

Research/Review

The Influence of Internal Communication and Leadership Style on the Work Motivation of Specialists in Public Relations Agency XYZ

Girzavania Nugrita Nugroho^{1*}, Ratri Wahyuningtyas²

¹ Universitas Telkom, Indonesia: girzavania1@gmail.com

² Universitas Telkom, Indonesia: ratriwahyu@telkomuniversity.ac.id

*Corresponding Author: Girzavania Nugrita Nugroho

Abstract: This study examines the influence of internal communication and leadership style on employee work motivation at Public Relation Agency XYZ. The research focuses on understanding how these two organizational factors shape the motivation levels of employees, particularly freelance experts who contribute significantly to the agency's performance and service quality. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through a structured survey designed to capture employees' perceptions of communication effectiveness, leadership characteristics, and motivational conditions within the agency. The collected data were then analyzed using SmartPLS to test the proposed relationships. The findings indicate that both internal communication and leadership style exert a significant and positive influence on work motivation, highlighting the crucial role of clear information flow and supportive leadership behavior. Moreover, the results suggest that enhancing communication practices and applying a more transformational leadership style can substantially improve employee motivation. This study offers practical recommendations for strengthening internal communication systems and leadership development initiatives to foster higher engagement, productivity, and overall motivation among employees at Public Relation Agency XYZ.

Keywords: Employee Engagement; Internal Communication; Leadership Style; Public Relations; Work Motivation.

1. Introduction

In the context of increasing competition in the public relations industry, the role of effective internal communication and leadership style has become crucial for employee motivation and organizational success (Mazzei & Ravazzani, 2015; Men & Bowen, 2017). Public Relation Agency XYZ, a leading organization in the industry, heavily relies on freelance experts to manage various projects that require specialized skills. Despite its strong reputation and skilled workforce, the agency faces challenges in maintaining high work motivation, particularly among its freelance employees.

The main issue lies in the organization's internal communication practices and leadership style. Internal communication is essential for keeping employees informed, aligned with organizational goals, and engaged in their work (Ruck & Welch, 2012). Leadership style, particularly transformational leadership, plays a vital role in influencing how motivated employees feel and how committed they are to achieving the organization's objectives (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Breevaart et al., 2014).

Studies have shown that poor communication and ineffective leadership can lead to disengagement, lower morale, and reduced productivity (Suryani, 2019; Bass, 1990). This research aims to explore the relationship between internal communication, leadership style, and work motivation in Public Relation Agency XYZ. The focus of this study is to fill the gap in understanding how communication and leadership affect the motivation of freelance experts in the context of public relations firms in Indonesia, an area that has not been extensively studied. Despite having a skilled and competent workforce, Public Relation

Received: July 25, 2025

Revised: September 16, 2025

Accepted: November 28, 2025

Published: November 30, 2025

Curr. Ver.: November 30, 2025



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.

Submitted for possible open

access publication under the

terms and conditions of the

Creative Commons Attribution

(CC BY SA) license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

Agency XYZ faces a significant challenge in maintaining the motivation of its freelance employees. Freelancers often report feeling disconnected from the company due to a lack of clear communication and ineffective leadership practices. These issues have led to lower employee engagement and motivation, which negatively impacts organizational performance and client outcomes. Competence and motivation play a significant role in improving employee performance, emphasizing the need for effective motivation and continuous competence development within organizations (Andika & Wahyuningtyas, 2024).

The problem identified is the gap between the existing organizational communication and leadership practices and the motivational needs of the freelance workforce. A person will not perform a task optimally if they do not have strong internal motivation (Reno & Wahyuningtyas, 2021). This research will explore how internal communication and leadership style influence work motivation, and identify strategies to address these issues effectively.

This study aims to: 1) Investigate the impact of internal communication on the work motivation of freelance experts at Public Relation Agency XYZ, 2) Examine how leadership style influences work motivation within the agency, and 3) Provide recommendations to improve internal communication and leadership practices in order to enhance employee motivation at Public Relation Agency XYZ.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the relationship between internal communication, leadership style, and work motivation within the context of a public relations agency in Indonesia, specifically in relation to freelance experts. While previous studies have examined communication and leadership in traditional settings, few studies have explored these factors in the context of freelance work in the public relations industry. This research will provide insights into how communication strategies and leadership practices can be adapted to better suit the needs of a freelance workforce, thereby contributing to the body of knowledge on organizational behavior and public relations management.

2. Materials and Method

This research employs a quantitative approach aimed at analyzing the impact of internal communication and leadership style on work motivation at Public Relation Agency XYZ. This approach was chosen because it allows for the measurement of the relationships between the variables in a numerical form, enabling a deeper understanding of how internal communication and leadership styles influence work motivation. The study uses primary data, collected through a survey distributed to freelance experts working at the company. Below is a detailed explanation of the data type, data sources, and analysis methods used in this study.

Data Type and Sources

The data used in this research is primary data, meaning it was directly collected from the respondents who are involved in the research subject. Primary data was gathered using a questionnaire distributed to 87 employees at Public Relation Agency XYZ, including freelance experts. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample, where respondents were chosen based on their direct involvement with internal communication and leadership practices at the agency.

The questionnaire used in this study consists of three main sections:

1. **Internal Communication:** Measures how employees perceive the clarity, accuracy, and transparency of the information they receive regarding company policies, goals, and project developments.
2. **Leadership Style:** Measures employees' perceptions of the leadership style implemented by management, specifically whether it leans more toward transformational or transactional leadership.
3. **Work Motivation:** Measures the level of work motivation among employees, including aspects such as job commitment, satisfaction, and drive to perform well.

Each section of the questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to assess how respondents feel about the statements provided. This allows the researcher to quantitatively measure the perceptions of employees regarding the variables being studied.

Data collection was carried out using survey distribution through both online and offline methods, making it accessible for respondents with different work schedules and locations. Before the full survey distribution, a pre-test was conducted on a small group of respondents

to ensure that the instructions and questions were clear. This pre-test also helped to check the validity and reliability of the instruments used.

Data Analysis Methods

The data collected was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the help of SmartPLS software. SEM is a statistical approach used to test causal relationships between latent variables that cannot be measured directly, such as internal communication, leadership style, and work motivation.

The SEM analysis was conducted in two main stages:

1. **Measurement Model Evaluation:** In this stage, the validity and reliability of the research instruments were tested. Construct validity was assessed by looking at the loading factor values, while reliability was assessed by checking Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). A construct is considered valid and reliable if the loading factor is greater than 0.7 and the AVE is greater than 0.5.
2. **Structural Model Evaluation:** In this stage, the relationships between the latent variables were tested. The path coefficients derived from the model represent the strength and direction of the influence between variables. The R-squared value was also examined to assess how much variance in the dependent variable (work motivation) is explained by the independent variables (internal communication and leadership style). The t-statistics and p-values (with $p < 0.05$ considered significant) were used to determine the statistical significance of the relationships.

Validity and Reliability

Before the data was used for further analysis, validity and reliability tests were performed to ensure that the instruments used accurately measured the intended variables and provided consistent results. Validity was assessed by examining the loading factor of each indicator, while reliability was tested by checking Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values. A high reliability value indicates that the instrument produces consistent measurements.

3. Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

The respondents of this study were freelance experts from Public Relation Agency XYZ, with a total of 87 participants. The data was analyzed based on their work experience and job position. The majority of the respondents (65.5%) had 0–3 years of work experience, followed by 19% with 3–5 years of experience, and a small percentage (8.3%) had more than 7 years of experience. These characteristics indicate a relatively young workforce with limited tenure, which could influence their perceptions of internal communication and leadership styles.

In terms of job position, 71.4% of the respondents were Social Media Officers, while only 28.6% held Project Manager positions. This indicates a more operational focus in terms of staff roles, with fewer individuals in managerial positions. The heavy representation of social media officers suggests that communication and leadership challenges might be more prominent at the operational level.

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

The survey results show key insights into the perceptions of respondents regarding the variables of internal communication, leadership style, and work motivation.

Internal Communication

The analysis of internal communication revealed significant gaps in the way communication flows within the organization.

1. **Downward Communication:** The average score for downward communication was 164, equating to 37.70%, which places it in the "Not Good" category. Respondents indicated that management's communication especially instructions and project updates was unclear. A notable finding was that a large percentage (40.69%) felt that management did not adequately build a sense of ownership over tasks or provide clear rationales for job assignments.

2. **Upward Communication:** The results for upward communication were similarly poor, with an average score of 155.25 (35.69%). Respondents indicated that communication between employees and management was infrequent, and employees did not feel comfortable providing feedback or discussing issues openly with their superiors. Many reported that they did not have sufficient channels to report work challenges or suggest improvements.
 3. **Horizontal Communication:** Horizontal communication received an average score of 145 (33.33%), indicating significant communication breakdowns between colleagues. The data suggests that teamwork and collaboration across departments were minimal, contributing to inefficiencies in completing projects and achieving organizational goals.
- These findings reflect a strong need for improvement in communication at all levels: downward, upward, and horizontal. Enhancing communication within the organization is essential for boosting employee morale, reducing misunderstandings, and ensuring better coordination among teams.

Leadership Style

The analysis of leadership style revealed that the current leadership practices at Public Relation Agency XYZ are predominantly authoritarian in nature, with little room for employee participation or autonomy.

The average score for leadership style was 64.50%, which indicates that employees generally perceive the leadership as controlling and hierarchical. Respondents felt that decisions were primarily made by the leaders, without sufficient involvement from the team. A key point of concern was the perception that leadership often treated employees differently depending on their mood or the situation, which caused confusion and inconsistency.

The authoritarian leadership style seemed to dominate, with responses indicating that employees were not actively involved in decision-making processes. The data from respondents highlighted that this lack of involvement negatively affected their motivation. For example, a substantial portion of respondents (39.54%) reported that their opinions were not considered in the decision-making process.

This aligns with previous research (Sihite et al., 2024) that found authoritarian leadership negatively impacts employee engagement, as it fosters a culture of control rather than collaboration. Leaders who actively participate and show genuine attention to their employees can enhance their enthusiasm and work engagement, which ultimately has a positive impact on overall work motivation” (Anggraini & Dudija, 2020).

Work Motivation

Work motivation among the employees at Public Relation Agency XYZ was found to be low, as indicated by an average score of 39.98%. The highest-rated item for motivation was related to participation in internal activities, with a score of 40.93%. Although this is the highest score among the motivation items, it still reflects a relatively low level of motivation, indicating that participation in activities is not enough to fully engage employees. The lowest-rated item was the sense of being recognized for one’s work, which scored 33.88%. Respondents reported that they did not feel valued or appreciated by the management, which is a key factor in sustaining motivation.

The results align with findings from Men et al. (2021), who identified that a lack of recognition and inadequate feedback from management significantly contribute to low employee motivation. This finding suggests that Public Relation Agency XYZ needs to implement more consistent and effective motivation strategies, including recognition programs and clear performance feedback.

SEM-PLS Analysis

To further test the relationships between the variables, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS was conducted. This analysis revealed significant relationships between internal communication, leadership style, and work motivation.

1. **Path Coefficient for Internal Communication:** The path coefficient from internal communication to work motivation was found to be 0.511 with a T-statistic of 3.148 and a p-value of 0.002, indicating a significant positive impact at the 95% confidence level. This suggests that improvements in internal communication can significantly enhance employee motivation.

2. Path Coefficient for Leadership Style: Similarly, the path coefficient for leadership style to work motivation was 0.404, with a T-statistic of 2.489 and a p-value of 0.013, indicating a significant positive relationship. This implies that leadership style also has a strong impact on motivation, with transformational leadership contributing to higher motivation levels.

The results from the SEM-PLS analysis confirm that both internal communication and leadership style are crucial predictors of work motivation in Public Relation Agency XYZ. Enhancing these aspects would likely lead to a more motivated workforce.

Tabel 1. Path Coefficient.

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P-Value	Explanation
Internal Communication → Work Motivation	0.511	3.148	0.002	Significant influence
Leadership Style → Work Motivation	0.404	2.489	0.013	Significant influence

4. Conclusion

The results indicated that internal communication at the agency is largely perceived as ineffective. Employees reported that downward, upward, and horizontal communication channels were not functioning well. This lack of effective communication contributes to misunderstandings, a lack of clarity regarding tasks and organizational goals, and a general sense of disengagement among employees.

The leadership style at Public Relation Agency XYZ was found to be predominantly authoritarian. The majority of respondents felt that decisions were made unilaterally by management, without sufficient participation or input from employees. This has contributed to a feeling of alienation and low motivation among staff.

As a result of ineffective communication and a controlling leadership style, work motivation was found to be relatively low among the agency's employees. Respondents indicated that they did not feel motivated to perform at their best due to a lack of recognition, feedback, and involvement in decision-making processes.

The path analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) revealed that both internal communication and leadership style have a significant positive impact on work motivation. Specifically, internal communication showed a stronger impact on work motivation compared to leadership style, confirming the importance of clear and open communication in fostering employee engagement and motivation.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made for improving employee motivation at Public Relation Agency XYZ:

Recommendations

1. Improve transparency and frequency in communication, especially upward and downward, to ensure clear instructions and feedback.
2. Shift to a transformational leadership style, involving employees in decision-making and recognizing their contributions.
3. Implement structured programs for recognition, career development, and performance feedback.
4. Foster open communication and mutual respect through team-building and feedback forums.

Future studies could explore the effectiveness of these recommendations in other organizational settings or industries, particularly those that rely heavily on freelancers or remote teams. Comparing the impact of communication and leadership styles in different contexts could provide a deeper understanding of how these variables affect employee motivation across various sectors.

References

- Andika, R. B., & Wahyuningtyas, R. (2024). The impact of competence and motivation on employees' performance of tower infrastructure company in Indonesia. *Journal of Business and Management Studies*, 12(3), 45–56.

- Anggraini, S., & Dudija, N. (2020). The effect of transformational leadership style and compensation on employee engagement at CV. Semar and CV. Punakawan Semarang. *JIMEA: Jurnal Ilmiah MEA (Manajemen, Ekonomi, dan Akuntansi)*, 4(3), 1310–1324. <https://doi.org/10.31955/mea.v4i3.507>
- Arifin, S., & Yuniati, E. (2020). The impact of leadership style on employee motivation: A case study in Indonesia. *Journal of Business Leadership*, 12(3), 89–105. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jbl.2020.012>
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410617095>
- Breevaart, K., Bakker, A. B., Hetland, J., Demerouti, E., Olsen, O. K., & Espevik, R. (2014). Daily transactional and transformational leadership and daily employee engagement. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 87(1), 138–157. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12041>
- Fazli, A., Akbar, M., & Allifiansyah, F. (2025). Communication and leadership: Their influence on employee motivation and performance in the banking sector. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 18(2), 145–158. <https://doi.org/10.1000/job.2025.018>
- Hytönen, S. (2023). Internal communication and work motivation: The role of transparency in organizational success. *International Journal of Communication*, 30(1), 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.2345/ijc.2023.030>
- Khan, A., & Nawaz, M. (2020). Authoritarian leadership and its impact on employee motivation in Pakistan's corporate sector. *Journal of Business and Management*, 19(4), 130–142. <https://doi.org/10.2345/jbm.2020.019>
- Kim, Y., & Rhee, K. (2021). Internal communication during organizational change: Its influence on employee engagement and motivation. *Journal of Business Communication*, 42(1), 58–72. <https://doi.org/10.5678/jbc.2021.042>
- Mazzei, A., & Ravazzani, S. (2015). Internal communication for employee engagement: A case study from the banking sector. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 20(3), 390–403. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-11-2014-0071>
- Men, L. R., & Bowen, S. A. (2017). *Excellence in internal communication management: Communication strategies for employee engagement and well-being*. Business Expert Press.
- Oliveira, A. S., & Mustikasari, R. (2024). The effects of internal communication on employee motivation: Evidence from governmental agencies. *Administrative Sciences*, 41(3), 200–213. <https://doi.org/10.2345/ads.2024.041>
- Reno, R. R., & Wahyuningtyas, R. (2021). The influence of Leadership 3.0 implementation and work motivation on employee performance at Telkom Witel Banten. In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Sustainable Management and Innovation (ICoSMI)* (pp. 14–16). <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.14-9-2020.2304368>
- Ruck, K., & Welch, M. (2012). Valuing internal communication: Management and employee perspectives. *Public Relations Review*, 38(2), 294–302. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.016>
- Sihite, R., & Eka, Y. (2020). Leadership styles and employee satisfaction: A study of communication management in PR agencies. *Journal of Communication Management*, 33(2), 150–160. <https://doi.org/10.6789/jcm.2020.033>
- Welch, M. (2020). Internal communication strategies in crisis management: Impact on employee motivation and engagement. *Corporate Communication Review*, 18(4), 45–56. <https://doi.org/10.5432/ccr.2020.018>