

The Influence of Interpersonal Communication and Workplace Friendships on Employee Job Satisfaction in Public Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines the influence of interpersonal communication and workplace friendships on employee job satisfaction in a public-sector organization..

Research Method: A quantitative survey approach was employed involving 80 employees of the South Sulawesi Provincial Office of Communications, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS 23, including validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression, t-tests, F-tests, and coefficient of determination analysis.

Results and Discussion: The results indicate that interpersonal communication has a positive but insignificant effect on employee job satisfaction. In contrast, workplace friendships have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. These findings suggest that supportive social relationships, trust, and friendship among colleagues contribute more strongly to employee satisfaction than communication processes alone. The study highlights the importance of workplace social dynamics in shaping positive employee attitudes within public organizations.

Implications: Public organizations should foster supportive workplace relationships through collaboration, team-building activities, and programs that encourage social interaction and peer support to enhance employee satisfaction.

Originality: This study provides empirical evidence that workplace friendships are a stronger predictor of job satisfaction than interpersonal communication, offering new insights into the role of informal social relationships in public-sector workplaces.

Keywords: interpersonal communication; workplace friendships; job satisfaction; public organizations; employee behavior.

1. Introduction

Today's business environment and workplace are increasingly dynamic, complex, and volatile. Fierce competition across various industrial sectors demands that organizations maintain stable performance and employee job satisfaction to ensure their workforce remains productive and highly competitive. In this context, an individual's general attitude toward their work plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction (Purnawati *et al.*, 2021). Job satisfaction reflects an individual's feelings toward their work and everything they encounter in the workplace. A positive attitude toward work arises from an individual's assessment of the work outcomes produced (Barotuttakiah, 2019).



However, in practice, many organizations face challenges such as declining motivation, inter-employee conflicts, and weak interpersonal communication, which ultimately lead to low job satisfaction. Interpersonal communication among employees is defined as the process of sending and receiving messages directly or through communication media, whether verbal or nonverbal, which can be one-way or two-way. This communication is essential for building harmonious, conducive, and comfortable work relationships for employees. In addition to interpersonal communication, workplace friendships also serve as a key factor influencing job satisfaction, as they foster emotional closeness, a sense of belonging, and social support among employees (Laajalahti, 2018). Previous research indicates that effective interpersonal communication helps prevent misunderstandings and resolve conflicts arising from cultural, linguistic, and religious differences in the workplace (Safitri *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, organizations must emphasize the importance of interpersonal communication and healthy workplace friendships to foster teamwork, enhance job satisfaction, and sustain the company's existence and innovation amid global competition.

Empirical and theoretical studies indicate that interpersonal communication and workplace camaraderie are key factors in shaping employee job satisfaction. Interpersonal communication encompasses the process of sending and receiving messages—both verbal and nonverbal—which plays a role in strengthening social bonds, building trust, and enhancing team effectiveness. Putri's (2018) study found that interpersonal communication contributes 0.131 to job satisfaction, indicating that the better the communication among employees, the higher the level of satisfaction felt. Meanwhile, Eriş (2020) demonstrated that workplace friendships have an indirect effect of 0.250 on employee performance, meaning that positive social relationships among employees can boost motivation and productivity through job satisfaction. Sias *et al.*, (2020) even classify workplace friendships as the "primary organizational framework" that contributes to job satisfaction through mutually supportive social interactions.

Further research by Tobing (2022) reinforces these findings by showing a correlation coefficient of 0.488 between interpersonal communication and job satisfaction. Friendships in the workplace also play a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging, trust, and emotional support among employees (Prasanth & Janani, 2023), which can be strengthened through open communication and team-building activities (Bella, 2023). Similar results were reported by Consul & Kola (2024) with a positive correlation of 0.283 ($p = 0.001$), as well as by Putri & Fathiyah (2025), who confirmed that interpersonal communication significantly influences job satisfaction. Furthermore, Murphy & Bedford (2025) and Sundari (2024) demonstrate that friendship and effective communication enhance team cohesion, reduce work-related stress, and strengthen employee motivation.

Although various previous studies have confirmed that interpersonal communication and workplace friendships positively influence job satisfaction, there remain empirical and theoretical gaps that need to be bridged. Theoretically, most of these studies have focused on private-sector organizations with more flexible structures and competitive work cultures, so their findings may not necessarily be generalizable to the public sector, which features a more rigid bureaucracy and strong hierarchies. In government agencies, employee relationships are often governed by formal, structural norms that can limit the development of open interpersonal communication or natural friendships. Most prior research has emphasized the direct relationships among interpersonal communication, friendship, and job satisfaction without delving into the underlying social, psychological, or cultural mechanisms. Few studies have comprehensively examined how the emotional dimensions and informal social interactions among employees influence job satisfaction within public bureaucratic environments.



Additionally, contextual factors such as leadership style, organizational work culture, and internal communication systems have not been fully integrated into previous analytical models. Thus, there remains room to expand our understanding of how social interactions and interpersonal communication can enhance employee job satisfaction, particularly in government agencies like the South Sulawesi Department of Communication, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography, which face high levels of task complexity and public responsibility. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the influence of interpersonal communication and workplace friendships on job satisfaction in local government agencies, specifically the South Sulawesi Communication, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography Agency, which has rarely been empirically studied to date.

Previous studies have primarily been conducted in the private sector, whereas public bureaucracy exhibits distinct dynamics, including vertical communication patterns, a formal work culture, and often hierarchical interpersonal relationships. Through this approach, the study aims to expand theoretical understanding of how interpersonal communication functions not only as a means of information exchange but also as a social mechanism that strengthens emotional bonds among employees and enhances job satisfaction through a sense of camaraderie and psychological support. Furthermore, this study offers practical contributions to public organizations in identifying strategies to improve employee well-being and work motivation through the development of a communicative, harmonious, and collaborative work environment. Based on the gap analysis outlined above, the objective of this study is to empirically analyze the extent to which interpersonal communication and workplace friendships influence employee job satisfaction, while also providing a scientific foundation for formulating more effective human resource management policies within the local government sector.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides literature review and hypothesis development. Section 3 presents research methodology. Section 4 provides empirical result and discussion. Section 5 presents conclusion.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is defined as the process of exchanging messages, information, and meaning between two or more individuals, involving both verbal and nonverbal interactions, with the aim of building mutual understanding and meaningful social relationships. In the context of modern organizations, interpersonal communication serves as the primary foundation for fostering effective working relationships, as it functions not only as a means of conveying information but also as a tool for building trust, fostering empathy, and strengthening social identity among organizational members (Curado *et al.*, 2022). High-quality interpersonal communication is characterized by message clarity, openness among participants, and the ability to listen actively, all of which contribute to harmonious interactions in the workplace (Abed *et al.*, 2023). In practice, interpersonal communication encompasses various dimensions such as perception, feedback, shared meaning, and emotional closeness that influence the effectiveness of interpersonal relationships.

As noted by Jämsen *et al.*, (2022), open and reflective interpersonal communication enables individuals to develop more adaptive social relationships, particularly in the context of remote work, where the success of interactions no longer depends on physical proximity but on the ability to maintain



psychological closeness through consistent and empathetic communication. In a broader context, the effectiveness of interpersonal communication is also influenced by an individual's ability to understand and adapt to cultural differences, values, and perspectives that arise in diverse work environments. In line with Erfan's (2024) findings, effective cross-cultural management practices have been shown to enhance communication efficiency and global team collaboration, strengthen social cohesion, and reduce misunderstandings among individuals.

Furthermore, recent studies highlight that interpersonal communication is not merely an information-exchange activity but a complex social process that shapes emotional experiences, identity perceptions, and group cohesion. Artar & Erdil (2024) assert that interpersonal communication possesses a satisfaction dimension that directly influences individuals' perceptions of their work environment and social connectedness. This aligns with the perspective of Dalal *et al.*, (2023), who explain that interpersonal communication satisfaction serves as a key mediator in fostering organizational commitment and enhancing individual professional commitment. In this context, interpersonal communication encompasses verbal aspects such as speaking style, word choice, and intonation, as well as nonverbal aspects such as facial expressions, eye contact, and body gestures, which together shape emotional meaning in interactions (Artar & Erdil, 2024).

According to Kambara *et al.*, (2023), the success of interpersonal communication is determined by an individual's ability to adapt their communication style to the context and characteristics of the conversation partner, as misperceptions can create social distance and hinder the transfer of meaning. Similar findings were reported by Pratama & Mukhlis (2024), who highlighted that effective interpersonal communication in educational and organizational settings requires mutual openness and empathy to foster mutual understanding and respect for differing viewpoints. Beyond its social functions, interpersonal communication also plays a strategic role in emotion regulation and enhancing individuals' psychological well-being in the workplace. In the study by Abed *et al.*, (2023), a positive interpersonal communication style was shown to foster personal and professional growth by creating space for authentic and constructive self-expression. This is reinforced by Artar & Erdil (2024), who found that adequate interpersonal communication helps reduce workplace conflicts and enhances adaptability in flexible or remote work settings.

Furthermore, Curado *et al.*, (2022) highlight that organizations fostering an open and participatory interpersonal communication culture tend to have higher levels of job satisfaction and employee loyalty. This indicates that interpersonal communication is not merely a social skill but a strategic competency that determines the organization's overall effectiveness. In the context of globalization and the digitalization of work, interpersonal communication has become increasingly important as it mediates the relationship between individuals and technology, helping to maintain the warmth of human connections amidst the rise of virtual interactions. Thus, interpersonal communication can be understood as a dynamic process that connects individuals not only informatively but also emotionally, socially, and culturally, forming the foundation for sustainable, productive, and meaningful interactions across various contexts of human life.

2.2 Friendships in the Workplace

Friendship in the workplace is defined as a voluntary social relationship formed between individuals in a work environment, based on trust, mutual support, and emotional attachment beyond formal professional relationships. In the context of modern organizations, these relationships not only foster a



sense of community but also serve as a psychological foundation that strengthens the organizational climate and enhances employees' emotional well-being (He *et al.*, 2022). Friendships in the workplace differ from ordinary work relationships because they are characterized by a high degree of closeness, deeper personal interactions, and the presence of voluntary, non-instrumental social intimacy (Fasbender & Drury, 2022). According to Biçer (2023), friendships in the workplace play a crucial role in building organizational trust and job satisfaction, particularly when such interactions occur in an environment that fosters openness and mutual empathy. Such relationships often serve as a buffer against work-related stress because employees feel they have social support that can reduce stress, strengthen commitment to the organization, and enhance emotional engagement in their work (Yang & Shiu, 2023).

Friendships in the workplace also have significant social functions in shaping collective identity and mediating interpersonal relationships across various organizational levels. According to He *et al.*, (2022), healthy friendships can strengthen team cohesion, facilitate informal communication, and create a more inclusive work environment. In the context of age and background diversity, Fasbender & Drury (2022) found that intergenerational friendships in the workplace can reduce social distance and enhance loyalty among team members. This indicates that the presence of friendships not only strengthens interpersonal relationships but also plays a role in fostering a sense of belonging to the organization. A study by Wyandini *et al.*, (2023) shows that employees with workplace friendships tend to be more enthusiastic, committed, and have high levels of work engagement because these positive interactions create personal meaning in their work.

In line with this, He *et al.*, (2022) emphasize that a work environment that fosters friendship tends to enhance employees' psychological well-being and reduce negative behaviors such as knowledge hiding. Workplace friendships can also serve as an important means of social and emotional learning. According to Yang & Shiu (2023), close friendships foster a sense of psychological safety, where individuals feel comfortable expressing ideas, opinions, and even mistakes without fear of social sanctions. This contributes to increased innovation and team effectiveness. In a study conducted by Hoffmann *et al.*, (2025), gender differences were found in how men and women build and maintain friendships in the workplace. Men tend to view friendship as a means of exchanging instrumental support, while women place greater emphasis on emotional and affective aspects. These differences indicate that the dynamics of workplace friendships are not uniform but are influenced by gender, cultural, and organizational structural factors. Adrizal *et al.*, (2023) add that workplace friendships can enhance employees' positive emotions, which ultimately lead to improved morale and performance. These findings reinforce the view that friendship is not merely a social relationship but also a crucial psychological and organizational asset for creating a harmonious, productive, and humane work environment.

2.3 Employee Job Satisfaction

Employee job satisfaction is a positive or pleasant emotional state resulting from an individual's evaluation of their job or work experience. This satisfaction encompasses not only how an individual evaluates the tasks performed but also reflects the extent to which the work environment, social relationships, and organizational policies align with the employee's personal expectations and values. According to Gazi *et al.*, (2024), job satisfaction arises when an employee's perception of their work outcomes aligns with both personal and organizational expectations, ultimately influencing their work



behavior and commitment to the office or institution where they work. In both government and private sector contexts, job satisfaction is often linked to the balance between workload and compensation, career development opportunities, and the quality of inter-employee relationships.

Damai *et al.*, (2023) emphasize that job satisfaction serves as a key indicator determining employee performance levels, as satisfied individuals tend to demonstrate high work enthusiasm, discipline, and loyalty to the institution. Furthermore, Hartono (2023) explains that job satisfaction is not only oriented toward work outcomes but also toward the psychological experiences that foster a sense of pride, appreciation, and recognition within the workplace. According to Syahrir *et al.*, (2024), job satisfaction also serves a strategic function as a mediating variable bridging the relationship between the work environment and employee productivity. A comfortable work environment, supported by healthy interpersonal relationships and a fair reward system, can enhance job satisfaction and ultimately drive higher productivity.

Job satisfaction has multidimensional aspects that include satisfaction with the type of work, the reward system, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and the physical conditions of the work environment. Research by Yusnita *et al.*, (2023) indicates that a supportive work environment—both in terms of facilities and interpersonal relationships—can significantly increase employee satisfaction levels. Employees who feel safe, comfortable, and receive strong social support tend to have a positive view of their work. Similar findings are reinforced by Suci *et al.*, (2022), who emphasize that quality of work life is closely linked to job satisfaction, where the balance between work demands and personal life is a key factor influencing employee well-being. Sitorus & B (2025) add that job satisfaction can function as a moderating variable that strengthens the relationship between the work environment and employee performance, particularly in public service organizations where social pressure and responsibility are relatively high.

Furthermore, transformational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping employee job satisfaction through enhanced intrinsic motivation, empowerment, and emotional bonds between leaders and subordinates. In Basalamah's (2023) study, it was found that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee job satisfaction by creating an inspiring work environment, valuing individual contributions, and encouraging active participation in decision-making. Job satisfaction is influenced not only by structural factors such as compensation and benefits but also by psychological and emotional dimensions fostered through humanistic and inclusive leadership interactions. Beyond internal factors, employee job satisfaction is also influenced by perceptions of organizational justice, promotion systems, and opportunities to participate in decision-making.

Hartono (2023) emphasizes that employees who feel involved in the policy-making process tend to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction compared to those who merely act as implementers. In a study by Gazi *et al.*, (2024), it was found that job satisfaction not only enhances individual productivity but also strengthens prosocial behaviors, such as cooperation and collective responsibility, within the workplace. These findings indicate that job satisfaction drives organizational morale, which in turn maintains institutional stability and effectiveness. Meanwhile, Damai *et al.*, (2023) state that the relationship between job satisfaction and performance is reciprocal—satisfied employees will demonstrate good performance, while good performance reinforces feelings of job satisfaction. In the public sector, Sitorus & B (2025) found that job satisfaction plays a crucial role in improving service quality, as employees who feel valued and treated fairly are more committed to delivering optimal service.



3. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with an associative research design to empirically test the relationship and influence between the independent and dependent variables. The quantitative approach was chosen because it provides an objective description of the phenomenon under study through numerical data analyzed using statistical tools. This study analyzes the influence of interpersonal communication and workplace friendships on employee job satisfaction at the South Sulawesi Provincial Office of Communication, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography. The study population includes all employees working at the Office of Communication, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography of South Sulawesi Province. From this population, 80 respondents were selected as the sample using census sampling, as all members of the population were considered relevant and met the research criteria. This approach allows the researcher to obtain representative results without overlooking variations in respondent characteristics within that work environment. The data used consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through a survey method, by distributing a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The research instrument was developed based on theory and previous studies, then tested through validity and reliability tests to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the statement items. Secondary data were obtained from institutional documents, personnel reports, and supporting scientific literature. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23. The analysis process included descriptive analysis, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression analysis, as well as F-tests, t-tests, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to determine the simultaneous and partial effects among variables. All results were analyzed at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) to ensure the empirical validity and reliability of the research findings

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis Results

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 1. Results of the Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interpersonal Communication (IC)	80	13	25	20.03	3.497
Friendship in the Workplace (FW)	80	18	30	23.40	4.342
Job Satisfaction (Y)	80	14	25	19.86	3.724
Valid N (listwise)	80				

Source: processed primary data, 2026

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the variables in this study, including:

- *Interpersonal Communication*
The minimum value of 13, a maximum value of 25, and a mean of 20.03, placing it on a scale that indicates agreement. The standard deviation indicates a deviation of 3.497 from the mean of the respondents' answers.
- *Friendships at Work*

The minimum score is 18, the maximum score is 30, and the mean is 23.40, placing it on a scale that indicates the response option "strongly agree." The standard deviation is 4.342, indicating the spread of the respondents' mean score.

- *Job Satisfaction (Y)*

The minimum score is 14, the maximum is 25, and the mean is 19.86, placing it in the agreement range. The standard deviation is 3.724, indicating the spread of the respondents' mean score.

4.1.2 Validity and Reliability Tests

Based on Table 2, the variables Interpersonal Communication (), Workplace Friendship (), and Job Satisfaction () have Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.6. Therefore, it can be concluded that all survey items in this study are valid. The variables Interpersonal Communication (IC), Workplace Friendship (FW), and Job Satisfaction (Y) have Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.6. This indicates that the survey items in this study are reliable. Consequently, each survey item will yield consistent data, and if the questions are asked again, the responses will be relatively similar to the previous ones.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Question Item	r calculated	r estimated	Info	Cronbach's Alpha	Info
Interpersonal Communication (IC)	IC.1	0,787**	0.219	Valid	0.913	Reliable
	IC.2	0,888**	0.219	Valid		
	IC.3	0,909**	0.219	Valid		
	IC.4	0,872**	0.219	Valid		
	IC.5	0,862**	0.219	Valid		
Friendship in the Workplace (FW)	FW.1	0,852**	0.219	Valid	0.945	Reliable
	FW.2	0,892**	0.219	Valid		
	FW.3	0,924**	0.219	Valid		
	FW.4	0,890**	0.219	Valid		
	FW.5	0,933**	0.219	Valid		
	FW.6	0,826**	0.219	Valid		
Job Satisfaction (JS)	JS.1	0,920**	0.219	Valid	0.953	Reliable
	JS.2	0,929**	0.219	Valid		
	JS.3	0,926**	0.219	Valid		
	JS.4	0,914**	0.219	Valid		
	JS.5	0,898**	0.219	Valid		

Source: processed primary data, 2026

4.1.3 Multiple Linear Regression Test

Based on Table 3, the regression equation derived from this regression test is :

$$Y = 5.916 + 0.139 IC + 0.477 FW \quad (1)$$

The model can be interpreted as follows :

- The constant value is 5.916, which indicates that if the independent variables (interpersonal communication and workplace friendships) are zero (0), then the value of the dependent variable (job satisfaction) is 5.916 units.



- The coefficient for interpersonal communication is 0.139 and is positive. This means that the value of the dependent variable will increase by 0.139 if the value of the independent variable increases by one unit, while the other independent variables remain constant. A positive coefficient indicates a direct relationship between the interpersonal communication variable and the job satisfaction variable. The better the interpersonal communication, the higher the level of job satisfaction.
- The regression coefficient for workplace friendship is 0.477 and is positive. This means that the value of the dependent variable will increase by 0.477 if the value of the independent variable increases by one unit, while all other independent variables remain constant. A positive coefficient indicates a positive relationship between workplace friendship and job satisfaction. The better the workplace friendship, the higher the level of job satisfaction.

Table 3. Results of Multiple Linear Regression

		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.916	2.013		2.940	.004
	Interpersonal Communication (IC)	.139	.121	.131	1.155	.252
	Friendships at Work Friendship at Work (FW)	.477	.097	.556	4.903	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction (JS)

Source: processed primary data, 2026

4.1.4 Simultaneous Test

Table 4. Results of the F-test

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	459.667	2	229.834	27.834	.000 ^b
	Residual	635.820	77	8.257		
	Total	1095.487	79			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction (Y)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Friendship in the Workplace (FW), Interpersonal Communication (IC)

Source: processed primary data, 2026

The steps for determining the F-test in this study yielded the following results :
The significance level is $F_{table} 0.000 < 0.05$ (5%), and $F_{calculated}$ is 27.834. The F-table value can be calculated using $df = k-1$ and $df = n-k$, where df (numerator) = $3-1=2$, and df (denominator) = $80-3=77$. The F-table value is 3.12 If $F_{calculated} > F_{table}$, then H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected; if $F_{calculated} < F_{table}$, then H_0 is accepted and H_a is rejected. Since the calculated F-value (F_{calc}) is greater than the critical F-value (F_{tab}) ($27.834 > 3.12$), H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected, meaning there is a significant simultaneous effect of the variables interpersonal communication (IC) and workplace friendships (FW) on job satisfaction (JS).

4.1.5 Partial Test

Through the test statistics—which include interpersonal communication and workplace friendships—we can partially determine their influence on job satisfaction. Testing the First Hypothesis The interpersonal communication variable has a significance level of $0.252 > 0.05$. The value of 0.139 indicates that the effect on the dependent variable is not positive. This means the null hypothesis is rejected, so it can be concluded that interpersonal communication has a positive but insignificant effect on job satisfaction. Friendships in the workplace have a significant level of $0.000 < 0.05$. The value of 0.477 indicates that the effect on the dependent variable is positive. This means the hypothesis is accepted, so it can be concluded that workplace friendships have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction.

4.1.6 Test of the Coefficient of Determination

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.648 ^a	.420	.405	2.87357

a. Predictors: (Constant), Friendships in the Workplace, Interpersonal Communication

Source: processed primary data, 2026

Table 5 shows a value of 0.668, indicating that the relationship between job satisfaction and the two independent variables is strong, as it falls within the 0.6 to 0.8 range. Meanwhile, the R-squared value of 0.420, or 42%, indicates that 42% of the variance in job satisfaction is explained by interpersonal communication and workplace camaraderie, while the remaining 58% is attributable to other variables not included in this study.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 The Influence of Organizational Culture on Performance

The results of this study indicate that interpersonal communication has a positive but insignificant effect on employee job satisfaction at the South Sulawesi Provincial Office of Communications, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography. These findings suggest that although interpersonal communication is recognized as a key factor in fostering harmonious workplace relationships, its implementation within this office environment has not yet made a significant contribution to enhancing employee job satisfaction. The prevailing communication patterns are still dominated by formal, one-way interactions, where information flows predominantly from superiors to subordinates without sufficient space for open dialogue to express aspirations, ideas, or feedback. Consequently, some employees tend to adopt a passive stance in communication and focus more on carrying out orders rather than building mutually supportive work relationships. This situation also creates social distance among employees, preventing collaboration and work coordination from functioning optimally. The low quality of interpersonal communication impacts a decline in a sense of camaraderie, motivation, and emotional engagement with work, which ultimately lowers job satisfaction levels within the office environment.



The findings of this study indicate that interpersonal communication in public agencies such as the Department of Communication, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography still faces challenges stemming from a hierarchical organizational culture. This culture makes employees reluctant to voice their opinions openly out of fear of creating a negative perception or being seen as overstepping their authority. Consequently, communication processes are often limited to technical and administrative matters without addressing the social aspects that could strengthen camaraderie and mutual trust among employees. Yet, within a bureaucratic work context, effective interpersonal communication can serve as a vital tool for fostering team spirit and creating a conducive work environment. Field observations indicate that when communication is rigid and non-participatory, employees tend to feel isolated from their work environment, lack motivation, and lack opportunities to fully contribute their ideas or input.

Theoretically, the findings of this study can be explained through the Organizational Communication Theory proposed by Katz & Kahn (1978), which asserts that communication functions as a process of transferring information, ideas, and emotions that shape an organization's social structure. Within this theoretical framework, an organization's success depends heavily on the extent to which individuals within it can communicate effectively, openly, and with mutual understanding. Consequently, a lack of effective interpersonal communication in the workplace leads employees to lose a sense of connection with the organization, reduces motivation, and diminishes job satisfaction that should arise from healthy social interactions. At the Office of Communications, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography, communication patterns that tend to be hierarchical and instruction-oriented can hinder the development of mutual trust among employees. This situation underscores the importance of reforming communication patterns to make them more participatory and dialogic, thereby fostering a work environment that supports employees' psychological well-being. Furthermore, interpersonal communication plays a role in clarifying tasks, reducing misunderstandings, and strengthening social bonds—which form the foundation of job satisfaction itself. When viewed in light of previous research findings, these results align with the study by Ramadanis *et al.*, (2023), which found that interpersonal communication does not significantly influence employee performance. This occurs because most communication within public institutions is one-way and limited to the delivery of instructions, rather than the exchange of ideas and emotions that foster working relationships.

These results reinforce the argument that interpersonal communication in government agencies still faces structural and cultural challenges, where bureaucratic systems often limit the space for dialogue between leaders and subordinates. Nevertheless, interpersonal communication continues to play a positive role as the foundation for the formation of harmonious and productive work relationships. When interpersonal communication is strengthened through openness, honesty, and empathy, employees will feel more valued and develop a sense of ownership toward the organization.

4.2.2 The Influence of Vertical Communication on Performance

Research findings indicate that the variable of workplace friendship has a positive and significant influence on employee job satisfaction at the Office of Communication, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography of South Sulawesi Province. This finding suggests that the stronger the bonds of friendship among employees, the higher the level of job satisfaction they experience. In the context of a public sector work environment, the presence of positive and trusting social relationships is crucial for creating a comfortable, supportive, and harmonious work atmosphere. Workplace



friendship is not merely a personal relationship but also serves as a vital foundation for fostering team collaboration, mutual support in facing work-related pressures, and a source of intrinsic motivation for employees. When employees have trustworthy and reliable coworkers, they feel more emotionally secure, have a place to share experiences and difficulties, and are more motivated to contribute their best to the organization. This demonstrates that healthy social relationships at work can be a determining factor in enhancing job satisfaction, as employees not only feel valued as individuals but also feel like an integral part of a cohesive work community.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that the most influential factor affecting workplace friendship is the ability to understand colleagues. This ability encompasses an understanding of colleagues' personalities, behaviors, and habits, which forms the foundation for building effective interpersonal relationships. In practice, understanding colleagues' personalities allows individuals to adapt their communication styles, manage differences, and prevent conflicts that could disrupt teamwork. Employees who understand the social dynamics of the workplace tend to adapt more easily, show mutual respect, and demonstrate empathy toward their colleagues. Thus, workplace friendships serve not only as informal social relationships but also as a psychological mechanism that strengthens a sense of camaraderie and solidarity among employees. This ultimately creates a more conducive work environment, boosts collaborative spirit, and reduces work-related stress—a factor that often leads to decreased job satisfaction. This finding underscores that friendships in the workplace play a crucial role in balancing organizational demands with individual social needs, thereby directly contributing to increased job satisfaction and commitment.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study align with Social Exchange Theory proposed by Blau (1964), which states that interpersonal relationships within an organization are based on the principle of reciprocity, where individuals exchange emotional support, information, and assistance as a form of social investment expected to benefit both parties. In this context, workplace friendships can be viewed as a form of social exchange that generates emotional and psychological value, such as a sense of security, being valued, and acceptance within the work group. When social relationships in the workplace function well, employees will feel more emotionally attached to the organization and more motivated to maintain their optimal performance. Thus, the results of this study reinforce the view that the quality of social relationships in the workplace has a direct impact on employees' psychological well-being and job satisfaction. The practical implication of these findings is that government agencies need to pay attention to the social aspect of human resource management by creating programs that encourage positive interactions, such as team-building activities, collaborative training, or cross-unit discussion forums that can strengthen relationships among employees. When compared to previous studies, the results of this study are consistent with the findings of Najmudin & Haryono (2022), who explained that workplace friendships have a direct effect on employee job satisfaction and performance. Both researchers emphasized that when employees have close, trusting, and supportive relationships at work, they tend to exhibit higher levels of happiness and stronger work motivation. These conditions drive increased productivity and reduce the potential for stress resulting from high workloads. The similarity of these results reinforces the argument that, in both public and private organizational contexts, workplace friendships are a social factor that cannot be overlooked in creating a healthy work environment. However, what distinguishes this study is the context of government bureaucracy, which has a more formal and hierarchical structure compared to the private sector.



5. Concluding Remarks and Recommendation

This study aims to analyze the influence of interpersonal communication and workplace friendships on employee job satisfaction at the South Sulawesi Provincial Office of Communications, Information Technology, Statistics, and Cryptography. Based on the results of the analysis, this study shows that, taken together, these two variables have a significant effect on job satisfaction. Partially, interpersonal communication has a positive but insignificant effect on job satisfaction, while workplace friendship has a positive and significant effect. This reflects that although interpersonal communication plays an important role in coordination and task execution, factors such as social closeness and emotional bonds among employees are more dominant in influencing job satisfaction. Thus, close, trusting, and supportive relationships among employees are essential elements in building a harmonious, productive, and satisfying work environment.

Scientifically, this study contributes to the development of organizational behavior research, particularly within the context of the public sector in Indonesia. The findings of this study reinforce the understanding that social aspects within an organization—such as friendship and interpersonal interactions—have a tangible impact on employees' psychological well-being and job satisfaction. From a practical and managerial perspective, these findings can serve as a guide for government agency leaders to create a more open, collaborative, and employee-wellbeing-oriented work environment. Such efforts can be implemented through effective communication training, strengthening a participatory organizational culture, and developing team-based collaborative work programs. By strengthening interpersonal communication and fostering friendships in the workplace, organizations can sustainably enhance employee motivation, loyalty, and performance. The originality of this study lies in its focus on the context of local government bureaucracy, which has rarely been examined from the perspective of social relationships and interpersonal dynamics in the workplace.

This study has several limitations that should be considered in future research. First, the use of a survey method via questionnaires carries the risk of respondent subjectivity in assessing workplace communication and social relationships. Second, this study was conducted in only one government agency, so the results cannot yet be generalized to all public institutions in Indonesia. Future research is recommended to use a mixed-methods approach by combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the interpersonal dynamics and psychological factors influencing job satisfaction. Additionally, comparative research across agencies or regions is needed to examine variations in the influence of organizational culture on communication and social relationships in the workplace. Future research agendas could also expand the analytical model by incorporating mediating variables such as work motivation or transformational leadership, thereby providing a more comprehensive picture of how social factors contribute to improved employee performance and the effectiveness of public organizations.

Statement of Use of Generative AI

During the preparation of this work, the author used generative artificial intelligence tools to support the scientific writing process. Grammarly was used to check grammar, refine writing style, and improve clarity in scientific writing. All interpretations, analyses, and conclusions presented in this study are the sole responsibility of the author.



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