



Leadership Communication and Employee Performance: An Empirical Study at PT Herba Emas Wahidatama Purbalingga

Komunikasi Kepemimpinan dan Kinerja Karyawan: Studi Empiris pada PT Herba Emas Wahidatama Purbalingga

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Abstract – Effective communication is a critical leadership competence that influences organizational performance. This research investigates how participative, directive, and supportive leadership communication contribute to employee performance while controlling for employees' educational background, work experience, and age. A quantitative research design was adopted, using a census (saturated sampling) method involving all 96 employees in the production workforce. Descriptive findings indicate that the participative communication style has the highest mean score (3.96), followed by directive (3.53) and supportive (3.37). Regression analysis demonstrates that participative and directive communication significantly improve employee performance, whereas supportive communication does not exhibit a statistically significant effect. Education level has a positive effect, whereas work experience and age show no significant impact. The model explains 73.9% of performance variation ($R^2 = 0.739$). Overall, the findings suggest that participative and directive communication practices play an important role in improving employee coordination, motivation, and productivity, highlighting the importance of strengthening leaders' communication capabilities through continuous organizational development.

Keywords: Leadership Communication, Participative, Directive, Supportive, Employee Performance.

Abstrak – Keberhasilan organisasi sangat dipengaruhi oleh kemampuan pemimpin dalam membangun komunikasi yang efektif dengan karyawan. Penelitian ini menganalisis hubungan antara gaya komunikasi kepemimpinan, yang meliputi gaya partisipatif, direktif, dan suportif, dengan kinerja karyawan di PT Herba Emas Wahidatama Purbalingga. Analisis dilakukan dengan memasukkan tingkat pendidikan, pengalaman kerja, dan usia sebagai variabel kontrol. Penelitian menerapkan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode sensus (sampling jenuh), sehingga seluruh 96 karyawan dijadikan sebagai responden penelitian. Temuan deskriptif menunjukkan bahwa gaya komunikasi partisipatif memiliki nilai rata-rata tertinggi (3,96), diikuti oleh gaya komunikasi direktif (3,53) dan suportif (3,37). Hasil analisis regresi berganda menunjukkan bahwa gaya komunikasi partisipatif dan direktif berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja karyawan, sedangkan gaya komunikasi suportif tidak menunjukkan pengaruh yang signifikan. Tingkat pendidikan berpengaruh positif terhadap kinerja, sementara pengalaman kerja dan usia tidak memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan. Model penelitian mampu menjelaskan 73,9% variasi kinerja karyawan ($R^2 = 0,739$). Secara keseluruhan, hasil penelitian menegaskan bahwa penerapan komunikasi kepemimpinan, khususnya yang bersifat partisipatif dan direktif, mampu meningkatkan koordinasi, motivasi, serta produktivitas kerja. Oleh karena itu, penguatan kompetensi komunikasi pemimpin melalui program pengembangan yang berkelanjutan diperlukan untuk mendukung peningkatan kinerja karyawan.

Kata Kunci: Komunikasi Kepemimpinan, Partisipatif, Direktif, Suportif, Kinerja Karyawan.

INTRODUCTION

The agribusiness sector has undergone a significant transformation in its management systems through the implementation of managerial functions at every stage of the value chain, from upstream to downstream. This development requires effective organizational management in which the communication style of leaders becomes a crucial factor in enhancing employee motivation and performance (Sholikhah, 2021).

Effective leader communication is not only about delivering instructions but also about creating mutual understanding, trust, and emotional connection that influence employees' work behavior and productivity. Human resource management serves as a valuable investment for organizations because effective management enables the achievement of long-term vision, mission, and success. Skilled, motivated, and collaborative employees are key assets that determine organizational effectiveness (Nursin et al., 2024). Within this context, the leader's communication behavior plays a central role in shaping employees' attitudes, coordination, and job satisfaction, all of which directly affect organizational performance outcomes.

An effective leader communication style focuses on clarity, empathy, openness, and the ability to provide constructive feedback. These communication attributes empower employees, build trust, and foster a supportive work environment that enhances performance and commitment (Riwukore et al., 2021). Conversely, poor or inappropriate communication styles can lead to misunderstanding, decreased motivation, and low job satisfaction, eventually resulting in fluctuating work performance and decreased productivity.

Previous studies have confirmed the influence of leadership communication on employee performance. Nugroho et al. (2021) demonstrated that organizational communication and leadership processes significantly shape stakeholder perceptions and institutional effectiveness, highlighting communication as a central managerial instrument in achieving organizational goals. Similarly, Surahman (2020) identified a strong and positive relationship between a leader's communication behavior and employee productivity, with a correlation coefficient of 0.792. Siminto et al. (2024) demonstrated that transformational leadership, supported by effective communication and psychological safety, significantly improved employee

performance through enhanced technological competence. This finding confirms that communication-oriented leadership remains a critical determinant of performance across organizational contexts. However, empirical validation within agribusiness manufacturing sectors remains limited, indicating a contextual research gap.

PT Herba Emas Wahidatama, a herbal product company operating since 2012 in Purbalingga, produces honey, herbal tea, and olive oil. Preliminary observations revealed performance fluctuations among production employees, reflected in varying task completion times and inconsistent production outputs. These findings indicate the need for an in-depth evaluation of the leader's communication style as a potential factor influencing employee performance. The selection of PT Herba Emas Wahidatama as the research location is based on several strategic considerations. First, the company operates within the downstream agribusiness sector, specifically herbal manufacturing, which requires strict standardization, precision, quality control, and inter-unit coordination. In such an operational environment, leader communication plays a critical role in minimizing errors, ensuring product safety compliance, and maintaining efficiency. Second, the production division involves labor-intensive processes with heterogeneous educational backgrounds, making communication clarity and adaptability central determinants of performance effectiveness. Third, as a growing regional herbal enterprise in Central Java, the company represents a relevant case for examining leadership communication practices within small-to-medium agribusiness manufacturing firms that face increasing market competition and regulatory standards.

In today's competitive manufacturing environment, communication effectiveness has become a strategic tool for improving organizational performance. In the production division of herbal industries, where coordination, precision, and compliance with standards are essential, the leader's ability to communicate clearly and empathetically determines the efficiency of team collaboration and the accuracy of task execution. Therefore, understanding how different leader communication styles such as directive, participative, and supportive affect employee performance is crucial for enhancing both individual productivity and overall organizational success.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method section of this study provides a transparent and systematic description of the procedures and analytical techniques employed to ensure the reliability and replicability of the research. This section explains the study design, research sample, and data analysis methods used to examine the influence of leader communication styles on employee performance.

Study Design

This research employed a quantitative observational study design with a cross-sectional approach to analyze the effect of leader communication styles on employee performance at PT Herba Emas Wahidatama, Purbalingga. The study was conducted during February–March 2025, using structured questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument.

Research Sample

The study involved 96 employees working of PT Herba Emas Wahidatama. A saturated sampling technique was applied, whereby all members of the population were included as research respondents. This technique was selected due to the relatively small population size, allowing comprehensive representation of production employees. Inclusion criteria consisted of employees actively working in the production division and willing to participate in the study. All respondents provided informed consent prior to data collection.

Research Variables and Data Collection

The research variables consisted of leader communication styles as the independent variables, including directive communication (X1), participative communication (X2), and supportive communication (X3). To control for demographic and professional characteristics that may influence employee performance, education level (X4), work experience (X5), and age (X6) were included as control variables. The dependent variable was employee performance (Y), which was measured based on employees' ability to achieve organizational goals through indicators such as work quality, productivity, responsibility, timeliness, and cooperation.

Tabel 1. Operational of Research Variables

Variable Type	Variable	Code	Indicators
Independent Variable	Directive Communication	X1	Clarity of instruction; Monitoring performance; Task focus
	Participative Communication	X2	Two-way communication; Idea sharing; Joint problem-solving
	Supportive Communication	X3	Empathy; Feedback; Encouragement and recognition
Control Variables	Education Level	X4	SMA/SMK; Diploma; Bachelor
	Work Experience	X5	<3 years; 3–5 years; 6–8 years; >8 years
	Age	X6	21–30 years; 31–40 years; >40 years
Dependent Variable	Employee Performance	Y	Work quality; Timeliness; Responsibility; Initiative

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize respondent characteristics and describe the distribution of research variables. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of directive, participative, and supportive communication styles on employee performance, while controlling for education level, work experience, and age. Statistical significance was determined at $p < 0.05$. The data analysis process followed several common stages:

1. Data cleaning, including checking data completeness, accuracy, and consistency.
2. Data exploration, conducted through descriptive statistics such as mean and frequency distributions to identify patterns and trends.
3. Descriptive analysis, used to summarize the basic characteristics of respondents and variables.
4. Inferential analysis, involving multiple linear regression to test hypotheses and estimate the relationships between variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents at PT Herba Emas Wahidatama, including gender, age, education level, and work tenure, which provide an overview of the workforce profile involved in this study.

Table 2. Characteristic Respondent

Characteristic	Category	Number of Employees	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	95	99
	Female	1	1
Age	21–30 years	51	53
	31–40 years	24	25
	41–50 years	15	16
	> 50 years	3	3
Education level	Senior High School/ Vocational School	79	82
	Diploma/ Bachelor's Degree	17	18
Work Tenure	< 3 years	10	10
	3–5 years	19	20
	6–8 years	51	53
	> 8 years	16	17

Resource: Primary Data, 2025.

Based on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, it can be observed that the majority of employees in the production division are male, representing 99% (95 individuals) of the total respondents. This dominance reflects the nature of production work, which often requires greater physical strength and endurance, making it more suitable for male workers. Meanwhile, only 1% (1 individual) are female employees, indicating that female participation in production roles remains limited due to the physical demands of the job.

In terms of age distribution, most respondents fall within the 21–30 years age group (53%), followed by the 31–40 years group (25%). This composition suggests that the workforce in the production division is dominated by young and productive employees who possess high energy, adaptability, and openness to learning factors that are essential for effective communication and responsiveness to managerial feedback. The presence of younger employees also facilitates two-way communication with leaders, as they are generally more receptive to participative and supportive communication styles.

Regarding educational background, a large proportion of respondents hold a senior high school or vocational school qualification (82% or 79 individuals). This is typical in the manufacturing sector, where many roles require technical skills and

hands-on experience rather than advanced academic qualifications. Only 18% (17 individuals) have higher education degrees (Diploma or Bachelor's), most likely occupying supervisory or technical positions that involve coordination and communication with both management and workers. This educational composition implies that effective leader communication should emphasize clarity, simplicity, and feedback orientation to ensure messages are well understood by all employees.

For work tenure, the majority of employees have worked for 6–8 years (53%), reflecting a relatively high level of loyalty and organizational familiarity. This tenure distribution indicates that most employees have an established understanding of production processes and company standards. Meanwhile, employees with 3–5 years of service (20%) and more than 8 years of service (17%) demonstrate a balanced composition between experienced and newly trained workers. The 10% of employees with less than three years of experience represent new entrants adapting to the organizational culture and leader communication patterns.

Overall, these characteristics reveal that the company's production division has a stable and mature workforce dominated by young, technically skilled, and loyal employees. This demographic profile provides a supportive foundation for effective leader–employee communication, as employees are generally capable of responding positively to directive, participative, and supportive communication styles. Such conditions enable leaders to tailor their communication approaches to enhance coordination, understanding, and ultimately, employee performance in achieving production targets.

Implementation of Leader Communication Style

The descriptive analysis results indicate that the participative communication style dominates the communication behavior of leaders in the production division, with an average score of 3.96. This finding suggests that leaders at PT Herba Emas Wahidatama actively engage employees in operational discussions and decision-making processes. The participative communication style is reflected in two-way communication practices, open dialogue between supervisors and employees, regular feedback sessions, and transparent recognition of employee achievements. Such communication fosters collaboration, increases

trust, and enhances employee commitment to achieving production goals.

The directive communication style ranks second, with an average score of 3.53. This style is characterized by leaders providing clear and structured instructions, maintaining close supervision, and emphasizing task completion accuracy, especially in production processes that require strict compliance with herbal product standards and safety protocols. Although directive communication may appear top-down, it remains essential in ensuring operational consistency, efficiency, and adherence to quality control procedures.

Meanwhile, the supportive communication style has the lowest implementation level, with an average score of 3.37. This communication approach is selectively applied, particularly toward experienced employees and senior supervisors who demonstrate consistent performance and self-discipline. Supportive communication is manifested through empathy, motivational encouragement, and the provision of constructive feedback to help employees overcome work-related challenges. While less dominant overall, this style contributes significantly to creating a positive emotional climate and strengthening employee morale.

Overall, the implementation pattern reveals that leaders combine participative, directive, and supportive communication styles depending on the situation and employee characteristics. The predominance of participative communication aligns with the company’s effort to foster involvement and shared responsibility, while the directive style ensures operational precision. The balanced use of these communication approaches enhances mutual understanding, coordination, and ultimately contributes to improved employee performance across production activities.

The Effect of Leader Communication Style on Employee Performance

The validity and reliability tests confirmed that all research instruments met the required standards, with r-count values greater than r-table (0.202) and Cronbach’s Alpha values above 0.60, indicating that the questionnaire items were valid and reliable. Classical assumption tests also showed that the data were normally distributed (Asymp. Sig. = 0.200 > 0.05), free from multicollinearity (VIF < 10), and had no indication of heteroscedasticity. The results of the

multiple linear regression analysis produced the following equation:

$$Y = 0,091 + 0,160X1 + 0,097X2 + 0,009X3 + 0,055X4 - 0,007X5 - 0,015X6$$

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients

Variable	Coeffisien	Sig.
Constanta	0,091	0,00
Participative Communication (X1)	0.160	0.000
Directive Communication (X2)	0.097	0.000
Supportive Communication (X3)	0.009	0.610
Education Level (X4)	0.055	0.000
Work Experience (X5)	-0.007	0.180
Age (X6)	-0.015	0.460
R ²	0.739	
F	28.564	0.000

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2025)

The results indicate that the participative communication style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.160, p < 0.05$). This finding aligns with the notion that participative communication enhances employee involvement in decision-making, fosters two-way dialogue, and increases job ownership. Leaders who listen actively, encourage ideas, and maintain open communication channels are more likely to boost motivation, coordination, and productivity among production employees.

The directive communication style also shows a positive and significant influence ($\beta = 0.097, p < 0.05$). Although directive communication tends to be task-oriented, in the context of the herbal manufacturing industry, it plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with operational standards, product safety, and production efficiency. Clear and structured communication from leaders minimizes errors, reduces uncertainty, and enhances employees’ understanding of their tasks, ultimately leading to improved performance outcomes.

On the other hand, the supportive communication style does not have a significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.009, p > 0.05$). This may be attributed to the production environment’s high level of standardization, where task precision and procedural adherence are prioritized over emotional support or interpersonal closeness. Nonetheless, supportive communication remains important in maintaining employee morale and reducing stress, even if its direct statistical impact on performance is limited.

Among the control variables, education level has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.055$, $p < 0.05$), confirming that formal education contributes to employees' ability to comprehend operational procedures and apply technical skills effectively. In contrast, work experience ($\beta = -0.007$, $p > 0.05$) and age ($\beta = -0.015$, $p > 0.05$) do not show significant effects. This may be because standardized operating procedures and technological systems in the company minimize the role of seniority, emphasizing continuous learning and adaptability instead.

Simultaneously, all independent variables significantly influence employee performance ($F = 28.564$, $p < 0.05$), with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.739, indicating that 73.9% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by the leader's communication styles and employee characteristics. This high level of explanatory power demonstrates that effective communication from leaders, especially participative and directive communication plays a critical role in enhancing employee performance of PT Herba Emas Wahidatama.

Managerial Implication

The findings of this study provide several significant implications for the management of PT Herba Emas Wahidatama, particularly regarding the enhancement of internal communication practices in the production division. The strategic integration of participative and directive leader communication styles has proven to be the most effective combination for improving employee performance in the herbal manufacturing sector. This balanced approach enables leaders to maintain operational discipline and compliance with quality standards while simultaneously encouraging collaboration, feedback exchange, and employee involvement in decision-making processes (Robbins & Judge, 2022; Yukl, 2020).

Management should prioritize the development of structured communication capability programs aimed at improving leaders' interpersonal and message-delivery skills. These programs could include internal communication workshops, industry-specific certifications, and formal mentoring systems designed to enhance clarity, empathy, and motivational language in

communication (Keyton, 2021). Effective leader communication not only reduces misinterpretations in operational tasks but also fosters a climate of trust and mutual respect, which in turn positively influences work motivation and job performance (Men & Yue, 2019).

Furthermore, the company should strengthen its competency-based job placement and development system, considering factors such as education, technical expertise, and communication adaptability. Assigning employees to positions that align with their communication and technical competencies can enhance coordination, teamwork, and task accuracy (Luthans, 2011). In addition, PT Herba Emas Wahidatama should design clear career progression pathways that integrate communication effectiveness as part of performance evaluation criteria. This would encourage employees and supervisors to continuously refine their communication practices in line with organizational goals (Gao & Jiang, 2023).

Finally, management should implement a transparent recognition and reward system to reinforce positive communication behaviours and acknowledge employees' contributions toward achieving production targets. Recognition based on collaborative communication and performance achievements strengthens employee morale and supports the creation of a high-performance culture (Hackman & Johnson, 2019). By embedding participative and directive communication as core managerial competencies, the company can build a work environment that is both communicative and performance-oriented critical for maintaining competitiveness in the dynamic herbal production industry.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the leader communication styles significantly influence employee performance of PT Herba Emas Wahidatama. The results show that participative and directive communication styles have a positive and significant impact on employee performance,

while the supportive communication style has no significant effect. This indicates that clear, structured, and interactive communication from leaders enhances coordination, motivation, and productivity among employees. The findings also reveal that education level positively affects performance, whereas work experience and age do not. This suggests that effective communication and adaptability are more important than seniority in achieving high performance. The study emphasizes that developing leaders' communication competence is essential for improving employee performance and organizational productivity. By combining participative and directive communication, the company can build a balanced work environment that promotes efficiency, engagement, and sustainable competitiveness in the herbal manufacturing sector.

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Limitation

First, the research adopted a cross-sectional design conducted within a limited period (February–March 2025), which restricts the ability to establish strong causal relationships between leader communication styles and employee performance. A longitudinal approach would provide deeper insight into dynamic communication processes and long-term performance effects. Second, the study was confined to a single organization PT Herba Emas Wahidatama, specifically the production division thereby limiting

external validity and generalizability. Organizational context, managerial systems, and industry characteristics may differ across firms, which suggests that caution is needed when generalizing the findings. Future research should incorporate multi-site or comparative studies. Third, data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, which may introduce common method bias and subjective perception bias. Employee performance was not measured using objective indicators such as productivity records or supervisor evaluations. Integrating multi-source data would enhance measurement accuracy and construct validity. Finally, although the model explains 73.9% of the variance in performance, other relevant variables such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, or work climate were not included. Expanding the conceptual framework with mediating or moderating variables would provide a more comprehensive understanding of performance determinants.

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