

The Relationship of Lecturer's Communication Pattern and Peer Group Communication Intensity to Learning Interest in Online

Ali Arif Setiawan^{1*}, Jahid Syaifullah²

Universitas Surakarta, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia¹

Politeknik Indonusa Surakarta, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia²

* Corresponding Author: aliarifsetiawan@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Online learning enables flexible learning but often reduces student interest due to communication barriers. This study aims to describe lecturer communication patterns, peer group communication intensity, and student learning interest, and to analyze their relationships in online learning at Universitas Surakarta. This is a cross-sectional correlational quantitative study involving 60 Communication students from the 2019 and 2020 cohorts, selected through proportional random sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using univariate and bivariate analysis with the Spearman Rank correlation test. The results show that lecturer communication pattern is in the fair category (60.0%), peer group communication intensity is in the medium category (63.3%), and student learning interest is in the medium category (63.3%). The bivariate analysis reveals a positive and significant relationship between lecturer communication patterns and learning interest ($r_s = 0.402$; $p = 0.001$), and between peer group communication intensity and learning interest ($r_s = 0.604$; $p = 0.000$). The study concludes that both lecturer communication patterns and peer group communication intensity have a direct and significant relationship with student learning interest at Universitas Surakarta.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic that emerged in early 2020 has fundamentally transformed the educational landscape. To control the spread of the virus, the government, through the Minister of Education and Culture's Circular No. 4 of 2020, decided to temporarily suspend teaching and learning activities in schools and replace them with distance learning. This policy required educators and students to adapt to an online learning system that relies on information technology. However, the implementation of online learning has not been free from various obstacles, such as unstable internet networks, limited facilities, and difficulties in controlling students' learning activities (Aan, 2020).

Online learning is essentially an educational process that occurs separately between educators and students, so communication must be facilitated by media, both printed and electronic. In this context, communication becomes a key element that determines the success of learning. Lecturers, as educators, need to have an effective communication pattern to deliver material, build interaction, and maintain students' learning interest. Lecturer communication patterns include the way messages are delivered, interaction styles, and the ability to create a conducive learning atmosphere. Several studies have shown that lecturer communication patterns significantly affect students' motivation and learning achievement (Alifia & Fajar, 2021; Nurida, 2021).

In addition to lecturer communication, the intensity of communication within peer groups also plays an important role in shaping students' learning interest. Peer groups serve as reference groups for adolescents in forming attitudes and behaviors. Reference group theory explains that individuals tend to refer to a particular group to assess themselves and form attitudes (Rakmad, 2007). In the context of online learning, peer groups become a source of social support that can enhance motivation and learning interest. Intense interaction with peers can create a sense of security and a conducive learning environment (Santrock, 2007; Slameto, 2015). Several studies have shown that the intensity of peer group communication is significantly related to students' learning interest and behavior (Wening, 2014; Nugrahani, 2015; Yunie, 2018).

Learning interest is an important factor that determines the success of learning. Students with high learning interest tend to be more active, enthusiastic, and able to achieve learning objectives optimally (Waraney et al., 2021). However, monotonous and repetitive online learning can cause boredom and reduce learning interest (Silvia et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence learning interest in online learning is an urgent need, especially during the post-pandemic transition.

It should be acknowledged that several studies have examined online learning. Alifia and Fajar (2021), for instance, investigated communication styles and learning motivation during online learning, while Waraney et al. (2021) examined the relationship between online lectures and learning interest with student achievement. Silvia et al. (2021) analyzed factors affecting student learning interest during the pandemic, and Harwanto et al. (2021) studied the effect of online learning on student learning interest. Furthermore, Vara (2020) examined lecturer-student communication strategies in improving the quality of online learning, and Mefta (2022) investigated the relationship between self-compassion and peer group influence on subjective well-being in online learning students.

Nevertheless, these studies still leave room for further investigation. Most of them examined learning motivation or learning achievement rather than learning interest specifically. In addition, although some studies have examined online learning, they generally focused on the quality of learning or student well-being, not on the relationship between lecturer communication patterns and peer group communication intensity simultaneously with learning interest. Furthermore, previous studies generally used samples from a single study program or a single

cohort, so their results may not be generalizable to broader contexts. This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the relationship between lecturer communication patterns and peer group communication intensity with students' learning interest in online learning at Universitas Surakarta, involving students from two cohorts (2019 and 2020) as the sample.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe lecturer communication patterns, peer group communication intensity, and students' learning interest in online learning, as well as to analyze the relationship between lecturer communication patterns and peer group communication intensity with students' learning interest at Universitas Surakarta. This study is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational communication studies and practical contributions for lecturers in designing more effective communication strategies to enhance students' learning interest.

METHODS

This study was a descriptive quantitative research with a cross-sectional approach, aiming to describe lecturer's communication pattern, peer group's communication intensity, and student's learning interest, and analyzing the relationship of lecturers' communication pattern and peer group's communication intensity to the students' learning interest. This research took place at Universitas Surakarta. The population of research consisted of 2019 and 2020 generation students in the Communication Department of Universitas Surakarta who have ever attended learning using the online method. The sample of research consisted of 60 students taken using proportional random sampling technique, the sample determined based on the representativeness of each generation. Having known the representativeness of each generation, the sample of each generation was taken randomly.

The sample was taken using a questionnaire about lecturer's communication pattern, peer group's communication intensity, and students' learning interest. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed using a Likert scale with the answer choices of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The research instrument used to collect data first undertook an instrument feasibility test, and validity and reliability tests with 20 students of the Communication Department of Universitas Surakarta in the 2021 generation. The results of validity and reliability tests showed that all question items in the three questionnaires were valid and the three instruments were reliable and thereby reliable to be used as an instrument of collecting data of research.

Considering the response to the questionnaire, the variable of lecturer's communication pattern is divided into three categories: poor, fair, and good, then variables of peer group's communication intensity and student learning interest are divided into three categories: low, medium, and high. The category of variables was determined using mean and standard deviation (SD). Data analysis involved univariate analysis using frequency distribution table and bivariate analysis using Rank Spearman Correlation test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Univariate Analysis

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Lecturer's Communication Pattern

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor Fair Good	7	11.7
	36	60.0
	17	28.3
Total	60	100.0

Source: data processed (2022)

The frequency distribution of lecturers' communication pattern shows that the highest distribution belongs to fair category (60.0%) and the lowest one to poor category (11.7%).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Peer Group's Communication Intensity

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low medium	11	18.3
High	38	63.3
	11	18.3
Total	60	100.0

Source: data processed (2022)

The frequency distribution of peer group's communication intensity shows that the highest distribution belongs to medium category (63.3%) and the lowest one to low and high categories (18.3%).

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Students' Learning Interest

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
low	7	11.7
medium	38	63.3
high	15	25.0
total	60	100.0

Source: data processed (2022)

Bivariate Analysis

The Relationship between Lecturer's Communication Pattern and Students' Learning Interest

Table 4. Relation between Communication Pattern and Students' Learning Interest

Relation	rs	p-value
Communication Pattern and Students' Learning interest	0.402	0.001

Source: data processed (2022)

The result of Rank Spearman correlational test on the relation between communication pattern and students' learning interest shows a coefficient of correlation (rs) of 0.402 at a significance value (p-value) of 0.001. The significance value of correlation is $0.001 < 0.05$; therefore H_0 is not supported, meaning that there is a significant relation between lecturer's communication pattern and students' learning interest.

Furthermore, the coefficient of correlation is positive (0.402), meaning that there is a one-way relation between lecturer's communication pattern and students' learning interest. Considering the relational pattern, the better the lecturer's communication pattern, the higher the students' learning interest.

The Relation between Peer Group's Communication Intensity and Students' Learning Interest

Table 5. Relation between Peer Group's Communication Intensity and Students' Learning Interest

Relation	rs	p-value
Peer Group's Communication Intensity and Students' Learning Interest	0.604	0.000

Source: data processed (2022)

The result of Rank Spearman test on the relation between peer group's communication intensity and students' learning interest shows a coefficient of correlation (rs) at a significance value (p-value) of 0.000. The significance value of correlation is $0.000 < 0.05$; therefore H_0 is not supported, meaning that there is a significant relation between peer group's communication intensity and students' learning interest.

Furthermore, the positive coefficient of correlation (0.604) means that there is a one-way relation between peer group's communication intensity and students' learning interest. Considering the relational pattern, the higher the communication intensity of the peer group, the higher the students' learning interest.

Discussion

The Relationship between Lecturer's Communication Pattern and Students' Learning Interest

The Rank Spearman correlation test shows a positive and significant relationship between lecturer's communication pattern and students' learning interest ($rs = 0.402$; $p = 0.001$). The positive direction indicates that the better the lecturer's communication pattern, the higher the students' learning interest. This finding is consistent with Alifia and Fajar (2021), who found that teachers' communication style affects students' learning motivation at MTs Negeri 4 Bantu. In addition, Nurida (2021) found that the communication pattern between students and academic advisors significantly affects students' learning achievement at UIN Malang, while Sucia (2016) reported that teachers' communication style is related to students' learning interest. Thus, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that lecturer communication is an important factor in learning.

However, it should be noted that Alifia and Fajar (2021) examined learning motivation, not learning interest, and were conducted with MTs students, not university students. This difference in context is important because motivation and learning interest are two distinct constructs. Learning motivation refers to the internal drive that moves a person to learn, whereas learning interest refers to the tendency to give attention and involvement to a learning activity

because the activity is considered interesting and meaningful. This study specifically measures students' learning interest in the context of online learning, thereby providing an empirical contribution to a context that has not been widely studied.

The Relationship between Peer Group's Communication Intensity and Students' Learning Interest

The Rank Spearman correlation test shows a positive and significant relationship between peer group's communication intensity and students' learning interest ($r_s = 0.604$; $p = 0.000$). The positive direction indicates that the higher the peer group's communication intensity, the higher the students' learning interest. This finding is consistent with Wening (2014), who found a significant relationship between peer group's communication intensity and children's learning interest, and Nugrahani (2015), who found a significant effect of peer group communication on students' learning behavior. The results of this study are also consistent with Yunie (2018), who found a significant effect of peer group's communication intensity on students' learning achievement.

It is worth noting that the correlation coefficient for peer group (0.604) is stronger than that for lecturer communication pattern (0.402). This can be explained through several reasons. First, students in late adolescence to early adulthood tend to interact more with peers than with lecturers. Second, peer group communication is informal and continuous, whereas communication with lecturers tends to be formal and limited to class hours. Third, in the context of online learning, students more frequently discuss and share experiences with peers through group chats or social media, making peer groups a more dominant source of social support. Fourth, reference group theory explains that individuals tend to refer to a particular group to assess themselves and form attitudes, so peer groups have a stronger influence in shaping learning interest (Rakmad, 2007).

This finding suggests that peer groups serve as a learning environment that can shape students' positive attitudes. Santrock (2007) explains that peers are individuals of the same age or maturity level. Interaction between individuals at the same maturity level, involving relatively high intimacy within the group, produces peer recognition and acceptance, which in turn fosters a sense of security. This sense of security then encourages the formation of mutual support among peer group members. When the environment built within the peer group is conducive, the peer group contributes to the development of positive attitudes in adolescents, one of which is learning interest (Slameto, 2015).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the communication pattern of lecturers at Universitas Surakarta during online learning falls into the

fair or adequate category. Second, the peer group communication intensity of students at Universitas Surakarta during online learning is in the medium category. Third, the learning interest of students at Universitas Surakarta is also in the medium category. Fourth, there is a significant one-way relationship between lecturer communication patterns and students' learning interest at Universitas Surakarta, meaning that the better the lecturer's communication pattern, the higher the students' learning interest. Fifth, there is a significant one-way relationship between peer group communication intensity and students' learning interest at Universitas Surakarta, meaning that the higher the peer group communication intensity, the higher the students' learning interest.

These findings indicate that both lecturer communication patterns and peer group communication intensity play an important role in shaping students' learning interest in online learning. However, the correlation coefficient for peer group communication intensity ($r_s = 0.604$) is stronger than that for lecturer communication pattern ($r_s = 0.402$), suggesting that peer groups have a more dominant influence on students' learning interest in the online learning context. Therefore, lecturers at Universitas Surakarta are recommended to maintain and even improve their communication skills, particularly in delivering learning materials and managing the learning situation, so that the learning process becomes more attractive and ultimately enhances students' learning interest.

Suggestion

Based on the research findings, lecturers are recommended to maintain and improve their communication skills in online learning and to design group discussion activities that strengthen interaction among students, considering that peer group communication intensity has a stronger correlation ($r_s = 0.604$) than lecturer communication pattern ($r_s = 0.402$) with learning interest. Institutions are recommended to provide instructional communication training, strengthen online learning platforms that support two-way interaction, and facilitate the formation of student study groups. Future researchers are recommended to develop the study using a longitudinal design, multivariate analysis, and a broader sample across other universities to obtain more comprehensive results.

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