

## Primary School Teachers Perceptions toward Urgency of Interpersonal Relationships in Primary Schools

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**Abstract: Primary School Teachers Perceptions toward Urgency of Interpersonal Relationships in Primary Schools. Objective:** This research study aims to (1) explore the experiences of primary school teachers in conducting interpersonal relationships in the world of education; (2) describe the problems in conducting interpersonal relationships among teachers. **Methods:** This research is qualitative research with a phenomenological type. Data were collected through interviews with participants of 11 primary school teachers. Data analysis was performed based on the Bogdan & Biklen analysis model which begins by looking for themes and sub-themes on the topics covered. **Findings:** The results showed that good interpersonal relationships will make students more open, enthusiastic, and motivated when studying, feel comfortable in learning, and will try to show their best performance in class. Furthermore, although the teacher has tried to understand the learners with their interpersonal intelligence, there are still conflicts when interacting with some students in the classroom. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that interpersonal relationships are urgent for teachers in building positive relationships with students, to improve the quality of their learning in the classroom.

**Keywords:** interpersonal relationships, primary school teacher, student, teacher student interaction, teacher perception

**Abstrak: Persepsi Guru Sekolah Dasar terhadap Urgensi Hubungan Interpersonal di Sekolah Dasar. Tujuan:** Studi penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mengeksplorasi pengalaman guru sekolah dasar dalam melakukan hubungan interpersonal di dunia pendidikan; (2) mendeskripsikan problematika dalam melakukan hubungan interpersonal guru. **Metode:** Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan jenis fenomenologi. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan partisipan 11 guru sekolah dasar. Analisis data dilakukan berdasarkan pada model analisis Bogdan & Biklen yang dimulai dengan mencari tema dan sub-tema pada topik yang dibahas. **Temuan:** Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahwa hubungan interpersonal yang baik akan membuat siswa lebih terbuka, antusias, termotivasi ketika belajar, merasa nyaman dalam belajar, dan akan berusaha menunjukkan performa terbaiknya di kelas. Selanjutnya, walaupun guru sudah berusaha memahami peserta didik dengan kecerdasan interpersonalnya, tetapi masih saja ada konflik ketika berinteraksi dengan beberapa peserta didik di kelas. **Kesimpulan:** Dapat disimpulkan bahwa hubungan interpersonal menjadi urgensi bagi guru dalam membangun hubungan positif dengan siswa, guna meningkatkan kualitas pembelajarannya di kelas.

**Kata kunci:** hubungan interpersonal, guru sekolah dasar, siswa, interaksi guru-siswa, persepsi guru

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## ■ INTRODUCTION

Increasing the capacity and competence of teachers is the key to control over the ever-evolving flow of change (Fullan, 2005: 83). If the competence of the teacher is low, it will make the quality of students who are also low (Musfah, 2012: 3). Meanwhile, there are four main competencies that teachers need to have, namely pedagogical, social, personality, and professional. The moral problems that have been conveyed above become the complexity of the elements of teacher competence that are already at the level of the digital and real world. This means that the teacher must be professionally, pedagogically, socially, and personally competent. Competence is an element that must be possessed by every teacher because it supports the efficiency of achieving the objectives of learning in each era. Each competency has a role that is interconnected and influential with each other.

However, the competence of teachers in Indonesia is still not up to standard. Teacher Competency Test (UKG) scores also show low results (Kurniawan et al., 2019: 20). The results on the official website of [npd.kemdikbud.go.id](http://npd.kemdikbud.go.id) in 2020 show results that are still around the average figure of the 50s. Pedagogic competence and professionalism may be something that is often raised as an issue compared to personal and social competence. However, each competency has its role that is interconnected with each others. Teacher mastery of learning is also still felt to be lacking and the teacher's personality is sometimes still unstable (Musfah, 2012: 7). This is certainly not accompanied by testing the ability of teachers to use technology-based media. Teachers who come from the millennial era may be aware of the importance of the role of technology in learning.

So it should be noted that in this industrial era 4.0, in addition to pedagogic and professional

competencies, teachers need to be strong on personal and social intelligence, one of the competencies contained in these competencies is interpersonal intelligence. Life skills in the form of self-awareness and interpersonal intelligence are needed to build comfort in learning (Walker, 2017: 189). So teachers need to hone interpersonal intelligence according to their time. In addition, the teacher is also a role model, of course, every behavior will become the center of attention of students. Especially when teachers have Instagram and have many followers from students, then every behavior contained on Instagram will be an example for their students. The teacher's philosophy that was imitated and imitated (believed and exemplary) has become indifferent that it is entrenched to this day. Interaction between students and teachers also needs to be built with the right ethical principles, both in the classroom and in the virtual space.

Programs in the curriculum that can develop interpersonal intelligence are group study, working on a project together, the resolution to conflicts, and making friends in social life (Acesta, 2019: 21). Research from Kiuru et al. (2020) with 848 respondents showed that high interpersonal relationships will have an impact on their academic performance and thus provide an improvement in school well-being. The study was conducted during the transition period of the child to the next level. Research from Shin et al. (2019) also in 879 respondents showed that sixth-graders who felt good interpersonal relationships with their teachers then tended to have friends whose prosocial behaviors were high compared to students whose interpersonal relationships were low. This shows that the role of Interpersonal relationships in a small perspective, namely only in the classroom between teachers and students, is very influential on student learning achievement,

and prosocial friendships that have an impact on improving the welfare of the school.

An analysis conducted by McFarland et al. (2016) in their article on 4169 children aged 10-11 years and in 3343 teachers in Australia showed that student-teacher conflict is low and individual quality in self-concept occurs when there is a high interpersonal relationship between teacher and student. A good interpersonal relationship between teacher and student will have an impact on the student's motivation and self-efficacy (Spilt, Koomen, Thijs, & van der Leij, 2012). Interpersonal relationships of teachers can be built with learners namely through (Acesta, 2019: 21), 1) developing support in learner study groups; 2) establishing rules of conduct, either through the class dojo, class craft, or conventional devices; 3) provide an opportunity to take responsibility; 4) jointly resolve conflicts, can be through problem-based learning; 5) invite to carry out social activities in the environment; 6) respect dissent; 7) understand cultural diversity; 8) practice patience waiting for your turn to speak and listening to other people's conversations first through a series of discussion forums that can be done in class.

One of the things that need special attention after the Covid-19 pandemic in the world of education is the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students. Educators' interaction with students has been reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic (Fathoni, Mustadi, & Kurniawati, 2021a, 2021b; Fathoni & Retnawati, 2021). Well-established interactions between educators and learners can increase learner engagement in the classroom (Tichavsky, Hunt, Driscoll, & Jicha, 2015), build emotional patterns that support the cognition of learners (Tolidong & Toquero, 2020), reduce anxiety (Zeng, Hou, & Peng, 2016), and evoke positive emotions in educators and learners (Hagenauer, Hascher, &

Volet, 2015). Moreover, learning in the classroom occurs through the interaction of the teacher with students. On the educator's side, positively constructed interpersonal relationships build a sense of joy and reduce anxiety or anger from teachers because of the sense of security they gain (Hagenauer et al., 2015). Thus, the discussion of interpersonal relationships is important, considering the reduced interaction between teachers and students.

Interpersonal within the Oxford campus means the relationship of connection between people. Interpersonal intelligence holds the key to good interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal intelligence is one of the most important things in Howard Gardner's language in Multiple Intelligences. Gardner (1993, p. 15) explains that this intelligence is built by paying attention to their mood, temperament, motivations, and intentions. Correspondingly, Hanafi (2019, p. 52) explains that interpersonal intelligence is a person's ability to recognize the intentions, desires, and motivations of others. Interpersonal intelligence allows a person to understand and cooperate with others (Gardner, 1993, p. 18). Thus, through interpersonal relationships, a person will get to know each other better (Hardjana, 2003, p. 86).

Furthermore, strong interpersonal intelligence can make a person more sensitive to the nuances of other people's speech or the effects of his speech on others (Gardner, 1993, p. 222). This allows the teacher to be sensitive to the atmosphere in the classroom. In the Study carried out by Hagenauer et al. (2015) show that teachers or homeroom teachers who spend long periods with their students have the opportunity to better recognize students and develop positive attitudes from both.

Previous research has also shown that high or positive interpersonal relationships can have an impact on student's academic performance

(Kiuru et al., 2020), be more prosocial (Shin et al., 2019), have low teacher-student conflicts (McFarland et al., 2016), increase learning motivation (Comer, 1984; Spilt et al., 2012) increase excitement in the classroom (Ahmadi Safa & Doosti, 2017), minimize negative behavior in the classroom (Hagenauer et al., 2015), build closeness and increase student self-efficacy (Spilt et al., 2012). Good interpersonal relationships will make students more open, enthusiastic, and motivated when studying, feel comfortable in learning, and will try to show their best performance in class. Based on these studies, we can find out the urgency of interpersonal relationships between teachers and students.

After knowing the urgency of interpersonal relationships based on previous studies, it is appropriate for teachers to be able to develop their interpersonal intelligence through social awareness in an ever-evolving social dimension. The rapid development of information and communication technology has become a catalyst in expanding the range of interaction between people. A very real influence is seen in the dimension of interaction which is now not only limited to in-person encounters in a particular situation or place. But the dimension of interaction has evolved in a space that is not limited to distance, that is, in virtual space. The development of social media in the virtual world certainly makes teachers have to be able to follow or monitor the direction of their students' development not only in physical spaces or classrooms but also in cyberspace. This is due to the interaction of teachers and students in the industrial era 4.0. This can happen in in-person classrooms and virtual spaces through digital platforms (Uddin, Fathoni, & Samsuri, 2022).

Based on awareness of the importance of interpersonal relationships for teachers and

students, as well as the challenges of widening social interaction on the scale of physical and virtual spaces. So research is needed that discusses the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students in the industrial era 4.0. So that the objectives of this study are (1) to explore the experiences of elementary school teachers in conducting interpersonal relationships in the world of education; (2) to describe the problems in conducting interpersonal relationships among teachers.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological type. The research was conducted online on November 24-29, 2022. The respondents of this study were elementary school teachers spread across Yogyakarta and its surroundings. The teachers in the Yogyakarta area are in the districts of Sleman, Bantul, and Kulon Progo. Furthermore, teachers who are outside the Yogyakarta area are in the Central Java region, namely in the districts of Magelang, Wonosobo, and Kebumen. The number of primary school teachers in this study was 11-grade teachers, with details of 7 upper grades, and 4 lower grades. Determination of respondents using purposive sampling techniques by considering the purpose of the study. Data is collected through the provision of open questionnaires online through google forms and additional interviews via WhatsApp when information mining is needed. The researcher is the main instrument in this study. However, instruments in the form of interview guidelines were created to facilitate the extraction of information from respondents. Interview guidelines are developed by researchers and validated by peers. The construction of the interview guidelines and their questions can be seen in table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Construction of interview guideline on the urgency of interpersonal relationships

Researchers	Component	Question
Fathoni et al. (2021); Fathoni & Retnawati (2021)	- Reduced interaction	What is the condition of your interaction with students during distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic?
Talidong & Toquero (2020)	- Building cognitively supportive emotional patterns	Are there any differences in learning outcomes between students who are interpersonally close to you and who are not? Explain!
Gardner (1993, p. 15)	- Mood, temperament, motivation, intention	What is your mood when interacting with students in the classroom as well as in cyberspace?
Uddin et al. (2022)	- Interaction in the classroom and virtual	How do you interact in cyberspace? What are the platforms? What about your social media?
Hagenauer et al. (2015)	- Increase excitement - Reduces anxiety/anger - Evoke positive emotions	Have you ever felt upset when interacting with your students in both the virtual space and the classroom?  Have you ever felt happy when interacting with your students in both the virtual space and the classroom?
Gardner (1993, p. 222)	- Sensitivity to communication	How do you understand a student's desires when you interact with them?
Hagenauer et al. (2015)	- Recognizing students	Do you recognize all the interests, talents, and emotions of all your students? How to recognize it?
McFarland et al. (2016)	- Conflict	Have you ever had a conflict with your students? What does the conflict look like? How close are you to him when it comes to interpersonal relationships?

After the questionnaire data is collected from each respondent, the data is then reduced. The reduction result data is presented in the form of a table consisting of several sub-themes. Data analysis refers to the analysis model of Bogdan & Biklen (1982) by conducting reductions, looking for sub-themes, and looking for relationships between sub-themes (Fathoni & Retnawati, 2021). The triangulation process

occurs through delivery between respondents. The submission of respondents to one another becomes strong when it has relevance to one another. Data saturation occurs when several respondents respond with similar or almost the same information. The provision of an open questionnaire link is scheduled to adjust the free time of each respondent. Teachers in this study have agreed to be respondents without any

coercion. The researcher stated that everything that can be conveyed to the researcher by the respondent is used for this study only. All identities of respondents were kept secret. Matters relating to participants' responses were kept secret and did not affect the fate of respondents in the future

## ■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are divided into two main topics, namely (1) exploration of the experiences of elementary school teachers in conducting interpersonal relationships; and (2) problems in conducting interpersonal relationships. Each topic is then presented in several themes to be specific to the discussion. After that, in each theme, sub-themes are obtained that will be linked between other sub-themes so that conclusions are found. Each topic is discussed in more detail as follows.

### Exploration of Primary School Teachers' Experiences in Interpersonal Relationships

The topic of exploring the experiences of elementary school teachers in conducting interpersonal relationships is found on four themes

to understand them. The four themes are (1) Interpersonal Relationships through digital platforms; (2) Direct interaction with learners; (3) How to understand and recognize learners; and (4) Students who are close interpersonally. Each of the themes obtained is then searched for sub-themes and linked to each other to construct conclusions on each theme. A more detailed explanation of each theme is presented as follows.

### *Interpersonal Relationships through Digital Platforms*

The development of digital technology makes it easy for humans to be able to communicate across time and space. Humans can easily interact with each other without having to meet in person. The development of social interaction in the digital or virtual dimension makes teachers must be able to follow or monitor the direction of their student's development. Based on the results of the analysis conducted on the theme of interpersonal relationships through digital platforms, four sub-themes were obtained as presented in table 2.

**Table 2.** Results of interpersonal relationship reduction through digital platforms

No	Sub-themes	Relationships between sub-themes
1	Online Interpersonal communication occurs through chat and virtual face-to-face	The interpersonal relationship between teachers and students in digital platforms focuses more on things related to learning. Interactions occur through chat and virtual face-to-face with teachers always taking the time to ask how their students are doing. Other interactions occur through social media although not intense.
2	Interactions also occur on Instagram although not intensely by following and sometimes replaying Instagram stories	
3	Intertwined interactions focus more on things related to learning	
4	In distance learning, teachers always take the time to ask their students how they are doing	

The use of digital platforms in the interaction between teachers and students began to intensely occur during emergency learning during the

Covid-19 Pandemic. Interpersonal communication through digital platforms focuses more on things related to learning. The interaction

that occurs between teachers and students is facilitated by several digital platforms. In communication that utilizes chat teachers take advantage of the Whatsapp application. While communicating face-to-face virtually, teachers choose to use zoom or google meet. However, teachers said that the use of digital platforms does not fully make teachers understand the condition of their students. This is because teachers cannot directly observe gestures, facial features, and body language from students. In addition, in the absence of in-person meetings, the inner bond that arises from teachers and students is also not very strong when compared to in-person meetings. In addition, although students also follow social media (Instagram) from their teachers, the interactions that arise are not so intense. The use of social media is only as a delivery of practical tasks or anything related to learning. This is as stated by the following teachers.

*“Not very actively communicating on social media. Just a follower.”* (5th Teacher)

*“My social media interactions with students are less effective because the devices used are not privately owned so they don’t go both ways, and learners tend to be cursory in utilizing their devices.”* (8th Teacher)  
*“I limit the use of social media with students unless it has anything to do with learning.”* (10th Teacher)  
*“... The interaction on Instagram is only limited to being used as a medium for sending students’ practical assignments.”* (11th Teacher)

### **Mood in Direct Interaction with Learners**

Based on the results of the interview, teachers prefer to interact directly with their students, as opposed to interaction through digital platforms in learning. Teachers feel happier and more satisfied when interacting face-to-face. Based on the results of the analysis carried out on the theme of direct interaction with students, four sub-themes were obtained as presented in table 3.

**Table 3.** Results of reducing direct interaction with learners

No	Sub-themes	Relationships between sub-themes
1	Teachers can dive into students firsthand	Interactions that occur directly make teachers able to explore students, share knowledge, joke, and laugh directly. Teachers also feel more connected, satisfied, and happy. This is because of the direct feedback provided by students without any delay problems due to internet interference.
2	Feel more connected, satisfied, and fun	
3	The emergence of direct feedback provided by students	
4	Can share knowledge, joke, and laugh directly	

The mood that arises when teachers and students interact in person is fun, happy, relieving, and feeling more connected. Learning has also become more lively and real. The existence of direct interaction allows teachers to take action directly when there are students who are experiencing difficulties. Teachers explain that in-person meetings will make it easier for teachers

to explore their students. Teachers can also joke, and laugh in person with their students without any internet interruptions or delays in virtual face-to-face. In addition, teachers feel more interactive two-way communication, and more real learning, can fully control the learning process, get direct feedback, know body gestures, can see the expressions of students, and can make



affirmations directly to their students. Some of these findings were presented by the following teachers.

*“It’s fun and satisfying because you can know body gestures, deeper eye contact, activities that involve body movements so it’s not boring, and interactions between students are also more varied.”* (2nd Teacher) *“There is two-way (interactive) communication between teachers and students ... Teachers can directly see students’ emotions, feelings, and expressions during learning activities.”* (3rd Teacher) *“... Teachers can set an example and help directly when students have difficulty carrying out learning or experimentation.”* (5th Teacher) *“It’s nice because there’s feedback on every single thing we give students. The teacher can also go deep into the students one by one ... Learners are more lively and real. The teacher can direct and fully control the learning process that occurs.”* (6th Teacher)

Interpersonal intelligence is one of the important intelligence for an educator. Educators who have interpersonal intelligence can build closeness with their students in school (Ahmadi Safa & Doosti, 2017). On the theme of direct interaction with students, it was found that the interaction that occurs directly makes teachers able to explore students, share knowledge, joke, and laugh directly. Teachers also feel more connected, satisfied, and happy. This is because of the direct feedback provided by students without any delay problems due to internet

interference. The positive emotions raised by the teacher are certainly one of the things that indicate that interpersonal relationships are well-established. This correlates with previous studies that have shown that well-established interactions will bring out comfort without any pressure or feelings of fear (Talidong & Toquero, 2020). In addition, good interpersonal relationships will provide feelings of joy, reduce anxiety, give rise to a sense of security, and prevent teachers from having negative emotions (Hagenauer et al., 2015). Furthermore, previous studies have shown that lower negative emotions and higher positive emotions are associated with a higher quality of teacher and student interpersonal relationships (Goetz et al., 2021; Hagenauer et al., 2015). Thus, a lack of interpersonal relationships or even constrained interaction between teachers and students will give rise to negative emotions. The findings on the theme of direct interaction with students are certainly complementary to previous studies.

### ***How to understand and recognize learners***

Recognizing and understanding students is important to teachers. A good understanding from the teacher about his students will certainly help the teacher in optimizing his learning in the classroom. Based on the results of the analysis carried out on the theme of how to understand and recognize the conditions and desires of students, five sub-themes were obtained as presented in table 4.

**Table 4.** Reduction results how to understand and recognize learners

No	Sub-themes	Relationships between sub-themes
1	Along with frequent encounters, it makes students more recognizable	The way to understand and recognize learners is to interact intensely directly, asking them directly, their friends, and their parents. Furthermore, by looking at the facial expressions, gestures, and behaviors shown by students.
2	Facial expressions, gestures, and behaviors are shown to the teacher	
3	How to recognize students can also be by asking friends or parents	



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4	How to understand students by asking them directly
5	Interaction is accompanied by intense communication with students

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Based on the results of the reduction, information was obtained that the way to understand and recognize students is to interact directly intensely, asking them directly, about their friends, and their parents. Intense meetings between teachers and students will certainly provide an understanding of the habits, preferences, behaviors, interests, and talents of the students. However, teachers must also have sensitivity and openness to their students. Furthermore, asking the learners directly will allow the teacher to understand what is desired of them. Questions can also be asked of friends or parents about what the student wants. Then, in addition to going through direct questions to students, teachers can also see the facial expressions, gestures, and behaviors that students show. The teacher will also recognize the students who have the title of the most, for example, the naughtiest one, the smartest, and so on. Some of these findings were presented by the following teachers.

*"... By interacting, I automatically observe and recognize the personality of each student."* (4th Teacher) *"I know my students well. I interact intensely to be able to build good communication with students, so I recognize them better. In addition, I also try to dig up information through discussions with students' parents."* (10th Teacher) *"The more I meet and interact with each other, the better I know what's in the students, whether it's getting to know them in terms of their traits, strengths, the difficulties they face, or the way they deal with problems ... I always try to make time to tell stories and chat with students."* (11th Teacher)

Furthermore, teachers also tell their way of recognizing the talents and interests of their students. Researchers found that teachers can recognize students' talents and interests by making observations while in school, seeing the trends shown in the learning process, asking students directly, discussing with their parents, and looking at the expressions shown. Some of these findings were presented by the following teachers.

*"The way to recognize interests and talents is to look at their tendencies in the learning process, ask students directly, and see their interactions with their friends and teachers."* (2nd Teacher) *"... from daily life and learning outcomes in schools, from the experiences and attitudes/behaviors shown, and through direct questions."* (3rd Teacher) *"Observing their daily activities, discussing things they love, and sharing with parents about talent interests that arise when at home."* (9th Teacher)

The findings on the theme of how to understand and recognize students show that interacting intensely, actively asking about what students need, asking friends and parents, and seeing firsthand the expressions, gestures, and behaviors of students, can make teachers recognize students better. This correlates with previous studies that explained that teachers who spend long periods with their students have the opportunity to recognize their students better (Hagenauer et al., 2015; Hardjana, 2003, p. 86). The findings on how teachers understand students by asking students, their friends, or parents, as well as teachers' observations of the expressions, gestures, and behavior patterns shown by

students are new findings that can be new information for previous research.

### ***Students who are close interpersonally***

Students who are close interpersonally certainly provide benefits for optimizing learning

in the classroom. Close students interpersonally can give positive values to themselves and their teacher in the classroom. Based on the results of the analysis conducted on the theme of students who are close interpersonally, six sub-themes were obtained as presented in table 5.

**Table 5.** Reduction results interpersonally close student reduction results

No	Sub-themes	Relationships between sub-themes
1	Students will be more comfortable studying with the teacher without fear	Students who are close interpersonally to their teacher will be more open to their teacher, more comfortable learning without fear, less willing to ask questions when facing difficulties, more enthusiastic, and motivated when learning, and will try to show their best performance in class.
2	Students become more open to teachers	
3	Students are more motivated when studying	
4	Students do not hesitate to ask questions when facing difficulties	
5	Students are enthusiastic about studying at school and meeting their teachers	
6	Students try to perform at their best in class	

Based on the results of the reduction, information was obtained that students who are close interpersonally to their teacher will be more open to their teacher, more comfortable learning without fear, do not hesitate to ask questions when facing difficulties, are more enthusiastic, motivated when learning, and will try to show their best performance in class. The comfort that is formed is certainly due to the inner attachment between teachers and students. The openness created by students makes teachers able to be more responsive to every condition that arises from their students, for example when students face learning difficulties, they directly ask the teacher. Students will also feel more comfortable when they feel someone understands them. A comfortable student certainly makes the student will try to show his best performance in class. Some of these

findings were presented by the following teachers.

*"... because there is a spirit of meeting the teacher."* (1st Teacher) *"... Students who are close to the teacher, tend to like to ask the teacher about learning difficulties, try to answer every question from the teacher, try to show their best performance. This makes children's learning motivation even higher."* (3rd Teacher). *"... Students will be more comfortable studying with the teacher and not feel afraid (but that does not mean underestimating) the teacher so that students will be more active in learning."* (7th Teacher) *"... The closer the student is to the teacher, the more comfortable the student will follow the learning delivered by the teacher. If the student already has a sense of comfort in the*

*teacher, then he will be more motivated to learn.” (11th Teacher)*

The findings in this study suggest that close students interpersonally will be more open to their teachers. The openness referred to here is that students want to tell stories, joke, and not hesitate to ask questions when facing difficulties. In addition, the closeness that arises between teachers and students makes students try to show their best performance in class so that these students will look more enthusiastic and motivated when learning. This correlates with previous studies that have shown that good interpersonal intelligence can make students more enthusiastic about learning (Sutarman, Sunendar, & Mulyati, 2019), and increase learning motivation (Comer, 1984; Spilt et al., 2012; Sutarman et al., 2019). The efforts of students in showing the best performance when interpersonal relationships between teachers and students are well established become new findings and add information to previous research.

### **Problems in Conducting Interpersonal Relationships of Teachers**

The topic of problems in conducting interpersonal relationships found four themes to understand it. The two themes arise (1) Communication problems in the digital dimension; and (2) conflicts that occur when interacting with learners. Each of the themes obtained more fully is presented as follows.

#### ***Communication Problems in the Digital Dimension***

In the first topic, it has been explained that the emergence of problems from interactions carried out through digital platforms. More complete findings are discussed in this second topic with a focus on the theme of communication problems in the digital dimension. Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, six sub-themes were obtained as presented in table 6.

**Table 6.** Results of reducing communication problems in the digital dimension

No	Sub-themes	Relationships between sub-themes
1	Limited access to interactions that occur online	Some problems arise when communicating only relying on digital, namely not being able to know the condition of the students directly, the message intended by the teacher being captured differently by students, not being able to meet face to face in person, obstacles arise in the network, interaction is limited and not optimal.
2	The teacher cannot fully understand the condition of the students	
3	The interaction that occurs is not optimal	
4	Problems arise when the network is not good	
5	Lack of relief from not being able to meet face to face	
6	The teacher's intended message was captured differently by the student	

Based on the results of the reduction, information was obtained that there are problems that arise when communicating only relying on digital, namely 1) not being able to know the condition of the students directly, the message intended by the teacher is captured differently by the students; 2) cannot meet face to face; 3) problems arise in the network; and 4) interactions

become limited and not maximal. Teachers said that interactions that only rely on digital platforms such as Whatsapp or virtual face-to-face using zoom or google meet are not so optimal. Many limitations arise and teachers cannot fully understand the condition of their students. Teachers are not satisfied when learning only relies on distance learning such as emergencies passed

during the Covid-19 pandemic. The most common difficulty that arises is the signal that sometimes makes learning delay or the connection is interrupted. Teachers also explain that they cannot maximally condition their students. In addition, sometimes the teacher's intended message is captured differently by students and does not pay attention to the deadline of the task. Conditions of interaction that do not match expectations create negative emotions from both teachers and students. Some of these findings were presented by the following teachers.

*"It's not satisfying that you can't know the student's condition directly..."* (2nd Teacher) *"Students do not participate in the learning of and do not collect assignments that are given. What students do is only play, and it is left to their parents. In the end, the learning goal was not achieved."* (6th Teacher) *"Negative emotions arise when students do not respond during class in Whatsapp groups."* (7th Teacher) *"The feeling of dislike arises when students are less focused on the following learning through google meet or zoom. Students are easily distracted by the things or toys around them..."* (11th Teacher)

Interpersonal relationships that are not so strong will certainly bring out negative emotions. The lack of interpersonal relationships that occur between educators and students is seen during the implementation of distance learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, teachers have tried to take advantage of digital platforms when

interacting with students. The findings show that the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students on digital platforms focuses more on matters related to learning. Interactions occur through chat and virtual face-to-face with teachers always taking the time to ask their students how they are doing. Other interactions occur through social media although not intense. The teacher's efforts are certainly the most appropriate way in an emergency. However, the experience of teachers shows that interpersonal communication between teachers and students is less than optimal. The non-optimal communication is shown in the findings on the theme of communication problems in the digital dimension, namely teachers cannot know the condition of students directly, the messages intended by teachers are captured differently, there are network constraints, and limited interaction. This is certainly an inversion affirmation of previous research (Goetz et al., 2021; Hagenauer et al., 2015).

### **Conflicts that occur when Interacting with Learners**

Conflicts that occur between students and teachers will certainly also cause negative emotions. In the interview, the teacher told about the conflicts that occurred when interacting with several students. Based on the results of the analysis carried out on the theme of conflict that occurs when interacting with students, five sub-themes were obtained as presented in table 7.

**Table 7.** Results of conflict reduction that occurs when interacting with learners

No	Sub-themes	Relationships between sub-themes
1	Conflicts occur When students are not listening during lessons	Interpersonal conflicts between teachers and students occur when students do not listen during lessons, talk to other friends while the teacher delivers material, violate agreements set in class, and when students damaged school facilities.
2	When the wishes of the student are not in line with the subject matter presented by the teacher	
3	When students talk to their friends during learning	

4	When students violate established covenants in class
5	When students damage school facilities

Based on the results of the reduction, information was obtained that interpersonal conflicts between teachers and students occur when students do not listen during lessons, talk to other friends when the teacher delivers material, violate agreements established in class, and when students damaged school facilities. Whether offline or online, teachers least like it when students are unfocused, crowded with their peers, inactive or passive, underestimate learning, and pay less attention when learning. Teachers also said that conflicts can occur when learners' wishes differ from those of teachers, do not want to be regulated in class, and do not obey or violate agreements previously made between teachers and students. Some of these findings were presented by the following teachers.

*"... The conflict around what the learner wants is sometimes not in line with the material of the time. For example, the majority of students like to imagine, and love to draw. Whereas not all material can be presented in such a form."* (4th Teacher) *"There was once a conflict when students didn't want to be organized in class. Talk a lot when the teacher explains the lesson. There are also those who damage the facilities in the classroom."* (5th Teacher) *"Conflicts that have been experienced when students without my permission use a class marker that is following the agreement should not be used to draw on the board unless there is a lesson that requires it."* (8th Teacher) *"The upsetting thing is when students don't pay attention to the teacher and tend to underestimate the teacher... Students are busier on their own to play than to participate in learning."* (11th Teacher)

Although the teacher has tried to understand the learners with their interpersonal intelligence, there are still conflicts when interacting with some students in the classroom. Findings on the theme of conflict that occur when interacting with learners show that conflicts arise when students do not listen during lessons, talk to other friends when the teacher delivers material, violate established agreements in class, and when students damaged school facilities. Of course, many factors encourage students to do this. Students in the trouble maker category need special attention and handling. Nevertheless, teachers still have to optimize their interpersonal intelligence to present dominant positive traits in the classroom. Furthermore, previous studies have shown that high interpersonal will make conflicts that occur between teachers and students low (McFarland et al., 2016). Because strong interpersonal intelligence can make a person more sensitive to his surroundings (Gardner, 1993, p. 222), to be able to appropriately respond or find a way out of existing problems.

## ■ CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis, it was concluded that good interpersonal relationships will make students more open, enthusiastic, and motivated when studying, feel comfortable in learning, and will try to show their best performance in class. Furthermore, the way teachers recognize their students is by interacting intensely, asking them and those around them directly, and paying attention to the expressions and behaviors exhibited by students. Then, the interaction that occurs between the teacher and the students will bring out positive emotions. Meanwhile, problems that arise in interpersonal

relationships will give rise to feelings of discomfort or negative emotions from teachers and students. Finally, even though the teacher has tried to understand the learners with their interpersonal intelligence, there are still conflicts when interacting with some students in the classroom.

This research certainly still has many limitations that arise. The limitations that arise can be suggestions for future research. The suggestion that emerged was that this study had not explored the point of view of students and parents regarding their perceptions in looking at the interpersonal relationships created with teachers. So further research is needed that explores the perspectives of students and parents in looking at the interpersonal relationships created with teachers. Furthermore, further research needs to address also from the point of view of teachers at a higher level to educators at the college level. Finally, this study has not examined the relationship between interpersonal relationships and learning outcomes or academic achievements of students. Some of these suggestions are expected to be considered for further research.

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