



STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT VIEWED FROM PEER INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

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A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the influence of peer interpersonal communication on academic adjustment among students of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at Cenderawasih University. Using a quantitative associative design, data were collected from 102 students through total sampling and analyzed using simple linear regression. The results revealed a significant and positive relationship between peer communication and academic adjustment ($t = 10.717$, $p < 0.05$), with a correlation coefficient of $R = 0.788$ and $R^2 = 0.621$. These findings indicate that 62.1% of students' academic adjustment can be explained by their level of interpersonal communication with peers. Students who demonstrate higher communication skills tend to adapt better academically, showing improved emotional stability, motivation, and collaboration. Theoretically, this study supports Devito's interpersonal communication framework and Bandura's Social Learning Theory, highlighting communication as a crucial factor in adaptive learning. Practically, the findings emphasize the need for universities to strengthen peer-based mentoring and communication training programs to enhance students' academic resilience and success in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Academic adjustment is one of the essential components determining the success of students in higher education. It refers to a student's ability to adapt cognitively, emotionally, and socially to the academic environment and its demands. Students who can manage academic stress, maintain focus, and interact constructively with others tend to achieve better learning outcomes and persistence in their studies (Tindle, 2022; Mandoa et al., 2021). Prior research emphasizes that students with strong adjustment skills exhibit higher motivation, emotional stability, and self-confidence in academic settings (Mayang, 2025; Fernanda et al., 2024). Conversely, those who fail to adjust often experience frustration, anxiety, and decreased academic performance (Zhu, 2024; Kərimova & Hüseynova, 2025). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence academic adjustment has



become an important focus in educational and psychological research (Saputra & Cahyo, 2023; Lubis et al., 2025).

Although various studies have highlighted the significance of interpersonal communication in education, its direct impact on academic adjustment among university students remains underexplored (Azila-Gbettor et al., 2023). Many students face barriers in expressing ideas, seeking assistance, and maintaining positive peer relationships during their learning process (Chishiba & Joseph, 2024; Reba et al., 2023). These limitations often contribute to social isolation, low self-esteem, and academic disengagement (Boyari, 2024). Prior research tends to examine communication skills and adjustment separately, without clarifying their specific interconnection (Rautakoski et al., 2021). Moreover, studies rarely investigate this issue in the context of Guidance and Counseling students, who are expected to possess high interpersonal competence (Tolentino, 2024). Based on these observations, the present study aims to address the gap by exploring how peer interpersonal communication affects academic adjustment.

This study aims to investigate the influence of peer interpersonal communication on academic adjustment among students in the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at Cenderawasih University. The research specifically examines whether students who demonstrate higher interpersonal communication skills exhibit better academic adjustment (Reba et al., 2021). By identifying this relationship, the study provides empirical evidence to strengthen existing theoretical perspectives in educational psychology. Furthermore, it seeks to measure the extent of peer communication's contribution to students' adjustment levels. The research also intends to highlight how interpersonal communication can be used as a strategy to support student development programs. In essence, this study bridges the gap between communication theory and practical applications in academic adjustment (Karimova, 2024).

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding how interpersonal communication among peers enhances students' adaptability within higher education settings (Shukrullayev, 2025). Effective peer communication fosters collaboration, emotional support, and shared learning experiences that strengthen students' academic confidence (Phan, 2025). The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of Guidance and Counseling education. Theoretically, the research provides a foundation for developing



communication-based models of student adjustment and success (Johnson & Goldman, 2022). Practically, it may guide universities in designing counseling interventions and peer-support programs to promote student well-being (McCabe et al., 2024). Thus, the study is motivated by the need to build an academic environment that values communication competence as a key to successful adjustment and lifelong learning (“Educating the Competent and Skilled Communicators of the Era!,” 2025). Ultimately, enhancing interpersonal communication skills among students can lead to improved academic adjustment and overall success in higher education settings (Maizura et al., 2024). This research aims to fill the existing gap by providing insights into how interpersonal communication skills can be effectively integrated into academic support programs for students.

RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with an associative research design to examine the influence of peer interpersonal communication on students’ academic adjustment. The associative design was selected because it allows the analysis of relationships and causal links between variables (Ziauddin et al., 2023). Through this design, the study sought to determine whether interpersonal communication among peers significantly affects students’ ability to adjust academically (Guo & Noordin, 2024). The research applied a cross-sectional strategy in which data were collected from participants at one specific point in time (Mukherjee & Roy, 2023). This approach provided a comprehensive snapshot of students’ communication and adjustment patterns. The findings derived from this design were intended to contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies in educational counseling and communication training.

2. Participants

The population of this study consisted of 102 students enrolled in the Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Cenderawasih University. A total sampling technique was employed, meaning that all members of the population were included as participants. This method ensured data accuracy and representation of the entire student cohort across different academic years (Sugiyono, 2019). Participants were drawn from three academic cohorts: 2022, 2023, and 2024. All participants voluntarily completed research instruments after being informed about the purpose and confidentiality of the study. The sample characteristics



provided a diverse representation of students with varying communication experiences and academic adjustment levels (Hamade et al., 2024). The study aimed to explore how these varied experiences influence their academic performance and social integration within the university setting.

3. Instruments

Data were collected using two Likert-scale questionnaires developed specifically for this research: the Peer Interpersonal Communication Scale and the Academic Adjustment Scale (Kalavasonlu & Akçamete, 2024). The items were designed based on theoretical frameworks and adapted from prior studies on communication and adjustment in higher education contexts (Khalifa et al., 2025). Each instrument underwent expert validation by three senior lecturers from the Guidance and Counseling Department to ensure content validity and readability (Keshf et al., 2024). Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha revealed high internal consistency, with values above 0.80 for both instruments, indicating strong reliability (Saputra, 2025). Before distribution, the questionnaires were piloted among a small group of students to confirm clarity and response accuracy (Tate et al., 2023). The final instruments provided valid and reliable measurements of the two core variables studied.

4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression through SPSS version 23 (Celaya Padilla, 2023). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the levels of peer interpersonal communication and academic adjustment among students (Bhatti & Kanwal, 2023). The regression analysis aimed to test the hypothesis regarding the influence of peer communication on academic adjustment (Moradi & Mardani, 2023). Significance levels were set at $p < 0.05$ to determine the statistical relevance of the results (Fetzer, 2023). The strength of the relationship between variables was assessed through correlation coefficients (R) and determination values (R^2) (Yun, 2022). This analytical framework enabled the researcher to draw precise conclusions about how peer communication contributes to students' academic adjustment within the university environment (Väyrynen, 2023). The study's findings are expected to provide insights into enhancing student support services and improving academic outcomes through effective peer communication strategies.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

The results of this study indicate that peer interpersonal communication among students of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at Cenderawasih University is categorized as high, while their academic adjustment level is in the moderate category. The descriptive statistics for both variables are presented in Table 2 to provide a clearer overview of students' responses and the overall distribution of scores.

Tabel 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category
Peer Interpersonal Communication	72	45	90	67.23	15.86	High
Academic Adjustment	72	50	98	76.62	13.23	Moderate

As shown in Table 1, the mean score for peer interpersonal communication indicates that most students exhibit a high level of interpersonal competence, while the academic adjustment score falls within a moderate range, suggesting varying levels of adaptability among respondents.

The simple linear regression analysis produced a t-value of 10.717 with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), signifying a strong and significant influence of peer interpersonal communication on academic adjustment. The positive regression coefficient ($B = 0.658$) indicates that better interpersonal communication predicts higher academic adjustment. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.788$) also suggests a very strong relationship between the two variables. Thus, communication among peers plays a critical role in facilitating students' ability to adjust academically. To further clarify the distribution of students' peer interpersonal communication levels, Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage of respondents categorized as low, moderate, or high in their communication competence.

Tabel 2. Frequency Distribution of Peer Interpersonal Communication Categories

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	12	11.8
Moderate	34	33.3
High	56	54.9
Total	102	100.0



As indicated in Table 2, more than half of the respondents demonstrated a high level of peer interpersonal communication, suggesting that the majority of students possess the social competence necessary to establish positive academic relationships.

Further regression testing confirmed that peer interpersonal communication contributed **62.1%** to the variance in academic adjustment, as reflected by the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.621$). The F-test results ($F = 114.844$, $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$) further supported the model's statistical significance. These findings demonstrate that interpersonal communication is not merely a social skill but an essential academic competency that fosters adaptability in the learning environment. The residual analysis also confirmed that data distribution met the assumption of normality (Kolmogorov–Smirnov $\text{Sig.} = 0.200 > 0.05$). Therefore, the regression model used in this study was valid and reliable for interpretation. Table 1 and Figure 1 below summarize the results of the regression analysis and the strength of the relationship between variables. In addition to communication, the classification of students' academic adjustment levels is presented in Table 3 to provide a more detailed description of respondents' adaptability within the learning environment.

Tabel 3. Frequency Distribution of Academic Adjustment Levels

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	10	9.8
Moderate	47	46.1
High	45	44.1
Total	102	100.0

Table 3 shows that most students were in the moderate to high categories of academic adjustment, reflecting a generally positive yet varied ability to manage academic and emotional challenges.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression Summary

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R ²	F	Sig. (ANOVA)
(Constant)	32.417	4.237	—	7.651	0.000	0.788	0.621	114.844	0.000
Peer Interpersonal Communication	0.658	0.061	0.788	10.717	0.000	—	—	—	—

To visually confirm the linear relationship between the two variables, Figure 1 displays the scatterplot of peer interpersonal communication and academic adjustment, with the regression line illustrating the positive direction of the relationship.

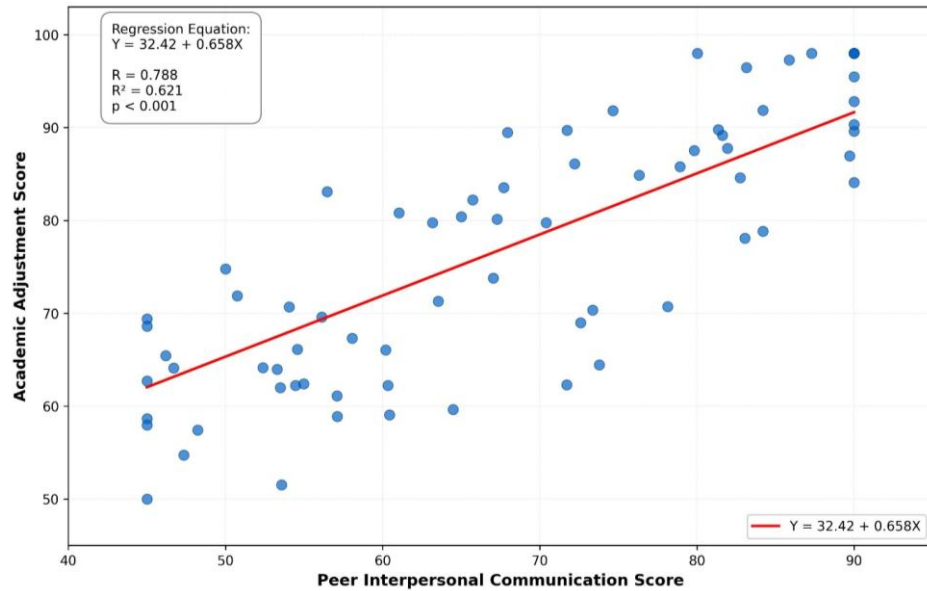


Figure 1. Scatterplot of Regression Line between Peer Communication and Academic Adjustment

As shown in Figure 1, the scatterplot points cluster upward along the regression line, confirming a strong positive association consistent with the statistical results presented earlier.

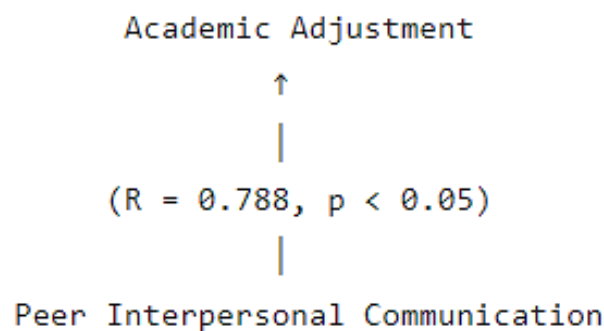


Figure 2. Relationship Between Peer Interpersonal Communication and Academic Adjustment

A positive linear relationship exists between peer interpersonal communication and academic adjustment, indicating that improved communication skills are directly associated with stronger adjustment outcomes among students.



B. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that peer interpersonal communication significantly influences students' academic adjustment. This result aligns with previous research by (Emilia et al., 2024) and (Mishra & Kumari, 2025), which demonstrated that effective communication enables individuals to express ideas, manage emotions, and engage productively in academic tasks. Students who can interact openly with their peers are more likely to experience academic satisfaction and psychological comfort. In contrast, students with limited communication competence often struggle with group collaboration and self-expression (Xakimov, 2025). These difficulties can lead to stress and disengagement from learning activities (Baiti et al., 2024). Hence, interpersonal communication acts as a mediating factor in the process of academic adaptation. Effective interpersonal communication not only fosters academic adjustment but also enhances overall student well-being Reba et al. (2025), as highlighted in studies on communication competence and academic performance (Hawken et al., 1991).

The strong correlation coefficient ($R = 0.788$) emphasizes that interpersonal relationships among peers play a dominant role in shaping academic behaviors. Students who experience positive peer interactions receive emotional support and constructive feedback that enhance their learning motivation (Firman & Sandiarsa, 2024). According to Devito's interpersonal communication framework, openness and empathy promote a supportive learning atmosphere conducive to academic success (Makweya & Sepadi, 2024). This result also reinforces the Social Learning Theory perspective, which suggests that behavioral adaptation is influenced by social modeling and peer interaction (Field & Prinstein, 2024). Therefore, communication among peers is not only a social necessity but also a psychological resource for cognitive and emotional regulation in learning. (Baucal et al., 2023). The present study provides quantitative evidence supporting these theoretical assumptions. Ultimately, fostering effective peer communication can significantly enhance students' academic experiences and overall well-being, leading to improved educational outcomes. This underscores the importance of developing communication skills as a foundational element for both academic success and mental health among university students.

From an applied perspective, the findings highlight the importance of integrating interpersonal communication skills into counseling and academic support programs (Baek & Shin, 2025). For



Guidance and Counseling students, the ability to communicate effectively is not only relevant for academic adjustment but also for future professional practice (Obasi, 2024). Universities should design peer-based mentoring programs that emphasize empathy, feedback, and collaboration as essential components of student development (Koziol & Wagner, 2024). By fostering such communication-rich environments, institutions can strengthen students' adaptability, resilience, and academic performance (Ibrahim et al., 2024). The evidence from this study thus contributes both theoretically and practically to the discourse on student well-being in higher education. In conclusion, peer interpersonal communication serves as a vital mechanism that enhances students' academic adjustment and success. Moreover, the integration of supportive communication practices can further facilitate a smoother transition for students adjusting to university life, enhancing their overall academic experience and emotional well-being ("Coping Mechanisms for First-Year Students," 2023).

This study emphasizes the critical need for universities to prioritize the development of interpersonal communication skills to support student well-being and academic success (Vetrivel et al., 2025). By fostering an environment that encourages open dialogue and peer interaction, institutions can significantly enhance students' mental health and educational outcomes (Prakosa et al., 2024). This approach not only benefits individual students but also contributes to a healthier campus culture that values emotional support and collaboration. Creating programs that promote interpersonal communication among students is essential for fostering a supportive academic environment that prioritizes mental health and well-being.

Implementing targeted training for both students and faculty in interpersonal communication can further enhance these supportive environments, ensuring that all members of the university community feel valued and understood. Such initiatives can lead to improved relationships within the university, ultimately fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing overall student satisfaction and retention. This study's findings align with previous research indicating that a strong sense of belonging significantly influences student satisfaction and retention in higher education (Fan et al., 2021; Rehman et al., 2023). By prioritizing interpersonal communication, universities can effectively enhance students' sense of belonging and overall academic success. Moreover, fostering a sense of belonging through interpersonal communication can mitigate feelings of isolation and



enhance academic engagement, which are critical for student success in higher education (Jones & Bell, 2025).

This study highlights the necessity for universities to create structured opportunities for peer interaction, which can lead to improved mental health outcomes and greater academic engagement among students. Such initiatives can include workshops, peer mentoring programs, and social events designed to encourage collaboration and communication among students, ultimately fostering a supportive academic community. These initiatives should be tailored to address the unique cultural contexts of the student population, ensuring inclusivity and relevance to their experiences.

CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion

The findings of this research demonstrate a significant and positive influence of peer interpersonal communication on academic adjustment among students of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at Cenderawasih University. Statistical analysis revealed that communication competence contributed 62.1% to students' ability to adapt academically, indicating that peer interaction is a dominant determinant of academic success. Students who communicate effectively with their peers exhibit higher emotional stability, stronger motivation, and better engagement in learning activities (Reba & Muttaqin, 2025). These results validate the theoretical assumptions of Devito's interpersonal communication framework and the Social Learning Theory proposed by Bandura. Both theories emphasize that social relationships and communication behaviors are central to adaptive learning processes. Therefore, peer interpersonal communication serves not only as a medium of expression but also as a catalyst for personal growth and academic resilience.

B. Recommendation

Based on the research findings, several recommendations are proposed for improving students' academic adjustment through enhanced communication practices. First, universities should develop structured peer-support and mentoring programs that foster empathy, openness, and collaboration among students. Second, the curriculum in Guidance and Counseling should integrate interpersonal communication training as a key competency to strengthen students' social and professional



readiness. Third, academic advisors and counselors are encouraged to facilitate workshops and reflective discussions that promote effective communication in learning contexts. Future research is recommended to expand the model by including mediating variables such as self-efficacy, motivation, or emotional intelligence. Such studies will deepen the understanding of communication's multidimensional role in academic adjustment. Ultimately, improving peer interpersonal communication is essential for building inclusive, adaptive, and high-performing academic communities.

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