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Enhancing Teacher Professionalism through the Development of a Positive Self-Concept Based on Communication Psychology

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Abstract

This study examines how teacher professionalism can be effectively enhanced through the development of a positive self-concept using a communication psychology approach. Conducted at SMP Negeri Kota Banda Aceh, the research addresses long-standing challenges related to low teacher motivation, seniority-based hierarchies, limited ICT competence, and weak collaboration between civil servant teachers (PNS) and non-permanent teachers (GTT). Using a qualitative design, data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation over a six-month intervention period focusing on interpersonal communication, small-group communication within MGMP meetings, and large-group communication led by the school principal. The findings show that communication psychology significantly improves teachers' confidence, motivation, and willingness to engage in professional tasks. Teachers demonstrated increased digital competence, greater openness to collaboration, stronger reflective practices, and improved pedagogical initiative. The intervention also helped reduce social gaps between PNS and GTT teachers by fostering a more supportive relational climate. These results suggest that teacher professionalism is not solely a technical or administrative issue but a psychosocial construct shaped by relational support, communication patterns, and emotional validation. The study concludes that communication-based interventions can serve as effective strategies for professional development in schools with hierarchical cultures. Future research should employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine sustainability and broader applicability.

Keywords: *Teacher Professionalism; Positive Self-Concept; Communication Psychology; Professional Development; School Culture.*



A. Introduction

The development of national education in Indonesia requires the presence of professional teachers who are capable of realizing the ideals of the *Pelajar Pancasila* profile—students who are faithful, pious, critical, creative, independent, collaborative, and able to participate meaningfully in global diversity. As the central actors of educational transformation, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping these competencies. Their success is strongly influenced not only by pedagogical and academic expertise but also by the quality of their self-concept and communication skills. Teachers with a positive self-concept tend to demonstrate higher levels of confidence, adaptability, and instructional creativity, which enable them to create meaningful learning experiences that support students in reaching their full potential. This underscores the argument that teacher professionalism is shaped not merely through technical training, but through psychological conditions, social interactions, and the communicative climate within their school environment (Hargreaves, 2000; Mulyasa, 2016; Siswanto et al., 2018).

A professional teacher is expected to act as a facilitator, motivator, innovator, and inspirer for learners. Through their pedagogical and academic competencies, teachers express themselves fully in classroom practice while cultivating student character— independence, creativity, moral integrity, and social awareness. Fulfilling these responsibilities requires teachers to maintain a positive self-concept, defined as the belief that they are capable, valuable, and equal to others. Such a self-concept fosters personal resilience, openness to new ideas, and the emotional capacity to support students effectively (Suryabrata, 1982; Mead in Burns, 1993).

Self-concept is shaped continuously through social interactions (Burns, 1993). Rakhmat (2002) emphasizes that a positive self-concept strengthens self-confidence and motivates individuals to improve. Dariyo (2007) categorizes self-concept into physiological and psychological domains, with cognitive, affective, and conative components forming the foundation of how individuals perceive and manage themselves. Hamachek adds that individuals with positive self-concepts typically maintain strong personal principles, make decisions confidently, accept their own limitations, and demonstrate sensitivity toward others.

In educational settings, numerous studies highlight the relevance of self-concept in shaping teacher professionalism. Lemba (2012) found that self-concept and discipline significantly influence teachers' work effectiveness. Irawan (2017) demonstrated that self-concept is positively correlated with interpersonal



communication competence among university students, reinforcing the argument that one's belief in oneself lays the foundation for healthy social relationships. Widiarti (2017) further shows that interpersonal communication-based assistance improves students' relational quality and self-concept. Kurniawan and Chotim (2015) identify positive self-concept as a key determinant of achievement motivation. More broadly, Stoll et al. (2006) highlight that teacher self-concept and professional identity develop significantly through interactions within professional learning communities. These findings affirm that professional development must address psychological and relational dimensions, not merely instructional skills.

Despite the importance of these factors, observations in the field – as reflected in the results of this study – show that many teachers still face psychological barriers. These include low confidence, feelings of inferiority toward senior colleagues, fear of adopting new technologies, reluctance to participate in competitive or innovative tasks, and a persistent preference for comfort zones. Some teachers exhibit anxiety, resistance to change, and low motivation, exacerbated by social dynamics such as PNS-GTT segregation, status inequality, and hierarchical work cultures. These conditions weaken the foundation of teacher professionalism and directly affect the quality of learning students receive.

In such circumstances, a communication psychology approach becomes highly relevant. Communication psychology operates through symbolic interaction that engages the emotions, perceptions, and internal experiences of the communicant. Empathic interpersonal communication enables teachers to feel accepted, valued, and heard – conditions that encourage emotional and behavioral transformation. DeVito (2016) asserts that effective interpersonal communication builds positive relationships, reduces anxiety, and enhances self-confidence. Rogers (1959) explains that unconditional positive regard creates the psychological space necessary for individuals to grow and actualize themselves.

This approach aligns with the stimulus-response principles outlined by Fisher, which include sensory reception, internal mediation, response prediction, and reinforcement. In this study, the school principal – as the key communicator – provides positive reinforcement, dialogic space, motivation, and emotional support through three forms of communication: interpersonal, small-group communication through MGMP, and large-group communication involving all teachers. Each form plays a complementary role:



interpersonal communication enhances emotional security; small-group communication fosters collaboration and strengthens collective efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004); and large-group communication contributes to the development of professional identity and public confidence (Mead, 1934; Timmis et al., 2020; Nuranifah et al., 2022).

Beyond improving teachers' psychological conditions, this approach has direct implications for professional competence. According to Indonesian Law No. 14/2005, a professional teacher must demonstrate mastery of content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and the ability to evaluate learning outcomes. Mulyasa (2013) outlines five pillars of teacher professionalism: commitment to student learning, mastery of subject matter, skill in assessment, systematic thinking, and participation in learning communities. The findings of this study show that these dimensions can develop sustainably only when teachers possess a positive self-concept and operate within a supportive communicative environment.

Therefore, this study aims to: (1) formulate the concept of enhancing teacher professionalism through the development of a positive self-concept using a communication psychology approach; (2) analyze the implementation of interpersonal, small-group, and large-group communication in shaping teachers' self-concept; and (3) identify the psychological, social, and professional barriers that hinder teachers from performing professionally.

The communication psychology approach is essential not merely because it facilitates behavioral change, but because it addresses the root causes of teacher professionalism—namely psychological and relational aspects often neglected in educational policy and training programs. Given the diverse backgrounds of teachers in terms of age, experience, motivation, and digital literacy, this approach offers a more humane, sustainable, and contextually appropriate pathway for strengthening teacher professionalism within the school environment.

B. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the processes through which teacher professionalism is enhanced by strengthening positive self-concept using a communication psychology approach (Walidin et al., 2015; 2023). A qualitative design was chosen because this research focuses on natural contexts and human behavioral dynamics, where psychological phenomena such as self-concept, motivation, and attitudinal change can only be understood holistically through



direct interaction with research participants. In this approach, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, directly engaged in observing, interviewing, and documenting empirical realities. The position of the researcher as the central instrument enables flexible interpretation of data, allowing the meaning that emerges from teachers' lived experiences to be understood comprehensively within their social and psychological contexts.

The research was conducted during the odd semester of the 2023/2024 academic year at a junior high school in Banda Aceh, an educational environment where teachers vary in age, experience, and pedagogical competence. The study focused on three forms of communication that constitute the core of the communication psychology approach: interpersonal communication, small-group communication through school-based MGMP (Subject Teacher Working Groups), and large-group communication involving all teachers. These three communication forms were observed directly because each contributes differently to developing a positive self-concept among teachers. Interpersonal communication provides a private, supportive space where teachers feel valued and emotionally accompanied. Small-group communication fosters collaboration, reduces personal ego, and strengthens mutual respect among colleagues. Meanwhile, large-group communication serves as a collective motivational arena that encourages perseverance, confidence in expressing opinions, and a stronger competitive spirit.

Data were collected through repeated observations of teachers' behaviors in both formal and informal settings, including classroom instruction, digital interactions via WhatsApp and Google Classroom, and MGMP activities. Participant observation was used to capture authentic responses to the principal's communication strategies. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore teachers' personal experiences, including their self-perceptions, professional challenges, and attitudinal changes throughout the intervention process. Interviews were carried out both face-to-face and through digital media to accommodate the diverse circumstances of the teachers. Documentation techniques were employed to gather supporting data such as lesson plans, teaching materials, performance evidence, assessment records, and digital communication archives, all of which enriched the analysis of changes in teacher professionalism (Walidin et al., 2015; 2023).

All data were analyzed using an inductive analysis technique, including data organization, pattern identification, category development, and the extraction of core themes related to the development of teachers' positive self-concepts and the



enhancement of their professionalism. Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously, enabling the researcher to deepen emerging findings through follow-up interviews or observations whenever necessary. To ensure the validity of findings, this study employed source and technique triangulation by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documentation. Triangulation was essential to address potential contradictions, given the teachers' diverse experiences and backgrounds (Walidin et al., 2015; 2023).

The entire research process adhered to ethical guidelines, including maintaining participant confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, and ensuring that all data were used strictly for academic purposes. Through this methodological approach, the study successfully captured the significant psychological and behavioral transformations experienced by teachers as a result of the internalization of communication psychology principles within their professional practices.

C. Results and Discussion

All data in this study were analyzed thematically to identify patterns of behavioral, attitudinal, and interactional changes among teachers following the implementation of the communication psychology approach. The analysis was conducted with careful attention to the school's social context, the diverse characteristics of the teachers, and the organizational conditions that shaped their responses to the intervention. This analytical orientation allowed the findings to capture not only shifts at the individual level but also the broader transformation of the school's professional climate and work relationships. Through this approach, the study reveals how communication processes—interpersonal, small-group, and large-group—collectively contributed to reshaping teachers' self-concepts, motivation, and professional engagement. The following sections present the findings systematically, illustrating the nature of these changes and the key factors that supported the transformation.

1. Results

The findings of this study indicate that the initial level of teacher professionalism in junior high schools across Banda Aceh was relatively low, marked by several issues stemming from age, health conditions, work motivation, pedagogical literacy, and social dynamics among teachers. Among the civil servant teachers (PNS), nearly 40% were over the age of 45. This relatively senior age group experienced physical limitations, such as reduced visual endurance when operating



laptops and mobile devices, which serve as essential tools in modern teaching. These limitations contributed to slower adaptation to technology-based instructional innovations.

Beyond age-related factors, the research also revealed a work culture that was stable yet insufficiently productive. Many teachers appeared satisfied with routine teaching activities and the assurance of salary and certification allowances, resulting in weak motivation to improve their professional competencies. A performance appraisal system that emphasized tenure and rank over actual instructional quality further contributed to the issue. Senior teachers tended to receive high performance ratings due to administrative considerations, while younger teachers and non-permanent teachers (GTT), who often demonstrated competitive potential, did not receive recognition proportional to their efforts. This structural imbalance weakened the school's professional climate.

The study also highlighted significant disparities in teacher participation in extracurricular activities. Most extracurricular supervisors were GTT teachers, while PNS teachers showed low involvement due to limited physical stamina, lack of skills in specific extracurricular fields, and financial stability that reduced their need to pursue additional professional activities. Furthermore, interaction gaps were found between PNS and GTT teachers. PNS teachers were more comfortable socializing within their own group, while GTT teachers tended to support each other. This status difference sometimes caused feelings of inferiority among GTT teachers, reducing the effectiveness of collaboration across teacher groups.

Another important finding concerns the mismatch between teachers' educational backgrounds and the subjects they were assigned to teach. Certification regulations requiring PNS teachers to teach subjects aligned with their degrees forced many GTT teachers to teach outside their area of expertise. For instance, English teachers were assigned to teach Arts and Culture or Javanese Language, while Mathematics teachers handled Craft or Physical Education. This mismatch resulted in limited subject mastery, monotonous instructional methods, and diminished teacher confidence. Consequently, classroom learning became less engaging and more difficult for students to understand.

Teachers' ICT skills were also found to be limited. Many had not yet developed proficiency in using computers, digital learning applications, or online



platforms for classroom management and assessment. Much of the instructional administration remained manual, causing slower information delivery and delayed adaptation to new policies. Professional literacy limitations were further reflected in teachers’ reliance solely on student textbooks, teacher guides, and district-level MGMP modules, without exploring additional academic resources.

In the area of assessment, teachers frequently depended on questions from companion textbooks and district MGMP question banks for mid-semester, final-semester, and final-year assessments. As a result, their ability to design HOTS-based assessments remained limited. Skills assessment was often misinterpreted as merely evaluating physical products rather than authentic student performance. The dominance of a cognitively oriented assessment mindset hindered the development of creativity, collaboration, social awareness, and independence – key components of the *Pelajar Pancasila* profile.

Following the implementation of the communication psychology approach, significant changes were observed in teachers’ self-concepts and professional behaviors. These improvements, driven primarily by interpersonal communication strategies, are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Differences in Self-Concept Before and After Interpersonal Communication

No	Self-Concept	Before	After
1	Ability to Solve Problems	Anxious; feels afraid when invited to communicate Closed; unwilling to share or disclose personal problems Unable to make decisions	Calm attitude Open; willing to share existing problems Able to make decisions
2	Self-Confidence	Often thinks negatively about oneself and others Feels inferior; believes they are unworthy of performing assigned tasks, often refuses additional tasks Does not initiate communication unless approached first	Thinks positively about oneself and others Confident that they are capable and motivated to produce better outcomes Confident to initiate communication



No	Self-Concept	Before	After
		Not focused on their work	Focused on their work or things they enjoy
		Unwilling to accept personal shortcomings	Willing to accept their shortcomings
		Believes appearance is not important	Shows improved appearance
		Less interested in new things	Enjoys new experiences

Small-group communication through school-based MGMP meetings was able to enhance the sense of togetherness, reduce gaps among teachers, and strengthen collaboration within the same subject area. This change is documented in the table below.

Table 2. Differences in Self-Concept Before and After Small-Group Communication (MGMP)

No	Self-Concept	Before	After
1	Ability to Solve Problems	Self-centered; prioritizing personal interests	Not self-centered; develops a sense of sharing with fellow teachers
2	Equality	Lacks appreciation for oneself	Able to understand others Sees oneself as valuable and equal to others
3	Self-Confidence	Feels inferior to senior teachers or civil servant teachers Indifferent; does not care about the tasks assigned to the group	Realizes that they are equal to other teachers Responsible for the group's success
4	Perseverance	Ordinary or distant relationships Stable cognitive level Individualistic	Relationships become closer Cognitive improvement Increased sense of togetherness within the MGMP group



No	Self-Concept	Before	After
		Lacks a sense of responsibility	Strong sense of responsibility for the group's success
		Low enthusiasm	High enthusiasm

Through large-group communication, teachers demonstrated increased courage in expressing opinions, greater responsibility for collective tasks, and enhanced ability to adapt to the dynamics of school change. These changes are shown in the table below.

Table 3. Differences in Self-Concept Before and After Large-Group Communication (All Teachers)

No	Self-Concept	Before	After
1	Perseverance	Individualistic; less appreciative of others' feelings; less sensitive to the surrounding environment	Realizes that every person has feelings, desires, and behaviors that may not always be approved by their environment
		Not brave enough to express ideas or suggestions	Courageous in expressing ideas or suggestions
		Presence of cliques or grouping behaviors; GTT teachers tend to associate only with other GTT and prioritize personal interests	A more conducive and pleasant social environment
		Works only to fulfill basic duties; lacks interest in competition and believes it has no effect	Shows a desire to engage in competition
		Rarely engages in self-evaluation or reflection after completing a task	Performs reflection on their performance

The improvement of teachers' self-concept subsequently had a direct impact on the enhancement of their professionalism in various aspects, such as discipline, lesson planning, teaching method variation, ICT skills, assessment quality, reflective



ability, and work motivation. The details of these improvements are presented in the table below.

Table 4. Improvement of Teacher Professionalism Before and After Implementing the Communication Psychology Approach

No	Professionalism	Before	After
1	Discipline	Less disciplined in carrying out tasks; often not punctual	Punctual, especially in completing assigned tasks
2	Lesson Planning	Prepared only to fulfill administrative requirements	Lesson plans are more well-developed and not done carelessly
3	Mastery of Subject Matter	Limited to teacher's book, student's book, and available supplementary books	Strong desire to master the material, shown through effort in seeking additional sources from the internet and other references
		Thinking was very simple	Thinking has become more global and focused on students' progress
4	Teaching Methods	Teaching methods lacked variety Assessment focused mainly on knowledge	Teaching methods are more varied and not monotonous Assessment is based on multiple indicators – including knowledge, skills, and attitudes – in the form of portfolios
5	Assessment	Assessment was not varied and did not reach higher-order thinking (HOTS)	Assessment has become more varied; some teachers have related assessments to real-life contexts, and questions now reflect higher-order thinking (HOTS)
		Narrow understanding of skills assessment, assuming it only means producing a product Often did not provide feedback to students who submitted assignments and lacked transparency in grading	Understands the concept of skills assessment, which may include process, performance, and product Student assignments are reviewed, given feedback, and scores are shared in the class WhatsApp group
6	ICT	Limited ICT skills; tests still done manually	Improved ICT skills; tests conducted using CBT



No	Professionalism	Before	After
7	Use of Android Applications	Limited ability to use online applications	(Computer-Based Test), enabling faster scoring and analysis Increasingly proficient in using Android applications, which speeds up assessment processes and enhances efficiency and effectiveness
8	Outputs/Products	Outputs were ordinary, only to fulfill task requirements	Outputs produced are of significantly better quality
9	Work Motivation	Low motivation; low desire for self-development	High motivation; works more diligently and has a strong desire for self-improvement
10	Reflection	Rarely engaged in reflection	Conducts reflection

Overall, the results demonstrate that the communication psychology approach brought substantial improvements to teachers’ self-concept and professional behavior. The transformations documented in the tables show consistent positive changes across interpersonal, small-group, and large-group communication contexts. Teachers who initially exhibited anxiety, low confidence, limited collaboration, and minimal professional initiative gradually developed stronger problem-solving skills, greater self-confidence, improved social sensitivity, and a stronger sense of responsibility. These internal changes directly contributed to measurable improvements in professional competence, including discipline, lesson planning, mastery of subject matter, teaching methods, assessment quality, ICT skills, reflective capacity, and work motivation. Collectively, these findings affirm that enhancing teachers’ psychological readiness and communicative relationships provides a solid foundation for sustainable growth in teacher professionalism.

2. Discussion

The findings of this study show that improving teacher professionalism through a communication psychology approach affects not only behavioral aspects but also the structure of professional consciousness, work identity, and the dynamics of social relations within the school organization. Thus, this discussion positions the improvement of teacher professionalism not merely as an issue of technical skill enhancement, but as a



transformational process rooted in communicative relationships, meaning-making, identity dynamics, and psychosocial construction that occur in daily interactions. The author takes a firm stance that in the context of Indonesian schools—particularly those with a high composition of senior teachers, hierarchical cultures, and stagnant work motivation—the communication psychology approach is not only relevant but also the most effective intervention compared to short-term technical programs such as instructional training or workshops.

Theoretically, the findings reinforce the literature on the central role of interpersonal communication in changing professional behavior. Communication is not merely the transmission of messages, but a symbolic process that shapes perceptions, emotions, identity, and motivation (DeVito, 2016). Teachers who previously exhibited anxiety, reluctance toward technology, and a lack of self-confidence experienced significant improvement when given safe spaces to speak, receive emotional attention, and obtain positive reinforcement from the school principal. This aligns with Rogers' (1959) view that unconditional positive regard creates psychological conditions that allow individuals to move toward self-actualization. When teachers feel valued, heard, and not judged, they begin to develop confidence and open themselves to change.

From a self-efficacy perspective, these changes can be explained through Bandura's (1997) theory, which states that individuals' beliefs in their abilities influence their actions, persistence, and work effectiveness. Teachers who previously resisted using ICT or felt incompetent began to try, and eventually succeeded in integrating technology into instruction. International research supports this finding: teachers with high digital self-efficacy adopt technology more quickly in the classroom (Tondeur et al., 2019; Avidov-Ungar & Forkosh-Baruch, 2018). This indicates that changes in teacher professionalism depend less on technical training and more on how communication shapes belief and the courage to try.

Beyond individual aspects, this study shows that group dynamics play a significant role in driving change. Small-group communication through school-based MGMP meetings created collaborative spaces enabling teachers to identify professional blind spots, share experiences, and find solutions to challenges. This mechanism aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory that cognitive and professional development occur through social dialogue and symbolic mediation. Small groups



enable social validation, where experiences previously regarded as weaknesses become shared learning material. Modern educational literature affirms that teacher collaboration enhances professional competence, pedagogical creativity, and collective efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2004; Stoll et al., 2006).

The study also reveals social inequality between civil servant teachers (PNS) and honorary teachers (GTT), which creates communication gaps and hinders professional collaboration. In many schools across Southeast Asia, teachers' social status determines patterns of interaction and distribution of tasks (Hallinger & Bryant, 2013; Tabrani ZA et al., 2024). PNS teachers who feel financially secure are less motivated to develop themselves, whereas GTT teachers, despite high motivation, often feel inferior. The communication psychology approach used in this study was effective in reducing such social segregation. When teachers were given space to speak in both small and large groups, and when the principal provided equal appreciation, hierarchical relational patterns began to dissolve. The author identifies this as one of the most important theoretical contributions of the study: communication can serve as an instrument to address structural inequality in educational organizations.

Large-group communication also significantly influences the formation of teachers' professional identity. Mead (1934) emphasizes that self-concept is shaped through the generalized others—how individuals perceive collective views about themselves. When teachers get opportunities to present ideas before a large group and receive positive responses, they experience validation of their professional identity. Timmis et al. (2020) show that participation in professional communities strengthens identity as adaptive, reflective, and skilled educators. In this study, teachers who were once silent and passive began to show confidence to speak, express opinions, and take responsibility for school projects.

In the organizational dimension, changes in teacher professionalism are also linked to the school's social climate and work culture. Hoy and Miskel (2013) assert that a supportive organizational climate enhances cohesion, motivation, and innovation. In this study, behavioral changes occurred not only due to direct intervention but also due to the transformation of the school's psychological atmosphere: teachers became more respectful toward one another, reduced suspicion, and became more open to collaboration. This finding is consistent with the professional capital framework (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Casey et al., 2018), which emphasizes that teacher



professionalism grows when there is investment in social capital – strong relationships, mutual trust, and meaningful collaboration among teachers.

Progress in teachers' ICT professionalism also reinforces the literature on the link between emotional support and digital learning. Tondeur et al. (2017) note that technology adoption in education is not solely determined by device availability but by confidence, organizational support, and a sense of psychological safety in trying new things. In this study, teachers who initially struggled with technology gained confidence in operating laptops, learning applications, and digital resources after undergoing systematic interpersonal and group communication processes. In other words, communication serves as a bridge between psychological readiness and technical ability.

Findings on changes in teachers' self-concept are supported by teacher agency theory, which positions teachers as active agents capable of making decisions, taking action, and shaping their work environment (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015). Before the intervention, many teachers were stuck in passive compliance – doing only what was required without initiative. After the intervention, teachers demonstrated increased confidence in proposing ideas, taking additional tasks, and initiating communication. This reflects the emergence of active professional agency, a key indicator of modern teacher professionalism. Thus, the author affirms that communication is not merely a tool but a mechanism that enables teachers to regain control over their professional development.

In the context of instruction, improvements in teachers' ability to design assessments, use varied methods, and engage in reflection reinforce the literature on the importance of reflective practice (Schön, 1983; Ziaurrahman et al., 2024). Teachers with positive self-concepts are more willing to evaluate their shortcomings, enabling them to refine lesson plans and adapt instructional methods. Reflection also makes teachers more attentive to students' individual needs, a key characteristic of effective teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

The author also asserts that the communication psychology approach offers strong practical contributions within Indonesian school contexts, where many senior teachers experience professional fatigue, feel unappreciated, or are trapped in old routines. Technical interventions such as workshops will not succeed unless teachers' psychological conditions are improved. This intervention proves that professional



change can emerge from within through humane, empathetic, and dialogical communication processes. Therefore, this study supports the argument that educational reform must consider the emotional and relational dimensions of teachers, not merely administrative and technical aspects.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations. The six-month intervention period was insufficient to assess long-term impacts on teacher professionalism. Moreover, the research was conducted in only one school, so generalization should be made cautiously. Future research may employ mixed-method approaches, involve various types of schools, and adopt longitudinal designs to capture the dynamics of professional change over longer periods.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the communication psychology approach successfully produces tangible improvements in teacher professionalism, particularly in aspects related to self-concept, motivation, and the quality of social interactions within the school environment. These transformations occurred because empathic, open, and support-oriented communication helped restore the confidence of senior teachers, strengthen collaboration between civil servant (PNS) and honorary (GTT) teachers, and encourage teachers to innovate in their teaching and utilize technology. Thus, this study affirms that enhancing professionalism does not rely solely on technical training but also requires interventions that address the psychological and relational dimensions that are often overlooked.

An important contribution of this research lies in sharpening the understanding that teacher professionalism is a psychosocial construct formed through the dynamics of communication and work relationships in schools. The communication psychology approach has proven to be an effective mechanism for generating sustainable changes in professional attitudes and behavior, especially in schools characterized by senior teachers and hierarchical work cultures. These findings offer practical implications for schools and policymakers, emphasizing that teacher professional development must take into account emotional conditions, interpersonal support, and a healthy communication climate.

Based on the limitations noted above, future studies are recommended to use longitudinal designs to examine the durability of behavioral changes over time. A mixed-methods approach may also be employed to quantitatively test the relationship between



communication, self-concept, and teacher professionalism. Research in various school contexts – public, private, and madrasah – is also needed to understand the variations in the effectiveness of this approach across broader settings.

Overall, this study reinforces that improvements in teacher professionalism are strongly influenced by the quality of communication within the school organization. Empathic, supportive, and non-hierarchical communication not only enhances teachers' competence but also strengthens their professional identity. Therefore, future teacher development strategies must place communication as a fundamental pillar in building a productive and humanistic school ecosystem.

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