

A STUDY ON SOCIAL INTERACTION PATTERNS BETWEEN MALE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AT THE KALTARA TARAKAN HEALTH VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

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Social interaction between teachers and students plays a crucial role in creating an effective learning environment and fostering students' social development. This study aimed to explore the patterns of social interaction between male students and teachers at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving male students from grades X, XI, and XII, as well as male and female teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña supported by NVivo software. The findings revealed that democratic interaction patterns were the most dominant, characterized by two-way communication and respect for students' opinions. Liberal interaction patterns were identified through guided learning freedom, where students were given opportunities to develop according to their interests and abilities under teacher supervision. Meanwhile, feudal interaction patterns were found only in the form of teacher control and instructional delivery, without indicating authoritarian domination. The findings also showed that male students tended to feel more comfortable interacting with male teachers because they perceived them as more relaxed and approachable. Overall, the interaction patterns at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan reflect a learning environment characterized by openness, participation, and mutual respect, which support students' academic and social development.



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INTRODUCTION

Social interaction constitutes a fundamental aspect of human development and plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic, emotional, and social competencies. Within educational settings, interactions between students and teachers are essential for creating a supportive learning environment, fostering communication skills, and promoting positive behavioral development. Effective social interaction enables students to develop empathy, mutual respect, cooperation, and a sense of belonging, all of which contribute to successful learning outcomes and psychosocial adjustment (Santrock, 2020). In vocational schools, where students are expected to acquire not only technical knowledge but also interpersonal competencies, the quality of teacher-student relationships becomes increasingly important. Positive interactions between teachers and students facilitate classroom engagement, improve motivation, and enhance academic achievement (Pianta et al., 2021). Conversely, limited or ineffective interactions may negatively affect students' participation, communication skills, and emotional well-being.

Teacher-student interaction has been widely recognized as a determinant of educational quality. According to Hamre and Pianta (2017), meaningful interactions between teachers and students provide emotional support and instructional guidance that positively influence learning processes. Similarly, Wentzel (2016) argued that supportive teacher relationships contribute to students' social competence, academic motivation, and behavioral adjustment.

In the context of secondary education, social interaction is particularly significant because adolescents experience rapid emotional, cognitive, and social changes that require guidance and support from teachers and peers. Consequently, teachers are expected to create inclusive and responsive learning environments characterized by fairness, openness, and mutual respect (Jennings & Greenberg, 2019).

The advancement of digital technology, however, has introduced new challenges to social interaction among students and teachers. The widespread use of smartphones and digital devices has transformed communication patterns among adolescents. Although technology provides numerous educational benefits, excessive use of smartphones may reduce face-to-face communication and limit opportunities for meaningful interpersonal interactions (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). Students who spend considerable time engaging with digital media often demonstrate lower levels of social engagement and reduced attention during classroom activities (Keles et al., 2020). Moreover, smartphone dependency has been associated with difficulties in maintaining concentration, diminished social skills, and weaker interpersonal relationships (Domoff et al., 2019).

Preliminary observations conducted at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan revealed that male students frequently displayed a tendency to prioritize smartphone use rather than focusing on classroom instruction. During learning activities, several students appeared more engaged with their devices than with teachers' explanations. Interviews with teachers further indicated that students often needed to be compelled to surrender their smartphones before lessons began. Such circumstances suggest that technological distractions may interfere with effective communication and reduce opportunities for social interaction between students and teachers. Similar findings have been reported by Keles et al. (2020), who found that excessive smartphone usage among adolescents negatively affects interpersonal communication and social functioning. Likewise, Domoff et al. (2019) emphasized that problematic smartphone use may hinder students' ability to maintain meaningful interactions with individuals around them.

In addition to technological factors, gender dynamics appear to influence patterns of teacher-student interaction. Previous studies have demonstrated that gender may affect communication styles, emotional closeness, and perceptions of fairness within educational settings (Eccles & Roeser, 2018). Research conducted by Fitriyani and Nurawati (2024) regarding differences in social interaction based on gender among junior high school students found that female students generally exhibited more positive social interaction patterns compared with male students. These differences were reflected in communication behaviors, attitudes, and adherence to social norms. Such findings indicate that gender-related characteristics may influence how students establish relationships with teachers and peers.

Observations at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan further identified issues related to interactions between male students and teachers. Some male students reported that their questions or concerns were occasionally ignored by certain teachers. Interviews with one male teacher suggested that unequal treatment might occur due to personal beliefs and perceptions regarding gender relations. These circumstances potentially create barriers to effective communication and may reduce students' willingness to actively participate in classroom discussions. Perceived favoritism and unequal treatment have been shown to negatively affect students' trust, motivation, and engagement (Wentzel, 2016). Furthermore, feelings of exclusion or neglect may weaken the quality of teacher-student relationships and hinder the

effectiveness of the learning process (Jennings & Greenberg, 2019).

Social interaction within schools serves as a medium through which students acquire communication skills, social norms, and emotional competencies. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, learning and development occur through social interactions with more knowledgeable individuals, including teachers (Daniels, 2016). Consequently, teacher-student relationships are not merely instructional exchanges but also social processes that facilitate cognitive and emotional growth. Positive interactions encourage students to express opinions, ask questions, and engage actively in learning activities, whereas negative interactions may generate feelings of anxiety, alienation, and reduced academic confidence (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Previous studies have examined various dimensions of social interaction in educational contexts. Sari & Muis (2018) reported that communication quality significantly affects students' motivation and participation in classroom activities. Similarly, Mumtaz et al. (2024) demonstrated that positive social interactions contribute to empathy, cooperation, and emotional well-being among students. Meanwhile, Tsany et al. (2024) emphasized that successful learning requires harmonious interactions among all educational components, including teachers and students. Nevertheless, most previous studies have focused on general teacher-student relationships or gender differences among students themselves. Relatively few studies have specifically explored the social interaction patterns between male students and teachers within vocational education institutions.

This lack of empirical evidence represents an important research gap. Existing studies have predominantly investigated social interaction from broad perspectives without paying sufficient attention to the unique dynamics between male students and teachers. Furthermore, the influence of technological distractions and perceptions of unequal treatment on teacher-student interactions remains underexplored, particularly in vocational school settings. Considering that SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan is characterized by diverse student backgrounds and intensive practical learning activities, understanding the interaction patterns between male students and teachers becomes highly relevant for improving educational quality and fostering healthy social environments.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the social interaction patterns between male students and teachers at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the characteristics of communication, responsiveness, and interpersonal relationships that emerge during educational activities. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for teachers, school administrators, and guidance and counseling practitioners in developing strategies to enhance teacher-student relationships and create more inclusive and effective learning environments. In addition, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on social interaction in vocational education. It highlights the importance of equitable and supportive communication practices in promoting students' academic and psychosocial development.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to explore and understand the patterns of social interaction between male students and teachers at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan. A qualitative descriptive approach was selected because it enables researchers to investigate social phenomena comprehensively and to interpret

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation techniques to ensure data triangulation and enhance the credibility of findings (Miles et al., 2014). Semi-structured interviews provided opportunities for participants to express their experiences and perspectives regarding interaction patterns, while participant observation enabled the researcher to directly observe communication behaviors and classroom dynamics. Documentation was used to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis focused on three dimensions of interaction patterns proposed by Mualif (Pelajaran et al., 2021), namely democratic interaction patterns, characterized by two-way communication, shared decision-making, and respect for students' opinions; liberal interaction patterns, indicated by high learning autonomy, minimal teacher direction, and flexible rules; and feudal interaction patterns, characterized by one-way communication, dominant teacher control, and strict discipline. These indicators served as the analytical framework for identifying and interpreting the interaction patterns between male students and teachers at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan.

Analysis of interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation using NVivo revealed that the social interaction patterns between male students and teachers at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan were predominantly characterized by democratic interaction patterns. The coding results indicated that the themes with the highest frequency were two-way communication and respect for students' opinions, which represent the essential characteristics of democratic interaction. In contrast, liberal interaction patterns appeared only in the form of guided learning freedom, while feudal interaction patterns were limited to the teacher's role in organizing instruction and delivering learning materials without indicating authoritarian domination. These findings suggest that the interaction between male students and teachers tends to emphasize participation, openness, and mutual respect rather than rigid hierarchical relationships.

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graph LR
    A((Teachers' Role Students and Relations Between Social Interaction)) --- B[Positive Interaction Feedback]
    A --- C[Positive Interaction Control]
    A --- D[Positive Interaction Democratic]
    B --- B1[Minimize Interfering of]
    B --- B2[Control Teacher]
    B1 --- B1a[Minimize and reduce the remaining main sources of information. The teacher acts as the classroom.]
    B2 --- B2a[Minimize remaining sources in the class and manage the the teacher's ability to]
    C --- C1[Freedom Learning]
    C1 --- C1a[applies to their interests and and discover according remaining knowledge base. freedom to determine their judgments are given the]
    D --- D1[Obvious Respect for Students]
    D --- D2[Communication Two-Way]
    D1 --- D1a[considering each other's interests: freedom to and choice of teachers and mutual respect for the]
    D2 --- D2a[considering teacher and student the effective communication between both parties: Exchange of information]
  
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Teachers' Role Students and Relations Between Social Interaction

- Positive Interaction Feedback**
 - Minimize Interfering of
 - Minimize and reduce the remaining main sources of information. The teacher acts as the classroom.
 - Control Teacher
 - Minimize remaining sources in the class and manage the the teacher's ability to
- Positive Interaction Control**
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The concept map generated through NVivo analysis further demonstrated that democratic interaction occupied the central position in the network of themes. Two-way communication emerged through reciprocal exchanges of information between teachers and students both inside and outside the classroom. Male students were generally given opportunities to ask questions, express opinions, and participate in discussions. Respect for students' opinions was reflected in teachers' willingness to listen, appreciate, and consider students' viewpoints before making decisions regarding learning activities. Meanwhile, liberal interaction patterns appeared through learning autonomy, where students were allowed to choose learning strategies and utilize technological resources according to their interests and abilities. However, such autonomy remained under teacher supervision, indicating that freedom was exercised within educational boundaries rather than without direction.

Table 1.
 Description of NVivo Coding Results

Interaction Pattern	Subtheme	Description
Democratic Interaction Pattern	Two-Way Communication	1) Exchange of information between two or more parties. 2) Effective communication between teachers and students both inside and outside the classroom.
Democratic Interaction Pattern	Respect for Opinions	1) Mutual respect for the views and perspectives of teachers and students. 2) Willingness to accept, listen to, and consider others' opinions.
Liberal Interaction Pattern	Learning Freedom	1) Students are given opportunities to determine their own learning methods, pace, and approaches. 2) Students are provided with opportunities to learn and develop according to their interests and abilities.
Feudal Interaction Pattern	Teacher Control	1) The teacher's ability to direct and manage the learning process in the classroom. 2) Teacher dominance in organizing and conducting instructional activities.
Feudal Interaction Pattern	Instructional Delivery	1) The teacher acts as the primary source of information. 2) The teacher directs and regulates the learning process in the classroom.

Source: research analysis results

Although elements of feudal interaction were identified, they did not represent an authoritarian relationship. Teachers maintained control over classroom management and instructional delivery as part of their professional responsibilities, but they still encouraged active student participation. The findings therefore indicate that teacher authority functioned primarily as pedagogical guidance rather than as absolute dominance. Such interaction patterns created a learning environment characterized by cooperation, dialogue, and emotional closeness between teachers and male students.

The findings indicate that democratic interaction patterns dominate social relationships between male students and teachers at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan. The presence of reciprocal communication, active discussions, and respect for students' perspectives demonstrates that classroom interactions are increasingly student-centered. According to Mualif (2021), democratic interaction is characterized by mutual communication and active student participation. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that two-way communication strengthens interpersonal relationships and creates more

meaningful learning experiences (Munisah et al., 2022). In addition, effective teacher-student communication contributes to students' emotional well-being and academic engagement, thereby supporting a positive school climate (Mumtaz et al., 2024).

From the perspective of Humanistic Theory proposed by Carl Rogers, the interaction patterns identified in this study reflect the importance of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness in educational relationships. Teachers who listen to students' opinions and encourage participation create an atmosphere in which students feel accepted and valued. Such conditions foster self-confidence and increase students' willingness to express ideas and engage actively in learning activities. Rehanaisha (2024) emphasized that humanistic counseling approaches encourage the development of supportive interpersonal relationships that facilitate individual growth and self-actualization. Consequently, democratic interaction not only promotes academic achievement but also contributes to students' psychosocial development.

The findings also reveal the existence of guided learning freedom, which differs from the theoretical concept of liberal interaction proposed by Mualif (2021). Students were granted opportunities to choose learning resources, use technology, and collaborate with peers, yet teacher supervision remained evident. This condition aligns more closely with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes observational learning and modeling processes (Putri et al., 2024). Teachers continued to serve as role models whose behavior influenced students' attitudes and communication patterns. Therefore, the autonomy provided to students did not result in uncontrolled behavior but rather promoted responsible learning and constructive social interaction.

Interestingly, the results show that some male students felt more comfortable interacting with male teachers than with female teachers. Students perceived male teachers as more relaxed and emotionally approachable, whereas interactions with female teachers tended to involve greater feelings of respect and hesitation. This phenomenon may be explained by gender differences in communication styles and emotional expression. Previous studies have suggested that males and females exhibit different interpersonal tendencies, which may influence teacher-student relationships and communication dynamics (Fitriyani & Nurmawati, 2024). Nevertheless, these differences did not hinder the establishment of positive interactions between students and teachers.

Another important finding concerns the limited manifestation of feudal interaction patterns. Although teachers remained dominant in explaining learning materials and managing classrooms, they did not exercise absolute authority or suppress students' voices. Instead, they continued to encourage questions and provide appreciation for students' contributions. These findings contradict the traditional notion of feudal interaction characterized by one-way communication and passive learners (Mualif, 2021). Similar findings were reported by Saidah et al. (2023), who argued that teacher leadership does not necessarily produce rigid relationships but may instead facilitate supportive and conducive learning environments.

Overall, the study demonstrates that democratic interaction patterns represent the most dominant form of teacher-student relationships at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan. Communication based on mutual respect, openness, and active participation has created a positive learning atmosphere that supports students' academic and social development. The findings also suggest that teacher authority and learning autonomy are not contradictory concepts; rather, they complement one another in establishing balanced and effective educational interactions. Such conditions are essential for fostering healthy social relationships and enhancing the quality of learning experiences among male students.

CONCLUSION

The The findings of this study indicate that the social interaction patterns between male

students and teachers at SMK Kesehatan Kaltara Tarakan are predominantly characterized by democratic interaction. This pattern is reflected through two-way communication, opportunities for students to express their opinions, and teachers' appreciation of students' perspectives. Such interaction creates a positive learning atmosphere that encourages student participation and strengthens interpersonal relationships. Although elements of liberal interaction were identified through learning autonomy and the use of diverse learning resources, these freedoms remained under teacher guidance. Likewise, elements of feudal interaction appeared only in terms of teacher control and instructional delivery, without demonstrating authoritarian practices or one-way communication. Thus, teacher authority functioned primarily as pedagogical guidance rather than as a form of domination.

In addition, the study revealed that gender differences influenced interaction preferences, as male students tended to feel more comfortable and emotionally closer to male teachers. Nevertheless, interactions with female teachers remained positive and respectful. Overall, the results suggest that democratic interaction patterns are more prominent than liberal or feudal patterns in the school context. These findings highlight the importance of maintaining open communication, mutual respect, and student participation to create a supportive learning environment and enhance students' social and academic development.

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