

DETERMINANTS OF EARLY-CAREER EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN DENPASAR'S HOSPITALITY SECTOR: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how competence, delegation, and knowledge sharing are associated with early-career employee performance in star-rated hotels in Denpasar City, Bali, and whether workplace communication mediates these relationships. Drawing on the performance framework of Gibson et al., the study positions workplace communication as a process through which individual and organizational resources are translated into coordinated work behavior. An explanatory quantitative, cross-sectional design was applied to 125 permanent or contract employees aged 18–35 years with six months to five years of organizational tenure. Data were collected using a 25-item five-point Likert questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS. The measurement model met the specified reliability, convergent-validity, and discriminant-validity criteria. The structural model explained 43.1% of the variance in workplace communication and 49.5% of the variance in performance. All direct and indirect hypotheses were supported. Delegation had the strongest effect on workplace communication ($\beta = 0.376$), knowledge sharing had the strongest direct effect on performance ($\beta = 0.328$), and workplace communication positively affected performance ($\beta = 0.243$). Workplace communication provided complementary partial mediation for the effects of competence, delegation, and knowledge sharing on performance. The findings emphasize structured delegation, interactive knowledge sharing, competence development, and routine two-way feedback as mutually reinforcing practices for early-career employees in hospitality.

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INTRODUCTION

Hospitality operations depend on employees being able to coordinate quickly while maintaining service accuracy, consistency, and guest orientation. In Denpasar City, this challenge occurs in a service environment with fluctuating demand: the room-occupancy rate of star-rated hotels increased from 53.05% in March 2024 to 58.65% in April 2024, while the provincial tourism directory recorded 80 active star-rated hotels in Denpasar in 2024 (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Bali, 2024; Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Bali, 2025). When workloads change rapidly, performance problems may arise not only from limited individual capability but also from unclear authority, delayed information, weak feedback, and difficulty converting coworkers' experience into action.

These coordination demands are particularly relevant for early-career employees. This study operationally defines early-career employees as workers aged 18–35 years with six months to five years of organizational tenure. Compared with a general employee sample, workers at this stage are still consolidating role clarity, confidence, organization-specific routines, social acceptance, and practical judgment. Organizational socialization research shows that information seeking, newcomer learning, role clarity, and social support are important for adjustment and subsequent work outcomes (Ashforth

et al., 2007; Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). The early-career stage therefore warrants separate examination because the same job resources may have different performance implications when employees are still learning how work is actually coordinated.

The theoretical foundation is the performance model of Gibson et al. (2003), which explains individual performance through the interaction of individual, psychological, and organizational variables. Within this framework, competence represents an individual resource, delegation reflects the organization of authority and responsibility, and knowledge sharing represents an organizational learning process. Workplace communication is positioned as a linking process that enables employees to interpret expectations, clarify delegated tasks, obtain feedback, and contextualize shared knowledge. This positioning is consistent with research showing that transparent and symmetrical internal communication can strengthen understanding, relationships, and employee engagement (Jiang & Men, 2017; Kang & Sung, 2017; Men, 2014; Men & Stacks, 2014; Mishra et al., 2014; Verčič & Špoljarić, 2020).

Competence should support both communication and performance. Employees who understand their jobs and possess stronger technical and problem-solving capability have a richer task vocabulary, can diagnose problems more accurately, and are better able to formulate precise questions, interpret instructions, and provide useful feedback. Indonesian evidence generally links competence with stronger performance, although the magnitude of the direct relationship varies across settings (Afandi & Veritia, 2023; Irsa et al., 2024; Nugroho et al., 2024; Widiyarsari & Padmantyo, 2023). Evidence that communication can operate alongside competence in shaping work outcomes further suggests that capability is more useful when it can be expressed through clear information exchange (Butarbutar & Indrawan, 2024; Nugroho et al., 2024).

Delegation is also central to early-career development because it gives employees opportunities to exercise responsibility and judgment. Effective delegation, however, is not merely the transfer of tasks; it requires clear outcomes, authority boundaries, escalation points, accountability, and feedback. Developmental challenge is more beneficial when feedback is available (DeRue & Wellman, 2009), and empowering leadership research in hotel properties shows that authority and knowledge processes can contribute to collective effectiveness (Srivastava et al., 2006). Indonesian studies similarly report positive relationships between delegation and performance or decision effectiveness (Hilmi et al., 2023; Jusdienar et al., 2024; Tanjung et al., 2023). For less-experienced employees, communication is therefore expected to determine whether delegated responsibility becomes developmental autonomy or role ambiguity.

Knowledge sharing is especially important in hospitality because many service problems depend on tacit, experience-based knowledge that is not fully captured in formal manuals. Knowledge-sharing research emphasizes the role of organizational context, interpersonal interaction, and motivation in determining whether knowledge is exchanged and used (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Wang & Noe, 2010). In hospitality, empowering leadership has been linked to knowledge sharing and performance (Srivastava et al., 2006), while strategic internal communication can facilitate employees' willingness to share knowledge (Lee et al., 2021). Evidence from Bali also indicates that knowledge sharing contributes to hotel employee performance (Antara et al., 2023), although other Indonesian studies suggest that its effect may operate through intervening mechanisms (Abdussamad & Susilowati, 2024; Febriyanti et al., 2024).

Workplace communication is therefore treated as a mediating mechanism rather than only an independent predictor. Clear two-way communication allows early-career employees to confirm task meaning, seek clarification, interpret feedback, and convert shared knowledge into situation-specific action. Internal-communication studies show that communication quality, transparency, channel appropriateness, and employee voice are associated with stronger engagement and organizational relationships (Jiang & Men, 2017; Kang & Sung, 2017; Men et al., 2020; Verčič & Špoljarić, 2020). Indonesian evidence likewise links communication with employee performance (Karim, 2022; Sulistyani & Sari, 2024; Tanjung et al., 2023).

Four gaps motivate the model. First, competence, delegation, and knowledge sharing are often examined as separate predictors, which provides limited explanation of the process through which these resources become coordinated work behavior. Second, workplace communication has rarely been tested simultaneously as a mediator of the competence–performance, delegation–performance, and knowledge sharing–performance relationships. Third, many studies rely on general employee samples even though early-career employees face distinctive needs for role clarification, feedback, socialization, and access to practical knowledge. Fourth, integrated evidence from star-rated hotels in Denpasar remains limited. The study therefore contributes by applying Gibson et al.'s performance framework to a career-stage-specific sample, testing three communication-mediated mechanisms within one model, and translating the resulting effect pattern into operational practices for hospitality supervisors.

Table 1. Empirical Context of Star-Rated Hotels in Denpasar City

Empirical indicator	Period/condition	Value
Number of star-rated hotels in Denpasar City	December 2024	80 establishments
Number of star-rated hotels in Bali Province	December 2024	1,297 establishments
Star-rated hotel room occupancy rate (TPK), Denpasar City	March 2024	53.05%
Star-rated hotel room occupancy rate (TPK), Denpasar City	April 2024	58.65% (+5.60 points)

Source: Dinas Pariwisata Provinsi Bali (2025) and BPS Provinsi Bali (2024), processed by the researchers.

Building on this framework, competence is expected to improve workplace communication because stronger task knowledge helps employees encode and decode work information accurately, identify what needs clarification, and communicate problems using a shared technical frame. Competence should also improve performance by supporting accurate and timely task execution. Accordingly, H1 proposes that competence positively affects workplace communication, while H4 proposes that competence positively affects early-career employee performance.

Delegation is defined as the transfer of tasks, authority, and responsibility within explicit boundaries. Because effective delegation requires employees to understand expected outcomes, decision limits, reporting requirements, and accountability, it should intensify purposeful supervisor–employee communication. Delegation should also improve performance by providing developmental responsibility and opportunities to exercise judgment. Therefore, H2 proposes that delegation positively affects workplace communication, and H5 proposes that delegation positively affects performance.

Knowledge sharing refers to the exchange and use of work-related information, experience, problem-solving approaches, and procedural knowledge. For early-career employees, asking questions, explaining experience, discussing alternatives, and confirming understanding are inherently communicative processes. Access to coworkers' tacit knowledge should also reduce trial-and-error and improve context-appropriate decisions. Accordingly, H3 proposes that knowledge sharing positively affects workplace communication, and H6 proposes that knowledge sharing positively affects performance.

Workplace communication is defined as the exchange of work-related information between supervisors and employees and among coworkers in a manner that creates shared understanding. In hospitality operations, communication helps synchronize service delivery, clarify priorities, prevent misinterpretation, and accelerate corrective action. H7 therefore proposes a positive effect of workplace communication on performance. Because competence, delegation, and knowledge sharing are expected to shape communication, while communication subsequently shapes performance, H8–H10 propose that workplace communication mediates the effects of competence, delegation, and knowledge sharing on early-career employee performance.

Figure 1 summarizes the seven direct hypotheses and three mediation hypotheses. The three antecedents are modeled as direct predictors of both workplace communication and performance, while workplace communication is modeled as a direct predictor of performance and as the intervening mechanism in H8–H10.

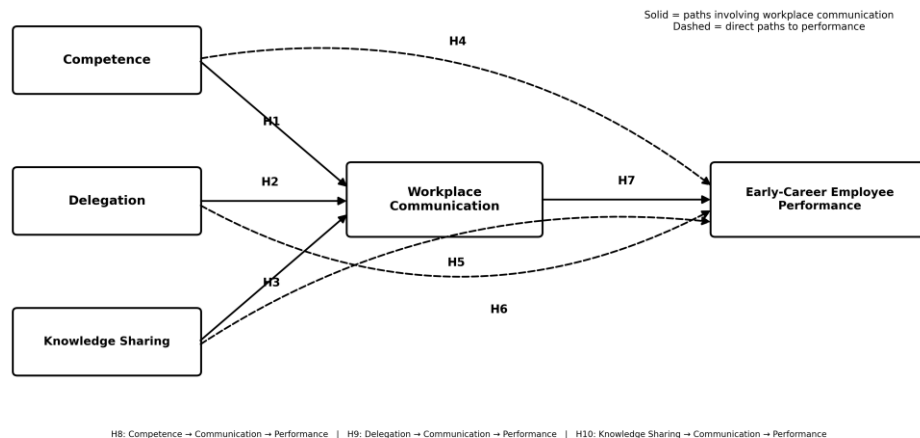


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework and Ten Research Hypotheses

The solid paths in Figure 1 represent relationships involving workplace communication (H1–H3 and H7), while the dashed paths represent the direct effects on performance (H4–H6). H8–H10 test the three corresponding indirect effects through workplace communication.

METHOD

This study uses an explanatory quantitative design with a cross-sectional approach. The unit of analysis is the individual employee working at a star-rated hotel within the administrative area of Denpasar City. Purposive sampling was used because the study required respondents who met the operational definition of the early-career stage and had direct experience with delegation, knowledge sharing, and workplace communication. The organizational sampling frame refers to 80 active star-rated hotels listed in the Bali tourism directory. Data collection was conducted in 2026 through the direct and online distribution of structured questionnaires to respondents who met the sampling criteria.

Respondents were eligible if they were permanent or contract employees working directly for a hotel, aged 18–35 years, had organizational tenure of at least six months and no more than five years, held staff or junior-supervisor positions, had a direct supervisor, and routinely experienced delegation, workplace communication, and knowledge sharing. Interns, trainees, and work-placement participants were excluded. The final dataset contained 125 valid respondents. This sample size was retained for the specified PLS-SEM model and is interpreted in conjunction with the model's effect sizes and predictive-explanatory statistics rather than as evidence of population representativeness.

Five reflective constructs were measured: competence, delegation, knowledge sharing, workplace communication, and early-career employee performance. Each construct was represented by five indicators measured on a five-point Likert scale. Competence covered job understanding, technical skills, problem solving, professional attitude, and learning orientation. Delegation covered task clarity, authority clarity, responsibility clarity, task–ability fit, and supervisor support. Knowledge sharing assessed information openness, discussion, experience exchange, knowledge access, and utilization. Workplace communication assessed information clarity, openness, supervisor feedback, communication intensity, and opportunities for task clarification. Performance assessed quality, timeliness, target achievement, procedural compliance, and independent responsibility.

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS. The reflective measurement model was evaluated using outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (ρ_C), and the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio (HTMT). Convergent validity was evaluated using outer loadings of approximately 0.70 or higher and AVE of at least 0.50; internal consistency was evaluated using reliability values of approximately 0.70 or higher; and discriminant validity was assessed using HTMT values below 0.90 (Hair et al., 2014, 2019; Henseler et al., 2015).

The structural model was evaluated using inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). VIF values below 5 were used to identify problematic collinearity, SRMR below 0.08 was treated as an approximate-fit benchmark, and f^2 values of about 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 were interpreted as small, medium, and large effects, respectively (Hair et al., 2019). Hypotheses were

tested by bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples; support required a coefficient in the hypothesized direction, $t > 1.96$, and $p < 0.05$. Mediation was evaluated using specific indirect effects. When both the direct and corresponding indirect effects were significant and had the same direction, mediation was interpreted as complementary partial mediation.

Table 2. Operationalization of Research Constructs

Construct	Operational focus	Indicator
Competence (X1)	Capacity to perform work effectively	Job understanding; technical skills; problem solving; professional attitude; learning orientation
Delegation (X2)	Transfer of tasks, authority, and responsibility	Task clarity; authority clarity; responsibility clarity; fit; supervisor support
Knowledge sharing (X3)	Exchange and utilization of work knowledge	Information openness; discussion; experience exchange; knowledge access; utilization
Workplace communication (Z)	Exchange of work information and feedback	Information clarity; openness; feedback; intensity; clarification
Performance (Y)	Achievement of work standards and targets	Quality; timeliness; target achievement; procedural compliance; responsibility

Source: Research data processed, 2026.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis included 125 early-career employees from star-rated hotels in Denpasar City. The construct means were 3.880 for competence, 3.822 for delegation, 3.872 for knowledge sharing, 3.878 for workplace communication, and 3.907 for performance. Standard deviations ranged from 0.826 to 0.887, as reported in Table 3.

All 25 indicators recorded outer loadings above 0.70, ranging from 0.745 to 0.872. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.858 to 0.889, composite reliability (ρ_C) from 0.897 to 0.919, and AVE from 0.635 to 0.693. HTMT values ranged from 0.122 to 0.650. Relative to the criteria specified in the Method section, these values satisfy the study's reliability, convergent-validity, and discriminant-validity benchmarks.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics, Reliability, and Convergent Validity

Construct	Mean	SD	Cronbach α	ρ_C	AVE
Competence	3.880	0.826	0.859	0.897	0.636
Delegation	3.822	0.846	0.858	0.897	0.635
Knowledge sharing	3.872	0.879	0.862	0.901	0.645
Workplace communication	3.878	0.887	0.889	0.919	0.693
Performance	3.907	0.853	0.869	0.905	0.657

Source: Research data processed, 2026.

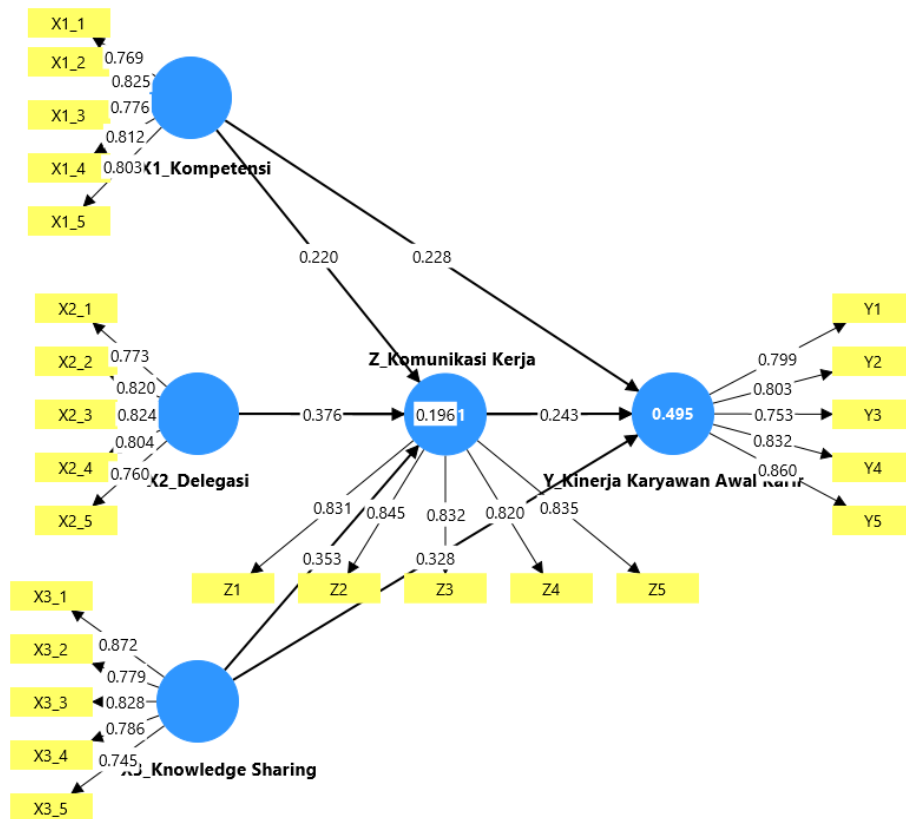


Figure 2. PLS Algorithm Results for the Measurement and Structural Models

Inner VIF values ranged from 1.058 to 1.757. Workplace communication had $R^2 = 0.431$ (adjusted $R^2 = 0.417$), while performance had $R^2 = 0.495$ (adjusted $R^2 = 0.479$). The SRMR was 0.070. Path-specific f^2 values ranged from 0.058 to 0.235: competence $\rightarrow$ communication = 0.079; delegation $\rightarrow$ communication = 0.235; knowledge sharing $\rightarrow$ communication = 0.196; competence $\rightarrow$ performance = 0.089; delegation $\rightarrow$ performance = 0.058; knowledge sharing $\rightarrow$ performance = 0.159; and communication $\rightarrow$ performance = 0.067. Under the predefined benchmarks, the delegation $\rightarrow$ communication and knowledge sharing $\rightarrow$ communication paths have medium effect sizes, knowledge sharing $\rightarrow$ performance is also medium, and the remaining effects are small.

Table 4. Structural Model Evaluation

Criterion/path	Value	Benchmark-based interpretation
R^2 Workplace communication	0.431	43.1% variance explained
R^2 Performance	0.495	49.5% variance explained
SRMR	0.070	Below 0.08 benchmark
f^2 Competence $\rightarrow$ Communication	0.079	Small effect
f^2 Delegation $\rightarrow$ Communication	0.235	Medium effect
f^2 Knowledge sharing $\rightarrow$ Communication	0.196	Medium effect
f^2 Competence $\rightarrow$ Performance	0.089	Small effect
f^2 Delegation $\rightarrow$ Performance	0.058	Small effect
f^2 Knowledge sharing $\rightarrow$ Performance	0.159	Medium effect
f^2 Communication $\rightarrow$ Performance	0.067	Small effect

Source: Research data processed, 2026.

Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples produced statistically significant coefficients for all seven direct paths. Competence → workplace communication was $\beta = 0.220$ ($t = 3.272$; $p = 0.001$); delegation → workplace communication was $\beta = 0.376$ ($t = 5.478$; $p < 0.001$); and knowledge sharing → workplace communication was $\beta = 0.353$ ($t = 4.912$; $p < 0.001$). For performance, competence had $\beta = 0.228$ ($t = 3.559$; $p < 0.001$), delegation $\beta = 0.196$ ($t = 2.232$; $p = 0.026$), knowledge sharing $\beta = 0.328$ ($t = 4.560$; $p < 0.001$), and workplace communication $\beta = 0.243$ ($t = 2.717$; $p = 0.007$). Accordingly, H1–H7 were supported.

Table 5. Direct Hypothesis Testing (H1–H7)

H	Structural path	β	t	p	Decision
H1	Competence → Workplace communication	0.220	3.272	0.001	Supported
H2	Delegation → Workplace communication	0.376	5.478	<0.001	Supported
H3	Knowledge sharing → Workplace communication	0.353	4.912	<0.001	Supported
H4	Competence → Performance	0.228	3.559	<0.001	Supported
H5	Delegation → Performance	0.196	2.232	0.026	Supported
H6	Knowledge sharing → Performance	0.328	4.560	<0.001	Supported
H7	Workplace communication → Performance	0.243	2.717	0.007	Supported

Source: Research data processed, 2026.

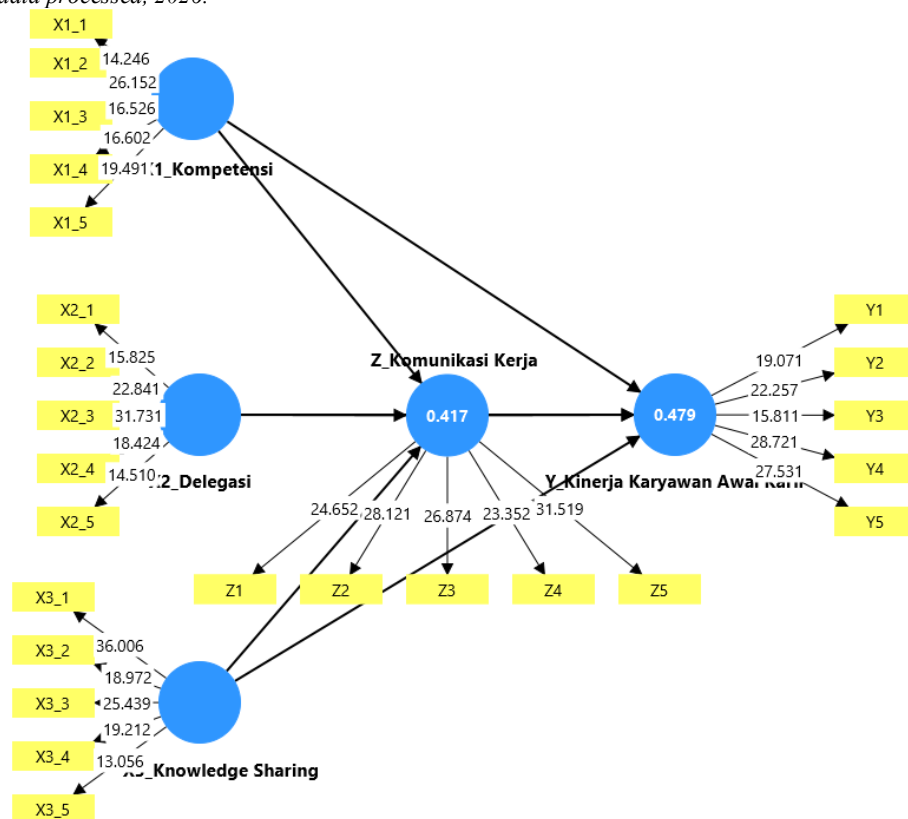


Figure 3. Structural Model Bootstrapping Results

The specific indirect effects were also statistically significant: competence → workplace communication → performance was $\beta = 0.053$ ($t = 2.139$; $p = 0.033$), delegation → workplace communication → performance was $\beta = 0.091$ ($t = 2.290$; $p = 0.022$), and knowledge sharing → workplace communication → performance was $\beta = 0.086$ ($t = 2.410$; $p = 0.016$). Because the corresponding direct effects remained positive and significant, H8–H10 were classified as complementary partial mediation.

Table 6. Specific Indirect Effects and Mediation

H	Indirect path	β	t	p	Mediation
H8	Competence → Communication → Performance	0.053	2.139	0.033	Complementary partial
H9	Delegation → Communication → Performance	0.091	2.290	0.022	Complementary partial
H10	Knowledge sharing → Communication → Performance	0.086	2.410	0.016	Complementary partial

Source: Research data processed, 2026.

Discussion

Competence, Communication, and Performance

The positive competence → workplace communication relationship (H1) can be explained by the informational demands of service work. Competence gives employees more than technical ability; it also provides the cognitive vocabulary needed to identify relevant cues, distinguish routine from non-routine problems, and formulate questions that supervisors and coworkers can answer efficiently. Employees with stronger job understanding are therefore less dependent on vague trial-and-error communication and are better able to check instructions, describe service problems precisely, and interpret feedback. This mechanism is consistent with evidence that communication and competence jointly shape work outcomes (Butarbutar & Indrawan, 2024; Nugroho et al., 2024) and with internal-communication research showing that shared understanding depends on accessible, transparent information exchange (Jiang & Men, 2017; Men, 2014).

Competence also had a significant direct effect on performance (H4). The result is consistent with Afandi and Veritia (2023), Irsa et al. (2024), and Widiyarsari and Padmantyo (2023), but the effect size was small relative to knowledge sharing. In interdependent hotel operations, technical capability cannot be fully separated from coordination: employees may know how to perform a task but still require timely clarification about guest priorities, cross-departmental dependencies, or exceptions to standard procedures. This helps explain why competence retained a direct effect while also operating through communication.

The H8 indirect effect supports this interpretation. Workplace communication partially translates competence into performance because knowledgeable employees can use communication more productively: they can ask higher-quality questions, absorb feedback more accurately, and explain operational issues in a way that accelerates collective problem solving. For hotel management, technical training should therefore be paired with structured handovers, check-back instructions, briefing routines, and feedback-seeking practice rather than delivered as a stand-alone skills program.

Delegation, Communication, and Performance

Delegation was the strongest predictor of workplace communication (H2; $\beta = 0.376$) and produced the largest effect size on communication ($f^2 = 0.235$). This pattern is theoretically plausible because delegation creates an immediate need to negotiate task boundaries: employees must understand expected outputs, authority limits, escalation points, and accountability. Developmental assignments are more useful when feedback is available (DeRue & Wellman, 2009), while empowering leadership in hotel settings has been shown to facilitate knowledge-related processes and performance (Srivastava et al., 2006). The finding also aligns with Indonesian evidence emphasizing clear authority and responsibility in delegation (Hilmi et al., 2023; Jusdienar et al., 2024; Tanjung et al., 2023).

Delegation also had a significant direct effect on performance (H5), although its f^2 was small. The implication is not that managers should delegate more tasks indiscriminately, but that delegation quality matters. Early-career employees need explicit outcomes, decision boundaries, available support, and a clear point at which problems should be escalated. These communication conditions reduce the risk that autonomy is experienced as ambiguity.

The H9 mediation path had the largest indirect coefficient ($\beta = 0.091$), showing that a meaningful part of delegation's performance effect operates through communication. A practical brief–confirm–execute–feedback cycle is therefore appropriate: supervisors explain the task and authority, employees restate their understanding, the task is carried out, and a short review closes the learning loop. This sequence preserves accountability while gradually expanding employee autonomy.

Knowledge Sharing, Communication, and Performance

Knowledge sharing positively affected workplace communication (H3) and had the strongest direct effect on performance (H6; $\beta = 0.328$; $f^2 = 0.159$). The result is highly relevant in hospitality, where many service-recovery decisions, peak-period responses, and cross-departmental workarounds rely on tacit experience. Knowledge-sharing theory emphasizes that information becomes valuable when it is exchanged in a social context and can be interpreted and

applied (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Wang & Noe, 2010). Evidence from hotels has similarly linked empowering leadership, knowledge sharing, and performance (Srivastava et al., 2006).

The finding is consistent with Antara et al. (2023) in the Bali hotel context and with Abdussamad and Susilowati (2024). It also helps reconcile evidence that knowledge sharing may require intervening processes (Febriyanti et al., 2024): access to information alone does not guarantee correct application. Strategic internal communication can strengthen employees' willingness and ability to share knowledge (Lee et al., 2021), which is consistent with the significant communication-mediated path observed here.

The H10 indirect effect indicates that communication functions as a mechanism of knowledge internalization. Information stored in manuals, digital channels, or experienced coworkers becomes useful when employees can question, discuss, demonstrate, and contextualize it. Hotels should therefore prioritize interactive knowledge-sharing mechanisms—daily briefings, buddy systems, mentoring, case reviews, demonstrations, and short post-action discussions—rather than relying only on one-way information distribution.

Workplace Communication as a Performance Mechanism

Workplace communication had a positive direct effect on performance ($H7; \beta = 0.243$). This result is consistent with evidence that effective internal communication supports understanding, engagement, and work coordination (Jiang & Men, 2017; Kang & Sung, 2017; Men et al., 2020; Mishra et al., 2014; Verčič & Špoljarić, 2020) and with Indonesian studies linking communication to employee outcomes (Karim, 2022; Sulistiyani & Sari, 2024). In hotels, the operational consequence is immediate because front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, engineering, sales, and support functions are interdependent and time-sensitive.

The three complementary partial mediation effects show that communication does not replace competence, delegation, or knowledge sharing. Instead, it is a process through which these resources are converted into shared understanding and coordinated action. This refines the application of Gibson et al. (2003) by specifying one empirically supported pathway linking individual and organizational factors to performance. For early-career employees, the pathway is particularly important because local routines, exceptions, and informal coordination norms are still being learned.

Managerially, the effect pattern suggests four connected priorities: structure delegation with explicit authority and feedback; organize case-based knowledge sharing around recurrent service problems; integrate technical competence development with communication practice; and maintain rapid access to clarification through supervisor and coworker channels. These practices should be embedded in onboarding, shift-change routines, supervisor coaching, and performance feedback rather than treated as separate human-resource initiatives.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

Theoretically, the study contributes by positioning workplace communication as a process variable that links both an individual antecedent (competence) and organizational antecedents (delegation and knowledge sharing) to performance. The result does not imply that communication is the only mechanism in the Gibson et al. (2003) framework. Rather, the simultaneous significance of the direct and indirect paths shows that early-career performance is produced by both resources and the communicative process that makes those resources usable in context.

The effect-size pattern sharpens the managerial implications. Delegation produced the largest contribution to workplace communication, making the supervisor–employee interface a key intervention point. Formal standard operating procedures cannot eliminate uncertainty when delegated tasks lack explicit decision boundaries, expected outputs, or feedback timing. Supervisor development should therefore include concise task framing, confirmation of understanding, escalation rules, and post-task review.

Knowledge sharing should be designed around operational relevance rather than the volume of information distributed. Short case-based sessions on guest complaints, peak-hour bottlenecks, handover failures, service recovery, and safety incidents can make tacit knowledge easier to transfer. A buddy or mentoring system can support social learning, while a searchable repository can preserve recurring solutions. These mechanisms complement, rather than substitute for, conversation and feedback.

Competence development should likewise incorporate communication behavior. Technical training can include role-play for handovers, escalation, clarification, feedback seeking, and explanation of service exceptions. This integration is consistent with the study's competence → communication path and helps ensure that knowledge is expressed through accurate, timely, and actionable information.

Finally, performance management for early-career employees should emphasize developmental feedback. Employees in the first years of work are still building professional judgment and context-specific routines. Frequent low-cost feedback—such as a short post-task review or weekly coaching checkpoint—can reinforce learning, improve future delegation decisions, and encourage knowledge sharing without waiting for periodic formal appraisal.

Table 7. Managerial Action Matrix Based on the Findings

Priority area	Evidence from the model	Recommended practice	Early-career employee outcome
Structured delegation	Strongest predictor of communication ($\beta=0.376$; $f^2=0.235$)	Brief–confirm–execute–feedback; establish authority limits and escalation points	Lower role ambiguity and faster autonomy
Knowledge sharing	Strongest direct predictor of performance ($\beta=0.328$; $f^2=0.159$)	Buddy system, case reviews, daily briefings, searchable knowledge notes	Faster transfer of tacit service knowledge
Competence development	Positive direct and mediated effects	Combine technical training with handover, clarification, and feedback practices	Conversion of ability into better work outcomes
Workplace communication	Direct effect on performance and three mediation paths	Two-way feedback, clear shift briefings, check-back instructions	Fewer interpretation errors and stronger coordination

Source: Research data processed, 2026.

Limitations and Future Research Agenda

The cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation because all variables were measured at one point in time. PLS-SEM estimates theoretically specified directional relationships but does not establish temporal precedence. Longitudinal designs that follow employees across onboarding and later early-career stages would provide stronger evidence about how competence, communication habits, and performance develop over time.

All focal constructs were measured through a single self-report questionnaire, creating potential common method bias because predictor, mediator, and outcome measures were obtained from the same source and measurement occasion (Podsakoff et al., 2003, 2012). The current design did not include temporal separation, a marker variable, or multi-source performance ratings. Future studies should combine procedural remedies with statistical diagnostics such as a marker-variable approach or full-collinearity assessment, and should supplement employee perceptions with supervisor ratings, customer feedback, absenteeism, productivity, or service-quality indicators (Kock, 2015).

Generalizability is also limited by purposive sampling and the absence of respondent clustering by identifiable hotels. The results should therefore be interpreted as evidence from the studied early-career employees in star-rated hotels in Denpasar rather than as statistically representative estimates for all hospitality employees in Bali or Indonesia. Future research can use stratified or probability-based sampling across hotel star categories, departments, employment status, and regions; collect sufficient respondents per hotel for multilevel analysis; and examine hotel-level factors such as leadership climate, psychological safety, service culture, and human-resource practices.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to early-career performance research by showing that workplace communication is a complementary mechanism through which competence, delegation, and knowledge sharing are translated into performance in star-rated hotels. The practical implication is an integrated development approach: structured delegation should clarify authority and feedback, knowledge sharing should be interactive and case based, and competence training should be connected to handovers, clarification, and feedback-seeking routines.

The findings extend the Gibson et al. (2003) perspective by specifying communication as one process linking individual and organizational resources to observable work outcomes. For managers, the strongest priorities are the quality of delegation and the practical transfer of tacit service knowledge, supported by routine two-way communication.

The study remains bounded by its cross-sectional, single-source design and purposive sample, which limit causal inference, create potential common method bias, and restrict statistical generalization. Future research should use longitudinal and multi-source designs, broader probability-based samples, objective service-performance indicators, and multilevel models that distinguish employee-level processes from hotel-level context.

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