INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: THE KEY TO UNLOCKING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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Abstract—**Interpersonal skills play a pivotal role in determining the success and performance of employees within an organization. This study aims to explore the multifaceted impact of interpersonal skills on employee performance, encompassing communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, and empathy. Drawing from a comprehensive review of existing literature.The findings highlight that effective interpersonal skills enhance communication clarity, decrease misunderstandings, and improve collaboration among team members. Furthermore, employees with strong interpersonal skills tend to excel in conflict resolution, creating a harmonious work environment that fosters productivity and job satisfaction. Empathy, an essential component of interpersonal skills, has been shown to positively impact employee performance, job commitment, and overall well-being.**

Keywords— **Interpersonal Skills, Communication, Organizational Performance, Employee Performance.**

I. INTRODUCTION

It is beneficial to explore precisely what the term Interpersonal skills means. Interpersonalskills, as a term, are broadly similar to social skills and social competence, and they are sometimes used interchangeably. Because of its omnipresent nature, there is no single accepted definition of this term. Because much of professional life is concerned with human relationships, Fontana (1990) defines social skills as the way in which people can efficiently manage their professional relationships. He views interpersonal interactions with people in a variety of professions—teachers, nurses, doctors, social workers, managers, attorneys, counselors, etc.—as one of the key factors in deciding whether or not professional performance is successful (Fontana 1990). According to definitions, social skills are a competency that a person may have in varying degrees. According to Argyly (1984), socially competent individuals are those who have the abilities necessary to influence others in social settings in a way that is desired (Argyly, M. 1984. cited in Hayes, J. 2002). This argument can also be made using Schlundt and McFall's (1985) definition, which defines interpersonal skills as the particular processes that allow an individual to act in a way that will be regarded as competent. The ability to act in ways that increase the likelihood of obtaining desired results is the main focus of these definitions.

II. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to find out the significant factors of interpersonal skills significantly influencing the performance of employees. Employees are the most essential part of any organization, and their performance plays a crucial role in the organization's profitability. That`s why this focuses on the factors that influence the performance of employees. The important components of interpersonal skills are discussed in this study in relation to raising employee performance in any kind of business. There are four sections to it. First, a summary outlining the goal and approaches of interpersonal skills in the workplace. Second, it explains why connections and interpersonal skills are important and becoming more so in the context of employee performance at work. Thirdly, it looks at instances of how interpersonal skills are applied in non-essential interpersonal relationships inside an organization. Finally, the conclusion connects the findings from the case organization with the evidence gleaned from the literature.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main focus of this paper is to determine the important factors of interpersonal skills that influence the performance of employees. These factors are identified with the help of related literature studies. With the help of available literature, the researcher has found the various factors discussed in these research studies.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEWS

To effectively practice medicine, doctors need to improve interpersonal skills in communication, leadership, management, teaching, time management (N.G.Barakat, 2016). The researcher has found that interpersonal skills for various beneficial work-related results cultivated like skills in students rather than in experienced employees (American Management Association, 2012). The strongest interpersonal skills can deaden organizational support on job performance (Hochwarter, Witt, Treadway & Ferris, 2006). Interpersonal skills include the capacity for entering into the bi-directional exchange of emotional information. Interpersonal skills include various ways that people affect each other's moods and emotional viruses, nonverbal cues, and behavior withdirect implications for social functioning (Engelberg&Sjoberg, 2005). Social skills help to create effective relations; some tips are suggested, such as building trust, open communication, using respected words, and spending time appropriately with friends, siblings, and parents (D.Gupta et al., 2015). Regarding terms and conditions, several groups' characteristics include: funding, team members' experience, positive interdependence among team members, effective communication, physical space, and funding (De Long 1970; Sternberg & Wilson, 2006). Research findings are impacted by interpersonal skills because they have an impact on important aspects of teamwork, such as creativity, problem-solving, and communication styles (Bennett et al.,2010). For high performance good Interpersonal Skills have the capacity to influence high performance and positively affect interaction with team members (K.S. Cheruvelil,2014). Interpersonal skills have been identified as a key differentiator between a

successful and unsuccessful manager (Hayes, 1994, 2002) and are essential for overcoming low perceived organizational support in assessments of individual job performance (Hochwarter, Witt, Treadway, & Ferris, 2006). Interpersonal skills in teams have been shown to explain 32% of the variation in peer performance judgments (Neuman& Wright, 1999).

V. INFLUENCING FACTORS OF THE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Interpersonal skills are the abilities that allow us to communicate effectively, build relationships, and work well with others. They are essential for success in any workplace, regardless of the industry or role.Interpersonal skills, also known as people skills, are the capacity to communicate efficiently, construct relationships & collaborate. Employees with strong interpersonal skills are more likely to be productive, innovative, and satisfied with their jobs. Strong interpersonal skills can improve communication, effective collaboration, motivation and engagement, and strong leadership skills. As a result, businesses can create a more productive, innovative, and satisfying work environment for everyone involved. Here are some of the factors of interpersonal skills that influence employee performance:

Fig. 1 Types of interpersonal skills

(Sourcehttps://www.google.com/search?client=firefoxe&sca)

A. Communication skills:

Clear and concise communication is crucial for teamwork, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. Employees who can communicate effectively can share information, ideas, and concerns in a way that is understandable and helpful to others. One of the most important aspects of an engineer's work in industry is communication. According to certain industry graduates, effective communication is crucial for fostering education in any field (Keane, A. & Gibson, 1999). Communication skills have been identified as a valuable skill for career enhancers (Polack, 2000). Communication skills are considered multidimensional; it is essential to categorize how they will be assessed in the students' task (M.J.Riemer, 2000).

B. Active listening skills:

Being attentive to the spoken and unspoken words of others is a key component of active listening. It also entails being aware of the speaker's viewpoint and reacting in a way that is encouraging and empathetic. Workers that can effectively listen are more suited for relationship-building, dispute resolution, and customer service

roles. According to supervisor evaluations, Hope (2004) discovered that helpline volunteers' active listening skills improved after 45 hours of instruction in active listening counseling techniques. Education professionals can communicate to parents their genuine interest in understanding their perspective while also getting the most important information for their work by employing active listening techniques, according to Lasky (2000). While the necessity of improved communication between educators and parents is acknowledged (Bernhard et al., 1998; Lea, 2006), there are several interventions that have been scientifically validated to enhance educators' communication abilities (Lasky, 2000).

C. *Empathy & emotional intelligence:*

The capacity to comprehend and feel another person's emotions is known as empathy. The capacity to constructively and helpfully regulate both your own and other people's emotions is known as emotional intelligence. Employees that possess empathy and emotional intelligence are more adept at forming bonds with others, functioning well in groups, and offering customer service. The most recent study that appeared in Science magazine demonstrates that empathy is not always a trait shared by human groups. Mice couples were trained by researchers at McGill University in Canada to gaze at each other while one of the animals endured pain stimuli. They were surprised to see that even in the mouse-observer, there was a statistically significant behavioral shift in pain (Langford DJ et al. 2006). Empathy is not the result of the past experience. It occurs when «non-verbal» contact among people occurs (Goldie P 2000).

D. *Conflict resolution skills:*

Conflict is a normal part of any workplace. Employees with good conflict resolution skills can mediate disputes, negotiate solutions, and maintain positive relationships with others, even when disagreements occur. A condition of indecision, incompatibility, and hesitation felt by the person forced to select between two opposing situations that occur concurrently is called conflict (Akbalık, 2001). It can also mean the results of a group or individual's inability to decide on a single course of action, which disrupts the decision-making process (Erdoğan, 1997).

E. *Teamwork skills:*

Teamwork is essential for many tasks and projects. Employees who are good team players can cooperate with others, share responsibilities, and contribute to the collective success of the team. Asserting that teamwork is the organizational alliance around which numerous organizational and individual deterrents rotate to complete the organizational philosophy, previous papers have acknowledged the significance of teamwork (Kassim&Ramayah, 2015; True, Stewart, Lampman, Pelak, &Solimeo, 2014). However, a clear picture of the impact of cooperation on individual employee performance has not yet been fully exposed by the literature (Kirti& Saini, 2022).

F. *Adaptability:*

Adapting to change is crucial in today's workplace. Adaptable employees can learn new skills, adjust to new situations, and work effectively in various environments.When the

organization first analyzes the area of their strengths and the weak portion where they lack some. They would have to choose whether to strengthen their current human resource capital segment skills or not. In 1992, David Bowen and Edward Lawler gave greater weight to the dissemination of knowledge. They also recommended incentives and training, as well as forming teams to provide workers leadership and resolving issues. Businesses collaborate with others to gain mutual benefits, so they need employees to be more adept at a variety of tasks in order to perform better (Kinicki&Latack, 1990). They also provide employees with more advanced training to help them develop in a more sophisticated way that they can use in both current and future activities to achieve goals and objectives. In order to transform the existing weakness into a strength, it should also be addressed and further training should be given. Employees today must constantly adapt to change in order to perform their jobs successfully and efficiently, necessitating the acquisition of new skills and knowledge (Hesketh& Neal, 1999).

G. Initiative:

Employees who take initiative are proactive and take ownership of their work. They are also willing to go the extra mile to help out their colleagues and contribute to the team's success Mangkunegara (2009) asserts that an employee's performance is measured by the quality and amount of work they produce in carrying out their assigned duties. Nawawi (2006) asserts that performance is a response to what a person has learned from performing. Job performance is the outcome of an individual's efforts in carrying out the task assigned to them, taking into account their abilities, background, commitment, and time. According to Rivai and Ella Jauvani (2009), job performance is the real conduct that each person expresses at work and the output that each employee produces that is appropriate for their position inside the company. Work performance is a representation of an organization's state within a specific time period and is an outcome and accomplishment impacted by the operations of the organization in making use of its resources.

H. Problem-solving skills:

Employees who are good problem solvers can identify problems, analyze potential solutions, and implement effective solutions. They can also learn from their mistakes and improve their problem-solving skills. According to Mumford et al. (1998), activities that take into account the domain of competence yield the best predictions and proficiency plays a major role in creative problem-solving. Furthermore, as Runco et al. recommended that the reaction needed to be more realistic (more appropriate and realistic), they cautioned that it's probable that pragmatic tasks are more demanding. This idea is corroborated by Yuan and Zhou (2002), who suggested that participants tend to focus more on originality when given artistic tasks (writing a story, making a collage), but they tend to focus more on appropriate and useful solutions when given business problem-solving tasks (Kirti& Saini, 2022).

VI. WHAT QUALIFIES AS INTERPERSONAL SKILLS?

As suggested by the aforementioned literature, the study of interpersonal skills is complex and nuanced, encompassing interpersonal connections, social competence, and interactive behaviors. Thus, these many studies also contribute to our understanding of the factors of interpersonal skills. The majority of it talks on communication and relationships between people. According to Guirdham (2002), interpersonal communication skills are essential for reflecting successful interpersonal relationships and interactive behavior. We must attempt to comprehend values, objectives, emotions, beliefs, attitudes, intentions, abilities, and traits. We also need to be able to recognize the meanings of emotions and be able to recognize and regulate our own feelings as well as those of others. Different people define communication in different ways (Dance & Larson, 1976 cited in Burgoon, et al., 1994). Essentially, communication is the exchange of information between parties using a mutually understood symbol system. This can involve vocal behaviors such as speaking, listening, and writing as well as nonverbal ones such as posture, vocal cues, facial emotions, gestures, and physical appearance. Egan (1998) distinguished four fundamental communication abilities:

- Attending refers to the method in which listeners position themselves in relation to speakers on a physical and psychological level.

- The act of listening is taking in and comprehending the spoken and nonspoken cues that speakers convey.

- Empathy, which entails communicating to the speaker what they consider to be messages from within their frames of reference.

- Probing, which includes hopeful and motivating speakers to talk about themselves and to describe their concerns in more realistic and specific terms.

(Egan, 1998, referenced in Hayes, J. (2002)) Effective and suitable communication can convey the message that the communicators have arrived at and help the recipient understand the meaning behind the phrases, claims, and reasoning (Guirdham, 2002). Awareness of oneself, problem-solving abilities, flexibility, teamwork, initiative & conflict resolution, etc., are other crucial components of interpersonal skills that affect people's performance. Teams provide the most difficulties, opportunities for participation, and a sense of accomplishment, according to Conti and Kleiner (2003). Some businesses have started implementing team-based strategies through their work to boost employee productivity and emphasize the value of cooperating as a single, cohesive unit to achieve the organization's goals and objectives as effectively as possible. "Investigation of manager conflict styles perceived by the teachers working at private education institutions" carried out GümüşÖzkubat (2013) were found. According to Knight and Yorke's (2004) original definition, the term refers to a collection of accomplishments, including knowledge, abilities, and character traits, that increase graduates' chances of landing a job and succeeding in their chosen fields, which benefits the workforce, the community, and the

economy. According to Forrest (1989), in order to be proficient in interpersonal skills, it is important to recognize one's own motivations, experiences, and biases as well as how others see us. Interaction with other individuals is a universally inescapable aspect of people's social lives. People typically have to interpret one another's speech and behaviors, including what they are saying and doing, when they want to get along with one another at work or in other social situations. In other words, in order to interact effectively—that is, to communicate appropriately, to be aware of oneself and others, and to function in relationships—people need to understand what others are thinking and feeling, including their intentions, motives, beliefs, and attitudes (Guirdham, M. 2002). The following are some methods, approaches, and abilities for comprehending others:

- Watching out for people and analyzing their nonverbal and verbal signs;

- Attributing actions and determining the motivations behind them;

- Forming conclusions and judgments, concluding that a person's behavior reveals aspects of their personality and cohesive perceptions of their personality;

- Recognizing the impact of gender, ethnicity, and culture;

- Considering the possibility that someone else is interpreting a certain circumstance or creating their own meaning of it.(Source: ibid)

Theorists of interpersonal skills, like Guirdham, Hayes, and Forrest, identified the core skills of interpersonal skills as empathy, emotional intelligence, adaptability, and others' and understanding others' skills in the literature review on interpersonal skills that is displayed above. Since they are the cornerstone of every human contact, in both personal and professional contexts, they are essential abilities.

A. Significance of Interpersonal Skills for Employee Performance

In the dynamic world of business, where success hinges on effective collaboration and communication, interpersonal skills emerge as a crucial determinant of employee performance. These skills, encompassing the capability for communicating efficiently, construct associations, and navigate social interactions, play a pivotal role in shaping an individual's contributions to the workplace. Employees armed with strong interpersonal skills seamlessly navigate the complexities of teamwork, fostering a harmonious and productive environment. They possess the ability to articulate their ideas clearly, actively listen to others, and resolve conflicts constructively. These attributes contribute to a cohesive and collaborative team dynamic, where individuals work in sync towards shared goals. Interpersonal skills also extend their influence to customer interactions (Kirti& Kumar, 2023). Employees adept at building rapport and understanding customer needs are better equipped to provide exceptional service, fostering customer loyalty and satisfaction. Their ability to empathize, listen attentively, and address concerns effectively translates into positive

customer experiences, bolstering the organization's reputation. Moreover, interpersonal skills serve as a catalyst for personal growth and career advancement. Employees with strong interpersonal abilities are often perceived as leaders, capable of motivating and inspiring their colleagues. They excel in building networks, fostering connections that can open doors to new opportunities and career progression.
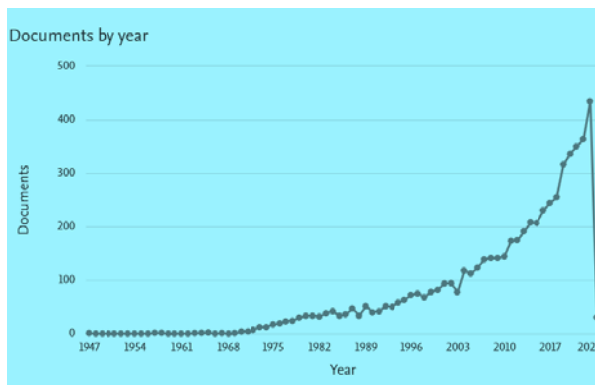

Fig. 2 Documents Per Year of Interpersonal Skills retrieved from Scopus Database) (Source:https://scopusmdu.refread.com/term/anal yzer.uri)

The line graph shows an increasing trend in the number of documents related to interpersonal skills research published from 1947 to 2024. There is a sharp increase in the number of documents published in the last 20 years, with the largest increase occurring between 2010 and 2024. This suggests that the field of interpersonal skills is growing rapidly. To become excel in Interpersonal skills the following conditions must be satisfied;

- Members ought to be considerate of one another (Critchley & Casey, 1986).

- Everyone should be supported and protected by others (Kets De Vries, 1999).

- Emotions can be openly expressed (Critchley & Casey, 1986).

- Individuals respect and believe in one another (Kets De Vires, 1986).

- Individuals should have reasonable expectations of one another and be supportive of one another (Harris & Harris, 1996).

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the profound influence of interpersonal skills on employee performance and underscores the need for organizations to prioritize the development and cultivation of these skills in their workforce to achieve a competitive edge in today's dynamic business environment.This study explores the impact of interpersonal skills on employee performance. Humans are social beings and live in a world where interactions must take place for better co-existence. Employees are determined as the most crucial factor of the organization, and their interactions with each other play significant role in the employees performance. This paper explained the crucial factors of interpersonal skills which help in improving employee performance such as: communication skills, teamwork, conflict resolution, adaptability etc. Researchers found that there are significant relations between interpersonal skills and employee performance because in this paper, most related factors are mentioned that prove this relationship.

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