Text-Based Computer-Mediated Communication On Thesis Supervision Through Whatsapp In Pandemic Era

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Abstract

The learning and teaching processes have shifted from offline to online during Covid-19 pandemic. Online platforms are used to support learning and teaching process from early childhood to higher education institution. Another process that is important in the teaching and learning process in universities is the process of thesis supervision which before the pandemic used to be held face-to-face. Lecturers and students of the Department of Communication Science, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta use WhatsApp as a text-based Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) platform in conducting thesis supervision. Text-based CMC is lack of nonverbal and visual experiences compared to face-to-face communication. This research aim is to understand how CMC perspectives are developed between thesis supervisors and their students in thesis supervision process using WhatsApp. A descriptive qualitative research method was used in this study involving 3 thesis supervisors and 3 students as informants. Semi-structured interview was used to collect data. The results showed that the communication perspective in the thesis supervision process through WhatsApp are: (1) impersonal, indicated by the lack of nonverbal cues, delayed feedback, lack of conversational language, and focus distracted. (2) Interpersonal, indicated by the time of interaction, motivation, and the use of emoticons, and (3) hyperpersonal, indicated by online presentation management.

Keywords: *text-based computer-mediated communication, communication perspective, WhatsApp, thesis supervision process*

Komunikasi Bermediasi Komputer Berbasis Teks dalam Bimbingan Skripsi Melalui WhatsApp di Masa Pandemi

Abstrak

Pandemi COVID-19 telah membawa dampak pada penyelenggaraan pendidikan. Penyelenggaraan pendidikan dan pengajaran beralih dari luring menjadi daring. Platform daring dimanfaatkan untuk mendukung proses belajar mengajar mulai dari tingkat PAUD hingga perguruan tinggi. Bimbingan skripsi adalah proses yang penting dalam pengajaran di perguruan tinggi. Bimbingan skripsi yang sebelum pandemi biasa dilakukan dengan konsultasi tatap muka. Dosen dan mahasiswa Prodi Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta memanfaatkan WhatssApp sebagai salah satu platform komunikasi bermediasi komputer berbasis teks dalam bimbingan skripsi. Komunikasi bermediasi komputer berbasis teks sangat dibatasi oleh kehadiran isyarat nonverbal dan visual dibanding dengan dengan komunikasi tatap muka. Penelitian ini ingin mengetahui bagaimana perspektif komunikasi bermediasi komputer berbasis teks yang dikembangkan dalam bimbingan skripsi melalui *WhatsApp*. Metode penelitian kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini dengan jenis metode deskriptif. Penelitian ini melibatkan tiga orang dosen dan tiga orang mahasiswa dengan pengumpulan data berupa wawancara semi struktur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perspektif komunikasi dalam proses bimbingan skripsi melalui *WhatsApp* adalah (1) impersonal ditunjukkan dengan minimnya isyarat nonverbal, umpan balik yang tertunda, minimnya bahasa percakapan, dan fokus komunikasi yang terbagi. (2) Interpersonal ditunjukkan dengan lamanya waktu berinteraksi, adanya motivasi, dan juga penggunaan *emoticon*, dan terakhir (3) hyperpersonal dengan adanya upaya pengaturan kesan.

Kata kunci: *komunikasi bermediasi komputer berbasis teks, perspektif komunikasi, WhatsApp, bimbingan skripsi*

INTRODUCTION

Learning management system, video-mediated communication, or text-based computer-mediated communication are commonly used as online thesis supervision in universities. The use of online platforms in the process of thesis supervision has been practiced by several universities even before the pandemic occurred (Aghaee, 2015; Tuhkala & Kärkkäinen, 2018). However, the Covid-19 pandemic has been causing almost all universities to switch face-to-face thesis supervision to online.

Thesis supervision is a process that requires intense communication between the supervising lecturers and their students. Research related to the learning process showed that face-to-face interaction is the best form of communication to increase student engagement in learning (Norman, 2020). However, the pandemic has forced universities to conduct online teaching activities which require lecturers and students to adapt to these conditions. Thesis supervision is a form of knowledge transfer from lecturers to students. Knowledge transfer is important in the teaching process because it is a process of transmitting knowledge such as experiences and lessons from lecturers to students (Suebsom, 2015). Albino et al., (2004) stated that knowledge transfer involves communication between individuals and this can be mediated by technology in the transmission of

information.

Previous studies showed that online teaching offers many benefits to students because this type of teaching is student-centered and more flexible (Dhawan, in Coman et al., 2020). The consideration of choosing what type on online platform in thesis supervision is based on the advantages and disadvantages of each platform. However, platform convenience and accessibility are likely the strongest reasons to choose the platform.

WhatsApp is the most likely online application used in the thesis supervision process during the pandemic in Indonesia considering that its users reached 68.8 million with an increase of 15.1% as of August 2020 (Business Insider, retrieved from Backlinko, 2021). Compared to other instant messaging applications such as Telegram, Slack, Line, or Google Chat, WhatsApp is the most popular to use in Indonesia. Yalcinalp (in Yeboah & Ewur, 2014) stated that the value of WhatsApp application encourages students to learn, make teaching more efficient and effective, and build relationships that stimulate teaching to be consistent and progressive. This application makes it easier for students and supervisors to communicate and discuss without meeting face to face.

There were 187 students of the Department of Communications Science Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta who submitted a thesis proposal seminar in the 2020/2021 academic year. From this data, 151 students were able to complete their thesis in the same academic year. During the Covid 19 pandemic which coincided with the 2020/2021 academic year, lecturers of the department provided thesis supervision to students through various online platforms, including the Zoom, Google Meet, and WhatsApp. WhatsApp is the most used in the thesis supervision process.

Text-based computer-mediated communication through WhatsApp on the one hand is considered to have shortcomings due to the limited nature of the communication that occurs. The lack of nonverbal cues, asynchronous time, or the difficulty of conveying natural language are distractions that cause communication barriers (in Thurlow et al., 2007).

This obstructed communication raises problem of whether the supervision process can run smoothly so that it does not hinder the completion of student thesis. Research related to text-based computer-mediated communication resulted in three communication perspectives, namely impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal (Walther, 1996). Impersonal, means that communication is based only on the purpose of task completion. Interpersonal means that communication involves not only messages exchange, but also feelings. Meanwhile, hyperpersonal means communication that surpasses the face-to-face communication (Walther, 1996).

LITERATURE REVIEW

At the beginning, research stated that text-based CMC was impersonal, therefore the nature of the communication seemed flat (Walther, 2007). Impersonal

communication which lacks of nonverbal cues usually obstruct the achievement of effective communication. However, further research found that text-based computer-mediated communication can also be interpersonal. In this perspective, the establishment communication is more intimate (Walther and Burgoon, 1992). While the hyperpersonal perspective arises as a result of message sender to make a selective self-presentation.

December (in Thurlow et al., 2007) stated that computer-mediated communication is a communication process that occurs between humans by utilizing computers as a channel in a specific context and purpose. The computer referred to not only computer hardware, but also software, specifically the internet (Herring in Thurlow et al., 2007).

The study of computer-mediated communication has been growing in recent decades. Although studies about CMC have been increasing and becoming a trend in the internet era as it is today, studies in this scope began with the early development of text-based communication technology through the internet. Emails, internet relay chat, or multi-player dungeons are the early stories of how computer-mediated communication occurred.

There are three perspectives generated in text-based computer-mediated interpersonal communication research, namely: impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal (Walther, 1996). The initial approach used in text-based computer-mediated communication research is the Deficit Approach. In his research, Walther (1996) found that text-based computer-mediated communication has limitations due to the nature of the technology which can only transmit text. There are three models in this approach: the Social Presence Model, the Cuelessness Model, and the Media Richness Model.

The three models see that text-based computer-mediated communication has limitations including the absence of visual cues, the absence of nonverbal cues, and technological limitations consisting of (1) the ability of the channel to transmit multiple signals, (2) the ability of the channel to provide immediate feedback, (3) the ability of the channel to support the use of conversational language, and (4) personal focus. These limitations reduce the quality of interaction between users. Such conditions give rise to an impersonal communication perspective where the communication process that occurs is task-focused and rigid (Thurlow et al., 2007).

In its development, along with the more natural process of communication that occurs, the question arises: does the absence of nonverbal signs cause a complete loss of social interaction in text-based computer-based communication? In fact, there are many internet users who can develop good relationships and maintain them. Thurlow dan Brown (2003) supported the term Imperative Communication where humans will always strive to increase communication and interaction satisfaction regardless of technological barriers that might prevent us from getting the fulfillment of the expected relationship.

Using the Social Information Processing Model, Walther dan Burgoon (1992) found that as internet users communicate with each other longer, the communication will be more interpersonal and equals the quality of face-to-face communication. In interpersonal perspective, internet users can exchange feelings in text-based computer-mediated communication over time.

There are several interpersonal natures in computer-mediated communication (Thurlow et al., 2007): (1) length of time spent online, (2) previous interactions, (3) anticipation of future interactions, (4) expectations and motivations, (5) chronemics (information related to when messages were sent/received), and (6) emoticons.

Another study also found that text-based computer-mediated communication can be hyperpersonal. Hyperpersonal means that communication on the internet can be friendlier, more social, and closer than face-to-face communication (Walther, 1996). This idea started from Goffman's idea (in Thurlow et al., 2007) regarding impression management. Internet users tend to adjust their appearance in order to get the impression they want in the eyes of others.

Hyperpersonal communication can occur because senders adjust their appearance to get certain impression. In addition, the receiver idealizes the perception of the message sent by the sender. The asynchronous channel in text-based computer-mediated communication provides sufficient time for users to adjust

communication involvement to their convenience. While feedback in lack of nonverbal cues condition is very likely to be exaggerated. In other words, users behave based on the expectations of others because the social data exchanged in the communication is selected before being sent and received by the user (Walther, 1996).

Previous research conducted by Coman et al., (2020) showed that online teaching which carried out exclusively would reduce the benefits of the teaching and would highlight the disadvantages. Meanwhile, Suparman (2021) showed that online thesis supervision during the pandemic is considered effective and efficient. The supervision given by the supervisor is clear to understand and follow. Meanwhile, from the student's point of view, online supervision helps them to write the thesis manuscript better, neater, and wider.

A study conducted by Kartikawati dan Pratama (2017) also showed that WhatsApp is able to create a conducive academic atmosphere because students can study anywhere and anytime. This study also showed that the implementation of teaching through WhatsApp is presented in a relaxed learning atmosphere. Moreover, good emotional closeness is formed along with the increasing intensity of communication through social media.

Communication between supervisors and students during thesis supervision through WhatsApp may have a certain communication perspective. The research question arise from this research

background and literature review is: How the perspective of text-based computer-mediated communication through WhatsApp is built between lecturers and students in the thesis supervision process at the Department of Communication Studies Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta? The supervision referred to in this study is focused on the process of exchanging information related to thesis writing. The purpose of this study is to determine the perspective of text-based computer-mediated communication through WhatsApp as a form of knowledge transfer between supervisors and students in the thesis supervision process.

METHOD

The method selection is based on this research objectives. Because this study seeks answers to the question of how, the qualitative method was chosen with the consideration that qualitative method is suitable to explain everyday events (Silverman, 2010). This research data collection used semi-structured interviews using an interview guide. The list of questions made by the researcher as guidance were developed to explore answers from informants to obtain in-depth information and data (Wengraf, 2001).

The population in this study were lecturers and students of the Department of Communication Science Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta who took thesis writing course in the 2020/2021 academic year. The sampling technique used purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) lecturers and their students

who use WhatsApp in thesis supervising at least once every two weeks, (2) lecturers who supervise students from class of 2017, and (3) students from class of 2017 with the consideration that in the 2020/2021 academic year the thesis writing course was offered to semesters VII-VIII students. There are six informants in this study: three supervising lecturers and three students. The following is the presentation of the data based on the thesis supervisor-student in pair:

Tabel 1: Research informants' data

No.	Thesis Supervisor	Student
1.	Lecturer D1	Student D
2.	Lecturer D2	Student N
3.	Lecturer D3	Student O

Source : Generated from data analysis

Data analysis was carried out in several stages. After the obtained data was transcribed, the data then reduced and grouped into several categories of analysis inductively.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section will present the analysis and interpretation of the obtained data to answer how the perspective of text-based computer-mediated communication on WhatsApp occurs in thesis supervision. After conducting an inductive analysis, the researcher divided the analysis into three categories: 1). Impersonal perspective: limited communication channels, 2). Interpersonal perspective: the interpersonal nature of text-based computer-mediated communication, and 3). Impersonal perspective: impression management.

Impersonal Perspective: Limited Communication Channel

WhatsApp is an instant messaging application with more than five billion downloads worldwide. The six informants agreed that WhatsApp is a common and familiar application to use, making it easier for them to carry out the online thesis supervision process.

Even though WhatsApp has video call feature, informants still rely on communication via text in the thesis supervision process. The communication through text causes the sent message by the lecturer were interpreted differently by students. This caused Lecturer D3 repeatedly explain his meaning through text.

Another difficulty experienced by the Lecturer D2 when he had to explain the review of student's thesis manuscript in detail, for example when explaining data analysis. Informant have to expatiate the manuscript review so that students understand, but it turned out that students did not necessarily understand what the lecturer mean. With limited communication channels, lecturers eventually find a way out by sending feedback in voice notes or inviting students to provide supervision through video-based communication, for example through WhatsApp Call, Zoom, or Google Meet.

In addition, Lecturer D3 also stated that the capacity for sending files on WhatsApp is very limited, so it requires support from other applications like file sending applications. Lecturer D1 limits the use WhatsApp to only have thesis discussion, while the thesis manuscript review is sent through email.

On the other hand, all student informants felt that supervision process through WhatsApp was convenient because of the documents sending feature. Student O felt helped by his supervisor who often send her documents to be used as references in writing his thesis.

The channel limitation felt by the informants was the feedback delay, as stated by Student D:

> "…, the disadvantage in using WhatsApp is that the feedback delay, so I have to wait for a reply from the lecturer and the lecturer waits for a reply from me." (Student D, March , 2021)

The most common thing that is considered by all informants as an obstacle in the thesis supervision process is that incoming messages are often unread due to busyness or a large number of incoming messages. In addition, students assume that supervision through WhatsApp has problems in synchronizing thesis manuscript reviews.

The time spent for thesis supervision was also very limited. The Lecturer D1 stated that during pandemic, it is difficult for her to give on time review on student thesis manuscript, because she has to do a lot of online work at the same time, including teaching and doing another administrative work.

In general, those limitations are drawn in table below:

Table 2: Text-based CMC limitations according to informants

No.	Communication Limitation	Informants
1.	Receivers' different interpretations of messages or feedbacks on the given thesis review.	All informants
2	Super-detailed written thesis manuscript review.	Lecturer D2
3	Students' misunderstanding of the super-detail written thesis manuscript review.	Lecturer D2
4	The lack of platform's capacity to send numerous files.	Lecturer D1, Lecturer D3
5	Feedback delay.	Student D, Student N, Student O
6	Unread incoming messages due to large number of incoming messages.	All informants
7	The lack of time provided for thesis supervision due to many other online schedules.	Lecturer D1

Source : Generated from data analysis

Online thesis supervision is carried out in the absence of direct meetings between the supervising lecturers and their students. Through WhatsApp, they can communicate anywhere and anytime (Widyanto et al., 2018). There is limited literature on impersonal communication that imply the discussion in this perspective is limited. However, as explained in the literature review, text-based computer-mediated communication can be impersonal if analyzed using the Deficit Approach.

After doing analysis, it is found that impersonal communication occurred in the thesis supervision process through WhatsApp. This category will be divided into four subcategories.

Lack of Nonverbal Cues

The results showed that the user experienced obstacles in thesis supervision because of the channel limitation which could only send text. Text-based computer-mediated communication is accused of being asocial because the quality of communication is reduced as a consequence of technological limitations (Thurlow et al., 2007). Although WhatsApp has a video call feature, this application is considered to have limitation in sending nonverbal cues. This is similar to the Cuelessness Model where text-based CMC becomes impersonal due to the lack of paralinguistic

and visual cues, causing psychological distance between users (Rutter, in Thurlow et al., 2007).

Nonverbal cues such as gestures and facial expressions play important role in regulating human interactions. Communication that does not involve a nonverbal component will be complicated. The Social Presence Model states that less presence of visual cues in communication leads to low social presence which leads to task-focused and less relationship-focused communication (Thurlow et al., 2007).

Gestures and nonverbal cues increase social presence and interaction that help students understand the discussion material more effectively. The lack of nonverbal cues in online thesis supervision through WhatsApp provides a greater challenge for thesis supervisors so they need to put in extra effort so that the messages can be clearly understood by the students (Zaheer & Munir, 2020).

Delayed Feedback

The thesis supervision process through WhatsApp faces challenges related to delayed feedback. Text-based CMC cannot match face-to-face communication because of its asynchronous nature (Walther, 2007). Parkinson dan Lea (2011) stated that this feedback delay affects the level of information accuracy and causes bias. Whereas the Social Presence Model considers that psychological closeness presents in immediate communication (Thurlow et al., 2007).

In addition to feedback, the analysis results show the lack of feedback sent by users. Muuro et al., (2014) found in his research that the lack of feedback in CMC may reduce student satisfaction in the learning process so that interpersonal interaction is difficult to achieve.

Lack of Conversational Language

Baron (in Papaja, Pluszczyk, and Swiatek, 2015) stated that CMC is a written natural language message sent over the Internet. However, the results of this study indicate that users need more efforts to communicate effectively. This happens because messages sent through WhatsApp must be detail and carefully written and so the massages can be interpreted correctly by the recipient. The Media Richness Model shows that the more limited the channels in sending various forms of messages, the more impersonal the communication will be (Daft dan Lengel, in Thurlow et al., 2007). Text-based communication cannot replace conversational language perfectly because there are nonverbal signs that help to understand the meaning in a message in spoken language such as voice intonation (Thurlow et al., 2007).

Divided Communication Focus

Unlike face-to-face communication which requires a high degree of focus, text-based CMC is often difficult to focus on both the sender and recipient of the message, as well as on the content of the message itself. This study found that during the thesis supervision process the user's focus was divided due to replete incoming text messages and heavy workload.

Yusminanda (2019) showed that

the user's focus will be distracted while interacting using the Internet. This condition is caused by the overload information which was accessed by the user during interacting through the Internet (Benselin and Ragsdell, 2016). According to Klingberg (2009), this kind of distraction arose because the user does not have good focus. In addition, humans have limitations in managing received information so users may lose their focus in interacting through the Internet.

From the discussion above, it is likely that there is impersonal communication between users in thesis supervision process. As stated by Walther (1996) that impersonal communication is sometimes useful for completing tasks because it does not involve personal issue.

Interpersonal Perspective: The Interpersonal Nature of Text-Based CMC

The data interviews showed that both the thesis lecturers and students had ever communicated before they involved in thesis supervision. All informants have ever met face to face both during academic supervision and during lectures.

Even though they communicate through text, the Lecturer D3 tried communicate as casually as possible to reduce tension when students read their messages. Lecturer informants treat their students as friends and try to hear the complaints and difficulties experienced by students related to thesis writing. However, Student O feels different things, as she said:

"The relationship is good, even though my supervisor is an easygoing person,

sometimes there is a feeling of awkwardness because he is a lecturer". (Student O, March, 2021)

When communication felt awkward, the Lecturer D1 tried to lighten the mood by using emoticons in the text, as she said:

"When I sent short text, the student may worry that I am angry or in a bad mood. I used emoticons to show that I am not angry. Not only emoticons, sometimes I insert stickers or gifs". (Lecturer D1, March, 2021)

However, not all lecturers feel comfortable using emoticons, Lecturer D2 is more comfortable using voice notes than using emoticons.

Student D as a student under the Lecturer D1 supervisory considered that although the communication was fluid, but she felt that his supervisor gave only mediocre feedback. This made her have to find her own way out of the difficulties she faced related to her thesis writing.

Although communication channels are limited, the supervisors try to always pay attention to students that even though they face difficult situation but thesis supervision can still be carried out and the thesis manuscript surely can be completed. Thesis supervisors stated that they often pay attention so that students can complete their thesis on time despite the pandemic.

The six informants spent different durations of time in each thesis supervision schedule. Lecturer D3 stated:

The six informants spent different durations of time in conducting thesis supervision. Lecturer D3 stated:

"…the time varies, I openly to be contacted anytime, around 10-15 minutes for each student by text. But if the student is confused, it can take up to 30 minutes through WhatsApp Call". (Lecturer D3, March, 2021)

The exchange of feelings may occur in the text-based computer-mediated communication process.

Lecturer D3 tends to disclose if he has obstruction in supervising thesis. However, this is different from the Lecturer D2 who said that the students are more disclose. In addition, he also said that he tends to close his personal problem to students, because it is not something that his students should know.

Apart from Lecturer D2, all of the informants agreed that they were equally open so that thesis supervising ran smoothly. Nevertheless, all informants stated that communication during thesis supervision was still limited to the scope of the thesis, not spreading to topics outside it.

Text-based CMC can be interpersonal over time depending on how long the communication lasts (Walther, 1997). However, interpersonal communication actually relies on openness and perception (Johari, in Thurlow et al., 2007). Interpersonal relationship between supervisor and students affects the thesis supervision process (Peterson in de Kleijn et al., 2012).

The Length of Interaction Time

The length of interaction time between users in CMC affects the emergence of interpersonal interactions because it means that there is intense communication between users. Previous research has shown that interpersonal interactions have many benefits in improving understanding of learning materials (Norman, 2020).

Although text-based CMC has limitation in sending messages, it is found that CMC has been developing and evolving in a more interpersonal direction. The level of relaxation, informality, acceptance/trust, and social orientation among users becomes higher when the time spent between users is getting longer. The study by Walther dan Burgoon (1992) found that interpersonal communication occurs in text-based CMC by extending interaction time.

Motivation as A Form of Closeness

A study conducted by Graham et al., (1993) showed that the level of closeness of interpersonal relationships will increase when there are affection and inclusion motives. Good interaction and motivation are needed by students and supervisors to get benefit online platform used in the thesis supervision process (Aghaee 2015).

High motivation is also needed to complete thesis writing. Several studies have shown that the use of WhatsApp can increase motivation in online learning process. (Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020; Arianti et al., 2021).

Emoticon

As a graphic representation of facial expressions, emoticons play a role in the interpretation of meaning in text-based CMC (Walther and D'Addario, 2001). Despite channel limitations, users find ways to increase media richness in CMC to present social signs. Online platforms

users send text messages to achieve the same level of relational communication as face-to-face interaction (Walther, 1997; Walther & Burgoon, 1992). DeVito (2013) stated that the use of symbols or emoticons CMC made users feel more expressive and interpersonally connected. Chairunnisa dan Benedictus (2017) found that emoticons have important role in increasing the meaning of texts messages in interpersonal communication.

Hyperpersonal Perspective: Impression Management During Thesis Supervision

All informants, both lecturers and students, set their own impressions in the thesis supervision process. Interview results from lecturer informants said that they wanted to give a positive and not negative impression in order that students felt comfortable. Below chart illustrates how the impression management process conducted by informants

Figure 1: Informants' impression management process

Source : Generated from data analysis

Lecturers want to eliminate the stigma that thesis supervision must be carried out offline or face to face. Many students consider thesis supervision to be done offline. Though lecturers believe that it can be done anywhere and anytime depending on the effort of both supervisor and the students.

The same thing was also conveyed by all student informants that they wanted to give a positive impression to supervisors. In managing the impression, all informants need time both in writing messages and providing feedback. Asynchronous WhatsApp characters provide an opportunity for informants to be able to repeatedly edit the message before sending it.

In two-way communication, both sender and receiver are active parties in the message exchange process. Text-based CMC has the potential to give rise to hyperpersonal communication (Walther, 1996). The results of this study indicate that there is online impression management made by users.

Text-based CMC does not allow users to meet each other face to face and see nonverbal cues sent to each other thus allowing users to manage their impression (Walther, 1996). However, under certain conditions, it can increase the users' ability to adjust the impression (Palupi, 2019). Discussions in the online environment offer more opportunities for users to think about, research, and even structure messages and feedback to manage their own presentations (Brown dalam Norman, 2020).

However, the results of this study show that the hyperpersonal perspective does not support the nature of WhatsApp platform which has been experiencing expansion, to not only transmit text-based messages but also send images, audio, and video (Scott and Fullwood, 2020).

CONCLUSION

As conclusion in this study, it is found that the communication perspective in the knowledge transfer in thesis supervision process through WhatsApp is generally

impersonal. This is indicated by the lack of nonverbal cues, delayed feedback, lack of conversational language, and divided communication focus. In some categories, interpersonal communication also occurs but only limited to the length of interaction time, the motivation, and also the use of emoticons. Hyperpersonal communication can also be seen when the informants also manage their impression through the arrangement of text messages.

Findings in this study is limited to the fact that there may social power usage between teacher-student relationship which is similar to supervisor-subordinate relationship (Richmond and McCroskey in Elias & Mace, 2005). In the other hand, students in Indonesia are unlikely send personal feedback to teachers because the distance between them (Maulana et al., 2011). Further research is necessary to examine the limitations on how both limitations may affects lecturers and students' communication through text in CMC.

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