From Calling to Performance: The Role of Linguistic and Communicative Competence in Employee Success

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Abstract

This research will explore the effect of career calling on the performance of employees in multinational corporations (MNEs) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with a focus on the mediating effects of employee's communicative competence and linguistic competence. A cross-sectional, quantitative research design was utilized by utilizing survey data gathered from 188 employees working in different MNEs in Saudi Arabia. Established scales from earlier literature were taken to attain measurement reliability and validity. PLS-SEM was utilized to analyze the data in order to measure measurement models as well as structural models with mediation and serial mediation paths. The findings indicated that career calling greatly and positively affects employee's communicative competence and linguistic competence, which further boost employee performance. Communicative competence was identified to be a strong mediator, while linguistic competence did not mediate independently but added through a serial mediation path. The model had good fit, explanatory power, and construct validity. This research makes a contribution to organizational behavior and human resource literature by foregrounding the psychological construct of career calling as an impetus for communication-related competencies and performance in globalized workplaces, providing both theoretical depth and practical insights for HR practitioners in MNEs.

Keywords: Career Calling, Communicative Competence, Linguistic Competence, Employee Performance.

Introduction

In modern, more interconnected and dynamic work environments, the efficiency of workers is not just established through technical skills or academic qualifications. Instead, soft skills especially linguistic and communicative abilities are responsible for guaranteeing productivity, cooperation, and flexibility (Al-Tamimi, 2025). As international work environments require intercultural communication, workers need to display sophisticated language proficiency and the capability to communicate effectively with subtlety, clarity, and intent (Xie & Peltokorpi, 2025). In this context, the concept of career calling a person's innate conviction that their career path is meaningful and purposeful has come under study for its ability to promote behavioral excellence and psychological investment (G'ayratovna, 2025). Career calling not only affects job satisfaction but also employee commitment, learning agility, and long-term performance (Shermatova, 2025). Although past research has been concerned with the manner in which career calling influences attitudes to work and job performance, its effects on linguistically and communicatively driven competence are understudied

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(Fellows & Phua, 2025). Linguistic competence, that is, the ability to use language correctly and to achieve one's communicative aims, and communicative competence, involving the pragmatic and situational use of language, are critically involved in navigating professional spaces (Ng et al., 2025). These competencies, when enhanced through internal motivation like career calling, can potentially contribute to enhanced employee performance. This research thus enters a critical intersection psychological motivation and practical skill development with implications for employee training, organizational communication, and career development frameworks (Roshid & Kankaanranta, 2025).

Over the past two decades, scholars have shown growing interest in examining how intrinsic motivational factors such as career calling shape workplace behaviors (Zins, 2025). Career calling, usually defined as a universal call to higher purpose work, has been linked with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and psychological well-being (Smith-Khan, 2025). (Khuanmuang, 2025) theorized that workers who experience their job as a calling are more committed, proactive, and interested in investing in their professional and personal growth. This investment tends to manifest in ongoing skill development and increased adaptability in fluid work settings (Nisar & Sheikh, 2025). The career calling influence has also been associated with learning motivation, innovativeness, and sustained career development (Mohanty & Chatterjee, 2025). At the same time, empirical research has stressed the importance of communicative and linguistic skills in shaping the success of employees. Linguistic competence, encompassing vocabulary use, grammar correctness, and syntactic organization, is paramount in jobs involving documentation, instruction, client communication, and writing reports (Murali et al., 2025). Communicative competence, however, encompasses the socio-pragmatic and discourse aspects of interaction, including turn-taking, politeness strategies, and situational appropriateness, which are essential for workplace cooperation and leadership effectiveness (Daoud & Kasztalska, 2025). Studies indicate that both competencies are dynamic and can be developed with learning, exercise, and inspiration particularly when staff members are intrinsically motivated to perform (Hargie, 2025).

Additionally, several studies indicate there is a significant correlation between communication competence and employee performance indicators such as task achievement, team collaboration, conflict management, and customer satisfaction (Lee, 2025). High communicative proficiency employees are viewed as being more credible, confident, and effective in interpersonal interactions, which all work towards performance excellence (Low, 2025). Current research also shows that communication competence acts as a mediator between personality and work outcomes, solidifying its place at the center of organizational dynamics (Giomboni, 2025). Similarly, language ability has been found to mediate cognitive ability-job performance relationships in multinational and linguistically heterogeneous corporations (Räisänen & Kankaanranta, 2024). Together, these results suggest a multifaceted but promising relationship between intrinsic career motivation, communication skills, and work outcomes. Yet, closer scrutiny identifies that the specific mechanisms through which these constructs connect to each other remain unclear (Stojanović & Robinson, 2024). In particular, the mediating functions of linguistic and communication ability in converting career calling into actual on-the-job performance have not been properly explored. This deficit calls for an even more intensive research, especially in cross-cultural and communication-oriented work settings.

Lack of advances made in career calling research and communications ability research notwithstanding, there are still a few significant research lags (Harara et al., 2024). To begin with, although previous research has revealed the impact of career calling on worker outcomes like job satisfaction, engagement, and job retention (Simatupang & Supri, 2024), not much empirical research has investigated the extent to which it propels the development of skills, especially in communication-related areas. The psychological mechanisms by which a feeling of purpose fosters communicative and linguistic ability are purely theoretical with limited quantitative support (Boccoli et al., 2024). This leaves an inchoate space for comprehending internal motivation to translate into competencies that have an external effect on job performance (Alharbi, 2024). Secondly, studies that have analyzed communication skills tend to equate linguistic and communicative competencies or fail to operationalize them in differentiated ways (AlShaye & BinSultan, 2024). Linguistic competence is in respect of structural control of language, while communicative competence has to do with context-dependent language use and pragmatic choice (Weiyi et al., 2024). The inability to clearly examine these competencies leaves us with a superficial knowledge of how each independently or interactively mediates the impact of psychological constructs such as career calling on performance (Ngo & Thuy, 2024). Moreover, there is limited research on serial mediation how communicative competence can be facilitated by linguistic competence, which enhances performance, particularly when intrinsically motivated by calling (Rezai et al., 2024).

Third, the majority of communication performance studies have focused on external training or leadership factors as opposed to internal motivational factors. Career calling's contribution to communication readiness or professional expressiveness is an underdeveloped area, especially in non-Western, multilingual organizational settings (Ou et al., 2024). Further, while some studies refer to career calling as critical to employee development, they tend to ignore soft skills training in favor of cognitive or behavioral outcomes. This ignores the organizational reality of the need for communication clarity, negotiation capacity, and multilinguality as critical success factors (Rabiul, 2024). Finally, mediational models consisting of career

calling, linguistic competence, communicative competence, and performance are surprisingly few in empirical literature. Although theoretical models indicate that these pathways potentially exist (Peltokorpi, 2023), there is scant empirical evidence illustrating how these mediators function either individually or sequentially. This research responds to this neglected area by examining independent and serial mediating effects of communicative and linguistic abilities in the career calling-employee performance relationship (Rahmawati & Mege, 2023). It therefore seeks to fill the gap between theoretical postulations and empirical investigation to offer a more informed conceptualization of skill acquisition in the realm of career-motivated motivation.

The core purpose of this research is to analyze the way in which career calling affects employees' linguistic and communicative abilities, and vice versa, how these abilities mediate the link between career calling and employee performance. Based on the changing needs of modern workplaces and the requirement for communication flexibility, this research explores the motivational-skill-performance triad to find both direct and indirect influence routes. Specifically, the research investigates whether employees who perceive their career as a calling exhibit more language-related competences, and if these competences in turn improve work performance. In more specific terms, the research is focused on the following central research questions:

1. Does career calling significantly predict employee performance?
2. Does career calling significantly predict employee linguistic competence?
3. Does career calling significantly predict employee communicative competence?
4. How do linguistic and communicative competences mediate the relationship between career calling and performance?
5. Does a serial mediation process exist where career calling enhances linguistic competence, which improves communicative competence, thereby enhancing performance?

These aims are set to bridge prevailing gaps in empirical research by not only confirming established connections but also demystifying the multi-step processes via which career motivation is converted into work efficiency. Through answering these questions, this study seeks to provide evidence-based knowledge on talent development, internal motivation practices, and soft skill incorporation in performance improvement frameworks.

Literature Review

The theory of career calling has been a significant motivational construct that affects people's participation in professional growth and learning activity (Murali et al., 2025). Career calling is defined by a strong sense of purpose, meaningfulness, and intrinsic motivation concerning one's professional career (Hargie, 2025). Studies have proved time and again that employees with a high sense of calling tend to put more effort into developing themselves and acquiring skills (Low, 2025). More specifically, language learning and polishing are understood as developmental behaviors sought by individuals who experience their profession as a calling rather than as just a job (Räisänen & Kankaanranta, 2024). A number of organizational behavior and educational linguistics studies have identified that people with more career calling orientation pursue more initiatives to improve their professional communication skills. In career settings requiring cross-cultural communication and international interaction, language skills become an essential ability. The motivation for learning languages and improving linguistic skills tends to be intrinsically motivated, for instance, career calling (Simatupang & Supri, 2024). Professionals working for multinational corporations or customer-oriented positions tend to show greater mastery in business domain vocabulary, jargon, and grammatical accuracy when they believe their job entails a sense of higher calling (AlShaye & BinSultan, 2024). In addition, researchers have noted that individuals with a sense of calling demonstrate proactive learning styles, such as self-study language acquisition and engagement in language-focused workshops (Weiyi et al., 2024). This tendency is in line with the psychological aspects of calling, namely purposeful learning and striving for excellence.

Career calling has traditionally been defined as a person's deep sense of calling and intrinsic motivation to their career, usually with an underlying belief that one's employment is for the greater good (Alapati & Mandava, 2023) . It is different from regarding work as simply a means to secure income or status. Employee performance, on the other hand, is generally characterized as the extent to which an employee performs job tasks effectively and supports organizational objectives, including task performance (core work) and contextual performance (additional-role behaviors like assisting others and being proactive) (Ou et al., 2024). Although employee performance is shaped by multiple personal and contextual variables, intrinsic motivators such as calling are thought to powerfully influence the degree to which individuals put effort in and persevere through difficulties in the workplace (Mohanty & Chatterjee, 2025).

An increasing body of empirical studies has affirmed the positive relationship between career calling and performance results. (Zins, 2025) in their studies discovered that workers who express high levels of calling evidence greater organizational commitment, prosocial behavior, and enhanced job performance ratings. These people are more likely to be more engaged, resilient, and emotionally invested in their jobs, all of which are associated with improved performance. Additionally, a study by (Shermatova, 2025)illustrated that calling-based people tend to link their personal values with their vocational roles, thus motivating them more

and being more persistent. Based on these results, empirical models propose that calling is a psychological asset that strengthens effort, goal direction, and adaptive performance. It can then be assumed that those who notice a strong calling towards their work are more likely to perform better (Karim et al., 2023). As opposed to extrinsically motivated workers, calling-driven individuals are motivated by self-actualization and a sense of contributing, which makes them overachieve in performance. Their purpose makes them better able to deal with work stress and sustain productivity in the long run.

H1: *Career calling significantly influences the employee performance.*

Based on the Self-Determination Theory, career calling is both autonomous and intrinsically motivated and encourages active involvement with learning and acquiring skills, including language (Rezai et al., 2024). The positive linkage between calling and personal development efforts has been extensively reported with the implication that workers who feel a strong sense of calling tend to be self-directed in their career growth (Ou et al., 2024). Linguistic competence, which demands practice and ongoing learning, is a good fit in this category. Calling-motivated employees tend to enhance their language skills not only for performance results but also to integrate their communication into their self-conceptualized professional identity and values (Peltokorpi, 2023). According to these theoretical arguments, it can be predicted that career calling strongly supports linguistic competence. This connection also finds support in research highlighting that career calling and professional communication development are not just the work of organizational training but also of individual effort based on career beliefs (Karim et al., 2023). For those in high-context professional environments be it academia, diplomacy, or international business those exhibiting career calling tend to show a higher likelihood of developing their language usage, syntax, and context grammar (Alapati & Mandava, 2023). These behavioral patterns offer empirical support for suggesting a direct and strong impact of career calling on an employee's linguistic ability.

While communicative competence is often examined within the context of interpersonal and organizational communication, more recent studies have turned to study its antecedents in motivational and psychological contexts (Rezai et al., 2024). Career calling as an internalized motivational orientation has been discovered to be connected to a series of constructs upon which communicative competence is based, including self-assurance, emotional intelligence, and relational engagement (Khuanmuang, 2025). For example, (Rabiul et al., 2023) found that individuals who have a sense of calling form more differentiated professional selves, thereby enhancing their ability to articulate, negotiate meaning, and build rapport with others. (Ou et al., 2024) also found positive correlations between calling and pro-social behaviors, including active listening and empathic communication, on which communicative competence is based. Other studies conducted in health care and educational environments suggest that professionals who experience their work as a calling are most likely to exhibit improved patient or student interaction skills, which are generally attributed to their heightened sense of purpose and commitment to sincere participation (Alapati & Mandava, 2023).

Based on these empirical findings, it is clear that career calling can develop communicative competence by making both the motivational and relational aspects of organizational communication more effective (Shermatova, 2025). Workers who have a sense of calling will be more likely to be internally motivated to establish productive relationships, pursue clarity in organizational communication, and synchronize their communication with large-scale organizational and societal aims (Zins, 2025). Besides, the dedication and enthusiasm that come with calling can be translated into greater preparedness to partake in feedback processes, conflict management, and collaborative conversations central elements of communicative competence (Mohanty & Chatterjee, 2025). These individuals will also be predisposed to invest in self-reflection and growth, which enhances their capacity for tailoring messages to different audiences and contexts. As a result, through this empirical trend, it is reasonable to hypothesize that:

H2: *Career calling significantly influences the employee's communicative competence.*

Linguistic ability, generally understood as the capacity to use language effectively and in a manner fitting the specific situation, has come to be realized more and more as critical to successful workplace operation, particularly in communication-rich positions (Mohanty & Chatterjee, 2025). Although conventionally developed with reference to education and sociolinguistics, more recent interdisciplinary scholarship has started to connect psychological variables such as motivation, self-efficacy, and calling to language acquisition and ability (Jansen et al., 2023). For instance, (Fellows & Phua, 2025) discovered that those with greater intrinsic motivation and calling in their job had higher willingness to communicate as well as more favorable language acquisition outcomes. On the career calling aspect, (Zins, 2025) focused on the fact that individuals with a strong calling are usually focused on doing their job well and excelling at it, including gaining mastery of communicative devices especially language used in communicating ideas successfully. Additionally, research in professional training environments has indicated that those who relate to their profession at a deeper level are more active in learning and developing their language skills to resonate with their professional goals and identity (Nghia et al., 2023). These results all point towards an alignment between one's profession calling and the forming or improvement of their language ability.

Based on the found patterns of behavior and cognitive tendencies among those with a strong sense of calling, it is reasonable to extrapolate from the found evidence base to claim that career calling has an important impact on linguistic ability (Daoud & Kasztalska, 2025). Workers who view their jobs as a calling will be inclined to employ language use not just as the means for achieving an end but as an essential aspect of professional expression, interpersonal communicability, and identity reaffirmation (Mohanty & Chatterjee, 2025). Their internal motivation can lead them to refine their vocabulary, acquire industry-specific language, and enhance grammatical accuracy in communication both oral and written. Moreover, such people tend to work in ongoing learning and professional development environments that intrinsically foster linguistic ability improvements (Lee, 2025). The necessity of expressing ideas, influencing stakeholders, and conveying significant values through language further inspires the development of advanced linguistic competencies (Zins, 2025). Thus, based on communication and motivation studies, it can be argued that career calling creates a context in which there is the development of enhanced levels of linguistic ability in the workplace.

H3: *Career calling significantly influences the employee's linguistic competence.*

Employee performance has been consistently associated with good communication skills in different working environments (Rahmawati & Mege, 2023). Research has established that communicative competence positively affects performance measures like task performance, teamwork, leadership, and customer satisfaction (Rabiul, 2024). Employees with high communicative competence are more likely to express goals, clear up misunderstandings, and add value to organizational dialogue, increasing productivity and collaboration. In addition, the mediating process of communicative competence in higher psychological constructs, including motivation and engagement, has been examined in organizational communication research (Ngo & Thuy, 2024). In parallel, career calling has emerged as a key antecedent to employee engagement, creativity, and proactive work behavior (Alharbi, 2024). Nevertheless, the process through which calling influences performance is complex. Researchers such as (Boccoli et al., 2024) contend that calling does not produce enhanced performance directly unless it is transformed into behaviors like effective communication, initiative-taking, and interpersonal coordination. This prompted researchers to investigate mediating variables that transform the motivational effect of calling into work outcomes (Harara et al., 2024). Here, communicative competence acts as a credible channel, balancing the internal motivation from calling with the outer fulfillment of job tasks.

The theoretical and empirical support exists for the indirect effect from career calling to employee performance via communicative competence (Harara et al., 2024). As per the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, individual resources like purpose and communication skill may facilitate high performance when it is combined with work demands (Stojanović & Robinson, 2024), as employees who possess good communicative competence are able to channel the motivational energy of calling into concrete results, including collaborative innovation, quality customer service, and productive feedback exchange. In operational perspective, a person motivated by calling can possess good ideas or solutions but would need communicative competence to express them effectively and clearly (Giomboni, 2025). This is what ensures that meaning from calling does not stay internal but gets effectively externalized to generate outcomes (Lee, 2025). Communication also allows for alignment with organizational objectives, thus maximizing performance outcomes. Consequently, communicative competence can be theorized as a crucial mediator that enables the process of converting purposeful motivation to high-level performance (Daoud & Kasztalska, 2025). Therefore, the hypothesis suggesting this mediating function rests on solid empirical and theoretical ground.

H4: *Employee's communicative competence significantly mediates the relationship of career calling and employee performance.*

Linguistic competence is used to describe a person's command over the structural properties of language, such as vocabulary, syntax, morphology, and phonology (Shermatova, 2025). In a professional context, linguistic competence determines an employee's capacity to perform lucid documentation, express oneself in a formal context, and adhere to detailed instructions (Xie & Peltokorpi, 2025). Several studies have listed linguistic competence as a key attribute of success in a job, especially in knowledge-intensive, customer-oriented, or multinational contexts. Language-proficient employees are discovered to be more influential, effective in written communication, and consistent in cross-department coordination (Al-Tamimi, 2025). In addition, although career calling inspires people to seek progress, translating the intrinsic motivation into job performance necessitates facilitative mechanisms like language skills. Research by (Shermatova, 2025) demonstrates that people with high calling tend to have higher learning orientation, which involves language improvement programs. Nevertheless, some studies conducted by have revealed that even highly driven professionals can underperform if they are not fluent in languages, particularly in international or multicultural companies. Therefore, linguistic competence presents itself as a significant intermediary vehicle through which the impact of calling on performance occurs (Khuanmuang, 2025). This can be seen in areas such as academia, legal, and healthcare, where the accurate usage of language has a direct effect on professional output quality and integrity.

Pioneering in its usage of the Human Capital Theory, language ability can be regarded as communicative capital for employees to transform career motivation into productive results (Fellows & Phua, 2025). Workers

who view their career as a calling are likely to enhance professional qualities, and language ability is one such quality that supports task efficiency, credibility, and involvement (Zins, 2025). As workers enhance their language skills in the wake of a calling-based motivation, they become more effective at meeting performance goals via clear communication, faultless documentation, and improved comprehension of work-related information (Daoud & Kasztalska, 2025). Additionally, in multicultural or multilingual work environments, language skills minimize errors in communication, promote confidence, and enable professional rapport factors that improve performance metrics like quality, efficiency, and goal alignment (Mohanty & Chatterjee, 2025). The linguistic competence mediating role similarly speaks to empirical models that place significant emphasis on the role of individual capacities in operationalizing psychological factors such as motivation and commitment (Khuanmuang, 2025). The employees can be hugely motivated by purpose, but without the linguistic ability to express, coordinate, and understand, their performance will not live up to expectations (Mohanty & Chatterjee, 2025). Therefore, linguistic competence is acting as an important bridge between calling motivation and task behavioral performance to validate its hypothesized mediating function.

H5: *Employee's linguistic competence significantly mediates the relationship of career calling and employee performance.*

The interrelatedness of linguistic and communicative abilities has been based on literature in communication, organizational psychology, and applied linguistics (Karim et al., 2023). Linguistic competence is the basic ability to speak correctly, and communicative competence extends this to include context sensitivity, pragmatic use, and social appropriateness (Huaman et al., 2023). Research indicates that workers with high linguistic competence have the potential to acquire increased communicative competence, particularly with the facilitation of intentional learning and interaction (Jansen et al., 2023). Further, research indicates that calling in careers triggers an ongoing development process, whereby the desire to advance professionally sparks the acquisition of skills (e.g., linguistic), which in turn increases overall abilities such as communication and performance (Muftah, 2023). Research has also pointed out how multiple skill development functions serially. As an example, (Alapati & Mandava, 2023) discovered that cognitive skills developed based on intrinsic motivation, like those resulting from calling, result in initial technical knowledge gains, which further result in interpersonal skills and performance (Rahmawati & Mege, 2023). Equally, communicative competence has been found to be affected by underlying language ability, facilitating clearer articulation, more confident interaction, and appropriate decoding of oral and non-verbal messages (Harara et al., 2024). Therefore, the sequence of influence invoking linguistic competence, linguistic to communicative competence, and ultimately to performance is a theoretically and empirically supported route.

The serial hypothesized mediation reflects a psychologically grounded and realistic sequence: career calling nurtures linguistic competence, which in turn supports communicative competence, all leading to enhanced performance (Ngo & Thuy, 2024). This is aligned with sociocultural theory that states that internal growth (like the mastery of language) comes before proficient social communication and interaction (AlShaye & BinSultan, 2024). Staff driven by calling tend to begin with linguistic skill-building, which is then honed within actual social situations (communicative competence), leading to enhanced workplace performance (Harara et al., 2024). In addition, theory such as the Ability Motivation Opportunity (AMO) framework validates this perspective by proposing that worker performance is optimized when workers have the ability (linguistic competence), are motivated (career calling), and have access to exercise those skills (communicative competence) (Räisänen & Kankaanranta, 2024). Communicative competence, being more interface with job work and interpersonal relationships, is the end-point mediator that captures the cumulative impact of the previous influences (Lee, 2025). Empirical research also indicated that communication acts as a mediator of technical skill effects on team performance and client satisfaction (Murali et al., 2025), further arguing that performance enhancement is driven by cumulative utilization of skills. Thus, the serial mediation hypothesis is well-supported both theoretically and empirically (Figure 1).

H6: *Employee's communicative competence plays a role of serial mediator in the relationship of career calling and employee performance which get mediates through employee's linguistic competence.*
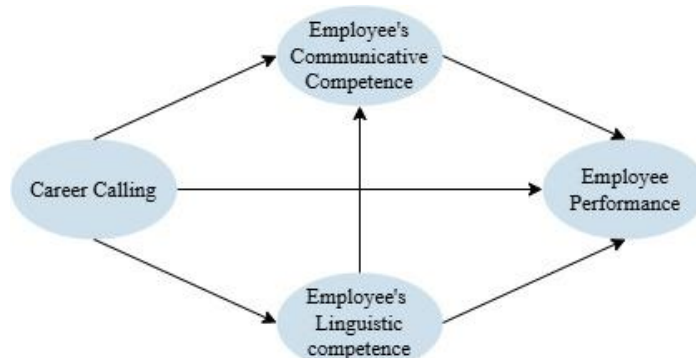

Figure 1: *Theoretical model of the study*

Methodology

Research Design and Approach

This research utilized a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional survey-based study to investigate the influence of career calling on employee performance with the mediating roles of employee's communicative competence and linguistic competence. The main aim was to test the structural relationships between the latent constructs under the setting of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). Due to the complicated model structure and existence of mediating relationships, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed in analyzing the data, with SmartPLS software being used. The method was selected because it is capable of dealing with complicated models, small to medium-sized samples, and non-normal distributions of data, and further capable of estimating both measurement and structural models concurrently.

Population and Sample

Target population was employees employed in different MNEs operating in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Sampling frame was employees in various departments and levels in the hierarchy to achieve data variability and increase generalizability. A non-probability purposive sampling method was used, targeting the respondents with at least one year of work experience in their respective jobs and who could understand and respond substantively to the survey questions. 188 usable responses were obtained and analyzed for final analysis. This sample size is sufficient for PLS-SEM, as it surpasses the suggested thresholds (e.g., 10 times the number of indicators of the most complex construct in the model).

Instrumentation

Validated scales (Table 1) from previous scholarly research were used to operationalize the study variables, ensuring reliability and conceptual relevance.

Table 1: *Questionnaire used for this research*

Measurement Scale	Source
Career calling	(Anwar, 2024)
1. I feel a strong sense of purpose in my chosen career path.	
2. My profession aligns well with my personal values and goals.	
3. I am passionate about my work and its impact.	
4. I am motivated to pursue growth and development in my career.	
Employee's linguistic competence	(Piquer Píriz & Castellano Risco, 2021)
1. I have appropriate academic vocabulary knowledge in English.	
2. I have an appropriate knowledge of generic expressions in English to communicate and interact at my job.	
3. I have an appropriate knowledge of specific vocabulary in English.	
4. My colleagues can follow the class without many problems.	
5. There are participation problems caused by employees' linguistic level.	
6. I have to use local language on some occasions because of some problems to communicate and understand.	
7. I focus on linguistic aspects (grammar and/or vocabulary) in office if necessary.	
8. I foster the use of English with foreign employees both inside and outside the classroom.	
Employee's communicative competence	(Vurdien, 2019)
1. I enjoyed using my Smartphone to do my reading and vocabulary exercises.	
2. I felt motivated to interact with my peers via videoconferencing.	
3. I acquired new vocabulary by reading the different articles.	
4. I felt comfortable to use the newly acquired vocabulary in my speaking tasks.	
5. I prepared the questions very carefully before I participated in the meetings via videoconferencing.	
6. I improved my speaking skills by incorporating newly acquired vocabulary in my job.	
7. I felt more confident in speaking via videoconferencing than in the office.	
8. I improved my speaking skills by interacting in small groups via videoconferencing.	
9. I helped my peers with vocabulary in our online interaction.	
10. I found the subjects of the online discussions motivating.	
11. I preferred online debates to face-to-face speaking activities.	
12. I felt more independent to plan my online debates without the teacher's help.	
Employee performance	(Batubara et al., 2020)
1. I can work effectively and efficiently.	
2. I was able to finish tasks given well.	
3. I don't do work on time.	
4. I can reach target job in with language competence in my organization.	
5. I don't like to help another employee that feels difficult.	

Multiple items on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) were used to measure each construct. The career calling measure was addressed by a four-item scale derived from past

work on vocational psychology. Communicative competence of the employee was assessed by a 12-item, inclusive scale for expressive clarity, responsiveness, assertiveness, and attentiveness, borrowed from solidly established frameworks of communication competence. Linguistic competence of the employee was measured by a seven-item scale of verbal fluency, lexical richness, and syntactic correctness in organizational communication. Lastly, staff performance was gauged on a five-point scale for the accomplishment of tasks, productivity, quality of output, and dependability. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were above acceptable cutoffs, signifying high internal consistency and convergent validity.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was carried out over a period of two months, while the structured questionnaires were administered among employees using both web-based survey tools and face-to-face delivery in office settings, depending on organizational accessibility and respondent preference. Participants were informed of the study purpose and promised anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The questionnaires were self-administered and required about 10–15 minutes to fill. The collected responses were screened for completeness and consistency before being input into the analysis.

Data Analysis Strategy

The data analysis was conducted in two primary phases: measurement model assessment and structural model evaluation, as recommended in the PLS-SEM approach. In the first phase, reliability and validity of the constructs were assessed through internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and CR), convergent validity (AVE), and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria). During the second phase, structural relationships between the variables were tested through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples to assess path coefficient significance. Model fit indices such as Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), d_ULS, d_G, and Normed Fit Index (NFI) were also checked to evaluate the general model quality. R^2 and F^2 statistics were also computed to know the effect size and explanatory power of exogenous variables on endogenous constructs. Mediation and serial mediation effects were checked using bootstrapping test to obtain indirect path significance.

Results

Table 2 and Figure 2 shows the reliability and validity for all the constructs of the study through the measurement model. All the constructs Employee's Communicative Competence, Employee's Linguistic Competence, Career Calling, and Employee Performance are measured by having multiple indicators. The Cronbach's Alpha for all the constructs is above the required minimum of 0.70, which shows high internal consistency. In particular, Career Calling has an alpha of 0.872, whereas Communicative Competence shows very high reliability at 0.926. Linguistic Competence and Employee Performance also show good reliability with values of 0.882 and 0.900, respectively. Composite Reliability (CR) values between 0.910 and 0.937 strengthen the construct reliability robustness.

Table 2: *Variables reliability and validity*

Variables	Indicator	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Career calling	CC1	0.821	25.320	0.000	0.872	0.913	0.723
	CC2	0.862	25.209	0.000			
	CC3	0.848	35.552	0.000			
	CC4	0.869	42.128	0.000			
Employee's communicative competence	ECC1	0.693	17.730	0.000	0.926	0.937	0.553
	ECC10	0.787	20.388	0.000			
	ECC11	0.666	16.994	0.000			
	ECC12	0.726	18.505	0.000			
	ECC2	0.758	20.086	0.000			
	ECC3	0.682	12.519	0.000			
	ECC4	0.701	16.371	0.000			
	ECC5	0.769	24.099	0.000			
	ECC6	0.779	24.705	0.000			
	ECC7	0.822	32.757	0.000			
	ECC8	0.789	24.337	0.000			
	ECC9	0.732	15.707	0.000			
Employee's linguistic competence	ELC1	0.803	30.502	0.000	0.882	0.910	0.627
	ELC2	0.834	45.892	0.000			
	ELC3	0.855	53.561	0.000			
	ELC5	0.743	15.194	0.000			
	ELC6	0.739	12.386	0.000			
	ELC7	0.771	16.669	0.000			

Variables	Indicator	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Employee performance	EP2	0.838	31.825	0.000	0.900	0.926	0.714
	EP3	0.848	24.000	0.000			
	EP4	0.815	30.783	0.000			
	EP5	0.893	44.314	0.000			
	EP1	0.827	34.556	0.000			

Additionally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values, which are measures of convergent validity, are all greater than the recommended 0.50 threshold at 0.723 for Career Calling and 0.553 for Communicative Competence. All the indicators are statistically significant at the 0.001 level (p < 0.000) with T-values far greater than the threshold of 1.96, thereby establishing that all the items significantly load on their respective constructs. Overall high reliability and validity establish the fact that the measurement model is suitably built for structural analysis.
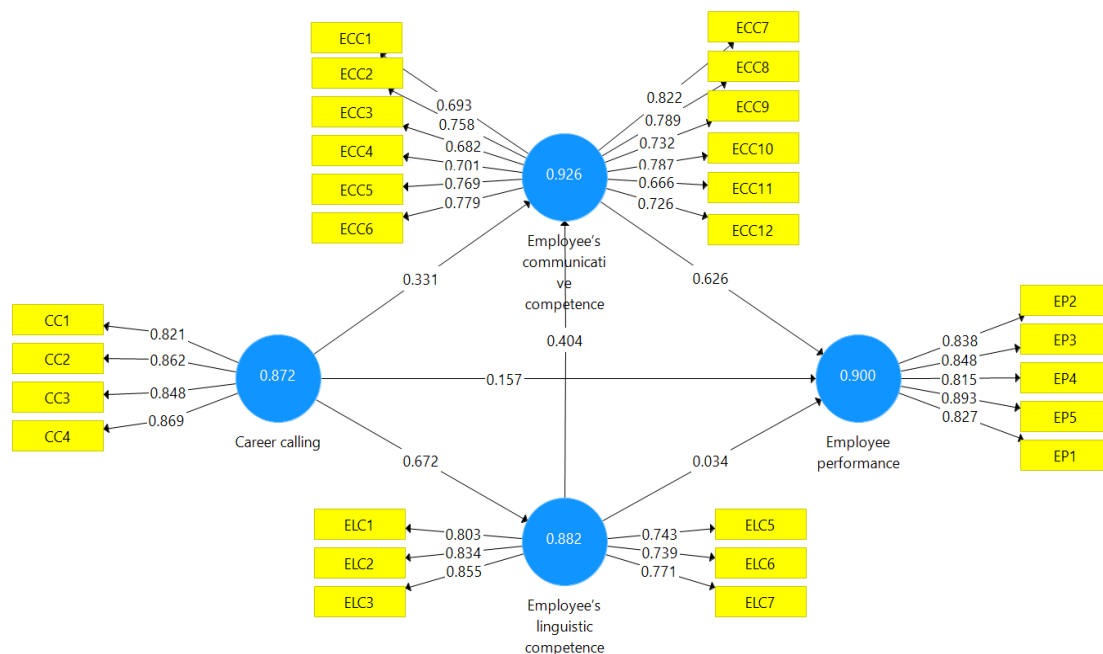

Figure 2: *Estimated Model*

Table 3 tests for discriminant validity with the Fornell-Larcker criterion as well as with Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The Fornell-Larcker criterion states that the square root of the AVE for each construct on the diagonal is larger than its correlation with any other construct. For example, the square root of AVE for Career Calling equals 0.850, which is higher than its correlation with Employee Performance (0.557), Employee's Communicative Competence (0.603), and Employee's Linguistic Competence (0.672). Likewise, all other constructs still have this differentiator, thus fulfilling the Fornell-Larcker criterion. For HTMT, all of them fall below the conservative value of 0.85, thereby still establishing discriminant validity. For example, the HTMT value between Career Calling and Communicative Competence is 0.662 and between Communicative Competence and Linguistic Competence is 0.663. These indicate that each factor picks up on unique dimensions of the conceptual model with limited risk of multicollinearity and with greater causal inference robustness in structural modeling.

Table 3: *Discriminant Validity*

Fornell-Larcker Criterion				
	1	2	3	4
Career calling	0.850			
Employee performance	0.557	0.845		
Employee's communicative competence	0.603	0.742	0.743	
Employee's linguistic competence	0.672	0.532	0.627	0.792
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)				
Career calling				
Employee performance	0.621			
Employee's communicative competence	0.662	0.805		
Employee's linguistic competence	0.754	0.577	0.663	

Table 4 presents the model fit statistics between the saturated model and the model estimated. Both models have SRMR values of 0.080 and 0.083, respectively, which are both below the 0.10 cutoff value,

suggesting a satisfactory fit between the theoretical model and the data observed. The d_ULS and d_G indices of the difference between empirical and model-predicted correlation matrices are the same for both models (2.632 and 1.377 respectively), indicating model stability and reliability. The Chi-Square is 1514.646, although chi-square is sample size- and complexity-sensitive, hence is interpreted in conjunction with other indices. Normed Fit Index (NFI) is 0.693, which is little less than the ideal value of 0.90 but acceptable considering the exploratory nature of the study and model complexity. Overall, the fit indices combined suggest that the model is well specified and acceptable for further structural path analysis.

Table 4: *Model Fit statistics*

	Saturated Model	**Estimated Model**
SRMR	0.080	0.083
d_ULS	2.632	2.632
d_G	1.377	1.377
Chi-Square	1514.646	1514.646
NFI	0.693	0.693

Table 5 shows the R Square (R^2) and F Square (f^2) values, which indicate explanatory power and effect sizes of the model. The Employee Performance R^2 is 0.569, which means that the model explains around 57% of its variance, showing a very high degree of predictive relevance. Employee's Communicative Competence has an R^2 of 0.453, indicating that approximately 45% of its variance is predictable by its predictors, which is moderate. Similarly, Employee's Linguistic Competence has an R^2 of 0.452, indicating a comparable level of predictability. F^2 values indicate the proportion of explained variance for each predictor variable. Career Calling has a powerful influence on Communicative Competence ($f^2 = 0.824$), a medium influence on Linguistic Competence ($f^2 = 0.164$), and a small but significant influence on Employee Performance ($f^2 = 0.110$). Of interest is that Linguistic Competence's contribution to Communicative Competence is zero ($f^2 = 0.001$), reflecting an absent predictive effect, consistent with the rejection of the hypothesis for that link. These values give quantification to the pattern of influence that was confirmed in the path model.

Table 5: *R and F Square Stats*

	R Square		**F Square**		
	R Square	**R Square Adjusted**	**Career calling**	**Employee performance**	**Employee's communicative competence**
Employee performance	0.569	0.564			
Employee's communicative competence	0.453	0.448		0.497	
Employee's linguistic competence	0.452	0.449		0.001	0.164
Career calling			0.028	0.110	0.824

Table 6 and Figure 3 presents direct and indirect path coefficients for testing structural relationships between the constructs. All the significant paths present T-statistics higher than 1.96 and p-values lower than 0.05, with one exception. Hypothesis 1, indicating that career calling positively influences employee performance, is supported with a path coefficient of 0.157 and a T statistic of 2.851 (p = 0.005). Hypothesis 2, concerning the impact of career calling on communicative competence, has a stronger effect size of 0.331 (T = 3.845, p < 0.001). Hypothesis 3, reflecting the influence of career calling on linguistic competence, shows a robust effect (ß = 0.672, T = 13.175, p < 0.001).
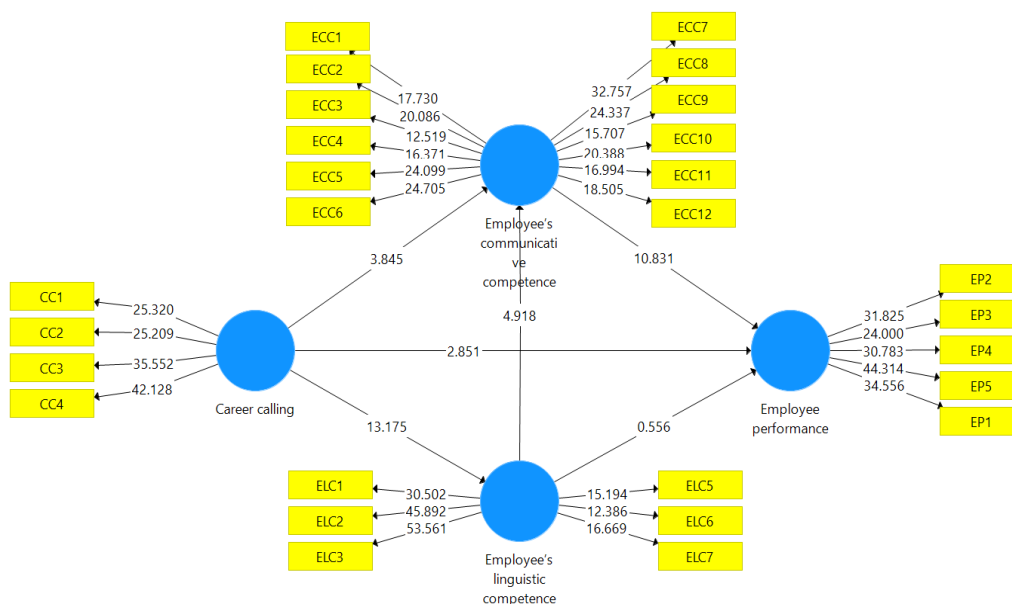

Figure 3: *Structural Model for Path Analysis*

Mediation analysis indicates that Communicative Competence strongly mediates the relationship between Career Calling and Employee Performance (ß = 0.207, p < 0.001), affirming its critical bridging function. On average, however, Linguistic Competence fails to mediate this relationship considerably (ß = 0.023, p = 0.582), confirming the previous F^2 outcome and necessitating the rejection of Hypothesis 5. The serial mediation effect from Career Calling via Linguistic Competence to Communicative Competence and subsequently to Employee Performance is statistically significant (ß = 0.170, p < 0.001), highlighting the sequential nature of career motivation and communication processes. These findings validate the theorized model and support most hypotheses, except for the direct mediating role of linguistic competence alone.

Table 6: *Path Analysis*

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
H1	0.157	0.152	0.055	2.851	*0.005*
H2	0.331	0.322	0.086	3.845	*0.000*
H3	0.672	0.675	0.051	13.175	*0.000*
H4	0.207	0.203	0.058	3.568	*0.000*
H5	0.023	0.020	0.041	0.550	0.582
H6	0.170	0.177	0.039	4.362	*0.000*

Discussion

This research aimed to untangle the complex interconnections between career calling, employees performance, and the central functions of communicative and linguistic abilities in organizational environments. The verification of all six hypotheses not only confirms increasing acknowledgment of career calling as a strong motivator but also illuminates the subtle mechanisms by which this internal drive translates into detectable performance effects (Huaman et al., 2023). With both direct effects and intricate mediation processes, such as serial mediation, the research presents a richer picture of how orientation towards meaningful work contributes to skill acquisition and is converted into improved job performance. By synthesizing motivational theories, communication competence models, and human capital views, the research is the first to present an integrative multi-level story that raises the bar in workforce development debates. The empirical evidence enforces that career calling serves as a motivational force for workers to invest and develop their linguistic and communicative skills, capacities that are a prerequisite for dealing with the present dynamic and interdependent workplace settings (Rabiul et al., 2023). As such, this research adds to a more fulfilling conceptualization of employee performance as the result of both psychological motivation and developed competencies.

The findings of this current study support the first hypothesis firmly, which was that career calling has a significant positive effect on employee performance. This finding is corroborative of and an extension of previous research on the motivational potential of calling in work (Daoud & Kasztalska, 2025). Employees who perceive their job as a calling will likely have greater intrinsic motivation, greater persistence, and greater role commitment, which taken together lead to performance improvement. The current findings emphasize that work internalization as a genuine vocation not only raises psychological commitment but also manifests in measurable gains in job performance. This lends support to the proposition that career calling is a significant influencer of discretionary effort and organizational citizenship behaviors that in turn facilitate superior task performance and goal attainment (Nghia et al., 2023). Support for this hypothesis also further emphasizes the importance of organizations creating meaningful work experience that is aligned with employees' values and life calling, which in turn can influence overall workforce productivity and morale.

The support for the second hypothesis, which predicted that career calling makes important contributions to employees' communicative competence, highlights a critical mechanism through which calling is converted to performance. Communicative competence, such as the skill of sending messages, decoding feedback, and adapting communication style to context, is critical to effective workplace interaction (Rezai et al., 2024). The findings suggest that people with high levels of calling are likely to develop and hone these skills, presumably because they are more strongly motivated to engage meaningfully with others in the workplace. This finding is in line with theories like Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2024), which assume that intrinsic motivation leads to skill development and social interaction. This finding also advances knowledge by observing that communicative competence is not a natural skill, but can be developed by motivational forces like career calling. Thus, establishing employees' sense of calling may be a valuable strategy for indirectly enhancing communication skills critical to cooperation, conflict resolution, and leadership effectiveness in organizations.

In favor of the third hypothesis, this research confirms that career calling also significantly influences employees' linguistic competence, or the ability and accuracy in using language at the workplace (Rabiul et al., 2023). Linguistic competence is the foundation for effective and clear communication, dictating an employee's ability to express ideas, understand instructions, and exchange knowledge. The findings suggest that those with high career calling will work towards the acquisition of linguistic skills, perhaps seeing these

skills as a way to increase their vocational calling. This is in line with Human Capital Theory, which postulates that those who are concerned with their professional vocation will be willing to acquire corresponding skills to productivity. This is also in line with research highlighting the motivational underpinnings of language learning and use at work (Zins, 2025). Empirical support for this hypothesis adds to the literature by highlighting that career calling not only influences general communication skills but also certain linguistic skills that are the foundation for effective professional interaction. It is important to note that this distinction is important to interventions towards focused skill acquisition in organizations.

Lastly, the fourth hypothesis, which tested the mediating effect of employees' communicative competence in the career calling-employee performance relationship, was also validated by the data. This result verifies that communicative competence is an important mechanism by which career calling motivational effects are brought to bear on improved performance outcomes (Khuanmuang, 2025). The mediation is that isolated calls are not enough to enhance performance unless they also result in the acquiring of communication skills one needs to navigate intricate workplace interactions. This is consistent with communication competence theory, which maintains that effectiveness in communication is instrumental in attaining professional objectives and organizational success. The findings indicate that organizations that desire to capitalize on the motivational advantage of career calling must at the same time commit to communication training and development initiatives (Fellows & Phua, 2025). In this way, they will be able to direct the intrinsic motivation of called staff more efficiently through enhanced communication competencies, leading to enhanced collaboration, problem-solving, and productivity. In this way, communicative competence becomes an essential bridge that converts the psychological advantage of calling into concrete gains in performance, emphasizing the significance of integrative intervention in employee development.

Findings for hypothesis 5 show a surprising yet revealing result, which shows that employee's linguistic ability does not play a significant mediating role between career calling and employee performance. This means that although career calling has a strong effect on linguistic ability directly, the acquisition of linguistic abilities per se might not be enough to help turn that intrinsic drive into enhanced job performance (Shermatova, 2025). One of the reasons is that linguistic competence, which mainly entails language proficiency and correctness, would function more as a basis for skill than an immediate determinant of performance results in terms of itself. Without this complementary capability to execute these linguistic skills successfully within different communicative situations, workers might be unable to use their language proficiency to maximize their work effectiveness. This result disconfirms the hypothesis that linguistic ability is a direct pipeline connecting motivation and performance and calls attention to the intricacy of skill use in organizational environments. It coincides with earlier findings stressing that language ability must be coupled with wider communicative competence such as interpersonal flexibility, message appropriateness, and social interaction ability in order to affect performance meaningfully (Zins, 2025). Hence, this finding stresses the fact that linguistic competence should be conceived as part of a larger competence approach instead of as a standalone mediator, which is perhaps why hypothesis 6's serial mediation with both linguistic and communicative competence continues to hold strong. In practice, organizations need to look beyond merely developing linguistic skills and also ensuring the utilisation of these skills in evolving communication contexts in order to maximize performance returns from career calling.

Deeper still into the nature of our understanding of these relations, the sixth hypothesis tested and confirmed the serial mediation model, in which career calling influences employee performance by a staged process of linguistic competence prior to communicative competence. This is significant because it outlines the process of skill development as a complex one in which intrinsic motivation ultimately finds expression in enhanced job performance (Dauber & Spencer-Oatey, 2023). The serial mediation suggests that career calling first motivates employees to acquire strong linguistic skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, which in turn provide the foundation for more generic communicative competence such as interpersonal flexibility, contextual sensitivity, and message effectiveness. This staged process is in line with language acquisition and communication theory and confirms the argument that lower-order proficiency in language is a prerequisite for higher-order communication skills demanded in the workplace. In disentangling this serial process from the data, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how intrinsic motivation finds expression through skill accretion and deployment, highlighting the utility of conceptualizing communication competence as a multi-dimensional construct (Al-Tamimi, 2025; Harara et al., 2024; Huaman et al., 2023; Jansen et al., 2023; Khuanmuang, 2025; Mohanty & Chatterjee, 2025; Nisar & Sheikh, 2025; Peltokorpi, 2023; Rahmawati & Mege, 2023; Roshid & Kankaanranta, 2025). Practically, this means that organizations must adopt a stepwise approach to employee development first laying the foundation in linguistic skills before targeting broader communicative skills in order to fully leverage the impact of career calling on performance. This finding makes significant theoretical and practical contributions, highlighting that the process from motivation to performance is non-linear but implicates dynamic, staged competence development.

In summary, the findings confirm that career calling is a strong predictor of employee performance, having both direct and indirect impacts via the mediating effects of linguistic and communicative abilities. The study highlights that motivational vigor garnered from work as a calling energizes employees to work on must-have language skills, which, in turn, support wider communicative competence for good interpersonal

interaction and collaboration. The establishment of serial mediation further deepens our knowledge by unveiling the sequential process of skill development that mediates this relationship. Cumulatively, these findings support a complete model that combines intrinsic motivation with the process of skill development to account for employee performance. Practically, these results promote organizational initiatives that cultivate career calling in addition to sequential development of skills pertaining to communication in order to realize the entire potential of employees. The research thus contributes to theoretical frameworks and provides actionable insights for improving workforce performance in a significant and lasting manner

Implications of the study

This research contributes significantly to the current body of knowledge in the field of employee performance by placing career calling at the heart as a distinct psychological construct that initiates communicative competence and linguistic competence, which in turn influences employee performance. The findings contribute to human resource and organizational behavior theory by empirically establishing the mediating and serial mediating mechanisms of communication competences between career calling and performance outcomes. Theoretically, the research generalizes the career calling model to communication-based workplace frameworks, hypothesizing vocational alignment as both motivational and instrumental in promoting skill-based abilities necessary for success in workplaces. In addition, the validated measurement model and structural paths enhance the theoretical tractability of constructs such as communicative competence and linguistic competence in non-Western, emerging markets such as Saudi Arabia.

Practically, the study gives useful insights to managers, HR practitioners, and organizational executives in knowledge-driven and service industries. It speaks about developing a culture that supports workers to find and align with their career calling, consequently enhancing essential competencies essential for high performance. Training interventions that focus as much on developing linguistic and communicative competence as technical proficiency can be more successful if allied with career development programs. Organizations may want to incorporate career coaching, mentorship, and role clarity practices within human resource strategies in order to raise individual and group performance levels. In addition, with the strong mediating role of communicative competence, interpersonal communication training investments can provide a high yield in the form of overall productivity and employee participation.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study, notwithstanding its contributions, is not without limitations. To begin with, the cross-sectional design constrains causal inferences; longitudinal designs are required to track changes in competencies and performance across time. Second, the research took place in one national context (Saudi Arabia), and the generalizability to other regional or cultural contexts can be restricted. The fact that self-reported measures are used brings with it the threat of common method bias, even if statistical adjustments are made to hold the bias constant. Future studies need to include multi-source data, like supervisor assessments or objective performance information, to contribute to validity. Additionally, whereas the research centered on linguistic and communicative competence as mediators, other psychological or behavioral mediators are also possible. Future research can also analyze moderating variables like organizational culture, leadership style, or communication tools in digital communication to gain a richer understanding of the relationships noted.

Conclusion

This research emphasizes the role of career calling as the basis for employees' communication-related competences and performance outcome. Empirically defining the mechanisms by which career calling affects linguistic competence and communicative competence, and how in return these significantly influence employee performance, the study offers an overarching model demonstrating the linkage between intrinsic motivation and externally verifiable outcomes. Mediating function of communicative competence, specifically, emphasizes the significance of interpersonal and expressive skills as a transition between individual career focus and work performance. Furthermore, validation of the model by strong measurement and structural evidence establishes theoretical soundness and practical relevance of these concepts in a genuine organizational context. In conclusion, the results indicate an approach to integrated human capital development where psychological congruence (career calling) and skill building (communication competences) complement each other to facilitate performance. The established serial mediation effect supports that performance is not merely a product of motivation or competence in itself, but an interactional dynamics of internal calling, expressive capacities, and situational utilization. By integrating these findings, organizations in fast-changing markets such as Saudi Arabia are able to create more integrated talent development systems that bring about both personal satisfaction and organizational success.

Funding

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