

Transformation of Digital Communication Media in Practicum-Based Learning: Examining the Experience of IAIN Langsa Lecturers, Aceh

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Article Info

Received: 2022-06-12

Revised: 2022-03-21

Accepted: 2023-12-20

Keywords:

Communication
Transformation,
Digitalization, Learning.

Abstract

The transformation of communication in education is critical to sustaining good learning. The COVID-19 epidemic has altered how instructors communicate, hence changing their body of knowledge. This study explores how instructors at IAIN Langsa, Aceh, have dealt with the shift from traditional to digital communication media in the context of teaching. The primary emphasis is on how they modified their communication tactics to manage learning following the COVID-19 outbreak and the difficulties they encountered, such as shifting learning paradigms and gaining access to technology. This study uses a qualitative methodology to show how lecturers' personal experiences in practicum courses mirror efforts to enhance learning connections in this new era. Interviews with practicum course teachers who continue to employ digital media for instruction served as the data source. The study's findings demonstrate that lecturers' communication styles have changed during the teaching and learning process. Lecturers mostly communicate via the Zoom program, while attempts are being made to use alternative platforms, including Google Classroom and WhatsApp. They still have significant difficulties with communication regularity and frequency, though. to boost lecturers' digital literacy and the efficacy of communication education through media diversity. After the COVID-19 pandemic, IAIN Langsa's communication media underwent a quick metamorphosis; nonetheless, additional work must be done to support an ideal learning experience with more effective communication.

I. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic that has hit the world since the beginning of 2020 has brought significant changes in various aspects of world life (Soni, 2020), including in the field of education. In Indonesia, the Government's policy to limit physical activity outside the home to curb the spread of the virus forced educational institutions to adopt distance learning methods. (Putra et al., 2020). This sudden transformation requires the effective use of communication media to ensure that the teaching and learning process can continue even without face-to-face contact. (Azhari & Fajri, 2022). Before the pandemic, learning in Indonesia was still dominated by conventional methods, such as face-to-face learning in the classroom. The communication media used is also relatively simple, such as whiteboards, textbooks, and presentations (Yoga, 2021). However, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technology in learning. Various online learning platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, and Microsoft Teams have become the main tools in the teaching and learning process. In addition, social media and instant messaging applications are also used to communicate between teachers and students. (Febrianto et al., 2020).

These changes impact not only the way the material is delivered but also the way students interact and learn. Limitations in physical interaction make students more independent in seeking information and completing assignments. Teachers must also be more creative in compiling learning materials to remain exciting and easy to understand even though they are delivered virtually. (Angraeni, 2021). However, this transformation is not without its challenges. Difficulties in equitable internet access, limitations of technological devices, and lack of digital competence among teachers and students are some of the main obstacles. Governments, educational institutions, and other stakeholders must work together to address these challenges so that all students can access quality education. (Adisel & Pranansa, 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has also opened up opportunities for innovation and improvement of the education system in Indonesia. Digital technology in learning allows for flexibility in time and place and access to a wider range of educational

resources. (Nisa et al., 2020) In the post-pandemic era, it is important to continue developing and integrating technology in learning to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

The transformation of communication in education has become critical to maintaining effective learning continuity amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has forced universities, including IAIN Langsa and Aceh, to change the way lecturers transform their knowledge. Previously, communication in learning tended to be traditional, but now, it must be switched to the digitalization of education. In this context, this study aims to investigate the experience of lecturers from IAIN Langsa in dealing with this change in communication media.

Research by Negin A. Riazi (Riazi et al., 2023) Emphasizes that along with the Covid-19 pandemic significantly affecting students in learning physically, mentally, and socially so that students are worried about their future, it is necessary to carry out thorough communication involving students to capture their needs. Kristen M C Malecki (Malecki et al., 2021) In explaining the results of her research that the Covid-19 pandemic also had an impact on communication, Kristen emphasized the importance of risk communication to see community developments in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. Risk communication aims to provide correct and good information about dangers and ways to prevent them, but others may provide wrong information. Ioana Literat Research (Literat, 2021), which examines students' experiences participating in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, shows that COVID-19 has changed the learning model carried out offline. This makes students exhausted, and learning this does not support empathy and sympathy behavior toward students. Several other studies also explain significant changes in communication models carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic to after the COVID-19 pandemic. This material occurs in various sectors such as education, business (Al-Hakim, 2021), Journalism (Masduki & Prastya, 2022), research (Dwi et al. Mihardja, 2023), health (Abbas et al., 2021) and technology (Elpana et al., 2022).

Changes in community behavior after COVID-19 affect not only the psychological aspect but also the style and model of communication between students and teachers.

Of course, this does not only involve educators in making decisions about students; good communication management is needed in building a learning pattern that a crisis communication model still colors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unlike several previous studies, this study focuses on the adaptation of communication strategies carried out by these lecturers to manage learning after the COVID-19 pandemic. Their main challenges include access to adequate technology and a change in the learning paradigm from face-to-face to more digital media. Through a qualitative approach, this study will reveal how the personal experiences of lecturers in teaching practicum courses reflect their efforts in improving learning interaction in this new era. Thus, this research highlights the transformation of communication in the context of education in the digital era and explores how lecturers personally adapt to these changes and overcome various emerging challenges.

2. Research Method

This paper is the result of empirical research conducted at IAIN Langsa using qualitative data (Butsi, 2019). Qualitative research emphasizes data collection, data analysis, and interpretation methods. (Sandelowski, 1995) The phenomenological approach in this study is used to answer the question of how efficient and effective communication models are used in the learning process (Susilo, 2017) because of the big obstacle in learning, namely the communication pattern built by lecturers and students at IAIN Langsa. Phenomenology looks at the structure and experience of a group of people's symptoms associated with the observed observations, so there is a relationship between the researcher and the studied object. (Aspers, 2009) This form of phenomenological paradigm refers to the process of collecting data, which is the primary research material, by observing and studying the life phenomena experienced by each individual towards something (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007); this is a phase of phenomenological observation creates accurate research (Van Manen, 2017).

Primary data sources were obtained from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation; interviews were conducted with lecturers and students in practical and theoretical courses. In addition, this paper also uses several other

empirical research results to add data and enrich the analysis in this paper. The data analysis method was carried out by means of data reduction (reduction), Display data (Display), Conclusions and Verification (Conclusion And Verification) (Namey et al., 2008).

3. Results And Discussion

Learning Digital Communication Media at IAIN Langsa

Communication media is a tool for obtaining a source of information. Information sources are references obtained in the form of books, scientific journals, magazines, and other sources that are used as a foothold and knowledge in the learning process (Abdul Latip, 2020) During the COVID-19 pandemic, IAIN Langsa lecturers used learning resources in the form of digital media. As Mr. Ikhsan Kamila Latif conveyed, digital learning resources are used in the learning process, including other relevant and useful sources. Until now, digital communication media is still used in certain conditions.

Learning resources can be easily accessed in a variety of forms, including books, journals, and articles. In addition, learning resources can also be accessed online via the internet in PDF form. There are also learning resources obtained through libraries or digital libraries, either by downloading through the internet or coming to the IAIN Langsa library. In addition, learning resources can also be obtained independently, both digitally and in person, allowing broader and more accessible access (Latif:29/11/2022).

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The learning resources obtained can be accessed easily. They are obtained through the Internet, including from online sources such as Google and

journals. Learning resources can be obtained independently, allowing students to obtain the information they need easily and quickly. (Syamsuri: 28/12/2022)

The learning resources obtained can be accessed quickly, allowing students to obtain the information they need easily and quickly. These learning resources are obtained through the internet, including from online sources such as Google and journals. Thus, students can obtain the information they need independently, without contacting teachers or visiting the library.

Learning resources, including books, journals, and articles, can be easily accessed in various forms. In addition, learning resources can also be accessed online via the internet in PDF form. There are also learning resources obtained through libraries or digital libraries, either by downloading through the internet or by coming to the IAIN Langsa library. Thus, learning resources can be accessed independently, both digitally and in person, allowing for broader and easier access. The learning resources obtained can be accessed quickly, allowing students to obtain the information they need easily and quickly. These learning resources are obtained online, including from online sources such as Google and journals. Thus, students can obtain the information they need independently, without contacting teachers or visiting the library.

Based on observations on December 6, 2022, regarding the communication media used by lecturers to students during the COVID-19 pandemic, lecturers use WhatsApp as the only information medium related to learning. However, not all lecturers communicate regularly with students, only in the run-up to virtual classes. Based on the results of the 2022 survey of students with the use of digital communication media at IAIN Langsa can be seen in the following table:

Platform	Number of Users	Percentage
Zoom	127	98,45%
WhatsApp Group	102	79,06%
Edlink	79	61,24%
Siakad	28	21,70%
Google Classroom	8	6,20%
Google Meet	6	4,65%
Other platforms	9	6,98%

Source: Respondent Survey in 2022

Table 1 shows the students' preferences for using the platform. Zoom is the most widely used platform, with 98.45% of respondents using the platform. WhatsApp groups are also prevalent, and they are used by 79.06% of respondents. Variations in the use of other platforms were also seen, such as Siakad which was used by 21.70% of respondents; Edlink, which was used by 61.24% of respondents, Google Classroom which was used by 6.20% of respondents, Google Meet which was used by 4.65% of respondents, and other platforms used by 6.98% of respondents.

Activities	Number of Interactions
Presentation of Lecture Materials	3,370
Video Conference	2,941
Quiz	60

Source: Edlink IAIN Langsa 2023

Based on data on the interaction of lecturers and students using Edlink digital media during the Covid-19 pandemic at IAIN Langsa, it can be seen that the activity of delivering lecture material is the most carried out activity by lecturers, with the number of interactions as many as 3,370 times. Video conference activities are also quite active, with a total of 2,941 interactions. However, quiz activities are the least carried out activity, with the number of interactions only 60 times. This data shows that lecturers interact more with students in activities related to learning materials than quiz activities.

Digital Communication in Learning at IAIN Langsa: Advantages and Disadvantages

The communication process in delivering messages in learning at IAIN Langsa is carried out using digital communication media. Initially, information was sent through the WhatsApp Group of Courses, then continued with interaction in the Edlink application in the virtual conference room for material explanations. In the virtual conference room, lecturers explain lecture material, making it easier for students to understand each material. This process is similar to conventional face-to-face meetings but uses digital media.

In an interview, Mr. Ikhsan Kamilan Latif discussed the use of digital communication media in the learning process in practicum courses at IAIN Langsa.

He explained that Edlink, a digital media platform provided by the Campus, is used to display material in videos related to astronomy materials and PowerPoint slides. Edlink has an unlimited duration in the learning process and synchronization with the campus Siakad system so that student attendance can be directly connected to Siakad. (Latif : 29/11/2022).

Digital communication media, in the form of the Edlink application provided by the IAIN Langsa campus, is used for learning. In addition to Edlink, other applications, such as Siakad, can be synced with Edlink, allowing students to connect directly in the attendance process in a virtual room of a digital classroom.

Other applications like Google Meet and WA Group have been used during the pandemic. These apps are easily accessible and available for free from campus, requiring no personal cost. The learning materials are well received, but specialized materials such as geometry and practice are easier to understand face-to-face in conventional classrooms. The student response was excellent, as seen from the liveliness and presence in the virtual space and the ability to hear and see well through video conferencing. (Latif : 29/11/2022).

Based on this statement, the communication media used, such as the Edlink application, Zoom, Google Meet, and Group WA, are used as digital communication media, and these applications are easily accessible and available for free from the campus, without requiring personal fees. The use of digital communication media is considered adequate in the learning process. Zoom, Edlink, and Siakad media are considered the most effective digital communication media used in the learning process. Siakad data has been provided in the lecture schedule at Group WA, making it easier for students to attend lectures.

However, several difficulties exist when using digital communication media. Specialized materials such as geometry and practice are easier to understand face-to-face in conventional classrooms. To overcome the difficulties, various preparations are needed, including scheduling meetings, simplifying information, limiting reporting, and determining the digital media to be used.

The student response was very good, as seen from their liveliness and presence in the virtual space and their ability to hear and see well through video conferencing. In addition,

WA applications, Google Classroom, email, and Edlink are used as communication and learning tools, and they are delighted with the use of digital media, as it can save time and money.

The Edlink, Zoom, Google Meet, and Group WA applications are used as digital communication media that are easily accessible and available for free from campus. Zoom, Edlink, and Siakad media are considered the most effective digital communication media used in the learning process. Siakad data has been provided in the lecture schedule at Group WA. Specialized materials such as geometry and practice are easier to understand face-to-face in conventional classrooms. The solution to overcome the difficulties is to make various preparations, which include scheduling meetings, simplifying information, limiting reporting, and determining the digital media to be used. The student response was excellent, as seen from the liveliness and presence in the virtual space and the ability to hear and see well through video conferencing.

This study shows that the types of digital media used during lectures during the pandemic are divided into various components. This digital media can display text, images, graphics, and sounds and is also accompanied by video conferences. Because it combines several components in the delivery of messages and information, this type of digital media can be categorized as multimedia.

One of the media used by lecturers and students during the COVID-19 pandemic at IAIN Langsa is YouTube social media as a learning communication medium. Lecturers use YouTube to present lecture materials in the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Materials related to courses taught by lecturers can be easily accessed by students, making it easier for them to obtain learning resources that display lecture materials in the form of images, graphics, animations, or videos. Thus, students can understand all lecture materials easily and practically.

The communication media lecturers use to convey information to students are Zoom, WhatsApp Group, and Edlink. The Zoom application is very widely used by 127 respondents or around 98.45% of the total respondents. WhatsApp Group was used by 102 respondents, reaching around 79.06% of the total respondents. Edlink was used by 79 respondents, around 61.24%. Siakad was used by 28 respondents, around 21.70%. The

other platform was used by nine respondents, around 6.98%. Google Classroom was used by eight respondents, around 6.20%. Google Meet was used by six respondents, around 4.65%.

Disadvantages of Digital Communication Media in Learning

Digital communication media is beneficial in transforming information over long distances. This makes it very convenient for people to get information in this modern era. However, it is possible that problems occur in the process of delivering information. (Emeilial & Muntazah, 2023) Communication disruptions in interactive digital media-based lectures can hinder the ongoing learning process. As Mr. Ikhsan Kamilan Latif conveyed, communication barriers at IAIN Langsa can take the form of various things that interfere with the communication process.

The disruptions faced in interactive digital media-based lectures at IAIN Langsa are several things that can interfere with the communication process. One of the most significant obstacles is the need for a stable network. If the network is unstable, then the learning process can be disrupted. For example, the laptop device should be in good condition if the lights or electricity go out. Suddenly, the network was unstable during the learning process, so students attending lectures were ejected. In addition, the speaker swings simultaneously using the microphone, thus interfering with the interaction. (Latif: 29/11/2022)

The disruption of digital communication includes the need for a stable network, so if the network is unstable, the learning process can be disrupted. For example, the laptop device should be in good condition if the lights or electricity go out. The network was suddenly unstable during the learning process, so students attending lectures were ejected. In addition, the speaker swings simultaneously using the microphone, thus interfering with the interaction. Mr. Marimbun, a lecturer in the Islamic guidance and counseling study program, also conveyed the same statement.

He explained that the obstacles faced in interactive digital media-based lectures at IAIN Langsa include several things. One of the obstacles is the power outage, which can interfere with the learning process. In addition, the

availability of the internet is inadequate where the student is domiciled, so it is suddenly disconnected and can be resumed after the signal improves. Internet facilities are inadequate because they are related to students' locations, such as in the Southeast Aceh and Aceh Tamiang areas, which are far from urban areas. Unstable internet networks, lights that often turn off, and inadequate internet availability are some of the obstacles faced in interactive digital media-based lectures at IAIN Langsa. (Marimbun: 8/12/2022).

One of the communication disorders is the lights off, which can interfere with the learning process. In addition, the availability of the internet is inadequate where the student is domiciled, so it is suddenly disconnected and can be resumed after the signal improves. Internet facilities are inadequate because they are related to students' locations, such as in the Southeast Aceh and Aceh Tamiang areas, which are far from urban areas. Unstable internet networks, lights that often turn off, and inadequate internet availability are some of the obstacles faced in interactive digital media-based lectures at IAIN Langsa.

Shannon and Weaver's informative theory explains that communication is the process of sending information from source to destination through appropriate channels. In the context of learning resources, this theory explains that learning resources can be accessed easily through various channels, including the Internet, libraries, and digital libraries. Thus, students can obtain the information they need easily and quickly.

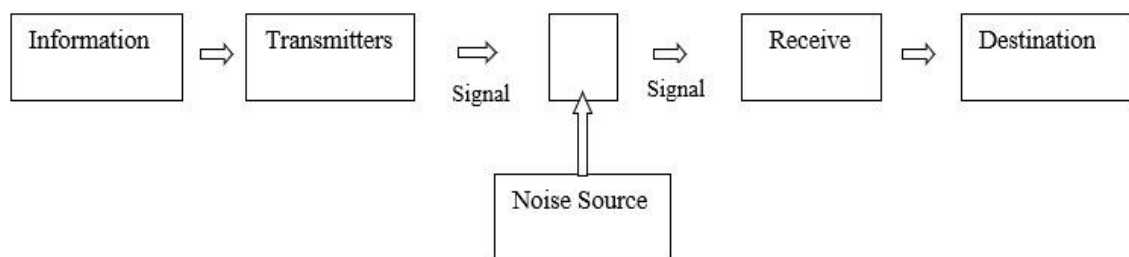


Figure 1. Shannon and Weaver's informative theory (Al-Fedaghi, 2012).

Shannon and Weaver's Informative Theory introduces using a combination of media to communicate messages, such as a learning management system (LMS), digital boards, and video conferencing in learning media. In addition, this theory also uses a linear and unidirectional communication model, which is by the use of a linear communication model.

Shannon and Weaver's theory also introduces the concept of distraction as one of the factors that can affect the communication process, which is by using the concept of distraction in the sentence. As such, Shannon and Weaver's informative theory is relevant in several ways, including the use of media combinations, linear communication models, and the concept of distraction. (Ritchie, 1986).

Research shows that the type of media used by lecturers against students during the COVID-19 pandemic at the Langsa State Islamic Institute is video conference. Lecturers use the Zoom and Edlink Zoom media platforms to deliver lecture materials directly, as well as YouTube to present lecture materials in the form of presentations. Lecturers and students can interact directly through the learning method of discussion, displaying images, videos, sounds, and chats. In addition, lecturers also use other media such as reading books, journals, articles, and so on in the form of PDF and PPT texts which are disseminated through the WhatsApp Group Course social media platform and the Edlink application.

Shannon and Weaver's Communication Theory shows that the use of online learning media such as video conferences, media platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet, as well as learning videos that can be created by lecturers and disseminated through the YouTube platform or video can increase efficiency and effectiveness in the learning process. Lecturers and students can interact directly through video conferencing and can provide quick and effective feedback. The challenge faced by educators in using social media as a learning medium is that educators must prepare themselves to be able to operate technology and must improve their abilities and skills innovatively and creatively in accordance with technological developments in order to be able to present learning that is in accordance with the characteristics of millennial students.

4. Conclusion

In learning communication media, lecturers use Zoom and Edlink Zoom media platforms to deliver lecture materials directly and YouTube to present lecture materials in the form of presentations. Lecturers and students can interact directly through the learning method of discussion, displaying images, videos, sounds,

and chats. Research shows that the type of media used by lecturers against students during the COVID-19 pandemic at the Langsa State Islamic Institute is video conference.

Shannon and Weaver's Communication Theory shows that the use of online learning media such as video conferences, media platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet, as well as learning videos that can be created by lecturers and disseminated through the YouTube platform or video can increase efficiency and effectiveness in the learning process. Lecturers and students can interact directly through video conference and can provide fast and effective feedback. One of the communication disruptions faced in interactive digital media-based lectures at IAIN Langsa is the power outage, which can interfere with the learning process. In addition, the availability of the internet is inadequate where the student is domiciled, so it is suddenly disconnected and can be resumed after the signal improves. Internet facilities are inadequate because they are related to students' locations, such as in the Southeast Aceh and Aceh Tamiang areas, which are far from urban areas. Unstable internet networks, lights that often turn off, and inadequate internet availability are some of the obstacles faced in interactive digital media-based lectures at IAIN Langsa.

The challenge faced by educators when using social media as a learning medium is that they must prepare themselves to be 'literate' in technology and improve their abilities and skills innovatively and creatively in accordance with technological developments in order to present learning that is in accordance with the characteristics of millennial students.

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