



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Analysis of the Effectiveness of Interpersonal Communication in Building Positive Relationships between Staff and Students at the Faculty of Letters Muslim University of Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to (1) analyze the form of interpersonal communication between staff and students at the Faculty of Letters, Muslim University of Indonesia, then (2) identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect interpersonal communication between staff and students. This study uses a qualitative approach with in-depth interview methods and participatory observation. The results of the study show that (1) interpersonal communication between staff and students includes verbal and nonverbal interactions, carried out through face-to-face communication and digital channels such as WhatsApp and online platforms, where face-to-face communication is considered important in building emotional closeness and trust. Academic staff strive to create harmonious relationships by being friendly, caring, and open, while students experience the benefits of this communication in obtaining emotional support and resolving academic problems effectively. (2) Supporting factors include positive attitudes and openness, while inhibiting factors include time limitations, differences in perception, and difficulties in the optimal use of technology.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental human activity that allows individuals to interact with each other, both in everyday life, such as in households, workplaces, markets, and in society or other environments. Communication cannot be ignored in human life, as well as in organizations or institutions. Effective communication will help the organization run more smoothly and achieve success, while poor communication can cause problems at work and disrupt the organizational structure. Communication is a topic that is often discussed, not only among communication academics, but also among the general public. As a result, the term communication has many meanings based on people's perceptions. Although there are various interpretations, the meaning of communication is basically similar. Interpersonal communication is an interaction that occurs between individuals and other individuals involving various elements. Interpersonal communication is unique because the individuals involved create shared meaning in the communication process. This process helps in understanding the message conveyed. Even in a silent situation, a person can be considered to be communicating. The concept of interpersonal communication is similar to communication in general, except that it has a deeper context. Interpersonal communication can also be defined as verbal and nonverbal interactions between two or more interdependent people.¹ This

¹ Akbar, M & Paresa, J & Pamuttu, D. (2021). Analysis of the Effect of Parking on Road Bodies on Road Service Levels. IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering. 1125. 012014. 10.1088/1757-899X/1125/1/012014.

communication allows Interpersonal communication involves individuals who have relationships and interrelationships in building the communication process. When two or more interconnected individuals interact through interpersonal communication, a relationship is formed between them. Interpersonal communication is very close to everyday life, both within the scope of family and social life. The more individuals involved, the more complex the communication process becomes. In an academic environment, interpersonal communication plays an important role in creating a productive and inclusive atmosphere. In educational institutions such as universities, interpersonal communication occurs between academic staff, students, and other members of the academic community. The ability to understand and interact effectively, both in formal and informal situations, is an important aspect of this communication. Interpersonal communication supports various academic activities, such as teaching, mentoring, scientific discussions, and joint research. Academic staff use this communication to deliver materials, answer questions, and provide constructive feedback. Students also use it to discuss, ask questions, and get guidance from academic staff. In addition to academic aspects, interpersonal communication also affects social and emotional aspects. Positive interactions between staff and students create a supportive learning environment, where students feel valued and supported.

At the Faculty of Letters at Universitas Muslim Indonesia, which has 1,894 active students and 17 employees, interpersonal communication plays an important role in creating a conducive learning environment. Positive relationships between staff and students improve teaching quality, motivation, engagement and student satisfaction. Effective communication supports academic advising, skills development and career planning.²

However, challenges such as cultural differences, language, hierarchy, and generation gaps can hinder communication, causing confusion or conflict. Good communication is necessary to resolve conflicts and maintain harmony. In addition, supportive interpersonal communication has a positive impact on college students' mental well-being. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of interpersonal communication, identify barriers, and find solutions to improve communication. A qualitative approach through interviews and observations was used to understand the dynamics of communication and encourage harmonious relationships between staff and students.³

2. METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative methods with the aim of providing a description of the situation that occurs, known as descriptive research. Descriptive research is a type of research that presents the facts or characteristics of a population systematically, accurately, and factually. In descriptive research, Kirk and Miller state that qualitative research is an approach in social science that relies on observations of human behavior in the context and terminology they use. The qualitative approach aims to understand the experiences and perceptions of individuals, especially in the context of interpersonal communication. Techniques such as participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and content analysis can be applied to gain a deeper understanding of the interactions between staff and students. This descriptive research aims to describe specific phenomena or characteristics, such as the quality of interpersonal communication between staff and students at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. Data collection can be done through surveys or interviews to obtain information about the pattern of communication interaction between the two parties.

1. Forms of interpersonal communication between staff and students at the faculty of letters, Universitas muslim Indonesia

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351928433 Analysis of the Effect of Parking on Road Bodies on Road Service Levels/citation/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351928433_Analysis_of_the_Effect_of_Parking_on_Road_Bodies_on_Road_Service_Levels/citation/download)

² Listyawati, Arinda A., and Muhammad Akbar. "Strategi Komunikasi Pemasaran Terintegrasi dalam Meningkatkan Jumlah Pengunjung Taman Nasional Kutai Kalimantan Timur." *Jurnal Administrasi dan Kebijakan Kesehatan Indonesia*, vol. 1, no. 2, Jun. 2016, pp. 159-177, <https://www.neliti.com/publications/95558/strategi-komunikasi-pemasaran-terintegrasi-dalam-meningkatkan-jumlah-pengunjung#cite>

³ Kahar, M., Sani, Y., Tang, M., & Nadjib, M. (2018). CONTEMPORARY BUGIS WEDDINGS IN THE REGENCY OF SOPPENG: AN ANALYSIS OF CULTURAL SEMIOTICS. *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences* Vol, 6(6). <https://www.idpublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Full-Paper-CONTEMPORARY-BUGIS-WEDDINGS-IN-THE-REGENCY-OF-SOPPENG-AN-ANALYSIS.pdf>

Interpersonal communication plays an important role in maintaining harmony and effectiveness of interactions in higher education settings, including the Faculty of Letters at Universitas Muslim Indonesia. As an institution that focuses on the development of knowledge and education, interactions between academic staff and students cover various aspects, such as administration, guidance, and academic consultation. With the development of digital technology, interpersonal communication now involves various platforms such as email, social media, and online communication applications. However, although technology makes communication easier, face-to-face interaction remains essential to build trust, understanding and emotional closeness that virtual communication cannot replace. At the Faculty of Letters at Universitas Muslim Indonesia, interpersonal communication between academic staff and students supports academic and administrative success. Through interviews with several academic staff, various views and strategies in establishing effective communication were revealed. For example, Ridho Muhammad Alam, S.Kom., M.Kom., emphasized the importance of smiles, understanding, attention, and togetherness as ways to build good communication. He also highlighted the need for questioning skills to help students who are experiencing academic difficulties. Aqilah Fadiah Pratiwi added that face-to-face communication is key in building strong relationships between staff and students. According to her, good interpersonal communication acts as an important link in creating harmonious relationships. Meanwhile, Nur Mu'min, ST, MT, emphasized that interpersonal communication is effective if information can be received and understood well. He emphasized the importance of openness in communication with students, which can be realized through respect, attention, listening, and responding well. Such communication can improve the closeness and quality of relationships between staff and students. Overall, interpersonal communication not only serves as a means of conveying information, but also building supportive relationships and strengthening academic bonds.

Interpersonal communication between staff and students at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia plays an important role in creating a harmonious and effective academic environment. The main strategies used by staff include: Smile as a symbol of friendliness and openness, creating a comfortable atmosphere. Empathy and concern to understand student challenges and build trust. Communication skills such as active listening and providing relevant solutions. Face-to-face interactions that reinforce symbolic meaning through body language and non-verbal expressions, although digital technology is also used. Symbolic Interaction Theory highlights the importance of meaning, language, thoughts and context in building effective relationships. Students appreciate the responsiveness of staff but recognize that there are variations in the quality of communication, especially regarding response times and formal communication styles. Communication skills training and workload management can improve the quality of interactions and support an inclusive and collaborative academic environment.⁴

In addition, effective communication can also be achieved through a more personalized approach. This was conveyed by Nindy F. Putri in her interview on November 19, 2024: "By actively listening and giving appropriate responses to students, giving a smile and answering all the questions given to me." (Nindy F. Putri, interview November 19, 2024) In her explanation, Nindy F. Putri highlighted the importance of active listening, which is really listening to what students say attentively and providing relevant and appropriate responses. This process creates an atmosphere that is more conducive to dialogue and helps students feel valued and supported. By giving a genuine smile and answering any questions patiently, academic staff demonstrate a friendly and open attitude. This approach helps build a closer and more positive relationship between staff and students, which in turn increases students' comfort in communicating.

Meanwhile, the importance of interpersonal communication to build understanding and openness was also emphasized by Achmad Anugerah, SE, M.Si., in his interview on November 19, 2024: "Effective interpersonal communication occurs when the message and purpose of the conversation are understood by both. Interpersonal communication is very important because we can provide understanding to students regarding the process or development in the academic field. As much as possible we express honesty regarding the topic being communicated, so that it can give an open

⁴ Akbar, M., Utary, C., Kakerissa, Y., & Asmal, S. (2019). Priorities of road network development to support national food flows in Merauke District with SWOT and AHP methods. In IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science (Vol. 343). Institute of Physics Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/343/1/012185>

impression so that students are also able to express what they feel and want to say.” (Achmad Anugerah, SE., M.Si., interview 19 November 2024) Achmad Anugerah emphasized that the effectiveness of communication lies in the ability of both parties to understand each other's messages and intentions of the conversation.

Good interpersonal communication helps students understand academic processes and knowledge development more clearly.

In addition, honesty in communication creates a more transparent and open environment. With openness, students feel heard and are more willing to express their feelings and opinions, which in turn strengthens the relationship between staff and students. Not only from the perspective of staff, students also provide views on the quality of interpersonal communication they experience at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia. One of the students, Nur Fadilah Aolia, gave her views in an interview on November 22, 2024: “Interpersonal communication in some staff is good and some are not good at responding, so there is a lack of good interpersonal communication between staff and students.

The staff quite often helps to take care of lecture files, etc.” (Nur Fadilah Aolia, interview November 22, 2024) From this interview, Nur Fadilah Aolia said that the quality of communication between staff and students is uneven. There are staff who are very responsive and helpful to students, but there are also those who are not good at responding, which causes communication barriers. Even so, she also acknowledged the positive role of staff in assisting students in administrative matters, such as the processing of lecture files. This suggests that administrative support from staff can strengthen academic relationships, although interpersonal communication challenges still need to be addressed. Overall, effective interpersonal communication in an academic environment requires attention to various aspects, such as active listening, providing appropriate responses, being open, and establishing personal relationships. The success of interpersonal communication depends not only on the ability to convey messages, but also on the ability to create an atmosphere of support and mutual understanding. By overcoming communication barriers and strengthening personal approaches, relationships between staff and students at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia can become more harmonious and productive.

In addition, views regarding interpersonal communication between students and academic staff were also expressed by Diandra Febrina Revita Kalia, Dadang, and Muh. Amar Ma'ruf in interviews conducted on November 22, 2024.

Diandra Febrina Revita Kalia explained how she interacts with academic staff on a regular basis: “I usually interact directly with academic staff about 2-3 times a week, especially for academic consultation or administrative matters. Interpersonal communication by academic staff is mostly quite good. They are generally responsive and friendly, although there are some situations where the response time is a bit slow due to their busy schedules.” (Diandra Febrina Revita Kalia, interview 22 November 2024) In her statement, Diandra emphasized that interpersonal communication with academic staff is generally good, characterized by the responsive and friendly attitude of the staff. These interactions often occur in the context of academic consultations and administrative arrangements. However, she also noted that in some situations, responses can be slow due to staff being busy.

This suggests that although the quality of interpersonal communication is quite positive, time efficiency is a challenge that needs to be overcome.

A similar opinion was expressed by Dadang, who interacts with academic staff less frequently: “I interact with academic staff once or twice a month, mainly for administrative matters or if there are specific questions related to lectures. I feel that the interpersonal communication between academic staff is quite formal and sometimes feels stiff. However, they still try to help if there is an urgent need.” (Dadang, interview November 22, 2024) In this statement, Dadang explained that the frequency of his interactions with academic staff tends to be low, namely only once or twice a month. He noted that the interpersonal communication that occurs is often formal and sometimes feels stiff. Even so, academic staff still show an effort to help students, especially when there is an urgent need.

This suggests that there is room for improvement in terms of the warmth and flexibility of communication, so that interactions become more comfortable and less formal.

Meanwhile, Muh. Amar Ma'ruf provided a similar perspective regarding his communication experience with academic staff: "I interact quite rarely, usually only when there is an urgent need such as document processing or academic consultation. I see their communication as professional, although sometimes it feels less personalized because there may be a large number of students being served." (Muh. Amar Ma'ruf, interview November 22, 2024) In his interview, Muh. Amar Ma'ruf said that although he rarely interacts with academic staff, the communication is generally professional. However, he also highlighted that there is a less personal aspect to the communication. This is likely due to the large number of students that staff have to serve, so interactions become more general and less in-depth.

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Meanwhile, Muh. Amar Ma'ruf provided a similar perspective regarding his communication experience with academic staff: "I interact quite rarely, usually only when there is an urgent need such as document processing or academic consultation. I see their communication as professional, although sometimes it feels less personalized because there may be a large number of students being served." (Muh. Amar Ma'ruf, interview November 22, 2024) In his interview, Muh. Amar Ma'ruf said that although he rarely interacts with academic staff, the communication is generally professional. However, he also highlighted that there is a less personal aspect to the communication. This is likely due to the large number of students that staff have to serve, so interactions become more general and less in-depth. Opinions regarding interpersonal communication between students and academic staff were also shared by Jumharira Cahyani.

In her interview on November 22, 2024, she explained her experience in interacting and how certain barriers can affect the effectiveness of communication. "I interact every time there is a problem or discussion related to the class schedule, maybe about once a month. In my opinion, the interpersonal communication is quite good, although sometimes there are obstacles because of their busy schedules." (Jumharira Cahyani interview November 22, 2024) In her interview, Jumharira Cahyani explained that she interacts with academic staff every time there is a problem or discussion related to the class schedule, which occurs about once a month. She assessed that interpersonal communication with academic staff is quite good, although sometimes there are obstacles in communication due to their busy schedules.

Supporting and inhibiting factors affecting interpersonal communication between staff and students at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia.

This study aims to determine the factors that influence interpersonal communication between staff and students at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI). Effective interpersonal communication is very important in creating harmonious relationships between the two parties, both in academic and non-academic contexts. A good relationship between staff and students not only facilitates the completion of administrative tasks but also supports a conducive and productive teaching-learning process. Therefore, understanding the factors that support or hinder interpersonal communication is an important step in improving the quality of interactions in the academic environment.

In an effort to understand the dynamics of this communication, interviews with staff and students are one of the methods used to obtain direct information about the challenges and obstacles faced, as well as the factors that support the success of this communication. Through interviews, qualitative data was obtained that described the real experiences of both parties. The results of the interviews that have been conducted will be presented to provide a clearer picture of the supporting and inhibiting factors of interpersonal communication within the Faculty of Letters. With an in-depth analysis of the results of these interviews, it is hoped that the research can identify existing problems and provide concrete recommendations for improving communication in the future. Effective communication between staff and students is key to creating a productive learning environment and supporting an optimal learning process. Factors that influence this communication are very diverse, ranging from aspects of personality, openness, to the way information is conveyed. In addition,

psychological aspects, culture, and environmental conditions also play an important role in shaping the dynamics of interpersonal communication.

The results of the interview with Nur Mu'min, ST., MT. provide an in-depth insight into the factors that support and hinder communication between staff and students. In his interview on November 19, 2024, he stated: "Factors that support communication with students are openness and good explanation and easy to understand, while factors that hinder communication with students are usually due to lack of understanding, lack of openness and unclear messages." (Nur Mu'min, ST., MT., interview November 19, 2024)

This explanation emphasizes that openness and the ability to convey information clearly and easily understood are important elements in effective communication. Conversely, lack of understanding, openness, and ambiguous messaging can be serious obstacles in establishing good communication. This shows that the quality of communication is greatly influenced by the individual's attitude and ability to communicate.

Meanwhile, an interview with Ridho Muhammad Alam, S.Kom., M.Kom. highlighted other more complex barriers, such as cultural differences and psychological barriers.

He explained: "Language differences, cultural and distance barriers, emotional and psychological barriers." (Ridho Muhammad Alam, S.Kom., M.Kom., interview November 19, 2024) This statement illustrates that interpersonal communication barriers are not only technical but also include social and emotional aspects. Language and cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings, especially in a multicultural academic environment. Distance barriers, both physical and psychological, can also reduce communication effectiveness. Emotional barriers, such as anxiety or distrust, can inhibit openness in communication. Therefore, efforts to improve interpersonal communication should consider these various factors and find solutions to overcome them. Strategies for Improving Interpersonal Communication Based on the results of the interviews, several strategies can be applied to improve interpersonal communication between staff and students at the Faculty of Letters UMI, including:

1. **Increase openness:** Academic staff need to build a more open atmosphere of communication with students. This can be done by actively listening, providing easy-to-understand explanations, and showing a friendly and responsive attitude.
2. **Develop communication skills:** Communication training for staff can help them convey information more clearly and effectively. Likewise, students can be given guidance to improve their communication skills.
3. **Overcoming psychological and emotional barriers:** Building more personalized relationships and showing empathy can help reduce emotional barriers. Staff need to create a supportive environment that does not make students feel anxious or pressured.
4. **Respecting cultural differences:** Recognizing and respecting cultural diversity can reduce misunderstandings arising from different backgrounds. Cultural exchange programs or open dialogue can strengthen understanding between individuals.
5. **Improving responsiveness:** Academic staff need to be more responsive to student queries and needs, especially in urgent situations. Reducing response times can increase student satisfaction and trust in academic services.

With the implementation of this strategy, it is hoped that interpersonal communication at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia can run more effectively, support the academic process, and create a more harmonious and productive learning environment.

Opinions regarding interpersonal communication between academic staff and students were also expressed by Aqilah Fadiyah Pratiwi in her interview on November 19, 2024. According to her, there are various factors that support and hinder this communication. Supporting factors include openness and accessibility of staff through various communication channels, empathy and understanding of students, and clear and structured communication. In addition, time flexibility is also considered important so that students can consult according to their schedule. Conversely, communication can be hindered due to staff time constraints, unresponsiveness, different ways of communicating, and

limited facilities. Therefore, she emphasized the importance of creating communication that supports student development.

Achmad Anugerah, SE, M.Si. also gave a similar view in his interview on November 19, 2024. He highlighted the importance of language style and time flexibility as the main factors affecting communication. A language style that is too formal or difficult to understand can make students feel awkward or reluctant to interact. Conversely, a relaxed, clear, and easy-to-understand language style makes it easier for students to discuss. In addition, the time flexibility of the staff also plays a role in ensuring effective communication. In Nindy F. Putri's view, factors inhibiting communication include students' "know-it-all" attitude and non-compliance with rules. Students who think they already know everything tend to refuse to listen to input from staff, thus creating distance in communication. According to her, effective communication requires mutual respect and a willingness to learn. Nur Fadilah Aolia added that openness, empathy, and the ability of staff to listen to students are key factors in effective communication. In addition, providing a clear consultation schedule facilitates communication between the two parties. Diandra Febrina Revita Kalia pointed out that mutual respect and willingness to listen also play an important role. Clarity in the delivery of information also ensures good communication.

According to Dadang, patience and the ability of staff to understand student needs are key to good communication. He emphasized the importance of time flexibility so that communication can take place despite staff's busy schedules.

Muh. Amar Ma'ruf argues that proactive attitudes from students and staff, as well as a willingness to make time, support effective communication, especially when staff have busy schedules. Jumharira Cahyani emphasized the importance of trusting relationships and regular communication. According to her, good relationships with staff make it easier for students to get guidance in solving academic problems. From these interviews, it can be concluded that the supporting factors for interpersonal communication between staff and students include openness, accessibility, empathy, appropriate language style, time flexibility, and trusting relationships. On the other hand, communication barriers can arise due to staff time constraints, cultural and language differences, unresponsiveness, and lack of clarity in message delivery. By understanding these factors, it is hoped that more effective communication can be created at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia (UMI).

3. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that interpersonal communication between staff and students at the Faculty of Letters, Universitas Muslim Indonesia involves verbal and nonverbal interactions through face-to-face and digital channels such as WhatsApp. Face-to-face communication remains important to build emotional closeness, trust and mutual understanding. Staff strive to create harmonious relationships with a friendly, caring and open attitude, which helps students in getting emotional support and solving academic problems. This communication plays an important role in supporting academic and non-academic activities. Key enablers include openness, empathetic attitude, clear communication, staff accessibility, and a relaxed and inclusive language style. However, barriers such as lack of understanding, staff busyness, generational and cultural differences, psychological barriers, and limited facilities can reduce the effectiveness of communication and lead to misunderstandings. Some suggestions are: First, it is important for staff and students to manage their time better in order to maximize face-to-face interactions, such as by scheduling regular meetings. Second, given the generation gap, it is necessary to introduce and understand a more inclusive communication culture to create comfort in interaction. Third, it is necessary to conduct periodic evaluations regarding the effectiveness of interpersonal communication at the Faculty of Letters as a basis for improvement and development of better communication strategies.

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