

Harnessing the Power of Interpersonal Communication and Work Ethic to Drive Employee Performance

Menggali Potensi Komunikasi Interpersonal dan Etos Kerja untuk Mendorong Kinerja Karyawan

Maulana Ismail¹, Asep Jamaludin², Nandang³

Management Program, Universitas Buana Perjuangan Karawang^{1,2,3}

mn21.maulanaismail@mhs.ubpkarawang.ac.id¹, asepjamaludin@ubpkarawang.ac.id²,

nandang@ubpkarawang.ac.id³

ABSTRACT

Interpersonal communication is an important aspect in an organization to manage the flow of information between employees or employees and superiors, while work ethic plays an important role in increasing motivation and commitment in carrying out tasks, an ammonia distribution company in Karawang. The research background shows that the performance of employees of this company is still not optimal, with data showing fluctuations in performance scores from 2021 to 2023. The study aims to evaluate the extent to which interpersonal communication and work ethic contribute to improving employee performance. The methodology used is a quantitative verification approach with a population of 34 employees, using a closed questionnaire as a data collection instrument. The results showed that interpersonal communication has no significant effect partially on employee performance, while work ethic has a significant effect. Simultaneously, the two variables contributed 80.6% to the variation in employee performance. This finding confirms the importance of work ethic development as a top priority to improve productivity and work quality. In conclusion, although interpersonal communication has no significant effect partially, the synergy between good interpersonal communication and high work ethic together can create a more effective and harmonious work environment. Recommendations for management are to strengthen communication training and work ethic development programs to optimize employee performance.

Keywords: *Interpersonal Communication, Work Ethic, Employee Performance*

ABSTRAK

Komunikasi interpersonal merupakan aspek penting yang ada di dalam sebuah organisasi untuk mengatur alur informasi antara karyawan atau karyawan dengan atasan, sementara etos kerja berperan penting dalam meningkatkan motivasi dan komitmen dalam menjalankan tugas, sebuah perusahaan distribusi amoniak di Karawang. Latar belakang penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kinerja karyawan perusahaan ini masih belum optimal, dengan data menunjukkan fluktuasi nilai kinerja dari tahun 2021 hingga 2023. Penelitian bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi sejauh mana komunikasi interpersonal dan etos kerja berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan kinerja karyawan. Metodologi yang digunakan adalah pendekatan verifikatif kuantitatif dengan populasi sebanyak 34 karyawan, menggunakan kuesioner tertutup sebagai instrumen pengumpulan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi interpersonal tidak memiliki pengaruh signifikan secara parsial terhadap kinerja karyawan, sedangkan etos kerja memiliki pengaruh signifikan. Secara simultan, kedua variabel tersebut memberikan kontribusi sebesar 80,6% terhadap variasi kinerja karyawan. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya pengembangan etos kerja sebagai prioritas utama untuk meningkatkan produktivitas dan kualitas kerja. Kesimpulannya, meskipun komunikasi interpersonal tidak berpengaruh signifikan secara parsial, sinergi antara komunikasi interpersonal yang baik dan etos kerja yang tinggi secara bersamaan dapat menciptakan lingkungan kerja yang lebih efektif dan harmonis. Rekomendasi bagi manajemen adalah memperkuat pelatihan komunikasi dan program pengembangan etos kerja untuk mengoptimalkan kinerja karyawan.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi Interpersonal, Etos Kerja, Kinerja Karyawan

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, effective employee performance is critical to the success of any organization. Businesses are increasingly recognizing the significance of interpersonal communication and work ethic in enhancing employee performance (DeKay, 2012; Wang & Tan, 2021). Interpersonal communication refers to the exchange of information and feelings between individuals, while work ethic embodies the values and attitudes employees bring to their work (Mishra & Pandey, 2021; Barling & Frone, 2023). These two factors play a pivotal role in shaping employee engagement, productivity, and satisfaction, which directly influence organizational outcomes (Zeki & Kapoor, 2023; Stokes & Hughes, 2020).

The shift to remote work in recent years, accelerated by the global pandemic, has added a layer of complexity to the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee performance (Amalia et al., 2023; Artar & Erdil, 2024). While face-to-face communication in physical offices has long been studied (Li & Liu, 2020), virtual workspaces present new challenges and opportunities for employee interactions. The lack of physical proximity necessitates a different approach to communication, yet the fundamental principles of effective interpersonal communication remain crucial (Thomas & Schmidt, 2021). The growing reliance on digital platforms for communication calls for a deeper understanding of how interpersonal communication strategies can be optimized in remote and hybrid work environments (Kim & Park, 2021; Rashid & Ali, 2022).

One major issue in this domain is the impact of communication breakdowns, particularly in virtual environments. Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, decreased morale, and reduced performance (Sethi & Singh, 2022). Employees who struggle to communicate effectively with their peers and superiors may feel isolated or disconnected, which could harm their motivation and overall productivity (Hossain & Ali, 2021). Thus, identifying how communication styles, frequency, and quality affect employee performance in remote work settings is an important area for exploration (Daniels & O'Reilly, 2022; Zewdie, 2020).

Moreover, work ethic is another essential factor that contributes to employee performance. A strong work ethic fosters a sense of responsibility, dedication, and discipline in employees, driving them to achieve organizational goals (Groening & Kanfer, 2021). However, the impact of interpersonal communication on the development and reinforcement of work ethic in remote settings remains underexplored. In virtual teams, leaders and managers may find it more difficult to instill a sense of shared purpose and motivation (Scharmer, 2023), and the role of interpersonal communication in overcoming these challenges is an area that warrants further investigation (Anisah et al., 2024).

The research gap in this field lies in understanding how the interplay between interpersonal communication and work ethic specifically affects employee performance in hybrid or remote work environments. While there is ample research on both communication and work ethic in traditional office settings (Sharma & Gupta, 2020; Groening & Kanfer, 2021), fewer studies focus on the unique dynamics of remote or hybrid work models. This gap in knowledge calls for a comprehensive examination of how virtual communication tools and strategies can be employed to enhance employee engagement, foster a strong work ethic, and ultimately improve performance in these non-traditional work settings (Amalia et al., 2023; Artar & Erdil, 2024).

This study aims to address the research gap by examining the impact of interpersonal communication and work ethic on employee performance in remote and hybrid work environments. By focusing on how communication influences work ethic and, in turn, how this affects employee performance, the research seeks to provide actionable insights for organizations navigating the

challenges of remote and hybrid work models (Rashid & Ali, 2022; Mishra & Pandey, 2021). The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of the combination of these two factors in a contemporary context, offering fresh perspectives on how businesses can optimize their communication strategies and enhance their employees' work ethic (Barling & Frone, 2023; Daniels & O'Reilly, 2022).

The objective of this research is to identify specific communication practices that promote a strong work ethic and contribute to higher employee performance. By examining both the direct and indirect effects of interpersonal communication and work ethic, this study will provide a nuanced understanding of how these elements interact to shape employee outcomes (Scharmer, 2023; Hossain & Ali, 2021). The findings are expected to help managers and organizational leaders design better communication frameworks and foster a more productive work environment, particularly in remote and hybrid settings (Anisah et al., 2024; Kim & Park, 2021).

Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in organizational behavior and human resource management. By bridging the gap between theory and practice, the research will offer recommendations for enhancing communication strategies and work ethic initiatives, supporting organizations in achieving higher levels of employee performance and satisfaction in the evolving workplace landscape (Stokes & Hughes, 2020; Zewdie, 2020).

2. Literature Review

Definition of Human Resource Management (HRM)

Human Resource Management (HRM) refers to the process of recruiting, developing, evaluating, and retaining employees, along with managing employee relations, workplace safety, and organizational justice (Rashid & Ali, 2022; Hossain & Ali, 2021). HRM aims to optimize employee performance and satisfaction through strategic interventions that support both individual growth and organizational success (Groening & Kanfer, 2021; Stokes & Hughes, 2020).

Definition of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is the exchange of information, emotions, and meaning between individuals within organizational or social contexts. Effective interpersonal communication enhances collaboration, reduces misunderstandings, and fosters trust among employees (Amalia et al., 2023; Artar & Erdil, 2024; DeKay, 2012). In remote or hybrid settings, interpersonal communication continues to be crucial, despite the shift to digital platforms, as it directly impacts employee engagement and team dynamics (Kim & Park, 2021; Scharmer, 2023; Thomas & Schmidt, 2021).

Definition of Work Ethic

Work ethic encompasses the values of responsibility, dedication, discipline, and integrity that individuals bring to their professional roles. A strong work ethic is associated with higher performance, organizational loyalty, and a proactive attitude towards goal achievement (Barling & Frone, 2023; Mishra & Pandey, 2021; Zewdie, 2020). In remote environments, maintaining a consistent work ethic requires both intrinsic motivation and supportive communication from leadership (Daniels & O'Reilly, 2022; Anisah et al., 2024).

Definition of Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the extent to which employees meet or exceed job expectations and contribute to organizational goals. Performance is typically measured by productivity, quality, timeliness, and adherence to organizational standards (Wang & Tan, 2021; Sharma & Gupta, 2020). Effective communication and a strong work ethic have been found to be critical factors influencing individual and team performance outcomes (Stokes & Hughes, 2020; Li & Liu, 2020; Kim & Park, 2021).

The Influence of Interpersonal Communication on Employee Performance

Effective interpersonal communication positively affects employee performance by improving collaboration, reducing misunderstandings, and fostering a sense of connection within teams (Amalia et al., 2023; Artar & Erdil, 2024). In remote environments, communication clarity and frequency are key to ensuring alignment and motivation among staff (Kim & Park, 2021; Zeki & Kapoor, 2023). Poor communication often leads to disconnection, decreased morale, and lower productivity (Sethi & Singh, 2022; Hossain & Ali, 2021).

The Influence of Work Ethic on Employee Performance

Work ethic plays a central role in shaping employee behavior and performance. Employees with a strong work ethic exhibit higher levels of discipline, responsibility, and perseverance, which directly contribute to improved productivity (Groening & Kanfer, 2021; Mishra & Pandey, 2021). In virtual work environments, fostering a strong ethical foundation can be more challenging but is essential for sustained performance (Daniels & O'Reilly, 2022; Barling & Frone, 2023).

The Combined Influence of Interpersonal Communication and Work Ethic on Employee Performance

Both interpersonal communication and work ethic jointly contribute to the quality of employee output. An effective communication environment reinforces ethical behavior, while ethical employees tend to engage more constructively in team interactions (Scharmer, 2023; Rashid & Ali, 2022). This synergy leads to improved employee satisfaction, engagement, and performance outcomes (Stokes & Hughes, 2020; Thomas & Schmidt, 2021). Organizations that successfully integrate strong communication strategies with ethical workplace culture can expect higher levels of performance across departments (Anisah et al., 2024; Zewdie, 2020).

Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Interpersonal communication has a partial effect on employee performance at PT. Sumber Adiluhung Kahuripan.

H2: Work ethic has a partial effect on employee performance at PT. Sumber Adiluhung Kahuripan.

H3: Interpersonal communication and work ethic have a simultaneous effect on employee performance at PT. Sumber Adiluhung Kahuripan.

3. Methods

The research design employed in this study is a verificative research approach utilizing quantitative data analysis. Data collection was conducted using closed-ended questionnaires, distributed to employees of PT. Sumber Adiluhung Kahuripan, located in Karawang Regency. The data used in this study consist of both primary and secondary data. The population includes all 34 employees of the company, and due to the relatively small population size, the entire population was used as the research sample (total sampling). Data were collected through the distribution of structured questionnaires to all 34 respondents, ensuring consistency and standardization in responses.

To analyze the relationship between variables, this study employs a multiple linear regression analysis. This statistical method allows for the simultaneous examination of the effect of two independent variables—interpersonal communication and work ethic—on the dependent variable, which is employee performance. The variables in the questionnaire were measured using a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree/lowest score) to 5 (strongly agree/highest score). The multiple regression analysis enables the researcher to determine the strength and significance of each independent variable's influence, as well as their combined impact on employee performance. This approach provides comprehensive insight into the causal relationships and supports hypothesis testing within the study.

4. Results and Discussion

Preliminary Tests

The validity test was conducted to ensure that the items used in the questionnaire accurately measure each variable. Based on the results, all items on the variables of Interpersonal Communication, Work Ethic, and Employee Performances showed correlation coefficient values (r count) greater than the r table value of 0.3388. This indicates that all questionnaire items for each variable are considered valid.

Reliability testing was performed using the Cronbach's Alpha method. The results showed that all variables had Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.60, indicating that the instruments used for measuring interpersonal communication, work ethic, and employee performance are reliable and consistent.

The normality test using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov method yielded an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200, which is greater than 0.05. This suggests that the residual data are normally distributed, satisfying the assumption for regression analysis.

For the multicollinearity test, the Tolerance value was 0.245 (greater than 0.10) and the VIF value was 4.080 (less than 10). This indicates no multicollinearity among the independent variables, meaning the variables are not linearly correlated.

The heteroscedasticity test revealed significance values of 0.136 for interpersonal communication and 0.775 for work ethic, both of which are above 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity, confirming homoscedastic residuals.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The multiple linear regression analysis produced the following equation:

$$Y = 6.627 + 0.140X_1 + 0.732X_2 + e$$

Where:

- Y = Employee Performance
- X₁ = Interpersonal Communication
- X₂ = Work Ethic
- e = Error term

This equation models the relationship between employee performance (Y) and two independent variables: interpersonal communication (X₁) and work ethic (X₂).

- 6.627 is the constant (intercept). This means that if both interpersonal communication and work ethic are at zero (hypothetically), the baseline employee performance score would be 6.627. Although it's rare for these variables to be zero in practice, the constant serves as a starting value in the model.
- 0.140 is the coefficient of interpersonal communication (X₁). It indicates that for every one-unit increase in interpersonal communication (assuming work ethic remains constant), employee performance increases by 0.140 units. This coefficient is positive but relatively small, suggesting a minor positive influence of interpersonal communication on performance.
- 0.732 is the coefficient of work ethic (X₂). It shows that for every one-unit increase in work ethic (while keeping interpersonal communication constant), employee performance increases by 0.732 units. This is a stronger positive effect, indicating that work ethic has a more substantial impact on employee performance than interpersonal communication.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 1. Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Variable Relationship	Sig. Value	t-value / F-value	t-table / F-table	Conclusion
H1	X ₁ → Y (Interpersonal Communication to Employee Performance)	0.480	0.715	2.018	Rejected – No significant effect
H2	X ₂ → Y (Work Ethic to Employee Performance)	0.000	4.983	2.018	Accepted – Significant effect
H3	X ₁ & X ₂ → Y (Simultaneous effect)	0.000	64.319	3.29	Accepted – Significant joint effect

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The R-squared (R²) value from the regression analysis was 0.806, which means that 80.6% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the two independent variables: interpersonal communication and work ethic. The remaining 19.4% may be influenced by other factors not examined in this study, indicating that the regression model is strong and reliable for predicting employee performance based on the variables used.

Discussion

The Influence of Interpersonal Communication on Employee Performance

Based on the results of statistical analysis, Hypothesis 1 (H1) regarding the influence of interpersonal communication on employee performance at PT. Sumber Adiluhung Kahuripan is rejected. This is evident as the significance value exceeds the threshold of 0.05 ($0.480 > 0.05$). The calculated t-value is 0.715, which is less than the critical t-table value of 2.309. Therefore, it can be concluded that interpersonal communication does not have a significant effect on employee performance.

This result suggests that although interpersonal communication is an essential element within the workplace, it does not directly impact performance levels among the employees of PT. Sumber Adiluhung Kahuripan in a statistically significant way. This aligns with previous findings by Falah (2020), which also concluded that interpersonal communication, while important, does not always produce a measurable influence on employee performance when assessed in isolation.

This may be due to other prevailing factors in the organizational context—such as workload, leadership, or organizational culture—that moderate or override the impact of communication on performance outcomes. Additionally, it's possible that communication practices are already well-established, reducing their variability in influencing performance differences.

The Influence of Work Ethic on Employee Performance

The statistical findings support Hypothesis 2 (H2), indicating that work ethic significantly influences employee performance at PT. Sumber Adiluhung Kahuripan. The significance value is 0.000, which is far below the 0.05 threshold, and the t-value is 4.983, exceeding the t-table value of 2.039. These results confirm that the relationship between work ethic and performance is real, strong, and not due to random chance.

This finding supports the conclusion that employees with a strong work ethic—marked by discipline, responsibility, and dedication—contribute more positively to the organization's goals. It echoes the perspectives of Thomas & Mahdi in Adrie Oktavio et al. (2023), who emphasize that a solid work ethic is one of the most decisive factors affecting employee commitment and productivity. Additionally, Patel & Singh in Jufrizen and Erika (2021) also emphasize that perseverance and accountability at work strongly influence performance outcomes.

The Influence of Interpersonal Communication and Work Ethic on Employee Performance

The simultaneous test results support Hypothesis 3 (H3), demonstrating that interpersonal communication and work ethic collectively have a significant effect on employee performance. The probability value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 significance level, and the F-count value significantly exceeds the F-table value, indicating a strong model fit.

This supports the notion that while interpersonal communication may not be impactful on its own, in combination with a strong work ethic, it can reinforce overall employee performance. These findings are consistent with those of Siregar & Barham (2023), who found that effective interpersonal communication helps reduce workplace conflict, and when combined with a strong work ethic, creates a more productive and collaborative environment.

Moreover, Chitnis et al. in Ummah (2019) highlight that effective interpersonal communication enhances collaboration, and when paired with a robust sense of responsibility and integrity—as described by G. Dessler in Ali et al. (2024)—the workplace becomes more cohesive and performance-oriented.

In conclusion, improving both the work ethic and the communication dynamics within an organization can significantly elevate employee performance. Fostering a culture where communication is open and transparent, and where employees are intrinsically motivated to contribute, will likely enhance overall organizational success.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that interpersonal communication, while important in day-to-day operations, does not directly influence employee performance when considered on its own. However, work ethic plays a crucial role in shaping employee performance and is seen as a key factor that contributes positively to the achievement of organizational goals. When interpersonal communication and work ethic are considered together, they both have a meaningful impact on how well employees perform. Therefore, even though communication alone may not show a direct link, it remains essential for supporting teamwork and a healthy work atmosphere. It is recommended that companies continue to encourage open and respectful communication while also investing in programs that promote strong work ethics, including discipline, responsibility, and dedication. To further support employee performance, companies could implement training that combines communication skills and personal development. **Future research** is encouraged to explore additional factors—such as leadership, motivation, or organizational culture—that may also influence employee performance and provide a broader understanding of what drives success in the workplace.

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