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# CULTIVATING WORK ENGAGEMENT: THE IMPACT OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOR

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the crucial roles of interpersonal communication and behavior in enhancing work engagement within an organizational context, with a focus on work motivation as a mediating factor. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory, the research highlights the importance of intrinsic motivation fostered by quality interpersonal relationships, which enhance employee engagement and well-being. Conducted at the Yogyakarta Special Region Manpower and Transmigration Service in Indonesia, this quantitative study involved 100 employees and utilized hierarchical regression analysis to examine the relationships among interpersonal communication, behavior, and work engagement. The findings indicate that interpersonal dynamics, specifically interpersonal communication and interpersonal behavior, have significant direct effects on work engagement, as well as significant mediated effects through work motivation. Interpersonal behavior was identified as having the strongest impact on work engagement, highlighting its critical role in fostering an engaging work environment. Additionally, work motivation was found to serve as a significant mediator, amplifying the relationship between interpersonal

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dynamics and work engagement. This underscores the complex interplay where both direct and indirect influences of interpersonal communication and behavior contribute synergistically to enhancing employee engagement in organizational settings. The study underscores the complexity of work engagement dynamics and advocates for enhancing interpersonal communication and behavior in organizational settings to boost motivation and engagement. These insights contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in workplace management and communication psychology.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In the continually transforming field of occupational psychology, effective interpersonal communication and behavioral dynamics significantly influence work engagement. Work motivation serves as a crucial intermediary in this relationship. This connection is grounded in extensive theoretical and empirical research, which emphasizes the critical role of mentoring relationships in the workplace. Foundational contributions from Arthur & Kram (1985) and Tong & Kram (2012) introduced the importance of mentoring in building competence, developing professional identity, and enhancing role effectiveness. Later research supported this perspective, illustrating how workplace interpersonal relationships positively impact long-term outcomes, including productivity, motivation, well-being, and employee retention (Allen et al., 2004; Burk & Eby, 2010; Eby & Allen, 2002; Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Tong & Kram, 2012; Salim et al., 2022).

This study, guided by the foundational principles of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posited by Deci & Ryan (2000), seeks to explore the intricate mechanisms through which interpersonal communication and behavior influence work-related outcomes, particularly through the mediating role of intrinsic motivation. According to SDT, the quality of interpersonal relationships in the workplace fosters employee motivation by meeting fundamental psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), which in turn enhances work engagement and overall well-being.

The research, conducted in Indonesia's Yogyakarta Special Region Manpower and Transmigration Service, focuses on the interplay between interpersonal communication, interpersonal behavior, work motivation, and engagement within an organizational framework. Interpersonal communication—embodied in aspects like self-disclosure, feedback, and harmonious interactions—creates a conducive work environment that improves job satisfaction, empowerment, and trust in leadership. Similarly, interpersonal behavior, aligned with nurturing autonomy, competence, and relatedness, plays a significant role in catalyzing motivation and influencing outcomes like reduced turnover intentions, higher engagement, and improved psychological well-being (Akbar & Hidayanto, 2023; Sazali et al., 2022).

Key findings from hierarchical regression analyses suggest that interpersonal behavior has a particularly strong impact on work engagement and that work motivation serves as a mediating bridge between communication, behavior, and engagement. This emphasizes that when employees experience meaningful and supportive interactions, intrinsic motivation is enhanced, which subsequently fosters a more engaged and empowered workforce.

In conclusion, the study extends the theoretical validity of SDT by demonstrating how interpersonal communication and behavior, mediated by intrinsic motivation, shape work engagement in a novel organizational context. It highlights the importance of maintaining constructive interpersonal dynamics (communication and behavior) to cultivate a positive organizational culture that improves employee engagement and overall organizational performance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Research Design*

This study run through a quantitative research method to analyze the connections among independent variables (interpersonal communication and behavior), the dependent variable (work engagement), and the mediating variable (work motivation). Quantitative research is characterized by the statistical analysis of specific populations and samples and aims to test predefined hypotheses systematically. (Akbar & Hidayanto, 2023; Dinti et al., 2024; Lumampauw et al., 2020)

### *Variables*

Independent Variables: Interpersonal communication and behavior.

Dependent Variable: Work engagement.

Mediating Variable: Work motivation.

### *Data Collection Method*

The primary data for the study were obtained by administering a detailed survey to employees, utilizing a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to collect information on the research variables. Secondary data were derived from existing sources, including books, academic journals, and other pertinent materials.

### *Sampling Technique and Sample Size*

a census sampling technique, or total sampling, was employed in this study, which included the entire population of 100 employees at the Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (*Yogyakarta Special Region Manpower and Transmigration Service*), Indonesia. (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970).

### *Data Validation and Reliability*

Validity: Employing Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation to ensure questionnaire items accurately measure the intended variables.

Reliability: the reliability of the survey was confirmed through Cronbach's Alpha, with all variables exceeding the 0.70 threshold, indicating high internal consistency, with an alpha value greater than 0.70 considered acceptable (Akbar & Hidayanto, 2023; Azzariaputrie & Avicenna, 2023; Creswell, W.John; Creswell, 2022; Dinti et al., 2024; James W, Elston D, 2022; Yusriyah et al., 2020).

### *Statistical Analysis*

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using SPSS software to explore the proposed relationships between the variables. Additionally, statistical methods were applied to evaluate how each independent variable individually, as well as collectively, influenced the dependent variable. The explanatory strength of the independent variables in predicting changes in the dependent variable was also assessed.

### *Classical Assumption Tests*

Normality Test: The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess whether the data followed a

normal distribution pattern.

Multicollinearity Test: Utilizing Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to detect the presence of multicollinearity among independent variables.

Heteroscedasticity Test: Conducted through the Glejser test to check for constant variance across residuals.

This methodological framework aims to illuminate the intricate relationships at play, offering profound insights into how interpersonal communication and behavior contribute to fostering work engagement, with work motivation serving as a critical intermediary.

## FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing a census sampling technique to include the entire population of employees at the Dinas Tenaga Kerja dan Transmigrasi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (*Yogyakarta Special Region Manpower and Transmigration Service*), Indonesia. Data were meticulously gathered through direct questionnaire distribution over three months with 100 participants.

### *Respondent Profile Analysis*

The analysis revealed a diverse respondent demographic with a notable distribution across gender, age, educational background, and job tenure. Specifically, the workforce comprised 56% female and 44% male, with a significant proportion (67%) over 40 years old. Educational attainment predominantly reflected bachelor's degrees (65%); a substantial segment of the staff had served over 20 years (38%).

**Table 1.** Descriptive

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	44	44 %
Female	56	56%
<b>Age Group</b>		
18 – 28	10	10%
29 – 39	23	23%

≥ 40    67    67%

**Education**

High School	11	11 %
Academy	4	4 %
Bachelor	65	65 %
Master	20	20 %

**Field**

Engineering	12	12 %
Social	36	36 %
Education	12	12 %
Others	40	40 %

*Variable Descriptors*

Interpersonal Communication: Exhibited a mean score indicating prevalent positive communication practices, with "agree" and "strongly agree" responses dominating.

Interpersonal Behavior: Positive tendencies indicate a supportive and collaborative work environment.

Work Motivation: Highlighted the intrinsic and extrinsic factors propelling the workforce, with high valuation on learning and career progression.

Work Engagement: Evidenced a highly engaged workforce, finding meaning, vigor, and dedication in their roles.

**Table 2.** Coefficient of Determination Test Results

Equation	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	0.458	0.447
2	0.332	0.319
3	0.498	0.483

**Table 3.** Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
M 1	15.9800	2.222	.508	.770

M 2	16.0000	1.939	.714	.704
M 3	16.1400	1.798	.644	.727
M 4	16.0800	1.973	.592	.744
M 5	16.0400	2.463	.410	.796

### *Statistical Analysis*

The research used Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation as the data validation method, with results showing statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ) for all survey items, which verified their validity. Internal consistency measurements demonstrated strong results, as all variables had alpha coefficients above 0.70, showing robust measurement quality across all components of the study.

Hierarchical regression analysis was applied to examine the hypotheses, revealing that interpersonal communication and behavior significantly influenced work engagement directly and through mediating work motivation. The adjusted R Square values highlighted the models' robustness in explaining the variance in work engagement.

**Table 4. F-Test Result**

Equation	F Statistics	Sig.
1	40.937	0.000
2	24.137	0.000
3	31.799	0.000

**Table 5.** T-Test Result

Variable	Coef ( $\beta$ ) Unstandard	Coef ( $\beta$ ) Standard	t-count	Sig.
<b>Equation 1</b>				
<i>(Constant)</i>	2.631	-	2.556	0.012
<i>Interpersonal Communication</i>	0.176	0.386	4.601	0.000
<i>Interpersonal Behavior</i>	0.212	0.407	4.850	0.000
<b>Equation 2</b>				
<i>(Constant)</i>	9.629	-	6.194	0.000
<i>Interpersonal Communication</i>	0.273	0.440	4.725	0.000
<i>Interpersonal Behavior</i>	0.158	0.223	2.391	0.000
<b>Equation 3</b>				
<i>(Constant)</i>	0.885	-	0.752	0.454
<i>Interpersonal Communication</i>	0.126	0.278	3.084	0.003
<i>Interpersonal Behavior</i>	0.184	0.352	4.217	0.000
<i>Work Motivation</i>	0.181	0.274	2.791	0.000



**Table 6.** Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variable	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	Information
Interpersonal Communication	0.001	0.991	Heteroscedasticity does not occur
Interpersonal Behavior	-0.126	0.280	Heteroscedasticity does not occur
Work Motivation	0.185	0.136	Heteroscedasticity does not occur

Notably, interpersonal communication ( $\beta = 0.176$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and interpersonal behavior ( $\beta = 0.212$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) directly contributed to enhancing work engagement. Work motivation emerged as a significant mediator, with indirect effects observed for both interpersonal communication and behavior on work engagement. The analysis underscored the critical role of interpersonal dynamics and motivational aspects in fostering a productive and engaging work environment.

The nuanced interrelations among our study variables underscore the critical role of interpersonal dynamics in fostering an engaged and motivated workforce. Our findings validate theoretical propositions and offer actionable insights for organizational leadership aiming to enhance work engagement through strategic communication and behavior facilitation.

In this study conducted within the Department of Labor and Transmigration in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, involving 100 participants, a predominant female representation (56%) and a significant age majority of over 40 years (67%) were noted, reflecting a mature workforce with a solid educational background, primarily at the bachelor level (65%). The research utilized four variables: two independent (interpersonal communication and interpersonal behavior), one dependent (work engagement), and one mediating (work motivation), aiming to explore their interrelations within an organizational context.

Interpersonal communication was operationalized through self-disclosure, feedback, and harmony (Chichirez & Purcărea, 2018), with a notable consensus among respondents on the positive enactment of these aspects within their organizational environment. This aligns with Wood's (2010) interpretation of interpersonal communication as a multifaceted interaction where immediate feedback is central. The favourable responses to questions on interpersonal behavior, emphasizing autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000), suggest a conducive work environment fostering positive interactions and adaptability (Salim et al., 2023).

In the contemporary academic dialogue on the dynamics of workplace engagement, the role of interpersonal communication and behavior has emerged as a pivotal area of study. This discourse is enriched by exploring how these elements directly impact employee engagement and indirectly influence it through the mediating role of work motivation. The synthesis of theoretical frameworks posits that interpersonal communication, originating from the Latin *communis* meaning "common," embodies the process of information exchange that facilitates the formation of a shared understanding (Khairani, 2015; Nofrion, 2018). This dialogue extends beyond verbal interactions to include non-verbal cues, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of communication in fostering an environment conducive to engagement.

The high levels of agreement on work engagement indicators—vigor, dedication, and absorption—demonstrate a deeply ingrained work culture characterized by commitment and involvement (Schaufeli et al., 2002) - underline a deeply embedded work culture of commitment and involvement, resonating with May et al. (2004) definition of work engagement as the full expression of oneself in work tasks (Lumampauw et al., 2021).

Work motivation, defined through intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Deci & Ryan, 2000), was also notably high, indicating a well-motivated workforce. This finding aligns with Dabamona et al. (2023 and Samsudin (2006) understanding of motivation as an external influence that drives employees to fulfill their work needs and aspirations.

The study's regression analysis unveiled significant direct effects of interpersonal communication and behavior on work engagement, corroborated by the mediation effect of work motivation. This suggests that while interpersonal dynamics directly influence engagement, the underlying motivational aspects amplify this relationship. Such findings echo Firzly et al. (2022) research, highlighting the mediating role of motivation between interpersonal behavior and various work outcomes.

Interestingly, the impact of interpersonal behavior on work engagement emerged as paramount, suggesting its critical role in fostering an engaging work environment. Nevertheless, interpersonal communication and work motivation also contributed significantly to engagement, underscoring the complexity of organizational dynamics where different elements interact synergistically to enhance employee engagement.

This study reinforces the interconnectedness of interpersonal behavior, communication, and work motivation in shaping work engagement, aligning with findings from Tong and Kram (2012)

and Amalia et al. (2023), who underscored the significant influence of interpersonal communication on various work-related outcomes. The mediating role of work motivation, particularly in bridging interpersonal communication with work engagement, highlights the nuanced mechanisms through which organizational behaviors influence employee engagement.

Further, Interpersonal behavior, grounded in the principles of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ayu & Ulung, 2023; Deci & Ryan, 2000), is crucial in shaping the social dynamics of the workplace. Social exchange theory highlights the critical role of such behaviors in nurturing meaningful connections, which form the foundation of a robust and flourishing organizational culture. (Daniel Goleman, 2007; Gresham & Elliott, 1993). These relationships, characterized by mutual respect and understanding, enhance work motivation, indirectly bolstering work engagement.

Empirical evidence underscores the direct and indirect influence of interpersonal communication and behavior on work engagement, mediated by work motivation (Chichirez & Purcărea, 2018; Schaufeli et al., 2002). This nuanced relationship highlights the complexity of organizational dynamics, where communication and behavior serve as the linchpins in employee engagement. The findings resonate with the theoretical propositions of Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzales-Roma, and Bakker (2002), work engagement is described as a gratifying and enriching work-associated mental state, marked by energy, commitment, and deep involvement in one's tasks.

This analysis is further corroborated by studies that elucidate the mediating role of work motivation in the correlation between interpersonal dynamics and employee engagement (Bakker, 2010; Federman, 2009). These studies elucidate the pathways through which interpersonal interactions foster an environment that nurtures motivation and, by extension, engagement. The implications of this discourse extend beyond academic theorization, offering practical insights for organizational leadership in strategizing communication and behavioral interventions to enhance employee engagement.

These insights contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing nurturing positive interpersonal interactions and a supportive work environment to cultivate higher employee engagement and motivation. The findings advocate for organizational strategies prioritizing communication and behavior enhancement programs to bolster employee motivation and engagement, thereby propelling organizational performance and satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the investigation conducted within the Department of Labor and Transmigration in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, elucidates the intricate relationships among interpersonal communication, behavior, work motivation, and engagement within an organizational framework. Our study reveals a mature and well-educated workforce actively engaging in their work environment. By operationalizing interpersonal communication through self-disclosure, feedback, and harmony, and aligning interpersonal behavior with constructs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, our research offers a nuanced understanding of the dynamics that foster a positive work culture.

The empirical findings highlight the pivotal role of interpersonal dynamics in enhancing work engagement, significantly mediated by work motivation. This underscores a complex interplay where both direct and indirect influences of interpersonal communication and behavior converge to augment work engagement. Notably, the paramount impact of interpersonal behavior on engagement, alongside the substantial roles of interpersonal communication and motivation, delineates a multifaceted organizational landscape where synergistic interactions propel employee engagement to new heights.

Moreover, the regression analysis reveals significant effects and the mediating role of work motivation between interpersonal dynamics and work engagement. This extends our understanding of how motivational factors intricately bridge interpersonal exchanges with employee engagement outcomes. These findings, consistent with broader academic discourse, affirm the essentiality of fostering robust interpersonal communications and behaviors within the workplace to cultivate a highly motivated and engaged workforce.

The research significantly contributes to the scholarly conversation on workplace dynamics, offering evidence-based insights into how interpersonal aspects influence work engagement. It advocates a strategic focus on enhancing organizational and interpersonal communication and behavior to bolster work motivation and engagement. This holistic approach enriches the theoretical understanding of employee engagement and serves as a practical guide for organizational leaders aiming to enhance work culture and performance through targeted communication and behavioral strategies.

Our study's insights into the mediating role of work motivation in the relationship between interpersonal dynamics and employee engagement highlight the layered complexity of organizational behaviors. They call for a strategic emphasis on nurturing positive interpersonal

interactions and a supportive work environment, which is crucial for cultivating higher levels of employee engagement and motivation. These strategies are instrumental in propelling organizational performance and satisfaction, marking a significant contribution to the corpus of knowledge on the impact of organizational communication and behavior on employee engagement.

## LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The study employed a robust methodological framework; however, several limitations should be acknowledged. The participant sample consisted of only 100 individuals, which, while statistically adequate, restricts the applicability of the results to broader and more varied populations. Furthermore, data collection within a single organizational setting limits the study's ability to reflect the diversity of interpersonal dynamics and motivational factors across distinct sectors or workplace cultures. Lastly, the cross-sectional nature of the research design prevents the establishment of causal links between interpersonal communication, behavior, and work engagement.

Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported measures introduces the potential for response bias, where participants may respond in a manner they perceive as favorable rather than accurate. Lastly, the study focused predominantly on intrinsic motivation factors, potentially overlooking the impact of extrinsic motivators that are also significant drivers of employee engagement and performance.

To address these limitations and extend the scope of the research, future studies could employ a longitudinal design to track changes over time, thereby providing insights into the causal relationships and dynamics of interpersonal communication and behavior in the workplace. Expanding the sample to include multiple organizations across various industries would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Incorporating a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods could also provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interpersonal dynamics at play.

Investigating the role of extrinsic motivators alongside intrinsic ones would offer a balanced view of the factors contributing to work engagement. Additionally, exploring the impact of technological advancements, such as digital communication tools, on interpersonal dynamics and work motivation could provide relevant insights for modern organizational practices.

Through additional analysis and exploration in these key aspects, subsequent studies can expand upon the core discoveries revealed in this research, advancing our knowledge of how personal interactions and professional conduct shape job enthusiasm within today's fast-changing business setting.

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