The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Enhancing Teamwork Effectiveness in the Digital Era

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Abstract
This study explores the role of interpersonal communication in enhancing teamwork effectiveness in the digital era, focusing on how effective communication practices can strengthen mutual understanding, coordination, and collaboration within teams. Utilizing a qualitative method and literature review, this research collected and analyzed data from various contemporary sources to understand the dynamics of interpersonal communication within the context of technology-supported teamwork. The findings indicate that interpersonal communication characterized by openness, empathy, and support not only strengthens relationships among team members and builds trust but also reduces misunderstandings and conflicts. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of training in interpersonal communication skills to bolster team cooperation and accelerate the collaboration process by leveraging appropriate digital communication tools. These findings underscore the significance of effective interpersonal communication strategies and the integration of digital communication technology to create a productive and harmonious work environment, as well as to improve job satisfaction, motivation, and employee retention in the digital era.

Keywords: interpersonal communication, teamwork effectiveness, digital era, digital communication technology, job satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Communication acts as the main tool in interaction between individuals and aspects of daily life. According to a study, humans spend about seventy percent of their time communicating, which shows the importance of communication in improving social relationships. In particular, interpersonal communication has a crucial role in human life and is closely related to various scientific disciplines that research human behavior, including psychology, business, sociology, anthropology, and counseling, as explained by Wood, Julia T in 2013.

Interpersonal communication is a dynamic process that involves the exchange of various types of information, ranging from ideas, feelings, to interpersonal values, which occurs between two or more individuals. This process occurs through various channels, including spoken and written words, facial expressions, body movements, and various other forms of non-verbal cues that add depth to the communication. More than just a process of conveying information from one party to another, interpersonal communication also involves the exchange of feedback, where the recipient of the message provides a response to the sender. These responses not only enrich the interaction, but also make it an interactive, two-way dialogue, resulting in richer and more meaningful communication.

In its essence, interpersonal communication acts as a bridge that links the communicator and the communicant in an effective exchange of thoughts and emotions. This is due to the dialogic nature of interpersonal communication, which allows for more open and empathetic conversations (Widodo et al., 2021). In this context, each communicator not only acts as a sender or messages receiver, but also as an individual who actively contributes to building mutual understanding and increasing emotional closeness.

Paying attention to the latest developments in the communications technology sector is an amazing experience, where many extraordinary advances have occurred. What was once considered impossible can now be easily achieved. Distance limitations are no longer a problem in verbal communication, with almost no time delays (Mulyani, 2016). The transformation in interpersonal communication, which is a crucial component of everyday life, has occurred significantly with the emergence of social media, instant messaging applications, and various online platforms. In the context of this change, the maintenance of human relationships, the quality of interactions that occur, and the depth of interpersonal relationships are the main focus studied within the framework of interpersonal
communication theory. This change in the way of communicating affects how individuals build and maintain relationships, demanding adjustments in the understanding and practice of interpersonal communication in the digital era (Kartini et al., 2024).

In the scope of teamwork, interpersonal communication plays an irreplaceable role in determining the success of collaboration. This function has become increasingly critical in the digital era, where teams often consist of members located across geographies and rely on communications technology to interact. In this context, the ability to communicate effectively has a significant impact on the effectiveness of teamwork, task coordination, joint problem solving, and decision-making processes.

Efficient communication between team members not only increases mutual understanding, but also strengthens bonds and working relationships. This contributes to building trust and respect which are important foundations in creating a conducive and collaborative work environment. In the digital era, a face-to-face interactions might decrease, but importance of maintaining effective interpersonal communication becomes more pronounced. The ability to communicate clearly, listen actively, and provide constructive feedback via various digital platforms determines how well a team can work together.

Additionally, in the digital era, interpersonal communication challenges also include navigating through large volumes of information and diverse communication channels. Choosing the right communication tool for a specific task, understanding digital etiquette, and developing non-verbal communication skills in digital media are important aspects that every team member needs to pay attention to.

The aim of the journal "The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Enhancing Teamwork Effectiveness in the Digital Era" is to explore how interpersonal communication influences the effectiveness of collaboration in teams integrated with digital technology, identify communication challenges that teams face in the digital era, and develop strategies for effective communication. This journal also aims to assess the role of technology in supporting communication between geographically separated team members and understand the impact of interpersonal communication on innovation and efficiency of task completion. Through comprehensive analysis, this journal seeks to provide practical guidance for overcoming communication challenges and maximizing the collaborative potential of teams in today’s digital work environment.

**METHOD**

This research adopts a qualitative method with a focus on literature studies to examine the role of interpersonal communication in increasing the effectiveness of team work in the digital era. According to Siyoto and Sodik (2015) in the research of Robbani and El Adawiyah (2023), qualitative data sources are displays in the form of spoken or written words that are observed by researchers and objects that are observed in detail so that the meaning implicit in them can be captured in the documents or objects (Siyoto & Sodik, 2015). The first step of research involved collecting data from various relevant sources, including searching articles on Google, Google Scholar, and Research Gate using specific keywords related to analyzing the impact of communication and teamwork on improving employee performance. The articles selected to be used as references were those published within the last ten years to ensure the actuality of the data. This research also filtered titles and abstracts to select journals that focused on the themes of “communication” and “teamwork” in both Indonesian and English. In addition, further screening was carried out on the aims, methods, results, and conclusions of each article. Content analysis of each journal was carried out in depth and the results were presented into the table for making a comparison between related studies easily. Additional literature such as other journal articles or textbooks is carried out to enrich the discussion. Through this process, researchers can draw comprehensive conclusions about the research subject.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**
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Results

Based on the literature study that has been carried out, the following research results were obtained:

1. Improved Understanding and Coordination:

   Findings from research by Ramdhani, Anjani, and Yuliana (2023) reveal that good interpersonal communication practices contribute significantly to increasing understanding and coordination among team members, especially for teams whose members are across various geographic locations in the digital era. Messaging applications such as WhatsApp have proven to be a very efficient means of communication, facilitating team collaboration and facilitating the smooth holding of virtual meetings. Interpersonal communication carried out well not only strengthens relationships between individuals in the team, but also plays a role in building trust and increasing employee involvement. Especially for teams whose members are in different locations, strong interpersonal communication practices can enhance the team's ability to operate more effectively and efficiently.

2. Reducing Misconceptions:

   Doing interpersonal communication regularly has been proven to reduce the level of conflict and misunderstanding between team members, as well as strengthen the negotiation process and solve problems more efficiently (Sarmiati, 2019). Research shows that training in interpersonal communication contributes to increased cooperation within teams. The effectiveness of interpersonal communication is characterized by openness, the ability to empathize, support, a positive attitude, and an open attitude, all of which are essential to facilitate continuous communication.

3. Trust Building:

   Through interpersonal communication practices built on openness and the ability to empathize, trust within the team can be increased, creating a supportive and inclusive work atmosphere and strengthening trust between team members. The effectiveness of interpersonal communication not only reduces the potential for conflict and misunderstanding but also strengthens the negotiation and problem solving process, improving the foundation of teamwork and joint performance. Transparent communication allows team members more understand each other's views and opinions, which facilitates decision making and fosters more harmonious relationships (Esso, 2016).

4. Encouraging Innovation and Creativity:

   Deep and meaningful interpersonal interaction creates opportunities to exchange ideas and information, which encourages the birth of innovation and creative ideas to solve problems or develop new solutions (Hidayat, 2017). Effectively implemented interpersonal communication facilitates information sharing between team members, supports active listening practices, and empathetic interactions, all of which contribute to strengthening cooperation within teams and improving joint work results. The existence of open and empathetic communication makes team members feel safe and encouraged to contribute their ideas, convey challenges they face, and collaborate in finding innovative solutions. Therefore, high-quality interpersonal communication is the main key in creating a work atmosphere based on collaboration and productivity.

5. Increased Job Satisfaction:

   Supportive and positive interpersonal communication makes a significant contribution to increasing team member motivation and job satisfaction, which has a direct impact on higher employee retention rates. The results of research by Umbas and Puspadarmaja (2021), show that job satisfaction and motivation to achieve can be obtained through efficient interpersonal communication practices. Communication whose characteristics are open, empathetic and effective makes team members feel that they are truly recognized, appreciated and encouraged to provide their best performance. This creates a positive work environment, strengthens connections between team members, and generally improves collective performance and job satisfaction.

6. Utilization of Communication Technology:
The selection and use of appropriate digital communication instruments plays an important role in improving team work performance. Various platforms such as social media, instant messaging applications and video calls offer the possibility for more adaptive and fast interactions, facilitating more intense communication and collaboration between team members in the work environment. In the ever-growing digital era, technology is the main key to advancing efficiency and more dynamic team collaboration. The strategic application of digital communication tools not only overcomes obstacles such as reducing nonverbal communication and digital distance, but also strengthens interpersonal relationships between team members and accelerates collaboration dynamics (Hidayat, 2017).

**Discussion**

The digital era has brought major changes to interpersonal communication theory, especially related to the loss of nonverbal elements in online communication. In digital environments, where interactions are often limited by text and images, the absence of body language, facial expressions, and voice intonation can make understanding messages more complex compared to face-to-face interactions. Interpersonal Communication Theory, which is a collection of concepts and principles for understanding and explaining communication between individuals in personal relationships, seeks to reveal how individuals communicate, interact and build relationships. This theory explores verbal and nonverbal communication as well as the influence of psychological, social and cultural factors on human interaction, with the aim of uncovering general interaction patterns, understanding the role of emotions and perception, and body language in communication. Concepts in Interpersonal Communication Theory include understanding perceptions of self and others, power dynamics, conflict, and emotions, as well as communication strategies used in various relationship contexts. This theory is useful for analyzing the dynamics of communication between people in various situations, both everyday and in formal relationships, and is important in understanding the complexity of human interactions, identifying factors that influence relationships, and providing a framework for developing effective and healthy interpersonal communication skills in various situations (Ashria, 2020).

The results of a study conducted by Ramdhani, Anjani, and Yuliana in 2023 highlight the important role of interpersonal communication in increasing the effectiveness of team work, especially in the context of team work whose members are not in the same geographical location. This research found that implementing effective interpersonal communication can significantly improve mutual understanding and coordination between team members. In the digital era, where communication is no longer limited by physical boundaries, messaging applications like WhatsApp have become invaluable tools. This application enables smooth and efficient communication, facilitates team collaboration and coordination, and simplifies holding virtual meetings.

A study conducted by Sarmiati in 2019 was in-depth regarding the significant impact of interpersonal communication practices carried out routinely in the context of teamwork. This research reveals that regular and effective communication between team members can substantially reduce the potential for conflict and misunderstandings that may arise. By ensuring that team members actively communicate, share information, and discuss issues openly, teams can identify and resolve disagreements or misunderstandings before they escalate into larger conflicts.

The research emphasizes that training in interpersonal communication skills can strengthen teamwork by improving the quality of interactions between members. This training is designed to develop important skills such as openness, the ability to empathize, provide support, maintain a positive attitude, and demonstrate an open attitude towards the ideas and opinions of others. These aspects are considered crucial because they help create a more cooperative and supportive work environment, where every team member feels valued and understood.

Openness in communication allows team members to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment, while empathy skills facilitate a deeper understanding of co-workers'
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Support from teammates increases trust and emotional security, while a positive and open attitude towards ongoing communication encourages a constructive exchange of ideas and solutions.

By practicing effective interpersonal communication, teams can not only improve their abilities in negotiation and problem solving, but also build a strong foundation for long-term collaboration. This, in turn, leads to a more harmonious and productive work environment, where every team member feels connected and involved in achieving common goals. Sarmiati's research, thus, provides valuable insight into how interpersonal communication skills strengthened through training can positively influence teams' work dynamics and increase the effectiveness of their collaboration.

Interpersonal communication practices that focus on openness and the ability to empathize have been shown to play a crucial role in building and strengthening trust among team members. This type of communication creates a work environment that is not only supportive and inclusive, but also strengthens a sense of mutual trust between team members. According to research conducted by Esso in 2016, effective interpersonal communication has a significant impact in reducing potential conflicts and misunderstandings that may arise in team interactions, while strengthening the negotiation process and solving problems in a more efficient way.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of interpersonal communication is not only limited to resolving conflicts, but also to improving cooperation and overall team performance. Open and empathetic communication allows each team member to feel valued and heard, thereby strengthening the foundation of cooperation and increasing synergy within the team. By understanding the views and opinions of each team member, the decision-making process becomes more inclusive and effective, leading to the formation of more harmonious and productive relationships.

Transparent communication also helps in facilitating a freer exchange of ideas and information, enriching discussions and enabling teams to reach more creative and innovative solutions to the problems at hand. In this way, not only can conflicts and misunderstandings be minimized, but also the quality of cooperation and teamwork results can be significantly improved.

Esso research confirms the importance of paying attention to ways of communication within teams, highlighting that good interpersonal communication practices—which include openness, empathy, support, and a positive attitude—are key to creating a productive and harmonious work environment. This emphasizes the need to develop effective communication skills among team members as an integral part of professional development and improving organizational performance.

Research conducted by Umbas and Puspardarmaja in 2021 highlights the significant impact of supportive and positive interpersonal communication on motivation and job satisfaction in a team. This type of communication directly contributes to increased employee retention, demonstrating that a work environment that facilitates open and empathetic dialogue can strengthen employee morale and loyalty. This study found that job satisfaction and the drive to achieve higher levels of achievement can be increased through effective interpersonal interactions, where transparent, empathetic and supportive communication provides team members with the experience of feeling valued and cared for.

Characteristics of efficient interpersonal communication, such as openness in sharing information, the ability to show empathy for co-workers's conditions and situations, and a supportive and positive approach, help create a conducive work atmosphere. In an environment like this, every team member feels recognized for their contributions, which not only increases their sense of appreciation but also motivates them to continue delivering their best performance.

In addition, Umbas and Puspardarmaja's research highlights that good interpersonal communication practices are not only beneficial in the context of increasing job performance and satisfaction, but are also vital in preventing employee turnover. By having a supportive work environment, where communication is considered an important tool for developing and
retaining talent, organizations can minimize the costs associated with recruiting and training new employees.

In the context of improving team performance, the selection and use of appropriate digital communication tools plays a crucial role. Digital platforms such as social media, instant messaging applications and video calling technology, allow for more flexible and responsive interactions, giving a strong boost to the communication and collaboration processes between team members in the work environment. According to Hidayat (2017), in the midst of a dynamic digital era, technology acts as the main driver for increasing efficiency and dynamics of teamwork. Strategic implementation of various digital communication instruments not only minimizes obstacles caused by limited nonverbal communication and geographical barriers, but also improves the quality of interpersonal relationships between team members and speeds up the collaboration process.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the literature study that has been carried out shows that interpersonal communication plays a crucial role in increasing the effectiveness of teamwork, especially in the digital era. Effective interpersonal communication practices, characterized by openness, empathy, and support, not only strengthen understanding and coordination among geographically dispersed team members, but also help reduce misunderstandings and conflict. Training in interpersonal communication skills has been proven to increase cooperation and strengthen the foundation of teamwork, which in turn improves joint performance. Then, high-quality interpersonal communication creates a supportive and inclusive work environment, encourages innovation and creativity in solutions. In the context of the digital era, selecting and using appropriate digital communication instruments has become the main key to strengthening more dynamic team collaboration, overcoming nonverbal communication barriers, and speeding up the collaboration process.

Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of developing and implementing effective interpersonal communication strategies in the context of teamwork, as well as the integration of digital communication technologies to support more efficient interactions. This will not only increase the effectiveness of teamwork, but also contribute to increased job satisfaction, motivation and employee retention, creating a more productive and harmonious work environment.

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