

Exploring indirect communication strategies in the educational organisation: perspective from Jakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract This study investigates the use of indirect communication strategies within an educational institution in Jakarta, Indonesia, focusing on discussing their significance in achieving communication objectives within professional contexts. The primary emphasis is on how these indirect communication strategies are applied to cultivate supportive relationships and create a favourable professional environment within educational settings. The following research questions guide the ethnographic study: 1) How are indirect communication strategies employed in educational organisations? and 2) What factors influence the adoption of these communication strategies? This research utilised four data collection methods: participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Participants in this study included school principals, vice-principals, teachers, support staff, students, and parents from a state primary school in Jakarta, Indonesia. The study's findings reveal that indirect communication strategies are predominantly employed to achieve various communication objectives, such as conveying humour, expressing frustration, delivering implied messages, seeking assistance, and expressing uncertainty. These strategies are deeply rooted in the cultural context, particularly influenced by Betawi culture, which strongly emphasises preserving social harmony and promoting respectful interactions. Several influential factors, including shared cultural values, power dynamics, and age, were identified as elements affecting the adoption of these indirect communication strategies.

Keywords: educational organisation; ethnographic study; indirect communication strategies

INTRODUCTION

Communication serves a multidimensional role beyond the simple exchange of messages and information between individuals. It functions as a means to build positive relationships among individuals and groups. Successful communication is achieved when participants feel at ease expressing themselves while being treated fairly and respectfully (Cook et al., 2013; Harvey & Wenzel, 2006). In other words, individuals must uphold constructive communication principles to maintain positive relationships (Harvey & Wenzel, 2006).

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Effective communication is a crucial factor contributing to the success of educational organisations (Furqon, 2003). Proficient communication strategies are essential for facilitating the smooth dissemination of accurate information and fostering strong interpersonal relationships among the members of these institutions (Câmpeanu-Sonea et al., 2011; Musheke & Phiri, 2021; Syakur et al., 2020). However, numerous challenges can impede the communication process within educational institutions, characterised by a complex hierarchy that includes school principals, vice-principals, support staff, students, and external stakeholders. This intricate hierarchical structure presents challenges related to efficient information flow and decision-making processes, potentially leading to inefficiencies (Dai et al., 2022; Inesi et al., 2021).

A significant challenge arises due to educational environments' constantly evolving and dynamic nature. The changing landscape of policies, regulations, and educational innovations requires effective communication to ensure that all organisation members comprehend and correctly implement these changes (Khristoforova et al., 2015; Mykhailyshyn et al., 2018; Stevens, 2004). However, ineffective communication can result in misinformation, create uncertainty in applying new policies, and generate resistance to change among various stakeholders (Furxhi & Dollija, 2021). These factors collectively emphasise the importance of addressing and minimising communication challenges within educational organisations.

To tackle these challenges, the role of effective communication strategies becomes vital and urgent for members of educational organisations. Appropriate communication strategies are pivotal in fostering a healthy and efficient environment for all participants, facilitating timely information flow, promoting clear understanding, and encouraging active participation in decision-making (Pirzadeh et al., 2020). By implementing effective communication strategies, members of educational organisations can enhance collaboration, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and achieve organisational goals more efficiently (Syakur et al., 2020).

One type of communication strategy that can be employed is indirect communication strategies. According to Yusoff et al. (2014), indirect communication strategies play a fundamental role in interpersonal communication, particularly within organisational contexts. This communication strategy is part of shared organisational norms and culture for certain groups to achieve agreed-upon objectives (Bigdeli & Doroudi, 2021; Yusoff et al., 2014).

Furthermore, indirect communication strategies are implemented within the educational context, often involving interactions between school principals, who hold leadership roles in the institution, and their subordinates, including vice principals, teachers, and support staff. As Kung and Scholer (2018) pointed out, one primary objective of using indirect communication strategies in organisational communication is to

solicit feedback or reactions from those receiving the messages. School principals may employ this communication approach to seek assistance from colleagues while preserving their own and their colleagues' self-esteem, avoiding undue burdens. Additionally, indirect communication strategies can influence behaviour in pursuit of established goals and offer constructive feedback for necessary improvements without singling out specific individuals (Kung & Scholer, 2018).

Numerous studies have explored the significance of indirect communication in educational organisational settings. Kulbayeva (2020) emphasises that indirect communication strategies are regarded as a form of politeness that upholds solidarity and power dynamics within an organisation. This study investigated how two female teachers utilised indirect communication strategies, such as employing inflected verbs and avoiding negative connotations, to convey criticism and commands during a professional meeting. Similarly, AlAfnan (2014) delved into applying politeness strategies in indirect communication via email within a multicultural workplace. The findings revealed that employees from diverse ethnic backgrounds indirectly employed positive and negative politeness strategies to build relationships with recipients, with social distance playing a significant role.

Another study by Ramani et al. (2018) in a medical faculty setting examined the influence of cultural and institutional norms on politeness and feedback delivery. The findings indicated that medical students preferred receiving constructive feedback from peers with positive learning relationships, underscoring the impact of institutional feedback culture on the acquisition and quality of feedback. The study also introduced the concept of Face Threatening Acts (FTA), which refers to communicative acts that may threaten the social identity of speakers or receivers. The theory of FTA influenced how feedback was delivered, considering factors such as social distance, power disparities, and cultural contexts to preserve individuals' "face" and prevent conflicts (Ramani et al., 2018).

Nonetheless, there needs to be more research regarding indirect communication strategies and other politeness strategies within educational organisations. Nevertheless, utilising these strategies in educational settings is vital for realising schools' visions and missions and supporting their involvement in various programs. When members comprehend how the organisation's meaning and purpose can be subtly conveyed through these strategies, they can fulfil their respective roles and functions while avoiding conflicts stemming from misunderstandings.

In the context of this study, an educational institution in Jakarta, Indonesia, serves as the primary research site due to its highly diverse environment, where effective communication plays a significant and crucial role (Kristiani et al., 2019; Tirtosudarmo, 2022; Wasino, 2013). Jakarta is renowned for its coexistence of individuals from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds within educational institutions (Kristiani

et al., 2019; Nas, 2022). The significance of effective communication in Jakarta's educational organisations cannot be overstated. It bridges cultural differences, ensuring that information and messages are comprehensible to all, regardless of language or cultural disparities (Virgana & Kasyadi, 2020). Effective communication is fundamental to these organisations' success and their constituents' well-being (McNamara et al., 2021).

Moreover, in multicultural educational organisations like Jakarta, effective communication is the cornerstone for establishing healthy and harmonious relationships among members. Effective communication is essential in such a diverse environment where individuals from various cultural backgrounds interact daily to prevent miscommunication, misunderstanding, and conflicts (Hossain, 2023; Rafay & Ozbutun, 2023). It also fosters mutual understanding and respect among organisational members (Hossain, 2023).

Hence, this study aims to address two research questions: (1) how are indirect communication strategies implemented in educational organisations, and (2) what factors influence the implementation of these communication strategies? The findings from this study will provide a deeper insight into the practical application of indirect communication strategies in educational organisations and identify key influencing factors. These insights will be invaluable for educational practitioners. Furthermore, the study has the potential to inform the development of tailored communication strategies, contribute to academic research in educational communication, and create opportunities for professional development among educators.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed an ethnographic research design, proving to be a valuable approach for understanding the indirect communication strategies utilised in an educational organisation. Ethnography entails direct observation, active participation, and immersion within the social environment under investigation (Kuswarno, 2008). Adopting this methodology allowed the researcher to closely examine communication practices, cultural norms, and contextual factors influencing indirect communication strategies in the selected educational organisations.

The study was thoughtfully conducted within a state primary school in Central Jakarta, Indonesia, to comprehensively understand the educational system and the complex communication dynamics among its diverse stakeholders. The participants included school principals, vice principals, teachers, support staff, and students, offering valuable insights and a variety of perspectives on indirect communication strategies within the educational setting. Specifically, this school was chosen due to its location in an area renowned for its rich cultural and ethnic diversity.

According to the demographic data provided by the school, the organisational membership reflects a vibrant mix of ethnic backgrounds, encompassing various cultures, as depicted in the following table.

Table 1. The demographic data provided by the school

No	Ethnic Origins	Percentage
1	Betawi	50%
2	Javanese	25%
3	Sundanese	19%
4	Batak	2%
5	Palembang	2%
6	Lampung	1%
7	Papua	1%

Source: Author (2023)

The rich tapestry of cultural diversity plays a crucial role in shaping school communication practices, rendering it an ideal context for investigating organisational communication dynamics within a multicultural environment. Additionally, by involving participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, each with distinct beliefs, values, and educational experiences, the study sought a comprehensive context for examining indirect communication strategies within the educational organisation in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Furthermore, several research instruments were utilised to gather comprehensive data on implementing indirect communication strategies. These instruments included participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Participant observation necessitates the researcher's complete immersion in the educational organisation, actively engaging in daily activities, meetings, and events within the school. Throughout this ethnographic research, the researcher assumed the role of a temporary administrative assistant, collaborating with the teachers to draft semester-end learning reports for the students. This two-month-long role allowed the researcher to actively partake in various professional activities within the research setting, as all members of the organisation engaged in numerous discussions and interactions through various activities. Consequently, the researcher gained a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the indirect communication strategies employed within the organisation.

Furthermore, we conducted focus group discussions involving teachers, students, and parents to encourage group interactions and allow participants to share their perspectives on indirect communication strategies. In this process, participants were granted informed consent

to participate in the study. They were assured that participating in these discussions would not affect their professional environment.

In addition, document analysis was employed to scrutinise pertinent documents, including communication policies, memos, and instant messaging chats, to gain insights into the formal communication channels and strategies the educational organisation employs. The data collected from these research tools were transcribed, coded, and subjected to thematic analysis. This thematic analysis involved identifying patterns, themes, and recurring concepts about utilising indirect communication strategies within the educational organisation. The analysis results were presented clearly and coherently, supported by quotes and examples from the participants. A comprehensive overview of the research procedure is provided in Figure 1.

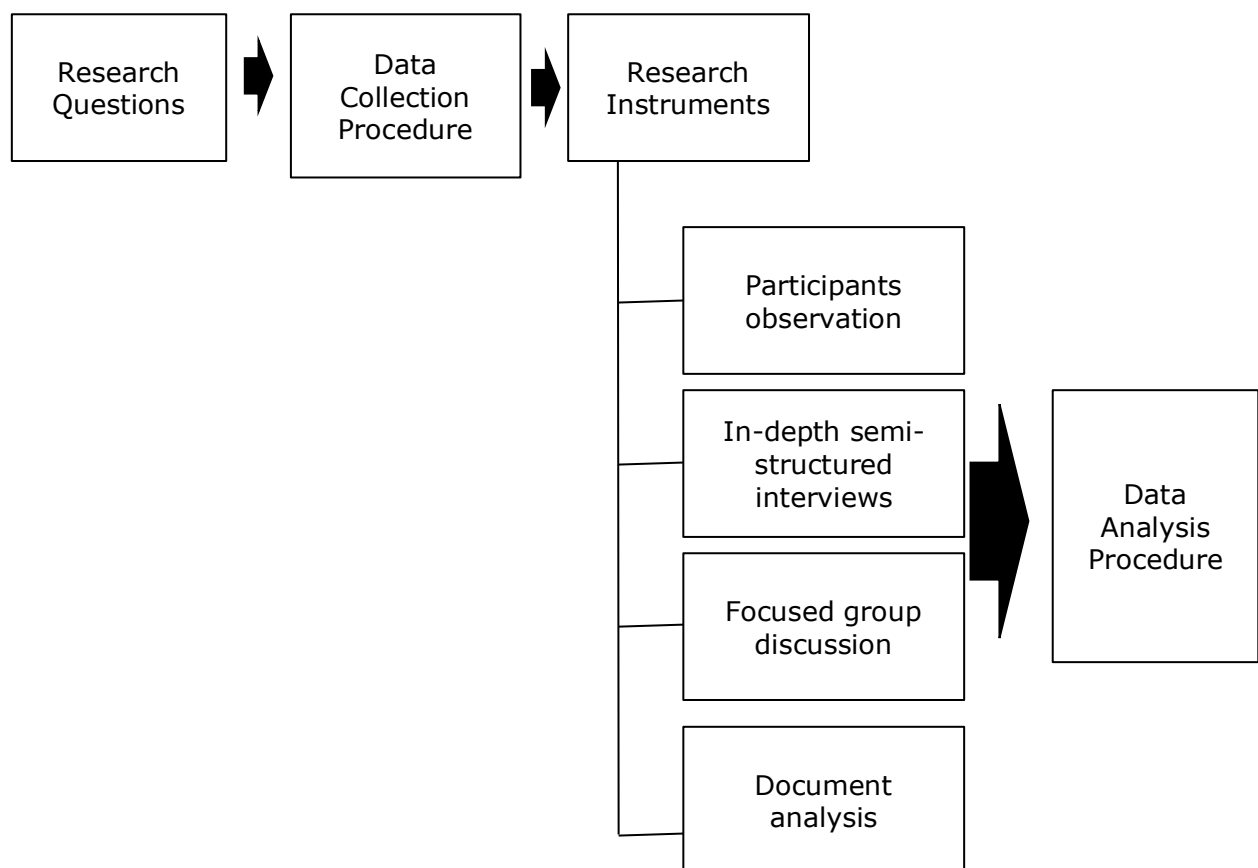


Figure 1. Overview of the research procedure
Source: Author (2023)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In an educational environment, communication serves multiple purposes, such as conveying humour, expressing frustration, seeking assistance, showing agreement, maintaining politeness, and expressing uncertainty or inability. These objectives are achieved through indirect communication strategies, enabling organisational members to

effectively navigate hierarchical relationships, preserve harmony, and adhere to politeness norms, as discussed below.

Implementation of Indirect Communication Strategies in Educational Organisations

The study's results indicate that members of an educational organisation utilised indirect communication strategies within educational settings, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Various Indirect Communication Strategies

No	Indirect Communication Strategies
1	Conveying humour
2	Expressing frustration
3	Conveying implicatures
4	Requesting assistance
5	Expressing uncertainty

Source: Author (2023)

The comprehensive findings of this study offer deeper insights into the application of indirect communication to convey humour, the first identified communication purpose within the educational organisation. Data gathered from participant observations, interviews, and focus-group discussions collectively contribute to a holistic understanding of how humour is effectively conveyed indirectly. Participant observations within the organisation underscored the prevalent use of sarcasm, subtle wordplay, and irony as indirect communication strategies for conveying humour. In specific settings, like teachers' meetings and teacher-parent discussions, organisation members strategically employ these techniques to evoke amusement among their peers. The consistent use of indirect expressions and language with humorous undertones underscores the organisation's reliance on indirect communication strategies to foster a lighthearted and enjoyable atmosphere.

To bolster the data derived from participant observations, interviews were conducted with educational organisation members. Participants shared their firsthand experiences and perspectives on the role of indirect communication in conveying humour. The data obtained from the interviews corroborate the observations, emphasising the effectiveness of sarcasm as a common strategy for infusing humour into discussions without being overly direct. The following excerpt illustrates the perspective of teacher ST, a member of the educational organisation, regarding the use of sarcasm as a prevalent strategy for injecting humour into discussions:

"We often use sarcasm to lighten up the atmosphere during meetings. It is a way to bring humour into discussions without

being too direct. We say things with a slight edge, but everyone knows it is all in good fun."
(ST, Personal Interview, 2 June 2023)

Additionally, teacher YD also mentioned the utilisation of subtle wordplay as another form of indirect communication for conveying humour, as explained in the following interview excerpt:

"We enjoy playing with words and using puns to create laughter. It is a way of being clever and injecting humour into our interactions. Sometimes, we devise witty remarks that catch everyone off guard and elicit a good laugh."
(YD, Personal Interview, 5 June, 2023)

The statements made by teacher ST and teacher YD above illustrate how educational organisation members recognise and embrace indirect communication strategies like sarcasm and wordplay as effective means of conveying humour. This aligns with the perspective of Flamson and Bryant (2013), who argue that indirect communication allows individuals to create humorous effects by relying on shared knowledge, context, and inference. Sarcasm and wordplay are potent tools in this context, emphasising indirect expressions and linguistic ambiguity to generate amusement (Kreuz, 2020). Similarly, Huang et al. (2015), who have extensively studied humour and sarcasm, underscore the role of indirect communication in humour. Indirect expressions like sarcasm enable individuals to convey humorous messages without causing direct offence or confrontation (Huang et al., 2015). Moreover, Huang et al. (2015) also mention that sarcasm relies on the audience's ability to grasp the underlying irony and effectively conveys humour indirectly.

Furthermore, the focus group discussions conducted in this study provided valuable insights into utilising indirect communication strategies for humour within the educational organisation. Participants enthusiastically engaged in these dynamic discussions, sharing their experiences and providing specific instances of employing indirect expressions and subtle humour to cultivate a positive and enjoyable environment. They discussed occasions when they used indirect communication strategies, such as sarcasm, wordplay, and irony, to convey humour in an organisational context. They explained how they purposefully employed humorous remarks, clever wordplay, and indirect language to evoke laughter and lighten the mood. For example, during department meetings, when someone proposed an unconventional idea, instead of outright rejection, they responded playfully with indirect language and humorous remarks, such as: "That is an interesting approach; let us add it to our list of alternative options, right between 'wildly ambitious' and 'completely outlandish'." These shared experiences and humour contributed to participants' deep

understanding of the effective use of indirect communication techniques for humour within the educational organisation.

The discussions affirmed that organisational members frequently employ humour as an indirect communication strategy. Their active participation and consensus regarding indirect expressions and subtle humour underscored the widespread adoption of such strategies. Indirect communication consistently fosters a pleasant and enjoyable environment, highlighting its significance in cultivating a positive organisational culture.

Furthermore, the study's findings highlighted that organisational members frequently utilise indirect communication strategies to express frustration within the educational organisation, serving as another communication objective. Participant observations in this study consistently demonstrated how members subtly turn to sarcasm or veiled criticism to convey their feelings of frustration. Some members strategically employ language that incorporates concealed criticism or indirect expressions to communicate their dissatisfaction and disappointments in specific situations involving obstacles or challenges. For instance, during meetings or discussions, some teachers were observed using sarcasm or indirect remarks to articulate their frustration. This data provides tangible evidence of the widespread adoption of indirect communication strategies for effectively expressing frustration within the educational organisation.

Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted to corroborate these findings to gain deeper insights into utilising indirect communication strategies for expressing frustration. During the interviews, participants shared their experiences and perspectives on employing indirect communication to express frustration within the organisational context. The excerpts below offer direct evidence of the use of indirect communication strategies in expressing frustration:

"When encountering challenges with certain administrative processes, I use sarcasm to express my frustration. It is a way to communicate my dissatisfaction without directly sparking conflicts. I might say: 'Oh, another brilliant policy that makes our job ten times harder. Bravo! It is a way to vent my frustration without being too confrontational.'"

(SA, Personal Interview, 14 June, 2023)

"It is quite typical to convey frustration with veiled criticism. Instead of directly addressing the issue, I use indirect language or hint at the problem to convey my discontent. For example, I say: 'It is interesting how certain decisions are made without considering the practical implications. It makes you wonder.'"

(YT, Personal Interview, 14 June, 2023)

The excerpts above show how participants employed sarcasm and veiled criticism as indirect communication strategies to express frustration

within the educational organisation. Furthermore, the focus-group discussions offer additional support for using indirect communication strategies in expressing frustration. Participants engaged in lively exchanges, sharing instances where they employed indirect expressions and subtle cues to communicate their dissatisfaction effectively. These discussions underscored the prevalence of indirect communication strategies in expressing frustration and their effectiveness in maintaining a harmonious organisational environment.

Moreover, the findings provide insights into indirect communication strategies for conveying implicatures within the educational organisation. Implicatures refer to concealed or implied meanings conveyed through utterances (Sitdikova & Asmolovskaya, 2021). Data obtained from participant observations revealed that organisational members employ indirect communication strategies, such as employing ambiguous language or emphasising context, to convey implicatures effectively.

The data gathered from participant observations indicated that members of the organisation strategically applied indirect communication strategies to convey implicatures. This was evident when they used statements with double meanings or expressions that alluded to indirect implications to communicate specific messages to their colleagues. This demonstrates a deliberate effort to convey particular meanings without explicitly stating them. Indirect communication strategies through implicatures were also observed in the interactions between teachers and students. For example, teacher SA employed a rhetorical question or a subtle hint to encourage students to think critically or make connections in their learning.

These observations are further supported by data obtained from interviews with teachers, providing additional evidence and insights into why they employ implicatures in communication, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

"Sometimes, instead of directly providing answers, I use implicatures to encourage students to explore and discover the answers themselves. I ask them, 'Have you considered looking at it from a different perspective?' This question prompts them to think deeper and draw their conclusions."
(SA, Personal Interview, 15 June, 2023)

The teacher's statement above indicates a deliberate use of indirect communication strategies, such as implicatures, to engage students and facilitate meaningful interactions in the classroom. Using implicatures as part of indirect communication strategies aligns with the principles of implicature in pragmatics proposed by Sitdikova and Asmolovskaya (2021). It underscores that effective communication involves adhering to conversational maxims, including the Maxim of Relevance (Sitdikova & Asmolovskaya, 2021). By intentionally employing ambiguous language and emphasising context, educational

organisation members adhere to the principles of implicature, conveying nuanced meanings beyond the literal interpretation of their words. Furthermore, the research findings indicate that indirect communication strategies are commonly used within the educational organisation when requesting assistance. Data from participant observations revealed that organisational members employed polite and indirect language when seeking help from their peers, signifying a deliberate effort to maintain harmonious relationships and uphold politeness norms while seeking assistance.

To bolster these findings, interviews and focus-group discussions were conducted with educational organisation members. The data from these interviews and discussions demonstrated that organisational members recognised the effectiveness of employing polite and indirect language, framing requests as suggestions, or seeking advice indirectly when seeking assistance. These strategies were seen as conducive to effective communication and the cultivation of positive interpersonal relationships. Additionally, they believed these strategies aligned with cultural norms of politeness and maintaining harmony within the educational organisation. In detail, the following excerpts present comments from teachers and the principal regarding the use of indirect communication strategies to request assistance:

"When I need help from my colleagues, I often use polite and indirect language to make my request. For instance, I might say, 'If you have a moment, can you assist me with this? I would greatly appreciate your input on this matter.' It is a way to seek assistance while maintaining a respectful and harmonious atmosphere."

(KS, Personal Interview, 21 June, 2023)

"Indirectness is crucial when requesting help. I try to frame my request as a suggestion or seek advice indirectly. Sometimes, I tell my colleague, 'I have been pondering this issue and would value your insights.' By saying so, it allows me to seek assistance without sounding demanding or imposing on others."

(GN, Personal Interview, 21 June, 2023)

These interview excerpts highlight the perspectives and strategies employed by organisational members when seeking help from their colleagues within the educational organisation. School principal KS emphasises the use of polite and indirect language to make requests for assistance. By using phrases such as "If you have a moment" and "Would you be able to assist me," she aimed to create a respectful and harmonious atmosphere. This approach also allowed her to seek help without appearing demanding or imposing on her colleagues. She recognised that maintaining positive relationships and fostering a cooperative environment is essential when seeking organisational assistance.

Likewise, teacher GN emphasises the importance of indirect approaches when seeking help. He explained that framing requests as suggestions or seeking advice indirectly helps him avoid coming across as demanding. Using phrases such as "I have been pondering on this issue" and "I would value your insights," he conveys a sense of collaboration and openness to his colleagues' input. This approach enables him to seek assistance while maintaining a respectful and non-imposing tone.

Furthermore, data collected from the focus-group discussions provided additional evidence supporting indirect communication strategies when seeking assistance. Other participants engaged in interactive discussions, sharing their views on using indirect expressions and courteous language effectively to request help from their peers. These discussions confirmed the widespread use of indirect communication strategies in seeking assistance and underscored their role in maintaining a respectful and harmonious organisational environment.

Lastly, the study's findings also revealed that indirect communication strategies are frequently employed within the educational organisation to express uncertainty. Participant observations indicated that organisational members used qualifiers or indirectly emphasised sentences to convey their lack of confidence or uncertainty about a specific matter. This suggests deliberately communicating uncertainty without sounding too definitive or assertive to the recipients. For example, during meetings and discussions, some participants were observed using phrases such as "I am not entirely sure," "There might be some uncertainty," and "It could be open to interpretation." These linguistic cues indicate a conscious attempt to express uncertainty without appearing definitive or assertive. By employing qualifiers and indirectly emphasised sentences, members demonstrated their awareness of creating an environment that fosters open dialogue and respects diverse perspectives.

To complement the data obtained from participant observation regarding indirect communication strategies to express uncertainty, interviews and focus-group discussions were conducted with organisational members. The findings revealed that participants consciously employed indirect communication strategies, such as qualifiers and indirectly emphasised sentences, to convey uncertainty within the educational organisation, as evident in the following excerpts:

"When unsure about something, I use qualifiers like 'perhaps' or 'maybe', etc. It allows me to express my uncertainty without making absolute statements."

(YN, Personal Interview, 22 June, 2023)

"I find it more effective to emphasise sentences as a strategy to express my uncertainties indirectly. By emphasising certain words or phrases like, 'I am not entirely sure, but from what I

have found...', I signal that I am not entirely certain about the information I provide. It also helps to maintain an open and collaborative environment for discussion."
(DT, Personal Interview, 22 June, 2023)

These excerpts provide insights into how teachers consciously utilised qualifiers and indirectly emphasised sentences effectively to communicate their lack of confidence or uncertainty without making unequivocal statements. The first excerpt, derived from the interview with teacher YN, demonstrates using qualifiers to express uncertainty. The teacher explained that when unsure about something, he employed qualifiers like "perhaps" or "maybe" to convey his uncertainty. By using qualifiers, he allowed for the possibility of doubt and recognised the potential for alternative perspectives or outcomes. Such a strategy fosters a balanced and open approach to discussion, encouraging other members to contribute their thoughts and opinions without imposing a definitive stance.

Furthermore, the second excerpt from the interview with teacher DT highlighted using indirectly emphasised sentences to convey uncertainties. She emphasised specific words or phrases, such as "I am not entirely sure, but from what I have found," to indicate her lack of complete certainty. Through this approach, she cultivated an environment conducive to collaborative discussions and extended invitations for others to contribute their insights and perspectives, fostering shared knowledge and mutual learning.

From a theoretical standpoint, several scholars have explored the role of indirect communication strategies in expressing uncertainty. According to Miehle et al. (2022), individuals employ indirect language to mitigate potential face-threatening situations and maintain positive social interactions. Expressing uncertainty is considered an indirect communication strategy, preventing people from making definitive statements that may appear overly assertive or confrontational. Individuals convey their uncertainties through qualifiers and indirectly emphasised sentences while preserving harmonious relationships and encouraging open discussions (Saunders et al., 2021). Additionally, the teachers' preference for employing indirect communication strategies to express uncertainty underscores the significance of nurturing a positive and collaborative atmosphere within the educational organisation. By using qualifiers and indirectly emphasised sentences, teachers communicated their uncertainties in a manner that promoted dialogue and active participation.

Influential Factors Affecting the Implementation of Indirect Communication Strategies in Educational Organisations

This study, conducted at a public primary school in Jakarta, Indonesia, identified several pivotal factors that significantly affect the adoption of indirect communication strategies, particularly within the cultural

context of the predominant Betawi community, which mirrors the broader population of Jakarta. The data collected from the research instruments revealed three key factors rooted in Betawi culture that could influence the application of such communication strategies. Table 3 below outlines some of the factors that affect the implementation of indirect communication strategies in the educational organisation.

Table 3. Factors affecting the implementation of indirect communication strategies

No	Factors	Indirect communication strategies
1	Shared cultural values	Using humour, expressing frustration, conveying implicatures, requesting assistance, expressing uncertainty
2	Power distance	Using humour, expressing frustration, expressing opinions
3	Age	Expressing arguments and opinions, stating some points

Source: Author (2023)

Regarding shared cultural values, which is the first factor, the diverse cultural landscape of Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, significantly influences communication styles within educational organisations. Individuals residing in the Jakarta area tend to uphold various cultural values in their social practices, such as prioritising social harmony, nurturing positive relationships, and respecting authority (Siregar et al., 2023). These cultural values manifest in the communication behaviours of educational organisation members who aim to sustain harmonious interactions. Data gathered from observations revealed that members of the organisation employ several strategies to prevent potential conflicts, including humour, expressing frustration indirectly, conveying implicatures, requesting assistance, and expressing uncertainty. These strategies facilitate subtle and tactful communication that upholds social harmony. For example, organisational members frequently utilise humour as an indirect communication strategy to lightheartedly address delicate or sensitive matters lightheartedly, thus avoiding direct criticism and potential conflicts. This approach aligns with the Betawi cultural value of preserving social harmony and avoiding confrontations that could disrupt relationships.

Additionally, expressing frustration indirectly is another communication practice influenced by Betawi cultural values. Instead of directly criticising someone, organisational members employ expressions of disappointment or subtle hints to convey their concerns. This aligns with the values upheld by the Betawi culture, which strongly emphasises maintaining social harmony and collective identity, fostering positive relationships while avoiding conflicts, and promoting a sense of togetherness (Purbasari, 2010; Ruslan et al., 2021). Such values serve

as foundational principles for educational organisation members in Jakarta, who use subtle expressions of disappointment to communicate and navigate sensitive topics while preserving harmonious interactions effectively.

Power distance, the second influential factor affecting indirect communication strategies within educational organisations, refers to the degree to which individuals accept and expect power disparities within a hierarchical system. This concept of power distance is closely linked to the cultural values of Jakarta and is believed to influence the adoption of indirect communication strategies within educational organisations (Siregar et al., 2023). Power distance represents a cultural dimension that reflects a society's or culture's perception of and tolerance for hierarchical structures, authority, and the distribution of power (Merkin & Merkin, 2018). Further clarify that in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia, power distance is intertwined with cultural values and can impact communication practices for several reasons, including the acceptance of hierarchy, respect for authority, and avoidance of conflict. It measures the extent to which individuals within a culture embrace hierarchical arrangements and unequal power distribution (Siregar et al., 2023). In cultures with high power distance, such as some in Indonesia, there is a strong acknowledgement of authority figures and an awareness of power differentials. As part of this cultural context, Jakarta tends to hold authority figures within educational organisations in high regard. This acceptance of hierarchy can influence communication by promoting more formal and indirect communication styles when addressing superiors or authority figures.

This notion is corroborated by participant interviews and document analysis data, which reveal how power distance shapes indirect communication strategies. For example, teacher YD often employs humour when interacting with individuals of higher rank within the community, as it helps bridge the gap created by power distance. Through humour, he cultivates a more relaxed atmosphere and fosters a sense of camaraderie, enabling indirect communication without directly challenging their authority. A similar approach is taken by teacher PW, who refrains from directly expressing frustration, particularly in situations with significant power distance, to avoid being perceived as disrespectful. She contends that indirect communication allows her to convey her concerns while maintaining respect when addressing issues subtly.

These examples underscore the impact of power distance on communication practices and indirect communication strategies. In hierarchical settings marked by power distance, individuals often use indirect communication to navigate power dynamics and uphold harmonious relationships (Kirkhaug, 2009; Lee & Edmondson, 2017; Widhiastuti, 2012). Indirect communication enables the expression of thoughts and concerns while demonstrating respect for authority and acknowledging existing power structures within the organisation. By

incorporating indirect communication strategies, members of the organisation can broach sensitive topics, voice their opinions, and seek assistance without directly challenging or undermining individuals in higher positions. This approach facilitates effective communication while considering power dynamics and preserving respect and harmony within the organisational framework.

As the final influential factor affecting indirect communication strategies, age explores how generational distinctions influence communication preferences. These age-related communication preferences are closely intertwined with Jakarta's cultural norms and values. Many cultures, including Jakarta, strongly emphasise demonstrating respect towards older individuals (Javidan et al., 2006; Siregar et al., 2023). Younger generations are expected to differ and refrain from confrontations with their elders. This reverence for authority and age aligns with indirect communication strategies when engaging with older organisation members. Such strategies may also be employed to convey respect for their senior colleagues.

Furthermore, the communication preferences of senior members within the organisation are often shaped by their upbringing and the cultural values instilled in them (Musheke & Phiri, 2021). Jakarta's culture places significant importance on respect, harmony, and maintaining positive relationships. Older individuals may have grown up in an environment where indirect communication was the prevailing norm, and they carry these cultural values into their professional lives (Jackson, 2014; Musheke & Phiri, 2021). Within Jakarta's cultural context, indirect communication is frequently employed, especially when addressing sensitive matters or with authority figures (Siregar et al., 2023). Older individuals may have been exposed to and observed these indirect communication practices throughout their lives. They may have learned that using subtle hints or expressions of disappointment is a culturally acceptable means of conveying concerns while upholding respect and harmony.

Consequently, these individuals extend these cultural norms to their professional roles within educational organisations. Supporting this assertion, data from participant interviews revealed that older organisation members often favour indirect communication. This preference can be traced back to their upbringing and cultural values, as they adhere to respect and avoid confrontations, which align with indirect communication strategies.

Similar patterns were identified through document analysis, illustrating how younger organisation members employ indirect communication strategies, such as hedging expressions and posing questions, to convey messages. These communication practices underscore adopting indirect communication strategies across various age groups. For instance, in written reports or emails, they may employ phrases like, "I am not entirely sure, but..." or "It might be a good idea to..." before suggesting or stating a point. These expressions serve to

temper the message and make it less straightforward. By doing so, younger members manifest indirect communication by their cultural norms. Subtle suggestions function as a way to indirectly communicate their preferences, allowing others to contemplate and respond accordingly. Supporting the insights gained from document analysis, the results of interviews with younger members also unveiled their perspectives on the use of hedging expressions in conveying their messages. They indicated that such a communication strategy enabled them to articulate their ideas and opinions more cautiously and diplomatically, allowing them to express themselves without coming across as overly assertive and confrontational. Subtle suggestions offer them a means to indirectly convey their preferences, allowing others to deliberate and respond thoughtfully.

In addition to using hedging expressions in written communication, it was observed that some participants also employed the strategy of posing polite questions through instant messaging applications as an additional form of indirect communication. This approach was often used to seek clarification or express uncertainties, providing an avenue for further discussion and clarification without directly challenging authority or creating conflict. This communication practice underscores the adaptability and awareness of younger members, their understanding of the significance of cultural norms, and the need to tailor their communication styles to different contexts.

Considering the explanation above, understanding the influential factors such as shared cultural values, power distance, and age enhances communication practices within educational organisations. The emphasis on social harmony and collective identity in Betawi culture shapes communication preferences, leading to the adoption of indirect strategies. Power distance influences the use of indirect communication to navigate hierarchical structures and maintain harmonious relationships. Age highlights how younger members adapt their communication styles by incorporating indirect strategies for effective communication. By acknowledging and accommodating these influential factors, educational organisations can cultivate inclusive communication environments that respect cultural diversity and promote collaboration.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the ethnographic study, it can be deduced that members of educational institutions in Jakarta, Indonesia, relied on indirect communication strategies to achieve various communication objectives, including conveying humour, expressing dissatisfaction, implying meaning, seeking assistance, and expressing uncertainty. These strategies are primarily employed to uphold social harmony and cultivate mutual respect among participants. The implications of this study are particularly pertinent in the Betawi cultural context, where indirect communication strategies align seamlessly with cultural norms.

The findings of this study are highly relevant in the Betawi cultural context, where participants' utilisation of indirect communication aligns with cultural norms that prioritise preserving social cohesion, averting conflicts, and promoting collectivism. In this context, employing indirect communication effectively achieves these objectives and nurtures more harmonious interactions and positive relationships among organisation members. Through indirect communication, participants can effectively mitigate the potential for misunderstanding and offence arising from overly direct or confrontational communication. This approach also aligns with the cultural values of Betawi, which emphasise a higher degree of social harmony and mutual respect. Therefore, adopting indirect communication strategies within educational organisations in Jakarta harmonises with local cultural norms and reinforces the overarching goals of preserving harmony and fostering respect among participants. Moreover, the study identified several influential factors influencing the adoption of indirect communication strategies, including shared cultural values, power distance, and age. Cultural values, particularly those shared within the local Betawi culture, significantly shaped communication preferences and promoted social harmony. Power distance within the organisational hierarchy influenced the use of indirect strategies to navigate authority dynamics. Finally, age played a role in communication strategies, with younger members adapting their approaches to align with indirect strategies. This study is expected to contribute to understanding communication practices in educational organisations, emphasising the importance of indirect strategies in fostering supportive connections and creating a conducive learning environment. By recognising the role of shared cultural values, power dynamics, and age-related differences, educational organisations can establish inclusive communication settings that respect diverse perspectives and promote effective collaboration.

Furthermore, this study enriches the body of knowledge on intercultural communication theory by providing valuable insights into utilising indirect communication strategies within the cultural context of Jakarta, Indonesia. This research enhances our understanding of how cultural norms and values impact communication practices in educational institutions. The results of this study also offer a formal perspective on the function of indirect communication as a mechanism for cultural adjustment within educational establishments. The research highlights how members of schools in Jakarta adapt their communication patterns to align with the cultural values of the locality, which prioritise social harmony, conflict avoidance, and the reinforcement of collective identity.

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