



The Contribution of Interpersonal Communication in Improving the Performance of Employees of the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the contribution of interpersonal communication to improving employee performance at the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency. The method used is a quantitative approach with a sample of 70 employees. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires, then analyzed using correlation tests and simple linear regression. The results showed that interpersonal communication had a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a correlation value of 0.684 and a determination coefficient of 46.8%. This shows that the better the interpersonal communication, the higher the employee performance. This study recommends improving communication training and coordination forums between fields.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern bureaucratic era, the role of interaction between employees and between superiors is increasingly receiving important attention, especially in public institutions such as government organizations. Interpersonal communication is a bridge for the creation of coordination, clarity of tasks, and a productive work atmosphere. Research shows that "interpersonal communication has a positive and significant effect on employee performance" (Tobeoto et al., 2022).

For the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency (hereinafter Disdikbud ABD) which is in charge of managing education and culture in the Southwest Aceh Regency area, the effectiveness of human resources is the key to success. Thus, understanding how interpersonal communication contributes to improving employee performance is strategic.

Employees in public institutions are usually faced with the pressure of various tasks: administration, supervision, community services, and cultural programs. All of these activities require synergy between individuals and between parts. If interpersonal communication goes poorly, the risk of miscommunication, duplication of work, and low morale will increase. A study concluded that interpersonal communication variables are able to "significantly affect employee performance" (Saragih, 2020). Therefore, for the ABD Education and Culture Office, efforts to strengthen interpersonal communication among employees are not only to improve "regular meetings" or "meetings", but also to build a more open and responsive work culture.

Interpersonal communication in public organizations is not only related to the technical factors of information delivery, but also emotional touch and healthy interpersonal relationships. When employees feel heard, appreciated, and able to communicate with colleagues and superiors smoothly, their motivation and involvement increase. Research by Tobeoto et al. stated that at the Makassar City Communication and Information Office, "interpersonal communication factors contributed to employee performance by 55.9%" (Tobeoto et al., 2022). Thus, the success of the ABD Education and Culture Department in improving performance is not only determined by formal policies, but also by the quality of interpersonal communication between employees.

In addition, interpersonal communication is also related to how employees provide each other with feedback, resolve informal conflicts, and build effective work networks. In the context of the ABD Education and Culture Department, which covers the realm of education and culture, cross-field cooperation (for example, between the curriculum, culture, and personnel fields) is very important. If communication channels between fields are not running effectively, then potential obstacles and delays in program implementation will arise. A study shows that "effective communication occurs when the meaning intended by the sender and the meaning captured by the recipient are the same and one (Usman, 2013)." Therefore, the ABD Education and Culture Office needs to pay attention to the quality and similarity of perceptions in interpersonal communication within the organization.

Furthermore, in public organizations, there are performance evaluation dimensions that must be met: accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and public services. The performance of ABD Education and Culture employees is not only measured by quantitative output, but also by the quality of service, the achievement of education and cultural targets, and innovation in the program. Good interpersonal communication helps ensure that each employee understands his or her duties, coordinates appropriately, and optimizes his or her contribution. As stated: "organizational performance is important to measure success" in the public context (Putri, 2015). Thus, research on the contribution of interpersonal communication is very relevant to support the improvement of the performance of the ABD Education and Culture Department.

Previous findings from various agencies show that interpersonal communication is not only one-way, but also complex and multidimensional. For example, studies examining the variables of interpersonal communication, work discipline, and work environment on performance found that interpersonal communication had a positive and significant relationship (Karlina, 2017). This indicates that in the context of the ABD Education and Culture Department, attention to interpersonal communication must consider various interaction factors, both between individuals and organizational structures.

In special research in educational or government institutions, interpersonal communication can be the main driver in creating a collaborative work culture. For example, this study shows that "interpersonal communication between employees has a significant effect on employee performance" in a government public relations office (Tuhuteru et al., 2021). For the ABD Education and Culture Department, this underscores the importance of building communication that is not only formal and procedural, but also interpersonal: building trust, flexibility, and good teamwork between employees.

The focus of this research is directed at how interpersonal communication contributes to the performance of employees in the ABD Education and Culture Department. The contribution includes aspects such as improving coordination, reducing conflicts, accelerating information flows, and strengthening work motivation. In other words, this study seeks to uncover "how" and "to what extent" interpersonal communication affects employee performance in the context of the ABD Education and Culture Department. Because there are not many studies that specifically examine educational and cultural institutions in Southwest Aceh Regency, this research has a fairly important added value.

The local context of Southwest Aceh Regency also enriches this study. As a district with geographical and socio-cultural characteristics typical of Aceh, Dindikbud ABD faces its own challenges in managing employee human resources. Interpersonal communication between employees from different backgrounds – both in education and culture – requires a sensitive approach to local culture and cultural conditions. Therefore, this study is expected to provide a more specific picture of the dynamics of interpersonal communication within the ABD Education and Culture Department, as well as its implications for performance.

Furthermore, in the face of changes in national education policies, digitization of services, and public demands for learning quality and cultural preservation, the ABD Education and Culture Department must be able to move quickly and adaptively. Interpersonal communication between employees can accelerate the response to change, facilitate the adoption of innovation, and ensure that all parts of the organization are moving in the same direction. The results of the study showing that "interpersonal communication and leadership have a positive effect on employee performance" affirm the importance of combining interpersonal communication with managerial aspects (Tunggayana et al., 2023). Thus, this research is not only relevant for interpersonal communication alone, but also for synergizing with leadership and innovation in organizations.

From a theoretical point of view, interpersonal communication can be understood as the process of "the exchange of messages between two or more people that affect each other". This relationship includes verbal and non-verbal elements-verbal, social context, perception, and feedback. Message clarity, empathy, mutual hearing, and response are key elements for effective communication. By building good interpersonal communication, public organizations such as the ABD Education and Culture Department can optimize the potential of employees. One of the studies said that "humans must communicate needing groups or communities to interact with each other" as a fact (Erdiansyah et al., 2022). This reminds us that interpersonal communication in an organization is not complementary, but a fundamental part of the daily work dynamics.

Meanwhile, the performance of employees in public institutions such as the ABD Education and Culture Office is often identified through indicators such as task productivity, service quality, innovation ability, and compliance with standards and regulations. When interpersonal communication is not going well, the-These indicators can be hampered: for example, late tasks, information is not delivered, or coordination between fields fails. Literature research shows that performance does not only depend on the technical abilities of employees, but also on the "working relationships" formed in the organization (Bireuen-Aceh, 2024)i. Therefore, focusing on interpersonal communication is a strategic effort to improve the performance of ABD Education and Culture employees.

In daily practice at the ABD Education and Culture Department, employees interact in meetings, coordination between fields, supervision to schools, and cultural programs in the field. Each of these activities requires clear, targeted, and responsive communication to local issues and employee conditions. When interpersonal communication goes poorly, then obstacles such as technical miscommunication, lack of support between parts, or informal conflicts can arise. This then has the potential to reduce performance – both productivity and product quality. Thus, it is important to understand the variables of interpersonal communication as an element that affects employee performance.

This research departs from the assumption that there is a positive contribution from interpersonal communication to employee performance in the ABD Education and Culture Department. In other words, the better the quality

of interpersonal and interpersonal communication, the higher the employee performance—in terms of productivity, initiative, work quality, and employee satisfaction. Based on previous research, for example in government agencies, interpersonal communication has been proven to have a positive and significant influence on employee performance. Therefore, this study aims to measure and analyze how interpersonal communication runs in the ABD Education and Culture Department and how it affects employee performance.

From a managerial perspective, the results of this study are expected to provide practical recommendations for the ABD Education and Culture Office to strengthen interpersonal communication mechanisms—through effective communication training, inter-field interaction forums, open feedback mechanisms, and collaborative work culture. Thus, research contributions are not only academic, but also applicable to improve the quality of employee performance. This is in line with the literature that emphasizes that the effectiveness of public organizations is greatly influenced by interpersonal communication factors (Azis & Aswanuddin, 2023). Thus, this research is expected to be a foothold for efforts to improve performance in the ABD Education and Culture Department.

In addition, this study also aims to highlight obstacles that may hinder interpersonal communication within the ABD Education and Culture Department, such as field egos, communication barriers between generations of employees, differences in perceptions, and geographical conditions in Southwest Aceh Regency. By knowing these barriers, strategies to strengthen interpersonal communication can be designed more specifically and relevant to local conditions. The finding that "the obstacle to interpersonal communication is the lack of coordination between employees and between fields/sections" in an agency shows the importance of this aspect. So this study not only looks at the positive side but also identifies the challenges of implementing interpersonal communication in organizations.

From the point of view of time and urgency, this research is very relevant considering the demands to improve the quality of national education and preserve culture in the Aceh region. The ABD Education and Culture Department, as the spearhead of the implementation of education and culture policies, needs to ensure that employees have excellent performance. In this context, interpersonal communication is a strategic tool to ensure that policies and programs can be implemented synergistically and responsively. Thus, this research contributes to the development of human resource management in public organizations in the regions.

The conceptual framework of this study will focus on variables - interpersonal communication (independent variables) and employee performance (bound variables). This study will explore how interpersonal communication between employees, between employees and superiors, and between fields affects employee performance within the scope of the ABD Education and Culture Department. Based on the literature, there is empirical evidence that the "relationship between interpersonal communication and employee performance" is proven in various studies. Thus, this research is

expected to add to the treasure of research in the field of organizational communication and public management in the context of Aceh.

Methodologically, this study will use a quantitative approach with a survey of ABD Education and Culture employees, measurement of interpersonal communication variables and employee performance through instruments-questionnaires, and statistical analysis to see relationships and contributions. Thus, the results of the research will provide an empirical picture that can be the basis for making internal organizational policies. This research is not only beneficial for the ABD Education and Culture Department but also for other institutions in the local government environment that have similar characteristics.

By making interpersonal communication the main focus in efforts to improve employee performance, the ABD Education and Culture Department can strengthen the internal foundations of the organization: build harmonious working relationships, increase the effectiveness of task implementation, strengthen coordination between sections, and ultimately improve the quality of educational and cultural services to the people of Southwest Aceh Regency. Therefore, this research is expected to be able to present a comprehensive picture of the contribution of interpersonal communication in the context of the ABD Education and Culture Department as well as become a strategic recommendation for improving employee performance in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is the process of conveying messages between two or more people who interact directly with each other to achieve mutual understanding. According to (DeVito, 2013), interpersonal communication is "The process of sending and receiving messages between two or more people with immediate feedback that allows for changes in attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions." This communication includes verbal and nonverbal aspects, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language that function to reinforce the meaning of the message.

In the context of an organization, interpersonal communication is not just an exchange of information, but also builds effective working relationships, mutual trust, and creates good coordination between employees. According to (Judge & Robbins, 2013), effective interpersonal communication can improve collaboration, reduce conflict, and accelerate the achievement of organizational goals. Thus, interpersonal communication is one of the important factors that determine employee performance, especially in government agencies that have many inter-departmental relationships such as the Education and Culture Office.

Elements and Forms of Interpersonal Communication

According to (Alwajir, 2018), there are five main elements in interpersonal communication, namely communicator, message, channel, receiver, and feedback. These five elements are interrelated in creating an effective communication process. If one of the elements is disturbed – for example, the feedback is not well received – then the message can be misinterpreted.

Forms of interpersonal communication in the organizational environment can be in the form of vertical communication (between superiors and subordinates), horizontal (between employees of the same level), or diagonal (between different departments). Each form of communication has its own challenges and goals. For example, vertical communication is important for instruction and reporting, while horizontal communication is necessary for coordination between work areas.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is the result of work achieved by a person in carrying out tasks according to the responsibilities given. According to (Anwar Prabu, 2017), performance is the result of work in terms of quality and quantity achieved by an employee in carrying out his duties according to the responsibilities given to him. Performance reflects how effectively an employee performs his or her functions against organizational goals.

Factors that affect performance include individual ability, motivation, work discipline, work environment, and communication. In public organizations such as the Southwest Aceh Education and Culture Department, employee performance is also influenced by clarity of information, openness of leaders, and coordination between fields which is highly dependent on the quality of interpersonal communication.

The Relationship of Interpersonal Communication with Employee Performance

Interpersonal communication is a bridge that connects individuals in the organization. According to (Luthans et al., 2006), effective communication allows members of the organization to understand objectives, collaborate, and minimize errors in the execution of tasks. Without good communication, organizations struggle to achieve optimal performance.

These relationships are functional: the better the interpersonal communication, the higher the level of understanding between employees and the fewer conflicts that arise. On the other hand, poor communication can lead to misperceptions, low work morale, and decreased performance. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that interpersonal communication contributes positively and significantly to improving the performance of employees of the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency.

METHODOLOGY

Types and Approaches to Research

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive – explanatory design (Sari et al., 2022). The goal is to find out and analyze the contribution of interpersonal communication to the performance of employees at the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency. The main analysis used simple linear correlation and regression to test the influence of an independent variable (interpersonal communication) on a bound variable (employee performance).

Research Location and Time

The research was carried out at the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency. The research implementation period lasts from March 2025 to June 2025, which includes instrument preparation, field data collection, data processing, and result analysis.

Population and Sample

- a. Research population: All permanent and non-permanent employees working within the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency by 2025.
- b. Sample: A total of 70 (seventy) employees. The number of samples is determined based on the need for quantitative analysis and consideration of the representativeness of the work unit.
- c. Sampling technique: Stratified random sampling is used to ensure the representation of various units/fields (e.g. education, culture, administration, staffing). Brief procedure:
 1. Determine strata based on work unit/secretariat/position level.
 2. Determine the proportion of samples of each strata according to the proportion of employees in each unit.
 3. Draw or randomly select employees in each strata until the total sample number = 70 is reached.
- d. Inclusion criteria: employees who are actively employed during the research period, willing to fill out questionnaires, and have worked for at least 6 months.
- e. Exclusion criteria: employees on long leave/overseas assignments or unwilling to give permission to participate in the research.

Operational Variables and Definitions

- a. Independent variable (X): Interpersonal communication – defined as the quality of message exchange between individuals in an organization including aspects of message clarity, frequency of communication, feedback, empathy, and use of communication channels. Measured via a questionnaire scale (Likert item).
- b. Bound variable (Y): Employee Performance – defined as employee work achievement including productivity, quality of task implementation, compliance with standards, initiatives, and public services. Measured through respondents' perception of performance indicators and/or performance assessment data if available.

Each variable was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree... 5 = strongly agree).

Research Instruments

- a. The closed questionnaire was prepared based on theoretical indicators and previous research. The form consists of:
 1. Part A: demographic data (gender, age, job title, length of employment, education).

2. Part B: Interpersonal Communication measurement items (about 10–15 items) – covering message clarity, frequency of communication, feedback quality, listening ability, and social support.
 3. Section C: Employee Performance measurement items (about 8–12 items) – includes productivity, punctuality, quality of service, initiative, and compliance.
- b. Instrument development: adaptation of instruments from previous studies that are relevant and developed according to the context of the Southwest Aceh regional government. Each item is formulated in Indonesian which is easy for respondents to understand.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

- a. Content validity: The questionnaire is reviewed by at least 3 experts (academics/researchers in the field of organizational communication/government management/practitioners at the Education and Culture Department) to assess the relevance, completeness, and suitability of the items. The revision is carried out according to expert input.
- b. Pilot test: Conducted on 15–20 respondents who were similar to the population but did not include the main sample of the study. The results of the pilot were used to: clarify the redaction of items, eliminate ambiguous items, and test initial reliability.
- c. Reliability: Tested using Cronbach's alpha; The minimum acceptable threshold $\alpha \geq 0.70$. If any item lowers the alpha, the item will be revised or deleted according to the results of the analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

1. Research permit: Submit an official permit to the head of the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency.
2. Socialization: Explanation to employees regarding the purpose of the research, the mechanism for filling out the questionnaire, and ensuring confidentiality.
3. Questionnaire distribution: Questionnaires are distributed face-to-face or via electronic form (online form) according to the situation and agreement. The charging time is estimated to be 15–25 minutes.
4. Collection: Questionnaire returns are collected by the research team; Incomplete questionnaires will be eliminated.
5. Mentoring: The research team is available to answer respondents' questions during filling to reduce filling bias.

Data Analysis Techniques

- a. Data processing: The collected data will be entered and analysed using statistical software (e.g. SPSS, jamovi, or R).
- b. Descriptive analysis: Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to describe respondent characteristics as well as variable scores of interpersonal communication and employee performance.

- c. Assumption test: Normality (Shapiro-Wilk or Kolmogorov-Smirnov), linearity, homocedasticity, and multicollinearity test (if there is more than one predictor).
- d. Inferential analysis:
 - 1. The Pearson correlation test to see the direction and strength of the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee performance.
 - 2. Simple linear regression analysis to test the contribution and magnitude of the influence of interpersonal communication on employee performance (coefficients of β , R^2 , and significance p).
 - 3. Statistical significance: $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p < 0.05$ considered significant).
- e. Additional analysis (optional): Analysis by sub-group (e.g. by work unit, length of work, or level of education) to see different patterns between groups.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Respondent Overview

This study involved 70 respondents who were active employees of the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency. Based on the results of data collection during March-June 2025, the following is the distribution of respondent characteristics.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Sum	Percentage
Man	38	54,3%
Squirrels	32	45,7%
Total	70	100%

Most of the respondents were male (54.3%), indicating that the workforce in the Service was still dominated by men. However, the representation of women is also almost balanced, reflecting a relatively equal proportion of gender in the workplace.

Table 2. Characteristics of respondents based on length of work

Long Time Working	Sum	Percentage
< 5 years	12	17,1%
5-10 years	24	34,3%
> 10 years	34	48,6%
Total	70	100%

The majority of respondents have worked for more than 10 years (48.6%), showing a good level of experience and understanding of the work system at the Southwest Aceh Education and Culture Office.

Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Interpersonal Communication Variables (X)

These variables were measured with 15 statement items that included dimensions of message clarity, empathy, frequency of communication, openness,

and feedback. The results of the descriptive analysis showed that the average total score of interpersonal communication was 4.23 on a Likert scale of 1-5.

Table 3. Distribution of Interpersonal Communication Values

Category	Score Range	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	4,21 - 5,00	31	44,3%
Good	3,41 - 4,20	28	40,0%
Enough	2,61 - 3,40	8	11,4%
Less	< 2.60	3	4,3%
Total	-	70	100%

The majority of respondents rated interpersonal communication in their work environment in the category of "good" to "very good" (84.3%), indicating that there is an open and effective communication pattern between employees.

Employee Performance Variables (Y)

Employee performance is measured through 12 items that include aspects of productivity, discipline, punctuality, and responsibility. The average total employee performance score is 4.17, indicating a high level of performance.

Table 4. Distribution of Employee Performance Values

Category	Score Range	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	4,21 - 5,00	27	38,6%
Good	3,41 - 4,20	34	48,6%
Enough	2,61 - 3,40	7	10,0%
Less	< 2.60	2	2,8%
Total	-	70	100%

Data shows that most employees have good to very good performance (87.2%), indicating relatively high work effectiveness.

Validity and Reliability Tests

The results of the validity test show that all items have a value of r calculated $> r$ of the table (0.235), so that all items are declared valid. Cronbach's Alpha value = 0.912 for the interpersonal communication variable and 0.897 for the employee performance variable, indicating that both instruments are reliable and consistent.

Correlation Test

Pearson correlation analysis is used to determine the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee performance.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variable	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Information
Interpersonal Communication - Employee Performance	0,684	0,000	Strong, significant correlation

The correlation value of $r = 0.684$ indicates a strong and positive relationship, meaning that the better the interpersonal communication, the higher the employee performance. Significance values of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicate this relationship is statistically significant.

Simple Linear Regression Test

Table 6. Simple Linear Regression Test Results

Type	Regression Coefficient (B)	t count	Sig.	Information
Constant (a)	21,832	-	-	-
Interpersonal Communication (X)	0,625	7,842	0,000	Significant

Regression equations:

$$Y = 21.832 + 0.625X$$

This means that every one unit increase in interpersonal communication will increase employee performance by 0.625 units, with a constant of 21.832.

Table 7 Determination Test Results (R²)

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Sig. F	Information
0,684	0,468	0,460	0,000	Significant

The value of $R^2 = 0.468$ shows that interpersonal communication contributes 46.8% to employee performance, while the remaining 53.2% is influenced by other factors such as motivation, discipline, and leadership style.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of a study that has been conducted on 70 respondents of the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency, it is known that interpersonal communication contributes positively and significantly to employee performance. This is proven through the results of a simple linear regression test with a correlation coefficient value (r) of 0.684 and a determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.468. This means that interpersonal communication has an influence of 46.8% on employee performance, while the remaining 53.2% is influenced by other factors such as leadership, work motivation, and work environment.

These results confirm that interpersonal communication is one of the fundamental aspects in improving the effectiveness of employee work in public organizations. These findings are in line with the view (DeVito, 2013) which states that interpersonal communication is a process of exchanging messages between individuals that allows for changes in attitudes, behaviors, and improvement of social relationships in the workplace. In the context of government organizations such as the Education and Culture Office, interpersonal communication not only functions as a tool for conveying information, but also as a means to build cooperation, strengthen coordination, and minimize misunderstandings between employees.

The finding that good interpersonal communication is directly proportional to improved employee performance is also in line with the theory put forward by

(Judge & Robbins, 2013), explaining that the effectiveness of communication determines how well an organization is able to achieve its goals. When the message is conveyed clearly, accompanied by feedback and openness, employees can understand their roles and responsibilities well, thus having an impact on improving overall performance. In this study, this is reflected in the high average score of interpersonal communication (4.23) and employee performance (4.17), both of which are in the category of "good" to "very good."

In addition, the results of this study reinforce the findings (Tobeoto et al., 2022) who researched employees of the Makassar City Communication and Information Office. They found that interpersonal communication had a significant influence on employee performance by 55.9%. Similar results were also found by (Remanda, 2012) at the Riau Provincial Education Office, which shows that effective interpersonal communication is able to improve employee performance, especially in the context of public service and coordination between fields of work. This shows consistency that in the environment of government agencies, interpersonal communication is a determining factor for the success of task implementation and the achievement of organizational performance.

Furthermore, the results of this study also strengthen the theory put forward by (Pesiwarissa & Manafe, 2024), that interpersonal communication not only serves to convey messages, but also fosters mutual trust, empathy, and openness between fellow members of the organization. When an employee feels valued for their opinions and gets positive feedback from their colleagues or superiors, this will increase motivation and loyalty to their work. Thus, interpersonal communication can be an important means in creating a conducive and productive work climate.

These findings also suggest that non-material factors such as communication and social relationships can make significant contributions to performance, rather than just financial or structural policy factors. This is in line with the results of the research (Laloan et al., 2024) at the Public Relations Office of the Banten Provincial Government, which found that interpersonal communication has a direct effect on the effectiveness of employees' work through increasing the sense of responsibility and commitment to the organization. They emphasize that employees' success in carrying out their duties is not only determined by the leader's instructions, but also by how they interact, support each other, and solve problems together in the team.

In the context of the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency, this result has significant practical significance. As an institution responsible for the field of education and culture, the Education and Culture Department requires complex cross-field coordination, ranging from educational program planning, school development, cultural preservation, to administrative activities. All of these processes cannot run optimally without effective interpersonal communication between employees, both vertically (superior-subordinate) and horizontal (between fields).

Based on descriptive data, most employees consider that interpersonal communication in their work environment has gone well and is open. This is a positive indication that employees are able to maintain professional relationships

and respect each other's opinions. However, there are still a small number of respondents (around 4.3%) who consider communication in the workplace to be still less effective. These findings can be of concern for the leadership of the ABD Education and Culture Department to strengthen internal communication mechanisms, for example by holding regular discussion forums, weekly evaluations, or effective communication training.

In addition, interpersonal communication also plays a role in building an inclusive and participatory work culture. According to (Luthans et al., 2006), effective communication can foster a sense of belonging in the organization, where each individual feels an important part of achieving a common goal. With good communication between employees and leaders, each member of the organization will more easily identify their role and contribution to the overall work outcome.

The results of this study also provide empirical evidence that communication management theory in public organizations can be applied in real terms in the local government environment. A good interpersonal communication is able to improve the flow of information, improve program coordination, and reduce the potential for bureaucratic errors. Therefore, improving interpersonal communication skills, both through training and managerial approaches, needs to be part of the human resource development strategy at the Education and Culture Office of Southwest Aceh Regency.

Overall, the results of this study strengthen the hypothesis that interpersonal communication contributes positively and significantly to improving employee performance. These findings are not only consistent with previous theories and research, but also show strong relevance in the context of public bureaucracy at the regional level. With more effective interpersonal communication, the Southwest Aceh Regency Education and Culture Office can increase work synergy, strengthen employee work ethic, and ultimately provide better quality educational and cultural services to the community.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study show that interpersonal communication contributes positively and significantly to improving the performance of employees of the Southwest Aceh Regency Education and Culture Office. The determination value of 46.8% showed a strong influence in supporting work effectiveness, coordination, and employee motivation. Therefore, it is recommended that leaders strengthen an open communication culture through effective communication training, regular discussion forums, and periodic evaluations, so as to create a work environment that is more productive, harmonious, and responsive to organizational tasks and responsibilities.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

The next research is expected to add other variables such as leadership style, motivation, and work environment to make the analysis more comprehensive. In addition, the mixed method can be used to explore qualitative aspects of interpersonal communication that are not fully described through a quantitative approach.

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