



## Analysis of Social Communication Skills in Experimental PGSD' Students: A Case Study at a University

<sup>1)</sup> Ribka Yago, <sup>2)</sup> Nurhasanah, <sup>3)</sup> Arpiani <sup>4)</sup> Yulia Astuti

<sup>1)</sup> Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Madako Tolitoli, [ribka121203@gmail.com](mailto:ribka121203@gmail.com)

<sup>2)</sup> Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Madako Tolitoli, [hnur45271@gmail.com](mailto:hnur45271@gmail.com)

<sup>3)</sup> Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Madako Tolitoli, [arpiani016@gmail.com](mailto:arpiani016@gmail.com)

<sup>4)</sup> Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Madako Tolitoli, [yuliaastuti300703@gmail.com](mailto:yuliaastuti300703@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

PGSD students of Madako Tolitoli University generally still experience obstacles in communicating effectively, especially in their social environment. This is a crucial challenge in the process of forming their communication skills as prospective educators in elementary schools. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the strategy of developing students' communication skills in the social context of experimentation as a learning strategy in improving students' communication skills. This study uses an experimental contextual study method, which analyzes the impact of implementing real-life based strategies. Data collection techniques include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research subjects consisted of five students in the sixth semester of PGSD Madako Tolitoli University who were selected purposively. The results of this study show that students' communication skills in the experimental social context are applied with the strategy of open thematic discussion forums (87.88%), social interaction simulations (83.66%), and collaborative studies across study programs (84.21%). The results of each of these findings had a good impact on improving students' communication skills after they were involved in social experiment activities. Contributively, these findings can be used as an alternative learning strategy that is effective in developing the communication skills of PGSD students at Madako Tolitoli University.

### Article

#### Information

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### ABSTRACT

Mahasiswa PGSD Universitas Madako Tolitoli umumnya masih mengalami kendala dalam berkomunikasi efektif terutama di lingkungan sosialnya, sehingga ini menjadi tantangan krusial dalam proses pembentukan skill berkomunikasinya sebagai calon pendidik di sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis efektivitas strategi mengasa keterampilan berkomunikasi mahasiswa dalam konteks sosial eksperimen sebagai strategi pembelajaran dalam meningkatkan kemampuan komunikasi mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kontekstual eksperimental, yang menganalisis dampak penerapan strategi berbasis kehidupan nyata. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari lima mahasiswa semester VI PGSD Universitas Madako Tolitoli yang dipilih secara purposif. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa keterampilan

komunikasi mahasiswa dalam konteks sosial eksperimen yang diterapkan dengan strategi forum diskusi tematik terbuka (87,88%), simulasi interaksi sosial (83,66%), dan kajian kolaboratif lintas program studi (84,21%). Hasil temuan ini masing-masing berdampak baik dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berkomunikasi mahasiswa setelah mereka terlibat dalam kegiatan eksperimen sosial. Secara konstruktif, temuan ini dapat dijadikan alternatif strategi pembelajaran yang efektif dalam mengembangkan kemampuan komunikasi mahasiswa PGSD di Universitas Madako Tolitoli.

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✉ **Corresponding Author:** (1) Ribka Yago, (2) Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, (3) Universitas Madako Tolitoli, (4) Jln. Kampus UMADA No. 1 Kelurahan Tambun, Kabupaten Tolitoli, Indonesia, (5) Email: [ribka121203@gmail.com](mailto:ribka121203@gmail.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

As social beings, humans cannot live alone and always need interaction and assistance from others in living a complex and diverse life. In these social relationships, communication is very important to convey various information, opinions, and messages. Through communication, humans are able to build understanding, establish relationships, and work together in various life contexts. According to (Rapti & Sapounidis, 2024), communication is a process of interaction between two or more people that aims to convey and form information appropriately, so that feedback is created that allows the formation of certain opinions and attitudes. In addition, communication allows individuals to express their potential as well as build relationships with their surroundings (Berhanu & Naidoo, 2024).

In the process of communicating, not every individual understands the concept of communication correctly, so misunderstandings often occur. Therefore, supportive efforts are needed to overcome these problems (Anjani & Sudradjat, 2023). One form of this effort is to provide communication skills from an early age through formal education, especially starting from the elementary school level. The cultivation of this skill from the beginning is expected to be able to form individuals who have good communication skills in the future.

As part of advanced formal education, communication skills are also a basic aspect that must be possessed by students of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program (PGSD). This is very important because in the future, they will carry out a strategic role as educators who are not only in charge of delivering learning materials, but must also be able to establish effective communication with students, parents, and

peers in the educational environment. Good communication is the main foundation in creating a conducive learning atmosphere and improving the quality of learning in the classroom (Faudya et al., 2025). Therefore, mastering communication skills not only supports the academic process, but also supports the professional competence of prospective teachers as a whole.

The results of initial observations of PGSD students of Madako Tolitoli University show that most students experience obstacles in conveying ideas in a coherent manner, lack confidence when speaking in public, and have not been able to build active interaction in discussion situations. This situation is evident in class presentation activities and group work, where student participation is still low and many have difficulty expressing their ideas or opinions. The findings show the need for a more targeted approach to help PGSD students' oral communication skills develop.

However, in reality, many PGSD students have difficulty in conveying ideas and information clearly and effectively. In fact, at the higher education level, students are expected to be able to put forward ideas in a structured and logical manner (Rosdayanti et al., 2021) This communication problem can have an impact on the learning process, because poor communication can hinder students' understanding of the material presented. Therefore, improving the communication skills of PGSD students is one of the aspects that is highly considered in higher education.

Therefore, this study contributes significantly to renewal compared to previous studies. One of the forms of novelty that is carried out is the focus of research which specifically highlights students of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program (PGSD) semester VI at Madako Tolitoli University. Most previous studies have tended to address improving communication skills in a more general context, or in students at the primary and secondary education levels. Thus, this research is relevant because it raises the issue of communication skills specifically in prospective educators who will later have a strategic role in the world of education.

In the context of higher education, improving students' communication skills can be done through various innovative learning methods that are active and participatory. One of the approaches that is increasingly being applied is social experimentation. This method is a form of experiential learning that encourages students to be directly involved in social situations, both in the form of simulations and real interaction practices. Social experimentation activities allow students to develop practical communication skills, deal with group dynamics, resolve conflicts, and build cooperation in diverse social contexts.

In terms of methodology, this research also presents a different approach, namely through the application of social experiments based on real-life contexts. Students are directly involved in various activities, such as open thematic discussion forums, cross-class cooperation, and social interaction simulations, all of which are carried out in the campus environment. This method not only provides an active and participatory learning experience, but also allows students to face the dynamics of communication in authentic social situations. Research conducted by Žalėnienė & Pereira (2021) shows that social-emotional based learning strategies contribute significantly to the improvement of

collaborative communication skills. Students not only become more active in discussing, but also more confident in conveying ideas and opinions in groups. This approach is considered effective in fostering interpersonal skills which are the foundation for successful communication in teaching practice. The approach in this study is considered more applicable, because the research carried out only applies social-emotional learning without direct involvement in the real social environment.

Furthermore, social experiments also have a positive impact on strengthening students' confidence in communicating publicly. Findings from [Rahayu et al. \(2023\)](#) confirm that there is a positive correlation between confidence and public speaking ability. This is important, because in the teaching profession, the ability to speak clearly, convincingly, and in a structured manner in front of students and the public is an integral part of the role of a professional educator. The results of the research conducted by [Mugara et al. \(2019\)](#) show that students' communication skills have improved when preparing vlog-based teaching materials.

Although there have been many research studies that discuss student communication through an active learning approach, studies that specifically address the use of social experimentation within the scope of PGSD students are still rare. As attached in an international journal, [Karpovich et al. \(2021\)](#) which says that in addition to teachers' communication skills, students are also required to have good communication skills, therefore teachers are required to be more able to manage strategies in improving students' communication skills ([Aydın, 2016](#)). Therefore, this research offers an element of novelty both in terms of the focus of the subject and the practical approach applied. Not only describing the transformation of students' communication skills, the results of this research also make a real contribution to the development of active learning strategies at the university level, especially in education study programs in the area of Madako Tolitoli University.

Referring to the results of the literature review and factual data that have been described earlier, this study aims to evaluate the level of effectiveness of the application of the social experiment approach in improving the communication skills of PGSD students at Madako Tolitoli University. In addition, this study also aims to describe the changes in students' communication skills before and after their involvement in social experimentation activities as part of an effort to prepare them to become professional educators.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design, which aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of social experiment activities in improving students' communication skills. The case study design was chosen because it provides an opportunity for researchers to delve deeper into the processes and experiences that students experience directly in real life, especially those related to improving communication skills.

The subjects in this study were five students in the sixth semester of the PGSD Study Program, Madako Tolitoli University, who were selected purposively, with certain criteria such as involvement in social experiment activities and willingness to become participants. The research was carried out on the campus of Madako Tolitoli University

Data collection is carried out through three main techniques:

1. Participatory observation, which allows researchers to be directly involved in social experiment activities to observe students' communication behavior in a real context. In-depth interviews, to explore students' perceptions, experiences, and reflections on the communication process during the experiment.
2. In-depth interviews, to explore students' views, personal experiences, and reflections during the experiment process.
3. Documentation, including the collection of visual data such as videos, photographs, and field notes that are used to strengthen the validity of research findings. The documentation in this study was collected directly by the researcher during the process of social experiment activities.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **A. Result**

In an effort to improve communication skills, education has a very vital role. Education serves as the main foundation in shaping a generation that is able to communicate effectively. This shows the need for an effective learning approach to strengthen communication competence. Therefore, improving communication skills can be realized through fostering students as future educators. PGSD students as part of prospective educators, have the responsibility to develop good public speaking skills, in order to prepare themselves as prospective educators in the future. Because good communication skills will also have a good impact on society.

Improving students' communication skills can be done using various approaches, one of which is through social experimentation activities where this approach involves direct interaction in the surrounding environment. This research was carried out at Madako Tolitoli University. In this study, an interview instrument was used to explore the opinions of students who participated in social experiment activities, with the aim of finding out its influence on the development of communication skills. The data from the interviews were then analyzed and summarized into five main themes, namely the advantages of activities, improvement of communication skills, experience in interacting, challenges faced, and proposals for optimizing the implementation of social experiments. This data was obtained based on the perspective of five students observed on Thursday, April 17, 2025.

As a basis for the data analysis process in this study, the researcher formulated a number of indicators of observed communication skills. These indicators were obtained from the findings of interviews and literature references, including:

1. Ability to Convey Ideas
2. Involvement in Discussion

3. Active Listening Skills

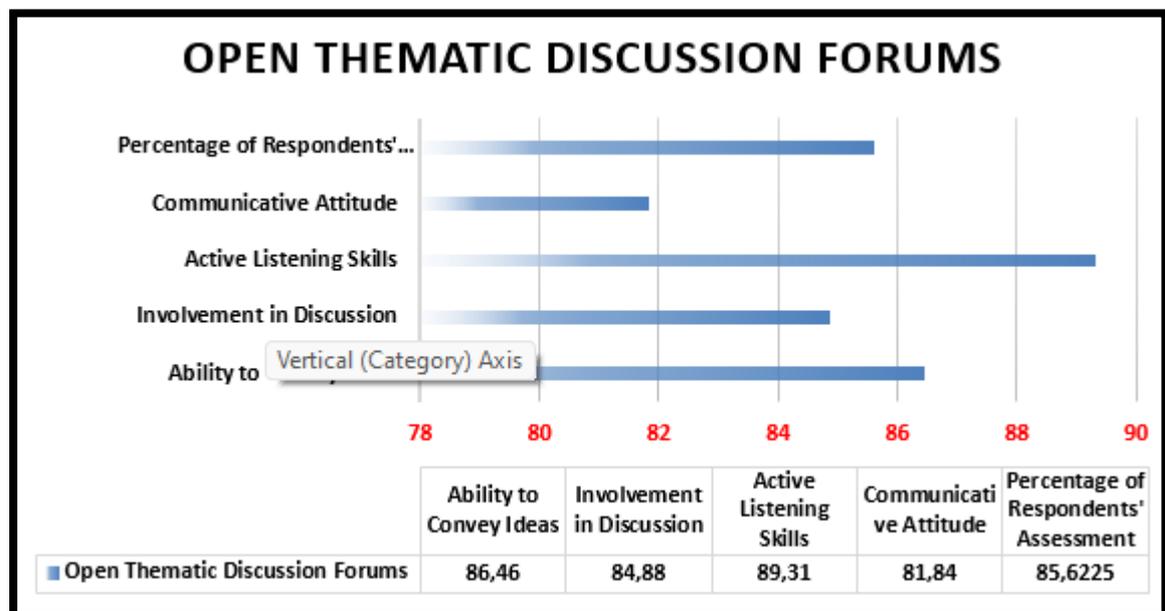
4. Communicative Attitude

**Table 1. Interview Results of Social Experiment Activities**

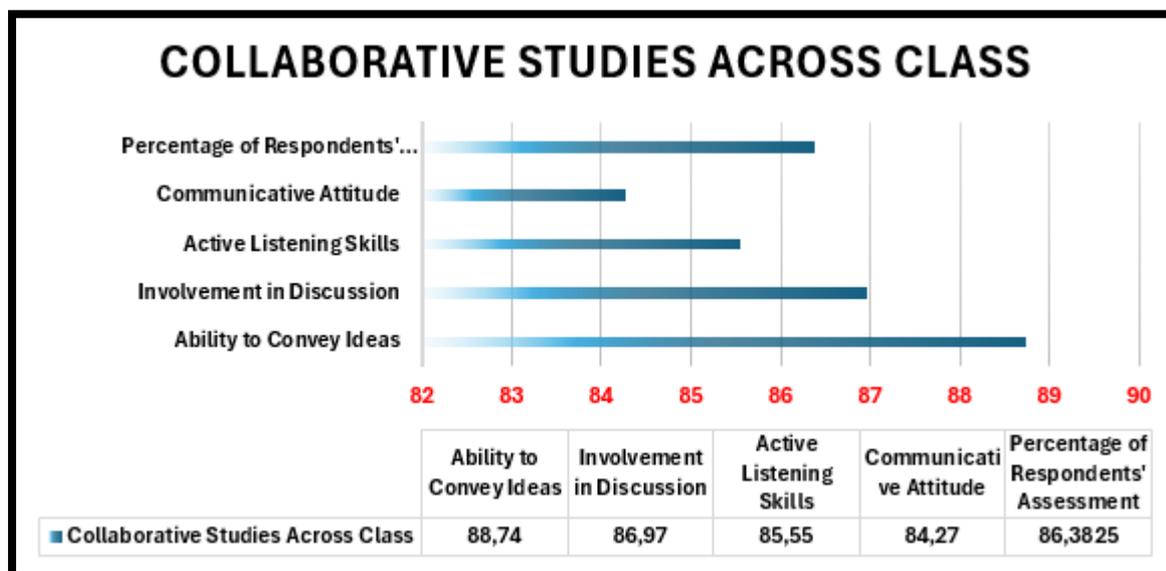
No.	Respondent Name	Ability to Convey Ideas	Involvement in Discussion	Active Listening Skills	Communicative Attitude
1.	F	Improve critical thinking and teamwork.	Increased confidence, able to express opinions.	Positive, more daring to speak and listen.	There is fear when communicating with others.
2.	KR	Learning is more lively, not boring.	Confidence and better word choice.	Be bolder to express your opinion.	The response from respondents was not satisfactory.
3.	NA	Real interaction is better than theory	More confident and careful choice of words	Positive, bolder and responsive.	Awkward and nervous when talking.
4.	DM	Live and interactive learning	Ability to speak, express opinions and be able to respond well to the interlocutor.	Less hesitation in communicating with others.	A little difficulty expressing opinions, responding and managing emotions.
5.	SH	It is more interesting, because it adapts directly to the audience in social experiment activities.	All aspects of communication are improving.	There are changes although not significant.	Respondents were less focused or not serious, even some respondents considered social experimentation activities to be unimportant.

**Table 2. Research Findings Based on Applied Strategies**

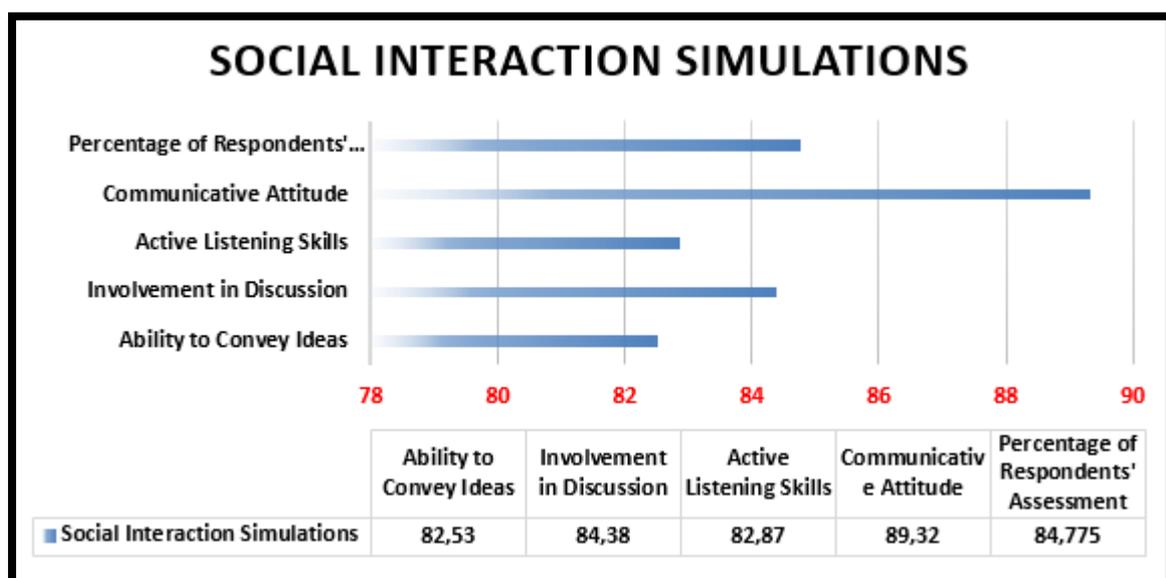
Aspects of Findings	Percentage of Respondents' Assessment				Percentage of Respondents' Assessment
	Ability to Convey Ideas	Involvement in Discussion	Active Listening Skills	Communicative Attitude	
Open Thematic Discussion Forums	86,46	84,88	89,31	81,84	85,62
Collaborative Studies Across Class	88,74	86,97	85,55	84,27	86,38
Social Interaction Simulations	82,53	84,38	82,87	89,32	84,78



**Figure 1.** Open Thematic Discussion Forums Strategy



**Figure 2.** Collaborative Studies Across Class Strategy



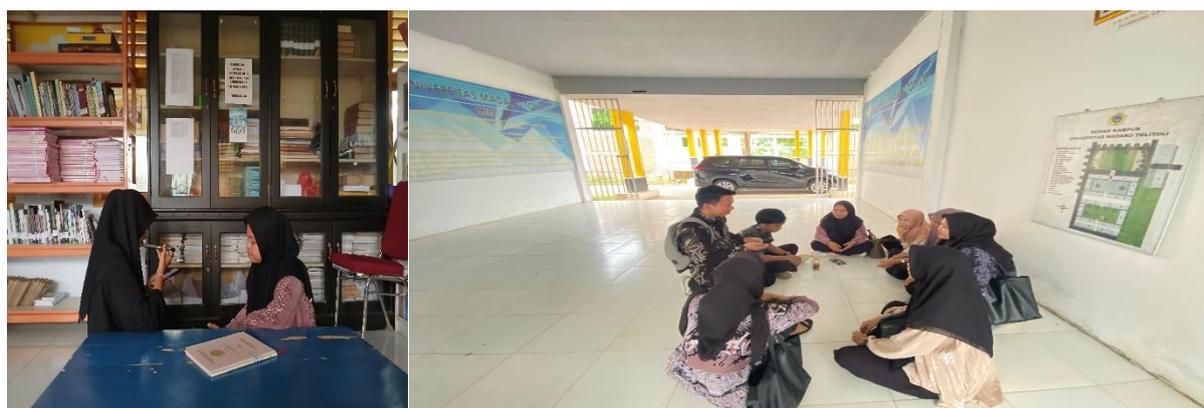
**Figure 3.** Social Interaction Simulations Strategy

The results of the respondents' percentage assessment of three forms of social-experimental strategies designed to develop students' communication skills, it was seen that the three approaches had a significant contribution despite the different characteristics of achievement. The Open Thematic Discussion Forums strategy showed high effectiveness in honing the skills of conveying ideas (86.46%) and actively listening (89.31%), although the achievement of the communicative attitude aspect was slightly lower (81.84%). This indicates that open forums have great potential as a forum for training cognitive and receptive communication skills, but may still require reinforcement in the affective dimension or interpersonal attitudes.

Meanwhile, Collaborative Studies Across Class obtained the highest score in general (86.38%), especially in terms of the ability to convey ideas and engage in discussions, which indicates that collaborative activities between classes are more effective in building confidence and active participation of students across groups. These results confirm that the context of cooperation in heterogeneous groups is able to create a conducive space for productive and reflective communication.

The Social Interaction Simulations stood out in the aspect of communicative attitudes (89.32%), showing that social interaction simulations were very effective in training affective aspects of communication, such as empathy, manners, and adaptation to social dynamics. Although the aspect of ability to convey ideas is slightly lower (82.53%), this approach is still important as a complement to other strategies because it provides a hands-on experience in contextual social interaction.

This data reflects that a social-experimental approach based on real situations in the campus environment is able to make a positive contribution to the development of students' communication skills holistically, and the implementation of the three strategies in an integrated manner can complement each other to create a communicative and transformative learning process.



**Figure 4.** Documentation of Social Experiment Activities

Through the results of the interviews, most of the respondents revealed that social experiments are able to create more lively, interesting, and not boring learning. They feel benefits in the form of increased confidence, the ability to express opinions, and better word choice skills when communicating. This can be seen from the statements of respondents F and KR who stated that social experimentation helps increase confidence and courage to speak and listen to other people's opinions.

In addition, NA and DM respondents underlined the importance of real interaction in the learning process. According to them, learning through social experiments provides space to practice direct speaking skills and respond effectively to the interlocutor. SH respondents also emphasized that direct involvement in social experiments allows students to learn to adapt to diverse audiences, so that all aspects of communication have improved, although not significantly.

However, some challenges are still found in the implementation of this social experiment. Fear, awkwardness, and nervousness when speaking in front of others are still barriers for some college students, as experienced by F and NA respondents. DM respondents added that managing emotions and responding appropriately is still a challenge in communication. Meanwhile, SH faced obstacles in the form of respondents who lacked focus or even did not consider the social experiment activities important.

These findings indicate that the application of social experimentation activities can be an effective strategy in improving the communication skills of PGSD Semester VI students. Through this activity, students have the opportunity to practice speaking, listening, and conveying ideas skills in a structured manner. This also contributes to shaping their readiness as prospective teachers who are required to have qualified communication skills in the educational environment.

## **B. Discussions**

Social experiment activities as an effort to improve students' communication skills, especially in elementary school teacher education students, is one of the innovative learning strategies that can provide direct experience in social interaction, build confidence, and practice effective speaking skills in various situations (Aufenvenne et al., 2021; Nikkels et al., 2023). Through social experiments, students not only gain a theoretical understanding of communication, but are also trained to apply it directly in real-life contexts, both in the campus environment and in society (Kadarisma, 2018; Zhao, 2024).

Given that humans are social creatures, each individual will naturally engage in the process of communication with others, which is generally manifested through interpersonal communication (Anggraini et al., 2022; Sakuliampaiboon et al., 2015; Schwab-Reese et al., 2018). Good communication skills are an important aspect that must be possessed by prospective teachers. Effective communication not only helps in the learning process in the classroom, but also plays an important role in establishing harmonious relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and the surrounding community (Anderson et al., 2018; Siddiq et al., 2016; Zakaria et al., 2022). Therefore, strengthening communication skills from an early age through approaches such as social experimentation is very relevant and needs to be developed continuously in the teacher education curriculum.

Social experimentation is included in the project-based learning approach. This method is considered appropriate to be used in the learning process, especially when the main goal is to improve students' communication skills optimally (Clark & Jones, 2001; Pu et al., 2020). Through active involvement in real-life project activities, students not only gain a theoretical understanding of communication concepts, but are also trained to implement them in the various contexts of social interaction they face on a daily basis. This statement is in line with the findings (Klinhom & Wuttphan, 2022; Lan et al., 2023) which revealed that project-based learning methods, including social experiments, contribute significantly to improving students' communication skills through active

involvement in projects that correspond to real situations in the field. This hands-on experience helps to form an adaptive communicative mindset, strengthen interpersonal skills, and increase students' confidence in conveying ideas and interacting with various individual backgrounds.

In addition, project-based learning such as social experiments also plays a role in reducing various communication obstacles that are often faced by students, such as feelings of anxiety and lack of confidence. The involvement of students in project-based learning can have a positive impact on speaking skills, especially in terms of pronunciation and confidence increase (Coppe & Lucchini, 2023; Maulana Ahmad et al., 2024).

Research conducted by Fathoni et al. (2021) shows that a Real-life or hands-on activity-based learning approach can significantly improve students' communication skills, as students are engaged in real, contextual interactions. Similarly, research by Osman et al. (2010) emphasizing that students' active involvement in contextual and meaningful learning provides greater opportunities to develop interpersonal communication competencies. This indicates that learning activities that place students as the main actors in real situations will encourage them to be more active in speaking, listening, expressing opinions, and adjusting to various social dynamics that arise in the interaction process. In addition to strengthening verbal communication skills, this approach also trains empathy, responsiveness to situations, and building confidence, all of which are urgently needed by aspiring educators in carrying out their roles in the future (Anggraini et al., 2022; Herbein, Golle, Tibus, Schiefer, et al., 2018; Indraswati et al., 2020).

This is in line with Novia Rista Kurniawati (2024)'s research which shows that learning approaches that involve real problem-solving can improve students' interpersonal communication skills through discussion and interaction activities in situations relevant to their life contexts. Hands-on experiential learning is able to increase students' confidence in communicating, especially when facing diverse audiences. In line with (Girsang, 2018)'s opinion, skills public speaking can increase the effectiveness of communication in conveying messages to others through the right way and an approach that is able to attract attention. In the context of teacher education, the courage to speak and the ability to convey ideas effectively are among the main competencies that must be mastered (Kadarisma, 2018).

However, the development of these abilities often faces various obstacles in practice. One example can be seen in social experimentation activities, where students still encounter various challenges. A number of students revealed that there were obstacles in the form of nervousness, difficulty expressing opinions, and lack of focus from the audience. This is in line with the findings of the Sari & Trisnawati (2019), which suggests that communication anxiety is still a common obstacle in the development of students' speaking skills. Therefore, it is necessary to provide additional debriefing in the form of communication training or classroom simulations before the implementation of social experiments.

Effective communication skills are closely related to the professional competence of a teacher. Based on Permendiknas No. 16 of 2007 concerning Academic Qualification Standards and Teacher Competencies, it is stated that one of the essential pedagogic competencies for teachers is the ability to communicate effectively with students. Thus, communication training, which can be done through methods such as social experiments, is an important part of the development of qualified teacher candidates. In the process of social experimentation, students are not only trained to communicate information, but also develop the ability to listen carefully, understand different points of view, and provide appropriate responses (Alfi & Amalia, 2024; Herbein, Golle, Tibus, Zettler, et al., 2018).

In addition, social experimentation provides an opportunity for students to improve their communication skills in contexts involving different cultures and social strata. In the midst of today's globalization, a teacher is not only required to communicate with students who come from similar backgrounds, but also with students who have cultural, economic, and social diversity. Through social experiments, students can experience these dynamics firsthand, which in turn broadens their understanding of the importance of inclusive and empathetic communication in education (Anjani & Sudradjat, 2023; Dansieh et al., 2021; Kassim et al., 2015).

Similar to the findings in the previous study, this study also presents updates shown through arguments from several sources. The argument discusses social experiment activities carried out at the research site, by comparing the learning that takes place self-taught in the classroom and the direct learning in the field by the students (Pontillas, 2020; Rahma & Zainuddin, 2023; Saidalvi & Mansor, 2012). Most of the respondents stated that learning through hands-on practice in the field feels more real, interesting, less boring, and more effective in improving students' critical thinking skills in dealing with problems that arise during the research process. In addition, this method is also considered to be able to strengthen teamwork among students. A similar opinion was also found in previous research, which stated that hands-on experiential learning can be an effective means for learners to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of communication skills, which can be applied in various daily life situations (BK et al., 2024; Clark & Jones, 2001).

The social experiments conducted in this study have been proven to make a significant contribution to increasing student confidence, especially in terms of expressing opinions, speaking in public, responding well to interlocutors, and being wise in the choice of words so that there are no mistakes in conveying messages and meanings. Through this experiment, students become more responsive, courageous, and show a more positive attitude, both as speakers and listeners. This is in line with previous research that used sociodrama techniques to improve interpersonal communication skills in students, whether they have a tendency to be addicted to social networks or not. The results of the study show that sociodrama techniques can effectively improve students' interpersonal communication skills, which is proven by comparing pre-test and post-test results (Herbein, Golle, Tibus, Schiefer, et al., 2018; Sülter et al., 2022).

In the social experiment conducted in this study, students showed progress through the various challenges they faced during the hands-on learning process in the field. These challenges include fear, unsatisfactory responses from respondents, awkwardness and nervousness when speaking, difficulties in responding and managing emotions, and lack of seriousness from respondents in answering questions, some even consider these activities unimportant (Marmoah et al., 2022).

Another advantage of this study is the use of specific indicators in measuring communication skills, which include the ability to convey ideas, involvement in discussions, active listening skills, and communicative attitudes. The division of these indicators provides a more structured and thorough evaluation, in contrast to previous research as conducted by Rahayu et al. (2023), which only highlights the confidence aspect of public speaking. Similarly, a study by Mugara et al. (2019) who use vlog media to improve communication skills, but have not directly touched the aspect of contextual social interaction as done in this study.

However, this situation is actually a valuable means of learning for students. Through this experience, students can understand the right strategies to deal with various obstacles wisely. This is not only useful in the current implementation of social experiments, but also a provision for the development of similar experiments in the future.

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that this social experiment is very appropriate and recommended to be applied in the student learning process. With the aim of forming the character of students who are more active, have high potential, think critically, and are intelligent in expressing opinions and communicating. Thus, students can develop into multitalented individuals. This finding is in line with the opinion expressed by Coppe & Lucchini (2023) who states that mathematical communication plays a role as a social activity as well as a thinking tool for students, so it needs to be continuously developed. From this opinion, it can be concluded that communication skills have a very important role in daily life. The development of these skills can be done through other forms of communication, such as mathematical communication.

The results of this study also reinforce the findings of previous studies on the effectiveness of hands-on experiential learning, as explained by Foster et al. (2022). However, the social experiment approach applied in this study emphasizes more on direct interaction in real situations, rather than just simulated activities in the classroom. This makes the method more able to help students overcome real obstacles in communication, such as nervousness, lack of confidence, and difficulty responding to social situations (Indraswati et al., 2020; Widodo et al., 2020).

Thus, social experimentation is an activity that can make a great contribution to improving students' communication skills. The social experiment approach is not just an alternative learning approach, but a strategy that has a real impact in preparing PGSD students to become professional educators who are able to communicate effectively and build meaningful relationships with various parties in the world of education.

This research presents innovations in the development of active learning strategies, especially in improving the communication skills of prospective teachers. The novelty includes specific research subjects, real-context learning methods, and systematic and comprehensive measurement indicators. Therefore, the social experiment approach can be used as an alternative effective learning strategy in preparing PGSD students to become professional educators who are able to communicate effectively and build good relationships in the world of education.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study shows that the implementation of social experiments provides a real improvement in the communication skills of PGSD students of Madako Tolitoli University, especially in the aspects of confidence, courage to express opinions, and effective interaction skills. By involving students in real social interaction experiences, this approach is able to overcome barriers such as nervousness and awkwardness that have been hindering their communication skills. Therefore, social experimentation can be used as an effective and relevant learning strategy to prepare prospective teachers with the communication skills needed in the world of education, as well as form students who are more active, critical, and communicative. This research makes an important contribution to developing a learning strategy that is able to improve the communication skills of students of the PGSD Study Program at Madako Tolitoli University. Through a social experiment approach, the results of this study show that learning methods based on active interaction and cooperation between individuals can facilitate students to be more open in communicating verbally and nonverbally. These findings also provide new insights for the development of teacher education curriculum to be more in line with the context of today's needs and support the achievement of 21st century competencies. However, there are several limitations in the implementation of this research. First, because participants came from only one educational institution, the results could not be generalized to the wider population. Second, the time to implement the experiment is limited so it has not been able to show the sustainable effect of the application of this method. Therefore, further research is recommended to reach participants from various institutions, extend the duration of activities, and utilize a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

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