

Communication, Motivation, and Employee Performance: A Systematic Literature Review

Communication,
Motivation, and
Performance

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ABSTRACT

Human resources are considered one of the most crucial assets for ensuring long-term sustainability and competitiveness of any organization or company. Employees who deliver high-quality performance make a significant impact on the company's growth and success. Recognizing this importance, this study presents a conceptual model to understand the key factors influencing employee performance within organizational settings. The model examines the effects of communication, work environment, incentives, leadership style, and motivation on employee performance. This conceptual framework was developed based on a systematic literature review conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency and methodological rigor. Relevant studies published between 2016 and 2024 were evaluated based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The findings suggest that effective communication, supportive work environments, properly designed incentive systems, and appropriate leadership styles work together to enhance employee motivation, ultimately improving performance outcomes. These results imply that organizations should prioritize communication training, develop conducive workplace conditions, implement fair and achievable incentive structures, and adopt leadership approaches that strengthen both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Collectively, these implications highlight the importance of integrating organizational, psychological, and managerial strategies to optimize employee performance and long-term organizational success.

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ABSTRAK

Sumber daya manusia dianggap sebagai salah satu aset paling penting dalam memastikan keberlanjutan jangka panjang dan daya saing suatu organisasi atau perusahaan. Karyawan yang mampu memberikan kinerja berkualitas tinggi memiliki dampak signifikan terhadap pertumbuhan dan keberhasilan perusahaan. Menyadari hal tersebut, penelitian ini menyajikan sebuah model konseptual untuk memahami faktor-faktor utama yang memengaruhi kinerja karyawan dalam konteks organisasi. Model ini mengkaji pengaruh komunikasi, lingkungan kerja, insentif, gaya kepemimpinan, dan motivasi terhadap kinerja karyawan. Kerangka konseptual ini dikembangkan berdasarkan tinjauan pustaka sistematis yang dilakukan sesuai dengan pedoman PRISMA 2020 untuk memastikan transparansi dan ketelitian metodologis. Studi-studi relevan yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2016 hingga 2024 dievaluasi berdasarkan kriteria inklusi dan eksklusi yang telah ditentukan. Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi yang efektif, lingkungan kerja yang mendukung, sistem insentif yang dirancang dengan baik, dan gaya kepemimpinan yang tepat bekerja secara simultan meningkatkan motivasi karyawan, yang pada akhirnya memperbaiki kinerja. Implikasi ini menggambarkan bahwa organisasi perlu memprioritaskan pelatihan komunikasi, menciptakan kondisi kerja yang kondusif, menerapkan struktur insentif yang adil dan dapat dicapai, serta mengadopsi pendekatan kepemimpinan yang mampu memperkuat motivasi ekstrinsik maupun intrinsik. Secara keseluruhan, implikasi tersebut menegaskan pentingnya

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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a fundamental determinant of organizational success and sustainability. Understanding that performance is fundamental to an organization's success, it is essential to focus on strategies and initiatives that enhance employee performance. High-performing employees not only contribute to achieving strategic goals but also foster innovation, enhance operational efficiency, and sustain competitive advantage (Alqudah et al., 2022). Conversely, poor performance can lead to reduced productivity, increased cost, and a decline in organizational reputation. As such, understanding the factors that influence employee performance has become a central focus for researchers and practitioners aiming to enhance workforce effectiveness. Performance, however, is a multifaceted construct influenced by various individual and organizational factors.

Performance encompasses a range of behaviors stemming from an individual's technical knowledge (expertise in a specific field), skills and adaptability (understanding how to perform tasks and adjusting based on circumstances), and interpersonal relations (fostering teamwork, loyalty, and connections with others) (Pradhan & Jena, 2017). Among these, communication, work environment, incentives, leadership style, and motivation are widely recognized as pivotal determinants. Effective communication ensures clarity of roles and expectations (Braun et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2024). Meanwhile a positive work environment fosters employee well-being and engagement (Hamed et al., 2023). Incentives serve as motivators to sustain effort, and leadership style increases employees' productivity and improves quality (Daniel, 2019; Meirinhos et al., 2023). Motivation, as a driving force, directly impacts employees' willingness to perform at their best (Alanizan, 2023).

Extensive research has highlighted a range of factors that influence employee performance, with many studies demonstrating the importance of communication, work environment, leadership, motivation, and incentives. For instance, a study in Dalimunthe (2018) that leadership style and motivation significantly affect employees' performance. Similarly, another research by Lubis (2016) stated that communication has a significant impact on employees' performance. These findings underscore how each factor can meaningfully enhance performance, forming a strong foundation for examining how they may also operate in combination. This fragmentation in the literature highlights the need for a more integrative synthesis that systematically reviews existing evidence.

To address this gap, the present study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, ensuring transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor. Through the four PRISMA phases (identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion), relevant empirical studies published between 2016 to 2024 were selected based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. This structured process provides a comprehensive overview of current research, minimizing bias and improving the reliability of synthesized findings. This research introduces a conceptual model that explores the interconnected roles of communication, work environment, incentives, leadership style, and motivation. Another prior work also points toward these linkages. For example, a study in Indonesia found that motivation is higher in face-to-face communication (Ophilia & Hidayat, 2021). The model illustrates how communication channel can also affect motivation. The model in this study illustrates how these factors not only influence employee performance independently but also interact in complex ways to shape organizational success.

The purpose of this study is to develop and examine a comprehensive conceptual model that captures the combined influence of communication, work environment,

incentives, leadership style, and motivation on employees' performance. By demonstrating the conceptual model highlighting the importance factors affecting employees' performance, this study provides organizations with a pathway to creating leaders who inspire and support their team. While prior research has shown that each of these factors can enhance productivity and job satisfaction, this study aims to integrate them into a single framework to understand their interactive effects better. By doing so, the research seeks to provide organizations with evidence-based insights that can guide more holistic human resource strategies, improve employee engagement, and foster sustainable organizational growth. Ultimately, the study intends to contribute to both academic literature and practical management practices by offering a systematic, PRISMA-guided understanding of the human and organizational factors that drive sustainable performance and long-term growth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations

Employee performance has been widely explained through a combination of behavioral, psychological, and organizational. From a behavioral and cognitive-behavioral perspective, communication is viewed as a learnable skill that influences both task execution and interpersonal relationships. Assertive communication, in particular, reflects the ability to express ideas clearly while respecting others, which aligns with theories emphasizing learned behavioral competencies in the workplace (Zhou et al., 2024). The role of communication channels suggests that face-to-face communication is the most effective medium for complex and ambiguous tasks due to its capacity to convey immediate feedback and non-verbal cues. This theoretical perspective supports findings that direct interaction enhances understanding and motivation more effectively than online communication (Bosch, 2023).

Employee motivation which emphasizes the fulfillment of psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness as drivers of intrinsic motivation and optimal performance (Hashiguchi et al., 2021). Leadership influences performance through Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theories, where transformational leadership stimulates higher motivation and engagement, while transactional leadership reinforces performance through structured rewards and clear expectations (Muhdar et al., 2022). Together, these theories provide a robust conceptual foundation for understanding how organizational, psychological, and managerial mechanisms interact to shape employee performance.

Factors Affecting Employee Performance

Communication as a central determinant of employee performance. Assertive communication enhances work effectiveness and strengthens interpersonal relationships, while the appropriate selection of communication channels ensures message clarity and collaboration. Face-to-face communication is particularly effective in addressing complex issues, as it reduces misunderstanding and supports immediate feedback, ultimately improving performance outcomes (Zhou et al., 2024; Bosch, 2023).

The work environment also plays a significant role in shaping performance. Physical conditions such as lighting, temperature, spatial layout, and cleanliness contribute to employee comfort, reduce stress, and increase concentration. A supportive physical environment has been shown to foster positive attitudes and intrinsic motivation, which in turn enhance job performance (Iis et al., 2022).

Incentives, both financial and non-financial, function as strategic tools for motivating employees when aligned with realistic performance targets. Well-designed incentive systems not only recognize achievements but also sustain productivity and engagement (Liaquat et al., 2024). Additionally, leadership style significantly influences employee motivation and performance. Transformational leadership encourages employees to exceed routine expectations, while transactional leadership is effective in contexts requiring clear structure and reward mechanisms (Muhdar et al., 2022). Finally,

motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation driven by recognition, responsibility, and growth opportunities, acts as a key mechanism linking organizational practices to performance outcomes (Wai et al., 2024).

Organizational and Workplace Context

The reviewed literature is situated within an organizational and workplace context, focusing on employee performance as a critical factor for organizational effectiveness and sustainability. The studies primarily examine employees operating in structured organizational environments where communication practices, physical work conditions, incentive systems, and leadership approaches directly influence daily performance.

Most empirical evidence is drawn from recent studies published between 2021 and 2024, reflecting contemporary workplace dynamics, including the increasing use of digital communication alongside traditional face-to-face interaction. The context also emphasizes organizations seeking to balance structural efficiency with employee psychological well-being. This integrative context highlights the necessity for organizations to adopt holistic management strategies that simultaneously address communication effectiveness, environmental support, motivational systems, and leadership practices to achieve sustained performance improvement.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to develop and validate the proposed conceptual model of employee performance determinants. The SLR method was chosen because it provides a structured, transparent, and replicable process for collecting, evaluating, and synthesizing existing research evidence. Unlike a traditional narrative review, an SLR minimizes bias by following a clear set of steps to ensure that the review process is comprehensive and reliable. Following the principles of transparency and reproducibility, the review process includes a structured search strategy, predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, and a rigorous screening of studies across multiple academic databases. Each stage, identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion, was documented in accordance with PRISMA.

This research process begins with the formulation of research questions focusing on the relationship between motivation, communication, work environment, incentives, leadership style, and employees' performance. A systematic search will be conducted across multiple academic databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar to identify relevant peer-reviewed articles and other credible scholarly sources including selected non-peer-reviewed studies. Following the database search, the selected studies will undergo a screening process consisting of title, abstract, and full-text reviews. Data extraction will then be performed to identify key findings, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches.

To refine the selection of eligible studies, the review applied a set of criteria aligned with PRISMA guidelines to ensure that only research with direct relevance to employee performance was included. These criteria guided the evaluation of population characteristics, research focus, methodological rigor, and publication quality. Only studies conducted within organizational or institutional settings and involving employees, managers, or leaders were considered, while research centered on non-employee groups was excluded. The review targeted studies that examined factors influencing performance, such as motivation, communication, work environment, incentives, or leadership and required that each study report clear and measurable performance outcomes.

Eligible research designs included empirical quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies, as well as systematic reviews providing relevant evidence, whereas non-empirical publications such as opinion papers or conference abstracts were removed from consideration. To maintain consistency and data reliability, only journal articles available in English or Bahasa Indonesia and published between 2016 and 2024 were included. These criteria ensured that the final pool of studies reflected recent, methodologically

sound, and contextually relevant evidence to support the synthesis and development of the conceptual model.

RESULTS

The findings of the review of several recent articles published within the past five years related to employee performance are presented in Table 1. The three categories include conceptual framework, research results, and recommendations for concept development. This classification was intended to facilitate in obtaining the core insights of each study and to formulate future research recommendations.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Research

Author, Year	Journal	Method	Result	Development
Zhou et al. (2024)	Human Resources Management and Services	Quantitative	Assertive communication has a positive impact on employee performance	While previous studies have often examined these variables in isolation, this research combines communication style, communication channels, work environment, incentives, and leadership style into one integrated model with employee motivation as both a dependent and mediating variable, offering a more holistic understanding of what drives performance.
Ramadanty and Martinus (2016)	Humaniora	Qualitative	Assertive communication has a positive impact on employee motivation	
Deepa and Baral (2021)	Corporate Communications: An International Journal	Qualitative	A communication channel has a positive impact on employee performance	
Ophilia and Hidayat (2021)	Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies	Qualitative	Employees preferred face-to-face communication.	
Hamed et al. (2023)	International Journal of Business and Technology Management	Qualitative	Working environment has a positive impact on employee performance	
Iis et al. (2022)	International Journal of Economic, Business, Accounting, Agriculture Management and Sharia Administration (IJEBAAS)	Quantitative	Working environment has a positive impact on employee motivation	
Daniel (2019)	International Journal of Business Marketing and Management	Quantitative	Incentives has a positive impact on employee performance	
Ali and Anwar, (2021)	International Journal of Engineering, Business and Management	Quantitative	Incentives has a positive impact on employee motivation	
Meirinhos et al. (2023)	Journal of Risk and Financial Management	Quantitative	Leadership Style has a positive impact on employee performance	
Amegayibor (2021)	International Journal of Financial, Accounting, and Management	Quantitative	Leadership Style has a positive impact on employee motivation	

Author, Year	Journal	Method	Result	Development
Alanizan (2023)	International Journal of Business and Management	Quantitative	Employee motivation has a positive impact on employee performance	

The results of this study indicate that assertive communication, communication channels, work environment, incentives, leadership style, and employee motivation consistently demonstrate a positive influence on employee performance, either directly or indirectly. Prior empirical evidence shows that assertive communication significantly enhances both employee performance and motivation, highlighting the importance of clear, respectful, and confident communication within organizational settings (Zhou et al., 2024; Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016). These findings suggest that communication style plays a critical role in shaping employees' psychological readiness and work outcomes. Furthermore, the results reveal that communication channels also contribute positively to employee performance. Qualitative studies emphasize employees' preference for face-to-face communication, which facilitates clarity, trust, and immediacy in information exchange (Deepa & Baral, 2021; Ophilia & Hidayat, 2021). This preference underscores the relevance of selecting appropriate communication media to enhance work effectiveness.

In addition, the work environment emerges as a significant determinant of both employee motivation and performance. Empirical findings consistently show that a supportive and conducive working environment improves employees' psychological well-being, leading to higher motivation levels and better performance outcomes (Hamed et al., 2023; Iis et al., 2022). These results indicate that physical and social workplace conditions are essential drivers of organizational productivity. The findings also confirm that incentives positively affect employee motivation and performance. Quantitative studies demonstrate that fair and performance-based incentives encourage employees to exert greater effort and commitment toward organizational goals (Daniel, 2019; Ali & Anwar, 2021). Incentives thus function as an important extrinsic motivator that reinforces desired work behaviors.

Moreover, leadership style is identified as a crucial factor influencing employee motivation and performance. Previous studies consistently report that effective leadership styles foster motivation, enhance engagement, and ultimately improve employee performance (Meirinhos et al., 2023; Amegayibor, 2021). Leadership effectiveness therefore plays a central role in translating organizational strategies into employee-level outcomes. The results highlight employee motivation as a key variable that directly influences employee performance. Evidence suggests that motivated employees demonstrate higher levels of productivity, commitment, and performance (Alanizan, 2023). In this regard, motivation serves as both an outcome of organizational practices and a mechanism through which communication, work environment, incentives, and leadership affect performance.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that communication plays a central role in shaping employee performance, particularly when it is assertive and supported by an appropriate communication channel. Assertive communication contributes to greater work effectiveness and stronger interpersonal relationships, aligning with behavioral and cognitive-behavioral perspectives that emphasize its learnable nature. This conclusion corresponds with Zhou et al. (2024), who highlight that clear and firm communication styles foster constructive responses in workplace interactions. Beyond communication style, the choice of communication channel also determines how well messages are understood. Face-to-face communication remains the most effective medium for complex issues because it provides richer cues and immediate feedback. Bosch (2023) reinforces this by demonstrating that online interactions tend to reduce motivation compared with

direct interpersonal communication. When communication is delivered effectively and through the right medium, information becomes clearer, collaboration improves, and overall performance increases.

In addition to communication, the work environment is shown to have a meaningful influence on employee performance. Physical factors such as lighting, temperature, spatial arrangement, and cleanliness contribute to comfort, reduce stress, and enhance focus. Findings from Iis et al. (2022) indicate that a well-designed and comfortable workspace fosters positive employee attitudes and boosts intrinsic motivation, ultimately improving performance. Thus, the physical environment serves as a fundamental support structure for daily productivity. The results also confirm that incentives significantly contribute to performance outcomes. Both financial and non-financial rewards can strengthen motivation when implemented appropriately and accompanied by realistic performance targets. Liaquat et al. (2024) emphasize that well-aligned incentives improve motivation, leading to better performance. These findings demonstrate that incentive systems operate not only as recognition mechanisms but also as strategic tools for maintaining productivity.

Leadership style emerges as another influential factor that shapes motivation and performance. Transformational leadership, which emphasizes inspiration, vision, and intellectual stimulation, encourages employees to go beyond routine expectations. Meanwhile, transactional leadership is effective in structured settings where clear reward mechanisms are required. Evidence from Muhdar et al. (2022) shows that leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, underscoring the need for leaders to adopt approaches that match organizational goals and employee needs. Motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, plays a pivotal role in determining performance. Factors such as recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for growth significantly enhance satisfaction and job performance (Wai et al., 2024). Hashiguchi et al. (2021) found that fulfilling fundamental psychological needs, including autonomy, competence, and relatedness, strengthens intrinsic motivation and leads to optimal performance. These findings suggest that organizations should not only manage structural factors but also nurture the psychological well-being of employees.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study highlight that assertive communication, appropriate communication channels, a supportive work environment, effective incentives, and suitable leadership styles collectively shape employee performance. Assertive communication enhances clarity, reduces misunderstandings, and improves interpersonal relationships, while face-to-face channels remain the most effective for complex tasks. A well-designed physical workspace also contributes to productivity by supporting comfort and reducing stress. Incentives, both financial and non-financial, strengthen motivation when aligned with realistic targets, and leadership styles such as transformational and transactional approaches influence how employees engage with their work. Motivation emerges as a central mechanism linking these factors to performance, as fulfilling psychological needs and providing recognition boosts both effort and commitment. In theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce multidimensional performance models that integrate communication, environment, leadership, and motivation. In managerial perspective, organizations should invest in assertive communication training, improve workplace design, implement fair incentive systems, adopt effective leadership practices, and nurture intrinsic motivation to sustain long-term performance.

These results highlight the importance for organizations to strengthen their communication systems, cultivate positive and effective leadership, create supportive work environments, and develop well-structured incentive systems to boost employee motivation and performance. Future research is recommended to further test and validate the proposed model through quantitative or mixed-method designs. Despite its valuable contributions, this study acknowledges certain limitations, including the restricted database scope, language constraints, and the exclusion of unpublished studies, which

may affect the comprehensiveness of the findings. Finally, the study received no external funding, and the authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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