



Communication Ethics and Students' Argumentative Skills in Islamic Higher Education

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Abstract

This study examines the role of communication in developing students' argumentative skills in educational settings and public discussions. It aims to analyze the concept and role of communication, communication ethics in expressing opinions, and strategies for improving students' communication and argumentative skills. This study employed a qualitative approach using content analysis. Data were obtained from relevant books, academic journal articles, and previous studies addressing communication, argumentation, communication ethics, and students' argumentative skills. The data were analyzed through a process of identifying, categorizing, and interpreting recurring themes related to communication and argumentation. The findings reveal three main themes: i) the role of communication in developing argumentative skills, ii) communication ethics in expressing opinions, and iii) strategies for developing communication and argumentative skills. Communication was found to support logical and critical thinking, active listening, information literacy, confidence, and the ability to construct systematic arguments. Communication ethics were reflected in the use of respectful language, appreciation of different viewpoints, active listening, and responsible use of digital media. Meanwhile, the development of argumentative skills can be supported through public speaking practice, critical and logical thinking, literacy activities, discussions and debates, digital media use, self-evaluation, and a supportive academic environment. Overall, the findings indicate that effective argumentation requires an integration of communication skills, critical thinking, information literacy, ethical communication, and continuous practice.

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INTRODUCTION

University students are often regarded as agents of change because of their strategic role in promoting social transformation through their academic and intellectual capacities. As members of the academic community, students are expected not only to acquire knowledge but also to develop critical thinking skills, identify problems, and communicate ideas logically and constructively. These

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capacities enable students to participate in addressing various social, economic, and political issues in society (Jannah & Sulianti, 2021). Therefore, communication and argumentative skills are important competencies that support students' roles in both academic and social contexts.

In the context of higher education, argumentative skills constitute an important competency that supports students' engagement in discussions, analysis, and problem-solving. Argumentation involves not only expressing opinions but also the ability to formulate claims, provide logical reasons, use relevant facts or evidence, and consider alternative perspectives. These abilities are closely related to critical thinking because students need to analyze information, evaluate opinions, and formulate conclusions before expressing a particular viewpoint. Thus, the quality of students' arguments is determined not only by the knowledge they possess but also by their ability to communicate ideas clearly and systematically.

Nevertheless, students' argumentative skills do not always develop optimally in higher education. Some students tend to remain passive during discussions and experience difficulties when expressing their opinions in formal situations, such as classroom presentations and seminars. These difficulties may be related to shyness, anxiety, and low self-confidence when speaking in front of others (Suttinarto et al., 2026). Such conditions may affect students' willingness to express ideas, provide responses, and defend their arguments during academic interactions.

In addition to confidence-related factors, students may also experience concerns about making mistakes when presenting their arguments. The fear that their opinions may be rejected or considered incorrect can discourage students from expressing their views. Negative perceptions of their own abilities may also become a barrier to communication. If such conditions are not addressed in the learning process, students may have limited opportunities to develop critical thinking, communication, and argumentative skills through academic interaction.

Under these conditions, communication skills play an important role in supporting the development of students' argumentative abilities. Communication involves not only the ability to speak but also the ability to convey information, exchange ideas, listen to others, and establish effective social interactions (Ridha et al., 2025). Students with good communication skills tend to be better prepared to express their ideas in public and interact within academic and social environments (Tajuddin, 2023). Therefore, developing communication skills can be an important means of helping students overcome barriers to expressing their opinions.

Effective communication skills also enable students to view differences of opinion as part of the process of exchanging ideas. In academic discussions, differing perspectives can provide opportunities to examine reasoning, evaluate evidence, and broaden perspectives. Therefore, students need to be able to communicate their ideas clearly, respectfully, and based on sound reasoning. This process requires not only the confidence to speak but also the ability to listen to and appropriately respond to the views of others.

The development of these abilities requires support from the higher education environment. Instructors can create learning environments that provide students with opportunities to participate through group discussions, presentations, question-and-answer sessions, and debates. An open learning environment that respects differences of opinion can provide students with opportunities to practice expressing their ideas and receive feedback on how they communicate and construct arguments. In this way, the learning process can serve as a space for students to continuously develop their communication and argumentative skills.

Argumentative skills are also increasingly relevant to the demands of academic and professional life. In the era of globalization, students require not only academic competence but also various *soft skills*, including communication and argumentative

skills. These abilities are needed to navigate dynamic work environments, establish professional interactions, and communicate ideas in various contexts. Effective communication practices can also support the development of students' critical thinking skills (Fridayani et al., 2022).

In addition to the ability to present arguments, communication ethics also require attention. In academic environments, expressing opinions cannot be separated from the ability to respect different perspectives, use polite language, listen to others, and take responsibility for the information being communicated. Communication ethics have become increasingly important as interactions extend into public spaces and digital media because expressing opinions without considering context, using provocative language, or disseminating unverified information may affect the quality of social interaction. Therefore, argumentative skills should be understood not only in terms of logical reasoning and the strength of evidence but also in terms of how ideas are communicated.

Previous studies have discussed communication, argumentative skills, and communication ethics among students separately. However, a more integrated understanding is still needed regarding how communication contributes to the development of students' argumentative skills, how communication ethics are applied when expressing opinions, and what strategies can be used to develop these abilities. This need is important because argumentative skills depend not only on the confidence to speak but also on the ability to think critically, manage information, listen to others, use evidence, and communicate opinions ethically.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze three main aspects: i) the concept and role of communication in developing students' argumentative skills, ii) students' communication ethics in expressing opinions, and iii) strategies for developing students' communication and argumentative skills. The analysis of relevant sources is expected to provide a more systematic understanding of the relationship between communication, communication ethics, and students' argumentative skills in academic contexts and public spaces.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using content analysis techniques to examine various sources related to communication, argumentation skills, communication ethics, and strategies for developing students' communication skills. This approach was used to identify, categorize, and interpret information and themes emerging from various sources relevant to the research focus. The research data consisted of secondary data obtained from books, scientific journal articles, proceedings, and previous studies discussing communication and students' argumentation skills (Alejandro & Zhao, 2024; Engkizar et al., 2026; Gergen, 2020; Özden, 2024).

Data sources were selected based on their relevance to the research focus, namely the role of communication in developing argumentation skills, communication ethics in expressing opinions, and strategies for developing students' communication and argumentation skills. The selected sources were then read and reviewed to identify information related to the research focus. Relevant information was recorded and used as the unit of analysis in the content analysis process (Engkizar et al., 2019, 2025; Kleinheksel et al., 2020; Pohontsch, 2019).

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through several stages. The first stage was data identification, namely identifying relevant information from the collected sources. The second stage was data categorization, namely grouping information based on similarities in meaning and their relevance to the research focus. The third stage was theme identification, namely discovering patterns or themes emerging from the various data categories. The fourth stage was interpretation, namely interpreting

the relationships between themes to gain a deeper understanding of students' communication and argumentation skills (Allsop et al., 2022; Lindgren et al., 2020; Renz et al., 2018a).

Based on this process, the analysis produced three main themes, namely (1) the role of communication in developing argumentation skills, (2) students' communication ethics in expressing opinions, and (3) strategies for developing students' communication and argumentation skills. These three themes were further analyzed interpretively to explain the relationships between communication skills, critical thinking, information literacy, communication ethics, and argumentation skills.

In this study, the researcher served as the primary instrument in the process of identifying, selecting, categorizing, and interpreting data. To assist the data collection and organization process, documentation sheets and analysis notes were used. Documentation sheets were used to record the identity and key information of each source, while analysis notes were used to document the results of coding, categorization, and data interpretation (Kyngäs, 2020; Preiser et al., 2021).

Data validity was established through source triangulation, namely by comparing information from various sources discussing the same topic. This comparison was carried out to examine the consistency of information, identify similarities and differences in findings, and strengthen the interpretations generated from the content analysis process. Thus, the results of the analysis were based on patterns of information found consistently across various relevant sources (Ashour, 2018; Hasan et al., 2025; Renz et al., 2018b).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the content analysis of various sources addressing communication and students' argumentative skills, three main themes were identified: (1) the role of communication in developing argumentative skills, (2) communication ethics in expressing opinions, and (3) strategies for improving communication and argumentative skills. These themes indicate that argumentative ability is not limited to the ability to express opinions but also involves critical thinking, active listening, the use of information, respect for differing viewpoints, and the ability to communicate ideas ethically and systematically.

The Concept and Role of Communication in Developing Argumentative Skills

The findings indicate that communication is a fundamental component in developing argumentative skills. Communication functions not only as a means of conveying information but also as a process of exchanging ideas that enables individuals to build understanding, provide responses, and influence the perspectives of others. In educational contexts, communication skills are associated with the ability to express ideas clearly, logically, and systematically, thereby supporting the development of critical and argumentative thinking skills (Evanne et al., 2021; Nanlohy & Siahaan, 2021).

The analysis of the sources reviewed shows that the argumentative process involves several elements of communication, including the communicator, message, medium, recipient, and feedback. These five elements form an interactive process through which students can present claims, provide reasons, receive responses, and revise or defend their positions. Thus, argumentation does not occur as a one-way process but develops through interaction between the sender and the recipient of a message (Afandi et al., 2022).

The findings further reveal a relationship between communication, critical thinking, and the quality of argumentation. Activities such as discussions, presentations, and question-and-answer sessions provide opportunities for students to analyze information, evaluate different opinions, and formulate conclusions based

on relevant reasons or evidence. Participation in interactive academic communication can encourage students to express their views in a more logical, systematic, and reflective manner (Gillies, 2019; Maisarah et al., 2025).

In terms of communication forms, the analysis indicates that verbal and nonverbal communication both contribute to the effectiveness of argumentation. Verbal communication involves word choice, sentence structure, and clarity of expression, whereas nonverbal communication includes facial expressions, eye contact, intonation, gestures, and body language. The integration of verbal and nonverbal communication can strengthen the intended message and reduce misunderstandings during the argumentative process (Siahaan, 2022).

The quality of argumentation is also determined by the structure and informational basis used. A strong argument does not merely consist of an opinion but includes a clear claim, logical reasoning, and relevant facts or evidence. The ability to consider counterarguments is also an important component in developing more comprehensive arguments (Rahardhian, 2022; Nakrowi et al., 2021). This finding indicates that argumentative ability is closely related to students' capacity to organize ideas and establish connections between evidence and the claims being presented.

In addition to speaking skills, active listening also emerged as an important element in the argumentative process. Active listening enables students to understand information and the perspectives of others before providing a response. This process helps students provide more relevant responses, avoid misunderstandings, and develop arguments that are consistent with the context of the discussion (Asniar, 2016).

The analysis also indicates that argumentative ability is associated with information literacy. Students need to be able to search for, select, evaluate, and use credible sources to support their opinions. The use of theories, research findings, and scientific data provides arguments with a stronger foundation than opinions based solely on personal perceptions (Taher et al., 2025). Therefore, argumentative communication in academic settings cannot be separated from the ability to manage and evaluate information.

Communication skills are also associated with students' confidence in expressing their opinions. Students with strong communication skills tend to be more capable of presenting ideas, delivering presentations, and participating in discussions. These skills help students organize their ideas clearly and reduce psychological barriers when speaking in front of others (Indraswati et al., 2020).

Conversely, the analysis identified several barriers that may reduce the quality of students' communication and argumentation. These barriers include nervousness, difficulties in expressing ideas clearly, limited vocabulary, and a lack of confidence in expressing opinions. Such barriers may cause students to become passive during discussions and produce less structured arguments (Anshori, 2022). This finding suggests that argumentative ability is influenced not only by subject-matter knowledge but also by communication skills and students' readiness to engage in interaction.

Communication Ethics in Expressing Opinions

The second theme identified through the content analysis concerns communication ethics in expressing opinions. The findings indicate that the quality of an argument is determined not only by the strength of its reasoning and evidence but also by how students express and respond to opinions. Communication ethics help ensure that the exchange of ideas takes place respectfully, appropriately, and constructively in academic discussions, debates, seminars, and digital public spaces (Syifa et al., 2023; Qudratullah & Rosniar, 2021).

One of the most frequently identified aspects of communication ethics is the use of polite and non-provocative language. Students need to express criticism or disagreement without attacking the person presenting the argument. The use of clear, respectful, and contextually appropriate language helps minimize misunderstandings and creates a more conducive communication environment (Melia, 2019; Mukhlis & Cahyadi, 2026).

The analysis also indicates that respecting differences of opinion is an important component of argumentative communication. In academic settings, differences in perspective are part of the process of knowledge exchange. Therefore, students need to provide opportunities for others to express their perspectives, accept criticism, and consider alternative viewpoints. Such attitudes not only help prevent conflict but also support the development of critical thinking and tolerance in academic interactions (Rodiya et al., 2023).

Communication ethics also involve the ability to listen to and accept the opinions of others. The findings indicate that ethical communication extends beyond speaking politely to include listening attentively, allowing others sufficient space to express their views, and avoiding premature judgment. This aspect is increasingly important in digital communication because the absence of facial expressions and vocal intonation may increase the potential for misunderstanding (Azzahra et al., 2025).

In the context of digital public spaces, the analysis indicates that freedom of expression needs to be accompanied by responsibility. As active users of digital media, students need to consider the accuracy of information, the potential impact of messages on others, and the social consequences of the opinions they express. The dissemination of disinformation, the use of provocative language, and the expression of opinions without considering context may reduce the quality of public communication and potentially generate conflict (Mas et al., 2025).

The analysis further shows that unethical communication can affect social relationships and students' public image. The use of offensive language, dissemination of unverified information, imposition of personal opinions, and personal attacks can reduce trust and hinder constructive dialogue. In contrast, respectful, evidence-based, and responsible communication can support professional academic interaction.

Thus, appropriate communication behavior in argumentation is characterized by several elements, namely respectful expression of opinions, the use of relevant reasons and evidence, active listening, respect for differences of opinion, and avoidance of personal attacks. This finding demonstrates that ethics are an integral component of argumentative quality rather than merely an additional aspect of communication (Maharani et al., 2025; Priastuty et al., 2023).

Strategies for Developing Communication and Argumentative Skills

The third theme concerns strategies that students can employ to improve their communication and argumentative skills. The analysis indicates that these skills can be developed through several activities, including public speaking practice, strengthening critical and logical thinking, improving literacy, participating in discussions and debates, utilizing digital media, conducting self-evaluation, and engaging in supportive academic environments.

Public speaking practice emerged as one of the most prominent strategies. Practice through presentations, classroom discussions, student organizations, and other speaking activities can improve confidence, clarity of expression, voice intonation, and the ability to interact with audiences. Public speaking skills are not limited to confidence in speaking but also include the ability to convey messages persuasively and establish relationships with audiences (Indraswati et al., 2020; Selwen et al., 2021).

Another strategy is strengthening critical and logical thinking skills. These abilities enable students to analyze information, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, connect evidence with claims, and formulate conclusions systematically. Discussions, problem-solving activities, and learning activities that require in-depth argumentation can be used to develop these abilities (Satwika et al., 2018; Limat et al., 2024).

Improving literacy also emerged as an important strategy for developing argumentative skills. Reading books, scientific journals, academic articles, and credible digital sources can broaden students' knowledge and provide the foundation necessary for constructing arguments. Reading activities also help students compare different perspectives, evaluate information, and formulate conclusions more systematically (Zamroni & Warsono, 2020; Limat et al., 2024).

Participation in discussion forums, debates, seminars, and student organizations provides students with opportunities to practice expressing opinions, defending arguments, listening to different perspectives, and responding to opposing views. The findings indicate that debates and discussions can serve as effective means of developing argumentative skills, critical thinking, and academic communication (Gita et al., 2024).

In constructing arguments, students also need to employ a clear argumentative structure. Effective arguments can be developed through the presentation of claims, logical reasoning, relevant evidence, and consideration of counterarguments. Such a structure enables students to present their reasoning coherently, making their opinions easier to understand and justify (Nakrowi et al., 2021).

The use of technology and digital media also emerged as a supporting strategy for developing communication skills. Digital learning and communication platforms provide opportunities for students to express opinions, engage in discussions, collaborate, and practice composing messages in both written and oral forms. However, the use of digital media needs to be accompanied by an understanding of digital communication ethics, including respect for others' opinions, the use of appropriate language, and verification of information before it is shared (Saputra & Gunawan, 2021; Sari et al., 2024).

The final strategy identified is self-evaluation and reflection. Students can evaluate their communication skills by identifying areas that require improvement, such as clarity of expression, word choice, listening skills, and argumentative structure. Repeated practice through discussions, presentations, organizational activities, and everyday communication experiences can help increase confidence and improve interpersonal communication skills (Aw et al., 2019).

The campus environment also plays a supporting role in developing these abilities. Interactions occurring through academic and organizational activities provide students with opportunities to practice communication directly. An open, active, and collaborative environment can create opportunities for students to develop confidence in speaking, exchange ideas, and strengthen their argumentative skills (Nugroho et al., 2020).

Overall, the content analysis indicates that the development of students' argumentative skills is a multidimensional process. These skills are shaped by the interaction of communication skills, critical and logical thinking, information literacy, active listening, communication ethics, discussion experiences, and continuous practice. Therefore, improving argumentative quality cannot be achieved through speaking practice alone but requires an academic environment that provides students with opportunities to read, analyze, discuss, express opinions, receive feedback, and reflect on their communication processes.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that students' argumentative competence should be understood as an integrated communication capacity rather than merely the ability to express opinions. The analysis suggests that effective argumentation develops through the interaction of communication competence, critical thinking, information literacy, ethical awareness, and students' opportunities to engage in academic communication. This perspective indicates that improving argumentative competence requires learning environments that provide sustained opportunities for students to articulate, examine, and refine their ideas. The findings also imply that communication ethics should be positioned as an integral dimension of argumentative competence. Argumentative communication becomes academically meaningful when students are able to express disagreement responsibly, engage with alternative perspectives, and base their positions on relevant information. Therefore, higher education institutions and instructors should consider communication and argumentation as interconnected competencies that need to be cultivated through continuous practice and reflective academic interaction.

Overall, this study contributes to a more integrated understanding of students' communication and argumentative development by connecting argumentative competence with ethical and critical dimensions of academic communication. Future studies may examine how specific instructional interventions, such as structured debates, collaborative discussions, or digital communication activities, can be implemented and evaluated to strengthen these competencies across different higher education contexts.

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