



# The Role of Organizational Communication in Improving Work Effectiveness at the Mangliawan Village Office, Malang Regency

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role and influence of organizational communication on improving work effectiveness with a case study at the Mangliawan Village Office, Pakis District, Malang Regency. The research focus includes the implementation of vertical (superior-subordinate) and horizontal (inter-staff) communication, its relation to fulfilling employee needs based on Maslow's theory, as well as the identification of obstacles and improvement strategies. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study method. The research results show that organizational communication at the Mangliawan Village Office has been running well and contributes significantly to work effectiveness. Open vertical communication has been created where superiors' instructions are easily understood and feedback from subordinates is accepted. Horizontal communication is characterized by a strong sense of family, empathy, and mutual cooperation. The fulfillment of employees' physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs also encourages work motivation. However, obstacles were found such as potential task duplication (job overlap) in certain situations and a reward system that is still informal. Effective organizational communication, built on message clarity, harmonious relationships, and fulfillment of employee needs, has proven to be a key factor in improving work effectiveness at the Mangliawan Village Office.

**Keyword:** Organizational Communication, Work Effectiveness, Village Government, Maslow's Needs Theory, Qualitative Case Study.

## 1. Introduction

Communication has long been recognized as the backbone and most important management lever in every organization. It functions as a medium to inform, persuade, control daily operations, and resolve conflicts. In contemporary government dynamics, especially at the village level, demands for fast, accurate, and accountable public services are increasing. The village office, as the frontline and face of government at the grassroots level, is required not only to carry out administrative functions but also to be the engine of development and community empowerment. In this context, the work effectiveness of all village officials becomes a key parameter for the success of the village government organization.

The phenomenon underlying this research is the operational complexity and challenges faced by village government organizations such as the Mangliawan Village Office. As a semi-urban village with high service traffic, this office must face various demands: from handling population and land administration, infrastructure development, to dealing with emergency situations such as disasters or pandemics. Optimal organizational performance in fulfilling this mandate is highly dependent on the smooth flow of information and the quality of interaction among organization members, both internally (between leaders, staff, and across sections) and externally (with the Village Consultative Body [BPD], Village-Owned Enterprises [BUMDes], Family Welfare Empowerment [PKK], and the community). Communication failure can become a source of friction, conflict, and ultimately hinder the achievement of organizational goals and reduce the quality of public services.

The main theoretical foundation of this research is the theory of Organizational Communication and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Organizational communication is defined as the channels and forms of communication involving all message exchanges within an organization and between the organization and its stakeholders. This theory emphasizes the importance of effective communication in achieving coordination, decision-making, and creating harmonious cooperation (Bucăța & Rizescu, 2017; Pace et al., 1997). Meanwhile, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Mangkunegara, 2013) is used as a lens to analyze the motivational factors of officials. This theory argues that individual performance is strongly influenced by the fulfillment of their hierarchical needs, ranging from physiological, safety, social, esteem, to self-actualization needs. This study hypothesizes that good organizational communication not only facilitates smooth task execution but also plays a role in fulfilling various levels of employees' psychological needs, which in turn drives their work effectiveness.

The urgency of this research is based on several things. First, the village as the frontline government unit requires an effective governance model, where communication is its foundation. Second, there is still a limited number of in-depth studies linking daily communication practices with work effectiveness in the context of rural bureaucracy in Indonesia. Third, the identification of obstacles and the formulation of context-specific communication improvement strategies are highly needed to support improving the capacity of village officials in facing increasingly complex governance challenges. Research Gap was identified by comparing this study with previous research. Research by Aris Febri Rahmanto (2004) discussed the role of communication in

general using the grounded theory method, whereas this study uses the case study method to explore the specific context of a village office. Research by Sidik Purnomo (2022) focused on the role of communication in building an organization conceptually through library research, while this study produces direct empirical data from the field. Research by M. Fikri Akbar (2016) examined communication in community empowerment organizations, different from the focus of this research on formal government organizations (village office) and its internal-external communication relationship with performance. Thus, this study presents to fill the gap by providing an in-depth and contextual analysis of the implementation and influence of organizational communication on work effectiveness in the village government environment.

## 2. The Art of Research

### 1. Organizational Communication and Effectiveness

Organizational communication is a vital process that binds all members and activities within an organization. According to Bodie & Crick (2014), effective communication is the heart of coordination and task execution. Pace, Paterson, & Burnet (1997) assert that a good organizational communication strategy must aim to: (1) to secure understanding, (2) to establish acceptance, and (3) to motivate action. Organizational work effectiveness, in this research, is operationalized through indicators of work quality, work quantity, responsibility, and teamwork. The relationship between smooth communication and the improvement of these indicators has been mentioned in many literatures, including in the context of public bureaucracy.

### 2. Maslow's Needs Theory and Work Motivation

Abraham Maslow's theory (in Mangkunegara, 2013) states that humans are motivated by a hierarchy of needs consisting of five levels: physiological, safety, social/love, esteem, and self-actualization. Fulfillment of basic needs (physiological and safety) is a prerequisite before individuals can be motivated by higher-level needs (esteem and self-actualization). In an organizational context, a safe work environment, good social relationships, recognition of achievements, and opportunities for development (self-actualization) are key factors for encouraging employee motivation and performance. This research applies this theory to analyze whether and how the Mangliawan Village Office fulfills these needs through communication practices and internal policies.

### 3. Barriers in Organizational Communication

No communication process is always perfect. Fielding (in Johanna, 2013) identifies barriers in downward communication, such as message ambiguity, information overload, and information irrelevance. These barriers are highly likely to occur in government organizations that have diverse stakeholders and multitasking duties. Understanding specific barriers at the Mangliawan Village Office becomes an important step before formulating improvement strategies.

Based on the gap identification above, this research offers **four dimensions of novelty (novelty)** that are significant:

1. Integration of Dual Theories in the Village Bureaucracy Context: Combining analysis of organizational communication (with a focus on vertical-horizontal flow) with motivation analysis based on Maslow's Needs Theory to holistically understand the drivers of work effectiveness of village officials.
2. Case Study in a Specific "Semi-Urban" Setting: Selecting the Mangliawan Village Office, which has unique characteristics as a village with high service traffic and dynamics akin to peri-urban areas, providing a picture of the challenges of organizational communication in the transition from traditional rural to urban.
3. Dual Perspective (Internal and External): Not only analyzing internal communication among staff and superiors but also exploring the connections and quality of external communication with village partner institutions (BUMDes, PKK, BPD) and its implications on performance perception and development synergy.
4. Strategy Formulation Based on Direct Empirical Findings: Recommendations for communication improvement strategies (to secure understanding, to establish acceptance, to motivate action) are formulated based on identification of real obstacles in the field, thus being applicative and contextual for the Mangliawan Village Office.

## 3. Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is suitable for investigating social phenomena (communication and performance) in depth, with an emphasis on understanding the meaning, experiences, and perspectives of the actors within it. The case study type allows researchers to intensively and holistically explore a single case (Mangliawan Village Office) in its natural context. The paradigm underlying this research is the interpretive (constructivist) paradigm. This paradigm views reality as a social construction formed through the interaction and interpretation of the individuals within it. In the research context, researchers seek to understand how village officials interpret the communication that occurs, how they feel its influence on their work, and how those relationships are built. The research was conducted at the Mangliawan Village Office, Pakis District, Malang Regency, during June-July 2023. The location selection was done purposively based on the consideration that this village has dense activities and organizational structure, thus considered rich in organizational communication phenomena relevant to the research objectives. Research



informants consisted of two groups: (1) Key Informants: Officials of the Mangliawan Village Office who directly understand internal dynamics, and (2) Participant Informants: Leaders of village partner institutions who provide an external perspective.

The primary data collection technique was semi-structured in-depth interviews with key informants and open-ended questionnaires for participant informants. Secondary data was obtained from organizational structure documents and village social media. Data analysis was conducted interactively following the Miles and Huberman model, including: (1) Data Reduction, (2) Data Display, (3) Triangulation: Testing data credibility by comparing interview results, questionnaires, and secondary data, (4) Conclusion Drawing.

The choice of a qualitative case study methodology is reinforced by the following considerations: (1) The phenomenon of organizational communication is complex, dynamic, and full of subjective meaning. The qualitative approach allows researchers to delve into the depth of this phenomenon, which cannot be fully measured by numbers, (2) This research wants to answer "how" and "why" communication has an influence. This requires an understanding of the interaction process, perceptions, and experiences of the research subjects, which can only be explored through in-depth interviews and contextual observation, (3) Case study allows researchers to gather a comprehensive and detailed picture of the Mangliawan Village Office, including organizational culture, personal relationships, and unique dynamics that affect communication, so that the resulting analysis is richer and deeper, (4) The qualitative approach allows researchers to develop questions and explore information that emerges during the research, so that potential unexpected findings can be revealed.

#### **4. Result**

The data of this study consist of primary data obtained through direct interviews with employees of the Mangliawan Village Office, as well as secondary data from existing sources. The research focus is on the implementation of organizational communication and its influence on performance and work relationships within the village office environment in the following aspects:

1. Task Success Parameters
  - Administrative tasks completed on time, then employees receive benefits in the form of base salary, allowances, and a sense of familial experience.
  - Village development tasks completed and community well socialized. Then benefits: base salary and allowances.
  - Tasks given with deadlines, but not all can be completed perfectly. Then receive benefits: wide relations, fixed salary, position allowances, and additional from Regional Original Revenue (PAD).
2. Experience and Constraints

Informants revealed they once had external duties during the pandemic for data collection and village officials were required to be versatile, covering various fields, including emergencies. Solution: intensive communication, coordination, and deliberation.
3. Communication between Superiors and Employees
  - Understanding of Superior Instructions, informants could accept instructions well and ask about things considered unclear. In essence, two-way communication is established well, affecting performance.
  - Superior Concern and Reprimand. If there are mistakes in performance, the superior corrects and reprimands in a constructive manner, not pressuring, giving advice so it is not repeated.
  - Appreciation for Achievements. Treatment of employees based on interview results found that appreciation is informal, in the form of additional incentives or informal activities.
4. Influence of Communication on Work Relationships.

Good communication built in a good organization makes work comfortable, creates a support system, and generates new ideas, facilitates coordination, information delivery, and minimizes conflict.
5. Responses from Leaders of Other Institutions in Mangliawan Village

Based on interviews conducted with external parties, it is known that communication with the Village Office runs well in the form of active interaction and participation in village office activities. The role of the Village Office is very important, especially in distributing aid to the community. In other words, the Village Office continues to strive to improve services in various sectors.

#### **5. Discussion**

The Mangliawan Village Office has a relatively complete organizational structure with the Village Head, Village Secretary, six section heads, and four Hamlet Heads. Research findings indicate that the implementation of organizational communication in this office generally runs well. Vertical Communication (Superior-Subordinate) occurs effectively. Superiors give clear and easily understood instructions. Two-way communication occurs; employees are not hesitant to ask if they don't understand

(Informant: "Understand, if not, will ask directly"). Superior concern is shown through corrective and constructive reprimands, not judgmental. This creates a sense of psychological safety for employees. Horizontal Communication (Among Employees) is highly characterized by a strong family culture. The work atmosphere is filled with empathy and mutual understanding. Although differences in perspective sometimes occur, they are resolved through deliberation and even strengthen relationships. Mutual cooperation (gotong royong) is very visible, where colleagues help each other when someone is absent or overwhelmed. External Communication with partner institutions such as BPD, BUMDes, and PKK is also well established, marked by regular meetings and joint activity implementation. This shows that the Mangliawan Village Office does not operate in isolation but actively builds networks to support community empowerment tasks.

Furthermore, there is an influence of communication on work effectiveness and need fulfillment based on analysis with Maslow's theory, where this research finds that good organizational communication significantly influences work effectiveness, and this influence is mediated by the fulfillment of employees' hierarchical needs as follows:

1. **Physiological Needs:** Fulfilled through provision of base salary, allowances, and additional incentives (such as transportation/meal money) for tasks outside job descriptions. Clear communication about these financial rights reduces anxiety and forms the basis for work stability.
2. **Safety Needs:** A communicative and supportive work environment, where superiors reprimand in a good manner, creates a sense of psychological safety. Employees are not afraid to make mistakes as long as they are willing to learn, and there is security ensuring physical safety. This allows employees to focus on work without the distraction of anxiety.
3. **Social Needs (Sense of Belonging and Love):** A strong family culture, built and maintained through warm and empathetic daily communication, is highly fulfilled. Employees feel part of a big "family," which increases commitment to the organization and colleagues. Informants mentioned that this atmosphere becomes an important support system.
4. **Esteem Needs:** Although appreciation is more informal (such as being invited for refreshing, given additional transportation money, or personal praise), this is still felt as a form of appreciation. Praise and recognition communication from superiors and peers fulfills employees' esteem needs.
5. **Self-Actualization Needs:** Support from superiors who provide trust, space to ask questions, and task delegation, allows employees to develop and contribute maximally according to their abilities. Open communication also facilitates the submission of new ideas from employees, which are then discussed for work quality improvement.

The combination of good communication and fulfillment of these needs is able to produce: Smooth information flow facilitates coordination and speeds up task completion, strengthening teamwork where a sense of family and empathy encourages automatic mutual cooperation. When one employee has a problem, others help, minimizing conflict through effective communication and the formation of a safe and supportive environment encourages employees to contribute new ideas in discussions, improving work quality.

Furthermore, although generally good, there are obstacles that potentially disrupt communication effectiveness:

1. **Potential Job Overload and Role Ambiguity:** Especially under certain conditions (e.g., pandemic period or structural transition), employees often receive additional tasks outside their job descriptions. The Planning Section Head informant mentioned a transition period where certain positions were vacant, so tasks were duplicated. This risks causing fatigue and decreased focus on primary tasks.
2. **Demand for Broad Understanding:** Village officials are required to understand many things outside their technical fields (development, social, disaster). Without structured communication and training, this can cause information overload and stress.

The strategies that can be applied refer to three main objectives:

- **To Secure Understanding:** Ensuring messages are well understood, avoiding miscommunication, and building harmonious relationships.
- **To Establish Acceptance:** Implementing patterns of simultaneous information dissemination (email, mobile phone) for quick communication, and sequential patterns for gradual tasks.
- **To Motivate Action:** Providing rewards or appreciation to high-performing employees to increase work motivation.

Good organizational communication at the Mangliawan Village Office has contributed to improving employee performance and public service. However, obstacles such as excessive workload still exist. By applying appropriate communication strategies—ensuring understanding, building message acceptance, and motivating action—communication effectiveness and organizational performance can be further improved.



## **6. Conclusion**

Based on the overall analysis, it can be concluded that organizational communication plays a very crucial and positively influential role on work effectiveness at the Mangliawan Village Office. Effective communication, characterized by message clarity, a two-way open climate, an empathetic family culture, and a solid external network, has successfully created a conducive work environment.

Through good communication practices, the Mangliawan Village Office has fulfilled the hierarchy of needs of its officials, from physiological and safety needs, to higher ones such as social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. It is this fulfillment of needs that becomes the driving engine of motivation and, ultimately, improves quality, quantity, responsibility, and teamwork as indicators of work effectiveness.

Regarding challenges such as potential excessive workload and fatigue due to task duplication in special situations, the proposed strategies focus on three pillars: (1) Ensuring Understanding through role clarity and technology utilization, (2) Building Acceptance through open feedback forums, and (3) Motivating Action through a more structured reward system and consistent appreciative communication.

## **Acknowledgments**

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