

## Communication Strategy in *Smart Education* for Building the Trust of Parents of Children with Disabilities in Parepare City

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### Abstract

*This study examines the communication strategies implemented by Smart Education in building the trust of parents of children with disabilities in Parepare City. This research stems from the need to understand how trust among parents of children with disabilities can be developed, as the limitations experienced by their children make parents more cautious in entrusting assistance to others. Therefore, appropriate communication strategies by educational institutions are essential in creating a sense of security and trust. This study is descriptive qualitative study that describes the data obtained in the field related to the procedures used by directors and tutors in build the trust of parents of children with disabilities in Parepare City. Data collection was carried out through interviews, as well as through books and other literature. These sources were used as theoretical foundations and references to strengthen the analysis of the field data. This study shows that Smart Education builds the trust of parents of children with disabilities through five main approaches: empathetic communication, participatory communication, humanistic communication, the ability to overcome information challenges, and specific trust building strategies. Empathy is demonstrated through an emotional understanding of parents, participation is reflected in their active involvement in the educational process, and humanistic communication is shown through warm and equal relationships. Supported by the theories of Symbolic Interactionism and Communicator Credibility, the findings affirm that communication grounded in empathy, participation, and honesty not only strengthens parental trust but also contributes to more effective inclusive education practices.*

**Keywords :** *Communication Strategy, Parental Trust, Children With Disabilities*

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini membahas strategi komunikasi yang diterapkan oleh Smart Education dalam membangun kepercayaan orang tua anak difabel di Kota Parepare. Penelitian ini berangkat dari kebutuhan memahami kepercayaan orang tua anak difabel dapat dibangun, karena keterbatasan anak membuat orang tua cenderung lebih berhati-hati dalam menyerahkan pendampingan kepada pihak lain. Oleh karena itu pentingnya strategi komunikasi yang tepat oleh lembaga pendidikan dalam menciptakan rasa aman dan kepercayaan. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif yang menggambarkan data-data yang diperoleh di lapangan berkaitan dengan tata cara direktur dan tentor membangun kepercayaan orang tua anak difabel di Kota Parepare. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, serta melalui buku-buku dan literatur lainnya. Literatur-literatur tersebut digunakan sebagai landasan teoritis dan referensi untuk memperkuat analisis data yang diperoleh dari lapangan. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Smart Education membangun kepercayaan orang tua anak difabel melalui lima pendekatan utama: komunikasi empatik, komunikasi partisipatif, komunikasi humanis, kemampuan mengatasi tantangan informasi, dan strategi khusus membangun kepercayaan. Empati ditunjukkan melalui pemahaman emosional terhadap orang tua, partisipasi melalui*

pelibatan aktif mereka dalam proses pendidikan, dan komunikasi humanis melalui hubungan yang hangat dan setara. Didukung teori Interaksionisme Simbolik dan Kredibilitas Komunikator, temuan ini menegaskan bahwa komunikasi yang berlandaskan empati, partisipasi, dan kejujuran tidak hanya memperkuat kepercayaan orang tua tetapi juga berkontribusi pada praktik pendidikan inklusif yang lebih efektif.

**Kata Kunci:** Strategi Komunikasi, Kepercayaan Orang Tua, Anak Difabel

## Introduction

Communication plays a crucial role in bridging relationships between individuals in everyday life, especially in interactions that involving trust, caring, and shared responsibility. The relationship between parents and institutions responsible for supporting the development of children with disabilities is a form of interaction that requires in depth, open, and continuous communication. In this context, communication is not only a means of conveying information but also a vital medium for reducing anxiety, building confidence, and strengthening emotional engagement between both parties <sup>1</sup>. For parents of children with special needs, building trust in the institutions that support their children is not a simple matter. A personal, adaptive, and empathetic approach is required so that children feel included, valued, and given the space to express their views, concerns, and hopes.

Many institutions lack communication patterns that are truly responsive to the emotional needs of parents of children with disabilities. Communication often becomes one-way, administrative, and rigid, creating distance between the institution and the family <sup>2</sup>. However, effective communication with parents involves far more than simply conveying evaluation results or reports on the child's development. It also includes active listening, providing psychological support, involving them in decision-making, and creating space for equal dialogue. Open and humane communication can strengthen trust, increase a sense of belonging, and encourage long-term collaboration between parents and those involved in supporting the child <sup>3</sup>. With strong communication, parents become more prepared and confident in supporting their children, both at home and in various social activities.

Reality in the field shows that the implementation of such communication strategies remains uneven, especially in areas that have not

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<sup>1</sup> Herlina , L., & Arifin, MB (2021). *Teachers' Interpersonal Communication Strategies to Increase the Trust of Parents of Children with Special Needs Specifically in Inclusive Schools*. Journal Communication Science , 19(1), 45.

<sup>2</sup> Kurniawan, A., & Nurjanah , S. (2022). *The Role of Humanistic Communication Strategy in Improving Involvement of Parents of Children with Disabilities* . Journal of Islamic Communication, 12(2), 98.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO. (2020). *Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learner-Friendly Environments* . [Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org>]

fully developed inclusive service systems. In Parepare City , for example, there are disparities in communication practices between institutions and parents of children with disabilities. Many parents feel insufficiently informed, excluded from decision making processes, or even marginalized from matters related to their children's development <sup>4</sup>. This situation presents a serious challenge that must be addressed through contextual communication strategies grounded in humanitarian values and sensitive to family emotional dynamics. Procedural and formal communication alone will not be sufficient to address the social and psychological needs of parents supporting children with special needs.

Based on this reality, it is important to conduct a more in-depth study of how communication strategies can be built and implemented within a *Smart Education approach* in Parepare City, particularly in efforts to build trust among parents of children with disabilities. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive overview of ideal communication patterns, the challenges faced, and interaction models that can be applied more broadly and contextually. By involving parents, caregivers, and institutions that interact directly with children with disabilities, it is hoped that a communication model will emerge that is not only technically effective but also humanistic, empathetic, and grounded in sustainable collaborative values.

Islamic teachings emphasize that a person's worth is not measured by physical condition, but by piety and good deeds <sup>5</sup>. Therefore, we should give the same attention and support to children with disabilities as we do to other children, as a concrete manifestation of the principles of justice and compassion taught in Islam. This conclusion is reinforced by a narration from Imam Abu Dawud:

عَنْ أَنَسٍ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ اسْتَخْلَفَ ابْنَ أُمِّ مَكْتُومٍ يَوْمَ النَّاسِ وَهُوَ أَعْمَى

Translation:

"From Anas, that the Prophet SAW once appointed Ibn Ummi Maktum to replace him in leading the people, even though he was blind . <sup>6</sup>"

In the hadith above, the Prophet even chose Ibn Umm Maktum to succeed him as an imam in Medina. This shows that the Prophet did not discriminate

<sup>4</sup>Sari, DP, & Latifah, M. (2021). *Parents' Perceptions of Teacher Communication in Inclusive Education Programs* . Journal of Special Education, 17(1), 30.

<sup>5</sup>Aziz, MA (2023). *Islamic Values in Humanistic Communication for Services for Children with Special Needs* . Journal of Da'wah and Communication, 17(1), 70.

<sup>6</sup>Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. *The Qur'an and its Translation*. Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2010, p. 412.

against Ibn Umm Maktum, even though he was a person with a disability . As long as a someone meets the criteria for being an imam, they have the right to lead the community. The Prophet said, "The one who leads a people in prayer is the one who is best in reciting the Qur'an . "7

*Smart Education* as an approach offers strategic opportunities through the use of information technology, two-way communication systems, and active family involvement in the educational process. In a local context like Parepare City, implementing this approach must consider the cultural, social, and economic aspects of the community. Not all parents have access to technology or an adequate understanding of modern educational methods. Therefore, educational institutions need to develop communication strategies that are contextual, inclusive, and easily accessible to all levels of society.

The context of children with disabilities also demands a more sensitive and personal form of communication. In the *Smart Approach In education*, a child's learning success is greatly influenced by the consistency between school instruction and home care. Therefore, building parental trust is an essential first step to ensuring their active involvement in their child's education, particularly in supporting character development, social development, and the adaptive abilities of children with disabilities within the community.<sup>8</sup>

Given the current situation in Parepare City , the communication strategies implemented by educational institutions to build trust among parents of children with disabilities are crucial. Communication is not simply the delivery of technical or administrative information, it must also engage the emotional and psychological aspects of parents. Openness, clarity, and a humanistic approach are essential in every interaction between schools and parents to foster a trusting relationship. When parents feel valued, involved, and understood by the school, trust grows, which ultimately has a positive impacts on their participation in their children's education.

*Smart Education's* communication strategy aims to builds the trust of parents of children with disabilities in Parepare City. Its goal is to strengthen parental trust through communication strategies implemented by the directors and tutors of *Smart Education*, in improving communication practices that support trust building among parents.

Interactionism theory is a development of Max Weber's theory of social action and emerged as a critique of radical behaviorism, which views humans as passive beings. This theory was pioneered by George Herbert Mead and

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<sup>7</sup>Abu Dawud. *Sunan Abu Dawud* , No. Hadith 593, Beirut: Dar al- Kutub al- Ilmiyah , 2009, p. 112.

<sup>8</sup> Prayitno , *Smart School and Smart Education* . Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar , 2018, p.59.

systematized by Herbert Blumer, who stated that humans act based on meanings acquired through social interactions, and then modify those meanings through interpretation. Individuals do not respond to stimuli automatically, rather, they interpret the stimulus before acting. Symbols such as body language and facial expressions become means of communication and the formation of self awareness. Mead argues that humans can become object to themselves, allowing the emergence of reflective awareness in social interaction<sup>9</sup>.

In this theory, the concept of self and society are interrelated an individuals self is shaped through social responses, while society is formed from interaction among individuals who collectively interpret symbolic meanings. Social interaction is dynamic, where individuals as reflective actor continuously adapt their roles based on social expectation. Blumer emphasized that humans are creator of meaning, not morely receivers of stimuli. Unlike behaviourism, which ignores mental processes, symbolic interactionism stresses that human action begins with an internal reflective dialogue, a process called self indication. Social reality is also viewed as a joint construction through the exchange of meaningful symbols in life daily.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to interactionism, this study also used message Credibility Theory to support and complement Melvin L. De Fleur and Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach persuasive Communication Strategy Theory. This theory, developed by McCroskey, explains that the effectiveness of a message is determined not only by its content but also by the characteristics of the person delivering it. Credibility refers to the audience's perception of the extent to which the communicator is competent in the topics discussed, honest, and trustworthy in conveying the message .<sup>11</sup>

Research by Husni Dwi Syafutri and Fatma Hidayati titled Fables as Character Education Alternatives in Children's Literature Learning shows that fable are effective in instilling character value such as religiosity, curiosity, and social care through children's literature <sup>12</sup> . The study use a descriptive qualitative method and concluded that children easily emulate characters with ideal norms in fable stories.

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<sup>9</sup> Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969)

<sup>10</sup> George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* , ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 135-139.

<sup>11</sup> McCroskey, J. C. (2016). *The Effects of Communication Style and Source Credibility on Attitude Change . Speech Monographs* , 33(1 ),p , 22-29.

<sup>12</sup> Husni Dwi Syafutri and Fatma Hidayati , "Fables as "Alternative Character Education in Children's Literature Learning," *Journal of Indonesian Language and Literature Education* , Muhammadiyah University of North Sumatra. <https://scholar.google.com/> Accessed on April 24 , 2025

While the aforementioned studies share a focus on children, including children with disabilities, there is a clear gap compared to this research. Previous studies centered on character education through children's literature, whereas this study fills a gap that has not been widely explored, the *Smart Education Communication strategy* in building parental trust to support children with disabilities in Parepare City. Thus, this article contribution new insights to the communication aspect of inclusive education not only character building through literary media but also addressing a research gap regarding how educational institutions build parental trust as part of supporting the development of children with disabilities.

## **Method**

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a field research design to objectively describe the communication phenomena occurring in *Smart Education* in Parepare City. The research informants consisted of six individuals: three parents of children with disabilities, two tutors /companions, and one institutional manager. Informants were selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) parents whose children have received services for at least three months, (2) tutors who are directly involved in assisting children with disabilities, and (3) managers who understand the institutions communication policies<sup>13</sup>. This research adopts an interpretive paradigm to understand social dynamics in detailed and natural manner. Data sources were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation involving the director and tutors of *Smart Education* as primary data, and books, journals, and official documents as secondary data. The research location is at Jl. Lasinrang No. 118, Parepare, South Sulawesi. *Smart Education* is a non formal education institution based on inclusive principle, upholding equality, and establishing active communication with parents to build trust in supporting the education of children disabilities.

Data collection was carried out in three stages: preparation, implementation, and completion, with the main instrument being the researchers, equipped with interview guidelines, observation interviews, and documentation. The data analysis techniques followed the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing. This study used a constant comparative analysis technique by comparing findings throughout the process to strengthen theoretical validity. To ensure data validity, the researcher applied

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<sup>13</sup> Nanang Martono, *Method Study Social: Concepts Edition First ( 2nd Edition Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2016)*, p. 194

triangulation techniques by combining observational data, interviews, and documentation as cross checks to obtain valid and objective information.<sup>14</sup>

## **Results and Discussion**

### **The Forms of Communication Strategies Implemented by *Smart Education* in Building the Trust of Parents of Children with Disabilities in Parepare City**

The communication strategy in the *Smart Education* program in Parepare City focuses on creating empathetic, open, and consistent relationships between educators and parents of children with disabilities. Communication is not merely a means of conveying information but also a way to build understanding, establishing trust, and maintain a shared commitment to supporting children's development<sup>15</sup>. The communication implemented is interpersonal, with teachers or mentors engaging directly with parents, understanding their family backgrounds, and exploring their concerns and hopes regarding their children's education.

#### **1. Communication Empathetic**

Empathy in communication is demonstrated through body language, soft voice intonation, and supportive, affirmative emotional responses. Communication no longer one directional, instead, it becomes interactive and driven by the intention to build strong human connection. This is important because many parents of children with disabilities initially feel anxious, embarrassed, or even hopeless<sup>16</sup>. Through empathetic communication, they gradually open up, feeling supported, and begin to trust the school or institution. When parents feel understood, their involvement in their child education increases significant .

According to Devito empathy is the ability to feel what other people feel and to place oneself in their position. In the context of communication, empathy become the foundation for harmonious and mutually respectful relationship <sup>17</sup> . This is particularly important in interactions involving

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<sup>14</sup> Basrowi and Suwandi, *Understanding Qualitative Research* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 2008), p. 158.

<sup>15</sup>Nurhayati, Sri. (2021). "Inclusive Communication in the Education of Children with Special Needs." *Journal of Educational Communication* , 5(2), 112-123.

<sup>16</sup>UNESCO. (2020). *Inclusive Education: Are we there yet* [ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/> ], 12 June 2025.

<sup>17</sup>DeVito, J. A. (2011). *The Interpersonal Communication Book* (13th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education. 123-125

vulnerable group, such as children with disabilities, elderly individuals, patients, or other marginalized communities.

*Smart Education* applies empathetic communication as a central strategy in building the trust of parents of child with disabilities. This is practiced through active listen, the use of supportive body language, and the provision of praise and emotional reinforcement o parents. These practices create *safe space* for parents to share their experiences without fear of being judged .

Based on field findings, *Smart Education* places empathetic communication as a key foundation in its interactions with parents. The institution consistently strives to understand parents' perspectives and emotions, ensuring that complaints or concerns are addressed respectfully, reassuringly, and without judgmental. This demonstrates that empathy is not merely an interpersonal attitude but a core communication strategy that creates psychological safety and strengthens parental trust in services for children with disabilities.

From a symbolic interactionist perspective, verbal and nonverbal symbols such as gentle language, praise, and body language take on new meanings that help parents feel valued, become more open, and participate actively in their children's education. To futher understand how this communication process contributes to building parental trust and involvement, the following discussion analyzed these dynamics using symbolic interactionist theory and a humanist communication approach, two frameworks relevant for explaining how symbolic interaction and human values from the basis of meaningful social relationships.

## **2. Communication Participatory**

Participatory Communication becomes the second important strategy implemented by *Smart Education* in building the trust of parents of children with disabilities in Parepare City. In this approach, the institution does not merely convey information unilaterally but actively involves parents in various decisions making processes, monitoring children's development, and planning education and therapy programs<sup>18</sup>. By involving parents as subjects rather than objects, the communication established become dialogic, equal, and collaborative. In addition to empathy, *Smart Education* applies participatory communication by involving parents in evaluations, preparing learning methods, and discussing children's development. Communication is conducted both formally and informally, such as through WhatsApp groups, discussion forums, and routine entries in the children's notebooks.

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<sup>18</sup>Mulyana, Deddy. (2005). *Communication Science : A Introduction* . Bandung: Teenagers Rosdakarya .



Field findings show that Smart Education implements participatory communication by involving parents in the decision making related to supporting children with disabilities. Tutors do not make decisions unilaterally but integrate parental input to adjust learning methods according to each the child's needs. This pattern emphasizes that parental participation is not merely a formality, but a collaborative mechanism that strengthens service effectiveness and increases parent's trust in the institution.

The statement above illustrates that communication does not occur solely in a vertical direction from the institution to parents, but is two way and dialogic. Tutors act as facilitators who open space the conversation, not merely as policy messengers. Parents are not positioned as passive recipients but are regarded as partners who contribute to their children's educational process. Kiki added that learning documentation helps busy parents remain connected to their children's development.

The sunday meeting, a routine activity held every three months that includes children's competitions and communal meals, serves as an example of emotional and social participation has shaped parent's trust in Smart Education. Through symbolic interactionism, communication is understood as a process of meaning making through symbolic relationships. *Smart Education* not only conveys information but also builds strong emotional bond, positioning parents as equal partners in the process of supporting the growth and development of children with disabilities.

### **Challenges faced in the Communication Process Between *Smart Education* and parents of Children with Disabilities**

#### **1. Challenges in Dilivering Information to Parents of Children with Disabilities**

Communication between *Smart Education* tutor and parents of children disabilities is not only a channel for conveying information but also an emotional bridge that determines the success of the child's learning support. The main challenge lies in delivering the child's condition honestly yet empathetically, especially when the child has not shown significant progress. In many cases, parents are still in the process of accepting their child's condition, so communication must be carried out with great care to avoid offending them or creating negative perceptions. One tutor explained that she always tries to convey information politely and directly, with the aim of helping parents better understand their child's characteristics. However, she also acknowledged the need for extra patience, as the diverse characteristics of the children often make the learning process difficult.

Another tutor emphasized the importance of sensitivity in shaping positive perceptions among parents. They avoid approaches that might seem to blame the child or the parents, and instead choose constructive and supportive communication. Communication is not only verbal but also utilizes visual media such as videos to help reduce misunderstandings. Meanwhile, from the parents' perspective, they admitted that the tutors' honest and empathetic approach provides them with a sense of calm and trust.

Practical suggestions offered by tutors for example, ways to handle tantrums are especially helpful and make parents feel less alone in supporting their children at home. These dynamics show that communication cannot be one-directional. It requires a two-way approach that involves empathy, patience, honesty, and a deep understanding of the parents' psychological condition. The success of this communication depends greatly on the quality of the interpersonal relationship between tutors and parents, as well as the institution's ability to facilitate inclusive and supportive communication.

### **1. Communication Strategy in Building Trust in Parents of Children with Disabilities**

Findings study show that Smart Education builds parental trust through intensive, transparent, and participatory communication strategies. One of the main strategies is sending activity videos Study child regularly. The video functioning as visual evidence regarding the mentoring process, progress Study children, and attention given tutor. Practice This creates a sense of transparency, calming parental concerns, and strengthen involvement emotional they in the educational process.

Field data also shows that video media is not only become means information, but participate build bond positive between family and institutions, because parents can see Alone abilities and development child although happen in a way gradually . This strategy increase parental optimism, strengthening trust to professionalism institutions, as well as push they For more active support the learning process child .

With approach this, Smart Education is successful form pattern communication that is not only effective in a way technical, but also touching side emotional parents. Visual strategies, communication daily, as well as open and empathetic dialogue become runway formation trust and work the same closely. In context education child disabled, approach this is very crucial Because give room for parents For feel valued, empowered, and not walk themselves. As a result, the relationship that is created No Again between institutions and clients, but between mutual partners complement for development child in a way holistic.

### **Empathetic Communication Principles in Strengthening Parental Involvement (Viewed from the Theory of Communicator Credibility)**

Communication built between *Smart parties Education* for parents of children with disabilities serves not only as a means of conveying information but has also evolved into a means of forming meaningful social relationships. In this context, a humanistic and empathetic communication approach plays a crucial role in building trust, emotional comfort, and active parental involvement. These principles are reflected in the way tutors interact with parents, from greeting them in a friendly manner, listening to their concerns, politely communicating about their child's progress, to fully involving them in their child's learning process.

In interpersonal communication studies, communication effectiveness is highly dependent on the communicator's credibility. When a communicator possesses these three attributes, the message delivered is not only easily received but also fosters trust and engagement from the recipient. The findings of this study indicate that *Smart Education's consistent implementation of humanistic and empathetic communication* has increased the tutors' credibility in the eyes of parents, enabling them to become more active participants in supporting their children's development at home than simply passively receiving reports.

### **1. Humanistic Communication as the Basis for Positive Interaction**

Humanistic communication at Smart Education is reflected in the equal, warm, and respectful interactions between tutors and parents. This practice focuses not only on delivering information about a child's development but also on creating a two-way dialogue that enables the exchange of experiences, emotional understanding, and psychological support. Theoretically, this pattern aligns with Blumer's principles of Symbolic Interactionism, which view communication as a process of creating meaning through repeated interactions<sup>19</sup>. Through humanistic interaction, parents develop positive perceptions of the institution as a safe, caring and trustworthy entity.

This approach also reflects elements of trustworthiness and goodwill in communicator credibility theory<sup>20</sup>. Tutors demonstrate honesty, sincerity, and consistent attention without being judgmental, allowing parents to feel valued as full partners in the education of children with disabilities. When interactions are filled with empathy and non-dominant attitudes, parents tend to be more open, more confident giving feedback, and more emotionally engaged in the mentoring process.

From the perspective of institutional, humanist communication is not merely a technique, but represents an internalized culture value and an ethics

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<sup>19</sup> Stephen W. Littlejohn, Karen A. Foss, and John G. Oetzel, *Theories of Human Communication*, 11th ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2017)

<sup>20</sup> James C. McCroskey and Jason J. Teven, "Goodwill: A Reexamination of the Construct and Its Measurement," *Communication Monographs* 66, no. 1 (1999): 90–103.

foundation for family centered mentoring. This approach strengthening the institutions social credibility, fosters long term relationships, and increases parental participation and loyalty towards Smart Education educational inclusive programs. Therefore, the findings confirm that humanistic and meaningful communication is a crucial pillar in building trust and collaborative relationships in the education of children with disabilities.

## 2. Empathetic Communication in Building Emotional Closeness

Empathetic communication is one of the key elements in building credibility and parental engagement in educational services for children with disabilities. Conceptually, empathy is understood not only as the ability to convey a message gently, but also as the communicator's ability to adapt the delivery style to suit the emotional state of the recipient. This principle aligns with the concept of *person centered communication* in interpersonal communication studies, which emphasizes the importance of tailoring the language, intonation, and meaning of the message to the emotional needs of parents.<sup>21</sup>

In the context of Smart Education, empathetic communication is reflected in how tutors convey information about child's development constructively, especially when the child shows slow progress or faces behavioral challenges. This approach represents the *expertise* dimension within of communicator credibility theory, namely the ability to manage difficult messages without causing psychological pressure for parents. This competence is not only related to mastery of learning content but also an understanding of sensitive communication techniques, as emphasized in previous studies on communication within inclusive education c<sup>22</sup>

Positive response from parents toward this communication style indicates that empathy plays an important in shaping their perceptions of educators professionalism and reliability. This is consistent with earlier research findings showing that empathetic communication enhances trust building between educators and families in the context of children with special needs. Thus, empathetic communication not only helps parents understand their child's condition more realistically but also strengthens the interpersonal credibility of the tutors.

More broadly, the application of humanistic and empathetic communication at Smart Education simultaneously shapes parents' perceptions of the institution's credibility. These two approaches reflect the main characteristics of communicator credibility competence, trustworthiness, and goodwill which form the foundation for parental

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<sup>21</sup> M. Byrne, "The Current State of Empathy, Compassion and Person Centered Communication in Healthcare : An Umbrella Review ," *Patient Education and Counseling* (2024); AM Grilo et al , "Attitudes toward Patient-Centred Care , Empathy , and Assertiveness among Students in Rehabilitation Areas : A Longitudinal Study," *Healthcare* 11, no. 20 (2023): 2803

<sup>22</sup> " School-Family Communication in Early Childhood Education Through Digital Tools ," *International Journal of Early Childhood* (2025).

engagement in the education of children with disabilities. When an institution is perceived as competent, honest, and well intentioned, parental participation increases, whether in the form of two way communication, collaboration in home based learning, or openness in discussing challenges.

This finding strengthens that credible communication is the main foundation of cooperation between educational institutions and parents. In perspective Interactionism Symbolic, consistent and meaningful interactions create new social meaning specifically, the perception that the institution is a safe and trustworthy entity. This meaning then fosters the sustained involvement of parents as part from the child support process.

Therefore, the humanistic and empathetic communication strategy implemented by Smart Education do not merely function as technique for delivering information, they serve as mechanisms for building trust, psychological safety, and the institutions social credibility. These finding affirm that in the education child disabilities, the quality of communication is a fundamental prerequisite for creating effective and sustainable collaboration relationships .

## **Conclusion**

This study demonstrates that parents trust in Smart Education is built through dialogic, humanistic, and empathetic communication . This approach creates shared meaning between tutors and parents, aligns with principles of Symbolic Interactionism, and strengthens the institution credibility through the dimensions of competence, character, and goodwill. The scientific contribution of this study lies in affirming that communication is not merely a tool for delivering information but a psychosocial instrument that fosters a sense of safety and family engagement in inclusive education. Practically, it is important for inclusion institution to make empathetic communication as a core organizational culture to strengthen long term partnership with parents.

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