



# Communication management model for mental health prevention and intervention program at Telkom University

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## ABSTRACT

The background of this research lies in the significance of mental health issues among students and the necessity for an integrated communication system between stakeholders and students. This study aims to analyze internal and external communication management in the mental health prevention and handling program at Telkom University, as well as to formulate an appropriate communication model to support its implementation. Adopting a qualitative case study design within a constructivist paradigm, data were collected through in-depth interviews with the Head of Student Affairs, academic advisors, counselors, and students. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model. The findings indicate that internal communication has been systematically designed by the Directorate of Student Affairs through a structure involving the Vice Dean II, Student Affairs Coordinators, Program Chairs, academic advisors, and counselors. However, resource limitations and the low engagement of academic advisors remain key challenges. External communication is conducted through various digital channels, yet its effectiveness is still influenced by digital literacy levels and student initiative. Based on these findings, this study proposes a new field-driven model called the Student-Centric Data-Driven Participatory Communication Model (S-DDPCM). This model integrates four iterative stages—planning, implementation, monitoring & feedback, and evaluation—but distinguishes itself by incorporating (1) student psychological data as the basis for communication segmentation, (2) peer-counselor participation as a credibility-enhancing communication agent, (3) real-time digital academic platforms as monitoring instruments, and (4) symmetrical communication loops that allow students to co-shape messages, not merely receive them. This grounded model reflects the actual communication dynamics observed in the field and responds directly to the behavioral characteristics of digital-native students. This study reinforces organizational communication theory by demonstrating how participatory, data-driven, and technology-supported communication can enhance mental health program effectiveness. It also offers practical implications for higher education institutions seeking to build collaborative and responsive communication systems that better support student mental well-being.

**Keywords:** *Communication management, communication model, internal-external communication, mental health, students*

## INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the increasing number of university students experiencing mental health problems is an issue that requires serious attention. According to data released by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenkes RI), it is estimated that one in ten Indonesians experiences mental health disorders (Rokom, 2021). In addition, the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) results show that more than 19 million individuals aged 15 and above in Indonesia experience mental health disorders, with over 12 million of them recorded as having depression (Riskesdas, 2018).

Indonesia is currently facing a significant mental health crisis among its university students. National data underscores the severity of this issue: the Ministry of Health reports that one in ten Indonesians experiences mental health disorders (Rokom, 2021), while the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) indicates that over 19 million individuals aged 15 and above—a demographic that includes the majority of university students—suffer from mental health disorders, with more than 12 million recorded as having depression (Riskesdas, 2018).

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of university students experiencing mental health disorders. Psychological well-being is a fundamental aspect that influences academic achievement and overall quality of life. Good mental health not only supports academic performance but also fosters healthy social interactions and equips students to face life's challenges. Therefore, it is crucial to thoroughly understand the underlying factors and impacts of the growing mental health issues among students.

Research has demonstrated a correlation between mental health disorders and declining academic performance. Heiligenstein et al. (2015) found that depressive symptoms were significantly more prevalent among students with poor academic performance. Similarly, Aloysius and Salvia (2021) reported that among students facing academic difficulties, 16% exhibited mild depressive symptoms, 43% moderate depression, and 41% severe depression.

As a higher education institution in Indonesia, Telkom University accommodates a student population of more than 48,000 individuals from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The academic environment, which involves competitive admission processes and substantial academic demands, may act as a significant source of stress. These academic pressures can be further influenced by family expectations, peer competition, and financial constraints. Students who have difficulty adapting to or managing these stressors may be at an elevated risk of experiencing mental health problems, including anxiety and depression.

As a higher education institution in Indonesia, Telkom University accommodates a student population of more than 48,000 individuals from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The competitive academic environment and substantial performance demands may function as significant stressors, particularly when compounded by family expectations, peer competition, and financial pressures. Students who struggle to adapt to these stressors are at increased risk of developing mental health conditions, including anxiety and depression.

According to a report issued by the Directorate of Student Affairs at Telkom University (Pramitha, 2024), an average of 134 students accessed counseling services per month between January and June 2024. Furthermore, mental health assessments conducted for more than 34,000 students from 2020 to 2023 identified 3,029 individuals who were recommended to receive counseling; however, only 37.3% proceeded to utilize these services. This discrepancy between psychological need and service uptake indicates persistent barriers related to awareness, accessibility, and help-seeking behavior among students.

According to an internal report from Telkom University's Directorate of Student Affairs (Pramitha, 2024), an average of 134 students accessed counseling services monthly between January and June 2024. Furthermore, mental health assessments of over 34,000 students conducted from 2020 to 2023 identified 3,029 individuals as

requiring counseling; however, only 37.3% proceeded to utilize these services. This substantial treatment gap—between identified psychological need and actual service uptake—points to persistent barriers in student awareness, service accessibility, and help-seeking behavior.

Telkom University began systematically developing its mental health support initiatives in 2020, coinciding with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic substantially intensified students' psychological burden due to prolonged social isolation, abrupt shifts to online learning, and uncertainty about academic and career trajectories. Empirical evidence from Komang et al. (2021) demonstrates the extent of this impact, revealing that 42.13% of students experienced mild anxiety, 25.53% mild stress, and 6.38% symptoms of depression during the pandemic period.

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Mental health challenges not only compromise students' emotional well-being but are also associated with high-risk behaviors, including self-harm and suicide. Nurdiansyarani and Chusairi (2023) argue that anxiety disorders can impair rational decision-making, thereby increasing vulnerability to extreme actions. A suicide incident involving a high-achieving student at Telkom University in June 2024 (Mubarokah & Susanti, 2024) underscores that academic success does not equate to psychological resilience.

Beyond compromising emotional well-being, mental health challenges are associated with high-risk behaviors, including self-harm and suicide. Nurdiansyarani and Chusairi (2023) contend that anxiety disorders can impair rational decision-making, thereby increasing vulnerability to extreme actions. The tragic salience of this risk was underscored in June 2024, when a high-achieving Telkom University student died by suicide (Mubarokah & Susanti, 2024)—a stark reminder that academic excellence does not equate to psychological resilience.

Globally, mental health has emerged as a leading public health priority. The Ipsos Global Health Service Monitor 2023 reports that 44% of respondents across 31 countries consider mental health their primary health concern, surpassing cancer (40%) and stress (30%) (Muhammad, 2023). In the Indonesian context, the rising prevalence of mental health disorders is similarly alarming. Data from Riskesdas 2018 indicate that more than 19 million Indonesians aged 15 years and above experience mental health problems, with over 12 million living with depression. Likewise, the World Population Review (2023) documents more than 9 million cases of depression nationwide, corresponding to a prevalence rate of 3.7%.

Globally, mental health has emerged as a leading public health priority. The Ipsos Global Health Service Monitor 2023 reports that 44% of respondents across 31 countries identified mental health as their primary health concern, exceeding cancer (40%) and stress (30%) (Muhammad, 2023). National data reflect a similar trend. The 2018 National Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) reported that more than 19 million

Indonesians aged 15 years and above experience mental health problems, with over 12 million living with depression. Complementary data from World Population Review (2023) estimate more than 9 million depression cases nationwide, corresponding to a prevalence rate of 3.7%.

An increasing number of student suicide cases across both public and private universities further highlights the urgent need for systematic preventive and intervention frameworks. Incidents reported in Yogyakarta, Semarang, Bogor, and Malang during 2023–2024 reveal persistent gaps in early detection mechanisms and institutional support systems for at-risk students (Pangaribowo & Khairina, 2023; Ikhsan & Susanti, 2024; Werdiono, 2023). One critical structural challenge concerns the low counselor-to-student ratio. Rarasati (2024) notes that the current ratio of 1:570 is far below the recommended standard of 1:250, thereby constraining timely access to psychological services in the midst of increasing academic and emotional pressures.

The urgency of systematic intervention is further underscored by an increasing number of student suicide cases across Indonesian universities. Incidents reported in Yogyakarta, Semarang, Bogor, and Malang during 2023–2024 reveal persistent gaps in early detection mechanisms and institutional support systems for at-risk students (Pangaribowo & Khairina, 2023; Ikhsan & Susanti, 2024; Werdiono, 2023). Compounding these gaps is a critical structural challenge: the inadequate counselor-to-student ratio. Rarasati (2024) notes that the national average ratio of 1:570 falls substantially below the recommended standard of 1:250, severely constraining timely access to psychological services amidst escalating academic and emotional pressures.

The Indonesian Ministry of Health defines mental health as an individual's ability to realize their potential, manage life stressors, function productively, and contribute meaningfully to their community (Savitrie, 2022). Untreated mental health conditions adversely affect not only psychological functioning but also physical health, social relationships, and academic or work performance, potentially escalating into substance abuse and other harmful behaviors.

In response to these escalating challenges, Telkom University has implemented a comprehensive suite of mental health prevention and support programs. Free counseling services—offered both online and offline—provide up to 15 daily sessions and adhere to structured clinical stages, including rapport formation, psychological intervention, and session termination (Gunawan, 2016). Service quality is further enhanced through collaboration with the West Java Clinical Psychologists Association, with counseling access integrated into institutional platforms such as MyTelU and iGracias.

Beyond individual counseling, the university promotes mental health awareness through seminars, social media campaigns (@ditmawa\_univtelkom), and skill-building programs (e.g., Self-Management, Leadership Skills, Entrepreneurial Mindset). However, outreach effectiveness hinges on strategic media selection, as each medium (print, digital, outdoor) has distinct advantages and limitations that directly impact communication outcomes (Tjiptono, 2015). Prior research (Septierly, 2021) notes that while students express interest in counseling, most underutilize these services unless actively facilitated by the university. Rai et al. (2020) further highlight academic advisors' pivotal role in supporting students during high-pressure academic transitions.

Another study conducted by Cahyaningtyas and Krisnanda (2024) highlights the importance of implementing counseling services in secondary and higher education as a means to support students in developing their potential holistically. However, its implementation faces several significant challenges, including limited resources, inadequate perceptions and understanding of the role of counseling, social stigma, and the lack of support and collaboration from educational staff.

The implementation of counseling services in educational settings, while crucial for holistic student development, is fraught with challenges. Cahyaningtyas and Krisnanda (2024) identified several persistent obstacles in secondary and higher education, including limited resources, inadequate perceptions of the counseling role, social stigma, and a lack of support and collaboration from educational staff.

The communication management process is understood as a coordinated effort to construct shared understanding or interpretation formed through human interaction and communication skills. This activity reflects the application of various managerial functions within a communication context.

Within this context, communication management can be conceptualized as a coordinated process aimed at constructing shared understanding through structured interaction and strategic communication practices. It reflects the integration of managerial functions—such as planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating—within communication processes.

This conceptualization aligns with fundamental principles in management, defined “as the process of getting things done through and with people” (Lieber, 1999:35), and with communication, understood “as a process of interrelated elements working together to achieve a desired outcome or goal” (Barker, 1987:5).

This conceptualization is rooted in foundational theories of management and communication. Management is fundamentally defined as “the process of getting things done through and with people” (Lieber, 1999, p. 35), emphasizing coordination and collaboration. Similarly, communication is conceptualized as “a process of interrelated elements working together to achieve a desired outcome or goal” (Barker, 1987, p. 5).

In line with the management concepts proposed by Lieber and Barker—which posit that management is the process of achieving goals through and with other people, while communication is a process in which interrelated elements work together to achieve a desired outcome—the mental health prevention and intervention program at Telkom University requires effective coordination to attain its objectives. These elements include communication across organizational units, the provision of accurate and relevant information to students, and feedback mechanisms for continuous improvement.

Applying this synthesized framework to the context of this study, the mental health prevention and intervention program at Telkom University necessitates effective communication management to achieve its goals. This involves coordinating communication across multiple organizational units (e.g., academic advisors, counselors, faculty), ensuring the delivery of accurate and relevant information to students, and establishing robust feedback mechanisms for continuous program improvement.



The findings of this study are expected to generate a communication model that can be utilized by Telkom University in implementing its mental health prevention and intervention initiatives through student counseling services.

Given the complexity of student mental health challenges and the critical role of strategic communication in program implementation, this study evaluate the communication management model for mental health initiatives at Telkom University.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research approach within a constructivist paradigm to obtain an in-depth understanding of how communication management is implemented in the mental health prevention and intervention program at Telkom University. The methodology was operationalized through three primary data collection techniques: in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis.

This study employed a qualitative research design within a constructivist paradigm to develop an in-depth understanding of how communication management is implemented in the mental health prevention and intervention program at Telkom University. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate to explore stakeholders' experiences, perceptions, and interactional dynamics within the institutional context.

In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including the Directorate of Student Affairs as the program owner, internal and external counselors, academic advisors, Vice Dean for Student Affairs, faculty student affairs officers, and students. These interviews explored communication practices, coordination processes, and stakeholders' perceptions of program effectiveness. Field observations were carried out during counseling services, seminars, webinars, and the use of communication channels such as MyTelU, iGracias, WhatsApp broadcasts, and social media to observe how program messages were implemented in practice. Document analysis was performed on standard operating procedures, mental health guidelines, communication materials, and student participation data to examine the alignment between planned communication strategies and their execution.

All collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, guided by the stages of communication management proposed by Lieber and Baker (strategic analysis, strategic intent, strategic messaging, strategic positioning, strategic implementation, and evaluation). Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. The application of this methodology enabled the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external communication dynamics of the program and to formulate a more adaptive communication management model aimed at enhancing student participation.

The research was conducted from March to June 2024 at Telkom University. During this period, I carried out a series of data collection activities consisting of three rounds of non-participatory observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The observations were conducted to capture the real communication practices within the mental health program: (1) observing how the Directorate of Student Affairs disseminated program information through MyTelU, iGracias, WhatsApp broadcasts, and social media; (2) observing the counseling service process, including interactions between counselors and students; and (3) observing mental

health seminars and webinars to understand message framing and audience engagement. Each observation session lasted approximately 60–90 minutes.

The research was conducted from March to June 2024 at Telkom University. A total of nine non-participatory observation sessions were carried out, each lasting 60–90 minutes, covering three categories of activities: (1) dissemination of program information through digital platforms (MyTelU, iGracias, WhatsApp broadcasts, and social media); (2) counseling sessions to observe counselor-student interactions; and (3) mental health seminars and webinars to examine message framing and audience engagement.

To complement these observations, I conducted semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Interviews with the Directorate of Student Affairs and counselors lasted 45–75 minutes, while interviews with academic advisors, faculty student affairs officers, and students ranged from 30–45 minutes. These interviews explored communication strategies, coordination practices, challenges, and perceptions of program effectiveness.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all key stakeholders. Interviews with the Directorate of Student Affairs and counselors lasted between 45–75 minutes, while those with academic advisors, faculty student affairs officers, and students ranged from 30–45 minutes. The interview protocol was designed to explore the topics outlined in the previous section [merujuk ke Paragraf 2], with flexibility to probe emerging themes.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation (comparing information from multiple actors), method triangulation (cross-checking interviews, observations, and documents), and member checking, where preliminary interpretations were reconfirmed with selected informants. All data were analyzed using thematic analysis, guided by Lieber and Baker's communication management framework. The analysis process involved data reduction, coding, categorization, interpretation, and synthesizing findings into a communication management model that reflects the dynamics of both prevention and intervention components of the mental health program.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Internal Communication Management**

The research findings indicate that the Directorate of Student Affairs (Ditmawa) has established a systematic and hierarchical internal communication system. Information flows from the university level through the Vice Dean II, then continues to faculty student affairs units, department heads, and finally to academic advisors. This vertical communication pattern enables structured information distribution, consistent with Brennan's perspective in Effendy (2011) that vertical communication facilitates both top-down instructions and bottom-up feedback within an organization.

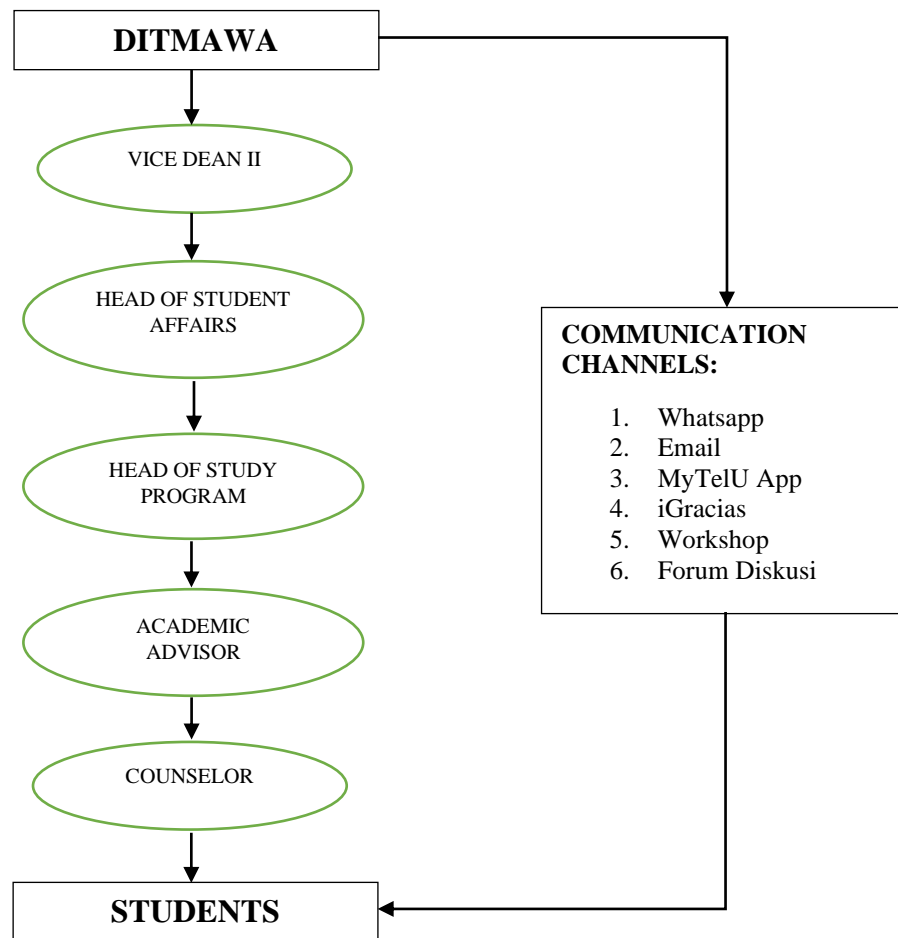


Figure 1. Internal Communication Flow (Source: research data,2025)

The Directorate of Student Affairs (Ditmawa) employs various communication media, including formal channels such as Electronic Official Notes (NDE), iGracias, and MyTelU, as well as informal platforms like WhatsApp groups and counseling hotlines. This multichannel approach aims to accommodate diverse audience preferences, consistent with Goldhaber's (1993) perspective emphasizing the importance of varied communication media for effective message delivery.

However, findings indicate that academic advisors' participation in socialization activities remains low. One contributing factor is the predominantly one-way communication approach, such as mass text messages (WhatsApp Blast), which provides limited opportunities for clarification. This results in weak understanding and engagement among academic advisors, despite their crucial role in student mentoring. These limitations highlight the need for two-way communication and approaches that foster a sense of ownership, as proposed by Katz and Kahn (1978) and Yamin (2015).

This is reinforced by the statement of one informant who expressed the following opinion:

“Usually, if it comes from the Directorate of Student Affairs, they use a hotline. So for anything related to the program, communication is done via the hotline. So far, it has been quite effective. For us, it allows faster responses. Email is also effective for me personally, because I always check my email for anything important. And in terms of communication channels, it can be through email or WhatsApp. But if I want to see the recap, I don’t have to open my email. I can access it through iGracias. I just go to the academic advisor menu and everything is already there— all the results and updates from the students I supervise.”

This is reinforced by the statement of one informant who expressed the following opinion:

“When the communication comes from the Directorate of Student Affairs, it is usually delivered through the hotline. For program-related matters, the hotline enables faster responses. Email is also effective for me because I regularly check it for important information. Communication may take place via email or WhatsApp, but if I need to review records, I can access them directly through iGracias. By opening the academic advisor menu, I can see all updates and reports concerning the students under my supervision.”

Coordination between Ditmawa and counselors is facilitated through administrative staff and specific forums. However, human resource limitations have resulted in suboptimal services. The administrative staff’s function as communication bridges between students, counselors, and program managers has not been maximized, aligning with AHRQ’s (2014) assertion that effective coordination requires clear communication, defined responsibilities, and ongoing monitoring.

Internal communication strategies are also informed by student omni-test results, which categorize students into red (high priority), yellow (medium priority), and green (low priority) groups. This classification enables more adaptive and targeted communication according to need levels. As a psychological assessment tool, the omni-test helps map students’ mental conditions, thereby making communication interventions more precise (Yuwafik, 2020).

In practice, WhatsApp serves as the primary channel for rapid communication with academic advisors. Nevertheless, its effectiveness requires improvement, particularly in ensuring clear message delivery and comprehension. The scarcity of clarification forums and periodic evaluations has led to uneven understanding of program workflows among advisors. Consequently, more personal and interactive approaches such as open discussion forums are necessary.

Ditmawa’s workshop-based socialization strategy proves relatively effective in building shared understanding. However, this approach needs adjustment according to participants’ academic backgrounds, as non-engineering faculty demonstrate better comprehension of mental health issues compared to engineering faculty. Audience-sensitive communication approaches are crucial for enhancing message effectiveness, as explained by Johnson (2009) and Tampubolon (2020).

Furthermore, resistance from some academic advisors stems not from lack of information but from low program ownership. This underscores the importance of building emotional engagement and collective responsibility regarding mental health issues in academic settings. More intensive two-way communication, as recommended by Postelnyak (2022), should be implemented to strengthen participatory engagement.

From the counselors' perspective, some report limited understanding of the program's overall direction due to insufficient comprehensive socialization. Nevertheless, technical coordination continues through self-reporting systems and support from department heads and faculty units. This indicates that operational communication functions adequately, while strategic communication requires strengthening to align all implementers' understanding of the program's long-term vision.

This is reinforced by the statement of one informant, who expressed the following view:

“Personally, as I mentioned earlier, I really don’t know. I don’t know the short-term, medium-term, or long-term plans. I have no idea where Direktorat Kemahasiswaan (Ditmawa) is heading. So, in my understanding—because I really do not know—it feels more like focusing on evacuation, evacuation, evacuation, and then prevention, prevention, prevention. I do not understand what the actual plan looks like. What I have been doing so far is simply carrying out my duties and responsibilities as a counselor.”

“To be honest, as I mentioned earlier, I am not aware of the short-, medium-, or long-term plans of the Directorate of Student Affairs. I do not clearly understand the overall direction of the program. From my perspective, the focus seems to be on immediate response and preventive actions, but I am unsure how these efforts are structured within a broader strategic plan. So far, I have simply carried out my responsibilities as a counselor according to my assigned duties.”

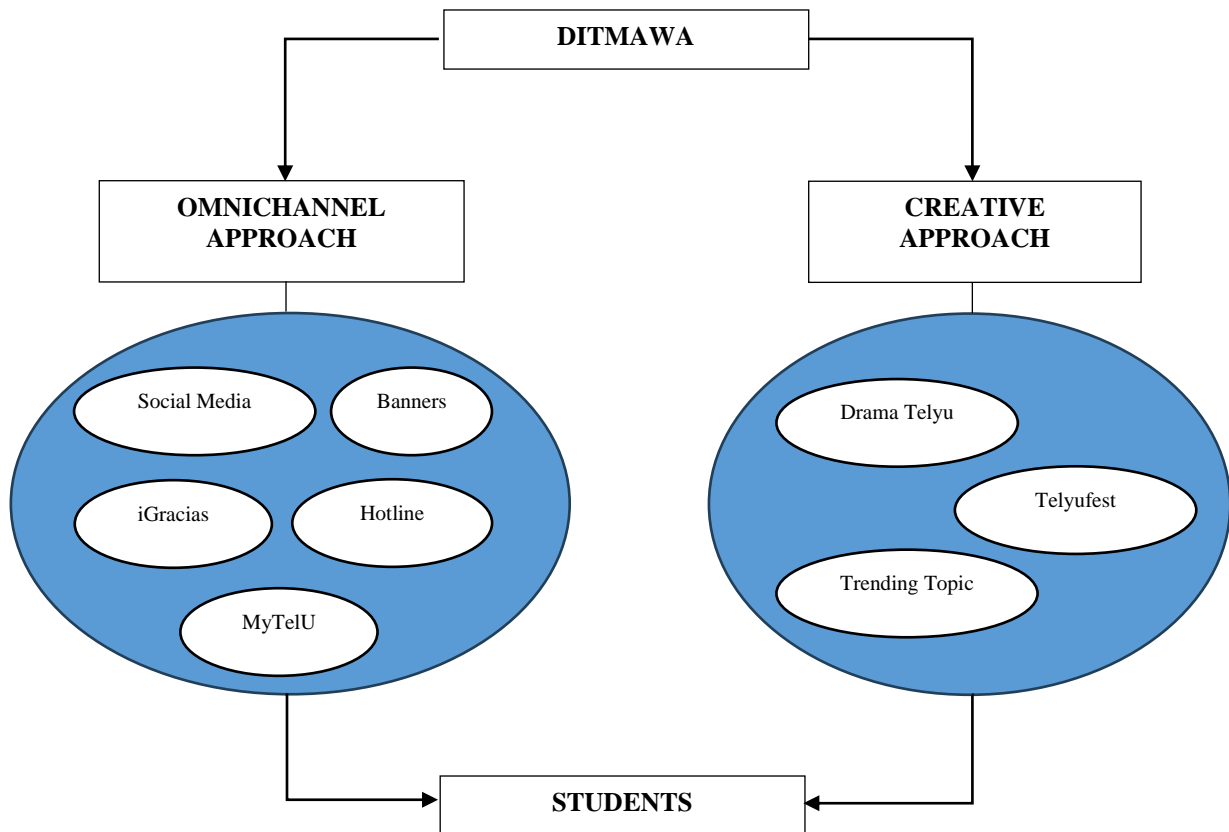
This program supports the institution's mission to develop students' emotional and academic resilience. Ditmawa has provided adequate counseling services, training programs, and information channels. However, active participation from academic advisors remains challenging. Annual evaluations are necessary to assess program effectiveness, address communication gaps, and strengthen follow-up processes, as suggested by Cheesman et al. (2023).

Overall, program implementation and coordination have progressed well, supported by a culture of openness, transparent reporting, and strong collaboration within the campus environment. Although occasional delays in responses occur, the principle of open communication as explained by Wenzel (2019) helps maintain smooth program execution.

## **External Communication Management**

The management of external communication within Telkom University's mental health prevention and intervention program demonstrates an adaptive and comprehensive strategy, tailored to the characteristics of students who belong to the digital generation. The Directorate of Student Affairs, Career, and Alumni (Ditmawa) utilizes various communication channels, both official and informal, including social

media, the MyTelU application, and entertainment-based activities such as Telyufest. This approach is considered appropriate as Generation Z students tend to prefer visual, digital content and emotionally engaging approaches.



**Figure 2.** Program Approach Strategy (Source: research data, 2025)

Message delivery using inclusive and empathetic language serves as a crucial element in building supportive relationships between the institution and students. However, the effectiveness of information dissemination still faces challenges. Some students remain unfamiliar with service procedures or available contact points, primarily due to low media literacy regarding official campus channels. These findings align with studies emphasizing the importance of digital media literacy in ensuring effective message delivery within higher education environments.

In practice, the MyTelU platform serves as an integrated information hub and counseling service directory. However, high demand for face-to-face services has resulted in long queues and waiting times. The limited number of counselors presents a constraint in maintaining service quality, highlighting the need for enhanced human resource capacity and more efficient service communication systems.

Ditmawa has incorporated data-driven evaluation into its communication activities through pre- and post-tests, satisfaction surveys, and student needs assessments. This demonstrates the implementation of strategic communication management based on feedback and impact measurement. Communication content is adapted to audience characteristics through visual approaches, empathetic narratives, and relatable, lighthearted delivery.

Student participation is encouraged by linking program involvement with the Student Activity Transcript (TAK) system. Counseling services have also created spaces perceived as safe by students. Direct interaction with faculty-level student affairs units proves more effective than approaches through academic advisors, indicating the importance of horizontal and empathetic communication patterns within the campus environment.

The program employs a participatory approach by involving trained students as peer counselors. This strategy has proven effective in reducing stigma and enhancing engagement among the student body. From the perspective of Excellence Theory, this approach reflects the principles of two-way symmetrical communication, where dialogue, mutual understanding, and co-creation of meaning occur between the institution and students. In practice, this participatory model not only enhances message acceptance but also strengthens relational trust, which is essential in mental health communication. Additionally, Direktorat Kemahasiswaan (Ditmawa) provides emotional expression outlets such as complaint boxes (as forms of catharsis), group counseling services, and social media monitoring for early issue detection.

Continuous evaluation is conducted through post-activity surveys, the results of which inform subsequent program designs that are better aligned with student needs. This feedback-oriented practice reflects the symmetrical communication cycle, where organizational strategies evolve based on audience responses. It also demonstrates characteristics of Goffman's dramaturgy, wherein the institution adjusts its "front stage performance"—in this case, communication activities—based on audience reactions to maintain credibility and alignment with student expectations.

At the institutional level, the program supports the vision of Telkom University as a National Entrepreneurial University based on SAFE AI by 2028, and aligns with student character development in the Society 5.0 era. Service quality evaluation is strengthened through Management Contracts, service satisfaction indices, and internal quality audits adhering to ISO standards, demonstrating an integrated institutional communication framework.

The number of campus counselors has increased over the past five years; however, the ideal counselor-to-student ratio remains unmet. The establishment of a psychology degree program is considered a long-term solution to reinforce psychological service capacity, aligning with national recommendations of one counselor per 250 students. This structural reinforcement supports the resource adequacy dimension within communication system theory.

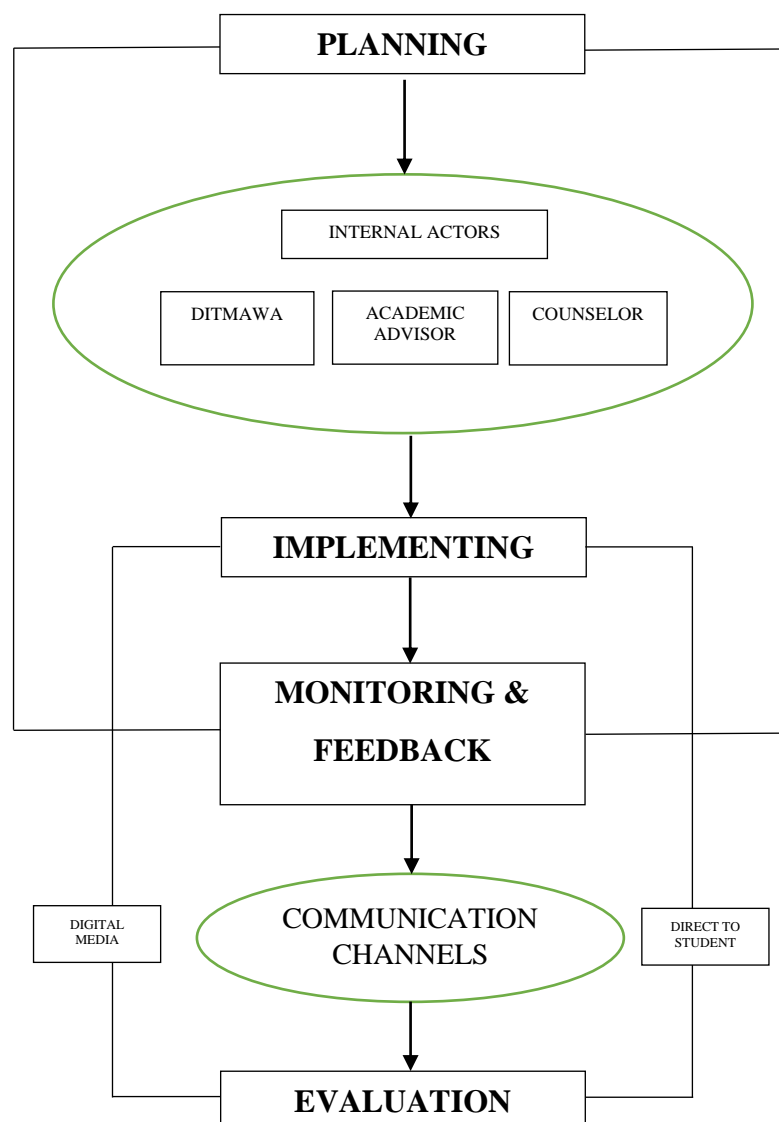
In terms of communication media, passive channels such as banners are considered less effective for conveying in-depth messages. Conversely, interactive media such as webinars have proven more effective as they enable real-time dialogue and knowledge exchange—an embodiment of two-way symmetrical communication. This interactive engagement fosters deeper learning, reduces psychological distance, and enhances message retention.

Service responsiveness and the speed of follow-up also remain key concerns among students. Warm, open, and responsive communication is viewed as essential in fostering a sense of safety when accessing services. This highlights the relevance of Social Support Theory, particularly the emotional and informational support

components that are critical in counseling contexts. Empathic communication not only improves perceived service quality but also shapes students' willingness to seek help.

Overall, the program has positively influenced students' awareness of mental health importance. However, many students continue to seek services primarily during crises. This suggests that promotive and preventive communication strategies must be further strengthened. Applying the logic of preventive framing within health communication theory, future messages should target proactive behavioral change, helping students maintain mental well-being before serious issues arise.

### Communication Management Model for Mental Health Prevention and Handling Program



**Figure 3.** Communication Management Model for Mental Health Prevention and Intervention Programs (Source: research data, 2025)

The results of this study indicate that the communication strategy in Telkom University's mental health prevention and intervention program is designed through a

comprehensive and adaptive managerial model. This model integrates program implementers, communication mechanisms, implementation stages, and the use of various communication media to ensure the program's effectiveness in achieving its objectives and guaranteeing implementation continuity.

The communication structure in this program is classified into two main scopes: internal communication, involving institutional actors such as academic advisors, counselors, Vice Dean II, faculty student affairs heads, department chairs, and administrative staff; and external communication, focusing on students as the primary beneficiaries. This two-layered structure aligns with prior models of organizational communication flow proposed by Grunig and Hunt, particularly the distinction between organizational-level coordination and public-facing communication. The internal communication process operates hierarchically yet maintains flexibility, enabling inter-role coordination, information dissemination, and responsive case reporting mechanisms. Meanwhile, external communication is inclusive and participatory, emphasizing a multi-channel approach aimed at improving students' understanding of mental health issues, strengthening awareness, and promoting active engagement in campus services.

Unlike previous communication models in higher-education mental health programs—which often emphasize top-down messaging—this model integrates participatory elements consistent with the principles of two-way symmetrical communication. This demonstrates its novelty in embedding dialogue, feedback loops, and shared decision-making with students. The use of trained peer counselors, for example, mirrors the findings of earlier studies indicating that peer-led mental health initiatives enhance message credibility and reduce help-seeking stigma, yet this program further extends the approach by systematically integrating student psychological data into communication planning.

This communication model was developed through four primary stages, which align with the strategic communication cycle in established literature while introducing contextual adaptations to the needs of a digitalized university environment:

1. Planning Stage, conducted by Direktorat Kemahasiswaan (Ditmawa) using psychological data (omni-test results, surveys, and counseling reports) as the basis for crafting strategies and audience segmentation. This data-driven planning reflects contemporary strategic communication frameworks emphasizing evidence-based targeting.

2. Implementation Stage, involving multi-channel dissemination, seminar and workshop organization, and the activation of counseling services tailored to student needs. This stage resonates with health communication studies that stress channel diversification to address heterogeneous audiences.

3. Monitoring and Feedback Stage, carried out through periodic counselor reports and analyses of student participation levels, supported by reminder and follow-up systems. This mirrors feedback models in previous mental health communication research, yet the present model adds novelty by integrating digital academic platforms (MyTelU and iGracias) as monitoring instruments.

4. Evaluation Stage, assessing media effectiveness, goal attainment, and synergy among implementers as the basis for strategy refinement. This stage is consistent with



evaluation practices in strategic communication theory, but its integration with ISO-based internal audits at Telkom University strengthens its institutional rigor.

A crucial highlight of this model is the structured use of integrated and student-responsive communication media. The communication channels used include digital media (electronic official memos, mass emails, WhatsApp groups, hotlines, MyTelU, and iGracias), print media (banners, pamphlets, posters), and participatory offline activities such as workshops, seminars, and buddy system programs. The selection of these media aligns with prior research emphasizing the effectiveness of interactive and dialogic channels in health communication, particularly for Generation Z audiences.

Overall, the findings indicate that the program's success is strongly influenced by the effectiveness of structured, participatory, and data-driven communication management. These findings support earlier studies highlighting the need for integrated communication in campus mental health services, while also contributing a distinctive model that incorporates institutional digital ecosystems, peer counseling components, and continuous feedback mechanisms tailored to the dynamic characteristics of students as the primary audience.

## CONCLUSION

This study indicates that Telkom University's communication management for its mental health prevention and intervention program is systematically structured but still constrained by several implementation challenges. Internally, information flows through an organizational hierarchy involving the Directorate of Student Affairs, academic advisors, counselors, and faculty-level technical units. Although communication channels such as WhatsApp, email, MyTelU, and iGracias are utilized, their effectiveness is limited by insufficient personnel, inadequate understanding of program procedures, and the suboptimal engagement of academic advisors in supporting the program.

On the other hand, external communication strategies targeting students have adopted a multi-platform approach, including social media, banners, campus applications, and participatory activities. These efforts are reinforced by the use of creative and student-trend-responsive communication channels. However, low digital literacy, limited access to official information, and students' weak understanding of service mechanisms pose major challenges in reaching and activating their engagement.

Based on these empirical findings, this study successfully formulates a communication management model for mental health prevention and intervention programs, consisting of four main stages: planning, implementation, monitoring and feedback, and evaluation. This model emphasizes the importance of synergy among internal campus actors—particularly Direktorat Kemahasiswaan (Ditmawa), academic advisors, and counselors—as well as the use of adaptive communication technologies to reach students directly. The model's implementation effectiveness heavily depends on inter-unit collaboration, willingness to cooperate, and shared awareness of the urgency of mental health issues in higher education environments.

The findings of this study contribute several important implications for both theory and practice. Theoretically, this model extends existing communication

management frameworks by integrating data-driven decision-making, digital ecosystem utilization, and participatory student involvement—elements that are underrepresented in traditional higher education communication models. It also illustrates how symmetrical communication principles can be operationalized within mental health programs in the university context.

Practically, the model provides a strategic blueprint for universities, including Telkom University, to strengthen their mental health communication systems through structured coordination mechanisms, continuous monitoring, and technology-supported feedback loops. The emphasis on peer-based communication and real-time digital platforms offers actionable insights for institutions seeking to enhance early detection, reduce stigma, and improve proactive help-seeking behavior among students. The model may also serve as a reference for policymakers in designing integrated mental health communication protocols aligned with national counseling standards and the evolving needs of Generation Z learners.

The communication management model developed in this study can be recommended to other higher education institutions as a reference for designing similar programs, particularly those related to mental health. The systematic and collaborative approach of this model contributes significantly, both theoretically and practically, especially in strengthening communication mechanisms for mental health programs in academic settings.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, including time constraints in field research and a scope focused primarily on communication perspectives. Therefore, future research is encouraged to integrate approaches from other disciplines, such as psychology, to gain deeper insights into student behavior and the effectiveness of intervention programs. Such integration is expected to yield a more comprehensive and adaptive communication management model tailored to future needs.

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