



The Role of Communication in Improving Employee Performance at PT Semen Padang

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Abstract

Communication is the main thing that must be understood before interacting with other people when entering the world of work. In a company or organization, problems and conflicts that arise are commonplace due to poor communication between superiors and subordinates as well as between employees. Communication conflicts caused by ineffective communication within a company are the background for this research. Therefore, this research aims to examine the form of interpersonal communication in a company and analyze how to increase the effectiveness of communication. The method used is the library study method, namely by searching and collecting data and information related to the effectiveness of communication from various sources such as books and journals, then the next method is the interview method which aims to obtain information based on facts that occur in the world of work. The results of an interview conducted with a public relations officer from PT Semen Padang show that the success of a company is based on the quality of the performance of the human resources within it, without effective communication this quality of performance will not be achieved.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the main factors causing the deterioration of the atmosphere and work climate in an organization or company is the ineffectiveness of the communication established within it. Therefore, communication is a crucial aspect to study before entering the workforce because, in the working world, we must maintain good relationships with many parties, both internal and external. This study focuses on the importance of communication in enhancing the effectiveness of interpersonal communication between superiors and subordinates at PT Semen Padang. Personal issues between superiors and subordinates often arise in an organization or company, potentially hindering and reducing work quality.

The decline or reduction in the quality of an individual's work significantly impacts a company, as the quality of a company is formed by the quality of its employees' work. This serves as the background for the problem study discussed in this research. PT Semen Padang, which serves as the subject of this scientific work, is known for its good reputation and high quality in Southeast Asia. This indicates that the employees there can manage their communication effectively, thereby enhancing their work quality and the company's quality. Due to PT Semen Padang's success in maintaining its quality, the researcher chose this company as a reference to understand how to avoid communication ineffectiveness in the workplace.

To avoid ineffective communication in an organization or company, this research examines the triggers of ineffective interpersonal communication. It will present ways to achieve effective interpersonal communication in an institution based on interviews conducted with a public relations officer from PT Semen Padang. It can be found on PT Semen Padang's website

<https://www.semenpadang.co.id> that PT Semen Padang is a progressing and developing company. This is undoubtedly due to the good and integrity-driven work of its human resources. Despite its success and achievements, PT Semen Padang has likely faced internal and external issues. Therefore, the researcher selected this company for the study and writing of this scientific work, aiming to explore how a successful and developing company like Semen Padang can maintain and improve its communication effectiveness in the workplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication within an organization is a crucial process that ensures all members understand the goals, tasks, responsibilities, and information needed to achieve the organization's objectives. The patterns, roles, and effectiveness of communication within an organization are essential aspects that determine how well communication functions.

There are many communication theories about patterns/roles and effectiveness in communication. This study focuses on interpersonal communication and organizational communication theories to effectively manage an organization. The explanation is as follows:

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is the process of conveying information from one person to another for a specific purpose. It is the exchange of messages, feelings, attitudes, and emotions between two people or in small groups. Interpersonal communication plays a significant role in building interpersonal relationships in both personal and professional environments (Afriyadi, 2015).

In a business context, interpersonal communication between superiors and subordinates greatly affects employee performance. Through interpersonal communication, superiors can provide direction, feedback, and guidance to employees. This influences employee performance and helps employees understand their tasks and responsibilities. Additionally, good interpersonal communication can enhance employee motivation. Superiors who listen and support their employees boost their morale and productivity.

PT Semen Padang is one of the oldest cement companies in Indonesia, established on March 18, 1910. It operates in the cement manufacturing industry, producing various types of cement for both domestic and international construction needs.

Interpersonal communication between superiors and subordinates at PT Semen Padang helps improve work efficiency and effectiveness within the company. Through effective communication, superiors can provide clear directions and instructions to their subordinates, ensuring everyone understands their tasks and responsibilities.

Furthermore, good communication enables subordinates to convey ideas, feedback, or issues they are facing, allowing superiors to provide timely and appropriate solutions. This helps create a responsive and adaptable work environment, essential for supporting overall company performance.

Thus, effective interpersonal communication between superiors and subordinates significantly influences employee performance at PT Semen Padang. Additionally, interpersonal communication plays a key role in building a positive and collaborative corporate culture at PT Semen Padang.

Organizational Communication

Organizational communication is the interactive process of sending, receiving, and exchanging information within an organization. It encompasses all forms of communication, both formal and informal, among members of an organization to create, maintain, and change meanings and relationships within the organization (Widiastuti et al., 2018).

Organizational communication is crucial in a company to prevent misunderstandings among employees, departments, as well as between superiors and subordinates. This communication includes general meetings within the company to evaluate each department's activities and foster better collaboration. Organizational communication functions to motivate employees through direction and

feedback and support decision-making with accurate information. Moreover, through organizational communication, good relationships are established among members, fostering innovation and new ideas that can enhance a company's productivity.

Without organizational communication, a company can face serious issues. Employees may become confused about their tasks and responsibilities, leading to decreased productivity and efficiency. Coordination among departments becomes challenging, increasing the risk of errors and job duplication. Poor communication can also affect employee morale and motivation due to a lack of feedback and support. Additionally, without effective communication, decisions become less accurate and strategic, hindering the company's ability to innovate and respond quickly to market changes.

At PT Semen Padang, organizational communication is used to ensure that information flows effectively throughout the company to prevent misunderstandings that could lead to problems. Moreover, organizational communication at PT Semen Padang helps build a positive corporate image in the eyes of the public. Through the active roles of public relations and the secretariat, the company's values and achievements are effectively communicated to stakeholders and the public.

At PT Semen Padang, interpersonal and organizational communication theories play crucial roles in supporting the company's operations and success. Interpersonal communication helps build strong and harmonious relationships among employees, which is important for teamwork and conflict resolution, as well as enhancing employee morale and motivation.

Simultaneously, organizational communication ensures effective coordination among departments, the provision of clear policies and procedures, and the distribution of strategic information. The role of public relations in strengthening the company's image and maintaining relationships with stakeholders is also a vital aspect of organizational communication, supporting operational efficiency and the company's responsiveness to market changes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method used in this research is a qualitative method. Qualitative research emphasizes analysis and description, focusing on in-depth observation of phenomena. In this method, the researcher acts as an instrument in the collection and interpretation of data, making the research results more subjective and prone to bias (Fadli, 2021). This method is often referred to as naturalistic research because it is conducted in a natural setting. The qualitative approach was chosen by the author based on the consideration that this research is conducted in a natural state.

The project in this research is from PT Semen Padang because the study examines the effectiveness of communication within the working environment of PT Semen Padang. Primarily, this research involves data collection, descriptions, and analysis. The research is conducted by interviewing an employee at PT Semen Padang in West Sumatra. The interview aims to gather information about the communication that occurs within the company and to determine whether the communication among staff in the company is effective or not.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effective Communication from the Perspective of a Public Relations Officer

Communication issues within a company, especially PT Semen Padang, are often caused by the diverse backgrounds of its human resources (HR). These employees are classified based on the following data:

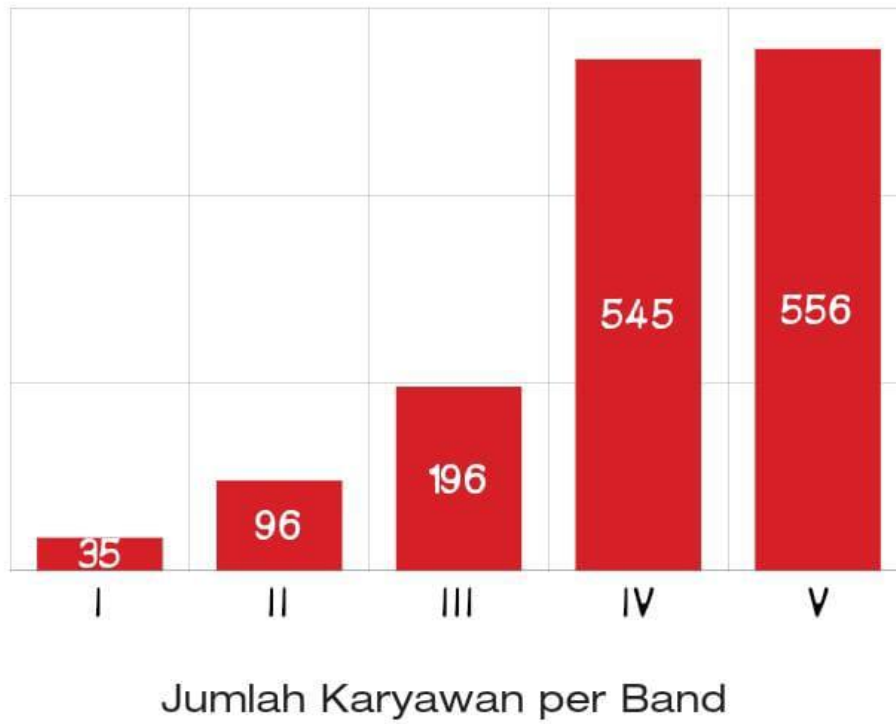


Image 1. Number of PT Semen Padang Employees by Band

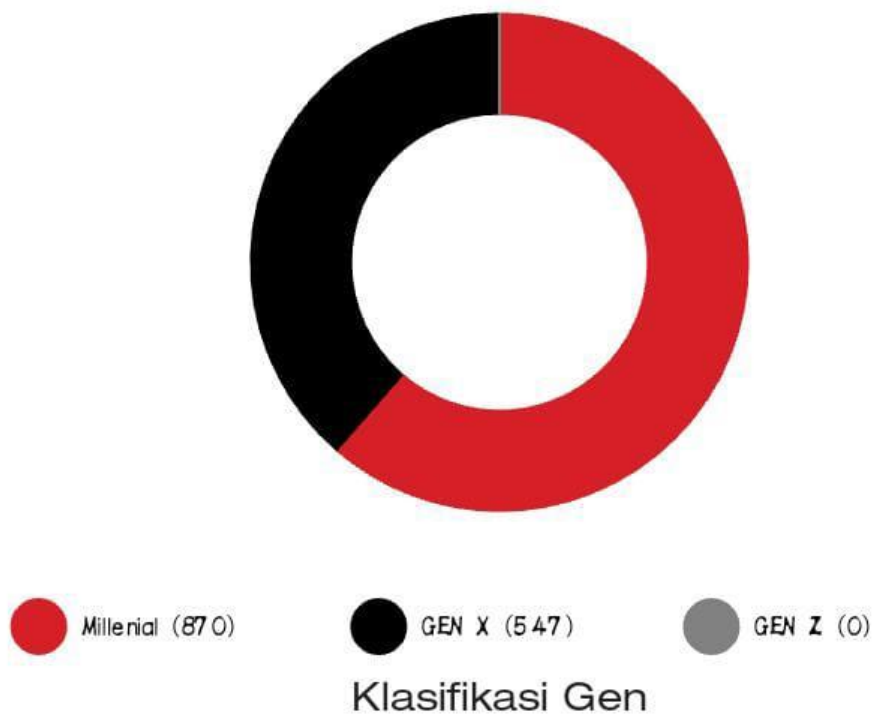


Image 2. Classification of PT Semen Padang Employees by Generation

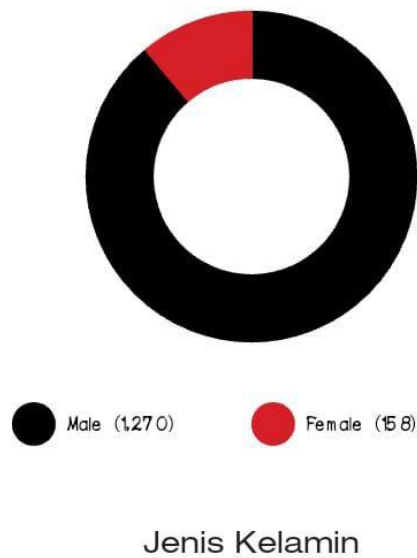


Image 3. Classification of Employees by Gender



Image 4. Classification of Employees by Education

Source of images: [PT Semen Padang Careers](#)

According to the data in Figure 1, PT Semen Padang has a total of 1,428 employees distributed across various bands. Figure 2 shows the generational classification of PT Semen Padang employees based on age and birth year, with 870 millennial employees (red), 547 Gen X employees (black), and no Gen Z employees. Figure 3 categorizes employees by gender, with 1,270 male employees (black) and 158 female employees (red), indicating a male-dominant workforce. Figure 4 classifies employees by education: 544 high school/vocational graduates (gray), 304 diploma holders (yellow), 517 bachelor's

degree holders (black), and 63 master's degree holders (red). This diversity illustrates the varying backgrounds of PT Semen Padang employees, leading to different understandings and perspectives on various issues, which can trigger conflicts within the company.

One of the 1,428 employees at PT Semen Padang is Muhammad Haikal, a member of the Public Relations (PR) unit. As someone who plays a significant role in managing information within the company, a PR officer must also effectively manage communication within the workplace. Internal and external issues often spark conflicts between superiors and subordinates or among employees. The researcher interviewed Haikal, who has worked at PT Semen Padang since September 2023. Despite being relatively new, Haikal's background as a journalist equips him with experience in managing conflicts within an organization or company.

Haikal acknowledged: "One of the most common conflicts in a company is between superiors and subordinates" (Haikal, interview, May 25, 2024).

This reflects issues in interpersonal communication. Besides, conflicts among employees are serious as they affect work quality. The work environment significantly impacts an employee's performance. According to Haikal, during his tenure at PT Semen Padang, he has not encountered any conflicts with colleagues or superiors, indicating a positive and harmonious work environment. However, this does not imply the absence of conflicts, but rather that employees know how to handle them, especially within the PR unit where Haikal works.

Haikal's view that conflicts between superiors and subordinates are common highlights the importance of understanding interpersonal communication. Burhan Bungin (2017) explains that "interpersonal communication is direct personal communication without intermediaries or indirect communication using intermediaries." Simple examples include face-to-face discussions, mobile conversations, and personal correspondence (Megaster, 2023).

Thus, communication is sensitive yet crucial. Each individual has a unique communication style due to different traits and behaviors. Good interpersonal communication is created from positive employee behavior in the organization (Musirin & Irwansyah, 2019).

From the interview with Haikal, it can be understood that PT Semen Padang's Public Relations department resolves issues through personal approaches. These issues not only involve communication problems but also other issues such as declining employee performance. Through these approaches, emotional connections are established between superiors and subordinates or among employees, ensuring smooth communication within PT Semen Padang. Devito (1997) also describes how to enhance the effectiveness of interpersonal communication from a humanistic perspective, as follows:

a) Openness

Openness in interpersonal communication includes three elements. First, an effective communicator needs to be open to the people they interact with. Second, the communicator is expected to be honest in their communication. Third, emotionally acknowledging the feelings of the communicator towards the communicant.

b) Empathy

Empathy means feeling what others feel. In interpersonal communication, a communicator is expected to understand what the other person experiences and narrates, fostering mutual understanding.

c) Supportiveness

Interpersonal relationships are highly effective when both parties support each other. Communication cannot flow smoothly, and the parties cannot be open with each other without mutual support.

d) Equality

Equality here means facing situations equally. Although individuals are not inherently equal, as each has their strengths and weaknesses, recognizing and accepting each other's differences during communication can achieve equality and enhance communication effectiveness.

Based on Devito's suggestions for improving interpersonal communication, it is clear that four elements are crucial when communicating with someone. Haikal mentioned in the interview that he has not faced any serious communication issues during his tenure, indicating that the PR staff and other employees at PT Semen Padang have implemented ways to enhance both the quality and quantity of their interactions. If these methods were not applied, serious problems would likely arise within the company. However, Haikal's statement, "The communication within my work environment is quite good and has never had any serious issues" (Haikal, interview, May 25, 2024), confirms the effectiveness of these methods.

Haikal, being relatively new to the PR department at PT Semen Padang, also mentioned that he strictly adheres to and understands the instructions given by his unit coordinator. This demonstrates the importance of mutual respect between subordinates and superiors. In any organization or company, mutual respect and regard are key to effective communication. This aligns with Covey's five fundamentals for building effective communication, which include: efforts to understand others, the ability to commit, recognizing desires and expectations, willingness to sincerely apologize for mistakes, and demonstrating integrity (Nurrohim & Anatan, 2009).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted by the researcher through interviews and references from various books and journal articles on the effectiveness of interpersonal communication in a company, it can be concluded that it is crucial to understand how to communicate effectively in the workplace. Additionally, one must improve their behavior before entering the professional world. In the workplace, we will encounter many people from different backgrounds, and it is not easy to align perspectives with others. Therefore, communication is the primary skill that must be learned to endure the many pressures of the professional world.

The interview with a PR officer at PT Semen Padang, who has been working for less than a year and has not yet encountered any serious conflicts with others, shows that he is able to establish good communication within the work environment. This indicates that Haikal had adequately prepared his knowledge and understanding of effective communication before entering the professional world.

From this, we can learn that understanding how to communicate is extremely important, although sometimes communication is considered insignificant by some people. In reality, the ability to establish effective communication is proof of one's integrity.

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