

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN INCREASING AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE OF POLITICAL ISSUES IN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Interpersonal communication has an important role in increasing awareness and acceptance of political issues in society. This article examines how direct interactions between individuals can serve as a primary mechanism for disseminating information, forming opinions, and influencing political behavior. By discussing communication theories such as Social Exchange Theory, Uncertainty Reduction Theory, and Social Construction of Reality Theory, this article explains the framework underlying the interpersonal communication process in a political context. Additionally, effective communication strategies, such as listening with empathy, articulating opinions clearly, and managing conflict wisely, were identified as key to creating constructive political dialogue. Case studies from various countries show that interpersonal communication can increase political literacy, change political attitudes and behavior, and shape political identity. However, challenges such as political polarization, personal bias and unequal access to information need to be addressed. This article also provides policy and practice recommendations to promote effective interpersonal communication, including creating space for public dialogue, improving political education, and utilizing the media responsibly. Thus, interpersonal communication can contribute to the building of a more politically aware and inclusive society.

Keywords: *Interpersonal communication, political awareness, acceptance of political issues.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal Communication Theories

Interpersonal communication is the main foundation in human interaction which includes various theories that underlie the way humans

communicate and influence each other("Ganjar Pranowo's Personal Branding to Build Political Communication on Instagram Social Media," 2021). One of the main theories in interpersonal communication is the Social Exchange Theory put forward by George Homans. This theory states that interpersonal relationships are based on the exchange of resources that are considered valuable by the participants. In a political context, these resources may take the form of information, emotional support, or political influence. Through interpersonal communication, individuals seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs in their interactions, which ultimately influences their awareness and acceptance of political issues.

Another relevant theory is Uncertainty Reduction Theory by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese. This theory states that interpersonal communication helps individuals reduce their uncertainty about other people and their environment. In a political context, uncertainty is often related to a lack of information or understanding about a particular issue. Through interpersonal interactions, individuals can ask questions, clarify, and obtain information that helps them feel more confident in taking a political stance(Zempi et al., 2023). This theory emphasizes the importance of accurate and relevant information in interpersonal communication to increase political awareness.

The Social Construction of Reality theory by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann also has relevance in interpersonal communication related to politics. This theory states that social reality is built through human interaction and communication. In a political context, a person's political reality is formed through dialogue and discussion with other people. Through interpersonal communication, individuals can confirm or challenge their views on political issues, which in turn influences their awareness and acceptance of those issues.

2. RESERCH METHODS

Effective Interpersonal Communication Strategies

To achieve effective interpersonal communication in a political context, strategies are needed that can facilitate constructive and inclusive

dialogue. One of the main strategies is to listen with empathy. Listening with empathy means understanding and feeling what the person you are talking to feels, without rushing to judgment or response (Saputro et al., nd). In political discussions, empathetic listening can help reduce tension and open up space for more open and honest dialogue. Empathy also allows individuals to understand different perspectives, which can increase acceptance of complex political issues.

Articulating opinions clearly and firmly is also an important strategy in interpersonal communication. In political discussions, it is important for individuals to be able to express their opinions in a clear and structured way, so that the interlocutor can understand the arguments presented. This includes the use of simple language, consistent logic, and strong factual support (Febriansyah Putra & Patra, 2023). By articulating opinions effectively, individuals can contribute to more productive and meaningful dialogue.

Managing conflict wisely is also the key to effective interpersonal communication. In political discussions, conflict is often unavoidable due to differences in views and interests. To manage conflict wisely, individuals need to adopt a solution-oriented approach, that is, focus on finding common ground and compromise rather than winning arguments. Conflict resolution techniques, such as mediation, using non-confrontational language, and focusing on issues rather than personalities, can help reduce tensions and promote constructive dialogue.

The Impact of Interpersonal Communication on Political Perceptions

Interpersonal communication plays an important role in shaping and influencing individual political perceptions. Through direct interaction with others, individuals have the opportunity to explore various points of view, hone arguments, and deepen understanding of relevant political issues. One of the most striking benefits of interpersonal communication in a political context is increased political literacy. When individuals engage in deep discussions with friends, family, or coworkers, they not only share information, but also exchange views and thoughts (The Influence of Identity Politics on Indonesian Democracy), nd). This helps

individuals to broaden their horizons on complex political issues, thereby being able to make more informed decisions.

In the process of discussion and debate that occurs in interpersonal communication, individuals not only receive new information, but are also exposed to various points of view that may be different from their own views. This can help them see political issues from various perspectives, thereby not only deepening their understanding, but also enriching the way they think. This increasing political literacy has direct implications for political participation. When someone feels more confident and informed about political issues, they tend to be more active in various political activities, such as voting in general elections, taking part in political debates, or even engaging in advocacy activities.(Pamungkas et al., 2020).

Apart from increasing political literacy, interpersonal communication also has a significant impact on a person's political attitudes and behavior. Through intense and meaningful dialogue, individuals can be influenced by the arguments presented strongly and logically by others. For example, someone who initially does not care much about the issue of climate change may change their attitude after discussing its impacts in depth with friends or family who have a better understanding of the issue. This shows how strong the influence of interpersonal communication is in shaping individual attitudes towards various political issues(Salman Farid, 2023).

One of the reasons why the influence of interpersonal communication is so strong in a political context is because it involves deep personal and emotional relationships. When individuals interact with others directly, they exchange not only information, but also emotions, values, and beliefs. This creates a strong bond between the individuals involved in the communication, thereby allowing political ideas and views to be conveyed and received more effectively(Fathan Mandela & Johan Kusuma, 2024). Compared to the influence of mass media which is often impersonal and indirect, interpersonal communication is able to create deeper and more meaningful interactions.

However, although interpersonal communication has a significant impact on individuals' political perceptions, it cannot be ignored that this influence can also vary depending on factors such as the beliefs, values, and cultural background of the individuals involved in the communication. In addition, there is also the possibility of polarization of opinion, where individuals tend to gather with people who have the same political views, thereby limiting the diversity of perspectives they can receive through interpersonal communication.

In the increasingly developing digital era, interpersonal communication has also experienced significant changes with the emergence of social media platforms. Although these platforms allow individuals to connect with others more widely and quickly, they are often places where inaccurate or politically biased information is spread. Therefore, it is important for individuals to remain critical of the information they receive through interpersonal communication, whether through direct interaction or through social media.

Interpersonal communication also plays a role in forming political identity. A person's political identity is often formed through interactions with their social groups, such as family, friends, or community. Through interpersonal communication, individuals can internalize the values and political views of their group, which then shape their political identity. This political identity in turn influences how they view and respond to political issues. For example, someone who grows up in a family with certain political leanings may be more likely to adopt those same political views.

Challenges in Interpersonal Communication Related to Politics

Although interpersonal communication has many benefits in increasing awareness and acceptance of political issues, there are several challenges that need to be overcome. One of the main challenges is political polarization. Political polarization refers to a situation where differences in political ideology become so extreme, that they hinder constructive dialogue (Indriani, nd). In highly polarized situations, interpersonal communication often turns into heated debate or even

hostility, which can hinder understanding and acceptance of differing views.

Additionally, personal biases and prejudices also pose significant challenges in interpersonal communication. Personal biases, such as confirmation bias, in which individuals tend to seek out and interpret information that supports their own views, can hinder objective and open dialogue(Sukmawati & Rafni, nd). Prejudice against other political groups can also hinder effective interpersonal communication, as individuals may refuse to listen to or consider arguments from different groups. Overcoming these biases and prejudices requires self-awareness and a commitment to openness to different perspectives.

Inequality in access to information is also a challenge in interpersonal communication related to politics. Not all individuals have the same access to quality and trusted sources of information. This inequality can result in differences in levels of political literacy and understanding of political issues(Hayat et al., 2021). In this context, interpersonal communication can be an important tool for bridging information gaps, but it can also face obstacles if the individuals involved in the dialogue have very different access to information.

Case Study: Interpersonal Communication in Political Contexts in Various Countries

Interpersonal communication has a significant role in increasing awareness and acceptance of political issues, both at the local and global levels. Case studies from various countries, such as the United States and Scandinavian countries, provide valuable insight into how this communication can shape a country's political landscape.(8316-31410-1-PB, nd).

In the United States, especially in the 2008 presidential election, Barack Obama's campaign highlighted the important role of interpersonal communication in the political process. Obama used social networks and face-to-face communications to mobilize voters, especially among young and minority voters. This strategy involves volunteers conducting door-to-door canvassing and holding community discussions. Through this approach, the Obama campaign succeeded in building personal

relationships with voters, which in turn increased political participation. This shows how interpersonal communication not only influences political perceptions, but also actual actions in the democratic process.

Meanwhile, in Scandinavian countries such as Norway, interpersonal communication is also a key element in the political process. Here, political debates involving ordinary citizens are very common and considered an integral part of democratic culture. Through public discussion forums and small discussion groups, citizens can participate in deep and meaningful political dialogue. This approach allows citizens to be actively involved in political decision making and strengthens social connections in society. Thus, it not only increases political awareness, but also strengthens social cohesion.

Differences in approaches to interpersonal communication between the United States and Scandinavian countries highlight the importance of cultural and historical context in understanding the role of communication in politics. Although the strategies used may differ, the bottom line is that interpersonal communication opens channels for better understanding between voters and leaders, as well as between citizens and their fellow citizens. In a democratic society, it is important to ensure that every individual's voice is heard and taken into account in the political decision-making process.

Apart from that, interpersonal communication can also broaden the scope of political issues discussed and enrich the perspectives involved. Through direct interaction between individuals with different backgrounds and experiences, understanding of the complexity of political issues can be deepened. This makes it possible to look at the issues from multiple viewpoints and develop more holistic and inclusive solutions.

However, it is important to remember that interpersonal communication can also be a means for the spread of misinformation or manipulative information. In a political context, propaganda and false rhetoric can be used to influence public opinion. Therefore, it is important to promote honest, open, and fact-based communication in the political

process. This requires strong education in critical and media literacy, as well as awareness of potential bias in communications.

In developing a better understanding of how interpersonal communication can increase awareness and acceptance of political issues, cross-national studies provide a rich and varied foundation. From political campaigns in the United States to the culture of political participation in Scandinavian countries, we can see various ways in which interpersonal communication shapes the political dynamics of a society. By drawing lessons from these experiences, we can continue to strengthen democracy and ensure that every individual's voice is heard in a democratic and inclusive political process.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

Based on the discussion above, there are several policy implications and recommendations for promoting effective interpersonal communication in increasing awareness and acceptance of political issues. First, governments and civil society organizations need to create more space for public dialogue and discussion. These can be discussion forums, public debates, or community discussion groups that allow citizens to interact and discuss political issues in a constructive way.

Second, political education must become an integral part of the school curriculum. By providing a comprehensive political education, students can be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in meaningful political discussions. Political education should also include training in interpersonal communication skills, such as empathetic listening, articulation of opinions, and conflict resolution.

Third, mass media and social media must promote constructive dialogue and avoid spreading biased or misleading information. The media has an important role in shaping public opinion and can be a powerful tool for increasing political awareness. Social media, in particular, can be used to facilitate interpersonal communication in an inclusive and open manner.

Interpersonal communication is a key element in increasing awareness and acceptance of political issues in society. Through relevant communication theories, effective communication strategies, and an

understanding of the impact of interpersonal communication on political perceptions, we can see how personal interactions can shape an individual's political views. Although there are various challenges that need to be overcome, such as political polarization and personal bias, interpersonal communication remains an important tool in building a more politically aware and inclusive society. By creating more space for public dialogue, providing comprehensive political education, and promoting responsible media, we can improve the quality of interpersonal communication and, in turn, increase awareness and acceptance of political issues in society.

3. CONCLUSION

Interpersonal communication has a very important role in increasing awareness and acceptance of political issues in society. Through direct interaction, both verbal and non-verbal, individuals can exchange information, form opinions, and influence one another's political attitudes. Communication theories such as Social Exchange Theory, Uncertainty Reduction Theory, and Social Construction of Reality Theory provide frameworks for understanding how interpersonal communication functions in political contexts.

Effective interpersonal communication strategies, such as listening with empathy, articulating opinions clearly, and managing conflict wisely, are essential to creating constructive and inclusive political dialogue. Through good communication practices, individuals can increase their political literacy, change political attitudes and behavior, and form a more solid political identity.

Nonetheless, challenges such as political polarization, personal bias, and unequal access to information need to be addressed to ensure that interpersonal communication can function optimally. By overcoming these challenges, society can achieve more open and honest dialogue, which will ultimately increase acceptance of various political issues.

Case studies from various countries show that effective interpersonal communication can increase political participation and strengthen social cohesion. Initiatives such as public discussion forums, political education

in schools, and responsible media use can strengthen the role of interpersonal communication in political contexts.

Overall, interpersonal communication is an important tool for building a more politically aware and inclusive society. By creating more space for dialogue, providing comprehensive political education, and promoting responsible media, we can improve the quality of interpersonal communication and, in turn, increase awareness and acceptance of political issues in society. Thus, interpersonal communication not only helps individuals understand political issues better, but also promotes a healthier and more participatory democracy.

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