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The Influence of Managerial Factors on the Performance of Jember Social Service Employees: Internal Communication as an Intervening Variable

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the influence of discipline, workload, leadership style, psychological contract, and work motivation on employee performance, as well as to test the mediating role of internal communication at the Social Services Office, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Division, Jember Regency. A quantitative approach using explanatory research was applied to a population of 101 employees, with a sample of 81 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data analysis utilized Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) via the SmartPLS software. The results indicate that discipline, workload, psychological contract, and work motivation have a significant positive effect on internal communication, whereas leadership style does not. Directly, discipline, workload, leadership style, and psychological contract significantly influence performance, while work motivation does not. Internal communication has a positive effect on performance and was found to act as a significant mediator for discipline, workload, psychological contract, and work motivation, but does not mediate leadership style. This study confirms that internal communication in the public sector serves as a strategic translation mechanism that aligns managerial and psychological factors to achieve more accountable and precise service performance outcomes.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Public Sector Internal Communication, SEM-PLS, Job Demands-Resources, Public Administration, Department of Social Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is crucial for an organization to achieve its goals (Roring et al., 2023). Public sector employee performance is a key determinant of the quality of government services, particularly in organizations addressing complex, target-based social issues. In a regional bureaucratic environment, achieving optimal performance depends not only on individual capacity but is significantly influenced by managerial factors such as discipline, workload, leadership style, psychological contracts, and work motivation (Putri & Susanto, 2022). In Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD), particularly the Social Service, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Division of Jember Regency, East Java Province, the dynamic nature of the work demands a rapid response, accurate data in aid distribution, and protection of vulnerable groups, making cross-unit coordination an absolute prerequisite. In this context, internal public sector communication plays a crucial role as a bridge connecting strategic policies, operational procedures, and daily task implementation, enabling existing resources to be converted into measurable performance.

A review of recent literature reveals inconsistent empirical findings regarding the influence of these factors on employee performance. Research by Audina & Aswan (2023) states that discipline has a positive effect on employee performance. Furthermore, research by Pamungkas & Nursyamsi (2024) states that higher motivation and work discipline lead to higher employee performance. However, a study by Herliana et al. (2024) provides conflicting evidence, showing that discipline has no significant effect when process variables such as work facilities are more dominant. Similarly, a study by Herlambang et al. (2022) found that the influence of workload on employee performance is inconsistent. Companies need to consider the context in which workload presents challenges or obstacles for employees. Similar variations in results were also found for the influence of workload, leadership, and motivation, indicating that their significance is highly dependent on the organizational context (Sahrona & Rizky, 2025).There are limited comprehensive studies that position internal communication as a mediating mechanism in explaining the influence of managerial and psychological factors on employee performance, especially in regional apparatus organizations.

Research on the influence of managerial factors on employee performance so far has tended to test variables partially or using mediators that do not address communication aspects. Few studies have comprehensively tested the influence of these variables on employee performance by positioning internal public sector communication as the primary mediator in public sector organizations. The novelty of this research lies in

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the comprehensive integration of these five variables simultaneously within a single mediation framework with internal public sector communication as an intervening variable. Unlike previous research that tends to test variables partially or use other mediators such as OCB, this study examines how internal public sector communication functions as an effective translational mechanism in the specific context of regional social services. With optimal internal public sector communication quality, information flow, cross-sector coordination, and feedback provision become more effective, allowing various managerial factors to be realized optimally in achieving accountable performance. Methodologically, the use of Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) provides advantages in modeling complex causal relationships simultaneously with more robust parameter estimates (Pradita et al., 2022).

The main objectives of this study are to analyze the direct influence of discipline, workload, leadership style, psychological contract, and work motivation on employee performance, analyze the influence of public sector internal communication on employee performance, and empirically test the role of public sector internal communication as a mediating variable. The hope of this study is to provide an operational evaluation framework for the Jember Regency Social Service, which can assist leaders in improving public sector internal communication SOPs, organizing workloads fairly, and optimizing leadership and motivation to achieve more accountable and sustainable service performance (Pamungkas & Nursyamsi, 2024).

Scientifically, this paper contributes to the development of the literature on Human Resource Management (HRM) and public administration, particularly in expanding the scope of mediation theory in the public sector. This research confirms the position of public sector internal communication as a catalyst within organizations and serves as a valuable empirical reference for future organizational behavior research focusing on the dynamics of regional government organizations with their unique social service characteristics.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Grand Theory

This study uses the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as the main theoretical framework (grand theory) to understand the dynamics of employee performance in public sector organizations, particularly in the Social Service, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Division of Jember Regency. The JD-R model was chosen because of its ability to integrate various organizational factors, both managerial and psychological, into

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two large, interacting categories, namely Job Demands and Job Resources. Lee and Kim (2025) emphasized that the JD-R model is the most valid framework for analyzing how human resource policies affect employee performance in the public sector, where the balance between job demands and organizational support is the main predictor. In the context of this study, workload is positioned as Job Demands, namely physical, mental, and organizational aspects that require continuous effort, while discipline, leadership style, psychological contracts, work motivation, and internal communication in the public sector are positioned as Job Resources that function to achieve work goals, mitigate the impact of workload, and stimulate employee performance.

To reinforce the JD-R grand theory, this study integrates several supporting theories that explain behavioral mechanisms more specifically. Social Exchange Theory (SET) is used to explain the influence of psychological contracts on employee performance. Pieters and Wynen (2025) in a recent study on the public sector emphasized that fulfillment of psychological contracts in government environments is highly dependent on perceptions of fairness and system stability. When an organization is perceived to keep its promises, both explicit and implicit, employees tend to provide feedback in the form of work behaviors that exceed formal standards as a form of reciprocity to the organization.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of employee performance mediated by internal public sector communication is strengthened through Goal Setting and Expectancy Theory. Alharbi (2025) shows that employee performance efficiency is highly dependent on how well communication channels instructions and feedback. Structured internal public sector communication acts as a mediator that ensures organizational goals are clearly understood and challenging, in line with Goal Setting Theory. Furthermore, Wu and Liang (2026) emphasize that in a bureaucratic environment, clarity of expectations that are effectively communicated can mediate potential stress due to work demands, which ultimately affects the effectiveness of employee motivation in achieving optimal performance.

Overall, this study positions public sector internal communication as a key job resource that bridges the influence of other variables on employee performance. The findings of Angeles-Cabrera et al. (2026) through a systematic review confirm that public sector internal communication is a critical determinant that mediates organizational climate on employee productivity. Thus, this research model proposes that the direct influence of discipline, workload, leadership, psychological contracts, and work motivation will be further optimized when accompanied by a disciplined, responsive, and accountable internal communication architecture.

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Employee Performance

Employee performance is understood as the work results, both qualitatively and quantitatively, achieved by individuals in accordance with the responsibilities assigned by the organization (Robbins & Judge, 2020). In the public sector context, performance encompasses quality achievement, timeliness, work behavior, and an accountable service orientation in accordance with ASN service standards. Employee performance is the primary dependent variable resulting from various interactions between organizational and psychological factors.

Discipline

Discipline is defined as an attitude of compliance with the rules and regulations established by the organization as a basis for orderly work (Oupen & Yudana, 2020). Discipline is not only about attendance, but also employee consistency in following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), maintaining work ethics, and completing tasks on time according to quality standards (Ratnasari et al., 2021). Empirical evidence shows that strong discipline plays a role in reducing role ambiguity and procedural errors (Audina & Aswan, 2023). However, the effectiveness of discipline as a predictor of employee performance can vary depending on the context of other process variables, such as the work environment (Herliana et al., 2024).

Workload

Workload is the task demands, both quantitative and qualitative, that must be completed by employees within a specific time period (Hudaningsih, 2019). Based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, workload has an ambivalent impact: workload managed as a challenge (challenge demands) can foster engagement, while excessive workload (hindrance demands) actually triggers stress and decreases employee performance (Novita Sari et al., 2022). Therefore, objective workload mapping through indicators such as task volume, deadlines, and complexity is essential (Kurniawan, 2020).

Leadership Style

Leadership style is a leader's behavioral pattern in providing direction, motivating, and coordinating subordinates to achieve organizational goals (Sembiring, 2020). In bureaucracies, a combination of transformational and transactional styles is considered relevant for driving change while ensuring compliance. Effective leaders provide support,

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serve as role models, and empower employees to take initiative, ultimately improving unit performance (Oktavianti et al., 2022; Andriyana et al., 2023).

Psychological Contract

The psychological contract encompasses individual beliefs regarding the unwritten promises and reciprocal obligations between employees and the organization (Mutiara & Rini, 2018). Fulfillment of the psychological contract, through reward equity and role clarity, has been shown to increase commitment and extra-role behavior (Organizational Citizenship Behavior), which positively impact employee performance (Barlian, 2016). However, policy consistency and transparency in employee performance assessments are key to maintaining the perception of contract fulfillment and preventing it from devolving into a breach of contract, which is detrimental to the organization (Irawan et al., 2023).

Work Motivation

Work motivation is an internal or external drive that drives and directs individual behavior toward achieving work goals (Kuncoro et al., 2019). In the public sector, fulfilling the need for esteem and self-actualization is a significant driver of employee performance. Goal-setting theory asserts that motivation is effective when service goals are clear, challenging, and accompanied by consistent feedback (Pamungkas & Nursyamsi, 2024). However, motivation does not always translate directly into employee performance if it is not supported by adequate organizational context factors (Putra & Heriyanto, 2022).

Public Sector Internal Communications

Public sector internal communication is a systematic process of information exchange, coordination, and feedback that serves to align task execution (Sari et al., 2022). In this study, public sector internal communication is positioned as an intervening variable that bridges managerial factors (discipline, workload, leadership, psychological contracts, and motivation) into consistent operational actions. Effective communication, characterized by clear instructions, quality coordination, and a secure communication culture, is a crucial job resource for effectively leveraging the influence of other resources on employee performance (Herliana et al., 2024; Wibowo & Handayani, 2022).

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Conceptual Framework

This study adopts the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as a conceptual framework for analyzing public sector employee performance. In this model, workload is positioned as job demands, while discipline, leadership, psychological contracts, and work motivation are categorized as job resources. By integrating Social Exchange Theory and Goal Setting Theory, this study positions internal communication as a crucial intervening variable. Internal communication functions as a translational mechanism that translates various managerial and psychological resources into consistent work behavior. By mapping direct and indirect influences, this framework aims to examine the extent to which internal communication is able to optimize the impact of these determinants on employee performance at the Jember Regency Social Service.

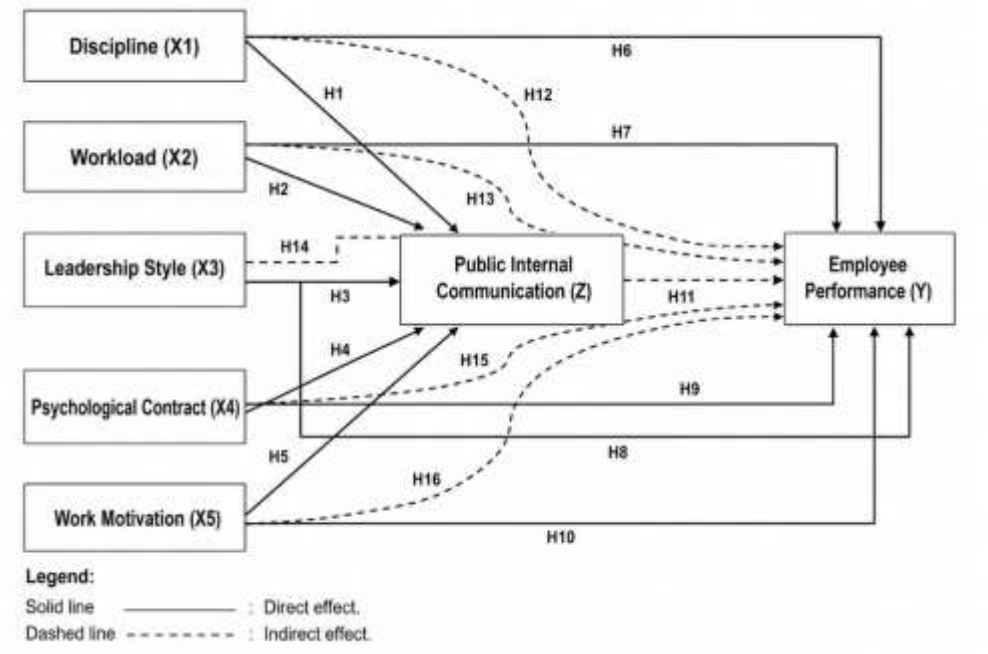


Figure 1.Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis

H1 The influence of discipline on internal communication in the public sector

Discipline forms the foundation of orderly and accountable organizational communication. Adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs) and administrative discipline ensure timely information flow, reduce role ambiguity, and minimize

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inconsistencies in instructions. Disciplined employees tend to be more consistent in implementing communication protocols, thereby strengthening the accuracy and continuity of information. Empirical evidence confirms that discipline is closely correlated with procedural compliance and coordination effectiveness (Ratnasari et al., 2021; Audina & Aswan, 2023). Therefore, a high level of discipline improves the quality of internal communication.

H2 The effect of workload on internal communication in the public sector

High workloads demand greater coordination intensity. Without structured communication, task pressure can lead to resource misallocation and process errors. Conversely, good internal communication practices, such as briefings and synchronizing dependencies, can transform workloads into “manageable challenges.” Clear and consistent communication practices have been shown to facilitate cross-unit coordination and improve service responsiveness amidst dynamic work demands (Sari et al., 2022; Wibowo & Handayani, 2022). Thus, the quality of internal communication significantly determines the effectiveness of coordination in dealing with workloads.

H3 The influence of leadership style on internal communication in the public sector

Leadership style determines the rhythm of coordination and clarity of instructions. Leaders who are able to establish vision and priorities, and maintain consistent messaging, reduce role ambiguity. Coaching practices and resource support accelerate two-way feedback, while leaders' role models in using formal channels strengthen communication discipline (Sembiring, 2020; Yuliasti, 2023). Empirical evidence shows that leadership that emphasizes communication and coordination is positively correlated with more synchronous work processes (Oktavianti et al., 2022). Therefore, leadership effectiveness improves the quality of internal communication.

H4 The influence of psychological contracts on internal communication in the public sector

Fulfillment of the psychological contract, including procedural justice and organizational support, increases employee trust, which encourages open communication. Employees who feel their rights are being met tend to be more proactive in using official channels and providing accurate feedback. Conversely, contract violations trigger defensive communication that weakens coordination. Transparent communication also serves a dual purpose: as a means of fulfilling contractual expectations and a

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mechanism for maintaining commitment (Barlian, 2016; Sari et al., 2022). Thus, fulfillment of the psychological contract strengthens the quality of internal communication.

H5 The influence of work motivation on internal communication in the public sector

High work motivation encourages employees to actively engage in the information exchange process to achieve targets. Employees with a clear goal orientation tend to be more proactive in requesting clarification of instructions, providing feedback, and reporting progress in a timely manner, which strengthens smooth coordination and the accuracy of internal information. Conversely, low motivation hinders participation in organizational communication processes (Kuncoro et al., 2019; Pamungkas & Nursyamsi, 2024). Therefore, high work motivation triggers a more proactive and high-quality internal communication process.

H6 The influence of discipline on employee performance

Discipline ensures adherence to organizational standards of conduct, which directly reduces role ambiguity and minimizes procedural errors. Public sector literature consistently positions discipline as a key predictor of improved service quality and timeliness (Audina & Aswan, 2023; Pamungkas & Nursyamsi, 2024). In the context of social services, procedural discipline is a prerequisite for employee performance accountability.

H7 Effect of workload on employee performance

Based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, the impact of workload is ambivalent; well-managed workload acts as a challenge demand that boosts performance, but excessive workload becomes a hindrance demand that decreases employee performance (Novita Sari et al., 2022). Clear priority mapping and task allocation are key determinants in converting workload into a productivity driver.

H8 The influence of leadership style on employee performance

Leadership style influences employee performance through direction, support, role modeling, and employee empowerment. A combination of transformational and transactional leadership has been shown to be effective in maintaining SOP compliance while stimulating employee motivation in bureaucracies (Andriyana et al., 2023). Conceptually, effective leadership is a key catalyst for work behavior aligned with organizational goals.

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H9 The influence of psychological contracts on employee performance

Fulfillment of psychological contracts, including fairness, role clarity, and opportunities for development, increases commitment and extra-role behaviors, which positively impact employee performance. A study by Barlian (2016) confirmed the significance of psychological contracts on employee performance through these behaviors. Consistency and transparency of organizational policies strengthen perceptions of contract fulfillment, which theoretically improves employee performance.

H10 The influence of work motivation on employee performance

Work motivation is the driving force that drives employee focus, initiative, and perseverance in achieving goals. In line with Goal Setting and Expectancy theory, motivation is effective when supported by clear goals and adequate feedback. Empirically, high motivation has been shown to improve the quality of work output and employee responsiveness in social services (Kuncoro et al., 2019; Putra & Heriyanto, 2022).

H11 The influence of public sector internal communication on employee performance

Public sector internal communication serves as a translational mechanism that transforms strategic policies into operational actions. Through clear instructions, cross-unit coordination, and systematic feedback, internal communication minimizes procedural errors and accelerates service responses. Good internal communication quality is a crucial factor in effectively utilizing organizational resources to achieve final performance (Sari et al., 2022; Wibowo & Handayani, 2022).

H12 The influence of discipline on employee performance through internal communication in the public sector

Discipline creates procedural order, which forms the basis for effective internal public sector communication. Disseminating SOPs and clear instructions through communication channels can transform procedural compliance into accurate and responsive task synchronization. Thus, internal public sector communication mediates the influence of discipline in suppressing process deviations and increasing output accuracy (Ratnasari et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2022).

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H13 The influence of workload on employee performance through internal communication in the public sector

Workloads risk reducing employee performance if coordination is inadequate. Effective internal public sector communication through priority management, regular briefings, and feedback channels can transform workload pressures from hinderance demands to productive challenge demands (Novita Sari et al., 2022; Wibowo & Handayani, 2022). The mediating role of internal communication is crucial in aligning task demands and maintaining coordination.

H14 The influence of leadership style on employee performance through internal communication in the public sector

Leadership effectiveness in driving employee performance depends heavily on the quality of internal public sector communication. Leaders who convey direction, coaching, and consistent messaging through clear channels minimize role ambiguity (Oktavianti et al., 2022; Andriyana et al., 2023). Internal public sector communication serves as a mediating variable that channels leadership support into synchronous and reliable work execution.

H15 The influence of psychological contracts on employee performance through internal communication in the public sector

Fulfillment of the psychological contract increases employee commitment, which in turnOperational processes are supported by a transparent internal public sector communication system. Open and consistent communication maintains perceptions of fairness and clarity of organizational promises, thereby minimizing defensive communication behavior (Barlian, 2016; Sari et al., 2022). Internal communication serves to bridge contractual commitments into optimal work behavior.

H16 The influence of work motivation on employee performance through internal communication in the public sector

Motivational energy requires an internal communication architecture to be converted into tangible performance. Through the delivery of clear goals and proactive feedback, internal communication facilitates employees' actualization of motivation into initiative and productivity (Kuncoro et al., 2019; Sari et al., 2022). Thus, internal communication mediates the influence of motivation in maintaining focus and work persistence.

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RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research type. This approach was chosen because it aims to test hypotheses regarding causal relationships between variables, as well as provide an explanation of the direction of the correlation between the influence of discipline, workload, leadership style, psychological contract, and work motivation on employee performance, both directly and through internal public sector communication as an intervening variable.

Sulistyaningsih (2020) states that a population is a generalized area consisting of objects or subjects with certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then conclusions drawn. The population for this study was employees of the Social Service, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Division of Jember Regency, totaling 41 Civil Servants (PNS) and 60 Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK). The sampling technique used was purposive sampling to ensure the data obtained was relevant, representative, and valid according to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2022). The inclusion criteria set for respondents include: (1) active employees (PNS/PPPK) in the PPPA Division of the Social Service, (2) have a minimum work period of 6 months to ensure an understanding of organizational culture (Hair et al., 2021), (3) have a direct leader for leadership style assessment, (4) are active in the internal communication system, (5) have measurable performance targets (SKP/IKU), and (6) carry out frontline and back-office roles to ensure representation of service perspectives.

Based on these criteria, from a total population of 101 employees, 81 eligible respondents were selected. This sample size was deemed sufficient for Structural Equation Modeling-based Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) analysis. Referring to Hair et al. (2021), sampling in SEM-PLS emphasizes respondents' competence in reflecting research variables rather than statistical probability alone. Therefore, 81 competent respondents were deemed sufficient to produce a robust, consistent, and highly valid analytical model in explaining performance phenomena in the work unit under study.

The data source in this study is primary data, which is obtained directly from respondents through a questionnaire (Google Form) using a measuring tool in the form of a 5-point Likert Scale.including: 1) Strongly Disagree (STS), 2) Disagree (TS), 3) Neutral (N), 4) Agree (S), 5) Strongly Agree (SS). Data analysis used in this study includes convergent validity tests for outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), discriminant validity tests, reliability tests, inner models or structural models, and hypothesis testing

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents

Respondent characteristics represent the profiles of the individuals who are the subjects of the research. This data is used to describe the sample's background, ensure its suitability to the research objectives, and analyze the influence of demographic/psychographic factors on responses. The following respondent characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.Respondent characteristics

Characteristics	Sub-Category	Number of people)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Man	43	53.09
	Woman	38	46.91
	Total	81	100
Age	20–29 years	12	14.81
	30–39 years	21	25.93
	40–49 years	23	28.40
	50–59 years	25	30.86
	Total	81	100
Years of service	< 3 years	8	9.88
	3–5 years	15	18.52
	6–10 years	25	30.86
	> 10 years	33	40.74
	Total	81	100

Source: Processed data, 2026

Presents a comprehensive overview of the demographic profile of the respondents involved in this study. The characteristics of the respondents, consisting of 43 men (53.09%) and 38 women (46.91%), indicate a relatively balanced gender proportion within the Social Services, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Division of Jember Regency. This balanced proportion is crucial in organizational behavior research, as it indicates that the collected data is not dominated by the perceptions of one gender group alone, thus minimizing the potential for gender bias in the assessment of leadership,

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motivation, and internal communication variables. This finding provides confidence that the research results represent an inclusive and objective view of both groups.

Furthermore, in terms of age, the majority of respondents were in the productive and mature age range, namely between 30 and 59 years old, with an accumulation reaching 85.19%. The 50–59 age range was the dominant group (30.86%), followed by the 40–49 age group (28.40%), and the 30–39 age group (25.93%). Meanwhile, the young age group (20–29 years old) had the smallest proportion (14.81%). This age profile reflects a high level of professional maturity within the organization. Individuals in the productive-mature age range generally have good emotional stability and sufficient experience in handling work dynamics and social interactions in the workplace. This is important for the validity of the study, considering that respondents have the capacity to conduct in-depth assessments of the complexity of leadership styles, workloads, and the effectiveness of internal communications in their institutions.

Analysis of respondents' tenure further strengthens the legitimacy of the research data. The data shows that the sample is dominated by employees with relatively long and stable tenure, with the majority of respondents having served for more than 6 years (71.6%), with those with tenures exceeding 10 years making up the largest proportion (40.74%). Long tenure indicates that the majority of respondents are "organizational memory" holders who possess a deep understanding of work culture, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and cross-unit coordination dynamics. This group of respondents is highly credible in providing feedback on the research variables because they have been intensively and consistently exposed to the organizational systems, leadership, and internal communication patterns implemented.

Overall, the demographic profile of respondents, predominantly in the mature age category and with long tenure, positively impacts the analytical rigor of this study. The respondents' extensive experience in the organization ensures that their perceptions are not based solely on superficial knowledge but on stable, real-world work experience. This demographic distribution cumulatively reflects a stable human resource profile within the institution, significantly enhancing the validity and generalizability of the research findings regarding the determinants of employee performance.

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Hypothesis Testing

a. Results bootstrapping direct effect (direct effect)

Table 2.Path Coefficient Bootstrapping direct effect value

Direct Effect	Original sample	T statistics	P values	Information	Hypothesis
Workload -> Employee Performance	0.157	2,408	0.016	Positive, Significant	Accepted
Workload -> Public Sector Internal Communications	0.277	4.154	0.000	Positive, Significant	Accepted
Leadership Style -> Employee Performance	0.150	2,307	0.021	Positive, Significant	Accepted
Leadership Style -> Public Sector Internal Communication	0.133	1,866	0.062	Positive, Not Significant	Rejected
Discipline -> Employee Performance	0.208	3,209	0.001	Positive, Significant	Accepted
Discipline -> Public Sector Internal Communication	0.313	4,657	0.000	Positive, Significant	Accepted
Public Sector Internal Communication -> Employee Performance	0.327	3,725	0.000	Positive, Significant	Accepted
Psychological Contract -> Employee Performance	0.177	2,516	0.012	Positive, Significant	Accepted

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Direct Effect	Original sample	T statistics	P values	Information	Hypothesis
Psychological Contract -> Public Sector Internal Communication	0.235	3,592	0.000	Positive, Significant	Accepted
Work Motivation -> Employee Performance	0.149	1,938	0.053	Positive, Not Significant	Rejected
Work Motivation -> Public Sector Internal Communication	0.263	3,261	0.001	Positive, Significant	Accepted

Source: Data processed using SmartPLS 4.1.1.4, 2026

Based onThe results of the path analysis presented in Table 7 found a significant structural relationship between various organizational factors and employee performance at the Social Services Agency, particularly in the field of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in Jember Regency. This finding indicates that Public Sector Internal Communication plays a crucial role as a mediating variable that strengthens the influence of exogenous factors on employee performance.

The Workload variable is proven to have a significant influence on both Employee Performance (= 0.157; = 0.016) and Public Sector Internal Communication (= 0.277; = 0.000). This indicates that proportional workload management not only directly improves performance achievement, but also improves the intensity and quality of cross-unit communication. In line with this, Discipline shows a significant impact on Employee Performance (= 0.208; = 0.001) as well as on Public Sector Internal Communication (= 0.313; = 0.000). This finding confirms that compliance with standard operating procedures, punctuality, and work order are the main foundations in creating an effective communication flow while encouraging high performance.βpβpβpβp

Psychological Contracts also contribute significantly to both Employee Performance (= 0.177; = 0.012) and Public Sector Internal Communication (= 0.235; = 0.000). These results show that clarity of mutual expectations, procedural justice, and organizational support can strengthen work relationships and facilitate the flow of internal communication.βpβp

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On the other hand, there are variations in the influence of the variables of Leadership Style and Work Motivation. Leadership Style has a significant direct effect on Employee Performance (= 0.150; = 0.021), but its effect on Public Sector Internal Communication is not significant (= 0.133; = 0.062). This suggests that although the leadership's exemplary behavior contributes directly to improved performance, its impact is not strong enough to explain variations in the quality of internal communication directly. Meanwhile, Work Motivation does not have a significant direct effect on Employee Performance (= 0.149; = 0.053), but has a significant effect on Public Sector Internal Communication (= 0.263; = 0.001). This finding illustrates that employee motivational drive is first manifested through active involvement in the communication process, which then influences employee performance through indirect channels.βpβpβpβp

Public Sector Internal Communication itself has a significant and strong influence on Employee Performance (= 0.327; = 0.000). Overall, these structural and behavioral variables prove that internal communication is a key pathway that strengthens the influence of exogenous factors on performance. Therefore, managerial interventions that focus on workload management, discipline enforcement, building fair psychological contracts, and strengthening timely and psychologically safe internal communication channels are crucial in efforts to improve employee performance within the Social Service, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection sector of Jember Regency.βp

b. Results bootstrapping indirect effects (Indirect effect)

Table 3.Path Coefficient Bootstrapping indirect effect value

Indirect Effect	Original sample (O)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Information	Hypothesis
Discipline -> Public Sector Internal Communication -> Employee Performance	0.103	2,986	0.003	Positive, Significant	Accepted
Psychological Contract ->	0.077	2,479	0.013	Positive, Significant	Accepted

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Public Sector Internal Communication -> Employee Performance					
Work Motivation -> Public Sector Internal Communication -> Employee Performance	0.086	2,402	0.016	Positive, Significant	Accepted
Workload -> Public Sector Internal Communication -> Employee Performance	0.091	2,605	0.009	Significant	Accepted
Leadership Style -> Public Sector Internal Communication -> Employee Performance	0.043	1,645	0.100	Positive, Not Significant	Rejected

Source: Data processed using SmartPLS 4.1.1.4, 2026

Based onThe results of the path analysis presented in Table 8 show that Public Sector Internal Communication significantly acts as a mediator for most exogenous variables in influencing Employee Performance. The discipline variable is proven to have a significant indirect effect on Employee Performance through Public Sector Internal Communication (= 0.103; = 0.003). This finding confirms that increased work discipline encourages the creation of better internal communication quality, which ultimately contributes significantly to improving employee performance. A significant mediation pattern was also found in the Psychological Contract variable (= 0.077; = 0.013), where clarity of mutual expectations and organizational support strengthen the flow of internal

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communication as an intermediary for performance improvement. Similarly, the Work Motivation variable (= 0.086; = 0.016) and Workload (= 0.091; = 0.009), both of which show a significant indirect effect on Employee Performance through Public Sector Internal Communication. This indicates that employee motivational encouragement and proportional workload management not only operate directly, but also effectively facilitate coordination and information flow, which then spurs improved performance.βpβpβpβpβp

In contrast, different results were shown by the Leadership Style variable. The mediation path of Leadership Style on Employee Performance through Public Sector Internal Communication was not proven to be significant (= 0.043; = 0.100). Thus, in the context of this study, the influence of leadership on performance improvement is not strong enough to be explained through the mediation mechanism of internal communication. Overall, these findings confirm the strategic position of Public Sector Internal Communication as a crucial mediator that channels the influence of Discipline, Workload, Psychological Contract, and Work Motivation on Employee Performance. Therefore, strengthening the quality of internal communication that is timely, consistent, easily accessible, and psychologically safe is the main foundation in maximizing the impact of various organizational factors on improving employee performance within the Social Service, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection sector of Jember Regency.βp

Interpretation

Overall, the results of this study provide an in-depth overview of the organizational dynamics in the Social Service, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Division of Jember Regency, where Public Sector Internal Communication plays a core role as a strategic mediator in shaping Employee Performance. These findings indicate that structural variables such as Discipline, Workload, and Psychological Contract consistently have a positive and significant influence, both directly on performance and indirectly through strengthening the quality of internal communication. This confirms that in a stable and experienced bureaucratic environment, discipline and workload are not merely routine demands, but organizational resources that, if managed with the right communication architecture, can be converted into accountable and precise service performance.

An interesting dynamic emerged in the variables Leadership Style and Work Motivation, which showed different patterns of influence. Leadership Style was shown to have a significant direct influence on Employee Performance but not significantly on

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internal communication, suggesting that in a bureaucracy with established standard operating procedures (SOPs), the leader's role is more as a catalyst for direct execution than as an agent of change in the communication system. Conversely, Work Motivation did not have a direct influence on performance, but significantly influenced internal communication. This emphasizes that individual motivational drive in this agency requires a translative medium, namely effective internal communication, to be channeled into measurable performance outputs.

The mediation mechanism through Internal Public Sector Communication confirms its position as a vital "translation system" in public organizations. Path analysis demonstrates that internal communication serves as a bridge connecting various exogenous factors such as discipline, workload, psychological contracts, and motivation with employee performance. Through timely, accurate, and psychologically safe communication channels, organizations are able to minimize role ambiguity and maintain a synchronized operational rhythm. Without this mediating role, employee productivity potential is often hampered by fragmented information or unclear instructions, making strengthening the quality of internal communication the most crucial managerial intervention.

These findings enrich the public sector management literature by providing empirical evidence that performance improvement cannot be achieved solely through personal employee motivation. A holistic integration of behavioral governance, such as disciplinary enforcement and psychological contract fulfillment, is required, along with a robust communication system as supporting infrastructure. By positioning Internal Public Sector Communication as a key pillar, the Jember Regency Social Service can ensure that all internal dynamics, both workload challenges and motivational drives, are effectively transformed into fast, accurate, and sustainable public services

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study indicates that Discipline, Workload, Psychological Contract, and Work Motivation are the main determinants that have a positive and significant influence on Public Sector Internal Communication as well as Employee Performance in the Social Service, Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Division of Jember Regency. Internal communication plays a crucial role as a translation system that transforms various organizational factors into accountable and precise work actions. An interesting finding emerged in Leadership Style which was proven to have a direct influence on performance but not significantly on internal communication; this indicates that in an

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established bureaucracy, formal procedures have acted as a "substitute" for leadership style in directing the flow of information. Meanwhile, Work Motivation requires the support of a structured communication system so that its energy can be optimally converted into real performance. Thus, internal communication does not only stand as an independent variable, but also a strategic mediator that integrates discipline and workload management into sustainable public service achievements.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the Social Services Department strengthen integrated management by focusing on transparent enforcement of SOPs and realistic workload distribution as manageable challenges. Management needs to adopt results-based leadership through regular coaching, coupled with the fulfillment of psychological contracts through fair assessment and appreciation criteria. Furthermore, the company needs to prioritize the development of an internal communication architecture through standardized instruction formats, disciplined coordination, and a psychologically safe communication culture so that all employee potential can be channeled effectively. This step is crucial to ensure that the dynamics of individual motivation and discipline are not wasted, but are integrated with other management practices to encourage superior, timely, and accountable work behavior on an ongoing basis.

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