

Determinants of Village Heads' Managerial Performance: The Role of Interpersonal Communication, Personality, and Work Motivation

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Abstract

Managerial performance of village heads is essential for effective local governance, yet it remains suboptimal due to limited managerial capacity. This study examines the effects of interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation on managerial performance using an integrated causal model. A quantitative explanatory survey was conducted with 115 village heads in Bogor Regency selected through probability sampling. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and analyzed using path analysis to assess direct and indirect relationships. The findings indicate that interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation significantly influence managerial performance, with work motivation as the strongest predictor. Interpersonal communication and personality also positively affect work motivation, although its mediating role is weaker than the direct effects. These results highlight the central role of internal motivation, supported by effective communication and adaptive personality traits, in enhancing managerial performance. This study offers an integrative empirical model of behavioral factors in village governance and contributes to public sector organizational behavior literature.

Keywords:

Managerial Performance, Interpersonal Communication, Personality, Work Motivation, Village Governance



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INTRODUCTION

The managerial performance of public officials is a key determinant of successful governance, particularly at the village government level, which spearheads public service delivery. In the context of decentralization following the implementation of the Village Law, village heads no longer serve solely as administrators but as strategic actors responsible for planning, organizing, directing, and controlling village development. Therefore, the quality of a village head's managerial performance is crucial for determining the effectiveness of local development and improving community welfare. Empirically, various indicators demonstrate that village government performance in Indonesia, particularly in Bogor Regency, still faces serious challenges. Human Development Index (HDI) data shows that Bogor Regency consistently fell below the West Java Province average for the 2021–2023 period.

This situation indicates that development output, largely implemented through village government structures, is not yet optimal. Furthermore, village financial data shows that most villages still rely on government transfers, with only a small proportion able to generate Village Original Income (PADesa) independently. This reflects weak managerial capacity in managing local economic potential.

This phenomenon is reinforced by preliminary survey results, which indicate significant weaknesses in the managerial functions of village heads, including in the areas of organizing (62.6%), directing (57.5%), controlling (43.3%), and planning (33.7%). These findings indicate a

gap between the demands of the village head's strategic role and their actual capacity. From a human resource management perspective, this gap is caused not only by structural factors but also by individual factors such as interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation.

Interpersonal communication plays a crucial role in creating effective coordination, building trust, and ensuring accurate information flow within village organizations. Furthermore, the village head's personality determines how a leader makes decisions, manages conflict, and influences village officials and the community. Meanwhile, work motivation serves as an internal driver that determines the level of energy, perseverance, and commitment in carrying out tasks. These three factors, together, are believed to be key determinants of a village head's managerial performance.

Thus, the issue of village head managerial performance is not only academically relevant in the development of public sector organizational behavior theory but also has significant practical implications for the effectiveness of village development, local economic independence, and improving the community's quality of life.

Research on the determinants of public apparatus performance has grown rapidly in the past decade. A study by Lestari and Abdullah (2022) found that interpersonal communication has a positive and significant influence on the performance of public sector organizations, particularly in improving service quality and work efficiency. This finding is supported by Hadian, Amelia, and Yusuf (2023), who demonstrated that effective communication contributes to successful village development governance by improving coordination and reducing organizational conflict.

In the context of personality, research by Mohammed and Khan (2023) revealed that the personality dimensions of leaders, particularly based on the Big Five Personality approach, influence leadership effectiveness in rural government. Meanwhile, research by Sumarno, Widodo, and Fatimah (2021) confirmed that work motivation has a significant influence on village apparatus performance, particularly in increasing productivity and work commitment. Furthermore, Rahman and Putri (2024) highlighted the importance of village head communication in improving village government performance, although their approach was limited to analyzing direct relationships without considering other psychological variables. Conversely, Fernandes and Shinta (2020) found that work motivation is a key predictor of civil servant productivity, but this has not been specifically examined in the context of village leadership. In general, these studies indicate that interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation are important variables in explaining the performance of public sector organizations. However, the approaches used are still partial and have not been integrated into a comprehensive model capable of explaining both direct and indirect relationships between variables.

Although prior studies have contributed to understanding the performance of public officials, several areas remain open for further exploration. Much of the existing research has focused on public sector employees in general, with limited attention given specifically to village heads, who hold a distinctive role as both local political leaders and administrative managers. In addition, earlier studies have often examined interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation separately, which may limit a comprehensive understanding of how these factors jointly influence managerial performance. While quantitative approaches have been widely used, there is still room to further contextualize empirical findings within the specific setting of village governance. Moreover, the linkage between empirical results and their practical implications for improving village head performance could be more explicitly articulated. In light of these considerations, this study seeks to offer a more integrated perspective by examining the relationships among interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation within a single analytical framework. This approach is expected to provide a more nuanced understanding of the determinants of managerial performance in the context of village government. Based on these gaps, this study aims to analyze and explain the influence of interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation on village head managerial performance, both directly and indirectly through mediating mechanisms.

Specifically, this study has several main objectives:

1. To test the direct influence of interpersonal communication on the managerial performance of village heads.
2. To analyze the influence of personality on managerial performance.
3. To examine the role of work motivation as an intervening variable in the relationship between interpersonal communication and personality on managerial performance.

4. To develop an empirical model that comprehensively explains the causal relationships between variables.

The novelty of this research lies in several key aspects. First, this study places the village head as the primary focus of analysis, a topic rarely explored in the public management literature. Second, this study develops an integrative model based on path analysis that examines the simultaneous relationships between interpersonal communication, personality, work motivation, and managerial performance. Third, this research uses a quantitative analysis method. Therefore, it is expected to make a significant contribution to both the development of public sector organizational behavior theory and the practice of village government management in Indonesia.

Managerial performance is a central concept in the study of organizational management, particularly in the public sector, which demands accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness of service delivery. Managerial performance refers to an individual's ability to carry out management functions such as planning, organizing, directing, and controlling to achieve organizational goals (Colquitt et al., 2019). In the context of village government, the village head has strategic responsibilities in managing resources, leading village officials, and ensuring the optimal implementation of public policies. Empirical research shows that managerial performance in the public sector is influenced not only by structural factors but also by individual behavioral and psychological factors. This aligns with the organizational behavior approach, which emphasizes the importance of interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects in determining work effectiveness (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Therefore, understanding the determinants of a village head's managerial performance requires simultaneously considering the variables of interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation.

Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging information, meaning, and emotions between individuals, which plays a crucial role in fostering coordination and collaboration within an organization. In the context of village government, effective interpersonal communication enables the village head to build harmonious working relationships with village officials, the community, and other stakeholders. Research by Lestari and Abdullah (2022) shows that interpersonal communication has a positive and significant impact on the performance of public sector organizations. Effective communication improves task clarity, accelerates decision-making, and reduces organizational conflict. These findings are supported by Hadian et al. (2023), who stated that interpersonal communication contributes to the success of village development governance by improving coordination and transparent information flow. Furthermore, interpersonal communication plays a role in shaping work motivation by creating a supportive work environment. According to DeVito (2019), open and empathetic communication can increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Thus, interpersonal communication not only directly influences performance but also has indirect effects through psychological variables such as work motivation.

Personality is a relatively stable psychological characteristic that influences how individuals think, feel, and behave. In the context of leadership, personality is a crucial determinant of a leader's effectiveness in managing an organization. The Big Five Personality Model, encompassing openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, has been widely used to explain leadership behavior in various organizational contexts (McCrae & Costa, 2008). Research by Mohammed and Khan (2023) shows that personality dimensions significantly influence leadership effectiveness in rural governance. Leaders with high levels of conscientiousness and emotional stability tend to have better managerial performance due to their ability to manage work pressure, make rational decisions, and build positive working relationships. In the context of village heads, a mature and stable personality is essential for dealing with the complexity of social, political, and economic issues at the local level. Personality also plays a role in shaping work motivation and leadership style, which ultimately impacts overall organizational performance.

Work motivation is an internal factor that drives individuals to act and strive to achieve specific goals. Motivational theories such as Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) explain that individuals will demonstrate optimal performance if they have intrinsic drive and clear expectations regarding work outcomes. Research by Sumarno et al. (2021) shows that work motivation has a significant influence on village apparatus performance. Individuals with high work motivation tend to be more productive, have a strong commitment, and are able to complete tasks more effectively. This aligns with the findings of

Fernandes and Shinta (2020) who stated that work motivation is a primary predictor of civil servant productivity. In the context of village government, the work motivation of village heads can be influenced by various factors, such as organizational support, job satisfaction, and the social environment. High motivation will encourage village heads to innovate, improve the quality of public services, and optimize the use of village resources.

An integrative approach to organizational behavior emphasizes that individual performance is the result of the interaction of various factors, both external and internal. The model developed by Colquitt et al. (2019) shows that individual factors such as personality and work motivation, as well as situational factors such as interpersonal communication, interact to influence performance. Several empirical studies demonstrate a causal relationship between these variables. Interpersonal communication can increase work motivation by creating a positive work environment (Hadian et al., 2023). Meanwhile, personality also influences work motivation because it determines how individuals respond to challenges and work pressures (Mohammed & Khan, 2023). However, most previous research has examined this relationship only partially. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach is needed to understand the direct and indirect relationships between variables that influence village head managerial performance.

Based on the literature review above, it can be concluded that interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation are the main determinants of managerial performance in the public sector. However, the relationship between these variables is complex and interconnected. This study adopts an integrative approach by positioning work motivation as an intervening variable that bridges the influence of interpersonal communication and personality on village head managerial performance. This approach is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding and produce a more robust empirical model to explain the determinants of village head performance.

METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with an exploratory survey design to examine the causal relationship between interpersonal communication, personality, work motivation, and managerial performance of village heads. This design is suitable for testing hypothesized relationships and estimating direct and indirect effects between variables. The population consisted of 416 village heads in Bogor Regency. The sampling technique used multistage random sampling. Multistage random sampling is a sampling technique conducted on a population that has stratified and clustered characteristics. Subsequently, samples were taken from smaller clusters until the desired sample unit was reached. Random selection was carried out not only on the clusters but also on sample units within the selected clusters, considering the sample size determined based on the adequacy requirements for path analysis. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from operational indicators of each variable, including managerial performance (planning, organizing, leadership, and controlling), interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation. All items were measured using a Likert scale. Prior to data collection, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability to ensure measurement accuracy and internal consistency. Data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of respondents and the distribution of variables. Second, prerequisite tests (normality, linearity, and homogeneity) were conducted to ensure the data's suitability for further analysis. Hypothesis testing was then conducted using path analysis to assess the magnitude and significance of direct and indirect effects, particularly the mediating role of work motivation. Data robustness was ensured through construct validity testing and reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha. All statistical procedures were conducted systematically to provide empirical evidence of the structural relationships between the studied variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the managerial performance of village heads in Bogor Regency is generally in the high category. This is reflected in the average managerial performance score, which is close to the maximum, with a relatively homogeneous data distribution concentrated

in the middle to upper categories. This finding indicates that most village heads are able to carry out managerial functions effectively, particularly in the leadership and evaluation aspects.

More specifically, the leadership and control evaluation indicators are the aspects with the highest achievements, demonstrating the village head's ability to direct village officials, make decisions, and evaluate the implementation of development programs. Meanwhile, the planning and monitoring aspects are still in the good category but relatively lower, indicating room for improvement in data-driven planning and consistent program monitoring. The interpersonal communication variable also shows a high level, with the majority of respondents demonstrating effective communication skills, particularly in the aspects of openness and empathy. The data distribution indicates that interpersonal communication is concentrated in the middle to high category, reflecting the village head's ability to build harmonious and collaborative working relationships. Furthermore, personality and work motivation are also in the high category, indicating that the village head possesses psychological characteristics that support task performance and a strong internal drive to carry out managerial functions. The main findings of this study indicate that interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation have a positive and significant influence on the managerial performance of village heads. Furthermore, interpersonal communication and personality have also been shown to influence work motivation. However, the role of work motivation as an intervening variable did not show a significant strengthening compared to the direct influence, so improving managerial performance is more effective through direct strengthening of interpersonal communication and personality.

The following is a summary of the descriptive analysis scores for all variables:

Table 1. Summary of Descriptive Analysis Scores for All Variables

No	Description	Managerial performance (Z)	Work Motivation (Y)	Interpersonal Communication (X ₁)	Personality (X ₂)
1.	Mean	233.3826	193.0783	185.0957	230.6261
2.	Total Score	23.772	16.789	16.095	20.054
3.	Variance	1046.344	201.108	190.508	284.499
4.	Stand Deviation	32.34723	14.18125	13.80247	16.86711
5.	Range	139.00	50.00	59.00	65.00
6.	Minimum	134.00	165.00	146.00	190.00
7.	Maximum	273.00	215.00	205.00	255.00
8.	Curtosis	0.554	-1.020	-0.766	-0.900
9.	Count (Total)	115	115	115	115

Next, a normality test was performed using the Chi-Square method by comparing the observed frequencies (fo) and expected frequencies (fh) based on the theoretical normal distribution. The normality test yielded a normal distribution. A homogeneity test then followed, indicating that all variables had the same variance, or were homogeneous. A linear regression test was then conducted to test the regression equation model for variable Y on variable X. The linearity test is necessary for conducting inferential analysis in association tests (Supardi U.S., 2013; pp. 149-153).

The following are the results of the linearity test for the Interpersonal Communication Variable and Performance:

Table 2. Results of the Linearity Test for the Interpersonal Communication Variable and Managerial Performance

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Kinerja Manajerial * Komunikasi Interpersonal	Between Groups	(Combined)	45998.208	41	1121.908	3.118	.334
		Linearity	246.294	1	246.294	3.245	.022
		Deviation from Linearity	45751.914	40	1143.798	3.139	.010
	Within Groups		73284.957	73	1003.904		
Total			119283.165	114			

The following are the results of the linearity test between Personality Variables and Managerial Performance:

Table 3. Results of the Linearity Test between Personality Variables and Managerial Performance

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Kinerja Manajerial * Kepribadian	Between Groups	(Combined)	47968.883	42	1142.116	3.153	.093
		Linearity	1298.864	1	1298.864	3.311	.026
		Deviation from Linearity	46670.019	41	1138.293	3.149	.030
	Within Groups		71314.282	72	990.476		
Total			119283.165	114			

The following are the results of the linearity test between the Motivation Variable and Managerial Performance:

Table 4. Results of the Linearity Test Between the Motivation Variable and Managerial Performance

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Motivasi Kerja * Kinerja Manajerial	Between Groups	(Combined)	8681.555	38	228.462	3.219	.230
		Linearity	38.337	1	38.337	3.205	.024
		Deviation from Linearity	8643.218	37	233.600	4.246	.008
	Within Groups		14244.741	76	187.431		
Total			22926.296	114			

The following are the results of the linearity test between Interpersonal Communication and Work Motivation:

Table 5. Results of the Linearity Test between Interpersonal Communication and Work Motivation

ANOVA Table

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Motivasi Kerja * Komunikasi Interpersonal	Between Groups	(Combined)	13368.408	41	326.059	2.490	<.001
		Linearity	5164.955	1	5164.955	39.448	<.001
		Deviation from Linearity	8203.452	40	205.086	1.566	.048
	Within Groups		9557.888	73	130.930		
Total			22926.296	114			

The following are the results of the linearity test between personality and work motivation:

Table 6. Results of the Linearity Test Between Personality Variables and Work Motivation

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Motivasi Kerja * Kepribadian	Between Groups	(Combined)	18725.373	42	445.842	7.641	<.001
		Linearity	8975.145	1	8975.145	153.826	<.001
		Deviation from Linearity	9750.228	41	237.810	4.076	<.001
	Within Groups		4200.923	72	58.346		
	Total		22926.296	114			

Furthermore, an inter-indicator analysis was conducted, which showed that all variables in this study, namely interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation, had a strong to very strong contribution to the managerial performance of village heads without any weak relationships, indicating that each indicator in the model has a significant role in shaping overall performance. In the interpersonal communication variable, indicators of openness, empathy, supportive attitude, positive attitude, and equality consistently correlated strongly with all dimensions of managerial performance, with openness being the most dominant indicator, especially in strengthening the evaluation aspect of control, thus emphasizing the importance of transparency in improving supervisory effectiveness. In the personality variable, all dimensions showed a strong to very strong relationship, with openness to experience and agreeableness as the most dominant indicators, especially in supporting leadership and control, which reflects the importance of adaptive character and interpersonal skills in managerial effectiveness. Meanwhile, in the work motivation variable, all indicators also contributed significantly, with the desire to achieve, commitment to work, and a sense of responsibility as the most determining factors in driving optimal performance. In addition, interpersonal communication and personality are proven to have a strong to very strong relationship with work motivation, especially through indicators of positive attitudes, empathy, and openness to experience which are closely related to aspects of appreciation, recognition, and responsibility, so that overall it can be concluded that the managerial performance of village heads is the result of a close interaction between communication skills, personality character, and motivational drive, with the dominant contribution in the strong to very strong category which indicates the high empirical validity of this research model.

The next stage of path analysis involves using regression analysis to estimate the causal relationships between variables (a causal model) previously established based on theory. Based on the theoretically constructed causal model, a path analysis diagram and coefficient calculations for each path are obtained. According to Hair et al. (2018), model evaluation using R-squared results with R² values ≥ 0.75 , 0.50, and 0.25 indicate strong (substantial), moderate, and weak, respectively.

The results are as follows:

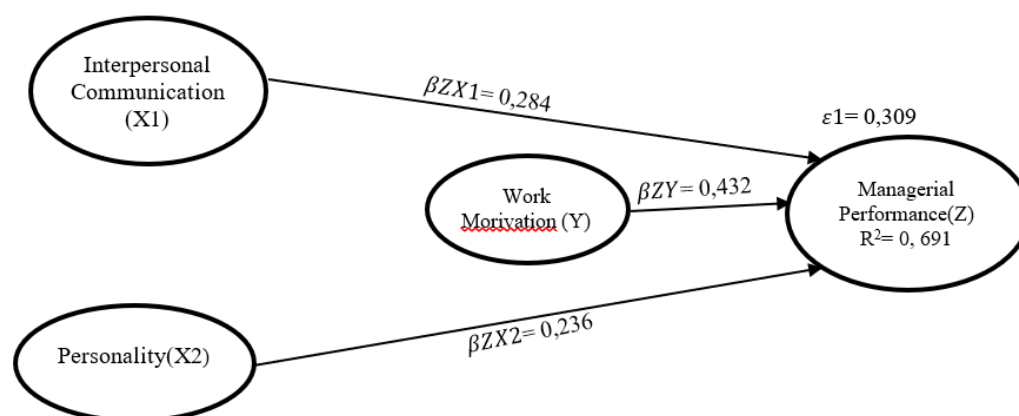


Figure 1. Empirical Causal Relationship Model Between Variables
Source: Research Data (2026)

The results of the causal relationship model analysis in substructure-1 indicate that the managerial performance of village heads is simultaneously influenced by interpersonal

communication, personality, and work motivation, with significant contributions. The resulting empirical model shows that work motivation has the most dominant influence on managerial performance, followed by interpersonal communication and personality. This finding indicates that the improvement of village heads' managerial performance is determined more by the level of an individual's internal drive in carrying out tasks, compared to communication factors and personal character alone. Nevertheless, interpersonal communication still plays a significant role in supporting performance effectiveness by improving the quality of interaction and work coordination, while personality contributes to shaping behavioral stability, adaptability, and decision-making quality. The high coefficient of determination value indicates that most of the variation in managerial performance can be explained by these three variables, confirming the model's strength in explaining empirical phenomena at the village government level. However, there is still a proportion of unexplained variance, indicating the presence of other factors outside the model, such as transformational leadership, organizational culture, or institutional support, that also have the potential to influence managerial performance. Overall, these findings reinforce the perspective that managerial performance in the public sector, particularly at the village level, is the result of the interaction between individual psychological factors and organizational social dynamics, with work motivation as the primary determinant that strengthens the effectiveness of the village head's managerial role.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that village head managerial performance is significantly influenced by interpersonal communication, personality, and work motivation, with work motivation being the most dominant determinant in increasing the effectiveness of managerial function implementation. These findings indicate that although communication skills and personality traits are important foundations in shaping leadership behavior, an individual's internal drive is a key factor that directly strengthens the quality of managerial performance. Simultaneously, these three variables were able to explain a significant portion of the variation in performance, confirming that the research model has high empirical strength in explaining the phenomenon of village head performance. Theoretically, this study strengthens the public sector organizational behavior perspective by confirming that managerial performance is determined not only by structural factors but also by the interaction between psychological and social factors, with work motivation as the primary driver. Furthermore, the finding that direct influences are more dominant than indirect influences provides a novel contribution to the development of intervariable relationship models, particularly in the context of village governance.

Practically, the results of this study imply that efforts to improve village head performance should focus on strengthening work motivation through an increased sense of responsibility, commitment, and achievement orientation, supported by the development of effective interpersonal communication and the development of adaptive and stable leadership character. This approach is considered more strategic than solely structural or administrative interventions. However, this study has limitations, particularly in its scope of variables, which does not include other factors such as organizational culture, leadership style, or institutional support that could potentially influence managerial performance. Furthermore, the quantitative approach used is not fully capable of capturing contextual dynamics in depth. Therefore, future research is recommended to develop a more comprehensive model by incorporating additional variables and using a longitudinal or mixed-methods approach to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of managerial performance in the village government context. Thus, future research development is expected to enrich theoretical contributions while generating more applicable policy recommendations.

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