

Received: May 11, 2024

Revised: June 11, 2024

Accepted: July 30, 2024

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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of Effective Communication in Harmonizing Work Relations and Increasing Employee Work Productivity

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Abstract: This research was carried out to determine the extent of effective communication's role in harmonizing work relationships between leaders, subordinates, and co-workers and what the results of employee work productivity are due to the role of effective communication. This research was conducted at the Bawaslu office in the South Sulawesi Province, with a total research population of 552. The sample was determined using purposive sampling so that 104 people were spread across 24 (twenty-four) districts/cities with the criteria of employee tenure and status. technical executive officer. The research results show that effective communication influences work relationships and employee work productivity. However, it was found that work relations do not impact work productivity.

Keywords: Communication, Effectiveness, Harmonization, Work Relations, Work Productivity.

JEL Classification Code: K3, J2, E2, O15

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is a critical element within any organization (Onifade et al., 2018). It plays a vital role in ensuring the organization's success by optimizing communication both from the top down (management to subordinates) and from the bottom up (subordinates to management). When communication is effective, it fosters positive working relationships and can promote a sense of peace within the organization (McCarty et al., 2015). It is especially influential in creating a conducive work environment, particularly in formal settings like corporate or government offices. The quality of communication between employees at all levels, including between subordinates and supervisors, directly impacts the harmony of these relationships. Effective communication can motivate employees, helping them complete their tasks efficiently and on time (Antara et al., 2021). Conversely, poor communication can harm both individual and collective work relationships, negatively impacting performance (Basuki, 2014).

Leaders use communication as a key tool to convey management functions, such as planning, organizing, directing, and supervising (Fuadah, 2019). Achieving organizational goals becomes more feasible when communication is prioritized, as strong and effective communication fosters cooperation and encourages feedback. It also helps to maintain employee motivation and improve overall performance (Amadu & Anyarayer, 2022). Effective communication enhances professional relationships, boosts productivity among teams, and helps organizations meet their objectives (Subhashini & Imran, 2021). In institutions where diverse human resources work together, it is crucial to foster open communication (Kurnia, 2021). Communication serves as a management tool that helps build relationships and create an environment conducive to internal organizational development (Bucăța & Rizescu, 2017). For instance, cases like the conflict between members of Bawaslu and the Secretary regarding financial management (DKPP Case No. 31-PKE-DKPP/III/2020), or the conflict between Bawaslu staff and the Secretary over exam evaluation results (DKPP Case No. 151-PKE-DKPP/VI/2021), illustrate how organizational conflicts often arise from

poor communication. In such instances, effective communication is essential for resolving conflicts and fostering a positive, harmonious atmosphere (Woldemichael, 2021).

Several studies emphasize that a supportive attitude is essential for creating harmonized communication, as emotions, fear, and anxiety can hinder communication. These elements affect attitudes in communication, often driven by specific situations (Novianti et al., 2017). Other research highlights that openness, empathy, and effective communication between colleagues can create harmony in the workplace (Aprina & Suryani, 2020). Additionally, ensuring that work conditions contribute to employee satisfaction can help harmonize work and personal life, reducing conflict without incurring additional costs. Open communication between employees and supervisors is essential for achieving this balance (Sukalova et al., 2015). However, some studies contradict this view, stating that there is no statistically significant relationship between communication, work relationships, and productivity or performance (Kwee Fah et al., 2023; Musheke & Phiri, 2021). Based on these varying studies and observed phenomena, this research seeks to explore the role of effective communication in harmonizing work relationships—between leaders and subordinates as well as among colleagues—and how it influences productivity, positively or negatively.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication is the art of conveying information—whether it be messages, ideas, attitudes, or perspectives—from a communicator to an audience with the aim of influencing or shaping the recipient's behavior, attitudes, or understanding in a mutually desired way. For communication to be effective, it must be delivered in a manner that allows the recipient (communicant) to easily grasp the message. This can only be achieved if the communicator has a clear understanding of what constitutes effective communication, the communication process itself, and the essential elements that contribute to its success (Suprpto, 2018).

Effective communication occurs when both the communicator and the recipient share a common understanding of the message. This alignment is often referred to as being "in tune," meaning that both parties involved in the communication process fully comprehend the message being conveyed. Jalaludin Rahmat, as cited by Zuwirna (2016), defines effective communication as communication that fosters understanding, creates enjoyment, influences attitudes, strengthens social relationships, and ultimately results in action. Effective communication is critical in everyday interactions, especially between employees. When communication fails, it often leads to dissatisfaction among service users. Communication is deemed effective when both the communicator and the communicant share the same understanding of the message. Within a team, structured communication standards can further enhance the effectiveness of communication (Puspita Dewi, 2018).

2.1. *Communication relationship towards harmonization of work relations*

Clear, concise, and well-organized information, delivered with professionalism, helps align employee behavior within an organization (Roziņa & Karapetjana, 2020). Enhanced communication fosters stronger cooperative relationships among employees (Katz, 2010). In the workplace, communication plays a central role in building and shaping the quality of work relationships within a company. It is important to recognize that communication is the process of sharing information and creating mutual understanding between individuals (Ahyia et al., 2014). Based on that, the hypothesis state is:

H1: Effective communication positively influences the harmonization of work relationships.

2.2. *The relationship between communication and work productivity*

The relationship between communication and productivity has not been extensively explored in previous research. However, open communication promotes transparency, which fosters trust among employees and keeps them informed about organizational changes and goals. As a result, transparent communication can lead to higher work productivity. The frequency of interactions within an

organization also plays a crucial role, as the ongoing exchange of information is a predictor of sustained productivity. This suggests that effective communication can significantly enhance work productivity (Dutta et al., 2021). Based on this, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H2: Communication positively influences work productivity.

2.3. The relationship between work harmonization and work productivity

The relationship between work harmonization and productivity suggests that when departments collaborate effectively, it enhances overall performance. Open communication channels enable the seamless flow of information, ideas, and feedback, which in turn leads to improved problem-solving, decision-making, and the sharing of resources. This synergy across departments ultimately boosts overall productivity (Sukalova et al., 2015; Zwain, 2022). Based on this, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3: Work harmonization positively influences work productivity.

3. RESEARCH METHOD AND MATERIALS

This research utilizes a quantitative method with an associative approach, which aims to determine the relationship between two or more variables. The primary data for this study was gathered by distributing questionnaires to respondents, specifically employees of Bawaslu in South Sulawesi. The study's population consisted of 552 employees, and the sample was determined using purposive sampling based on specific criteria: employees must have worked for more than five years, hold permanent employment status in administrative roles, and possess at least a bachelor's degree (S1). Based on these criteria, the final sample size was 104 employees. The study employed a Likert scale for measurement, ranging from 1 (not good) to 5 (very good). For data analysis, the study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS as the analytical tool. The initial step in the analysis involved testing for validity and reliability to ensure that the indicators accurately measured the latent constructs. Additionally, the structural model was evaluated using a Goodness of Fit (GOF) analysis to confirm that the model fit the empirical data. GOF measures included several indicators such as Normed Chi-Square, PNFI, and PGFI, among others. Hypothesis testing was conducted by examining the C.R. (Critical Ratio) and P-values. A hypothesis is accepted if it has a high C.R. value and a low P-value (< 0.05), while it is rejected if the C.R. value is low and the P-value is high (> 0.05).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research indicate that the validity and reliability of the measuring instruments were confirmed through the AMOS testing process. The procedures implemented ensured the accuracy and consistency of the research tools by employing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), construct reliability, and Cronbach's alpha. These methods allowed the researchers to verify that the instruments used in the study demonstrate both high validity and reliability. The detailed test results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Indicator	λ	Validity	AVE	CR	Reliability
X	X.1	0.534	valid	0.46	0.80	Reliable
	X.2	0.807	valid			
	X.5	0.656	valid			
Y1	Y1.2	0.791	valid	0.75	0.87	Reliable
	Y1.3	0.900	valid			
	Y1.4	0.906	valid			
Y2	Y2.1	0.936	valid	0.70	0.86	Reliable
	Y2.2	0.880	valid			
	Y2.4	0.677	valid			

Based on Table 1, the results show that the average variance extracted (AVE) values are predominantly greater than 0.5, while the construct reliability values exceed 0.7. These findings indicate that the instrument used in this study is highly reliable. Additionally, the validity testing, as evidenced by the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), reveals that the loading factor values for all indicators are greater than 0.5, confirming that the data is suitable for hypothesis testing. Following this, the overall structural model was evaluated using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via AMOS to predict the relationships between the latent variables and the indicators explaining the constructs under investigation. The results of this structural model test are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

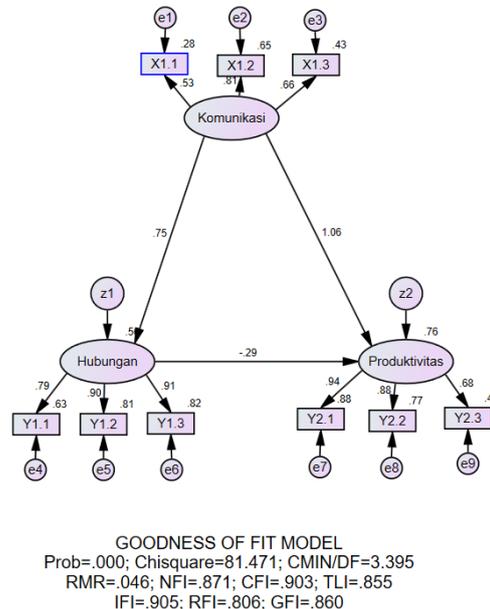


Figure 1. Structural Estimation Model

Table 2. Evaluation of Goodness of Fit Indices Overall Model Criteria

The Goodness of the Fit Index	Nilai Cut-off	Computation	Results Description
Chi-square	Expected to be small	81,471	Marginal Fit
Probability	≥ 0.05	0,000	Marginal Fit
RMR	≤ 0,05	0,046	Fit
NFI	≥ 0.90	0,871	Marginal Fit
CFI	≥ 0.90	0,903	Fit
TAG	≥ 0.90	0,855	Marginal Fit
IF	≥ 0.90	0,905	Fit
GFI	≥ 0.90	0,860	Marginal Fit

The data from Figure 1 and Table 1 demonstrate that the research model aligns well with the Goodness of Fit Index criteria, indicating that the model is a good fit overall. According to Hair (2010), evaluating a model's fit requires considering key criteria, such as absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices, and parsimony fit indices, all of which should be appropriately represented. After confirming the model fit, a significance test is conducted by examining the p-values and Critical Ratios (C.R.). If the p-value is less than 0.05 and the C.R. exceeds 2.074, the results are deemed significant, indicating a meaningful relationship between the variables in the SEM model (Dr. et al., 2016).

Table 3. Significance Test Results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Relationship	<---	Communication	1.348	.298	4.527	***	par_7
Productivity	<---	Communication	1.773	.455	3.899	***	par_8
Productivity	<---	Relationship	-.268	.180	-1.490	.136	par_9

Based on the results in Table 3, the hypothesis testing provides the following conclusions:

1. **Communication and Work Harmonization:** The p-value for the relationship between communication and work harmonization is indicated as (***) with a C.R. value of 4.527, which is significantly higher than the threshold. This demonstrates that communication has a significant positive effect on work harmonization. Effective communication plays a critical role in building harmonized relationships within the workplace. By conveying information accurately, it fosters shared understanding and mutual cooperation among colleagues.
2. **Communication and Work Productivity:** The p-value for the relationship between communication and work productivity is also (***) with a C.R. value of 3.899, indicating a strong, significant influence. This suggests that better communication within an organization significantly enhances work productivity. Clear, precise communication helps streamline work processes, providing direction and clarity that contribute to more efficient task completion.
3. **Work Harmonization and Work Productivity:** The p-value for the relationship between work harmonization and work productivity is 0.136, which is greater than the 0.05 threshold, and the C.R. value is -1.490. These results indicate that work harmonization has little to no significant effect on work productivity. This could suggest that even in cases where interpersonal relations are less harmonious, employees may still maintain their productivity due to personal responsibility, commitment, or other external factors that drive their performance.

These findings align with previous literature that emphasizes the role of communication in fostering effective work relationships and improving productivity. Communication is a foundational element in maintaining workplace harmony and ensuring that tasks are completed efficiently. However, the weaker relationship between work harmonization and productivity in this study suggests that while positive interpersonal relationships are important, they may not directly drive productivity. Instead, employees may continue to be productive regardless of the quality of interpersonal dynamics, likely due to external motivations or organizational responsibilities. Further exploration into these nuances may be needed to fully understand the interplay between these variables.

4.1. The influence of communication on work harmonization

The research findings indicate that communication has a significant impact on establishing harmonious working relationships. Open communication is crucial in fostering not only harmony but also productivity in the workplace. It enables teams to share information, voice opinions, and resolve conflicts efficiently, which ultimately leads to a more cohesive work environment (Rismayadi, 2024). Effective communication ensures that all team members are well-informed, understand each other, and remain aligned with shared goals. This can be achieved through various communication methods, such as face-to-face meetings, emails, video conferencing, and other digital platforms (Abed et al., 2023). Therefore, enhancing communication strategies is essential. Clear and concise messaging, along with constructive feedback, helps to strengthen relationships and cultivate a positive work atmosphere (Roziņa & Karapetjana, 2020).

4.2. The effect of communication on work productivity

The research findings demonstrate that communication within organizations significantly impacts work productivity. While this relationship has not been extensively studied, effective communication is clearly essential in maintaining a conducive work environment. Whether in a traditional office setting or a remote work scenario, effective communication plays a pivotal role in boosting productivity. It strengthens trust and fosters strong relationships between employees and management, ultimately contributing to increased efficiency and performance (Sadia et al., 2016).

Several prior studies align with these findings, affirming that communication positively influences productivity (Bicer & Halicioglu, 2022; Cornelia et al., 2022; Dewi et al., 2023; Fauziyah et al., 2023). To enhance work productivity, it is crucial to maintain consistent and effective communication, particularly in today's technologically advanced environments. Modern technology facilitates continuous connectivity, enabling teams to share information, collaborate, and manage tasks more efficiently, further supporting the communication process and driving productivity.

4.3. *The influence of harmonious relationships on work productivity*

The results of this research reveal that work harmonization does not significantly influence work productivity. Relationships with co-workers do not always have a direct impact on productivity, particularly for employees who are highly target-driven and focused on fulfilling their responsibilities. In some cases, even in a toxic work environment, employees remain productive due to their strong commitment. Commitment, therefore, is a crucial factor in enhancing work productivity. When employees are deeply committed to their organization, they are more motivated to perform at a higher level, more likely to remain with the company, and generally more productive in their roles (Eka et al., 2022; Sutarman, 2022). Although several previous studies have highlighted the positive impact of strong work relationships on productivity (Abun et al., 2023; Tran et al., 2018), this research presents a different perspective. It suggests that in the public sector, where the focus may be more on societal welfare, other factors could play a more significant role in determining work productivity. This contrasts with findings from research in the private sector, where managing good working relationships has been shown to be a key contributor to increased productivity. Therefore, this study offers a unique viewpoint by examining the potential differences in variables affecting productivity across sectors.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, improving work productivity remains a critical objective. The results demonstrate that effective communication has a significant impact on enhancing employee productivity and fostering harmonious work relationships. However, this study found no direct influence of work harmonization on productivity. While maintaining harmonious work relations is valuable, especially in the context of public sector organizations, it may not be a key factor in boosting productivity, particularly in the public sector. This research has limitations, as it focuses solely on the public sector, specifically election management institutions responsible for overseeing the democratic process. Future research should broaden the scope to include both public and private sectors, as these sectors have different organizational goals, structures, and challenges. Additionally, there were limitations in the research instruments, as some questions had to be excluded due to invalid data during the validity testing process. Future studies should aim to improve the robustness of the instruments by including a more comprehensive set of questions to ensure stronger validity and reliability in measuring the relevant constructs.

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