

Lecturers' Communication Competence and Undergraduate Students' Reading Interest: The Mediating Role of Motivation at Telkom University

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Abstract

Students often face difficulties in meeting academic standards, particularly in reading activities. Reading interest is an internal drive that encourages individuals to engage in reading voluntarily. In this context, the reading interest of undergraduate students at Telkom University is influenced by various factors, one of which is lecturers' communication competence as facilitators in the learning process. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of lecturers' communication competence on students' reading interest through motivation. This study employs a quantitative approach using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method and is grounded in Self-Determination Theory. The study involved 400 respondents selected using the cluster random sampling technique. The findings indicate that lecturers' communication competence has a positive and significant effect on students' motivation and reading interest. Furthermore, motivation also has a positive and significant effect on reading interest and acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between lecturers' communication competence and students' reading interest.

***Keywords:** Communication Competence, Motivation, Reading Interest.*

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, highly knowledgeable human capital is increasingly required to achieve stronger economic growth in the future (Islam et al., 2016). Higher education institutions in Indonesia play a role in building national civilization through three main aspects known as the

Tri Dharma of Higher Education (Asfia & Sari, 2024). Therefore, Higher education institutions must be able to produce graduates with strong academic abilities.

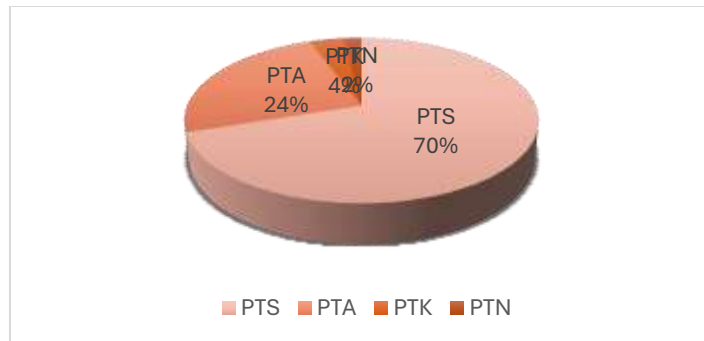


Figure 1. Percentage Distribution Diagram of Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia

According to data from the Central Statistics Agency in 2025, Indonesia has 6,527 higher education institutions with a total of 9,241,945 university students. The high number of students indicates the public's strong interest in pursuing higher levels of education. However, behind these large numbers, higher education in Indonesia still faces various challenges.

University students occupy a very important position in today's digital era. They are not only one of the largest groups of online information users, but also play a role in disseminating and filtering the various information they receive (Hutapea et al., 2026). University students are considered agents of change, whose roles are expected to contribute to building a better nation in the future. Therefore, students need broader access to information in order to develop and maximize their potential (Akbar, 2020). One way to obtain broader information is through reading activities, as reading can help students enrich their knowledge, broaden their insights, and improve their critical thinking skills.

Reading is a simple and easy activity; however, in reality, reading interest in Indonesia remains low (Dewi & Usman, 2021). Interest is basically the acceptance of a relationship between oneself and something outside oneself. The stronger the relationship, the stronger the interest will be (Efendi et al., 2023). Reading interest levels in Indonesia vary significantly across provinces. Yogyakarta recorded the highest score, while several provinces in eastern Indonesia, such as Highland Papua and Papua, showed the lowest scores. Although some provinces achieved relatively high scores, no province surpassed the 80% level, showing that

Indonesia's reading culture is still not in the very high category. A lack of reading interest among university students can lead to a shortage of innovative and creative ideas in forming arguments, which may ultimately affect national development and the quality of human resources (Bardi et al., 2025).

One of the extensive reading programs, which encourages students to read for pleasure or based on their own interests, has been proven to help improve their reading habits and literacy skills (Madjdi et al., 2024). Therefore, when a person has a high interest in reading, reading activities become enjoyable and are carried out regularly. The greater a person's reading interest, the broader their knowledge, vocabulary, and critical thinking abilities will be.

Therefore, efforts are needed to improve students' reading interest, one of which is through lecturers' communication competence in the learning process. Effective lecturer communication can build students' learning motivation, thereby encouraging the growth of reading interest among undergraduate students. Lecturers' competence and effective communication can enhance students' learning motivation and ultimately improve the quality and outcomes of the learning process (Suarjana & Yintayani, 2017).

Individuals make efforts because of motivation, and strong motivation will lead to better outcomes (Mediawati, 2010). Professional lecturers are able to encourage students to develop a desire to learn and to act as facilitators for their students. Lecturers must be able to provide motivation to students so that the learning process can be carried out effectively (Hanik & Harsono, 2020). Therefore, it is important for higher education institutions to have qualified and professional lecturers who possess strong communication competence, so that they are able to motivate students, which in turn can foster reading interest and improve the quality of learning.

Telkom University is one of the private universities in Bandung that has continued to experience an increase in the number of applicants since its establishment in 2013. The Rector of Telkom University for the 2025–2030 period, Prof. Dr. Suyanto, S.T., M.Sc., emphasized the importance of strengthening reading and writing literacy to face the “post-truth” era and digital disruption. According to him, critical and creative thinking skills can be developed through reading. Therefore, Telkom University plans to implement various literacy-strengthening initiatives in each faculty to produce outstanding and highly qualified talents.

Table 1. Undergraduate Students' Reading Literacy Interest at Telkom University

Faculty	Percentage
Faculty of Industrial Engineering	97%
Faculty of Electrical Engineering	96%
Faculty of Economics and Business	96%
Faculty of Communication and Social Sciences	95%
Faculty of Applied Sciences	95%
Faculty of Informatics	92%
Faculty of Creative Industries	91%

The level of reading and writing literacy awareness among undergraduate students at Telkom University is relatively high across all faculties. The Faculty of Industrial Engineering recorded the highest percentage at 97%, while the Faculty of Creative Industries had the lowest at 91%, indicating generally strong literacy awareness among students.

Based on data obtained from the Academic Development Unit of Telkom University, most Telkom University students demonstrate a relatively good level of reading intensity, both for academic materials and non-academic reading. Most respondents fall into the categories of fairly frequent readers (around 30%) and occasional readers (around 45–50%), while only a small proportion are categorized as very frequent readers (5–9%). The faculty with the highest reading frequency is the Faculty of Electrical Engineering (FTE), while the Faculty of Creative Industries (FKS) shows the lowest reading frequency. These findings indicate that the reading culture among Telkom University students is fairly active, although it still needs improvement so that more students engage in reading regularly and consistently.

Although the reading culture among Telkom University students is considered fairly active, the data show that most students are still categorized as fairly frequent readers and occasional readers, while the number of students with very high reading intensity remains relatively low. This condition indicates that students' reading interest has not yet developed optimally and still requires various efforts to be improved. Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that can influence students' reading interest, particularly those related to the learning process and the interaction between lecturers and students.

In the context of this study, the reading interest of Telkom University students can be understood as a positive relationship between students and

reading activities themselves. This relationship does not form automatically, but is influenced by various factors, one of which is lecturers' communication competence. Lecturers who possess good communication skills are able to create an engaging learning environment, provide encouragement, and foster students' motivation to explore knowledge more deeply through reading activities, both related to academic assignments and beyond. Therefore, the study entitled *“Lecturers' Communication Competence and Undergraduate Students' Reading Interest: The Mediating Role of Motivation”* seeks to explain how lecturers' communication abilities can strengthen students' relationship with reading activities through the enhancement of their learning motivation.

This study is aligned with Self-Determination Theory (SDT). According to SDT, humans naturally possess an intrinsic drive to be active, curious, and continuously develop themselves; however, they can also become passive or unmotivated depending on the surrounding environment. SDT can be applied in various research and practical contexts because it explains how motivation, self-regulation, and basic psychological needs influence human behavior. Based on these three aspects, SDT can be used in the context of education and learning to analyze how learning motivation is formed, to understand the role of psychological needs such as competence, autonomy, and relatedness in increasing interest and achievement, and to examine the influence of educational factors such as teaching methods, lecturers' communication, feedback, and classroom environment on students' motivation.

Previous studies have discussed the relationship between motivation, teacher communication, and students' learning interests. A study conducted by Muhalida Zia Ibhara (2022), entitled *Reading Motivation and EFL Learners' Vocabulary Development Against Interest in Learning English Moderated by Teacher Competence*, used a quantitative method with an SEM approach and focused on reading motivation and teacher competence in the context of English language learning. In addition, a study by Reza Anggriyashati Adara and Josi Nur Panuntas Al Amin (2023), entitled *Investigating the Correlation between Teachers' Instructional Communication and Students' Motivation*, applied a quantitative correlational method using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to analyze the relationship between teachers' instructional communication and students' motivation.

However, studies that specifically examine the influence of lecturers' communication competence on undergraduate students' reading interest through motivation as a mediating variable are still limited. Furthermore,

this study differs in terms of the research object, variables, and the use of motivation as a mediating variable in an SEM model based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT). Therefore, the study entitled Lecturers' Communication Competence and Undergraduate Students' Reading Interest: The Mediating Role of Motivation was conducted to fill this research gap.

Based on the problems that have been described, this study focuses on determining whether there is an influence of lecturers' communication competence on Telkom University students' reading interest through motivation. In addition, this study is also aimed at measuring the extent of the influence of lecturers' communication competence on students' reading interest through motivation, so that it can provide a clearer understanding of the role of lecturer communication in improving students' reading interest in the higher education environment.

This study also has relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4: Quality Education. SDG 4 emphasizes the importance of ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education, as well as promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. In this context, improving students' reading interest becomes an important indicator in creating an academic culture that is oriented toward sustainable learning. Effective lecturers' communication competence plays a strategic role in creating an inspiring and interactive learning environment that encourages students to actively seek knowledge independently.

Therefore, this study not only contributes to the development of educational communication theory but also supports efforts to achieve the SDGs by strengthening the quality of the learning process in higher education institutions. Lecturers who possess strong communication competence are able to create effective learning interactions, foster motivation, and encourage students to actively engage in literacy activities such as reading and seeking new knowledge.

2. Method

2.1 Research Type

In this study, the researcher employs a quantitative research method. A research method is a technique and approach used to generate knowledge. Quantitative research uses numerical data to test hypotheses, measure variables, and explain the relationships between variables. (Scharrer & Ramasubramanian, 2021). Quantitative research uses numbers and statistics to help researchers understand and measure phenomena (Stockemer, 2019).

This study involves three variables: (1) Lecturers' Communication Competence as the independent variable, defined as the ability of lecturers to communicate verbally and nonverbally, encompassing clarity of delivery, empathy, and feedback; (2) Students' Reading Interest as the dependent variable, measured through reading frequency, interest in reading materials, and motivation to comprehend texts; and (3) Motivation as the mediating variable that bridges the influence of lecturers' communication competence on students' reading interest. All variables were measured using a Likert scale of 1–5, and instrument validation was conducted through outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability tests within the SEM-PLS framework.

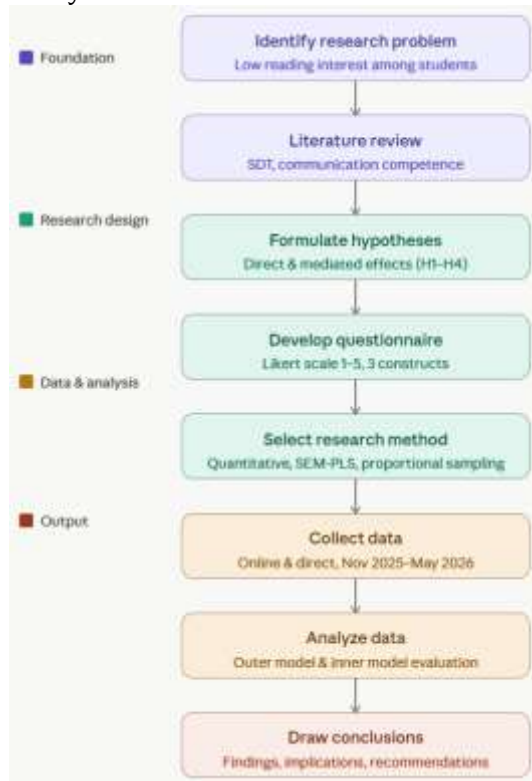


Figure 2. Research Flowchart

2.2 Population and Sample

This study uses independent, dependent, and mediating variables. The population of this research consists of all active undergraduate students at Telkom University, totaling 32,967 students. However, due to the large population size, the researcher does not examine the entire population but instead selects a representative sample. The sample consists of active

Telkom University students selected using probability sampling, ensuring that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen.

This approach is expected to produce representative data and accurately reflect the overall population. Telkom University has many study programs across various faculties, each with different student characteristics. If the researcher were to randomly sample individuals from the entire population, it would require significant time, effort, and cost.

Table 2. Number of Students by Faculty at Telkom University

No	Faculty	Number of Undergraduate Students (S1)
1	Faculty of Communication and Social Sciences	3278
2	Faculty of Economics and Business	6109
3	Faculty of Creative Industries	4262
4	Faculty of Applied Sciences	3102
5	Faculty of Informatics	5065
6	Faculty of Industrial Engineering	5268
7	Faculty of Electrical Engineering	5883

Based on the total population of 32,967 active undergraduate students at Telkom University, the sample was determined using a probability sampling technique with a proportional approach to ensure that each faculty is fairly represented according to its number of students. From a total sample of 395 students, the distribution is as follows: 39 students from the Faculty of Communication and Social Sciences, 74 from the Faculty of Economics and Business, 51 from the Faculty of Creative Industries, 37 from the Faculty of Applied Sciences, 63 from the Faculty of Industrial Engineering, 71 from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, and 61 from the Faculty of Informatics. Based on the Slovin calculation, the minimum sample size was 395 respondents, which was then rounded up to 400 respondents.

Data were collected through a questionnaire distributed to undergraduate students at Telkom University during the period of November 2025 to May 2026. The questionnaire was distributed both online and directly to respondents. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire based on their personal experiences related to the topic under investigation. The data collection process was conducted in accordance with research ethics principles, whereby all respondents participated voluntarily without any form of coercion. Prior to completing the

questionnaire, respondents were provided with clear information regarding the purpose of the study, ensuring that they fully understood the context and objectives of the research. All data obtained from respondents were kept strictly confidential and used solely for research purposes.

With this proportional distribution, each faculty is adequately represented, allowing the research findings to reflect the overall population and be generalized more reliably. This study uses two types of data sources: primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected directly through surveys of Telkom University students, reflecting the respondents' actual conditions, experiences, and assessments relevant to the study. Meanwhile, secondary data are obtained from various supporting sources such as books, articles, and national and international journals to strengthen the theoretical framework and analysis. By combining these two types of data, the study is expected to provide comprehensive, accurate information and support the validity of the research findings.

2.3 Data Analysis Technique

This study employs two data analysis approaches: descriptive statistical analysis and Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). Descriptive analysis is used to describe the variables being measured and to illustrate and assess the characteristics of a social phenomenon. This analysis provides information about the existing data and presents it in a communicable form, involving techniques of recording, classifying, and summarizing information from numerical data (Silalahi, 2019).

Meanwhile, Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) is used to analyze complex relationships among variables, including both direct and indirect effects through intervening variables. SEM evaluates the extent to which a set of measured variables within each dimension can represent overall quality, with a focus on the reliability of the constructs (Crano et al., 2023). Thus, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is capable of analyzing hierarchical relationships among variables simultaneously, something that cannot be achieved using ordinary linear regression analysis. In this study, the data are processed using the SmartPLS application.

To better understand more complex relationships in recent social science research, the use of more advanced multivariate data analysis methods is increasingly required. Multivariate analysis is the application of statistical methods used to analyze multiple variables simultaneously (Hair et al., 2017). SEM analysis using PLS effectively provides a deeper understanding of the complex relationships among variables in this research model.

The results of the analysis not only confirm the existence of a direct relationship between the independent and dependent variables, but also demonstrate the significant role of the intervening variable in mediating the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Febryaningrum et al., 2024). In SEM-PLS, an evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) is conducted. The measurement model, also referred to as the outer model in PLS-SEM, represents the relationship between constructs and their indicator variables (Hair et al., 2017). It also includes the evaluation of the structural model (inner model). This model is assessed using the R-squared value to determine the extent to which the model can explain the variance in the dependent and intervening variables. PLS-SEM was chosen in this study because it is more suitable for data that do not need to meet normality assumptions, appropriate for relatively large sample sizes, and more fitting when the research objective is predictive in nature. Unlike CB-SEM, which requires normally distributed data and larger sample sizes, PLS-SEM is more flexible and efficient for models involving both reflective and formative constructs.

With this method, mediation pathways can be identified more clearly. The results indicate that the intervening variable not only acts as a link between the independent and dependent variables, but also strengthens the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Febryaningrum et al., 2024). By applying this method, the study is able to provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the relationships among the independent, intervening, and dependent variables simultaneously.

3. Results

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot test was conducted with 100 initial respondents to ensure the readability and comprehensibility of the instrument. This process was carried out to identify any ambiguous or unclear statements in the questionnaire, so that necessary revisions could be made before the questionnaire was distributed to the full sample.

The study involved 400 respondents drawn from seven faculties at Telkom University, with the distribution presented in Table X and Figure X below. The largest proportion of respondents came from Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis (18.5% =74), followed by Fakultas Teknik Elektro (17.8% =71), Fakultas Rekayasa Industri (15.8% =63), Fakultas Informatika (15.5% =62), Fakultas Industri Kreatif (13.0% =52), Fakultas Komunikasi dan Ilmu Sosial (10.0% =40), and Fakultas Ilmu Terapan (9.5% =38). In terms of gender, the sample consisted of 53% female and 47% male students. Regarding age distribution, the majority of respondents were in the 20–22 age range (81.8%), followed by 17–19 years (15.0%), and

23–25 years (3.2%). In terms of weekly reading duration — encompassing all forms of reading including books, journals, websites, and social media content — the largest proportion of respondents spent 7 to 8 hours per week reading (27.2%), followed by those who read more than 8 hours (26.4%), 5 to 6 hours (11.7%), and 1 to 2 hours, more than 7 hours, 3 to 4 hours, and 6 to 7 hours each at 9.3%.

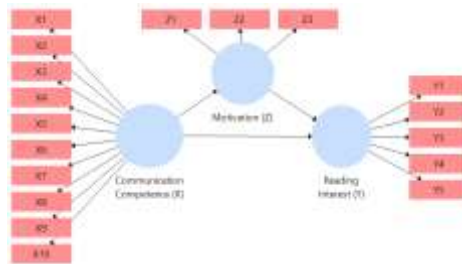


Figure 3. SEM-PLS Analysis Results Diagram

Convergent validity is used to measure the degree of positive correlation between a variable and other variables by assessing the factor loading values. Standardized loading values greater than 0.5 (preferably approaching or ≥ 0.7) indicate that the indicators provide a sufficient contribution in explaining the latent variable. Convergent validity also serves to evaluate the validity of reflective indicators as measures of variables, which can be observed from the outer loading values of each indicator. Based on the outer loading results, most indicators have values above 0.70, although there are still some indicators with values below 0.70, ranging from 0.50 to 0.60. These values are still considered acceptable, so the indicators are retained in the PLS model.

3.1 Convergent Validity

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable	AVE	Critical Value	Description
Communication Competence (X)	0.592	> 0.5	Valid
Reading Interest (Y)	0.589		
Motivation (Z)	0.769		

Based on the table, it can be seen that all variables have an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value greater than the established critical value of 0.5. An AVE value exceeding this minimum threshold indicates that each variable is able to explain more than 0.5 of the variance in its indicators. Thus, the indicators used in this study demonstrate a

sufficiently strong level of association. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this research model meet the criteria for convergent validity, meaning that the indicators are valid and appropriate for further analysis.

3.2 Discriminant Validity

Table 4. Cross Loadings

Variabel	Communication Competence	Reading Interest	Motivasi
X1	0.739	0.371	0.108
X2	0.559	0.319	0.192
X3	0.786	0.419	0.110
X4	0.633	0.393	0.262
X5	0.807	0.426	0.099
X6	0.822	0.432	0.050
X7	0.863	0.435	0.081
X8	0.749	0.420	0.171
X9	0.765	0.460	0.120
X10	0.775	0.508	0.199
Y1	0.425	0.783	0.354
Y2	0.421	0.749	0.396
Y3	0.507	0.822	0.262
Y4	0.440	0.779	0.203
Y5	0.350	0.699	0.315
Z1	0.233	0.393	0.896
Z2	0.135	0.321	0.869
Z3	0.104	0.331	0.865

The outer loading results show that most values are above 0.70; some values fall below 0.70, ranging between 0.50 and 0.60. These values are still considered acceptable and therefore retained in the PLS model (Susanty, 2020). Based on the table, it can be observed that the cross-loading value of each indicator on its respective latent variable is higher than its cross-loading values on other latent variables. This indicates that each indicator has a stronger relationship with the construct it is intended to measure compared to other constructs in the model. Therefore, it can be concluded that the indicators used in this study meet the criteria for good validity and are considered valid in terms of convergent validity.

3.3 Reliability Test

Table 5. Reliability Test

Variabel	Composite Reliability	Nilai Kritis	Cronbach's Alpha	Nilai Kritis
Kompetensi Komunikasi	0.929		0.914	
Minat Membaca	0.877	> 0.6	0.825	> 0.7
Motivasi	0.909		0.851	

Based on the test results, it is known that the values of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability for all variables in this study are above the established threshold criteria. This indicates that each variable has good internal consistency in measuring the constructs under investigation. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables used in this study meet the reliability requirements, meaning that the indicators are reliable and suitable for further analysis.

3.4 Structural Measurement

3.4.1 Inner Model

Table 6. R Square

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Reading Interest	0.406	0.403
Motivation	0.035	0.033

Based on Table 7, the inner model test results show that the R-Square value for the Reading Interest variable is 0.406, meaning that the predictor variables in this study are able to explain 40.6% of the variation in reading interest, while the remaining 59.4% is influenced by other factors outside the model. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.403 confirms this result after accounting for the number of variables in the model. Meanwhile, the Motivation variable has an R-Square value of 0.035, indicating that only 3.5% of the variation in motivation can be explained by the predictor variables in this model, with an Adjusted R-Square of 0.033. The R Square value of Reading Interest is considered moderate, suggesting that the model is fairly good at predicting reading interest, whereas the low R Square value of Motivation indicates that motivation is largely influenced by other factors not included in this study.

3.4.2 Predictive Relevance

Figure 4. Construct Cross-Validated Redundancy

Konstruk	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Motivation (Z)	1200.000	1172.878	0,023
Reading Interest (Y)	2000.000	1534.837	0,233

The predictive relevance of the model was assessed using the blindfolding procedure in SmartPLS, which produces Q^2 values for each endogenous construct based on the formula $Q^2 = 1 - SSE/SSO$. The results indicate that Motivation (Z) obtained a Q^2 value of 0.023, and Reading Interest (Y) obtained a Q^2 value of 0.233. Both values exceed zero, indicating that the model has adequate predictive relevance for all endogenous constructs. Q^2 value greater than zero suggests that the model has predictive relevance, while values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large predictive relevance, respectively. Therefore, Motivation demonstrates small predictive relevance, while Reading Interest demonstrates medium predictive relevance, confirming that the structural model possesses satisfactory explanatory power.

3.5 Hypothesis Test

Table 7 Path Coefficients

Variable	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Communication Competence (X) → Reading Interest (Y)	0.504	0.508	0.044	11.506	0.000
Motivation (Z) → Reading Interest (Y)	0.307	0.308	0.043	7.067	0.000
Communication Competence (X) → Motivation (Z)	0.187	0.188	0.043	3.127	0.002
Specific Indirect Effects					
Communication Competence (X) → Motivation (Z) → Reading Interest (Y)	0.057	0.058	0.021	2.726	0.007

$$VAF = 0,057 / 0,561 \times 100\% = 10,16\%$$

A VAF above 80% is considered full mediation, a VAF between 20% and 80% is considered partial mediation, and a VAF below 20% is considered nearly no mediation (Sheko & Spaho, 2018). Although the indirect effect is significant ($P = 0.008$), the very small VAF value of 10.16% indicates that motivation contributes only minimally as a

mediator. The direct effect of Communication Competence on Reading Interest is far more dominant.

Table 8. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Description	Result
<i>Direct Effect</i>		
H1	The Influence of Lecturers' Communication Competence on Motivation	H1 Accepted
H2	The Influence of Motivation on Students' Reading Interest	H2 Accepted
H3	The Influence of Lecturers' Communication Competence on Students' Reading Interest	H3 Accepted
<i>Indirect Effect</i>		
H4	The Influence of Lecturers' Communication Competence on Students' Reading Interest through Motivation	H4 Accepted

4. Discussion

Based on the results of data processing, descriptive analysis was conducted for all three variables using a percentage score calculated from the ratio of the total actual score to the ideal score, derived from responses to a Likert scale 1–5 questionnaire distributed to 400 respondents. Variable X, the overall percentage score obtained was 68.18% of the ideal score, which falls into the “Good” category. This indicates that, in general, the quality of learning carried out by lecturers has been implemented well, particularly in terms of mastery of the material, delivery methods, and the use of references in the learning process.

Based on the results of data processing on variable Z, the overall percentage score obtained was 90.25%, which falls into the “Very Good” category. This indicates that respondents have a very high level of reading motivation. Respondents not only feel proud when they successfully understand difficult material, but also possess a strong drive to read due to curiosity and the desire to excel compared to others. Thus, it can be concluded that the respondents' internal motivation in reading activities has been very well established and supports the improvement of their comprehension quality.

Based on the results of data processing on variable Y, the overall percentage score obtained was 81.08%, which falls into the “Good”

category. This indicates that respondents already possess relatively high awareness, interest, and reading habits.

All variables in this study have met the criteria for proper testing. The AVE values indicate that each variable is valid because it is capable of explaining its indicators well. The cross-loading results show that each indicator corresponds appropriately to its respective variable and that there are no classification errors. In addition, the comparison results among variables indicate that each variable has distinct characteristics and can therefore be clearly differentiated. Thus, the measurement model in this study can be declared valid and suitable for analysis. Based on the calculation results of the Predictive Relevance (Q^2) value, which was obtained at 0.427, it can be concluded that the research model has good predictive capability.

Based on the hypothesis testing results, it was found that lecturers' communication competence has a positive and significant effect on student motivation. This means that the more effective lecturers are in delivering material, interacting, and communicating, the higher the students' learning motivation will be. Increased motivation was also proven to encourage students' reading interest, so that students with higher motivation tend to have better reading interest. In addition, lecturers' communication competence also has a direct effect on reading interest, with the largest coefficient value compared to the other relationships. This confirms that lecturers' communication ability is the main factor in improving students' reading interest.

Another finding shows that the influence of lecturers' communication is not only direct but also indirect through motivation as a mediating variable. In other words, lecturers' communication competence is able to increase motivation first, which then strengthens students' reading interest. Overall, this study confirms that improving the quality of lecturers' communication is a key factor in encouraging both motivation and students' reading interest simultaneously.

This study is aligned with Adara and Al Amin (2023), both of which employ Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as the theoretical foundation and a quantitative questionnaire-based approach to examine the role of educator communication in shaping student motivation. However, this study extends that scope by positioning motivation as a mediating variable rather than merely a dependent variable. That Study found a strong correlation between teachers' instructional communication and student motivation ($r = 0.681$), whereas this study demonstrates that lecturers' communication competence has a more dominant direct effect on reading

interest (path coefficient = 0.504), with motivation contributing only minimally as a mediator (VAF = 10.16%).

A further connection is found with Ibhar (2022) Both studies employ quantitative SEM analysis and treat learning interest as the dependent variable. That study found that motivation significantly influenced learning interest (path coefficient = 0.398) with teacher competence as a moderating variable, whereas this study positions motivation as an intervening variable mediating the relationship between lecturers' communication competence and reading interest. Another key difference lies in the research population: Ibhar (2022) utilized a sample of 53 students in an EFL learning context, while this study involved 400 undergraduate students from various faculties at Telkom University, yielding findings that are more representative and broadly generalizable.

This study also relates to the research conducted by Dafit et al (2020) Both studies share reading interest as a dependent variable and employ a quantitative descriptive approach using questionnaires with a Likert scale to measure students' reading interest at the university level. Both studies also confirm that reading interest among university students can be significantly influenced by external factors within the academic environment. However, the two studies differ considerably in terms of variables and analytical approach. That study examined the influence of a literacy corner program, a physical reading facility, on students' reading interest using simple linear regression, finding a significant effect with an average reading interest score of 83.89% in the good category. In contrast, this study investigates lecturers' communication competence as the independent variable and introduces motivation as a mediating variable, analyzed through the more complex SEM-PLS method. This difference reflects a broader scope of variables, as this study not only examines what environmental factors influence reading interest, but also how the psychological mechanism of motivation mediates that relationship. Furthermore, while that study focused on the availability of physical reading resources as a driver of reading interest, this study highlights the interpersonal and communicative dimension of the learning process, specifically lecturers' ability to communicate effectively, as the more dominant factor in shaping students' reading interest (path coefficient = 0.504).

5. Conclusion

Based on the hypothesis testing results, three statistically significant direct effects and one significant indirect effect were identified. The strongest relationship in the model was found on the path from Lecturers'

Communication Competence (X) to Reading Interest (Y), with a path coefficient of 0.504 ($T = 11.506$, $p = 0.000$), establishing it as the most dominant predictor in the model. Communication competence also significantly influenced motivation (path coefficient = 0.187, $T = 3.127$, $p = 0.002$), which in turn had a significant effect on reading interest (path coefficient = 0.307, $T = 7.067$, $p = 0.000$). Regarding the strength of mediation, the indirect effect through motivation yielded a path coefficient of 0.057 ($T = 2.726$, $p = 0.007$); however, the Variance Accounted For (VAF) value of only 10.16%, well below the 20% threshold, indicates that motivation functions as a negligible mediator. This suggests that the direct influence of lecturers' communication competence on reading interest is far more dominant than the indirect pathway through motivation. Overall, the model explained 40.6% of the variance in reading interest ($R^2 = 0.406$), with a Q^2 value of 0.427, demonstrating adequate predictive relevance.

Theoretically, this study makes a significant contribution to the application of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in the higher education context, particularly in understanding how external environmental factors, such as lecturers' communication competence, interact with students' intrinsic motivational constructs. The findings support SDT's core proposition that a supportive interpersonal environment can fulfill students' basic psychological needs, especially the need for competence and relatedness, which in turn promotes voluntary engagement in academic activities such as reading. Nevertheless, the remarkably low VAF value of 10.16% challenges the SDT assumption that motivation consistently serves as the primary mediating mechanism between environmental factors and academic behavior. This finding suggests that in the higher education context, the cognitive and affective impact of lecturers' communication may directly shape students' reading interest without necessarily passing through the motivational pathway, a nuance that has not been fully accommodated in existing SDT-based educational models. Therefore, this study proposes that lecturers' communication competence should be positioned not merely as an antecedent to motivation, but also as a direct and independent driver of students' academic behavioral outcomes, such as reading interest.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed for multiple stakeholders. For lecturers, it is recommended to continuously improve communication competence, particularly in terms of clarity in material delivery, use of engaging and expressive language, and mastery of subject matter, as these indicators were found to have the strongest influence on students' reading interest. Lecturers are also encouraged to more actively integrate scientific reading sources into classroom

discussions and learning activities, as effective communication has been proven to simultaneously enhance student motivation and foster reading habits. For the university, it is recommended to develop a structured communication competence training program formally embedded into the annual lecturer development activities, with a minimum of two structured sessions per semester. In parallel, Telkom University is expected to broaden students' access to diverse reading materials beyond academic books and journals, and to optimize the role of the Open Library Telkom University as a flexible digital reading facility. Literacy-strengthening activities such as reading challenges, seminars, and interdisciplinary literacy workshops are also encouraged, particularly for the Faculty of Creative Industries, which recorded the lowest reading interest and reading frequency among all faculties. For students, maintaining and developing internal motivation, especially curiosity and consistent reading habits, remains essential for the sustained growth of reading interest.

Furthermore, given that the R^2 value for motivation is only 3.5%, future research is strongly encouraged to explore other variables that may more substantially account for variance in student motivation. Potential variables worth investigating include the use of digital learning media, classroom environment quality, peer interaction, academic self-efficacy, and lecturer feedback quality, all of which are theoretically grounded in SDT's three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Future studies may also consider incorporating moderating variables such as students' academic year, faculty background, or digital literacy level to better explain why motivation plays a relatively weak mediating role in certain student populations. Additionally, future researchers are encouraged to examine the influence of reading activities on other outcome variables, such as critical thinking skills, academic achievement, and students' self-development, in order to more comprehensively capture the long-term benefits of cultivating reading interest in higher education settings.

This study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design only captures data at a single point in time, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships between variables. Second, reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, as respondents may tend to provide socially desirable answers rather than accurately reflecting their actual experiences. Therefore, future research is encouraged to adopt a longitudinal design and expand the scope of the population beyond Telkom University to allow for broader generalization. The use of more objective data collection methods, such as direct observation or official academic records, is also recommended to minimize bias. Additionally, future studies may consider

incorporating other variables that may influence students' reading interest, such as the learning environment, access to reading materials, or the impact of digital technology.

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