

# Strategies for Forming Interpersonal Communication in Increasing Student Motivation During the Covid 19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

When the Covid-19 virus emerged, people's lives experienced changes. The process of face-to-face communication that is usually formed in society is changing. Where communication is carried out online or using online media. However, face-to-face communication is replaced by meeting in cyberspace or called virtual. This is in line with the changes in learning carried out within universities. Students experience major changes in their daily attitudes. Since the activities of education-based institutions are carried out online (school from home), it indirectly affects student activities and attitudes. Especially felt by new students who are not familiar with lecture world activities in college. Therefore, the author will conduct research on Interpersonal Communication Formation Strategies in Increasing Student Learning Motivation During the Covid-19 Pandemic Study on Online Learning of Public Relations Students at Mercu Buana University Jakarta. The purpose of this study is to determine the strategy of Interpersonal Communication Formation in Increasing Learning Motivation of Public Relations Students of Mercu Buana University During the Covid-19 Pandemic, especially in Online Learning.

This study used the theory of Interpersonal Communication. Where in interpersonal communication there are 5 aspects that must be prepared in building a good relationship, including Openness Aspects, Empathy Aspects, Support Aspects, Positive Feelings Aspects and Equality Aspects. Interpersonal communication can occur between two people anywhere and anytime, either together or between a group. This research uses the Constructivist paradigm. The method used in this study uses Qualitative methods. This study used a descriptive type of research. This type of descriptive research intends to make systematic, factual, and accurate descriptions of the facts and nature of a particular population or area.

The results of research conducted by the author show that there are changes being made in society, especially in the learning process in higher education. Where these changes occur in the communication process that is built in the class of each course carried out by students and lecturers as well as the interpersonal communication process carried out by students and their friends. This process can be seen in the interpersonal communication process when distributing or coordinating coursework given by the lecturer. In this process, there are many communication barriers that occur between students. So, in the process, many students do not understand and do not listen to the directions and explanations from the lecturer concerned. Lack of motivation to learn results in a weak learning process, resulting in ineffectiveness and many discrepancies, especially in the context of understanding and analysis in carrying out the assignments for each course. These obstacles occur because students are reluctant or reluctant to ask their lecturers or friends so that their understanding and way of thinking is weak.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Communication, Student, Lecturer, Public Relations

## INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Covid 19 virus has resulted in significant changes occurring in the life processes of society. Especially in the process of communication and establishing relationships in society. This change occurred because people were not allowed to leave the house because of the Covid-19 virus. Not only in

society, the lecture and learning process is also experiencing changes. Where students and lecturers are used to coming to campus to carry out the learning process, however during Covid 19, lecturers and students conducted online or virtual lectures using online applications provided by the university.

This change in communication methods is a threat to all circles of society in the world. Especially there are changes in the method of communicating between lecturers and students and students with students in learning activities in universities. This is faced and applied by students, where the learning process is carried out remotely or carried out at home virtually. Learning activities in universities, especially within the Mercu Buana University environment, are changing virtually which are carried out from their respective homes through a temporary or temporary online lecture system called the (POST) system.

Activities in the Temporary or Temporary Online Lecture system are called the (POST) system. Students can conduct lectures in the system starting from discussions both virtually using Google Meet and forums in the system (POST), answering Quizzes, Collecting Assignments for each course to collecting answers to Final Semester Exams in the system. The author can conclude that every face-to-face or direct communication activity in the learning process is carried out as much as possible at home or "Work from home".

Communication is one of the most important parts of human life. Since humans are born, the communication process has occurred both verbally and nonverbally (Saudi: 2021, 39). Therefore, communication becomes a part of the It is inseparable from human life as interacting creatures. Even the communication process itself becomes something that is needed and becomes one of the most frequent activities of many other activities carried out by humans as social beings (Saudi: 2021). According to Herdiansyah in Jalaludin Rakhmat states that a relationship can determine harmonization. (Herdiansyah Pratama, 2011) For this reason, one way to determine one's harmony is through interpersonal communication. Dean Barlund describes interpersonal or interpersonal communication as people who meet face-to-face in informational social situations that carry out focused interaction through the exchange of verbal and nonverbal cues that are reciprocated (Edi Harapan and Syarwani Ahmad, 2014). So basically interpersonal communication is communication that involves two or more people face-to-face and allows direct reception of messages or responses, both verbally and nonverbally (Saudi: 2021).

The aspect of success in interpersonal communication mentioned by Joseph De Vito in (Suranto AW, 2011) there are 5 aspects, namely Openness, Empathy, Supportiveness, Positive Feelings, and Equality. From this aspect, the role of interpersonal communication can be light because on the one hand effective communication is interpersonal communication. This interpersonal communication ability is a skill or skill to communicate dialogically between communicants and communicators. With these 5 aspects, has it run effectively and in accordance with the concept proposed by Joseph De Vito, especially what happens between new students and lecturers to other students.

The communication process is also carried out in the distance learning process carried out in this condition. Where, it is necessary to implement good communication relationships, it will give birth to a positive impact for everyone who carries out communication activities such as students, families and communities, not adjusting age differences or traits to become an obstacle in communication itself (Munir, 2020: 63-75). Especially during this pandemic, almost all students spend their time at home (school from home), live directly with the surrounding community and their families, of course, experience considerable changes in terms of communicating opponents, usually students spend with other students on campus or in their respective organizations, now the situation is reversed. However, in conducting Communication has a relationship between the goals to be achieved and the consequences (problems) that must be considered, then plan a strategy on how the consequences are in accordance with the expected results or goals to be achieved (Subiakto, 2019: 36). The development of communication and information technology today requires all circles of society to be able to master various types of new media so that it is easy to communicate with others, let alone to give considerations and opinions to the public with various purposes. The purpose of providing information given to others to get a negative response or positive response from the recipient. Therefore, in addition to the skills possessed by the informer, good information receiver skills are also needed. The opinion of the recipient of information in receiving and responding to the information received must be in line with

knowledge from Giver information in order to not happen misunderstanding. Communication through its purpose can give a good impression to others, which is a motivation. The ability to communicate effectively is the most important part of every leader's job (Anggarina, 2020).

The presence and development of communication technology makes the development of online or virtual media a thing that is loved by many teenagers, especially students, and becomes a part that cannot be separated from everyday life by the community. Not only that, communication media can also divert changes in the process of communication and interaction that occur among the community. Until this can occur at various levels of communication, including at the level of interpersonal communication (Syifa, 2022: 70). Social media is considered a place to share information tools but is often misused. As a result, social media users, in this case teenagers, become easily influenced by negative things on social media (Subiako: 2023).

The development of information communication technology can now be used as a medium of interpersonal communication, this is because the features of interactive digital media are able to provide facilities in the process of interpersonal communication, it may even make interpersonal communication have dependence on the use of digital media (Agustina: 38). The urgency of face-to-face or in-person communication lies in nonverbal communication. This is as stated by Hwang that in face-to-face communication there is cue richness which is not necessarily replaced by the process of communication through media, although digital technology has begun to develop in such a way as to meet aspects of media richness (Agustina: 8).

Motivation is one of the important intermediaries for everyone in carrying out their activities. Because, motivation can be interpreted as encouragement who comes from within and from outside oneself to carry out activities and activities in achieving goals. For example, motivated students will make them more active in studying in college. Thus, everything that becomes an individual or group goal will be easier to achieve if accompanied by the growth of motivation first. The lack of motivation among Mercu Buana University students during the Pandemic when conducting lectures virtually experienced several obstacles and difficulties in carrying out the direct communication process to lecturers. Communication is not optimal so that it decreases student motivation in interacting in online learning.

In line with research conducted by Emeilia (2021), during the COVID-19 pandemic has directly affected teaching and learning activities in Indonesia. Learning carried out online is actually not similar to face-to-face learning, various obstacles in learning communication are found so that it is a task for educators to be able to make effective learning communication so that learning objectives can be achieved. This learning process also experiences barriers to communication saturation, limited interpersonal communication, limited space and time in learning activities, reduced student confidence, limited technology and information, the emergence of feelings of loneliness, limited media, fatigue of online communication and limited media literacy.

Therefore, the author is interested in researching and knowing more about the Strategy for Forming Interpersonal Communication in Increasing Student Learning Motivation During the Covid 19 Pandemic (Study on Online Learning of Public Relations Students at Mercu Buana University Jakarta).

## **THEORETICAL STUDIES**

According to Tenholm and Jensen quoted by (Suranto AW, 2011) provides a definition: "Interpersonal communication as communication between two people that takes place face-to-face (Suranto, 2011: 3)." Then according to LitleJohn quoted by (Suranto AW, 2011) said that: "Interpersonal communication is communication between individuals (Suranto, 2011: 3)." According to Deddy Mulyana quoted by (Suranto AW, 2011) gives a definition: "Interpersonal communication or interpersonal communication is communication between people face-to-face, which allows each participant captures the reactions of others directly, both verbally and nonverbally."

According to Muhammad (2011: 7), Communication is an idea or information directly or indirectly conveyed from the communicator to the recipient of the message to improve attitudes or behavior. A communication in the process requires understanding each individual and not only expressing information that is not important or

needed by others, but it requires clear goals and selection of appropriate vocabulary so that the content of the message is conveyed in accordance with the expectations of the communicator. It can be concluded that interpersonal communication is the process of delivering information in the form of messages, ideas or ideas between two people who have a clear relationship, taking place face-to-face or through the media so that they react to each other with the aim of achieving mutual attention, understanding and understanding of the problem to be discussed until there is an opinion or change in someone's behavior.

There are 8 (eight) goals of interpersonal communication that feel important to learn together, including: Expressing concern for others, Finding yourself, Discovering the outside world, Building and maintaining harmonious relationships, Influencing attitudes and behavior, Seeking pleasure or just spending time, Eliminating losses due to miscommunication and Providing assistance (counseling) (Suranto AW, 2011).

According to Joseph De Vito in (Suranto AW, 2011) mentions 5 (five) positive attitudes that must be prepared in interpersonal communication, namely:

### **Openness**

Openness refers to at least two aspects of interpersonal communication. First, we must be open to others who interact with us, what is important is the willingness to open ourselves to common problems, so that others are able to know our opinions, ideas, or thoughts so that communication will be easy to do. Openness refers to our willingness to respond to others honestly and frankly to everything they say. Openness or openness is very influential in fostering effective interpersonal communication.

### **Empathy**

It is a person's ability to feel like being someone else, being able to understand something that others are going through, feeling what others are feeling, and understanding a problem from someone else's point of view. Empathic people are able to understand the motivations and experiences of others, their feelings and attitudes, and their hopes and desires for the future. A person can communicate empathy both verbally and non-verbally. Non-verbally, that is, by showing. Empathy is a person's ability to put himself in the shoes or roles of others. In the sense that a person is emotionally as well as intellectually able to understand what others feel and experience.

### **Supportiveness**

Interpersonal communication will be effective if there is supportive behavior in a person. It means that one with another provides mutual support for the message conveyed. Example: when students participate in an inter-school competition a teacher gives more support, which will lead to communication interactions between teachers and students. In interpersonal communication, an attitude of giving support from the communicator is needed so that the communicant wants to participate in communication. In interpersonal communication there needs to be a supportive or motivating atmosphere, especially from the communicator.

### **Positiveness**

Shown in the form of attitudes and behaviors. This positive feeling can be shown by respecting others, thinking positively towards others, not being excessively suspicious, believing in the importance of others, giving praise and appreciation, and commitment to cooperation. Having a positive behavior is thinking positively about yourself and others. Positivity is a person's tendency to be able to act on good judgment without feeling excessive guilt, accept themselves as important and valuable to others, have confidence in his ability to overcome problems, sensitivity to the needs of others, to accepted social habits.

### **Equality**

It is a tacit recognition that both parties are equally valuable and valuable and that each side needs the other. Equality means we accept the other party. Equality includes placing oneself on an equal footing with others,



recognizing the existence of different interests, recognizing the importance of the presence of others, not imposing the will, two-way communication, mutual need, and an atmosphere of intimate and comfortable communication. The effectiveness of interpersonal communication is also determined by the similarities that the perpetrators have. Such as values, attitudes, dispositions, behaviors, habits, experiences and so on (Suranto, 2011: 82-84).

Based on what De Vito mentioned above, interpersonal communication can occur between two people anywhere and anytime either alone or between a group. The effects and feedback that occur in communicating indicate dialogue and interaction. The dialogue makes those involved have a dual function, namely as senders and recipients of messages. One of the goals of interpersonal communication is as an effort to change the attitudes and behavior of others. Dialogue and interaction that occur in interpersonal communication are considered as the most influential communication in changing attitudes, opinions and behavior of communicants.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The paradigm used in this study is the constructivist paradigm. The Constructivist paradigm is a paradigm that is almost the antithesis of an understanding that lays down deep observation and objectivity. The method used in this study uses Qualitative methods. This method is a method that explores and understands meanings that are ascribed to social or humanitarian problems. This study used a descriptive type of research. This type of descriptive research intends to make systematic, factual, and accurate descriptions of the facts and nature of a particular population or area. In this study consisted of new students in the Field of Public Relations Studies at Mercu Buana University Jakarta, where at that time they entered the beginning of the semester directly through online learning. Therefore, Key Informants here are new students who are considered capable of providing complete information and related to the field studied, so that the data obtained can be recognized as correct. The key informants in this study are students of class 2020, in the field of Public Relations, namely: Farras Arthemisia, Keke Eka Fadilla and Nurhaliza. Data collection techniques are ways used by researchers to obtain data in a study. Data is the most important part of a study, because with data researchers can find out the results of the study. In this study, researchers choose the type of qualitative research, so the data obtained must be deep, clear and specific.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on this study, the results of the study focused on a problem, namely interpersonal communication strategies in increasing student learning motivation during the Covid 19 pandemic. Where in forming interpersonal communication, students try to approach other students in this online learning process. Of course, the communication process is carried out through this approach so that the learning process does not feel boring as well as to reduce awkwardness with other students and reluctance with lecturers. In addition, from this approach, you can get learning obtained in the form of studies, input to criticism.

In this case, the author sees the concept of Interpersonal Communication Success which consists of Openness, Empathy, Supportiveness, Positive Feelings, and Equality. Even in the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, communication can still be done through the media as a communication channel that has been supported by technology, namely the internet. Now all communities, including new students, can continue to communicate remotely through communication channels such as WhatsApp and learning media, namely POST or Google Meet to still be able to communicate or interact with other students to course lecturers, so that lectures in the teaching process, teaching, providing material to the distribution and work on assignments individually and in groups.

In its realization for students in the field of Public Relations class of 2020 to course lecturers, as well as course lecturers who teach at the beginning of the semester to new students alternately acting as communicator and communicant. Each has a message to be conveyed such as examples of explanations or questions about the material to the tasks given, both individual tasks and group tasks.

The results of Interpersonal Communication carried out by students with lecturers and other students at Mercu Buana University still occur one-way communication. Two-way communication carried out by students and lecturers still looks ineffective. If associated with the study of the theory mentioned by Joseph De Vito regarding the Success of Interpersonal Communication which includes the following:

### **Openness**

This is, in the communication process there are students who are able to adjust themselves to other students to lecturers. However, there are still students who feel awkward because this learning is done online. For good lecturers from the Field of Public Relations Studies are very open to their students, the understanding from lecturers to students intended for students can also be open with lecturers and other students. In addition, the supervisor also provides directions or regulations that must be done when in class or outside the classroom.

### **Empathy**

During the learning process, when communicating there are students who do not respond to other students, especially in group assignment activities. In addition, students also do not respond to messages or information from lecturers because communication with lecturers is sometimes through class representatives or trusted people to convey lecture activities between students and lecturers. Another reason for students not responding to messages or information is because the supervisor also sometimes does not respond to students when students contact the lecturer, with the fact that the lecturer has important things or other activities.

### **Supportiveness**

The support obtained from students is carried out from their willingness to communicate with each other, so that the learning process can be done habitually and comfortably, gradually they can become close outside of the interests of learning or lectures. For lecturers, provide support as much as possible to provide time to students, give good responses and find solutions and do not judge students. In addition, Lecturers provide learning on how to do, because students are considered not all to have literacy so that the lecturers teach and give examples to students how to make and complete tasks according to what should be done even though the learning and communication process is carried out online.

### **Positive Feelings (Positiveness)**

Positive feelings arise when the learning process is carried out positively. But positive feelings can be felt from the factors that make it positive, for example support from friends, namely other students or the lecturer himself. Students who are close to other students can be positive because they can help or cooperate when getting assignments given by lecturers. The lecturers also motivate students so that this online learning activity can be carried out with intention and enthusiasm.

### **Equality**

The equality that exists between students and lecturers still shows a sense of reluctance from students to lecturers, even though lecturers say they always open themselves to students to be welcome to contact or ask questions to lecturers, either through personal chat or class discussions. Equality in students is certainly felt the same, especially when online learning makes students not really recognize each other's attitudes or personalities.

It can be concluded that the effectiveness of communication between students and lecturers and other students still looks ineffective, because communication between students and lecturers is felt to still have walls or high boundaries so that there is still a sense of reluctance so that students sometimes do not do it at all or are done through class representatives or trusted people who can contact lecturers.

If it is associated with theory, in the process of group communication this occurrence is less effective. According to Michael Burgoon, groups are formed when there is a group of 2 more people who aim to

complete and group goals. However, the ineffectiveness here is felt because the communication process carried out by students with other students in a group there are disputes, such as their busy lives or incompatibility of their time to be able to communicate or discuss in groups, because the learning is carried out online, so it cannot be ascertained what has become the reason for the student, such as activities or activities carried out.

Lecturers often give assignments in the form of group assignments, with the hope that from these group assignments students can communicate or interact with each other. However, group assignments do not look in line with the expectations of the lecturer. Not a few results of group assignments are done arbitrarily or arbitrarily. In fact, there are still students who are reluctant to reprimand other students in the same group when there is an error in working on group assignments. So that students in online learning are better felt to get and do assignments individually, because group assignments make learning outcomes less effective.

If it is associated with the theory according to Heinich that learning media is an intermediary that carries messages or information. Universitas Mercu Buana has its own online learning media called Temporary / Temporary Online Lectures or called POST. The POST platform as a learning medium was formed due to an emergency situation that requires learning to be carried out online. In this POST, learning is carried out for lecturers to convey messages in the form of tasks that must be done by students. In the section in the POST, there are accesses such as lecture schedules, and course schedules run by students.

In the course, the supervisor provides material either in the form of Word, PPT or PDF, later students will download the material and collect assignments in accordance with the collection limit given by the lecturer. In addition, students are required to fill out a POST which is divided into Forum and Quiz columns. In online learning, online face-to-face meetings are usually carried out via Google Meet or Zoom or what is called Hangout Meet, with a schedule of 2 weeks x 1 online face-to-face meetings are held as absences and updates on new developments. Every 12 meetings will be held Midterm Exam and End of Semester Exam, or students are given Big Task 1 and Big Task 2.

As long as learning is running, it certainly does not always go well, especially when learning is currently transferred to online learning. For students entering the class of 2020, where the beginning of their semester immediately starts with online learning so they have never experienced face-to-face learning directly when in class. In addition, they also lack information about lecturers, classmates to one batch who make this online learning process extra must be done so that students can follow the online learning process well.

Obstacles that occur in interpersonal communication between students and lecturers affect the communication process, including:

### 1. Difficulty in adapting

This obstacle is felt well for students in the field of Public Relations, namely at the beginning of entering lectures they feel difficulties in communicating with other students because communication is carried out online, namely without meeting in person so that they feel awkwardness that has not been carried away by the new atmosphere which at that time they were only students until now they could not know about the character or nature of each student.

### 2. Distribution of duties from lecturers

There are students who feel that there are lecturers who give modules or assignments without giving a good explanation but ask their students to complete it well. So that in this situation, the communication process received by students from lecturers is still not going well even though not all lecturers do this.

### 3. Working on tasks in groups

The distribution and work on assignments given by lecturers to their students often get assignments in groups because the expectations of the lecturers want their students to always communicate with other students to work on and complete assignments together. But students feel that this group task is not going well, because

this online communication makes communication in the group there is a discrepancy in their respective times, besides that it looks like doing the task arbitrarily or arbitrarily by doing a makeshift assignment without answering carefully or copy paste. So that group assignments in online learning are less effective.

#### 4. Internet Connection

Obstacles that often occur to date in the online learning process experienced by both students and lecturers in the field of Public Relations have problems with internet connection. In this case, students and lecturers sometimes experience problems with the internet connection, such as unstable signals and even not getting a signal so that interference with the internet connection making communication in delivering and receiving messages in the form of material explanations or tasks difficult.

#### 5. Milieu

Online learning that is known is practical or flexible learning, meaning online learning can be done anywhere and anytime that only requires technology in the form of smartphones, tabs, or laptops with the help of the internet. But this creates obstacles when there are students who are participating in online learning while in a crowded and noisy environment such as in vehicles or transportation in the form of cars, motorbikes to trains. In addition, there are students who are there while doing other activities such as falling asleep, playing games and even smoking.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion that have been described in the following chapters, the results of research to answer the research objectives that have been prepared can be drawn the following conclusions:

Communication strategies in the interpersonal communication process of students in the Public Relations field of study with lecturers in learning in each course. Lecturers always provide theory and concept-based explanations and understanding of each achievement of the graduation indicators at each meeting. This creates open communication and interaction that occurs both in discussions and when given assignments by lecturers. With assignments given by lecturers both individually and in groups, students are expected to coordinate and discuss with their friends. Virtual lectures do not mean that students are lazy or do not want to do the assignments given by the lecturer in each course. However, in reality, when students do assignments, both individually and in groups, there are many obstacles such as lack of discipline, laziness in doing assignments and the results do not match expectations based on course completion achievements.

Apart from that, in the interpersonal communication process created by Public Relations students at Mercu Buana University, technical problems often occur which often recur, including slow connections that can even be lost so that the student is thrown out of the zoom lecture meeting. Apart from that, students do not focus on lecturing at home resulting in students lacking understanding of the material provided so that when doing assignments, students appear careless and careless in doing the assignments. Especially the development of communication technology has made students increasingly lazy about reading books and looking for other references such as journal articles, related data, etc. Students rely more on the internet to do their assignments.

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