



COMPETENCE, COMMUNICATION, AND ASN PERFORMANCE: A STUDY AT THE GENERAL ELECTIONS COMMISSION OF TANA TORAJA REGENCY

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Abstract

This study examines how competence and communication style are associated with the performance of Civil Servants (ASN) working at the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Tana Toraja Regency. A quantitative approach employing an explanatory design was adopted. The study involved a population of 28 civil servants, with 27 respondents providing complete and analyzable responses. Data were obtained through a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression in SPSS. The analytical procedures comprised validity and reliability assessments, classical assumption tests, partial significance testing (t-test), simultaneous significance testing (F-test), and the coefficient of determination. The findings revealed that competence was not statistically significant in predicting ASN performance ($B = 0.164$; $t = 1.213$; $p = 0.237$). In contrast, communication style demonstrated a positive and statistically significant association with performance ($B = 0.380$; $t = 2.764$; $p = 0.011$). When considered jointly, competence and communication style produced a statistically significant regression model ($F = 34.333$; $p < 0.001$). The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.741$) indicates that the two predictors collectively account for 74.1% of the variance in ASN performance, while the remaining 25.9% is attributable to factors not represented in the model. Overall, communication style emerged as the more consistent factor associated with performance in the organizational setting examined. The findings highlight the importance of fostering communication that is clear, transparent, constructive, and conducive to effective coordination as part of organizational performance improvement efforts.

Keywords: Communication style, ASN performance, General Elections Commission.

INTRODUCTION

The performance of Civil Servants (ASN) represents a critical component of effective public administration and the delivery of quality public services (Fattah, 2025; Nathaniel & Marsal, 2020). Within public-sector institutions, employee performance is not limited to the attainment of administrative objectives but also contributes to an organization's capacity to deliver services that are accountable and responsive to societal needs. At the same time, civil servants face increasingly demanding responsibilities as government functions become more complex, service delivery requires greater speed and accuracy, and expectations regarding organizational transparency and accountability continue to grow (Maidelis et al., 2022).

Within the framework of human resource management, employee performance is influenced by both the capabilities individuals bring to their duties and their ability to establish productive interactions in the workplace (M et al., 2022). Competence encompasses several dimensions, including knowledge, skills, personal characteristics, self-concept, and motivation, all of which contribute to the effective execution of work responsibilities (Elfira et al., 2026). Communication, meanwhile, facilitates the exchange and understanding of information, instructions, coordination, and organizational objectives among employees (Sadia et al., 2016). Consequently, competence and communication represent important dimensions for understanding differences in employee performance across organizational settings (Olugbo et al., 2023; Sadia et al., 2016). The relevance of competence and communication becomes more pronounced as public institutions encounter increasingly demanding and complex work environments. Civil servants are expected to comply with established procedures while also demonstrating adaptability, effective coordination, responsiveness to organizational requirements, and the ability to maintain constructive workplace relationships (Mawardi et al., 2024). These capabilities are particularly relevant in election administration, where

organizational activities involve internal coordination, engagement with diverse stakeholders, public information dissemination, and the implementation of responsibilities in accordance with applicable regulations and established procedures.

The General Elections Commission (KPU), as an institution entrusted with the administration of elections, operates within a setting that places considerable emphasis on accuracy, coordination, communication, and accountability (Fitrasari & Rodiyah, 2024). Accordingly, ASN performance within the KPU encompasses more than the completion of routine administrative duties; it also involves the capacity to respond appropriately to organizational requirements and carry out responsibilities in accordance with prevailing regulations (Hosniawati et al., 2025; Muhazir et al., 2023). For this reason, competence and communication warrant examination as factors potentially associated with ASN performance within the organization.

Previous studies have investigated the connections among competence, communication, and employee performance across various organizational settings (Bayu Framesthi & Veranita, 2026; Fattah, 2025; Wijaya & Aminudin, 2017). Research examining leaders' communication competence has reported a positive and significant relationship with employee performance, particularly through effective internal conflict management (Parengring et al., 2025). Other studies have found that competence, internal communication, and leadership style are positively and significantly associated with employee performance, both individually and when considered collectively (Indah Kristiani Telaumbanua et al., 2025). These findings suggest that competence and communication may represent meaningful factors in understanding employee performance across different organizational environments.

Nevertheless, empirical evidence concerning the competence–performance relationship remains mixed. Some studies have reported that competence does not demonstrate a significant partial relationship with performance, despite showing a significant effect when combined with other explanatory variables (Alfina Nur Hidayah & Subhan Djaya, 2025). Other research has similarly indicated that competence does not directly influence performance, whereas factors such as work discipline may exhibit a stronger association (Mubarok et al., 2025). Such differences raise questions about whether competence independently contributes to improved performance or whether its contribution is contingent upon other organizational conditions.

The variation in previous findings suggests that conclusions regarding competence and performance should not be generalized across organizational contexts without considering contextual characteristics. While some studies have identified significant relationships, others have found no direct effect of competence on performance. Furthermore, empirical studies that examine competence and communication style together as predictors of ASN performance within election administration institutions remain limited. Differences in organizational structures, work characteristics, coordination requirements, and workplace environments may contribute to variations in the relationships observed among these variables.

This situation points to a research gap concerning both empirical setting and the combination of variables examined. Although competence and communication have been studied in government institutions and private-sector organizations, empirical evidence concerning their relationship with ASN performance within the General Elections Commission, particularly the Tana Toraja Regency KPU, remains limited. Examining this specific setting is therefore relevant for determining whether relationships identified in other organizational environments are also evident within the KPU, where work responsibilities involve distinctive operational characteristics and substantial coordination requirements. In response to this research gap, the present study examines the relationship between competence, communication style, and ASN performance. More specifically, the study investigates: (1) whether competence is associated with ASN performance; (2) whether communication style is associated with ASN performance; and (3) whether competence and communication style jointly contribute to ASN performance at the General Elections Commission of Tana Toraja Regency.

The study adopts a quantitative approach using an explanatory research design. Data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to civil servants working at the Tana Toraja Regency KPU. Multiple linear regression was employed to examine the individual and joint contributions of the independent variables to ASN performance. The analysis was complemented by validity, reliability, and classical assumption tests to assess the quality of the measurement instruments and the suitability of the regression model. The study is expected to contribute empirical evidence to research in human resource management and organizational behavior, particularly concerning factors associated with ASN performance in public-sector institutions. From a practical perspective, the findings may provide useful input for the Tana Toraja Regency KPU in formulating performance improvement strategies, particularly by strengthening organizational communication practices while continuing to support the development of civil servants' professional capabilities.

METHOD

A quantitative explanatory design was adopted to investigate the relationship between competence, communication style, and the performance of Civil Servants (ASN) serving at the General Elections Commission (KPU) in Tana Toraja Regency. The study examined two predictor variables, namely competence (X1) and communication style (X2), and one outcome variable, namely ASN performance (Y). The target population comprised 28 ASN employees within the institution. Questionnaire responses were obtained from 27 individuals, and the resulting dataset was used for statistical analysis.

Primary information was gathered directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Competence was operationalized through five dimensions: knowledge, skills, self-concept, characteristics, and motivation, represented by 25 questionnaire items. Communication style was assessed through five dimensions covering understanding, enjoyment, interpersonal relationships, behavioral impact, and behavior or action, also represented by 25 items. ASN performance was measured using 15 items covering productivity, service quality, responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability.

The measurement instruments were evaluated for validity and internal consistency before the main statistical analysis was conducted. Item validity was assessed by comparing the obtained correlation coefficients with the critical correlation value. Based on 27 observations, the degrees of freedom were 25 ($N-2$), producing a critical r -value of approximately 0.381 at the 5% significance level. All questionnaire items recorded correlation coefficients exceeding this threshold and were therefore retained as valid measures. Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient above 0.70 considered satisfactory. The resulting Alpha coefficients were 0.956 for competence, 0.961 for communication style, and 0.961 for performance, confirming the reliability of the three measurement scales.

The data were subsequently processed using multiple linear regression through SPSS. Prior to estimating the regression model, diagnostic procedures were undertaken to assess normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. Residual normality was evaluated to determine whether the error distribution approximated normality. Multicollinearity was assessed using tolerance statistics and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), whereas the heteroscedasticity assessment examined whether the residual variance remained consistent across the predicted values. The regression specification was expressed as $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$, where Y denotes ASN performance, X_1 denotes competence, X_2 denotes communication style, a represents the intercept, b_1 and b_2 represent the respective regression coefficients, and e denotes the error component. Partial relationships were assessed using the t -test, while the F -test was applied to evaluate the joint contribution of the two predictors. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was subsequently examined to determine the proportion of variation in ASN performance accounted for by competence and communication style in the estimated model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis was based on responses from 27 civil servants working at the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Tana Toraja Regency. Of these respondents, 19 were male (70.37%) and 8 were female (29.63%). The age distribution indicated that respondents aged 36–45 years constituted the largest group, with 15 individuals (55.56%). This was followed by 7 respondents (25.93%) aged 26–35 years and 5 respondents (18.52%) aged above 45 years. In terms of educational attainment, 16 respondents (59.26%) had completed a bachelor's degree (S1), 8 (29.63%) were graduates of senior high school or vocational high school (SMA/SMK), 1 (3.70%) held a diploma (D3), and 2 (7.41%) had obtained a master's degree (S2). With respect to tenure, 8 respondents (29.63%) had worked for 1–5 years, while an equal number had 6–10 years of service. Another 5 respondents (18.52%) reported 11–15 years of service, whereas 6 respondents (22.22%) had worked for more than 15 years.

Descriptive statistics indicated that respondents generally reported a high level of competence. The mean score for knowledge was 4.10, followed by skills at 4.24, self-concept at 4.04, characteristics at 4.04, and motivation at 4.15. Among the five indicators, skills received the highest mean rating (4.24), whereas self-concept and characteristics recorded the lowest mean values, both at 4.04.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test Results of the Research Instruments

Variable	Number of Items	Range of r -calculated	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Competence	25	0,534–0,799	0,956	Valid & Reliable
Communication Style	25	0,452–0,820	0,961	Valid & Reliable
Performance	15	0,654–0,894	0,961	Valid & Reliable

Regarding communication style, the mean scores across the measured indicators were 4.14 for understanding, 4.24 for enjoyment, 4.16 for interpersonal relationships, 4.06 for behavioral impact, and 4.19 for behavior or action. Among these dimensions, enjoyment recorded the highest average score at 4.24, whereas behavioral impact had the lowest at 4.06. At the individual-item level, the highest mean score, 4.33, was obtained for the statement reflecting respondents' willingness to communicate with their superiors and colleagues.

For ASN performance, the mean scores were 4.09 for productivity, 4.26 for service quality, 4.10 for responsiveness, 4.15 for responsibility, and 4.22 for accountability. Service quality represented the highest-rated performance dimension, with a mean of 4.26, while productivity received the lowest mean score of 4.09.

The item validity assessment demonstrated that the 25 competence items produced correlation coefficients ranging from 0.534 to 0.799. For the 25 communication style items, the coefficients ranged from 0.452 to 0.820, while the 15 performance items yielded values between 0.654 and 0.894. Since all coefficients exceeded the critical value of 0.381, the questionnaire items met the established validity criterion. Reliability analysis further produced Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.956 for competence, 0.961 for communication style, and 0.961 for performance. These results demonstrate strong internal consistency across the three measurement instruments and support their use in the subsequent analysis

Table 2. Results of the Partial Regression Analysis

Variable	B	t	Sig.	Description
Constant	6.12	0.89	0.37	-
Competence (X1)	0.16	1.21	0.23	Not Significant
Communication Style (X2)	0.38	2.76	0.01	Positive and Significant

The diagnostic analysis indicated that the residuals were approximately normally distributed, as the observations in the Normal P-P Plot were positioned close to the diagonal reference line. The multicollinearity assessment yielded a tolerance value of 0.219 and a VIF of 4.568 for both competence and communication style. These results remained within the specified threshold and did not indicate a critical multicollinearity issue in the regression model. Regarding heteroscedasticity, the scatterplot displayed residual points dispersed both above and below the zero value on the Y-axis, with no discernible systematic pattern. Nevertheless, a definitive conclusion regarding heteroscedasticity should be based on the results of the relevant statistical test rather than the scatterplot alone.

$$Y = 6,123 + 0,164X_1 + 0,380X_2 + e$$

The regression coefficient for competence of 0.164 indicates a positive relationship with performance; however, the partial test results show that this effect is not statistically significant ($t = 1.213$; $p = 0.237$). Therefore, competence does not have a significant partial effect on ASN performance. In contrast, communication style has a regression coefficient of 0.380 and has a positive and significant effect on ASN performance ($t = 2.764$; $p = 0.011$).

The simultaneous test results show an F-value of 34.333 with a significance value of <0.001 . This indicates that competence and communication style jointly have a significant effect on ASN performance. Furthermore, the R-value of 0.861 and the R^2 value of 0.741 indicate that 74.1% of the variation in ASN performance in the model can be jointly explained by competence and communication style, while the remaining 25.9% is associated with other factors not included in the research model.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that competence and communication style jointly contribute significantly to the performance of Civil Servants (ASN) at the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Tana Toraja Regency. The simultaneous regression test produced an F-value of 34.333 with a significance level of <0.001 , while the coefficient of determination (R^2) reached 0.741. Statistically, this means that the combination of competence and communication style is significantly associated with variations in ASN performance represented in the research model. The finding suggests that performance in a public-sector organization should not be viewed exclusively as a reflection of individual capability. It may also be influenced by the organizational processes through which employees exchange information, coordinate responsibilities, interpret instructions, and respond to workplace demands. This perspective is consistent with the human resource management view that employee performance

emerges through the interaction between individual attributes and the organizational environment in which work is carried out (Fattah, 2025; Hosniawati et al., 2025). From the competency perspective, effective performance requires more than the possession of technical knowledge. Competence encompasses knowledge, skills, self-concept, individual characteristics, and motivation that enable employees to carry out their responsibilities (Kalogiannidis, 2020). However, the availability of these capabilities does not necessarily result in higher observable performance when employees operate within organizational environments that are highly regulated or dependent on coordination with other parties. Competence may provide the foundation for performing a task, whereas organizational systems, leadership, communication, workload, and work procedures may determine how effectively that capability is translated into actual performance. Accordingly, the significant simultaneous result provides support for examining individual capacity together with organizational interaction rather than treating employee performance as an exclusively individual outcome.

The partial analysis, however, revealed that competence did not have a statistically significant relationship with ASN performance. The regression coefficient was positive ($B = 0.164$), but the t -value of 1.213 and significance level of 0.237 indicate that the coefficient did not reach the 5% significance criterion. Therefore, although the direction of the relationship was positive, the evidence obtained from this study was insufficient to establish a significant partial association between competence and ASN performance. This finding is important because respondents generally reported relatively high levels of competence. The mean scores for the competence indicators ranged from 4.04 to 4.24, with skills obtaining the highest mean score (4.24), followed by motivation (4.15), while self-concept and characteristics each recorded a mean of 4.04.

The relatively high competence scores may provide one possible explanation for the non-significant statistical result. When respondents have relatively similar and favorable perceptions of their competence, the amount of variation available to explain differences in performance becomes limited. In statistical terms, restricted variation in a predictor can make it more difficult for the regression model to detect a meaningful relationship with the dependent variable. Thus, the non-significant result should not be interpreted as indicating that competence is unimportant. Rather, it suggests that competence did not independently explain differences in performance among the respondents included in this study.

The result is also compatible with previous studies reporting that competence does not consistently demonstrate a direct relationship with employee performance (Mawardi et al., 2024; R. & Yasin, 2021). These differences across studies suggest that the contribution of competence may depend on organizational circumstances. In organizations where work is strongly governed by regulations, standard operating procedures, formal responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms, employees may have relatively similar opportunities to perform their duties regardless of small differences in perceived competence. The KPU provides a relevant context for this interpretation because election administration involves formal regulatory frameworks, procedural requirements, administrative responsibilities, and coordination among organizational actors. Nevertheless, this explanation represents an interpretation of the observed pattern rather than a causal mechanism established by the present study.

Other organizational factors may also contribute to the relationship between competence and performance. Leadership, work discipline, workload, organizational culture, work environment, motivation, reward systems, and organizational commitment, for example, were not incorporated into the current regression model. These variables may influence whether individual competencies can be effectively translated into work outcomes (Indah Kristiani Telaumbanua et al., 2025; Nurammida et al., 2024). Consequently, the absence of a significant partial relationship between competence and performance should be understood within the boundaries of the variables and sample examined in this research. In contrast, communication style demonstrated a positive and statistically significant relationship with ASN performance. The regression coefficient was 0.380, with a t -value of 2.764 and a significance level of 0.011. This indicates that higher communication style scores were associated with higher levels of ASN performance after the effect of competence was statistically controlled. Among the independent variables examined, communication style therefore demonstrated the more consistent partial relationship with performance.

The descriptive findings provide further context for this result. All communication style indicators received relatively high mean scores, ranging from 4.06 to 4.24. The enjoyment indicator recorded the highest mean score of 4.24, followed by behavior/actions at 4.19, good relationships at 4.16, understanding at 4.14, and impact on behavior at 4.06. At the item level, the statement concerning respondents' willingness or comfort to communicate with superiors and colleagues obtained the highest mean score of 4.33. This pattern suggests that interpersonal interaction and employees' willingness to communicate constitute important aspects of the communication environment perceived by respondents.

The significant relationship between communication style and performance can be understood through the perspective of organizational communication. Communication is not simply a mechanism for transmitting messages; it also facilitates coordination, clarification, feedback, information sharing, relationship building, and problem-solving (Sadia et al., 2016). In organizational settings, employees need to understand instructions, communicate work progress, clarify responsibilities, exchange relevant information, and coordinate their activities with supervisors and colleagues. Effective communication can therefore provide an important mechanism through which individual capabilities are transformed into coordinated work behavior.

This mechanism is particularly relevant to the KPU work environment. Election administration requires employees to work according to established procedures while simultaneously coordinating activities with colleagues, supervisors, external stakeholders, and the broader community. Clear communication can facilitate the accurate transmission of information, reduce ambiguity concerning responsibilities, and support timely coordination. Conversely, ineffective communication may increase the possibility of misunderstanding, delay information exchange, and create difficulties in coordinating interdependent tasks. The present finding that communication style is significantly associated with performance is therefore theoretically and contextually plausible.

The result is consistent with previous research reporting a significant relationship between communication and employee performance (Indah Kristiani Telaumbanua et al., 2025). Effective communication may contribute to performance through several organizational mechanisms. Clear messages help employees understand what is expected of them, feedback enables them to identify areas requiring improvement, and interpersonal communication facilitates cooperation among individuals performing interdependent tasks. Communication may also contribute to a supportive work climate by encouraging employees to interact openly with supervisors and colleagues. These mechanisms provide a possible theoretical explanation for why communication style demonstrated a stronger partial relationship with performance than competence in this study.

The significant simultaneous model should also be interpreted alongside the partial findings. The fact that competence was not statistically significant individually while the model containing competence and communication style was significant does not constitute a contradiction. The F-test evaluates whether the set of predictors, taken together, provides a statistically significant explanation of variation in the dependent variable, whereas the t-test evaluates the contribution of an individual predictor after accounting for the other variables in the model. In the present study, communication style appears to provide the strongest individual statistical contribution, while the inclusion of competence alongside communication style forms a statistically significant overall model.

The R^2 value of 0.741 indicates that competence and communication style jointly account for 74.1% of the variance in ASN performance represented in the regression model, leaving 25.9% associated with factors outside the model. The relatively high explanatory value suggests that the two variables are relevant for understanding the observed performance scores. However, R^2 should not be interpreted as evidence that 74.1% of changes in performance are causally produced by competence and communication style. The study involved only 27 respondents from one organization, used perceptual measures, and collected the data at a single point in time. Therefore, the statistical relationships should be interpreted within the specific organizational context investigated rather than generalized as universal causal relationships.

The findings have practical implications for performance management at the Tana Toraja Regency KPU. Performance improvement efforts should not focus exclusively on strengthening individual competencies but should also consider the communication environment in which employees perform their duties. Communication practices that emphasize clarity, openness, mutual respect, accessibility, timely information exchange, and effective coordination may help create conditions that support better work performance. Particular attention can be given to communication between supervisors and employees because accessible communication may facilitate task clarification, feedback, and coordination.

At the same time, the non-significant partial relationship between competence and performance should not be interpreted as a reason to disregard competency development. Knowledge, skills, motivation, self-concept, and other competency dimensions remain important foundations of professional work. The implication of the present finding is instead that competency development may be more effective when accompanied by organizational conditions that enable employees to apply their capabilities. Training and professional development, for instance, can be supported by clear procedures, appropriate workloads, constructive leadership, effective feedback, and communication channels that allow employees to use their competencies in actual work situations. From a theoretical standpoint, the findings reinforce the importance of viewing employee performance as a multidimensional organizational outcome. Individual competence represents the capacity to perform work, while communication provides an important social and organizational mechanism through which that capacity can be coordinated and

utilized. The absence of a significant partial relationship between competence and performance does not necessarily invalidate competency-based perspectives; rather, it suggests that the expression of competence in measurable performance may be contingent upon contextual factors within the organization. This interpretation is particularly relevant for public institutions in which employees operate within formal rules, structured responsibilities, and high levels of interdependence.

The study also leaves several opportunities for further investigation. The 25.9% of performance variation not explained by the present model indicates that other variables may be relevant. Future research could incorporate leadership, work discipline, workload, organizational culture, work environment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, motivation, or reward systems to develop a more comprehensive performance model. Larger samples involving several KPU institutions from different regions would also be valuable for assessing whether the relationships identified in Tana Toraja are consistent across different organizational and regional contexts. In addition, future studies could employ longitudinal designs or combine self-reported measures with supervisor assessments and objective performance indicators to reduce reliance on a single source of perceptual data.

The study indicates that communication style has the clearest partial statistical relationship with ASN performance in the organizational setting examined, whereas competence does not demonstrate a significant independent relationship. Nevertheless, competence and communication style together form a statistically significant explanatory model. The findings consequently suggest that improving ASN performance requires a balanced approach: developing employees' professional capabilities while simultaneously creating communication practices and organizational conditions that enable those capabilities to be effectively translated into coordinated work performance.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that competence and communication style jointly have a statistically significant relationship with the performance of Civil Servants (ASN) at the General Elections Commission (KPU) of Tana Toraja Regency. The simultaneous analysis produced an F-value of 34.333 with a significance level of <0.001 . Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.741 indicates that the two independent variables collectively account for 74.1% of the variation in ASN performance represented in the research model.

The partial analysis produced a different result for competence. With a t-value of 1.213 and a significance level of 0.237, competence did not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship with ASN performance. Although respondents generally reported high levels of competence, the observed variation in competence was not sufficient to establish a significant partial relationship with performance in the present model. Thus, competence alone cannot adequately explain differences in ASN performance within the context examined.

Communication style, on the other hand, emerged as a significant predictor of ASN performance. The analysis yielded a regression coefficient of 0.380, a t-value of 2.764, and a significance level of 0.011, indicating a positive and statistically significant relationship. Communication practices that facilitate mutual understanding, comfortable interaction, positive workplace relationships, and constructive communication behavior appear to be relevant to performance. Accordingly, efforts to improve ASN performance at the Tana Toraja Regency KPU may benefit from strengthening communication that is clear, open, constructive, and supportive of effective coordination.

Future studies should consider broader samples and additional explanatory variables to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of ASN performance. Potential variables include leadership, work discipline, workload, organizational culture, work environment, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and other contextual factors. Research involving multiple KPU institutions and larger respondent groups would also help determine whether the patterns identified in this study remain consistent across different organizational settings.

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