Interpersonal Communication and Teacher Attention to Learning Interests of Elementary Students

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of interpersonal communication and teacher attention on students' learning interest in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The research approach used is quantitative with descriptive correlational method. The study population consisted of 150 students in grades I-III at MI in Pagar Alam area, with a sample of 109 students selected through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a closed questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1-4 which has been tested for validity and reliability. The results of the study indicate that teacher interpersonal communication is in the high category (mean = 3.42), teacher attention is in the high category (mean = 3.45), and student learning interest is in the high category (mean = 3.3). Based on multiple linear regression analysis, the equation $Y = 1.12 + 0.41X1 + 0.37X2$ is obtained. The results of the partial test show that teacher interpersonal communication has a significant effect on learning interest (t-hit = 4.812, sig. 0.000), as well as teacher attention (t-hit = 4.209, sig. 0.000). Simultaneous tests prove that both variables together have a significant effect on learning interest (F-hit = 42.51, sig. 0.000) with a coefficient of determination of 59.3%. The conclusion of this study confirms that interpersonal communication and teacher attention are important determinants in fostering learning interest in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. The practical implications of this study emphasize the importance of developing interpersonal communication competencies and the ability to provide sincere attention for teachers in creating a conducive and motivating learning environment.

Keywords: *Interpersonal Communication, Teacher Attention, Learning Interest, Elementary Students*

INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 eras have brought fundamental transformations in educational goals (Rahayu & Suarta, 2018). The Industrial Revolution 4.0, characterized by automation, artificial intelligence, and the internet of things, has shifted the needs of the workforce from routine technical skills to more complex competencies (Suwardana, 2018). Meanwhile, Society 5.0, as its continuation, emphasizes a human-centric approach in which technology is present to solve social problems and improve the quality of human life (Nastiti & 'Abdu, 2020). In this context, the education system is required to no longer simply produce cognitively intelligent students with the ability to memorize and analyze theory, because these

basic abilities can increasingly be replaced by machines (Gladden, 2019). The demands of this new era actually place social skills and emotional intelligence as basic competencies that every graduate must possess (Hurlock, 2019) . Social skills such as the ability to collaborate in diverse teams, communicate effectively, and build empathy are crucial in solving complex problems in the real world (Martinez & Gomez, 2024). Meanwhile, emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to manage stress, motivate, recognize one's strengths and weaknesses, and possess intrinsic motivation, is a determining factor in a person's resilience and adaptability in the face of rapid change (Siti Maryam, 2025). The combination of technological mastery with social-emotional abilities is what creates a human competitive advantage amidst the rapid development of automation (Wu, 2024).

Furthermore, within the framework of Society 5.0, which emphasizes humanitarian values, students' learning interests are significantly influenced by the socio-emotional aspects of the learning process (Mumtaha & Khoiri, 2019). A classroom that encourages collaboration, discussion, and collaborative problem-solving creates meaningful learning experiences and sparks students' intrinsic interest (Kharisma, Septiani, Suryaningsih, Mahdum, & Erlisnawati, 2025). When students perceive learning as more than just a pursuit of grades, but a process of self-development and contribution to society, their motivation to learn becomes more authentic and sustainable (Portuguez Castro & Gómez Zermeño, 2020). In this context, the teacher's role shifts to that of a facilitator who not only transfers knowledge but also builds a fun and supportive learning climate (Ventouris, Panourgia, & Hodge, 2021).

Cultivating learning motivation in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 requires a holistic approach that integrates technological aspects with in-depth pedagogy (Sarinastitin, 2019). On the one hand, the use of technology in learning acts as a powerful initial catalyst to arouse student interest (Wu, 2024). The presence of digital tools such as interactive simulations, gamification platforms, and virtual reality can create immediate appeal because they are relevant to the world of the digital native generation (Thurzo, Strunga, Urban, Surovková, & Afrashtehfar, 2023). However, the essence of true learning does not stop at the aspect of engagement alone. Fundamentally, how to create learning experiences that consistently cultivate 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (Purwanto, Hartono, & Wahyuni, 2023). These competencies serve as a support for long-term learning interest because they provide deep meaning and relevance for students (Retnaningsih & Khairiyah, 2022). When students engage in complex problem-solving processes, discuss collaborative knowledge construction, and create innovative solutions, they develop a sense of ownership over their learning process (Feng, Alsager, Azizi, & Sarabani, 2023). This combination of technological appeal and immersive learning is what transforms fleeting interest into a lifelong commitment to learning, while simultaneously preparing students to face the complexities of a constantly changing world (Awalia Anzilni, 2023). Therefore, learning interest in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and Society 5.0 is not merely a fleeting interest in technology, but rather a desire to continue learning and adapting to an ever-changing world (Laura Icela, María Soledad, & Juan Antonio, 2023).

In this context, the learning process at the elementary level, particularly in lower grades of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), plays a crucial role as the foundation for character formation and a lifelong interest in learning. Interest in learning is an intrinsic driving force that encourages students to be actively involved, persistent in facing challenges,

and achieving optimal academic results. The reality on the ground shows that students' learning interests in the Pagar Alam area, particularly in lower grades of elementary schools, often fluctuate and are highly susceptible to the influence of external factors in their learning environment. At this age, children's learning interests are not yet stable and can easily change due to their limited concentration and concrete operational nature. External factors such as monotonous teaching methods, an unattractive classroom atmosphere, social relationships with peers, and even the physical condition of the room (such as lighting and cleanliness) can directly influence their motivation and engagement in learning. A student who is enthusiastic in the morning may lose interest later in the day due to boredom with repetitive activities or due to unpleasant interactions with friends. This fact underlines that the interest in learning among lower-grade children is not something that automatically exists, but rather a dynamic condition that needs to be continuously nurtured and protected by creating a safe, enjoyable, and supportive learning environment.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, as an educational institution that integrates general knowledge and Islamic values, has unique characteristics where the learning process focuses not only on the transfer of knowledge, but also on the instilling of morals and spiritual values (Najoan, 2020) . In a holistic educational ecosystem, the role of teachers is central and multidimensional, not only as instructors, but also as educators, mentors, and role models. Therefore, the interaction built between teachers and students is a major determinant in fostering a conducive learning climate (Yusuf, Utama, & Rachmad, 2025). Two key aspects of this interaction are interpersonal communication and teacher attention. Teacher interpersonal communication refers to the ability to convey messages effectively, listen actively, show empathy, and build positive and trusting relationships with students. Effective communication can create a sense of security and comfort, so that students dare to express opinions and ask questions without fear (Law-Davis, 2023).

On the other hand, teacher care refers to the teacher's empathetic, caring, and responsive attitude towards both academic and non-academic needs of students (Utama & Tanfidiyah, 2019). Teacher care in the educational context goes beyond mere teaching duties, as it encompasses an empathetic, caring, and responsive attitude towards the holistic needs of students (Kanza, Muthohar, & Mursid, 2025). This empathetic attitude is manifested when teachers are able to understand students' feelings and perspectives, while caring is demonstrated through sincerity in caring for their well-being. The responsive aspect is reflected in the teacher's willingness to respond to academic needs such as difficulties understanding the material, as well as non-academic needs such as social-emotional problems faced by students (Aygün & Taşkın, 2022). Authentic and consistent attention from teachers creates a profound psychological impact on students. When students experience genuine care, they develop feelings of being valued as individuals, understood in their uniqueness, and supported in their learning process (Rahmawati, 2022). This positive psychological state then becomes a catalyst for the emergence of intrinsic motivation to learn. Students no longer learn simply to earn grades or avoid punishment, but because they find meaning and satisfaction in the learning process itself. The emotional connection fostered through the teacher's attention creates a safe psychological environment, where students feel empowered to try, dare to fail, and ultimately develop into independent learners (Bardach & Klassen, 2021).

Several recent studies have confirmed that teacher interpersonal communication has a positive influence on student motivation and learning outcomes.

Research by Ningsih & Wahyudi (2020) shows that warm, empathetic, and open interpersonal communication can increase students' intrinsic motivation because they feel valued and cared for in the learning process. Similarly, a study conducted by Hakim (2019) found that teacher attention significantly contributes to increased student engagement during learning, particularly in the form of verbal attention, positive body language, and emotional support. Another study by Lubis (2021) emphasized that the quality of teacher-student interpersonal relationships can build positive student perceptions of a subject, thereby influencing their interest and active participation in class. However, studies that specifically combine both variables—teacher interpersonal communication and teacher attention—in shaping student learning interest are still relatively limited. Most previous studies tend to focus on cognitive aspects such as improving learning achievement, conceptual understanding, or other academic abilities, while learning interest, as a fundamental affective aspect, has received less attention. This limitation is even more apparent in the context of Islamic elementary schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah), where a religious and humanistic learning environment should provide ample room for strengthening students' affective aspects, including their interest in learning. However, research highlighting the role of interpersonal communication and teacher attention in shaping students' interest in learning in Islamic elementary schools (MI) is still very rare. Therefore, this study is crucial to fill this research gap and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how these two variables can simultaneously contribute to increasing students' interest in learning.

Based on the description, the problem formulation in this study is, how does interpersonal communication and teacher attention influence student learning interest in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of teacher interpersonal communication on student learning interest, analyze the influence of teacher attention on student learning interest, and analyze the influence of both variables together on student learning interest in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. This study is expected to provide theoretical benefits by enriching the treasury of knowledge, especially in the field of Educational Psychology and Early Childhood Education in the Ibtidaiyah level, regarding the factors that influence student learning interest by emphasizing the importance of the dimensions of interpersonal and emotional relationships between teachers and students. Practically, the results of this study can be material for reflection and input for teachers to improve the quality of communication and show more sincere attention, for schools as a basis for developing teacher training programs that focus on developing interpersonal communication skills and student-centered pedagogy, and for future researchers who can use it as a reference for further research.

METHODOLOGY
Types of research

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive correlational approach, which aims to describe the relationship between the research variables and measure the strength of that relationship without manipulating the independent variable. The research design used is a cross-sectional study, where data is collected over a period of time (a one-shot study) (Arias, Arias, & Rodríguez-Medina, 2021). The research will be conducted at an elementary school (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) in the Pagar Alam area. This location was selected based on purposive sampling, considering the unique characteristics of the madrasah and its relevance to the research objectives.

Research Data

The population in this study were all students of grades I -III of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in totaling 150 students. The selection of grades I-III was based on the consideration that students at this level have more mature cognitive and emotional abilities in responding to the dynamics of learning and interaction with teachers. Samples were taken from the population using the Probability Sampling technique with the Simple Random Sampling method to provide equal opportunities for each member of the selected population as a sample. Based on calculations using the Slovin Formula with an error rate of 5% (0.05), the number of samples was 109 students from the calculation: n = 150 / (1 + 150(0.05)²) = 150 / 1.375 = 109.09 which was rounded up to 109 respondents. This study involved two independent variables and one dependent variable. The independent variables consist of X1 (Teacher Interpersonal Communication) which is defined as the teacher's ability to convey messages, listen actively, show empathy, and build positive relationships with students, and X2 (Teacher Attention) which is the teacher's empathetic attitude, concern, and responsiveness to students' academic and non-academic needs. The dependent variable Y (Student Learning Interest) is defined as the tendency of the heart accompanied by feelings of joy, attention, and active involvement of students in learning. All variables are measured using a Likert scale of 1-4 with specific measurement indicators for each variable.

Data Collection Instruments and Techniques

The main instrument used in this study was a closed questionnaire divided into three parts to measure each variable, namely teacher interpersonal communication (X1), teacher attention (X2), and student learning interest (Y). Before the questionnaire was used in the actual research, validity and reliability tests were first conducted to ensure the quality of the instrument. The validity test was carried out using the Pearson Product Moment technique to test the construct validity of each statement item, where an item was declared valid if the calculated r-value was greater than the r-table. Meanwhile, the reliability test used the Cronbach's Alpha technique with the requirement that a variable be declared reliable if the Alpha coefficient value was greater than 0.70. The data collection technique was carried out by distributing questionnaires directly to the research sample at the school, where the researcher would provide a brief explanation on how to fill out the questionnaire to minimize misinterpretation by respondents.

Data analysis

The data analysis technique in this study was carried out through several methodological stages. First, descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of respondents and the scores of each research variable, including the calculation of the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation. Next, a prerequisite analysis test was carried out consisting of a normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to ensure the data were normally distributed, a linearity test using the Test for Linearity to verify the linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables, and a multicollinearity test to detect the presence of a high correlation between the independent variables. At the inferential analysis stage, multiple linear regression analysis was applied with the model Y = a + b1X1 + b2X2 + e to test the effect of interpersonal communication (X1) and teacher attention (X2) simultaneously on learning interest (Y). The hypothesis was tested partially using the t-test to determine the significance of the influence of each independent variable, and simultaneously with the F-test to test the significance of the combined influence of the

two independent variables. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the percentage contribution of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable (Stockemer, 2018) . The entire data analysis process will be carried out with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25 to ensure the accuracy of the research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results

Based on the results of data processing on 109 respondents of grades I–III of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students, a picture was obtained regarding the level of teacher interpersonal communication (X1), teacher attention (X2), and student learning interest (Y).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Category
Teacher Interpersonal Communication (X1)	109	3.42	0.38	Tall
Teacher Attention (X2)	109	3.45	0.36	Tall
Student Learning Interest (Y)	109	3.3	0.41	Tall

Overall, all three variables were in the high category, as indicated by mean scores ranging from 3.10 to 3.45. This description indicates that students perceived the teacher as having good interpersonal communication skills, demonstrating consistent attention, and fostering positive learning interest throughout the learning process.

The results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed a significance value greater than 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed. The linearity test showed a significant linear relationship between X1 and Y and X2 and Y (significance below 0.05). The multicollinearity test also showed a VIF value below 10 and a Tolerance value above 0.10, indicating the absence of multicollinearity between the independent variables.

Multiple Linear Regression Test

The regression model obtained is:

Y = a + b1X1 + b2X2 + e, the partial test results (t test) show that:

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression X1 and X2

Variables	b	t-count	Sig.	Information
Constant	1.12	–	–	–
X1 (Interpersonal Communication)	0.41	4,812	0	Significant
X2 (Teacher's Attention)	0.37	4,209	0	Significant

Teacher interpersonal communication (X1) has a significant effect on student learning interest (t-count is greater than t-table, significance below 0.05). Teacher attention (X2) also has a significant effect on student learning interest (t-count is greater than t-table; significance below 0.05).

Table 3. Simultaneous F Test and Coefficient of Determination

F-count	Sig.	Conclusion	R	R²	Percentage of Influence
42.51	0	Significant model	0.77	0.593	59.30%

The results of the simultaneous test (F test) show that the F-count value is greater than the F-table (significance below 0.05), which means that interpersonal communication and teacher attention together have a significant effect on students' learning interest. The coefficient of determination (R^2) shows a contribution of around 50–60 percent, which means that half of the variation in students' learning interest can be explained by these two variables, while the rest is influenced by other factors such as family environment, learning facilities, psychological conditions, and internal motivation.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that effective teacher interpersonal communication is not merely a complement, but a key variable that significantly stimulates and maintains student learning interest. The effectiveness of this communication is manifested in several concrete teacher actions: the ability to explain material clearly to eliminate confusion and build understanding, the provision of positive and constructive feedback that motivates rather than judges, active listening skills that make every student's opinion feel important, and interactions imbued with empathy that are able to read and respond to students' emotional states.

The combination of these communication practices creates a psychologically safe and supportive learning environment. In such an environment, students' interest in learning can flourish. Students feel cared for and valued for their presence and thoughts, not merely as recipients of knowledge. They also feel truly understood, both when experiencing learning difficulties and when they have ideas they wish to share. Furthermore, communicative teachers provide a safe space for students to express themselves, ask questions, express opinions, and even try and fail without fear of embarrassment. Ultimately, this feeling of being valued, understood, and having the freedom to express themselves fulfills students' basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and social connectedness. Fulfilling these needs is a powerful trigger for intrinsic motivation, where students learn because they find meaning, satisfaction, and enjoyment in their own learning process, not because of coercion or the lure of external rewards. In other words, effective interpersonal communication from teachers successfully transforms the learning experience from an obligation to an activity that is authentically engaging for students.

This finding aligns with Hurlock's theory, which states that learning interest grows when students feel emotionally comfortable through positive social interactions. It is also supported by research by Ningsih and Wahyudi (2020), which confirms that warm interpersonal communication between teachers can increase

student motivation and participation. For lower-grade students in Islamic elementary schools, this communication skill becomes even more important because they still greatly need emotional closeness to foster a sense of security in learning. Furthermore, teacher attention, which includes concern, empathy, and responsiveness to student needs, has also been shown to have a strong influence on learning interest, as seen in teachers' ability to understand student difficulties, provide reinforcement, and provide emotional support, thus creating a sense of comfort and high intrinsic motivation. This finding aligns with the results of research by Hakim (2019), which shows that teacher attention increases student engagement, as well as the Self-Determination theory of Deci and Ryan (2000), which explains that teacher attention fulfills students' psychological needs for relatedness, thus fostering intrinsic motivation.

Simultaneously, both variables—interpersonal communication and teacher attention—showed a significant influence on student learning interest, confirming that harmonious interpersonal relationships are an important foundation in shaping learning interest. Interpersonal communication provides the structure of interaction, while teacher attention provides emotional meaning, thus creating a conducive learning environment, as reinforced by Lubis's (2021) study on the importance of the quality of teacher-student relationships to academic interest. In the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools), which have a humanist-religious character, interpersonal interaction and teacher attention are integral parts of education because teachers serve not only as instructors but also as role models in morals and empathy. This indicates that positive emotional interactions and a supportive learning environment play a significant role in fostering intrinsic motivation in MI students, especially at the elementary school age, which is at the concrete-operational stage of development and is strongly influenced by the quality of personal relationships with teachers.

This study presents several significant novelties in the study of elementary education. First, it focuses specifically on the context of lower grades (I-III) of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school), a unique educational environment that integrates Islamic values with general knowledge, where the emotional and cognitive characteristics of students at this level are highly specific and vulnerable to external influences. Second, it integrates two key variables, interpersonal communication and teacher attention—which have often been studied separately —to examine their simultaneous influence on students' learning interest. This holistic approach provides a comprehensive perspective on how the quality of teacher-student relationships builds the foundation of intrinsic motivation. Third, it shifts the paradigm from an orientation toward cognitive learning outcomes to the learning process by placing learning interest as the primary variable, which is highly relevant to the demands of 21st-century education and Society 5.0, which emphasizes the importance of a lifelong love of learning. Fourth, it provides strong quantitative empirical evidence of the significant contribution of the combination of communication and teacher attention (59.3%) to learning interest in faith-based educational environments, while enriching the body of Islamic education with data supporting the importance of building human relationships in the learning process. Fifth, the findings of this study have measurable practical implications for MI teachers by offering a fundamental model for strengthening teachers' relational and emotional competencies as a strategy for increasing interest in learning, going beyond mere reliance on sophisticated media or learning methods.

Practically, this research provides a significant contribution to various stakeholders. For elementary school teachers, the findings can serve as a reference in developing more participatory and dialogic learning strategies, with attention to the quality of communication and individual attention to each student. For madrasah institutions, the results of this study can serve as a basis for developing teacher professional development programs that focus on improving interpersonal communication competencies and emotional intelligence. For education offices, the findings can be used as considerations in formulating policies to improve the quality of basic education that not only focus on cognitive aspects but also strengthen the socio-emotional dimension of learning. For parents, this research can raise awareness about the importance of choosing a school environment that not only pursues academics but also pays attention to the quality of teacher-student interactions.

Despite its careful design, this study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, it focused only on two independent variables: interpersonal communication and teacher attention, while many other variables may influence student learning interest, such as learning methods, infrastructure, parental support, and student psychological factors. Second, the study's limited scope to one particular Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school) requires caution in generalizing the findings, given the potential differences in the characteristics and culture of each madrasah. Third, this study employed a quantitative approach with a questionnaire as its primary instrument, which has limitations in exploring respondents' subjective meanings and experiences in depth. Fourth, the cross-sectional design employed only provides a snapshot of a single point in time and therefore cannot reveal the dynamics of changes in student learning interest over a long period. Fifth, this study relied on student perceptions as the primary data source, which may be influenced by social bias and emotional states at the time of completing the questionnaire.

CONCLUSION

Based on the overall data analysis and discussion conducted, this study concludes that, both partially and simultaneously, interpersonal communication and teacher attention have been proven to have a significant influence on the learning interest of students in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Specifically, teacher interpersonal communication, which includes the ability to explain material clearly, provide constructive feedback, and interact empathetically, has been proven to create a safe and comfortable learning environment where students feel valued and are encouraged to actively engage in learning. Meanwhile, teacher attention, manifested through empathy, concern, and responsiveness to students' academic and non-academic needs, has succeeded in building a strong emotional bond that triggers the emergence of intrinsic motivation in learning. Together, these two variables contribute 59.3% to student learning interest, while the remainder is influenced by other factors outside the research model. The findings of this study further confirm the importance of implementing a humanistic approach in the learning process, especially at the elementary education level such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The results of the study prove that the relational and emotional aspects of teacher-student interactions are important foundations for building sustainable learning interest. In the context of the Society 5.0 era, which emphasizes a human-centric approach, this study confirms that the quality of interpersonal relationships between teachers and students cannot be ignored, but rather becomes a determining factor in fostering long-term learning interest. The practical implications of these findings emphasize the need to strengthen

interpersonal communication competencies and the ability to demonstrate genuine concern as effective strategies to increase students' learning interest, while also preparing them to become lifelong learners capable of adapting to the increasingly complex demands of the times.

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