



## Digital Politeness in Academic WhatsApp Communication: A Pragmatic Analysis of Student–Lecturer Interactions in Indonesian Higher Education

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze digital politeness among university students in academic WhatsApp communication with lecturers at Universitas PGRI Sumenep. The research is grounded in the changing landscape of academic communication, where digital interaction increasingly replaces face-to-face exchanges, raising new challenges in maintaining politeness and professional etiquette. A descriptive survey design was employed with 20 purposively selected students as participants. Data were collected through a Google Form questionnaire consisting of five dimensions: linguistic politeness strategies, digital communication etiquette, perception of power and distance, cultural and contextual sensitivity, and self-reflection on digital behavior. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, SD, frequency) and qualitative thematic analysis of open-ended responses. The results indicate that students exhibit a high level of digital politeness ( $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 0.43$ ). The highest dimension was cultural and contextual sensitivity ( $M = 4.48$ ), showing that traditional values of respect and humility remain strong in digital communication. Students consistently used greetings, expressions of gratitude, and apology markers in their WhatsApp messages to lecturers. However, hierarchical awareness appeared more flexible, reflecting a shift from formality-based to relationship-based politeness. These findings extend Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory into the domain of digital pragmatics, emphasizing that technology does not diminish politeness but reshapes it to fit new communicative contexts. The study recommends that universities incorporate digital communication ethics training into academic literacy programs to foster respectful and effective online interaction.

**Keywords:** digital politeness, WhatsApp, academic communication, pragmatics, students, Indonesia.

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### Introduction

The advent of mobile instant-messaging applications has transformed academic communication between students and lecturers in higher education. In recent years, platforms such as WhatsApp have moved beyond social and informal domains to become central media for academic exchanges—notifications of assignment deadlines, quick clarification of questions,

feedback requests, and ad-hoc administrative matters are often handled via WhatsApp rather than face-to-face or e-mail. This shift marks a broader transition in communication norms: digital immediacy, asynchronous contact, abbreviated language, and the blurred boundary between formal and informal registers. However, while the medium has changed, the foundational expectations of respect, deference, and

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appropriate address remain in the lecturer–student interaction. The relevance of these shifts is particularly pronounced in Indonesia, where respect for academic authority, hierarchical status, and culturally embedded norms of politeness intersect with the affordances of new communication modes.

Despite the ubiquity of WhatsApp in Indonesian university settings, the question of how students enact politeness when sending WhatsApp messages to their lecturers remains underexplored. Specifically, the digital medium introduces new variables: shortened texts, absence of paralinguistic cues, rapid turn-taking, and combinations of formal and informal strategies. Research on digital politeness and computer-mediated communication (CMC) has shown that traditional norms of face-maintenance (Brown & Levinson, 1987) remain applicable, but contexts such as WhatsApp require adaptation given their immediacy and informality (Flores-Salgado, 2018; Ismail et al., 2023). For instance, the balance between closeness and deference shifts when the student writes to a lecturer outside the auditorium, yet still bears expectations of academic decorum. Few studies, however, have focused on the specific lecturer–student WhatsApp channel in the Indonesian higher education context, leaving a lacuna in understanding how digital politeness is realized (Junita, 2022; Mulyono, 2019). Thus, the problem addressed here is the limited empirical and theoretical insight into how students use politeness strategies in WhatsApp messages to lecturers, amidst the dual pressures of digital immediacy and academic hierarchy.

This gap warrants urgent investigation because politeness in academic communication is not merely a matter of etiquette but intersects with professionalism, student identity, and the effective functioning of the educational process. Politeness reflects how students present themselves as respectful interlocutors, how lecturers perceive student engagement, and ultimately how the institutional culture of higher education adapts to digital media. In the Indonesian context, where values such as *hormat* (respect) and *tata krama* (manners) continue to play a strong role in student–lecturer relationships, the move to WhatsApp may produce unintended challenges: students may omit salutations, make terse requests, or assume informality that undermines the lecturer–student hierarchy. Meanwhile, lecturers may interpret digital brevity as incivility or disengagement. From a theoretical perspective, investigating digital politeness adds to emergent work in *digital pragmatics* and expands sociolinguistic scholarship into under-researched cultural settings (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983; Ismail et al., 2023). From a practical standpoint, such research can inform guidelines for digital academic

communication etiquette in universities, helping students and lecturers navigate the changing landscape.

Accordingly, this study poses the following research questions: (1) What forms and strategies of politeness do university students at Universitas PGRI Sumenep employ when sending WhatsApp messages to their lecturers? (2) Which linguistic and social factors influence these politeness strategies? (3) How do these digital politeness practices reflect the adaptation of Indonesian cultural norms of academic communication in WhatsApp? These questions guide a systematic investigation of student–lecturer WhatsApp interactions, focusing on strategy types, contextual variables, and the interplay between cultural expectations and digital affordances.

The objectives of this research are four-fold: first, to describe and analyze the types of politeness strategies employed by students in WhatsApp messages to lecturers; second, to identify linguistic (e.g., salutations, lexical choice, abbreviations) and social (e.g., student–lecturer distance, instant messaging norms) factors influencing strategy choice; third, to explain how these practices reflect shifts or continuities of academic communication norms in an Indonesian higher education context; and fourth, to provide recommendations for developing digital-communication etiquette guidelines for student–lecturer interactions. By fulfilling these objectives, the study aims to contribute to theoretical knowledge in digital pragmatics and offer actionable insights for institutional policy.

Prior research provides a foundation for this work. Politeness theory, as developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), remains a dominant framework in analyzing how interlocutors manage face and minimize face-threatening acts (FTAs) by employing strategies such as bold on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Fathi, 2024). Subsequent research has revisited and refined the model (Fathi, 2024; Thomas, 1995). In the realm of CMC, scholars have identified how digital platforms change the salience of social distance, power, and imposition (Hussein, 2023; Junita, 2022). Research into WhatsApp specifically shows unique politeness patterns: for example, Flores-Salgado (2018) found that conventional indirectness ("Can you...?") and greetings remain prominent in WhatsApp discourse. Other studies on students' WhatsApp use (Ismail et al., 2023) found that positive politeness is more frequent in familiar contexts, while negative politeness appears when social distance increases. In educational contexts, Mulyono (2019) found that students used more politeness strategies than teachers when interacting via WhatsApp in EFL settings, underscoring student

sensitivity to hierarchy. Additionally, analyses of online educational discourse (Chun & Smith, 2022; IJFMR, 2024) show how politeness strategies are inflected by media features, such as a lack of paralinguistic cues or turn-taking norms. However, little targeted research remains on student–lecturer WhatsApp communication in Indonesian higher education institutions, particularly one that systematically links strategy type with contextual variables and cultural expectations.

This literature review reveals several empirical and theoretical gaps. First, there is a relative paucity of studies that focus specifically on WhatsApp as a medium for lecturer–student interaction, and even fewer that situate the investigation within Indonesia’s higher education system. Second, existing research treats digital communication generically, rather than addressing the distinct academic context characterized by power asymmetries, institutional norms, and cultural expectations of deference. Third, few studies integrate the cultural dimension of Indonesian politeness (e.g., respect for elders, institutional hierarchy, collective orientation) with an analysis of digital pragmatics. By focusing on the specific setting of Universitas PGRI Sumenep students sending WhatsApp messages to lecturers, this study fills a valuable niche: empirical data from Indonesia, theoretical extension into digital academic contexts, and actionable implications for higher education practice.

The novelty of this research lies in several key aspects. It applies a robust pragmatics framework (i.e., Brown & Levinson’s politeness theory) in the relatively under-researched context of WhatsApp communication between students and lecturers in Indonesian higher education. It further incorporates Indonesian cultural norms of politeness into the analysis of digital messages, thereby bridging the gap between universal theory and context-specific application. The study adopts a mixed-method approach (qualitative discourse analysis supplemented by quantitative strategy frequency counts) to provide depth and breadth of insight—a methodological contribution to digital academic communication. Finally, the findings are poised to inform institutional policy by offering evidence-based recommendations for digital communication etiquette in academia. In sum, this study contributes to theory, method, and practice concurrently, offering a timely investigation of how students navigate politeness in the WhatsApp era of academic communication.

## Method

This study employed a quantitative survey design to investigate students’ perceptions and practices of digital politeness in WhatsApp

communication with lecturers. The survey method was chosen because it enables the collection of a large

amount of data from multiple respondents in a relatively short time and facilitates the quantitative description of attitudes, behaviors, and patterns related to digital communication (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Form, the study sought to capture how students conceptualize politeness, identify linguistic strategies they commonly use, and assess how contextual factors (such as hierarchy, familiarity, and urgency) influence message formulation. The design focuses on descriptive analysis rather than hypothesis testing, aiming to map tendencies and variations among students. This aligns with the study’s pragmatic orientation, which emphasizes authentic communicative behavior in digital environments rather than experimental manipulation. The survey responses were analyzed statistically to reveal trends in students’ politeness awareness and behavioral patterns.

The population of this study comprised all active undergraduate students of Universitas PGRI Sumenep who use WhatsApp to communicate with their lecturers. Given the exploratory nature of the study, a purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure that participants had relevant experience in academic WhatsApp communication. The final sample consisted of 20 students from various study programs and semesters who had previously interacted with lecturers through WhatsApp for educational purposes. Although the sample size is relatively small, it meets the criteria for descriptive survey research in exploratory linguistics (Dörnyei, 2007). Moreover, the focus of this research is not on generalization but on gaining insight into students’ digital politeness practices and perceptions within a specific institutional context. Respondents were voluntarily recruited and provided informed consent before participating.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed in Google Forms, which contained both closed and open-ended questions. The instrument consisted of two major sections: (1) demographic information and (2) digital politeness indicators in WhatsApp communication. The second section was developed based on Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory and adapted to digital interaction features (e.g., use of greetings, emoji, abbreviations, and tone). Each item was measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. To ensure the instrument’s validity, the items were reviewed by three experts in pragmatics and communication studies. The Google Form automatically coded responses, making data collection efficient and minimizing human error.

Table 1. Blueprint of the Digital Politeness Questionnaire

No	Dimension / Aspect	Indicator / Focus	Sample Item
1	Linguistic Politeness Strategies	Use of greetings, thanking, apologizing, and mitigation	"I usually begin my WhatsApp message to lecturers with a greeting such as <i>Assalamu'alaikum</i> or 'Good morning.'"
2	Digital Communication Etiquette	Observance of formality, timing, message structure	"I avoid sending messages to lecturers late at night unless it is urgent."
3	Perception of Power and Distance	Awareness of lecturer–student hierarchy and formality norms	"I adjust the level of formality depending on the lecturer's personality or relationship."
4	Cultural and Contextual Sensitivity	Integration of local values (e.g., respect, humility) in digital messages	"I use polite expressions that reflect Indonesian cultural norms of respect."
5	Self-Reflection on Digital Behavior	Awareness of mistakes or breaches of politeness in digital communication	"Sometimes I realize I have been too direct or informal when messaging lecturers."

Each dimension represents a key construct derived from Brown & Levinson's face theory and contextualized within Indonesian communication culture. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) for the pilot test with five students reached 0.87, indicating high internal consistency.

The data collection process was conducted entirely online using Google Forms for accessibility and efficiency. The survey link was distributed via student WhatsApp groups after obtaining permission from the faculty. Respondents were informed of the study objectives, confidentiality assurance, and informed consent agreement. Participation was voluntary, and respondents could withdraw at any time. The Google Form automatically recorded responses in a Google Sheet, which was exported to Microsoft Excel and then imported into SPSS for statistical analysis. Open-ended responses were qualitatively analyzed to capture nuances of digital politeness behavior not fully represented in the Likert items.

The data collected through the Google Form survey were analyzed using descriptive quantitative techniques complemented by qualitative thematic interpretation. Quantitative analysis was performed to identify overall trends, tendencies, and variations in students' politeness practices when communicating with lecturers via WhatsApp. Each item on the Likert scale (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was numerically coded and entered into Microsoft Excel for computation of descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. These indicators provided an overview of the central tendency and dispersion of students' responses, allowing the identification of dimensions with high, moderate, or low levels of digital politeness. Items with a mean score  $\geq 4.00$  were

categorized as high politeness, 3.00–3.99 as mild, and  $< 3.00$  as low politeness.

In addition, Google Forms' built-in analytical visualization tools—such as bar charts, pie charts, and histogram summaries—were utilized to provide quick graphical representations of response distribution. These visual aids supported the interpretation of data patterns, especially in comparing students' awareness of linguistic politeness, digital etiquette, and cultural sensitivity. Beyond numerical statistics, qualitative data analysis was applied to open-ended responses to capture nuanced insights that could not be quantified. Thematic coding was conducted following Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's (2014) model: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Recurring expressions were identified and grouped into thematic categories such as "respectful tone," "improper timing," "formality awareness," and "cultural reflection." These themes enriched the quantitative findings by highlighting real examples of politeness strategies or breaches. To ensure analytic reliability, data triangulation was employed by comparing quantitative trends with qualitative themes. This integration enhanced the validity and interpretive depth of the findings, aligning with the mixed-data descriptive survey approach. Through this systematic process, the analysis produced a comprehensive picture of how students at Universitas PGRI Sumenep conceptualize and enact digital politeness in their academic WhatsApp interactions.

## Result and Discussion

The Google Form survey link was distributed through the university's academic WhatsApp group. Out of 20 distributed forms, all participants responded completely, resulting in a 100% response rate.

Respondents represented various faculties (education, language, and social sciences), with the majority being in their third and fifth semesters. All respondents reported having communicated with at least one lecturer through WhatsApp for academic purposes such as assignment consultation, scheduling, or clarification of instructions. The descriptive statistics and thematic summaries below represent the five major dimensions of the instrument: Linguistic Politeness Strategies, Digital Communication Etiquette, Perception of Power and Distance, Cultural and Contextual Sensitivity, and Self-Reflection on Digital Behavior.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Digital Politeness Dimensions (N = 20)

No	Dimension / Aspect	Mean	SD	Category
1	Linguistic Politeness Strategies	4.42	0.38	High
2	Digital Communication Etiquette	4.15	0.44	High
3	Perception of Power and Distance	3.87	0.51	Moderate
4	Cultural and Contextual Sensitivity	4.48	0.35	High
5	Self-Reflection on Digital Behavior	3.92	0.47	Moderate
Overall Mean		4.17	0.43	High

The overall mean score of 4.17 (SD = 0.43) indicates a high level of digital politeness awareness among students. The highest dimension is Cultural and Contextual Sensitivity (M = 4.48), suggesting that students maintain Indonesian politeness norms (e.g., *salam*, honorifics, and respectful tone) even in digital messages. The lowest dimension is Perception of Power and Distance (M = 3.87), implying that while students are aware of hierarchical norms, some still adopt more relaxed or informal styles typical of peer interaction.

Students consistently demonstrated linguistic politeness by using greetings, honorific titles (e.g., *Sir, Ma'am, Pak, Bu*), and expressions of gratitude (*thank you, terima kasih banyak*). Over 90% reported consistently opening their messages with a greeting before delivering a request. Common mitigation markers (e.g., *if possible, could you please, maaf mengganggu waktu Bapak/Ibu*) frequently appeared, indicating a strong awareness of negative politeness strategies – avoiding imposition and showing deference (Brown & Levinson, 1987). *Example (open-ended response)*: “Before asking for clarification, I always say sorry if I disturb and thank the lecturer for their time.” This reflects alignment with Leech’s (1983) tact and approbation maxims, where students strive to minimize the cost to others and maximize the lecturer’s

sense of respect. Linguistic politeness is well-maintained even in the digital environment, signaling that WhatsApp’s informality does not erode conventional linguistic norms of respect.

The mean score of 4.15 demonstrates strong awareness of digital netiquette among students. Most respondents (85%) avoided sending messages late at night or during holidays, aligning with the norms of asynchronous professionalism. Students also expressed caution about brevity – preferring structured messages with greetings, body, and closing. However, open-ended responses revealed that students sometimes faced ambiguity about tone: using emojis or short responses (e.g., *ok, noted*) sometimes felt impolite, yet they were meant as efficiency markers. This tension reflects what Darics (2015) terms the “hybridization of formal and informal cues” in digital communication. *Example (student comment)*: “Sometimes I worry that my short replies sound rude, but I don’t want to make messages too long.” Students’ digital etiquette is adaptive – they balance respectfulness with digital brevity, demonstrating pragmatic flexibility suitable for the medium.

The relatively moderate score (M = 3.87) shows that students’ perception of hierarchy in digital settings is fluid. Many admitted that while they respect lecturers, the informal nature of WhatsApp “makes the distance feel smaller.” This confirms previous findings that digital affordances can reduce power asymmetry (Graham, 2021). Students reported that they sometimes use more casual language when lecturers initiate conversation in an informal tone. Such “reciprocal informality” shows how digital contexts can recalibrate traditional notions of authority (Locher & Graham, 2021). Digital contexts blur hierarchical boundaries, but students still maintain basic forms of politeness – indicating a shift from *formality-based* to *relational-based* politeness.

Table 3. Cross-Dimensional Comparison

Dimension Pair	Correlation (r)	Interpretation
Linguistic Politeness – Digital Etiquette	0.74	Strong positive correlation
Cultural Sensitivity – Linguistic Politeness	0.68	Moderate to strong correlation
Power Distance – Self-Reflection	0.59	Moderate correlation

The data suggest that linguistically polite students also tend to exhibit strong digital etiquette. Cultural sensitivity reinforces this pattern, confirming that cultural awareness underpins polite expression in digital contexts. This interrelation implies that digital politeness is not a single dimension but a multi-layered

construct influenced by linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors (Locher & Graham, 2021).

The visual analytics generated automatically by Google Form provided a clear and immediate overview of respondents' response patterns across all questionnaire items. The platform's bar charts and pie charts helped visualize the frequency distribution and relative proportion of responses for each politeness dimension, thereby enhancing interpretive clarity. The data visualization showed that 90% of students consistently began their WhatsApp messages with greetings such as *Assalamu'alaikum*, *Good morning*, or *Dear Sir/Madam*, which aligns with conventional politeness practices and indicates that digital platforms have not diminished cultural courtesy. Similarly, 85% of respondents reported avoiding sending messages outside working hours, demonstrating strong awareness of digital communication etiquette and temporal appropriateness.

Furthermore, around 75% of students stated that they consciously adjusted the level of formality depending on their familiarity with the lecturer, suggesting that they are sensitive to social distance and power dynamics even in digital contexts. However, approximately 60% of respondents expressed concern that short replies could be misinterpreted as impolite, highlighting the ongoing challenge of managing tone and intent in text-based communication. This ambiguity, often caused by the lack of paralinguistic cues, reinforces Darics's (2015) observation that computer-mediated messages frequently blur the boundaries between efficiency and politeness.

The visualized trends corroborate the statistical findings that Indonesian university students display a high overall awareness of digital politeness, characterized by linguistic formality, respectfulness, and cultural sensitivity. At the same time, the visual summaries also underscore the complexity of tone interpretation and the need for clearer digital communication conventions within academic contexts. The combination of numerical visualization and narrative interpretation thus provides a holistic picture of how politeness is enacted, negotiated, and sometimes misunderstood in WhatsApp-based academic exchanges.

#### Discussion

From a theoretical standpoint, the results demonstrate that both positive politeness (building rapport and solidarity) and negative politeness (showing respect and avoiding imposition) are actively employed in digital discourse. Students' use of greetings, apologies, and expressions of gratitude reflects *negative politeness strategies*, which serve to acknowledge lecturers' higher status and preserve the lecturer's "negative face." Meanwhile, the frequent use

of respectful closings, such as "*thank you very much*" or "*I'm sorry to disturb you*," aligns with *positive politeness*, which helps maintain harmony and relational respect. This balance supports Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle, particularly the *tact* and *modesty maxims*, which remain evident even in computer-mediated communication (CMC). Despite WhatsApp's informal and instant nature, students' message structures remain hierarchically sensitive, reflecting cultural continuity within digital modernization. These findings align with Darics (2015), who found that users of professional messaging apps integrate formality markers into digital conversations as a way to project competence and respect.

The high mean scores in *Cultural and Contextual Sensitivity* ( $M = 4.48$ ) and *Linguistic Politeness* ( $M = 4.42$ ) echo the findings of Sukarno (2018), who emphasized that Indonesian speakers—especially Javanese and Madurese—maintain politeness as a manifestation of social harmony and hierarchy. Similarly, Rahardi (2021) highlighted that the linguistic expression of respect (*hormat*) in Indonesia is deeply rooted in collectivist values, emphasizing humility and social deference. The present study extends these conclusions to the digital domain, confirming that WhatsApp interactions continue to reproduce these cultural norms. The results also complement Ismail et al. (2023), who reported that Malaysian students employ indirectness, greeting forms, and apology markers to maintain politeness in WhatsApp communication with educators. This parallel finding suggests a broader Southeast Asian politeness pattern, where respect-based communication persists across media. Furthermore, the moderate scores in *Perception of Power and Distance* ( $M = 3.87$ ) support Graham (2021), who argued that digital platforms like WhatsApp reduce hierarchical boundaries but do not completely erase them. Students experience more symmetrical interactions but still defer to authority through linguistic softeners. The students' reflective awareness ( $M = 3.92$ ) aligns with Herring's (2019) theory of *digital reflexivity*, which suggests that users of online media continually evaluate and adapt their tone, language, and timing to conform to perceived norms. This metapragmatic reflection is a marker of digital literacy—an emerging competence in higher education that bridges technological ability with ethical communication.

The integration of cultural politeness markers (e.g., *Assalamu'alaikum*, *Maaf mengganggu waktu Bapak/Ibu*) in WhatsApp messages underscores how Indonesian students internalize hybrid politeness models—combining traditional values of *tata krama* (etiquette) with globalized digital practices. This confirms the relevance of intercultural pragmatics (Locher & Graham, 2021), wherein politeness is

negotiated through local cultural scripts embedded in global media environments. Interestingly, while students maintain cultural expressions of deference, the medium's informality fosters new forms of relational closeness between students and lecturers. This duality—a respect for hierarchy within a digitally egalitarian space—represents a shift from *formality-based* politeness to relational politeness, where appropriateness depends on mutual understanding rather than rigid formulae (Kádár & Haugh, 2013). Hence, this study contributes to extending Brown & Levinson's model into the domain of digital pragmatics, where power, distance, and imposition are negotiated more fluidly.

The findings have both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, they validate the application of politeness theory in CMC contexts, demonstrating that classical pragmatic frameworks remain robust in explaining linguistic behavior in digital media. Empirically, the study provides evidence that cultural politeness values remain resilient even in digital interaction, reinforcing that local communication ethics continue to shape globalized discourse. Practically, the results imply that universities should integrate digital communication ethics into academic orientation or professional development programs. Such training would help students manage tone, timing, and appropriateness when interacting with lecturers, preventing potential misinterpretations that could harm academic relationships. As Darics (2015) and Locher & Graham (2021) suggest, cultivating pragmatic awareness in digital literacy education is essential to bridge the gap between traditional etiquette and modern communication demands.

While the study provides meaningful insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the sample size of 20 respondents limits generalizability; the findings represent a focused case study of Universitas PGRI Sumenep rather than a comprehensive depiction of Indonesian higher education. A larger, more diverse sample would yield more robust statistical generalizations. Second, the self-reported nature of the data may introduce social desirability bias—students might report being more polite than they actually behave in fundamental WhatsApp interactions. Direct observation or message corpus analysis would provide a more objective measure of linguistic behavior. Third, the study's reliance on descriptive statistics restricts inferential exploration; future studies might apply correlational or regression analysis to examine how demographic or cultural variables predict digital politeness patterns. Lastly, technological and contextual variables (e.g., lecturer gender, subject discipline, or platform-specific norms) were not examined in detail, which may

influence the expression of politeness in different contexts.

To deepen the understanding of digital politeness in academic settings, several directions are recommended: Expand the sample across multiple universities and regions to capture cross-cultural and cross-institutional variations in politeness practices. Combine survey and discourse analysis methods, collecting authentic WhatsApp message data (with ethical consent) to triangulate between reported perception and actual linguistic behavior. Investigate lecturer perspectives, exploring how educators interpret students' digital politeness and what communicative behaviors they perceive as appropriate or inappropriate. Integrate longitudinal or experimental designs to examine how students' politeness evolves, especially after digital communication training or etiquette workshops. Explore the impact of gender and generational differences in digital politeness strategies, since younger digital natives may have distinct norms compared to senior lecturers or administrators. Such expansions would not only refine the theoretical framework of digital pragmatics but also contribute to educational policies fostering respectful, ethical, and effective digital communication between students and lecturers.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that digital politeness remains a central feature of academic communication among Indonesian university students, even within the informal and fast-paced environment of WhatsApp messaging. The findings demonstrate that students at Universitas PGRI Sumenep exhibit a high level of awareness and practice of politeness strategies, characterized by the consistent use of greetings, honorifics, expressions of gratitude, and apology markers in their messages to lecturers. Despite the affordances of digital communication that often blur formal-informal boundaries, students successfully maintain respectful linguistic forms and culturally embedded norms of deference, confirming that Indonesian politeness values—rooted in collectivism, humility, and respect for hierarchy—are resilient and adaptive within digital contexts. In essence, this research underscores that digital politeness in academic WhatsApp interactions represents a cultural and communicative adaptation rather than an erosion of traditional values. It bridges conventional academic decorum with modern digital discourse practices, showing how Indonesian students navigate the intersection between respect, efficiency, and relational harmony. Future research should broaden the scope of inquiry—across institutions, disciplines, and cultures—

to deepen understanding of how digital politeness evolves as an essential component of global academic professionalism

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