

Analysis of Student Responses to Communal Spaces in Universitas Negeri Medan

Irma Novrianty Nasution¹, Syahreza Alvan², Mirzal Yacub³

{irmanasution@unimed.ac.id¹, syahrezaalvan@unimed.ac.id², mirzalyacub@unimed.ac.id³}

The Building Engineering Education Department of Faculty of Engineering of Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia 20221^{1,2,3}

Abstract. Communal space on campus is one of the place where educational services occur. Furthermore, it becomes a place for social interaction, ranging from private to public activities carried out between the academic community. The phenomenon of communal spaces at Universitas Negeri Medan (Unimed) shows an alarming condition. This can be seen from the lack of student activities facilitation in their community activities such as discussing and developing themselves after the lecture process ends. The tag line of Unimed is The Character Building University which wants to build the character of the nation's educators. It turns out that the academic atmosphere is not supportively. This study uses quantitative and qualitative methods with field observations, questionnaires and mapping approaches. The results of this study indicate the significance of the need for communal spaces related to improving facilities and designs in communal spaces in supporting non-lecture activities and other activities.

Keywords: analysis, student responses, communal space, Universitas Negeri Medan

1 Introduction

Students as part of the academic community have the right to be able to obtain educational services that can increase their talents, interests, potential and abilities. Several indicators related to the quality of educational services provided by universities to students are (a) Respect for students, (b) Professor's knowledge and (c) University's physical environment [1]. Improving the quality of educational services for students will basically have a significant impact on the quality of accreditation and the achievement of a better academic atmosphere.

Some of the achievements that have been achieved by Universitas Negeri Medan (Unimed) in educational services are the achievement of a very satisfactory accreditation and an award from the UI Green Metric. By the decision of the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (*BAN PT*) No. 1067/SK/BAN-PT/Ak-PPJ/PT/XII/2021, Unimed obtained accreditation A which is valid from December 21, 2021, to December 21, 2026 [2]. Furthermore, the 2016 UI Green Metric Award Unimed was ranked 20 [3] and followed in 2017 and 2018 with 18th and 19th rank in Indonesia. Based on UI Green Metric data from 2019 - 2021, Unimed's ranking has

continued to decline, namely in 2021 at ranks 59 nationally. Based on two indicators, the finding of an increase and a decrease in the achievement of educational services at Unimed must be a comprehensive and in-depth concern, especially for students.

The communal space on campus is one part of the place where educational services occur. Furthermore, the communal space on campus becomes a place for social interaction, ranging from private activities to public activities that occur between the academic community [4]. Based on this, the existence of a campus communal space has an important role to create an academic atmosphere between lecturers and students outside of formal lectures (indoor).

The phenomenon of communal space at Unimed shows an alarming condition. This can be seen from the lack of facilitation of student activities in discussing and developing themselves after the lecture process ends. The tag line of Unimed is "The Character Building University" which wants to build the character of the nation's educators, it turns out that the academic atmosphere created is not supportive. Based on these conditions, the presence of the phenomenon of communal space at Unimed has an urgency value to be investigated. Through this research, communal space design planning becomes a solution in determining Unimed's policy in creating a sustainable academic atmosphere.

2 Method

The method in research uses a qualitative method approach [5]. Qualitative research is an approach that aims to build a statement of knowledge that is sourced from individual experience and social values, to build a particular theory or pattern of knowledge. [6]. This research belongs to the category of exploratory research. The purpose of exploratory research is to reveal broadly and deeply the causes and things that influence the occurrence of something [7]. In this research, an exploratory qualitative approach was used to obtain data in the form of information about the form of the communal space and user responses to the existence of the existing communal space. From this approach, user-oriented design criteria will be obtained which can be used as the next communal space design approach.

This research uses primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data is data that comes from the original or first source [8]. Secondary data is data that refers to information collected from existing sources [9]. Primary data collection uses a survey method in an online questionnaire (via google form) to obtain user responses to the design of the communal space. Furthermore, the mapping method was also implemented to see current conditions with a direct observation approach to locations that are often used as communal spaces. Secondary data were obtained from field surveys (technical identification of existing communal space designs) and a literature review regarding technical and non-technical requirements related to communal space design.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Participants

According to the survey results, data were obtained from 284 Unimed students consisting of 272 undergraduate students and 12 master and doctoral students. if divided by gender, 201 were female and 83 were male. Furthermore, based on the academic background of students were: 1.) Faculty of Engineering - *Fakultas Teknik* (FT) 14.8%, 2.) Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences - *Fakultas Matematika dan Ilmu Pengetahuan Alam* (FMIPA) 15.8 %, 3.) Faculty of Economics - *Fakultas Ekonomi* (FE) 11.3 %, 4.) Faculty of Social Sciences - *Fakultas Ilmu Sosial* (FIS) 20.1%, 5.) Faculty of Languages and Arts - *Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni* (FBS) 16.9%, 6.) Faculty of Sports Science - *Fakultas Ilmu Keolahragaan* (FIK) 9.2%, 7.) Faculty of Education - *Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan* (FIP) 7.7%, and 8.) Postgraduate Program - *Program Pascasarjana* (PPS) 4.2%.

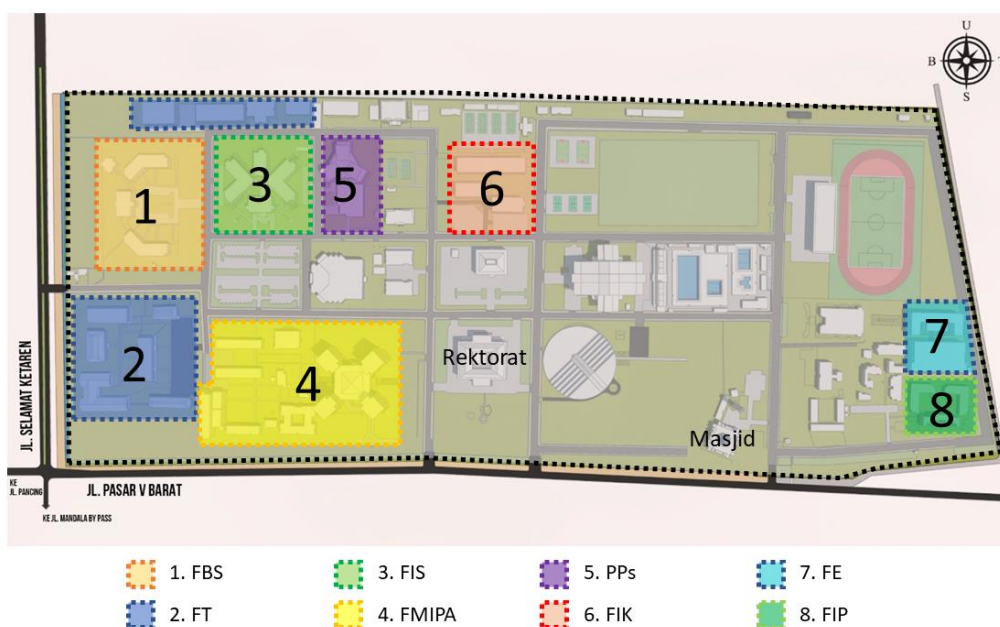


Fig. 1. Map of the distribution of faculties at Universitas Negeri Medan

3.2 Student Activities

Based on surveys and observations made during the transition between the even and odd semesters of 2022, the activities found were divided into two important conditions, namely activities during the implementation of health protocols COVID-19 (online lecture activities) and activities with a hybrid method approach (a combination of online and offline). In more detail, activities in the communal space at the end of the even semester of 2022 were only around the administration building. Furthermore, some of the activities in the classroom were the final

session and laboratory practicum activities, while the activities outside the classroom were practice/field visits. Meanwhile, when the hybrid lecture was running, there was the spread of new communal spaces due to the opening of offline classes.

There were three main domination activities conducted by Unimed students while in the communal space, namely using devices (laptops and smartphones), discussing and chatting. When compared from 8 faculties, student activities using devices (laptops and smartphones) occupy the first rank. Of the total 231 activity spots throughout Unimed, 44 of the most spots were in FBS and the lowest 23 were in FE. Followed by discussion activities in the second rank, which reached 136 activity spots, of which the 28 most activity spots were in FBS and the 5 lowest spots were in FIP. Furthermore, the third rank was chatting activity which reached around 126 spots, of which 39 of the highest activity spots were in FIP and the 3 lowest spots were in FIK (see Table 1).

Table 1. Student spots by activities

| Activities | Faculties | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-------|-----|-----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| | FT | FMIPA | FBS | FIS | FE | FIP | FIK | PPs |
| Waiting | 1 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 0 |
| Using Devices | 27 | 32 | 44 | 29 | 23 | 25 | 27 | 24 |
| Discussing | 15 | 16 | 28 | 23 | 11 | 5 | 26 | 12 |
| Doing Assignments | 8 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 17 | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Exercising | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 0 |
| Practicing | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Chatting | 13 | 14 | 19 | 4 | 34 | 39 | 3 | 0 |
| Consultating | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Eating/Drinking | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Taking Pictures | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Preparing Files | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Gathering | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |

Especially in the two faculties, FMIPA and PPs, there are some striking differences in the behavior and activities conducted by students. Since these two buildings take a modern theme (built in the 2000s), the use of corridors on the outside of the building has been removed. This condition is different from most other faculty buildings that have been built in the 1990s. This causes the distribution of student activity spots to be further away from the administrative building from FMIPA and PPS.

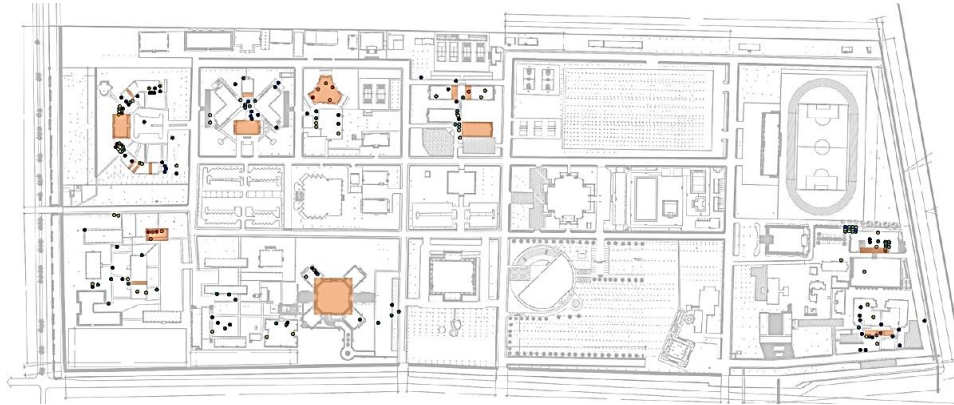


Fig. 2. Mapping of student activity spots at 10:00 - 12:00 AM

Based on surveys and direct observations, it can be seen that there are striking differences in the intensity of activity from the use of communal spaces in each faculty (see Fig. 2). From the observations between 08:00 AM - 04:00 PM, students from FBS (120 Spots) and FE (93 Spots) were the biggest users of communal spaces. While PPs students are the smallest communal space users (37 Spots). The conditions seen in the FBS and FE faculties are indeed very supportive of the realization of communal spaces. Several accesses such as electricity, WIFI and the presence of a gazebo can be seen around the FBS and FE faculty areas. This condition is very different from several other faculties whose access is not available, even though both are located in the main area of the Unimed campus.

3.3 Perceptions of Communal Space

The existence of communal space on the Unimed campus is important for students. This is because most of the time on campus will be spent in this space, such as waiting for lecturers, changing class times and other activities. Based on the observations that have been made, four main things are of concern to the presence of the communal space, namely as a learning activity, self-development activities, social activities, administrative activities, personal activities and technology/information activities (see Table 2).

Table 2. Classification on the activities of the communal space in Unimed

| Classification | Keywords |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning Activities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Doing Assignments (43) 2. Practicing (10) 3. Consultating (1) |
| Self-development Activities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exercising (14) 2. Discussing (136) |
| Social Activities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chatting (126) |

| Classification | Keywords |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| | 2. Gathering (9) |
| Administration Activities | 1. Preparing Files (8) 2. Waiting (18) |
| Personal Activities | 1. Eating/Drinking (7) 2. Taking Pictures (1) |
| Technology/Information Activities | 1. Using Devices (231) |

The use of devices has become very dominant in its presence in the campus communal space area. Based on Table 2, it can be seen that there is a significant number of activities using information technology-based devices (Laptops and Smartphones). Moreover, with all lecture activities before and after the COVID-19 Pandemic, the use of this device has taken on an important role than the use of books or handwriting (manual). Multimedia-based lectures and teleconference activities also add to the strong use of information technology in the campus world, especially for students.

The presence of a communal space with interaction with technology/information becomes a necessity. This is shown by the view that the challenges of technology and mobility make sense of community limitless [10]. The emergence of technology, especially the use of learning media via laptops and smartphones, has created a large communal space interaction (there are no regional or area barriers). All activities that are located in several separate places will be connected to each other.

3.4 Perceptions of Communal Space Design

Perceptions of users of communal spaces at Unimed were taken based on questionnaire questions asked to students in eight faculties at Unimed. This activity took place during the even semester of 2022 learning process. Related to the design context of this communal space, an important fact was found that a design that combines open and closed space is the most desirable to support activities after the lecture is over (see Fig. 3). some important facilities that are of concern to users such as electricity, WIFI, and some flexible maubilers.

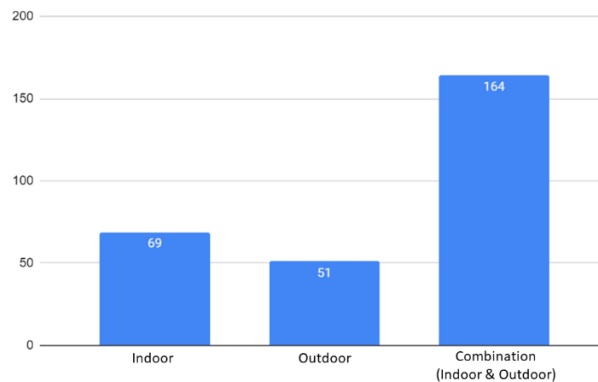


Fig. 3. Communal space design concept chosen by Unimed students

4 Conclusion

Based on the results and analysis of research data in communal spaces on campus, it can be concluded that there are four situations, namely private area, technology area, discussion area and academic area. Communal space becomes an arena for student self-improvement in interacting while in the campus area. The use of information technology devices in activities in communal spaces is commonplace, especially in the learning process. Chatting also takes an important part in student activities (especially conversations outside of learning/lectures). Discussions also take the next role in improving the quality of students in the academic field.

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