

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TRAINING FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN**Fit YANUAR^{1*} and Daesy EKAYANTHI²**^{1,2}*Faculty of Communication Science - University Sahid, Jalan Supomo 84 Tebet, Jakarta***fit_yanuar@usahid.ac.id***ABSTRACT**

Mother-child communication is not always easy. Problems arise when there is a misalignment in communication between mothers and children. The gap created can lead to issues ranging from minor to severe, both in the present and in the future. The program design and implementation team of PKM (Community Service Program) from the Faculty of Communication Science, Sahid University Jakarta, aims to address the aforementioned issues by providing effective communication training to a group of mothers who are parents of students at an educational institution named PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor, located in Cikarawang, Dramaga, Bogor Regency. The activities took place from May to June 2024. A brief analysis shows that partners can utilize knowledge related to effective communication to enhance their competencies when dealing with their children. The effective communication knowledge includes understanding effective communication and the conditions required to achieve it. The guidance and motivation provided seem to have been utilized by the partners with satisfactory results.

Keywords: effective communication, mother-child, paud khairu ummah bogor, problem-solving.

INTRODUCTION

Mother-child communication issues may seem simple, but they are not always straightforward. Problems can arise, as communication often comes with challenges (Littlejohn & Foss, 2020). In the context of mother-child relationships, there might be cases where a mother communicates negatively to the child, or the child refuses to listen to the mother. These are direct issues. Indirect issues that trigger poor communication between mother and child can stem from factors such as disharmony between parents, financial problems, interference from father/mother in-laws, and various other issues.

Effective communication is an important foundation in family relationships, especially between mother and child. However, along with the development of the times and increasingly complex social challenges, many mothers have difficulty in establishing good communication with their children. This phenomenon is exacerbated by technological advances and digital media that, despite providing ease of communication, often reduce the quality of face-to-face communication at home. According to the theory of interpersonal communication (Devito, 2015), good communication must involve active listening, empathy, and openness, so that the relationships built become closer and harmonious. However, in reality, many mothers find it difficult to apply these principles in their daily lives, especially in dealing with the dynamics of children that continue to change as they grow. Busyness, differences in views between generations, and lack of quality time are often barriers to effective communication.

With the development of technology and social changes, communication patterns in the family have also shifted. Many mothers face challenges in understanding how to communicate well with their children, especially when facing various stages of child development, such as adolescence that is often accompanied by conflicts, differences of views, and a lack of open communication.

Ineffective communication often leads to miscommunication, misunderstandings, and emotional distance between mother and child. This can have an impact on children's emotional development, self-confidence, and children's ability to solve problems and interact with their social environment. Mothers who have good communication skills can help children develop a more mature personality, be able to express themselves appropriately, and build healthy confidence.

Therefore, effective communication training for mothers and children is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of modern life today. This training aims to provide mothers with an in-depth understanding of the importance of empathetic communication, how to actively listen to children, as well as ways to overcome conflicts that may arise without damaging emotional relationships. In addition, this training is expected to strengthen the relationship between mother and child, create a positive home atmosphere, and improve the emotional well-being of both parties. Through this effective communication training, mothers can be trained to be more sensitive to their children's emotional needs, provide the necessary support, and build more open and honest two-way communication, which ultimately contributes to healthier child development, both emotionally and socially.

PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor is a social educational institution established for the education of preschool children. Indonesia recognizes the formal preschool education system in the form of PAUD (Early Childhood Education) and TK (Kindergarten). PAUD is intended as an educational institution for children aged 4-5 years, combining play and learning activities for preschool-aged children who already have sufficient cognition and affection. Kindergarten is aimed at children aged 5-7 years, similar to PAUD, and also combines play and learning activities for children before they enter elementary school.

PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor is located at Jln. Carang Pulang RT 04, RW 03, Desa Cikarawang, Kecamatan Dramaga, postal code 16689, Bogor Regency, West Java Province, Republic of Indonesia. It is managed by the Khairu Ummah Cikarawang Foundation, officially registered through the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights decree number: AHU-199.AH.02.01 of 2012, established by Notary Deed Andhika Juwita Yustiningsih, SH, M.Kn., number 1, dated February 2, 2022. Currently, PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor has 14 students aged 4-6 years, who come from the surrounding area of the school in the village of Cikarawang, Dramaga District, Bogor Regency. Due to the young age of the students, most mothers accompany their children during play and learning activities.

The PKM team from FIKOM Usahid (Faculty of Communication Science, Sahid University Jakarta) met with the administrators of PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor in early February 2024. During the conversation, the administrators mentioned that the mothers of PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor students were experiencing difficulties in communicating with their children. As previously mentioned, some issues could stem from the parents, while others could come from the children.

The "Effective Communication for Mothers and Children" training is an educational program that aims to equip mothers with better communication skills, in order to create more harmonious relationships and support children's emotional and social development. This activity is motivated by the challenges faced by many mothers in maintaining effective communication with their children, especially in the modern era which is filled with distractions from technology and differences of views between generations. This training is designed in an interactive form, involving discussions, simulations, and hands-on practice so that participants can apply the techniques learned during the session.

Regarding effective mother-child communication, it is clear that parents must take the initiative to ensure the communication meets expectations. In the book "Komunikasi Efektif Orang Tua Dengan Anak (Effective Communication Between Parents and Children)," Masganti Sit et al. (2021) discuss the importance of understanding effective communication to help parents find effective ways to communicate with their children. Wise parents understand how to communicate properly and appropriately, so their children can understand what is best for themselves.

Dr. Laura Markham, in "Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How to Stop Yelling and Start Connecting" (2020), states that parents must understand their children's issues to achieve effective communication. Markham outlines three conditions for effective communication: 1) innovative strategies to reduce conflicts, 2) fostering empathetic connections, and 3) enhancing children's emotional intelligence. The key lies in coaching parents to manage their emotions first, equipping them to calmly understand and respond to their children's needs.

Seeing the importance of good communication in the mother-child relationship, this training is designed to provide real solutions in overcoming these challenges. With a participatory and interactive approach, the training aims to equip mothers with better communication skills, so that they can build more positive relationships with their children. The training also integrates empathic communication techniques and active listening that have proven effective in reducing conflict and increasing openness in family relationships.

In "Listen: Five Simple Tools to Meet Your Everyday Parenting Challenges" (2021), Patty Wipfler strongly suggests that parents practice being listeners to their children, which paves the way for effective communication. Many parents do the opposite, expecting their children to listen while they talk or dictate. However, growing children need to be heard, which makes them happy and allows parents to guide them beneficially for their future.

Koerner & Fitzpatrick (2002) found that communication patterns in the family have a great influence on children's emotional development. Families with open and supportive communication patterns show children who are better able to express their emotions in a healthy way and have better relationships with parents. This effective communication training supports these findings by focusing on how mothers can create a positive communication environment at home.

Based on this information, the PKM FIKOM Usahid team offered to provide knowledge on effective mother-child communication to the mothers of PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor students. The offer was well received, making PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor a partner in this community service activity.

METHOD

The implementation of the "Effective Communication Training for Mothers and Children" activity uses a structured and effective method, with a participatory and interactive approach. The methods used include lectures, group discussions, simulations, and hands-on practice that allow participants to understand concepts and apply communication skills directly.

The lecture method provides a strong theoretical basis regarding the importance of communication in the mother-child relationship, while group discussions encourage active participation and sharing of experiences between participants. Simulations and hands-on practice are key elements in practicing active listening and empathetic communication techniques, which have proven to be effective in improving the communication skills of the participants.

With this combination of comprehensive methods, the training successfully achieved its goal, which is to equip mothers with the ability to build better communication with their children. The applied method also allows participants to not only understand the concept theoretically, but also internalize it through hands-on practice, which ultimately has an impact on improving the quality of mother-child relationships in daily life.

In line with the partner's problems, this PKM team offers solutions for the mothers of PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor students in the form of:

1. Providing training and teaching on effective mother-child communication.
2. Offering guidance and motivation for practicing effective mother-child communication.

The first solution is in the form of a brief teaching session on effective mother-child communication. The goal is for partners to develop competence in effective family communication, particularly with their children, and to make them aware that understanding their children is more important than expecting their children to constantly understand them. The aim of the guidance and motivational support is to encourage mothers to consistently practice effective communication when interacting with their children.

Specifically, the goal is for training participants to be able to:

1. Communicate more effectively with their children.
2. Understand what their children want from them.
3. Improve their communication skills.
4. Reduce problems between training participants and their children.

The approach methods used are as follows:

1. Growing partners' knowledge of effective communication.
2. Building partners' motivation.
3. Transferring effective communication skills within the family.

To support the realization of the proposed methods, the following work procedures can be detailed:

1. Conducting socialization with partners about the need for communication knowledge and skills.
2. Conducting effective communication training for partners.
3. Providing training/guidance on effective communication practice for partners.

The following is an outline of activities in this PKM activity:

1. Collecting partner data.
2. Developing a focused plan with partners (PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor management).
3. Implementing the work plan.
4. Monitoring, evaluating, and reporting.
5. Creating publications (videos and scientific articles).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The partner's issue is how to make communication with their children more effective. Therefore, the PKM team designed relevant training materials for this issue. The training was conducted on May 13, 2024, at PAUD Khairu Ummah Bogor, Jln. Karang Pulang RT 04, RW 03, Desa Cikarawang, Kecamatan Dramaga, Bogor Regency. There were 13 participants from the partners (mothers of students) and 2 PAUD tutors. The speakers were two lecturers from the Faculty of Communication Science, Sahid University Jakarta: Fit Yanuar, M.Si (PKM Team Leader) and Daesy Ekayanthi, M.Si (PKM Team Member).

The training material included:

1. Understanding the concept of effective communication.
2. Questioning the ease/difficulty of effective communication.
3. Five requirements for effective mother-child communication:
 - a. Managing the mother's emotions first.
 - b. Willingness to be a listener.
 - c. Willingness to understand the child.
 - d. Willingness to let the child be themselves.
 - e. Practicing persuasion, not threats.
4. Understanding mistakes in effective mother-child communication practice:
 - a. Lack of listening.
 - b. Giving instructions without explanation.
 - c. Not providing space for children to express themselves.
 - d. Lack of openness and honesty.
 - e. Giving disproportionate punishment.
 - f. Lack of appreciation and encouragement.

The participants absorbed the material well. Enthusiasm was evident as they seriously and motivatedly followed the training. The training was a mix of seriousness and humor, considering the mothers liked to make remarks. There was always something they commented on. Discussions were held in the middle of the training, and participants frequently asked questions related to their experiences in mother-child communication. The most common concern was about the demands of the current generation of children. Participants were surprised by their children's desires, influenced by modern communication tools and media present since childhood, like becoming YouTubers or TikTokers.

Some participants had serious communication issues due to interference from in-laws. In such cases, where the in-laws pampered the children, conflicts arose when children turned to their grandparents for support, especially in cases where the grandparents fulfilled most of the children's requests. The PKM team provided solutions, suggesting mothers explain the consequences of relying on their grandparents. For example, if a child consumes ice cream, which they are allergic to, with their grandfather's help, resulting in a sore throat, the mother should calmly explain the consequences without scolding, raising the child's awareness effectively.

This training successfully equips mothers with active listening and empathetic communication skills, which significantly improves their relationships with children. Increased openness, reduced conflict, and improvements in daily communication show that this training has a real positive impact in the family environment.

These findings also show that the interactive and practice-based approach in this training is effective in improving communication skills. With consistent implementation, the positive results obtained from this training are expected to have a long-term impact on the relationship between mother and child, support the emotional development of children, and create a more harmonious family environment.

Here is a sketch of the activity configuration:



Figure 1. Sketch of PKM Activity Configuration

Training evaluation was conducted twice, two weeks and a month after the training. The results were satisfying. The mothers started to feel competent in effective communication with their children. They practiced persuasion and understanding, leading to significant improvements in mother-child relationships. Children became more willing to listen, and mothers felt their children were closer to them. According to the tutors at PAUD Khairu Ummah, children expressed that their mothers were now more affectionate, and they wanted to be closer and share their feelings with their mothers.

Based on the results obtained, this training showed success in improving mothers' communication skills with their children, especially in terms of active listening and the application of empathetic communication. Overall, this training provides real benefits in building more effective communication between mother and child. However, several challenges still exist, such as maintaining consistency in the application of communication techniques that have been learned, as well as differences in family dynamics that affect the results of training in each household. Nonetheless, this training provides a solid foundation to improve the quality of family communication and support children's emotional development optimally.

CONCLUSION

Communication issues are often described as difficult but manageable. Communication becomes effective when the communicator understands the communicant's issues. In this PKM activity, mothers realized that they were imposing too many demands on their children. By changing their communication approach to understand their children's needs and issues, mainly through listening and patience, the children felt safe and comfortable, becoming closer and more communicative with their mothers. In sociological studies, Jurgen Habermas (in Ritzer & Goodman, 2020) offers communication as a solution for societal issues, emphasizing logical dialogue without coercion. This societal level

analysis can also be applied to family levels, particularly mother-child relationships, as demonstrated by this PKM activity.

This activity has a positive impact on improving the communication skills of mothers, which has an impact on the quality of relationships with children. Through the application of interpersonal communication theory, attachment, as well as an empathetic approach and active listening, this training is able to equip mothers with practical skills to communicate more effectively and empathetically with their children. Overall, this training not only provides theoretical insights, but also practical skills that help mothers become better listeners and respond more empathetically. The impact is expected to continue in the long term, helping to build the foundation of a closer, harmonious relationship, and support optimal child development, both from emotional and social aspects.

Overall, this training not only provides theoretical insights, but also practical skills that help mothers become better listeners and respond more empathetically. The impact is expected to continue in the long term, helping to build the foundation of a closer, harmonious relationship, and support optimal child development, both from emotional and social aspects.

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