



## The Effect of Managerial Competence and Interpersonal Communication on the Performance of Heads of SMK Negeri in Palembang City

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**Abstract.** Education has an important role in improving the quality of life of society as a whole, through good education, it can improve welfare, increase awareness about the importance of health, environment, and security, and increase the ability to contribute to society (Santoso, Karim, & Maftuh, 2023). Education not only means teaching about reading and writing, but it also provides the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to live in society. Education plays a key role in helping individuals reach their potential (Nurmaningsih, Norrahman, & Wibowo, 2023).

**Keywords:** Managerial Competence, Interpersonal Communication, Performance

### 1. BACKGROUND

Education has become one of the most sensitive and complex issues, especially with technological advances and rapid social changes, so education must be able to adapt to these changes. A good education can help individuals to adapt to the changes that occur (Darma & Banurea, 2019). Education should be the top priority in every society to improve the quality of life and make people able to manage existing resources.

The performance of school principals includes various aspects, including resource management, the implementation of educational policies, and the ability to motivate and direct teachers and students (Efendi & Sholeh, 2023). Therefore, it is important to understand the factors that are able to affect the performance of school principals in order to improve the quality of education at vocational schools. One of the factors that is believed to contribute to influencing the performance of school principals is competence (Muhajir, 2022). The competencies in question include the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to carry out duties and responsibilities effectively. School principals who have high competence are expected to be able to plan, organize, direct, and control school activities well, so that they can achieve the educational goals that have been set (Syamsul, 2017).

Effective interpersonal communication allows school principals to build good relationships with teachers, students, and other related parties (Kartini, Ahmad, & Eddy, 2020). Through good communication, principals can clearly communicate the school's vision, mission, and goals, and receive constructive feedback for continuous improvement. This means that the ability of the principal to build communication also has an impact on the implementation of his work to achieve the educational goals carried out in the school.

Examining the description of competence and interpersonal communication that is believed to be able to contribute to optimizing the performance of school principals, especially in vocational schools, initial observations were made at State Vocational Schools in Palembang City. As one of the major cities in Indonesia, Palembang City has many State Vocational Schools that aim to prepare students with skills that are ready for use in the world of work (Rojaki, Fitria, & Martha, 2021).

According to the researcher, it is concluded that it is important to conduct an in-depth study on the importance of the head of the State Vocational School having good performance. For this reason, it is appropriate to empirically prove various factors that can affect the performance of the head of the vocational school. Examining the description, this study is compiled in the narrative titled "The Influence of Managerial Competence and Interpersonal Communication on the Performance of State Vocational School Heads in Palembang City".

## **2. THEORETICAL STUDIES**

### **Principal Performance**

Performance is a term that is often used in various fields, such as management, education, and psychology, to describe the results of efforts made in achieving certain goals (Darim, 2020). Performance can be interpreted as the work achieved by a person or a group of people in an organization, in accordance with the responsibilities and tasks given. Performance can be expressed as the result of work achieved by a person in carrying out his or her duties in accordance with the criteria determined by the organization (Mathis & Jackson, 2011).

Based on the description of performance, it is understood that performance is a complex and multidimensional concept, including work results, task implementation processes, and managerial abilities. As for the world of education, performance is often linked to student learning outcomes and the effectiveness of teaching and learning management. For example, the performance of school principals is measured based on their ability to manage the school, lead staff, and improve the quality of education. The performance of the school principal is interpreted as the ability to mobilize all school resources to achieve educational goals (Mulyasa, 2017).

The performance of the principal is an important factor in determining the success of a school. Principal performance is interpreted as the result of efforts that are influenced by abilities and situational factors (Robbins & Coulter, 2018).

### **Interpersonal Communication**

Interpersonal communication is the process of exchanging messages between two or more people that takes place face-to-face (Mustofa & Wuryan, 2020). This process involves various elements such as senders, receivers, messages, media, and feedback that aim to achieve mutual understanding. In the context of interpersonal communication, aspects such as trust, openness, and empathy are very important to achieve effective communication. Interpersonal communication can be defined as the process of interaction between individuals that allows them to share information, feelings, and meanings through the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages (DeVito, 2019). Interpersonal communication can also be interpreted as the primary means that individuals use to build and maintain their social relationships (Gamble & Gamble, 2018).

Interpersonal communication is considered important in a variety of contexts, including in the work environment, as it serves as a tool to convey messages, build relationships, and solve problems. In the context of leadership, such as school principals, interpersonal communication is essential to create effective relationships with teachers, staff, students, and outsiders, such as parents and the community. Principals who have good interpersonal communication skills will be able to listen, give instructions, and motivate those involved in education, which in turn can increase the effectiveness of overall school performance (Goleman, 2019).

According to researchers, interpersonal communication is a form of communication that occurs between two or more individuals who aim to share information, ideas, feelings, or meanings with each other through the use of verbal and non-verbal messages. This communication is direct and personal, usually involving dialogue or face-to-face conversations, although it can also occur through communication media such as telephone or written messages.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

A research method is a systematic and structured approach or method used to collect, analyze, and interpret data in order to answer research questions or test hypotheses. Research methods are very important to ensure that the results of research are trustworthy, valid, and accountable (Nurlan, 2019). This research was carried out by referring to quantitative research methods. Quantitative research methods are research methods based on the philosophy of positivism, used to research on certain populations or samples, data collection using research instruments, quantitative/statistical data analysis (Sugiyono, 2020; Arikunto, 2019). The quantitative research method is a research approach used to collect and analyze numerical data

to answer research questions or test hypotheses (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021). The quantitative method emphasizes objective measurement and statistical analysis.

**Research Population Table 1**

It	School Name	Number of Teachers
1	SMK Negeri 1 Palembang	84
2	SMK Negeri 2 Palembang	169
3	SMK Negeri 3 Palembang	91
4	SMK Negeri 4 Palembang	126
5	SMK Negeri 5 Palembang	89
6	SMK Negeri 6 Palembang	91
7	SMK Negeri 7 Palembang	78
8	SMK Negeri 8 Palembang	97
9	South Sumatra State Vocational School	68
	Sum	893

Based on the information presented in the table above, the population in this study is 893 people spread across nine State Vocational Schools in the city of Palembang.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Results**

The research carried out at the State Vocational School in the city of Palembang related to managerial competence, interpersonal communication and the performance of the head of the vocational school, obtained varied results. To be clearer, each variable is described comprehensively in the following points.

Data on managerial competency variables were obtained through a questionnaire consisting of 27 (twenty-seven) statement items. The respondents consisted of 90 (ninety) people who were in State Vocational Schools in the City of Palembang (nine State Vocational Schools). More clarity about the data obtained is outlined in the following table:

Data Table 2 of Results of the Distribution of Managerial Competency Questionnaire

Sample	School	X1	X1 <sup>2</sup>
1	SMK N 1 Palembang	77,78	6049,38
2		89,81	8066,70
3		77,78	6049,38
4		79,63	6340,88
5		74,07	5486,97
6		81,48	6639,23
7		75,00	5625,00

Sample	School	X1	X1 <sup>2</sup>
8		82,41	6790,98
9	SMK N 2 Palembang	74,07	5486,97
10		78,70	6194,27
11		82,41	6790,98
12		79,63	6340,88
13		78,70	6194,27
14		79,63	6340,88

Examining the information presented in the table above, it can be seen that the researcher obtained accurate information related to managerial competence. Through the table above, it is known that in general, the average score obtained for the managerial competency variable is 77.94.

Average Table 3 of Research Achievements

No	School Name	X1	X2	And
1	SMK N 1 Palembang	79,75	80,96	84,31
2	SMK N 2 Palembang	77,83	80,45	85,03
3	SMK N 3 Palembang	76,65	79,32	84,29
4	SMK N 4 Palembang	76,28	79,64	84,14
5	SMK N 5 Palembang	77,67	80,51	85,29
6	SMK N 6 Palembang	77,98	80,00	84,29
7	SMK N 7 Palembang	79,63	80,29	86,12
8	SMK N 8 Palembang	78,06	79,69	83,86
9	SMK N South Sumatra	79,10	81,21	85,12

Examining the information presented in the table above, it can be seen that the average value for each variable is variable in each group of respondents (schools). The diversity of average score achievement indicates that respondents provide an authentic perspective on the variables being studied.

## Discussion

The influence of managerial competence on the performance of the head of the State Vocational School in Palembang City refers to the crucial role of the principal in managing resources, decision-making, and effective leadership to achieve educational goals. Managerial competencies include a variety of technical, conceptual, and interpersonal abilities that are essential to the success of a school. The managerial competence possessed by the principal contributes significantly to the operational effectiveness of the school. These competencies include the ability to develop strategic planning, manage finance and human resources, and monitor and evaluate the implementation of education policies. Principals who have good

managerial competence will be able to make the right decisions, increase efficiency, and maximize the potential of teachers and students.

This reflects the importance of the principal in realizing the vision and mission of education, especially in vocational high schools that require a different managerial approach due to the demands of vocational practice. Research shows that high managerial competence in school principals is positively correlated with their performance. Principals who are able to formulate policies, implement quality control, and lead well will create a productive learning environment. This has an impact on teaching management, a more structured learning process, and improved student learning outcomes. In Palembang City, vocational school principals who are competent in managerial aspects are better able to overcome vocational education challenges, such as adaptation to technological changes and industrial demands. This can be seen from the results of the study conducted that the amount of relationship between managerial competence and the head of the State Vocational School in the City of Palembang is 71.5% which belongs to the category of close relationship, the contribution given by the managerial competency variable to the performance of the head of the State Vocational School in the City of Palembang is 51.2% which is included in the category of contribution of a fairly high influence

In the context of vocational schools, the managerial competence of school principals includes the ability to manage educational practices that focus on students' technical skills (Utami, 2020). Principals with good managerial competence are not only able to manage the implementation of the curriculum, but also establish partnerships with industry to provide relevant internship experiences. School principals can manage the budget well to ensure adequate practical facilities, thereby supporting the improvement of students' competence in the vocational field (Susanti & Putri, 2019).

The managerial competence possessed by the principal affects the overall performance of the school. Competent school principals are able to ensure that all components of the school work synergistically, including teachers, students, and other education personnel (Rachman, 2021). Another thing can also be seen from the tendency to have the ability to conduct self-evaluation and adjust strategies if there are challenges faced. This condition results in an increase in overall school performance, both in terms of students' academic achievement and the school's reputation in the community.

Principals who are able to communicate well can motivate teachers to work more optimally. Through effective interpersonal communication, principals can provide constructive feedback, resolve conflicts quickly, and create a conducive work environment. This in turn

increases the morale of teachers, which has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and student achievement. In addition, good interpersonal communication allows principals to gather information from various sources before making important decisions. Principals who are open to input from teachers, staff, and students will be able to make more appropriate and strategic decisions. It also assists principals in managing relationships with external parties, such as companies involved in internship programs for vocational school students.

The performance of school principals is greatly influenced by the synergy between competence and interpersonal communication. Principals who have good competence in managing schools but are unable to communicate effectively may face obstacles in exercising their leadership. On the other hand, school principals who excel in communication but lack managerial competence may have difficulty in achieving greater educational goals. Therefore, these two aspects complement each other and together determine the performance of the principal in creating an outstanding school.

The synergy of competence and good interpersonal communication will create a school that is well managed, has a positive work culture, and is able to achieve higher educational targets (Rachman, 2021). At SMK Negeri Se-Kota Palembang, the combination of managerial competence and interpersonal communication skills of school principals will have an impact on achieving better quality of education, improving the quality of graduates, and creating strong relationships between schools and industry and society.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the analysis of the research findings that have been discussed, the conclusions of the research conducted are as follows:

1. There is an influence of managerial competence on the performance of the head of the State Vocational School in the city of Palembang. The relationship between the two categorical variables is closely and the contribution of the influence of managerial competence to categorised performance is quite high. Managerial competence has a positive influence on the performance of the head of the State Vocational School in the city of Palembang because in managerial competence there are various important aspects in the management of education in schools, such as the ability of the principal to optimize the resources owned.
2. There is an influence of interpersonal communication on the performance of the head of the State Vocational School in the city of Palembang. The relationship between the two variables was closely categorized and the contribution of the influence of interpersonal

communication to the performance of the categorization was quite high. The variable of interpersonal communication has a positive influence because with a good way of communicating, it will make the proclaimed goals clearly understood by the school community.

3. There is an influence of managerial competence and interpersonal communication simultaneously on the performance of the head of the State Vocational School in the city of Palembang. The relationship between variables is closely categorized. The contribution of the influence of managerial competence and interpersonal communication on performance is categorized as quite high. The combination of managerial competency variables and interpersonal communication is able to make a positive contribution to the performance of school principals, considering that the two variables have peculiarities in the management of education that support each other.

### **Suggestion**

Based on the conclusions of the research that has been carried out, the researcher compiled suggestions in general and in particular, as follows.

1. In general, the results of this study can be an illustration of the importance of school principals having good managerial competence, good interpersonal communication and optimal performance, therefore for those who have authority, to pay attention to these various aspects so that they continue to be optimized.
2. Specifically, the researcher suggests the following to the parties: For school principals, they should be aware of their potential so that all activities carried out provide benefits to school development. For schools, the results of this study should be used as an evaluation so that improvements or relevant policies can be determined. Other researchers use the results of this study as a reference or reference in the context of further research.

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