

## **Factors influencing miscommunication among employees: a case study at PT X**

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### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor utama yang menyebabkan terjadinya miskomunikasi antar rekan kerja di PT X. Peneliti menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, dokumentasi, serta wawancara mendalam dengan karyawan di PT X. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui penyebab miskomunikasi, dampak miskomunikasi, serta pola komunikasi yang berkaitan dengan terjadinya miskomunikasi antar rekan kerja di perusahaan. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, ditemukan bahwa penyebab utama miskomunikasi adalah perbedaan gaya komunikasi, kurangnya kejelasan dalam penyampaian pesan, serta terbatasnya media komunikasi yang digunakan. Dampak dari miskomunikasi ini yaitu penurunan produktivitas kerja, kesalahpahaman, hingga munculnya konflik antarpribadi. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi beberapa hambatan komunikasi seperti ambiguitas bahasa dan pola komunikasi yang pasif. Rekomendasi yang disarankan meliputi peningkatan sistem komunikasi internal, pelatihan komunikasi bagi karyawan, dan mendorong adanya umpan balik terbuka antarpegawai.*

*Kata kunci: indonesia; instansi x; karyawan; komunikasi kerja*

### **Abstract**

This research aims to analyze the main factors that cause miscommunication between coworkers at PT X. The researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach and case study, namely through observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews with employees at PT X. The purpose of this research is to find out the causes of miscommunication, the impact of miscommunication, and communication patterns related to the occurrence of miscommunication between coworkers in the company. Based on the results of the research, it was found that the main causes of miscommunication are differences in communication styles, lack of clarity in delivering messages, and limited communication media used. The

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**Citation in APA style:** Luthfia, A., Wolor, C.W., & Utari, E.D. (2025). Factors influencing miscommunication among employees: a case study at PT X. *Jurnal Informasi dan Komunikasi Administrasi Perkantoran*, 9(3), 287-292. <https://dx.doi.org/10.20961/jikap.v9i3.102488>

impact of this miscommunication is a decrease in work productivity, misunderstanding, and the emergence of interpersonal conflict. This study also identified several communication barriers such as language ambiguity and passive communication patterns. Recommendations include improving the internal communication system, communication training for employees, and encouraging open feedback between employees.

Keywords : agency x; employee; indonesia; work communication

Received May 19, 2025; Revised May 27, 2025; Accepted May 31, 2025;  
Published Online May 02, 2025

<https://dx.doi.org/10.20961/jikap.v9i3.102488>

## Introduction

Communication plays a vital role in maintaining the continuity of interpersonal interactions, particularly within workplace environments. Just as health is a crucial aspect of human life, the sustainability of organizational activities is supported by effective communication. Without healthy and smooth communication, coordination, teamwork, and decision-making processes can be disrupted. In today's professional landscape, organizational success is not solely determined by technical competencies but also by individuals' ability to convey information clearly, accurately, and effectively. In an increasingly complex work environment, good communication among colleagues is key to building strong and productive teamwork.

In practice, however, not all communication proceeds as intended. Miscommunication frequently occurs, potentially leading to various negative consequences for workplace dynamics. Miscommunication represents one of the most common challenges in the workplace, often resulting in misunderstandings between employees, internal conflicts, and decreased work effectiveness. It arises from multiple factors, including differences in perception, inconsistent language use, and inappropriate utilization of digital communication tools. Therefore, it is essential for organizations to understand the root causes and impacts of miscommunication in order to develop more effective communication strategies.

This study was conducted at PT X, a state-owned enterprise (SOE) based in Jakarta that operates in fisheries and construction consultancy. Based on observations and interviews conducted, while communication within this company generally functions adequately, several obstacles indicate instances of miscommunication occurring in real work situations. One such example is when work instructions from superiors are not conveyed through clear and structured communication channels, leaving subordinates feeling excluded or confused about task assignments. These issues include discrepancies in understanding between message senders and receivers, limitations in the use of communication media such as email and WhatsApp work groups, and psychological barriers such as hesitation or fear to clarify unclear information. These findings suggest that although miscommunication does not occur continuously, it still disrupts coordination and operational efficiency within the company.

Several previous studies have explored similar issues. Research by Kanda and Yunita (2024) identified that miscommunication among employees stems from a lack of openness, differing perceptions, and psychological communication disturbances. Meanwhile, Anggraini et al. (2024) demonstrated that interpersonal miscommunication can be triggered by unstable emotions and ineffective use of communication media. However, few studies have examined miscommunication from two perspectives simultaneously namely, from both the message receiver (employee) and the message sender (supervisor or colleague) particularly within the context of consulting firms. Unlike earlier studies conducted by Kanda and Yunita (2024) and Anggraini et al. (2024), this research offers a novel approach by focusing on internal communication dynamics within the working environment of PT X. It not only explores the primary causes of miscommunication but also

investigates actual communication patterns among employees based on direct observation and in-depth interviews with four participants.

Given this background, this study focuses on analyzing the factors contributing to miscommunication among colleagues at PT X. The research aims to identify the main causes of miscommunication, analyze its impact on the work environment, and explore the communication patterns and barriers experienced by employees in daily interactions. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study is expected to provide strategic recommendations for improving internal communication effectiveness within the company. The urgency of this research lies in the importance of establishing effective workplace communication in modern organizations, especially within SOEs characterized by complex bureaucratic structures. Recurrent miscommunications, even if minor, can lead to reduced productivity, employee conflict, and delays in achieving team objectives. Thus, a deep understanding of the forms, causes, and patterns of miscommunication is essential for formulating appropriate communication strategies that enhance team performance and foster a harmonious, productive work environment.

## Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of miscommunication among colleagues at PT X. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, in which participants were selected based on specific criteria deemed relevant to the research focus. The criteria included being a permanent employee with at least one year of work experience at PT X, having direct or indirect experience in encountering miscommunication in the workplace, willingness to provide information openly, and representing different divisions or departments to reflect the diversity of communication contexts within the company. This selection aimed to ensure the representativeness and relevance of the collected data. As presented in Table 1, several rules of thumb have been formulated by experts to determine sample size in qualitative research:

**Table 1**  
*Rules of Thumb for Qualitative Sample Size*

Basic Study Type	Rule of Thumb
Ethography	30-50 interviews
Case Study	At least one, but can be more
Phenomenology	Six participants
Grounded Theory	30-50 interviews
Focus Group	Seven to ten per group per each strata of interest

Source: (Njie & Asimiran, 2014)

The data analysis process was conducted thematically through several systematic stages. First, the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. Second, the researcher thoroughly read through the transcripts to understand the communication context that occurred. Next, the data were coded based on initial emerging themes and then grouped into sub-themes and main themes. Following this, the identified themes were analyzed in-depth by connecting the field findings with relevant communication theories. Finally, the researcher compiled a narrative report to describe the factors causing miscommunication, its impacts, as well as the communication patterns present in the workplace.

To enhance the validity and credibility of the data, this study applied technique triangulation and time triangulation (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020). Technique triangulation was carried out by cross-checking data from interviews, direct observations, and documentation such as internal company communication transcripts. Meanwhile, time triangulation involved collecting data at different moments and situations, such as before and after meetings or specific work activities, to assess the consistency of information provided by participants. These steps were taken to ensure that the research findings were highly valid and capable of portraying the actual reality more objectively.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Research Findings**

The researcher described field findings to address the research questions, which include the factors causing miscommunication, its resulting impacts, as well as the communication patterns and barriers among colleagues at PT X. Based on interviews and observations conducted with four employees from the HR and IT divisions, it was found that miscommunication frequently occurs due to several key factors. These include the absence of a structured communication channel, unclear delivery of instructions, differences in perception between message senders and receivers, and the habitual use of informal language or abbreviations that are not universally understood. Additionally, the use of communication media such as WhatsApp or email was considered ineffective, as messages were sometimes unread or misinterpreted.

The impact of miscommunication is clearly felt within the workplace environment. Among the consequences identified are task execution errors, delays in completing assignments, the emergence of minor conflicts between teams, and a decline in work motivation due to feelings of being undervalued or excluded from the communication process. This also affects coordination effectiveness across departments, particularly in situations requiring rapid and accurate collaboration.

Regarding communication patterns, most employees at PT X rely heavily on direct verbal communication, especially for daily coordination. Although this method is perceived as fast, without documentation or written records, information is easily lost or misinterpreted. Communication barriers faced by employees also include reluctance to ask clarifying questions when receiving unclear information, assumptions that everyone shares the same understanding, and limited practice in providing feedback on received messages. Some participants also acknowledged that overly passive communication styles hinder productive and open work interactions.

### **Discussion**

Workplace miscommunication is a critical factor that can hinder team effectiveness, reduce productivity, and create a disharmonious work environment. Miscommunication refers to the inability or failure to communicate effectively between two or more parties, where the message sent by the communicator is not properly understood by the recipient, or the received message deviates from the original intent of the sender (Dewi et al., 2024). Based on interviews and observations conducted at PT X, it was found that miscommunication occurs due to several factors, including unclear communication channels, the use of informal language or abbreviations not understood by all parties, and insufficient clarity in conveying work instructions. Additionally, differences in perception among employees also serve as a primary trigger for miscommunication.

### **Main Causes of Miscommunication Among Colleagues**

The miscommunication occurring at PT X is largely driven by internal factors related to employee behavior and communication practices. Interview results indicate that information is often incomplete or inadequately detailed, leading to divergent interpretations of tasks or job instructions. This aligns with findings from Bahrain et al. (2023), who argue that ineffective communication—such as ambiguous or unclear messaging—can lead to misunderstandings that affect coordination and task execution within organizational settings.

Moreover, variations in individual communication styles also contribute significantly to miscommunication. Within team contexts, some employees tend to communicate directly and straightforwardly, while others prefer a more cautious and reserved approach when expressing opinions. These mismatches in communication styles influence how messages are interpreted, especially when there is no mutual adjustment or shared understanding of the communication patterns being used. This finding supports the study by Fiset et al. (2024), which identifies

differences in personal backgrounds, including communication style, as barriers to establishing effective workplace communication.

### **Impact of Miscommunication on the Work Environment**

Miscommunication in the workplace can have significant consequences, affecting both individual performance and the overall work atmosphere. Interview results revealed that miscommunication frequently leads to misunderstandings, delays in task completion, and even interpersonal conflicts among colleagues. One informant noted that miscommunication caused delays in finishing assignments because the received information did not align with initial expectations or instructions, resulting in rework and inefficiencies in time management.

In addition, miscommunication negatively affects interpersonal relationships among employees. Several informants reported that miscommunication often causes hurt feelings, misunderstanding, and a decline in work motivation. Such situations illustrate how miscommunication can generate tension, ultimately contributing to an unproductive and stressful work environment. When communication fails to function as a tool for building connections and facilitating collaboration, it instead becomes a source of conflict and stress. Research by Ray et al. (2025) reinforces this point, emphasizing that ineffective communication can spark interpersonal conflict, disrupt teamwork, and lower workplace productivity. Their findings show that miscommunication among team members often results in unclear task distribution, errors in work execution, and project delays, which collectively hinder overall team productivity and cohesion.

### **Communication Patterns and Barriers Faced by Employees**

The communication patterns established among colleagues are heavily influenced by organizational culture, work structure, and individual personalities. Interview data reveal that most employees at PT X rely on direct verbal communication, particularly for urgent coordination tasks. However, in practice, communication does not always proceed smoothly. Barriers include the use of ambiguous language, perceptual differences, and incorrect assumptions.

Unclear communication leads to disorganized work processes, as poorly conveyed information disrupts task execution and decision-making. Aishatu et al. (2025) highlight the importance of clear and concise communication in task delegation, which directly impacts employee understanding, engagement, and motivation. They found that ineffective communication during task assignment can result in confusion, reduced motivation, and errors in task implementation, further hampering productivity and team collaboration.

Additionally, barriers emerge due to differences in personal background and communication styles. For example, some employees are accustomed to direct and blunt communication, while others prefer a softer and more indirect approach. These differences sometimes lead to varied interpretations of the intended message. Another barrier involves the inappropriate use of communication media—for instance, relying on text messages for important matters that should be discussed face-to-face. Employees noted that the use of internal chat applications sometimes causes misunderstandings, as not all messages are fully read or correctly interpreted within their proper context.

## **Conclusion**

The research findings indicate that miscommunication among colleagues at PT X is caused by several factors, including unclear communication channels, differences in individual perception, the use of informal language not always understood by all parties, and mismatches in the use of digital communication media. The consequences of this miscommunication include task execution errors, work duplication, decreased team work effectiveness, and potential conflicts among employees that disrupt workplace harmony. These findings underscore the importance of regular evaluation of internal communication patterns, the reinforcement of an open communication culture, and the provision of interpersonal communication training for employees as strategies to minimize the risk of miscommunication. Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of organizational communication by offering insights into the dynamics of workplace miscommunication within a state-owned enterprise. Practically, it provides actionable recommendations for PT X to enhance

coordination and teamwork through more adaptive communication approaches. A limitation of this research lies in the small number of participants and its focus on a single case study, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other organizations with different structures and organizational cultures. Nonetheless, this study is expected to serve as a reference for companies aiming to identify and address communication issues in the workplace, as well as a foundation for future research exploring effective communication strategies within organizational contexts.

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