

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Modelling interpersonal behaviour-motive-satisfaction for employee commitment: Gender as moderator

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the association between interpersonal communication constructs and employee commitment. Employers and employees must have effective interpersonal communication skills to comprehend one another, understand requirements and expectations, and manage the workforce efficiently. Effective interpersonal communication also aids in enhancing the organisation's engagement and enabling stronger bonds with stakeholders and colleagues. This research uses the quantitative method, a questionnaire-based survey of employees from various businesses to examine the factors that influence interpersonal communication competence. The data were analysed with partial least squares structural equation modelling with SmartPLS software. The findings reveal employers should prioritise interpersonal communication to enhance employee commitment. Organisations could undertake more engagement sessions and training to increase interpersonal communication. This study added to the body of knowledge by examining the relationship between three interpersonal communication factors and employee commitment. Other interpersonal communication factors influencing employee commitment and a mixed-method approach should be considered for future studies.

Keywords: interpersonal communication; behaviour; motive; satisfaction; employee commitment; performance

1. Introduction

Interpersonal skills (both soft skills and communication skills) are a system in which two or more people employ verbal or nonverbal techniques to convey information, thoughts, and feelings^[1]. The degree of one's interpersonal communication skills is measured by the successful delivery of messages^[2]. Interpersonal contact at the workplace improves communication, builds stronger relationships, and enhances workplace beliefs and practices^[3]. Attributes like endurance, hard effort, motivation and interpersonal communication skills keep evolving throughout ones working life, and employers must establish a work environment that encourages employee commitment. Employee commitment, in return, guarantees better employee performance and demonstrates a high degree of engagement and dedication^[4].

Modern organisations must address performance issues regularly and give ideas and support to assist and improve their employees' performance. Evidence of studies conducted on interpersonal communication^[5], employee engagement^[6], and the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee

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commitment^[7] are seen. These studies were undertaken mainly in India, Iran, and Indonesia. However, no reports of such studies are available in Malaysia. Effective interpersonal communication is especially significant in Malaysian workplaces because their population are predominantly multicultural individuals. Ethnic dynamics have always been a part of Malaysian society, and with the development of an association government based on multicultural values, ethnic identity has become even more prominent^[8,9]. This study examined the relationship between interpersonal communication variables and employee commitment in Malaysia. In addition to ethnicity, gender disparities in communication patterns are also demographic traits^[10], which calls for further investigation. Extant studies have established that gender influences communication^[10,11]. This study examined the relationship between interpersonal communication variables and employee commitment in Malaysia.

Improved interpersonal communication approaches would assist organisations in connecting better with their multi-ethnic workforce for improved performance. This will further allow organisations to maximise their productivity by improving interpersonal relationships. Identifying the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee engagement can assist in overcoming adversities and making employees feel at ease in their workplaces. Effective communication occurs in the workplace with improved information sharing and coordination for task completion, but it also impacts the organisation’s development and growth. Poor interpersonal communication skills can stifle productivity and lead to misconceptions among co-workers^[12].

Next, the study’s research questions, research objectives and conceptual framework (**Figure 1**) is presented.

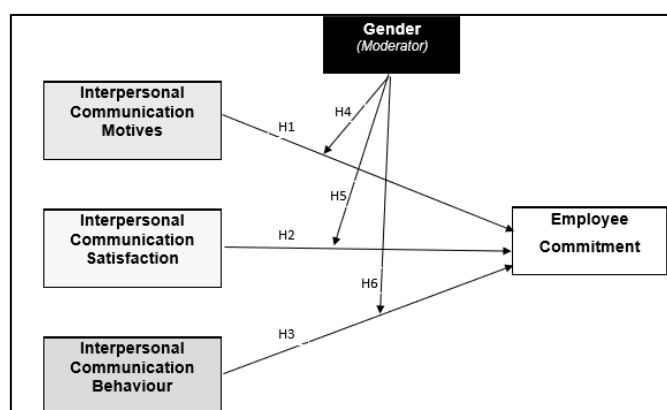


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

1.1. Research questions

The following research questions were constructed:

- a) What is the relationship between interpersonal communication factors and employee commitment?
- b) What is the moderating role of gender in the relationship between interpersonal communication factors and employee commitment?

1.2. Research objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- a) To identify the relationship between interpersonal communication factors and employee commitment.
- b) To investigate the moderating role of gender in the relationship between interpersonal communication factors and employee commitment.

2. Literature review

2.1. Interpersonal communication

An interpersonal relationship is one of the most important aspects of one's life, both socially and professionally, where people interact^[13]. Interpersonal communication is the technique of conveying and receiving messages between the sender and the receiver of the message, either directly or indirectly^[13]. The fundamental purpose is to build collaboration, relationships, and accomplishment of tasks in a workplace^[14]. Based on these perspectives, interpersonal communication can be defined as exchanging specific knowledge, thoughts, and attitudes between two or more individuals who transform the message as a communicator to achieve a shared understanding of the issues at hand, which eventually changes their behaviour.

Interpersonal communication refers to transferring knowledge and information and building mutual understanding from one person to another, which is critical to any organisation's success^[1]. Organisations can achieve their goals when their employees understand their responsibilities and obligations to the company and that constant communication between the management, leadership, and employees is necessary to set performance goals, track work progress, and achieve good results^[15]. Employees who maintain good interpersonal communication are more likely to remain loyal to an organisation. Employees with good interpersonal communication skills can effectively communicate their message to their superiors, peers, and subordinates and stay committed to the organisation^[16]. No technological breakthrough can ever replace the importance of interpersonal interactions.

The interpersonal communication motives model (ICMM) by Rubin and Martin^[17] is an extension of the uses and gratifications theory of mass media. The ICMM which strongly emphasises the idea that people's intentions are apparent to them is a representation of the theory of uses and gratifications. The framework of interpersonal communication motives has been identified as a heuristic theory given the amount of research it has stimulated. Hence, the interpersonal communication motives model is currently being applied in this study. Research in this vein can provide data that might expand the theoretical framework and provide more evidence to support the interpersonal communication motivations model. The six motives of interpersonal communication (IPC) were explained by Weaver^[18]. The motive of pleasure is used for enjoyment, the motive of affection is used to show compassion for another, the motive of inclusion is used to lessen feelings of exclusion, the motive of escape is used to and pass time, the motive of relaxation is used to reduce stress, and finally, the motive of control is used to enforce compliance. Interpersonal communication skills were less adept in communicators with high control motives. Conversely, communicators who claimed higher levels of IPC skills reported having strong affection, moderate pleasure and relaxation motives.

A unidimensional self-report tool called the interpersonal communication satisfaction inventory endured several phases of development^[19]. Communication satisfaction is derived when the expectations are met through interaction. The Corn-Sat Inventory has been extensively employed within the communication industry, which implies that satisfaction is a crucial factor in the communication field. According to Farooqi et al.^[20], interpersonal communication satisfaction (IPS) encourages employees to accomplish shared goals and has a positive correlation with organisational commitment. Jia et al.^[21] also claimed that positive work experiences of employees encourage them to satisfy their superior's relationship-oriented requirements.

According to Xu et al.^[22], competencies are behaviours acquired through a learning process that incorporates the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards work. Knowledge refers to the information employee receive, skills are associated with the ability to apply the knowledge gained, and attitudes is the way the knowledge is applied. The Interpersonal Communication Competency Scale (ICCS), developed by Rubin and Martin^[23], was used to assess interpersonal communication behaviour in this study.

The Interpersonal Communication Competency Scale is the most well-known tool widely used to assess interpersonal and communication competencies. Amofa and Ansah^[24] highlighted that sources of jobs might vary from person to person, much like work satisfaction. Interpersonal behaviours have been observed to impact communication and spur responsiveness, which is why Xu et al.^[22], Lleo et al.^[25] and Farooqi et al.^[20] highlighted close relationships between interpersonal skills and behaviour. Less flexibility, poor ability to resolve conflicts and insensitivity to others' feelings are all adversely correlated with negative behaviours.

2.2. Employee commitment

Organisations devoted to their employees will be able to attract and retain the necessary personnel^[26]. Employee loyalty is required for a higher level of commitment, which leads to several positive organisational outcomes. Beloor et al.^[27] also emphasised the importance of work commitment since it may be used to predict job performance. Employees' first commitment to a firm is mainly determined by their personal qualities and how closely their early work experience corresponds to their goals. Income, interactions with managers and co-workers, working conditions, and opportunities for advancement affect commitment^[24]. Employee commitment was developed by 14 British companies, including Jaguar, Royal Bank of Scotland, British Steel, Pilkington, Rothmans, Raleigh, Schweppes, Martins, and Nicholls^[28]. The following are the foundations: A sense of belonging reinforces the need for managers to ensure that their teams are well-informed, active, and unified in their efforts. A sense of excitement can only be achieved if employees retain their excitement (pride and loyalty) for their occupations, which leads to high-performance motivation. Confidence in the management of employees and the creation of a dedicated environment are essential indicators of performance. In other words, confident employees work hard to ensure quality performance.

The efficiency of employees is inextricably linked to the level of commitment of employees in a firm. Companies have provided work protection to their employees to raise their level of commitment and productivity^[29]. This way, employee productivity can increase, and employees are happier with their roles and responsibilities. This study also indicated that an employee's immediate manager positively or negatively impacts individual work behaviour. Likewise, compensation is crucial, but most employees regard it as a right rather than a means of remunerating themselves for their labour. Workers want to know that what they make matters, and that money alone does not prove this.

According to Meyer and Allen^[30], organisational commitment is a multidimensional construct (affective, continuous, and normative). Affective commitment refers to employees' emotional bond and involvement which brings about personal attachment to their organisation. Continuous commitment involves being mindful of the consequences of quitting the organisation. Employees with a lengthy history of commitment will continue to stay with the organisation against all adversities. On the other hand, normative commitment refers to a sense of devotion and duty to an organisation built on one's own set of principles and ideals. This is congruent to the findings of the past studies by Meyer and Allen^[30] that also found that employees' commitment to the company significantly impacts job efficiency.

The topic of employee commitment has sparked a lot of research interest in the past, with some studies highlighting its consequences, such as work behaviours and job efficiency^[31]. Raina and Roebuck^[4] state that numerous factors influence an employee's devotion, including communication, education, and incentive management systems. Furthermore, Rizal et al.^[32] found that employee commitment had a significant positive influence on employee performance. As a result of the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that employee commitment is a crucially significant study subject that is indicative of the organisation's strength.

According to Weaver^[18], a superior with a strong power motive would consider a subordinate's performance with a high degree of flattery to be better. Communication skill was found to be poor among

communicators with a strong control drive. If the superiors fail to adjust their communication, the employees can misunderstand the allocated responsibilities, resulting in poor performance. Hence, interpersonal communication motive affects employee commitment. Farooqi et al.^[20] also identified that interpersonal communication satisfaction motivates employees to achieve common goals. As a result, it leads to a high level of satisfaction and commitment. Jia et al.^[21] also reported that subordinates are motivated to meet their supervisor's relationship-oriented needs rather than personal-influenced needs through their satisfaction with "on-the-job experiences". On the other hand, interpersonal communication behaviours define management practices that directly enhance employees' level of commitment and participation (Lleo et al.^[25]). Farooqi et al.^[20] also highlighted that observing good interpersonal communication behaviour with one another while working in a team is essential.

Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₁: Interpersonal communication motives have a significant and positive relationship with employee commitment.

H₂: Interpersonal communication satisfaction has a significant and positive relationship with employee commitment.

H₃: Interpersonal communication behaviour has a significant and positive relationship with employee commitment.

2.3. Role of gender

Gender is a socially formed subjective sense of identity^[11]. According to Torppa^[33], interpersonal communication differences exist between men and women. Cultural standards place the onus on women to regulate and initiate communication. Women pay greater attention to the underlying meanings of the message, and men, on the other hand, are more sensitive to "between the lines connotations". Women also outperform males on average in terms of social effect, responsiveness, and internal cohesiveness^[34]. Women are more likely than males to be good communicators in a collaborative setting. Miscommunication is a problem in cross-gender communication. Studies have also reported that men and women contribute differently in communication situations^[10,11]. Gender disparities in social interaction patterns appear well-known; however, gender differences in communication are rarely examined or reported in sociolinguistic studies^[10].

Hence, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H₄: Gender moderates the relations between interpersonal communication motives and employee commitment.

H₅: Gender moderates the relations between interpersonal communication satisfaction and employee commitment.

H₆: Gender moderates the relations between interpersonal communication behaviour and employee commitment.

3. Methodology

The study's main objective is to study the relationship between interpersonal communication (independent variable) and employee commitment (dependent variable). The chosen quantitative method focuses on statistical, analytical, or numerical analysis of data collected through survey questionnaires. This study's approach focused on gathering and generalising numerical data from a target population to describe a specific phenomenon.

The study's target population were working individuals or employees with a diverse range of abilities within an organisation in different positions who are a great asset for a company (the majority holding

executive positions and representing the upper management) and provide many possibilities for current and future work requirements. Participants were chosen from a range of professions within an organisation.

Simple random sampling was used to obtain samples from a target population. This probability sampling approach uses statistical theory to select a subset of a big population at random and relate all predictions to the general population. A total of 302 responses were collected from organisations in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's most developed city^[35]. Online data collection was administered using a Google Form. The survey questionnaire was sent through informal channels, such as messaging apps, and through official channels, such as e-mail, depending on the respondents' preferences.

The survey questionnaire collected responses of the respondents' demographic profile, interpersonal communication competence, and employee commitment, respectively. The target population included employees working in different organisations from marketing, sales, education, customer service, and human resources backgrounds. The instruments that were employed to assess interpersonal communication competence (IPC) were adapted from Rubin and Martin^[17], Rubin and Rubin^[36] and Hecht^[37], whereas employee commitment was adapted from Meyer and Allen^[38]. Some of the items used to assess the IPC construct of the motive scale were: "I talk to people ...to let them know I care about their feelings, ...because it is reassuring to know someone is there, and ...to get away from pressures and responsibilities", etc. The sample items for the satisfaction scale were: "The other person lets me know that I was communicating effectively", "I feel that during the conversation I was able to present myself as I wanted the other person to view me", and "I feel I could talk about anything with others", etc. Similarly, some of the items for the behaviour competence scale were: "I am comfortable in social situations", "In conversation with friends, I perceive not only what they say but what they don't say", and "I communicate with others as though they are equals", etc. On the other hand, the sample of some items used to test respondents' commitment where they stated their agreement or disagreement were: "Accepting any type of job assignment in order to keep working for the organisation", and "proud of telling others to be part of the organisation", "talking about the organisation to friends as a great place to work for", "there is much to be gained by sticking with the organisation indefinitely", etc. The data was analysed using a partial least squares structural equation modelling approach, and the results were computed using SmartPLS software.

4. Results and findings

A total of 302 responses were returned to the researchers for data analysis purposes. The majority of respondents fell into the age groups of 20–30, 30–40, 40–50, and over 50 years. The employee's years of experience ranged from 1–5 years (29.1%), 6–10 (28.8%), 11–15 (17.5%), 16–20 (11%) and >20 years (13.6%). The study also collected responses from 160 (54%) males and 136 (46%) females. Moreover, 135 Malays (44.7 percent), 96 Chinese (31.8%), and 71 Indians (24.5%). The respondents held the following positions: 87 respondents (28.7%) executive, 75 (24.8%) non-executive, 65 (21.5%) upper management, 43 (14.2%) middle management, and 32 (10.6%) support staff. 104 (34.4%) respondents belonged to the marketing departments, 74 (24.5%) from sales, 49 (16.2%) from education, 43 (14.2%) from customer service, and 32 (10.6%) from human resource.

The data collected is analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling. Data analysis started with the measurement model used to assess instrument validity and reliability. Then, the structural model was evaluated to determine the significant predictors of the model and the moderation effect.

The measurement model was assessed using content validity, discriminant validity and convergent validity^[39]. According to Babbie^[40], content validity ensures that the questionnaire items express the same meaning as embedded concepts. The measurement model's loadings and cross-loadings were used to assess

the content validity. **Table 1** illustrates that all measures have high loadings in connection to their respective constructs and low loadings on the other constructs^[41]. Hence, content validity at the item levels is supported^[42].

Table 1. Loadings and cross-loadings for the measurement model.

	Employee commitment	Gender	IPC-behaviour	IPC-motives	IPC-satisfaction
EC-C1	0.676	0.167	0.512	0.452	0.485
EC-C2	0.762	0.038	0.563	0.524	0.498
EC-C3	0.748	0.102	0.502	0.496	0.517
EC-C4	0.735	0.146	0.447	0.493	0.504
EC-C5	0.768	0.156	0.488	0.498	0.468
EC-C6	0.715	0.078	0.49	0.472	0.501
Gend1	0.154	1	0.171	0.153	0.205
IPC-B1	0.454	0.11	0.722	0.511	0.55
IPC-B2	0.522	0.123	0.746	0.578	0.591
IPC-B3	0.515	0.092	0.704	0.462	0.542
IPC-B4	0.453	0.144	0.697	0.491	0.499
IPC-B5	0.521	0.169	0.783	0.518	0.541
IPC-B6	0.532	0.118	0.752	0.529	0.536
IPC-M1	0.434	0.153	0.54	0.714	0.557
IPC-M2	0.508	0.162	0.506	0.769	0.526
IPC-M3	0.478	0.155	0.526	0.734	0.547
IPC-M4	0.523	0.053	0.529	0.765	0.53
IPC-M5	0.527	0.072	0.551	0.755	0.545
IPC-M6	0.514	0.105	0.503	0.751	0.5
IPC-S1	0.525	0.255	0.555	0.48	0.723
IPC-S2	0.471	0.132	0.516	0.482	0.748
IPC-S3	0.478	0.196	0.558	0.538	0.747
IPC-S4	0.466	0.092	0.558	0.55	0.693
IPC-S5	0.49	0.126	0.519	0.563	0.753
IPC-S6	0.545	0.102	0.566	0.539	0.759

A model was assessed for convergent validity to verify whether all items of a variable correlate positively with other items of the same construct. Factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to test the measurement model's convergent validity. For convergent validity, factor loadings and AVE should be higher than 0.5, and the CR value must be greater than 0.7^[39]. The results are summarised in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Convergent validity.

	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Employee commitment	EC-C1	0.696	0.875	0.54
	EC-C2	0.762		
	EC-C3	0.748		
	EC-C4	0.735		
	EC-C5	0.768		
	EC-C6	0.715		

Table 2. (Continued).

	Items	Loadings	CR	AVE
Gender	Gend1	1	1	1
IPC-behaviour	IPC-B1	0.722	0.875	0.539
	IPC-B2	0.746		
	IPC-B3	0.704		
	IPC-B4	0.697		
	IPC-B5	0.783		
	IPC-B6	0.752		
IPC-motives	IPC-M1	0.714	0.884	0.56
	IPC-M2	0.769		
	IPC-M3	0.734		
	IPC-M4	0.765		
	IPC-M5	0.755		
	IPC-M6	0.751		
IPC-satisfaction	IPC-S1	0.723	0.877	0.544
	IPC-S2	0.748		
	IPC-S3	0.747		
	IPC-S4	0.693		
	IPC-S5	0.753		
	IPC-S6	0.759		

The factor loading of all the items is greater than 0.69 satisfying the minimum requirements. The AVE obtained is more than the threshold value of 0.5, and the CR values are within the range of 0.875 to 1.00, meeting the minimum requirement of 0.8. As a result, the convergent validity is satisfactory^[43,44].

Discriminant validity was assessed using Fornell-Larcker^[41] criterion and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)^[45]. The results in **Table 3** indicate that all the variances extracted by the constructs (diagonal values) are more than the correlation coefficients between the constructs (off-diagonal values), indicating adequate discriminant validity. In addition, the results presented in **Table 4** satisfy the HTMT 0.9 requirement as proposed by Gold et al.^[46]. The discriminant validity is supported by the HTMT_{inference}, which excludes the value 1 within the confidence interval.

Table 3. Discriminant validity using Fornell Lacker criterion.

	1	2	3	4	5
1) Employee commitment	0.735				
2) Gender	0.154	1			
3) IPC-behaviour	0.683	0.171	0.734		
4) IPC-motives	0.667	0.153	0.702	0.748	
5) IPC-satisfaction	0.675	0.205	0.74	0.712	0.737

Table 4. Discriminant validity using HTMT criterion.

	1	2	3	4
1) Employee commitment				
2) Gender	0.171 CI _{0.9} (0.088, 0.268)			
3) IPC-behaviour	0.82 CI _{0.9} (0.748, 0.881)	0.188 CI _{0.9} (0.093, 0.285)		
4) IPC-motives	0.795 CI _{0.9} (0.72, 0.859)	0.17 CI _{0.9} (0.086, 0.269)	0.841 CI _{0.9} (0.77, 0.901)	
5) IPC-satisfaction	0.81 CI _{0.9} (0.726, 0.88)	0.224 CI _{0.9} (0.129, 0.32)	0.89 CI _{0.9} (0.831, 0.935)	0.853 CI _{0.9} (0.79, 0.907)

4.1. Structural model and hypotheses testing

The structural model developed using the Smart PLS is shown in **Figure 2**.

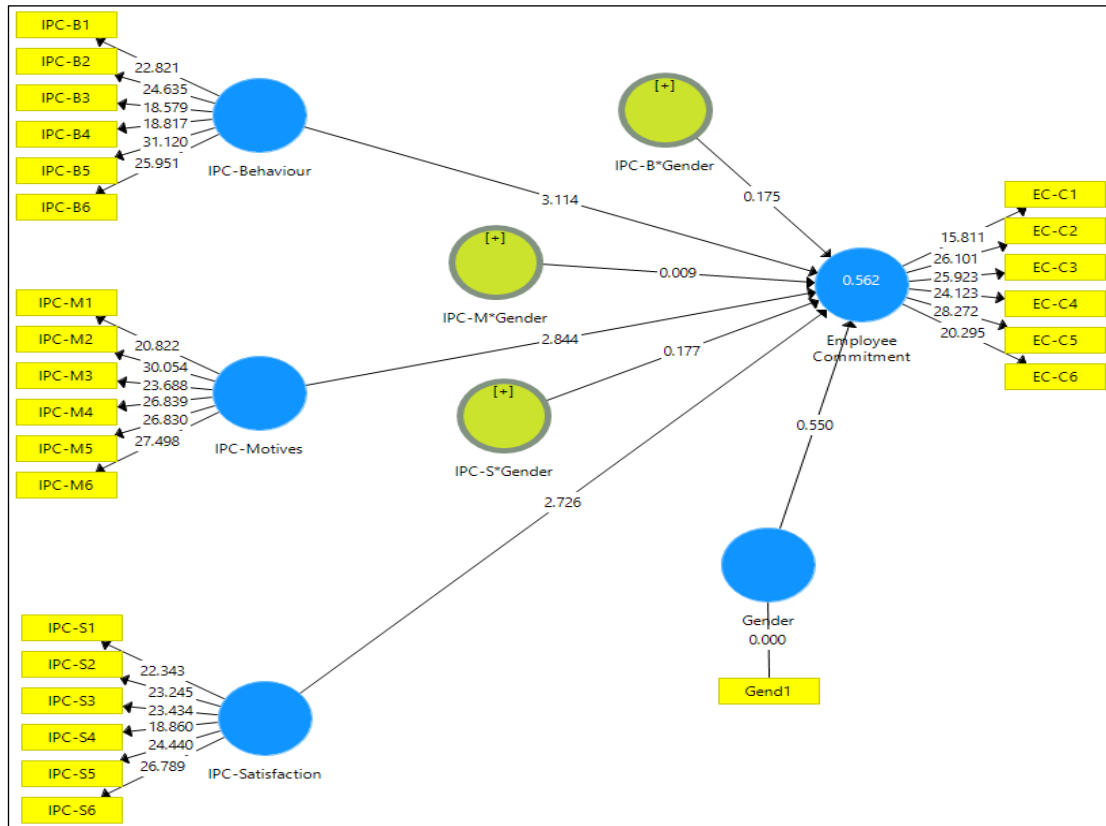


Figure 2. Structural model.

The R -square value for the model is 0.562, which indicates that the variation in the predictors can explain 56.2% of the variation in Employee commitment. Since the R^2 value is more than 0.26, according to Cohen^[47], the predictors jointly substantially impact the endogenous variable. The cross-validated redundancy Q^2 is used to test the predictive relevance of the structural model. Moreover, a Q^2 value greater than zero is acceptable^[48,49]. The blindfolding procedure resulted in a Q^2 value of 0.294, more than 0.15, ensuring the model's medium predictive relevance^[43].

Bootstrapping procedure with a resample of 5000, as suggested by Hair et al.^[43], was used to test the hypotheses, and the results are presented in **Table 5**.

Results of the hypotheses test show that gender does not significantly impact employee commitment. Interpersonal communication-behaviour, interpersonal communication-motives and interpersonal communication-satisfaction have a significant positive impact on employee commitment. Moreover, there is no moderation effect of gender on the relationship between the three variables and employee commitment. The effect size f^2 for the significant relationships is more than 0.02 and less than 0.15, which shows a small effect size. Similarly, the relative prediction relevance q^2 for all the significant variables is between 0.02 to 0.065, indicating a small predictive relevance. The variance inflationary factor (VIF) is used to investigate the problem of multicollinearity. VIF results ranged from 1.04 to 2.66, which is less than 5, indicating no problem of multicollinearity^[43,50].

Table 5. Hypotheses testing results.

Hypotheses paths	β value	T-value	P-value	Decision	f^2	q^2	VIF
H1: IPC-motives → Employee commitment	0.265	2.844	0.002	Supported	0.071	0.022	2.35
H2: IPC-satisfaction → Employee commitment	0.247	2.726	0.003	Supported	0.057	0.021	2.66
H3: IPC-behaviour → Employee commitment	0.289	3.114	0.001	Supported	0.08	0.024	2.56
H4: IPC-M*gender → Employee commitment	-0.002	0.009	0.496	Not supported	-	-	-
H5: IPC-S*gender → Employee commitment	0.046	0.177	0.43	Not supported	-	-	-
H6: IPC-B*gender → Employee commitment	0.03	0.175	0.431	Not supported	-	-	-

5. Discussion

Based on the study’s findings, employees had high interpersonal communication competency factors. Employees place the most value on IPC construct behaviour, followed by motives and satisfaction. As a result, businesses should place a greater emphasis on their behaviour during their communication. Moreover, behaviours define management approaches that directly improve employee commitment and participation^[25]. According to the respondents, illustrations of favourable behaviours occurs when “they are described as warm”, “their colleagues truly believe that they care”, “they feel relaxed in small group discussions”, “they are made to feel comfortable in social situations”, “they are able to perceive not only what their colleagues/peers say but also what they don’t say”, and “when others communicate to them as equals”, Hence, the behaviours of support, immediacy, interaction management and social relaxation favour successful interpersonal communication.

Similarly, communicators with strong motives reported a higher competence in IPC^[17,18]. Finally, interpersonal communication satisfaction inspires employees to pursue common goals^[20]. Improved employer communication motives lead to higher staff performance^[18]. This study’s findings also revealed a relationship between communication motives and employee commitment. Based on the responses, employees engage in interpersonal communication with the motives “to have a good time”, “to show gratitude and thank their colleagues”, “to show encouragement and concern”, and “to let them know they care about their feelings”, or simply because “they enjoy spending time together to build rapport and relationship”. These findings clearly indicated that the motives behind using interpersonal communication were primarily for expressing affection and for pleasure. These communication motives contribute to higher employee commitment leading to improved employee performance. The study’s findings also revealed that IPC satisfaction is linked to employee commitment. Based on the findings, respondents experienced satisfaction when “their conversations flow smoothly”, “they could laugh easily together”, “they are able to present themselves as they wanted the other person to view them”, “they receive confirmation that the other person understands what is communicated”, and “the other person provides support for what is communicated”. The study’s finding is backed by Farooqi et al.^[20], who found a favourable association between employee satisfaction and motivation, which leads to a higher degree of commitment. As a result, companies should invest in IPC, leading to increased IPC satisfaction^[21]. Employee commitment is also observed to be positively associated with IPC behaviour. Lleo et al.^[25] concurred with this finding.

Interpersonal communication is a key factor in employee commitment, and fostering excellent communication can significantly enhance this commitment and engagement. This study’s findings also support Farooqi et al.^[20] who explored the relationship between communication satisfaction and psychological safety,

highlighting that a healthy, psychologically safe environment encourages employee commitment and satisfaction. The findings of this study have a considerable impact on interpersonal communication in Malaysian businesses. Based on the results of this study, interpersonal communication might be enhanced even further. Ethnic dynamics have historically been embedded in Malaysian society to promote interpersonal relationships. With the emergence of the association government centred on the ideas of diversity, ethnic identity has become even more essential^[8,9]. Research indicates that workplace disputes are inevitable, and successful interpersonal communication can help resolve them, leading to a more dedicated workforce through open and constructive dialogue. Positive communication relations among employees may lead to increased levels of commitment due to improved well-being. Interpersonal communication is critical for employee commitment in the workplace since it leads to higher productivity and a more pleasant working environment. Organisations often invest in training and development initiatives to improve interpersonal communication skills^[24], and this study confirms their effectiveness in enhancing commitment and communication abilities as supported by Xu et al.^[22]. The study comprehended their distinct viewpoints on interpersonal communication and employee commitment. Leadership in an organisation must be able to guide, motivate, mobilise a diverse workforce, and communicate the organisation's vision effectively to achieve higher levels of satisfaction.

The study included gender as a moderator because gender differences in interpersonal communication and interaction have been noted in earlier research but seldom addressed or reported in sociolinguistic studies^[10]. Torppa^[33] revealed a gender gap in interpersonal communication, with women outperforming men on average^[34]. Men and women are also known to participate differently in different communication circumstances^[10,11]. However, according to this study's findings, gender did not influence the association between interpersonal communication constructs and employee commitment, and gender gaps do not exist in interpersonal communication. This could be because the communication needs and interests of male and female employees may not be very different, especially in the positions occupied by the respondents in marketing, sales, education, customer service, and human resource. The decision to include gender as a moderator was motivated based on empirical evidence and the desire to investigate potential variations in the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee commitment in a diverse cultural and ethnic demography. Although this did not find any conclusive evidence of gender differences in this relationship, it does add nuance to our knowledge and recommend that organisations prioritise inclusive communication strategies that consider different communication preferences especially in certain job roles, communication needs and interests may not significantly differ regarding their impact on commitment.

Based on the findings of this study, it is important for employers to place a high priority on support, promptness, interaction management, and social relaxation in the workplace. Appreciation, encouragement, and empathy are examples of positive communication that can enhance employee dedication and job satisfaction while building an environment of security and acceptance. Employee engagement is greatly influenced by interpersonal communication in companies with a culturally diverse workforce. To engage and inspire workers from all backgrounds, organizations should be aware of the diversity in their workforce and adopt effective communication techniques. This study identified no gender differences in the association between interpersonal communication and employee commitment, in contrast to other research. This suggests that businesses should strive for inclusive communication techniques and avoid assuming gender-based communication preferences. This study suggests future research on the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee commitment, suggesting that employers should invest in personalized, concise, and timely communication, and that training and engagement sessions can enhance employees' interpersonal communication skills. The study contributes to interpersonal communication theory and suggests future research could benefit from a mixed-methods strategy, combining qualitative and quantitative data. Larger

sample sizes and comparing communication dynamics within different departments in a single organisation could provide insights into how communication affects commitment.

6. Conclusion

Future studies should include other interpersonal communication constructs and employee commitment relationships. This is the first research of its kind in Malaysia, putting interpersonal communication to the test in multicultural Malaysian workplaces. According to the study's findings, Malaysian employees place a high value on interpersonal communication at work. Previous studies examined one or two interpersonal communication constructs and employee commitment, but this study looked at the association between three interpersonal communication constructs with employee commitment.

Employers must adopt interpersonal communication in their workplaces to boost employee engagement on the practical side. According to the findings of this study, behaviours that are supportive, responsive, engaging, and relaxing are desirable for good interpersonal communication. Therefore, employers should also prioritise these interpersonal communication behaviours to increase employee productivity. Similarly, the employees interact with one another for a variety of reasons. The results made it very evident that expressing affection and enjoying oneself were the main motives for practising interpersonal communication, and these motives for communication enhance employee commitment. The motives also appeared to be a good indicator supporting one's emotional and psychological well-being. Organisations and employers who value these attributes will find this information to be extremely helpful. Participants also reported feeling satisfied when the communication is fun, smooth, understandable, and accepting, which indicated that employees value "how" something is communicated instead of "what" is communicated. In other words, low fear and high pleasure, affection, and relaxation were found to be the greatest predictors of communication satisfaction.

Interpersonal communication is essential for professional growth and effectiveness. It nurtures interpersonal skills like positive attitudes, teamwork, knowledge and engagement. Lack of interpersonal communication can make employees feel marginalised and detached at work because they don't feel they are entitled to communicate and express their needs, wants, or apprehensions. Therefore, employers and internal communicators ought to offer personalised, clear, and timely communication to drive higher employee commitment. To strengthen interpersonal communication, organisations should organise more engagement sessions and training. This study adds to the body of knowledge by putting three interpersonal communication models (interpersonal communication motives model, interpersonal communication satisfaction inventory, and Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale) to test the three constructs of motives, satisfaction and behaviour respectively against employee commitment in terms of the theoretical component. There are very few studies which have employed all three IPS scales in a single study for testing the relationship between three different IPS constructs with employee commitment. This study also confirmed the key ideas of interpersonal communication and employee engagement in Malaysian businesses.

This study's interests are both theoretical and practical. This study aimed to tie together the three models, the interpersonal communication motivations model with the interpersonal communication satisfaction inventory and the Interpersonal Communication Competency Scale to evaluate IPC against employee commitment. This empirical investigation has theoretical relevance by expanding the theories of interpersonal communication. Additionally, the study has produced findings that are useful for service-based professionals who are dedicated to enhancing businesses by building interpersonal relationships with stakeholders. From both theoretical and practical standpoints, this study served as a catalyst for several future research areas. Theoretically, this can be expanded to forecast how different factors more accurately will additionally affect IPC. Practically, this strengthens the body of knowledge by providing recommendations to employers on ways

to effectively manage IPC for enhanced commitment.

The limitations of this study were considered when providing suggestions for further research. The significance of interpersonal communication in a multicultural setting is emphasised in this study. The study is only applicable to a specific geographic area in Malaysia and could only be generalised to similar cultures, fields or locations. The study examined the dimensions of behaviour, satisfaction, and motives which have not been investigated in the target population. The results of this study might be expanded in future studies in the Malaysian context by including other IPC dimensions. Additionally, this study exclusively employed quantitative data collection methods for structural equation modelling for SmartPLS analysis. A mixed-method approach might be used in future research to obtain in-depth analysis and rich datasets. This will allow the generalisation of the study's findings. Moreover, longitudinal analysis with a larger sample size might aid in generalising the study's findings. Future studies should also focus on a single organisation and compare the interpersonal communication of different divisions within that organisation. Despite the limitations, these results demonstrate that additional research in interpersonal communication for enhanced employee commitment leads to improved job performance.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, KB; methodology, KB; software, AA; validation, KB and AA; formal analysis, AA; investigation, AABMFL; resources, AABMFL; data curation, AA and AABMFL; writing—original draft preparation, KB; writing—review and editing, KB, AA and AABMFL; visualization, AA; supervision, KB; project administration, KB. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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