

STUDENT SENATE'S COMMUNICATION STYLE ON "SEMA UNIMED" INSTAGRAM: IDENTIFYING FRAMING MESSAGE FOR ACADEMIC POLICIES

Rachel Mutiara Lolita Marpaung
rachel.2233220007@mhs.unimed.ac.id

Bella Yanti Marpaung
bellayanti.2233220051@mhs.unimed.ac.id

Rita Hartati
ritahartati@unimed.ac.id

UNIVERSITAS NEGERI MEDAN
**JL. William Iskandar Ps. V. Kenangan Baru, Kec. Percut Sei Tuan, Kabupaten Deli
Serdang, Sumatera Utara 20221, Indonesia**

Abstract

This research examines how students at Universitas Negeri Medan (UNIMED) express their opinions through Instagram, focusing on the @semaunimed.id account managed by the Student Senate. Using qualitative content analysis, this study explores the themes, communication styles, and emotional framing found in students' comments. The findings show that students often use sarcasm, humor, and informal language to voice their concerns, especially on issues such as academic policies and campus facilities. Sarcasm emerged as the most dominant style (33%), while negative emotional framing appeared in 60% of the analyzed comments, indicating a tendency towards dissatisfaction and criticism. However, positive expressions of support and constructive feedback also appeared. Using the theoretical framework from Norton, Gudykunst, and Entman, this study shows that Instagram not only serves as a platform for informal dialog, but also as a space for advocacy, institutional accountability, and student participation in higher education discourse.

Keywords: Communication Style, Instagram, Student Comments, Message Framing, Student Engagement

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media has become one of the main communication tools for students in expressing opinions, discussing, and participating in various academic issues and student organizations. In Medan State University (UNIMED), Instagram is one of the platforms that is widely used as a means of communication and interaction between students and student organizations, including the UNIMED Student Senat (SEMA). SEMA UNIMED's Instagram account functions as a medium of information as well as a forum for students to convey their aspirations, criticisms, and support for various policies taken by the organization.

One interesting aspect of students' digital interaction on SEMA UNIMED's Instagram account is their communication style in the comments section. The comments left by students are not just spontaneous responses, but also reflect broader communication

patterns, ranging from the way they convey opinions, use of language, argumentation strategies, to patterns of interaction between users. In the context of student organizations, comment sections are often an open space for students to evaluate leadership performance, criticize policies that are considered less effective, or support measures that are considered beneficial to the academic community.

Students' activeness in expressing opinions through social media also reflects their level of participation in campus democracy. In an ideal academic environment, students are expected to have the freedom to express their opinions, both in person and through digital media. Instagram, with its comment feature that allows open interaction, is one of the means for students to contribute to academic discourse and student organizations. Therefore, analyzing student communication styles in SEMA UNIMED's Instagram comment section can provide deep insight into how students understand and respond to various campus issues.

In this article, we will discuss in depth the communication style of UNIMED students in the SEMA UNIMED Instagram comment column, especially in the context of discussions related to student organization policies and educational issues. By analyzing various aspects of digital communication, such as the tone of communication, forms of argumentation, and interaction patterns formed in comments, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how students use social media as a means of advocacy and participation in the academic environment. The findings from this analysis can also be taken into consideration for student organizations in designing more effective communication strategies, so that interactions between students and organizations can take place more constructively and have a positive impact on the development of education at UNIMED.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media and Student Communication Patterns

The rapid development of digital technology has significantly changed how students communicate, particularly through social media platforms like Instagram. Instagram is not just a platform for sharing images and videos but also serves as an interactive space where students engage in discussions, express their identities, and build social networks. According to Astleitner & Schlick (2024), social media use among university students has evolved into a tool that supports identity formation, peer engagement, and academic collaboration.

In the context of UNIMED students, Instagram functions as a digital forum where academic and social discussions unfold. Research by Junco et al. (2011) found that student engagement on social media is largely driven by entertainment, social bonding, and the desire to stay updated with institutional developments. Similarly, studies indicate that online communication often follows distinct interaction patterns, where students use informal language, humor, or even sarcasm to express their opinions on educational policies and campus issues.

Moreover, communication on Instagram often reflects the personalities and emotional states of students. Some may use humor to lighten discussions, while others

adopt a more formal tone when discussing serious academic matters. The adaptability of Instagram as a communication tool allows students to switch between these styles depending on the context of the discussion. This aligns with the findings of research on digital discourse, which shows that young people tailor their communication style based on the platform and audience.

The Role of Instagram in Academic and Social Engagement

While Instagram provides opportunities for academic engagement, excessive use can also negatively impact students' academic performance. Masrom et al. (2024) found that excessive Instagram use (EIU) is linked to lower academic outcomes due to distractions caused by prolonged engagement on the platform. This study aligns with previous research by Kirschner & Karpinski (2010), which highlights how multitasking between social media and academic tasks can result in cognitive overload and reduced learning efficiency.

Despite these challenges, Instagram can be effectively utilized for educational purposes. Greenhow & Galvin (2020) argue that social media platforms, when integrated with structured learning approaches, can foster collaborative learning environments where students exchange knowledge and share academic insights. Features such as Instagram Stories, live discussions, and interactive polls have been used by educators and student organizations to facilitate peer-to-peer learning.

Furthermore, studies on digital learning suggest that visual-based social media platforms like Instagram can enhance information retention and student motivation. Research by Fadhlani & Putri (2021) found that when students engage in academic discussions through visually appealing and interactive content, they tend to develop a stronger interest in learning. This underscores the need for institutions to develop strategies that balance social media engagement with academic productivity.

Instagram as a Tool for Advocacy and Student Representation

Beyond personal interactions, Instagram has emerged as a powerful advocacy tool for student organizations. Student representative bodies, such as SEMA UNIMED, utilize Instagram to disseminate information, mobilize students for academic causes, and address campus issues. Research by Greenhow & Robelia (2009) suggests that social media activism enables students to engage with university governance and policy discussions in a more transparent and inclusive manner.

A case study by Debastuti & Sarkar (2022) on student-led digital movements highlights how social media has been instrumental in shaping education-related policies and advocacy efforts. This is particularly relevant for UNIMED students who actively use Instagram as a platform for discourse on educational reforms, academic policies, and student rights. The ability to reach a wider audience through visual storytelling and interactive engagement makes Instagram an effective medium for promoting student-driven initiatives.

Moreover, student organizations often leverage Instagram to engage in collaborative efforts with academic institutions, NGOs, and government agencies. This

digital ecosystem allows students to participate in decision-making processes, bridging the gap between student bodies and educational policymakers. Research on digital advocacy further confirms that social media platforms empower students to take an active role in shaping their learning environments.

Student Senate and Its Role in Higher Education Governance

The Student Senate plays a crucial role in representing student interests, advocating for institutional improvements, and fostering democratic engagement in universities. As a student-led governing body, the Senate ensures that student concerns regarding academic policies, tuition fees, campus facilities, and student rights are acknowledged and addressed (Astin, 1999).

Student senates serve as a platform for student democracy, where elected representatives participate in policy discussions, decision-making processes, and organizing student activities (Klemenčič, 2014). Effective student senates promote student leadership, institutional accountability, and active participation in higher education governance (Luescher-Mamashela, 2013). Research shows that when students are involved in governance, they develop civic engagement skills, leadership abilities, and a stronger sense of responsibility towards institutional development (Menon, 2003).

In the digital era, the role of student senates has evolved with the increasing use of social media platforms like Instagram, which serve as tools for communication, advocacy, and mobilization (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009). Student senate Instagram accounts function as interactive spaces where students express opinions, engage in academic discussions, and critique university policies (Veletsianos, 2016). Social media facilitates faster and more transparent communication between student leaders and their peers, allowing greater participation in governance decisions (Dahlgren, 2021). In the context of UNIMED, the SEMA UNIMED Instagram account has become an essential platform for students to discuss organizational policies, voice concerns, and advocate for educational improvements. This reflects the broader trend of digital activism in student governance, where social media enhances institutional democracy and accountability (Debastuti & Sarkar, 2022).

Theoretical Framework: Communication Style in Social Media Context

To gain a comprehensive understanding of how students engage in digital spaces particularly through the comment sections of Instagram posts made by student organizations such as SEMA UNIMED this study draws on several established theories related to communication style. Communication style encompasses not only the content of a message but also the manner in which it is delivered, including verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal elements. These stylistic features reflect individual attitudes, intentions, and communication strategies. As social media continues to evolve as a primary communication medium, both classical and contemporary theories become increasingly relevant for analyzing student communication patterns in the digital environment.

Norton's Communication Style Theory (1978)

James C. Norton defines communication style as “the way one verbally, nonverbally, and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood.” Norton identifies nine primary communication styles: dominant, dramatic, contentious, animated, impression-leaving, relaxed, attentive, open, and friendly. These styles represent distinct communicative behaviors observable in social interactions, including digital platforms such as Instagram.

In this context, communication style is evident through linguistic choices, sentence structure, emoji usage, and implied tone. For example, a contentious style may appear in confrontational or sarcastic comments, while an animated style can be reflected through expressive language and energetic phrasing. Norton’s theory serves as a foundational tool for categorizing student expressions and identifying dominant communicative behaviors within online discourse.

Gudykunst’s Dimensions of Communication Style (1994)

William Gudykunst offers a model focused on cultural and contextual dimensions of communication. He outlines four core dichotomies:

- Direct vs. Indirect,
- Formal vs. Informal,
- Personal vs. Contextual, and
- Instrumental vs. Affective.

These dimensions are relevant to examining communication between students and institutional bodies such as the Student Senate. Students tend to communicate in a direct, informal, and affective manner—often expressing emotions and personal concerns. Conversely, institutions often employ formal, contextual, and instrumental communication aimed at delivering structured information.

Gudykunst’s model supports the analysis of how communicative context, power dynamics, and institutional norms influence the communication style of each party. It also allows for the exploration of how students adapt their style based on the perceived openness or restrictiveness of the platform.

Social Media Communication Style (Lee & Sundar, 2013)

Lee and Sundar (2013) propose a framework that categorizes organizational communication on social media into three primary styles:

- Informative Style: One-way communication that focuses on delivering information (e.g., announcements, schedules).
- Promotional Style: Communication aimed at enhancing the image or reputation of the organization.
- Dialogic Style: Interactive communication that encourages audience participation and feedback.

This framework is particularly applicable to analyzing how SEMA UNIMED utilizes

Instagram. For instance, a purely informative approach may involve unilateral messaging without responses to comments, while a dialogic style would be evident through engagement in comment threads, interactive questions, and calls to action. This model is also useful in evaluating how students respond—whether they participate in the conversation, criticize, support, or disengage.

Message Framing Theory (Entman, 1993)

Robert Entman's message framing theory addresses how the structure and presentation of messages shape public interpretation. According to Entman, framing serves four essential functions:

1. Define problems
2. Diagnose causes,
3. Make moral judgments, and
4. Suggest remedies.

In social media contexts, framing becomes a strategic component of communication. For example, the Student Senate may frame a tuition increase as necessary for institutional development, while students may reframe the same issue as unjust or misaligned with their needs. Framing is also reflected in the language choices, metaphors, and rhetorical devices students use in their comments, often involving humor or irony to emphasize their point.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with content analysis to examine student communication styles and message framing in the context of academic policy discourse. According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research is a research method used to examine the conditions of natural objects, where the researcher acts as the key instrument. This method allows researchers to interpret meaning, understand behavior, and explore phenomena based on the perspective of the research subject. The focus of this study is on how students use the comment section of the Instagram account @semaunimed.id the official account of the UNIMED Student Senate to respond to and participate in discussions about university policies and governance. This platform serves as a public space where students openly express support, criticism, or suggestions related to academic policies.

The data were collected from several selected posts on the Instagram account @semaunimed.id, focusing on topics such as academic performance, class conditions, senate transparency, and policy feedback. Five student comments were selected as primary data based on their clarity, relevance, and uniqueness in terms of communication style and message framing. Each of the five was then paired with another comment of the opposite framing positive or negative resulting in a total of ten analyzed comments. The method of analysis used is content analysis, as described by Krippendorff (2004), which is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data in their

context. This method is useful for identifying patterns, meanings, and structures in communication especially when analyzing social media content.

The analysis process in this study consisted of three stages:

1. **Comment Categorization:** Comments were grouped according to the general issue they addressed (e.g., classroom facilities, student activism, or academic policy implementation).
2. **Communication Style Identification:** Each comment was analyzed using the frameworks of Norton (1978) and Gudykunst (1994) to identify its dominant communication style such as contentious, informal, promotional, or supportive.
3. **Message Framing Analysis:** Based on Entman's (1993) framing theory and Lee & Sundar's (2013) typology of social media communication, comments were examined for either positive or negative framing, based on tone, emotional expression, and message direction.

This methodology helps to uncover how students construct meaning and engage in academic discourse through social media platforms. It also reveals how communication and framing strategies shape the public perception of student organizations and academic policy in digital spaces. This method allows for a deeper understanding of how students articulate their views and participate in institutional discourse through informal digital platforms. The result of this analysis provides insight into how communication and framing styles can influence how academic policies are interpreted, challenged, or supported by students online.

FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Findings

Presents the results of data categorization and interpretation from the comments section of the Instagram account @semaunimed.id. Five student comments were selected based on their relevance to academic issues and the diversity of communication style and framing used. The analysis focuses on three main components: comment categories, communication styles, and message framing. Each of these elements is important in understanding how students express their views and participate in campus-related discourse through social media.

Table I.1 Comment Categories

No.	Username Ig	Comment	Comment Category
1.	anwarstar_	"Konon katanya ini kampus 'character'."	Criticism of Academic Policies
2.	siuuh_	"Kipas di kelas gak ada dingin-dinginnya."	Complaints about Campus

3.	fawwazrsn	"Izin bapak dan ibu senator yg terhormat, saya rasa jangan cuma pengerjaan darurat..."	Participation in Campus Discussions
4.	benotamba_	"@semaunimed.official kapan aksi di depan Rektorat! Kumpulkan massa!"	Encouragement for Digital Activism
5.	rziii1111._	"Ditunggu pergerakannya, Min! 🍌"	Expressing Support and Appreciation

The five comments above are categorized based on their main themes. Each comment represents a different area of student engagement, ranging from direct criticism of university policies to expressions of support for the student senate. This classification provides a clearer view of the kinds of concerns students raise most frequently in relation to academic life, and also serves as a foundation for identifying communication styles and message framing in the next analysis stages.

Table I.2 Communication Style

No.	Username	Comment	Communication Style	Theory
1.	anwarstar_	"Konon katanya ini kampus 'character'."	Sarcasm	Norton – Contentious
2.	siuuh_	"Kipas di kelas gak ada dingin-dinginnya."	Informal	Gudykunst – Informal & Personal
3.	fawwazrsn	"Izin bapak dan ibu senator yg terhormat, saya rasa jangan cuma pengerjaan darurat..."	Formal	Gudykunst – Formal & Instrumental
4.	benotamba_	"@semaunimed.official kapan aksi di depan Rektorat! Kumpulkan massa!"	Digital Activism	Lee & Sundar – Promotional

5.	rziii1111	"Ditunggu pergerakannya, Min! 🟡"	Direct & Personal	Gudykunst – Direct
----	-----------	----------------------------------	-------------------	--------------------

Each comment is matched with a corresponding communication style based on its tone, structure, and intention. Theories from Norton, Gudykunst, and Lee & Sundar are used to define these styles. The diversity in styles reflects the various emotional states and rhetorical strategies students use when engaging with institutional bodies through online platforms.

Table I.3 Framing

No.	Username	Comment	Framing	Framing Pair Comment (Username)	Opposite Framing	Explanation
1.	anwarstar_	"Konon katanya ini kampus 'character'."	Negative	"Setuju, mahasiswa seharusnya mengutamakan fasilitas kampus seperti ruang kelas..." (hikzimarpau ng)	Positive	Sarcasm about campus jargon is balanced with solutive comments that support campus quality improvement .
2.	siuuh_	"Kipas di kelas gak ada dingin-dinginnya."	Negative	"Minimal pasang AC lah, kipas di dinding itu udah jim." (za_ulpe)	Positive	Direct complaints in an angry tone are countered by concrete & constructive suggestions.
3.	fawwazrsn	"Izin bapak dan ibu senator yg terhormat, saya rasa jangan cuma pengerjaan darurat..."	Positive	"Kalau begini terus, aspirasi cuma numpang lewat." (chmaiaszzz)	Negative	Polite comments that wish to be juxtaposed with disappointed and harsh

						expressions.
4.	benotamba –	"@semaunimed.official kapan aksi di depan Rektorat! Kumpulkan massa!"	Negative	"Akhirnya bersuara juga 👏👏." (rnisyrfh)	Positive	The tone of demonstrative agitation is juxtaposed with quieter supportive comments.
5.	rziii1111	"Ditunggu pergerakannya, Min! 🍌"	Positive	"UNIMED emang agak lain." (devilaia07)	Negative	Comments supporting the organization's work are countered with subtle pessimistic comments

This table highlights how student comments can be framed either positively or negatively, even when addressing similar issues. By pairing each original comment with another comment that holds the opposite framing, we can see how the emotional direction of a message changes the way it is interpreted. Positive framing tends to suggest solutions or optimism, while negative framing often emphasizes dissatisfaction or distrust. This contrast helps illustrate the dynamic nature of student sentiment on social media platforms.

DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents a detailed breakdown of communication styles identified from student comments on the Instagram account @semaunimed.id. Each comment is categorized based on its dominant communication style, the corresponding issue (as seen in the Comment Categories table), and the emotional framing (positive or negative) reflected in the student's message. This method of analysis provides a multidimensional view of how students engage with academic and organizational topics through digital discourse.

1. Sarcasm

- Comment Example: "*Konon katanya ini kampus 'character'.*"

- Comment Category: **Criticism of Academic Policies**

Framing: Negative

This sarcastic statement by the user `anwarstar_` criticizes the university's branding strategy by highlighting the perceived disconnect between institutional slogans and students lived experiences. The use of quotation marks around the word 'character' subtly ridicules the notion, implying that the values promoted by the university are not reflected in reality. From a theoretical standpoint, this aligns with Norton's (1978) 'contentious' communication style, which characterizes confrontational or challenging

expressions. Although not overtly aggressive, sarcasm carries a biting undertone that questions the legitimacy of institutional narratives.

The framing of this message is clearly negative. According to Entman's (1993) framing theory, messages can define problems, diagnose causes, and imply solutions. In this case, the comment defines the problem a gap between branding and experience but offers no constructive pathway forward. Instead, it functions more as a rhetorical critique, signaling disappointment and skepticism toward the institution's credibility.

2. Informal

- Comment Example: "*Kipas di kelas gak ada dingin-dinginnya.*"

- Comment Category: **Complaints about Campus**

Framing: Negative

This comment by siuuh_ exemplifies informal, spontaneous communication. It reflects a personal grievance using casual, everyday language. Gudykunst (1994) categorizes this style as both informal and personal, indicating a low level of formality and a strong emotional undertone. The choice of colloquial Indonesian, rather than academic or formal language, underscores the authenticity of the complaint and its alignment with student vernacular.

The comment is negatively framed, focusing on the discomfort experienced by students due to inadequate classroom facilities without offering any recommendation or call to action. This kind of expression is valuable in its honesty and relatability; it resonates with other students who share the same frustration but it lacks a solution-oriented approach. Such expressions, while valid, often reflect short-term emotional reactions rather than long-term advocacy.

3. Formal

- Comment Example: "*Izin bapak dan ibu senator yg terhormat, saya rasa jangan cuma pengerjaan darurat...*"

- Comment Category: **Participation in Campus Discussions**

Framing: Positive

In stark contrast to informal comments, this post by fawwazrsn adopts a formal, respectful tone. The comment opens with a polite address to institutional figures, signaling deference and constructive intention. Gudykunst's 'formal and instrumental' style aptly describes this communication, which seeks to achieve a goal greater accountability and long-term planning in campus projects through courteous engagement.

The framing here is positive. The student acknowledges the efforts of the senate while requesting more consistent or comprehensive action. There's no ridicule or overt frustration; rather, the comment reflects trust in the institution's ability to improve and a desire to collaborate. This type of message plays an important role in maintaining productive dialogue between students and their representatives. It signals that students can criticize while still respecting institutional processes.

4. Digital Activism

- Comment Example: "*@semaunimed.official kapan aksi di depan Rektorat! Kumpulkan massa!*"

- Comment Category: **Encouragement for Digital Activism**

Framing: Negative

This statement by benotamba_ reflects an urgent and mobilizing tone, typical of digital activism. The call to action—organizing a mass protest—is assertive and aimed at pressuring institutional response. According to Lee & Sundar's (2013) framework, this falls under the promotional style of social media communication, where users seek to rally others and influence public sentiment.

Although the intention may be to seek justice or reform, the framing of the message is negative. It emphasizes dissatisfaction and suggests that previous efforts have been inadequate. The comment is emotionally charged and directive, expressing a clear sense of urgency and impatience. While this kind of comment can be effective in galvanizing support, it also carries the risk of polarizing audiences or escalating conflict if not accompanied by dialogue.

5. Direct & Personal

- Comment Example: "*Ditunggu pergerakannya, Min! 🟡*"

- Comment Category: **Expressing Support and Appreciation**

Framing: Positive

The final comment, posted by rziii1111, illustrates direct and emotionally supportive communication. It combines encouragement with subtle pressure, indicating both belief in the institution and an expectation of timely action. Gudykunst's (1994) 'direct' style applies here, as the message is clear, succinct, and purposeful. The use of the fire emoji adds emotional resonance, amplifying the sense of motivation and urgency.

This message is positively framed. It acknowledges the role of the organization (SEMA UNIMED) and expresses hope rather than frustration. In digital environments where criticism often dominates, such supportive comments are crucial in sustaining morale and validating institutional efforts. They indicate that students are not only critical observers but also active stakeholders invested in institutional progress.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

In this section, the analysis focuses on three key aspects of student responses to posts on the official Instagram account of the UNIMED Student Senate (@semaunimed.id): (1) what issues students talked about, (2) how they expressed themselves through different communication styles, and (3) how their comments were emotionally framed either positively or negatively. These findings are presented through three pie charts and supported by communication theories from Norton (1978), Gudykunst (1994), Lee & Sundar (2013), and Entman (1993). Together, these insights give us a clearer view of how students use digital spaces not just to speak but to speak meaningfully, critically, and emotionally about their campus experience.

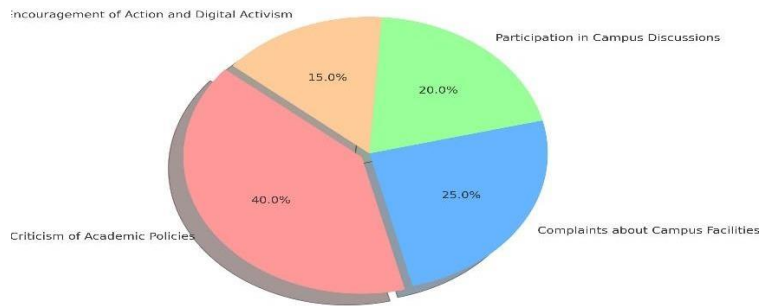


Figure 1. Main Themes in Student Comments on Instagram

Based on the first pie chart, the most dominant topic students commented on was criticism toward academic policies, making up 40% of the total comments. This proves that students are highly aware and emotionally invested in the decisions made by the university especially those affecting their academic lives. Their criticisms are often indirect, filled with sarcasm or irony, but they carry a strong message. For example, the comment “*Konon katanya ini kampus character*” mocks the university’s slogan in a clever but critical way. It reflects disappointment toward the gap between the institution’s branding and the reality experienced by students. According to Entman’s (1993) framing theory, these types of comments focus on defining problems and making moral judgments. The student is essentially saying, “You say one thing, but you do another,” and that message hits hard because it’s rooted in a shared reality among the student body.

Coming in second, 25% of the comments were about campus facilities, such as hot classrooms and broken fans. These might seem like “simple” complaints, but they reflect real struggles that students deal with every day. When someone says “*Kipas di kelas gak ada dingin-dinginnya*,” they are not just stating a fact they are expressing discomfort, dissatisfaction, and a sense of being ignored. These basic facility issues may seem small, but they greatly affect students’ focus and motivation. Another 20% of comments were categorized as participation in campus discussions. These are the more formal or reflective comments where students try to engage in serious dialogue with SEMA, offering input and criticism in a more structured way. The comment “*Izin bapak dan ibu senator...*” reflects a respectful attempt to speak up, suggesting that at least some students believe there is still room for constructive conversation.

Lastly, 15% of comments were expressions of digital activism—encouraging protests or calling for collective action. Comments like “*Kumpulkan massa!*” show that students aren’t just commenting for fun. They want action, visibility, and accountability. Instagram, in this case, is not just a platform for reacting it becomes a tool for mobilizing and pushing for change. Overall, the range of issues discussed tells us that students are not passive observers. They are fully aware of what’s happening, and they’re using their digital voice to hold institutions accountable, share lived experiences, and call for reform.

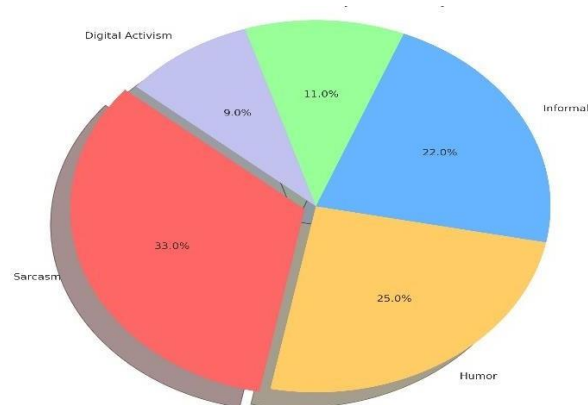


Figure 2. Student Communication Style on Instagram

The second pie chart breaks down how students choose to express their opinions online. The way students write their comments isn't random it's often intentional, strategic, and shaped by how they feel and what response they expect to get. From the analysis, we can see that sarcasm is the most used style, with 33% of the comments showing this tone. This aligns with Norton's idea of contentious communication, where people use sharp language to express criticism without being directly aggressive. Sarcasm allows students to be both clever and critical at the same time. It gets attention, and it sticks in people's minds.

Next, 25% of the comments used humor. Many students use jokes or memes to express how they feel. It might seem funny on the surface, but it often reflects real frustration underneath. Humor becomes a coping mechanism it softens the message, but still delivers the point. It makes the message more relatable, and encourages engagement from peers who might feel the same way. 22% of the comments were written in a casual and informal style. This includes slang, relaxed grammar, or even the use of emojis. It shows that students feel comfortable speaking in their own voice on Instagram. According to Gudykunst's theory, this is a personal and affective communication style where students speak directly from their emotions, without needing to sound official or "academic."

Only 11% of students used a formal style in their comments. These are the kinds of responses where students respectfully address the Student Senate and present feedback or criticism in a more official tone. While formal communication still exists, it seems less common, possibly because students don't always expect that formal comments will get more attention or response. The least common communication style was digital activism (9%), which includes calls for protest, public demands, or challenges to authority. Even though the percentage is low, this kind of communication is powerful. It turns passive complaints into a push for collective action. Lee & Sundar (2013) describe this as a promotional or dialogic style meant to drive others to respond or join in. Altogether, this data tells us that students are creative and emotionally expressive in how they write their comments. They know how to grab attention, provoke thought, and reflect their real emotions all within the comment section of an Instagram post.

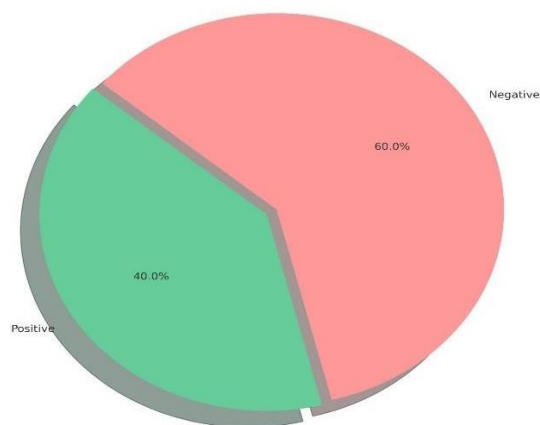


Figure 3. Emotional Framing of Student Comments

The third pie chart looks at the emotional framing of the comments—whether students were framing their messages in a negative or positive way. Here, we see that 60% of the comments had a negative frame, while 40% were positive.

Negative framing includes sarcasm, frustration, pessimism, or disappointment. These types of comments focus on what’s wrong, what’s broken, and what needs to be changed. They don’t always offer solutions, but they make it clear that something is not right. The sarcastic tone in “Konon katanya ini kampus character” or the bluntness in “UNIMED emang agak lain” are examples of this. According to Entman (1993), these messages work by highlighting a problem, blaming a cause, and showing emotional dissatisfaction. In this context, the problem is the university or student organization’s actions (or inaction), and the cause is perceived as institutional failure.

On the other hand, positive framing (40%) focuses on suggestions, appreciation, and hope. Comments like “Ditunggu pergerakannya, Min!” show that while the student is pushing for more action, they are still encouraging and optimistic. They are holding on to the belief that change is possible. These kinds of comments also carry emotional weight not by complaining, but by showing trust and expectation. What’s important here is the contrast: both positive and negative comments are talking about the same issues but their emotional approach is different. Some students choose to criticize with sharp words, others choose to encourage improvement. This shows the dual nature of student engagement: they are not indifferent. They care deeply. Some are tired, some are hopeful but all are involved.

These emotional frames matter because they influence how the institution is perceived. Too much negative framing, left unaddressed, can lead to apathy or loss of trust. But positive framing when recognized and validated can strengthen student-institution relationships and create more productive dialogue.

CONCLUSION

This study explores how UNIMED students use communication styles and message framing in the comments section of the Student Senate Instagram account (@semaunimed.id) to respond to academic-related content. The findings show that Instagram has evolved beyond a mere social media platform and now serves as a space

for student engagement, critique, advocacy and interaction with institutional discourse.

Through the application of communication style theory (Norton, Gudykunst) and message framing analysis (Entman), it was found that students communicate using diverse rhetorical strategies-from sarcasm and informal expressions to formal advice and calls for collective action. These styles reflect not only personal emotions but also broader social commentary on how students perceive the responsiveness and transparency of the institution.

The contrast between positive and negative framing shows how the same issue can be approached with solution-oriented optimism or cynical frustration. This duality shows that students are not detached or apathetic; rather, they are keenly aware of campus dynamics and choose strategic ways to express themselves-whether to push for change, question authority, or express solidarity.

The use of language, tone, and emotion in these digital comments suggests that students see social media as a meaningful tool to influence institutional behavior. Therefore, if student organizations like SEMA UNIMED want to strengthen their role as representatives of student interests, they must go beyond one-way communication and actively engage with student voices expressed in online spaces. Reading, interpreting, and responding to these digital interactions can provide valuable insights into student needs, concerns, and expectations that ultimately contribute to more inclusive and participatory university governance.

REFERENCES

- Astleitner, H., & Schlick, S. (2024). The social media use of college students: Exploring identity development, learning support, and parallel use. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14697874241233605>.
- Debastuti, P., & Sarkar, S. (2022). Student-led Digital Activism: Social Media's Role in Educational Policy and Advocacy. *Journal of Digital Activism in Education*, 6(3), 87-102.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Fadhlan, M. H., & Putri, K. Y. S. (2021). The Influence of Folkative Instagram Account's Communication Style on Online Engagement (A Case Study of Communication Science Students at the State University of Jakarta, Class of 2019). *Komunikologi: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi*, 18(1), 1-7.
- Fahri, M. N., Aditia, R. A., & Rachman, I. F. (2024). Strategi Media Sosial untuk Memperkuat Pemahaman dan Partisipasi Publik terhadap Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan 2030. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Ekonomi Dan Akuntansi*, 1(3), 139-148. <https://doi.org/10.62017/jimea>.

- Hartati, R., Meisuri, Ginting, S. A., & Ariatna. (2024). *Menguasai komunikasi dengan NLP: Membuka kekuatan soft skill*. GETPRESS Indonesia. p:16.
- Junis, M. A., Fadillah, H. N., & Rachman, I. F. (2024). Transformasi Sosial di Era Digital: Peran Media Sosial dalam Meningkatkan Kesadaran terhadap Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan 2030. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Ekonomi dan Akuntansi*, 1(3), 31-39. <https://doi.org/10.62017/jimea>
- Krippendorff, Klaus. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Mosteller, F., & Wallace, D. L. (1963). Inference in an authorship problem. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 58, 275–309. (Page 18)
- Norton, R. W. (1978). Foundation of a communicator style construct. *Human Communication Research*, 4(2), 99–112. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1978.tb00600.x>
- Sugiyono. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta. ISBN: 979-8433-64-0.
- Syahreza, M. F., & Tanjung, I. S. (2018). Motif dan Pola Penggunaan Media Sosial Instagram di Kalangan Mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Ekonomi UNIMED. *Jurnal Interaksi*, 2(1), 61-84.
- Tekin, I., & Aydin, S. (2022). Well-Being and Instagram Use Among University Students. *International Journal of Adult Education and Technology*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJAET.310074>.
- Veletsianos, G. (Ed.). (2016). *Emergence and Innovation in Digital Learning: Foundations and Applications*. Athabasca University Press.
- Yuliana, M. E., Arini, D. W. W., & Renjani, I. A. (2025). Analisis Instagram terhadap Gaya Hidup dan Pola Komunikasi pada Remaja Karang Taruna Cempaka Putih, Kecamatan Gondangrejo, Karanganyar. *Jurnal Indonesia: Manajemen Informatika dan Komunikasi*, 6(1), 128-137. <https://journal.stmiki.ac.id/index.php/jimik>.