

Disembodied behavior and communication effectiveness in learning activity during the covid-19 pandemic era

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Abstract

Currently, Corona is a hot topic of discussion. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV-2), better known as the coronavirus, is a new type of coronavirus that causes infectious diseases in humans. The online learning system (on the network) is the answer for universities to continue to carry out academic activities. Online learning is a learning system without face-to-face directly between lecturers and students but is done virtually. Lecturers must ensure that teaching and learning activities continue while students are at home. The solution is that lecturers must be able to design learning activities as innovations by utilizing online media to continue running effectively. Communication between students and lecturers through video conferencing raises several problems: the low creativity of students, the difficulty of achieving communication effectiveness, and generating demotivation and disembodied behavior. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of (1) effectiveness of virtual lecturer communication based on student perspectives, (2) student demotivation, (3) student disembodied behavior, and (4) student creativity. This research uses a descriptive method. The sampling method used is incidental sampling, where the subjects studied are lecturers and students willing to participate in filling out research questionnaires. The number of lecturers in this study was 91 people from 25 universities in the city of Bandung, with a total of 100 courses, so a sample size of 200 sampling units was obtained, where the sampling unit was lecturer-subjects. The results showed that the student creativity variable was in the high category, the demotivating variable was in the low category, the disembodied behavior variable was in the moderate category, and the lecturer's communication effectiveness variable was in the very high category.

Keywords: *communication effectiveness, demotivation, disembodied behavior, and student creativity*

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020, has affected all sectors of society. Dramatically, the outbreak also influenced the development of higher education worldwide. Seeing this, almost all public and private tertiary institutions experienced a shift in the learning process from face-to-face to online learning. Collaborative research, community service activities, and other physical activities were canceled. Seeing this, whether we like it or not, we are facing a “new normality” in higher education. This crisis is forcing higher education leaders to reconsider the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in various activities (Arshad, 2020; Aucejo, French, Paola, Araya, & Zafar, 2020; Chatterjee, 2020), especially in carrying out the learning process virtually (online) (Alawamleh & Al-twait, 2020). Meanwhile, other things are happening, and colleges face demands for significant tuition cuts if classes continue to be conducted virtually. This outbreak challenges every stakeholder in higher education to think hard in designing and re-deciding strategies to effectively increase the resilience and sustainability of higher education institutions in the future.

Virtual learning activities have been running for two semesters; of course, obstacles are experienced. This has brought concerns about the effectiveness of lecturer-student communication in teaching and learning activities (Kong et al., 2021; Vlachopoulos, 2020) or other activities. It is challenging for lecturers as educators to transfer knowledge during the current pandemic. Communication is a vital driving force in sharing knowledge between lecturers and students. Effective communication becomes a strategy for conducting virtual learning activities. Communicative lecturers can provide a good understanding for students, arouse feelings, and even influence student attitudes (Darihastining, Utomo, & Chalimah, 2021).

Lecturers have a central role in solving these problems. Along with circumstances that make it impossible to meet directly, a lecturer must be able to create effective communication. Communication between students and lecturers is expected to develop and stimulate students to think. Not just ordinary thinking but the thought process manifested in creative thinking. Thinking can shape planning, management, understanding, and decision-making to solve problems. Being able to think creatively is essential for students. Students can quickly solve problems, think creatively can create or imagine possible issues that will occur in the future, by thinking creatively can improve the quality of life and can also increase satisfaction, pleasure, and levels of trust in the student self (Sari & Putra, 2015).

The role of lecturer communication is essential in the educational process. The relationship between lecturers and students occurs every day in the process of teaching and learning activities. A good relationship between lecturers and students is vital for student motivation in following the learning process well (Fatmawati, 2019) (Kusman, 2019). Communication between students and lecturers through video conferencing raises several problems that usually occur, namely “disembodied behavior” (Heath & Luff, 1991, 1993). The “disembodied behavior” is like a student who is not active in communicating, not paying attention properly while doing other activities, or even leaving an ongoing activity but is still detected joining but not turning on the video. This problem often occurs in communication between lecturers and students who require using technology media, e.g., through video conference, to reduce direct physical contact to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Based on activities in the field, in the teaching and learning process, an average of about 20% of students turn off the camera, and sometimes there is no answer when a question is addressed. In additional teaching and learning activities (such as webinars, workshops, training, and counseling), almost 80% of students turn off the camera. This raises a negative presumption of whether effective communication has occurred with this behavior.

Based on the description of the problems above, it is crucial to research measuring the level of student creativity, motivation, disembodied behavior, and the effectiveness of virtual lecturer-student communication during the pandemic. This research is expected to be able to answer the problems and get the right solution so that the knowledge transfer process runs optimally.

LITERATURE REVIEW

High intellectual skills have particular characteristics: the ability to reason logically, systematically, carefully, critically, and creatively as well as having a good attitude in communicating ideas and solving each problem (Antika & Nawawi, 2017; Nawawi, 2016). A creative person shows good thinking, attitude, personality, and problem-solving ability (Aw, 2019; Antika & Nawawi, 2017; Baer, 1998). Birgil (2015) suggests that the characteristics of creative thinking skills are: flexibility, originality, double thinking, quick thinking, openness to criticism, and the ability to find different solutions.

The learning environment is critical in supporting creativity (Abdullah, 2016; Richardson & Mishra, 2017). Passion-based learning, co-creation and collaboration, and an atmosphere where ideas are valued and mistakes are seen as an essential part of learning can influence the process to support creativity. Other creativity-support activities include exploration of new media technologies, fantasy play, outdoor play, model making, building, planning, and design (Richardson & Mishra, 2017).

Demotivation is several negative influences that can thwart growing motivation. A demotivated learner was once motivated but then lost his commitment or interest in learning for several reasons (Nasution, 2017). Learning by using video conferencing is seen as a trigger that can reduce student learning motivation. "Two-way electronic communication between two or more groups at separate locations via audio, video, and/or computer systems" (Koenig, 2010). Lectures using video conferencing involve students/instructors and students/content interaction simultaneously, but only sometimes in the exact location. Students and lecturers communicate via an interactive two-way audio/video system during lectures. Using the monitor, students, and instructors can see and hear each other instantly (Koenig, 2010). Online communication goals are the same as face-to-face communication: bonding, exchanging information, and being heard and understood. Fostering a sense of community in online classes will make students' learning experiences more meaningful and help them stay connected during the knowledge transfer process (Alawamleh & Al-twait, 2020).

Seeing this, disembodied behavior often occurs in the online learning process (video conference). Students still join in learning activities but are sometimes busy doing other activities while deactivating the video camera. It is characterized by low motivation and learning participation in teaching and learning activities. Motivation is the drive and strength that exists within a person to achieve specific goals he wants to achieve (Dewi et al., 2020). Most students are only motivated by getting a degree but only give their best in some learning processes that are carried out (Nisa, 2021). Student activity in the discussion process plays a vital role in determining the level of student understanding of the lecture material given (Wijaya, 2012). Reid et al. (2008) stated that the level of student participation in class determines success in learning.

Successful and quality learning is learning in which most students are physically, mentally, and socially involved in learning activities (Wibowo, 2016). Efforts and efforts made by lecturers in stimulating student learning activity are significant because the level of student learning activity is a factor that can affect the success of the learning carried out (Salo, 2016).

METHODS

The data analysis in this study was adjusted to the pattern of research to be carried out. This study had four variables: communication effectiveness, student creativity, demotivation, and disembodied behavior. This study employed a descriptive method to make a picture of a situation or phenomenon. The research was conducted at public and private universities in Bandung that implemented online learning using video conferencing. In this study, the respondents were university lecturers and students who had experience in carrying out the process of learning activities using video conferencing. All variables are measured by the instrument in questionnaires available online or in print distributed to respondents.

The sampling method used was incidental sampling; the sample was lecturers who were willing to participate in filling out the first part of the questionnaire about the level of student creativity, demotivation, and disembodied behavior, as well as providing several names of students who filled out the second part of the

questionnaire about the effectiveness of lecturer communication. The sampling unit in this study was the subject-lecturer, meaning that a lecturer who teaches two subjects was treated as two sample units. Furthermore, two lecturers who teach one subject in different classes were treated as two different sample units.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis of Lecturer Communication Effectiveness

The measurement results on indicators of communication effectiveness show that the lecturer’s ability to communicate in class is considered effective (Table 1). Two indicators of effective communication, empathy (M=3.97; SD=0.792) and indirect feedback (M=4.10; SD=0.668), are rated high, although they are still considered low compared to the other eight indicators.

Table 1: The Assessment of the Effectiveness of Lecturer Communication (X)

Indicator	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Openness	200	836	4.18	.707
Empathy	200	793	3.97	.792
Support	200	850	4.25	.616
Positive feeling	200	860	4.30	.470
Equality	200	829	4.14	.629
Learning encouragement	200	850	4.25	.478
Material/content Mastery	200	871	4.35	.480
Technology utilization capability	200	864	4.32	.478
Providing feedback	200	860	4.30	.470
Indirect feedback	200	821	4.10	.668

Note:

- The actual score is obtained from the frequency multiplied by the weight (5,4,3,2,1) and then added up, for example, in number 1: $7(5) + 594(4) + 35(3) + 0(2) + 0(1) = 836$.
- The average score is obtained from the actual score divided by the number of observation units, that is $836/200 = 4.18$

Descriptive Analysis of Disembodied Behaviour

The measurement results on the indicators of the disembodied behavior variable show that the disembodied behavior is considered very high (Table 2). Two indicators of disembodied behavior, cooperation (M=2.61; SD=0.961) and initiative (M=2.57; SD=0.773), have low average values. Meanwhile, the indicator of knowledge about work (M=3.02, SD=3.02) is high.

Table 2: The Assessment of the Disembodied

Indicator	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Quantity and quality of work	200	2.76	.880
Knowledge of work	200	3.02	1.063
Cooperation	200	2.61	.961
Reliable and initiative	200	2.57	.773

The Effect of Communication Effectiveness on Disembodied Behavior

The results of the simple regression test show that the lecturer's communication behavior in learning does not affect disembodied behavior ($p\text{-value} = 0.080 < 0.05$). This means that the efforts made by lecturers to manage to learn have been effective but unable to reduce the emergence of disembodied behavior. Communication effectiveness only affects 1% ($R^2 \text{ Adjusted} = 0.01$) of disembodied behavior.

Table 3: The Summary of Regression Analysis for Predicting Disembodied Behavior by Communication Effectiveness

Variable	B	95% CI	β	t	p-value
(Constant)	13.58	[10.63; 16.53]		9.06	0.000
Communication Effectiveness	-0.06	[-0.13; 0.01]	-0.12	1.76	0.080

Note: $R^2 \text{ Adjusted} = 0.01$. CI = confidence interval for B

DISCUSSION

Lecturer Communication Effectiveness

From the results of the questionnaire where students were the respondents, it was concluded that the effectiveness of lecturer communication during the learning process in class was very high. This is understandable because, from the results of interviews and questionnaires, it can be seen that lecturers try their best to use several strategies or methods so that students can understand the core of the theories presented. Lecturers use various methods, such as teaching materials, books, online discussions, questions and answers, quizzes, and assignments.

Lecturers plan the learning process as well as possible so that students understand the material. For that, course materials must be prepared. Generally, online lectures use modules. The modules are designed according to the criteria for self-study, consisting of subject matter, material summaries, daily exercises (quizzes), and their answers. Then there is a formative test for making videos adapted to each subject. For practical courses, audio-visual material is usually added by viewing (watching) case examples via video. Thus, students are expected to understand more. In addition, the form of audio-visual material can be an attraction to reduce boredom.

Lecturers can build conducive communication and are willing to listen to the reasons given by students when problems occur. Usually, what often becomes an obstacle is network problems (technical barriers). Sometimes they are late to join a class with a predetermined schedule. Some can only participate in the middle of the lecture, some enter at the end of the class due to signal problems, and so on. This problem is not considered serious because lecturers are not in a hurry to have a prejudice against students.

Lecturers give simple questions to provoke student activity. This method is quite successful. Students feel that they get attention from the lecturers, which in the end, raises the spirit of learning in themselves. Lecturers change the way or method of giving assignments by not asking for perfect results, just summarizing the material for each meeting, even if it is only one paragraph. The assessment is prioritized in terms of originality, even though the answers could be more optimal. Lecturers give an evaluation right away on the e-learning page. It aims to stimulate students to be more active in learning. The value that was given quickly made students feel that the lecturer appreciated their hard work. The presence of a value indicates that the lecturer reads their assignment. Another form of study that received a positive response from students was a group assignment that had to be presented. Even though the presentation was online, they got excited. Their appearance realizes the desire to appear in front of their friends during presentations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of descriptive analysis, it can be concluded that the students' creativity variable in the high category shows that students already have a good habit of thinking, attitudes, personality, and ability to solve

problems very well with being able to enrich and develop an idea as an indicator with the highest score.

The demotivation variable in the low category shows that students do not have a decrease in motivation even though the lectures are conducted online or using video conferencing. In addition, the indicator with the lowest score is reluctant to complete college assignments. In other words, students are very diligent in doing college assignments even though assignments are given online.

The disembodied variable in the sufficient category shows that there are still students in learning activities but are sometimes busy doing other activities while deactivating the video camera. In the disembodied variable, the lowest indicator is that students who turn off the camera (off-cam) generally answer out of context to the lecturer's questions.

The variable of the effectiveness of lecturers' communication is in the very high category. It shows that communication in delivering information or providing learning materials is very effective. In the communication effectiveness variable, the indicator with the highest score is that the lecturer has mastered the material he teaches to his students. The suggestion for further researchers is to make a connection (analysis of influence) in each variable of student creativity, demotivation, disembodied, and communication effectiveness so that it can generate a new research model.

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