The Shift of University Students’ Communication Ethics in Post-COVID-19 Pandemic Learning

Endang Martini
Vocational School, Sebelas Maret University Surakarta, Indonesia
end_martini@staff.uns.ac.id

Monika Sri Yuliarti
Ewha Woman’s University, Korea Selatan
monika.yuliarti@ewhain.net

Septyanto Galan Prakoso
Institute of Political Sciences, National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan
septyantogalan@gmail.com

Christiyaningsih Budiwati
University Putra Malaysia, Malaysia
christiyaningsih.budiwati@gmail.com

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has left behind a wide range of effects. As a potential future learning paradigm, one of them is the hybrid learning model. In terms of appearance during lectures, whether directly or indirectly through the use of post-COVID-19 pandemic media, this study attempts to characterize the communication ethics of Generation Z students at Universitas Sebelas Maret’s Vocational School in Surakarta. The quantitative descriptive method is thought to be the most appropriate approach to use in addressing the study objectives. Secondary data is derived from internal data in the education sector, publications, books, and other documentation, while primary data is collected online using semi-open questions in addition to observation. It is possible to conclude that there is a lack of good student communication ethics when it comes to appearance during online learning because not all students have turned on their cameras, not all of them are dressed collared, and not all of them follow the dress code that has been established by previous agreements in several courses.

Keywords: communication ethics, learning, post-COVID-19 pandemic, students
Abstrak


Kata Kunci: etika komunikasi, pembelajaran, pasca pandemi COVID-19, mahasiswa
A. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic that occurred at the end of 2019 created huge jobs in many countries (Fernandez & Bruno, 2022; Kobiruzzaman, 2021; Lecouturier et al., 2021; Madan et al., 2021; Septiarini et al., 2021) including in Indonesia (Syapitri et al., 2021). The impact can be felt in various dimensions (Nasution et al., 2020; Rosita, 2020) one of which is the education sector (Herliandry et al., 2020; Ndasung, 2021; Wulandari & Agustika, 2020). Changes in teaching and learning activities become a valuable legacy. If before the COVID-19 pandemic, almost everyone implemented an offline learning process, then during the COVID-19 pandemic it accelerated online-based learning.(Szopiński & Bachnik, 2022) to minimize the spread of the virus and maintain survival. This distance learning (or *Pembelajaran jarak jauh* – PJ) in Bahasa Indonesia policy is based on regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia of *Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan* (*Kemendikbud*) No. 1 Year 2020 (Levine & Winduwati, 2021) which is followed by the policies of each educational institution, such as that carried out by Amikom Yogyakarta University (Nuzuli & Astria, 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, every individual is required to use digital technology. However, each individual's readiness is different. Digital technology causes humans to continue to think logically and competently so that they can adapt to changing times. As a tool, digital technology is used to facilitate human activities in various aspects of life because it is no longer possible for everyone to avoid it (Abdillah et al., 2022) and one of the main attractive features is its simplicity of it.

Adapting to current developments is very dependent on the ability to adapt and innovate. Including in the world of higher education which applies the concept or is based on Islamic boarding schools at Universitas Darussalam Gontor (Setyaningsih et al., 2020). They combine the role of humans and the use of technology to solve integrated social problems in real and virtual space. Research on students at two universities in Russia (Krasnova et al., 2022) saw that students have different perceptions of how they should behave in the real world and the virtual world.

When we behave, we cannot abandon the word ethics. Ethics in the plural *ta etha* means that custom is a theory about human behavior, the values of which are good and bad as far as reason can determine (Rachman, 2022). Ethics in communication is a reference or pattern for measuring human actions carried out following existing norms in communication to maintain the comfort and safety of fellow users of communication tools. According to Corry (2014), ethics is not only related to polite speech, but communication ethics also departs from sincere intentions which are manifested in our calmness, patience, and empathy in communicating, while Zafar et al., (2021) state that ethics reflects respect for other people, makes it easier for someone to be accepted in a positive relationship, maintains good relationships with anyone in the long term (Apdillah et al., 2022; Parlindungan et al., 2023).

Early in 2023, COVID-19 was declared no longer a national disaster because the emergency level was no longer the same as during the pandemic, online teaching
and learning activities were still used, but the portion was smaller compared to face-to-face learning. One of the universities that still uses online learning but combines it with offline and is usually called blended or hybrid is Sekolah Vokasi or Vocational School of Universitas Sebelas Maret (SV UNS). Online learning is an alternative learning that is still used as an effort to overcome the limited number of lecture classes and lecture times that last until the evening.

According to the study conducted by Sumartono and Astuti (2020), the shift in communication from conventional media to new media (especially social messenger applications like WhatsApp) has shifted the communication ethics of the millennial generation to be more relaxed when communicating with older people. The language used is not selected and differentiated, all ages are equalized. Meanwhile, research by Elen dan Putri (2020) mentioned that a lot of university students do not activate or turn on their computer/laptop cameras during video conferences (Undari et al., 2022). This phenomenon also happened in the lower education level, as students at one of the junior high schools in Surabaya (Ramadhan & Tutiasri, 2023) also show similar symptoms that there is a decrease in the quality of ethical communication between students and teachers when learning is carried out by offline method again.

In the research that has been conducted before, during the pandemic, students from the class of 2020 quickly adapted to technological devices but communication was still one-way because many closed their cameras during lectures. (Martini & Hayati, 2022). Therefore, in this research, the author will look at post-COVID-19 pandemic communication ethics for SV UNS class of 2022 students in learning, especially in terms of appearance when learning using online media, whether the way they appear when learning online is the same as when in class or different.

**B. Methods**

This study uses using quantitative descriptive method (Jalil et al., 2020; Meke et al., 2022), as it was considered the suitable method for the topic of the research. The instrument used was an online questionnaire created in Google Forms with open questions. The questionnaire is then distributed to the respondents, and the answers will be processed to discover findings and material to be analyzed. In this study, random sampling is used, so that there is no certain limitation for the students who are willing to become respondents. Respondents are students of all even semester D3 and D4 programs at SV UNS in the 2022/2023 academic year. The incoming data shows that 185 students gave answers divided between men and women as shown in Table 1. The study programs that gave answers came from D3 Keuangan dan Perbankan, D3 Perpajakan, D3 Usaha Perjalanan Wisata, D3 Teknologi Hasil Pertanian, D3 Budidaya Ternak, D3 Desain Komunikasi Visual, and D4 Studi Demografi dan Pencatatan Sipil.

**Table 1: The Gender of the Respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The total population of the UNS SV students based on the data owned by the University’s system can be seen in Table 2, numbering 6438 in the odd semester and 6048 in the even semester with 27 types of study programs according to the presentation in Table 2. Observation is another collection technique used to increase the completeness of the data. Secondary data comes from administrative data recorded in the SV UNS education section and articles and other documentation.

C. Results and Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic and the generation the research subjects come from are considered to be the cause of an accelerated shift in ethics in communication. The conclusions of research conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic stated that the use of diction, and different language styles between generations as well as environmental factors in which a person grows up and the attitude of educators are factors that determine whether students are ethical or not towards their educators. (Fauziyyah, 2019).

SV UNS students class of 2022 belong to Generation Z (Gen Z), a generation born into a world of technology connected to the internet. They were born from 1995 to 2012 (Hastini et al., 2020; Pichler et al., 2021). This means that Generation Z is still considered the younger generation, most of whom are currently elementary and middle school students and the oldest members of this generation are university graduates. Some nicknames for them include Generation N (for Net), generation D (for digital), generation V (for viral), or the Google Generation.

The most suitable label is 'Digital Natives', namely the younger generation who live their lives immersed in technology (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). One of the main characteristics of Gen Z members is a reduced ability to pay sustained attention because they think globally, communicate, and consume information from all over the world. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z prefers digital media over traditional media and has a constant need to receive new and different types of information. What is also characteristic of Gen Z is that they understand technology and prefer communication via technology rather than direct human contact.

What is interesting that can be discussed after the COVID-19 pandemic when learning at SV UNS still applies the online model alongside offline learning? Respondents who are Generation Z because they were born in the 2000s answered that they can still attend and undergo lectures both online and offline. They said the hybrid lecture model was a solution for limited classes. According to them, it is more effective to use a face-to-face system because they can connect directly with lecturers and are not constrained by signals, and the material presented is more easily accepted. Of course, this is different from one of the characteristics of Gen Z.

The effectiveness of offline learning is shown in Table 3 with answers from 162 students because there is no internet connection and the fluctuation of the signal is one of the noises (or interference) which causes communication between lecturers and students to be hampered. However, this combination of learning also benefits them in terms of saving time and fuel for the motorized vehicles they own from the answers of 11 students. Furthermore, according to them, because they are
SV students whose curriculum is designed to enter the world of practical work, offline learning is considered the most efficient.

According to Franz Magnis Suseno (Rici et al., 2021), ethics is a human’s attempt to use reason and mental power to solve the problem of how he should live if he wants to be good. As a science, the object of ethics is human behavior. Therefore, ethics plays an important role in maintaining the cultural value of communication in every aspect of life (Pohan et al., 2023)(Pohan et al., 2023). This means that ethics is very much needed in social life (Turnip & Siahaan, 2021) by both people in the real world and cyberspace.

The connection of ethics to the values of oneself is considered in close proximity. In response to this matter, three differences in the state of ethics have to be understood (Junaedi, 2020; Rayhaniah et al., 2021) : (1) ethics that are descriptive, (2) ethics that are normative, and (3) meta-ethics. Ethics that are descriptive, can be identified as the ones that can give an explanation to the attitude and behavioral aspect of one individual. Meanwhile, when talking about ethics that belongs to the normative side, it does not cater to the need for an explanation about how an act can be judged and justified. The objective of ethics on the normative side is to construct an ethical compass that is rationally correct and applicable in reality. Last but not least, meta-ethics will more likely differentiate the morality of actions (whether it is morally correct or considered immoral) and also explain it in the process.

Talking about effective communication, it is revolves around the process of exchanging information, ideas, beliefs, feelings and attitudes between participants can produce something that is under previous expectations. Communication not only aims to make other people understand but also hopes that other people accept our point of view (Saiful Akmal et al., 2022).

Table 2: Name of Department and Number of Students of SV UNS in 2022 Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of Department in Sekolah Vokasi UNS</th>
<th>Number of Students, First Semester of 2022 Academic Year</th>
<th>Number of Students, Second Semester of 2022 Academic Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>D3 Agribisnis</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>D3 Akuntansi</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>D3 Akuntansi [Madiun]</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>D3 Bahasa Inggris</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>D3 Bahasa Mandarin</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>D3 Budidaya Ternak</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>D3 Desain Komunikasi Visual</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>D3 Farmasi</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>D3 Kebidanan</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>D3 Keuangan dan Perbankan</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>D3 Komunikasi Terapan</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>D3 Manajemen Administrasi</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>D3 Manajemen Bisnis</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The world of higher education is a place where the character and disposition of students as individuals are shaped to become a better generation of successors and successors. Therefore, the relationship between students and all elements in higher education must run following norms, life values, moral obligations, and principles of decency. (Sari, 2020). In the world of higher education, communication is controlled and conditioned for educational purposes to create harmony in education.

Communication as a manifestation of human expression in verbal and non-verbal form regarding what they feel and think, must be understandable by all parties involved. Communication between lecturers and students, educational staff, and students will be effective if there is mutual conflict. Mutual respect and appreciation arise from good self-awareness. In other words, communication ethics are important to internalize and apply in the world of education.

SV UNS students continue to take part in learning both face-to-face and via Zoom meetings. They were orderly during the lecture. They wear neat loose clothing including tops (collared) and bottoms (pants/skirts) and shoes during face-to-face learning and also comply with the dress code in several courses that require batik clothing. But when asked the question what about appearance during online learning? Many people answered that they were wearing neat loose clothes but only tops because what was visible on the camera was only the face and a little of the body. Sometimes they forget to use the batik dress code for certain courses. There were even those who during lectures did not open their cameras because the clothes they were wearing were collarless and there were those who were asked to open their cameras by the lecturer but still did not open them and when asked the reason was because they were not wearing the hijab.
Table 3: Effective Learning Method According to Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Learning Method</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Offline</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the research on communication ethics in the 2016 PPKn student WhatsApp group for politeness, conveying information, and respecting other people’s privacy has been implemented very well (Afriani & Azmi, 2020) on the other hand, according to the observation on the online learning process found that external factors originating from the family and environment around students as well as internal factors from within students caused students’ attitudes towards communication ethics using WhatsApp groups to be poor. (Prabowo et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the communication ethics of SV UNS students when learning online in terms of appearance were also found to be quite poor. The way they look when learning offline is different from when taking part in online learning. They still have seriousness in receiving the material but ethically their appearance is not following the type of normative ethics. Some rules have been agreed upon between lecturers and students regarding appearance during lectures, both online and offline, but they have not been fully implemented, especially when entering the online learning phase. This means that students have not been able to apply the principles of mutual respect and appreciation and lack discipline towards the agreed rules.

D. Conclusion

Although one of the characteristics of Generation Z is that they prefer communication via technology rather than direct human contact, the learning mechanism that students consider to be the most effective and efficient is face-to-face learning. Student communication ethics in terms of appearance during online learning via Zoom meetings were stated to be poor because not all students opened their cameras, not all of them wore collared shirts and had dress codes by the agreements in several courses. This finding and conclusion shall be useful for future research that deals with the scope of ethics and communication in higher education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


