participation. With this method, the study is expected to provide concrete recommendations regarding social communication strategies that can be applied to increase community involvement in education in Aceh, as well as contribute to the development of community-based education policies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found that social communication based on cultural and religious values in Aceh has a significant influence in increasing community involvement in education.⁸ In various communities, interpersonal communication that emphasizes the values of deliberation and togetherness is more easily accepted by the community compared to more formal or technology-based communication methods. The culture of mutual cooperation and Islamic values inherent in the lives of the Acehnese people also strengthen their participation in supporting children's education. Good communication between community members allows the community to be more aware of the importance of their role in the world of education.

The results of interviews with community leaders and educators revealed that interpersonal communication methods are more effective than modern communication media in

⁸ A. Adli, "Building Communication Ethics in Students of SMP Muhammadiyah in Banda Aceh," *Jurnal Sosiologi Dialektika Sosial* 10, no. 2 (2024): 2, <https://doi.org/10.29103/jsds.v10i2.17356>.

building educational awareness. Discussions held in community forums, such as pengajian, village meetings, and deliberations, are effective forums for conveying educational messages. In these meetings, community leaders often act as facilitators who provide an understanding of the importance of education for the younger generation⁹ (Interview, 2025). In addition, this approach also allows the community to directly convey problems and seek joint solutions related to educational challenges in their environment.

Field observations show that the level of community involvement in education tends to be higher in areas that have active communication forums between parents, teachers, and local policy makers. In several villages that have built good communication between schools and the community, participation in educational activities such as school meetings, mutual cooperation in building educational facilities, and involvement in school committees is seen to be more active. On the other hand, in areas with minimal social interaction in the field of education, community awareness of the importance of education is still low, which has an impact on the lack of support for the learning process. Therefore, routine and open communication is an important factor in building community involvement in education.

However, the research results also revealed various obstacles in the application of social communication as a means of increasing community involvement in education. One of the main challenges is the limited access to educational information in rural areas that still rely on face-to-face communication and have not optimally utilized modern communication media. Many people in rural areas still face obstacles in accessing broader educational information due to the lack of communication infrastructure and the lack of use of digital media in the dissemination of educational information.¹⁰ This causes low awareness of various educational policies and programs that can actually support improving the quality of education.

In addition, low digital literacy is also an obstacle in utilizing technology as a means of social communication in the world of education. Although social media and digital communication platforms can be effective tools in disseminating educational information, most people in rural areas are not yet accustomed to using it as an educational medium. Interviews with several respondents showed that people tend to use social media for entertainment purposes rather than as a means of seeking educational information. As a result, educational communication that should be strengthened through digital media has not been utilized optimally.¹¹

On the other hand, this study found that religious figures and traditional leaders have an important role in building social communication that supports community involvement in

⁹Interview. (2025). *Wawancara dengan HA*, selaku Profesor Pakar Pendidikan. Tanggal 03 Januari 2025.

¹⁰Interview. (2025b). *Wawancara dengan HA*, selaku Profesor Pakar Pendidikan. Tanggal 03 Januari 2025.

¹¹Interview. (2025a). *Wawancara dengan AM*, Tokoh Komunikasi. Tanggal 03 Januari 2025.

education. In some communities, religious lectures and Friday sermons are often used as a medium to convey the importance of education and encourage parents to care more about their children's academic development. Community trust in religious leaders as a credible source of information makes this approach more effective in building educational awareness compared to other media.¹² Therefore, a social communication strategy involving religious leaders can be one solution to increase community participation in education.

In addition to the role of religious figures, the involvement of social organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also contributes to strengthening social communication related to education. Several community-based programs run by NGOs have succeeded in increasing public awareness of the importance of education through various activities such as parent training, student mentoring, and social campaigns. These programs provide space for the community to be actively involved in the education process and encourage the formation of more inclusive learning communities.¹³ Thus, collaboration between the community, schools, and social organizations is an important factor in building more effective communication in the world of education.

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However, although local culture-based social communication has high effectiveness, the main challenge remains in integrating digital media as part of a social communication strategy in education. In today's digital era, the use of technology in educational communication is becoming increasingly important, but there are still gaps in its utilization, especially in rural areas. Therefore, efforts to improve community digital literacy need to be part of a social

¹² I. Syafi'i and A. Aziz, "Dakwah Pesantren Menangkal Paham Radikalisme dengan Wawasan Al-Qur'an dalam Khutbah Jum'at: Studi Analisis Fungsi Utama Khutbah Jum'at," *Islam Universalia: International Journal of Islamic Studies and Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.56613/islam-universalia.v4i1.214>.

¹³ S. Prasad and J. Tata, "Non-Governmental Social Responsibility Communications," *XVI Annual Conference Proceedings January 2015*, 2015, 472–82.

¹⁴ Prasad and Tata, "Non-Governmental Social Responsibility Communications."

communication strategy so that access to educational information can be more equitable and effective.

By understanding these findings, it is important for the government and education policy makers to design a more adaptive social communication strategy based on the social realities of the community. The combination of community-based face-to-face communication and the use of modern communication technology can be a balanced approach to increasing community involvement in education. In addition, collaboration between schools, communities, religious leaders, and social organizations needs to be continuously strengthened so that social communication can run more effectively.

Based on the results of the analysis, this study confirms that social communication plays a strategic role in increasing community involvement in education in Aceh. With the right communication approach, public awareness of the importance of education can increase, which ultimately has an impact on improving the quality of education as a whole. Therefore, a more adaptive policy is needed, based on community participation, and taking into account the cultural and social characteristics of Acehnese society so that social communication can truly become an effective means of increasing community involvement in education.

CONCLUSION

This study answers the main objective by showing that social communication plays a strategic role in increasing community involvement in education in Aceh. Through community-based communication methods and local cultural values, the community is more receptive and understands the importance of their role in supporting the education system. Interpersonal communication that occurs in social forums such as deliberations, religious studies, and interactions with religious leaders has proven to be more effective than modern communication media that have not been optimally utilized. Therefore, a social communication strategy based on active community participation is key to increasing community awareness and involvement in education.

In addition, this study revealed that the effectiveness of social communication is greatly influenced by factors of access to information and the use of technology in supporting community involvement in education. Limited access to information in rural areas and low digital literacy are still major obstacles in optimizing social communication as a means of education. However, the results of the study also show that by utilizing community leaders and social organizations as communication liaisons, community involvement can be increased even though communication infrastructure is still limited. Therefore, education policies that support communication strategies

based on local wisdom need to be strengthened to expand community involvement in supporting education in Aceh.

This research contributes to the development of social communication strategies as a more effective approach to increasing community involvement in education, especially in areas with strong social and cultural characteristics such as Aceh. By identifying the communication methods that best suit local community conditions, this research can be a basis for the government and policy makers in designing more adaptive educational communication policies. In addition, the results of this study can also be used as a reference for further studies that examine how the combination of traditional and digital communication can be used optimally to increase community participation in education. Thus, this study not only provides theoretical understanding, but also offers practical recommendations that can be implemented to improve the quality of education through more inclusive and effective social communication.

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