



Building an Information Bridge: Proactive and Preventive Communication Strategy to Minimize Miscommunication Between Company Management and Ship Crew

^{1*} Naomi Louhenapessy, ¹ Riris Ariska

¹Maritime Institute, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran Jakarta, North Jakarta, Indonesia

*corresponding email: naomi.lpessy@gmail.com

Submitted : 20/01/2026 **Revised :** 07/02/2026 **Accepted :** 27/05/2026 **Published :** 30/06/2026

ABSTRACT

Effective communication is a crucial factor in supporting the successful operation of a vessel, particularly the training ship KL. MH Thamrin, owned by Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran (STIP) Jakarta. Field conditions indicate that a communication gap still exists between company management and ship crew, one with the potential to cause miscommunication, conflict, and risks to safety and operational efficiency. This study aims to identify the factors causing poor communication quality and limited communication understanding between management and crew, and to formulate a proactive and preventive communication strategy to minimize miscommunication. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and case study, analyzed descriptively and inductively. The findings show that poor communication quality stems from communication channels not yet integrated with modern technology, a mismatch between how messages are delivered and the crew's practical needs, distance and time constraints between shore and sea, minimal feedback mechanisms, psychological and organizational-culture factors that discourage openness, and inadequate interpersonal communication skills among personnel. Meanwhile, limited communication understanding contributes to low empathy, difficulty managing conflict, an inability to read nonverbal cues, and declining team productivity and wellbeing. As solutions, the study recommends adopting integrated digital communication technology, conducting regular interpersonal communication training, establishing clear and scheduled communication SOPs, providing two-way feedback channels, and building an open and inclusive work culture. Implementing this proactive and preventive communication strategy is expected to build a solid information bridge between management and crew, creating a harmonious and safe working environment that supports sustainable ship operations.

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Keywords: communication strategy; proactive; preventive; miscommunication; ship crew

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication plays a crucial role in ensuring the successful operation of a vessel, particularly the training ship KL. MH Thamrin, one of the assets of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran (STIP)

Jakarta. The successful execution of duties within the shipping environment depends heavily on the smoothness and quality of communication between company management and ship crew, since openness of information, accuracy of understanding, and speed of

decision-making are all strongly influenced by the quality of the communication that takes place. In reality, numerous communication barriers remain that carry the potential to create risks to safety, operational efficiency, and vessel productivity.

This communication gap is not merely technical in nature but also concerns human factors. A lack of understanding and interpersonal skill in communication leads to misunderstanding and differences in perception between management and crew, which ultimately affects the working atmosphere, morale, and overall crew performance. The impact of miscommunication can hinder coordination, cause delays, and even potentially trigger workplace accidents or errors in decision-making related to safety and emergency-response procedures. For this reason, building a solid information bridge through a proactive and preventive communication strategy has become an urgent and strategic necessity.

Based on the foregoing, this study is formulated to answer two central questions: (1) why the quality of communication between company management and the crew of KL. MH Thamrin remains poor; and (2) why communication understanding between company management and the crew of KL. MH Thamrin remains low. This study aims to examine the factors underlying the low quality and understanding of communication, and to formulate a proactive and preventive communication strategy applicable to the management of the training vessel KL. MH Thamrin.



Figure 1.1: KL. MH. Thamrin (training vessel).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Communication Strategy

Communication strategy is a structured plan aimed at managing messages and interactions with an audience so that communication objectives are achieved effectively, taking into account the components of communicator, message, medium, receiver, and effect [1]. Communication strategy management encompasses the stages of formulation, implementation, and evaluation of strategy so that it remains aligned with organizational objectives [2].

2.2 Proactive and Preventive Communication

Proactive communication is an anticipatory measure undertaken before a problem arises, such as providing information early, clarifying potential misunderstandings, and maintaining openness, and plays an important role in managing crises and preserving organizational image [3]. Preventive communication, meanwhile, is a preventative approach aimed at avoiding the emergence of conflict or miscommunication through strengthening communication mechanisms, training, and consistent monitoring [4].

2.3 Miscommunication

Miscommunication occurs when a message fails to reach its recipient or is received incorrectly, often as a result of differences in communication style, ambiguous language, or limitations in the communication medium, with impacts including reduced productivity and interpersonal conflict [5]. The role of technology and digital literacy is considered important for bridging communication differences and reducing miscommunication in the modern era [6].



Figure 2.1: Crew of KL. MH. Thamrin.

2.4 Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is the direct exchange of information, ideas, and feelings between two or more people, whether verbal or nonverbal, aimed at building mutual understanding and improved relationships. There are five important aspects of interpersonal communication skill: openness, empathy, engagement, clarity, and appreciation [7]. Good interpersonal communication does not merely convey information but also assists emotional recovery and strengthens harmonious working relationships [8].

2.5 Ship Crew and Company Management

Ship crew are persons who work aboard a vessel in a capacity listed in the crew list (buku sijil), consisting of the master, ship's officers, and ratings, as regulated under Regulation of the Minister of Transportation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 6 of 2022 concerning Shipping Safety [9]. Effective management requires clear and structured communication so that decisions and policies can be properly implemented by all

members of the organization, including ship crew operating within a maritime operational environment.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, a scientific methodology that emphasizes in-depth understanding and the rich context of a social phenomenon, with the aim of answering the questions "what," "why," "how," and "who" behind the event under investigation [10]. Thematic analysis is used to develop a conceptual model from the research findings systematically [11].

Primary data were obtained through three data-collection techniques: (1) direct observation of the communication process between management and crew within the STIP environment and aboard the KL. MH Thamrin, covering observation of both verbal and nonverbal communication; (2) in-depth interviews, both structured and semi-structured, with management and crew to explore their experiences, understanding, and the communication barriers they face; and (3) case study, used to analyze specific communication phenomena in depth by integrating observation results, interviews, and supporting documents. Secondary data were obtained from company and STIP documents.

The collected data were analyzed using two methods: descriptive analysis, which portrays the condition of communication systematically, factually, and accurately without generalization; and inductive analysis, used to draw out patterns, themes, and relationships from field data in order to formulate communication-strategy recommendations grounded in empirical evidence. The study was conducted from January to April 2026 at Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pelayaran and aboard the training vessel KL. MH Thamrin.

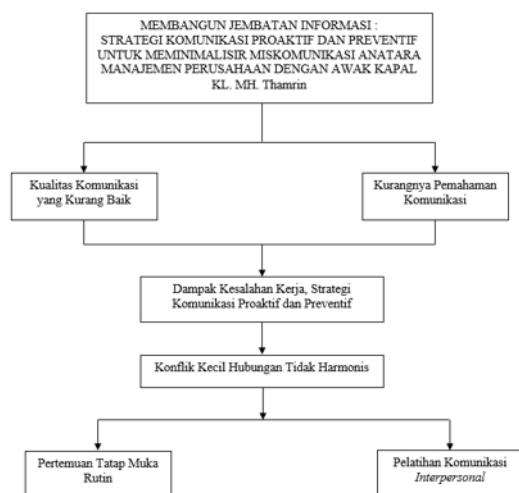


Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework.

The framework begins from the study's title and branches into two initial factors — poor communication quality and limited communication understanding — both of which lead to a shared consequence of operational errors, addressed through a proactive and

preventive communication strategy, which in turn is directed at minor conflicts and disharmonious relationships, resolved through two concrete interventions: regular face-to-face meetings and interpersonal communication training.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Factors Causing Poor Communication Quality

The findings show that the poor quality of communication between company management and the crew of KL. MH Thamrin is a complex issue involving technical, structural, and psychosocial dimensions. The principal factors identified are as follows.

- Limitations in structured, modern communication channels. The communication system still relies on traditional methods such as telephone calls and short text messages, which offer minimal documentation features, are prone to message-delivery errors, experience response delays, and are constrained by network connectivity at sea.
- Information not tailored to the crew's practical needs, resulting from the use of overly complex technical language, an overly formal delivery style, overly general information, a lack of practical illustration, and the absence of any direct channel for clarification.
- Physical distance and time-zone differences between shore-based management and crew at sea, which hinder real-time synchronization of communication and interactive discussion, particularly in emergency situations.
- A lack of effective and sustained feedback mechanisms, in which available communication channels remain one-directional and do not guarantee confidentiality for crew members wishing to raise complaints.
- Psychological and organizational-culture factors that do not support openness, including a rigid hierarchical structure and an imbalance of power relations between management and crew.
- Inadequate interpersonal communication skills among personnel, including the ability to convey messages clearly, manage conflict, and read nonverbal cues.

These findings are consistent with Hult and Lennung [12], who state that communication barriers in shipping companies generally stem from both technical and human factors. Likewise, this study's results reinforce Wibowo's [13] view regarding the importance of preventive communication strategy within the Indonesian shipping industry to reduce the risk of information gaps between shore and ship.

4.2 Factors Causing Limited Communication Understanding

Beyond the quality of communication channels, this study also found that limited interpersonal communication skills significantly affect communication understanding between management and crew, encompassing the following.

- a. A lack of empathy in communication, causing management to fail to grasp the aspirations and emotional needs of crew members, thereby generating frustration and reducing team trust.
- b. Difficulty managing conflict and providing constructive criticism, such that minor issues have the potential to develop into prolonged disputes.
- c. Limited ability to read nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice, which affects decision-making in ways that do not align well with actual field conditions.
- d. A widening communication gap that increases emotional and professional distance, thereby reducing the quality of interpersonal relationships between management and crew.
- e. Negative effects on team productivity and wellbeing, marked by declining work motivation, weakened teamwork, and an increased risk of operational error.

These findings reinforce Goleman's [14] view on the importance of emotional intelligence in organizational communication, and are consistent with Rambe [7], who affirms that openness, empathy, engagement, clarity, and appreciation constitute the five key aspects of effective interpersonal communication skill.

4.3 Proactive and Preventive Communication Strategy

Based on the analysis, this study formulates a set of proactive and preventive communication strategies to minimize miscommunication between company management and the crew of KL. MH Thamrin, as follows.

- a. Adopting more modern and rapid communication technology, such as a dedicated company instant-messaging application equipped with reporting and feedback features, to accelerate real-time and documented information transfer.
- b. Conducting regular communication training for management to enable clear, empathetic, and contextually appropriate message delivery to crew.
- c. Establishing a clear standard operating procedure (SOP) for communication, including a routine schedule of briefings or information updates between management and crew.
- d. Providing two-way communication channels enabling crew to give direct and prompt

feedback to management, such as a digital forum or electronic suggestion box.

- e. Holding regular interpersonal communication and emotion-management training for both management and crew, to improve their ability to convey messages, listen actively, and manage conflict.
- f. Implementing coaching or mentoring to build sustained interpersonal communication capability within the team.
- g. Encouraging an open work culture that values honest communication and mutual respect between management and crew.
- h. Providing an effective communication module adapted to the maritime context and the operational challenges faced by crew.

The integrated application of these strategies is expected to improve communication quality, build a healthy communication culture, and create a more harmonious and safe working environment. This is consistent with Clampitt's [15] view that managerial effectiveness is strongly determined by an organization's ability to design a structured and responsive communication system, and with the findings of Putra and Prasetyo [16], who emphasize the importance of optimizing communication technology aboard merchant vessels to support safety and shipping efficiency.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that: first, the poor quality of communication between company management and the crew of KL. MH Thamrin is driven by the limitations of traditional communication methods not yet integrated with modern technology, distance and time-zone constraints, minimal secure two-way feedback channels, and the absence of a standardized communication operating guideline. Second, limited communication understanding between management and crew is caused by insufficient interpersonal communication and emotion-management training, which in turn results in low empathy, difficult conflict management, and declining team productivity and wellbeing.

Figure 4.1: Shipboard organization chart of the training vessel KL. MH Thamrin, showing the command hierarchy from the Master through the deck, engine, and steward departments, as documented in the original study.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Adopt modern communication technology, such as instant-messaging applications with reporting, feedback, and documentation features, so that information delivery is faster and more accessible.

- b) Conduct regular interpersonal communication and emotion-management training for management and crew.
- c) Develop and implement a clear, structured communication SOP, including a routine briefing schedule and two-way communication mechanisms.
- d) Build an open and inclusive work culture by encouraging two-way dialogue and providing crew with a safe space to give feedback without fear of negative consequences.

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