

## Factors contributing to negative emotional experiences in intercultural academic communication

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**How to Cite This Article:** Hermanto (2025). Factors contributing to negative emotional experiences in intercultural academic communication. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi*, 9(3). doi: 10.25139/jsk.v9i3.10395  
Received: 28-05-2025, Revision: 25-09-2025, Acceptance: 31-10-2025, Published: 29-11-2025

**Abstract** This study investigates the factors contributing to students' negative emotional experiences during communication with peers, faculty members, and staff in the culturally diverse setting of Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS), Surabaya, Indonesia. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research examined the interplay of communication styles, interpersonal relationships, and socio-cultural differences of 126 respondents. Results indicate that a significant majority, 75.4% of students, reported experiencing negative emotions during campus communication, with female students reporting a higher prevalence within their gender group. Qualitative analysis identified three primary categories of contributing factors: 'tone and style of communication,' 'interpersonal relationships,' and 'social and cultural differences' along with their sub-categories, such as impolite or disrespectful language and feelings of being undervalued or unsupported, primarily stemming from communication styles and interpersonal relationships emerged as the most significant contributors to negative emotional experiences. The study highlights the critical role of communicative styles and interpersonal dynamics in eliciting negative emotions within a diverse university environment. These findings underscore the need for fostering inclusive and supportive communication practices to mitigate emotional strain and enhance student well-being and academic achievement.

**Keywords:** academic communication; inter-cultural communication; interpersonal communication; negative emotions; student well-being

### INTRODUCTION

Surabaya, a prominent urban centre in East Java, has emerged as a significant destination for higher education, attracting a diverse student population from across Indonesia. The city's appeal is rooted in its concentration of reputable public and private universities, which offer a conducive environment for academic advancement. Enhanced accessibility to university information via advanced information and communication technologies, coupled with improved transportation infrastructure, has further facilitated the migration of students from various regions.

The Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology (ITS), a distinguished legal entity state university (PTNBH), exemplifies Surabaya's academic prominence. Consistently ranked among the leading national universities in Indonesia (Webometrics, 2024). ITS attracts students from a broad geographical spectrum of Indonesia, including provinces beyond East Java and islands outside Java, such as Central Java, West Java, Jakarta, Banten, Yogyakarta, Bali, Sumatera, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua (Hermanto et al., 2021). This diverse student body contributes to a complex and dynamic sociocultural landscape within the campus.

The influx of students from varied regional backgrounds introduces a confluence of cultural norms, linguistics differences, and diverse communication styles. As observed by Salsabila and Shafa Khalisan, these differences were reflected in the form of lifestyle, way of communication, and way of thinking (Salsabila & Shafia Khalisan, 2021). Moreover, these

disparities create a multifaceted environment within the academic setting. Consequently, students engaged in social and academic interactions may experience significant cultural adjustment, potentially leading to psychological and emotional strain. This is further supported by recent research indicating that the adaptation to new cultural and linguistic environments can significantly impact students' emotional well-being (Oluwabusola Dorcas Olagunju et al., 2024).

The transition to a new academic environment, particularly one characterised by cultural and linguistic heterogeneity, can elicit a range of negative emotional experiences. Intercultural communication theory posits that discrepancies in style and cultural norms can lead to misunderstandings, frustration, and feeling of alienation (Gudykunst, 2003). Moreover, the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic suggests that individuals undergoing cultural transitions experience emotional responses, including anxiety and stress, as they navigate new social and academic landscapes (Mulyadi et al., 2024). Furthermore, the impact of these transactions can be understood through the lens of social identity theory, which highlights the importance of group affiliation and social acceptance; students from minority cultural groups may experience negative emotions when they perceive their social identity as being threatened or devalued (Feasel et al., 2023).

This study aims to investigate the specific factors contributing to negative emotional experiences by students during communication among students, faculty members, and staff within the academic setting of ITS. By examining the interplay of cultural, linguistic, and interpersonal dynamics, this research seeks to provide insights into the emotional challenges faced by students in a diverse university environment and inform strategies for fostering inclusive and supportive communication practices. The importance of this research is further supported by the work of (Pekrun, 2006), which emphasises the role of emotions in academic achievement and well-being. Additionally, (Leary, 2007) highlights the motivational and emotional aspects of the need to belong, which can be significantly impacted by negative communication experiences within a social setting such as a university campus. Recent studies have demonstrated a direct link between negative emotional experiences and academic performance, reinforcing the necessity of understanding and mitigating these challenges (Wijbenga et al., 2024).

In the context of higher education, a campus is a miniature society where students from various backgrounds meet and interact. Campus activities carried out by students are a means of learning to coexist with other different people, develop social skills, and prepare themselves to be good citizens of society. When entering a new foreign culture, students often feel unhappy, dissatisfied, uncomfortable, anxious, angry, and even have difficulty communicating (Devinta, 2015). This feeling is natural to occur and felt by nomads who live in a new cultural environment known as culture shock.

Humans are fundamentally social beings, inherently inclined to live and interact within groups (Avitasari et al., 2023). This innate need for social connection is essential for fulfilling both physical and psychological requirements. Effective communication and social skills are therefore critical for fostering cooperation and building supportive relations, from personal friendships to broader communities. These skills are considered foundational for successful social interaction, as they enable individuals to express thoughts and emotions, understanding others, and build meaningful relationships, all of which are vital for overall human well-being and social cohesion (Everyday speech, 2024) (Revised)

Speaking is a form of verbal communication that requires language understanding and skills. Speaking skills need to be acquired by everyone who needs communication in daily activities, either one-way or reciprocal between the interlocutors. As a social being, speaking is a requirement for every individual to socialize and communicate with others in a society.

In relation to multilingualism, according to Goh and Silver (2004) as quoted by Nurakhir (Nurakhir, 2016), multilingualism is a situation in society where there are more than one language. There are also those who define multilingualism as the use of more than one language, either by the speaker as an individual or by the speaker as a community. Multilingualism requires communication between interlocutors from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds as well as how languages that have different social and historical statuses in society are raised. In addition, multilingualism also requires ways (tone, diction), modes (oral, written, visual), and media (face-to-face, video, telephone, email) in communicating meaning.

However, not everyone in a society masters the multiple languages that exists in that society and uses it as a means of communication. There are always cases where people in that society use existing languages with different levels of competence. There are people who speak a certain language very fluently, but there are also people who are not fluent in that language, or even unable to use it at all. Therefore, the use of the mother tongue plays a very important role as the identity language of a group or tribe. In the academic context of college, students use their mother tongue when they are in discussion activities inside or outside the classroom. Using a mother tongue in this situation will help them understand the issues that arise during the discussion more easily and help them express their ideas and thoughts smoothly (Nurakhir, 2016). Conditions like this are strongly influenced by students' daily communication habits, especially with their family and close friends.

In relation, language is a fundamental component of culture, intricately reflecting a society's values, perspectives, and collective experiences. As a complex system, language shapes how a group of people thinks, feels, and interacts with the world, directly influencing communication and interpersonal dynamics.

In this study, three factors will be examined that are the focus of communication experienced by students in the campus environment, which cause negative emotions in students. These factors are the tone and style of communication, interpersonal relationships, and socio-cultural differences.

Tone refers to the way we use sound to convey meaning, emotions, and attitudes. Tone of voice plays an important role in communication. The tone of voice used is responsible for about 35-40 percent of the messages sent (McPheat, 2012). The tone of voice spoken can help increase or hinder the effectiveness of the message conveyed and influence how it is received and understood by others (Everyday speech, 2024). The important role that tone plays in communication includes: a) Expressing emotions and attitudes. The tone of our voice can express various forms of emotions and attitudes. For example, expressing happiness, anger, sadness, empathy, and so on. By using the right tone of voice, we can communicate our emotions effectively and authentically so that we can connect with others more deeply. b) Building relationships. Tone plays a role in building relationships with others. A warm and friendly tone of voice can create a friendly atmosphere and inclusive relationships, whereas a rough and high-pitched tone creates an atmosphere that can hinder effective communication. c) Affects the perception of others. The tone of voice can affect how others perceive us and the message we convey. A confident and assertive tone can inspire trust and credibility, whereas a tone of doubt and uncertainty makes others doubt our abilities. So, by paying attention to the tone of our voice, we can shape the perception of others and create positive interactions.

However, communication style refers to the speech characteristics of individuals used in communication. Communication style shows how the listener understands and receives the verbal message. So important, the communication style is said to go beyond literary texts and penetrate all forms of communication (Paraschiv, 2020). The style of communication that manifests during the act of communication affects how messages are conveyed, received, processed, and interpreted (Balakrishnan et al., 2024).

Communication style is essential for effective communication in a variety of situations. In general, communication styles are grouped into four types, namely passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and assertive (Ilmiah et al., 2024). A person who has a passive communication style usually speaks softly, cannot articulate their feelings, and relies on others. A person who has an aggressive communication style tends to criticise others, rush to lust, and expect things from others. A person who has a passive-aggressive communication style is characterised by traits that outwardly show passivity but secretly express their anger through subtle, indirect, or behind-the-scenes actions. Assertive communicators have a tendency not only to be confident but also to respect the thoughts and feelings of others. Assertive communication creates space for honest conversations and promotes healthy relationships between individuals.

Interpersonal relationship is social and emotional interaction between two or more people. According to Gardner (2017) (Tolstoukhova et al., 2023) interpersonal relationships in the context of on-campus interactions that occur between lecturers, students, or staff play a major role in student life. Given the fact that students spend most of their time on campus, interpersonal relationships become one of the important factors in their work productivity and psychological state.

Some interpersonal skills can help build and maintain relationships in some ways, such as active listening, conflict resolution, empathy, and communication. Language is central to interpersonal relationships: to initiate, maintain, and end relations. Language is also used to create social bonds, and the way people use language can indicate the state of a relationship. Positive language can also be important for the quality of interpersonal relationships.

Cultural diversity has a great influence on the communication process between individuals, so the communication process between people with different cultures requires a comprehensive understanding (Nuraeni et al., 2022). Different cultures have different value systems in determining communication behaviour. Therefore, with a good understanding of cultural differences, communication can run effectively. In addition, social status, roles, and relationships between individuals in a group or organization also affect the way they communicate.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research tried to analyse and describe factors contributing to negative emotions experienced by students during social interaction in academic settings. More specifically, this study seeks to give clear descriptions of the quantity, the styles of communication, the impact, the students' responses to the situation, and the form of communication experienced in the situation. Therefore, the mixed method, which combines the elements of quantitative and qualitative research, is used. This method helps gain a more complete picture than a standalone quantitative or qualitative method (George, 2023). Moreover, the use of mixed methods enables researchers to answer research questions with sufficient depth and breadth and helps generalise findings and implications of the researched issues to the whole population (Dawadi et al., 2021). In this study, the quantitative method is used to measure and analyse the prevalence of negative emotional experiences, while the qualitative technique is employed to gather descriptive information about the students' personal experiences and the specific factors influencing their emotional experiences. Creating a survey questionnaire with structured questions to measure the prevalence of negative emotional experiences. The questionnaire also contains a set of open-ended questions aimed at eliciting detailed narratives about students' experiences.

This research was carried out on the campus of the Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember (ITS) Surabaya with ITS students as the population. Therefore, the distribution sampling method falls under non-probability sampling, commonly known as convenience sampling. The sample research is students who are willing to voluntarily fill out a questionnaire with a set of structured, closed and open-ended questions provided in Google form format. The link of the online platform is distributed through WhatsApp groups of the respondents, and a total of 126 students were willing to fill in the questions.

Data collection focused on the indicators derived from the theoretical constructs; therefore, the instrument's validity was ensured through attention to content and construct validity. The qualitative dataset was then enriched by an integrated qualitative component, derived from open-ended questionnaire items, which was critical for thematically analysing and identifying the three primary contributing factors.

The data obtained from the results of the questionnaire in Google Form is then downloaded and presented in an MS Excel spreadsheet format. The data were then grouped and analysed according to the frequency of the existing variables for quantitative analysis, and grouped according to the general category of responses given for qualitative analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 shows a summary of the descriptive analysis of the respondents' demographic background. The demographic profile of the participants in this study reveals a sample of 126 students with a distribution across gender, age, and semester levels. Regarding gender, the sample exhibits a male predominance with 71 participants (56.3%), while 55 participants (43.7%) identified as female.

Age distribution demonstrates that most participants are between 19 and 21 years old. The largest age cohort consists of 20-years-olds, with 45 participants (35.7%), followed closely by 19-years-olds, comprising 40 participants (31.7%). Younger participants aged 18 constitute a small fraction, with only 2 participants (1.6%). Similarly, older participants aged 22 and 23 represent minor proportions, with 5 participants (4.0%) and 1 participant (0.8%), respectively.

Furthermore, most of the samples consisted of students in their third semester, with 78 participants (61.9%), fifth semester, with 44 participants (34.9%), and a smaller portion of participants from sixth and seventh semester students, with 1 participant (0.8%) and 3 participants (2.4%) respectively.

**Table 1.** Respondents' demography

| Profile  | Description | n (%)     |
|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Gender   | Male        | 71 (56.3) |
|          | Female      | 55 (43.7) |
| Age      | 18          | 2 (1.6)   |
|          | 19          | 40 (31.7) |
|          | 20          | 45 (35.7) |
|          | 21          | 33 (26.2) |
|          | 22          | 5 (4.0)   |
|          | 23          | 1 (0.8)   |
| Semester | 3           | 78 (61.9) |
|          | 5           | 44 (34.9) |
|          | 6           | 1 (0.8)   |
|          | 7           | 3 (2.4)   |

Source: Author (2025)

The data in Table 2 presents experiences of negative emotion among the respondents during communication on campus. The data indicates a significant trend of which a substantial majority of the students reported experiencing negative emotions. Specifically, out of the total 126 respondents, 95 (75,4%) experienced negative emotions during communication, while only 31 (24.6%) reported no such experiences. This overall distribution highlights the prevalence of negative emotional experiences during communication on the campus.

When disaggregated by gender, in total, more male respondents experienced negative emotions than female with the number of 49 (51,6%) and 46 (48,4%), respectively. Moreover, the findings also confirm that more male respondents, 22 (31,0%), express the experience of no negative emotion compared to the number of female respondents with 9 respondents (16.4%). However, within the same gender, female respondents exhibited an even higher rate of reported negative emotional experiences. Specifically, 46 out of 55 female participants (83.6%) reported experiencing negative emotions, with only 9 (16.4%) reporting no such experiences. On the other hand, 49 out of 71 male participants (69.0%) experience negative emotions. This suggests that female students, within this sample, are more likely to report negative emotional experiences in academic communication contexts.

**Table 2.** Respondents' negative emotion experience

|        |                                      | Negative emotion experience          |        | Total  |        |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|        |                                      | No                                   | Yes    |        |        |
| Gender | Count                                | 22                                   | 49     | 71     |        |
|        | Male                                 | % within gender                      | 31,0%  | 69,0%  | 100,0% |
|        |                                      | % within negative emotion experience | 71,0%  | 51,6%  | 56,3%  |
|        | Female                               | Count                                | 9      | 46     | 55     |
|        |                                      | % within gender                      | 16,4%  | 83,6%  | 100,0% |
|        |                                      | % within negative emotion experience | 29,0%  | 48,4%  | 43,7%  |
| Total  | Count                                | 31                                   | 95     | 126    |        |
|        | % within gender                      | 24,6%                                | 75,4%  | 100,0% |        |
|        | % within negative emotion experience | 100,0%                               | 100,0% | 100,0% |        |

Source: Author (2025)

The findings show that female students report a higher prevalence of negative emotional experiences which significantly highlights both psychological and sociolinguistic interpretations

related to the gender differences. Psychologically, female students often prioritise relational harmony and social support more highly. Consequently, the core contributing factors, such as disrespectful communication and feeling undervalued, threaten their sense of belonging more intensely, translating into a greater frequency of interpersonal stress and negative emotions. The finding may also reflect sociocultural norms that permit women to express emotional distress more readily than men, who may be socialised to suppress or to externalise such feelings.

The findings are also highly relevant to sociolinguistic theories of gender and communication style, which explain why specific communication issues cause more emotional strain for one group. When female students engage with peers, faculty, or staff using a rapport-oriented style aiming to build connection, consensus, and support, and are met with a detached, blunt, or disrespectful 'tone and style of communication, their core communication goal is invalidated. This mismatch causes them to feel 'unsupported' and undervalued, reinforcing the negative emotional experience.

The qualitative data derived from open-ended survey responses revealed a range of rationales provided by students who reported an absence of negative emotional experiences during interactions and communications with peers, faculty, and staff. These justifications included, but were not limited to, the perceived tolerability of the communication situation, the respondent's capacity to adapt to linguistics and dialectical variations, a tendency to minimise the significance of communicative exchanges, and instances where interlocutors provided instruction or clarification regarding the language employed.

Nadya Salsabella Angelio reported an absence of negative emotional experiences during interaction and communication within the campus environment, attributing this to her capacity for linguistic adaptation. She said, *"so far I feel fine and can adapt to the differences in language and accents used by friends in different regions."*

Similarly, Vicka Azzahra Amalia Lubis reported no communicative barriers arising from linguistic and accentual variations. Furthermore, she indicated that the interlocutor facilitated understanding by providing instruction on unfamiliar linguistic elements. *"So far it has never been because of my friends, even from other areas where they use a language that I don't understand, they still teach well and never offend,"* she explained.

These two testimonies suggest that linguistic and accentual variations do not necessarily constitute communicative impediments that elicit negative emotional responses. Rather, the data indicate that awareness and acknowledgement of such variations, coupled with an open and receptive disposition toward learning, are pivotal factors in fostering successful communication and interaction.

Among the 95 student respondents who reported experiencing negative emotions during campus interactions, a diversity of causal factors was identified. To facilitate analysis and data presentation, these factors were categorised into three primary themes based on their thematic similarities as presented in Table 3. The first category, 'tone and style of communication,' encompasses issues related to the way individuals convey messages. The second category, 'interpersonal relations,' focuses on challenges arising within relational dynamics. The third category, 'social and cultural difference,' underscores the influence of cultural disparities on communicative exchanges.

Each primary category is composed of several constituent elements that characterise the overarching theme. The 'tone and style of communication' category encompasses four elements: impolite and disrespectful language, a patronising or haughty tone, ambiguity or lack of directness, and variations in communicative style. The 'interpersonal relations' category consists of three elements: feelings of being undervalued or unsupported, conflicts and disagreements, and feelings of exclusion or marginalisation. The 'social and cultural differences' category is characterised by two elements: linguistic impediments and disparities in cultural norms and expectations.

It is noteworthy that individual student responses to survey items concerning communicative experiences that elicited negative emotions did not consistently align with a singular element within a given category. Rather, responses frequently spanned elements across different categories. Consequently, the aggregated frequency of each communicative element does not correspond directly to the total number of respondents. Furthermore, certain respondents did not provide sufficient articulation of their communicative experiences, resulting in their exclusion from the quantitative analysis presented in Table 3.

Table 3 presents a quantitative analysis of communicative elements identified as contributing to negative emotional experiences among student respondents. The data are categorised into three primary themes: tone and style of communication, interpersonal relationships, and social and cultural differences, with each theme further delineated by specific constituent elements.

Based on the frequency distribution across the three categorical domains, communicative challenges eliciting negative emotional responses among students are predominantly attributable to tone and style of communication. Specifically, impolite or disrespectful language constitutes the most prevalent factor, with 21 instances (20%). This is followed by a condescending or arrogant tone, reported in 8 instances (7.62%). Issues related to a lack of clarity or directness and variations in communication styles were reported in 5 (4.76%) and 4 (3.81%) instances, respectively.

**Table 3.** Communication elements causing negative emotions

| Category                        | Elements                            | Frequency (%) |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Tone and style of communication | Rude or disrespectful language      | 21 (20)       |
|                                 | Condescending or arrogant tone      | 8 (7,62)      |
|                                 | Lack of clarity or directness       | 5 (4,76)      |
|                                 | Differences in communication styles | 4 (3,81)      |
| Interpersonal relationships     | Feeling undervalued or unsupported  | 20 (19,05)    |
|                                 | Conflicts and disagreements         | 11 (10,48)    |
|                                 | Feeling excluded or left out        | 2 (1,90)      |
| Social and cultural differences | Language barriers                   | 2 (1,90)      |
|                                 | Cultural norms and expectations     | 5 (4,76)      |

Source: Author (2025)

The interpersonal relationships category also reveals significant contributions to negative emotional experiences. Feelings of being undervalued or unsupported were reported in 20 instances (19.05%), closely mirroring the frequency of impolite language. Conflicts and disagreements accounted for 11 instances (10.48%), while feelings of exclusion or marginalisation were reported in 2 instances (1.90%). Conversely, the social and cultural differences category demonstrates the lowest frequency of reported elements. Language barriers and disparities in cultural norms and expectations were reported in 2 (1.90%) and 5 (4.7%) instances, respectively.

Though not the main factor, the identification of social and cultural differences confirms that communication breakdowns and subsequent negative emotions are rooted in a lack of mutual understanding of cultural communication norms present in the diverse ITS environment; meanwhile, the differences in 'tone and style of Communication' are likely manifestations of these cultural variations.

Notably, concerns regarding the use of impolite or disrespectful language were articulated by Muhammad Hatta Amanu, saying "Yes, during group discussions, I once felt offended because there were group friends who in conveying ideas that did not respect the feelings of other group members and were presented in a high tone." Likewise, another respondent Jessica Bella Timothy articulated that "Sometimes, students often say rude things to each other, and I am not used to that." Experiencing negative emotions due to receiving harsh words is also experienced by Hugo Pramaditya, who said "Once, I was thrown harsh words by my senior who made me never talk to anyone again for a few days."

The results' implication underscores the need for enhancing intercultural communication competence among students, faculty, and staff to mitigate the emotional strain resulting from inadequate communication adaptation. The second most frequently reported element contributing to negative emotional experiences was the perception of being undervalued or unsupported, cited by 20 respondents. This element constitutes the predominant factor within the category of interpersonal interactions. As Social Identity Theory argues, individuals derive part of their self-esteem from their group membership; therefore, when a student perceives negative treatment from someone outside their social in-group, their social identity is threatened.

Illustrative student statements, such as that provided by Muhammad Taufiqul Hakim, exemplify this phenomenon: "Yes, ever. I once felt hurt when communicating with a lecturer. At that time, I was taking a course that was quite difficult for me. I found it difficult to understand the material taught by the lecturer. When I asked the lecturer, he replied in a stern tone and as if impatient. I felt offended and angry because I felt unappreciated." Similarly, Nova Kharisma expressed disappointment regarding the perceived lack of attention and support, by saying, "I was disappointed when my friend did not receive advice from me about practicum. Even though what I suggested was the intention of the lecturer's explanation. But I relented and let my friend give an understanding to another friend about the practicum. Then when doing the assistance, my friend asked the lecturer about the practicum and explained that his understanding was wrong, and automatically, the practicum of one class also got invalid results because the practicum method was wrong from the beginning."

The finding that 'interpersonal relationships' significantly contribute to negative emotions suggests students are experiencing threats to their social identity within campus interactions. Feeling 'undervalued' is a direct indicator of perceived out-group bias or a failure of the interaction to affirm the student's sense of belonging and worth within the broader university in-group.

The fact shows that the acceptance of negative emotions is critically rooted in the perceived failure to achieve social acceptance within the university environment or feeling of being undervalued. This perceived threat to one's social standing serves as a significant source of chronic interpersonal stress, which leads to the emotional strain and diminished students' well-being.

The third contributory element to negative emotional experiences during communication was identified as conflicts and disagreements, reported by 11 instances. This element is primarily attributed to misunderstandings arising between students and their interlocutors. The case presented by Austin Anggia Sianipar exemplifies the occurrence of conflicts and disagreements. "Yes, like at that time I forgot to bring an STNK in one of the ITS parking lots, it was obviously my fault that I forgot to bring the equipment. My motorbike was immediately forcibly turned by one of the parking guards and I was scolded. At that time, my condition was very difficult after the last afternoon class. Because it feels so bad and my heart can't accept it even if I don't wear it, I automatically fight with the guard. The guard even challenged me back." Likewise, the situation experienced by Frido Ilham Prianggoro "used to be angry with a friend because at that time we were in a group and he was a less serious person, then when he wanted to assist with his duties he always made a fuss by himself, always blamed his friends in the group, and liked to joke at the wrong time, making my patience peak so I scolded him."

The data indicate that cultural norms and linguistic variations exert a comparatively limited influence on the elicitation of negative emotions during communication. This finding suggests that, within the context of campus-based communication and student interaction, while cultural backgrounds, norms, and language may differ, their impact on communicative exchanges is minimal. This phenomenon can be attributed, in part, to students' extensive exposure to information disseminated via the internet and social media, which facilitates a broader understanding of diverse cultural perspectives. Furthermore, the utilisation of Bahasa Indonesia as a lingua franca serves to mitigate potential misunderstandings arising from linguistic disparities, thereby minimising the likelihood of negative emotional responses.

Overall, the findings no matter how intense they are to contribute to negative emotional experiences, confirm that communication in a culturally diverse setting acts as a source of communicative stress. Based on the Stress-Adaptation-Growth Dynamic, the negative emotions detected are critical indicators of the stress phase.

The findings, therefore, justify institutional intervention, such as promoting supportive communication practices to help students move from the stress phase into successful adaptation and ultimately achieve growth and higher well-being. Moreover, the findings necessitate that campus management shift its focus from mere cultural awareness to fostering practical communicative competence across all institutional levels. This involves prioritizing interpersonal dynamics by implementing training on respectful dialogue and supportive interaction to directly mitigate the emotional strain caused by poor communication style and the feeling of being undervalued. Ultimately, the study advocates for the institutionalization of inclusive

communication protocols to ensure student well-being is systematically addressed as a key output of a healthy multicultural climate.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the prevalence and nature of negative emotional experiences during communication within a university campus environment. The demographic analysis revealed a predominantly male participant pool, with a concentration of students aged 19 to 21, primarily in their third and fifth semesters. The data demonstrated a significant prevalence of negative emotional experiences, with a substantial majority of respondents reporting such occurrences (75.4%). Notably, female students reported a higher rate of negative emotions within their gender group, although the distribution of gender within the total negative emotion group was relatively balanced. This finding holds specific psychological relevance, suggesting a heightened sensitivity to relational dynamics and potential gender-normative differences in emotional reporting.

Qualitative analysis identified three primary categories of communicative elements contributing to negative emotions: 'tone and style of communication', 'interpersonal relations', and 'social and cultural differences.' 'Tone and style of communication' category, particularly impolite or disrespectful language, emerged as the most significant contributor. 'Interpersonal relations,' specifically feelings of being undervalued or unsupported, also played a substantial role. Conversely, 'social and cultural differences,' while present, had a comparatively lesser impact. The high prevalence of negative emotions confirms the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic, positioning daily communication as a source of chronic communicative stress that impedes student well-being and adaptation.

The findings also suggest that while linguistic and cultural variations exist within the student population, they do not significantly contribute to negative emotional experiences. This may be attributed to students' exposure to diverse perspectives through the internet and social media, along with the unifying role of Bahasa Indonesia. However, communicative styles and interpersonal dynamics are critical factors in eliciting negative emotions. This research underscores the importance of fostering respectful and supportive communicative environments within academic settings to mitigate negative emotional experiences among students.

These findings strongly resonate with Social Identity Theory (SIT), suggesting that negative emotions are elicited when interactions threaten students' sense of worth and belonging within the university collective, creating a perception of social rejection rather than affirmation. Conversely, the comparatively lower impact of social and cultural differences suggests that while cultural variation exists, the immediate, pragmatic elements of communication style as a key focus of Intercultural Communication Theory (ICT) are the most powerful daily triggers of emotional strain.

This research reframes negative emotional experiences as a significant outcome of inadequate communicative competence and threatened social identity. It critically underscores the necessity of fostering respectful and supportive communicative environments to transition students out of the stress phase and enable successful social and academic adaptation.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research was made possible through funding from the Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember and the Department of Development Studies, to whom we extend our sincere gratitude. The specific grant contract number is 1973/PKS/ITS/2024.

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