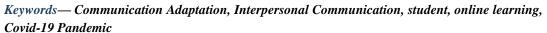# Adaptation of Management Students' Interpersonal Communication in the Learning Process during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Abdul Rahman, Vania Utamie Subiakto*, Farid Hamid Umarela

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Abstract— *This research was used to find out how the process of adapting management students' interpersonal communication in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. As social creatures, humans are required to always interact with other humans, especially in the process of interaction and communication in the learning process. The learning process is an obligation carried out by every student during their education. The theory used in this research is communication adaptation theory using research methods, data collection techniques through interviews, observation and documentation using a qualitative research method approach. Based on data collected by researchers obtained from interviews with informants and observations in the field, it was found that there was an adaptation of management students' interpersonal communication in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. In the communication adaptation process, there are five communication adaptation strategies, namely student openness, student empathy, support between students, positive student feelings and student equality in the online learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. Where the results of this research are changes in communication interactions which led to student adaptation, which was initially face-to-face and then changed to online learning. Adaptation of communication involving management students. Adaptation can be seen in communication between students and lecturers, which does not go well, which results in students being passive and indifferent. Assignments given in groups aim to explore communication between friends, but are not carried out very effectively between students due to mismatches in the time of each member, and students still feel reluctant about the lecturer, so they communicate with the lecturer through class representatives.*

Keywords— *Communication Adaptation, Interpersonal Communication, student, online learning, Covid-19 Pandemic*

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of education. Students who were previously accustomed to face-to-face learning on campus now have to switch to online learning. These changes not only change teaching and learning methods, but also influence the way students communicate and interact with each other, especially in the context of interpersonal communication. Communication adaptations also occur in activities carried out at home (Work from Home), especially in learning process activities carried out at home which become routine. This activity uses and utilizes communication technology so that students are able to adapt in interacting with fellow students and lecturers in learning activities.

The existence of interaction and communication built on the above phenomena requires an interpersonal communication process. The communication process requires special efforts from each role to gain mutual understanding. In this case, these efforts can take the form

of a process of adaptation, accommodation and openness (mindfulness) which is aimed at minimizing communication failures and creating effective communication. Effective communication means that the communicator and the communicant both have the same understanding of a message. In foreign languages, people call it "the communication is in tune", that is, both parties communicating understand what the message is conveying (Mulyana, 2008). From the communication process within humans, there are definitely emotions that are carried out. That is why in every communication there must be communication emotions as a display of the emotional expression of each communicator (Pandjaitan H. Rosmawaty, n.d.). This is very visible from the emotions expressed by students in implementing online learning.

Interpersonal communication involves direct interactions between individuals, such as teachers and students, which impact classroom climate, trust, and the effectiveness of the learning process (Miller, 2002). Effective interpersonal communication between teachers and students is very important in creating a classroom climate that is conducive to learning. Teachers who have good interpersonal communication skills are able to build positive relationships with students, gain a better understanding of individual learning needs, and facilitate effective learning. As stated by Miller (Miller, 2002), "Effective interpersonal communication between teachers

and students is key in creating a classroom climate conducive to learning"(Yeni & Susanti, n.d.).

Communication adaptations also need to be carried out by lecturers as teachers. In the learning process, it is necessary to develop communication skills for all parties involved. In addition, you also need to be trained in effective interpersonal communication skills, including active listening, providing constructive feedback, and managing conflict. Meanwhile, students also need to be given opportunities to participate in group activities that promote effective communication and cooperation. In order to achieve optimal educational goals, it is important for educational institutions to pay serious attention to the development of interpersonal communication in the online learning process of Mercu Buana University Management Students.

Mercu Buana University took action to respond by creating a temporary online lecture system or what is usually called a POST system for all courses by creating personal online learning media. Mercu Buana University diversifies learning through e-learning, with the ability to convert learning materials into various media formats. This way you can maximize the delivery of the material because it only needs to be adjusted to suit your needs. This is used so that students do not get bored and can study the material while having wider internet access. The system used is as shown in the image below:

Fig.1 Mercu Buana University POST System

Source: https://umb-post.mercubuana.ac.id

There is a POST system as an online learning media designed by Mercu Buana University as a substitute for face-to-face learning methods. The POST media system was introduced as a teaching and learning process media that utilizes the internet and digital media to deliver learning materials and online learning spaces carried out by lecturers to students. The POST system also acts as a learning intermediary, such as providing materials,

downloading materials, and collecting assignments. Media POST is carried out by all Mercu Buana University students. For management students, who often need good communication skills to work in teams, make presentations, and collaborate on projects, the transition to online learning brings its own challenges. Communication that previously could be done in person now has to be transferred via digital platforms such as Zoom, Google

Meet, or instant messaging applications. Learning changes are also carried out online, using the learning media and communication channels that have been provided. In its implementation, students also often carry out learning activities and group assignments in the hope that students can interact with each other. Online learning is considered a flexible learning mode that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. However, obstacles that often occur are time mismatches, disorganization of assignments and other activities, and online learning presents new challenges for students such as limited access to technology, loss of face-to-face interaction, increased personal responsibility and so on. Lecturers can see and understand students' changes in overcoming these challenges, which can help them understand their ability to adapt in the face of change.

This requires them to develop new skills in communicating effectively in digital environments. However, this transition does not always go smoothly. Many students face difficulties in adapting to new technology, limited internet access, and a sense of isolation due to a lack of direct social interaction. Interpersonal communication, which was previously one of the main foundations of the teaching and learning process, has now become more complex and sometimes less effective due to the limitations of digital media. On the other hand, this change also opens up opportunities for students to hone digital communication skills which are increasingly relevant in the era of globalization and digitalization. Skills such as writing formal emails, communicating via video conference, and working in virtual teams are becoming increasingly important. Therefore, students' ability to adapt to these changes will greatly influence their academic success and their readiness to face an increasingly digital world of work. The author also sees that the pandemic has forced all interactions that previously occurred in person to shift to online platforms. Management students, who are often involved in group discussions, presentations, and project collaboration, are experiencing significant changes in the way they communicate. This research is important for understanding how students adapt to these changes and how these changes affect their communication effectiveness.

In line with the results of the research presented by Pratiwi entitled Interpersonal Communication between Students and Lecturers (Review of Communication Apprehension among University Students in Jakarta), the same main concept, namely interpersonal communication, is discussed with the aim of understanding the differences in communication relationships that exist between students and lecturers in the form of communication. interpersonal. The findings here also reveal that there are certain fears or obstacles in relating or communicating with lecturers.

Interpersonal communication plays a very important role in motivating students to be able to collaborate in studies and assignments given by their lecturers(PRATIWI, 2018).

From the explanation above, the focus of this research discusses the adaptation of management students' interpersonal communication in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research can enrich academic understanding of how management students adapt to drastic changes in online learning and communication methods.

Trenhol and Jensen also provide a definition of "Interpersonal communication as communication between two people that takes place face to face(Trenholm, 1996)." Then according to LitleJohn said that: "Interpersonal communication is communication between individuals(S. W. & K. A. F. Littlejohn, 2009)." Deddy Mulyana also said that "Interpersonal communication or interpersonal communication is communication between people face to face, which allows each participant to capture other people's reactions directly, both verbally and nonverbally(Mulyana, 2008b)." Interpersonal communication or interpersonal communication is interaction from someone to another person face to face. From this communication, humans can form relationships with other people, because this communication is the most effective communication because they can observe other people's reactions directly so that they can change a person's attitudes, opinions or behavior. Interpersonal communication can also be done through media, as one of the advances achieved in new communication technology. So that conveying information or interacting with others can still take place.

It can be concluded that interpersonal communication is the process of conveying information in the form of messages, thoughts or ideas between two people who have a clear relationship with each other, 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 the problem. which will be discussed until someone's opinion or behavior changes.

Differential Adaptation Theory

Differential adaptation theory also distinguishes between adaptation and assimilation as it relates to agency. De La Garza and Ono explain that adaptation is something that an individual, or several individuals, can choose to do. In this research, differential adaptation was carried out by students, namely students regarding their participation in the 2024 general elections.

The first dialectic is universal versus specific

De La Garza and Ono explain that the integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation assumes a universal perspective in which all immigrants adapt in the same way. There may be some individual differences, but overall these experiences have similarities that can be explained by a single model. Furthermore, this theory assumes that all people want (or at least should want) to adapt to their host culture. (S. Littlejohn & Foss, n.d.).

The second dialectic is individual versus society

De La Garza and Ono argue that the integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation assumes a one-way adaptation in which the society changes the individual. In contrast, they also note that individuals change society and/or resist efforts to change which in turn can force society to change (S. Littlejohn & Foss, n.d.). In this research, the differential adaptation theory is the implementation of students in conducting conversations through interpersonal communication in the learning process online management students class of 2020 at Mercu Buana University, Jakarta. This theory will look at how students adapt in the learning process of the online management students class of 2020 at Mercu Buana University, Jakarta. Including the motives, foundations, knowledge, curiosity of students in interacting and learning processes through the POST system

Dialogic Theory

Referring to Bakhtin's thinking, the concept of dialogue is an important element in the dialectical theory of relationships. In short, without dialogue, a relationship cannot exist. In addition, there are five important concepts regarding how dialogue becomes the main point in the communication process, namely.

a. Dialogue as a constructive process (*dialogue as constitutive process*).

Communication creates a relationship and in practice as individuals change, their relationships also change. In this case dialogic considers that differences and similarities in people are equally important. Differences focus on what these differences mean to partners and how they act on these meanings. Meanwhile, similarities in attitudes, backgrounds and interests can unite people in a positive way.

b. Dialogue as a dialectical flow (*dialogue as dialectical flux*).

All social life is the product of "a union dominated by contradiction and full of tension of two warring desires." This makes it clear that various forms of contradiction are increasingly recognized as existing. This means that the process of developing

and maintaining relationships becomes unpredictable, unresolvable and uncertain.

c. Dialogue as an aesthetic moment (*dialogue as an aesthetic moment*)

Baxter describes this reciprocal sensation of refinement, accoutrement or wholeness amidst such fragmented experiences as not lasting. However, memories of good times can support couples through the turbulence that occurs in close relationships.

d. Dialogue as an expression (*dialog as utterance*)

Phrases are described as expressive links that form a dialogue chain. Therefore, the expressions that are approved are influenced by the words that came before and the words that will be used. Baxter (2004) emphasizes whether expressions give credence to the voices of both parties in a relationship or not(Baxter, 2004).

e. Dialogue as critical sensibility (*dialogue as a critical sensibility*).

It is an obligation to criticize dominant voices, especially those who suppress opposing views (S. Littlejohn & Foss, n.d.). The implementation of conversations can be used to dissect students' knowledge regarding the learning process of the online management students class of 2020 at Mercu Buana University, Jakarta. Conversations held by fellow students will certainly give rise to enthusiasm and contribute to the learning process, both in the discussion process and in carrying out assignments given by the lecturer. The conversation is part of student adaptation and participation in the online learning process carried out by Mercu Buana University Management Students. So research on conversation is considered very important because of the impact it will have on public opinion among students.

II.   METHODOLOGY

The paradigm used in this research is the constructivist paradigm. Neuman explains that: "The constructivist paradigm is an attempt to understand and explain meaningful social action"(Neuman, 2015) . The method used in this research uses a qualitative method. This method is a method that explores and understands the meaning ascribed to social or humanitarian problems. This research process involves important efforts such as asking questions and procedures, collecting specific data from participants, analyzing data inductively starting from specific, general themes and interpreting the data. This

research uses a descriptive research type. This type of descriptive research aims to create systematic, factual and accurate information (descriptions) regarding the facts and characteristics of a particular population or area. Moleong stated: "Research subjects or informants are people who are able to provide information about the situation and conditions of the research background (Moleong, 2012). The subjects of this research consisted of new students from the 2020 Management Study Program at Mercu Buana University, Jakarta, at which time they were entering the start of the semester directly through online learning.

The key informants in this research are Lina Agustina (Nim: 43120010184), Salfa Nabila Catelia (Nim: 43120010185), Putri Adelia Wardani (Nim: 43120010179). In this research, new students from the class of 2020 communicated with lecturers in the teaching courses, where at that time the communication and learning process at the beginning of their semester was carried out via *online*. The data collection techniques used by the author are interviews, indirect observation and documentation. The analysis process for this research was carried out starting from reading, studying and reviewing the data using the analytical technique steps from Miles and Huberman, namely: Data collection, Data Reduction, Data Presentation and Conclusion Drawing. The technique for checking the validity of the data used in this research is the Triangulation technique. Triangulation is checking the validity of data that uses something other than words for the purposes of checking and comparing data. Using the triangulation technique with sources, the researcher compares the interview results obtained from each source or key informant and research informant as a comparison to check the veracity of the information obtained. Apart from that, the researcher also checked the degree of trustworthiness through the Triangulation technique with a method, namely, by checking the research results using different data collection techniques, namely interviews and observation so that the degree of trustworthiness of the data could be valid.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mercu Buana University Management Students' Interpersonal Communication in the Learning Process during the Covid 19 Pandemic

The discussion of the results of this research is based on Interpersonal Communication according to Joseph De Vito, there are 5 (five) positive attitudes that must be prepared in interpersonal communication, namely (A. Devito, 1898) :

1. Openness, where in this case an open attitude is required in interacting in the learning process and requires adaptation to be carried out by students in carrying out the learning process. This open attitude is a willingness to open up about common problems, so that other people are able to know our opinions, ideas or thoughts so that communication will be easy. Openness refers to our willingness to respond to other people honestly and frankly regarding everything they say. Openness or an open attitude is very influential in fostering effective interpersonal communication. Look at the 6 (six) Key Informants.

In this case there is openness in conducting learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Where lecturers interact and communicate and provide explanations when learning courses is very good even though it does require challenges for students to understand. Yes, there are several lecturers who give examples to us as students about learning in the classes of the subjects they teach. However, there are also lecturers who only provide rules for classes in their courses but they themselves do not apply these rules to themselves as an example. Not only that, the lecturer always directs you to adapt when class starts. From the introduction first, the directions or regulations that apply when the class starts are explained. Communication adaptations are also needed for students to adapt to communicate well with lecturers, so that in the Zoom class learning runs well and comfortably. Of course, this behavioral attitude applies to all subject classes. This form of interpersonal communication is carried out by having a WA group established between students and lecturers. Because of the gap, it makes students passively communicate with various obstacles that occur to students. The WAG group is a communication medium between students and lecturers.

2. Empathy (Empathy), in the context of empathy in interpersonal communication, requires a person's ability to feel as if they were someone else, to be able to understand something that another person is experiencing, to feel what another person is feeling, and to understand a problem from another person's point of view. Empathetic people are able to understand other people's motivations and experiences, their feelings and attitudes, and their hopes and desires for the future. The role of empathy is very important, but in this case it is found when there are feelings from other people towards other people. Empathy can be seen from understanding the opinions, attitudes and behavior of other people.

This can be seen from the existence of group activities or group communication. Due to the many challenges faced by students with changes in the learning process where students are required to be more active, more diligent, more agile in searching for information, it is necessary to have team work or group cooperation developed in the learning process.

With group assignments carried out in coordination using WhatsApp and Google Meet/Zoom, many students are lazy about communicating, doing assignments and feel reluctant to ask their friends and lecturers. So there is a need for a sense of empathy that must be established in building group communication. Students prefer the process of dividing group assignments because the division of group assignments can still be understood because they are completed in groups or together. This is different from individual assignments which have to be completed by myself while learning online, if I don't really understand it then I find it difficult. So that we understand the explanation and directions of the assignment given. The online learning process really determines the student's disciplinary attitude and level of diligence in carrying out assignments.

Students are required to be more diligent and more disciplined in online learning, this is because there are many assignments, both individual and group, that have the same deadline. Because of that, like it or not, I have to immediately do the task before another task comes. But students feel bored when doing assignments given the same deadline. Therefore, in my opinion, online learning really influences a student's discipline and diligence in carrying out assignments.

3. Support (Supportiveness), In this context, it is necessary to provide mutual support for the message conveyed. In interpersonal communication, an attitude of support from the communicator is needed so that the communicant wants to participate in the communication. In interpersonal communication, there needs to be a supportive or motivating atmosphere, especially for the communicator. From the communication process carried out, support can be obtained from other students or lecturers. The attitude of support here can be in the form of compatibility with other people to adapt to each other, provide good responses and be able to work together in online learning. Since she first entered college as a student, Putri has started learning online, in fact all her initial lecture activities were

also carried out online. Of course, this makes it very difficult for us to adapt and adapt to the learning and interactions that are carried out. I experience this difficulty because I am still not very fluent in using technology and in the end, I often miss out on important information about campus (Putri Adelia Wardani).

Judging from the context above, students need communication adaptations to solve difficulties in conducting online learning. Management students try to adapt and operate until they are able to adapt to other students and lecturers.

4. Positive feelings (Positiveness), a positive attitude here also influences the communication process as well as the learning process in the communication process carried out online. Seeing the COVID-19 pandemic situation. This online learning produces a feeling of curiosity about lectures conducted online. With the communication process carried out during learning during the pandemic, effective communication and learning can be seen directly in class when the lecturer explains directly. Online learning is easier because you can study anywhere, but what is difficult is if there is material that is not easy to understand, I cannot ask the lecturer directly. The communication or online learning process is felt to be easier because it is flexible considering the COVID-19 situation in order to avoid the spread, but the communication process experiences difficulties during this learning when one does not understand the material explained by the lecturer.

5. Equality (Equality). Equality can be seen from the approach taken between students and other students and lecturers. Seeing the situation in the communication process carried out online influences online learning. The existence of an approach that exists between lecturers and students during online learning is able to influence the student's discipline in learning. If students are close to a lecturer, students will be less likely to not attend that lecturer's class. In the learning process, an approach is needed with the lecturer to get to know the lecturer in charge of each course better. I don't know about how close the lecturer is, but there is a way to ask the lecturer when in the WA group or Google Meet. Students need to approach other students as well as lecturers. From this approach, we can get to know each other so that everything can be made easier, from material to grades. However, some students try to get close to the lecturer, some don't.

Mercu Buana University Management Students' Communication Adaptation in the Learning Process during the Covid 19 Pandemic

The conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic have caused changes in communication behavior carried out in the learning process in lectures. In 2019, there was a momentum for changes in learning from face-to-face learning to online learning. Communication is also in creating openness in the experiences of students who are now studying remotely, which applies during times of crisis where the pandemic is the main factor in the situation which then forces all students to be sent home. At first, students' expectations were built to carry out activities on campus, but the reality is that they can't even meet their friends. There is a very interesting communication adaptation when there are changes in behavior made by students and lecturers in carrying out learning. Humans are essentially always changing and adapting to what is happening around them. These changes result in communication adaptations carried out by the community, especially among higher education academics in carrying out the Tridharma of Research.

The adaptation process in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic requires students to build a sense of self-confidence and become a person attitudes and feelings that are confident in one's own abilities, this makes individuals not feel anxious when carrying out an action, can feel free to do things they like and are able to take responsibility for the actions they take, be polite and friendly when interacting with other people, respect and accept others, want to show their skills and be able to know their own strengths and weaknesses (Lauster, 2003). An individual's self-confidence is related to one of the phenomena of the formation of interpersonal communication patterns in the learning process. Self-confidence is a positive attitude that is present in an individual, namely feelings, behavior and a belief that he is better and believes in his abilities. (Nabiilah & Jayanti, 2024).

IV.   CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the existence of interpersonal communication in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic has experienced changes and requires adaptation by all educational institutions, due to the existence of letter from the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education Policy During the Emergency Period of the Spread of CoronaVirus Disease (Covid-19), point 2 is the learning process at home. This was also carried out at Mercu Buana University, the author looked at the learning process activities during the

During the pandemic, even though there are restrictions on face-to-face interactions or meetings, it turns out that the need as humans to continue to exist and be recognized will still be needed by using digital technology and mass media. The pandemic has tended to flatten the graph. Life situations may shift to become endemic to Covid-19. Currently, there are changes in communication behavior related to technological adaptation. There is communication adaptation carried out by students in the learning process, where students are able to adapt themselves to other students and lecturers who teach each course at Mercu Buana University. However, there are still students who feel awkward because this learning is carried out online. The lecturers in charge of the Management Study Program at Mercu Buana University are very open to their students in delivering material and communicating regularly on the POST platform provided by the campus in carrying out the lecture process. Apart from that, the lecturers in charge also provide directions or regulations that must be followed when attending in class and outside of class.

Judging from this, we have to adapt to digital from conventional in the online learning process. Where Mercu Buana University has provided a platform, namely the POST system as an online learning system. The openness carried out by students and lecturers in the learning process means that communication adaptations are implemented as a strategy for the learning process on digital platforms. The pandemic conditions have forced students and all higher education academics to be able to use technology-based media which then opens up opportunities for all students to explore more deeply the material presented at each meeting using multiplatform. Changes in communication occur because humans need to adapt to situations related to information received online and indeed the ability to adapt to technology is not the same for everyone.

pandemic for students in the Management Study Program at Mercu Buana University. It can be seen from the activities carried out by students and lecturers in the learning process as usual, there are definitely new challenges and new adaptations that are being felt. Adaptations were made to create the same space and the same dialogue in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic. Even if you use a changed method. The learning process during the Covid 19 Pandemic requires adaptation in building interpersonal communication, namely in 5 ways, namely First, Openness, Empathy, Support, Positive Feelings and Equality. Openness in conducting learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Where lecturers interact and communicate and

provide explanations when learning courses is very good even though it does require challenges for students to understand. Yes, there are several lecturers who give examples to us as students about learning in the classes of the subjects they teach.

Second, empathy is also felt in the learning process during the Covid 19 pandemic, especially as a lecturer who builds adaptations and strategic steps in the learning process. Lecturers give group assignments or group communication as a form of empathy given to students in the learning process, because with group assignments students are better able to build communication, discussion, dialogue with each other in solving problems based on the theories and concepts taught. There are many challenges faced by students with changes in the learning process. Where students are required to be more active, more diligent, more agile in searching for information, it is necessary to have team work or group cooperation developed in the learning process. Third, Support. This context requires mutual support between friends in the learning process. Not only that, lecturers also provide support and motivation to students to be more active, more diligent, more agile in seeking information and responsive in the learning process.

Fourth, Positive Feelings. Where students feel that online learning produces feelings of curiosity about the lectures conducted online. With the communication process carried out during learning during the pandemic, it resulted in adaptation in building communication in the learning process, the methods used changed according to the platform used in this learning process. Students and lecturers must have positive feelings, so that there is warm dialogue and discussion during lectures. Lina Agustina also explained that having positive feelings in learning also brings new color and enthusiasm to the learning process, so that there is no decline in the grades you get.

Fifth, equality can be seen from the approach taken between students and other students and teaching lecturers. Seeing the situation in the communication process carried out through *online* this affects online learning. A*The approach that exists between lecturers and students during online learning is able to influence the student's discipline in learning. If students are close to a lecturer, students will be less likely to not attend that lecturer's class.*

Therefore, the changes in communication behavior carried out in the learning process are felt by all groups, especially students and lecturers in carrying out learning activities during the pandemic. The adaptation process in the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic requires students to build a sense of self-confidence and become a person attitudes and feelings that are confident in one's own

abilities, this makes individuals not feel anxious when carrying out an action, can feel free to do things they like and are able to take responsibility for the actions they take, be polite and friendly when interacting with other people, respect and accept others, want to show their skills and be able to know their own strengths and weaknesses.

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