

The Role of Educational Communication by Teachers in Enhancing Pupil Engagement in Learning at SMPN 2 Doplang, Blora Regency

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Abstract

This study examines the role of educators' educational communication in increasing student engagement in teaching at Doplang State Junior High School 2 in Blora. Effective interaction is a key factor in establishing good relationships between educators and students through reciprocal communication and the use of participatory teaching methods. The research employed a descriptive approach with observation, interviews, and recording techniques for educators and students. The research findings demonstrate that educators' ability to explain teaching materials, provide feedback, and create a conducive learning environment can stimulate student participation. Methods such as stimulating questions, discussions, and awarding extra points have proven effective in increasing student engagement. However, student participation remains reactive and not fully independent. Differences in competency and self-confidence also influence participation levels. This research contributes to the development of more interactive and participatory communication strategies to maximize student engagement in learning. The findings also emphasize the importance of school support and parental involvement for a more effective and sustainable learning process.

Keywords: Educational communication, Educator, Student, Learning participation, Active learning methods

1. INTRODUCTION

Education at lower secondary level is a crucial phase in the development of pupils' character, attitudes and active participation in the learning process. At this stage, pupils are in a phase of development that requires appropriate stimulation in order to maximise their cognitive, affective and social capacities. Pupil engagement in teaching is a crucial benchmark for educational success, as through such participation pupils do not merely acquire information but also take a direct part in the learning process. In an educational context, communication plays a fundamental role. Jalaluddin Rakhmat states that interaction is an inherent human trait used to understand and navigate social life appropriately. Meanwhile, Shannon and Weaver define communication as a process of mutually influential interaction between individuals, whether intentional or unintentional, through various symbols, both verbal and non-verbal. This perspective reinforces the view that communication serves not only to convey information but also as a process of shaping behaviour within social relationships, including in learning activities (Cangara, 2006). In the field of education, communication has a specific aspect known as educational communication. Educational communication is the interactive relationship between teachers and pupils in a teaching context, aimed at achieving educational objectives. This concept makes it clear that communication is not one-way, but involves reciprocal interaction between teachers and pupils during the learning process (Pane, 2019).

Furthermore, educational communication is interactive and participatory in nature, thereby fostering a dynamic learning relationship. Through effective communication, educators can shape pupils' understanding, facilitate their participation, and encourage them to contribute to the teaching process. As such, educational communication serves as the primary means of enhancing pupil engagement in the classroom (Firmansyah, Ramadhani, et al., 2026). On the other hand, effective teaching does not merely depend on communication, but must also take into account pupils' intellectual development. A holistic approach to education emphasises that pupils do not merely respond to stimuli, but actively shape their understanding through reasoning and interaction with the learning environment. This demonstrates that teaching interactions must be aligned with pupils' reasoning abilities in order to maximise the quality of their participation (Firmansyah, Ramadhani, et al., 2026). Various studies show that

educational success is largely driven by the communication model used in the classroom. The distinction between one-way and two-way interaction is a crucial factor influencing the level of pupil participation. Communicative communication tends to provide pupils with greater opportunities for active participation than one-way communication (Ulfah & Nurislamiah, 2023). A study by Putri and Kurniawan (2021) shows that the effectiveness of communication is influenced not only by the method of delivery, but also by the examples set and the consistency shown by teachers when communicating with pupils (Putri & Kurniawan, 2021).

However, in the practice of teaching, there remains a gap between the concept of educational interaction and the reality on the ground. Communication in education is still often centred on the delivery of content, meaning that pupil participation has not yet developed to its full potential. Furthermore, the integration of educational interaction with the development of pupils' thinking skills has not yet been fully realised in a balanced manner. This situation indicates that the relationship between educational communication and pupil participation should be further examined empirically, based on actual classroom situations. Such phenomena were also observed at SMPN 2 Doplang in Blora Regency. Based on the results of observations and interviews, the teaching process has incorporated two-way communication through interaction between teachers and pupils, such as setting questions, holding discussions, and providing meaningful feedback. Teachers are able to explain the subject matter clearly, create a comfortable learning environment, and encourage pupil participation through methods such as asking prompt questions and awarding extra marks to active pupils. However, the student participation that emerges still tends to be reactive to prompts from teachers such as responding to questions and has not yet fully developed into initiative-driven participation, such as asking questions or expressing opinions independently. Furthermore, variations in students' abilities, levels of self-confidence, and the learning environment also influence the extent of their engagement in learning. Against this background, this study aims to examine the role of educators' educational communication in enhancing student participation, to identify the forms of participation that emerge, and to analyse the supporting and inhibiting factors at various stages of education. It is hoped that the findings of this study will contribute to the development of teaching methods that are increasingly interactive, participatory and student-centred.



Figure 1. Photograph taken with teachers at SMPN 2 Doplang, Blora Regency

2. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative, descriptive approach aimed at describing in detail the role of educators' educational communication in increasing pupil participation at SMPN 2 Doplang, Blora Regency. The research design used is a case study, which enables the researcher to thoroughly examine the application of educational communication in real-life teaching situations. This method was chosen as it can provide a detailed understanding of the interactions between teachers and pupils during learning activities. The sources of information in this study include primary and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from primary sources through data collection by the researcher,

such as interviews and observations, and is therefore more relevant and accurate in the context of the study. Meanwhile, secondary data is data obtained indirectly through sources such as documents, books, articles and existing reports, which are used to supplement and strengthen the primary data. In this study, primary data was collected through interviews with teachers and pupils, direct observation of teaching practices in the classroom, and documentation of learning activities.

Secondary data, meanwhile, was obtained from supporting documents such as attendance records, data on pupils' learning outcomes, and school profiles relevant to the study (Sulung & Muspawi, 2024). Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews and documentation. These three methods were used in an integrated manner through methodological triangulation, namely the verification of data using a variety of data collection techniques on similar sources, in order to obtain more reliable and comprehensive information (Sugiyono, 2014). In addition, source triangulation was also employed by cross-checking information from various sources, in order to ensure the validity of the information obtained (Sugiyono, 2016). To reinforce the validity of the data, the researchers also carried out member checking, which involves cross-checking the data with informants to ensure it corresponds to the actual situation.

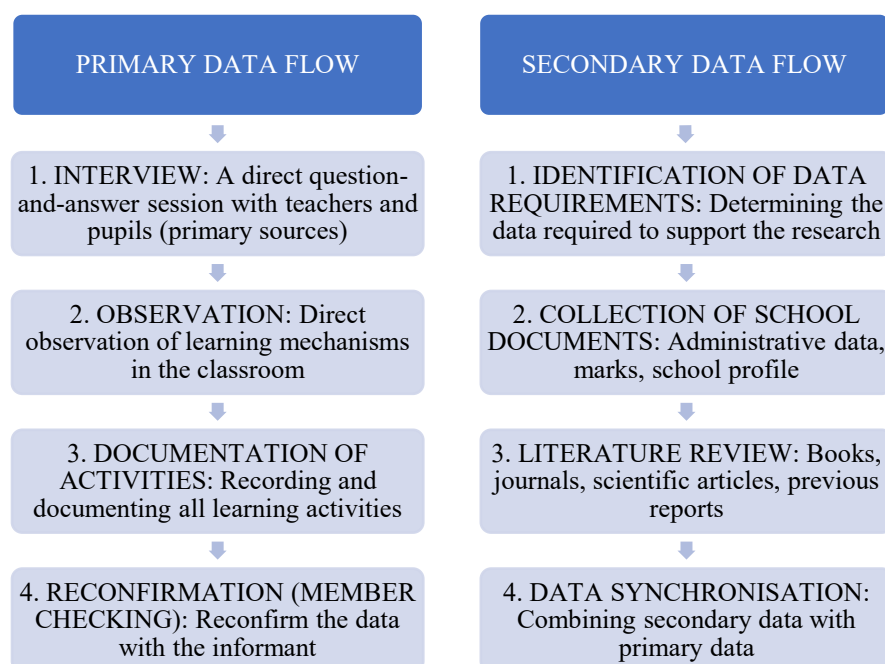


Figure 2. Research Data Collection Process

To reinforce the validity of the information, the researchers also carried out 'member checking', which involves cross-checking the information with the informants to ensure it aligns with the actual situation. Data analysis in this study utilised the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which encompasses the processes of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions all carried out continuously until data saturation was reached. Data reduction was carried out by summarising, selecting and focusing the information on crucial aspects; the information was then presented in a descriptive narrative format to ensure it was easily understood. The next phase involved drawing conclusions through a process of continuous verification to ensure accurate and academically accountable results (Ernawati et al., 2022). This assessment process is carried out iteratively until data saturation is reached, that is, the point at which no new information is found in the data collected.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.1 General Conditions and the Learning Environment

General conditions and the learning environment are among the key factors influencing the success of the learning process in educational institutions. Based on data from observations, interviews and documentation carried out at SMPN 2 Doplang in Blora Regency, the overall state of the learning environment can be classified as reasonably

adequate and capable of supporting teaching and learning activities. This finding is consistent with the view of Ompusunggu et al. (2023), who state that the learning environment is a vital factor in determining the progress and learning outcomes of pupils (Ompusunggu et al., 2023). An effective learning environment encompasses not only the physical aspects of the school, such as facilities and infrastructure, but also a comfortable classroom atmosphere and the relationships formed between teachers and pupils during learning activities. With a supportive learning environment, pupils will find it easier to understand the subject matter, feel at ease, and be motivated to participate actively in learning activities.

a. General Conditions of the School

SMPN 2 Doplang was originally established in 1996 as part of the government's efforts to improve access to education for residents in the Jati Sub-district, Blora Regency. At the time of its establishment, teaching and learning activities were still conducted jointly with SMPN 1 Doplang and took place during the day due to a lack of available facilities. This situation continued for several years until the school began using its own building, situated in Randulawang Village. From that point onwards, the school began to grow independently, in terms of pupil numbers, teaching staff and the facilities and infrastructure at its disposal. SMPN 2 Doplang is a lower secondary school located in Doplang Village, Jati Sub-district, Blora Regency. This educational institution is situated approximately 5 km from the Doplang–Randublatung main road, specifically on the Doplang–Kunduran road at km 5.

The boundaries of the SMPN 2 Doplang site are as follows: to the north it borders Mungkung hamlet; to the east it adjoins Baru hamlet; to the south it neighbours Temulawak hamlet; and to the west it borders Sempu hamlet. Consequently, the school's location is quite strategic and easily accessible to the local community. Geographically, the school is situated in a relatively peaceful rural area, far from the hustle and bustle of urban traffic. This setting is highly conducive to creating a favourable learning environment, as pupils can concentrate on their studies in a calm and peaceful atmosphere, free from external distractions. Furthermore, the school's unspoilt surroundings also have a positive impact on pupils' comfort and health whilst they are engaged in learning activities. This is in line with the view expressed by Indra Djati Sidi, who states that the learning environment plays a crucial role in creating an enjoyable learning experience and can increase pupil participation; therefore, the learning environment must be well organised to optimally support the learning process (Sidi, 2005).

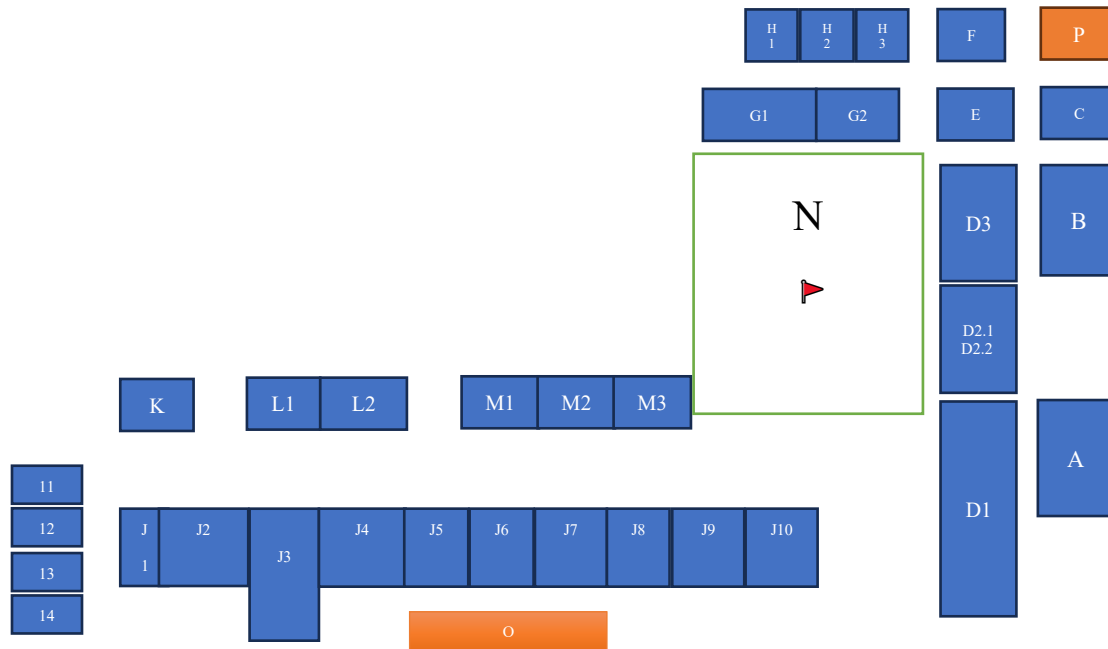


Figure 3. Floor Plan of the SMPN 2 Doplang School Building

The layout of SMPN 2 Doplang shows that the school buildings and facilities are arranged in a logical and well-managed manner to support teaching and pupil activities. According to the data obtained, every room and area in the school has a clear purpose in line with educational needs. In terms of sanitary facilities, the school has four blocks of boys' toilets (blocks 11–14), as well as separate toilets for girls to ensure hygiene and comfort. In addition,

there is an administrative block which serves as the location for the school's administrative activities. For learning areas, the school has several classrooms spread across a number of blocks.

Table 1. Classroom Allocation at SMPN 2 Doplang

Class Level	Room Code	Class Name
VIII	L2	8D
VIII	M1	8C
VIII	M2	8B
VIII	M3	8A
VII	J4	7C
VII	J5	7B
VII	J6	7A
IX	J7	9D
IX	J8	9C
IX	J9	9B
IX	J10	9A

In addition to classrooms, there are other teaching support facilities, as follows:

Table 2. Supporting Facilities at SMPN 2 Doplang

Type of Facility	Room Code	Function
Library	B	Learning resource for students
Science Laboratory	A	Science practical activities
Social Studies Lab	F	Supports social studies learning
Skills Room	J2	Student practical activities
School Health Unit	G1	Student health services
Guidance & Counseling	G2	Counseling and guidance services
Canteen	J3	Provides food for students
Storage Room	J1	Storage of goods
Ceremony Field	N	School ceremonies and events
Open Field	-	Students' physical activities
Teacher Parking Area	P	Parking for teachers' vehicles
Mosque/Prayer Room	C	Worship facility for school community

Overall, the layout of SMPN 2 Doplang features a concentrated building structure, with the open space serving as the centre of activity and the learning areas and supporting facilities arranged around it. This facilitates the movement of pupils and teaching staff, whilst also supporting the effective and efficient delivery of teaching and learning activities. In terms of pupil numbers, SMPN 2 Doplang has a total of 362 pupils divided into 12 study groups. The distribution of pupils across each year group is fairly even, ensuring that teaching can proceed effectively. The average number of pupils per class is around 27–32, which is considered appropriate for a lower secondary school. With this total, teachers are still able to manage their classes effectively and give each pupil a more balanced level of attention. To illustrate the overall pupil numbers, the following table shows the total number of pupils by year group:

Table 3. Pupil Numbers at SMPN 2 Doplang

No	Class	Male (M)	Female (F)	Total
1	VII A	17	12	29
2	VII B	17	10	27
3	VII C	18	10	28
4	VII D	18	10	28
Total VII		70	42	112
5	VIII A	16	16	32
6	VIII B	17	14	31

7	VIII C	17	14	31
8	VIII D	18	14	32
Total VIII		68	58	126
9	IX A	20	10	30
10	IX B	20	11	31
11	IX C	19	13	32
12	IX D	19	13	32
Total IX		79	45	124
GRAND TOTAL		217	145	362

According to the table above, it can be seen that the total number of pupils at SMPN 2 Doplang, Blora Regency, is 362, comprising 217 boys and 145 girls. The distribution of pupils across each year group is relatively even, with the largest number of pupils in Year 8, totalling 126, whilst Year 7 has 112 pupils and Year 9 has 124 pupils. The number of pupils in each class ranges from 27 to 32, which is still within the ideal range for the delivery of education at lower secondary level. With this number, teachers can manage their classes more effectively and give individual attention to each pupil, both in terms of delivering the curriculum and in classroom interactions. This is reinforced by the findings of Mc. Wija's research (2017), which revealed that if the total number of pupils in a class exceeds its capacity, the learning environment becomes less conducive, and teachers are unable to fully understand the issues faced by pupils; consequently, control diminishes and pupils tend to become passive in their learning (Mc.Wija, 2017).

b. Status of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

The total number of teaching and non-teaching staff at SMPN 2 Doplang is 33. This workforce comprises 25 civil servants (ASN), 2 temporary staff (PTT), and 6 members of the school committee. This total indicates that the school has relatively adequate human resources to support the implementation of learning activities and educational administration. Teaching staff are primarily responsible for the teaching process in the classroom, whilst non-teaching staff assist with the school's administrative and operational activities to ensure they run in an orderly and systematic manner. Overall, this sufficient number of staff is crucial in delivering an effective educational process. According to Hamalik (2007), teachers are the key element in the educational system as they act as guides and organisers of learning. With the support of sufficient non-teaching staff, school management can operate more effectively, thereby ensuring that educational objectives are met to the fullest extent possible (Hamalik, 2007).

c. Learning Facilities and Infrastructure

Facilities and infrastructure are crucial elements in supporting the success of the teaching process. The availability of comprehensive and adequate facilities can create a conducive learning environment and support pupils' needs in developing their academic and non-academic potential. According to the data obtained, SMPN 2 Doplang has the following facilities and infrastructure:

Table 4. School Facilities and Infrastructure

No	Type	Facilities
1	Field	Basketball, Volleyball, Long jump
2	Rooms	Classrooms, Counseling Room, UKS, Hall
3	Parking	Students, Teachers
4	Place of Worship	Prayer Room (Mushola)
5	Laboratory	Science Lab, Computer Lab
6	Network	WiFi

Based on the table above, it is clear that SMPN 2 Doplang has a fairly comprehensive range of basic facilities to support learning activities. Sports facilities such as basketball, volleyball and long jump show that the school does not merely focus on academic aspects, but also supports the development of pupils' physical abilities. Furthermore, the presence of classrooms, a guidance and counselling room, a school health unit and an assembly hall demonstrates a commitment to meeting students' learning needs, providing counselling services and supporting their physical wellbeing. This is vital in creating a comprehensive and balanced learning environment. Science and computer laboratories also indicate that the school is facilitating practice-based and technology-driven learning. Meanwhile, the availability of Wi-Fi suggests that the school has begun to integrate information technology into its teaching. According to Mulyasa (2013), adequate facilities and infrastructure will improve the quality of the educational process, as pupils can learn more effectively in a conducive environment (Mulyasa, 2013). Consequently, the facilities

available at SMPN 2 Doplang can be classified as fairly good in terms of supporting learning activities, both academic and non-academic.

1.2 Forms and Strategies of Educators' Educational Communication

According to the findings of interviews with Mrs Sulastri and Mr Imdhadur Rohman, as well as direct observations carried out by the researcher in Class VII A, the educators' educational interactions during science lessons demonstrated positive quality and were communicative in nature. Teachers presented the material clearly and systematically, whilst monitoring the pupils' level of understanding. This was evident in the way teachers presented the material using language that was easy to understand, supported by the use of media such as the blackboard, an LCD projector, and practical activities in the laboratory. Consequently, the verbal interactions employed by teachers were not merely informative but also facilitated the pupils' ability to grasp concepts in a tangible way. This statement is in line with Hardjana's view, as cited by Endang Lestari G. (2003), that interaction is the process of conveying and exchanging meaning between individuals (Lestari & Mariska, 2003). Furthermore, according to Kusumawati (2016), verbal communication is a form of communication that uses language, whether spoken or written, to convey ideas and information so that they are more easily understood by the audience (Kusumawati, 2016). In an educational context, clarity in interaction is not merely limited to the presentation of material, but also encompasses how teachers provide feedback, listen to pupils' questions, and respond to them in a way that is easy to understand (Wahyuni & Dahlia, 2020). This point is emphasised by Slameto (1988), who states that feedback is information provided to pupils regarding their level of understanding of the subject matter, enabling them to gauge their mastery of the subject and make improvements to their understanding (Slameto, 1988).

The results of the interview with Mrs Sulastri revealed that, during the learning process, teachers consistently strive to create a comfortable and conducive atmosphere by using clear, friendly and open communication. Mrs Sulastri also stated that teachers frequently provide feedback to pupils and give them opportunities to ask questions or respond, thereby making classroom communication more active and engaging. Meanwhile, according to the results of the interview with Mr Imdhadur Rohman, it was found that the educational communication used places greater emphasis on two-way communication and the provision of stimuli in the form of questions. Mr Imdhadur Rohman also emphasised the importance of using methods such as group discussions and providing encouragement in the form of appreciation so that pupils are more enthusiastic about participating in lessons. Documentation of the interviews with the informants, namely Mrs Sulastri and Mr Imdhadur Rohman, can be seen in the following image:



Figure 3. Documentation of the researcher's interview with Mr Imdhadur Rohman and Mrs Sulastri

In addition to verbal communication, teachers also employ non-verbal approaches through friendly expressions, an open attitude and a humanistic approach to communication. Teachers do not display rude behaviour, thereby creating a comfortable and relaxed teaching atmosphere. This makes pupils feel more at ease and less anxious about participating in lessons. This is in line with Kusumawati's (2016) view that non-verbal communication is expressed through gestures, facial expressions and body language, which can reinforce the meaning of a message

(Kusumawati, 2016). Furthermore, Brown (2004) explains that a relationship between teachers and pupils built on a foundation of trust and mutual respect can boost pupils' self-confidence (Brown, 2004). In terms of interaction patterns, the teachers have employed both two-way and multi-way communication. This is evident from the communication between teachers and pupils, as well as amongst pupils during group discussions. This is in line with Djamarah's view, who states that communication is a relationship between two or more people involving the transmission and reception of messages, thereby ensuring that information is understood accurately (Hidayat, 2018). To increase pupil engagement, teachers use teaching methods such as question-and-answer sessions, group discussions, prompting questions, and problem-based learning. These methods are in line with the principles of active learning, which requires pupils to participate actively, both individually and in groups. This is emphasised by Knapper (1997), who states that cooperative learning provides ample opportunity for pupils to learn independently and dynamically (Knapper, 1997). In addition, teachers also provide encouragement through rewards, such as extra marks for active pupils. This is in line with Hidayati's (2023) view that rewards, as a form of positive reinforcement, can motivate pupils to learn (Hidayati, 2023). Such motivation has a significant impact on pupils' engagement in learning. Furthermore, Slameto (2003) explains that pupils' self-confidence enhances their independence in learning, thereby making them more confident about participating in lessons (Slameto, 2003). Teachers also praise pupils who have the confidence to give things a go, even if they don't get the answer right, as this helps to boost their self-confidence and encourage them to participate more actively.

1.3 Forms of Pupil Engagement and Participation in Learning

Pupil participation in Class VII A is evident in a number of ways, particularly in responding to questions, discussing topics, and giving presentations in front of the class. These activities demonstrate that pupils do not merely act as recipients of the material, but also as active participants in the teaching process. Pupils generally appear more engaged when the teacher provides stimuli in the form of questions, tasks or specific instructions that encourage their participation. This is evident from the pupils' habit of raising their hands before answering questions, as well as their fairly good level of participation in group discussions, where they exchange ideas and work together to complete tasks. Furthermore, pupils also demonstrate a higher level of engagement in practice-based teaching activities, such as laboratory work or problem-based learning (PBL). In such situations, pupils participate directly in the learning process, whether through experiments or problem-solving tasks presented by the teacher. This direct involvement stimulates pupils' curiosity and fosters growing enthusiasm, thereby making learning more meaningful.

This demonstrates that active teaching models can encourage maximum student participation, both individually and in groups. This is consistent with Bonwell's (1995) view that active learning encompasses all forms of teaching that enable students to play a dynamic role in the learning process, whether through interaction with the learning material or social communication with the teacher and fellow students (Bonwell, 1995). Pupil participation can also be identified through specific indicators throughout the teaching process. According to Hollingsworth and Lewis (2006), active teaching is characterised by pupils who are enthusiastic, diligent and continuously engaged in effective learning activities (Hollingsworth & Lewis, 2006). Meanwhile, Rusman, Maftukhin and Nurhidayati (2012) state that pupils' engagement can be observed through their willingness to ask questions and respond to questions (Rusman et al., 2012). Furthermore, student engagement in learning is a form of participation—whether psychological, emotional or physical. Suryana, Mumuh and Hilman (2022) state that engagement refers to an individual's involvement in an activity, encompassing psychological, emotional and physical participation, in utilising their full capacity to achieve learning objectives (Suryana et al., 2022). However, pupils' participation still tends to be reactive in nature. That is to say, pupils are more active when they receive stimuli or motivation from the teacher, such as through questions, instructions or specific tasks. Meanwhile, proactive engagement such as asking questions independently, expressing opinions without being asked, or responding spontaneously remains relatively low.

This situation indicates that some pupils do not yet fully possess the courage or self-confidence to participate independently. This aligns with the view put forward by Slameto (2003), who states that self-confidence is one of the internal factors influencing pupils' active participation in learning (Slameto, 2003). This finding was further corroborated by interviews with two pupils, Naufal and Tisya from Class VIII A. Naufal stated that he tended to be more active when the teacher posed questions directly or called on pupils, as he did not feel confident enough to ask questions of his own accord. Meanwhile, Tisya mentioned that she actually wanted to ask questions, but often hesitated for fear of giving the wrong answer or receiving an unwelcome response from her classmates. This situation demonstrates that pupils' participation is indeed still influenced by stimuli from the teacher as well as the pupils' own psychological state. As supporting evidence for these interview findings, documentation of the researcher's interviews with Naufal and Tisya can be seen in the following image:



Figure 4. Documentation of the interview process with pupils Naufal and Tisya from Class VIII A

Furthermore, Balen, Gosen, Vries and Koole (2022) explain that initiative in learning refers to pupils' concrete efforts to participate in class discussions without being asked and to engage directly in problem-solving (Balen et al., 2022). This initiative not only serves to liven up the classroom atmosphere, but also plays a vital role in fostering communication and cooperation, as well as encouraging active participation amongst pupils in the learning process. The lack of such initiatives is due to a number of factors, including shyness, fear of making mistakes, and anxiety about negative reactions from peers. This situation is confirmed by the findings of Ernawati, Jais and Siombiwi (2019), who state that pupils' anxiety can arise from an unsupportive learning environment, such as ridicule from peers or unsupportive responses from teachers (Ernawati Jais & Siombiwi, 2019). In fact, pupils tend to be reluctant to ask questions for fear of being asked a question in return by the teacher or of being seen as disrupting the learning process.

Furthermore, according to Uno (2011), pupils' psychological state and motivation to learn have a significant impact on their level of engagement during the learning process (Uno, 2011). For this reason, teachers must create a safe and supportive learning environment so that pupils feel comfortable participating without fear of being blamed or laughed at. Teachers can also provide positive reinforcement, such as acknowledging every effort made by pupils, even if their responses are not entirely correct. Furthermore, the use of teaching methods that encourage collaboration, such as group discussions, can boost pupils' confidence as they do not feel they are learning alone. A friendly, open and non-judgemental approach on the part of the teacher is also crucial in reducing pupils' fear, so that they feel more confident to express their opinions and ask questions independently. On the other hand, there are still some pupils who display a lack of focus during lessons. This is evident in behaviours such as talking to themselves or failing to pay close attention to the teacher's explanations. From a cognitive psychology perspective, focus is a selective process that enables individuals to filter incoming information so that it does not exceed their cognitive capacity. When pupils' attention is distracted, the information they take in is not optimised. This aligns with the views of Driver (2001) and Roda and Thomas (2006), who state that focus acts as a selection system for data processed within the cognitive system, enabling individuals to process information effectively without experiencing excessive pressure (Driver, 2001; Roda & Thomas, 2006). Thus, although the majority of pupils have demonstrated good levels of engagement in their learning, there are still some who require further attention and support. Consequently, more diverse teaching strategies and a more personalised approach are needed so that all pupils can participate actively and equally in the learning process.

1.4. Factors and Analysis of the Role of Educational Communication in Pupil Engagement

Pupil participation in Class VII A is the result of the interplay of various factors that influence one another, whether originating from within the pupils themselves (internal) or from the external learning environment. Such engagement does not arise directly, but is influenced by the pupils' psychological state and how the teacher manages interactions during the learning process. Therefore, to understand the level of student engagement more comprehensively, an analysis is required of the factors influencing internal elements such as physical condition,

cognitive aspects, emotions, interests, talents, and learning motivation which form the basis of an individual's readiness to receive educational stimuli. Every pupil has distinct characteristics, so their levels of readiness and participation are not uniform; however, these internal capabilities do not operate in isolation but require support from external factors in order to develop to their full potential. The family, school, community and traditions surrounding the pupil make a significant contribution to shaping their learning experiences and the norms they internalise (Lutfiyah & Ramli, 2025). In Class VII A, the most evident internal factors relate to self-confidence, courage and readiness to engage with the learning process. Although some pupils already understand the material being taught, not all of them are able to actively demonstrate their understanding due to psychological barriers. The following table illustrates this situation:

Table 5. Internal Factors Affecting Pupil Engagement

No	Internal Factors	Percentage (%)	Description
1	High self-confidence	51.7%	Actively raising hands and answering
2	Low self-confidence	20.0%	Still hesitant to perform
3	Shyness	10.0%	Only a small number of students
4	Fear of making mistakes	18.3%	Not brave enough to answer

These findings indicate that the majority of pupils already possess a reasonably good level of self-confidence, as evidenced by their willingness to raise their hands and answer questions posed by the teacher. This situation indicates that pupils already possess the basic readiness to participate actively in learning activities. Such self-confidence serves as an important foundation for motivating pupil participation, whether in the form of responding to questions or engaging in discussions in the classroom. However, upon closer examination, there are still some pupils who are unable to demonstrate their full level of engagement. The presence of pupils who lack self-confidence, feel hesitant, and are afraid of making mistakes indicates that psychological factors remain a relatively significant barrier. This situation results in pupil participation not developing evenly, but remaining concentrated amongst certain pupils who possess greater courage. Furthermore, the presence of a fear of making mistakes also indicates that pupils do not yet feel entirely safe in expressing their opinions. Pupils tend to dwell on negative consequences, such as being judged incorrectly or receiving an unfavourable response from those around them. This leads pupils to choose to remain silent rather than attempt to participate, even though they actually understand the subject matter.

This situation highlights that pupil participation is not merely a cognitive matter, but is also heavily influenced by affective and emotional factors. Pupils who possess an understanding of the subject matter do not necessarily demonstrate participation if they are not driven by self-confidence and courage. Therefore, improving pupil participation requires more than just an understanding of the subject matter; it must also be accompanied by efforts to build self-confidence and reduce feelings of anxiety amongst pupils. Consequently, the information in the table indicates that, although pupils' capacity for participation has begun to develop, further focus is still required from educators to create a learning environment that better supports pupils' psychological well-being. This is important so that all pupils can participate actively, not merely by reacting to the teacher's stimuli, but also by taking the initiative that arises from within themselves. In addition to internal factors, pupils' active participation is also determined by external factors, particularly the educational communication employed by the teacher. This aligns with the view of Sardiman, as cited by Ahmadi (1996), who states that the learning relationship is a reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the pupil during the learning process (Ahmadi, 1996). Clear communication, the use of appropriate language, and the motivation and enthusiasm of teachers are key factors in increasing pupil participation. A comfortable classroom environment and a good relationship between teachers and pupils also support the development of participatory communication. These external factors are outlined in the table below.

Table 6. External Factors Affecting Pupil Participation

No	External Factors	Form of Implementation
1	Clear teacher communication	Teacher explains the material using simple language
2	Providing rewards	Extra points, earlier break time
3	Conducive classroom atmosphere	Classroom is comfortable and not tense
4	Teacher-student relationship	Teacher is friendly and open
5	Supportive approach	Teacher does not scold students for mistakes

This information shows that external factors, particularly the interactions initiated by teachers, play a highly significant role in fostering pupil participation in the classroom. Clear conversation and the use of simple language make it easier for pupils to understand the material being explained, thereby preventing them from feeling confused, which could hinder their participation. When pupils understand the material correctly, their opportunities to participate actively in lessons also increase. Furthermore, the provision of rewards is a powerful form of external motivation that encourages pupils to engage. Rewards such as extra marks or the chance to finish lessons early provide a positive incentive for pupils, motivating them to participate more actively in responding to or undertaking other learning activities. This demonstrates that the reinforcement provided by the teacher can directly influence pupils' learning behaviour. A comfortable classroom environment is also a key factor in supporting pupil engagement. A comfortable and stress-free learning environment makes pupils feel more at ease psychologically, so they are not afraid to try new things or make mistakes.

In such circumstances, pupils tend to be more open to participating, whether in question-and-answer sessions or discussions. A good relationship between the teacher and the pupils also contributes to increasing their engagement. Teachers who are friendly, open and approachable foster a positive emotional bond, making pupils feel appreciated and cared for. This situation can boost pupils' confidence to take part in learning without feeling anxious or under pressure. Furthermore, supportive teaching methods, such as not scolding pupils who make mistakes, are key to creating a comfortable learning environment. Pupils will be more confident in voicing their answers or opinions when they do not feel threatened by the possibility of making mistakes. This demonstrates that the way teachers respond to pupils' mistakes significantly influences pupils' level of confidence and participation in the learning process. Overall, the external factors shown in the table indicate that pupils' engagement is heavily influenced by how teachers establish communication and the learning atmosphere. Effective communication serves not only as a means of conveying subject matter but also as a tool for fostering students' motivation, confidence and active engagement in the learning process. On the other hand, there are still barriers affecting student participation, particularly those related to psychological factors and the social environment within the classroom. To understand these barriers, please refer to the following table:

Table 7. Barriers to Student Participation

No	Barriers	Percentage (%)	Impact
1	Shyness	13.8%	Students are not confident to ask questions
2	Fear of making mistakes	48.3%	Students hesitate to answer
3	Fear of being laughed at	20.0%	Students choose to remain silent
4	Lack of focus	17.9%	Students do not understand the material

The data shows that the greatest obstacle faced by pupils is fear, which causes them to hesitate to answer questions even though they actually understand the material being explained. This situation indicates that some pupils still weigh up the risks rather than having the courage to try, resulting in a tendency towards low participation. Furthermore, the fear of being laughed at by peers also contributes to a reduction in pupils' self-confidence. This social pressure leads pupils to opt for passivity and avoid the spotlight rather than actively participating in lessons. This situation demonstrates that the social climate in the classroom has a significant impact on pupils' confidence in expressing their opinions. Although the percentage of students experiencing shyness is relatively low, this factor remains a barrier, particularly for students who tend to be passive. Students with such traits require more time and motivation to begin engaging. Meanwhile, a lack of focus during lessons is also a significant factor, as students who do not understand the material find it increasingly difficult to participate actively and typically withdraw from learning activities. Overall, these obstacles indicate that pupil participation is not merely determined by academic understanding, but is also heavily influenced by psychological states and the social environment.

For this reason, sustained efforts are required to create a safe and supportive learning environment, so that pupils feel more confident to participate actively. To overcome these obstacles, educators employ educational communication that is polite, open and non-judgemental towards pupils. These efforts by educators are in line with the views of Tarsis Tarmudji (1998), who emphasises the urgency of encouraging students to be brave in striving for and attempting self-development within the learning process (Tarmudji, 1998). Furthermore, Firmansyah et al. (2026) also state that the formation of learning behaviour can occur through a sequence of stimuli, responses and reinforcement carried out on a continuous basis (Firmansyah, Nurfaizah, et al., 2026). Through stimuli in the form of questions or tasks, followed by responses from pupils and encouragement from teachers, active habits can gradually be formed. Furthermore, from an educational psychology perspective, the supportive communication practised by educators also plays a significant role in boosting pupils' motivation and participation. This is consistent with the views of Ryan and Deci (2020), who explain that support for pupils' psychological aspects, such as a sense of competence and relatedness, can encourage active participation in the learning process (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In light of this explanation, it is clear that educational communication serves not merely as a means of conveying content, but also as a method for fostering active behaviour in pupils. The role of such educational interaction is illustrated in the following table:

Table 8. The Role of Teachers' Educational Communication in Pupil Engagement

No	Form of Communication	Impact on Students
1	Clear language	Students understand the material more easily
2	Feedback	Students recognize their mistakes
3	Friendly attitude	Students feel comfortable
4	Motivation (reward)	Students become more active and confident

The data in the table shows that the various forms of educational communication used by teachers have a significant impact on pupils' participation in learning. The use of clear language makes it easier for pupils to understand the material, so that they do not feel confused and are more responsive to the questions posed. Furthermore, providing feedback helps pupils understand the mistakes they have made, giving them the opportunity to improve their understanding without feeling anxious. A friendly attitude on the part of the teacher also plays a key role in creating a comfortable and relaxed learning environment. In such circumstances, pupils feel more psychologically secure, which can boost their confidence to participate in lessons. This is supported by motivational rewards that encourage pupils to be more active and confident in responding or expressing their ideas. This situation is also evident in the learning environment in Class VII A, which demonstrates an active relationship between the teacher and the pupils, both in question-and-answer sessions and in discussions. The level of engagement shown by the pupils illustrates that the communication style employed by the teacher can create an ideal learning environment and support maximum pupil participation.



Figure 5. The learning atmosphere in Class VII A, showing active interaction between the teacher and the pupils

Overall, the educational communication carried out by teachers serves not only as a means of presenting information, but also as an effort to foster habits and active behaviour in pupils during learning. Supportive and consistent methods enable pupils to become increasingly confident, so that participation is not merely driven by the pupils' own initiative, but begins to develop into a routine for them.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research carried out, it can be concluded that pupil participation in Class VII A is currently at a relatively advanced stage, but is still dominated by responsive forms of engagement. Pupils tend to participate when prompted by the teacher, such as through questions, instructions or rewards, but still show a lack of independent engagement. This situation indicates that although the potential for participation is evident, the development of independent engagement still requires improvement. The results of this study show that student participation is determined by a combination of internal and external factors. Internal factors such as self-confidence, shyness, and anxiety about making mistakes are the dominant barriers to student participation. Meanwhile, external factors, particularly the educational interactions employed by the teacher, play a highly significant role in creating a supportive learning environment. Clear interaction, a friendly attitude, the provision of feedback, and reinforcement through rewards have been shown to increase pupils' confidence and participation in the learning process. It can therefore be concluded that educators' educational communication is the key to fostering pupil engagement. A supportive, consistent, and sustained communication model can shape patterns of active behaviour through the mechanisms of stimulus, response, and reinforcement.

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