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The Effects of Job Characteristics, Organizational Culture, and Work Ethics on Internal Communication and Employee Performance: Evidence from Southeast Maluku Regency and Tual City, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: Purpose: This study examines the effects of job characteristics, organizational culture, and work ethics on employee performance, with internal communication serving as a mediating variable. The study is theoretically grounded in the premise that effective internal communication can translate organizational cultural values and ethical principles into productive work behaviors, thereby enhancing employee performance in public-sector organizations. Methods: An explanatory research design with a quantitative approach was employed in Tual City and Southeast Maluku Regency, Indonesia. The study population comprised 1,649 civil servants, from which 312 respondents were selected as the research sample. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the direct and indirect relationships among job characteristics, organizational culture, work ethics, internal communication, and employee performance. Findings: The results indicate that organizational culture and work ethics have significant positive effects on both internal communication and employee performance, whereas job characteristics do not have a statistically significant effect. Internal communication plays a strategic mediating role in translating organizational cultural values and work ethics into productive work behaviors that contribute to improved employee performance. The model explains 79.1% of the variance in internal communication, as indicated by an R^2 value of 0.791, with the remaining 20.9% attributable to factors outside the model. For employee performance, the model yields an R^2 value of 0.697, indicating that 69.7% of its variance is explained by the three exogenous variables and internal communication, while the remaining 30.3% is attributable to other factors. Conclusions: The findings highlight the strategic role of internal communication in strengthening the effects of organizational culture and work ethics on employee performance in public-sector organizations. The non-significant effect of job characteristics further suggests that structural features of work alone may be insufficient to improve employee performance without supportive organizational values, ethical norms, and effective internal communication. Future research should extend the investigation to private-sector and non-bureaucratic organizations, conduct comparative studies across regions with different cultural characteristics, and integrate quantitative and

qualitative approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying employee performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Civil servants play a strategic role in government administration and public service delivery. According to data from the Indonesian National Civil Service Agency (Badan Kepegawaian Negara—BKN) as of December 2025, the number of civil servants in Indonesia reached approximately 6.5 million, distributed across central and regional government institutions, while the national population was approximately 290 million. Regional government institutions accounted for the largest proportion of civil servants, with approximately 78%, or 5.1 million, serving in regional institutions, compared with 1.4 million, or approximately 22%, employed by central government institutions. This composition highlights the important role of regional civil servants in determining the quality of government administration and public service delivery.

In the public-sector context, employee performance represents a key indicator of the effectiveness of public service delivery. An ethical and open work environment, supported by transparent communication, can strengthen trust, employee engagement, and relationships between employees and their organizations. Such conditions can create a more conducive environment for achieving high levels of employee performance. Therefore, organizational factors influencing employee performance require systematic investigation (Thelen & Formanchuk, 2022).

Job characteristics represent an important organizational factor that shapes employee responses and performance. Technological change, globalization, and workforce diversity require organizations to implement effective job designs to improve employee performance (Matilu & Obonyo, 2018). Conversely, unfavorable working conditions, including excessive physical demands and unsupportive work environments, may reduce work quality, creativity, and employees' compliance with organizational regulations (Kahya, 2007). Individual perceptions regarding the importance of job characteristics also play a role in shaping the relationship between job characteristics and employee performance (Peiró et al., 2020).

Organizational culture also shapes how employees understand organizational objectives, develop commitment, and perform their work. When individual values are aligned with organizational values, a strong organizational culture can strengthen employee attachment, enhance work effectiveness, and support organizational performance (Shahzad & Luqman, 2024). This relationship may become stronger when organizational values are translated into tangible forms of organizational support perceived by employees (Vasumathi et al., 2025). Conversely, limited teamwork and inadequate support among employees can hinder performance outcomes (Mohsen et al., 2020).

Work ethics constitute another important foundation of professionalism among civil servants. The quality of civil servants remains a concern, not only because of limitations in skills, competencies, and educational qualifications, but also because of character and personal attributes that may not fully reflect the expected standards of professionalism in public service delivery (Yulianto, 2020). Professional, integrity-driven, disciplined, and responsible work ethics are therefore essential for ensuring that employees perform their duties consistently and remain oriented toward high-quality public service. The relationship between job characteristics, organizational culture, work ethics, and employee performance cannot be separated from internal communication. Internal communication enables organizations to disseminate information, provide feedback, strengthen coordination, and develop shared understanding among employees. Transparent communication can also strengthen employee trust and organizational engagement (Thelen & Formanchuk, 2022). Accordingly, internal communication may function as a mechanism through which job characteristics, organizational culture, and work ethics influence employee performance.

The central problem addressed in this study concerns the performance of regional government employees as influenced by job characteristics, organizational culture, work ethics, and internal communication. Ineffective job characteristics may hinder employees' understanding of their tasks; unsupportive organizational cultures may weaken organizational attachment and commitment; and weak work ethics may undermine professionalism in public service delivery (Hakim, 2025). Improving employee performance therefore requires an integrated approach involving effective job design, a supportive organizational culture, strong work ethics, and open two-way internal communication that facilitates information sharing, feedback, and coordination. In this framework, internal communication functions as a connecting mechanism between these three organizational factors and employee performance. The literature suggests that effective job design is an important mechanism for improving employee performance. The Job Characteristics Model proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) explains that skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback generate psychological states that can enhance employee

motivation, job satisfaction, and sustained performance. These dimensions can contribute directly to employee performance by strengthening self-efficacy and facilitating effective task execution (Judeh, 2012; Masharyono et al., 2023).

Job characteristics therefore constitute an important foundation for shaping employee responses to the organization. Jobs that provide skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and feedback can strengthen employee engagement and positive work attitudes. When these characteristics are supported by a healthy organizational culture, strong work ethics, and effective internal communication, work processes can become more structured and conducive to employee performance (Na-nan, 2016). Job characteristics have also been found to significantly influence performance, particularly through performance feedback, task significance, and career development support (Peiró et al., 2020; Wright & Kim, 2004).

The influence of job characteristics on employee performance may also occur indirectly through internal communication. Employee participation in decision-making can improve performance feedback and understanding of task significance, which subsequently influence job satisfaction and performance (Wright & Kim, 2004). Effective internal communication can further strengthen the relationship between job characteristics and performance by fostering positive perceptions of work and the organizational environment (Bhatti & Shodiyev, 2025; Patrichi et al., 2025). These findings suggest that effective job design needs to be accompanied by communication processes that provide employees with task clarity and meaningful feedback.

Organizational culture represents not merely a set of shared values and norms but also a framework through which employees understand organizational objectives, develop commitment, and perform their work. Simamora (2010) defines organizational culture as a collection of assumptions, beliefs, values, and norms that develop within an organization and function as behavioral guidelines for addressing external adaptation and internal integration. Organizational culture also reflects a shared system of meaning and beliefs that provides a basis for action, differentiates one organization from another, and supports the achievement of organizational goals, strategies, tasks, and outcomes. Organizational culture is an important determinant of organizational effectiveness and employee performance. It shapes employees' values, norms, behaviors, mindsets, attitudes, and approaches to work. A strong organizational culture can create a conducive work environment, increase employee engagement, loyalty, and productivity, and ultimately support organizational performance (Vasumathi et al., 2025). Organizational culture can also influence performance directly through a supportive work environment, increased employee engagement, and enhanced job satisfaction (Prasetyo et al., 2021; Trisninawati et al., 2025).

Ethical organizational culture shapes employee behavior and relationships with the organization. Such a culture encompasses formal systems, including codes of ethics and training, as well as informal systems, including norms, peer behavior, and leadership role modeling. Together, these systems influence how employees make decisions, evaluate appropriate behavior, and interact within the workplace (Thelen & Formanchuk, 2022). In this context, congruence between individual and organizational values can strengthen organizational attachment and work effectiveness (Shahzad & Luqman, 2024).

Organizational culture and internal communication are mutually reinforcing. Communication provides a mechanism for expressing, maintaining, and transmitting organizational values to organizational members (Sebastião et al., 2017). Organizational culture shapes employees' work values, whereas internal communication ensures that these values are understood and consistently implemented. The interaction between the two can facilitate coordination and support employee performance more effectively and sustainably (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Men and Jiang (2016) further demonstrate that a supportive, fair, and stable organizational culture, together with symmetrical, open, and responsive internal communication, can significantly enhance employee trust, commitment, and satisfaction. Their survey of 391 employees showed that authentic leadership predicted internal communication, which mediated the quality of employee–organization relationships and employee outcomes. These findings are consistent with Mohsen et al. (2020), who found in the telecommunications sector in Afghanistan that limited teamwork and insufficient support among employees could affect performance. However, the telecommunications-sector context differs from regional government organizations. Therefore, the relationships among organizational culture, internal communication, and employee performance require further empirical examination among regional government employees in Southeast Maluku Regency and Tual City.

Professionalism, integrity, and perseverance in work ethics can contribute to the achievement of optimal employee performance (Haider, 2023; Hasibuan & Azmy, 2022). Hussain et al. (2021) similarly found that work ethics reinforced through increased moral awareness can promote more responsible work behavior and improve employee performance. However, Ahmed et al. (2021) reported that declining work ethics and employee commitment in Nigeria were associated with lower productivity and performance. Their findings also indicate inconsistencies in the relationship between work ethics and performance, suggesting the need to re-examine this relationship by incorporating a mediating mechanism.

Internal communication refers to the exchange of information and ideas within an organization, both formally and informally, across organizational levels (Kalla, 2005; Mubarok & Darmawan, 2019). It facilitates information dissemination, feedback, reduction of work-related barriers, coordination, and shared understanding of organizational objectives. Communication can also be understood as a process through which information is transmitted and exchanged so that recipients understand the message and are able to provide an appropriate response (Ibrahim et al., 2022). Internal communication can further enhance employee participation, job satisfaction, and performance. Nevertheless, the relationship among these variables requires further empirical examination within public-sector organizations (Kulachai et al., 2018). These considerations support the positioning of internal communication as a mechanism linking job characteristics, organizational culture, and work ethics to employee performance.

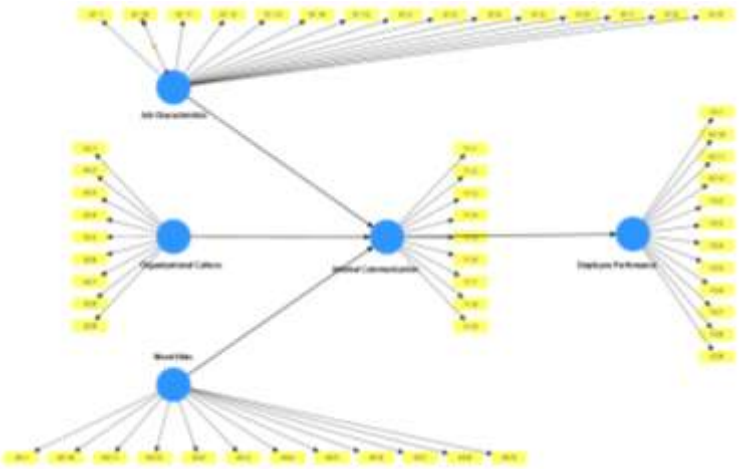
Overall, previous studies have predominantly examined job characteristics, organizational culture, work ethics, internal communication, and employee performance either independently or through different mediating mechanisms. Existing studies have also been conducted across diverse sectors and national contexts, including manufacturing (Kahya, 2007), the telecommunications sector in Afghanistan (Mohsen et al., 2020), and organizations in Nigeria (Ahmed et al., 2021). Consequently, the existing literature provides limited integrated empirical evidence concerning how job characteristics, organizational culture, and work ethics jointly influence employee performance through internal communication within regional government organizations in Southeast Maluku Regency and Tual City. The novelty of this study lies in integrating job characteristics, organizational culture, and work ethics into a single conceptual model in which internal communication serves as a mediating variable linking these organizational factors to employee performance. The model extends the work of Peiró et al. (2020), which emphasizes the role of perceptions regarding the importance of job characteristics; Men and Jiang (2016), which positions internal communication as a mediator of employee–organization relationship quality; and Ahmed et al. (2021), which examines job satisfaction as a mediator of the relationship between work ethics and employee performance. This study integrates these relationships within the specific context of regional government employees and empirically examines both the direct and indirect effects among the variables within regional government organizations.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed an explanatory research design using a quantitative approach. The research was conducted in Tual City and Southeast Maluku Regency, two administrative areas with relatively similar characteristics in terms of public-sector organizations. The study population consisted of civil servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN) working in both areas, with a total population of 1,649 employees. A sample of 312 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size formula, while respondents were selected through proportional random sampling.

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). The operationalization of the variables was defined as follows. **Job characteristics (X1)** were measured using skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. **Organizational culture (X2)** was measured using employee involvement, consistency in work, and adaptability. **Work ethics (X3)** were measured using integrity, sense of responsibility, self-discipline, and teamwork. **Internal communication (Y1)** was measured through vertical, horizontal, and diagonal communication. **Employee performance (Y2)** was measured using work quality, work quantity, job knowledge, and responsibility for work.

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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Measurement Model

The results of the outer-loading analysis presented in Table 3.1 show that all constructs have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.90, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability. All Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are above 0.50, indicating that the constructs satisfy the criterion for convergent validity. An outer loading value of 0.50 may still be considered acceptable under certain measurement conditions (Ghojali, 2015 dalam Dirman & Setyaningrum, 2023) Overall, these results indicate that the measurement constructs demonstrate adequate reliability and convergent validity.

Table 3.1 Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, dan AVE Value

Konstruk	Indikator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Job Characteristics	X1.1	0.719	0.941	0.944	0.550
	X1.2	0.668			
	X1.3	0.595			
	X1.4	0.770			
	X1.5	0.773			
	X1.6	0.796			
	X1.7	0.761			
	X1.8	0.787			
	X1.9	0.731			
	X1.10	0.736			
	X1.11	0.718			
	X1.12	0.711			
	X1.13	0.765			
	X1.14	0.790			
	X1.15	0.779			
Organizational culture	X2.1	0.676	0.911	0.916	0.585
	X2.2	0.790			
	X2.3	0.791			
	X2.4	0.802			
	X2.5	0.787			
	X2.6	0.766			
	X2.7	0.732			
	X2.8	0.758			
	X2.9	0.772			

Work Ethics	X3.1	0.838	0.953	0.959	0.662
	X3.2	0.844			
	X3.3	0.823			
	X3.4	0.820			
	X3.5	0.794			
	X3.6	0.816			
	X3.7	0.688			
	X3.8	0.652			
	X3.9	0.869			
	X3.10	0.863			
	X3.11	0.865			
	X3.12	0.855			
InternalCommunication	Y1.1	0.818	0.947	0.949	0.704
	Y1.2	0.824			
	Y1.3	0.839			
	Y1.4	0.872			
	Y1.5	0.893			
	Y1.6	0.828			
	Y1.7	0.883			
	Y1.8	0.824			
	Y1.9	0.764			
Employee performance	Y2.1	0.852	0.964	0.966	0.717
	Y2.2	0.869			
	Y2.3	0.838			
	Y2.4	0.884			
	Y2.5	0.813			
	Y2.6	0.911			
	Y2.7	0.883			
	Y2.8	0.891			
	Y2.9	0.826			
	Y2.10	0.894			
	Y2.11	0.707			
	Y2.12	0.766			

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

Discriminant validity was subsequently assessed using cross-loadings to determine whether each construct was empirically distinct from the other constructs in the model. The results indicate that the loading of each indicator on its respective latent construct was higher than its loading on the other constructs. This finding indicates that the indicators appropriately represent their respective latent variables and that discriminant validity is adequately established.

3.2 Structural Model (Inner Model)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was examined to assess the extent to which the independent variables explain the variance in the endogenous variables. The results are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 R-Square Values

Construct	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Internal Communication	0.791	0.789
Employee Performance	0.697	0.696

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

The results show that the R^2 value for internal communication is **0.791**. This indicates that job characteristics (X1), organizational culture (X2), and work ethics (X3) jointly explain **79.1% of the variance in internal communication**, while the remaining **20.9%** is explained by other factors not included in the research model. The R^2 value for employee performance is **0.697**, indicating that job characteristics (X1), organizational culture (X2), work ethics (X3), and internal communication (Y1) jointly explain **69.7% of the variance in employee performance**, while the remaining **30.3%** is attributable to other factors outside the model. These findings indicate that the proposed structural model has substantial explanatory power in accounting for variations in both internal communication and employee performance.

3.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the **path coefficients and bootstrapping procedure** in SmartPLS. The results are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Path Coefficients

Structural Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistics	P-Values
Job Characteristics (X1) → Internal Communication (Y1)	0.081	0.088	0.065	1.249	0.212
Job Characteristics (X1) → Employee Performance (Y2)	0.068	0.075	0.056	1.207	0.227
Organizational Culture (X2) → Internal Communication (Y1)	0.410	0.404	0.063	6.540	0.000
Organizational Culture (X2) → Employee Performance (Y2)	0.342	0.337	0.049	7.048	0.000
Work Ethics (X3) → Internal Communication (Y1)	0.465	0.463	0.060	7.746	0.000
Work Ethics (X3) → Employee Performance (Y2)	0.388	0.386	0.052	7.494	0.000
Internal Communication (Y1) → Employee Performance (Y2)	0.835	0.835	0.035	23.775	0.000

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

Interpretation of the Path Coefficients

The results indicate that job characteristics do not have a statistically significant effect on internal communication ($\beta = 0.081$; $t = 1.249$; $p = 0.212$). Similarly, job characteristics do not have a statistically significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.068$; $t = 1.207$; $p = 0.227$). In contrast, organizational culture has a positive and statistically significant effect on internal communication ($\beta = 0.410$; $t = 6.540$; $p < 0.001$) and employee performance ($\beta = 0.342$; $t = 7.048$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that stronger organizational culture is associated with more effective internal communication and higher employee performance. Work ethics also have positive and statistically significant effects on internal communication ($\beta = 0.465$; $t = 7.746$; $p < 0.001$) and employee performance ($\beta = 0.388$; $t = 7.494$; $p < 0.001$). This suggests that stronger work ethics are associated with more effective internal communication and improved employee performance.

Finally, internal communication has a strong positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.835$; $t = 23.775$; $p < 0.001$). Among the structural relationships examined in the model, this path has the largest coefficient, indicating a substantial statistical association between internal communication and employee performance within the observed sample.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Job Characteristics and Internal Communication

The findings indicate that job characteristics do not have a statistically significant effect on internal communication. This result suggests that variations in job design, including skill variety, task identity, and autonomy, do not substantially determine the quality of internal communication among employees. Instead, internal communication may be shaped more strongly by organizational and contextual factors beyond the technical structure of individual jobs.

This finding is relevant to the empirical context of Southeast Maluku Regency and Tual City. As public-sector institutions, the internal communication processes within these two administrative areas are largely structured by formal regulations, established organizational procedures, and hierarchical lines of authority. Consequently, differences in employee autonomy or task variety may not substantially alter established communication patterns. Internal communication within the regional governments of Southeast Maluku and Tual City may therefore be influenced more strongly by interpersonal relationships, local sociocultural values, and social proximity among employees than by the technical dimensions of job characteristics. This finding is consistent with Purwanto and Soliha (2017), who reported that job characteristics did not significantly influence employee outcomes. Their findings suggest that employees' perceptions of organizational commitment may affect how job characteristics are translated into positive attitudes toward the organization. The responsibilities associated with different tasks do not necessarily generate job satisfaction or strong organizational commitment. Thus, the present findings suggest that job characteristics alone may be insufficient to explain communication patterns within public-sector organizations.

4.2 Organizational Culture and Internal Communication

The findings demonstrate that organizational culture has a positive and statistically significant effect on internal communication. A healthy, adaptive, and supportive organizational culture can enhance the quality, transparency, and effectiveness of communication among employees by facilitating coordination, information sharing, and the exchange of ideas in pursuit of organizational objectives. The empirical context of Southeast Maluku Regency and Tual City provides an important perspective on this relationship. The influence of organizational culture on internal communication appears to be reinforced by the internalization of local sociocultural values, particularly the **Maren** philosophy, which emphasizes mutual cooperation and togetherness. These values can encourage responsive and supportive communication while reducing interpersonal barriers among employees and across regional government work units. In addition, the hierarchical characteristics of public-sector bureaucracy may strengthen instructional communication and formal coordination through respect for organizational authority and compliance with leadership. Accordingly, openness and collaboration grounded in local cultural values may constitute important contextual mechanisms supporting effective internal communication within regional government organizations.

This finding is consistent with Stefano et al. (2017), who found that organizations that value open communication, collaboration, and respect for employees can strengthen employees' sense of belonging and encourage their contributions to organizational objectives. The finding also supports Okunade (2025), who emphasizes the importance of effective internal communication in developing organizational cultures that can improve employee morale and organizational productivity. Although Okunade (2025) primarily positions internal communication as a mechanism supporting organizational culture, the present findings suggest a potentially reciprocal relationship. A strong organizational culture can facilitate effective internal communication, while effective internal communication can simultaneously strengthen the internalization of organizational values among employees.

4.3 Work Ethics and Internal Communication

The findings demonstrate that work ethics have a positive and statistically significant effect on internal communication. Higher levels of ethical conduct are associated with better-quality communication among organizational members. Work ethics extend beyond compliance with formal organizational norms. They also reflect employees' commitment to acting honestly, fairly, responsibly, and respectfully toward others. These values provide an important foundation for open communication, mutual trust, and effective work relationships.

Employees who demonstrate strong work ethics may be more likely to communicate information accurately, respond constructively to feedback, and maintain harmonious relationships with supervisors and colleagues. In the context of this study, employees' sense of moral responsibility in completing their duties may encourage more intensive coordination, accurate

reporting to supervisors, and constructive horizontal communication across sections and regional government work units. This finding is consistent with Medvecky and Leach (2017), who emphasize that ethical communication is grounded in honesty, fairness, responsibility, integrity, and respect for human dignity. Within organizations, ethics-based communication can strengthen information credibility, foster mutual trust, and reduce conflicts arising from communication distortion.

4.4 Job Characteristics and Employee Performance

The findings indicate that job characteristics do not have a statistically significant effect on employee performance. Although job characteristics represent important components of job design, they do not appear to constitute a direct determinant of employee performance in the organizations examined in this study. This finding suggests that employee performance may be influenced more strongly by other factors, including individual competence, motivation, leadership, reward systems, organizational culture, and organizational support. Job characteristics should therefore not be viewed as a single determinant capable of explaining variations in employee performance in the present research context. The characteristics of regional government organizations in Southeast Maluku and Tual City may provide a contextual explanation for this finding. Employee performance is generally assessed through administrative target achievement, compliance with working hours, and the implementation of programs conducted by regional government work units in accordance with applicable regulations. Because these performance standards are relatively standardized, differences in autonomy, skill variety, or task repetitiveness may have limited effects on measured performance.

Furthermore, a strong culture of bureaucratic compliance may encourage employees to prioritize the completion of instructions from organizational leaders rather than innovation or job enrichment. Consequently, structural compliance may play a more prominent role in shaping employee performance than variations in job characteristics. This finding is consistent with Kamani (2020), Yan Naing (2019), and Johanim and Yahya (2016), who emphasize that employees' perceptions of their jobs can vary according to position, work experience, and individual characteristics. Such differences in perception may explain why similar job characteristics do not necessarily generate equivalent levels of motivation or performance among employees. Differences in demographic characteristics, tenure, educational background, and work experience may therefore contribute to the absence of a significant relationship between job characteristics and employee performance.

4.5 Organizational Culture and Employee Performance

The findings demonstrate that organizational culture has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance. This result indicates that organizational culture is an important organizational factor associated with employee performance in the study context. Through the internalization of shared values, norms, and beliefs, organizational culture can guide employees to perform their duties effectively, responsibly, and in alignment with organizational objectives. Beyond functioning as an organizational identity, culture can also serve as a form of social regulation that helps align employee behavior with organizational vision, mission, and goals.

The findings indicate that employees in Southeast Maluku Regency and Tual City operate within a collective organizational environment rather than working solely as individuals. The local cultural value of **Maren**, which emphasizes mutual cooperation and togetherness, appears to be reflected in the work practices of public-sector organizations. The interaction between local cultural values and organizational practices may encourage collaboration and mutual assistance among employees, across sections, and across regional government work units. This finding is consistent with Akpa et al. (2021) and Alharbi and Alyahya (2013), who argue that organizational values provide behavioral guidance, facilitate coordination, reduce conflict, and improve decision-making, thereby contributing to employee performance. Similarly, Emeka and Philemon (2012) reported that organizational culture can influence organizational productivity. Ahmad (2012) and Salihu et al. (2016) also found that specific organizational cultural characteristics can influence employee efficiency and productivity.

Furthermore, Chibuzor et al. (2023), in the education sector, found that organizational culture dimensions, including involvement, adaptability, consistency, and mission clarity, positively influence employee performance. The present findings extend this discussion to the context of regional public-sector organizations in Southeast Maluku and Tual City.

4.6 Work Ethics and Employee Performance

The findings demonstrate that work ethics have a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance. Higher levels of ethical conduct are associated with greater professionalism, responsibility, discipline, and quality orientation. These

values can promote consistent work behavior and support organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity. Work ethics can be conceptualized as a form of **behavioral capital** that strengthens integrity within public-sector organizations. In the present context, employee performance may be closely associated with individual integrity and the implementation of the core values of Indonesian civil servants, particularly accountability and competence.

Employees with strong work ethics may be more capable of completing their responsibilities independently, maintaining accountable administrative practices, and delivering public services fairly. Such employees may also require less intensive supervision because ethical standards are incorporated into their everyday work behavior. The findings can be interpreted in relation to the **Theory of Planned Behavior** (Ajzen, 1991), which proposes that behavioral outcomes are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the present context, ethical orientations may contribute to responsible work behavior and, consequently, improved employee performance. The findings are also consistent with Osibanjo et al. (2015), who found that work ethics promote integrity, responsibility, discipline, and teamwork, thereby contributing to employee performance. Similarly, Benedicto and Caelian (2020) reported a positive relationship between work ethics and employee achievement, while Mathani (2016) emphasized that ethical practices in human resource management can contribute to work effectiveness and organizational standards.

4.7 Internal Communication and Employee Performance

The findings demonstrate that internal communication has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance. Among the direct relationships examined in the structural model, this relationship has the largest path coefficient ($\beta = 0.835$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong statistical association between internal communication and employee performance in the study sample. Effective internal communication facilitates information exchange, coordination, shared understanding, conflict resolution, and accurate feedback. Through these processes, employees can obtain clearer information regarding organizational objectives, task responsibilities, performance standards, and organizational expectations. Effective communication can therefore reduce uncertainty in task implementation, strengthen coordination across organizational units, and create a more collaborative work environment. This function may be particularly important in an archipelagic administrative context, where geographical dispersion can create additional challenges for organizational coordination. The finding is consistent with Ortega et al. (2023), who found that symmetrical internal communication positively influences organizational identification and individual performance, with organizational identification functioning as a mediating mechanism. Open, participatory, and two-way communication can strengthen employees' sense of belonging and encourage greater contributions to organizational activities. Salim (2022) further emphasizes the advantages of face-to-face communication through meetings and conferences compared with electronic communication. Direct interaction facilitates two-way communication, enables rapid clarification, reduces misunderstandings, and strengthens interpersonal relationships. In organizational settings, such communication can improve work coordination and accelerate task completion.

4.8 Job Characteristics, Internal Communication, and Employee Performance

The findings indicate that job characteristics do not have a significant indirect effect on employee performance through internal communication. Thus, internal communication does not function as a statistically significant mediator in the relationship between job characteristics and employee performance. Although job characteristics are relevant to task implementation, they do not appear to generate sufficient variation in internal communication to produce an indirect effect on employee performance. In other words, employees' perceptions of job characteristics do not necessarily translate into improved communication practices and, consequently, do not produce a significant indirect effect on performance. This finding suggests that internal communication may function primarily as an organizational infrastructure that supports work processes rather than as a specific mechanism linking job characteristics to employee performance. The finding is consistent with the Job Characteristics Model proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1975), while Krishnan and Wesley (2018) emphasize communication primarily as a mechanism for knowledge transfer rather than necessarily as a mechanism that strengthens the relationship between job characteristics and performance.

4.9 Organizational Culture, Internal Communication, and Employee Performance

The findings indicate that organizational culture has a positive and significant indirect effect on employee performance through internal communication. This result suggests that internal communication functions as a mediating mechanism through which organizational cultural values can be translated into productive work behavior. A strong organizational culture may not improve

employee performance solely through the existence of shared values. Rather, culture can establish a communication environment through which organizational values are communicated, interpreted, accepted, and implemented by employees. Internal communication therefore represents an important mechanism connecting organizational values with everyday work behavior. This mechanism can be observed in the local cultural value of **Maren**, which emphasizes mutual cooperation, togetherness, and interpersonal support. These values can encourage open interaction and collaboration among employees while reducing psychological barriers in workplace communication. At the same time, the paternalistic characteristics of public-sector organizations may establish formal communication patterns while maintaining interpersonal and familial dimensions.

The finding is consistent with Gochhayat et al. (2017), who emphasize that organizational effectiveness depends partly on an organization's ability to communicate its culture to its members. It is also consistent with Men and Jiang (2016), who demonstrate the importance of authentic leadership, organizational culture, and symmetrical internal communication in shaping employee outcomes. Symmetrical communication facilitates two-way dialogue between leaders and employees, strengthens collaboration, and enables organizational values to be incorporated into everyday work practices. Thus, internal communication can serve as an important mechanism through which organizational culture contributes to employee performance.

4.10 Work Ethics, Internal Communication, and Employee Performance

The findings indicate that work ethics have a positive and significant indirect effect on employee performance through internal communication. This result suggests that internal communication serves as a mediating mechanism linking employees' ethical orientations with their performance outcomes. Strong work ethics extend beyond individual conduct and can shape how employees interact, exchange information, coordinate activities, and fulfill organizational responsibilities. Employees who demonstrate honesty, responsibility, integrity, and respect are more likely to establish communication practices characterized by accuracy, transparency, and mutual trust. These communication processes can subsequently facilitate coordination and task completion. This finding is consistent with Mubarok and Darmawan (2019), who argue that internal communication serves not only as a medium for information exchange but also as a mechanism for internalizing work values and strengthening professionalism and responsibility. In the present study, stronger work ethics appear to contribute to higher-quality interpersonal communication, thereby facilitating information sharing, coordination, and work completion. The finding also has conceptual relevance to Lowe et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of transparent and ethically grounded communication in the dissemination of health-related information during the pandemic. Although their study was conducted in a health-communication context, its underlying principle is relevant to organizational settings: transparency, information accuracy, and moral responsibility can strengthen trust, reduce uncertainty, facilitate coordination, and improve the effectiveness of task implementation. Overall, the findings suggest that internal communication constitutes an important organizational mechanism through which work ethics can be translated into observable work behavior and employee performance.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that employee performance in regional government bureaucracy is not significantly determined by job characteristics, either directly or indirectly through internal communication. This finding suggests that structural attributes of jobs are not the primary determinants of employee performance within the bureaucratic context examined. In contrast, organizational culture and work ethics have significant positive effects on both internal communication and employee performance. A strong organizational culture facilitates the internalization of shared values, norms, and beliefs, which are translated into productive work behaviors through effective internal communication. Similarly, strong work ethics promote honest, open, and responsible communication, thereby contributing to improved work quality and employee performance. Internal communication has a significant direct effect on employee performance and serves as an important mechanism through which organizational culture and work ethics contribute to performance. These findings indicate that effective communication is not merely an administrative process but also a strategic organizational mechanism that translates shared cultural values and ethical principles into coordinated and productive workplace behaviors.

Within the context of Southeast Maluku Regency and Tual City, the findings further highlight the importance of socio-cultural values, particularly the *Maren* philosophy of mutual cooperation and solidarity, as well as the moral integrity of public-sector employees. Accordingly, developing an internal communication system that is responsive to local cultural values and grounded in strong ethical principles represents a strategic foundation for strengthening coordination, improving employee productivity, and supporting the achievement of public-sector organizational objectives.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Samsiah Aminah Borut: Conceptualization, Investigation.

Idrus Taba: Methodology, Laboratory Analysis.

Nurdjanah Hamid: Data Curation, Formal Analysis.

Wardhani Hakim: Supervision, Writing—Review & Editing.

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