

The Role of Internal Organizational Communication in Improving Employee Performance at the Secretariat of the Water Resources Management Agency (PSDA), Lampung Province

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Abstract

This study explores how internal organizational communication influences employee performance at the Secretariat of the Water Resources Management Agency (PSDA) in Lampung Province. In public sector organizations, effective communication is essential for ensuring coordination, clarity of responsibilities, and smooth implementation of administrative tasks. Nevertheless, bureaucratic structures often create communication constraints, particularly in the flow of information across hierarchical levels. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed in this research. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving selected informants within the PSDA Secretariat. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that communication within the organization operates through vertical channels between superiors and subordinates, horizontal interaction among employees, and informal communication practices that help support coordination in daily work processes. Despite these communication patterns, several challenges were identified, including delayed information dissemination, limited feedback mechanisms, and structural constraints within the bureaucratic system. The study concludes that strengthening internal communication practices is crucial for improving employee performance in local government institutions. The results highlight the importance of improving information flow and coordination systems to enhance organizational effectiveness in the public sector.

Keywords

organizational communication, employee performance, public sector, internal communication, bureaucracy



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INTRODUCTION

Internal organizational communication has become a critical determinant of effectiveness in public sector institutions, particularly in bureaucratic environments that rely on structured coordination across units. Effective communication enables the alignment of organizational goals, clarification of roles, and acceleration of

decision-making processes, which ultimately contribute to employee performance improvement. In contrast, communication breakdowns within organizations often lead to inefficiencies, role ambiguity, and delays in task execution (Robbins & Judge, 2020; Men et al., 2022). In contemporary public administration, communication within government institutions is increasingly challenged by hierarchical structures and fragmented coordination systems. Studies have shown that bureaucratic layering often creates information bottlenecks that reduce responsiveness and weaken inter-unit collaboration (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Purwanto et al., 2023). These challenges are particularly relevant in technical government agencies that require continuous coordination among functional divisions.

The Secretariat of the Water Resources Management Agency (PSDA) of Lampung Province represents one such institution where internal communication plays a central role in supporting administrative and technical coordination. As a regional government organization responsible for water resource governance, PSDA requires effective communication flows to ensure that planning, implementation, and reporting activities are conducted efficiently across units. However, empirical observations indicate that communication within PSDA is not yet fully optimal. Issues such as delayed information dissemination, limited feedback between hierarchical levels, and inconsistent coordination among divisions still occur in daily operational practices. These conditions suggest that internal communication mechanisms may not be functioning effectively in supporting organizational performance.

Although previous studies have emphasized the importance of organizational communication in improving employee performance (Putri & Herawaty, 2024; Anshari & Prihandini, 2024; Wibowo et al., 2023), most of these studies focus on general organizational settings or private sector institutions. Research that specifically examines communication dynamics within technical regional government agencies such as PSDA remains limited. This gap indicates the need for context-specific analysis that captures how bureaucratic communication structures influence employee performance in public sector technical organizations.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of internal organizational communication in improving employee performance at the Secretariat of PSDA of Lampung Province. This research contributes to the development of organizational communication studies in public administration by providing empirical evidence from a technical bureaucratic institution, while also offering practical implications for improving communication effectiveness in regional government organizations.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to examine the role of internal organizational communication in improving employee performance at the Secretariat of the Water Resources Management Agency (PSDA) of Lampung Province. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because it focuses on understanding social processes, communication patterns, and meaning construction within organizational settings rather than measuring numerical relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Sugiyono, 2022). The research was conducted at the Secretariat of PSDA, Lampung Province. This institution was selected due to its strategic role in regional water resource management, which requires intensive coordination and structured communication across organizational units in carrying out administrative and technical functions.

Informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling. The informants consisted of employees involved in administrative and operational activities who are directly engaged in internal communication processes. Purposive sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to select individuals who have rich and relevant information related to the research focus (Patton, 2015; Miles et al., 2014).

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences regarding communication flows within the organization. Observation was used to identify actual communication practices in daily work activities, while documentation supported and validated the primary data obtained from interviews and observations (Creswell, 2018). Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involves selecting and simplifying relevant information, data display organizes findings into a structured format, and conclusion drawing interprets patterns and relationships within the data (Miles et al., 2014).

To ensure data validity, this study applied triangulation of sources and methods. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from different informants, while method triangulation involved cross-checking data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Triangulation is widely recognized as an important strategy to enhance credibility and trustworthiness in qualitative research (Denzin, 2017).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Internal Communication Patterns in PSDA Secretariat

The findings indicate that internal organizational communication at the Secretariat of the Water Resources Management Agency (PSDA) of Lampung Province is implemented through three main patterns: vertical communication, horizontal communication, and informal communication. These communication patterns play an important role in supporting coordination and employee task execution within the organization. Vertical communication occurs through structured hierarchical channels between superiors and subordinates. This communication is generally used for instruction delivery, reporting, and task delegation. However, the flow of information is often perceived as slow due to layered bureaucratic procedures. This condition aligns with previous studies indicating that hierarchical structures in public organizations may create communication delays and reduce organizational responsiveness (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Purwanto et al., 2023).

Horizontal communication among employees across divisions is relatively active and supports daily operational coordination. Employees tend to collaborate informally to complete tasks efficiently, especially when formal coordination mechanisms are considered less effective. Informal communication also plays a significant role in supporting work processes. It functions as a complementary channel when formal communication is constrained by bureaucratic procedures. Similar findings were reported by Men et al. (2022), who stated that informal communication often emerges as an adaptive mechanism in complex organizational environments

Communication Barriers in the Organization

The study identifies several communication barriers within the PSDA Secretariat, including delayed information delivery, unclear instructions from superiors, and limited feedback mechanisms between hierarchical levels. These barriers indicate that communication processes have not yet fully supported optimal organizational performance. These findings are consistent with Robbins and Judge (2020), who emphasize that communication distortion and feedback limitations can significantly reduce organizational effectiveness. In bureaucratic institutions, such barriers are often amplified by multi-layered administrative structures.

Impact of Internal Communication on Employee Performance

The analysis shows that internal organizational communication has a direct relationship with employee performance at the PSDA Secretariat. Effective communication improves task clarity, coordination efficiency, and work

responsibility among employees. When communication flows effectively, employees are better able to understand job expectations and coordinate across units. Conversely, communication inefficiencies contribute to delays in task completion and reduced productivity. This finding supports previous research stating that organizational communication is a key determinant of employee performance in public sector institutions (Anshari & Prihandini, 2024; Wibowo et al., 2023).

Table 1. Summary of Communication Patterns and Their Implications

Communication Type	Description	Function in Organization	Main Issue
Vertical Communication	Top-down and bottom-up communication between leaders and staff	Instruction, reporting, coordination	Information delay, weak feedback
Horizontal Communication	Communication between employees across divisions	Task coordination and collaboration	Informal dominance over formal channels
Informal Communication	Non-structural communication among employees	Supporting coordination and problem solving	Lack of formal control structure

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that internal organizational communication plays a crucial role in shaping employee performance within public sector institutions. The PSDA Secretariat demonstrates a communication structure that relies heavily on hierarchical systems, yet is supplemented by horizontal and informal communication to maintain operational efficiency. The dominance of informal communication suggests that employees adapt to structural limitations by creating alternative communication pathways. This phenomenon reflects adaptive communication behavior in bureaucratic organizations, where formal systems are often constrained by procedural complexity (Men et al., 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2021). From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce organizational communication theory, which states that communication effectiveness is influenced not only by message clarity but also by structural openness and feedback mechanisms (Robbins & Judge, 2020). In PSDA, limited feedback channels weaken upward communication, potentially reducing managerial responsiveness. Practically, improving internal communication systems particularly feedback mechanisms and inter-unit coordination can enhance employee performance. Strengthening formal communication channels while maintaining effective informal communication balance is essential for improving bureaucratic efficiency.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that internal organizational communication plays a crucial role in improving employee performance at the Secretariat of the Water Resources Management Agency (PSDA) of Lampung Province. Communication within the organization is implemented through vertical, horizontal, and informal channels, all of which contribute to coordination and task execution within the institution. Vertical communication serves as the primary formal mechanism for instruction and reporting between superiors and subordinates. However, its effectiveness is limited by weak feedback systems and hierarchical information flow. Horizontal communication supports inter-unit coordination, while informal communication functions as an adaptive mechanism that helps employees maintain workflow efficiency when formal communication is constrained. The findings indicate that communication barriers such as delayed information, unclear instructions, and bureaucratic layering still affect employee performance. Despite these constraints, employees tend to adapt by utilizing informal communication networks to support daily organizational activities. In terms of implications, strengthening internal organizational communication is essential for improving public sector performance. Government institutions, particularly technical agencies such as PSDA, are recommended to enhance feedback mechanisms, streamline information flow across hierarchical levels, and improve coordination between units. A balanced integration between formal communication structures and effective informal communication practices is also necessary to increase organizational responsiveness and efficiency.

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