

The Role of Interpersonal Communication in Employee Relationships at STIE Yasa Anggana

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of interpersonal communication in building relationships between individual employees (staff) at STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut. Using a descriptive qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation of 13 informants from various work units, this study explores the forms of interpersonal communication, factors that influence its effectiveness, and obstacles that arise in work interactions. The analysis uses indicators of interpersonal communication effectiveness according to Joseph A. DeVito, namely openness, empathy, support, positive attitude, and equality. The results of the study indicate that interpersonal communication plays a significant role in building harmonious work relationships, improving coordination, and strengthening emotional bonds between employees. However, various obstacles were found such as a lack of information transparency, the dominance of informal communication, emotional sensitivity, and minimal support between units. This study confirms that effective interpersonal communication is an important foundation for creating collaboration and a positive work climate in the campus environment. These findings are expected to be the basis for improving formal communication practices, increasing interpersonal competence, and strengthening a supportive work culture.

Keywords: Interpersonal Communication, Inter-Individual Relationships, STIE Yasa Anggana Garut

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INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal communication is a crucial element in creating harmonious working relationships within an organization. Successful coordination, collaboration, and the achievement of organizational goals depend heavily on how employees interact, share information, and develop mutual understanding. However, in reality, interpersonal communication is not always effective and often triggers various problems related to interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

Interpersonal interaction among staff on the STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut campus is a crucial part of daily work activities. It supports a variety of services, including academic services, general administration and finance, and student affairs. Relationships built through conversation, discussion, and sharing experiences can strengthen a sense of unity and improve the quality of service to students, faculty, and colleagues. Furthermore, good communication between staff also helps create a comfortable work environment, boosting morale and employee satisfaction.

However, in practice, employee communication is not always perfect. Research has revealed various phenomena that indicate that interpersonal communication among employees at STIE Yasa Anggana Garut is not yet optimal. The following is data from interviews with 13 informants from various units, including the Academic, Finance and General Administration, Student Affairs and Public Relations, Student Affairs Institute (LPM), Student Affairs Institute (LPPM), Library Unit, and Computer Lab Unit, regarding interpersonal communication.

Table 1. of Interpersonal Communication Phenomena Between Employees

Aspects of Interpersonal Communication	Percentage
Lack of receiving important information	54%
Information is not made public	77%
Lack of support between employees	69%
Employees feel underappreciated	77%
Lack of facilities or activities supporting communication	69%
Informal communication is very dominant	92%
High level of feeling offended due to communication	85%

Source: Results of Observations and Interviews with Employees of STIE Yasa Anggana Garut, 2025

The data shows that the majority of employees experience limitations in receiving information (54%) and lack of transparency in work communications (77%). The high prevalence of informal communication (92%) and the tendency to be easily offended (85%) indicate complex emotional dynamics in employees' daily interactions. This phenomenon is an important indicator of the need to better understand how interpersonal communication is formed and implemented at STIE Yasa Anggana Garut.

Interpersonal communication is the process of sending and receiving messages between two or more individuals with the goal of building mutual understanding. Devito (2016) explains that effective interpersonal communication is characterized by four elements: feedback, empathy, openness, and a supportive attitude. These elements help shape the quality of interactions between individuals within an organization. This theory is highly relevant to the conditions of educational organizations such as STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut, where staff interaction is necessary to align academic information, general administration and finance, and student services. A lack of openness, a lack of empathy, and the dominance of informal communication can hinder work effectiveness and information accuracy.

In line with this, several previous studies have also emphasized the importance of interpersonal communication in workplace relationships. Research by Risa Larsen et al. (2020) confirms that cultural



differences, message delivery methods, and emotional connections play a crucial role in successful workplace communication. This study also emphasize the values of empathy, sensitivity, and openness contribute to effective communication. Meanwhile, Aleena Ansar (2020) revealed that errors in capturing and interpreting information can lead to misunderstandings that impact the smooth running of professional work. This research emphasizes that understanding the meaning of a message is not simply a technical matter but also involves a process of interpretation between individuals.

Shafira (2025) also stated that communication between coworkers plays a crucial role in improving workplace performance. Effective communication not only accelerates collaboration but also maintains better relationships between employees, increases motivation, creates a more enjoyable work environment, and encourages better results. Furthermore, Arfian's (2025) research states that interpersonal relationships are vital for building and strengthening bonds between management and employees within an organization. With an effective communication strategy, collaboration can be enhanced, conflict can be minimized, and employee participation will be higher.

Although interpersonal communication in the workplace has been widely discussed in previous studies, most existing research focuses on corporate, industrial, or healthcare organizational settings, with limited attention given to interpersonal communication dynamics within higher education institutions, particularly private colleges in regional contexts. Moreover, prior studies tend to emphasize communication outcomes such as performance or job satisfaction, while relatively few explore how specific dimensions of interpersonal communication effectiveness are experienced and practiced in everyday work interactions.

This study positions itself by examining interpersonal communication among administrative staff within a private higher education institution, namely STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut, using DeVito's interpersonal communication effectiveness framework as an analytical lens. By focusing on how openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitudes, and equality are manifested in daily work relationships, this research offers contextual and empirical insights that complement existing literature and contribute to a deeper understanding of interpersonal communication in non-corporate organizational environments.

The phenomenon occurring at STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut shows similarities with previous research findings, but also demonstrates unique dynamics that have not been widely studied in the context of private universities in the region. From these phenomena and previous findings, it appears that there is a research gap in the form of a lack of in-depth study of how interpersonal communication is formed, occurs, and influences work relationships in the campus environment, especially STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut. Therefore, this research is important to understand how employees build interpersonal relationships, the obstacles that arise, and the factors that influence the quality of their communication.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze interpersonal communication among employees at STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut by focusing on the effectiveness of communication as conceptualized by DeVito. Specifically, this research examines how dimensions such as openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitudes, and equality are reflected in daily work interactions, as well as the factors that influence their effectiveness and the obstacles that hinder communication processes. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of how interpersonal communication functions as a foundation for building work relationships within a higher education organizational context.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND FRAMEWORK

Communication Literature Review

Communication is a process of exchanging information between individuals through a common system, either with symbols, signals or behavior or actions, Purwanto (2006:3). Meanwhile, according to



Boove, communication is a process of sending and receiving messages. The definition of business communication according to the Business Dictionary, business communication is "the sharing of information between people within an enterprise that is carried out for the commercial benefit of the organization" (The act of sharing information between people within a company that is carried out for the commercial benefit of the organization) Suwatno (2019:13)

Interpersonal Communication

Intrapersonal communication is a communication process that occurs within an individual. In the workplace, intrapersonal communication is crucial because it influences how we think, feel, and act in various professional situations. According to Mulyana (2000:73), as explained in Citra Anggraini (2022), interpersonal communication is a type of communication where people meet face-to-face. In this communication, each party can directly receive reactions, both verbally and nonverbally.

DeVito's interpersonal communication framework is not merely descriptive but provides an analytical lens for understanding the quality of interactions within organizational settings. The dimensions of openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitudes, and equality represent core conditions that enable interpersonal communication to function effectively. Openness allows individuals to share information transparently, while empathy facilitates emotional understanding in workplace interactions. Supportiveness and positive attitudes contribute to psychological safety and mutual encouragement, whereas equality reduces hierarchical barriers that may inhibit communication. In this study, these dimensions are used as analytical indicators to interpret how interpersonal communication is practiced among employees at STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut. By examining how each dimension emerges in daily work interactions, this research seeks to reinforce the relevance of DeVito's theory in explaining interpersonal communication dynamics within higher education organizational contexts.

Relationships Between Individuals

Interpersonal relationships are generally defined as a form of encounter or interaction between individuals, whether with individuals or with specific groups, encompassing aspects of interpersonal relationships, ethical and moral values, and other activities. The goal of these relationships is typically to ensure both parties feel happy or satisfied.

According to Effendi (in Apriko, 2025), good interpersonal relationships are crucial for achieving company goals, by effectively implementing human relations principles. Human relations in organizational or institutional management activities fosters teamwork, increases productivity, and provides job satisfaction. In human relations, the most important aspect is how communication fosters motivation.

According to Purwanto (2006:22), when someone communicates with another person, they naturally have a specific goal, including interpersonal communication. There are several goals that can be achieved in interpersonal communication, including:

1. Delivering information
2. sharing experiences
3. Cultivate sympathy
4. Collaborate
5. Telling about disappointment or annoyance
6. Growing motivation

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method. According to Sugiyono (2023), this method is often referred to as a naturalistic method because it is conducted in a natural setting. This method is called qualitative because the data collected and the analysis process are dominated by qualitative

characteristics. Data collection in this study used in-depth interviews as the primary technique, which aimed to obtain detailed insights from informants. In addition, observation and documentation were also used. Through observation, researchers can directly observe and record behavior, interactions, or phenomena occurring in the field, thus obtaining contextual and authentic data. Documentation, meanwhile, was used to collect secondary data. These data sources include archives, notes, reports, photographs, and all official documents relevant to this research. By combining the three methods of interviews, observation, and documentation, researchers were able to obtain more comprehensive data, verify information from various sources, and produce a more valid and accurate analysis of the phenomenon studied. The informants in this study were:

Table 2. Participant Distribution Table Based on Section

No	Section/Unit	Participant Details
1	Academic Section	S1 Study Program, D3 Study Program, BAAK, Sisinfo
2	Finance and Administration Department	Finance Department, Personnel Department, General Administration Section, Household Section
3	Student Affairs Division	Student Affairs and Public Relations Division
4	LPM Section	-
5	LPPM Section	-
6	Library Unit Section	-
7	Computer Unit Section	-

The sampling technique used stratified sampling. According to Iliyasu & Etikan (2021), stratified sampling is a probability-based sampling method that divides the population into several groups (strata). Samples are drawn professionally from each stratum. Each individual in the informant population has an equal chance of being selected for a particular stratum. The calculation resulted in a sample of 13 individuals, who were divided equally among each group.

VALIDITY TEST

Triangulation Method

Data validity was ensured through triangulation. This process involves combining data collection techniques, including interviews, observations, and document reviews, to generate more comprehensive information, verify information from various sources, and increase the accuracy and reliability of research results (Sugiyono, 2020; Moleong, 2018).

Examination by Respondents and Discussion of Results

In addition to triangulation, researchers conducted respondents checks, ensuring that the data and interpretations of the research findings align with the reality on the ground by confirming them directly with participants. Researchers also discussed the research findings with colleagues as an additional validation step (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moleong, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Good relations between people are very important in achieving the goals set by the company. By implementing good Human Relations principles, it will create cooperation between employees in a work team, increase productivity, and gain satisfaction in work.

The success of an organization or company is influenced by interpersonal communication in building good relationships between individual employees. Human resources play a crucial role in a company's success; the performance of each employee significantly impacts its success. To ensure every employee feels comfortable and productive in the workplace, a positive work environment and good communication are required. Good interpersonal relationships can positively impact the quality of each employee's work. Based on observations and in-depth interviews with informants, the results and discussion are as follows:

Interpersonal Communication Between Employees (Staff) at the STIE Yasa Anggana Garut Campus

From the perspective of DeVito's interpersonal communication theory, openness refers not only to the willingness to share information but also to the ability to communicate appropriately within relational and organizational boundaries. Based on data obtained through in-depth interviews with staff from various work units at STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut, the findings indicate that openness in interpersonal communication tends to be selective rather than fully transparent. Employees generally regulate the disclosure of personal or sensitive information in order to maintain emotional harmony and to prevent potential interpersonal conflict in the workplace.

This pattern reflects a communication practice in which openness functions as a protective mechanism rather than as a means of comprehensive information exchange. Although such selective openness helps preserve interpersonal relationships, it simultaneously limits the effectiveness of communication in supporting formal coordination and information transparency within the organization. In this context, openness contributes to relational stability but does not yet optimally support organizational communication effectiveness as conceptualized by DeVito, after conducting interviews with employees (staff) at the STIE Yasa Anggana Garut Campus, it was found that the interpersonal communication that occurred between them results in:

1. **Personal and Emotional Boundaries:** Personal and emotional boundaries are evident in the cautious strategy of communicating complaints or personal issues. Staff tend to only open up to close colleagues or their immediate superiors to protect others' feelings and avoid conflict in the professional sphere. One informant stated, *"If it's a personal problem, I usually only tell it to people close to me, so it doesn't escalate and there are no misunderstandings,"* indicating a selectivity in openness. Another informant also stressed, *"If I share my feelings, I have to be careful, usually only to my superiors so it's more comfortable and there are no misunderstandings,"* so that openness serves as a personal catharsis without disrupting the work dynamic.
2. **Functional Equality:** The principle of functional equality appears to be an important foundation in working relationships at STIE "Yasa Anggana." This equality is not understood as eliminating positions, but rather as a form of respect for the value of individuals above structural positions. This is reflected in the statement of one informant who stated that *"here, position is not what warrants respect. We value people more for the way they work."* This statement emphasizes that respect between individuals is built through contribution and quality of work, not simply a hierarchy of positions. The superior-subordinate relationship also appears highly collaborative in daily activities. Although formal structures remain in place, communication patterns are non-hierarchical, with department or program heads positioned not as figures who create distance, but as dialogue partners. This is reinforced by another informant who stated that *"the structure still exists, but in daily life it is not felt. For example, with the head of the study program, we can chat casually and openly. So if we need a quick solution, we immediately discuss it without hesitation."* This statement

indicates that working relationships operate with a sense of equality and openness. Thus, equality in the STIE "Yasa Anggana" workplace reflects individual-focused interactions. Flowing communication without hierarchical distance makes operational task completion more effective and strengthens mutual respect in working relationships.

3. Emotional Foundation: A bridge of humanistic personal relationships (Empathy and Supportiveness), interpersonal communication not only focuses on tasks but also successfully builds emotional bonds between staff. Empathy at the STIE Yasa Anggana Garut Campus is manifested through concrete actions and verbal expressions of concern that go beyond job demands. Empathy is evident in daily attention, such as asking about conditions and providing flexibility when staff face urgent matters. One informant said, *"if we have a problem, we are always asked how we are and given time to calm down."* This form of tolerance makes work relationships feel more humane. Solidarity is also strongly evident when disasters occur. Another informant said, *"when a staff member is hit by a disaster, everyone immediately helps, not only morally but also materially."* This demonstrates a closeness like kinship. In addition to emotional support, technical support also helps reduce defensiveness at work. As an informant expressed, *"if there is an urgent task, usually someone immediately helps or takes over."* This kind of support creates a sense of security and psychological comfort that forms the basis for cooperative and effective communication between units.
4. Cheerful Atmosphere: A positive attitude as an organizational culture, a positive attitude is not just an individual characteristic but has become a communication culture at STIE "Yasa Anggana". Observations show a warm and humorous work atmosphere. One informant said, *"There are a lot of jokes here, the atmosphere is relaxed, so work is not tense,"* which indicates that the workspace also functions as a social space. When facing problems, colleagues encourage each other without blaming each other. Another informant said, *"if there is a problem, usually friends say: 'That's it, just find a solution, be enthusiastic, or is there anything I can help with'"* so that the focus of communication remains on solutions and motivation. This positive attitude is a catalyst that maintains harmonious relationships, increases work enthusiasm, and minimizes the potential for conflict in the work environment.

Determining Factors of the Effectiveness of Interpersonal Communication Between Employees (Staff) at the STIE Yasa Anggana Garut Campus

1. Information Transparency: One important factor influencing the quality of communication is the extent to which information is conveyed openly. Lack of transparency, both between employees and between management and staff, can lead to gaps in understanding, distrust, and increased rumors in the workplace.
2. Smooth Delivery of Important Information: Effective communication depends heavily on whether employees receive important information completely, clearly, and in a timely manner. Obstacles to formal information delivery can lead to miscommunication, which impacts coordination and task execution.
3. Level of Appreciation and Recognition: Employees who feel appreciated tend to communicate more openly and positively. Conversely, feeling underappreciated can trigger psychological barriers such as reluctance to discuss, withdrawing, and delaying the delivery of information.
4. Communication Facilities and Media: The lack of communication tools, such as regular coordination forums, discussion rooms, and internal information media, also hinders smooth interactions. Minimal communication facilities result in unstructured communication, limited to specific moments, and do not support effective interaction.
5. Dominance of Informal Communication: Staff's heavy reliance on informal communication (office

gossip, casual conversations, or informal chat groups) significantly impacts communication effectiveness. When informal communication dominates, the information received is often inaccurate, leading to misunderstandings.

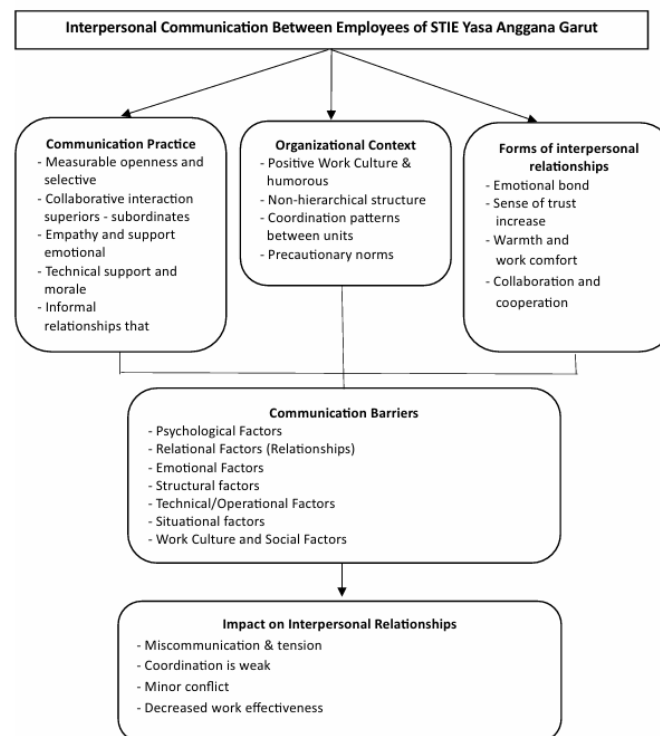
6. **Organizational Structure:** A clear organizational structure and defined communication flow so that messages are easily conveyed.
7. **Attitudes, Emotions, and Interpersonal Sensitivity:** Feelings of irritability, a less assertive communication style, and a lack of empathy are factors that directly affect the quality of interpersonal communication. Aggressive, passive, or overly direct (blunt) communication can trigger conflict and hinder smooth interactions.
8. **Physical and Psychological Conditions:** High workload, deadline pressure or conflict between staff can hinder communication.
9. **Work Culture and Organizational Climate:** An organizational culture that is less open, less collaborative, or tends to be hierarchical makes employees feel uncomfortable communicating freely. An unsupportive organizational climate can reduce the effectiveness of communication and interpersonal relationships.
10. **Employee Communication Competence:** An individual's ability to convey messages clearly, listen effectively, demonstrate empathy, and use appropriate nonverbal language contributes to the success of interpersonal communication. Employees with poor communication skills are more prone to miscommunication.

Obstacles that Arise in the Communication Process at the STIE Yasa Anggana Garut Campus

Based on interviews and observations, it was found that interpersonal relationships in the workplace still face several obstacles that recur in various contexts. This finding was obtained through a data reduction process of answer patterns that describe communication difficulties, feelings of discomfort, and psychological and structural barriers experienced by respondents in interacting with coworkers and superiors.

1. **Psychological Factors:** Feelings of reluctance in expressing opinions, lack of self-confidence in communication and previous negative experiences, such as being discouraged or ignored.
2. **Relational Factors:** Lack of support between coworkers or superiors, and unresolved interpersonal conflicts or tensions.
3. **Emotional Factors:** Feeling underappreciated in interactions, offensive remarks, and the inability to understand other people's conditions.
4. **Structural factors:** Job hierarchy that creates communication distance, organizational culture that does not support open communication, and lack of forums or communication spaces.
5. **Technical/Operational Factors:** Inadequate communication facilities (eg work platform does not support)
6. **Situational factors:** Limited interaction across units, differences in workload and rhythm where colleagues have different levels of busyness making it difficult to find the right time for discussions.
7. **Workplace and Social Cultural Factors:** Differences in cultural backgrounds, which influence how messages are delivered and received, as well as a lack of communication training, such as assertive communication or conflict management.

The following is a diagram model of the role of interpersonal communication in building relationships between individual employees (staff) at STIE "Yasa Anggana" Garut:



Although the findings demonstrate the presence of empathy, supportiveness, and positive interpersonal interactions among employees, these elements predominantly emerge within informal and personal communication contexts. From an analytical standpoint, effective interpersonal communication according to DeVito requires that openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitudes, and equality operate consistently within both informal and formal organizational structures.

The dominance of informal communication, limited transparency of information, and varying levels of perceived appreciation indicate that interpersonal communication at STIE “Yasa Anggana” Garut has not yet functioned systematically. Consequently, while interpersonal relationships among staff may appear harmonious, the overall communication process cannot yet be considered fully healthy in supporting sustainable coordination and organizational effectiveness.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings of this qualitative study confirm that interpersonal communication plays a significant role in shaping relationships among employees at STIE “Yasa Anggana” Garut. The results indicate that although interpersonal relationships among staff tend to appear harmonious, the communication process has not yet functioned optimally in a structured and systematic manner. The dominance of informal communication, limited transparency of information, and varying levels of perceived appreciation suggest that interpersonal communication effectiveness remains situational rather than organizational. From the perspective of DeVito’s interpersonal communication framework, this condition reflects a partial fulfillment of communication effectiveness dimensions, where emotional closeness exists but has not been fully supported by formal communication structures.

Based on the research findings, several practical recommendations can be proposed to improve interpersonal communication effectiveness at STIE “Yasa Anggana” Garut. First, the institution is encouraged to establish formal communication forums, such as routine coordination meetings or cross-unit discussion sessions, to reduce excessive dependence on informal communication and to ensure the



transparent dissemination of important information. Second, management is advised to develop clear internal communication guidelines that regulate information flow between units, including the roles of supervisors in conveying strategic and operational messages to staff. This policy is expected to minimize information gaps and reduce misinterpretation among employees.

Third, interpersonal communication training focusing on openness, empathy, assertive communication, and emotional management should be provided for employees. Such training can strengthen individual communication competence and support the practical application of DeVito's communication effectiveness dimensions in daily work interactions. Fourth, the institution should implement a recognition and appreciation mechanism, both formal and informal, to reinforce supportive communication and enhance employees' sense of value within the organization. This strategy can foster a more positive organizational climate and encourage constructive interpersonal interactions.

Future researchers are encouraged to expand the scope of analysis by examining interpersonal communication dynamics involving lecturers or students, or by employing comparative approaches across different higher education institutions to enrich theoretical and contextual insights.

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