



Principal's Communication in Enhancing Teacher Work Motivation at Senior High Schools in Pidie Regency

Putri Arvi Ananda¹, Bahrnun^{2*}, Nasir Usman³, Murniati⁴
Universitas Syiah Kuala

Corresponding Author: Bahrnun bahrnun@usk.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Communication,
School Principal Teacher,
Work Motivation

Received : 18, February

Revised : 20, March

Accepted: 22, April

©2025 Ananda, Bahrnun, Usman,
Murniati: This is an open-access
article distributed under the terms of
the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0
Internasional](#).



ABSTRACT

Communication between the principal and teachers is essential for delivering information effectively. Good communication enhances teacher motivation, contributing to better learning quality. This study examines the principal's communication strategies, supporting and inhibiting factors, and communication effectiveness in motivating teachers. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation at three high schools in Sigli City District. The findings show that effective communication occurs through routine meetings, digital media, and open interactions. Supporting factors include democratic leadership, an open school culture, and active teacher participation. However, obstacles such as limited principal time, teacher resistance to change, and differing communication styles exist. The study concludes that effective communication strengthens teacher motivation, fostering a positive work environment and greater commitment to their roles.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an interaction of essential components aimed at achieving educational goals, with principals and teachers as inseparable elements. Effective communication between principals and teachers is crucial in creating a conducive learning environment. Schools, as educational institutions, are responsible for managing the learning process to ensure its effectiveness. (Anugrah et al., 2022). According to Law Number 20 of 2003, education is a conscious and planned effort to develop students' potential in various aspects. The success of education in schools largely depends on the synergy between principals and teachers. Effective communication allows principals to provide guidance and motivation to teachers, thereby improving their performance in the learning process (Hikmatullah et al., 2022).

Teacher work motivation plays a significant role in determining the success of learning. Motivated teachers tend to be more responsible in planning lessons, assessing student achievements, and developing their professionalism. This motivation can be enhanced through open communication, recognition of teachers' contributions, and a supportive work environment. However, some teachers still lack motivation in carrying out their duties, such as only attending school for teaching without engaging in other school activities. Therefore, principals must establish effective communication to boost teachers' motivation and create a productive work atmosphere (Komariyah et al., 2020). Based on preliminary observations in several high schools in Sigli District, principals have made efforts to foster good communication with teachers. Thus, this study aims to analyze the principal's communication strategies, the supporting and inhibiting factors of communication, and the effectiveness of communication in enhancing teachers' work motivation in high schools in Sigli District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Communication

Communication is the process of conveying messages from a communicator to a communicant to create mutual understanding. It can be verbal, non-verbal, direct, or indirect. The effectiveness of communication depends on message clarity, the selection of appropriate channels, and understanding of the recipient (C. Wijaya et al., 2022; Pohan & Fitria, 2021).

Elements of Communication

According to Berlo (2004), the key elements of communication include:

- a. Source (Sender) – The person or entity sending the message.
- b. Message – The information being conveyed.
- c. Channel – The medium used, such as face-to-face, phone, or digital platforms.
- d. Receiver – The individual or group receiving the message.
- e. Feedback – The response from the recipient.
- f. Effect – The impact or influence of the communication.
- g. Environment – The situation or context in which communication takes place (Pradhana & Wibowo, 2020).

Purpose of Communication

Communication aims to convey information, build social relationships, influence attitudes and behavior, and ensure organizational effectiveness. Mutual understanding in communication is crucial to avoid misunderstandings and achieve intended goals (Ivana & Kurniawati, 2023; Nurrachmah, 2024).

Types of Communication

- a. Verbal Communication – Involves spoken or written words (Ramli, 2023).
- b. Non-Verbal Communication – Uses facial expressions, body movements, or gestures (Astuti, 2021).
- c. Context-Based Communication – Includes intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, and mass communication (Pohan & Fitria, 2021).

Definition of Work Motivation

Work motivation is the internal drive that encourages individuals to perform better in achieving specific goals. Teachers' work motivation plays a crucial role in supporting learning success and enhancing their professionalism in teaching (Sinaga, 2022; Janah et al., 2023).

Importance of Work Motivation

High motivation encourages teachers to be more dedicated to teaching, fosters creativity, and drives innovation in learning. Conversely, a lack of motivation can decrease productivity and educational quality (Kuleng et al., 2025; Mustika & Syamsuddin, 2022).

Types of Teachers' Work Motivation

- a. Intrinsic Motivation – Comes from within the individual, such as responsibility and job satisfaction.
- b. Extrinsic Motivation – Driven by external factors, such as rewards, salary, and a supportive work environment (Nelly, 2021).

Factors Affecting Work Motivation

- a. Intrinsic Factors – The desire for self-development, responsibility, and job satisfaction.
- b. Extrinsic Factors – Rewards, work environment, and institutional policies (Wedhu et al., 2023; Kusmiati et al., 2022).

Indicators of Teachers' Work Motivation

- a. Teachers' work motivation can be assessed through:
- b. Responsibility in performing tasks.
- c. Pride in their profession.
- d. Achievements and accomplishments.
- e. Recognition from the work environment.
- f. Opportunities for career advancement (Sukmayanti et al., 2021).

By understanding communication and work motivation, school principals can create a productive work environment and enhance teachers' performance to achieve educational goals.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to analyze how school principals communicate to enhance teachers' work motivation. The descriptive approach provides a detailed representation of the ongoing phenomenon, while the qualitative method allows for an in-depth exploration of the interactions between principals and teachers.

Research Location and Duration

The research was conducted at three high schools in Sigli District: SMA Negeri 1 Sigli, SMA Negeri 3 Unggul Sigli, and SMA Islam Terpadu Al-Uswah Sigli, from January 7 to March 7, 2025. These schools were selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the communication strategies employed by school principals in various institutional settings.

Research Subjects

The primary research subjects are school principals and teachers, selected through purposive sampling. Principals are chosen because of their strategic role in shaping communication policies that influence teacher motivation, while teachers are included to provide insights into how communication impacts their motivation and performance.

Research Instruments

Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. These methods ensure data credibility and reliability by triangulating findings from different sources. Observations focus on principal-teacher interactions, interviews provide deeper insights, and document analysis examines official records related to communication practices.

Credibility Testing

To ensure data validity, credibility testing was conducted by cross-verifying information from multiple respondents. Data were compared, analyzed, and aligned with documentation to ensure consistency and reliability in the research findings.

Data Collection Techniques

The study followed three main phases:

1. Orientation Phase – Conducted to gather preliminary data and establish research focus through initial observations and surveys.
2. Exploration Phase – Detailed data collection through repeated interviews, observations, and documentation review to gain deeper insights.

3. Member Check Phase – Verification of collected data by reconfirming findings with respondents to minimize misinterpretations.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using three stages:

1. Data Reduction – Filtering, classifying, and simplifying raw data to focus on relevant findings.
2. Data Display – Organizing data into structured formats for clearer interpretation.
3. Conclusion and Verification – Identifying key patterns and relationships to formulate research conclusions, ensuring their validity through continuous verification.

RESEARCH RESULT

School Principals' Communication Strategies to Enhance Teacher Motivation

a. Communication Patterns and Media

School principals applied various communication strategies, both formal and informal, to foster harmonious relationships with teachers, including:

- a. Monthly meetings for evaluation and motivation.
- b. Digital communication via WhatsApp groups to disseminate information quickly.
- c. Direct interactions outside formal meetings for personal engagement.

One principal stated:

"I hold monthly meetings and also use social media to ensure that all information is conveyed properly because not all teachers can attend meetings."

b. Teacher Involvement in Decision-Making

A democratic leadership style was applied, where teachers were encouraged to participate in discussions and decision-making. This increased their sense of ownership and motivation.

A teacher shared:

"Our principal always listens to our suggestions during meetings and quickly takes action, making us feel valued and motivated."

c. Motivation Through Written and Visual Media

Some principals used motivational posters in schools to inspire both teachers and students.

"I put motivational banners in classrooms and teachers' lounges because both students and teachers need encouragement," said one principal.

d. Adapting Communication Styles

Principals adjusted their communication approach based on the characteristics of each teacher, including their language preference (formal, national, or local dialects).

One principal explained:

"I must understand how teachers receive information. Not all teachers are fluent in formal language, so I adapt my communication style to ensure clarity".

Factors Hindering and Supporting Principals' Communication with Teachers

a. Hindering Factors

Some communication barriers identified between principals and teachers included:

- a. Differences in understanding of instructions.
- b. Age factor – Senior teachers sometimes had difficulty remembering instructions compared to younger teachers.
- c. The process of improving work quality – Teaching quality improvements take time and cannot be instant.

A principal stated:

"Some teachers forget instructions, especially those nearing retirement. I need to remind them several times to prevent misunderstandings."

a. Supporting Factors

- a. Open and democratic leadership – Principals who were flexible were better accepted by teachers.
- b. A harmonious communication climate – Teachers felt comfortable expressing their opinions.
- c. Utilization of communication technology such as WhatsApp for faster information sharing.
- d. Providing appreciation for teachers' achievements to boost their work motivation.

A teacher said:

"Our principal often appreciates our efforts, whether in meetings or personally. This makes us more motivated to work."

The Effectiveness of Principals' Communication in Motivating Teachers

Effective communication was found to contribute significantly to increasing teachers' work motivation in the three schools studied. Principals played a role in:

- Improving teacher discipline by setting an example of punctuality and responsibility.
- Resolving conflicts through an open and solution-oriented communication approach.
- Creating a creative and innovative work environment, where teachers felt encouraged to develop.
- Helping teachers solve work difficulties, for example, by providing tutorials or technical guidance.

One principal explained:

"I created a video tutorial to help teachers understand the new administrative system, making it easier for them to complete their tasks."

Research findings indicate that schools with experienced improved teacher motivation, as evidenced by:

- a. Teachers being more engaged in teaching.
- b. Increased enthusiasm due to appreciation from school leaders.
- c. Stronger professional relationships between school principals and teachers.

DISCUSSION

School Principals' Communication Strategies to Enhance Teacher Motivation

Communication is a continuous process that requires school principals to create a harmonious atmosphere, ensuring effective collaboration among teachers. As stated by Istighfara & Zaki (2022), communication within a school is primarily interpersonal, and principals must develop strong communication skills to effectively lead their staff. School principals play a vital role in teacher motivation. Gera et al. (2024) argue that effective leadership fosters enthusiasm among staff, ensuring that teachers remain committed to professional development and quality teaching. Strategies such as open communication, decision-making participation, and continuous feedback are essential for maintaining teacher motivation.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs also plays a role in teacher motivation. Beyond salaries, teachers need recognition, appreciation, and job stability to stay motivated. According to Anriyani et al. (2024), principals who provide clear information, fair evaluations, and career development opportunities create a more secure and motivated teaching environment. Additionally, Riatmaja et al. (2024) highlight that a sense of belonging among teachers enhances their engagement. Activities such as group discussions, informal gatherings, and collaborative projects strengthen relationships and promote teamwork. When teachers feel included, they become more dedicated to their roles. Principals who recognize teacher achievements through public acknowledgment and direct praise contribute significantly to motivation. Antera (2021) states that recognizing teacher accomplishments increases accountability, making them more committed to administrative tasks, curriculum implementation, and professional responsibilities.

According to Ahmad & Hodsay (2020), school principals, as motivators, should:

- Create a positive work environment.
- Foster open and democratic relationships.
- Implement reward and punishment systems.
- Ensure discipline and set an example for teachers.

The findings suggest that teachers in schools with strong communication cultures exhibit higher levels of motivation, demonstrating resilience, problem-solving skills, and commitment to their duties.

Hindering and Supporting Factors in Communication

Communication barriers can disrupt school operations and demotivate teachers. Basri & Tambunan (2023) classify these barriers into internal (such as weak leadership or lack of monitoring) and external (including poor infrastructure or lack of teacher discipline). On the other hand, effective communication builds a strong professional environment. Sesmiarni (2024) states that leadership, teacher collaboration, and supportive infrastructure enhance motivation. Principals should:

- a. Maintain regular discussions with teachers.
- b. Use technology for better engagement.
- c. Encourage peer support and collaboration.

The Effectiveness of Communication in Enhancing Teacher Motivation

Principals who communicate effectively positively influence teacher performance. Hendriani (2024) emphasizes that successful school leaders:

- a. Deliver clear messages.
- b. Use inclusive leadership styles.
- c. Encourage open discussions and teacher participation.
- d. Provide constructive feedback.

According to Simanjuntak et al. (2024), effective communication increases teacher accountability and commitment. Schools with structured communication systems show higher engagement and improved collaboration. When teachers feel heard and appreciated, their motivation and job satisfaction increase, ultimately leading to better student learning outcomes. This supports the idea that school leadership and communication are key drivers of teacher performance and institutional success.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Effective Communication Strategies: Open, structured, and technology-assisted communication by the Principal is essential for improving interactions with teachers and ensuring clear and transparent information exchange.
2. Addressing Communication Barriers: The Principal should actively listen to teachers' input and foster an open organizational culture that encourages two-way communication and mutual respect.
3. Teacher Motivation: Creating an appreciative and supportive work environment will enhance teachers' motivation, job satisfaction, and overall commitment to improving education quality.
4. Improve Communication Approaches: The Principal should conduct regular formal and informal meetings to facilitate better dialogue and collaboration with teachers.

5. Strengthen Teacher Engagement: Encourage active participation in decision-making and foster a culture where teachers feel heard and valued.
6. Enhance Work Motivation: Recognize teachers' contributions through verbal appreciation and rewards while ensuring a conducive and well-equipped work environment.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Principals should ensure transparency, use appropriate communication media, and adopt effective interpersonal approaches to enhance teacher motivation and create a productive work environment. Positive organizational culture and participative leadership should be strengthened, while barriers like lack of openness and limited interaction time must be minimized through better communication planning. Effective communication boosts teacher motivation and improves learning quality. Principals should actively foster teacher participation, provide continuous guidance, and create a supportive professional environment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was successfully completed with the support and assistance of many parties. The author sincerely expresses gratitude to Prof. Dr. Bahrin, M.Pd. as the Head of the Advisory Commission and Prof. Dr. Nasir Usman, M.Pd. as a member, for their invaluable guidance, advice, and corrections throughout the research process. Appreciation is also given to Dr. Niswanto, M.Pd., Coordinator of the Master's Program in Educational Administration, as well as all faculty members and staff for their support and guidance.

The author is also grateful to Razali, S.Pd, M.Pd., Head of the Regional Education Office for Pidie and Pidie Jaya, and the principals of SMA Negeri 1 Sigli, SMA Negeri 3 Unggul Sigli, and SMA Islam Terpadu Al-Uswah Sigli for their cooperation in data collection. Heartfelt appreciation goes to parents, Abu Bakar and Zainabon, for their unwavering prayers and support, as well as to beloved husband, Sadikul Wahdi, and son, Muhammad Sulthan Alfarizqi, who have been a source of strength and motivation. Sincere thanks are also given to siblings, Mitahul Jannah, Ayu Annisa, and Sarah Nadia, for their encouragement and support, and to friends from the Kerjasama Pidie class for their companionship and assistance throughout this academic journey.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, S., & Hodsay, Z. (2020). *Profesi kependidikan dan keguruan*. Deepublish.
- Anriyani, L., Yandri, H., & Kusayang, T. (2024). Analisis Dinamika Self Efficacy Dan Motivasi Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini. *As-Sibyan: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 9(1), 55-72.
- Antera, S. (2021). Professional competence of vocational teachers: A conceptual review. *Vocations and Learning*, 14(3), 459-479.
- Anugrah, A., Mulawarman, W. G., & Nurlaelah, N. (2022). School Operational Assistance Management to Lighten School Burden: A Literature Review. *EduLine: Journal of Education and Learning Innovation*, 2(3), 322-330.

- Astuti, D. (2021). Strategi komunikasi kelompok sadar wisata Desa Doro O'o Dalam Pembangunan Wisata Nisa Lampa Dana. UIN Mataram.
- Basri, H., & Tambunan, N. (2023). Faktor pendukung dan penghambat manajemen kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kualitas kinerja pendidik dan tenaga kependidikan di Madrasah Aliyah Sunggal. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 3(2), 2575–2587.
- Fadilah Istighfara, & Ahmad Zaki. (2022). Strategi Komunikasi Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Kinerja Guru di MIS Nurul Iman Kecamatan Gebang. Tut Wuri Handayani: Jurnal Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan, 1(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.59086/jkip.v1i1.52>.
- Gera, I. G., Ganjarjati, N. I., & Purbaningrum, D. (2024). Kepemimpinan Pelayanan Robert K. Greenleaf sebagai Model Manajemen Pendidikan yang Efektif dan Humanis. *Indonesian Research Journal on Education*, 4(3), 1465–1472.
- Hendriani, S. (2024). Peran Komunikasi Efektif Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Kerja Guru. *Journal of Social and Economics Research*, 6(1), 384–399.
- Hikmatullah, L., Notosudjono, D., & Setyaningsih, S. (2022). Strategi Peningkatan Etos Kerja Guru Melalui Penguatan Kepemimpinan Transformasional, Kompetensi Pedagogis, Dan Motivasi Kerja Guru.
- Ivana, R., & Kurniawati, D. (2023). Komunikasi efektif dengan pendekatan psikologi. *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan*, 9(7), 351–363.
- Komariyah, K., Haryati, T., & Miyono, N. (2020). Pengaruh Peran Kepala Sekolah Dan Kepuasan Kerja Terhadap Motivasi Kerja Guru Sekolah Dasar Negeri Di Kecamatan Ampelgading Pemalang. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan (JMP)*, 9(3).
- Kuleng, M. M., Ugha, Y., & Harso, A. (2025). Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Kinerja Guru di Smp Negeri 2 Ende. *Jurnal Bersama Ilmu Pendidikan (DIDIK)*, 1(1), 28–35.
- Kusmiati, I., Sahila, A. N., Damayanti, S., Saraswati, A., & Apriliani, A. (2022). Pentingnya Motivasi Pegawai Dalam Meningkatkan Produktivitas Kerja. *Karimah Tauhid*, 1(6), 869–879.
- Nelly, N. (2021). Strategi Pembelajaran Berbasis Motivasi. *EDULEAD: Journal of Christian Education and Leadership*, 2(2), 306–311.
- Pohan, D. D., & Fitria, U. S. (2021). Jenis jenis komunikasi. *Cybernetics: Journal Educational Research and Social Studies*, 29–37.
- Pradhana, F. A., & Wibowo, P. (2020). Analisis Pola Komunikasi Petugas pada Manajemen Sekuriti di Lembaga Pemasyarakatan. *Gema Keadilan*, 7(3), 139–154.
- Ramli, S. (2023). Implementasi Komunikasi Verbal Dan Nonverbal Dalam Proses Kegiatan Belajar Mengajar Di Sekolah Dasar Muhammadiyah 26 Surabaya. *Aleph*, 87(1), 2.
- Riatmaja, D. S., Andriani, N., Purwadisastra, D., Rukhmana, T., Ikhlas, A., & Wonmally, W. (2024). Hubungan Kepemimpinan Transformasi, Kelelahan Emosional, Karakteristik Individu, Budaya Organisasi dan Kepuasan Kerja dengan Komitmen Organisasional pada Guru SMA. *Indonesian Research Journal on Education*, 4(2), 1000–1006.
- Sesmiarni, Z. (2024). Implementasi motivasi kerja dalam meningkatkan produktivitas guru muatan lokal. *Idarah Tarbawiyah: Journal of Management in Islamic Education*, 5(4), 395–405.
- Simanjuntak, S. K., Hadijaya, Y., & Neliwati, N. (2024). Manajemen kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan etos kerja guru di sekolah menengah kejuruan swasta. *Jurnal EDUCATIO: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, 10(1), 362–375.