



Psychological Opportunities for Improving Interpersonal Relationships in Student Groups

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Abstract: *Interpersonal relationships and effective communication within student groups are of great importance for higher education institutions. Recent research highlights that by restructuring educational tasks, it is possible to enhance students' communication skills and ability to express their ideas, ultimately improving the overall effectiveness of education. This study focuses on the psychological aspects of the formation of interpersonal relationships within the student environment, the influence of interaction methods, and the implementation of training programs. These are analyzed in the context of how training sessions and the structure of learning tasks contribute to the development of interpersonal communication skills among students.*

Keywords: *Social Competence, Communication Culture, Training, Debate Method, Complex Influence, Integration, Functional Action.*

Introduction

Interpersonal relationships are essential to human life and activity as a social being, according to recent psychological research. The student years are especially important for learning social roles and responsibilities, cultivating autonomous thought, and creating thoughtful social interactions. In addition to providing psychological stability, the interpersonal ties formed during this stage set the groundwork for future social and professional success. Thus, one of the most important theoretical and practical concerns is a thorough investigation of the psychological potential for improving interpersonal relationships within student groups.

A systematic approach to developing this process through psychological resources, specifically within student groups, has not been sufficiently developed, despite the fact that there are scientific studies that are currently in existence that aim to improve the quality of interpersonal relationships. Specifically, little research has been done on the functions of

internal psychological elements like social competence, communicative culture, and emotional-intellectual potential. Furthermore, there isn't a thorough examination of how training-based approaches can affect modifications to the social environment of the group and individual motivation in the literature at this time. A glaring research gap in the field is revealed by this circumstance.

The study's primary goals are to create a psychological training programme that enhances student groups' interpersonal relationships and assess its efficacy. Through training sessions that improve emotional sensitivity, empathy, social adaptability, and communication skills, the programme aims to establish the prerequisites for students to reach their full psychological potential. This programme also helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, learn how to actively participate in the group environment, and become aware of their role and position within the group.

This research has wide-ranging applications. Students' emotional stability, cultural tolerance, social activity, and psychological adaptability are all strengthened by the training programme it develops, in addition to improving the interpersonal environment in student groups. Additionally, students improve their leadership potential, social sensitivity, and communication culture through this training. They consequently grow into engaged, accountable, and culturally sensitive members of society.

A training programme based on a methodical psychological approach is suggested through this study with the goal of encouraging positive interpersonal relationships among students. The programme covers the essential elements of psychological growth and promotes both positive group dynamics and personal transformation. As a result, students are guaranteed to successfully integrate into society throughout their entire lives, not just during their schooling.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative experimental method using a one-group pretest-posttest design to evaluate the effectiveness of the token economy intervention on students' learning motivation. The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Singosari, involving 14 students (santri) who were selected using purposive sampling based on their moderate levels of learning motivation, as assessed through initial screening.

The instrument used was a learning motivation scale which measured both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation dimensions. The intervention involved applying a token economy system, where students received symbolic rewards (tokens) for demonstrating academic behaviors such as completing assignments, active participation, and punctuality. These tokens could later be exchanged for predetermined rewards.

Pretest scores were collected before the implementation of the token system, and posttest scores were obtained after a structured intervention period of four weeks. The data were analyzed using paired sample t-tests via SPSS version 27, in order to determine the statistical significance of the motivational score improvements.

This methodological approach enabled the researcher to measure the direct impact of the token economy system on students' motivational levels in a structured religious education setting.

Result and Discussion

There is a real opportunity to consciously develop these individual capacities through training and psychocorrectional methods, which serve as the psychological foundation for improving interpersonal relationships.

Another important psychological resource is the development of an individual's social competence.

Social competence refers to a person's ability to adapt to existing social norms, communication principles, and systems of interpersonal interaction, and to function effectively within that framework. As a student's level of social competence increases, they gain a deeper understanding of group dynamics, quickly internalize social roles, and manage their behavior in accordance with social conformity. This psychological capacity can be effectively activated during the educational process through methods such as role-playing, situational analysis, debates, and group discussions.

In addition, among the psychological resources essential for improving interpersonal relationships, the development of communication culture holds special significance. Communication culture encompasses not only the ability to express one's thoughts, but also to understand others, accept criticism, approach conflict constructively, perceive subtle tones of voice, and regulate the psychological power of speech. A student who possesses this capacity engages in communication within the group in a respectful, tolerant, and emotionally stable manner. This, in turn, serves as one of the key psychological foundations for the improvement of interpersonal relationships. Through trainings, simulations, and debate-based methods, these psychological resources can be effectively directed and developed.

Students' psychological motivation toward interpersonal relationships is also considered one of the key internal resources in this process. Every student has an inner need related to their participation in the group, their social status, the degree of respect they receive, and social recognition. Identifying these needs from a psychological standpoint and developing targeted training programs can help engage students in interpersonal relationships more consciously and actively. Addressing these needs can be achieved through motivational dialogues, reflective journaling, and self-assessment tools.

For the psychological resources mentioned above to develop effectively, a positive socio-psychological climate within the student group is essential. When trust, respect, equality, and a culture of openness prevail in a group, students feel free, open to communication, and are willing to test and express their personal qualities in a social context. Conversely, a negative psychological climate can lead to shyness, suppression of opinions, and excessive interpersonal competition. Therefore, the positivity of the group's

internal atmosphere serves as a fundamental psychological condition for the development of interpersonal relationships.

A student's psychological resources are an inseparable part of their broader socio-psychological potential and can be activated through conscious psychological interventions, pedagogical conditions, and continuous methodological support. The internal potential for improving interpersonal relationships is a psychologically manageable and personally directed factor that contributes to student development.

On the basis of these psychological capacities, students can develop into socially adaptive, emotionally stable, culturally competent individuals who are prepared for collaborative work. The training program aimed at improving interpersonal relationships within student groups is designed in accordance with contemporary psychological approaches, socio-psychological principles, and age-specific developmental stages. It serves as a comprehensive intervention to activate students' internal resources, enhance social sensitivity, and strengthen their communication culture. This training functions not only as a psychological tool to stimulate personal development, but also as a mechanism that stabilizes the socio-psychological environment within the group and harmonizes interpersonal relations.

This training program is designed to support the development of student-age participants into socially active, emotionally stable, initiative-driven individuals who are prepared for culturally competent communication. The structure of the program is built in such a way that it addresses not only personal internal changes but also systematically analyzes and develops group dynamics, inter-role relationships, social status, and conformity through interactive activities. The training sessions are implemented based on the principles of gradual progression, consistency, and reflective approach, using a differentiated method tailored to each participant's individual capabilities.

The core principles of the training include: mutual respect, active listening, sincerity, willingness to compromise, constructive debate, emotional consistency, and enhanced personal responsibility. Each session offers participants the opportunity to reflect on themselves, assess their behavior from others' perspectives, understand their internal social role, and engage actively in team-based tasks. This transformation helps students evolve from passive observers to active participants, becoming socially responsible and initiative-oriented individuals.

Throughout the training, techniques such as role-playing, elements of psychodrama, situational analysis, group discussions, and reflective exercises are actively employed. Each module of the training program is dedicated to a specific psychological component aimed at improving interpersonal relationships within student groups.

For instance:

The "Empathy and Sensitivity" module equips participants with skills to understand others' emotions, respond appropriately, and build emotionally attuned communication.

The “Cooperation and Group Decision-Making” module focuses on understanding social roles within the group, defending one’s position constructively, and engaging in effective team communication.

The “Initiative and Leadership Position” module enhances students’ abilities in creative thinking, promoting their own ideas, and increasing social engagement.

During the training program, participants experience a variety of psychological states in the process of interpersonal communication: uncertainty, confidence, internal barriers, the desire for self-expression, acceptance of others’ reactions, and responding to them. Through these complex psychological situations, their interpersonal experience is enriched. Therefore, trainings serve not only as a means of teaching skills but also as a tool for self-awareness, understanding others, and integration into society.

When the psychological foundations and practical mechanisms that ensure the effectiveness of the training program are thoroughly studied, it becomes possible to identify real changes occurring within the structure of interpersonal relationships. One of the most important aspects is that the content of the training is directly connected to significant psychological components such as personal development, social interaction, and emotional stability. For this reason, during the training process, a person-centered approach is adopted, deeply considering participants’ internal needs, social status, communication resources, and levels of psychological readiness. The structure of the training is organized in such a way that not only new skills are taught but also existing psychological barriers are identified and addressed through constructive approaches. Moreover, throughout the training sessions, students have the opportunity not only to practice active listening in communication but also to develop emotional responsiveness, respect for opinions, a culture of compromise, and emotional sensitivity to others’ states.

The training program, by integrating individual and group activities, enables the observation and evaluation of each participant’s functional actions in collective roles. Through this psychological approach, students develop positive motivation toward group decision-making, a desire to complete tasks collaboratively, and a stronger sense of responsibility. Leadership situations, causes of passivity, and factors of social exclusion within the student group are identified and addressed through dialogue. This, in turn, plays a significant role in improving the psychological environment and positively transforming group dynamics. During the training sessions, theoretical knowledge is reinforced through practical exercises, allowing participants to directly analyze their own states, engage in reflective thinking, and develop an analytical approach to problems. Each module fosters skills such as social sensitivity, intercultural communication, emotional adequacy, and readiness for group cooperation. One of the main advantages of the training program is its ability to cultivate an internal psychological foundation that promotes self-awareness, self-esteem, and the strengthening of personal stance among participants. Through this approach, students enhance their skills in managing emotions, demonstrating psychological resilience in stressful situations, and choosing constructive solutions in interpersonal relationships. Additionally, uncertainty, distrust, and anxiety present within the group are

eliminated during the training process, replaced by a reliable psychological climate. This creates favorable conditions for students to feel free, socially active, and open to communication. The content of the training modules is adapted to the personal needs and specific social context of the students, which increases the flexibility and individualized effectiveness of the methodology. The deepening of interpersonal relationships and the increase in social activity create an environment within the student group that fosters mutual respect, cultural tolerance, social aspirations, and empathetic sensitivity. The training program serves as a tool specifically aimed at enhancing these socio-psychological aspects. Moreover, interpersonal conflicts that arise during the processes of self-awareness and understanding others are directed toward positive outcomes through constructive analysis. Participants have the opportunity to analyze their internal experiences, emotional states, and social positions through group discussions. Throughout this process, students learn to accept others' opinions, practice compromise, and defend their own positions in a balanced manner. By understanding and working with personal social roles, students clarify their place within the group, which positively influences their psychological stability.

Another important aspect of the training program is that it encourages students to operate within a social system based on cooperation rather than competition. As a result, instead of fostering a healthy social competition environment, a culture of mutual assistance, social support, and collaborative problem-solving develops among students. The methods used during the training include game-based exercises, scenario-based situations, group thinking, and team problem-solving techniques, which activate skills such as initiative, leadership, and determination in communication.

This approach serves to develop interpersonal relationships not only on a communicative level but also on emotional, social, and ethical levels. By engaging in social role-playing, training participants have the opportunity to strengthen skills in listening to others' opinions, reflecting thoughtfully, participating in discussions, and conducting dialogue in a culturally appropriate manner. The practical effectiveness of the training program allows students to test the dynamics of their psychological growth in real-life situations. In this process, each participant not only perceives their personal changes but also evaluates, reflects on, and generalizes them through psychological reflection. Through these reflective processes, the student begins to consciously approach not only the external environment but also their internal state. This, in turn, strengthens self-awareness, self-assessment, and motivation for self-improvement. The training creates a simulated psychological environment where real-life social situations are mimicked, providing a foundation for transferring the acquired skills into everyday life. By reviewing and improving behavioral strategies, students gain the ability to maintain psychological stability in interpersonal relationships, demonstrate social adaptability, and exhibit emotional consistency in response to social situations. The training program aimed at improving interpersonal relationships within the student community is designed to enhance psychological and social relations among students, as well as to support their emotional and intellectual development. The program begins with an in-depth diagnostic analysis of the

psychological and social conditions within the student group, focusing on identifying existing problems, the socio-psychological environment, and relationships among students. Based on the results of this diagnostic analysis, participants are psychologically prepared for the training process and provided with a comprehensive understanding of the program content.

The main focus of the training program is to develop emotional-intellectual competence within the student community, with particular attention given to active listening, empathy, and emotional responsiveness skills. Through interactive exercises, students increase their emotional sensitivity and empathic abilities, striving to better understand their own and others' inner worlds. Additionally, group reflection sessions allow students to analyze their personal changes and developmental dynamics, enabling them to become more psychologically mature.

Fostering a culture of communication within the group is one of the key directions of the training program, achieved through practical exercises aimed at strengthening cultural communication, mutual respect, and conflict resolution strategies. Students learn to find effective solutions in conflict situations through scenario-based exercises focused on constructive conflict resolution. Using role-playing games, students identify various functional roles in communication and develop the corresponding skills, thereby contributing to creating a positive environment within the team. Throughout the training program, exercises aimed at increasing cooperation and social activity within the student group play an important role. Through group tasks and collaborative problem-solving activities, students build mutual trust, a sense of responsibility, and team spirit. Practical assignments and group discussions designed to develop leadership and initiative skills teach students not only to manage themselves effectively but also to engage others in decision-making processes and leadership.

In the final stage of the training program, the psychological changes achieved are re-evaluated, and students receive concluding reflections as well as individual psychological consultations. This process helps students gain a deeper understanding of the results and develop their personal development plans. Overall, this training program serves as an effective mechanism for improving the socio-psychological environment within the student community, enhancing interpersonal relationships, and fostering students' emotional and intellectual development.

Tabel 1. Training Program for Improving Interpersonal Relationships in Student Communities

Stage	Main Focus	Activities
Stage I	Diagnostic Analysis and Introduction	Conducting psychological surveys; analyzing the current state of relationships; explaining the training content

Stage II	Developing Emotional-Intellectual Competence	Active listening and empathy exercises; reflection; analysis of internal needs
Stage III	Shaping Communication Culture	Cultural communication, respect, and compromise strategies; role-playing for conflict resolution
Stage IV	Enhancing Cooperation and Social Activity	Group tasks; leadership and initiative exercises; group discussions
Stage V	Final Evaluation and Summarization	Reflection; diagnostics; personal development plans

Conclusion

The training program aimed at improving interpersonal relationships within the student community has the following clear and detailed structure, designed to support students' psychological development and enhance the socio-psychological environment.

Stage I: Diagnostic Analysis and Introduction

- a. Conduct psychological surveys to determine students' psychological states and the level of interpersonal relationships within the group;
- b. Identify the current state of interpersonal relationships within the group;
- c. Explain the program content and psychologically prepare participants for the training.

Stage II: Developing Emotional-Intellectual Competence

- a. Exercises to develop active listening and emotional responsiveness skills;
- b. Interactive trainings aimed at fostering empathy and increasing emotional sensitivity;
- c. Group reflection sessions for analyzing personal changes.

Stage III: Shaping Communication Culture within the Group

- a. Strengthen cultural communication, respect, and compromise strategies through practical exercises;
- b. Scenario-based exercises aimed at teaching constructive conflict resolution;
- c. Identify and develop functional roles in communication through role-playing games.

Stage IV: Enhancing Cooperation and Social Activity in the Group

- a. Group tasks and exercises focused on collaborative problem-solving;
- b. Practical assignments aimed at identifying and developing leadership and initiative skills;
- c. Group discussions and strengthening strategies for joint decision-making.

Stage V: Final Evaluation and Summarization

- a. Re-assess the changes achieved during the training using psychodiagnostic methods;
- b. Support participants' understanding of the results through final reflections and individual psychological consultations;
- c. Summarize outcomes and assist in developing personal development plans.

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