

The Effectiveness of Interpersonal Communication in Online Learning in Providing Communication Science Students at the University of Muhammadiyah Madiun

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out whether interpersonal communication in online learning can help students of the Muhammadiyah University of Madiun communication science study program learn better. The approach taken in this research is a quantitative approach which focuses on testing theory by measuring or calculating research variables and using statistical techniques to analyze data. In this research all questions were made in Google form with a Likert scale. The sampling method used is the Slovin formula by entering confidence and error levels of 95% and 10% respectively. This research also uses the interpersonal communication characteristics of empathy, openness, positive feelings, equality, and support to evaluate how effective interpersonal communication is in providing students with an understanding of online learning. The results of this research are that the interpersonal communication process of online learning in providing understanding to Communication Science study program students at Muhammadiyah University of Madiun is quite effective. In the process of providing understanding, lecturers have an important role such as opening space for discussion and sharing opinions, providing additional information such as companion books for student learning needs, taking the time to provide guidance to students who are having difficulty and providing fair grades for the assignments they have completed student.

Keywords: *effectiveness, interpersonal communication, online learning, student understanding*

INTRODUCTION

Communication and information technology have changed the perspective and way people learn around the world, especially in Indonesia. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many educational institutions have been forced to adapt to online learning methods. The University of Muhammadiyah Madiun as one of the higher education institutions also experienced this shift. Although online learning provides flexibility, it also brings new challenges in the

interaction between lecturers and students especially in terms of interpersonal communication. The process of exchanging information that occurs directly and interactively is known as interpersonal communication. According to Afriyadi (2015), interpersonal communication is defined as communication that uses thoughts or language that occurs within the communicator. Therefore, communication involving more than one person is called interpersonal communication. In the context of education, this communication includes interactions between lecturers and students that greatly affect the understanding of the material, learning motivation and student involvement in the learning process. A study (Iswanto & Hidayat, 2020) found that effective communication between lecturers and students can produce better learning outcomes and student satisfaction. This shows the urgency of the quality of interpersonal communication in creating a productive learning environment. However, online learning also presents various challenges that can hinder the effectiveness of communication. One of the main problems is the lack of direct interaction which often leads to ambiguity in the delivery of the material. According to research by (Yunus et al., 2021) "lecturers often experience difficulties in delivering material effectively due to the limitations of the communication media used." This shows that despite attempts to communicate well, technical factors are often a hindrance.

On the other hand, students also face challenges in actively participating during online classes. Many students feel less involved and tend to be passive. Research by (Rahmawati & Setyowati, 2022) revealed that "students are often reluctant to activate the camera or participate in discussions, thereby reducing the quality of interaction." The limitations of the internet network and the lack of nonverbal feedback are factors that hinder their engagement. This has an impact on the relationship between lecturers and students, where lecturers may feel that they do not receive feedback from students. In this context, it is important to understand how the effectiveness of interpersonal communication can be improved in the interaction between lecturers and students in online classes. This study aims to determine the factors that affect interpersonal communication and how these factors affect student engagement at the University of Muhammadiyah Madiun. By understanding the dynamics of this communication, it is hoped that strategies can be found to improve the quality of online learning. According to previous research empathy, openness, positive attitudes, equality and support are important characteristics of effective interpersonal

communication (DeVito, 2007). In order for the teaching and learning process to be better, these characteristics must be applied in online learning. Research by (Santoso & Sari, 2020) emphasizes that "the use of appropriate communication techniques can improve interaction between lecturers and students and create a more conducive learning atmosphere." It is hoped that on this basis, this research can make a significant contribution to the development of more efficient learning methods in the future. This research will examine the effectiveness of interpersonal communication between lecturers and students in conducting online learning. The results of this study are expected to be used as a reference for developing curriculum and learning approaches in the era of modern technology, especially for the Communication Science study program of Universitas Muhammadiyah Madiun.

METHODS

The approach used in this study is quantitative which focuses on theoretical tests by measuring or calculating research variables and involves statistical techniques to analyze data (Yuliantika, 2018). Interpersonal communication theory is used in this study. Interpersonal communication is when a person conveys a message and is received by others as well as different types of responses that can create feedback. It is explained in DeVito that the characteristics of effective communication are empathy, openness, positivity, equality, and support. These characteristics are the basis for the research to be carried out.

In this study, all questions are presented in the form of a questionnaire made through a google form. Questions included in the research were given a likert score from 1 to 5. A value of one means strongly agree, a value of two means agree, a value of three contains a neutral meaning, a value of four contains a meaning of disagreement, a value of five contains a meaning of strongly disagreeing (Wowor & Putri, 2021).

The population is 70 students of Communication Sciences at the University of Muhammadiyah Madiun. The sample withdrawal technique used is to use the Slovin formula by entering the confidence level and error level of 95% and 10% respectively which is expected to provide the required information and be simpler and easier to apply, the following is the Slovin formula (Yusuf, 2017):

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

$$= \frac{70}{1+(70)(0,01)}$$

= 41, 1764 (41 students)

Where,

- n : Sample Size (students)
- N : Population Size
- e : Significant Extent (10%)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this study, there were 9 questions from the researcher that had been filled in by 43 respondents using questionnaire media. The questionnaire will answer how effective interpersonal communication is in online learning to provide understanding to students. The researcher uses the characteristics of interpersonal communication proposed by Joseph A. DeVito, namely openness, empathy, support, positivity, and equality (Kautsara, 2024).

A. Openness

Openness can occur because there is a willingness between the two parties, namely the communicator and the communicator, to make themselves more open and able to understand the thoughts and feelings of others (Febriati, 2014). There are 3 aspects of openness, namely communicators who are open to the communicators they interact with, the willingness of communicators to react honestly to stimuli that arise, and the feelings and thoughts conveyed come from themselves and their own responsibilities (Wijayani, 2021). According to Joseph A. Devito's theory of openness, openness is one of the essential elements in interpersonal communication that includes a willingness to share personal information spontaneously and honestly.

Table 1. Statement of My Lecturer Opening Space for Discussion During Online Learning

Statement	Percentage
1 = strongly disagree	3,2%
2 = don't agree	0%
3 = neutral	20,9%
4 = agree	41,9%
5 = strongly agree	34,9%

Based on the data above, it is concluded that the majority of respondents voted to agree (41.9%) and strongly agree (34.9%), indicating that 76.8% of students

feel that their lecturers actively open space for discussion. This indicates that most students feel supported in an interactive learning environment, which is essential for effective learning. With 20.9% of respondents being neutral, there was a group of students who may be hesitant or do not have sufficient experience to assess the openness of lecturers in discussions. Variations in learning experiences and limitations of online learning are the causes of this. There were no respondents who expressed disagreement, and there were 3.2% of respondents who strongly disagreed.

Overall, the results of this study emphasize that openness is one of the characteristics of effective interpersonal communication and can contribute significantly to the quality of interaction between lecturers and students, creating a learning environment that supports the intellectual and emotional growth of students.

Table 2. Statement about I feel comfortable sharing opinions or questions with lecturers during online sessions

Statement	Percentage
1 = strongly disagree	2,3%
2 = don't agree	2,3%
3 = neutral	41,9%
4 = agree	32,6%
5 = strongly agree	20,9%

From the data above, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents feel comfortable interacting with lecturers. Students agreed (32.6%) and strongly agreed (20.9%) stated that they felt comfortable sharing opinions or questions. This indicates that more than half of the respondents had a positive experience communicating with lecturers during online sessions. On the other hand, only 2.3% of respondents voted strongly disagree and another 2.3% disagreed with the statement. This percentage shows that discomfort in interacting with lecturers is a relatively rare thing among students. However, there are also 41.9% of respondents who choose the neutral option.

In this context, the results of the questionnaire showed that the majority of respondents felt comfortable enough to share opinions or questions with lecturers during the online session. This reflects a fairly good level of openness between students and lecturers in sharing opinions. However, the high percentage of neutral categories (41.9%) indicates that there are still obstacles or uncertainties in

communication. Factors such as student confidence, the quality of lecturer-student interaction or an online environment that may be less supportive of openness can be the cause. In this case, lecturers can increase openness by creating a more inclusive atmosphere and supporting two-way communication. Overall, the results of this questionnaire reflect that although there are some students who feel neutral or uncomfortable, the majority feel positive and open to interacting with lecturers during online sessions.

B. Empathy

Empathy is the ability of individuals to control information about other individuals' feelings at a given moment (Kautsara, 2024). The same opinion was also expressed by (De Vito in Wijayani 2021), who stated that empathy is a skill to feel the feelings of others and can act to show our concern for the feelings of others.

Table 3. Statement about my lecturer understanding the challenges I face in online learning

Statement	Percentage
1 = strongly disagree	2,3%
2 = don't agree	2,3%
3 = neutral	44,2%
4 = agree	34,9%
5 = strongly agree	16,3%

From the data above, it can be concluded that the majority of students voted to agree (34.9%) and strongly agree (16.3%), indicating that 51.2% of students feel that lecturers understand the challenges they face. While this reflects the support of some students, it also shows that almost half of students feel unsure or do not feel that understanding. With 44.2% of the responses neutral, almost half of the students did not have a clear opinion regarding the lecturer's understanding of their challenges. This can be caused by several factors such as experience variations, online learning obstacles and limited interaction. Only 4.6% of respondents voted to disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Overall, these results reinforce the statement that lecturers' empathy in communicating is quite acceptable to most students. However, even though most students feel the understanding from the lecturers, it turns out that there are still a number of students who may feel less noticed or unsure about the level of empathy

provided. This highlights the importance of strengthening empathic communication, especially in the context of online learning.

Table 4. Statement about Lecturers Shows Attention to My Learning Needs

Statement	Percentage
1 = strongly disagree	2,35%
2 = don't agree	2,35%
3 = neutral	25,6%
4 = agree	48,8%
5 = strongly agree	20,9%

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the majority of students, agreeing (48.8%) and strongly agreeing (20.9%), feel that their lecturers show attention to learning needs. This shows that the majority of students feel supported in the learning process and feel that there is attention from lecturers to their needs. With 25.6% neutral responses, there was a group of students who felt doubtful or did not have a clear view of the lecturer's attention. Some factors that may influence this response include Diverse Learning Needs, Limited Interaction in Online Learning and Variety of Learning Experiences. Only 4.7% of respondents voted to disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. Overall, the results of the study show that lecturer empathy in communication with students is essential for creating a supportive learning environment. When lecturers show concern and understand students' learning needs, they can build stronger relationships and improve the quality of learning.

C. Backing

The existence of support is very important to build harmony with each other, and support helps interpersonal communication to run effectively (Wahyuni, 2022). Support can also be interpreted as the ability to support information obtained from the interlocutor (Kautsara, 2024). A sense of openness and empathy when communication cannot take place in an unsupportive atmosphere (Febriati, 2014).

Table 5. Statement about I received adequate support from the lecturer in completing the assignment or understanding the material

Statement	Percentage
1 = strongly disagree	2,3%

2 = don't agree	4,7%
3 = neutral	27,9%
4 = agree	48,8%
5 = strongly agree	16,3%

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents responded positively to the statement. As many as 48.8% of respondents voted in agreement, and 16.3% voted in strongly agree, indicating that more than half of the respondents (65.1%) felt that they received adequate support from lecturers. Meanwhile, 27.9% of respondents chose neutral, indicating that they have not fully felt significant support, but also do not feel unsupported. On the other hand, the group that gave a negative response was relatively small, with 4.7% of respondents voting against and only 2.3% voting strongly disagreed. This data states that in general, students are satisfied with the support provided by lecturers, although there is still room for lecturers to improve or increase positive perceptions in the future.

Overall, these results show that the aspect of support as one of the characteristics of effective communication, has a significant role in creating productive communication and building a positive relationship between lecturers and students. By increasing support in communication, it will make communication more open and empathetic.

D. Positive Feeling

Positivity is defined as a person's tendency to act with good judgment, without feeling excessive guilt, accepting themselves as important to others, believing in their ability to handle problems, and being sensitive to the needs of others. (Wijayani, 2021). According to (Wahyuni, 2022), positivity also means that one must believe in oneself and create a welcoming environment for communicating.

Table 6. Statement of Lecturers provides additional resources that help my understanding of the material

Statement	Percentage
1 = strongly disagree	2,3%
2 = don't agree	0%
3 = neutral	32,6%
4 = agree	44,2%
5 = strongly agree	20,9%

Based on this data, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents feel that lecturers have provided additional resources that help their understanding of the material. A total of 44.2% of respondents agreed with the statement, while 20.9% said they strongly agreed. This shows that more than half of the respondents (65.1%) support the role of lecturers in providing additional resources. Meanwhile, as many as 32.6% of respondents chose this neutral attitude, indicating that they did not specifically feel the benefits or drawbacks of the additional resources provided. On the other hand, 2.3% of respondents stated that they strongly disagree completely, and none of the respondents chose to disagree (0%).

Overall, the results of this study show that a positive attitude is an important component in creating effective communication. When lecturers provide additional resources in understanding the material, it will strengthen the positive relationship between lecturers and students. This creates a supportive atmosphere and motivates students to participate more and feel more comfortable in the learning process.

Table 7. Statement of Lecturers Providing Positive Feedback on Assignments I Submitted

Statement	Percentage
1 = strongly disagree	2,3%
2 = don't agree	0%
3 = neutral	27,9%
4 = agree	51,2%
5 = strongly agree	18,6%

Based on this data, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents gave positive responses. As many as 51.2 percent of people who answered said they agreed, while 18.6 percent strongly agreed. This proves that 69.8% of students feel that lecturers give positive feedback on their assignments that have been submitted. Meanwhile, as many as 27.9% of respondents gave a neutral response indicating that they did not specifically assess lecturer feedback as positive or negative. Meanwhile, only 2.3% strongly disagree and none of the respondents chose to disagree (0%). Overall, the results of this study reinforce the concept of positivity in interpersonal communication, where constructive feedback from lecturers plays an important role in creating a more open, supportive, and motivating communication relationship in the context of learning.

E. Equality

Equality is the same feeling as others so that everyone does not feel low or high even though they have different abilities (Wahyuni, 2022). According to (Wijayani, 2021), equality is defined as recognition that both parties have the same sense of worth and value. This equality is very important to produce good communication (Febriati, 2014). According to the theory of equality from Joseph A. Devito, equality in communications is one of the essential principles to create effective and respectful interactions, especially in the context of online learning which often faces physical and emotional barriers. According to Devito, equality can be realized by respecting each other and providing equal opportunities to all parties who communicate. Equality in communication is an important principle for building healthy and productive relationships. Equality includes the recognition that all parties in the interaction have the same values and rights to participate and contribute.

Table 8. Statement about I feel equal in interaction with lecturers during online learning

Statement	Percentage
1 = strongly disagree	4,7%
2 = don't agree	2,3%
3 = neutral	41,9%
4 = agree	32,6%
5 = strongly agree	18,6%

Based on these data, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents feel equal in interaction with lecturers during online learning. This can be seen from 32.6% of respondents who agreed and 18.6% who strongly agreed, bringing the total to 51.2%. However, there were 41.9% of respondents who were neutral, indicating that many students felt that they did not have a clear view of equality, perhaps due to the variety of experiences during online learning. Meanwhile, only 7% of respondents felt unequal, consisting of 4.7% who strongly disagreed and 2.3% who disagreed. These results show that although there are doubts among some students, most feel equal in interaction with lecturers during online learning.

In the context of online learning, the results of the questionnaire showed that the majority of respondents had a positive view of equality in interaction with lecturers. This reflects the efforts of lecturers to create an inclusive learning environment and value student contributions. However, the high percentage of neutral categories (41.9%) indicates that there are still challenges in creating a

stronger perception of equality. Some factors that may affect this include the lecturer's communication style, the level of student involvement in the discussion and the dynamics of interaction on the online platform. To increase this sense of equality, lecturers can strengthen a more open and interactive communication approach and provide opportunities for all students to express their opinions without fear or doubt.

Overall, despite the positive trend towards equality in online interactions, additional efforts are needed to ensure that all students feel valued and recognized in the learning process.

Table 9. Statement about I don't feel any difference in treatment between myself and my classmates in interaction with lecturers

Statement	Percentage
1 = strongly disagree	4,6%
2 = don't agree	0%
3 = neutral	32,6%
4 = agree	44,2%
5 = strongly agree	18,6%

Based on the data, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents, namely 62.8%, show an attitude of agreement (44.2%) and strongly agree (18.6%) that they do not feel any difference in treatment between themselves and their classmates in interaction with lecturers. This shows that the majority of students feel treated fairly and equally by lecturers. In contrast, only 4.6% of respondents strongly opposed the statement, while none of the respondents voted for the option of disagreeing. This indicates that almost all students feel that there is no injustice in the treatment they receive. Meanwhile, 32.6% of respondents chose the neutral option which may reflect uncertainty or varied experiences among students regarding interaction with lecturers. According to the theory of equality from Joseph A. Devito, this result shows that the principle of perceived equality or perceived equality in interpersonal communication has been achieved in the relationship between lecturers and students. In this context, equality refers to fair treatment without bias against certain individuals which is important for creating an inclusive and harmonious learning environment. However, the opinion of respondents who strongly disagree (4.6%) is a signal that further evaluation is needed to ensure that the perception of equality can be felt by all students, especially to prevent potential bias or unawareness of injustice. This approach is in line with Devito's view which emphasizes that effective and fair

communication can strengthen interpersonal relationships and create a conducive environment for collaboration.

Overall, the results of this questionnaire show that the majority of students feel that there is no difference in treatment in interaction with lecturers, reflecting an inclusive and fair learning environment. From the above data, it can be concluded that the process of interpersonal communication in online learning to provide understanding to students can be said to be effective. Openness can be seen from the transparency of information between lecturers and students, while empathy is reflected in the lecturer's attention to the needs and feelings of students. Support is shown by the attitude of lecturers who help or provide student support in the learning process, while positive attitudes can be seen from the creation of a conducive environment for learning. The equality aspect can be seen from the majority of students who feel they are treated fairly, showing that the interaction runs without discrimination.

CONCLUSION

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that interpersonal communication between students and lecturers at the University of Muhammadiyah Madiun during online learning is quite effective. The majority of students feel that their lecturers are open to discussing, providing support, and showing concern for the challenges faced by students. This is evident from the majority of respondents who feel comfortable sharing opinions and receiving positive feedback from lecturers. However, there are still some students who feel neutral or not completely sure about some aspects of communication, such as the lecturer's understanding of their challenges or equality in interaction. Although most students feel that interpersonal communication with lecturers during online learning is quite effective, challenges still exist related to the limitations of different learning experiences between students. Some students still feel neutral or less engaged in interaction with lecturers, which may be due to a lack of feedback and technical constraints such as internet network issues. This shows that despite the efforts of lecturers to support students, technical and psychological factors still affect the effectiveness of interpersonal communication. Therefore, it is important to find ways to keep communication effective despite any technical obstacles that may arise.

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