Immediacy in Student- Parent Long Distance Communication in Islamic Boarding Schools

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Abstract :
In early 2022, several incidents of violence that occurred in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) were reported in the mass media and several parties highlighted from the role of parents. This study aims to obtain an overview of the communication between Islamic boarding school students and their parents by using the aspect of immediacy in interpersonal communication, which consists of the elements openness, empathy, supportiveness, and psychological closeness. The research was conducted using the qualitative method, interviews with five students. The study found that, students who do not have intense communication with their parents will try to be open to other parties such as friends and teachers. Students who have a low intensity of communication with their parents will form empathy to understand the burden on their parents, who are busy working to meet the needs of the family. Students who communicate intensively with their parents feel supported, more optimistic and have clear goals after completing their study. Students who feel that they lack parental support, will develop lack psychological closeness, show more sadness, and lack of optimism. This research contributes to the form of family communication of the Islamic boarding school students in using immediacy elements for supporting their teneegers.

Keywords: *immediacy* aspect, student –parents, communication.

Abstrak

Pada awal tahun 2022 sejumlah berita di media masa memuat beberapa peristiwa kasus kekerasan dilingkungan pesantren dan sejumlah pihak menyoroti dari peran orangtua siswa. Penelitian bertujuan untuk memperoleh gambaran tentang komunikasi siswa pesantren dengan orangtuanya melalui aspek *immediacy* dari konsep komunikasi interpersonal yang didalamnya terdapat elemen keterbukaan *(openness),* empati (*empathy*), dukungan *(supportiveness),* dan kedekatan fisik *(psychological closeness).* Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan proses wawancara kepada lima siswa. Hasil penelitian menemukan dari aspek *immediacy* pada elemen keterbukaan *(openness)* siswa pesantren yang tidak memiliki komunikasi secara intens dengan orang tuanya akan berupaya untuk terbuka kepada teman dan guru. Bagi siswa pesantren yang intensitas komunikasinya dengan orang tua rendah membentuk rasa empati (*empathy*) tentang kondisi orang tuanya dengan memahami beban orangtuanya yang sibuk karena harus memenuhi kebutuhan ekonomi. Siswa yang dapat berkomunikasi intens dengan orangtuanya merasa memperolah dukungan *(supportiveness)* yang menimbulkan optimisme dalam aktifitas sehari-hari hingga mampu memiliki cita-cita setelah lulus dari pesantren. Sebaliknya siswa yang kurang memperoleh dukungan orangtuanya karena minimnya pertemuan mengakibatkan kurangnya kedekatan psikologis *(psychological closeness)* dan siswa lebih menunjukkan kesedihan, kurang

percaya diri dan tidak memiliki optimisme merencanakan kehidupan selanjutnya. Penelitian ini berkontribusi sebagai salah satu tawaran untuk menggunakan aspek *immediacy* dalam komunikasi antara orang tua dan anak remaja.

Kata kunci : aspek immediacy,orang tua-anak, komunikasi

Introduction

In early 2022, Indonesians were shocked by a number of news reports on violence within the vicinity of universities and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*)committed by lecturers or teachers against their students, where some acts of physical and sexual violence were found (Assifa, 2021; Gautama, 2022; Rachmawati, 2022; Sutriyanto, 2021)

The Indonesian Child Protection Commission released that within 2021, there were 18 reports of violence lodged, and 77.8% of them were committed in the vicinity of Islamic boarding schools under the patronage of the ministry of religious affairs, with the remainder in institutions under the ministry of education, research, technology, and higher education (*Kekerasan Seksual di Lingkungan*, 2021)

This alarming condition has been reported and analyzed by various printed and electronic media. Those analyses encompassed various points such as unequal power relations between religious teacher (*ustadz*) and student in addition to the isolated system of Islamic boarding school education that potentially enables violence to be committed against students, the lack of government control over the educational process in Islamic boarding schools, the construction of relations between student and teacher that made Islamic boarding school students respect their teachers more than their parents, the parents' inability to get easy access to their children's well-being, potential parents and students being lured with free education, and so on.

According to media reports, one of the supporting elements for the success of Islamic boarding school students is parental involvement in monitoring their children's education in Islamic boarding schools. Studies on communication between an Islamic boarding school student and a teacher or peer are abundant; however, research publications on the relations between parent and child in an Islamic boarding school are scarce.

A few studies on students at Islamic boarding schools have been published. Here, the researchers have attempted to summarize some of those studies to gain a general overview of how

communication is practiced in Islamic boarding school communities. A study by Fitri (2020) finds some problems occur, such as the difference in geographical and cultural backgrounds of students, which results in a communication gap. In contrast, another study by Al Mahmudi in a modern Islamic boarding school shows that foreign students are trying to adapt to the local language and culture (Al Mahmudi et al., 2020) meanwhile, Ramdan and Usman (2021) find teacher-student communication construction through verbal, instructional, personal, and interpersonal communications, which leads to good student-teacher relations. Another study by Utami (2018) outlines that student-teacher communication is simetrical due to unwritten rules and students' respect towards their boarding school's *kyiai* (headmaster). The studies mentioned earlier could outline the communication situation where students live during their study period in an Islamic boarding school, where they are away from their parents. It is hoped that teachers and boarding school managers could fulfill their roles as parents as well as educators.

The role of teachers and boarding school management as dormitory parents was documented in the work of Spina et al., (2019) , who concluded that boarding students feel that they could confide in dormitory parents more than their parents. This is because communication between students and teachers or boarding school administration is more intense than communication between students and their parents. In addition, the biggest problem facing students at boarding schools is homesickness; therefore, developing a warm and supportive relationship like the one they have at home with their parents helps students adjust and succeed (Atli, 2017).

Previous studies mostly highlighted students' relations with other students or teachers in their surrounding school communities; therefore, the researchers find that student-parent communication is the gap that needs to be studied. This is because parents stand as a very important element in an individual's life. Parents who send their children to an Islamic boarding school are still responsible for educating their children, as parental involvement in supervising and building intensive communication with them is still needed.

As a comparison, the researchers summarize some previous studies on student-parent communication. A study by Viola and Wijayani, (2020) finds that many university students claim that they rarely communicate with their parents. Due to their lack of time, they communicate only

when they need something from their parents. Factors that support parent-student distance communication are the availability of communication tools, time, understanding, and openness about themselves and their environment. Meanwhile, physical, economic, and time constraints could be considered as hindering factors. The effectiveness of communication can be viewed through interpersonal communication effectiveness criteria based on a humanistic perspective such as openness, which is dominantly done by parents. This is because a lower intensity of communication results in the inability of children to be open to their parents, which includes negative attitudes without the knowledge of parents. Another criterion is the deep empathy shown by parents towards problems faced by their children; this empathy seems to be decreasing due to parents' busyness. Lastly, parents' tendency to be supportive and a great motivator for their children makes the children always remember their parent's advice (Viola & Wijayani, 2020).

A study by Yudha et al in one of the Islamic higher education institutions finds that the long-distance communication pattern between university students and their parents is two-way stimulus-response communication, with both students and parents mutually responding to the message that they received. It is also found that there is no boundary between students and parents when they communicate (Yudha et al., 2019).

In long-distance communication, the most effective pattern of communication is consensual communication. This pattern creates transparent and effective communication for building a harmonious family. On the other hand, there are some factors that hinder transparent and effective communication, such as time constraints, overload, network problems, and cost. Long-distance communication between students and parents, which is done online through WhatsApp, is believed to be able to strengthen relations and create a harmonious family (Astuti & Intan, 2022).

On other aspects of child and parent communication, it is found that authoritarian and permissive styles of communication are still dominant, while democratic styles are still hardly practiced. Factors that determine child-parent communication style are parents' insights and economic and educational backgrounds (Muttaqin & Azmussya'ni, 2021). A study conducted in Desa Pante Keutapang Aceh, Indonesia, discovered that work stress and the economy are major barriers to parent-child communication (Baharuddin, 2019)). Consistent with another finding of a

study on parent-teen communication problems conducted by Andrianto et al., (2021). These issues include a lack of parent-teen interaction time because parents are too busy working, a lack of parental internet knowledge, fatigue, a lack of focus in parenting, and selfishness (Andrianto et al., 2021). Parents tend to initiate communication, while students tend not to reveal everything that happens to them because they do not want to make their parents worried, their openness toward parents tends to be low, and there is a lack of use of communication technology tools (Sari & Fitri, 2018).

The conversational dimension has a significant correlation with social and personal identity. Meanwhile, conformity has a negative relationship with social identity and a positive relationship with personal identity. After dealing with family status and child position in the family, the conformity dimension modifies the positive relationship between the conversational dimension and social identity significantly (Ramadhana et al., 2019).

From the literature review, the researchers view that the novelty in this study is in the context of long-distance communication processes with a focus on Islamic boarding school students and their parents. This study is from the perspective of students, which implies that its purpose is to identify the communications of Islamic boarders with their parents. From the literature review, the researchers find a gap in studying child-parent communication in the mode of long distance from the perspective of Islamic boarding school students. In this study, the researchers use the concept of immediacy, which is one of the elements of interpersonal communication.

Summarizing the views of on the characteristics of effective communication Richmond et al., (2009) emphasizes that *immediacy* is clearly seen as the most effective form of conversation. Immediacy is a type of communication marked by openness, togetherness, and borderlessness between the speaker and the listener. When we communicate with immediacy, we feel that we have the chance to show our likeness and care—to show that we like something and care for someone. Immediacy is also considered a strategy used to impress others. Hence, it is not surprising if people prefer direct communication without an intermediary. That is because communication using immediacy gives users more chances to show mutual interest with various attitudes. In addition, it is very important to note that immediacy users are very effective in the

processes of teaching and health care (DeVito, 2016) .Furthermore, he elaborated that immediacy can be achieved through verbal and non-verbal communication. It allows us to express ourselves openly, displaying our best qualities, and giving us the freedom to express positively towards our interlocutors, improving the quality of our relationships.On the other hand, the immediacy process allows people to share about general topics and react to one another as a form of immediate response.In addition, immediacy gives a chance to express psychological closeness and openness due to the existence of physical closeness that can be felt. While communicating, one's eye gaze, physical touch, and facial expression are important aspects of showing interest in the interlocutors. This suggests the communicators have the sense of being understood by their interlocutors.

Based on the above, the researchers summarized that immediacy in communication is a form of direct communication that does not even use intermediaries such as communication tools. It is due to the nature of immediacy that it emphasizes openness and physical closeness between message sender and receiver. Both the sender and the receiver have an equal chance to improve the interest in both the message sent and the individuals involved in communication. Because the response is given immediately, the closeness gained through the process of communication is hoped to provide empathy and support to those involved in communication.

This research aims at obtaining an overview of the communication between Islamic boarding school students and their parents using the aspect of immediacy from the concept of interpersonal communication, which includes the elements of openness, empathy, supportiveness, and psychological closeness.

Methode

This study uses qualitative methods, which generally aim to understand the experiences and behaviors of participants. This technique can increase the effectiveness of information taken from a relatively small sample (Patton, 2014). Data collection in this study uses purposive sampling with the assumption that the individuals involved in the research represent people who experience the same phenomenon (Young et al., 2009) . The selection of participants is based on their experience, not their social variables . The data obtained from the interviews was then

analyzed inductively to accommodate the purpose of qualitative research, which emphasized meaning rather than generalization.

Since qualitative research emphasizes the understanding of problems in social life, it is necessary to obtain data based on the conditions of reality or natural settings that are holistic, complex, and detailed. The use of the induction approach in this study aims at compiling theoretical constructions or through disclosing facts as a part of the qualitative paradigm (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018; Yusuf, 2017) .

The methods used are in line with the purpose of this study, which is to identify the aspects of immediacy in communication between Islamic boarding school students and their parents. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five Islamic boarding school students to overview the phenomenon from the students' perspective. Five male and female boarding school students were interviewed, and to enhance the credibility of the data, the researchers did an observation at one of the Islamic boarding schools and arranged discussions with the Islamic boarding school managers.

Result and Discussion

In this study, the researchers focused on communication within the scope of family, which required the researchers to utilize the concept of interpersonal communication. The researchers conducted five interviews, consisting of three with female students and two with male students.

The first informant, NR, is a 19-year-old girl from Medan, South Sumatera. Her mother passed away in 2021, and her father currently works as a masseuse. She used to study at a vocational secondary school, majoring in fashion. She hopes that the skills she has gained will provide her with a source of income. Currently, she is studying at an Islamic boarding school in Cilacap, Central Java, which focuses on fashion training. In addition to being a senior student, she is given the opportunity to work as an assistant teacher at that Islamic boarding school.

NR admitted that she rarely communicates with her father, who is her only remaining parent. She claimed that her father does not really care about her well being, and when he is frustrated, he limits his words when he talks. Her father, who lives with her sisters, unfortunately

does not have a decent, stable job. He opposes his daughter's decision to work outside the home. This is because, according to the father, she can establish a tailoring business at home while she takes care of the household. Only once did she communicate with a member of her extended family. Due to access restrictions, communication between her and other members of her extended family has been hampered.

The second informant was known as "GN," a 19-year-old girl from Garut, West Java. She is currently enrolled in an Islamic boarding school in Depok, West Java, having been there for 5 years. Her father is a freelance cobbler in Cilacap, Central Java, and her mother sells food while managing the household. She has two siblings who are studying at a primary school and staying with her mother in Garut. Her brother lives in Jakarta; he is a scholarship recipient in an undergraduate program majoring in information technology. GN stays at an Islamic boarding school with 150 students owned by an individual. She has a very tight schedule in the Islamic boarding school because, beside studying Islamic religious lessons, she is also exposed to entrepreneurial education in the fields of farming and agriculture. dibidang pertanian, perkebunan, and peternakan. GN feels safe staying near the Islamic boarding school because, in addition to education, the school provides three meals per day.

The third informant was LK, an 18-year-old girl from a remote village in West Java; she is the fourth of twelve siblings. LK has been a senior student at an Islamic boarding school for seven years and serves as a mentor for her juniors. She is in school with her younger brother; her father works as a salesman and always travels out of the city. Her mother manages her family's household and cares for her four siblings, while the rest of the siblings attend an Islamic boarding school not far from their village.

LK's relationship with her parents is good. As an Islamic boarding school senior student, she has relatively more time to communicate with her family compared to her juniors. Her father frequently contacts her; so far, there is no problem between her and her father, and she is very close with her father, which makes it convenient for her to communicate with him. She is aware that her father frequently contacts his relatives to ask about their well-being. In contrast, her mother rarely contacts her, and she understands the reason is because she is busy taking care of her sisters at home. She only has a chance to go home once a year, during the Eid Fitr celebration. She tends

to conceal her problems that she faces at boarding school from her parents because she does not want to put the burden on them. Nonetheless, LK feels that she has never had any serious problems related to her study or her social life in the boarding school, as every time she has a problem, her friends are ready to help.

YS, a 17-year-old male student who spent six years in an Islamic boarding school, was our fourth informant. YS is considered the senior student in the boarding school and is appointed to mentor his juniors. He is the fourth of six siblings; all his siblings are studying at an Islamic boarding school too, although they are not enrolled in the same school as him. His communication with his parents is quite good, as they visit him almost every month to meet his needs. His parent owns a grocery store, and since he was a small kid, YS has been involved in business activities in his parent's store. Beside running a grocery store, YS's parent is also currently managing a weekly Islamic religious study circle in his house every Thursday night. This activity helps him accept the reality that his parents cannot visit him on Fridays as often as before. YS communicates more with his mother than with his busy father. He has more freedom to communicate with his parents via phone calls as a senior student in an Islamic boarding school than his juniors. Aside from that, YS is required to stay at the boarding school during semester break, so he is unable to return home during that time, which includes Eid Fitr.

Our fifth informant is RS, a 20-year-old male student and the sixth of twelve siblings. His brothers and sisters are also studying at the Islamic boarding school. His relationship with his parents is quite good, even though he does not communicate with his younger brothers often. RS communicates with his mother more, despite receiving many messages about the future from his father, who directs him to be a religious figure capable of building society.He can contact his parent any time he needs, although he understands that his parent is busy.

The first element of the immediacy concept is openness among those who are involved in the communication process. The degree of openness in the communication process between an Islamic boarding school student and his parent is determined by the relationship between the two parties prior to the student's enrollment in the boarding school. A student who shows openness toward his parent will be able to communicate with him easily. In contrast, a student who has less

intense communication with his parents will have difficulty being open to them after he has been enrolled in an Islamic boarding school.

Below is a quote from LK on her communication with her parent during his study in an Islamic boarding school:

> *My father is a salesman working outside the city, yet I don't know what he sells; however, he likes to call me and ask about my well-being and that of my siblings in the boarding school. He also asks me whether I still have money or not. I always say that I do, and even if I don't, I feel pity for him as he and my mom have a lot of children to take care of.*

In the case of other students, such as GN and NR, their communication with their parents is carried out as scheduled by the boarding school management. The communication schedule provided by the management is two hours per month, except in the case of an emergency. Students are allowed to be contacted by their parents through the Islamic boarding school management. This limited time to communicate becomes an opportunity to build openness between students and their parents. At the end, the quantity of communication could determine the quality of communication.

GN stated that if she gets a chance to contact her parents, she prefers to call her mother and not her father. She would converse with her mother on general things, such as the well-being of her siblings. Her mother frequently asks about her well-being at the Islamic boarding school. On the other hand, her mother never complains about the problems that she is facing. GN rarely speaks to her father during her boarding school stay; the only time she spends with her family is during school holidays or on time set aside by the administration. She does not even know the exact location where her father is working; the only thing she knows is that her father has a business in a city called Cilacap.

When GN encounters a problem while attending an Islamic boarding school, she frequently wishes to discuss it with her mother. However, due to the lack of time to communicate, she decided to conceal the problem from her mother.

> *"... I feel sad if there is a lesson that I cannot understand. I feel like telling Mom about the problem...But what can I do? I have only limited time to talk to her.*

If I have a problem, I like to share it with the supervisor of the dorm or with the wife of the school chairman, whom I consider my parent. Problems that make me sad are fighting with friends and not feeling well. Aside from that, there are things that make me happy, such as being recognized for my achievements, such as being the best student in class or the best student in the boarding school, and then receiving gifts such as a prayer robe, certificates, and so on".

NR raised the same issue. Because she rarely communicates with her parents, she relies on her friends and those around her at school to share her problems and thoughts.

If I have a problem, I prefer to share it with my friends who know me. In the boarding school, we have Mrs. RF, whom I consider my mother; she is very kind, reminds me to take breakfast, and sometimes she treats me to breakfast, just like my mother. I frequently tell her stories about my family, and I frequently complain about my family's problems.One thing I like the most is when I have time to joke around with my friends and teachers. I am the kind of person who is difficult to get close to and who is open with anyone, so I don't have a special friend.

For some students in an Islamic boarding school, the role of parent can be replaced by individuals who can spare their time listening to their problems. These individuals could be a teacher, religious teacher (ustadz), supervisor, or even the chairman or his wife, who are also considered dormitory parents. As individuals who enter the phase of adolescence, Islamic boarding school students need those who can communicate openly with them, have a conversation with them about simple things, share about their day, listen about problems that they are facing, give guidance, take care of them when they are sick, and appreciate when they have good achievements.

GN has adequate time to communicate with her extended family, such as her aunt or other members of her extended family. However, the conversation with them never lasts long, as she does not have a lot of things to tell them.

Different circumstances are experienced by LK and RS, who have their parents visit at least once a month. This opportunity is used to openly communicate about their daily activities at the Islamic boarding school. Both are aware of any news pertaining to their parents, including if there is any change in their activity; for instance, their parents may become busier because they have to go outside their city to take care of their business. Therefore, we can summarize that a

student's openness towards his parents can be built through physical contact, such as a physical meeting that is done regularly.

The second element of immediacy is empathy, which means an attempt to understand the feelings and circumstances of others. The element of empathy was found among students with parents who are busy working to fulfill the needs of their households, so they are not able to visit their children at the boarding school. One of the statements made by YS expressing empathy for his parents is:

> *"My parent used to come every Friday, but now that he runs a religious study circle at home every Thursday, he is not able to come as often. Even when he does not come often, I am still happy if he does, because I can have time to talk and tell stories".*

LK also responded, attempting to comprehend her parents' circumstances, as they rarely visit her at the boarding school.

> *"My father calls me frequently to inquire about my well-being and the well-being of my siblings at the boarding school.He doesn't come over here because he is too busy working outside the city. I am aware that my father is too busy to visit me. When he calls, he will tell stories about his well-being and his work. He also likes to call my siblings".*

Empathy can be observed in students when they tell stories about their parents' activities, whether their fathers are working or their mothers are managing the households. Students in an Islamic boarding school are aware of the conditions of their parents and thankful for whatever they have. Some students are aware that staying at the boarding school helps their parents relieve their burdens. In addition, some students are thankful for the chance to study at the boarding school because they believe that it supports their future ambitions, as stated by GN and RN:

> *"Being here is making me happy; I can have three meals a day, I have many friends, and on top of that, the environment here is very conducive to learning."*

The third element of immediacy is supportiveness. The researchers sensed more spirit and self-confidence from the informants who get support from their parents. Furthermore, students who communicate well with their parents can express their plans for the future.Because of his parents' early support, YS, for example, has already made up his mind about his future.

> *"I intend to study religious propagation science through a scholarship in Brunei Darussalam or the Middle East.My parents give me full support for that".*

The same idea was also expressed by RS, who aspires to continue his studies at the Islamic University of Madinah to specialize in the field of Quranic interpretation due to his admiration for the preachers in Indonesia who are able to memorize the Quranic verses and explain their meanings to people. He said:

> *"I really want to pursue my studies in Egypt because my father always reminds me that he wants his children to be religious leaders in society. My grandfather used to study in a classic Islamic boarding school in his village, where he learned classical religious books. My idol is Ustadz Adi Hidayat, who graduated from Libya".*

Students who have a sufficient intensity of communication with their parents before and after admission to an Islamic boarding school tend to have better confidence compared to those who have insufficient communication. Their parents have directed them to build their future, or at least supported them in choosing the area of specialization or university that they will go to.

On the other hand, students who do not have sufficient communication with their parents tend to have less confidence in their daily lives and their future. For them, life is to be lived year after year. The most important thing for them is to be thankful for whatever they get in their daily life at the Islamic boarding school. They lack the confidence to pursue larger goals, such as furthering their education or starting a small business in the future.The researchers concluded that they have little chance to develop their thoughts due to the lack of communication with those who can guide them to a better future or give them a good example to be followed.

For boarding school students, time to communicate with their parents is irreplaceable. However, without proper communication, parents are unaware of what their children are going through at boarding school.Furthermore, a lack of communication may lead to parents' lack of understanding of the education system in Islamic boarding school, so whenever they have the opportunity to communicate with their children, many of them ask many questions about the education system to their children.This could minimize the possibility of having more intimate and meaningful communication between student and parent.

According to the informants, the most important thing for them as teenagers is to find adults with whom they feel confidant enough to talk and express their feelings. Aside from their problems with friends and negativities such as sadness, disappointment, homesickness, anger, and inconvenience being heard, students also believe that their hard work should be recognized.

In the age of adolescence, one is expected to be close to his peer group; thus, in the case of boarding school students, peers are considered to be very important partners in their communication. Nevertheless, parents' role as adults is irreplaceable by peers. Hence, in an Islamic boarding school environment, adults are needed to function as parents, especially when biological parents are unable to play their role as parents, even from a distance.

Parents' limitations are mostly in the aspect of economics, which forces them to concentrate more on fulfilling their needs; some of them need to travel across cities to work. Beside economics, their presence in an Islamic boarding school is also hindered by their obligation to take care of other children at home who need more attention from their parents. Thus, Islamic boarding school students, who are considered young adults, are not being properly given sufficient attention. Furthermore, the communication schedule established by management provides little opportunity to establish a good communication process between students and parents; thus, students require adults who live their daily lives at the boarding school and who play the role of their parents during their study at an Islamic boarding school.

For many people who come from low-income groups, the existence of Islamic boarding schools gives them a solution for their children's education. However, the children's need to grow into independent adults does not only depend on a decent system of education; moreover, the involvement of many parties to fulfill their emotional needs is needed to help them grow into better individuals.

The roles of adults in an Islamic boarding structure are to monitor and facilitate the physical and academic needs of students and to fulfill their emotional needs by playing the role of their friends who listen and respond to their inquiries. Messages exchanged in student-parent communication mostly range from general conversation, such as a student's daily experience, to

very specific personal problems. This was stated by GN, to whom she confides when she needs to discuss her very personal problems:

> *"Yes, whenever I'm sick or have a problem, I don't tell my mother; instead, I talk to my supervisor or a senior at the boarding school who can help me."*

The next element of immediacy is psychological closeness. Psychological closeness can certainly be built through various processes, including physical closeness that leads to openness in the communication process and the intensity of regular meetings between students and parents.

Psychological closeness can be built through parents' regular visits to the boarding school. Parents' visits are the most anticipated by the students. This visit builds the communication process and gives an opportunity for both students and parents to give their attention to each other through physical closeness to fulfill students' emotional needs. Non-verbal communication is considered a phase of the interpersonal communication process, and with its immediacy, it can effectively affect the psychological well-being of the students, despite the fact that the number of physical visits by their parents is as low as once a month. Nevertheless, there are many things that can be supporting elements of student-parent closeness; one of the elements is the relationships that have been built before the student's departure for the boarding school. These relations have built psychological closeness through the inclusion of the student in his parent's daily activities, as stated by YS:

> *"When I was a little kid, I used to help my parents in their grocery store. I was tasked with helping my parents serve customers, so I know how my parents established their business".*

Some students, on the other hand, have developed low psychological closeness because they have not been admitted to the boarding school since they were small children, which has resulted in their current low psychological closeness.Conflict mostly arises due to the difference in expectations between parents and students. When students have been admitted to the boarding school, the relationship can worsen, especially when the need for family members increases, which forces parents to work harder and spend more time working. Hence, some parents are forced to stay away from the city for some time. Due to distance and economic constraints, they are not able to visit their children at the boarding school regularly. At the end, less physical contact between

parents and students leads to less psychological closeness. Hence, in the interview process, some students with less psychological closeness show more sadness, less confidence, and a lack of optimism in planning their future.

At a later stage, the study's findings yield some conclusions. First, there are problems found in the direct communication process through immediacy that face all Islamic boarding school students in different aspects and levels. For some students, their problem is mostly economic; they are from lower-class families, and their parents are forced to work harder to fulfill their basic needs. Because it requires parents' presence in the boarding school and costs them time and money, parents with relatively low-income face constraints in having direct communication with their children in boarding school. Other problems are parents' low education and the distance between boarding school and home, which hinder parental involvement and limit direct communication.

A study by Maulidina and Pusptawati is parallel with this research on the problems of communication facing boarding school students and their parents. While the problems of time and medium of communication can be taken care of, the physical presence of a parent is very important and irreplaceable, and the bonding between parent and child has a very positive influence on happiness in life (Maulidina & Puspitawati, 2021). Therefore, family support is needed in strengthening family traditions and optimizing parent-child bonding to maintain the happiness of the Z generation, both male and female. Hence, with the problems of parent-student communication, whether due to economics or previous relationships, it is concluded that parental support leads students to define their future. As they are now in the age of adolescence, they are going to be adults soon and must be responsible for their lives.

Secondly, for the observation of the previous student-family relationship, the work of Maulidina and Puspitawati can be benchmarked in this study, as there are different levels and categories of family tradition. In addition, in terms of parent-child bonding and happiness, it is classified as moderate. Meanwhile, similar to the previous study, this study was conducted on male and female informants and yielded the same conclusion that there is no significant difference in family tradition and family bonding; however, female students show significantly lower than male students (Maulidina & Puspitawati, 2021) . Furthermore, the study found that gender has a negative impact on the happiness of the G generation. Furthermore, family traditions and parent-child

bonding have a significant positive impact on happiness. The family tradition, which includes open communication, involving the students since the early days of their lives in their parents' activities, spending time to have physical meetings, and being open in discussing the future, will determine the happiness of the students.

Thirdly, the finding of a previous study by Ramadhana et al., (2019) on family communication emphasizes the importance of the conversational dimension, which correlates significantly with social and personal identities. While the confirmity dimension works to moderate a significantly positive relationship between the conversational dimension and social identity. Thus, this publication is in line with the earlier study, which found that Islamic boarding school students who have a high intensity of communication with their parents would show their social identity clearly within the boarding school vicinity. In this study, the researchers were able to obtain a clear picture of the students' social identities. Students who are involved in this study mostly play their role as the ones who are responsible as heads of groups or good seniors for their juniors. One of them was appointed to be a part-time teacher due to her acknowledged skills. In addition, students are able to be partners in school management with different roles to play. Although the students are young, the Islamic boarding school system has provided them with an avenue to develop their social identity; on the other hand, their personal identity has also been formed as they are able to describe their future ambitions.

Conclusion

From the interviews, the researchers found some problems related to the conditions of parents in the process of communication with their children. These problems are, firstly, an economic problem that makes parents forced to spend more time focusing on their work; some of them need to go out of their city; consequently, they are unable to visit their children at boarding school. Secondly, students have siblings who stay at home under the care of their mother. Thus, the students are aware of the limited time available for their mother to visit and communicate with them. Thirdly, some students who were not in a good relationship with their parents before being enrolled in the boarding school are experiencing a worse relationship with their parents after their admission to the boarding school.

The element of parents' openness in communication with their children who are students at the boarding school depends on their profession, their busyness in taking care of their siblings at home, and their ambition for their children's future after they have completed their study at the boarding school.

The element of empathy, which is one of the elements of immediacy, is felt by the students toward their parents. The students mostly understand that their parents have a responsibility to fulfill the basic needs of the family, which makes them unable to visit their children at the boarding school. In addition, the limitation of their parents' economic capability also makes them unable to communicate with their children physically at the boarding school. The empathies are also formed through students' previous communication with their parents and their involvement in their activities, which helped students understand the conditions of their parents. The students look forward to their parents' visits to the boarding school because it allows them to gain their parents' attention in the form of physical closeness and emotional fulfillment. Non-verbal communication can be fulfilled when parents visit their children in boarding school, even if it is only once a month. Moreover, this can possibly form the child's sense of empathy toward their parents.

The element of supportiveness is also sensed by the students in the communication process with their parents related to their well-being in their studies at the boarding school. This communication usually consists of questions pertaining to the health of the students and how they cope with the lessons at the boarding school. Physical support is felt by the students when they are regularly visited by their parents to bring them what they need at the boarding school. Furthermore, students' ability to express their desire to pursue higher education abroad with a specific area of concentration reflects their parents' support through the communication process. The supportiveness that has been built through communication between parents and students makes students feel confident about their future.

Psychological closeness can be dominantly seen in students who were visited by their parents on a regular basis or at least contacted through a phone call. When students get attention from their parents, even if it is not in the form of direct face-to-face communication, they sense psychological closeness, which leads to positivity and optimism. Psychological openness is sensed less by students who never get visited by their parents or even by those who are rarely visited or

contacted by their parents. It means that direct communication, or immediacy, does not take place. The less parent-student communication takes place, whether physically or through phone calls, the less psychological closeness the students feel. This circumstance affects social relations, which are later compensated by other people who expect support from their friends, teachers, or school management. Consequentially, students do not have the audacity to plan their future.

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