



ANALYSIS OF STUDENT COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AT STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 1 TAKALAR IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

The dynamics of communication in education in the digital era have changed the way teachers and students interact, creating new challenges in teaching character values and academic materials. This study aims to analyze in-depth the digital communication patterns of students at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar and identify the psychological and technical barriers that arise in the contemporary learning ecosystem. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and a non-experimental survey method (distance research), data were obtained from 78 respondents through a digital questionnaire using Google Forms. The study results indicate ambivalence in communication; although 48.7% of students rely heavily on social media

(Instagram/TikTok) as their primary source of information, 39.7% of respondents still prioritize face-to-face interaction for academic consultations to avoid misunderstandings. Other findings indicate that 46.1% of students feel that informal language is more effective in building social closeness, but on the other hand, there is a psychological barrier in the form of digital anxiety in 34.6% of students when having to initiate formal communication. This study shows that students' communicative self-efficacy is better in field practice situations (38.5%) than in classroom theory. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy, which includes communication ethics (netiquette) and the ability to adapt to language codes (code-switching), is necessary to align academic formalities with the flexibility of digital interactions in the era of Society 5.0.

Keywords: *Communication Patterns, Digital Era, SMA Negeri 1 Takalar, Digital Literacy, Remote Research.*

1. Introduction

Education is essentially a complex and constantly evolving communication process, where the success of imparting knowledge and instilling character values depends heavily on the quality of the relationship between teacher and student. In the high school education system, such as at SMAN 1 Takalar, communication serves not only as a tool for conveying subject matter but also as a crucial emotional and social tool in shaping students' learning styles. As Hafied Cangara emphasizes in his theory on the fundamentals of communication, every time humans interact, that interaction always occurs within a specific context, namely space, time, and the media used. Amidst today's rapid digital development, the way communication at SMAN 1 Takalar has undergone significant changes, shifting from a simultaneous, direct learning system to a blended system that relies more heavily on digital devices and social media algorithms. This phenomenon has created a new discussion space where the distinction between academic formality in school and casual interactions on social media is increasingly blurred and difficult to distinguish.

Primary data from a questionnaire conducted with students at SMAN 1 Takalar revealed significant changes in digital communication patterns compared to the previous decade. The majority of students prefer to communicate with teachers via asynchronous platforms such as WhatsApp, rather than asking or answering questions directly in class.

This behavior reflects a shift in students' mindsets and social comfort levels in interacting. Referring to Yusuf's (2024) thinking on the dynamics of interaction in the digital space, a sense of comfort in communication is a fundamental factor in creating an effective learning environment. Without this comfort, the process of conveying knowledge can be hampered by social anxiety that arises from the shift in interaction media. Therefore, students' preference to "hide" behind electronic devices indicates a serious challenge in oral communication that requires further study.

The use of social media such as Instagram and TikTok has become a primary source of information for students at SMAN 1 Takalar to keep up with school developments and activities. This high reliance on social media has significantly impacted how they receive information, collaborate, and develop an understanding of the educational institution. According to Usman (2002), the application of information technology in education should be able to increase active student engagement through more engaging and interactive learning methods. However, in reality, there is often a gap between students' technical skills in using digital tools and their ability to communicate effectively and develop in-depth digital literacy.

Even though students are accustomed to complex digital features, they often struggle to convey ideas in a structured, logical, and convincing manner in formal school forums. This obstacle is further clarified by questionnaire data, which indicates

frequent misunderstandings when students coordinate group assignments via instant messaging groups. Pratama and Sari (2022) suggest that this problem is caused by the loss of nonverbal cues such as tone of voice, eye contact, and facial expressions in text-based communication. As a result, messages become unclear, meaning is less accurately conveyed, and interpersonal conflicts arise that could have been avoided in the learning environment.

Communication barriers at SMAN 1 Takalar are closely related to the psychological development of adolescents in the internet era. According to Ramadhan and Fitri (2022), the use of casual language or slang serves as an important tool for building closeness, a sense of unity, and group identity amidst social pressures. The questionnaire revealed that students find it easier to create strong emotional connections with peers through informal language than through formal language, which is perceived as rigid and creates distance. However, problems arise when these language usage rules are poorly managed in interactions with teachers or formal academic situations.

In the context of this shift in communication culture, the role of guidance and counseling becomes crucial. Soetopo (2005) emphasized that communication in educational settings must adapt to the realities of students' lives to reduce feelings of shame, hesitation, and lack of confidence that often hinder students from communicating with teachers. Data also shows a tendency for students to

wait for the teacher's initiative before starting a conversation, indicating a barrier to proactive communication on the part of students.

2. Literature Review

Communication is the process of conveying messages from a communicator to a recipient with a specific purpose, whether to provide information, influence, or build social relationships. In the context of education, communication is a key element in the learning process because it serves as a means of conveying material, values, and character building for students. According to Cangara, communication always occurs within a specific context, encompassing space, time, and the media used. Therefore, changes in communication media, particularly those resulting from developments in digital technology, also influence interaction patterns between teachers and students in the school environment.

The development of information technology has brought significant changes to communication patterns in education. While previously communication was mostly conducted face-to-face, interactions are now increasingly shifting towards digital communication through various platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok. Yusuf (2024) stated that communication in the digital era is more flexible, faster, and not limited by space and time. However, this change has also given rise to ambivalence, where students feel more comfortable

communicating online, but still require direct interaction to obtain clear information and avoid misunderstandings.

In facing these developments, digital literacy is a crucial skill for students to possess. Digital literacy encompasses not only the ability to use technology, but also the ability to understand, evaluate, and use information wisely. According to Usman (2002), the use of technology in education should increase students' active involvement in the learning process. However, in reality, there is still a gap between students' technical skills in using digital media and their ability to communicate effectively. Therefore, digital literacy needs to be complemented by an understanding of communication ethics or netiquette and the ability to adapt to various communication situations.

Communication in learning involves not only verbal aspects but also non-verbal aspects such as facial expressions, vocal intonation, and body language. Pratama and Sari (2022) stated that text-based communication in digital media tends to eliminate non-verbal elements, thereby increasing the risk of miscommunication. This is a major weakness in online communication, especially in educational contexts that require clarity and accuracy of messages. As a result, students often experience misunderstandings when communicating via digital media, particularly when coordinating group assignments.

On the other hand, the use of informal language or slang is a common phenomenon among adolescents. Ramadhan and Fitri (2022) explain that informal language serves as a tool for building social closeness, strengthening relationships, and creating group identity. However, the use of this language in academic contexts can pose obstacles, especially when students must communicate with teachers or in formal situations. Santoso et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of code-switching skills, namely the ability to adapt language use according to the communication context, so that students can interact effectively in both formal and informal situations.

Besides language factors, communication barriers in the digital age are also influenced by technical and psychological aspects. Wulandari and Pratama (2022) stated that the loss of situational context in online communication is a major cause of miscommunication. Meanwhile, Fauzi (2024) revealed that reliance on instant messaging can lead to psychological stress, such as anxiety, doubt, and a lack of self-confidence. This condition makes some students tend to be passive and wait for the teacher to initiate communication.

Self-efficacy in communication is also a crucial factor in determining the success of student interactions. Nugraha (2022) stated that hands-on learning experiences in the field can increase students' confidence in communication compared to theoretical learning in the classroom. This is reinforced by Lestari (2024), who stated that

practical environments encourage students to more actively utilize their interpersonal intelligence, resulting in more effective and confident communication.

In overcoming these various communication barriers, the role of guidance and counseling is crucial. Soetopo (2005) emphasized that communication in education must be tailored to the student's circumstances and characteristics to reduce psychological barriers such as shyness and low self-confidence. Through guidance and counseling services, students can be guided to improve their communication skills, understand communication ethics in the digital world, and develop self-confidence in interactions, both in person and online.

3. Methodology

1. Research Approach and Design

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a non-experimental survey method. The research was conducted online using remote data collection methods, leveraging the convenience and efficiency of digital technology.

2. Population and Sample

The research population was all active students at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar, with a sample size of 78 students. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling (voluntary sampling), where

respondents independently completed a distributed digital questionnaire. This approach aligns with the characteristics of Generation Z, who have high levels of internet and digital platform accessibility.

3. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Data were collected digitally using Google Forms as the primary instrument. The data collection procedures included:

- **Instrument Development**

Development of items using a 1–5 Likert scale to measure student behavior and communication patterns.

- **Remote Distribution**

Distribution of questionnaire links through WhatsApp groups to access respondents without face-to-face contact.

- **Real-time Monitoring**

Live monitoring and storage of responses in a spreadsheet to ensure data validity before analysis.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, focusing on calculating the cumulative percentage and average score (mean) for each studied variable. The results of the analysis were presented in tables and pie charts to provide a clear visual representation of students' digital interaction patterns.

experienced by students in their school's digital environment.

No.	Stages	Activity	Methods/Tools	Description
1.	Preparation	Questionnaire Design	Google Forms	Create questionnaires related to digital communication patterns and psychological barriers.
2.	Implementation	Instrument Distribution	WhatsApp Messenger	Distribute questionnaire links to students without direct physical visits (Remote).
3.	Sampling	Respondent Selection	Voluntary Response	Collecting data from 78 students of SMAN 1 Takalar who participated voluntarily.
4.	Analysis	Data Processing	Descriptive Statistics	Calculating cumulative percentages and average scores based on spreadsheet data.
5.	Interpretation	Conclusion Drawing	Comparative Analysis	Comparing digital data with formal interaction data theory to conclude results.

The latest method used in this study considers data collection without the need for field visits as a valid approach, provided the instrument is designed with clear and easy-to-understand guidelines. According to Yusuf (2024), respondents' independence in completing online questionnaires can minimize researcher bias and reduce potential psychological stress for participants. This allows for more honest answers and reflects the real-world conditions

4. Results and Discussion

The following are the detailed results of a questionnaire involving 78 students of SMA Negeri 1 Takalar regarding their digital communication patterns.

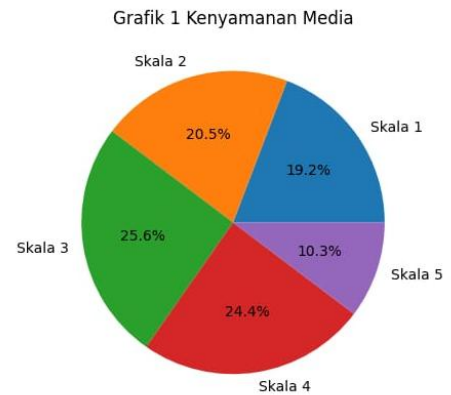


Figure 1. (The graph shows: scale 1 = 19.2%, scale 2 = 20.5%, scale 3 = 25.6%, scale 4 = 24.4%, scale 5 = 10.3%). Based on the data in Figure 1, 39.7% of students (scales 1 and 2) stated that they disagreed that asking questions via WhatsApp was more convenient than asking in person. Meanwhile, 34.7% of students who gave scores of 4 and 5 felt more comfortable learning online, while 25.6% of students were neutral. This is in accordance with research by Pratama and Sari (2022) which shows that communication via text often does not convey non-verbal cues. A recent study conducted by Azizah in 2024 in the International Journal of Digital Learning journal showed that students still

need direct recognition from teachers to avoid confusion regarding academic information.

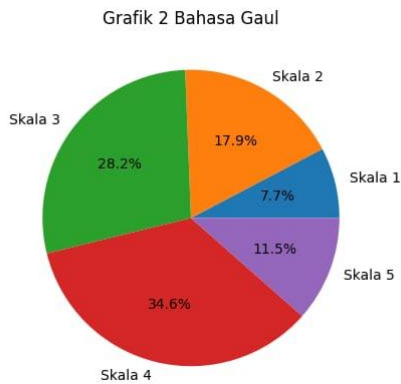


Figure 2. Effectiveness of Slang (Graph shows: Scale 1=7.7%, 2=17.9%, 3=28.2%, 4=34.6%, 5=11.5%). In Figure 2, 46.1% of students (scales 4 and 5) said that using slang was more effective in building familiarity compared to formal language. This phenomenon is in accordance with research by Ramadhan and Fitri (2022) which stated that informal language acts as a social bonding tool among teenagers. However, entering 2025, Santoso and his team (2025) highlighted the difficulties students face in switching between languages to continue communicating with professionals in the future workplace.

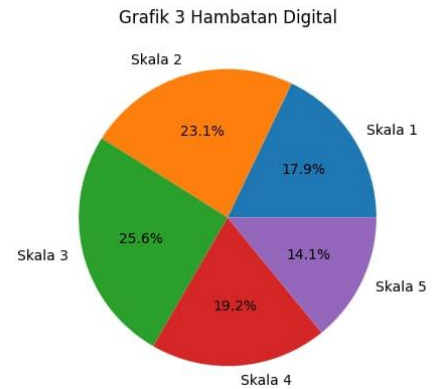


Figure 3. Digital Barriers (Graph shows: Scale 1 = 17.9%, 2 = 23.1%, 3 = 25.6%, 4 = 19.2%, 5 = 14.1%). The data in Figure 3 shows a fairly stable risk of miscommunication, where 33.3% of students (scales 4 and 5) said they often experience misunderstandings when coordinating using chat groups. This analysis is supported by Wulandari and Pratama (2022) in the Digital Literacy Journal, they stated that the main obstacle in online coordination is the loss of situational context. A recent study by Rahmawati and her team in 2025 emphasized the importance of asynchronous communication skills in reducing message errors that occur when working in digital teams.



Figure 4 shows that 38.5% of students (scales 4 and 5) felt more confident communicating during practical or fieldwork compared to in class. The graph shows a scale of 1 = 11.5%, 2 = 21.8%, 3 = 28.2%, 4 = 24.4%, and 5 = 14.1%. This analysis is supported by research by Nugraha (2022) which states that the practical environment provides opportunities for direct learning through experience. A 2024 study by Lestari (2024) showed that field conditions force students to more actively use their interpersonal intelligence.

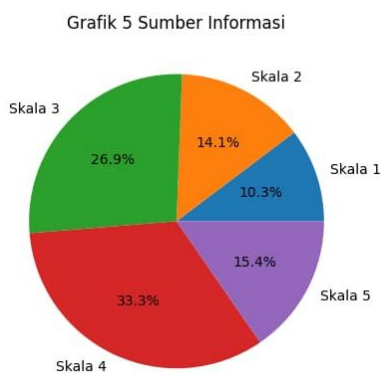


Figure 5. Information sources (graph shows: scale 1=10.3%, 2=14.1%, 3=26.9%, 4=33.3%, 5=15.4%). According to the graph, social media is the primary source of information for students at SMA Negeri 1 Takalar. As many as 48.7% of students (who gave scores of 4 and 5) said that Instagram or TikTok made it easier to get information about the school. Azizah's (2022) analysis states that the Gen Z generation tends to absorb information more easily from short visual video content. A study conducted by Gunawan & Saputra (2024) suggests that educational institutions should continue to adapt visual

platforms to be more effective in conveying messages to students.

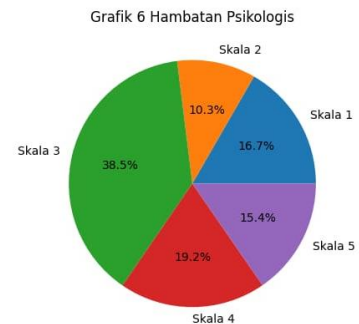


Figure 6. Psychological barriers (graph shows: scale 1 = 16.7%, scale 2 = 10.3%, scale 3 = 38.5%, scale 4 = 19.2%, scale 5 = 15.4%). The data in Figure 6 shows the existence of significant psychological barriers, where 34.6% of students (scales 4 and 5) feel embarrassed or reluctant to start a conversation with a teacher if not initiated by the teacher. The neutral figure (scale 3) of 38.5% indicates that students are still confused and unsure about understanding digital ethics rules. Fauzi (2024) said that relying on instant messaging often causes internal problems and puts pressure on a person's mind. These findings, according to Rahmawati and her team (2026), reinforce the importance of education about online communication ethics that can reduce these psychological barriers.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the dynamics of digital communication within SMA Negeri 1 Takalar demonstrate a very high level of technological dependence, accompanied by significant psychological anxiety. Although social media dominates as the primary information channel, students still require face-to-face interaction to ensure academic clarity and avoid the risk of chronic miscommunication. The data findings confirm that students' communicative self-efficacy is superior in the context of practical work rather than theoretical classroom learning. While the use of slang strengthens social relationships among adolescents, it hinders students' ability to initiate formal dialogue with teachers. The loss of non-verbal cues in online communication is a major factor triggering misunderstandings at school. Therefore, comprehensive digital literacy strengthening is needed, encompassing ethical netiquette and the ability to adapt to language codes. This step is crucial for aligning the flexibility of digital interactions with academic formality standards in order to face the increasingly dynamic, complex, competitive, and massive challenges of Society 5.0 for all elements of the current academic community.

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