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Savladavanje bontona na radnom mestu: profesionalizam, produktivnost i institucionalni ciljevi

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Apstrakt: Bonton na radnom mestu, koji obuhvata neformalne kodekse profesionalnog ponašanja, utiče na komunikaciju, poštovanje, profesionalizam i inkluzivnost, što sve ključno doprinosi uspehu organizacije. Ova studija mešovite metode istraživala je vezu između bontona na radnom mestu i produktivnosti zaposlenih, kao i usklađenost sa institucionalnim ciljevima, uključujući veze sa ciljevima održivog razvoja (COD). Rezultati ankete sprovedene među 350 zaposlenih pokazali su jaku pozitivnu korelaciju ($r = 0,68$, $p < 0,001$) između pridržavanja bontona i produktivnosti. Regresione analize su otkrile značajne prediktivne veze između komponenti bontona, posebno efikasnosti komunikacije i poštovanja, i postizanja institucionalnih ciljeva ($\beta = 0,54$, $p < 0,01$). Kvalitativni intervjui su potvrdili ove nalaze, naglašavajući važnost obuke i liderstva u negovanju kulture bontona. Preporuke uključuju sveobuhvatnu obuku o bontonu, programe mentorstva i strukturirane mehanizme povratnih informacija kako bi se bonton ugradio u organizacionu kulturu, promovišući održivost i društvenu odgovornost. Praktično, bonton služi kao vitalna organizaciona prednost koja poboljšava učinak, reputaciju i inkluzivnost.

Ključne reči: bonton na radnom mestu, profesionalizam, produktivnost, organizaciona kultura, inkluzivnost.

Mastering Workplace Etiquette: Professionalism, Productivity, and Institutional Goals

Abstract in English: Workplace etiquette, comprising informal professional conduct codes, influences communication, respect, professionalism, and inclusivity, all of which contribute critically to organizational success. This mixed-method study investigated the relationship between workplace etiquette and employee productivity as well as institutional goal alignment, including connections to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Results from a survey of 350 employees showed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.68$, $p < .001$) between etiquette adherence and productivity. Regression analyses revealed significant predictive relationships between etiquette components especially communication effectiveness and respectfulness and institutional goal achievement ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < .01$). Qualitative interviews reinforced these findings, underscoring the importance of training and leadership in fostering etiquette cultures. Recommendations include comprehensive etiquette training, mentorship programs, and structured feedback mechanisms to embed etiquette into organizational culture, promoting sustainability and social responsibility. Practically, etiquette serves as a vital organizational asset that enhances performance, reputation, and inclusivity.

Keywords: Workplace Etiquette, Professionalism, Productivity, Organizational Culture, Inclusivity.

1. Introduction

In contemporary organizational contexts characterized by rapid globalization, technological transformation, and increasingly diverse workforces, workplace etiquette the unwritten norms guiding professional behavior and interpersonal interaction plays a crucial role in fostering environments conducive to productivity and institutional success (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012; Holistique Training, 2024).

Beyond traditional notions of politeness, etiquette encompasses behaviors such as respectful communication, punctuality, professional appearance, and inclusivity that contribute to positive workplace relationships and culture. As virtual and hybrid work arrangements become more prevalent, challenges arise in maintaining consistent etiquette standards, especially in digital communication contexts. These shifts, alongside increased cultural diversity, necessitate updated, empirically grounded frameworks to guide organizations in embedding etiquette as a strategic asset (Edstellar, 2025; Shore et al., 2011). Although workplace etiquette is recognized as vital in organizational theory and practice, there remains a lack of comprehensive, data-driven studies explicitly measuring its impact on quantifiable outcomes such as employee productivity, institutional goal alignment, and reputational capital. Additionally, the absence of robust frameworks that incorporate modern work environment complexities such as multicultural teams and digital communication limits organizations' capacity to cultivate and sustain etiquette-centered cultures.

Research Objectives:

- To identify and explicate core components of workplace etiquette that significantly influences professionalism, productivity, and organizational climate.
- To empirically examine the relationship between workplace etiquette adherence and institutional goal achievement.
- To explore how the integration of workplace etiquette with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promotes organizational sustainability and social responsibility.

Research Questions:

- What are the essential behaviors and practices constituting effective workplace etiquette?
- How does workplace etiquette impact individual productivity and collective institutional outcomes?
- What practical strategies can organizations implement to embed workplace etiquette in alignment with SDGs?

2. Literature Review

Workplace etiquette refers to the informal code of conduct governing interpersonal interactions, communication practices, and professional behavior within organizational settings. The study of workplace etiquette is grounded in several foundational theories that explain how respectful and cooperative behaviors influence organizational outcomes. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) posits that social interactions operate on a system of reciprocal exchanges; in the workplace context, respectful behaviors such as active listening and acknowledgment foster trust and cooperation among employees (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This mutual respect cultivates positive relational networks essential for organizational cohesion and effectiveness. Organizational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1990) emphasizes the perception of fairness in workplace processes and outcomes. Fair treatment and accountability enhance employees' motivation and ethical behaviors, thus reinforcing a culture of etiquette that supports professionalism and productivity (Colquitt et al., 2001). Communication Theory, particularly the work of Burgoon, Guerrero, and Floyd (2016), explains that effective communication verbal and non-verbal is central to reducing ambiguity and workplace conflict. Non-verbal cues such as eye contact, posture, and facial expressions complement spoken words, conveying empathy and fostering trust critical for positive workplace relations. Emotional Intelligence (EI), conceptualized by Goleman (1995), plays a pivotal role in managing interpersonal dynamics by enabling individuals to recognize their own and others' emotions, regulate emotional responses, and navigate social complexities. High EI levels correlate with better teamwork, leadership effectiveness, and conflict resolution skills (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004).

Building upon the theoretical underpinnings, workplace etiquette comprises multiple practical components that collectively shape professionalism and impact organizational success.

Punctuality is widely regarded as a visible indicator of respect for others' time and commitment to organizational goals. While Macan (1994) highlighted its role as a time management skill crucial for productivity, Hall's (1983) distinction between monochronic and polychronic cultures challenges standardized expectations. In multinational organizations, flexibility and cultural sensitivity in regards to time perceptions are necessary (Gudykunst & Kim, 2017).

Professional Appearance affects impressions of competence and credibility, especially in customer-facing roles. Impression Management Theory (Leary & Kowalski, 1990) explains how adherence to professional dress codes fosters trustworthiness and a positive organizational image (Churchgate, 2024). Dress norms also indirectly influence employee confidence and behavior. Respect for Colleagues is foundational to reducing workplace incivility and fostering psychological safety. Andersson and Pearson (1999) outlined how incivility spirals detrimentally affect job satisfaction and performance. Conversely, respectful behavior promotes positive social exchanges that increase collaboration and reduce turnover intentions, corroborated by Holistique Training (2024).

Effective Communication encapsulates both verbal clarity and non-verbal acuity. Active listening, defined as intentionally absorbing and responding to messages, is crucial for understanding and minimizing miscommunication. Giles (1973) further argued that communication styles influence interpersonal rapport and conflict outcomes. Digital Communication Etiquette has gained prominence with the rise of remote and hybrid work. Holistique Training (2024) stresses clarity, timeliness, and professionalism in emails and virtual interactions, noting that breaches in digital etiquette can damage professional relationships and institutional reputation.

There is increasing recognition of workplace etiquette's alignment with global sustainability and social responsibility agendas. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework linking organizational conduct to broader societal challenges. Notably, SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) emphasize inclusive, respectful, and fair workplaces that uphold human dignity and promote equity (United Nations, 2024). Organizational cultures embedding etiquette contribute directly to these goals by fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion. Roberson (2006) and Shore et al. (2011) documented how inclusive cultures leverage etiquette norms to support innovation and employee engagement, which enhances organizational resilience and sustainability.

3. Research Methodology

This research employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine the relationship between workplace etiquette and organizational outcomes.

- The quantitative component consisted of a structured survey administered electronically to 350 employees across various industries, including manufacturing, services, and education. The sample was stratified to ensure diversity in gender, age, and cultural backgrounds, facilitating generalizable results. The survey measured perceptions of etiquette adherence, productivity levels, and institutional goal alignment using validated Likert-scale items.
- The qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews with 15 HR professionals and organizational leaders who oversee employee development programs. These interviews provided deeper insights into etiquette training practices, challenges faced, and observed organizational impacts.
- Additionally, secondary data analysis entailed reviewing institutional performance reports, employee engagement indices, and turnover statistics from organizations that have implemented formal workplace etiquette policies.

The survey instrument was developed based on established measurement scales for workplace communication, respect, and professionalism (Robbins & Judge, 2019; Mayer et al., 2004). Items included statements such as —Employees in my organization demonstrate respect during interactions‖ and —Effective communication enhances my productivity,‖ rated on a 5-point scale from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The questionnaire was pilot tested for clarity and reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding 80 for all constructs. The interview protocol comprised open-ended questions exploring how etiquette is defined, taught, and reinforced, as well as perceived outcomes on productivity and institutional goals.

Based on theory and prior literature, the study proposed:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a positive correlation between workplace etiquette adherence and employee productivity.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): The presence of robust workplace etiquette practices predicts higher alignment with institutional goals and enhanced organizational reputation.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics (version 27). Descriptive statistics summarized demographic information and key variables. Pearson correlation coefficients tested relationships between workplace etiquette and productivity (H1). Hierarchical multiple regression assessed the predictive power of communication, respect, and professionalism on institutional goal alignment (H2), controlling for demographic covariates. Qualitative interview transcripts were coded thematically using NVivo 12, enabling the identification of recurrent themes related to training efficacy, leadership influence, and cultural sensitivity in etiquette application. Secondary data triangulated findings by assessing organizational metrics linked to workplace etiquette programs.

The study adhered to ethical research standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Institutional Review approval was obtained prior to data collection, ensuring protection of participant rights and data security.

4. Findings and Analysis

The quantitative data from 350 survey respondents demonstrated a strong positive correlation between workplace etiquette adherence and self-reported productivity (Pearson's $r = 0.68$, $p < .001$), supporting Hypothesis 1 (H1). Among the etiquette components measured, effective communication and respectfulness emerged as the strongest predictors of productivity, consistent with prior research emphasizing the role of clear and respectful interactions in performance enhancement (LinkedIn, 2022; Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2016).

Hierarchical regression analysis revealed that these components collectively accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in institutional goal alignment ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < .01$), confirming Hypothesis 2 (H2). Control variables such as demographic factors did not substantially affect these relationships, indicating the robustness of etiquette's influence across diverse groups.

Interviews with 15 HR professionals and managers provided rich, contextualized support for the quantitative results. Key themes included:

- The critical role of continuous etiquette training in maintaining professional standards, particularly emphasizing digital etiquette in remote and hybrid environments.
- Leadership modeling of etiquette behaviors was identified as a crucial factor in embedding etiquette culture, fostering employee emulation and buy-in.
- The challenge of cultural diversity was reiterated, with calls for flexible and inclusive etiquette policies sensitive to different cultural norms and communication styles (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).
- Participants stressed the need for feedback mechanisms that confidentially address breaches to promote accountability without fostering negativity.

Analysis of organizational performance reports and employee engagement scores from firms with formal etiquette policies showed positive trends. These organizations demonstrated:

- Up to 30% higher employee engagement scores compared to peers lacking such policies.
- More consistent achievement of balanced scorecard targets related to customer satisfaction and internal process efficiency.
- Enhanced institutional reputation, as evidenced by stakeholder surveys and client retention data.

These findings illustrate that formalizing workplace etiquette into organizational strategy and culture has tangible benefits beyond interpersonal relations, extending to measurable institutional success.

Table 1: Workplace Etiquette Integration Strategies and Expected Outcomes

Strategy	Description	Expected Outcome
Etiquette Training	Regular workshops on communication, respect, cultural sensitivity, and digital conduct.	Enhanced employee awareness and professional behavior.
Mentorship Programs	Experienced staff guide new employees on professionalism and etiquette norms.	Smooth onboarding and cultural integration.

Feedback Mechanisms	Systems for reporting and addressing etiquette breaches confidentially.	Timely resolution and culture maintenance.
Leadership Modeling	Managers demonstrate and reinforce etiquette standards consistently.	Increased adherence and motivation.
Performance Metrics	Inclusion of etiquette behaviors in employee evaluations and rewards.	Reinforcement of accountability and continuous improvement

Source:.. Strategies are based on empirical findings combined with best practices in organizational development (Holistique Training, 2024).

5. Discussion

The evidence affirms workplace etiquette as a pivotal driver of professionalism, productivity, and institutional alignment. The strong correlation between etiquette adherence and productivity aligns with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which explains that reciprocal respectful behavior builds trust and cooperation, essential for high-functioning workplace dynamics (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Further, communication's role as the highest predictor underscores foundational principles from Communication Theory (Burgoon et al., 2016), wherein clarity and empathy reduce misunderstandings and mitigate conflict. The impact of respect and accountability on institutional goal alignment reflects Organizational Justice Theory (Greenberg, 1990), where perceived fairness enhances employee motivation and ethical conduct, leading to improved organizational outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2001). The qualitative emphasis on leadership modeling supports theories of organizational culture development and transformational leadership, highlighting that etiquette norms are most effective when visibly supported by management (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Importantly, the study's linkage of workplace etiquette to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) situates professional behavior within broader frameworks of social responsibility and equity (United Nations, 2024). SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) are particularly pertinent, as fostering inclusive, respectful work environments embodies these global objectives (Roberson, 2006; Shore et al., 2011). This study with help from previous literature filled empirical gaps and illustrating how etiquette functions not only as a set of social norms but as a strategic organizational asset contributing to productivity, employee engagement, and reputation. Challenges identified, such as digital etiquette and multicultural sensitivity, echo contemporary scholarship advocating adaptive organizational practices (Holistique Training, 2024; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).

6. Conclusion

This paper underscores the critical role of workplace etiquette in fostering professionalism, productivity, and alignment with institutional goals. Integrating theoretical insights with practical strategies enables organizations to build respectful, inclusive, and high-performing cultures. Aligning etiquette with Sustainable Development Goals further enhances social responsibility and sustainability. Future research should longitudinally evaluate etiquette initiatives' effectiveness across sectors and cultures, considering how evolving technologies and work modalities affect norms and outcomes.

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