



THE ROLE OF THE POMG CHAIRPERSON AS AN OPINION LEADER IN THE DIFFUSION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION INNOVATION OBSERVATION TRIP AT SMA LABSCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Character education is one of the key elements that many schools in Indonesia aim to implement. The Laboratory School (Labschool) has long recognized and integrated character learning through the innovation of Observation Trips (TOs) across all its institutions. On its implementation, Labschool involves the Association of Parents and Teachers (POMG) and the Class Parent Representatives (WOTK) in the diffusion process of the TO innovation. The involvement of these parties is considered helpful in the diffusion and adoption of TO. This study aims to acknowledge the role of the POMG chairperson in the TO innovation process at each Labschool high school, which is located in four different areas, specifically as an Opinion Leader. The research employs a qualitative method using the diffusion research procedure developed by Rogers to analyze the role of POMG as an Opinion Leader in the diffusion of Labschool's character education innovation. Interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis were used to collect the data. The results of this study show that the character education system utilizing TO innovation has been successfully diffused across Labschool institutions, and its adoption has been sustained through the involvement of POMG chairpersons who exhibit characteristics of Opinion Leaders. The conclusion that POMG chairpersons serve as Opinion Leaders is demonstrated by their possession of external communication, accessibility, elevated social standing, and greater innovation within the community, as well as their role as innovative opinion leaders when the social system norms support the changes they implemented.

Keywords: Diffusion of Innovation, Opinion Leader, POMG, Trip Observation

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of personal development aimed at enhancing students' comprehension, knowledge, and capabilities. Beyond academic achievement, elements such as character and personality development are core components of adolescent growth within the educational context (Colby et al., 1998; Park & Peterson, 2009). In numerous cultures, character education is often regarded as more important than cognitive development alone (Brown et al., 2012; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). According to Park and Peterson (2009), good character is a trait that teachers seek in their students and parents desire in their children. Thus, character education is a crucial factor in national development, as it contributes to bringing out not only competent graduates but also morally responsible citizens (Lickona, as cited in Reigeluth, 1999).

In Indonesia, implementing character education remains a significant challenge for many schools. The prevalence of juvenile delinquency—including drug abuse, student violence, and promiscuity—reflects the limitations in the current character education achievements. Scholars such as Endah (2012), Koesema (2012), and the Ministry of

Education and Culture (2016) argue that character education is key to addressing these behavioral issues. The success of character education is significantly influenced by the character education students receive in school.

Labschool has long recognized the importance of character education and has implemented it through the innovative *Observation Trip* (TO) program. This initiative aligns with Anderson's (1998) view that character education should be integrated across subjects, extracurricular activities, and a conducive learning environment. TO programs are conducted in rural areas away from urban centers for five days and four nights, designed to foster character development in a supportive setting. Values such as piety, leadership, independence, cooperation, and local wisdom are cultivated through experiential learning during the TO. Hence, the character education system can be understood as a set of interrelated components that interact to fulfill the stated objectives of character education.

The TO learning model is principally open to interaction with students' surrounding environment. These interactions are shaped by both the immediate context and related suprasystems (Richey, Klein, & Tracy, 2011). Thus, the more subsystems and suprasystems involved and integrated, the more effective the system becomes in achieving its educational goals. Based on this systems approach, TO committees—comprising teachers and administrative staff—have involved parents from the POMG and WOTK, as it was implemented at SMA IKIP Jakarta. This model was later adopted by other Labschool high schools and remained in use. Therefore, the *Observation Trip* (TO) innovation refers to a character education model adopted by Labschool Senior High Schools in Rawamangun (East Jakarta), Kebayoran (South Jakarta), Cibubur (Bekasi), and Cirendeu (South Tangerang).

At the time of this study, parental involvement—particularly through the POMG and WOTK—remained a vital support mechanism for the continuation of the TO program at each Labschool. Consequently, this research intends to examine the specific role of POMG chairpersons in the TO innovation process at these four Labschool branches, focusing on their function as *opinion leaders*.

This study contributes to a growing body of literature on character education at the senior high school level. For example, Hermino (2020) emphasizes that positive behavioral habituation among students can be cultivated when schools apply constructive discipline and maintain a strong commitment to character education grounded in local wisdom and cultural values. Similarly, Djazilan (2024) highlights the importance of synergistic collaboration between parents and the broader community in shaping school values, underlining that such alignment is critical to optimizing character education outcomes. Djazilan also argues that character formation serves as a strategic measure to prevent moral degradation among high school students and that transformational leadership by school principals plays a crucial role in program success.

Mendelová (2024), in her study on collaboration between parents and teachers, concludes that all forms of interaction between these parties contribute to effective partnerships. The relationship between school and family is a key factor in defining the direction, quality, and expectations of cooperation. In this context, Yulianti (2020) asserts that the roles of school principals and teachers are essential in facilitating parental engagement. Meanwhile, Alinsunurin (2020) notes that although parental involvement generally yields positive outcomes, it can also result in tension with school management, particularly when mandated by policy regulations, potentially disrupting the learning environment.



However, the role of parents—specifically through the POMG—in the diffusion of educational innovations such as the *Observation Trip* (TO) has not yet been extensively examined. Therefore, this research aims to address the central question: *What is the role of the POMG chairperson as an opinion leader in advancing the diffusion and sustaining the adoption of the TO program in Labschool Senior High Schools?*

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research method, with research procedures guided by the diffusion research model developed by Rogers. The purpose of this diffusion research is to discover the role of the Chairperson of the Parents and Teachers Association (POMG) as an *opinion leader* in disseminating the innovation and sustaining the adoption of the *Observation Trip* (TO) program in Labschool Senior High Schools.

Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. The key informants in this study included the Chairpersons of the POMG, principals, and vice principals from each Labschool senior high school. This approach aligns with Rogers' (2003, p. 309) assertion that, as an alternative to sociometric techniques, researchers may identify opinion leaders by consulting key informants who are highly knowledgeable about the communication networks within a system. In many cases, a small number of informed individuals are capable of accurately identifying opinion leaders within a system, particularly when the system is relatively small and the informants possess reliable information.

Information gathering was conducted through the distribution of questionnaires and in-depth interviews with the POMG Chairpersons from each participating Labschool Senior High School. The responses from both the questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain data based on the informants' perceptions regarding the characteristics of an opinion leader. These characteristics include possession of external communication channels, accessibility, higher social status relative to their followers, greater innovativeness compared to their followers, and the ability to act as an innovative opinion leader when the social norms within the system support the changes being introduced.

The data analysis procedure followed the interactive model of qualitative data analysis, which involves three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This analytical process allowed the researcher to systematically organize and interpret the data in line with the research objectives. To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the data, triangulation of sources and techniques was employed. This included the cross-verification of information obtained from multiple sources and the application of diverse data collection methods, thereby enhancing the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Concerning the diffusion network of the *Observation Trip* (TO) among parents at Labschool Senior High Schools, the findings of this study indicate that the Chairperson of the Parents and Teachers Association (POMG) plays a central and highly responsible role in the implementation of the TO program, particularly in addressing the needs related to community service activities. As such, the POMG holds significant influence in mobilizing support among parents of prospective student participants. The Chairperson of the POMG has demonstrated clear opinion leadership within the diffusion network of the TO initiative among parents.

One of the key strategies employed by the Chairperson was to gather the coordinators and members of the Class Parent Representatives (WOTK), typically comprising five parents per class. This strategy is consistent with the principles of social diffusion theory, which suggests that approximately 15% of individuals in a population function as opinion leaders or early adopters of an innovation. Their actions can influence others and help establish new behavioral norms (Rogers, 1983). In this context, five out of approximately thirty parents in a class represent this 15% threshold.

The selected parents, who were invited to attend meetings and engage in idea exchange with the POMG Chairperson, effectively became the early adopters of the TO innovation. These individuals then acted as opinion leaders within their respective classes, influencing other parents to provide both moral and material support for the initiative. This support took the form of granting permission for their sons or daughters to participate in the TO program, as well as offering financial contributions to support the program's community service component.

Characteristics of the POMG Chairperson as an Opinion Leader

The findings of this study reveal that in the context of disseminating information about the *Observation Trip* (TO) program in Labschool Senior High Schools, the Chairperson of the Parents and Teachers Association (POMG) occupies a strategic position. As the first party to receive information and having had direct experience with the program—particularly in addressing the needs related to its social service components—the Chairperson plays a fundamental role. As parents of students in Grades XI and XII, POMG members have previously accompanied the implementation of TO, equipping them with a deep understanding of the program's objectives, benefits, and challenges, especially regarding the fulfillment of social service activities in the TO location.

This experience positions the POMG Chairperson as more knowledgeable than the Class Parent Representatives (WOTK) of Grade X, as well as new parents who generally lack sufficient information. With this background, the POMG Chairperson is not only seen as a credible source of information but also serves as a key reference in guiding and building parental understanding of the importance of the TO initiative.

As a group with greater knowledge and direct experience of the TO program, POMG possesses a strong capacity to influence opinions and generate support among parents of prospective TO participants. Through intensive interpersonal communication, the Chairperson could convey the value of the program more convincingly, offering a perspective from a fellow parent rather than from the school administration alone.

This influence is evident in how the WOTK Coordinators and members from Grade X were receptive to input from the POMG and subsequently passed this information on to other parents in their respective classes. The trust developed through this process enabled the POMG to effectively foster participation, both in moral support and in material support. Thus, the POMG functions as a key driver within the information diffusion network, creating a chain of communication that strengthens parental engagement and broadens support for the sustainability of the TO initiative.

Within this diffusion network, the POMG Chairperson plays a central role as an opinion leader among the parent community. Their leadership is not solely defined by formal title but is supported by their experience in accompanying their child during TO and their ability to foster open, empathetic, and persuasive communication.



The Chairperson of the POMG is widely trusted by both WOTK Coordinators and parents, particularly for their clarity in conveying information and for their ability to emotionally resonate with others, often through personal anecdotes about the positive transformations experienced by students following their participation in the TO. This role as an opinion leader is reflected in the Chairperson's ability to guide the direction of communication flows, address doubts, and encourage active involvement from other parents.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the Chairperson of the POMG demonstrates several distinct characteristics of an opinion leader: early access to information, respect within the school community, active sharing of ideas, and the ability to serve as a bridge between the school and parents in supporting character education innovation through the TO.

One of the Chairperson's notable strengths in external communication is their ability to convey ideas clearly and accessibly to both fellow POMG officers and WOTK members. They can communicate systematically, ensuring that ideas are not only well-received but also inspire active engagement and follow-up actions from others. This clarity of communication is a key element in building mutual understanding, particularly in the planning and implementation stages of the TO program, where collaboration and alignment among stakeholders are essential for success.

The Chairperson's capacity for external communication is further evidenced by their success in fostering inter-school collaboration, namely, by initiating dialogue with POMG Chairpersons from other Labschool branches to exchange experiences related to TO implementation. This initiative has not only broadened the perspectives of both parents and school leaders but also enhanced the credibility of the information shared. Through such peer-sharing sessions, parents gain more concrete insights into the program's benefits, field challenges, and successful strategies that can be adapted locally. The Chairperson's ability to initiate and facilitate these inter-school forums represents their role as a communication bridge across schools and reaffirms their leadership in driving innovation.

The Chairperson's ability to establish and maintain strong relationships with POMG leaders from other Labschool branches also indicates the strength of their external communication network. These relationships are not merely formal but are built upon mutual trust and a spirit of collaboration among parents who play strategic roles in their respective schools. This inter-school network allows for the exchange of information, ideas, and best practices concerning the TO program. Through such connections, the Chairperson gains a variety of perspectives and experiences that can be adapted within their own school, strengthening POMG's position as a responsive and innovative institution within the Labschool system.

The POMG Chairperson also demonstrates strong communication skills when interacting with TO organizing committees and school leadership, particularly in conveying parental feedback, aspirations, and concerns. These discussions are two-way in nature; the Chairperson not only presents ideas clearly and systematically but also listens actively to the school's perspective and responds thoughtfully. This ability to mediate between school and parents plays a crucial role in ensuring that decisions related to TO are collaboratively and more readily accepted by all parties. The effectiveness of this communication further reinforces the Chairperson's position as both a representative of parents and a strategic partner of the school.

The Chairperson's support for TO innovation is also reflected in their initiative to implement more effective methods of communication and coordination within the POMG and WOTK structures. Rather than relying solely on conventional approaches, the Chairperson actively seeks more efficient and participatory methods, such as the use of digital media, thematic discussion forums, and systematic mapping of parental needs and potential contributions. These innovations have improved leadership engagement and accelerated the dissemination of critical information to parents. Through this adaptive and results-oriented leadership style, the Chairperson exemplifies a commitment to sustaining the program.

Interactions with POMG Chairpersons from other Labschool branches have further contributed to the enhancement of the Chairperson's communication skills. Through cross-school experience sharing and discussions, they have acquired new strategies for more effective communication, both in conveying information to parents and in building collaboration with the school. This process has not only expanded the Chairperson's perspective but also boosted their confidence in communicating ideas persuasively and systematically. These enhanced communication abilities have strengthened their role as a liaison between school stakeholders and have further amplified their effectiveness in supporting TO implementation.

The Chairperson occupies a strategic position within the school's communication structure, particularly in the context of supporting the TO program. Their presence is not only valued but considered essential by the school, as they serve as a crucial link between organizing committees and the parent community. Compared to other parents, the Chairperson has immediate and direct access to the TO committee, allowing them to respond quickly to emerging issues. This proximity facilitates smoother coordination, more collaborative decision-making, and more efficient communication of parental feedback. This central role strengthens the Chairperson's effectiveness as a communication conduit and their critical contribution to the success of the TO innovation in Labschool Senior High Schools.

The Chairperson also demonstrates excellence in terms of accessibility, as shown by their ease in establishing communication with other POMG leaders, WOTK members, and individual parents. POMG and WOTK members alike report being able to reach the Chairperson for matters concerning the TO program easily. Holding the role of Chairperson inherently carries greater responsibility in supporting TO implementation.

The Chairperson's motivation for taking on this role is not rooted in the pursuit of social or economic status, but is driven by a strong desire to contribute meaningfully to the success of the TO innovation.

Furthermore, the Chairperson displays a high degree of innovativeness, as evidenced by their ability to craft compelling narratives and strategic approaches to encourage parental participation and contributions to the program. This highlights their active role as a key supporter of the TO innovation.

The Chairperson also functions effectively as an opinion leader, supported by the social norms of the school community that place trust in their leadership, from both school authorities and fellow parents, particularly regarding the TO initiative. The school's conducive environment further enables the Chairperson to practice and advance this educational innovation.



The Communication Network of the Observation Trip (TO) Among Parents

This study focuses on mapping the communication network of the *Observation Trip* (TO) program within the Labschool Senior High School environment, encompassing four campuses: Labschool Jakarta, Labschool Kebayoran, Labschool Cibubur, and Labschool Cirendeu. The primary aim is to analyze the communication dynamics among three key stakeholder groups: the Parent-Teacher Association (POMG), the Class Parent Representatives (WOTK), and the parents of Grade X students. These three groups play strategic roles in disseminating information, shaping perceptions, and promoting parental engagement in supporting the implementation of the TO program. The research investigates how the flow of information circulates and how an effective communication network is formed among these actors, particularly in the context of reinforcing character education through TO.

The initial stage of the TO information diffusion network begins with the POMG, which serves as the first party to receive, interpret, and manage information related to the program implementation. Having prior firsthand experience with TO activities, POMG members occupy a strategic position in communicating this information to the Coordinators and Members of the WOTK for Grade X. The exchange of ideas between POMG and WOTK is both informative and persuasive, as POMG shares experiential narratives that reinforce confidence in the program's benefits. This communication takes place in an interpersonal and dialogical manner, laying a strong foundation for the broader diffusion of information among parents.

Once the Coordinators and Members of WOTK receive this information and guidance from the POMG, they proceed to disseminate it to all parents in their respective classes. This step is crucial, as WOTK serves as the mediator between the information initiators (POMG) and the parents who have not yet had direct experience with the TO program. Communication occurs through interpersonal discussions during class forums, informal gatherings, and digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp groups. In this process, WOTK not only conveys technical details but also seeks to foster trust and encourage participation among parents, thereby cultivating a mutual understanding and comprehensive support for the TO initiative.

After receiving the information from WOTK representatives, parent-to-parent communication continues to evolve through horizontal exchanges—both within the same class and among other classes. Discussions also occur between parents and WOTK Coordinators, as well as between parents and POMG members. These interactions are further strengthened by the use of digital communication tools, such as WhatsApp groups, which facilitate efficient information dissemination, clarify questions, and share perspectives and experiences. This open and participatory communication dynamic expands the reach of the TO information diffusion network while enhancing collaboration among parents in supporting the program's character education objectives.

Following a general briefing from school leadership to all parents regarding the implementation of the TO program, the next step involves collaboration between the POMG and the Social Service Committee. Together, they deliver more specific information—based on field surveys of the TO destination—to the Coordinators and Members of the WOTK for Grade X. This follow-up information is technical and contextual, supplementing the initial briefing from the school with real-time, location-specific data. This step demonstrates that the POMG serves not only as an extension of the school's communication channel but also as a critical liaison between on-site needs and parental involvement in program implementation.

The information delivered by POMG and the Social Service Committee focuses on the results of needs assessments conducted in the communities surrounding the TO locations. These needs include infrastructure, facilities, and social services that are to be addressed as part of the program's community service initiatives. This information is essential, as it provides WOTK representatives with a concrete understanding of real conditions in the field, enabling them to design more targeted and effective support strategies. With this deeper insight into community needs, parental involvement can be more meaningfully directed toward fulfilling both the social and educational objectives of the TO program.

Meetings between the POMG and the Coordinators and Members of WOTK are held in constructive and dialogical communication. The exchange of ideas is not one-sided but involves open discussions in which both parties share opinions, seek clarification, and provide suggestions related to the needs and implementation of the TO. The equal role of all participants—as fellow parents—facilitates smooth and respectful communication. This dialogical interaction provides a strong foundation for mutual understanding and enhances collaboration between the POMG and WOTK as key actors in the success of the TO program.

The trust placed in the POMG by Grade X WOTK Coordinators and Members is grounded in three main experiential and relational factors. First, POMG members are parents of students in Grades XI and XII who have previously participated in the TO, granting them firsthand knowledge and deep understanding of its benefits and processes. Second, some POMG members have previously served as WOTK Coordinators or members when their children were in Grade X, making them more experienced in supporting school programs, including TO planning. Third, the Grade X WOTK representatives feel a sense of responsibility as opinion leaders within their classes, prompting them to seek direct and comprehensive information from the POMG before relaying it to the broader parent body. These three factors reinforce the POMG's position as a credible source of information and a trusted discussion partner in facilitating the smooth execution of the TO program.

At the scheduled time, WOTK Coordinators and Members convey detailed information to all parents in their respective classes. This information complements the general explanation previously provided by school administrators during the initial parent meeting and includes additional details obtained during discussions with the POMG and the TO committee. One of the key topics communicated concerns the collective financial responsibilities taken by parents of prospective TO participants. These meetings provide opportunities for parents to deepen their understanding of the program and gain clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities in supporting their children's participation.

To further strengthen understanding and broaden support for the TO program, communication is not limited to formal exchanges between WOTK and parents but also occurs through peer-to-peer interactions within and across classes. This communication process is facilitated by technological advancements, especially through the use of class-specific WhatsApp groups. These digital platforms ensure that TO-related information is more comprehensive and widely distributed over time. WhatsApp groups also enable parents to directly engage in dialogues with WOTK Coordinators or Members and to establish cross-class communication networks with parents from other classes. These interactions ultimately enhance engagement and bolster parental support for the successful implementation of the TO program.



Model of the Communication Flow of the Observation Trip (TO)

With regard to the communication flow model for the Observation Trip (TO) among parents in Labschool senior high schools, the findings of this study indicate that while mass communication channels play an important role in introducing initial knowledge about the TO, it is interpersonal communication that proves to be significantly more effective in supporting the dissemination and understanding of the program. The interpersonal communication channel enables the Parents and Teachers Association (POMG) to successfully persuade Coordinators and Members of the Class Parent Representatives (WOTK) to recognize the importance of raising awareness among parents in their respective classes to support the TO initiative. This interpersonal communication channel also fosters the exchange of ideas and facilitates synergy in addressing the logistical and social needs of the TO program. Moreover, it allows for idea sharing among parents both within the same class and across different classes. The communication model initiated by POMG was subsequently adopted by WOTK, resulting in a smooth and effective exchange of information and support for the TO.

To reinforce the dissemination of information about the TO program, the school administration provided a platform for POMG to explain the benefits of the program. POMG, composed of parents whose children had previously participated in the TO, delivered interpersonal communication based on firsthand testimony and personal experience. The information conveyed went beyond the merely informative; it also appealed to the emotional concerns of fellow parents, fostering attitudinal change and encouraging broader acceptance of the TO as a valuable character education initiative.

On another occasion, POMG, together with the Social Service Committee, was allowed to deliver further briefings and to invite parents to collaborate in addressing practical aspects related to the implementation of the TO. These explanations were directed specifically at WOTK coordinators and members in each class. Given the established trust in POMG, the WOTK responded positively and openly to the ideas shared. The exchange of ideas between POMG and WOTK covered both content materials to be communicated and technical strategies for effectively delivering these messages to parents in their respective classes.

Following the receipt of this information, WOTK continued the communication process with all parents in their classes. This stage proceeded smoothly as parents began to understand the objectives of the TO and offered their support. This support was evidenced through parental consent for their children's participation and the fulfillment of required financial contributions. Additionally, some parents voluntarily provided extra financial contributions as an expression of deeper commitment to make the program successful.

Dynamic interactions and exchanges of ideas occurred continuously among parents, both within and across classes. These communications engaged WOTK, POMG, and school leaders, and evolved from initial mass communication exposure into ongoing interpersonal dialogue at multiple levels. This process has significantly strengthened both understanding and parental support for the TO.

Nature of the Communication Flow of TO among Labschool Parents

Initial reactions from some parents upon receiving an explanation of the TO concept from the school revealed significant emotional resistance. Many parents considered the idea exaggerated or unrealistic to apply. Parents have showed uncomfortable feelings since the beginning of the program elaboration, particularly the notion of having their children stay in village homes for several days, which was perceived as outside their comfort zone. These negative responses illustrate a gap in understanding between the school, as the program initiator, and parents, who were being asked to place trust in the institution.

This discomfort primarily stemmed from concerns about their children's well-being during the TO. The requirement that students stay with villagers in rural areas raised fears about safety, comfort, and the students' ability to adapt to unfamiliar environments. These concerns were exacerbated by the fact that many of the students came from protected and service-oriented backgrounds, raising doubts about their ability to be independent. As a result, many parents questioned the feasibility of the program before fully understanding its educational and character-building objectives.

In addition to concerns about the children, some parents questioned the school's preparedness and intentions in organizing the TO. The school's explanations were perceived as unconvincing, fueling a sense of insecurity and mistrust regarding the school's ability to ensure student safety and well-being. In some cases, suspicions emerged that the school had hidden agendas or lacked transparency in the program's execution, creating substantial early barriers to building parental trust.

These differences in interpretation between the school and parents reflect a heterophilous communication context, where the information sender and receiver differ significantly in background, values, or understanding. While the school positioned the TO as a key component of character education and contextual learning, some parents viewed it as risky and misaligned with their children's needs. This heterophily impeded effective communication and increased the likelihood of misperception. Therefore, a more empathetic and participatory communication strategy is required to bridge these gaps and gradually built shared understanding.

The identity of POMG members as fellow Labschool parents played a critical role in fostering trust and acceptance of the TO. As individuals with similar backgrounds and concerns, POMG members were seen as relatable and approachable. When information came from the school, some parents felt distanced; however, when the same information was presented by POMG, who were perceived as "peer parents," the message was more easily accepted. This perceived equality fostered emotional closeness and psychological comfort, which helped mitigate early resistance.

Personal experiences shared by members of the Parents Association (POMG) have played a crucial role in alleviating the concerns of some parents regarding the Observation Trip (TO) program. When POMG representatives conveyed that their own children had participated in the TO the previous year and described the subsequent positive changes in their attitudes and behaviour, parental suspicion and discomfort began to subside. These real-life experiences served as concrete evidence that the TO program is not a harmful activity, but rather one that is educational and character-building. Narratives delivered from the perspective of fellow parents carry emotional resonance and persuasive power that formal explanations from the school often cannot achieve. Consequently, the testimonies of POMG members function as a catalyst in transforming negative perceptions into gradually growing support.



The communication dynamics between POMG and other parents have become increasingly effective due to their shared backgrounds, experiences, and values as parents of Labschool students. This condition fosters homophily—a state in which communication flows more smoothly because of similarities in perspectives and understanding of a particular issue. In the context of the Observation Trip (TO), these shared characteristics help create a communicative climate that is more open, warm, and persuasive. There is no sense of awkwardness or dominance, as discussions occur between individuals who understand each other's positions and concerns. This homophily serves as the foundation for the growing support toward the TO program, as information is received through channels of trust and empathy, rather than solely through formal authority.

A similar dynamic is observed in the exchange of ideas between the Parents Association (POMG) and the coordinators, as well as members of WOTK, in which they discuss various logistical and preparatory needs related to the implementation of the Observation Trip (TO), both from the organizing committee's and participants' perspectives. This interaction occurs through interpersonal communication channels, enabling effective dialogue due to shared backgrounds and mutual understanding between the parties, a condition referred to as homophily. As a result of this harmonious communication, the Coordinator and WOTK members were able to successfully identify and address various TO-related needs, including technical aspects of conveying information to parents.

The meetings between the Coordinator and WOTK members and the parents in each class were conducted successfully. The WOTK members recognized their role as representatives of the parents within their respective classes. In presenting ideas related to efforts to comply the requirements for the Observation Trip (TO), they utilized interpersonal communication channels. The presence of equal standing and a sense of comfort in communication, homophily, facilitated a smooth exchange of ideas, both between WOTK and the parents, as well as among the parents themselves.

CONCLUSION

The Chairperson of the Parents and Teachers Association (POMG) at SMA Labschool demonstrates the characteristics of an opinion leader, as evidenced by their strong external communication abilities. This is reflected in their capacity to initiate collaboration and experience-sharing with POMG chairpersons from other Labschool branches, maintain inter-school relationships, and further develop their leadership competencies through these interactions. This finding aligns with Generalization 8-4 from Rogers' diffusion theory, which states: *“Opinion leaders are more cosmopolitan than their followers.”*

The Chairpersons also indicate the trait of accessibility, as shown by their openness to engage in discussion and exchange views with organizing committees and school leadership. Their presence is highly valued by the school, especially in matters related to the TO innovation. Furthermore, the Chairpersons possess a high degree of innovativeness, as demonstrated by their ability to introduce and apply more effective communication and coordination strategies within the POMG and WOTK networks, particularly in mobilizing parental support—both moral and financial—for the success of the TO program.

The Chairperson's role as an opinion leader is further validated by their alignment with three key elements: innovativeness, opinion leadership, and adherence to supportive

system norms. As a trusted figure among parents regarding the TO innovation, the Chairperson operates within a school environment that fosters and supports innovation, thereby reinforcing their role as a central actor in promoting and sustaining educational innovation at SMA Labschool.

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