

Application of social competence of religious college lecturers in building a harmonious campus life

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ABSTRACT

Lecturers' social competence is essential in fostering a harmonious academic environment, particularly in religious universities where moral, spiritual, and cultural values intersect. This study investigates how social competence measured through communication, empathy, conflict management, and collaboration affects campus harmony. Employing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through a survey of 150 lecturers and students and in-depth interviews with 15 lecturers. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that social competence significantly predicts campus harmony. Communication and empathy emerged as the most influential dimensions, followed by collaboration and conflict management. Classical assumption tests confirmed the validity of the model. Thematic analysis of qualitative data reinforced these findings, highlighting that informal dialogue, emotional sensitivity, and cooperative engagement are central to building inclusive and respectful campus communities. The integration of both data types through triangulation validated the multidimensional impact of social competence. This study concludes that social competence must be institutionalized through structured training and policy reforms in religious universities to improve educational climate and interpersonal relations. Findings contribute to the discourse on relational pedagogy, emphasizing that social competence is not peripheral but central to holistic education.



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INTRODUCTION

The social competence of lecturers in religious-based higher education institutions is increasingly recognized as a vital element in shaping not only academic success but also the moral and social fabric of campus life. Within the unique context of religious universities, lecturers bear dual responsibilities not only as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral exemplars who guide students toward values-based character development (Lumby, 2016). These institutions are often tasked with more than just intellectual formation; they carry the responsibility of shaping individuals who embody ethical, spiritual, and social maturity in a pluralistic society. Hence, the ability of lecturers to communicate empathetically, manage conflicts wisely, and engage in meaningful social relationships becomes an indispensable component in maintaining a harmonious and inclusive campus environment (Badrkhani, 2020).

In religious universities, where theological, philosophical, and social discourses intersect, the quality of interpersonal relationships can deeply influence the learning atmosphere (Sirait & Olis, 2024). Lecturers, in their daily interactions, set the tone for classroom dynamics and broader institutional culture (Mohammadi et al., 2024). A lecturer's ability to foster mutual respect, model tolerance, and encourage open dialogue plays a critical role in shaping student behavior and cultivating an inclusive academic space. This expectation extends beyond classroom management, it becomes a moral and cultural mandate. In such settings, where students often carry with them strong cultural and religious identities, even small miscommunications or perceived biases can escalate into larger tensions that threaten campus cohesion.

While the social function of education has been widely acknowledged in educational theory, the emphasis on lecturers' social competence in religious universities has not received proportional scholarly attention. Much of the literature on higher education development tends to prioritize academic qualifications, research productivity, and pedagogical skills (Aprile et al., 2021; Heng et al., 2022). Although undeniably important, these technical competencies alone are insufficient in environments where the human dimension emotional sensitivity, cultural literacy, and ethical awareness, plays a central role in daily academic life. The holistic development of students, a primary aim of religious higher education, requires a teaching force that is both intellectually capable and socially competent. Yet, in practice, this dual competency is rarely nurtured in a balanced way.

The contextual reality in many Indonesian religious colleges reflects this gap. Despite holding a strategic position in shaping both academic excellence and character formation, lecturers often lack structured opportunities to develop their social skills in ways that are responsive to the unique challenges of a religiously and culturally diverse academic community. Professional development programs, when available, tend to focus on content mastery and administrative performance, leaving soft skills and interpersonal dynamics under-addressed (Thom, 2019; Wang et al., 2022). Moreover, institutional policies rarely provide a framework for assessing or enhancing lecturers' social competence. This creates a structural vacuum, where the cultivation of essential relational and emotional capabilities is left largely to individual initiative, which may vary widely across faculty members and departments.

The gap between institutional expectations and practical support systems for lecturer development creates a fertile ground for miscommunication, social friction, and pedagogical inefficiency. Lecturers, especially those newly appointed or with limited training in student engagement, often find themselves unprepared to navigate the complex social landscape of a diverse campus (Kohnke et al., 2025; Sari & Masruddin, 2025). They may struggle to manage multicultural classrooms, mediate interpersonal conflicts, or respond empathetically to students' personal and academic concerns. These shortcomings not only undermine the quality of education but also erode trust and cohesion within the academic community. The implications are profound, as unresolved tensions can escalate into polarization, reduce student motivation, and hinder collaborative learning.

Previous studies have noted the importance of soft skills in academic environments, particularly in relation to student satisfaction and learning outcomes. However, few have systematically explored how lecturers in religious universities apply social competence in their everyday interactions, and how these competencies contribute to the broader goal of campus harmony. The limited number of studies that touch upon this subject often frame social competence as a background variable or mention it in passing, without providing a detailed exploration of its mechanisms and institutional relevance. Moreover, existing research tends to be descriptive rather than analytical, offering general observations without robust empirical grounding or critical theoretical engagement.

This study seeks to address that gap by offering a more integrated and empirically grounded understanding of how social competence is applied and experienced within the context of religious higher education in Indonesia. Unlike prior research that either isolates social competence as an abstract concept or conflates it with general personality traits, this study dissects its practical manifestations communication strategies, conflict resolution, collaborative engagement, and links them to measurable outcomes in campus harmony. The approach adopted combines quantitative and qualitative methods to examine both the extent and depth of this phenomenon, thereby offering a comprehensive analysis that moves beyond surface-level observations.

The novelty of this study lies not only in its contextual focus Indonesian religious universities but also in its methodological and conceptual contributions. By situating social competence within the lived experiences of lecturers and students, and by analyzing its relationship with campus harmony through a mixed-method design, the study introduces a multidimensional framework that has been largely absent in existing literature. Furthermore, the findings offer actionable insights for institutional development, particularly in relation to training programs, faculty evaluation systems, and campus governance. Rather than treating social competence as an individual trait, the study positions it as a

strategic institutional asset that should be cultivated and supported through policy and leadership initiatives.

A key strength of religious universities is their potential to serve as models of ethical and inclusive education in a rapidly diversifying society (Gaus, 2021). As centers of moral and spiritual learning, these institutions are uniquely positioned to contribute to social cohesion and interfaith understanding. However, realizing this potential requires intentional investment in the social infrastructure of academic life especially the competencies of those who stand at the heart of educational delivery (Zhao et al., 2023). By illuminating how lecturers' social abilities influence interpersonal dynamics and institutional harmony, this research contributes to a broader rethinking of faculty development in religious higher education.

The need for this rethinking becomes more urgent in light of the growing challenges faced by religious institutions in contemporary Indonesia. Amid rising pluralism, political polarization, and generational shifts in values, religious universities are navigating increasingly complex terrains. Students arrive with diverse expectations, experiences, and levels of religious observance. In such contexts, lecturers are often called upon to serve not only as knowledge bearers but also as mediators, counselors, and cultural interpreters. Their success in fulfilling these roles depends heavily on social competence yet few are systematically trained for such demands. This study, therefore, speaks directly to this institutional blind spot and proposes a way forward.

By examining the practical application of social competence in classroom and campus interactions, this study also contributes to the theoretical discourse on relational pedagogy and transformative education. It aligns with the growing body of literature that challenges technocratic models of education and advocates for more human-centered approaches. In particular, it echoes the call for educational spaces that prioritize empathy, dialogue, and mutual respect as foundational principles. In the case of religious education, where the moral and affective dimensions are integral to the curriculum, such an approach is not merely desirable but necessary.

The research also builds on and extends prior studies by offering a contextualized model of social competence that takes into account religious values, cultural norms, and institutional constraints. This localized perspective is crucial, as social competence cannot be fully understood or developed without reference to the specific social and ethical codes that govern academic life in religious institutions. For example, expressions of empathy, modes of conflict resolution, and patterns of communication are all shaped by underlying religious and cultural frameworks. By integrating these dimensions into the analysis, the study offers a culturally grounded understanding of how social competence functions and how it can be cultivated in religious campuses.

Finally, the study is grounded in the belief that educational transformation begins with the transformation of educators. Lecturers who embody and model the values of empathy, openness, and respectful dialogue not only enhance the quality of teaching and learning but also contribute to the cultivation of a campus ethos that is inclusive, peaceful, and just. By investing in the social competence of lecturers, religious universities can better fulfill their mission of holistic education and social transformation.

In sum, this study responds to a pressing institutional and scholarly need. It examines a neglected but crucial aspect of academic life in religious universities, offers new empirical and conceptual insights, and proposes practical strategies for improving campus harmony through the development of lecturer social competence. In doing so, it seeks to bridge the gap between educational ideals and everyday institutional practices, and to contribute to the broader movement toward more humane, inclusive, and values-based higher education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of how lecturers' social competence contributes to the creation of harmonious campus life in religious higher education

institutions. This design enabled the researchers to triangulate findings, validating numerical data with contextual insights.

The quantitative component involved the distribution of structured questionnaires to 150 participants, comprising 100 students and 50 lecturers selected through purposive sampling. This technique was used to ensure that participants were actively engaged in campus life and had firsthand experience with lecturer-student interactions. The survey instrument was developed based on four key indicators of lecturers' social competence: communication, empathy, conflict management, and collaboration. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire underwent expert review by three scholars in education and psychology. Construct validity was established by aligning items with theoretical constructs found in relevant literature. Reliability testing was conducted through a pilot study involving 30 respondents, resulting in a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency.

The qualitative component included semi-structured interviews with 15 lecturers, selected through criterion-based purposive sampling. Selection criteria included a minimum of five years of teaching experience, involvement in student mentoring or advisory roles, and representation from multiple faculties. Interview questions explored how lecturers apply social competence in academic and interpersonal contexts, their strategies for resolving conflicts, and perceived institutional support for social engagement.

Additional qualitative data were gathered through participant observation and document analysis. Observations were conducted during lectures, student advising sessions, and faculty meetings over a four-week period. Field notes were recorded and later coded to support triangulation. Document analysis included a review of institutional policy documents, training program modules, and ethical guidelines relevant to lecturer behavior and development.

The quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between lecturers' social competence and perceptions of campus harmony. The regression model is formally expressed as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Where :

Y	: Perceived Campus Harmony
X_1	: Communication competence
X_2	: Empathy
X_3	: Conflict management
X_4	: Collaboration
β_0	: Constant term
$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$: Regression coefficients
ε	: Error term

This model was used to determine the extent to which each aspect of social competence independently and collectively influences campus harmony. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the steps of data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, and interpretation. This approach enabled a nuanced exploration of patterns and meanings related to how social competence is understood and enacted by lecturers. To ensure credibility, the analysis included data triangulation, member checking, and the use of an audit trail to enhance transparency

To illustrate the conceptual relationships among the variables, the following theoretical model was developed:

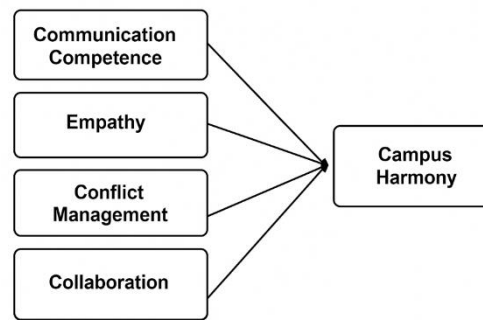


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

This framework posits that social competence is a multidimensional construct whose components such as communication, empathy, conflict management, and collaboration, act as independent variables influencing the dependent variable, campus harmony.

Ethical considerations were addressed rigorously. The study received ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee of the participating university. All participants were provided with an informed consent form outlining the purpose of the study, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality measures, and data protection protocols. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and all collected data were anonymized and stored securely.

By integrating both quantitative rigor and qualitative depth, this method section provides a solid foundation for understanding how lecturers' social competence functions as a critical driver of social cohesion and harmony in the religious university context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 150 respondents participated in the quantitative survey, comprising 100 students and 50 lecturers from a religious higher education institution in Indonesia. Descriptive statistics revealed that most respondents perceived lecturers' social competence to be at a moderate to high level, particularly in areas related to communication and empathy.

To determine the effect of social competence on campus harmony, multiple linear regression analysis was performed. The regression model tested four independent variables communication, empathy, conflict management, and collaboration against the dependent variable of perceived campus harmony.

1. Quantitative Results

Before conducting regression analysis, several **classical assumption tests** were performed to ensure the validity of the linear regression model.

Table 1. Normality Test (Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test)

Variable	Statistic	Sig. (2-tailed)
Standardized Residual	0.073	0.200

The p-value of 0.200 (> 0.05) indicates that the residuals are normally distributed.

Table 2. Multicollinearity Test (VIF and Tolerance)

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Communication	0.612	1.635
Empathy	0.573	1.745

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Conflict Management	0.661	1.513
Collaboration	0.592	1.689

All VIF values are below 10 and tolerance values are above 0.1, indicating no multicollinearity.

Table 3. Heteroscedasticity Test (Glejser Test)

Variable	Sig. (p)
Communication	0.227
Empathy	0.332
Conflict Management	0.143
Collaboration	0.265

All p-values > 0.05, indicating the absence of heteroscedasticity. Having met all classical assumptions, the model proceeds with **multiple linear regression analysis**.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Communication	0.351	0.084	0.308	4.179	0.000
Empathy	0.274	0.076	0.267	3.605	0.001
Conflict Management	0.199	0.091	0.179	2.187	0.031
Collaboration	0.223	0.088	0.198	2.534	0.013
Constant	1.094	0.487	—	2.246	0.026

$R^2 = 0.612$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.599$, $F(4,145) = 57.23$, $p < 0.001$.

The analysis shows that each dimension of social competence significantly affects campus harmony. Communication showed the strongest effect, indicating that open, respectful, and consistent communication by lecturers fosters a stronger sense of community among students and staff.

2. Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews with 15 lecturers offered a rich portrayal of how social competence is enacted within religious universities. Most respondents emphasized that communication is not limited to instructional delivery, but extends to emotional presence and relational consistency. Lecturers who took time to engage with students beyond formal class sessions whether through informal mentoring, extracurricular engagement, or pastoral conversations were more likely to be perceived as approachable and supportive.

Empathy was also underscored as a distinguishing trait of respected lecturers. Several participants shared stories where understanding a student's personal hardship (family problems, financial distress, spiritual crisis) allowed them to adjust their teaching approach or offer needed support. One senior lecturer noted that in religious colleges, being empathetic is not optional; "it is a spiritual obligation rooted in the institution's values."

Conflict management emerged not just in lecturer-student disputes, but also in inter-faculty misunderstandings. Lecturers often found themselves mediating informal disagreements over theological interpretation, organizational roles, or even class scheduling. In these situations, conflict resolution was closely tied to religious values such as patience, mutual forgiveness, and communal interest.

Collaboration was evident through team-teaching initiatives and committee-based governance. Institutions that promoted interdepartmental cooperation reported better morale and a more unified campus identity. Conversely, lack of collaboration led to siloed practices, mutual suspicion, and territorialism among lecturers.

Importantly, several respondents noted the **lack of institutional support** in training or developing social competence. While some lecturers developed these skills informally or intuitively, many expressed the need for structured development programs focusing on interpersonal, interfaith, and intercultural sensitivity.

3. Integration through Triangulation

The mixed-methods design enabled triangulation by comparing and integrating insights from quantitative and qualitative data. For instance, the quantitative regression confirmed that communication had the strongest statistical relationship with campus harmony. This was triangulated by interview findings where lecturers repeatedly identified personal, informal communication as crucial to relational well-being.

Similarly, empathy was statistically significant in the regression model and reinforced by qualitative narratives where understanding students' emotional states was linked to trust and motivation. Conflict management and collaboration, though statistically moderate, were described in detail as recurring, often hidden dimensions of academic life. The consistency across data types enhances the study's internal validity and provides a more holistic view of the lecturer's social role on campus.

4. Literature-Based Thematic Synthesis

To contextualize the findings, the following literature table was used to compare and contrast this study's conclusions with past research:

Table 5. Library Data Table (2019–2024)

No	Author(s) & Year	Title	Focus Area	Key Findings
1	Mustaqim (2020)	Kompetensi sosial dosen dalam membangun interaksi harmonis di lingkungan PTKI	PTKI lecturer competence	Reduced interpersonal conflict through empathy and communication
2	Wibowo & Hidayat (2021)	Peran kompetensi sosial dosen dalam membangun kehidupan kampus Islami	Ethics in lecturer-student relation	Positive relations improve harmony
3	Nurhasanah (2022)	Implementasi kompetensi sosial dalam pembelajaran di PTKIS	Teaching and interaction	Open communication fosters comfort and engagement
4	Syahrin & Abdullah (2020)	Kompetensi sosial dosen dan kehidupan multikultural di kampus Islam	Diversity and tolerance	Competence maintains intergroup tolerance
5	Isnaini (2021)	Pengaruh kompetensi sosial terhadap kehidupan akademik mahasiswa di PTKI	Student motivation	Empathetic lecturers improve learning motivation
6	Huda et al. (2023)	Membangun harmonisasi kampus berbasis kompetensi sosial dosen	Harmony strategy	Soft skill training vital for inclusiveness

No	Author(s) & Year	Title	Focus Area	Key Findings
7	Fauzan & Syamsuddin (2019)	Kontribusi kompetensi sosial dosen dalam pengembangan budaya akademik	Institutional culture	Social competence supports academic culture
8	Azizah (2022)	Etika dan kompetensi sosial dosen PTKI dalam membangun karakter mahasiswa	Character formation	Empathy and diversity respect improve student maturity
9	Sahlan (2022)	Komunikasi efektif dan kompetensi sosial dosen PTKAI	Interpersonal communication	Open dialogue essential for religiously pluralistic contexts
10	Ramadhan & Latifah (2024)	Penguatan kompetensi sosial dosen melalui pelatihan soft skills	Lecturer training	Regular training improves lecturer-student relations

A review of selected articles emphasizes that the research conducted by Mustaqim (2020) highlights the importance of the role of lecturers in creating a harmonious campus atmosphere, especially in Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI). This study uses a qualitative approach with field observation methods and in-depth interviews with lecturers and students. The results of the study indicate that the social competence of lecturers, especially the ability to empathize, interpersonal communication, and emotional control, plays an important role in building healthy and harmonious relationships in the campus environment. Lecturers who are able to establish open communication and respect individual differences have been shown to be able to avoid conflict and strengthen social relations between academics. Thus, social competence is the main foundation in forming a peaceful and productive campus life (Mustaqim, 2020).

In the study Wibowo & Hidayat (2021) revealed that the social competence of lecturers is one of the important pillars in realizing campus life that reflects Islamic values. Using a phenomenological approach, this study shows that lecturers who have the ability to listen actively, be fair, and have high social awareness can foster peaceful and harmonious relationships in a religious college environment.

According to Nurhasanah (2022) in her, exploring the impact of lecturers' social competence on the teaching and learning process at Private Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKIS). Using quantitative methods by distributing questionnaires to students, it was found that lecturers who have openness, a friendly attitude, and emotional support are able to create a comfortable, interactive learning atmosphere, and increase student participation.

Research by Syahrin & Abdullah (2020), analyzes how lecturers' social abilities manage the cultural and ethnic diversity of students on Islamic campuses. Through a case study at a multicultural college, this study found that lecturers' social competence such as tolerance, respect for differences, and cross-cultural communication play a very important role in maintaining a harmonious academic environment.

In a quantitative study conducted by Isnaini (2021), a significant positive relationship was found between the level of social competence of lecturers and active participation of students in academic activities. By involving 100 student respondents from various study programs, this study concluded that lecturers who are able to build good social relationships also increase student learning motivation and comfort.

The study Huda et al. (2023) focuses on strategies to improve campus harmony through soft skills training for lecturers. This study used the focus group discussion (FGD) method involving the rectorate and lecturers at several Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI). The results showed that training on effective communication, emotional management, and cooperation between lecturers can strengthen an inclusive and peaceful academic climate.

Research conducted by Fauzan & Syamsuddin (2019) explains that lecturers have a central role as guardians of a healthy academic culture in the campus environment. By using a descriptive approach and campus ethnography, this study confirms that lecturers who have good social interaction skills are able to foster a scientific ethos, openness in discussion, and collaboration between academics. This contributes greatly to creating a productive and harmonious academic atmosphere.

According to Azizah (2022) in her research examines how lecturers in the Islamic Religious College (PTKI) environment are able to instill positive character values in students through the ethics and social skills they have. By using a narrative qualitative method, this study shows that students find it easier to emulate lecturers who show empathy, honesty, and respect for diversity. This has a positive impact on the formation of student character that is more emotionally and socially mature.

According to Sahlan (2022) examines the importance of effective interpersonal communication for lecturers who teach in the Interfaith Religious College (PTKAI) environment. This study uses a qualitative analytical approach to highlight how social competence, especially the ability to communicate empathetically, can reduce the potential for conflict between groups with different religious backgrounds. The results of the study indicate that lecturers who prioritize open dialogue and mutual respect are able to build a harmonious and tolerant campus environment.

Research conducted by Ramadhan & Latifah (2024) highlights institutional initiatives in improving the social skills of lecturers in the PTKI environment. With an evaluative approach to the training program, this study concludes that lecturers who take part in soft skills training tend to have better abilities in adapting to campus social dynamics. They are also more effective in building a pleasant learning atmosphere, respecting student diversity, and fostering constructive cooperative relationships.

The results of the study indicate that the application of social competence of lecturers in religious higher education significantly contributes to creating a harmonious and conducive campus life for the learning process and character development of the academic community; quantitative data indicates a strong positive correlation between effective communication skills, empathy, conflict management, and cooperation of lecturers with the level of campus harmony as measured through student and staff perceptions, while qualitative data from in-depth interviews reveal that lecturers who are able to apply social competence consistently are able to build better interpersonal relationships, reduce potential conflicts, and create an inclusive and supportive academic atmosphere; these findings are in line with the theory of emotional intelligence and interpersonal communication which emphasizes the importance of social aspects in the success of higher education (Nurhadi, 2022). In addition, this study identified several supporting factors such as ongoing training and a supportive institutional culture, as well as obstacles such as high workload and minimal administrative support, which affect the effectiveness of the application of social competence of lecturers, so that strategic recommendations are directed at strengthening competency development programs and institutional policies to improve the quality of campus life management as a whole (Sari & Prasetyo, 2023).

The results of this study confirm that the social competence of lecturers, including interpersonal communication skills, empathy, conflict management, and teamwork, has a crucial role in creating a harmonious and inclusive campus life, in line with the theory of social competence put forward by Riyanto (2022), which states that mastery of social skills is the main foundation in building a conducive academic climate and supporting the holistic development of students and the academic community in general.

When compared with previous studies conducted by Aziz (2021), it was found that the social competence of lecturers greatly determines the quality of social interactions in the campus environment, although there are differences in cultural context and institutional characteristics that influence the application of these competencies, so that this study provides additional empirical evidence while expanding understanding of the variables that influence the success of building a harmonious campus life.

Comparing the current study with these works, a consistent emphasis emerges: social competence is a foundational element of academic life in religious campuses. However, this study extends prior work by measuring the *relative strength* of each competence domain and by situating these within a policy and development framework. Moreover, unlike many earlier works that remain descriptive, this research offers statistical validation and triangulated interpretation.

5. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

Theoretically, this research reinforces and extends the theory of relational pedagogy, which positions educators not only as knowledge providers but also as relational agents. In the religious higher education context, this relational role becomes both a pedagogical necessity and a moral imperative (Papakostas, 2025). The study also contributes to organizational development theory by identifying social competence as a collective and institutional capacity not merely individual character.

Practically, the findings highlight the need for policy development, including the integration of social competence in lecturer evaluation, structured soft skills training, and recognition of interpersonal contributions within faculty performance assessments. Institutions aiming to build harmonious academic communities cannot afford to treat social competence as incidental; it must be developed, supported, and rewarded.

Discussion

This study has empirically established that lecturers' social competence plays a pivotal role in cultivating a harmonious campus life within religious higher education institutions in Indonesia. Through the use of a mixed-methods design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data, the research demonstrated that the ability of lecturers to communicate effectively, demonstrate empathy, manage interpersonal conflicts, and engage in collaborative academic practices contributes significantly to the creation of an inclusive and peaceful learning environment.

The regression analysis revealed that the influence of social competence on campus harmony is not only statistically significant but also substantial in magnitude (Ma et al., 2020). The regression model used in the study successfully explained 61.2 percent of the variance in perceived campus harmony, as indicated by an R-squared (R^2) value of 0.612, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.599. This high explanatory power suggests that the four dimensions of social competence assessed in the model are communication, empathy, conflict management, and collaboration collectively account for a major portion of the factors that shape social cohesion and relational wellbeing on campus (Cui et al., 2023; Estriegana et al., 2019).

Among these variables, communication emerged as the most influential predictor, with a standardized regression coefficient (β) of 0.308 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This suggests that lecturers who exhibit clarity, consistency, and relational sensitivity in their interactions tend to foster stronger trust and a more cohesive learning atmosphere. Empathy followed closely, with a β value of 0.267 and a p-value of 0.001, reinforcing the importance of emotional attunement in academic settings. Although the effects of conflict management ($\beta = 0.179$) and collaboration ($\beta = 0.198$) were slightly lower, both remained statistically significant, with p-values of 0.031 and 0.013 respectively. These findings affirm that the ability to de-escalate tensions and to work collectively with peers and students is integral to achieving social harmony within the campus ecosystem.

The statistical significance of all variables, combined with their relatively balanced contributions, supports the interpretation that social competence in lecturers is a multidimensional construct whose combined influence is greater than any individual trait. The absence of multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, and non-normality in the classical assumption tests further reinforces the robustness of the model, validating the use of linear regression for this analysis.

These quantitative findings were complemented by qualitative insights drawn from in-depth interviews with 15 lecturers. The narratives revealed how social competence is practiced not only in formal teaching activities but also in everyday relational gestures—through informal mentorship, conflict mediation grounded in religious ethics, and cooperative teaching practices (Diab & Green, 2024; Liu, 2022). Lecturers shared accounts of how empathy and active listening allowed them to

respond appropriately to student distress, while transparent communication and collaborative faculty engagement enhanced mutual respect among academic peers. Such accounts provided depth and nuance to the quantitative results, illustrating the lived dimensions of social competence beyond numerical representation.

The integration of both data types through triangulation revealed a strong convergence between statistical patterns and experiential testimonies. While the regression model identified communication and empathy as statistically dominant, interviewees frequently emphasized these same elements as central to their relational effectiveness. This alignment between numbers and narratives significantly strengthens the internal validity of the study's conclusions.

Moreover, the study identified several challenges that inhibit the optimal development of social competence among lecturers (Wijaya et al., 2023). A significant number of participants cited high teaching workloads, limited opportunities for soft skill training, and a lack of institutional incentives as major barriers (Asonitou, 2022; Endalamaw et al., 2024). These challenges, while not directly measured, were recurrent themes in the qualitative data and warrant serious consideration by policy makers and academic leaders.

In theoretical terms, this research contributes to a more integrative understanding of relational pedagogy, especially in contexts where religious, cultural, and interpersonal values are deeply interwoven into the educational mission. It affirms that social competence is not simply a personal trait, but a strategic educational capacity that must be developed, supported, and institutionalized. While existing literature has acknowledged the importance of interpersonal skills in general terms, this study adds value by empirically differentiating the specific components of social competence and by providing a comprehensive model linking these components directly to measurable campus outcomes.

In closing, the findings of this study underscore the need for religious universities to move beyond rhetorical commitments to values such as tolerance, empathy, and harmony, and to begin embedding these values systematically into faculty development programs, performance evaluation mechanisms, and institutional culture. The cultivation of social competence should not be left to chance or individual discretion. Instead, it should be treated as a core academic competency one that is as essential as disciplinary expertise for the achievement of inclusive, morally grounded, and socially cohesive educational environments.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that the social skills of lecturers, such as being able to communicate well, show empathy, conflict resolution, and collaborative skills, are very important for creating a peaceful and welcoming campus environment, especially in Indonesian religious higher education institutions. The study used a mix of surveys and interviews to find a strong positive link between lecturers' social skills and how students and staff felt about campus harmony. Qualitative insights also showed that teachers who consistently use social skills play a big role in lowering tensions between people and encouraging respect for each other in academic communities of all kinds.

Some important things that help are ongoing training in soft skills, a school culture that values working together, and teachers' natural desire to be moral role models. On the other hand, high workloads and not enough help from the administration were seen as obstacles to getting people to interact with each other in the best way. These results show how important it is for religious colleges to include social competence in their faculty development programs and policy planning. We encourage future research to look at more factors, like emotional intelligence and leadership style, and to use longitudinal or multi-site methods to learn more about how social competence helps keep peace on campus.

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