

Effectiveness of Interpersonal Communication and Work Engagement of Garuda Indonesia Flight Attendants

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the relationship between the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and work engagement among flight attendants. The population in this study consists of Junior flight attendants at PT. Garuda Indonesia, totaling 248. The sampling technique refers to the accidental sampling model. Data collection methods use an interpersonal communication effectiveness scale and a work engagement scale with a modified Likert scale instrument. From the data analysis results, a correlation was found ($r_{xy} = 0.362$ and $p=0.00$). Thus, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and work engagement among flight attendants at PT. Garuda Indonesia. Effective interpersonal communication is considered one of the key factors in building harmonious work relationships and enhancing the motivation and performance of flight attendants. By using a quantitative approach and survey methods with several Garuda Indonesia flight attendants, it was found that open, empathetic, and trust-based interpersonal communication can significantly improve flight attendants' work engagement in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in the aircraft cabin. The findings of this study are expected to provide input for management in strengthening organizational culture and creating a conducive work environment to support better flight service quality.

Keywords : Interpersonal Communication, Work Engagement.

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of airplanes as a means of transportation for air cargo services has become increasingly important for every country, as it directly supports tourism and business activities both domestically and internationally. Among the companies engaged in air transportation services is PT. Garuda Indonesia, which is a State-Owned Enterprise. In facing the era of globalization and the free market, one of the main things that PT. Garuda Indonesia must prioritize how to ensure that customers/passengers stay and do not switch to other airlines. Additionally, it must be able to compete with foreign airlines as well as domestic airlines. In an effort to expand the market and increase profits, the measures taken by PT. Garuda Indonesia must be based on policies and strategies targeted by management/shareholders, in this case, the government through the Minister of State-Owned Enterprises. In this era of globalization and competition, PT. Garuda Indonesia is required to provide good service to customers. This must be supported by reliable human resources.

Competition in the aviation industry in Indonesia has experienced significant changes since 2002. It can be said that the changes in the competitive landscape are extraordinary. In a short time, many new airlines have entered the Indonesian market. In the past, prospective passengers only knew Garuda, Merpati, Mandala, Susi Air, and Bouraq, but now there are names like Lion Air, Indonesian Airlines, Jatayu, Kartika, Batavia, Adam Air, Citilink, Batik Air, Wings Air, Super Air Jet, Sriwijaya Air, NAM Air and Pelita Air. Moreover, there are foreign competitors like Air Asia, Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Qantas and others that are ready to enliven Indonesia's air traffic.

PT. Garuda Indonesia must face this global free competition with all its efforts if it wants to maintain its existence. Therefore, it must make changes towards a more competitive and quality direction in its management system, especially in service quality. Therefore, the company needs to nurture and maintain an active role of a stable workforce. This means that besides conducting recruitment, hiring, and placement of employees, the company must also be able to maintain and uphold the job engagement of its employees. Flight attendants are the front line and ambassadors of the company, having relatively long direct interaction with customers (passengers). As front liners, flight attendants are required to work even more professionally. It is hoped that the improvement in service will truly be felt by the passengers and will prevent them from turning to other airlines. Ultimately, this will provide a good outcome for the company by increasing revenue and the company's image.

This condition requires the company to have flight attendants who are not only potential but also willing and ready to work. This means that, in addition to being capable and skilled in performing their jobs, they must also be willing to work hard for the benefit of the company. Therefore, what is needed are people who are diligent in their work and capable of delivering quality results, have high confidence and motivation, show great concern for the company, and are able to work hard with loyalty. The above demands can be met by individuals who feel fully engaged in their work and can demonstrate high work involvement in efforts to achieve the company's goals and sustainability.

Increasing employee work engagement is not an easy task. Companies need to pay attention to various factors, such as providing enjoyable facilities and treatment, such as training resources, benefits, adequate salaries, rewards, and so on that align with what their employees desire.

According to Wokas et al. (2022) and Sucahyowati & Hendrawan (2020), work engagement is the level of psychological and emotional connection employees have to their jobs, reflecting how much employees identify themselves with the work and fully dedicate themselves to it. This concept aligns with the definition by Lodahl and Kejner, which emphasizes the importance of internalizing the values of work as part of employees' self-esteem and self-image.

Work engagement should be viewed as a cognitively generalized concept in identifying attitudes related to one's job. A fully engaged individual means that the person enjoys their work. Employees, in this case flight attendants who have very high work engagement, will lean toward the type of work they do and care deeply about that work.

According to (Putri & Anggraini, 2020), work engagement is an individual's psychological identification with their job, where the level of identification affects how work situations become a focal point for individuals and also helps shape their identity. This definition is supported by contemporary research stating that work engagement reflects a strong emotional and psychological connection between employees and their jobs, which significantly influences motivation, dedication, and work performance (Putri & Anggraini, 2020). Employees with high engagement do not only see their job as a main activity in their lives, but also as an important part of their self-image and self-esteem.

In short, work engagement involves the process of internalizing work values that make work a focal point and contribute to the formation of an individual's psychological identity, in line with the perspective of Brown and recent research in the field of organizational psychology and human resources.

Hadi et al. (2020) and Fitriadi et al. (2022) also emphasize the significant influence of work engagement on employee performance and job satisfaction, as indicated by the results of significant statistical tests showing a positive effect of work engagement on performance and job satisfaction. Handling

very important work and presenting it as best as possible is a good input for one's self-image, so that when performing their job, the individual will take it more seriously.

The success of a flight attendant in establishing good relationships and situations is determined by their ability to relate to others, communicate, and collaborate with passengers. In this regard, how communication, especially interpersonal communication, occurs between the flight attendant and the passengers, where the flight attendant learns to get to know someone, understand their needs, and work together to meet those needs.

PROBLEM FORMULATION AND MAIN DISCUSSIONS

Based on the description above, the problem can be formulated as follows: "Is there a relationship between interpersonal communication and work engagement among flight attendants at PT. Garuda Indonesia?"

Purpose

The purpose of this writing is to examine the relationship between interpersonal communication and work engagement among flight attendants at PT. Garuda Indonesia.

To study and analyze to what extent the effectiveness of interpersonal communication affects the level of work engagement of Garuda Indonesia flight attendants, as well as to identify the relationship between these two variables in improving performance and job satisfaction of flight attendants.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Work Involvement

According to Wokas et al. (2020, 2022), it is emphasized that employee work engagement has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Employees who are actively engaged in their work show better performance and contribute positively to the company's development. This study also emphasizes the importance of programs that encourage engagement, such as employee training and development, as well as open discussion forums. This is supported by the opinion of Basuki et al. (2023) who found that giving employees authority in decision-making and opportunities to contribute can significantly enhance work engagement and employee performance.

(Putri, Pratiwi, & Puspasari, 2020; Safitri, 2022) states that work involvement represents the psychological level where an employee identifies themselves with their job or an important role in that job, which impacts their sense of responsibility and commitment to work outcomes. The employees also feel that their job is extremely important to them, which drives them to devote all their energy, talent, knowledge, and time to performing their tasks.

In addition, Nugroho & Ratnawati (2021) emphasize that employee involvement has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, so the opportunities for employees to actively engage in the organization need to be considered. Individuals who are involved in their work are those who take it seriously, where important values are at stake in the work, mood, and feelings influenced by work experiences, as well as individuals who mentally commit themselves to their work.

A high level of work engagement can also lead an employee to be less likely to arrive late and be absent from work, to be willing to work longer than necessary, and to strive to show their best hard work. This work engagement also relates to the employees' attitudes towards their job and

related conditions such as the working environment, relationships with supervisors and colleagues, as well as the employees' expectations for their current job and future.

Individual involvement in work is considered an important part of each individual's psychological life. According to Wijaya & Santoso (2023), work engagement based on the centrality of work in a person's identity positively contributes to employee loyalty and retention. They concluded that increasing engagement can be achieved by strengthening employees' psychological connections with their roles and job responsibilities. This ego involvement relates to the feelings of ownership, responsibility, awareness of valuable efforts, awareness of taking opportunities to grow, and consistently contributes to the interests of the organization or company. Thus, the task reflects the extent of their attention and responsibility, as well as the magnitude of their efforts in completing the task. The statement above is supported by the opinion of Putri & Hermanto (2024) This recent study highlights the relevance of psychological identification dimensions and centrality of work in the context of the millennial generation, finding that this generation's work engagement is greatly influenced by the extent to which work becomes an integral part of their self-identity.

The behavior of individuals often discussed in organizational behavior is work engagement, which emphasizes the performance and responsibilities of individuals at work. The tasks and responsibilities that must be carried out are the tasks or jobs corresponding to the individual's role in the organization. According to Luthans (2020), work engagement arises when employees invest themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally in their tasks, which increases priorities and active participation in work.

Furthermore, the feedback on the behavior of the individuals in their work will make individuals believe that the job is an essential part of themselves.

Work involvement in an organization or company is associated with career advancement for employees and an increase in income as a form of reward. The dedication that a person gives to the company's norms and values can open opportunities to express themselves and have an ego involvement.

Vroom distinguishes three levels of ego involvement: high ego involvement where employees are constantly thinking about their work, medium ego involvement when employees think about their work only when there is an opportunity, and low ego involvement when employees never think about their work. Opinions (Safitri, 2022; Arles Junianto Lase et al., 2023). Employees with high work engagement demonstrate active participation, prioritize their work, and view their work as a significant part of their identity, which positively impacts performance and organizational commitment. This not only reflects whether they are happy or satisfied with their work, but also shows the responsibility that the individual has towards the tasks assigned to them.

Interpersonal Communication

Communication comes from the Latin word 'communication' which means 'notification or exchange of thoughts'. The term 'comunicatio' is derived from the word 'communis' which means 'the same', implying 'shared meaning'. Thus, communication emphasizes that shared meaning is a crucial factor in the effectiveness of interpersonal communication, where a mutual understanding of the conveyed message enhances connectivity and reduces conflict within an organization (Nugroho, 2024).

Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, and feelings that occur between two or more people directly, allowing for reciprocal interaction through verbal and nonverbal messages (DeVito, 2009; Rahmawati, 2022). This communication is dialogical and occurs in a face-to-face context, so that feedback can be received in real-time, which is very important for building a common meaning, shared understanding, emotional closeness, and

harmonious social relationships (Mataputun & Saud, 2020; Hendrawan et al., 2023; Lestari & Nugroho, 2024).

Recent research emphasizes that interpersonal communication plays a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of relationships between individuals, both in social and organizational environments. Important aspects include openness, empathy, two-way responsiveness, as well as the ability to initiate, develop and maintain interactions that are close, warm and productive (Effendi, 2003; Rusdayanti & Suranata, 2023).

In addition, interpersonal communication also plays a role in attitude changes, decision-making, and strengthening social bonds that lead to increased productivity and team work quality. In the digital era, although technology changes communication patterns, face-to-face interpersonal communication remains the most effective form of communication for building deep relationships and mutual understanding (Sahlaya et al., 2024; Aziz, 2019).

In brief, interpersonal communication is the process of direct interaction involving the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages between two or more people, which is very important for building healthy, effective social relationships and positively impacting cooperation and performance in various contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD

The variables used in this study are dependent variables and independent variables. In this study, the variables will be as follows:

1. Dependent variable : Work engagement
2. Independent variable : Interpersonal communication

Work engagement is a level that indicates how far a person can psychologically identify with their work or how important work is to their self-esteem. This work engagement is operationalized through scores on the work engagement scale, which consists of factors such as high expectations from the job, emotional involvement in the job, a strong sense of responsibility for the job, pride in the job, and the last factor being the desire for upward mobility.

Interpersonal Communication is an interaction that takes place in face-to-face situations involving two or more people, in which there is a transmission of messages by one individual and a reception of messages by another individual. This is operationalized through a score on the effectiveness scale of interpersonal communication which consists of aspects of openness, empathy, support, positivity, and equality.

In this research, the population will be the flight attendants of PT. Garuda Indonesia.

Characteristics of the Population:

- a. Junior Flight Attendant.
- b. Work experience 1-3 years.

Based on these characteristics, 248 people were obtained as the population. The number of samples was determined using Harry King's Nomogram. Where from the population of 248 people, a sample of 140 people was obtained.

The samples used employ the Accidental Sampling technique, which is a determination method based on coincidence, meaning anyone who randomly meets the researcher can be used as a sample. The data collection tool in this study uses the Likert scale method of Very Suitable (SS), Suitable (S), Not Suitable (TS), and Very Not Suitable (STS).

The data analysis method used in this study is bivariate correlation, which tests the relationship between one independent variable and one dependent variable. The data collection method uses two scales, namely:

1. Work Engagement Scale

This work engagement scale is formulated based on the discussion expressed by Lodhal and Kejner (Agus Subekti Doelhadi, 1995:23), which includes a high expectation for work, emotional involvement in work, a strong sense of responsibility towards work, a sense of pride in work and a desire for upward mobility.

2. Interpersonal Communication Scale

This work engagement scale is formulated based on the discussion expressed by De Vito (1997:259), which includes aspects of openness, empathy, support, positivity and equality.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Based on the bivariate correlation analysis computation by Karl Pearson using SPSS version 11.5 for Windows, a correlation coefficient of 0.362 was obtained between interpersonal communication and work engagement with $p < 0.05$. It can thus be concluded that H_0 (Null Hypothesis) which states there is no relationship between the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and work engagement is rejected, and H_a (Alternative Hypothesis) which states there is a relationship between the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and work engagement is accepted.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is that there is a relationship between the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and work engagement. Effective interpersonal communication is the key to enhancing the work engagement of Garuda Indonesia flight attendants. Through clear, open and empathetic interactions, flight attendants are not only able to create a harmonious work environment but also feel more motivated and contribute optimally to their duties. The effectiveness of this communication plays a crucial role in building a sense of ownership and loyalty to the company, thus positively impacting service quality and flight safety. Therefore, the development of interpersonal communication skills needs to be a strategic focus in efforts to improve work engagement and overall performance of Garuda Indonesia flight attendants.

The effectiveness of interpersonal communication is a crucial foundation for enhancing flight attendants' work engagement at Garuda Indonesia. Smooth and open communication enables flight attendants to work more synergistically and enthusiastically, which ultimately increases productivity and service quality. By building good interpersonal communication, the company can create a positive work atmosphere and foster flight attendants' sense of responsibility towards their duties. Therefore, improving interpersonal communication skills should be a priority in the human resources development strategy in this aviation industry.

Based on the results of data analysis and discussions that have been carried out, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and work involvement among flight attendants at PT. Garuda Indonesia. In other words, the higher the effectiveness of interpersonal communication possessed by the flight attendants, the better their work involvement will be, and vice versa.

DISCUSSION

Work involvement is a level that indicates how far someone can psychologically identify with their job or how important work is to their self-esteem. Work involvement is crucial for individuals, so that they are willing to take an active role in their work and can generate feedback for themselves, whether from colleagues or from the company. Feedback is an aspect of interpersonal communication, it is an interaction that occurs in face-to-face situations involving two or more people, in which one individual conveys a message and another individual receives that message. With the presence of feedback, individuals feel a beneficial cooperation for both parties.

The research results indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between interpersonal communication effectiveness and work involvement among flight attendants at PT.

Garuda Indonesia. The positive direction of the relationship shows that the higher the effectiveness of interpersonal communication possessed by the flight attendants, the better their work involvement will be. Conversely, the lower the effectiveness of interpersonal communication among employees, the lower the work involvement of those flight attendants will also be.

ADVICE

From the discussion and conclusion, the author attempts to convey several suggestions as follows:

1. Theoretically

The same research was conducted on other parts to get a broader view regarding the relationship between the effectiveness of interpersonal communication and work involvement.

2. Practically

PT. Garuda Indonesia is expected to maintain the flight attendants' work involvement by preserving the effectiveness of the flight attendants' interpersonal communication as well. This can be achieved by providing as many opportunities as possible for flight attendants who wish to advance their careers through high work involvement. Additionally, by providing great hope through rewards that are commensurate with the contributions made to the company, training and development for flight attendants, as well as good additional facilities.

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