



Communicative Responses Of Students To Campus Life Pressures

Yulia Putri Maharani ¹⁾; Alifzu Raja Tegar Julianda ²⁾; Jordy Ardiansyah ³⁾; Sri Narti ⁴⁾

^{1,2,3,4} Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu, Indonesia

¹ e-mail: yuliaamaharanni.7@gmail.com

Received [23-12-2025]

Revised [26-02-2026]

Accepted [07-03-2026]

Abstract. University students are in a phase of life characterized by various academic, economic, and social demands that may create pressures within campus life. These pressures require students to adapt and develop ways to respond to challenging situations through everyday communication. This study aims to examine the communicative responses of university students in Bengkulu to campus life pressures. The research employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving active students from various study programs at several universities in Bengkulu Province. The findings indicate that students experience academic pressure related to coursework demands and achievement expectations, economic pressure associated with financial limitations, and social pressure related to adjustment processes within the campus environment. These pressures shape students' communicative responses, which tend to be practical, adaptive, and solution-oriented. Students often use direct and efficient communication to express needs and seek solutions to the challenges they face. Interpersonal communication among peers serves as a primary medium for sharing experiences and obtaining support, while communication between students and lecturers plays an important role in managing academic pressure. In addition, students adjust their communication styles based on context and interlocutors and utilize digital media to access information and maintain social relationships. This study highlights that students' communicative responses represent an essential part of the adaptation process to campus life pressures.

Keywords: *Students, Communication, Campus Life, Adaptation, Social Pressure.*

INTRODUCTION

University students are at a stage of life characterized by numerous demands and continuous change. In addition to fulfilling academic responsibilities, students are confronted with various pressures inherent in campus life, arising from economic, social, and academic dimensions. These pressures require students to independently adapt, manage existing limitations, and make decisions that have direct implications for the continuity of their studies and their everyday lives. Within this context, communication becomes a crucial element that functions not merely as a means of message transmission, but also as a way through which students respond to and interpret the pressures they experience.

In Bengkulu Province, university students exhibit distinctive characteristics. The majority come from lower–middle socioeconomic backgrounds, originating from both urban areas and regency-level regions. Limited family economic resources, rising living costs, and dependence on parental financial support constitute realities frequently encountered by students. At the same time, limited opportunities for part-time employment and the persistence of academic demands place students in a highly pressurized situation. Such conditions have the potential to influence how students communicate, whether in expressing needs, building social relationships, or making everyday decisions.

Campus life pressures in Bengkulu are not solely related to economic factors, but also to academic demands. Students are required to complete coursework, maintain academic performance, and adapt to learning systems that emphasize independence and individual responsibility. For some students, academic pressure becomes more complex when it must be balanced with organizational involvement or part-time work. This situation places students in contexts that demand adaptive communication skills in order to effectively negotiate time, roles, and responsibilities. In communication studies, communicative responses refer to the ways individuals respond to particular situations through processes of message delivery, meaning-making, and action-taking. Students' communicative responses to campus life pressures do not emerge spontaneously, but are shaped by experience, environmental conditions, and the specific situations they encounter. How students interpret messages from lecturers, peers, family members, and campus institutions influences the attitudes and actions they adopt (Littlejohn et al., 2017).

Communication also plays a significant role in helping students manage the pressures they experience. Through interpersonal communication, students can express concerns, seek social support, and obtain information needed to cope with constraints. Conversely, limitations in communication can intensify perceived pressure, particularly when students struggle to convey academic difficulties or economic conditions they face. Therefore, the communication patterns that develop in students' lives reflect how they respond to campus life pressures as a whole. The social environment of campuses in Bengkulu further shapes the dynamics of student communication. Interactions occurring in classrooms, student organizations, living arrangements, and digital spaces generate diverse communication patterns. Students learn to adjust their ways of speaking, expressing opinions, and managing differences in background in their daily interactions. Under conditions of pressure, the ability to adapt communication becomes a critical factor in enabling students to maintain social relationships while simultaneously meeting academic and economic demands (West & Turner, 2021).

To date, studies on student life in Bengkulu have largely focused on academic aspects, well-being, or economic conditions in isolation. Research that explicitly positions communication as the central lens for understanding students' responses to campus life pressures remains relatively limited. Yet, communication is a fundamental aspect that connects students' internal conditions with their social environments. By examining students' communicative responses, a more comprehensive understanding can be gained of how students interpret pressure and develop adaptive strategies in campus life. Based on this background, the present study focuses on the communicative responses of university students in Bengkulu to campus life pressures. This study aims to understand how students make sense of academic, economic, and social pressures, and how these interpretations are reflected in their everyday communication patterns. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of communication scholarship, particularly in the context of student life in regional settings, and to serve as a consideration for higher education institutions in designing policies and campus environments that are more responsive to students' needs..

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication as a Process of Response

Communication is a process of message transmission and exchange involving a sender, message, channel, receiver, and the resulting effects. In the context of student life, communication functions not only as a means of conveying information, but also as a medium through which individuals respond to situations and pressures they encounter. Communicative responses emerge as outcomes of individuals' meaning-making processes toward messages received from their social environments.

Littlejohn et al. (2017) explain that communication is a dynamic process involving interpretation and responses to social symbols. This implies that individuals do not receive messages passively; rather, they actively interpret the meanings of messages based on their experiences and the situations they face. In campus life, students are continuously exposed to academic, social, and institutional messages that require particular responses. Students' communicative responses to campus life pressures can be observed in how they express opinions, seek assistance, negotiate, and make decisions. These response patterns reflect students' efforts to adapt to environmental demands and existing constraints.

Campus Life Pressures

Campus life pressures refer to various demands and conditions that have the potential to generate tension in students' lives. Such pressures may stem from academic demands, economic constraints, social relationships, as well as family and environmental expectations. Students are required to manage these pressures independently as their responsibilities increase.

According to West and Turner (2021), the social environment plays a significant role in shaping how individuals respond to pressure. In the campus context, academic pressures such as coursework, examinations, and performance targets often coexist with non-academic pressures, including economic needs and social adjustment. This combination of pressures influences how students communicate and interact with their surroundings. For university students in Bengkulu, campus life pressures are frequently shaped by limited economic resources and regional social conditions. These pressures encourage students to develop adaptive communication patterns in order to meet academic demands while sustaining their daily living needs.

Students' Communicative Responses

Communicative responses can be understood as the ways individuals respond to specific situations through communicative behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal. These responses encompass processes of message interpretation, emotional regulation, and actions taken as outcomes of communication. In student life, communicative responses serve as important indicators for understanding how individuals cope with pressure and adjust to the campus environment. Effendy (2018) argues that communication is not solely aimed at transmitting messages, but also at shaping attitudes and behaviors. Accordingly, students' communicative responses to campus life pressures are reflected not only in particular utterances or actions, but also in how they build social relationships and make life choices. Students' communicative responses may be adaptive, such as seeking social support, engaging in discussions with peers or lecturers, and accessing relevant information. However, these responses may also be passive or defensive, depending on how students interpret the pressures they face and their capacity to manage communication effectively.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to gain an in-depth understanding of students' communicative responses to campus life pressures. The qualitative approach is selected because the study focuses on students' experiences, meaning-making processes, and the ways in which they respond to the situations they encounter through everyday communication. The descriptive method is used to systematically and contextually portray students' communication phenomena in accordance with the realities of campus life.

The study was conducted at several universities located in Bengkulu Province. The research participants consisted of active students from various study programs and cohorts.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on specific criteria, namely students who live away from their families or in rented accommodation, experience academic, economic, or social pressures, and are willing to provide information openly. This selection was intended to obtain relevant and in-depth data regarding students' communicative responses to campus life pressures.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to allow the researcher to explore informants' experiences and perspectives flexibly in accordance with the context of the discussion. Non-participant observation was employed to examine students' communication patterns in campus life, including interactions with peers and within academic environments. Documentation served as supporting data in the form of notes or documents related to students' activities.

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data obtained from the various collection techniques were analyzed continuously from the initial phase of the research through to the reporting stage. This analytical process aimed to identify patterns, meanings, and forms of students' communicative responses to campus life pressures. To ensure data trustworthiness, this study applied triangulation techniques, including both source triangulation and method triangulation. Triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from different informants as well as from interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, the study adhered to research ethics principles by informing participants about the research objectives and ensuring the confidentiality of their identities.

RESULTS

The findings indicate that university students in Bengkulu experience a range of campus life pressures originating from academic, economic, and social dimensions. Academic pressure is associated with the workload of coursework, demands for timely completion of studies, and the need to maintain academic performance. Students reported that dense class schedules and continuous academic demands often generate feelings of stress, particularly when they must be balanced with limited time and energy.

Economic pressure emerged as a dominant factor in students' lives. Most informants stated that financial constraints affect the fulfillment of basic needs, such as food, housing, and academic-related expenses. These conditions encourage students to develop various survival strategies, including engaging in part-time work, managing expenditures carefully, and seeking alternative forms of assistance. Economic pressure also influences how students communicate, especially in expressing needs to their families and in building relationships within their social environments.

In responding to campus life pressures, students demonstrated communicative responses that were practical and solution-oriented. They tended to convey messages directly and efficiently when confronted with situations requiring immediate fulfillment of needs. Such responses were evident in students' efforts to seek information through interpersonal communication as well as digital media, particularly regarding employment opportunities, educational assistance, and strategies for managing daily necessities.

Interpersonal communication with peers played a significant role in helping students manage the pressures they faced. Interactions with peers who shared similar experiences provided a space for students to share stories, express concerns, and obtain support. Students perceived peer communication as fostering a sense of being understood and as helping to alleviate perceived pressure. In addition, interactions with lecturers influenced students' communicative responses. Students who felt that open channels of communication with lecturers were available tended to be more willing to express academic difficulties and seek

guidance. Conversely, limited communication with lecturers led some students to address academic challenges independently, which may potentially intensify pressure.

The study also found that students adjusted their communication styles according to context and interlocutors. In academic settings, students employed more formal and structured communication, whereas in peer interactions, communication tended to be more relaxed and open. This adjustment reflects students' ability to read situational cues and manage social interactions as a form of adaptation to campus life pressures. The use of digital media constituted an important component of students' communicative responses. Social media platforms and instant messaging applications were utilized to seek information, maintain social relationships, and express emotions. Digital media provided flexible spaces for communication, particularly when time and distance constraints posed challenges in campus life. To further clarify the forms of pressure and students' communicative responses, the research findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Communicative Responses to Campus Life Pressures

Pressure Aspect	Form of Pressure	Students' Communicative Responses	Description of Findings
Academic	Coursework load and performance demands	Communication with peers and lecturers	Students express academic difficulties to peers, while communication with lecturers is conducted in a more formal manner
Academic	Time constraints	Negotiation and communicative adjustment	Students adjust their communication strategies to manage schedules related to coursework, organizational activities, and part-time work
Economic	Limited living expenses	Practical and solution-oriented communication	Students actively seek information on part-time employment and financial assistance through interpersonal communication and digital media
Economic	Dependence on family financial support	Selective communication with family	Students convey urgent needs while withholding information perceived as potentially burdening their families
Social	Peer-related pressure	Open communication with peers	Peers serve as the primary source of support and a space for sharing concerns
Social	Differences in background	Adjustment of communication style	Students adapt their language use and attitudes to gain acceptance within the campus environment
Digital	Time and distance constraints	Utilization of digital media	Social media and instant messaging are used to seek information and maintain social relationships

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that campus life pressures experienced by university students in Bengkulu stem from academic, economic, and social dimensions. This finding is consistent with the perspective of Littlejohn et al. (2017), who conceptualize communication as a dynamic process shaped by environmental conditions and individual experiences. The pressures encountered by students do not merely constitute situational backgrounds; rather, they actively shape how students interpret messages and respond through their everyday communicative behaviors. Academic pressures related to coursework load, demands for timely completion of studies, and performance targets influence students' communication patterns within academic settings. Students tend to develop more structured and cautious communication when interacting with lecturers, while communication among peers is more open and informal. This pattern reflects communicative adjustment based on context and role relationships within the campus environment, reinforcing the view of West and Turner (2021) that individuals adapt their communicative behaviors in accordance with the roles they occupy and the social situations they encounter.

Economic pressure emerged as a dominant factor influencing students' communicative responses in Bengkulu. Financial constraints encourage students to develop communication that is practical and solution-oriented. Students become more proactive in seeking information through interpersonal communication and digital media regarding employment opportunities, educational assistance, and strategies for managing daily living needs. These responses demonstrate that communication functions as an adaptive tool in addressing limited resources, in line with Effendy's (2018) assertion that communication not only conveys messages but also shapes individual actions and behaviors. Peer interaction plays a crucial role in helping students manage campus life pressures. Peers serve as a primary source of communicative support because they share relatively similar experiences and are perceived as more understanding of the conditions faced. Peer communication provides a space for students to express concerns and obtain support without formal pressure, indicating that interpersonal communication serves as a site for meaning negotiation and the management of social pressure in campus life.

In contrast, communication between students and lecturers exhibits different dynamics. Students who perceive the existence of open communication channels tend to manage academic pressure more effectively, as they are able to convey difficulties and seek guidance. However, when communication with lecturers is perceived as limited, students are more likely to address academic challenges independently. This condition highlights the importance of communicative openness within academic environments in shaping students' responses to learning-related pressures.

The study also shows that students adjust their communication styles according to interlocutors and situational contexts. Such adjustments reflect students' capacity to read social contexts and manage interactions as a form of adaptation. In communication scholarship, the ability to adjust communication styles is regarded as an important indicator of meaning-making processes and responses to the social environment. University students in Bengkulu demonstrate this ability as a strategy to maintain social relationships while simultaneously meeting academic demands. The use of digital media constitutes an essential component of students' communicative responses. Social media and instant messaging applications are utilized for information seeking, maintaining social relationships, and emotional expression. Digital media offer communicative flexibility that helps students overcome time and distance constraints. These findings suggest that developments in communication technology significantly influence how students respond to campus life pressures, particularly in the context of contemporary student life. Overall, this discussion illustrates that the communicative responses of university students in Bengkulu are formed through the interaction between campus life pressures and students' capacity to adapt their communication to the conditions

they face. These responses vary across academic, economic, and social contexts. Understanding students' communicative responses provides important insights for educational institutions in designing campus environments that more effectively support students' adaptation processes and academic success.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that university students in Bengkulu experience campus life pressures originating from academic, economic, and social dimensions. Academic pressure arises from coursework workload, demands for timely completion of studies, and performance achievement targets. Economic pressure is reflected in financial constraints that affect the fulfillment of daily living needs as well as the continuity of students' studies. Social pressure relates to the process of self-adjustment within a diverse campus environment. Students' responses to campus life pressures are manifested through communication patterns that are practical, adaptive, and oriented toward problem solving. Students tend to employ direct and efficient communication when confronted with situations that require rapid decision making.

Interpersonal communication among peers serves as a primary means for students to share experiences, express concerns, and obtain support. Meanwhile, communication between students and lecturers plays a significant role in managing academic pressure, particularly when open channels of communication are available. The adjustment of communication styles based on context and interlocutors indicates students' ability to interpret social situations and manage interactions as part of their campus life adaptation strategies. The use of digital media also plays an important role in supporting students' communicative responses, especially in information seeking, maintaining social relationships, and expressing emotions.

These findings underscore that students' communicative responses constitute a crucial component of their adaptation to campus life pressures. An understanding of students' communication patterns is expected to serve as an important consideration for higher education institutions in Bengkulu in designing policies, academic services, and campus environments that are more responsive to students' needs.

LIMITATION

Based on the research findings, higher education institutions in Bengkulu are advised to provide more open communication spaces between students and lecturers. The availability of such communication channels is expected to enable students to convey academic difficulties and obtain clear guidance, thereby allowing academic pressure to be managed more effectively. In addition, universities should strengthen academic and non-academic support services so that students receive assistance that is appropriate to the conditions they face.

Higher education institutions are also encouraged to improve access to information related to educational financial assistance, part-time employment opportunities, and student welfare support programs. The provision of clear and easily accessible information can help students manage economic pressure and reduce uncertainty in decision making. Optimizing institutional digital media platforms can serve as a strategic means of disseminating such information.

For students, it is recommended that they develop more open and reflective communication skills in responding to campus life pressures. The active use of interpersonal communication with peers as well as academic communication is expected to help students manage pressure in a more adaptive manner. In addition, students should increase their awareness of using digital media positively as a resource for information seeking and social support.

For future researchers, it is suggested that studies be extended to broader contexts, either through quantitative approaches or comparative analyses across regions. Further research may

also explore more deeply the role of digital media and institutional policies in shaping students' communicative responses to campus life pressures..

REFERENCES

- Ardianto, E. (2011). Handbook of public relations. Simbiosis Rekatama Media.
- Ardianto, E., Komala, L., & Karlinah, S. (2005). Mass communication: An introduction. Simbiosis Rekatama Media.
- Arikunto, S. (1983). Research procedures: A practical approach. PT Bina Aksara.
- Bungin, B. (2006). Qualitative research methods. Kencana Prenada Media Group.
- Cangara, H. (2020). Introduction to communication studies (4th ed.). Rajagrafindo Persada.
- Effendy, O. U. (2011). Communication studies: Theory and practice. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Kriyantono, R. (2022). Practical techniques in quantitative and qualitative communication research (2nd ed.). Prenada Media.
- Liliweri, A. (2003). Foundations of intercultural communication. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Littlejohn, S. W., Foss, K. A., & Oetzel, J. G. (2017). Theories of human communication (11th ed.). Waveland Press.
- Moleong, L. J. (1989). Qualitative research methodology. Remadja Karya.
- Morissan. (2015). Communication theories: From individual to mass communication. Prenada Media.
- Morissan. (2020). Organizational communication. Prenada Media.
- Mulyana, D. (1990). Intercultural communication. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Mulyana, D. (2000). Communication studies: An introduction. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Nasrullah, R. (2019). Audience theory and media research. Prenada Media.
- Nasrullah, R. (2022). Cybermedia theory and research. Prenada Media.
- Nasrullah, R. (2024). Digital journalism: New technological approaches in journalistic practice. Prenada Media.
- Nazir, M. (1985). Research methods. Ghalia Indonesia.
- Pawito. (2007). Qualitative communication research. LKiS Pelangi Aksara.
- Rakhmat, J. (2013). Psychology of communication (3rd ed.). PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Sugiyono. (2008). Educational research methods: Quantitative, qualitative, and R&D approaches. Alfabeta.