

Strategies for strengthening employee performance at LPPL agropolitan television to support sustainable tourism in Batu City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the factors contributing to the improvement of employee performance at the Local Public Broadcasting Institution (LPPL) Agropolitan Television, Batu Tourism City, East Java. This study focuses on the influence of interpersonal communication and workplace comfort on employee performance. A quantitative associative approach was employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of employee performance optimization at the LPPL Agropolitan Television. Respondents were selected using a saturated sampling method, involving all 40 employees whose performances were assessed. Data was analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method. The findings reveal that workplace comfort directly enhances employee performance, whereas interpersonal communication improves performance only when it first fosters workplace comfort. Furthermore, workplace comfort fully mediated the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee performance. It is recommended that the leadership of LPPL ATV and the Department of Communication and Information of Batu Tourism City continue to provide adequate facilities to create a comfortable working environment. Such efforts are essential to improving employee performance in alignment with the shared vision and mission of advancing sustainable tourism in the Greater Malang area.

Keywords: workplace comfort, employee performance, interpersonal communication, local television.

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



1. INTRODUCTION

The Local Public Broadcasting Institution Agropolitan Television (LPPL-ATV) is a local television medium that plays a role in delivering information related to tourism and culture in Greater Malang. LPPL-ATV is headquartered in Batu Tourism City (KWB) and operates under the Department of Communication and Information (Diskominfo) of KWB, employing 40 permanent staff members across various divisions. The LPPL-ATV team strives to disseminate information on the city's flagship tourism attractions to foster sustainable growth in the tourism industry, given that the city's Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) relies heavily on the tourism sector (Tjahjo & Wahyuti, 2023). As a media partner of the local government, mass media must demonstrate optimal performance in achieving the intended goals.

With optimal media performance, the information delivered to the public will naturally be of high quality and well received by viewers. However, evaluations over the past few years have indicated that the performance of ATV employees has not yet reached an optimal level. Empirically, based on a brief interview with one of the leaders at the Batu City Department of Communication and Information (Diskominfo KWB), the decline in employee performance is reflected in LPPL-ATV's audience reach, which remains far below its target. Theoretically, weak employee performance can also be identified through signs of interpersonal communication problems (Kováčová & Drahotský, 2022). Observations reveal that such communication issues at LPPL-ATV emerge particularly when the entertainment division proposes creative ideas that the administration and broadcasting divisions often find difficult to understand and follow. Consequently, the production and broadcasting of flagship programs are hindered. In addition, limited facilities and infrastructure serve as barriers. Identified obstacles include outdated media equipment that lags behind current technological developments, suboptimal workplace comfort, and meeting rooms that fail to support effective discussion. These challenges have led to less effective reception and execution of creative ideas, which in turn may reduce the appeal of LPPL-ATV programs to its audience.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between interpersonal communication and workplace comfort and employee performance. Research conducted by the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic of Indonesia found that effective interpersonal communication plays a vital role in enhancing employee performance (Saputri & Dhewi, 2024). Another study found that effective communication strengthens collaboration and improves problem-solving skills, which are key factors in organizational success (Wahyuni, 2024). However, given the unique characteristics of the LPPL-ATV work environment, the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee performance may not be significant. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the extent to which interpersonal communication influences employee performance at LPPL-ATV. Workplace comfort encompasses not only the physical environment but also psychological aspects. This is consistent with studies conducted in companies in Czechoslovakia (Kábele & Edl, 2020; Sainger & Dev, 2023). Other research conducted in several schools in Saudi Arabia concluded that workplace comfort positively affects employee performance and productivity (Atyah, 2023). Furthermore, workplace comfort has been shown not only to have a direct influence on employee performance but also to mediate the effects of other independent variables on dependent outcomes (Nurseha & Ferine, 2024).

The differences between previous studies and the present research lie in three fundamental aspects. First, the research object: This study focuses on LPPL-ATV, a media-based service company aimed at enhancing public interest in tourism, whereas prior studies were conducted in manufacturing companies and non-media service industries. Second, the research method: several earlier studies employed qualitative approaches, while this study is designed to be conducted using a quantitative approach. Third, the research model or construct: this study emphasizes the examination of the mediating role of workplace comfort in the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee performance at LPPL-ATV, an analytical model that, to the best of our knowledge, has not been addressed in previous research.

The identified differences in this study establish a research gap that forms the foundation for designing a model to optimize employee performance at LPPL-ATV. This model is expected to support

the mission of the Batu City Department of Communication and Information (Diskominfo KWB) in effectively and sustainably increasing public interest in tourism in Greater Malang. The study is also expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions for policymakers, particularly the Head of Diskominfo KWB and the Manager of LPPL-ATV. Considering that improving employee performance at LPPL-ATV is crucial for the success of tourism promotion programs in Greater Malang, this study is expected to contribute to fostering a positive and sustainable tourism climate. Ultimately, the enhancement of public interest in tourism is anticipated to generate a significant economic impact on the Greater Malang region, particularly Batu Tourism City.

This study is structured using three main approaches: (a) a human resource management science approach, which emphasizes employee performance in strengthening the role of the creative industry to support sustainable tourism programs (Shields et al., 2020); (b) an empirical approach (Hermawan & Amirullah, 2021); and (c) an associative approach (Awaluddin et al., 2024). The problem-solving strategy is outlined through several steps: (a) primary data collection (Yuniarti et al., 2023); (b) organization of primary data (Awaluddin et al., 2024); (c) statistical analysis of primary data using SMARTPLS 3.0 (Gio et al., 2024); and (d) conclusion-drawing strategies (Santoso & Madiistriyatno, 2021).

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed an associative quantitative method. The quantitative approach is grounded in the statistical examination of variables (Santoso & Madiistriyatno, 2021), while the associative approach aims to analyze the relationships among variables through hypothesis testing proposed by the researchers (Abdillah et al., 2021). These inter-variable relationships form a model that can be comprehensively examined to address research problems and propose potential solutions. The object of this research is the employees of LPPL Agropolitan Television in Batu Tourism City, East Java, Indonesia. Referring to the research subjects, the study population consists of 40 employees. The sampling technique used is total sampling, which is equal to the size of the population (Sumargo, 2020); thus, the sample in this study consists of 40 employees.

The primary data utilized in this study are derived directly from respondents, making them raw in nature and requiring careful processing to address the research hypotheses (Hidayatullah et al., 2023). Secondary data serve as supporting references to contextualize the findings, including research journals and scholarly books. The data collection instruments in this study comprised three techniques: (1) observation, (2) interviews, and (3) questionnaires. Observation was conducted by examining the research object (Ramdhan, 2021), specifically how employees performed their tasks, along with the surrounding work environment. The interviews were conducted in an unstructured manner, involving open conversations with LPPL Agropolitan TV employees without predetermined question sequences. The questionnaire was designed in a closed format with predetermined answers. A total of 25 questions were posed to the respondents using a Likert scale of 1–5. However, the neutral or undecided option was removed, resulting in a 4-point Likert scale (1–4). The decision to exclude neutral responses was intended to minimize answer ambiguity and reduce data bias (Abdillah et al., 2021).

The stages of this research included: (1) determining the research object; (2) problem identification within the research object; (3) literature review; (4) identification of the research gap; (5) formulation of hypotheses; (6) development of research instruments (questionnaires); (7) data collection; (8) data processing; (9) data analysis and interpretation; and (10) drawing conclusions and formulating recommendations. Figure 1 shows the variables in this study: (a) Exogenous variable (ξ): Interpersonal Communication; (b) Endogenous variable (η): Employee Performance at LPPL-ATV; and (c) Intervening variable (z): Workplace Comfort. The research hypotheses are as follows: (a) H1: There is a significant influence of interpersonal communication on employee performance at LPPL-ATV; (b) H2: There is a significant influence of interpersonal communication on workplace comfort at LPPL-ATV; (c) H3: There is a significant influence of workplace comfort on employee performance at LPPL-ATV; and (d) H4: Interpersonal communication significantly influences employee performance at LPPL-ATV through the mediating role of workplace comfort.

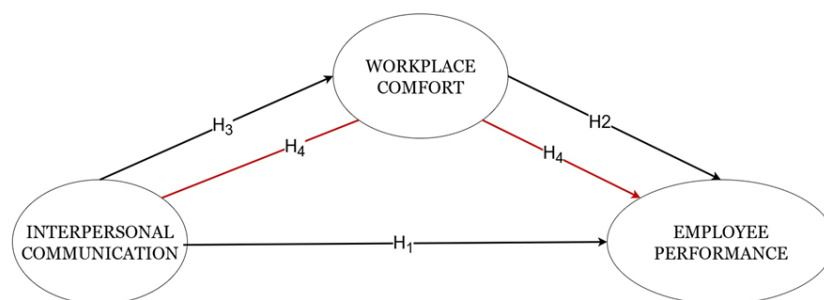


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Research Hypotheses

Source: Researchers (2025)

To address the proposed hypotheses, primary data were analyzed using the SEM-PLS method. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for small sample sizes and is reliable for testing model development (Ringle, 2020). The stages of data analysis consisted of: (a) outer model analysis, which includes outer loadings ≥ 0.60 , AVE ≥ 0.50 , Cronbach's Alpha ≥ 0.60 , Composite Reliability ≥ 0.60 , and HTMT < 0.90 to determine convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability with respect to their indicators; (b) inner model analysis, which involves R-square and path coefficients; and (c) hypothesis testing, where a hypothesis is accepted if the significance value is ≤ 0.05 (thus H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected), and rejected if the significance value is ≥ 0.05 (thus H_a is rejected and H_0 is accepted) (Hair et al., 2021).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The characteristics of the respondents whose data were successfully collected consisted of 40 employees whose overall performance was assessed in this study. Of these, 62.5% were men and 37.5% were women. In terms of age distribution, the majority of employees were between 20 and 29 years old (60%), followed by those aged 30–39 years (32.5%). This indicates that most employees belong to the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts. Regarding educational background, as obtained from the questionnaire, the majority had completed senior high school or its equivalent, with 22 employees (55%). This was followed by bachelor's degree holders (S1), totaling 10 employees (25%), and diploma holders, totaling 8 employees (20%). None of the employees held a master's (S2) or doctoral (S3) degree, indicating that no respondents had attained postgraduate qualifications or their equivalents.

From the perspective of the outer model, all criteria have been fulfilled. Table 1 demonstrates that convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability with respect to their indicators all met the required thresholds.

Table 1. Convergent Validity and Reliability Test

Construct Variable	Indicators	Outer Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Interpersonal Communication	X1	eliminated	0.797	0.853	0.539
	X2	0.702			
	X3	0.682			
	X4	0.752			
	X5	0.829			
	X6	0.697			
	X7	eliminated			
	X8	eliminated			

Workplace Comfort	Z1	0.687	0.882	0.905	0.515
	Z2	0.706			
	Z3	eliminated			
	Z4	0.628			
	Z5	0.749			
	Z6	0.631			
	Z7	eliminated			
	Z8	0.817			
	Z9	0.715			
	Z10	0.778			
	Z11	0.725			
Employee Performance	Y1	0.860	0.752	0.828	0.511
	Y2	0.818			
	Y3	eliminated			
	Y4	0.623			
	Y5	eliminated			
	Y6	0.817			

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

From the perspective of outer loadings, all indicators show values ≥ 0.60 , while those below 0.60 have been eliminated. After eliminating the indicators with low outer loadings, the values of Cronbach's alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) were ≥ 0.60 , and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was ≥ 0.50 . This indicates that convergent validity and construct reliability met the required prerequisites. Furthermore, to assess discriminant validity, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was examined, as presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Workplace Comfort	Employee Performance	Interpersonal Communication
<i>Workplace Comfort</i>			
<i>Employee Performance</i>	0.867		
<i>Interpersonal Communication</i>	0.665	0.561	

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

From Table 2 above, it can be observed that the HTMT values are below 0.90, indicating that discriminant validity meets the required criteria. Accordingly, the final construct model was established, as illustrated in Figure 2.

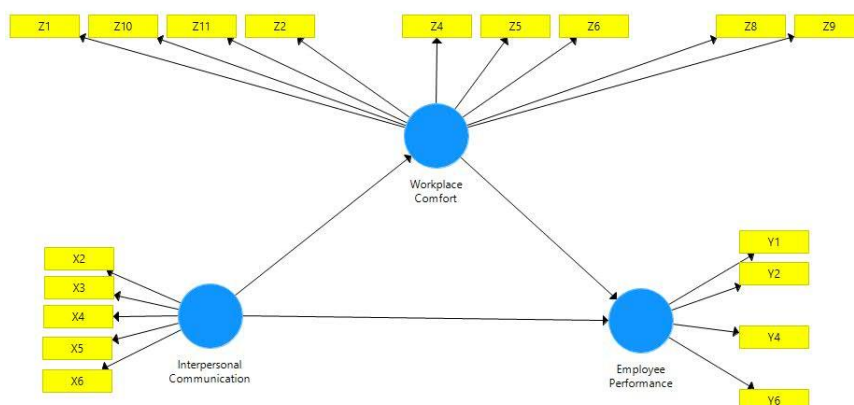


Figure 2. Final Construct

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

After the outer model fulfilled the required criteria, the results of the inner model test are presented in Table 3 and the following explanations:

Table 3. R Square

	R Square
Workplace Comfort	0.433
Employee Performance	0.602

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

The R-squared value indicates the extent to which the exogenous variables studied influence the endogenous variables, while the remaining variance is explained by other exogenous variables not included in this study. Based on Table 3, it can be stated that interpersonal communication influences Workplace Comfort by 43.3%, while 56.7% is influenced by other variables not examined in this research. Meanwhile, Employee Performance is influenced by both Workplace Comfort and Interpersonal Communication by 60.2%, whereas the remaining 39.8% is explained by other variables.

Table 4. Path Coefficient

	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Information
Interpersonal Communication -> Employee Performance	0.20	0.84	Not Significant
Interpersonal Communication -> Workplace Comfort	13.02	0.00	significant
Workplace Comfort -> Employee Performance	6.91	0.00	significant

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

Table 4 presents the direct relationships among the latent variables. Accordingly, the effect of Interpersonal Communication on Employee Performance is found to be insignificant. By examining the total path, the potential relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Employee Performance can be identified, with the total coefficient presented in Table 5 as follows:

Table 5. Total Coefficient

	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Information
Interpersonal Communication -> Employee Performance	5.28	0.00	Signifikan
Interpersonal Communication -> Workplace Comfort	13.02	0.00	Signifikan
Workplace Comfort -> Employee Performance	6.91	0.00	Signifikan

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

From the total coefficient, the relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Employee Performance demonstrates a strong influence. This indicates that Workplace Comfort plays a mediating role in enhancing the effect of Interpersonal Communication on Employee Performance. This finding is further supported by the indirect effects presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Indirect Effect

	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	
Interpersonal Communication -> Workplace Comfort -> Employee Performance	6.06	0.000	Signifikan

Source: Processed from primary data (2025)

The indirect effect table indicates that Workplace Comfort fully mediates the relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Employee Performance. Full mediation occurs when the direct relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Employee Performance is not significant; however, when the relationship is mediated by Workplace Comfort, the total effect of Interpersonal Communication on Employee Performance becomes significant. Furthermore, the indirect effect shows that Workplace Comfort has a significant and positive influence.

The findings of this study are aligned with the research conducted by [Saputri & Dhewi, \(2024\)](#), which emphasizes that effective interpersonal communication plays an important role in enhancing employee performance. However, this alignment is not absolute. This study argues that interpersonal communication does not directly improve employee performance; rather, performance enhancement occurs only when interpersonal communication fosters workplace comfort. To provide a more comprehensive interpretation, [Wahyuni \(2024\)](#) research is highly relevant. [Wahyuni \(2024\)](#) asserted that effective communication can strengthen collaboration and improve problem-solving capabilities, which are key factors in organizational success. Implicitly, [Wahyuni \(2024\)](#) suggested that effective communication does not immediately lead to higher employee performance but instead enhances factors such as collaboration and problem-solving abilities, which then contribute to organizational achievement.

The interpretation above is scientifically grounded in the findings of [Nurseha and Ferine, \(2024\)](#). Their study revealed that workplace comfort not only has a direct influence on employee performance but also serves as an intervening variable that mediates the influence of other independent variables on dependent variables. In this regard, the present study supports the research of [Nurseha and Ferine \(2024\)](#) by more explicitly specifying the independent variable as interpersonal communication and the dependent variable as employee performance. Thus, when compared, the previous studies discussed in this research complement each other. Collectively, these studies provide a more comprehensive understanding of the interrelationships and effects of interpersonal communication, workplace comfort, and employee performance.

At the indicator level, this study also supports the arguments of [Kábele and Edl \(2020\)](#) and [Sainger and Dev \(2023\)](#), who asserted that workplace comfort is shaped not only by physical conditions but also by the psychological atmosphere experienced by employees. In the present study, such support is evident

in Indicator Z11, which refers to a work environment that fosters emotional and psychological security. With an outer loading value of 0.725, this finding reinforces the claim that workplace comfort extends beyond physical aspects and encompasses psychological factors. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Kábele and Edl (2020), Sainger and Dev (2023), and the current study.

Employee performance at LPPL Agropolitan TV must be continuously improved to strengthen the institution's commitment to sustainability in fulfilling its role of delivering credible, engaging, and informative content. This statement aligns with Ramires and Veselova (2024), who emphasized that top management commitment and line management support significantly influence organizational sustainability in achieving its objectives. In this context, the sustainability of LPPL Agropolitan TV in broadcasting relevant, credible, informative, and appealing information about tourism programs developed by both the government and private sectors in Batu City will be enthusiastically received by the public. As one of the key stakeholders in sustainable tourism, the community must be properly engaged in collaborative efforts to build tourism programs that align with governmental initiatives and the socio-economic development of local residents surrounding tourist areas (Dahles et al. 2020). The dissemination of credible, engaging, informative, and relevant information serves as an initial catalyst for encouraging community participation in supporting the development of sustainable tourism.

To enhance such performance, this study both demonstrates and reinforces findings from previous research, showing that employee performance can be improved through effective internal communication. In this study, effective internal communication fosters a comfortable work atmosphere, which in turn enhances the performance of employees at LPPL Agropolitan TV. Consequently, this improved performance contributes to the delivery of credible, engaging, and relevant information to the people of Greater Malang and its surroundings. This assertion is supported by the research of (Muhonen & Berthelsen, 2021), who found that work grounded in well-structured activities and effective communication creates a positive and comfortable work environment, thereby optimizing employee performance.

4. CONCLUSION

The conclusions of this study are as follows: (1) Workplace comfort has a direct positive effect on employee performance at LPPL ATV; (2) Interpersonal communication at LPPL ATV can enhance employee performance, provided that it first fosters workplace comfort; and (3) Workplace comfort fully mediates the relationship between interpersonal communication and employee performance.

It is recommended that the leadership of LPPL ATV pay greater attention to fostering effective internal communication among employees, as this will help create workplace comfort that supports improved performance. Strengthening such communication is essential for achieving the organization's goal of disseminating tourism-related information in Malang Raya through engaging and appealing content on local television. In addition, the local government and the Batu City Department of Communication and Information Technology (Diskominfo) are encouraged to continue providing adequate facilities to establish a more comfortable work environment, thereby enabling LPPL ATV employees to enhance their performance in line with the shared vision and mission of promoting sustainable tourism in Malang Raya, particularly in Batu City. Finally, academics and researchers are encouraged to further investigate the factors that shape employee performance at LPPL ATV, so that the institution can remain competitive with other local and national television networks in its role of delivering positive information on tourism, ultimately supporting the realization of sustainable tourism programs in East Java in general, and Malang Raya or Batu City in particular.

Etical Approval

This study involving surveys and interviews with employees of LPPL Agropolitan TV was reviewed and received an exemption from the Institutional Review Board of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Indocakti, Malang, as it posed minimal risk to the participants. Written informed consent was obtained, and institutional permission was granted by the LPPL Agropolitan TV.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was not obtained for this study.

Author Contributions

PL contributed to the development of the research idea and served as the corresponding author. AA was responsible for data processing using SmartPLS. MIAW contributed to translating the manuscript from Indonesian to English. RHAS provided funding support and reviewed the manuscript prior to its submission to the journal.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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No external funding was received for this study.

Notes on Contributors

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