

## **Practiced Communication by Lecturers in Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this article is to discuss excellent communication style that being practiced by Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers in Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia. This excellent communication style is identified from a case study conducted. This case study was done at eight campuses of Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia. The study involved in-depth interview with eight representatives from (EIEL), eight Heads of Department, Department of Islamic Education and Moral, 16 colleagues and 18 students. Results of this in-depth interview were then organised and analysed by using NVivo version 7.0 program in order to construct theme and model that are related to excellent communication style of EIEL in Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia. Research findings show two aspects of excellent communication style being practiced by EIEL while performing their duties in Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia, which are verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communications are questioning and answering, being poise, consulting, giving sermon and advising. Non-verbal communications are writing, eye contact, body language and appearance. The implications of these findings have produced communication competency model of Islamic education lecturer at the Institute of Teacher Education in Malaysia. This model can be used as a guide by the excellent communication lecturer at the Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia.

**Keywords:** *verbal communication, non-verbal communication, excellent, lecturers*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Communication skill is an important factor in human life. It is a process of delivering and sharing ideas and feelings between two parties. Information will not be able to be delivered without effective communication. Humans communicate in order to give impacts towards human understanding, attitudes and actions; either they agree or disagree on certain matters as desired. The process of communication can take place at any time and humans cannot avoid or isolate themselves from this process. Hence, humans will always be communicating in their everyday life whether among human beings themselves, or between other creations, what's more with the Creator (Dixon & O'Hara, 2012; Gecer, 2013; Majid, 2011).

A very significant factor in ensuring teaching and learning process takes place effectively is communication factor. Communication process happens in almost all teaching and learning activities in classroom. Lecturers who are capable and skilful in effective communication are able to create effective teaching and learning session until its objective can be achieved. In order to ensure effective teaching and learning, lecturers should strive to learn the knowledge of communication until they are really expert in the skill, strongly and comprehensively. Excellent mastery of communication skill will help lecturers in using various kinds of suitable communication forms and creating teaching environments which are harmonious and conducive (Guat, 2013; Majid, 2011; Sabran, Sabri, & Mohamed, 2006; Wan Ali, 2011).

Element of communication is very important to the lecturers as teacher trainers at IPGM in producing future teachers who are competent, charismatic and reliable (Abdul Rahman, 2012; Omar, 2011). Thus, every lecturer, especially EIEL, should master and implement interpersonal and intrapersonal communication proficiently because both are the major characteristics in generic skill in becoming excellent and competent lecturer. Interpersonal and intrapersonal include both verbal and non-verbal communication (Z. Abdullah, Mohmad Taib, Othman, Md Salleh, & Yusuf, 2007)

According to the views of scholars on the aspect of communication is an important element for a lecturer. This coincides with the focus of this article, which discusses the types of communication adopted by the lecturer of Islamic Studies at Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia.

## **BACKGROUND OF PROBLEM**

Teacher trainers or lecturers should possess high skills in communication to give positive impact towards future teachers who are trained and educated in IPGM. There is a hope that those new teachers that start their jobs as practical teachers soon, will be able to communicate proficiently and excellently, as well as confident and creative in teaching. Good communication skills that they have learnt in IPGM are able to become a drive for them to motivate their students in classrooms. Therefore, in order to produce an excellent and quality future teachers of Islamic Education that will eventually uplift teaching profession, there is a need for education, training, instructions and guidance from Islamic Education lecturers especially those who are excellent, besides having good quality and competency in communication skill aspect, that should be the priority (Omar, 2011).

Lecturers who are not competent and excellent in communication during teaching and learning session will give negative impacts towards the achievement of students' academic. This is clearly proven in research finding by Leh(2010) that shows communication skill of lecturers particularly in the aspect of conveying ideas clearly, effectively and confidently by using verbal is only at intermediate level. This has given negative effects towards students' achievement in academic.

There are lecturers who still have difficulties in interacting with the students because of poor communication skill and style of lectures' appearances that are unable to draw students' attention during teaching and learning process. There are several weaknesses faced by the lecturers, such as knowledge delivery that is not really effective, bored and not properly planned (Sidin, 2000). According to Majid (2011) lecturers should have to communicate effectively as well as give emphasis on the aspects of social skills that help students to respond to the environment and control themselves in facing challenges to achieve and improve self-success. Effective communication needs efforts, experiences and interests towards the profession that has been entrusted.

According to Haris, Ahmad Kassim, & Yusof(2010) and Haris (2012) Islamic Education lecturers in IPGM are responsible to create awareness to the students regarding their tasks as teachers, educate students to embrace the practices of all prophets and messengers in performing da'wah. Islamic Education lecturers are also responsible to give guidance through bywords and lessons to the students so that they will practice noble qualities as teachers. All the

responsibilities mentioned can be accomplished properly and perfectly by Islamic Education lecturers who are really skilful in both verbal and non-verbal communication.

The conclusion from the discussion above, a lecturer in Islamic Education must practice effective communication while working at IPG. Effective communication will create an attractive working environment, can enhance organizational performance and can solve problems that arise among colleague.

## **OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTION**

This research aims to deeply identify the communication practices among Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers in Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia. This research also seeks for the excellent communication practices that have become pattern among Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers. Whereas the research question for this study is “What are the communication forms that have been practiced by Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers of Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia?”

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Sauli(2006) and Yong (2008) effective communication will be impeded if there is no good relationship among organisation members, whether between lecturers and students, lecturers and their colleagues, lecturers and administrators and others. An effective communication also will be hindered when suspicion and doubt occur among organisation members. Hence, he stresses factors that influence effective communications include personalities, motives, knowledge, attitudes, emotions, speaking skill and relationship of an individual. Communication can take place by speaking, listening, reading and writing. Modes of communication by using body movements or body parts, behaviours, appearances, smiles and facial expressions will also give meanings towards effective communication (Sauli, 2006; Suyumo, Ramlan, & Mohammad, 2008).

Competent lecturers are able to integrate communication skill, knowledge, technical skill, reasoning, feeling, values, and reflection on everyday practices for the benefits of an individual as well as the community with proper consideration (Mohamad, 2009). Lecturers at education institute must go through teaching and learning process that involves a lot of communication, which raises questions of not many lecturers are able to communicate proficiently and lecturers should understand what is meant by communication, discover communication skill and then practice those communication knowledge during their teaching session (Majid, 2011). Communication is a lecture done by the lecturers at the classroom in the form of voice communication, signs, movements, facial and eyes expressions, whether to complete or lessen the contents of lessons that are delivered (Cashin, 2010).

Razzaly, Baba, Md Yunus, & Konting(2012) state that a strategy to ensure active tutorial session is through effective communication. There are four ways of effective communication that should be implemented in tutorial session. First, encourage students to give comments or ask questions. Second, put an effort to memorize and call students by their names. Third, avoid any situations that are too formal yet at that same time do not being too close. Forth, improve the behaviours of problematic students at the very beginning.

Koehler & Hains-Wesson(2013) and Schulz(2008) explain that communication skill involves four aspects, which are language ability, attitude or behaviour, conversation and presentation. This means that educators should empower themselves with communication skill in both national and international languages.

Besides, according to him also, educators should know on how to communicate by using self-value bywords, ethics and cultures. On the other hand, in conversation aspect, educators should be expert in dialects, dialogues, discussion and listening. Also, in presentation aspect, educators must be wise in communicating in organisation and media. He stresses that behavioural, conversational and presentational aspects are related with body language communication. Whereas Ivy Deirdre(2012) categorises non-verbal communication into five types, which are smiling communication, hand communication, head communication, eyes gazing communication and hand shaking communication.

Beebe & Mottet(2006), Cashin(2010) and Che Pa, Kasdan, Sulaiman & Said (2014) likewise stress that communication in teaching and learning process aims for creating ideal relationship between educators and students so that they can share knowledge, ideas, information and values. Due to this reason, educators and students should communicate among themselves by using a variety of relevant medium. Verbal communication consists of utterances that are accompanied with important aspects in order to form effective verbal communication. Among of the aspects of verbal communication that should be practiced by educators are intonation and tone of voice, fluency and eloquence as well as stress. Whereas non-verbal aspects that are usually practiced by the educators are body gestures, eye contact and facial expression, for example, smiling.

This article will discuss the overall communication practices by Islamic education lecturer at the institute focused on verbal and non-verbal communication. Both are interlinked with each other. Both types of communication, this should be held by lecturers at the institute. Thus, the lecturers who have the competence and character that define excellent communication competence educators will make them competent, reputable, respected, and honored by administrators, colleagues, students, external parties, and communities.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a case study design. Due to the reason that this research involves respondents from more than one Teaching Education Institute, thus it would be more accurate if this research is called as a multiple case study. According to Chandler and Owen (2002), Yin (2003) and Denzin (2009) state that this kind of research is also being called as multi studies, which involves many areas. This means that the data has been collected and analysed through many research areas. This is agreed by Yin (2011), which means the data are collected from various areas that will increase the accuracy of research findings.

The researcher chooses multiple case research design by following an approach used by Jasmi, (2010), Kasim (2011) and Mohd Hamzah(2006) with a slight adjustment according to respondents' applicability, location and situation of the researcher. The adjustment that has been done by the researcher is the use of only one approach, which is qualitative approach that has been used completely on the research conducted.

This research also uses method of interview towards eight members of EIEL as a main data and eight Heads of Departments, 16 colleagues and 16 students as supporting data. Jasmi (2010) explains that interview is practical to be used in order to obtain accurate information from small population.

The sample in this research is chosen by using purposive sampling method, where a group of respondents that represent the population are identified and all individuals in this group are taken as sample. Researcher has identified Teaching Education Institute which has Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers that have been listed by Management of Human Resources Department.

Researcher has done face validity and reliability as being suggested by Bogdan & Biklen (2003) which is inventory validation of semi-structure questions by supervisor and experts, pioneer researches, data triangulation, field note reports, diaries as well experts' confirmation of interview inventory that has been built. The method of data collection is through in-depth interview.

Table 1: List of Panel of Analysis Experts on Agreeableness of Interview Protocol Inventory

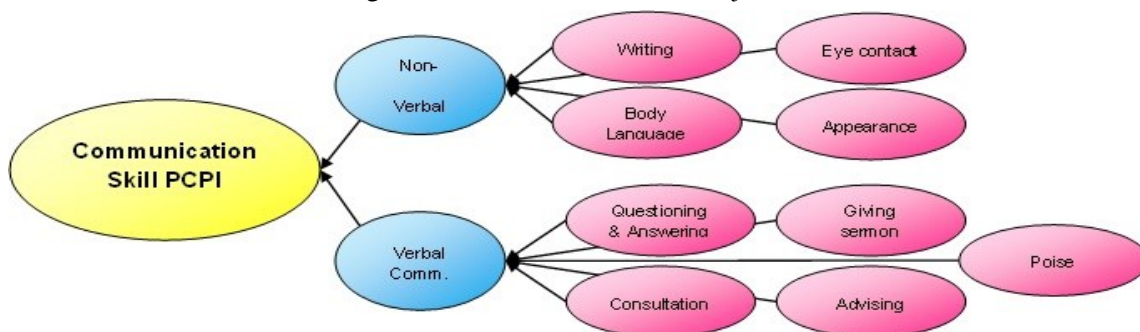
No	Name	Representative	Position and Qualification	Expertise	Agreeableness
1.	Expert A	Kolej Universiti Islam Selangor	Rector, Professor Dr.	Islamic Education	Totally Agree
2.	Expert B	Faculty of Education UKM	Senior Lecturer, Associate Prof. Dr.	Islamic Education, Arabic Language	Agree
3.	Expert C	Faculty of Islamic Civilization UTM	Senior Lecturer, Associate Prof. Dr.	Moral Education	Agree
4	Expert D	Faculty of Islamic Civilization UTM	Senior Lecturer, Dr	Islamic Education	Totally Agree
5	Expert E	Faculty of Islamic Civilization UTM	Senior Lecturer, Dr	Islamic Education	Totally Agree

Source: Form of agreeableness of Islamic Education specialists towards interview protocol inventory (2014)

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the in-depth interview that was conducted with EIEL, findings show that there are two main aspects of communication skill being practiced by EIEL in Teaching Education Institute of Malaysia. Researcher has categorised these two main aspects which are, verbal communication and non-verbal communication. The details of characteristics of communication skill are exemplified in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Communication Skill of EIEL



Based on Figure 1 above, Excellent Islamic Education Lecturers have been practicing both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. These two aspects are important skills to progress them to be excellent lecturers. Both aspects are also closely related with research findings by Jasmi, Tamuri & Hamzah (2009) and Jasmi(2010).

Non-verbal communication skills that have been practiced by EIEL towards their students in IPGM as being shown in Figure 1 are writing, eye contact, body language, appearances and attention drawing. Researcher has categorised writing as non-verbal communication because research findings reveal that there are EIEL who wrote books related to the skills that they are mastering, and those books have become references for the students in IPGM. The excerpts below prove that the aspect of communication skill through writing has been practiced by EIEL in their career.

*(TBPCP1) : "those supporting documents I've enclosed with modules that I prepared, I was involved with UUM, teaching at UUM so I have two modules that I did together with Ustazah Safiah and Puan Massura "*

*(TBEIEL) : "The book's title is Thinking Skill. Published in January 2011, I'm interested in writing however there is time constraint but the modules are still prepared"*

The second non-verbal communication that has been practiced by EIEL is the use of body language while communicating with the students. This finding is similar with research by Abdul Rahman (2012), Che Pa et al. (2014) dan Omar(2011) that state body language usage is able to deliver the message effectively, to activate teaching and learning session, to express feelings without being uttered, and to give information symbolically. The excerpts below prove that EIEL have been practicing communication skill through body language in their career.

*(TBEIEL1) : "from your body language, maybe when you are in class, there is something good that my students do as what I wish, from body language aspect I will nod, or smile"*

*(TBEIEL2) : "I once had blinked my eyes with my students, it was my intention to do those things..I want to create cheerful environment in the class "*

The third non-verbal communication practiced by EIEL is the use of eye contact while communicating with the students. This finding is similar with the views of Amzah & Amzah (2011) and Che Pa et al. (2014) that state the use of eye contact while communicating will give positive effect and can draw students' attention during teaching and learning session. The excerpt below proves that EIEL have been practicing communication skill by using eye contact towards the students.

*(TBGP1EIEL2) : "his/her eye contact, means that when we look into his/her eyes if we make mistakes, we know, there is like a strength there "*

The forth communication skill being practiced by EIEL is through appearances or self-image when communicating with the students. Appearances also influence EIEL communication style because the way we present ourselves reflects attitudes and knowledge possessed by individuals. This finding is similar with the view of M. N. Abdullah & Jasmi (2014), Jasmi, Abdullah & Mohsin (2014), Omar(2011), Syed Abu Bakar & Esa(2012) that say lecturers who display healthy competitive spirit, always energetic will show cheerful and tidy appearances. The extracts below prove that EIEL show non-verbal communication through appearances.

*(TBRS2EIEL1) : "her appearance is very clean and her dress is not over, her dress is really suitable as an ustazah"*

*(TBRS1EIEL1) : "she concerns about her appearance and she cares about boundaries, even though she is close with everyone but she still concerns about the boundaries whether with men colleagues or women "*

The next research finding is verbal communication skill has been practiced towards students. Based on Figure 1, there are 5 verbal communication skills that have been practiced by EIEL towards the students. Researcher will discuss five skills, which are questioning and answering, being poise, consulting, giving sermon and advising.

Questioning and answering skill with the students that has been practiced by EIEL proves that they possess high knowledge and able to answer questions that were given by students proficiently and strongly. This finding is similar with research by Omar (2011) who explains that excellent lecturers are able to have question and answer wisely with the students by giving them enough space to think the answers first before the lecturers come up with the correct answers. Lecturers who are wise in questioning and answering will make the student not to feel shy and tend to ask question and discuss (Mohd Daud, Basri, Baki, Hamzah, & Nawawi, 2011). The extracts below prove the communication skill that has been practiced by EIEL to the students.

*(TBKJEIEL1) : "his/her clear explanation can give understanding towards those who have problems or those who are referring"*

*(TBGP2EIEL2) : "those question and answer method, discussion are the ones that he/she usually use"*

The second verbal communication skill is being poise. In English language it is referred as 'poise'. Poise communication means that EIEL communication are pure, being concerned with the feeling, not raising voice, being soft spoken and respecting students' opinions when speaking or talking with the students. Omar (2011) and Ramlie & Hussin (2014) explain that lecturers who practice noble communication through poise communication such as sensitive towards other people's feelings, respecting each individual's opinion and voicing own opinion with sensible are able to create harmonious environment that eventually will boost teaching education institute to be ideal and respected institution. This finding is proven by using interview extract below.

*(TBRS2EIEL1) : "not even once that I saw him/her to be a person that raising voice or scolding his/her inferior, instead his/her condition is always calm, cool and tranquil"*

The third finding of verbal communication skill practiced by EIEL is consultation communication. The evaluation of promotion for a lecturer into higher status or rank is based on the contributions of that lecturer in the aspect of consultation service expertise with outsiders, involvement in administration activities as well as ability to publish academic books and articles (Abd Rahim, Ismail, Mohamad, Md Dahlal, & Nordin (2008), Nadler & Cundiff (2009) dan Nasr (1997). The extract below shows that EIEL excel in communication during consultation.

*(TBKJEIEL1) : "from the aspect of social service or consultation, he/she always involves maybe because of his/her expertise, for example, providing practicum supervising workshop for the students"*

The forth verbal communication skill practiced by EIEL is the skill of delivering sermon/talk in front of the students and public. The finding shows that EIEL are really expert in delivering lessons or sharing knowledge through sermons. This finding supports the view of Mohd Noor, Jasmi, & A Shukor (2014) that being smart in delivering sermon which possessed by lecturers will cause their values occupy the hearts of students and enable them to gain trust from the society. This finding is proven by the extract below

*(TBEIEL3) : "because for me every time people call me to give talk and stuffs... I must give something beneficial for that people"*

The fifth finding shows that EIEL are being proficient in communication when advising students who make mistakes. The language used by EIEL while advocating the students is sensible and concerned about students' feelings. This skill is really needed as an educator. This matter is agreed by Haris et al.(2010), Hussin, Che Noh, & Tamuri (2013) and Idris et al.(2008) state that educators should advocate their students without embarrassing those who make the mistakes, call them with nice names, advising them with jokes and humours, advocating while giving praise, having a strategy when advising, using beautiful language, always praying for other people, being appropriate with the targets' condition, celebrating other people's opinions, forgiving and being open.

*(TBEIEL4) : "I'm friendly but if there's any mistake I will advise..because I think I'm the old one..so I should be the one who advocates if there's something not right, isn't it"*

Based on the findings and discussion above, researcher has summarized that EIEL are practicing both verbal and non-verbal communication skills proficiently and excellently.

## CONCLUSION

Researcher concludes that these findings clearly exemplify that EIEL play important roles and are the vein towards human development and creating future teachers who are competent in every aspect, especially communication aspect. Excellent communication is a trait derived from knowledge and high personality that being owned by EIEL. These skills will give important influence towards an individual and are depicted when he or she is thinking, speaking or acting in whatever condition.

These communication aspects are in coherent with the core of the Malaysian Teacher Standards which are the ability to communicate effectively and mix around with the members of institute professionally, especially students, parents and the public. Effective communication with the students can make their objectives of teaching become clear. EIEL should ascertain that their communication is at high profession standard. The communication of EIEL that is consistently professional will create interesting and effecting teaching and learning session. EIEL that show good communication and creating conducive learning environment will encourage the feeling of respect between one another. EIEL should communicate with all their students and set high expectation, give support, encourage and provide positive and fair feedbacks about their learning efforts. Hence, EIEL in Teaching Education Institute should play their important roles in order to produce future teachers who are balance in all aspects, which are knowledge, skills and moral. EIEL that possess communication style that is excellent will give very positive impact towards future teachers who are trained at Teaching Education Institute all around Malaysia.

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