

# The role and challenges of public service communication in modern public administration.

Public service communication in modern public administration.

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## Abstract

The public service is a determining factor in the life of every citizen, from birth to the end of life. Public services, such as health, education, social security, etc., meet basic needs that the state has a duty to provide. The quality and accessibility of these services are closely linked to the functioning of the public administration and the professional, moral and communicative quality of the public servants working there. Public service is a very broad concept, encompassing the provision of tasks that are organised by the state, such as health, social security, social insurance, pensions, etc. At the same time, we can talk about market-based public services such as the provision of drinking water, heating, gas, electricity, etc., which are necessary for everyday living. Public services are designed to meet the common needs of society, in which the state, including public servants, has a key role to play. The aim of this study is to examine the importance, challenges and potential for development of public service communication.

## CCS Concepts

• **Sociology**; • **Psychology**; • **Additional Keywords and Phrases: Communication, Positive psychology, Flow, Digital governance, Privacy, GDPR, E-government;**

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## 1 Introduction

Public service communication plays a decisive role in the effectiveness, legitimacy, and citizen trust of contemporary administrations. Yet, despite its centrality, communication in the public sector often remains under-researched compared to policy-making, organizational structures, or performance management. Existing studies

tend to address communication either in a highly technical manner (focusing on digitalisation and IT systems) or in normative terms (highlighting transparency, openness, and accountability), without systematically connecting these perspectives [1] [2].

This study seeks to address this gap by examining the forms, challenges, and developmental opportunities of public service communication in Hungary, with special emphasis on the interplay of verbal, non-verbal, and digital communication. It further explores how concepts from positive psychology—especially Csikszentmihályi’s notion of flow—can enrich our understanding of communication practices in public administration [3].

The research problem underlying this paper is the limited availability of structured knowledge on how communication practices influence administrative effectiveness, citizen satisfaction, and democratic legitimacy. The objective is to develop a conceptual framework that identifies critical competencies, risks, and future directions in public service communication, particularly under the pressures of digital transformation.

To guide this inquiry, the following research questions (RQs) were formulated:

- RQ1: What are the main forms and functions of communication in public administration, and what challenges do they entail?
- RQ2: How do verbal, non-verbal, and digital channels influence both internal organizational efficiency and external citizen satisfaction?
- RQ3: How can insights from positive psychology contribute to strengthening communication practices in public service?
- RQ4: What risks and ethical challenges emerge in the context of digital communication, especially regarding privacy and data protection?

By addressing these questions, the paper aims to provide a conceptual contribution that integrates communication theory, public administration studies, and psychology.

## 2 Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative, conceptual research design based on an integrative literature review. Sources were selected from communication studies, public administration, psychology, and digital governance, using databases such as Scopus, Web of Science,



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and Google Scholar, with a focus on publications between 2000 and 2023. The methodological steps were as follows:

1. Identification of themes – Academic works on verbal, non-verbal, and digital communication in public administration were reviewed to capture key concepts and challenges [4], [5].
2. Interpretative synthesis – The selected studies were compared to identify common patterns, tensions, and knowledge gaps [6].
3. Contextualisation in Hungary – Illustrative examples from the Hungarian public sector, such as training initiatives at Ludovika University of Public Service and state digitalisation projects, were incorporated to provide contextual grounding [7].

This conceptual approach is not empirical in a narrow sense; it does not rely on original surveys or experiments. However, by systematically reviewing international and national scholarship, the study develops a structured framework that can guide future empirical research.

### 3 Theoretical background

Communication is a central component of public administration, shaping both internal organisational dynamics and external interactions with citizens. Scholars increasingly highlight that communication practices are not simply neutral channels but actively influence efficiency, legitimacy, and trust in governance [8], [9]. In the context of modernisation and digitalisation, communication has become a decisive factor in whether public administrations can meet expectations of transparency, accountability, and citizen-orientation. Accordingly, three traditional forms of communication—verbal, non-verbal, and informal—remain vital, while digital channels have introduced new opportunities and risks.

#### 3.1 Communication challenges in public administration, forms and purpose of communication

Communication is one of the basic activities of human existence, and existence without communication is almost unthinkable. Communication can mean communicating, sharing, discussing, exchanging information. There are many definitions, but in terms of its process, it can be said that communication is the act of saying something, about something, to someone, for some purpose, by some means, in some form, to someone, with some result. This is true for communication in the simplest of situations, in private life, as well as in public communication. The message may be conveyed in several ways, through several channels, in order to achieve the goal. In terms of the forms of communication, there are many different approaches, such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, mass, and organisational communication, all of which can be encountered in public service communication [10]. A distinction is made between verbal and non-verbal (nonverbal) communication in terms of the signalling or coding used [11]. While the clarity of speech and writing is of paramount importance in public communication, non-verbal communication must also be given great attention. This

is particularly important in customer relations, but it cannot be neglected in intra-organisational communication. The main purpose of intra-organisational communication is essentially to ensure the functioning of the organisation and the effective performance of its statutory tasks. A survey has shown that employees get the most useful information from their informal interpersonal relationships – in everyday language, from corridor gossip [12]. So the organisation needs to be prepared to manage this appropriately, and this is another challenge. A lot depends on staffing, the selection of public servants and officials, but this problem cannot be solved by regulation alone. Positive thinking has a crucial role to play in communication both inside and outside the organisation. Suffice it to point out the damage that pessimists, those who are not focused on the task at hand, those who are not looking for solutions and those who are perpetually dissatisfied can do to an organisation.

The purpose of communication outside the organisation is also related to the effective performance of the organisation's tasks. It is important that the messages that are most relevant to the strategy and objectives of the organisation reach citizens and customers in a clear and unbiased way. It should be noted that this issue has become very important in the process of reforming the public administration system, particularly in view of the fact that information can be distorted in the media and social media.

#### 3.2 Verbal and written communication in public administration

The role of verbal communication, such as speaking and writing, is equally important in public service communication, but the importance of non-verbal communication is also undisputed. According to Béla Buda [13], the verbal channel is man's most specific mode of communication, and is in itself almost entirely capable of carrying all kinds of human communication, of being used to transmit all kinds of information. In its written form it is the most typical means of indirect communication. The coding system (language) and verbal communication itself, speech, are cultural products, developed throughout the history of human evolution. Linguists have argued that all languages known today are at about the same or very similar levels of development in their formal systems, so that even the languages of primitive communities cannot be regarded as precursors of the languages of advanced civilisations.

When communicating orally, you need to be careful about who you address, what words you use and how clearly you express yourself. Particular attention must be paid to the situation in which information is conveyed. Completely different rules and norms may apply to a conversation at home, or a conversation at work, and to an announcement or communication in a large public forum. Speech is the direct delivery of information, whether it is a press conference, a radio interview, a television interview or a simple video message on social media. It is clear that spokespersons for organisations and public figures face new challenges every day in oral communication, and have to be prepared for unexpected and unforeseen situations. Focusing on the public administration, it is important to pay attention not only to grammatical rules but also to the formal tone and wording of communication, so that the message is clear and understandable.

In the context of oral communication and message formulation, I would like to briefly mention the role of positive thinking. The same information, even if it is unpleasant news, can be conveyed in different ways. If we tell a customer in a booming voice that his application has been rejected under the relevant legislation and we are already calling the next customer, this verbal message can be unfavourable, hurtful, even offensive, and lead to dissatisfaction. However, if, in addition to the refusal, we offer the client other suitable alternatives, or simply try to find an appropriate solution to his/her problem or life situation by thinking positively, the communication of the situation may still have a positive outcome, despite the refusal.

Written communication is an indirect way of transferring and communicating information. The indirect mode provides an opportunity to formulate the message in a more grammatically and professionally precise way, which is why it is important to prepare for oral communication in writing, preparing a written version of the speech or communication.

There are several forms of written communication in public administration. Decisions are made in writing, so this is the form in which clients receive the orders and decisions made in their cases. Similarly, they receive information letters and notices in writing, for example by post or electronically [14]. In recent years and decades, public administrations have made increasing use of the Internet, with organisations having their own websites, a social media presence, newsletters and closer, more direct contact with their customers. Written communication must meet specific standards in terms of both content and form. In external communication, the organisation must present a consistent and credible image at all times, which is why it is important to have a set of rules. In connection with decisions and official correspondence, public administrations should endeavour to minimise 'canned content' and at the same time to draft in a simple and clear way. Even today, a decision taken for a client in almost a single sentence is accompanied by several pages of legislation, so-called canned text, by the end of which the client no longer knows what the message was, what has happened and what he or she has to do. Of course, the client should be informed of his rights and obligations, which may explain the sometimes lengthy justification and legal references, but this should also be done in a simpler, client-centred way.

Literacy also plays an important role in internal, institutional communication. For example, minutes, notes of meetings, reports on the organisation's activities, reports, terms of reference, etc. are all written in a specific format. Correct wording, clear and unambiguous expectations, well-defined tasks and responsibilities are essential for the effective functioning of the organisation. At the same time, the effectiveness of the organisation also requires receptiveness, which is why the role and attitude of public servants must be emphasised: positive thinking is important, it is important to apply what and how, as opposed to what and how not to apply what is possible.

### 3.3 The importance of non-verbal communication

In introducing the forms and purpose of communication, I have pointed out that while the intelligibility of speech and writing is

of paramount importance in public service communication, non-verbal communication also needs to be given a great deal of attention. Non-verbal communication plays a key role in customer relations, but is also crucial for communication within the organisation.

Verbal messages are accompanied and complemented by a number of non-verbal signals which can even transform or change the original meaning of the speech. As Béla Horváth writes, non-verbality is inseparable from our human being, including our communication. We use it in a natural way, gesturing with our hands, moving our bodies, making contact with our eyes [15]. In speech, conversation, communication, or social communication, we convey different signals that are perceived by the receiver. Our readiness to communicate, our intentions, our emotional state can and do become visible. Body language can be controlled, and self-discipline, a conscious focus on communication, can play a big role in this. According to István Zentai, the communicator sets different muscle groups in motion to generate signals that are perceived and deciphered by the receiver. Depending on which muscle groups play a role in the transmission of the message, we speak of different channels of communication [16]. These channels are used to convey intentional or unintentional information, either individually or collectively. Without being exhaustive, we can include facial expressions, gaze, gesture, body movements or posture.

In addition to the above, communication expresses the six basic emotions [17], namely joy, anger, rage, sadness, sorrow, fear, disgust or surprise. Likewise, the tone of voice, tone of voice, tone of voice, or spacing used in communication, which is the distance or spacing taken up in conversation, speech, human interaction, can be considered as a non-verbal channel. To give a sense of the importance of non-verbal communication, I quote István Zentai [16] who argues that non-verbal cues also play a more important role than verbal communication in the expression of interpersonal attitudes. A facial expression maintained for a longer period of time can be a powerful expression of attitude. The frequency and duration of eye contact, or changes in these, may be related to positive or negative evaluations of the partner, affection or interest. The orientation of the parties' bodies, their choice of position and posture in relation to each other, and their spacing may primarily express the communicator's need for dominance, but may also be a consequence of interpersonal attitudes. The place and manner of touching, which is highly regulated by cultural and group norms, is a very powerful indicator of intimacy and physical attachment, but in some ways it can also express a general positive attitude [16].

In public administration, non-verbal communication plays a key role in personal customer relations. Our facial expressions, for example, can destroy what we have to say, and an excessively relaxed posture can suggest disinterest or indifference towards the client. It is necessary to mention here the way we dress, our well-groomed appearance, or even the way we wear our hair, our use of jewellery or the lack of it, which also affects our perception when communicating. István Sille's view [18] on dressing is that clothes determine our appearance. Before we hand over our business card in a new relationship, we are already judged by our appearance and dress [18]. The appropriate use of eye contact can send a positive message, it can make the client perceive that we care about them, that we care about their business. At the same time, the

aforementioned spacing should be given special attention, avoiding familiarity and touching.

In telephone customer relations, the use of tone of voice, tone of voice, tone of voice as a non-verbal channel is of particular importance, and of course these cues should also be given special attention in face-to-face communication. A bored tone of voice, or a lecturing tone of conversation, gives a very bad impression of the organisation. This is why, in the field of customer relations, particular attention should be paid both to the selection of people who will be responsible for customer service and to the organisation of training and development courses.

In public administration, it is of paramount importance that a people-centred, customer-friendly administration serves the needs of society. It is therefore essential that public servants consciously use elements of non-verbal communication in their communication with customers. Of course, non-verbal signals play a crucial role not only in communication outside the organisation but also within it. Special attention must be paid to non-verbal messages in interpersonal or group communication, but also in organisational communication. A well-constructed speech or uplifting thoughts are useless if they are not conveyed in an appropriate and authentic way. For example, the same message can be delivered in an encouraging and hopeful way, or in a way that creates fear and uncertainty.

### 3.4 Digital channels and governance

The rise of digital government has transformed communication in the public sector. Online platforms, mobile applications, and social media channels now complement traditional modes of interaction, enabling 24/7 access to information and services [1]. Digital channels can increase efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and enhance inclusiveness by reaching previously underserved groups.

At the same time, digitalisation introduces significant vulnerabilities. Technical failures, cybersecurity threats, and the spread of misinformation may undermine citizen trust in digital public services [19]. Moreover, digital divides remain a persistent problem: while digital channels may broaden access for many, they may simultaneously exclude citizens with limited digital literacy or poor internet connectivity [20].

Privacy and data protection are among the most pressing ethical concerns in digital governance. E-government platforms routinely process sensitive personal information, from tax records to health data, making compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) a legal and ethical imperative [21]. Citizens' willingness to use digital services depends not only on usability but also on assurances that their data is processed transparently and securely.

Finally, emerging discussions around AI in governance further underscore the need for accountability and oversight. Automated chatbots, predictive analytics, and decision-support systems are increasingly embedded in digital channels. While these tools can enhance efficiency, they also raise risks of bias and opacity. The proposed EU Artificial Intelligence Act identifies such public-sector applications as "high-risk" and subjects them to stricter requirements for transparency, human oversight, and accountability [22].

These regulatory frameworks highlight that digital communication in public administration is not purely technical, but deeply interwoven with legal and ethical safeguards.

## 4 Changing attitudes to public administration over the last decade

I believe that changing attitudes to public administration is one of the basic conditions for a well-functioning public administration. Of course, it is necessary to create the legal conditions, to establish the right organisational structure, to create the material and technical conditions, in particular to implement IT improvements, or to provide financial and moral recognition for officials, as well as a predictable career path. While the proper selection of new civil servants entering the public administration is crucial for the functioning of the administration and the provision of public services, the fact that several generations work together in the organisation should not be forgotten. They have different educational backgrounds, different goals, different professional and life experiences. They have different motivations and motivational capacities and different competences. Some officials find change easier, others find it harder. All these circumstances, together with a number of other factors, have made and continue to make it difficult to change attitudes. However, it can be argued that, despite these factors, there have been significant changes over the last decade.

There have been huge steps towards customer-centric administration in Hungary in recent years. Training courses for officials have helped to improve communication. The establishment and development of government offices and the introduction of government office buses have made administrative services available in the most remote settlements. By bringing services closer to citizens, communication has improved, customer contact has become more direct and customer satisfaction has increased. However, customer-oriented administration should not be equated with a negative perception of the official as a servant. There are still many examples of this today. For example, when the customer communicates in an impermissible tone or only knows his rights, ignoring his obligations. To reduce and prevent this, great care must be taken in government communication, whether at central or regional level.

In the context of changing attitudes among civil servants, it is essential to mention - without wishing to be exhaustive - the need for lifelong learning, the importance of training and management training. The Ludovika University of Public Service (LUPS) plays a very important role in public administration training. The changes of the last decade are noticeable, but they cannot stop. What else could be the goal but to ensure that public servants are dedicated, professionally excellent and collaborative in the way they carry out their duties, while at the same time loving their profession and enjoying their involvement in the life of the community.

### 4.1 The Development of External and Internal Communication

It is an undeniable fact that the role of communication in public administration has significantly increased in value over the past decades. Ensuring the transparency of organizations, familiarizing the public with their activities, and gaining acceptance are of key importance. Effective external communication serves to convey

and clarify messages directed toward society and clients, while effective internal communication promotes efficient administrative operations and task execution. Thirty years after the political transition, people are no longer limited to receiving information from television, radio, newspapers, or messages displayed on posters; the internet and social media now offer countless opportunities for public administration as well. Of course, these opportunities also carry risks, as a poorly worded message or an interview containing incorrect information can lead to unexpected consequences.

In the field of governmental communication, a clear tendency toward structured and deliberate communication has become increasingly evident. Messages are typically coherent, accessible to the general public, and focused on essential content. A notable example of the advancement of administrative communication is the public sector's adaptation to societal and technological changes, as demonstrated by its active presence on social media platforms such as Facebook, and its utilization of tools provided by platforms like YouTube. As for internal communication, continuous development is also observable within public administration. This progress has been supported by infrastructural developments carried out in recent years, as well as by ongoing professional training programs and workshops, which have significantly contributed to enhancing communication practices.

## 4.2 The Role of Motivation and Mindset

Nothing can truly function effectively without motivation, and public administration is no exception. Individuals working in the public sector are the face and representation of public administration for citizens and clients. Therefore, the characteristics of the personnel within the administrative system carry significant importance. It is thus justified to implement development initiatives that simultaneously increase both citizen trust in public servants and in the administration itself, as well as the overall attractiveness and performance of the public sector. These dual objectives can primarily be achieved through the introduction of a new, flexible public service career model. Key elements include the development of public service leadership competencies, ensuring the availability of successors, the full implementation of a position-based system, personalized career management, continuous training and skills development, and, importantly, enhancing employee commitment, motivation, and incentive management.

How and by what means can public servants be motivated? For many, an attractive career in public service includes a predictable career path, job security, opportunities for advancement, and financial stability. Competitive salaries and a wide range of additional benefits—such as cafeteria-style allowances—also play a vital role as motivational tools. Beyond these, factors such as the possibility of remote work, reasonable working hours, adequate rest periods, and generous leave entitlements can all contribute significantly to an employee's level of motivation. Support for the official's family—such as assistance for starting a family, child-rearing, or back-to-school support—can also serve as powerful motivational tools. In terms of career advancement, support for education and professional development, as well as team-building activities and social events, can further enhance motivation.

It is important to emphasize that motivational tools must be designed not only to attract new entrants to public administration but also to retain experienced public servants.

Changing the organizational mindset requires more than the intent, belief, or will of the leader alone. However, by setting an example, offering encouragement, and communicating with empathy, leaders can provide significant support to their teams. Honest and positive communication has a transformative power. I believe that cooperation, compassion, and a supportive environment make it much easier to achieve shared goals. When employees feel good within the organization, it benefits the leaders—and ultimately, the entire public administration.

## 5 Positive Thinking as the Appearance of Flow in Public Administration

### 5.1 The Concept and Meaning of Flow and Its Connection to Public Administration

The ability to adapt to change allows us to view transitional periods in our lives as opportunities for growth and renewal. Every change—even the most difficult and painful—offers us the chance to experience the extraordinary gift of personal transformation. Managing stress, developing the mind, healing and self-healing, and self-improvement are all inherently beneficial processes. Mental development, for instance, involves learning how to acquire knowledge more easily, how to teach more effectively, how to excel in the things we are passionate about, or how to accomplish our goals. But how do these relate to public administration or to communication within the civil service? And what exactly is flow? What does the term "flow" mean?

Positive thinking, as a manifestation of the flow experience, can also be observed in public administration. In addition to contributing to individual success and happiness, positive thinking facilitates organizational cooperation and enhances relationships among colleagues—ultimately setting a strong example for others.

Mihály Csíkszentmihályi described the concept of flow as the experience of optimal engagement—a state in which individuals feel both successful and satisfied, while being deeply immersed in and focused on a given activity [3]. According to Dominek [23], the concept of flow can be derived from creativity theory. She refers to Rhodes's model, which identifies four dimensions essential to defining creativity: Personality, Process, Press (i.e., environmental pressure), and Product—collectively known as the "Four Ps" of creativity.

These ideas naturally lead us back to the world of work and can be fully applied to public administration and public servants. When individuals experience high levels of joy, their concentration is intensely focused on a challenging task—this is when the state of flow occurs. Csíkszentmihályi [3] claims that average people most often experience flow while working. Work can become a truly creative activity that brings personal fulfillment. This includes experiencing emotions and desires, taking on challenges, and trying new things. Within the context of work, discovering variety and novelty, making decisions, or becoming deeply engaged in a particular subject all contribute to these experiences. Such experiences, in turn, lead to individual happiness [23].

Of course, any job can be performed reluctantly and without enthusiasm—just to pass the time. But the same work, when approached with a positive mindset, can yield much better results. Brian Tracy [24] argues that when you are working, you should work. A key element of success is using the time available wisely, focusing on outcomes, and avoiding time-wasting conversations with underperforming colleagues. It takes just as much time to do your job in a bad mood as it does to go through most of your day with a positive attitude.

Although people cannot be changed against their will, it is indeed possible to send them uplifting messages and lead by example.

## 5.2 Positive Thought, Positive Message, Positive Changes in Public Administration

The dissemination of the flow experience within public administration is essential. Positive thinking leads to positive actions and behaviors, which in turn bring about positive change. When such change occurs in public administration, it generates benefits not only from a societal but also from an economic perspective. However, change requires significant effort, and in this context, it is worth returning to the insightful work of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. “Sigmund Freud modified a well-known saying: when asked for the recipe for happiness, he gave a short but reasonable answer: ‘work and love.’ If someone finds flow in their work and in their relationships with others, their entire life can take a more favorable direction” [3] p. 92).

Flow can only be found in the present moment. We can only perform at our best when we are truly present in our work. If we dwell on the past or worry about the future while working, we become prisoners of negative thinking. To avoid this, it is worthwhile to consider the insights of a few great thinkers and writers. According to Eckhart Tolle [25], all negativity stems from the accumulation of psychological time and the rejection of the present. Restlessness, anxiety, tension, and worry—all forms of fear—are caused by too much future and not enough present. This is a thought-provoking idea, and one most of us have experienced: anything we do with negative energy becomes tainted by it, ultimately generating more pain and unhappiness. Furthermore, any negative inner state is contagious. Unhappiness spreads more easily than physical illness [25].

This phenomenon can also be observed in public administration. If a colleague is habitually negative—seeing only problems, lacking enthusiasm, and focusing on why tasks cannot be done rather than how to solve them—it has a demoralizing effect on their coworkers. Likewise, a supervisor who is frequently irritable, emotionally withdrawn, self-centered, or even verbally aggressive, can severely damage the workplace atmosphere. For this reason, the selection of new employees and leaders in public administration is crucial in shaping a positive institutional image. Without leaders with a positive outlook, meaningful change in public administration would not be possible, nor would constructive communication. Enthusiasm provides strength and helps overcome difficulties. According to Napoleon Hill [26], enthusiasm—which he regards as a fundamental principle—enables us to accomplish a great deal of work without fatigue. It is a mental state that motivates individuals to take initiative in the tasks they undertake. He emphasizes that enthusiasm is

especially contagious—it inspires cooperation and action in those we influence with our words.

Hill’s insights are well worth considering by leaders in public administration. He believes that a successful leader is courageous, and that this courage is rooted in self-awareness and professional expertise. Self-discipline is equally important, as it provides a model for others. A good leader has clear plans, and is characterized by cooperation, empathy, and understanding. Conversely, selfishness and lack of imagination lead to failure. An effective leader guides by encouragement, not by instilling fear in followers [27].

The most important message, therefore, is that we must have goals and not expect others to create improvement for us. We must take action toward our objectives—and this, in a broader sense, applies to public administration as well. Positive thoughts, positive messages, and positive changes can ultimately lead to a better life, security, order, justice, and the full realization of freedom.

## 6 Conclusion

Public service is an integral component of societal functioning, accompanying citizens throughout their life journey. Over the past decade, the Hungarian public sector has undergone substantial transformations: organizational structures have been reformed, service quality has improved, and citizen satisfaction has increased. These developments reflect both the strategic implementation of organizational objectives and the dedicated efforts of public servants delivering these services. Consequently, these changes have significantly influenced communication practices within public administration, where the emergence of positive thinking—manifested as the flow experience—is increasingly evident and influential.

This study has examined the multifaceted role of public service communication, focusing on verbal, non-verbal, and digital channels, and the interplay of these forms in shaping both internal administrative efficiency and external citizen perceptions. The findings demonstrate that communication is not merely a neutral conduit but actively affects organizational effectiveness, legitimacy, and citizen trust. Informal and non-verbal channels, often overlooked in traditional analyses, significantly contribute to organizational functioning by transmitting critical information, shaping workplace culture, and reinforcing citizen-centered service delivery.

Positive psychology, particularly Csikszentmihályi’s concept of flow [3], emerges as a valuable lens for understanding and enhancing communication in public administration. Encouraging positive thinking among public servants fosters engagement, motivation, and cooperative behavior, which in turn strengthens organizational performance. Conversely, negative thinking and disengagement undermine responsibility, reduce motivation, and impede the achievement of strategic objectives. Leadership plays a pivotal role in promoting these attitudes: mentoring, exemplary behavior, and continuous professional development create an environment in which positive communication and innovative problem-solving can flourish.

Addressing the research questions:

- RQ1: Communication in public administration is inherently multifaceted, encompassing verbal, written, non-verbal, informal, and digital forms. Each serves distinct internal and

external functions. Challenges include generational diversity, varying competencies, and differing motivational capacities among staff. Verbal and written communication ensures precision, legal compliance, and the transmission of procedural information, while non-verbal cues—such as gestures, tone, facial expressions, and spatial orientation—play a critical role in conveying trust, empathy, and organizational credibility. Digital channels expand accessibility, transparency, and engagement, yet simultaneously introduce vulnerabilities such as misinformation, cybersecurity threats, and the digital divide [1] [2]. Effective communication requires a strategic approach balancing clarity, efficiency, and citizen-centered responsiveness.

- **RQ2:** Verbal, non-verbal, and digital channels interact to influence both organizational efficiency and citizen satisfaction. Internally, structured, coherent, and transparent communication promotes task coordination, decision-making, and conflict mitigation. Informal channels, such as peer interactions and corridor communication, convey critical organizational intelligence but must be managed to prevent misinformation or misalignment with institutional goals [5] [13]. Externally, effective communication establishes transparency, fosters public trust, and enhances perceived service quality. Non-verbal cues and digital interactions significantly influence citizen perceptions of professionalism and responsiveness, emphasizing the need for holistic communication strategies.
- **RQ3:** Concepts from positive psychology, including flow and the cultivation of intrinsic motivation, enhance employee engagement, collaboration, and adaptability to organizational change. Employees experiencing flow are more likely to approach challenges constructively, engage collaboratively, and maintain high job satisfaction, ultimately strengthening organizational performance and citizen interactions [3] [23]. Embedding positive thinking into communication practices reinforces constructive organizational norms, reduces workplace negativity, and models behavior that fosters institutional trust.
- **RQ4:** Digital communication introduces both operational and ethical risks, particularly concerning privacy, data protection, and transparency. Compliance with GDPR and other regulatory frameworks is essential, and digital tools require careful implementation to maintain accountability and public trust. While digital platforms enhance efficiency, accessibility, and citizen engagement, they also pose risks of cybersecurity threats, misinformation, and algorithmic biases in AI-supported decision-making [22] [20]. Ethical governance and continuous monitoring of digital communication are crucial to sustaining citizen trust and democratic legitimacy.

The primary contribution of this study is a conceptual framework linking communication practices with organizational performance, citizen trust, and employee engagement. It underscores that effective communication is both a strategic and ethical imperative in modern public administration, requiring continuous adaptation to technological, societal, and organizational changes.

This study is primarily literature-based and reflective; it lacks empirical validation. Future research should employ surveys, case

studies, interviews, or experimental designs to empirically test these conceptual insights and quantify the effects of communication practices on citizen satisfaction, organizational performance, and democratic legitimacy. The long-term effects of digitalization, including AI-driven tools, warrant further examination, particularly concerning accountability, bias mitigation, and ethical governance. Additionally, longitudinal studies could explore how sustained implementation of flow-oriented and positive psychology interventions affects both employee well-being and service quality.

In conclusion, cultivating positive thinking, effective leadership, and adaptive communication practices in public administration not only enhances individual and organizational performance but also reinforces legitimacy, transparency, and citizen-centered service delivery. By integrating insights from communication theory, public administration, and psychology, this study provides a comprehensive foundation for future empirical research and practical interventions aimed at advancing the quality, resilience, and impact of public service communication in the digital age.

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