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The Dynamics of intercultural Conflict in Lecturer Performance Evaluation: The Perspective of Digital Immigrant Lecturers and Assessors (Study at Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak)

Julia Magdalena Wuysang^{1*}, Ira Patriani², Rahmawati³, Feibe Engeline Pijoh⁴

^{1,2}Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak, Indonesia, ³Universitas Syiah Kuala Banda Aceh, Indonesia, ⁴Universitas Negeri Manado, Indonesia

Julia.magdalena@fisip.untan.ac.id

Abstract. This study examines the dynamics of intercultural conflict in communication during the lecturer workload performance evaluation (BKD) at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Tanjungpura University (UNTAN), Pontianak. It focuses on the differing perspectives between digital immigrant lecturers and assessors. The conflict arises from variations in technology usage, communication styles, and cultural norms between the two groups. The research addresses how cross-cultural communication conflicts impact the effectiveness of the performance evaluation process and how generational differences and technological experience shape perceptions and practices in evaluation. A qualitative research method was employed, involving in-depth interviews, thematic analysis, and theoretical analysis based on the Digital Natives vs. Digital Immigrants Theory (Prensky, 2001), Face Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1985), Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 2004), and Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The findings show that: 1) the mismatch in technological proficiency between assessors and lecturers is the primary cause of communication conflict; 2) tensions arising from face negotiation are heavily influenced by differences in communication styles and technology usage between assessors and digital immigrant lecturers, with the latter perceiving technology as a threat to their professional face; 3) the diffusion of innovation and differing perceptions of technology become the main sources of tension in the performance evaluation process; and 4) limited intercultural understanding is a key factor exacerbating conflicts in the evaluation process.

Keywords. Intercultural Communication Conflict, Lecturer Performance Evaluation, Digital Immigrant Generation, Assessors in Lecturer Performance Evaluation

A. Introduction

Lecturer performance evaluation (Beban Kerja Dosen/BKD) is a fundamental component of higher education governance in Indonesia, serving as an instrument to ensure accountability, monitor academic productivity, and maintain educational quality. Through this evaluation system, universities assess lecturers' performance in teaching, research, community

service, and supporting academic activities. Despite its strategic importance, the implementation of lecturer performance evaluation is not merely a technical process; it also involves complex communication dynamics that may give rise to intercultural conflict, particularly in institutions experiencing generational transitions and rapid technological change.

At the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Tanjungpura University (UNTAN) Pontianak, the lecturer workload performance evaluation process has increasingly relied on digital-based systems. While this transformation aims to enhance efficiency, transparency, and standardization, it simultaneously introduces communication challenges between lecturers and assessors. These challenges are especially evident in interactions between digital immigrant lecturers—who are more accustomed to traditional, face-to-face, and direct communication methods—and assessors who are more proficient in digital technologies and technology-mediated communication.

Differences in communication styles, technological familiarity, and cultural expectations can generate latent intercultural conflicts during the evaluation process. Digital immigrant lecturers may experience difficulties adapting to digital platforms used for BKD assessment, while assessors may assume technological competence as a given. As a result, misunderstandings, feelings of alienation, and perceptions of unfairness may emerge, potentially undermining the objectivity and effectiveness of the evaluation system. These dynamics highlight that lecturer performance evaluation is not only an administrative activity but also a communicative and cultural process that requires mutual understanding and social negotiation.

One significant latent issue in this context is the misalignment in technological proficiency between generations. Digital immigrant lecturers often face challenges in operating digital evaluation systems, which can affect their ability to present academic performance accurately and transparently. According to Prensky (2001), digital immigrants tend to retain communication habits formed prior to the digital era, making adaptation to new technologies more demanding. Conversely, assessors who are more technologically adept may underestimate these challenges, thereby increasing the risk of misjudgment and miscommunication during the evaluation process.

Another latent issue relates to tensions in face negotiation, a central concept in intercultural communication. Ting-Toomey's (1985) Face Negotiation Theory explains that individuals from collectivist cultures tend to prioritize the maintenance of social harmony and personal dignity (face), often avoiding direct confrontation. Digital immigrant lecturers, who are more familiar with indirect and relational communication styles, may perceive the direct, technology-mediated communication used by assessors as threatening or insensitive. This mismatch in conflict management and communication expectations can intensify interpersonal tensions and reduce the effectiveness of the evaluation process.

Furthermore, differences in perceptions of technology adoption represent another underlying problem. Based on Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations Theory, individuals' willingness to adopt new technologies depends on how they perceive the benefits, compatibility, and risks of innovation. In the context of BKD evaluation, digital immigrant lecturers may view digital systems as incompatible with traditional academic culture or as burdensome, while assessors may regard them as neutral tools for efficiency and accountability. These divergent perceptions can slow innovation diffusion, heighten resistance, and exacerbate communication conflicts between the two groups.

In addition, limited intercultural understanding within the academic context further complicates the evaluation process. Gudykunst's (2004) Intercultural Communication Theory

emphasizes that differences in cultural values and communication norms can lead to misinterpretation and ineffective interaction. Assessors who rely heavily on direct, technology-based communication may not fully recognize the cultural sensitivities of digital immigrant lecturers, who value subtlety, respect, and relational harmony. This lack of sensitivity can weaken interpersonal relationships and diminish the constructive nature of performance evaluations.

Taken together, the misalignment in technological proficiency, tensions in face negotiation, divergent perceptions of technology, and limited intercultural understanding constitute critical latent issues in the lecturer performance evaluation process at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak. Addressing these issues is essential not only for improving the effectiveness and fairness of BKD evaluations but also for strengthening intergenerational relationships within the academic environment. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the dynamics of intercultural conflict in communication during lecturer performance evaluation, with particular attention to the perspectives of digital immigrant lecturers and assessors, and to offer insights that may support more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and adaptive evaluation practices in higher education.

B. Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of intercultural communication dynamics that emerge during the lecturer workload performance evaluation (Beban Kerja Dosen/BKD) at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tanjungpura University (UNTAN) Pontianak. A qualitative case study is considered appropriate because it allows for a detailed exploration of complex social phenomena, particularly communication conflicts shaped by generational differences, cultural values, and technological adaptation. The study is descriptive-analytic in nature, aiming not only to describe the forms of conflict that arise during the evaluation process but also to interpret these conflicts using established intercultural communication theories.

The research is conducted through two main analytical stages. The first stage involves thematic analysis of data collected through in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). This analysis is used to identify recurring patterns and key themes related to intercultural communication differences, experiences of conflict, and participants' understanding of the BKD performance evaluation process. Through this stage, the study examines how communication practices between Digital Immigrant lecturers and assessors influence interaction dynamics, perceptions of fairness, and the effectiveness of workload evaluation. The second stage consists of a critical analysis guided by intercultural communication theories. In this stage, the identified themes are interpreted to uncover the underlying factors contributing to communication conflicts and to explore how both Digital Immigrant lecturers and assessors navigate, negotiate, and attempt to manage generational and cultural differences in communication during the evaluation process.

Data collection in this study is carried out using multiple qualitative techniques to ensure depth and richness of information. In-depth interviews are conducted with Digital Immigrant lecturers and assessors to explore their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of the BKD evaluation system, particularly in relation to their use of digital technology and communication preferences. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are also conducted to encourage collective reflection and discussion among lecturers and assessors regarding communication conflicts, workload perceptions, and strategies for managing intercultural tension during the evaluation process. In addition, participatory observation is employed to capture direct

interactions between lecturers and assessors during the BKD performance evaluation. Through observation, the researcher gains contextual insight into communication behaviors, non-verbal cues, and moments where generational and cultural differences lead to misunderstanding or conflict.

To enhance the credibility, validity, and reliability of the research findings, several strategies are applied. Data triangulation is achieved by integrating information obtained from interviews, FGDs, and participatory observation, allowing the researcher to cross-check findings and strengthen analytical rigor. Member checking is conducted by confirming interpretations and conclusions with research participants to ensure that the findings accurately reflect their intended meanings and lived experiences. In addition, peer debriefing is undertaken by engaging colleagues or experts in intercultural communication to review the analytical process and provide critical feedback, thereby enhancing the objectivity and trustworthiness of the study.

The analysis of intercultural communication dynamics in this research is grounded in several complementary theoretical perspectives. Digital Generation Theory (Prensky) is used to distinguish between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants, highlighting differences in technological familiarity and communication preferences between assessors and some lecturers at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak. Face Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1985) provides a framework for understanding how individuals seek to maintain dignity and self-image during communication, particularly when technology-based evaluation practices are perceived as threatening or unfamiliar. High-context and low-context culture theory (Hall, 1976) is applied to explain differences in communication styles, with older lecturers tending to rely on implicit, relational communication and assessors favoring explicit, structured, and technology-mediated interaction. Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 2005) is employed to analyze how feelings of anxiety and uncertainty arise among Digital Immigrant lecturers in response to digital evaluation systems and how these emotions affect communication effectiveness. Finally, Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003) is used to interpret patterns of technology adoption in the BKD evaluation process, where assessors are generally positioned as early adopters, while older lecturers tend to adopt technology more slowly, creating potential tension and perceptions of marginalization.

C. Result and discussion

Context of BKD Performance Evaluation and Participant Overview

This study is situated within the context of lecturer workload performance evaluation (Beban Kerja Dosen/BKD) at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Tanjungpura (FISIP UNTAN) Pontianak, an academic environment that has undergone significant digital transformation in recent years. The BKD evaluation system functions as a formal mechanism for assessing lecturers' academic responsibilities, including teaching, research, community service, and supporting academic activities. In line with national higher education policies, the evaluation process has increasingly relied on digital platforms to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability. However, the integration of digital systems into academic evaluation practices has also introduced new forms of interaction that reshape communication patterns between lecturers and assessors.

The implementation of digital-based evaluation systems requires lecturers and assessors to engage in technology-mediated communication, replacing or reducing traditional face-to-face interactions that previously characterized academic assessment. This shift has altered not only technical procedures but also the social and cultural dimensions of evaluation.

Communication during BKD assessment now occurs through standardized digital interfaces, online reporting platforms, and system-generated feedback mechanisms, which demand specific technological competencies and familiarity with digital logic. As a result, the evaluation process becomes a site where technological proficiency, generational experience, and cultural expectations intersect.

Differences in generational background play a critical role in shaping how participants understand and experience the BKD evaluation process. Lecturers and assessors who entered academia before the widespread adoption of digital technology often carry communication habits, professional values, and epistemic orientations formed in an analog academic culture. Conversely, digital systems are designed based on assumptions of efficiency, standardization, and data-driven assessment, which may not fully accommodate these earlier academic practices. These conditions create a context in which intercultural communication conflicts can emerge, particularly when digital interaction is perceived as rigid, impersonal, or misaligned with established norms of academic recognition.

Technological competence further differentiates participants' experiences in BKD evaluation. While digital platforms promise objectivity and consistency, they also impose learning demands that are unevenly distributed across generations. Participants with limited technological confidence may experience anxiety, uncertainty, or resistance, which affects how they communicate, interpret feedback, and negotiate meaning during evaluation. Cultural orientation adds another layer of complexity, as values related to hierarchy, respect, face, and relational harmony influence how participants respond to evaluation procedures and technological mediation. Together, these contextual factors provide the foundation for examining intercultural communication conflicts in BKD performance evaluation at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak.

Digital Immigrant Lecturers in the BKD Evaluation Process

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Digital Immigrant Lecturers (DILs) in the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak – 2025

No	Birth Year	Field of Study	Public Administration		Sociology	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
1	1955–1959		–	1	–	–
2	1960–1970		20	7	8	7
3	1971–1978		–	4	2	1
4	1980–1988		7	5	3	3
5	1989–1995		12	11	1	12
	Total		44	28	14	23

Source: Author's field data (May, 2025)

The demographic data presented in Table 1 indicate that a substantial proportion of lecturers categorized as Digital Immigrants belong to older generational cohorts, particularly Baby Boomers and Generation X. These cohorts entered academia during periods when academic work was largely conducted through analog systems, face-to-face interaction, and paper-based administration. Consequently, their professional identities and communication practices were shaped by an academic culture that emphasized interpersonal engagement, experiential authority, and contextual understanding.

Baby Boomer lecturers (born 1946–1964) often perceive technology as an expert domain that lies outside their original professional formation. Previous studies suggest that members of this cohort tend to approach digital transformation with skepticism, viewing it as a disruptive force that challenges established academic norms and professional autonomy (Prensky, 2001; Tapscott, 2009). In the context of BKD evaluation, the shift from analog documentation to digital reporting platforms represents more than a technical adjustment; it constitutes a cultural and epistemic challenge. Digital systems require lecturers to translate complex academic activities into standardized categories and numerical indicators, which may be perceived as reductive and misaligned with their understanding of academic merit.

Resistance among Baby Boomer lecturers is often rooted in concerns about changing academic work structures and perceived threats to professional identity. When academic performance is assessed through digital metrics, lecturers may fear that their experience, intellectual contributions, and relational engagement are undervalued. These concerns can manifest as reluctance to fully engage with digital platforms, increased dependence on assistance, or critical attitudes toward the evaluation system. Such responses influence communication dynamics during evaluation, as lecturers may interpret technological demands as a lack of recognition for their long-standing academic service.

Generation X lecturers (born 1965–1980) demonstrate relatively higher adaptability to digital systems, as they were the first generation to encounter personal computing technologies during their professional development (Selwyn, 2016; Kocayörük & Olgan, 2020). This cohort often occupies a transitional position between analog and digital academic cultures. While generally more comfortable with technology than Baby Boomers, Generation X lecturers still face challenges when academic work becomes institutionalized through highly standardized digital platforms such as SISTER, which emphasize formal reporting, compliance, and data-driven assessment (Couldry & Mejias, 2019).

Even among digitally adaptable lecturers, difficulties arise when digital platforms prioritize administrative efficiency over contextual academic narratives. Lecturers may struggle to reconcile their pedagogical practices and scholarly activities with system requirements that demand precise categorization and quantification. These challenges highlight that technological adaptation among lecturers occurs unevenly and is influenced not only by technical skill but also by epistemic orientation and professional values. As a result, generational differences among Digital Immigrant lecturers play a crucial role in shaping communication patterns, perceptions of fairness, and responses to BKD evaluation procedures.

Assessors in the BKD Evaluation Process: Intergenerational and Intercultural Dimensions

The assessors involved in this study are predominantly Digital Immigrants who did not grow up with digital technology but have developed digital competencies through institutional training and professional experience. Their role in the BKD evaluation process places them at the intersection of institutional expectations and interpersonal communication with lecturers. Despite training efforts, many assessors continue to face challenges in navigating digital evaluation platforms, particularly when dealing with advanced system features, data integration, and procedural complexity (Helsper, 2012; Prensky, 2001).

These challenges reflect broader institutional difficulties in transitioning toward a fully digital evaluation environment. Assessors are expected to function as mediators between institutional policy and lecturers' academic practice, yet their own technological limitations may constrain their ability to perform this role effectively. As a result, assessors may rely

heavily on standardized procedures and system guidelines, potentially reducing flexibility and sensitivity in communication with lecturers who experience difficulties adapting to technology.

Table 2. Demographic Overview of Lecturers as Assessors at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak

No	Assessor's Age	Ethnicity
1	49 years	Malay Pontianak
2	60 years	Chinese Javanese
3	61 years	Bugis
4	46 years	Malay Pontianak
5	65 years	Malay Sintang
6	62 years	Javanese

Source: Author's field data (September 2025)

The assessors' age range (46–65 years) indicates significant intergenerational diversity, which corresponds to varying levels of digital literacy and familiarity with technology-based academic work (Prensky, 2001; Selwyn, 2016). Older assessors may share similar technological challenges with Digital Immigrant lecturers, yet their institutional role requires them to enforce digital evaluation standards. This dual position can create internal tension, as assessors must balance empathy with procedural compliance.

Furthermore, the ethnic diversity of assessors—including Malay Pontianak, Chinese Javanese, Bugis, Malay Sintang, and Javanese—reflects the multicultural character of the faculty. Cultural background influences communication styles, norms of authority, and approaches to evaluation (Sorrells, 2016; Ting-Toomey, 2005). In a technology-mediated context, these cultural dimensions interact with digital practices, shaping how assessors interpret academic performance and communicate expectations. Intercultural sensitivity becomes particularly important, as digital platforms may obscure contextual cues that are essential for understanding cultural nuances in academic interaction.

Mismatch in Technological Competency and Face Negotiation Tensions

The results of this study show that a mismatch in technological competency between assessors and Digital Immigrant faculty members constitutes a primary source of intercultural communication tension during the lecturer workload performance evaluation (BKD) process at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak. This mismatch is not limited to differences in technical skills but reflects broader generational disparities in familiarity with digital systems, confidence in technology use, and interpretations of technology's role in academic work. While assessors are generally well trained, technologically adept, and have consistent access to digital tools, many Digital Immigrant faculty members—who adopted technology later in their careers—experience anxiety, a sense of incompetence, and intimidation when confronted with technology-based evaluation platforms.

From the perspective of Digital Generation Theory (Prensky, 2001), this disparity can be understood as a structural digital divide between Digital Natives or technologically fluent assessors and Digital Immigrant lecturers. Assessors tend to approach digital platforms as intuitive and integral components of academic administration, enabling them to navigate BKD systems efficiently and confidently. In contrast, Digital Immigrant faculty members often perceive digital evaluation systems as complex and unfamiliar, requiring cognitive and

emotional adjustments that extend beyond mere technical learning. These differences in technological orientation shape how each group communicates, interprets evaluation procedures, and responds to institutional demands.

The findings indicate that this generational gap disrupts communication during the evaluation process. Digital Immigrant faculty members who struggle with digital platforms may misinterpret system requirements, experience difficulty uploading or categorizing academic outputs, or require repeated clarification from assessors. These challenges often lead to misunderstandings that reduce the objectivity and constructiveness of evaluation feedback. As a result, the intended goals of BKD evaluation—such as transparency, fairness, and accountability—are undermined by communication breakdowns rooted in technological disparity rather than academic performance.

Face Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1985) provides further insight into how technological mismatch intensifies communication conflict. In academic settings, professional face is closely tied to perceptions of intellectual competence, authority, and recognition. For Digital Immigrant faculty members, difficulty using technology-based evaluation systems may be interpreted as a public display of inadequacy, threatening their professional face. The requirement to demonstrate academic performance through unfamiliar digital platforms can thus be perceived as disrespectful or dismissive of long-standing scholarly experience. This perception often leads faculty members to feel undervalued and marginalized within the academic community.

Assessors, on the other hand, may experience frustration when faculty members struggle to adapt to digital evaluation systems. From the assessors' perspective, technological competence is associated with efficiency and objectivity, and difficulties in system use may be interpreted as resistance or lack of commitment. This divergence in interpretation exacerbates face-related tension, as both parties seek to maintain professional legitimacy while attributing communication difficulties to the other's perceived shortcomings. When face concerns remain unacknowledged, mistrust deepens and collaborative communication becomes increasingly strained.

Anxiety and uncertainty further amplify the effects of technological mismatch on communication dynamics. Drawing on Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 1988), the findings reveal that Digital Immigrant faculty members often experience high levels of uncertainty regarding evaluation procedures, system expectations, and the potential consequences of technological errors. This uncertainty generates anxiety that inhibits effective communication and limits faculty members' ability to present their academic achievements optimally within digital formats. Anxiety may cause lecturers to avoid engagement with the system, delay submissions, or rely excessively on others, thereby reinforcing perceptions of technological inadequacy.

At the same time, assessors may experience their own form of uncertainty and anxiety, particularly regarding the reliability and validity of evaluation outcomes when faculty members are unable to engage fully with digital platforms. Assessors may worry that performance evaluations do not accurately reflect academic contributions, which undermines their confidence in the evaluation process. This mutual uncertainty weakens communicative trust and contributes to emotional distance between lecturers and assessors, further diminishing the effectiveness of evaluation interactions.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the technological skill gap between assessors and Digital Immigrant faculty members is a central driver of intercultural communication conflict in BKD performance evaluation at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak. Digital Generation

Theory explains how generational differences in technological exposure shape communication patterns, Face Negotiation Theory highlights how professional dignity and recognition are contested through technology use, and Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory reveals how emotional responses to uncertainty hinder effective interaction. Addressing this mismatch requires a more inclusive and adaptive communication approach that recognizes differing learning trajectories, provides supportive technological guidance, and fosters empathetic interaction. Such an approach is essential for facilitating smoother communication, strengthening mutual understanding, and enhancing the overall effectiveness and legitimacy of digital performance evaluation in higher education.

Tensions in Face Negotiation

The results of this study indicate that tensions in face negotiation constitute a distinct and significant dimension of intercultural communication conflict during lecturer workload performance evaluation (BKD) at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak. These tensions arise from differences in how Digital Immigrant lecturers and trained assessors perceive, maintain, and negotiate professional self-image (face) within a technology-mediated evaluation environment. For Digital Immigrant lecturers, face is closely associated with professional dignity, academic experience, and interpersonal recognition, whereas assessors tend to emphasize procedural compliance, efficiency, and technological competence as markers of professional performance.

From the perspective of Digital Generation Theory (Prensky, 2001), the dominance of digital platforms in BKD evaluation creates a structural imbalance that places Digital Immigrant lecturers at a disadvantage. Lecturers who adopted technology later in their careers often perceive technology-based evaluation methods as foreign and difficult to access, which can be interpreted as a threat to their professional face. In contrast, trained assessors—although not necessarily Digital Natives—tend to view technology as a natural and efficient tool for standardizing evaluation processes. This difference in orientation generates frustration on both sides: lecturers feel intimidated or disrespected, while assessors perceive lecturers' reluctance or difficulty as resistance to institutional procedures.

Face Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1985) further explains how these tensions are embedded in intercultural interaction. In the context of BKD evaluation, face represents the professional status and academic legitimacy of lecturers. When lecturers encounter difficulties using digital systems, they may experience embarrassment, loss of confidence, and a sense that their academic competence is being undermined by technological demands rather than evaluated on substantive scholarly contributions. This perceived threat to face discourages open communication and may result in defensive attitudes or withdrawal during the evaluation process. Conversely, assessors may experience challenges in maintaining their own professional face when evaluation procedures are disrupted by lecturers' technological limitations, as this affects their ability to conduct assessments effectively and objectively.

The findings also show that anxiety and uncertainty play a crucial role in intensifying face negotiation tensions. Drawing on Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 1988), the study reveals that Digital Immigrant lecturers often experience uncertainty regarding digital evaluation procedures, system expectations, and performance indicators. This uncertainty generates anxiety that inhibits lecturers from presenting their academic achievements optimally. At the same time, assessors may experience anxiety related to the credibility and consistency of evaluation outcomes when lecturers are unable to engage fully with digital platforms. The presence of mutual anxiety weakens communicative openness and

amplifies misunderstanding, thereby reducing the overall effectiveness of performance evaluation.

In addition, cultural differences in communication styles further exacerbate tensions in face negotiation. Based on High-Context and Low-Context Culture Theory (Hall, 1976), Digital Immigrant lecturers tend to prefer high-context communication that relies on interpersonal relationships, implicit meaning, and face-to-face interaction. In contrast, assessors are more accustomed to low-context communication characterized by explicit instructions, structured procedures, and technology-mediated interaction. This mismatch leads lecturers to perceive evaluation communication as impersonal and insensitive to professional dignity, while assessors may interpret lecturers' expectations for relational engagement as inefficient or incompatible with digital systems. As a result, face negotiation becomes increasingly complex, as professional identity is challenged not only by technological demands but also by communication styles that do not align with participants' cultural expectations.

Overall, the results demonstrate that tensions in face negotiation are a core component of intercultural communication conflict in BKD performance evaluation at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak. These tensions are structurally embedded in the interaction between generational differences, technological mediation, emotional responses, and cultural communication norms. Digital Generation Theory explains how technological proficiency gaps frame face-related conflict, Face Negotiation Theory reveals how professional dignity and recognition are contested, Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory highlights the emotional mechanisms that intensify tension, and High vs. Low Context Culture Theory clarifies how differing communication orientations deepen misunderstanding. Without a more inclusive and context-sensitive communication approach, face negotiation tensions are likely to persist and undermine the quality and legitimacy of digital performance evaluation in higher education.

Diffusion of Innovations and Perception Gaps Towards Technology

The findings of this study indicate that the diffusion of digital evaluation technologies in the lecturer workload performance evaluation (BKD) process at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak is strongly shaped by perception gaps between Digital Immigrant faculty members and assessors. These gaps do not merely reflect differences in technological skills but also reveal contrasting values, professional orientations, and communication expectations toward technology within the academic environment. As digital platforms become central to BKD evaluation, the process of technology adoption itself emerges as a site of intercultural communication tension.

From the perspective of Digital Generation Theory (Prensky, 2001), the differing perceptions of technology between Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants significantly influence how evaluation systems are interpreted and accepted. Assessors, who are more accustomed to digital environments, tend to view technology as an efficient, rational, and indispensable tool for improving accuracy, transparency, and objectivity in academic performance evaluation. For them, digital platforms represent institutional progress and administrative modernization. In contrast, Digital Immigrant faculty members, who adopted technology later in life, often perceive these systems as foreign, complex, and incompatible with traditional academic practices. This perception leads to skepticism and hesitation, particularly when digital platforms are perceived as prioritizing technical compliance over substantive academic contributions.

These contrasting perceptions stem from fundamental differences in how technology is positioned within professional identity. Digital Natives and technologically trained assessors generally integrate technology seamlessly into their academic routines, viewing it as an

extension of professional competence. Digital Immigrant faculty, however, tend to regard technology as an external requirement imposed upon established academic norms. As a result, reluctance or difficulty in adapting to new evaluation technologies is not merely a technical issue but reflects deeper concerns about the erosion of traditional academic values, interpersonal recognition, and professional autonomy. This value-based disagreement intensifies tension during the evaluation process and obstructs the smooth diffusion of innovation within the faculty.

Face Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1985) further illuminates how perception gaps in technology adoption intersect with issues of professional dignity and recognition. For Digital Immigrant faculty, mastery of academic content and long-standing scholarly experience constitute the foundation of professional face. When evaluations rely heavily on technologies they do not fully master, faculty members may feel that their face is threatened, as technological competence becomes implicitly equated with academic competence. Technology-based evaluation systems may thus be perceived as diminishing professional status rather than fairly assessing academic performance. In contrast, assessors who are comfortable with digital systems tend to perceive technology as a neutral or even superior means of evaluation, assuming that standardized digital procedures enhance fairness and reduce bias.

This clash of perspectives results in tension when Digital Immigrant faculty interpret technology-driven evaluations as disrespectful to their experience, while assessors view resistance to technology as an obstacle to objective assessment. Face negotiation becomes a critical mechanism through which both parties attempt to maintain legitimacy and authority within the evaluation process. When face concerns are not adequately acknowledged, communication becomes strained, and mutual trust erodes, further hindering acceptance of digital evaluation systems.

Anxiety and uncertainty also play a central role in shaping perception gaps toward technology adoption. Drawing on Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 1988), the findings show that Digital Immigrant faculty often experience high levels of uncertainty regarding the operation, expectations, and implications of digital evaluation platforms. This uncertainty generates anxiety, particularly when faculty members fear that technological limitations may negatively affect evaluation outcomes. Anxiety reduces confidence and discourages active engagement with the evaluation system, leading faculty to withdraw or rely excessively on others for assistance.

At the same time, assessors may experience uncertainty regarding the reliability and consistency of evaluation results when faculty struggle to engage fully with digital platforms. This dual uncertainty intensifies communication tension, as both parties question the effectiveness of the evaluation process. In such conditions, innovation diffusion becomes increasingly difficult, as anxiety inhibits experimentation, learning, and adaptation—key elements required for successful technology adoption.

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (2003) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding these dynamics. According to Rogers, technology adoption occurs through distinct categories of adopters, ranging from innovators and early adopters to late majority and laggards. In the context of BKD evaluation at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak, assessors tend to occupy the positions of early adopters or early majority, while many Digital Immigrant faculty members align more closely with the late majority or laggard categories. This distribution creates structural tension when early adopters assume readiness and enthusiasm that late adopters do not share.

Rogers emphasizes that diffusion depends not only on technological advantages but also on effective communication within a social system. The findings of this study demonstrate that communication about the benefits, purpose, and value of digital evaluation technologies at FISIP UNTAN has not fully bridged perception gaps. Digital Immigrant faculty often perceive technology as threatening interpersonal relationships and traditional academic values, while assessors view it as a mechanism for enhancing efficiency and accountability. When communication fails to address these differing concerns, late adopters may feel isolated, misunderstood, or marginalized, further slowing the diffusion process.

Overall, the results show that diffusion of innovation in BKD evaluation is deeply intertwined with intercultural communication dynamics. Perception gaps toward technology adoption are shaped by generational differences, face concerns, emotional responses, and cultural values. Diffusion of Innovations Theory, when combined with Digital Generation Theory, Face Negotiation Theory, and Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory, reveals that resistance to digital evaluation systems cannot be reduced to technical incapacity alone. Instead, it reflects broader struggles over meaning, recognition, and professional identity in a transforming academic environment. Addressing these challenges requires inclusive communication strategies that acknowledge differing values, reduce uncertainty, and actively involve faculty members in the innovation process to ensure more effective and sustainable adoption of digital evaluation technologies.

Cultural Understanding Limitations in the Academic Context

The findings of this study indicate that limitations in cultural understanding constitute a fundamental source of intercultural communication conflict during lecturer workload performance evaluation (BKD) at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak. These limitations emerge from differences in perspectives, values, and communication habits between Digital Immigrant faculty members and assessors who are more accustomed to technology-mediated academic practices. Within the digital evaluation environment, cultural differences intersect with technological disparities, shaping how academic interactions are interpreted and negotiated by each party.

From the perspective of Digital Generation Theory (Prensky, 2001), cultural misunderstanding is closely linked to generational experiences with technology. Digital Native or technologically trained assessors tend to integrate digital tools seamlessly into their professional routines and view technology as a neutral, efficient, and objective medium for evaluation. In contrast, Digital Immigrant faculty members often associate academic work with interpersonal engagement, face-to-face interaction, and relational recognition. When performance evaluations are conducted primarily through digital platforms, Digital Immigrant faculty may perceive that traditional academic values—such as mentorship, dialogue, and contextual judgment—are being overlooked or diminished. This perception fosters cultural distance between lecturers and assessors and reinforces feelings of exclusion within the evaluation process.

The findings further suggest that cultural understanding limitations are not rooted in resistance to change per se, but in differences in how technological change is interpreted within academic culture. While many Digital Immigrant faculty members are willing to adapt to new systems, they often feel that the pace and manner of technological implementation fail to acknowledge their learning processes and professional backgrounds. Digital Native assessors, having grown accustomed to rapid technological adaptation, may underestimate the cultural and emotional dimensions of this transition. This misalignment leads to divergent expectations

regarding how performance evaluation should be conducted and communicated, thereby impeding effective collaboration and mutual understanding.

Face Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 1985) provides further insight into how cultural understanding limitations manifest during BKD evaluation. In the academic context, face represents professional image, scholarly authority, and social recognition within the institution. Digital Immigrant faculty members, who prioritize relational communication, may perceive technology-based evaluation systems as undermining their professional face, particularly when digital interfaces replace interpersonal dialogue. When evaluation feedback is delivered through standardized digital formats, lecturers may feel that their academic contributions are reduced to numerical indicators, which they interpret as a lack of respect for their professional identity and experience.

Assessors, on the other hand, often perceive digital platforms as mechanisms that enhance fairness and objectivity by minimizing personal bias. This difference in perception creates tension when assessors assume that technological mediation is value-neutral, while lecturers experience it as culturally insensitive. As a result, face negotiation becomes increasingly complex, as lecturers attempt to protect their professional dignity within systems they perceive as impersonal, and assessors seek to maintain procedural legitimacy within institutional expectations.

Anxiety and uncertainty further intensify cultural understanding limitations in the evaluation process. Drawing on Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 1988), the findings show that Digital Immigrant faculty frequently experience anxiety when faced with unfamiliar evaluation technologies and ambiguous procedural expectations. This anxiety is not solely technical in nature but is deeply connected to uncertainty about how academic performance is interpreted within digital systems. Lecturers may fear that technological shortcomings will overshadow substantive academic achievements, leading to self-doubt and reduced confidence during evaluation.

At the same time, assessors may experience uncertainty regarding faculty members' ability to adapt to digital platforms, which can generate concern about the consistency and credibility of evaluation outcomes. This mutual uncertainty constrains communicative openness and increases the likelihood of misinterpretation, as both parties approach evaluation interactions with heightened emotional sensitivity. Without explicit efforts to manage anxiety and clarify expectations, cultural understanding limitations are reinforced and communication becomes increasingly fragmented.

Differences in communication culture further compound these limitations. High-Context and Low-Context Culture Theory (Hall, 1976) explains how Digital Immigrant faculty members tend to rely on high-context communication that emphasizes implicit meaning, relational cues, and shared understanding developed through interpersonal interaction. In contrast, assessors are more inclined toward low-context communication characterized by explicit instructions, formalized procedures, and technology-mediated interaction. In the BKD evaluation context, this divergence becomes particularly pronounced, as digital platforms privilege low-context communication while marginalizing contextual and relational elements valued by lecturers.

As a result, Digital Immigrant faculty may perceive technology-based evaluation as reducing the depth and quality of academic relationships, while assessors may interpret lecturers' expectations for personal interaction as inefficient or incompatible with standardized systems. These contrasting communication orientations lead to misperception and frustration, reinforcing cultural boundaries rather than fostering mutual understanding. When cultural

communication norms are not explicitly acknowledged, technology functions not as a bridge but as a barrier in academic evaluation.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that cultural understanding limitations in BKD performance evaluation at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak are structurally embedded in the interaction between generational experiences, technological mediation, emotional responses, and communication cultures. Digital Generation Theory explains how technological familiarity intersects with cultural values, Face Negotiation Theory reveals how professional identity and dignity are contested, Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory highlights the emotional mechanisms that intensify misunderstanding, and High vs. Low Context Culture Theory clarifies how divergent communication styles shape evaluation interactions. These limitations significantly affect the effectiveness and legitimacy of digital performance evaluation systems, underscoring the need for more inclusive, empathetic, and culturally sensitive communication approaches in academic settings.

Summary of Key Findings

This study identifies four key empirical findings that explain the dynamics of intercultural communication conflict during lecturer workload performance evaluation (Beban Kerja Dosen/BKD) at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Tanjungpura (FISIP UNTAN) Pontianak. These findings synthesize the main patterns that emerged from the analysis of generational differences, technological adaptation, and cultural communication practices between Digital Immigrant faculty members and assessors.

First, disparities in technological competence emerge as a primary source of communication conflict in the evaluation process. Assessors who are technologically trained or more familiar with digital systems demonstrate greater confidence in navigating evaluation platforms, whereas Digital Immigrant faculty members experience difficulties adapting to technology-based evaluation procedures. This misalignment in technological proficiency creates barriers to effective communication and collaboration, leading to misunderstandings, reduced clarity in feedback, and diminished perceptions of fairness in the evaluation process.

Second, tensions in face negotiation play a significant role in shaping intercultural communication during BKD evaluation. Digital Immigrant faculty members often perceive technology-based evaluation methods as undermining their professional face, particularly when digital competence becomes implicitly associated with academic competence. In contrast, assessors tend to view the use of technology as enhancing objectivity and efficiency in evaluation. These differing interpretations of professional recognition and self-image intensify interpersonal tension and affect the quality of communication between lecturers and assessors.

Third, the diffusion of innovation and perception gaps toward technology constitute another major source of conflict. Digital Immigrant faculty members frequently experience anxiety, uncertainty, and feelings of inadequacy when engaging with new evaluation technologies, which limits their participation in technology-driven assessment processes. Assessors, positioned closer to early adopters of innovation, often assume readiness and acceptance that are not shared by late adopters. This imbalance deepens perception gaps, slows the diffusion of digital evaluation systems, and contributes to communication breakdowns during the evaluation process.

Fourth, limitations in cultural understanding significantly exacerbate communication conflicts in faculty performance evaluation. Differences in communication styles, cultural values, and technology usage—particularly the contrast between high-context communication preferred by Digital Immigrant faculty and low-context, structured communication used by

assessors—lead to misperception and confusion. These cultural differences complicate the integration of technology into academic evaluation and weaken effective dialogue between evaluators and evaluated parties.

Taken together, these four findings demonstrate that intercultural communication conflict in BKD performance evaluation at FISIP UNTAN Pontianak is not solely a technical or administrative issue. Rather, it is deeply embedded in the interaction between technological competence, professional identity, innovation adoption, and cultural communication norms. This synthesis of findings provides a clear empirical foundation for the concluding discussion on the broader implications of intercultural communication in technology-mediated academic evaluation.

D. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that lecturer workload performance evaluation (Beban Kerja Dosen/BKD) at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Tanjungpura (FISIP UNTAN) Pontianak constitutes a complex intercultural communication process rather than a purely technical or administrative activity. The transition toward digital-based evaluation systems has fundamentally reshaped patterns of interaction between lecturers and assessors, introducing new forms of communication while simultaneously revealing latent tensions rooted in generational differences, technological competence, and cultural communication norms. As a result, the evaluation process becomes a critical arena in which professional identity, institutional expectations, and technological mediation intersect.

The findings reveal that disparities in technological competence between Digital Immigrant faculty members and assessors serve as a central trigger of communication conflict. Difficulties in adapting to digital evaluation platforms generate anxiety, uncertainty, and perceptions of inadequacy among Digital Immigrant lecturers, while assessors tend to emphasize efficiency, standardization, and objectivity. These conditions not only disrupt effective communication but also affect how academic performance is interpreted and valued. Through the lenses of Digital Generation Theory, Face Negotiation Theory, and Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory, the study shows that technological challenges function as communicative barriers that threaten professional face, intensify emotional responses, and weaken trust in the evaluation process.

Moreover, the study highlights that perception gaps in the diffusion of innovation and limitations in cultural understanding further exacerbate intercultural communication conflict in academic evaluation. Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains how uneven adoption of digital systems places assessors in early adopter positions while positioning many lecturers as late adopters, leading to resistance and feelings of marginalization when technological change is insufficiently negotiated. At the same time, differences in high-context and low-context communication styles shape how evaluation messages are conveyed and interpreted. Digital Immigrant lecturers tend to prioritize relational, context-dependent communication, whereas assessors rely on explicit, technology-mediated interaction, resulting in misperception, frustration, and reduced dialogue during the evaluation process.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the field of intercultural communication and higher education studies by demonstrating that conflicts in technology-mediated performance evaluation are deeply embedded in generational experiences, cultural values, and communicative practices. Addressing these challenges requires more than technical training or system refinement; it necessitates inclusive, empathetic, and culturally sensitive communication strategies that acknowledge professional dignity, reduce uncertainty, and facilitate meaningful

dialogue across generations. By integrating technological support with intercultural awareness, higher education institutions can enhance the effectiveness, legitimacy, and sustainability of digital performance evaluation systems in increasingly diverse academic environments.

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