

## Challenges in Building Interpersonal Communication Skills between Students with Academic Supervisor

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**Abstract:** The study aims to examine the communication patterns of students with academic supervisors in building good interpersonal communication. The impact of establishing good interpersonal communication between students and academic supervisors can increase the enthusiasm for learning and student motivation in lectures. The research subjects were students majoring in Islamic Communication and Broadcasting (KPI) Faculty of Da'wah IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. The research used is a case study-based qualitative approach. The study results indicate that the factors that encourage the establishment of good interpersonal communication between students and their supervisors include polite attitudes both through the media and when visiting the lecturer's house. Face-to-face communication and personal communication. The challenges and barriers to interpersonal communication that occurs between students and supervisors are explained by several things, namely the lack of openness in students, the way of interpersonal communication between students and lecturers, setting the guidance schedule with academic lecturers, inactivity of students in interpersonal communication with lecturers and communication patterns that are not effective.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Communication, Learning Motivation, Students, Supervisor.

**Abstrak:** Kajian ini ingin meneliti tentang pola komunikasi mahasiswa dengan dosen pembimbing akademik dalam membangun komunikasi interpersonal yang baik. Dampak terbangunnya komunikasi interpersonal yang baik antara mahasiswa dengan dosen pembimbing akademik dapat meningkatkan semangat belajar dan motivasi mahasiswa dalam perkuliahan. Subjek penelitian adalah mahasiswa jurusan Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam (KPI) Fakultas Dakwah IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. Penelitian yang digunakan melalui pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi kasus. Hasil dari penelitian menunjukkan bahwa faktor yang mendorong terbangunnya komunikasi interpersonal yang baik antara mahasiswa dengan dosen pembimbing diantaranya sikap yang santun baik melalui media maupun ketika berkunjung ke rumah dosen. Adapun bentuk komunikasi interpersonal yang digunakan mahasiswa dan dosen pembimbing untuk meningkatkan semangat belajar melalui beberapa cara diantaranya komunikasi tatap muka dan komunikasi personal. Adapun tantangan dan hambatan komunikasi interpersonal yang terjadi antara mahasiswa dan dosen pembimbing disebabkan beberapa hal yaitu kurang keterbukaan dalam diri mahasiswa, cara komunikasi interpersonal antara mahasiswa dan dosen, pengaturan jadwal bimbingan dengan dosen akademik, ketidakaktifan mahasiswa dalam komunikasi interpersonal dengan dosen dan pola komunikasi yang tidak efektif.

**Kata Kunci:** Dosen Pembimbing, Komunikasi Interpersonal, Mahasiswa, Motivasi Belajar.

## **Introduction**

Interpersonal communication is considered the most effective in changing one's attitude, opinion or behavior because of its dialogical nature. It is considered the most effective form of communication carried out directly between the communicator and the communicant, they influence each other. Interpersonal communication can occur between children and parents, lecturers, and students. Interpersonal communication between lecturers and students can occur during when teaching-learning process, both inside and outside the classroom (Braithwaite & Schrod, 2021).

In this article, researchers will explore how students' communication patterns with academic supervisors contribute to successful interpersonal communication. The teaching-learning process is an interaction between lecturers and students based on an educational connection to achieve educational objectives. As a result, the teaching-learning process is characterized as a communication process, which delivers messages from the source of the message to the recipient of the message through various channels or media. The message to be delivered is the content of the curriculum's teachings or instruction (Burgoon et al., 2000) (Burleson, 2010).

The communication pattern between students and academic supervisors can be established in a lecture setting by establishing effective interpersonal interactions with lecturers. Because each major or university has a particular educational climate, the pattern of communication will naturally vary. This climate will affect the interpersonal communication that students and academic supervisors develop, leading to communication patterns between students and academic supervisors (Hargie, 2016).

Based on the initial research, researchers found that students often lack communication with their academic supervisor. One of the reasons is that students are hesitant to seek advice on topic matters or are not open with the academic supervisor. As a result, students will be more open with lecturers that have a good relationship with them. This type of interpersonal communication dampens Islamic Communication and Broadcasting (KPI) students for learning. If we look at the KPI major, we can assume students will use communication techniques daily, especially on the campus, whether to fellow students or lecturers (Hoover et al., 1988) (Martin & Nakayama, 1999).

In actuality, interpersonal communication occurs only when there is a need, such as guidance on thesis proposals or personal issues relating to courses; if there is no need, interpersonal communication does not occur. The lack of interpersonal

communication between students and lecturers in IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon motivates us to investigate the interpersonal communication patterns of KPI students with academic supervisors to boost the learning process (Beebe et al., 2009).

## **Research Method**

The research approach used in this study is qualitative research, with an interdisciplinary approach to communication science with religious science. Primary data source: Primary data sources are data gathered directly, such as through interviews, observations, and documentation. In this study, researchers will interview KPI lecturers and third-semester students using primary data. We will proceed with interviewing the third-semester students and lecturers of KPI majors. Secondary data source: Secondary data sources are information obtained indirectly or not directly from the field by researchers. This study's secondary data sources were communication literature, journals relevant to interpersonal communication, and the internet. Photographs of student interactions with KPI lecturers and data or files relevant to interpersonal connection between students and lecturers will be collected by the researchers (Bungin, 2017).

## **Result and Discussion**

### **A. Interpersonal Communication**

Gerald R. Miller argues that communication will occur when the source conveys information to the recipient with a clear and conscious purpose to influence the recipient's behavior or change something desire (Miller & Stiff, 1993). Communication serves a function; the function itself is a goal and communication is used to accomplish that aim. The primary function of communication is to manipulate the environment to get physical, economic, and social benefits. As previously said, non-personal and interpersonal human communication is all about manipulating the environment to obtain rewards in physical, economic, and social forms. According to Miller the relative success of influencing the environment through communication increases the chances of having a happy, productive personal life. Unhappiness as a result of relative failure might lead to a self-identity crisis (Gudykunst et al., 1988; Miller, 2013).

People who are involved in the public communication process easily categorize themselves into groups. They attempt to fit in with the group, and as a result, they are frequently taken away by the group's influence. A public lecture, lecture or sermon held in an open place attended by many people can be classified as public communication. It is just that the nature of the audience is usually homogeneous, for example students, adherents of a certain religion, or members of one particular party (Idris, 2013); (Braithwaite & Schrod, 2021).

There is a specific component within communication, communicator and communicant. The communicator is the person who delivers the message to the audience. The communicator might be referred to as the sender, source, or encoder as the first source. A communicator plays a crucial role in the communication process, particularly in directing the flow of information. As a result, a communicator must be good at communicating, possess many ideas or knowledge, and be creative. On the other hand, a communicant is a person who can receive information or messages from the communicator (Hargie, 2016). One of the most important things in the communication process is for a communicator to think or reflect on himself before beginning the process of providing communication, to see if the elements that a communicator must possess are already linked to him or not (Prasetyo & Anwar, 2021)

The content of the message is the link between the pattern of interpersonal communication between students and academic supervisors. The importance of lecturers' messages reaching students must be emphasized. Shannon and Weaver's mathematical theory of communication is widely accepted as the foundation model of communication. This theory is a clear example of the process school of thought, which sees communication as the transfer of messages (Hoover et al., 1988)

## **B. Student Communication Patterns**

Students' communication patterns for developing good interpersonal communication with academic supervisors are closely linked to learning activities in lectures. The patterns of student communication with academic supervisors are highly beneficial for students when experiencing obstacles in academic or non-academic fields (Hasanah, 2015). When students and academic supervisors engage in good interpersonal communication, such as consulting if they are experiencing

problems in academic or non-academic fields, student communication patterns can begin. Interpersonal communication can also help to improve human relations between the parties involved. A person's social life can gain many conveniences because he has many friends. We can also build good relationships through interpersonal communication, avoiding and overcoming conflicts, whether with neighbors, office friends, or other people (Abubakar, 2015)

Interpersonal communication occurs when a person predicts the reactions of others using psychological data (Nurdin, 2020). This is related to KPI students' eagerness to learn if communication is effective. Beginning in the final semester, the spirit of student learning is in dire need of direction and guidance from academic supervisors. The intended direction is academic, taking the form of:

- a. Assisting students in the preparation of study plan cards (KRS)

The most intense interpersonal communication between lecturers and students occurs only when the KRS is planned. Because students are required to go directly to the supervisor during the KRS preparation process. During this process, the supervisor will usually inquire about the students' academic difficulties (Prasetyo & Anwar, 2021).

- b. Giving advice when students want to change courses at KRS.

Interpersonal communication between supervisors and students usually occurs only when they are considering changing KRS. Interpersonal communication will be rare if students do not have urgent needs, such as changing courses at KRS. This indicates that interpersonal communication between supervisors and students occurs only when there is an emergency (Achroza, 2013).

- c. Assist students with thesis preparation by providing guidance.

Students will, of course, be more active in communicating with their academic supervisors during the preparation of thesis proposals. The communication process will be more intense during the thesis preparation consultation because lecturers and students interact and provide direct feedback. Typically, the lecturer will inquire about the status of the proposal that is being prepared. Similarly, students will communicate with their supervisors regularly, as there is a strong desire to complete the thesis as soon as possible. If students are not actively communicating in a situation like this, they will not get the spirit

and will not be encouraged to complete the final task as soon as possible (Mannan, 2019).

- d. Provide students with course-taking advice.

When lecturers advise students on which courses to take, they engage in interpersonal communication. Because there are elective courses when taking courses. In this case, the lecturer guides students in selecting elective courses that will become their focus. The pattern of interpersonal communication will be more open, with each other providing constructive feedback. The mentoring process between academic supervisors and students will allow students to be more open. Communication between lecturers and students will also improve (Dewanti et al., 2014).

- e. Assisting students with PPL and KKN.

The following communication will occur when the lecturer is giving advice regarding PPL and KKN. One of the times to carry out the process of interpersonal communication between lecturers and students is when PPL and KKN activities are carried out. Typically, lecturers will encourage and motivate students during PPL and KKN.

- f. Assisting students in improving their grades

The following communication will take place when lecturers and students work together to help students improve their grades. It is undeniable that when students have grade problems, they will consult with the course lecturer. Students will communicate if they actively consult with the course lecturer. In this case, the lecturer in question will provide students with guidance. In addition, ask students to describe any difficulties they encountered during the course. This type of communication will be much more intense when done face-to-face, because students will directly disclose their academic problems. Situations like this will significantly improve interpersonal communication between students and lecturers (Kertamukti, 2013).

Academic supervisors play a critical role in instilling a love of learning in students majoring in Islamic Communication and Broadcasting (KPI). Students can complain about academic problems if they consult or seek guidance from their respective academic supervisors regularly. As an example, consider the following: 1) When students are having academic difficulties. 2) Academic issues, such as a lack of

motivation to study. 3) A drop in academic achievements achieved by students while on campus (NURISLAMIAH, 2013).

Good interpersonal communication is required to create a harmonious relationship between students and academic supervisors. Good interpersonal communication between students and academic supervisors can increase KPI students' enthusiasm for learning, particularly sixth-semester students. Because, in the sixth semester, students rely heavily on the enthusiasm and support of their academic supervisors to complete their college assignments and compile thesis proposals (Mannan, 2019).

However, some students have different opinions, and it is sporadic for students to rely on the guidance of their respective academic supervisors; one such student is Nur Kholifah, who consults with academic supervisors sparingly; many students consult academic supervisors only to fill only KRS and KRS signature, and seldom do other guidance or consultation. The lack of interpersonal communication between sixth-semester students and academic supervisors reduces students' opportunity to establish good communication relationships with lecturers. A variety of factors contribute to the poor pattern of interpersonal communication between students and supervisors, including a) students are only willing to be guided when filling out the KRS and asking for the academic supervisor's signature. b) Scheduling a meeting with the academic supervisor is difficult. c) Students meet with academic supervisors only when there is a pressing need (Abubakar, 2015).

Each student differs in their reliance on guidance to academic supervisors, with some frequently focusing on guidance to discuss subjects, grades, and achievements. In contrast, others depend on guidance only when filling out the KRS and requesting the required signature. Each student has a different schedule for guidance or consultation; some meet once a month, while others meet once a week. The more frequently students engage in interpersonal communication with their academic supervisors, the greater their enthusiasm for learning grow (Hoover et al., 1988). The need for students to engage in interpersonal communication or guidance with academic supervisors is influenced by each individual's different interests. However, most students engage in interpersonal communication with academic supervisors when necessary.

The following is the pattern of communication used by KPI students with academic supervisors to increase their enthusiasm for learning:

### 1. Implementing good attitude

Implementing good attitude (*akhlaqul karimah*) is also important in interpersonal communication; students must have good manners when communicating with lecturers, both verbally and physically. *Akhlaqul karimah* is essential for both direct and indirect communication, because many students who communicate via WhatsApp ignore manners and do not recognize the appropriate time to communicate (Mannan, 2019).

### 2. Social Media

Students commonly use interpersonal Communication Patterns via media to communicate with academic supervisors. The telephone and social media platforms such as WhatsApp are the most commonly used modes of communication. When it is challenging to coordinate schedules between students and academic supervisors, students can first communicate via social media (Purnamaningsih, 2003).

#### a. Telephone

Indirect communication is communication through the media; students must agree in advance by telephone because the lecturer's schedule is uncertain if they do not agree on telephone, so students must first contact via telephone.

#### b. Social Media Platform (*WhatsApps*)

Students use social media communication platforms such as WhatsApp to contact lecturers for advice or conduct interpersonal communication. Many students communicate with their supervisors via the WhatsApp social media platform. Because using WhatsApps will facilitate long-distance communication. Given that both students and lecturers frequently use this application (Watie, 2016).

### 3. Paying a visit to lecturer home

Visit the lecturer's house is the following pattern of Interpersonal Communication between the academic supervisor and the student. his pattern is used when students want to do interpersonal communication and the lecturer is very difficult to find, when the lecturer is sick or difficult to find, many students come directly to the lecturer's home. One of the interpersonal communication patterns students use to communicate with academic guidance lecturers is paying a visit to the lecturer's home (Sari, 2017).



#### 4. Face to face communication

Academic supervisors use an interpersonal communication pattern in which they position themselves as students' parents, capable of guiding, directing, and educating them. So that students who are guided can have a strong desire to learn and can solve any problems that arise during lectures. Face-to-face communication is more effective than communication over the phone or via WhatsApp. Because direct feedback can be obtained through face-to-face communication between lecturers and students, rather than through telephone communication, which is delayed. Face-to-face communication allows for more flexibility in communication and allows for more topics to be discussed. This face-to-face strategy can be used individually or in small groups (of student guidance group). In some cases, such as emergencies, communication can be done online via phone or WhatsApp (KDT, 2019).

#### 5. Situations and Conditions

Both lecturers and students, must understand each other's situations and conditions when engaging in interpersonal communication. Students must understand when the lecturer is in an impromptu meeting or activities outside of universities. Setting this schedule is critical to avoiding miscommunication (Silfia, 2017).

##### a. Personal Communication

Personal communication is the same as individual personal communication so that students do not feel afraid and feel close to the supervisor. If there are difficulties, the solution in the guidance can be conveyed. Personal communication, like face-to-face communication, is more effective than indirect communication or communication via phone (Iriantara, 2014).

##### b. One Way Communication

Students use one-way communication for interpersonal communication. One-way communication occurs when one person sends a message to another person and the recipient does not respond to the message. Alternatively, one-way communication occurs when only one party communicates, whether the student or the lecturer (Nuridin, 2020).

##### c. Two Way Communication

Two-way communication occurs when the sender and receiver of the information can maintain continuous communication via the same medium, for

instance, over the phone or through WhatsApp. There is feedback if students and lecturers communicate in two-way communication (Purnamaningsih, 2003).

### **C. Effective Patterns of Interpersonal Communication**

The Academic supervisor lecturer for the KPI major not only communicates when filling out the KRS, but can also engage in deeper interpersonal communication such as:

- a) Lecturers inspire students to be more enthusiastic about learning by providing motivation and enthusiasm.
- b) Providing students with important information.
- c) Solving problems encountered by students in lectures.

The pattern of interpersonal communication used by the KPI major's Academic supervisor Lecturer is a gap-closing pattern. When students feel close to the lecturer and have self-disclosure to establish communication with the lecturer, the supervisor will be open and provide students with motivation and advice. According to the study's findings, interpersonal communication relationships between students and academic supervisors lead some lecturers to believe that students who are inconsistent with time when scheduling appointments for guidance make lecturers wait for students rather than students waiting for lecturers. There should be no coercion and no one is harmed in a good communication pattern between individuals to create good communication (Burgoon et al., 2000).

Things that are conveyed by academic supervisors when conducting interpersonal communication with their students:

1. Motivation for students to be more diligent in studying

The significance of motivating and encouraging students, particularly fourth-semester students. Because fourth-semester students require assistance in writing their theses and other assignments. Many students are exhausted by the numerous lecture assignments, necessitating the encouragement and enthusiasm provided by their academic supervisors (Setyastuti, 2012).

2. Thesis Proposal Guidance

Communication between lecturers and 6th-semester students typically involves interpersonal communication that discusses thesis proposals or problems students face when working on thesis proposals. Students understand and are

more enthusiastic about preparing thesis proposals after communicating or consulting with academic supervisors (Iriantara, 2014).

3. Discussing academic difficulties

If there are students who are having academic problems, academic supervisors will conduct interpersonal communication. Whether it is a problem with course grades, academic achievement, or attendance at lectures. Students can also do interpersonal communication when experiencing problems with tuition fees. Consultation on academic issues will encourage students to be more open with their supervisors (Hoover et al., 1988).

4. Provide motivation and enthusiasm for students

One of an academic supervisor's responsibilities is to encourage students. Students will be more enthusiastic about learning if they are motivated and communicate effectively. Students are not the only ones who must actively communicate; lecturers must also actively communicate with students. The trick is to always include motivation or enthusiasm during or after the course. Students will be more enthusiastic about learning if they are motivated to learn (NURISLAMIAH, 2013).

5. On campus scholarship consultation

The pattern of interpersonal communication between lecturers and students on campus is to consult on scholarship issues. A smooth flow of communication will result in positive feedback. Academic supervisors can advise students on scholarships if they are experiencing financial difficulties. Students must actively communicate in order to obtain information held by lecturers. If students are not actively engaged in interpersonal communication, the academic supervisor will be unaware of the problems that students are experiencing. This is an example of shaky communication that needs to be repaired (Silfia, 2017).

#### **D. The Constraints of Interpersonal Communication between Academic Supervisors and Students**

Students' self-disclosure to academic supervisors. When students are unwilling to open up or engage in interpersonal communication with lecturers. Students find it challenging to engage in interpersonal communication, such as rarely meeting lecturers in the department office. Students' Interpersonal Communication Content. Sixth Semester KPI students mentored by academic supervisors, the content

discussed is usually only about filling out the KRS, never about course guidance or venting about personal problems. Even if there are students whose interpersonal communication addresses personal life issues, only a few people participate (Budyatna, 2015).

Academic supervisors are not only available to consult on lecture problems, but students can also communicate interpersonally to discuss crisis issues in their lives. For instance, consider the following student: 1) Due to busy teaching hours and various other essential factors, it is challenging to plan a schedule for interpersonal communication. 2) Changing the schedule of meetings with students regularly due to an urgent need. 3) Students who do not wish to participate in active communication. 4) If you do not have enough time to talk in person, you can continue the conversation over the phone or via WhatsApp (Kertamukti, 2013).

According to the findings of interviews with KPI major's Academic supervisor Lecturer, Mr. Anisul Fuad, when students are not actively communicating, it is the lecturer's responsibility to be active with students, asking about academic developments in class and whether there are problems that are being faced, whether they are academic or non-academic.

#### **E. Obstacles Encountered by Students in Conducting Interpersonal Communication**

##### **1. Setting up a meeting with the academic supervisor.**

The difficulty in arranging schedules to meet impedes interpersonal communication between lecturers and students. Students have difficulty arranging schedules with lecturers because the time specified is not always following the supervisor's schedule. For example, the lecturer may be teaching or there may be activities outside of the universities. As a result, students find it challenging to schedule meetings with academic supervisors. One of the obstructions to interpersonal communication is the difficulty in managing this schedule (Abubakar, 2015).

##### **2. Students are only guided when KRS is filled out**

Students communicate interpersonally only when there is an urgent need, such as filling out KRS or requesting the academic supervisor's signature. Many students only communicate with their academic supervisor for KRS guidance.

Only a few students come for help with their thesis proposals or course questions. Some even sought advice on problems in their personal lives; for example, some students informed their academic supervisors about their families' economic situation, causing them to be unable to continue their studies (Purnamaningsih, 2003).

3. Lack of self-assurance in interpersonal communication

Students lack confidence in their ability to take part in interpersonal communication with academic supervisors. Many students are embarrassed and hesitant to strike up a conversation with the lecturer, particularly when they meet face to face. Because each student has a different set of communication skills. Some people are brave enough to communicate directly, while others are not (Dewanti et al., 2014).

4. Participating Problem in interpersonal communication

Students are unwilling to engage in action interpersonal communication with their academic supervisors. Students will report to their supervisors when they are ordered to do so or when needed, such as KRS guidance or requesting KRS signatures. The willingness of students to engage in interpersonal communication is reflected in each individual. Students who are not active in interpersonal communication or who have never done so have a different pattern of interpersonal communication than students who are active in interpersonal communication (Tuasikal, 2008).

5. Setting up a Communication Time

Lecturers' schedules are still challenging to organize when it comes to guiding students. As an example, when teaching, some students require guidance. Otherwise, students will have to wait. The schedules of students and lecturers are not always the same; lecturers may have commitments outside of campus, such as workshops, seminars, research, etc. As a result, students find it difficult to integrate or adjust to the lecturer's schedule (Saoqillah & Wardah, 2018).

6. Communication Problem

Not everything goes smoothly in the communication relationship between lecturers and students; some communications do not all go well, and not all of them understand the ongoing communication. Not everything goes smoothly in the process of interpersonal communication; messages are conveyed between

supervisors and students. Many difficulties arose. Such as messages that are not adequately conveyed, delayed feedback, lecturers who do not provide space for students to argue or express their opinions, and telephone communication patterns. Because when you communicate over the phone, the feedback you receive is not direct, and the communication you do cannot function properly (Dragojevic et al., 2015).

## **Conclusion**

As a result of this study, it is possible to conclude that good interpersonal communication can build students' communication patterns with academic supervisors. Based on the research findings, students' communication patterns are carried out to increase the spirit of learning in the following ways: a) through the good of attitude (*akhlaqul karimah*); b) communication through social media platforms such as WhatsApp; c) paying a visit to the lecturer's home; d) face-to-face communication; e) students and lecturers must communicate effectively. The following obstacles hamper the student's communication pattern: a) scheduling a meeting with the academic supervisor; b) students are only guided during KRS; c) lack the confidence to engage in interpersonal communication; d) do not wish to participate in interpersonal communication with lecturers; e) difficulty in allocating time for students and supervisors to communicate; f) communication does not always go as planned.

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