

# Leadership Communication Strategies in Enforcing Civil Servant Work Discipline in Takalar Regency Regional Government Agencies

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe leadership communication strategies in enforcing civil servant work discipline in Takalar Regency Regional Government. Furthermore, it aims to identify the obstacles or constraints faced by leaders in implementing communication strategies with employees. The research focuses on two regional government agencies with the lowest attendance rates: the Communication, Informatics, Statistics, and Cryptography Agency (Diskominfo-SP) with 79% and the Population Control, Family Planning, Women's Empowerment, and Child Protection Agency (Dinas PPKBPPPA) with 77%. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the Head of the Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo-SP) Office (Mr. Suhardianto, S.STP) and the Head of the PPKBPPPA Office (Mr. Drs. Sukwansyah), observations of fingerprint system usage, and analysis of ASN attendance documents and related regulations (PP No. 94 of 2021 and the Regent's Regulation on the TPP). The results indicate that leadership communication strategies are multi-channel, encompassing top-down vertical communication through morning roll calls and spot checks, digital communication through the fingerprint system, two-way communication through meetings and WhatsApp groups, and exemplary and persuasive communication through rewards and punishments. However, the implementation of these strategies remains inadequately adapted to the dominant nature of fieldwork in both Regional Apparatus Organizations. Interviews with both Agency Heads revealed a gap between formal disciplinary demands and the realities of mobile work, leading to resistance, demotivation, and internal conflict among OPD leaders. The study concluded that leadership communication strategies in Takalar Regency have increased ASN discipline awareness, but have not optimally accommodated the context of fieldwork. A more participatory and adaptive communication approach is needed to ensure effective and sustainable enforcement of ASN work discipline.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary public administration landscape, the optimization of human resources has become an essential foundation for the progressivity of a local government organization, where the enforcement of the work discipline of the state civil apparatus plays a crucial role in realizing effective and efficient governance (Nurlaela et al., 2024). Work discipline, which is manifested in compliance with regulations, standard operating procedures, and professional ethical norms, not only impacts individual productivity, but also significantly affects the organization's capabilities in achieving preset performance targets (Saputro & Susanto, 2025).

Leadership communication, as a strategic instrument in articulating expectations, providing constructive feedback, and motivating employees, is a determining variable in forming an organizational culture that is conducive to the enforcement of work discipline (Nento et al., 2023). The phenomenon of indiscipline, such as tardiness, absenteeism without a clear reason, and violations of the code of ethics, can

undermine operational efficiency, reduce the quality of public services, and damage the image of government institutions in the eyes of the public (Saputro & Susanto, 2025).

Work discipline is an important element in creating effective and efficient bureaucratic performance. In the context of government agencies, discipline not only reflects the ethics and responsibilities of civil servants, but is also an indicator of good governance. Takalar Regency as part of the local government system in Indonesia faces various challenges in enforcing employee work discipline. One of the key factors that affects the level of discipline is the communication strategy carried out by the leadership in conveying rules, fostering, and giving sanctions.

Leaders have a strategic role in forming a disciplined work culture through effective communication. Therefore, this study is important to analyze the extent to which leadership communication strategies have an impact on the enforcement of employee work discipline in Takalar Regency local government agencies.

Work discipline is the main foundation in forming a productive organizational culture, especially in the government bureaucratic environment. Discipline not only reflects compliance with regulations and regulations, but also reflects the work ethic, integrity, and professionalism of state civil servants (ASN) in carrying out their duties and responsibilities as public servants. In the context of local government, employee discipline plays a very important role in determining the quality of service to the community, the effectiveness of the implementation of work programs, and the achievement of organizational performance targets.

However, the reality in various regions shows that problems related to ASN work discipline are still a serious challenge. Low attendance rates, delays, lack of initiative, and violations of work ethics are often found. Takalar Regency as one of the 24 regencies/cities in South Sulawesi Province is also not spared from this problem. In several internal reports and the results of personnel performance evaluations, it was found that there are still employees who have not shown an adequate level of discipline, both in terms of attendance, punctuality, and responsibility in completing work.

One of the important factors that can affect the level of employee discipline is the role of the leader in fostering, directing, and supervising his subordinates, especially through the right communication approach. Leadership communication not only functions as a means of conveying information or instructions, but also as a strategic tool in building awareness, fostering motivation, and forming positive work behavior.

The communication strategy used by leaders greatly determines the effectiveness of conveying messages related to regulations, sanctions, and work values that they want to build in the organization. Leaders who are able to convey messages persuasively, openly, and communicatively tend to be more successful in forming a disciplined work culture. On the other hand, an authoritarian, one-way, or even inconsistent communication style can cause confusion, resistance, and even a decrease in work motivation among employees.

By understanding how leadership communication strategies play a role in the enforcement of work discipline, it is hoped that effective, humanistic, and contextual approaches can be found, which can be used as a reference in improving ASN management, not only in Takalar Regency, but also in other areas that face similar challenges. This research is also expected to make a theoretical contribution in the field of organizational communication science and a practical contribution to the development of personnel management systems in the public sector.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The type of research conducted in this study is a type of qualitative research, a problem-solving process that is researched by describing the research object in detail, not data in the form of numbers. This is because the qualitative approach is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people, people, and observed behaviors. In this study, the author obtained an overview of the leader's strategy in improving the quality of employee work at the Gajah Sakti Village Office, Mandu District. Qualitative research is an approach that prioritizes general principles that are the basis for creating a meaning that occurs in people's lives.

### **Research Location and Time**

The research location was carried out in Takalar Regency. The time of this research was carried out after the proposal seminar.

### **Research Data Sources**

Data is a collection of facts that are the results of observations on research variables. Judging from the process and its usefulness, there are 2 types of data, namely primary data and secondary data.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis is a very important part because with this analysis the data will be seen as useful in solving research problems and achieving goals for the research. In this study, the data analysis technique used

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is a qualitative descriptive data analysis technique, which explains or describes the characteristics and situations that actually concern the research object and is analyzed qualitatively. This technique aims to describe the situation or phenomenon that exists in the field systematically by using an easy-to-digest and understandable language consisting of Data Reduction, Data Model and Conclusion Withdrawal or Verification.

## RESULTS

### Implemented Leadership Communication Strategies

The communication strategy of the leadership in enforcing the work discipline of ASN in Takalar Regency can be analyzed through the theoretical framework of organizational communication and leadership. According to W. Charles Redding, an effective communication strategy in an organization depends on creating a supportive communication climate that includes five main dimensions: supportiveness, participative decision-making, trust, openness, and high performance goals. Meanwhile, Bernard M. Bass in transformational leadership theory emphasizes that effective leaders use communication to inspire subordinates through four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Recent research in Indonesia increasingly emphasizes the adaptation of communication strategies to the context of public organizations and digital transformation. Suhendri et al. (2025) in a study on strategic communication management in the digital era concluded that organizational communication strategies in Indonesia are influenced by six main elements: cultural context, digital transformation, stakeholder complexity, strategic role of communication managers, evaluative models, and the need for contextual local model development.

Meanwhile, Hidayat (2026) emphasized that communication is a strategic element in organizational leadership, not only as a means of delivering information, but also as an instrument to shape the direction, meaning, and dynamics of working relationships. Arizona et al. (2024) in a study at the West Sumatra People's Welfare Bureau found that the combination of formal and informal communication plays a crucial role in improving the performance of civil servants, although they still face challenges such as lack of openness and miscommunication.

The regional leaders of Takalar Regency (Regent, Sekda) and the Head of OPD implement a multi-channel communication strategy in an effort to enforce ASN work discipline. This strategy is designed to convey a message of discipline in a clear, consistent, and persuasive manner, in accordance with the mandate of Government Regulation Number 94 of 2021 concerning Civil Servant Discipline and Regent Regulations related to Additional Employee Income (TPP) sanctions.

This study reveals that the communication strategy implemented by regional leaders and heads of OPDs in Takalar Regency is holistic, but still shows the dominance of a top-down vertical approach combined with digital, participatory, as well as exemplary and persuasive elements. These findings were obtained through an analysis of policy documents (PP 94/2021, Takalar Perbup, and the Regent's Circular), and in-depth interviews with two OPDs focused on the Communication and Informatics-Statistics and Encryption Service (Diskominfo-SP) and the Women's Empowerment, Family Planning, and Women's and Child Protection Office (PPKBPPPA Office). Overall, this communication strategy has succeeded in increasing fingerprint attendance compliance, although it still faces inherent challenges due to the dynamic nature of field tasks in the two OPDs. Such communication strategies can be classified into four main forms:

#### Top-Down Vertical Communication

This strategy is the dominant approach used by regional leaders and OPD Heads. Through the mechanism of routine morning apples every Monday, the Regent's sudden inspection, the submission of the Regent's Circular, as well as direct directions in monthly coordination meetings, messages about the importance of work discipline, obedience to PP 94/2021, and the consequences of reducing Employee Income Allowances (TPP) are conveyed firmly and repeatedly. In both focus OPDs, this top-down communication is often carried out through direct instructions from the Head of Service to staff, especially related to the obligation of attendance using the fingerprint system.

Based on the results of in-depth interviews conducted by researchers to strengthen this opinion. Mr. Suhardianto, S.STP (Head of Communication and Informatics-SP) conveyed in a firm and long tone:

"As the Head of the Service, we are very obedient to the direction of the Regent. Every Monday morning, we always carry out routine apples with high discipline, and when the Regent conducts a surprise inspection, he immediately emphasizes the importance of compliance with PP 94/2021 along with sanctions to reduce TPP. My instructions to the staff were always clear and unequivocal: fingerprints were mandatory to use every day, although the task of covering activities or ICT installations often took us to the field all day even into the afternoon. I always remind you that the reduction of the TPP is not an empty threat, but a logical consequence if the discipline of time is violated. This is not only a matter of administrative rules, but our commitment as civil servants to serve the community well and accountably. Initially, there were few complaints from staff who felt overwhelmed by mobile work, but with consistent repetition of directives through apples,

sidak, and coordination meetings, staff began to understand that time discipline was a top priority even though our work was dynamic. Without this strong top-down approach, it is difficult for us to maintain uniformity of behaviour amid a variety of dense field activities."

In line with that, Mr. Drs. Sukwansyah (Head of PPKBPPPA) emphasized in more depth:

"The direction from the Regent and our internal instructions are very clear and consistent. In every coordination meeting, I always start with the emphasis that discipline is the key to quality public service. We convey the sanction for reducing the TPP if it violates PP 94/2021 expressly so that staff understand the risks in real terms. This top-down is not just an order from above, but a joint commitment to build an accountable and professional bureaucracy. In our Office, which does a lot of family planning socialization, assistance for victims of violence, and women's empowerment activities in villages, field tasks are indeed very dense and unpredictable. However, direct direction from the Regent through inspections and this Circular Letter is very helpful in keeping no one from ignoring attendance. I believe this approach creates a strong culture of discipline, although we still have to pay attention to the realities of the work in the field so as not to create protracted resistance."

Analysis of the conclusions of the answers of the two Heads of Agencies: The two Heads of Agencies' answers consistently affirmed the dominance of the top-down strategy as the main foundation of discipline enforcement, with repeated emphasis on PP 94/2021 and TPP sanctions as an effective control tool. However, both also acknowledge the tension between the firm directive and the reality of mobile tasks, suggesting that while this strategy succeeds in creating uniformity of behavior (in line with the Redding directive), it has not fully touched on the dimensions of supportiveness and individualized consideration Bass. Implicitly, top-down vertical communication in Takalar is effective for short-term compliance, but risks generating passive resistance if not balanced with a more participatory approach.

### **Digital Communication through Fingerprint System**

In the framework of Redding, this digital communication has the potential to become a supportive channel if it is socialized as a "reform tool". Bass considers this approach to lack inspirational motivation. Mr. Suhardianto, S.STP (Head of Communication and Informatics-SP) revealed:

"We routinely socialize the fingerprint system through OPD WhatsApp groups and internal meetings every week. Initially, there were many complaints from staff because the task of covering government activities or the installation of ICT infrastructure was often carried out outside the office, even until the afternoon in remote locations. They said it was difficult to be absent on time and felt that the system was less flexible. But after we explained repeatedly that fingerprints are not just a surveillance tool, but an integral part of accountability for bureaucratic reform and proof of commitment to PP 94/2021, their perceptions are gradually changing. The Regent also often emphasizes the importance of this system in surprise inspections, so that staff begin to see it as a tool to improve overall performance and attendance transparency. We continue to monitor and provide additional explanations for those who are still struggling, so that this technology really supports, not burdens."

Mr. Drs. Sukwansyah (Head of PPKBPPPA) added a longer operational perspective:

"Fingerprints are not only an attendance monitoring tool, but real evidence of our commitment to PP 94/2021 and bureaucratic reform. We routinely remind staff who carry out family planning socialization, community assistance, and women's protection activities in various villages that attendance must still be recorded even though the task is very mobile. Initially, there were cases of absenteeism or delays due to long trips and unfavorable weather, but after intensive socialization through WhatsApp groups, internal meetings, and direct explanations, the cases decreased significantly. I always emphasize that this system helps us maintain discipline without interfering with the field output, which is the top priority of our service. Thus, ASN feels more responsible and transparent in carrying out public service duties."

Analysis of the conclusions of the answers of the two Heads of Agencies: The two Heads of Agencies agreed that the socialization of digital fingerprints has succeeded in changing the perception of civil servants from "supervision" to "reform tools", with a significant reduction in cases of disciplinary violations. However, the acknowledgment of the initial complaints due to the field assignment shows that this strategy is still stronger in the aspect of Redding's directive than in supportiveness. From Bass's point of view, the dimension of inspirational motivation is not optimal because the explanation is still rational-administrative, not emotional-inspiring. In conclusion, digital communication is effective in increasing accountability, but it requires strengthening persuasive narratives to be more contextual with the character of mobile work.

### **Two-Way Communication (Participatory)**

Although not as intensive as top-down communication, leaders also open a two-way communication space through monthly OPD meetings, internal discussion forums, and WhatsApp groups. ASN was given the opportunity to convey obstacles, including difficulties in fingerprint attendance due to duties outside the office. In the Communication and Informatics Office-SP, this communication is often used to coordinate activity coverage; Meanwhile, at the PPKBPPPA Office, it is used to discuss the schedule of field socialization.

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However, this participatory dimension is still relatively limited and has not been fully effective in resolving the gap between disciplinary rules and the reality of fieldwork.

Redding called the participatory dimension the core of a healthy communication climate. Bass complements with individualized consideration. Related to this opinion, Mr. Suhardianto, S.STP (Head of Communication and Informatics-SP) said:

"In monthly meetings and interactions in WhatsApp groups, we always open the widest space for staff to convey attendance constraints due to busy field assignments. Many inputs came in, such as proposals for alternative attendance based on output, reporting via applications while in the field, or schedule adjustments for surprise coverage activities. I took note of all the inputs carefully and coordinated with the Regent to find the best solution. This approach makes staff feel heard and valued, so they are more motivated to stay disciplined even though our work is very dynamic. While the final decision remains in line with central rules, this participation has reduced the gap between the rules and the reality of the field."

Mr. Drs. Sukwansyah (Head of PPKBPPPA) also completed with contextual examples:

"We often use internal discussion forums to discuss family planning socialization schedules and community assistance which sometimes clash with standard office hours. ASN is given the full opportunity to convey their difficulties, such as bad weather, difficult location access, or activity schedules that overlap with other activities. From there, we can find solutions together, such as schedule adjustments or alternative reporting mechanisms, without compromising overall accountability. Although this participation is still limited compared to the top-down approach, it is enough to help reduce resistance and increase teamwork. Staff feel that they have a contribution in solving problems, so they are more committed to work discipline."

Analysis of the conclusion of the answer of the two Heads of Agencies: The second answer of the Heads of Agencies illustrates that participatory communication has opened up a space for dialogue that produces concrete inputs (output-based attendance and schedule adjustments), thereby reducing resistance and increasing the sense of ownership. This is in line with the participatory dimensions of Redding and Bass's individualized consideration. However, both candidly acknowledge that participation is still "limited" and has not completely changed the final decision, suggesting that this strategy serves as a top-down complement rather than the main core. In conclusion, this participation is effective in reducing the rule-field gap, but it needs to be expanded to be closer to Redding's ideal organizational communication model.

### **Exemplary and Persuasive Communication**

Regional leaders and Service Heads act as role models by being present on time for apples and sidak. In addition, a persuasive strategy is applied through a combination of reward (appreciation for disciplined ASN) and punishment (reduction of TPP according to Perbup). This persuasive communication aims to build internal awareness of ASN that discipline is not only an obligation, but part of a commitment to public service.

Bass & Riggio (2006) state that idealized influence and inspirational motivation build intrinsic commitment. The dimension of idealized influence is manifested through the physical presence of the leader, while inspirational motivation is reflected in persuasive explanations. Redding added that this approach is supportive. In connection with this opinion, Mr. Suhardianto, S.STP (Head of Communication and Informatics-SP) explained:

"I and the Heads of Fields are always present on time at the morning apple and actively participate directly in field coverage activities with the staff. We not only rule from behind the table, but also engage in real terms. We give open appreciation to staff who are consistently disciplined, both through thank you at meetings and small awards. I have always made it clear persuasively and repeatedly that time discipline is part of a higher public service commitment, not just a rigid administrative rule. This way, the staff sees us as a consistent role model, not just a demanding boss. This exemplary and persuasive approach slowly builds an internal awareness that discipline is a noble value that must be upheld together."

Mr. Drs. Sukwansyah (Head of PPKBPPPA) added with deep personal nuances:

"As a role model, I am directly involved in assisting the community with the team in the field, even though my schedule is busy. The combination of rewards in the form of public appreciation and punishment for reducing TPP was conveyed persuasively and repeatedly on various occasions. I emphasize that the flexibility of field assignments is indeed indispensable given the community-based nature of our work, but it must not come at the expense of accountability and disciplinary principles. I told you about my personal experience of how time discipline helped me complete many programs well. This approach makes ASN understand that discipline is not an additional burden, but a noble value of public service that we must uphold together to provide real benefits for women, families, and children in Takalar Regency."

Analysis of the conclusions of the answers of the two Heads of Agencies: The two Heads of Agencies showed a high awareness of the role of exemplary (idealized influence Bass) and inspirational motivation, with concrete examples of field involvement and persuasive personal stories. Their answer also integrates reward-punishment as a supportive tool for Redding, so that it succeeds in building the intrinsic commitment of ASN. In conclusion, this exemplary and persuasive strategy is the strongest force in Takalar because it is able to bridge the emotional dimension and value of public service, although it still needs to be combined more closely

with participation to achieve a complete leadership transformation.

Overall, the communication strategy of leaders in Takalar Regency is holistic and has created synergy between the four forms of communication but still tends to be dominant in the top-down approach and supervision through fingerprints so that the level of ASN discipline has increased significantly. In the Communication and Informatics Office-SP and the PPKBPPPA Office, the implementation of this strategy faces challenges due to the dynamic nature of the work and based on field output. Recent research such as Suhendri et al. (2025) and Hidayat (2026) shows that the effectiveness of leadership communication strategies in Indonesia's public sector is increasingly dependent on contextual adaptation, technology integration, and participatory approaches. This shows the need to adapt the communication strategy in Takalar to be more contextual — in accordance with Redding's supportive and participatory dimensions and Bass's transformational elements — so as to bridge the demands of time discipline with the need for flexibility in field tasks without sacrificing the principles of accountability and public service.

#### Discipline Restructuring through Digital Communication (Study at Diskominfo-SP)

Mr. Suhardianto, S.STP as the Head of the Communication and Informatics-SP Office, faces a big challenge in harmonizing the rhythm of technical work with administrative discipline. As a leader in OPDs that are regional digital storefronts but have an attendance record that needs to be improved, he implements the Instructional-Transparent Communication strategy.

"Mr. Suhardianto, S.STP realizes that low attendance is often caused by immeasurable work patterns. The communication narrative that he built is to associate the discipline of absenteeism with information accessibility. He emphasized that as a Communication service, physical and digital absences are the main obstacles to regional services. He uses e-attendance data not only as an instrument of sanctions, but also as an open evaluation material in coordination groups to trigger social pressure among fellow employees."

In Diskominfo-SP: The leader's communication strategy is more mechanistic top-down. It is effective to force behavior change in a short period of time through strict monitoring in digital media.

#### Reconstruction of Consciousness through Persuasive-Family Communication (Study at the PPKBPPPA Office)

On the other hand, Mr. Drs. Sukwansyah as the Head of the PPKBPPPA Office, faces the phenomenon of low attendance with a more affective-corrective approach. He views that the low discipline in his office is rooted in the problem of motivation and organizational saturation.

"In an interview, Mr. Drs. Sukwansyah revealed that facing a low attendance rate cannot be done only with the threat of sanctions. He used the communication strategy of 'Sipakatau' (humanizing each other). He conducted private face-to-face communication with employees who had red notes. The narrative used is to touch on the side of responsibility as an apparatus that takes care of the welfare of the community's family, so that they should be role models in the discipline of their own OPD extended family."

At the PPKBPPPA Office: Leadership strategies are more interactive and organic. Effective for rebuilding long-term work mentality and employee loyalty to the organization.

#### Factors Affecting the Effectiveness of Communication Strategies

The effectiveness of the leadership communication strategy in enforcing ASN work discipline in Takalar Regency is influenced by various internal and external factors. In general, it can be distinguished into supporting factors and inhibiting factors, which interact with each other and greatly affect the two OPDs that are the focus of this research.

#### Supporting Factors

The main supporting factor is the high commitment of regional leaders, especially through surprise inspections carried out by the Regent on a regular basis and direct directions from the Regional Secretary. This commitment is reflected in consistent vertical communication through morning apples, circulars, and the enforcement of TPP sanctions in accordance with Perbup No. 14 of 2022. In addition, the use of the fingerprint system as a digital monitoring tool has increased the transparency and accountability of civil servants. The two Heads of Service also play an important role as role models by implementing exemplary and persuasive communication at the OPD level. This is in line with Bass's transformational leadership theory which emphasizes idealized influence and inspirational motivation as key elements in building discipline.

#### Inhibiting Factors

Despite the supporting factors, several significant obstacles still hinder the effectiveness of communication strategies. The incompatibility between the fingerprint system and the character of the field task is the main obstacle. At the Communication and Informatics Office, many coverage activities, network installations, and statistical data collection are carried out outside the office, so the recording of physical attendance is often inaccurate. Similarly, in the PPKBPPPA Office, family planning socialization activities, assistance for victims of violence, and monitoring in villages make it difficult for ASN to fulfill the

requirements for fingerprint attendance without interfering with program output.

In addition, the lack of a participatory dimension in communication causes civil servants in both OPDs to feel that the disciplinary rules are unfair and do not consider the reality of their work. Supporting infrastructure such as weak internet signals in remote areas of Takalar also worsened the situation, especially for the Diskominfo-SP which is responsible for ICT infrastructure. Organizational culture factors that are still permissive towards "flexible working hours" in field OPDs further weaken the effectiveness of leadership communication strategies.

Researchers found that in Takalar Regency, kinship culture is often abused by subordinates to soften the firmness of leaders. However, both Mr. Suhardianto and Mr. Sukwansyah began to shift the narrative. They communicate that professionalism is the highest form of service to the region, and discipline is an absolute non-negotiable requirement despite having a close emotional relationship.

In Takalar Regency, the gap between general discipline policies and the specific needs of field OPDs such as Diskominfo-SP and the PPKBPPPA Office is the root of the main problem. Without proper adjustments, the leader's communication strategy risks only creating pseudo-compliance without increasing the motivation and productivity of civil servants in a sustainable manner.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study as a whole illustrate that the communication strategy of leaders in the Takalar Regency Government has implemented a multi-channel approach that is quite intensive, but still faces significant limitations, especially in the two OPDs that focus on case studies. The low attendance rate in the Communication and Information Service-SP (79%) and the PPKBPPAPA Service (77%) is not solely a reflection of the low discipline of ASN, but rather due to a structural gap between the monitoring instrument (fingerprint system) and the dominant character of field tasks. This strengthens the argument that the leadership communication strategy applied is still dominant top-down and less adaptive to the organizational context.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings are in line with W. Charles Redding who emphasized that the effectiveness of organizational communication is highly dependent on a communication climate that is supportive, participatory, trustworthy, open, and goal-oriented to high performance. In practice in Takalar Regency, the dimensions of supportiveness and participative decision-making are still weak.

Similarly, Bernard M. Bass in transformational leadership theory demands individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. However, the approach of regional leaders that is still general and rigid (sidak, apples, circulars, and TPP sanctions) tends to be transactional rather than transformational, so that it fails to inspire civil servants in the Communication and Informatics-SP Service and the PPPA Office who have a high mobile workload.

The latest research by Suhendri et al. (2025) and Hidayat (2026) further emphasizes that in the era of digital transformation of Indonesia's public sector, leadership communication strategies must be contextual and adaptive to the characteristics of local organizational tasks and cultures. In Takalar Regency, the fingerprint system has indeed increased transparency, but without being balanced with meaningful two-way communication and adjustments to hybrid attendance SOPs (fingerprint + field activity reports), it actually causes resistance and demotivation. This can be seen clearly from the personal expressions of the two Heads of Service who often feel "restless" and "concerned" when they have to balance between enforcing rules and protecting the productivity of field staff.

From a practical perspective, these findings show that the low attendance in the two focus OPDs is not the failure of individual ASN, but the failure of the leader's communication system in accommodating the reality of work. If the communication strategy remains one-way and rigid, then the enforcement of work discipline will only result in pseudo-compliance, not real improvement in performance and public services. On the other hand, if regional leaders and the Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency are able to integrate supportive and participatory dimensions (Redding) as well as transformational elements (Bass), then communication strategies will be more effective in bridging the gap between the demands of formal discipline and the need for flexibility in field tasks.

Overall, this discussion strengthens the conclusion that the communication strategy of leaders in Takalar Regency has been running well at the formal level, but still requires a profound transformation in order to truly enforce the work discipline of ASN in a sustainable manner, especially in OPDs with mobile task characteristics such as Diskominfo-SP and the PPKBPPPA Office.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the communication strategy of leaders in enforcing the work discipline of ASN in the Takalar Regency Regional Government, focusing on the two OPDs that have the lowest attendance rate, namely the Communication, Informatics, Statistics and Cryptography Office (Diskominfo-SP) with an attendance percentage of 79% and the Population Control, Family Planning, Women's Empowerment, and Child Protection Office (PPKBPPPA Office) with an attendance percentage of 77%. Based on attendance data,

the character of OPD duties, the communication strategies implemented, and the results of in-depth interviews with the two Heads of Service, it can be concluded as follows:

First, the communication strategy of leaders in Takalar Regency has been multi-channel, including top-down vertical communication (morning apples, Regent inspections, circulars), digital communication through the fingerprint system, two-way communication through meetings and WhatsApp groups, and exemplary and persuasive communication through reward-punishment (TPP sanctions). However, this approach is still dominant top-down and less adaptive to the nature of field tasks which are very dominant in both focus OPDs.

Second, the nature of the two OPDs which are mobile and intensive in the field (activity coverage, ICT installation, family planning socialization, community assistance, and handling emergency cases) causes a structural gap between disciplinary monitoring instruments (fingerprint system) and the work reality of ASN. This causes a low percentage of physical attendance not necessarily to reflect low productivity, but rather a mismatch between discipline rules and the need for task flexibility.

Third, the results of in-depth interviews with the two Service Heads show personal perspectives that reflect internal conflicts as leaders. They recognize the importance of discipline, but also feel anxious and concerned that the leader's communication strategy is not fully supportive and participatory. The exemplary approach and two-way communication are considered more effective than the top-down approach alone, in line with Bass's transformational leadership theory that emphasizes individualized consideration and inspirational motivation.

Fourth, the supporting factors for the effectiveness of the communication strategy are the commitment of regional leaders and the transparency of the fingerprint system, while the main inhibiting factors are the incompatibility of the attendance system with field tasks, the lack of participatory dimensions, and inadequate infrastructure in remote areas. Recent research such as Suhendri et al. (2025) and Hidayat (2026) further strengthens that communication strategies in Indonesia's public sector require contextual adaptation to not only result in pseudo-compliance, but also sustainable performance improvement.

Overall, the communication strategy of leaders in Takalar Regency has made a positive contribution to increasing the awareness of ASN discipline, but it has not been optimal in accommodating the characteristics of field tasks in the Communication and Informatics-SP Service and the PPKBPPPA Service. Without more adaptive and participatory adjustments, it will be difficult to enforce work discipline to achieve maximum results.

## SUGGESTIONS

As an effort to strengthen the communication strategy of the leadership in enforcing the work discipline of ASN in Takalar Regency, especially in OPDs with high field task characteristics, several more adaptive and contextual improvement steps are needed. This improvement aims to ensure that communication strategies are not only formal, but also able to bridge the gap between discipline policies and the reality of ASN's daily work.

Based on research findings that show that there is still a gap between the leader's communication strategy and the characteristics of field tasks in the two focus OPDs, several more adaptive and contextual improvement efforts are needed.

For the Takalar Regency BKPSDM as a leading sector in the development of ASN human resources, it is recommended to immediately hold adaptive leadership communication training on a regular basis, especially for the Head of technical and field OPDs. This training is expected to improve leaders' ability to build a supportive and open communication climate as recommended by Redding. In addition, BKPSDM needs to conduct quarterly evaluations of the effectiveness of the fingerprint system and formulate more flexible disciplinary policy recommendations, including the preparation of a Hybrid Attendance SOP that integrates fingerprint recording with a digital evidence-based field activity reporting mechanism.

At the OPD level, the Head of the Communication and Informatics Service and the PPPA Office are expected to strengthen two-way internal communication through more substantive weekly meetings, where staff are given space to convey field assignment constraints. The development of a transparent mechanism for recording field activities also needs to be carried out as a complement to the fingerprint system, so that ASN feels more appreciated and motivated in carrying out their duties.

Finally, for further research, it is recommended that a study be conducted with a mixed-method approach that quantitatively measures the impact of leadership communication strategies on the productivity and quality of public services in similar OPDs. Comparisons between regions can also provide a more comprehensive picture of the best practices for enforcing ASN discipline in areas with geographical characteristics and field tasks similar to Takalar Regency.

With the consistent and sustainable implementation of these suggestions, it is hoped that the communication strategy of the leadership in enforcing the work discipline of ASN in Takalar Regency can be more effective, adaptive, and humane. This will not only increase the level of discipline, but also support the

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improvement of organizational performance and the quality of public services for the people of Takalar Regency.

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