

# THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, YOUTH, SPORTS, AND TOURISM OF SURABAYA CITY

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## Informasi Artikel

Initial draft: August 8, 2025  
 Revision: September 15, 2025  
 Accepted: September 18, 2025  
 Available online: September 19, 2025

Keywords: *Communication, Employee Performance, Public Sector*

Type Article: Research paper (Quantitative)



Managed by the Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya

Published by UMSurabaya Publishing, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya

## ABSTRACT

Effective communication is a critical determinant of performance in public institutions with complex, multidimensional functions. This study investigates the effect of communication on employee performance at the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City. Employing a quantitative, explanatory research design, data were collected from all 53 employees using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS, incorporating validity and reliability tests, simple linear regression, and hypothesis testing. The results indicate that communication exerts a strong, positive, and significant influence on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.820$ ,  $R^2 = 0.672$ ), with goal setting, instruction delivery, and reporting emerging as the strongest indicators. Conversely, feedback provision and complaint handling remain areas for improvement. The findings underscore the need for strengthening two-way communication, institutionalizing constructive feedback mechanisms, and fostering a participatory work climate to optimize employee performance.

## INTRODUCTION

Regional development is an integral component of national development and serves as a key strategy for improving community welfare. This development extends beyond economic growth to include the enhancement of human resource (HR) quality and the optimal management of regional potential (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Since the enactment of Law No. 32 of 2004 on Regional Governance, local governments have gained the authority to regulate and manage public affairs according to local aspirations. This decentralization requires local governments to be innovative, creative, and uphold integrity in managing their resources to achieve sustainable development (Widianingsih & Morrell, 2007).

The tourism sector is one of the strategic fields with significant potential to stimulate regional

economic growth. As a metropolitan area, Surabaya aims to position itself as a competitive and sustainable tourism destination. To realize this vision, the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism plays a pivotal role in managing cultural heritage, promoting tourism, and improving the quality of public services. These functions are heavily dependent on the quality of human resources (Mochklas, 2023; Khanifa & Hafidulloh, 2024). Capital, infrastructure, and technology alone will not achieve optimal outcomes without skilled and motivated personnel (Saifudin et al., 2020; Rivai & Sagala, 2011).

In the context of public sector management, communication serves as a critical element for coordination, team-building, and aligning performance with organizational goals. Effective communication facilitates shared understanding, reduces errors, and enhances synergy in work

relationships, ultimately contributing to better service delivery, responsiveness, and productivity (Mochklas, 2024; Hafidulloh & Ratnaningtyas, 2024). The effectiveness of communication is further reinforced when coupled with a positive work environment and high employee motivation (Robbins & Judge, 2017; Saifudin et al., 2020).

Moreover, communication not only improves task execution but also nurtures interpersonal relationships, clarifies job responsibilities, minimizes potential conflicts, and fosters a supportive organizational climate (Osman et al., 2025). This is particularly relevant in cultural and tourism institutions that oversee diverse domains culture, sports, and tourism each with unique objectives, programs, and operational challenges. Consequently, an integrated and adaptive communication strategy is necessary to realize their collective goals effectively.

This study addresses a notable research gap by analyzing the influence of communication on employee performance in the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City. Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing literature on communication and public sector performance, while practically offering insights for institutional leaders to develop effective communication systems, strengthen coordination, and enhance public service performance in line with organizational missions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational performance, particularly in the public sector, is greatly influenced by the integration of effective communication and employee performance outcomes. In government organizations that focus on public service, such as the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City, communication serves not only as a medium for information exchange but also as a strategic instrument for aligning organizational objectives with individual contributions.

### Communication

Organizational communication is broadly defined as the process of conveying and exchanging messages to achieve shared understanding between sender and receiver (Keith Davis, 2010; Oxford, 2010). Athoillah (2010) emphasizes its persuasive and instructive roles, which influence employee behavior, motivation, and decision-making. In line with Kristiadi (2010), communication involves stages such as ideation, encoding, message delivery, decoding,

and feedback, making it a cyclical rather than linear process.

The communication process includes ideation, encoding, message delivery, reception, decoding, and feedback (Kristiadi, 2010). Types of communication in organizations comprise vertical (superior–subordinate), horizontal (among peers), diagonal (cross-functional), formal, and informal communication. Public organizations often employ a combination of formal and informal communication to support effective coordination and ensure smooth information flow across all levels.

The effectiveness of communication is influenced by internal factors such as communication skills, mutual respect, and openness, as well as external factors such as communication media, work environment, organizational policies, and work culture (Hafidulloh, & Ratnaningtyas, 2024). In the tourism sector, the ability to convey messages with cultural sensitivity and adapt to diverse stakeholders is particularly important (Saifudin et al., 2020). Empirical studies have shown that communication significantly affects employee performance. Ma'rifah et al. (2023) found that communication, competence, and work culture explained 59.8% of the variance in employee performance in regional tourism offices. Similarly, Suryanti and Wilujeng (2021) observed that effective internal communication increases employee motivation and positive attitudes, while Osman et al. (2025) confirmed that strong internal communication enhances morale and productivity among local government employees.

Previous studies highlight that communication is not only a technical function but also a determinant of performance outcomes. Ma'rifah et al. (2023) showed that internal communication, competence, and work culture explained 59.8% of employee performance variance in regional tourism offices. Similarly, Suryanti and Wilujeng (2021) found that effective communication increases motivation and responsiveness, while Osman et al. (2025) emphasized that strong internal communication improves morale and productivity in local government agencies. These findings confirm that communication in the public sector functions beyond message delivery; it creates a participatory environment that enhances accountability and service quality.

### Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the outcomes achieved by an individual in terms of both quality and quantity, in line with assigned responsibilities (Sulistiyan, 2003; Marihot, 2002). Rivai (2004) notes

that performance is a function of motivation and ability, both of which must be managed optimally.

Performance indicators include productivity, service quality, responsiveness, accountability, and teamwork (Gomes, 2001). In the public sector, particularly in culture and tourism, these indicators also cover public satisfaction and the successful implementation of cultural programs and tourism promotion.

Factors influencing performance encompass individual attributes (knowledge, skills, experience), psychological factors (motivation, perception, attitude), and organizational factors (leadership, communication, work environment) (Robbins, 2016). Khanifa and Hafidulloh (2024) highlight motivation and organizational culture as key drivers of improved employee performance, while Hafidulloh, & Ratnaningtyas (2024) found that effective communication mechanisms can enhance discipline and performance in the public sector.

Several scholars link communication directly with these performance outcomes. Khanifa and Hafidulloh (2024) identified motivation and organizational culture as strong determinants of performance, while Saifudin et al. (2020) emphasized that communication mediates the relationship between work environment and performance improvement. These studies indicate that communication not only supports task execution but also plays an integrative role in enhancing responsibility, problem-solving, and collaborative work.

### **The Relationship between Communication and Employee Performance**

Theoretically, effective communication contributes to performance improvement through mechanisms such as clarifying roles, enhancing motivation, supporting accurate decision-making, and minimizing internal conflict. Ma'rifah et al. (2023) demonstrated a significant relationship between internal communication and employee performance in regional tourism offices. Suryanti and Wilujeng (2021) found that communication that motivates employees is associated with higher work quality and responsiveness, while (Osman et al., 2025) confirmed that strong internal communication boosts morale and productivity in local government agencies.

In the context of the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City, communication effectiveness is crucial given the agency's diverse yet interconnected functions. Structured, open, and adaptive communication facilitates inter-unit coordination, enhances public

service quality, and supports the optimal achievement of organizational objectives.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study applied a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to assess the effect of communication on employee performance. The population consisted of all 53 employees of the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City, all of whom participated as respondents. Data were collected using a structured, close-ended questionnaire based on the research variable indicators, measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), in line with standard quantitative practices (Sugiyono, 2013; Creswell, 2014). The instrument was tested for validity and reliability to ensure measurement accuracy and internal consistency (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), including descriptive statistics to profile respondents, and validity and reliability testing to confirm the quality of the measurement tool. To test the hypothesis, the study employed simple linear regression to examine the influence of communication on employee performance, supported by a t-test at a 0.05 significance level (Ghozali, 2018). This combination of statistical procedures is appropriate for identifying linear relationships and confirming the strength and direction of variable effects in explanatory research.

## **FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

### **Finding**

This section presents empirical findings derived from data collected through questionnaires. The analysis aims to evaluate the extent to which the implementation of e-procurement influences the performance of civil servants (ASN) in the Surabaya City Government. The research findings include a description of respondent characteristics, validity and reliability testing of the instrument, inter-variable correlation analysis, and simple linear regression to determine the strength and direction of the relationships among the variables studied.

#### **a. Respondent Profile**

The study respondents comprised 53 employees of the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and

Tourism of Surabaya City, representing various structural and functional positions, with diverse educational backgrounds and lengths of service, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Category	Description	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	29	55
	Male	24	45
Age	20–24 years	7	13
	25–29 years	10	19
	30–34 years	16	30
	>35 years	20	38
Education Level	Elementary School	3	6
	Junior High School		
	School	11	21
	Senior High School	8	15
	Diploma (D3)	31	54
	Bachelor's Degree		
	<1 year	0	0
Length of Wworking	2–3 years	7	13
	4–5 years	5	9
	>6 years	41	77

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

From Table 1, most respondents were female (55%), with males comprising 45%. In terms of age, the largest groups were >35 years (38%) and 30–34 years (30%), indicating a workforce dominated by individuals in their productive years. Respondents aged 25–29 and 20–24 accounted for 19% and 13%, respectively. Regarding education, the majority held a bachelor's degree (54%), followed by senior high school (21%), diploma (15%), and junior high school (6%), with none having only elementary education, reflecting generally high educational attainment.

In terms of tenure, 77% had more than six years of service, 13% had two to three years, and 9% had four to five years, with no respondents having less than one year. This profile indicates that most employees possess substantial work experience, strong familiarity with organizational dynamics, and significant contributions to institutional performance.

### b. Respondents' Answer Results

The following section presents the respondents' answers, outlining their perceptions and evaluations related to the research variables, which serve as the basis for further statistical analysis.

#### Communication

The following section presents respondents' answers regarding the communication variables, reflecting their perceptions of goal setting, instruction delivery, policy information, feedback, and

interaction, which are essential for evaluating communication effectiveness within the organization.

Tabel 2. Respondents' answers related to communication

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Score	Category
Supervisor sets the goals to be achieved	28	25	-	-	-	240	Very Good
Supervisor gives clear work instructions	22	31	-	-	-	234	Very Good
Supervisor communicates policies and procedures	23	30	-	-	-	235	Very Good
Supervisor highlights issues requiring attention	10	32	11	-	-	211	Good
Supervisor provides feedback on performance	4	39	9	1	0	205	Good
Subordinates submit work reports	26	27	0	0	0	238	Very Good
Subordinates offer suggestions to the supervisor	21	32	0	0	0	233	Very Good
Subordinates express complaints to the supervisor	3	21	23	6	0	180	Less Good
Subordinates engage in discussions with supervisors	22	30	1	0	0	233	Very Good
Subordinates identify and solve problems with their supervisor	13	35	5	0	0	220	Good

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

Based on Table 2, most employees rated top-down communication as “very good,” especially in goal setting (240), delivering instructions (234), and conveying policies (235), indicating clear and systematic guidance from leaders. However, addressing issues (211) and providing feedback (205) were only “good,” suggesting the need for more focused problem attention and constructive feedback.

In bottom-up communication, work reporting (238), giving suggestions (233), and conducting discussions (233) were rated “very good,” showing openness toward leadership. Yet, complaint submission scored lowest (180, “poor”), reflecting barriers or reluctance to raise issues. Problem-solving with supervisors was “good” (220), highlighting the need to strengthen collaborative problem resolution and foster a more open two-way communication climate.

#### Performance

The following section presents respondents' answers regarding employee performance variables, illustrating their assessments of work completion, accuracy, adherence to instructions, problem-solving, responsibility, cooperation, and punctuality, which are crucial for evaluating overall performance within the organization.

Tabel 3. Respondents' answers regarding performance

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Score	Category
Work is completed on time	21	32	0	0	0	233	Very Good
Work is carried out carefully and thoroughly	24	29	0	0	0	236	Very Good
Work instructions are followed properly	21	30	2	0	0	231	Very Good
Work can be done without supervision	17	35	1	0	0	227	Very Good
Able to take appropriate action when problems arise	20	18	15	0	0	194	Good
Job responsibilities are carried out	21	21	11	0	0	196	Good
Performs tasks well without coercion	24	29	0	0	0	236	Very Good

Never refuses any task assigned by the supervisor	19	31	3	0	0	228	Very Good
Feels comfortable when working with colleagues	17	35	1	0	0	228	Very Good
Always delivers good work results	20	33	0	0	0	232	Very Good
Always arrives on time	17	35	0	0	0	230	Very Good

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

Based on the respondents' answers, most employee performance indicators were rated as "very good." High ratings were observed for on-time task completion (score 233), accuracy (score 236), adherence to work instructions (score 231), ability to work without supervision (score 227), performing tasks without coercion (score 236), compliance in accepting assignments (score 228), comfort in collaborating with colleagues (score 228), work quality (score 232), and punctual attendance (score 230). These results indicate that employees demonstrate strong discipline, responsibility, and motivation in carrying out their duties in line with organizational standards.

However, two indicators were rated "good," namely the ability to take appropriate action when facing problems (score 194) and the execution of job responsibilities (score 196). The relatively lower scores on these indicators suggest the need to enhance problem-solving skills and strengthen the sense of responsibility through training, technical guidance, or direct coaching from supervisors. Improving these aspects is expected to further optimize employee performance across all indicators.

#### c. Regression test results

The following section presents the results of the regression analysis, which examines the influence of communication on employee performance and evaluates the strength, direction, and statistical significance of the relationship between the studied variables.

Tabel 4. Regression test results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	0.372	0.218		1.705	0.094
Communication	0.946	0.093	0.820	10.225	0.000

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

Based on Table 4, the simple linear regression equation is:

$$Y = 0.372 + 0.946X + e.$$

Results show that communication has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a regression coefficient of 0.946, *t*-value of 10.225, and significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ). This means

each one-unit increase in communication improves performance by 0.946 units. The standardized beta (0.820) indicates a very strong influence, while the constant (0.372) represents performance when communication is zero, though not statistically significant (Sig. 0.094  $> 0.05$ ). These findings affirm that effective communication is a key driver of employee performance at the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City.

#### d. Correlation Coefficient of Determination

The following section presents the correlation and determination coefficients, which describe the strength of the relationship between communication and employee performance, as well as the proportion of performance variation explained by the communication variable.

Table 5. R Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.820 <sup>a</sup>	0.672	0.666	0.372

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

From Table 5, the R value of 0.820 indicates a very strong relationship between communication and employee performance. The R Square of 0.672 shows that 67.2% of performance variation is explained by communication, with the remaining 32.8% influenced by other factors. The Adjusted R Square of 0.666 confirms consistency after adjusting for variables and sample size, while the Standard Error of 0.372 reflects a low prediction error, indicating good model accuracy.

#### e. Hypothesis Test

The following section presents the hypothesis testing results, which determine whether communication has a statistically significant effect on employee performance and evaluate the strength and direction of this relationship based on the research model.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	0.372	0.218		1.705	0.094
Communication	0.946	0.093	0.820	10.225	0.000

Source: Processed researcher data (2025)

Based on Table 6, the hypothesis testing results indicate that the communication variable has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The regression coefficient of 0.946, with a positive direction, shows that each one-unit increase in communication will raise employee performance by 0.946 units. The *t*-value of 10.225 is far greater than

the critical  $t$ -table value, with a significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ), confirming that the hypothesis stating communication significantly affects employee performance is accepted. The standardized beta value of 0.820 further indicates that the strength of communication's influence on employee performance is categorized as very strong. Meanwhile, the constant of 0.372 has a significance value of 0.094 ( $> 0.05$ ), meaning it is not statistically significant, but it still represents the employee performance level when the communication variable is not considered in the model.

## Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that communication has a positive and significant impact on employee performance at the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City. A regression coefficient of 0.946 indicates that each one-unit improvement in communication quality increases employee performance by 0.946 units. This is consistent with the  $t$ -value of 10.225 and a significance level of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ), which supports the acceptance of the research hypothesis. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.820 further signifies a very strong influence of communication on performance. Additionally, the R Square value of 0.672 shows that 67.2% of the variance in employee performance is explained by communication, with the remaining 32.8% attributed to other factors.

Descriptive analysis supports these results, showing that most respondents rated top-down communication highly, particularly in goal setting, instruction delivery, and policy information sharing, though feedback provision and addressing critical issues require improvement. In bottom-up communication, the highest ratings were for work reporting and providing suggestions, while complaint submission scored lowest, indicating possible psychological or structural barriers to raising issues with leadership. Overall employee performance was rated very highly in timeliness, accuracy, compliance, and work quality, but problem-solving and job responsibility were rated "good," suggesting room for growth. Combined descriptive and inferential findings emphasize that communication serves not only as an information delivery tool but also as a mechanism for fostering coordination, motivation, and harmonious working relationships that ultimately enhance employee performance.

These findings align with Ma'rifah et al. (2023), who found that communication, competence, and work culture significantly contribute to the performance of regional tourism office employees.

They also support Suryanti and Wilujeng (2021), who emphasized that effective internal communication can enhance motivation and positive employee attitudes, and are consistent with Zonrioki and Ali (2023), who stated that strong internal communication improves morale and productivity in local government staff.

## Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this study reinforces communication management theory, which posits that effective communication is a key factor in achieving organizational goals, particularly in the public sector. The findings support Robbins' (2016) organizational communication model, which asserts that message clarity, information openness, and effective feedback improve performance by enhancing motivation and coordination. Furthermore, this research contributes empirical evidence to human resource management literature by demonstrating that internal communication acts as a strategic variable with a significant impact on employee performance.

## Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, the findings offer recommendations for the leadership of the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City to strengthen two-way communication between supervisors and subordinates. Communication effectiveness can be enhanced through regular discussion forums, communication skills training for employees, and the implementation of prompt and constructive feedback mechanisms. Additionally, targeted strategies are needed to reduce barriers to complaint submission, such as providing safe and pressure-free communication channels. Implementing these strategies is expected not only to improve employee performance but also to foster a more open, collaborative, and productive work environment.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that communication has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Department of Culture, Youth, Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City. The regression results ( $\beta = 0.820$ ;  $R^2 = 0.672$ ) demonstrate that communication explains 67.2% of the variance in employee performance, with the strongest indicators found in goal setting, instruction delivery, and work reporting. In contrast, feedback provision, issue handling, and complaint submission remain relatively weak, suggesting areas that require managerial attention.

To enhance employee performance, the leadership of the Department of Culture, Youth,

Sports, and Tourism of Surabaya City should strengthen open and participatory two-way communication, provide regular and constructive feedback, and encourage employees to confidently share suggestions or complaints without fear. Additionally, leaders should implement problem-solving and rapid decision-making training, foster a collaborative organizational culture through discussion forums and team-building activities, and utilize digital communication technologies to accelerate information flow and improve coordination efficiency.

This study is limited by its single-case focus on one public sector department, with a relatively small population (53 employees). Thus, the generalizability of findings may be constrained. Future research should expand to multiple agencies or cross-regional comparisons to validate the robustness of results. Moreover, incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could provide deeper insights into communication barriers, especially in complaint submission and feedback mechanisms. Finally, examining moderating variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, or digital communication platforms would enrich the understanding of how communication translates into performance outcomes.

In conclusion, this study not only confirms the importance of communication in enhancing employee performance but also contributes novel insights by addressing the imbalance between top-down and bottom-up communication in the public sector. These findings are expected to inform both scholars and practitioners in strengthening communication systems to optimize organizational performance.

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