
BUANA KOMUNIKASI

Jurnal Penelitian dan Studi Ilmu Komunikasi
<http://jurnal.usbykp.ac.id/index.php/buanakomunikasi>

INTEGRATING WEEKLY REFLECTIVE COMMUNICATION TO ENHANCE MORAL ETHICS AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS

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Abstract

The transition from elementary to junior high school is a critical phase often marked by emotional instability, low ethical awareness, and a decline in students' communication skills. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of weekly reflections integrated with classroom teacher–student communication as a strategy for developing moral and ethical character to foster conducive classroom management. A mixed-method approach was employed, with data collected through observation, daily reflections, and Google Form questionnaires. The findings indicate that consistent weekly reflections encourage improvements in students' self-awareness, critical thinking, and self-control. This study underscores that the integration of reflection and communication is a strategic and effective approach to shaping new student habitus during the transition period.

Keywords: *Weekly Reflection, Interpersonal Communication, Morals And Ethics, Classroom Management, Character Education*

Abstrak

Peralihan dari jenjang SD ke SMP merupakan fase transisi kritis yang kerap diwarnai ketidakteraturan emosi, rendahnya kesadaran etis, dan penurunan kemampuan komunikasi siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas refleksi mingguan yang terintegrasi dengan relasi komunikasi guru wali kelas dengan siswa sebagai strategi pengembangan karakter moral dan etika dalam rangka menciptakan pengelolaan kelas yang kondusif. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode campuran (mixed-method), dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, refleksi harian, dan kuesioner Google Form. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa refleksi mingguan yang konsisten mendorong peningkatan kesadaran diri, kemampuan berpikir kritis, dan kontrol diri siswa. Studi ini menegaskan bahwa integrasi refleksi dan komunikasi merupakan pendekatan yang strategis dan efektif untuk membentuk habitus baru siswa pada masa transisi.

Kata kunci: *Refleksi Mingguan, Komunikasi Interpersonal, Moral Dan Etika, Pengelolaan Kelas, Pendidikan Karakter*

**BUANA
KOMUNIKASI**

Jurnal Penelitian & Studi
Ilmu Komunikasi
Volume 06
Number 03
Pages 347-354
Bandung, Desember 2025

p-ISSN : 2774 - 2342
e-ISSN : 2774 - 2202

Date Received:
30 Desember 2025
Date Revised:
05 Januari 2026
Date Accepted :
26 Januari 2026

INTRODUCTION

The transition from elementary to junior high school is one of the critical stages in a child's development. During this period, students experience significant physical, psychological, and social changes. In the context of class 7A at a private junior high school in Bogor Regency, various issues have been identified, such as weak self-control, complaints from parents, declining ethics and manners, the formation of exclusive groups (cliques), an increase in cheating behavior, and a lack of empathy. These problems arise due to changes in environment, culture, and increasingly advanced technology, as well as the weakening of relationships between parents and children.

Technological factors and the lack of communication time with parents exacerbate the character issues observed in students. Therefore, pedagogical strategies that foster students' ethical awareness through reflective methods integrated with teacher-student communication are urgently needed.

Educational communication plays a central role in the learning process. As "a tool for delivering relevant information" (Yuliawati et al., 2023), it enables teachers to provide explanations, definitions, and key concepts to learners. The communication interaction between teachers and students is two-way, where students respond to the teacher's messages, allowing shared meaning to emerge. Thus, educational communication aims not only to transfer knowledge but also to encourage positive behavioral changes in students. The concept of transactional communication also emphasizes mutual exchange between teachers and students; ideally, learning takes place through interactive dialogue in which both parties act as senders and receivers of messages (Hilvania et al., 2025; Tharob et al., 2022). For instance, teachers are encouraged to engage students in friendly dialogue so that lessons are not perceived as rigid "advice" but rather as meaningful conversations that can be described as reflection.

The term *reflection* originates from the Latin word *reflectere*, meaning "to bend back" or "to direct backward." In the educational context, reflection is understood as an essential process that enables students to review their life experiences with the goal of transforming themselves into better individuals. Reflection is generally carried out after an individual experiences a certain event in daily life, which is then interpreted and evaluated deeply. This process turns experience into a valuable source of learning. Through reflection, students are guided to understand their life dynamics more clearly, allowing them to continuously evaluate themselves for optimal personal growth and development (John Dewey, 1933).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, the author focuses on three key areas of the literature review: Reflection in Education, the Transition from Elementary to Junior High School, and Character-Based Classroom Management.

2.1. Reflection in Education

According to Dewey (1933), reflection is a process of critical thinking based on experience, which functions to generate meaningful learning. In the educational context, reflection plays an essential role in helping students develop self-awareness that contributes to the formation of positive character. As stated by Ryan and Bohlin (1999), reflection enables students to understand the moral values underlying their actions. Thus, reflection serves not only as an important instrument in strengthening character education but also as a strategic element in effective classroom management.

2.2. Transition from Elementary to Junior High School

Eccles et al. (1993) emphasized that the transition period in education requires adequate emotional and moral support, as there is often a mismatch between the developmental needs of students and the characteristics of the new educational environment. The absence of such support may trigger maladaptive or deviant behavior among students.

2.3. Character-Based Classroom Management

Marzano (2003) stated that effective classroom management is not limited to enforcing rules and discipline but rather emphasizes the creation of a positive classroom culture through the internalization of moral values and the development of constructive communication.

2.4. Communication Styles in Moral Character Development

Various studies highlight the importance of specific communication approaches in moral character education. Interpersonal communication approaches are used to build emotional closeness; teachers engage students in dialogue, address them by name, and provide opportunities for questions. Symbolic and nonverbal communication (such as friendly facial expressions and warm body language) are also employed to convey moral messages with empathetic nuance (Hilvania et al., 2025). Meanwhile, persuasive communication is applied by linking ethical values to students' real-life situations. For example, teachers use concrete analogies (such as cooperative tasks or community pledges) so that lessons about trustworthiness or responsibility can be understood in tangible terms. Furthermore, teacher role modeling serves as the most powerful form of value communication—students are encouraged to follow real examples of good behavior, not merely verbal advice.

2.5. Reflective Communication in Value-Based Learning

A reflective communication approach is considered crucial in fostering moral awareness. Freire's (1970) philosophical framework asserts that "dialogical communication" (reflective) is the core of liberating education; critical discussions between educators and learners enable awareness and value transformation. Educational communication is understood as a process of meaning exchange that allows "conscious changes in ways of thinking and acting." By creating an egalitarian and reflective discussion space, students do not merely receive content passively but actively formulate social values relevant to their lives. In the context of ethics learning, such communication serves as a "bridge of transformation" rather than merely a transmission of content.

2.6. Communication Approaches and Character Reinforcement

In developing students' moral and ethical character, the use of diverse media and communication strategies has proven effective. As an example of innovation, an interactive communication application based on daily character observation has been implemented. An online attendance system equipped with entries for values of faith and devotion helps students internalize moral character daily (Bary et al., 2024). Thus, moral communication occurs through consistent technological interaction. In addition, understanding reflective communication within families is also essential during transitional crises. A family communication empowerment workshop during the pandemic demonstrated an increase in participants' understanding of family communication patterns that support children's character development (Rahmi et al., 2023). The training materials helped teachers and parents apply reflective communication principles in the teaching-learning process, enabling

students and parents to cope with cognitive and emotional uncertainty during times of transition.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted over approximately one year, from August to June 2025. The observation process was divided according to academic terms, as the school year consists of four terms: Term 1 (July–September), Term 2 (October–December), Term 3 (January–March), and Term 4 (April–June). The research employed a mixed-methods approach, with a dominant qualitative orientation in data collection and analysis.

Research Design

The subjects of this study were seventh-grade students from a private junior high school located in Bogor Regency during the 2024/2025 academic year.

Data Collection Techniques

The data collection techniques in this study involved several methods:

1. **Daily reflections** conducted from Monday to Friday. The collected reflections were compiled every Friday, analyzed by the homeroom teacher over the weekend (Saturday–Sunday), and feedback results were returned to the students on Monday.
2. **Direct observations** of student behavior in class, particularly during homeroom sessions, break times, and dismissal hours.
3. **Google Form questionnaires** to measure students' perceptions of the benefits of reflection.
4. **Documentation and indirect interviews** with students and the homeroom teacher.

Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic coding techniques, identifying patterns of meaning that emerged from daily reflections, observations, and indirect interviews. The coding process was carried out in multiple stages to uncover key themes representing changes in student character during the transition period. Each thematic category was analyzed in terms of frequency of occurrence, depth of narrative, and its relation to moral, ethical, and emotional management aspects.

Meanwhile, quantitative data obtained through Google Form questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and frequency distribution. This analysis aimed to measure students' perceptions of the effectiveness of weekly reflections and their behavioral changes in the context of maintaining a conducive classroom environment.

Through a data triangulation approach, qualitative and quantitative findings were compared to obtain a holistic and valid picture of the impact of integrating reflection and communication on students' character development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the main findings from a one-year study conducted with seventh-grade students at a private junior high school in Bogor Regency. The results were analyzed based on data obtained through students' daily reflections, direct classroom observations, questionnaires, and documentation of classroom activities. The mixed-methods approach allowed the researcher to combine in-depth insights from qualitative data with a broader perspective from quantitative data, thereby providing a holistic view of students' character dynamics during the transition from elementary to junior high school.

The discussion is directed toward answering the research question concerning the effectiveness of integrating weekly reflection and homeroom teacher communication in shaping students' moral and ethical character, as well as creating effective classroom management. The findings are analyzed with reference to relevant theories from Dewey (1933), Eccles et al. (1993), Marzano (2003), and Ryan & Bohlin (1999), to ensure coherence between empirical data and theoretical frameworks.

Overall, the results show significant improvement in students' ability to manage emotions, engage in reflective thinking, and enhance social behavior within the classroom environment. These improvements directly contributed to a more positive classroom climate and a more effective learning process. The following sections describe each stage of implementation, changes that occurred from one term to another, and an in-depth analysis of the factors influencing the success of the weekly reflection program integrated with interpersonal communication.

Identification of Problems

The transition period from elementary to junior high school often represents a challenging phase emotionally, socially, and morally. Based on preliminary observations and student reflections from class 7A at a private junior high school in Bogor Regency, several issues reflecting students' character immaturity were identified. More than 50% of students showed difficulties in controlling emotions, making ethical decisions, and understanding the consequences of their actions. This was evident in behaviors such as irritability, blaming others, inability to resolve conflicts constructively, and dishonest acts such as cheating or undermining peers in group settings.

These problems were compounded by a decline in meaningful interpersonal communication between students and their immediate environments, including teachers and parents. The rapid advancement of technology and exposure to social media also influenced students' thought patterns and social responses, often leading to impulsive and egocentric behaviors. This condition created challenges in establishing a classroom environment that is orderly, warm, and supportive of the learning process.

Therefore, a strategy that addresses the root causes of these issues is needed—one that strengthens self-awareness, moral values, and reflective communication skills as the foundation for character formation during the educational transition period.

Implementation of Reflection

Reflection was conducted daily based on three core questions:

1. What dominant feeling did I experience today?
2. What did I learn from today's events?
3. What will I do to improve myself?

Reflections were collected every Friday, analyzed and given feedback by the homeroom teacher over the weekend, and returned to students on Monday as part of a continuous learning process.

Reflection Development (Terms 1–4)

The daily reflection process, carried out consistently throughout the academic year, showed progressive development among the seventh-grade students. Initially viewed as an administrative activity, reflection gradually evolved into a tool for character transformation and self-awareness. The following describes the stages of reflection development across the academic terms:

1. **Term 1 (July–September):**

In the initial phase, most students still showed confusion in completing their reflection sheets. Their responses were typically short, normative, and lacked deep understanding of personal experiences. Many treated reflection as an ordinary diary rather than a process of introspection for developing ethical awareness and responsibility. This indicated that their metacognitive and reflective skills were still in the early stages of development.

2. Term 2 (October–December):

By the second term, emerging patterns began to appear in students' reflections, though consistency varied. Some students made efforts to relate daily experiences to behavioral improvements, but factors such as academic workload and limited free time caused the depth of reflection to differ across individuals. The homeroom teacher's main focus during this term was to deepen students' understanding of the meaning of reflection.

3. Term 3 (January–March):

During the third term, the quality of reflection improved among many students. They began to express their feelings more honestly, identify the causes of certain behaviors, and outline concrete self-improvement plans. Indicators of success included openness to teacher feedback, increased responsibility for mistakes, and willingness to change. Reflection was increasingly viewed as a safe space for personal growth rather than merely a routine task.

4. Term 4 (April–June):

In the final term, most students demonstrated maturity in reflective thinking. Reflection sheets were submitted punctually without reminders, reflecting internalized discipline and self-awareness. Their reflections became more personal and profound, showing heightened moral consciousness and understanding of the consequences of their actions. Some students even began spontaneously posing additional reflective questions as part of their search for meaning and self-evaluation.

The progression of reflection across the terms indicates that the integration of daily reflection and teacher–student communication not only enhanced administrative order but also fostered the development of new habits supporting holistic character education. These findings align with Dewey's (1933) view that reflection serves as a vital instrument in meaningful and transformative learning.

Character Change and Classroom Management

Students' improved ability to manage and regulate emotions, engage in reflective behavior, and reduce intergroup conflicts demonstrates positive transformation in behavioral and social interaction aspects within the classroom. These findings indicate that reflection- and communication-based interventions not only affect individuals on an interpersonal level but also create collective effects that strengthen social cohesion among students.

As students become more capable of understanding their own and others' feelings and perspectives, the tendency toward reactive and egocentric behavior decreases significantly. This directly contributes to the creation of a more harmonious, understanding, and low-conflict classroom environment. In terms of classroom management, these conditions substantially enhance a conducive, democratic, and productive learning climate—where learning extends beyond cognitive processes and is supported by strong affective and social foundations.

The findings from the reflective learning practice also show that this model requires students to continually reflect on their experiences and openly share them. Such an approach encourages active interaction between students and teachers through discussions connecting lesson content to real-life contexts. Therefore, reflection and communication are proven not merely as supportive strategies but as transformational instruments that have a systemic impact on overall classroom management effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The integration of weekly reflection and communication has proven effective in supporting students transitioning from elementary school (SD) to junior high school (SMP) in developing moral and ethical awareness, as well as holistic self-management skills. Through a structured reflection process and intensive interpersonal relationships between teachers and students, learners are given the space to reinterpret their daily experiences, critically evaluate their behavior, and formulate concrete steps for self-improvement. This approach not only strengthens students' intrapersonal dimensions—such as emotional regulation, empathy, and responsibility—but also enhances their ability to build healthy and constructive social interactions.

In the context of classroom management, the practice of reflection combined with two-way communication creates a more humanistic, democratic, and supportive classroom culture. Teachers are no longer positioned merely as behavior controllers but as facilitators of character growth. Therefore, this strategy effectively fosters a more conducive, meaningful, and sustainable learning atmosphere while also supporting the achievement of character education goals as mandated in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, several strategic recommendations can be applied to enhance the effectiveness of character development during the transition from elementary to junior high school through a reflective approach:

1. **Reflection should become a permanent part of the transition curriculum.** Given its effectiveness in fostering self-awareness, moral values, and emotional regulation, reflective activities should not be temporary or incidental but systematically integrated into the transition curriculum. Reflection can be formulated as a special program within guidance and counseling activities or as part of the *Pancasila and Character Education* subject, providing students with a consistent space for self-evaluation and continuous personal improvement.
2. **Reflection training for teachers and parents is highly recommended.** The role of teachers and parents as primary facilitators in character formation requires a deep understanding of reflective methods and principles. Therefore, regular training on reflection techniques, empathetic communication, and constructive feedback strategies should be conducted. Well-trained teachers can guide students more effectively, while parental involvement extends the impact of reflection from the school environment to the home. Children learn more from the way their parents speak, listen, and act daily than from what they hear outside the classroom.
3. **The development of a digital reflection system is needed to ensure sustainability.** In the digital era, the creation of technology-based reflection platforms has become a strategic necessity to maintain the continuity and accessibility of reflective practices. An interactive digital system can facilitate students in recording daily experiences, receiving feedback from teachers, and monitoring their character

development periodically. Moreover, technology allows for longitudinal documentation that benefits the comprehensive evaluation of character education. Thus, the digitalization of reflection serves as an adaptive step that supports the efficiency, sustainability, and wider impact of reflective practices in schools.

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