



The Relationship Between Lecturers' Communication Styles and Student Loyalty in the Context of Higher Education Marketing Communication

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Receive: 27/09/2025

Accepted: 29/09/2025

Published: 01/10/2025

Abstrak

Persaingan perguruan tinggi yang semakin ketat menuntut institusi pendidikan tinggi tidak hanya unggul secara akademik, tetapi juga mampu membangun hubungan jangka panjang dengan mahasiswa. Salah satu faktor strategis yang berperan dalam membangun hubungan tersebut adalah gaya komunikasi dosen sebagai aktor utama dalam interaksi akademik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara gaya komunikasi dosen dan loyalitas mahasiswa dalam konteks marketing komunikasi perguruan tinggi. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei terhadap mahasiswa aktif Fakultas Ekonomi, Bisnis, dan Ilmu Sosial Universitas Perintis Indonesia angkatan 2023. Populasi penelitian berjumlah 50 mahasiswa, dengan responden aktual sebanyak 30 mahasiswa yang mengisi kuesioner secara lengkap dan valid. Instrumen penelitian berupa kuesioner skala Likert lima poin yang mengukur variabel gaya komunikasi dosen dan loyalitas mahasiswa. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan uji korelasi Pearson dan regresi linier sederhana. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif dan signifikan antara gaya komunikasi dosen dan loyalitas mahasiswa ($r = 0,681$; $p < 0,05$). Gaya komunikasi dosen memberikan kontribusi sebesar 46,4% terhadap loyalitas mahasiswa. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa komunikasi dosen merupakan bagian penting dari strategi internal marketing perguruan tinggi dalam membangun loyalitas mahasiswa.

Kata kunci: gaya komunikasi dosen, loyalitas mahasiswa, marketing komunikasi perguruan tinggi

Abstract

Increasingly fierce competition among higher education institutions demands that they not only excel academically but also build long-term relationships with students. One strategic factor contributing to this relationship is the communication style of lecturers, the primary actors in academic interactions. This study aims to analyze the relationship between lecturer communication style and student loyalty in the context of higher education marketing communications. The study employed a quantitative approach with a survey method involving active students of the Faculty of Economics, Business, and Social Sciences, Perintis Indonesia University, class of 2023. The study population consisted of 50 students, with 30 actual respondents who completed a complete and valid questionnaire. The research instrument was a five-point Likert scale questionnaire measuring lecturer communication style and student loyalty. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson correlation and simple linear regression. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between lecturer communication style and student loyalty ($r = 0.681$; $p < 0.05$). Lecturer communication style contributed 46.4% to student loyalty. These findings confirm that lecturer communication is a crucial part of a higher education institution's internal marketing strategy in building student loyalty.

Keywords: lecturer communication style, student loyalty, higher education marketing communication

Introduction

The higher education sector is currently experiencing intense competition, driven by globalization, digital transformation, and increasing student mobility. Universities are no longer perceived solely as academic institutions but also as service organizations that must compete to attract, satisfy, and retain students. In this competitive environment, students are positioned not only as learners but also as key stakeholders and consumers of educational services who possess freedom of choice regarding institutions. Consequently, student loyalty has emerged as a crucial indicator of institutional success and sustainability in higher education.

Student loyalty plays a strategic role in ensuring the long-term viability of higher education institutions. Loyal students tend to complete their studies at the same institution, participate actively in academic and non-academic activities, and maintain positive attitudes toward their university. Moreover, they often engage in positive word-of-mouth communication, recommending the institution to prospective students, alumni, and the wider community. Such behavior contributes significantly to institutional reputation, enrollment stability, and competitive advantage. Therefore, understanding the determinants of student loyalty has become an essential concern for higher education management and scholars in the field of educational marketing.

In the context of marketing communication, higher education institutions are required to implement integrated strategies that go beyond external promotion. While advertising, branding, and digital marketing remain important, internal marketing communication has gained increasing attention as a foundation for building strong relationships with students. Internal communication refers to interactions that occur within the institution, particularly between lecturers, administrative staff, and students. Among these actors, lecturers play a central role as front-line service providers who interact directly and continuously with students throughout the learning process.

Lecturers are not only responsible for delivering academic content but also serve as

communicators who shape students' learning experiences and perceptions of institutional quality. The way lecturers communicate—through verbal clarity, nonverbal cues, empathy, openness, and responsiveness—significantly influences students' engagement, satisfaction, and emotional attachment to the institution. Lecturer communication style, therefore, becomes a critical element in shaping the overall academic climate and students' subjective experiences within higher education.

Communication style refers to the consistent patterns of verbal and nonverbal behavior used by individuals when conveying messages and interacting with others. In educational settings, lecturers' communication styles may range from supportive and participatory to authoritative and directive. Supportive and empathetic communication styles tend to encourage student participation, foster trust, and create a psychologically safe learning environment. In contrast, rigid or unresponsive communication styles may create emotional distance, reduce motivation, and negatively affect students' perceptions of the institution. As such, lecturer communication style has implications not only for instructional effectiveness but also for relational outcomes such as student loyalty.

From a higher education marketing communication perspective, interactions between lecturers and students can be understood as relational communication that contributes to the institution's brand experience. Each academic interaction represents a "moment of truth" in which students evaluate the quality of service they receive. Positive communication experiences can strengthen students' sense of belonging, trust, and commitment to the institution. Conversely, negative communication experiences may weaken relational bonds and reduce students' willingness to remain loyal to the institution.

Previous studies have demonstrated that interpersonal communication quality in educational contexts influences student satisfaction, academic motivation, engagement, and performance. Research in service marketing also suggests that relationship quality—characterized by trust, commitment, and effective communication—

is a key antecedent of customer loyalty. However, empirical studies that specifically examine the relationship between lecturers' communication styles and student loyalty within the framework of higher education marketing communication remain limited, particularly in the Indonesian context. Most existing studies focus on service quality, facilities, or institutional image, while the communicative role of lecturers as internal marketing agents receives comparatively less attention.

This gap in the literature highlights the need for further investigation into how lecturers' communication styles contribute to student loyalty as part of a broader marketing communication strategy. Higher education institutions, especially private universities, rely heavily on relationship-based strategies to maintain enrollment and institutional reputation. Understanding the communicative dynamics between lecturers and students can provide valuable insights for developing internal marketing policies, professional development programs, and communication training for academic staff.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to analyze the relationship between lecturers' communication styles and student loyalty in the context of higher education marketing communication. By adopting a relational marketing perspective, this research positions lecturers as key actors in building long-term relationships with students through effective communication. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of marketing communication and educational communication studies, particularly in service-based educational settings. Practically, the results may serve as a reference for university administrators and policymakers in designing communication strategies that enhance student loyalty and institutional competitiveness.

In conclusion, as competition among higher education institutions continues to intensify, the ability to foster strong and sustainable relationships with students becomes increasingly important. Lecturer communication style represents a vital yet often overlooked component of internal marketing communication that directly

influences students' experiences and loyalty. Therefore, examining this relationship is essential for advancing both academic understanding and practical strategies in higher education marketing communication.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method to examine the relationship between lecturers' communication styles and student loyalty in the context of higher education marketing communication. The quantitative approach was selected because it allows for objective measurement of variables and statistical analysis of the relationships between variables based on numerical data.

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all active students of the Faculty of Economics, Business, and Social Sciences at Universitas Perintis Indonesia, class of 2023, totaling 30 students. Given the relatively small population size, a saturated sampling technique was applied, in which all members of the population were included as research participants.

Of the total population, all 30 students met the criteria as research respondents by completing the questionnaire fully and providing valid responses. Therefore, the actual sample size used in the data analysis was 30 respondents.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The questionnaire was designed to measure two main research variables: lecturers' communication style as the independent variable and student loyalty as the dependent variable.

Indicators of lecturers' communication style reflected aspects such as openness, clarity of message delivery, empathy, responsiveness, and supportive behavior in the learning process. Meanwhile, indicators of student loyalty included commitment to the institution, positive attitudes, sustained

satisfaction, and willingness to recommend the higher education institution to others.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Testing

Instrument validity was tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation to determine the extent to which each questionnaire item accurately measured the intended variables. An item was considered valid if the correlation coefficient exceeded the critical value of the r -table at a 5% significance level.

Furthermore, instrument reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire. The instrument was deemed reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeded 0.70, indicating a satisfactory level of reliability.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using statistical software. The analytical techniques included Pearson correlation analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between lecturers' communication styles and student loyalty. In addition, simple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the effect of lecturers' communication styles on student loyalty.

All statistical tests were performed at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). The results of the analysis were used to draw conclusions regarding the strength of the relationship and the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable within the framework of higher education marketing communication.

Result and Discussion

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that lecturers' communication styles fall within the good to very good category, with a mean score of 4.12. This finding suggests that, in general, students perceive lecturers as having effective communication skills, characterized by clarity in delivering course material, openness in interaction, empathetic attitudes, and responsiveness to students' needs and questions during the learning process.

Meanwhile, the descriptive analysis of the student loyalty variable shows a mean score of 4.05, which is categorized as high.

This indicates that students demonstrate a strong level of commitment and attachment to the higher education institution, reflected in positive attitudes toward the institution, willingness to complete their studies at the university, and a tendency to recommend the institution to others.

Furthermore, the results of the Pearson correlation test reveal a strong and positive relationship between lecturers' communication styles and student loyalty, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.681$ and a significance level of $p < 0.05$. This finding indicates that the better the lecturers' communication styles, the higher the level of student loyalty toward the higher education institution.

To strengthen these findings, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted, showing that lecturers' communication styles contribute 46.4% to student loyalty. This means that nearly half of the variance in student loyalty can be explained by lecturers' communication styles, while the remaining variance is influenced by other factors outside the research model, such as the quality of facilities, administrative services, curriculum, and institutional image.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that lecturers' communication styles play a strategic role in shaping student loyalty, particularly within the context of higher education marketing communication. The strong and significant correlation results demonstrate that lecturer communication is not merely a means of delivering academic content, but also an essential mechanism for building relational bonds between students and the institution.

From a Relationship Marketing perspective, lecturers serve as key actors in the internal marketing processes of higher education institutions. The intensive and continuous interactions between lecturers and students enable the formation of long-term relationships based on trust, commitment, and satisfaction. Empathetic, open, and responsive communication styles contribute to the creation of positive academic experiences, which subsequently strengthen student loyalty.

The results of this study are also consistent with interpersonal communication theory, which emphasizes that communication effectiveness is determined by message clarity, empathy, openness, and the ability to provide constructive feedback. When lecturers effectively apply these interpersonal communication principles, students feel valued, understood, and actively involved in the learning process. This condition reinforces students' emotional attachment to both lecturers and the institution.

From a marketing communication perspective, effective lecturer communication enhances student satisfaction and engagement, which ultimately fosters loyalty and positive word-of-mouth behavior. Students who experience positive communication with lecturers are more likely to share favorable perceptions of the higher education institution with prospective students and the wider community, thereby contributing to the institution's image and competitiveness.

Thus, the findings of this study emphasize that efforts to enhance student loyalty cannot be separated from the quality of lecturer communication as the frontline of educational services. Higher education institutions should regard lecturers' communication styles as an integral component of internal marketing communication strategies in order to create mutually beneficial, long-term relationships between the institution and its students.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that lecturers' communication styles have a positive and significant relationship with student loyalty within the context of higher education marketing communication. The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that lecturers' communication styles fall within the good to very good category, while student loyalty is categorized as high. These findings confirm that the quality of lecturer communication contributes positively to students' academic experiences.

The results of the Pearson correlation test reveal a strong relationship between

lecturers' communication styles and student loyalty. Furthermore, the simple linear regression analysis shows that lecturers' communication styles make a substantial contribution to student loyalty, thereby emphasizing the strategic role of lecturers as primary representatives of the institution in building relational bonds with students.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support the principles of Relationship Marketing, which emphasize the importance of relational communication in fostering long-term relationships and loyalty among consumers of educational services. Lecturers function not only as educators but also as key internal marketing actors who directly contribute to the formation of institutional image, student satisfaction, and student loyalty in higher education institutions.

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