

## Determinants of Employee Performance at the Teluk Dalam District Office, Simeulue Regency

Ardi Wansyah Putra<sup>1\*</sup>, Amelia Rahmi<sup>2</sup>, Husnaina Mailsa Safitri<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Muhammadiyah Aceh, Indonesia

\*Corresponding email: [wansyahputraardi@gmail.com](mailto:wansyahputraardi@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the influence of internal communication, work quality, and workplace spirituality on employee performance at the Teluk Dalam District Office, Simeulue Regency. Using a quantitative causal design, data were collected from 32 employees through questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS 26. The results show that internal communication, work quality, and spirituality have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with spirituality emerging as the most dominant factor. The model explains 70.2% of the variation in performance, confirming the crucial role of intrinsic motivation and moral values in public service. Theoretically, the study contributes to human capital and workplace spirituality literature by integrating spiritual dimensions into performance models for public organizations. From a policy perspective, the findings suggest that local governments should enhance communication systems, strengthen employee development, and institutionalize spiritual and ethical programs to improve service quality. However, the limited sample size and cross-sectional design restrict the generalizability of findings. Future research should include broader samples and longitudinal designs to deepen theoretical and practical insights.*

**Keywords :** Internal communication, work quality, spirituality and employee performance.

### A. INTRODUCTION

Employees are human resources who play a strategic role in the success of public organizations, including sub-district offices (Kantor Camat) as the frontline units of government in delivering services to the community. Employee performance reflects the individual's ability to carry out tasks according to established standards, influenced by productivity, effectiveness, efficiency, and contribution to organizational goals (Sedarmayanti, 2018; Hasibuan, 2018).

In the context of public bureaucracy, employees are not merely administrative executors but also represent the quality of public service, which determines public trust and the image of local government institution. The urgency of improving employee performance is evident from national data. According to the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform of the Republic of Indonesia (KemenPAN-RB, 2023), the performance index of public service units at the district and city levels still shows considerable disparities, with approximately 28% of sub-district offices categorized as “adequate” or “low-performing.” This indicates that human resource governance at the grassroots level remains suboptimal, particularly in aspects of internal communication, work quality, and the strengthening of non-material employee values such as spirituality and work integrity.

A preliminary survey conducted at the Teluk Dalam Sub-district Office, Simeulue Regency, revealed several barriers in internal communication that have led to decreased motivation and coordination among employees. These barriers include unclear information delivery, limited formal communication channels, and an overly hierarchical organizational structure. Furthermore, work quality is affected by inadequate technical skills, low motivation due to limited recognition, and weaknesses in time management, which have reduced efficiency and service quality (Khusnah, 2019; Robson, 2020).

The Government Performance Accountability Report (LKjIP) of Simeulue Regency (2023) noted that only 62% of sub-district employees met the “good” performance criteria. The main contributing factors were weak vertical and horizontal communication and low intrinsic motivation related to a lack of work meaning. This finding suggests that performance issues are not only derived from technical or administrative deficiencies but are also influenced by psychological and spiritual aspects that affect employees’ enthusiasm and engagement in their work.

One non-material variable that has gained increasing attention in modern human resource management is workplace spirituality a condition in which individuals experience meaning, purpose, and alignment between personal values and the work environment. In public bureaucracies, this dimension is often overlooked due to the dominance of procedural and regulatory orientations. However, previous studies have shown that workplace spirituality can enhance employee satisfaction, loyalty, and performance by fostering a sense of meaning, integrity, and commitment to work (Nurdaya, 2018; Rego & Pina e Cunha, 2008). Unfortunately, research exploring workplace spirituality in sub-district government institutions remains limited.

A significant research gap emerges from the lack of studies linking internal communication, work quality, and workplace spirituality simultaneously in the context of improving public-sector employee performance particularly at the sub-

district level. Most prior studies have focused on private organizations or religious institutions, while public bureaucracies possess distinct characteristics, such as rigid hierarchies and compliance-oriented structures (Suwandi, 2021; Azis, 2018). Therefore, this research is essential to provide a contextual understanding of how these three factors interact and contribute to employee performance improvement in the local government setting.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the effect of internal communication, work quality, and workplace spirituality on employee performance at the Teluk Dalam Sub-district Office, Simeulue Regency both partially and simultaneously. This research employs a quantitative approach to provide a comprehensive empirical overview of the relationships among variables within public organizations at the sub-district level. Academically, the findings are expected to enrich the literature on public-sector human resource management by presenting empirical evidence of the role of spirituality in enhancing employee performance. Practically, the results may serve as strategic input for sub-district leaders in developing more effective, inclusive, and sustainable employee management policies, thereby strengthening organizational capacity and improving the quality of public service delivery.

## **B. THEORITICAL**

### **Employee Performance**

Employee performance is one of the key factors in achieving organizational goals. Performance is understood as the work outcomes achieved by an individual or group within the organization in accordance with the tasks and responsibilities assigned. Good performance is born from a combination of competence and motivation; both must work in balance to produce optimal output (Sedarmayanti, 2018). In line with this, Hasibuan (2018) emphasizes that performance reflects the work results based on skills, experience, seriousness, and effective use of time.

Employee performance is also often seen as the realization of work achievement founded on knowledge, skills, spirituality, and motivation (Irawan, 2018). This reflects the effectiveness of employees in achieving results consistent with organizational goals (Syahrani, 2018). Furthermore, performance is regarded as the record of outcomes produced from a specific function within a given period, which in aggregate represents the overall job performance (Yulius, 2018).

Factors influencing performance are diverse, ranging from cognitive abilities and education, work experience that shapes attitudes and skills, to aspects such as internal communication, work quality, and workplace spirituality. Effective communication within the organization, good work quality, and ingrained spiritual values can enhance employee motivation and work spirit (Mangkunegara, 2018; Suwandi, 2021). Renny (2020) mentions several indicators used in

measuring performance, namely quality, quantity, timeliness, reliability, and attendance as the main benchmarks.

### **Internal Communication**

Internal communication is the process of delivering messages in an organized manner within a specific context to achieve shared meaning between communicator and communicant. Devito (2020) defines internal communication as the act of sending and receiving messages, which may encounter interference (noise), yet still allows for feedback. Etymologically, the term communication comes from the word *communis* meaning “same,” thus internal communication emphasizes the creation of mutual understanding (Zuhdi, 2020).

Good communication plays an important role in organizational effectiveness. Its success is determined by message clarity, proper media selection, and individual skills in delivering information (Devito, 2020; Wadini, 2020). Furthermore, internal communication is also related to soft skills that support individual success, such as honesty, discipline, hard work, and a visionary attitude (Elfindri, 2020).

The effectiveness of internal communication can be measured through several aspects, including understanding of message content, enjoyment in interaction, the ability to influence attitudes, establishment of good social relations, and tangible actions resulting from the communication process (Rakhmat, 2020). Indicators of internal communication include communication style, method of communication, message content, clarity of information, and commendable behavior in information delivery (Devito, 2020).

### **Work Quality**

Work quality is understood as a management approach that emphasizes the importance of valuing people in the work environment. This quality not only covers the physical condition of the job but also employees' experiences in the organization that satisfy personal needs while supporting organizational goals (Wulandari, 2020; Jati, 2020). With good work quality, employees tend to have high work engagement and exhibit positive behavior toward the organization, including organizational citizenship behavior (Robson, 2020).

Work quality is determined by several factors, including financial compensation, job design, opportunities to participate in the organization, job security, and social interactions among employees. Fair compensation enhances work motivation, proper job design provides role clarity, while opportunities for participation strengthen the sense of belonging to the organization. Job security fosters calmness and confidence at work, while healthy social interaction minimizes conflict and improves efficiency (Jati, 2020).

In measuring work quality, Wulandari (2020) outlines several key indicators: work participation, career development, effective communication, fair

compensation, and pride in work. These indicators emphasize employee involvement and recognition in the organization.

### Spirituality

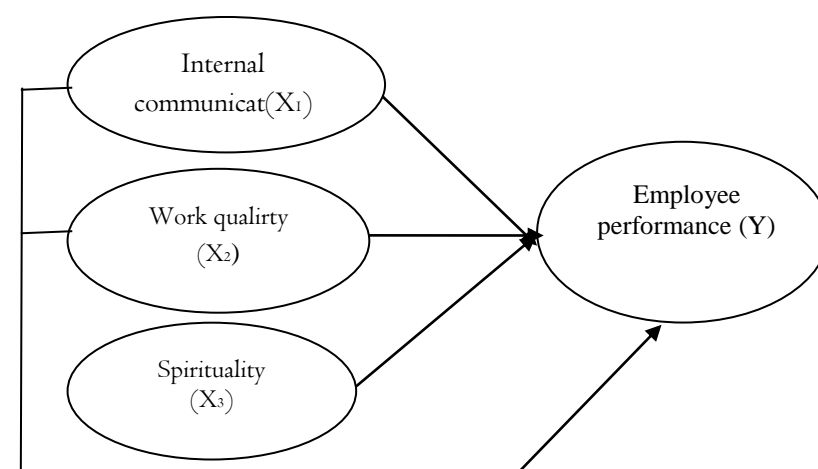
Spirituality is understood as a bond that emphasizes spiritual aspects rather than physical or material aspects. Spirituality relates to human subjective experiences that provide meaning, direction, and purpose in life (Hasan, 2020). In the individual context, spirituality is self-awakening to achieve overall well-being, both physical and psychological, which provides peace and life enlightenment (Tamami, 2020).

As a dimension distinct from religion, spirituality is considered to offer new insights into human motivation and life purpose. Spiritual values are also believed to strengthen work spirit, enhance perseverance, and provide positive encouragement even in the face of challenges (Suwandi, 2021; Aman, 2020). Thus, spirituality is an important factor in shaping positive emotions, courage, and persistence.

Factors influencing spirituality are mainly related to the essence of the human soul and its connection to broader consciousness. Spirituality reflects the unity between the inner aspects of the individual and collective consciousness, which then forms the basis for spiritual belief (Hasan, 2020).

In the organizational context, workplace spirituality can be measured through several indicators. Suwandi (2021) identifies five main aspects: meaningfulness of work, solidarity among employees, alignment of individual and organizational values, the presence of life meaning, and inner peace. These indicators emphasize the role of spirituality in providing deeper meaning to work and creating harmony between individuals and their environment.

**Figure 1.** Research framework



Source: Processed by author (2025)

### Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives and conceptual framework, the research hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

H1: Internal communication affects employee performance at the Teluk Dalam Sub-district Office, Simeulue Regency.

H2: Work quality affects employee performance at the Teluk Dalam Sub-district Office, Simeulue Regency.

H3: Spirituality affects employee performance at the Teluk Dalam Sub-district Office, Simeulue Regency.

H4: Internal communication, work quality, and spirituality collectively affect employee performance at the Teluk Dalam Sub-district Office.

### C. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal design, aiming to analyze the influence of internal communication, work quality, and workplace spirituality on employee performance. The selection of this approach is based on the need to empirically test the relationships among variables using measurable and objective data (Sugiyono, 2018). The study adopts a cross-sectional design, meaning that data were collected at a single point in time rather than longitudinally (Nurrahman, 2016). Although this design limits the ability to infer long-term causal relationships, it is appropriate for assessing the current state and inter-variable associations within an organizational setting.

The research was conducted at the Teluk Dalam Sub-district Office, Simeulue Regency, Aceh, from April 2024 to January 2025. This period was chosen because it coincided with the implementation of new administrative procedures introduced by the Simeulue Regency Government in early 2024, which affected employee coordination and communication systems. Conducting the research during this transition phase allowed for more accurate observations of the interaction between communication, work quality, spirituality, and performance in a real bureaucratic context.

The Teluk Dalam Sub-district Office was purposively selected as the research site because it represents one of the key administrative units in Simeulue Regency, serving as the center of community service coordination and supervision of 10 village administrations. According to the Simeulue Regency Performance Report (LKjIP, 2023), this office experienced fluctuating employee performance levels in the past two years, making it an ideal case for analyzing factors influencing bureaucratic performance in local government settings. Thus, the site selection was based on both relevance and accessibility.

The research population consisted of 32 employees, encompassing all structural and staff positions within the sub-district office. Since the total number of employees was fewer than 100, the entire population was included as the research sample using a saturated sampling technique (Arikunto, 2018). This

method ensures comprehensive representation of all roles and hierarchical levels, thereby enhancing internal validity and minimizing sampling bias.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale (Arikunto, 2018). The independent variables included internal communication (Devito, 2020), work quality (Wulandari, 2020), and workplace spirituality (Suwandi, 2021), while the dependent variable was employee performance (Renny, 2020). Each construct was operationalized through several measurable indicators, such as internal communication (communication style, message content, clarity of information), work quality (participation, career development, communication, compensation, and pride), spirituality (job meaningfulness, solidarity, value alignment, life meaning, and inner peace), and employee performance (quality, quantity, timeliness, reliability, and attendance).

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the research instrument was examined for validity and reliability using correlation analysis and Cronbach's Alpha (Sugiyono, 2018). Classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity, were performed to ensure that the regression model met statistical requirements (Ghozali, 2018). The data consisted of primary data, obtained through questionnaires and direct interviews, and secondary data, drawn from relevant literature, official documents, and institutional reports.

Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression analysis with SPSS version 26. The t-test was applied to assess the partial effects of each independent variable, while the F-test examined their simultaneous influence on employee performance at a 5% significance level (Ghozali, 2018). Although this cross-sectional study cannot capture changes over time, it provides an empirical snapshot of how communication, work quality, and spirituality interact to shape employee performance in the public sector context, particularly within the sub-district bureaucracy.

### **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study was conducted on 32 employees of the Teluk Dalam District Office, Simeulue Regency. The respondents consisted of 62.5% male and 37.5% female, with the majority aged 30-39 years (37.5%) and holding a bachelor's degree (65.6%). Most respondents had worked for more than 6 years, indicating relatively mature work experience.

The instrument validity test using Pearson Product Moment Correlation showed that all questionnaire items were valid because the correlation values were greater than the critical value of 0.374 at the 5% significance level. The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha produced values above 0.80 for all variables, indicating that the instruments were reliable (Sugiyono, 2018). The classical assumption test also met the requirements: the data were normally distributed

(Ghozali, 2018), there was no multicollinearity ( $VIF < 10$ ; tolerance  $> 0.10$ ), and no heteroscedasticity was found based on the scatterplot pattern.

### Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis stated that the factors of internal communication (X1), work quality (X2), and spirituality (X3) influence employee performance at the Teluk Dalam District Office, Simeulue Regency. The results of hypothesis testing are presented in table 2:

**Table I.** Effect of independent variables on employee performance

Variable name	B	Std Error	t-count	t-table	Sig.
Constant	2.084	0.683	3.051	2.048	0.000
Internal Communication (X1)	0.302	0.108	2.806	2.048	0.007
Work Quality (X2)	0.293	0.119	2.462	2.048	0.018
Spirituality (X3)	0.432	0.101	4.315	2.048	0.000

Source: Research findings, 2025 (processed data)

The multiple linear regression analysis produced the following equation:

$$Y = 2.084 + 0.302X1 + 0.293X2 + 0.432X3 + e$$

The partial test results show that internal communication ( $\beta = 0.302$ ;  $p = 0.007$ ), work quality ( $\beta = 0.293$ ;  $p = 0.018$ ), and spirituality ( $\beta = 0.432$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Simultaneously, the three independent variables also had a significant effect ( $F = 25.326$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), with a coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.702. This means that 70.2% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by internal communication, work quality, and spirituality, while the remaining 29.8% is influenced by other factors such as work experience, competence, or motivation.

### Discussion

The results of this study indicate that internal communication, work quality, and spirituality each have a positive and significant influence on employee performance at the Teluk Dalam District Office, Simeulue Regency. This finding supports the basic premise of organizational behavior theory, which posits that effective communication and strong work values are key drivers of performance in public institutions (Robbins & Judge, 2019). The coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.702$ ) further demonstrates that these three variables collectively account for more than two-thirds of performance variation, highlighting their strategic importance for public sector effectiveness.

Internal communication shows a significant positive effect ( $\beta = 0.302$ ;  $p = 0.007$ ), confirming that clear and open communication channels enhance coordination, task clarity, and employee engagement. According to Katz and Kahn's open system theory, organizations depend on information flow to

maintain stability and adaptability. In the context of local government, effective internal communication ensures alignment between district-level policies and operational activities. The Teluk Dalam District Office, which frequently coordinates with subdistrict and village units, relies heavily on timely information sharing; hence, communication becomes a critical enabler of performance outcomes.

Work quality also significantly affects performance ( $\beta = 0.293$ ;  $p = 0.018$ ), implying that professional competence and service quality remain vital in ensuring that public duties are executed efficiently. This aligns with the Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993), which emphasizes that employees with higher skill levels contribute more effectively to institutional performance. Within the local government context, efforts to improve work quality through training, performance evaluation, and digital literacy programs are consistent with the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (KemenPAN-RB) policies that aim to strengthen bureaucratic competence and accountability.

Interestingly, spirituality emerged as the most dominant variable ( $\beta = 0.432$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that employees with stronger spiritual values tend to perform better. This finding resonates with the concept of workplace spirituality, which views work as an expression of meaning and service rather than mere obligation (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). In the cultural and religious context of Simeulue Regency where Islamic values are deeply embedded in daily life spirituality fosters integrity, sincerity, and a sense of public responsibility. Employees who perceive their work as a form of worship (“amal”) are likely to be more disciplined and committed to serving the community.

The dominance of spirituality also reflects the relevance of Islamic work ethics in enhancing performance within local government settings. As highlighted by Ali and Al-Owaihan (2008), Islamic work ethics promote values such as honesty, hard work, and social justice, which directly translate into better public service outcomes. In this study, spirituality not only acts as a personal motivator but also aligns with the regional government’s vision to promote moral governance and servant leadership. Hence, the findings suggest that institutionalizing spiritual development through regular religious sessions, ethical training, or collective prayers can strengthen moral accountability among civil servants.

These results have strong policy implications for local governance. The Teluk Dalam District Office and similar institutions can improve employee performance by designing integrated strategies that combine effective communication management, professional skill development, and value-based leadership. Strengthening spirituality should not be viewed merely as religious expression but as part of organizational culture that nurtures empathy, trust, and

social responsibility. Such alignment is consistent with Indonesia's bureaucratic reform agenda that emphasizes "clean, serving, and moral governance."

The study provides empirical support for the argument that both technical and non-technical factors contribute to public sector performance. While communication and work quality represent structural and functional dimensions, spirituality reflects the moral and emotional foundation of performance. This integration between skill, structure, and spirit can create a more holistic model for improving employee productivity and service quality in local government organizations. Future studies could extend this model by examining mediating factors such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, or leadership style to deepen the understanding of performance dynamics in regional institutions.

## E. CONCLUSION

This study found that internal communication, work quality, and spirituality significantly influence employee performance at the Teluk Dalam District Office, Simeulue Regency, with spirituality emerging as the most dominant factor. The findings highlight that public employee effectiveness is shaped not only by structural and technical aspects but also by intrinsic moral and spiritual motivation. Academically, this research contributes to the development of public sector performance studies by integrating workplace spirituality into traditional models of organizational behavior. It extends previous research by proving that spirituality often examined in private or nonprofit sectors also plays a vital role in shaping performance within local government contexts. These results strengthen the theoretical perspective of human capital and workplace spirituality, emphasizing that moral awareness and purpose-driven work are essential for sustainable performance.

Theoretically and practically, the findings suggest that performance models in the public sector should adopt a more holistic approach by combining competence-based and moral-spiritual dimensions. Policymakers should embed ethical governance, value-based leadership, and workplace ethics programs into performance management systems to strengthen accountability and integrity. Although the study is limited by its small sample size (32 respondents), a single institutional focus, and a cross-sectional design, it provides a solid foundation for future research using broader samples and longitudinal or mixed-method approaches. In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of aligning structural efficiency, human competence, and moral integrity to build an ethical, productive, and citizen-centered bureaucracy that advances both institutional effectiveness and community welfare.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Marlizar, SE, MM, Dean of the Faculty of Economics, Muhammadiyah University of Aceh. In addition, we

extend our appreciation to the entire team who successfully carried out and completed this research. Please include your acknowledgments, particularly the funding sources that made this study possible.

## REFERENCES

- Aman, S. (2020). *The Spirituality Trend of the Third Millennium*. Tangerang: Ruhama.
- Arikunto, S. (2018). *Research Procedures: A Practical Approach*. Jakarta: PT Rineka Cipta.
- Azis, A. (2018). The influence of spirituality and organizational culture on employee performance at Ayam Goreng Nelongso Restaurant. *Journal of Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Muhammadiyah University of Malang*, 1(1), 1–13.
- DeVito, J. (2020). *Human Communication*. South Tangerang: Karisma Publishing Group.
- Elfindri. (2020). *Soft Skills for Educators*. Padang: Baduose Media.
- Ghozali, I. (2018). *Multivariate Analysis Application with IBM SPSS 23*. Semarang: Diponegoro University Publishing Agency.
- Hasan, A. W. (2020). *The Prophet's SQ: Application of Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) Strategies and Models of the Prophet Muhammad in the Present Day*. Yogyakarta: IRCiSod.
- Hasibuan, M. S. P. (2018). *Human Resource Management* (Revised Edition). Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Irawan, B. (2018). The effect of work ability and work motivation on employee performance at the Department of Transportation, Communication and Informatics, East Kutai Regency. *Journal of Management, Mulawarman University Samarinda*.
- Jati, A. N. (2020). Work quality and organizational commitment: Their relationship with organizational citizenship behavior. *Kiat Bisnis Journal*, 5(2), 89–97.
- Khusnah, H. (2019). The effect of workplace spirituality, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction on employee performance. *Scientific Journal of Accounting*, XVII(3), 17–23.
- Mangkunegara, A. A. P. (2018). *Human Resource Performance Evaluation*. Bandung: Rafika Aditama.
- Nurdaya, A. D. (2018). The influence of religiosity and workplace spirituality on employee performance (Study at Goro Assalam Hypermarket in Surakarta). *Journal of Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta*, 1(1), 1–9.

- Rakhmat, J. (2020). *Communication Psychology*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Robson, E. (2020). The effect of work quality, job satisfaction, and employee commitment on employee performance and citizenship behavior as an intervening variable (Study at PT Perindustrian dan Perdagangan Crumb Rubber). *JOM Fekon*, 2(1), 13–28.
- Sedarmayanti. (2018). *Human Resources and Work Productivity*. Bandung: CV Mandar Maju.
- Sugiyono. (2018). *Quantitative, Qualitative, and R&D Research Methods*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Suwandi. (2021). The influence of internal communication, work quality, and workplace spirituality on employee performance through work motivation (Case study at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, Pekalongan Regency). *Journal of Management, Universitas Pancasakti Tegal*, 1(1), 1–11.
- Syahrani. (2018). Performance analysis of civil servants at the Department of Mining and Energy, Nunukan Regency. *Journal of Administrative Reform*, 2(3), 1624–1636.
- Tamami. (2020). *Sufi Psychology*. Bandung: Pustaka Setia.
- Wadini, N. (2020). The effect of compensation and communication on employee morale at Puri Dajuma Resort Hotel. *E-Journal of Economics Education Department*, 10(2), 19–31.
- Wulandari, A. S. (2020). The influence of work quality, self-determination, and job performance on employee work engagement. *Journal of Resource Economics and Management*, 19(1), 1–9.
- Yulius, S. (2018). The influence of ability and motivation on employee performance in the Secretariat Division at the Department of Public Works, Bengkulu Province. *Journal of Management, Bengkulu University*.
- Zuhdi, U. F. (2020). *Business Communication: An Easy-to-Understand Approach*. Yogyakarta: Wahana Totalita Publisher.