

Social Competency of Indonesian Language Lecturers Buana Perjuangan University, Karawang

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ABSTRACT

Lecturers have a strategic role in the formation of qualified and highly competitive graduates, not only as teachers but also as academic supervisors, researchers, and role models. One of the crucial aspects of competence is social competence, namely the ability to communicate and interact effectively with students, peers, education staff, parents, and the community. This study aims to examine the social competence of Indonesian lecturers at Buana Perjuangan University, Karawang in the context of learning and academic life. This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques including in-depth interviews and documentation. The results show that Indonesian lecturers at UBP Karawang demonstrate good to very good social competence, reflected in polite and inclusive communication, cross-unit collaboration, and concern for the diversity of student backgrounds. Lecturers also show openness to feedback, the ability to create a conducive learning atmosphere, and active contributions to the tridharma activities of higher education. These findings confirm that social competence not only supports learning success but also strengthens an inclusive, ethical, and collaborative academic culture.

Keywords: Social Competence, Indonesian Language Lecturer, Buana Perjuangan University Scarlet Witch

INTRODUCTION

Lecturers play a strategic role in producing high-quality and highly competitive graduates, not only as teachers but also as mentors, researchers, and academic role models (Brar, 2025; Sija, 2022). As a crucial element in implementing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, improving lecturer competency is an absolute prerequisite. One aspect that receives special attention is social competency (Rina et al., 2021; Nento, 2018; Nurutami & Adman, 2016).

In general, social competency is defined as a lecturer's ability to communicate and interact effectively with students, colleagues, educational staff, parents/guardians, and the wider community, forming a vital component of higher education quality. Indonesian legislation, including Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers and the Ministerial Regulation No. 53/2023 under the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, formally recognize social competence as one of the four core domains of lecturer competency, alongside pedagogical, personality, and professional competencies (Sari Baso, 2016; Narmaditya, 2024). Empirical studies affirm that lecturers with strong social competence contribute to conducive

learning interactions and improved teaching effectiveness (Salsabilah et al., 2025). Measurement frameworks within Indonesian education also operationalize social competence in terms of communication with educational stakeholders and adaptability to socio-cultural diversity (Rusijono et al., 2020). Furthermore, comparative literature emphasizes that educators' social skills underpin student engagement, inclusive environments, and broader community relations (Basuki, 2025; Sáiful, 2020). Together, these legal and empirical foundations underscore that social competence is not only a regulatory requirement but also a central driver of professional teaching performance in higher education.

According to Muawanah's (2020) study, lecturers' social competence is demonstrated through effective collaboration, inclusive learning strategies, and empathetic and polite communication. Sulindra (year unspecified) explained that this competence can be measured through lecturers' ability to accept feedback, understand students as individuals, and tolerate diversity.

Social competence extends beyond daily interactions; it also enables lecturers to build a conducive, respectful, inclusive, and productive academic climate. According to RuangDosen (2024), its core elements include inclusive and polite communication, collaboration in multidisciplinary teams, and concern for cultural diversity.

Specifically, within Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang, efforts to improve soft skills—including social competence—have been integrated into the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program and the OBE-based curriculum. Through by-invitation workshops and collaborative activities across study programs, lecturers are expected to improve social interaction, empathy, and practical collaboration with students and the industrial world.

With these theoretical and empirical foundations, this research focuses on the Social Competence of Indonesian Language Lecturers Buana Perjuangan University, Karawang, specifically exploring how lecturers foster effective communication, build collaborative networks, understand the function of social institutions, and conduct harmonious social interactions within academic and community environments.

Previous research by Rani, Asih, & Andriyansyah (2025) found that teachers' interpersonal communication and social skills significantly influence student learning satisfaction—while inclusive teacher competency did not show a significant effect—highlighting the critical role of relational skills in classroom engagement but leaving unexplored the broader application to lecturers' social competence within higher education contexts. Meanwhile, Suwanto, Ummah, & Ubaidillah (2023) emphasized how principles of religious moderation (e.g., balance, tolerance, egalitarianism) effectively strengthen social competence among lecturers and students under the MBKM independent curriculum policy—but did not delve into how such competencies are practiced by lecturers in daily academic and community interactions.

The research objective is to empirically analyze lecturers' social competence in academic and community environments, informed by Tri Dharma obligations and institutional policy. The benefit lies in generating actionable insights for professional development, curriculum design, and institutional strategies to empower lecturers as effective mentors, communicators, and community-engaged role models in higher education.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative method to explore the meanings, perspectives, and social interactions of lecturers in an academic environment. Data were collected through multiple qualitative techniques to ensure the credibility and depth of the findings. The primary technique was semi-structured interviews with Indonesian Language lecturers at *Universitas Buana Perjuangan* (UBP) Karawang, which allowed researchers to capture personal experiences, communication styles, and perceptions of *social competence*. In addition, participant observation was conducted during classroom interactions, academic meetings, and community engagement activities to record real-time lecturer behaviors. Supporting documents, such as institutional guidelines, lecturer training reports, and curriculum policies related to MBKM and OBE, were also examined as documentary evidence. Triangulation of these methods increased the trustworthiness of the data.

Data analysis followed the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2018), consisting of three stages: (1) Data Reduction, where interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were coded and categorized into themes related to communication, collaboration, social interaction, and cultural sensitivity; (2) Data Display, using matrices and narrative descriptions to organize findings systematically for interpretation; and (3) Conclusion Drawing/Verification, where emerging patterns were cross-checked against theoretical frameworks such as the Tri Dharma of Higher Education and *social competence* constructs. This iterative process ensured that the interpretations remained grounded in empirical data while aligning with the research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, data analysis through in-depth interviews and documentation yielded comprehensive insights into the social competence of Indonesian Language lecturers at Buana Perjuangan University, Karawang. These results were further enriched by reference to the three main pillars of social competence: inclusive communication, collaboration, and concern for diversity (an-nur.ac.id+3e-journal.undikma.ac.id+3jurnal.unidha.ac.id+3ruangdosen.site).

First, all informants (HJ, RM, SD, LM, TR) demonstrated polite and inclusive communication skills. They consistently used formal and polite language in daily interactions, both spoken and written. RM and TR, for example, were known by students and fellow lecturers as friendly and responsive figures, consistent with the characteristics of lecturers who "communicate empathetically and professionally."

Second, collaboration and cooperation across academic elements were clearly evident in teaching, research, and community service activities. Elementary school, for example, is active in lecturer forums and extracurricular mentoring, while HJ initiates discussion groups with educational staff. This reflects a real contribution to "community activities" and academic networking, as explained in theory.

Third, the aspect of concern for diversity is reflected in the lecturers' ability to accommodate students' diverse backgrounds. LM and SD explicitly state their efforts to understand students' cultural contexts, assist students with the 3T (third-class) students, and provide space for the expression of diverse identities in the classroom—in line with the indicators of "knowledge of customs, social appreciation, and tolerance"

Overall, an in-depth analysis shows that the social competence of UBP Karawang lecturers is in the good to excellent category. This is reflected in:

- 1) An inclusive and non-discriminatory attitude in mentoring,
- 2) Openness to criticism and feedback,
- 3) The ability to create a conducive and harmonious classroom environment.

These findings align with a study by Sulindra (UNSA Sumbawa), which found that lecturers' social competence in learning contexts tends to be very good. Based on data mapping, it was found that:

- 1) All informants were able to communicate effectively, using polite and adaptive language.
- 2) Cross-functional collaboration was closely established within research teams, mentoring, and community service.
- 3) Sensitivity to student diversity was evident in the personal approach to teaching and learning.

This list of results indicates that Indonesian Language lecturers at UBP Karawang not only meet minimum standards of social competence but also demonstrate excellent practices that support an inclusive and productive academic climate. The results of this study have several strategic implications:

- 1) Further training should be directed at strengthening moderation in cross-cultural communication and digital media.
- 2) Formal collaboration can be expanded through interuniversity networks and professional associations.
- 3) Regular evaluation of lecturers' social competence can be implemented through questionnaires and holistic observations to ensure positive practices are maintained and improved.

Indonesian Language lecturers at UBP Karawang not only deliver academic material but also uphold a professional attitude and quality service, reflected in various dimensions:

1) Professional Attitude

Lecturers demonstrate high integrity and exemplify good and correct use of Indonesian. They are honest, fair, and objective in their assessments, and avoid plagiarism. They also continually update their knowledge in linguistics and literature, understand language policies (KBBi 2023 ; PUEBI, Kemendikbudristek 2023), and utilize the latest technology in their learning. Their teaching methods are innovative, tailored to student characteristics, and stimulate critical thinking and creativity. Lecturers are friendly, flexible, and provide consultation opportunities to assist students. Their discipline and consistency are demonstrated through timely and informative feedback.

2) Academic Services

Learning services include the provision of comprehensive modules, the use of digital platforms (Google Classroom, Moodle), and intensive guidance. For theses and scientific writing, lecturers provide guidance on writing techniques, citations, and the use of Mendeley or Zotero. They also encourage publication and support student activities in internships or professional seminars. Lecturers provide intensive consultation services for assignments and scientific papers, as well as motivational support to build self-confidence and respect for diversity.

3) Role in Character Building

Through language and literature learning, lecturers instill a love of the Indonesian language and the values of honesty and ethics in communication. They also facilitate active reading and writing habits and train students to think critically about linguistic and literary phenomena in society.

Collaboration Demonstrated by Lecturers

Lecturers demonstrate collaborative skills in various activities:

In Learning

- 1) Collaboration between lecturers: carried out through team teaching, joint curriculum development, and educational technology training.
- 2) Collaboration with students: thesis guidance, collaborative projects, and academic competition support.
- 3) Collaboration with the campus: Coordination with faculty and administrative staff, and collaboration with the library to facilitate access to teaching materials.

In Research and Publication

Lecturers actively conduct collaborative research, both among themselves and with external institutions such as literary study centers. They co-author journals and participate in seminars and conferences.

In Community Service

They conduct language and literature training and assist aspiring writers in schools or local literacy communities.

Lecturer Communication

Lecturers demonstrate high communication competency in various contexts:

- 1) In Learning
Their teaching language is clear and structured according to the KBBI (Indonesian Language Dictionary) and PUEBI (Indonesian Language Dictionary). Their intonation, articulation, and volume are effective, and they are able to use digital media in a variety of ways. Their interactions encourage active discussion and provide constructive feedback.
- 2) Research and Publication
They master systematic academic writing and are able to present research results professionally at seminars and scientific journals.
- 3) Community Service
Lecturers are able to convey educational material to the general public using an appropriate communicative style and actively write popular articles and disseminate them through digital media.
- 4) Collaboration and Formal Interaction
They are skilled at communicating with colleagues, staff, leaders, and the professional world using formal, professional, and ethical language.
- 5) Daily Communication Ethics
Lecturers are always polite, respect differences, listen actively, are responsive to input, and adapt to various communication channels according to the situation.

Social and Community Skills

Lecturers demonstrate good social skills in academic, community, and professional environments:

1) Academic Environment

They are friendly and approachable to students, establish harmonious relationships with colleagues and educational staff, and actively participate in faculty and educational activities.

2) Community Service

Lecturers are active in a number of social and cultural activities, such as language and literacy training, using accessible language, and respecting local customs and norms.

3) Professional and Industrial World

They build relationships with publishers, media, government agencies, and companies to support scientific work and language service.

4) Social Etiquette

Lecturers consistently demonstrate politeness, flexibility, empathy, and adaptability to various groups, as well as providing solutions to community and student problems.

Although the findings of this study show that Indonesian Language lecturers at UBP Karawang have generally demonstrated good to excellent social competence, the results tend to align with previous research rather than challenge or expand it. For example, Sulindra (2021) found that lecturers at UNSA Sumbawa were also rated highly in social competence, particularly in communication and collaboration. However, that study largely emphasized classroom teaching contexts, while the present research extends the analysis to include community service, professional networking, and academic services—domains that are underexplored in Sulindra's framework. This broader scope provides a more holistic perspective on lecturers' roles as communicators and collaborators, not just within campus boundaries but in wider societal contexts.

Furthermore, while Muawanah (2020) underscored that lecturers' social competence could be seen in inclusivity and collaboration, her findings suggested that feedback tolerance and diversity appreciation were often inconsistently applied across faculties. In contrast, the lecturers at UBP Karawang appear to have embedded tolerance and cultural sensitivity more consistently in both classroom practices and community activities. This difference may be due to the integration of MBKM (Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka) and OBE (Outcome-Based Education) programs at UBP, which explicitly require collaboration and inclusivity as part of curricular and extracurricular outcomes. Thus, the findings here illustrate how institutional policy frameworks can directly strengthen lecturer social competence, a dimension that earlier studies often overlooked.

Another notable comparison is with research by Rani et al. (2025), who reported that interpersonal communication and social skills significantly affected student satisfaction, yet inclusive competencies did not show strong effects. The findings at UBP Karawang contradict this trend, as inclusive and empathetic communication was consistently highlighted by students and peers as a strength of their lecturers. This suggests that in certain cultural or institutional contexts, inclusivity may play a more central role than in others, and points to the need for future comparative studies across regions or institutional types.

However, this study still faces limitations similar to those in earlier works: the evaluation of competence relies heavily on self-report, observation, and perception-based indicators, which may carry subjectivity. Unlike quantitative models that attempt to measure competence through standardized rubrics or student performance outcomes, qualitative studies—including this one—focus more on descriptive richness. Therefore, while the findings contribute depth and nuance, they must be complemented by further quantitative validation to strengthen generalizability.

CONCLUSION

This research found that Indonesian Language lecturers at Buana Perjuangan University, Karawang, exhibit good to excellent social competence, demonstrated through inclusive communication, cross-academic collaboration, and a strong concern for student diversity. Lecturers employ polite, adaptive, and empathetic communication in both formal and informal contexts and actively engage in collaborative activities involving students, staff, and external partners. Their concern for diversity is evident in understanding varied cultural backgrounds, providing special mentoring for students from 3T (frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged) areas, and fostering inclusive classroom environments. Additionally, lecturers show high professionalism in academic services, character building, and the use of technology and digital media, alongside ethical communication and friendly attitudes that enhance their role as agents of change. Future research could explore how these social competencies impact student outcomes and examine strategies to further strengthen lecturer-student engagement in diverse higher education settings.

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