

The Influence of Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, and Work Culture on Employee Performance Mediated by Internal Communication at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance is a crucial factor in supporting the effectiveness of local government administration. Performance improvement is influenced not only by leadership, motivation, and work culture but also by the internal communication processes within the organization. Objective: This study aims to analyze the influence of Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, and Work Culture on Employee Performance—both directly and indirectly through Internal Communication at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat. Method: This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. The research population consists of all employees at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat, with a sample of 115 respondents determined through a census sampling (saturated sampling) technique. Data were collected via questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the aid of SmartPLS software. Results: Transformational Leadership Style has a positive and significant influence on Employee Performance ($\beta = 0.271$; $t = 3.103$; $p = 0.002$) and Internal Communication ($\beta = 0.315$; $t = 4.224$; $p < 0.001$), as well as an indirect influence on Employee Performance through Internal Communication ($\beta = 0.096$; $t = 2.932$; $p = 0.004$). Work Motivation also has a positive and significant influence on Employee Performance ($\beta = 0.166$; $t = 2.279$; $p = 0.023$) and Internal Communication ($\beta = 0.264$; $t = 3.500$; $p = 0.001$), and exerts a significant indirect influence on Employee Performance through Internal Communication ($\beta = 0.081$; $t = 2.182$; $p = 0.030$). Work culture has a positive and significant influence on employee performance ($\beta = 0.262$; $t = 3.821$; $p < 0.001$) and internal communication ($\beta = 0.344$; $t = 4.665$; $p < 0.001$), and it exerts a significant indirect influence on employee performance through internal communication ($\beta = 0.105$; $t = 2.756$; $p = 0.006$). Internal communication has a positive and significant influence on employee performance ($\beta = 0.305$; $t = 3.433$; $p = 0.001$). The R^2 values are 0.547 (54.7%) for employee performance and 0.438 (43.8%) for internal communication. Conclusion: Internal communication acts as a partial mediator in the relationship of transformational leadership style, work motivation, and work culture with employee performance.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, Work Culture, Internal Communication, Employee Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Improving the performance of State Civil Apparatus is an important agenda in Indonesia's bureaucratic reform. The government has issued various strategic regulations, one of which is Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning State Civil Apparatus, which changes the paradigm of performance assessment from merely administrative evaluation to performance management oriented toward actual work results and sustainable work behavior. This paradigm shift emphasizes that State Civil Apparatus performance is no longer measured solely by attendance and compliance with administrative procedures, but also by employees' ability to make tangible contributions to organizational goals and improve the quality of public services. Nevertheless, the implementation of these demands still faces various challenges, particularly because employee performance in local government institutions has not yet consistently demonstrated the expected achievements.

The performance issue is relevant to be examined within the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat (Setdakab Pidie). Based on performance evaluation documents that served as the initial data source for this study, some employees still require performance improvement, particularly in terms of the timeliness of completing tasks and their ability to generate innovations. In addition, disciplinary enforcement actions against government personnel within the local government indicate that performance achievements and work behavior have not been fully consistent. This condition demonstrates a gap between the organization's expectations of high-performing personnel and the actual condition of some employees.

This phenomenon indicates that performance problems at Setdakab Pidie cannot be understood solely as individual capability issues, but also need to be examined from organizational factors that can shape employee behavior and work outcomes. In this context, transformational leadership style, work motivation, and work culture are three theoretically relevant factors for explaining variations in employee performance. These three factors can influence work outcomes not only directly, but also potentially affect how employees understand goals, receive directions, coordinate, and perform their duties.

One important factor is transformational leadership style. In government organizations facing demands for change and improved service quality, leaders are not only required to perform administrative functions but must also be able to build a vision, provide inspiration, encourage creativity, and attend to employees' needs and development. Sari et al. (2025) found that the implementation of transformational leadership has not been fully effective, particularly in the dimensions of individual consideration and inspirational motivation. Kurniati and Rojuaniah (2023) also showed that the influence of transformational leadership on performance is not always significant under certain organizational conditions. In contrast, Nafiudin et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership influences employee performance in the public sector, while Agazu et al. (2025), through a meta-analysis, demonstrated a positive relationship between transformational leadership and performance. These differences in findings indicate an empirical gap that requires further explanation.

In the context of Setdakab Pidie, the issue is not only whether transformational leadership is associated with employee performance, but also how leadership is translated into employee understanding and work behavior. When leaders communicate visions, targets, policies, and performance expectations, employees need clear information and opportunities to provide feedback. Internal communication therefore provides a plausible organizational mechanism linking leadership and employee performance. The same mechanism may also connect work motivation and work culture with performance because motivated employees need information and feedback, while organizational values are enacted through daily communication and coordination.

Accordingly, the research gap addressed in this study has two related aspects. First, previous findings concerning the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance are not fully consistent, as reflected in the studies cited above. Second, the present study places internal communication as a mediator linking transformational leadership, work motivation, and work culture to employee performance in a local-government organization. This integrated model is examined at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat, where the three antecedent variables and internal communication are considered simultaneously. The study therefore aims to provide empirical evidence on both the direct relationships and the communication pathway connecting organizational factors with employee performance. Based on the empirical phenomenon, inconsistencies in previous research findings, and the research gap, this study was conducted under the title *The Influence of Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, and Work Culture on Employee Performance Mediated by Internal Communication at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Internal Communication

According to Pally et al. (2023), internal communication is a communication process that takes place within an organizational structure and essentially functions to establish good relationships among internal publics and connect various subsystems, thereby enabling optimal work synergy.

According to Gomes, Santos, and Martins (2023), the indicators of internal communication consist of: (1) downward vertical communication; (2) upward vertical communication; (3) horizontal communication; (4) information clarity; and (5) feedback.

Transformational Leadership Style

According to Northouse (2022), transformational leadership is defined as a process in which leaders and followers engage with one another to create a strong relationship, thereby increasing the motivation and morality of both parties to a higher level.

According to Njaramba (2024), the indicators of transformational leadership style are: (1) idealized influence; (2) inspirational motivation; (3) intellectual stimulation; and (4) individualized consideration.

Work Motivation

According to Robbins and Judge (2023), in the latest edition of their organizational behavior textbook, motivation is a process that explains the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual's effort toward achieving organizational goals. Intensity concerns how hard a person tries, direction refers to the alignment of that effort with organizational goals, while persistence measures how long an individual can sustain the effort at work.

The indicators of work motivation according to Busro (2020) are: (1) achievement; (2) recognition; (3) the work itself; and (4) advancement/development.

Work Culture

According to Edison et al. (2023), work culture is defined as a set of values, beliefs, principles, and habits that are cultivated and passed down within an organizational group, and are reflected in attitudes, behavior, opinions, and everyday work perspectives. These internalized values serve as a moral and ethical foundation that guides employees to act honestly and with high discipline because of a collective awareness of organizational integrity.

The indicators of work culture according to Wibowo (2023) are: (1) work discipline; (2) responsibility; (3) cooperation; (4) organizational commitment; and (5) service/performance orientation.

Employee Performance

According to Dessler (2023), in the latest edition of the international standard human resource management textbook, employee performance is defined as the actual level of achievement of work tasks assessed based on the standards of quantity, quality, timeliness, and efficiency in the use of resources established by the organization. This performance is a direct reflection of the effectiveness of human capital management within an institution.

The indicators of employee performance according to the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (KemenPANRB, 2022) include: (1) quantity of work results; (2) quality of work results; (3) time/speed of completing work results; (4) service-oriented; (5) accountable; (6) competent; (7) harmonious; (8) loyal; (9) adaptive; and (10) collaborative.

Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among Transformational Leadership Style (X1), Work Motivation (X2), Work Culture (X3), Internal Communication (M), and Employee Performance (Y) at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat. The model specifies Employee Performance as the main endogenous outcome and Internal Communication as a mediating variable.

The study population comprised all 115 employees of the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat. Because the accessible population consisted of 115 employees, total sampling (census sampling) was used so that every member of the population was invited to participate. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers from the operational indicators described in the Literature Review. For transparency and reproducibility, the final submission should include the complete questionnaire or an appendix reporting the item wording, response-scale anchors, source/adaptation of each item, and the number of items used for each construct; these item-level details are not contained in the present manuscript version. The analysis consisted of descriptive statistics and PLS-SEM using SmartPLS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics. The measurement model (outer model) was assessed using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). The structural model (inner model) was evaluated using R-square, path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Mediation was assessed from the significance of the indirect effects together with the corresponding direct effects. PLS-SEM was selected because the research model contains several latent constructs and includes a mediation pathway, while the study used the entire accessible population of 115 employees. Bootstrapping in SmartPLS was used to obtain the sampling distribution for the inferential statistics. Because the research used a cross-sectional design, the estimated relationships should be interpreted as statistical associations within the proposed model rather than as definitive evidence of temporal causality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	69	60.0
Female	46	40.0
Total	115	100.0
Age		
≤ 30 years	14	12.2
31–40 years	17	14.8
41–50 years	45	39.1
> 50 years	39	33.9
Total	115	100.0
Income		
< IDR 4 million	36	31.3
IDR 4–6 million	66	57.4
IDR 6–8 million	10	8.7
> IDR 8 million	3	2.6

Total	115	100.0
State Civil Apparatus Grade		
II/c	1	0.9
II/d	4	3.5
III/a	24	20.9
III/b	23	20.0
III/c	11	9.6
III/d	35	30.4
IV/a	4	3.5
IV/b	8	7.0
IV/c	3	2.6
IV/d	2	1.7
Total	115	100.0
Education Level		
Senior High School	22	19.1
D-III	5	4.3
D-IV	9	7.8
Bachelor's degree (S-1)	64	55.7
Master's degree (S-2)	14	12.2
Doctoral degree (S-3)	1	0.9
Total	115	100.0
Length of Service		
< 5 years	12	10.4
5–10 years	16	13.9
11–15 years	2	1.7
> 15 years	85	73.9
Total	115	100.0

Position		
Administrator (Section Head)	6	5.2
Supervisor (Subsection Head)	10	8.7
Junior Expert Functional Position	2	1.7
Policy Technical Reviewer	20	17.4
Office Administrator	35	30.4
Operator/Operational Service Manager	12	10.4
Other Administrative Executor	30	26.1
Total	115	100.0

This study involved 115 respondents who were State Civil Apparatus at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat. The majority of respondents were male, totaling 69 people (60.0%); were in the 41–50 age group, totaling 45 people (39.1%); had an income of IDR 4–6 million, totaling 66 people (57.4%); were in Grade III/d, totaling 35 people (30.4%); held a Bachelor's degree (S-1), totaling 64 people (55.7%); had more than 15 years of service, totaling 85 people (73.9%); and most occupied the Office Administrator position, totaling 35 people (30.4%).

These characteristics indicate that the respondents were dominated by employees with relatively long work experience and adequate educational levels. This condition suggests that the respondents had sufficient experience in carrying out government duties and understood the conditions of leadership, work motivation, work culture, internal communication, and employee performance within the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat.

The results of the AVE index, composite reliability, R square, Cronbach's alpha can be seen in the table below.

Table 2. Reliability and AVE

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE	Description
Work Culture (X3)	0,887	0,890	0,917	0,689	Reliable and Valid
Transformational Leadership Style (X1)	0,890	0,897	0,924	0,753	Reliable and Valid
Employee Performance (Y)	0,949	0,950	0,956	0,684	Reliable and Valid
Internal Communication (M)	0,877	0,888	0,910	0,670	Reliable and Valid
Work Motivation (X2)	0,867	0,876	0,909	0,714	Reliable and Valid

A variable is said to have high reliability if the composite reliability value is above 0.7 and AVE is above 0.5. Based on the table above, it is stated that four variables meet the composite reliability because their values are above the recommended number, which is above 0.7 which already meets the reliable criteria.

The following are the results of the outer model test showing the outer loading value using the Smartpls v 3.2.7 analysis tool. The results can be seen in the image below.

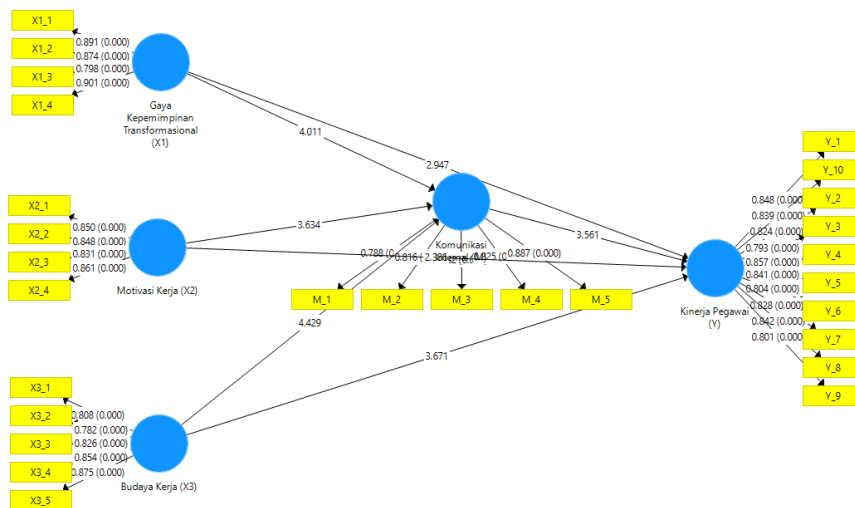


Figure 1. Outer Model Test Results

From the analysis results shown in Figure 1, it shows that all research variables have a loading factor value above 0.7.

R-Square is used to measure the predictive power of a structural model. R-Squares explain the influence of certain exogenous latent variables on endogenous latent variables whether they have a substantive influence. R-squares values of 0.67, 0.33 and 0.19 indicate strong, moderate and weak models (Ghozali and Latan, 2015). The R-Square value can be seen in the table below.

Table 3. R-Square

Item	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Employee Performance (Y)	0,547	0,531
Internal Communication (M)	0,438	0,422

Based on Table 3, the R-Square value for Employee Performance (Y) is 0.547, with an Adjusted R-Square of 0.531. This indicates that Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, Work Culture, and Internal Communication explain 54.7% of the variation in Employee Performance, while the remaining 45.3% is explained by other factors outside the research model.

Meanwhile, the R-Square value for Internal Communication (M) is 0.438, with an Adjusted R-Square of 0.422. This indicates that Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, and Work Culture explain 43.8% of the variation in Internal Communication, while the remaining 56.2% is explained by other factors outside the research model.

Overall, the model explains a substantial share of variance in the two endogenous constructs, while the remaining variance indicates the presence of factors outside the current model. These results indicate that the

variables used in the study contribute to explaining changes in both endogenous variables, although other factors outside the model also influence them.

Table 4. Total Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Descripti on
Transformational Leadership Style (X1) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,271	0,272	0,087	3,103	0,002	H1 Accepted
Work Motivation (X2) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,166	0,165	0,073	2,279	0,023	H2 Accepted
Work Culture (X3) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,262	0,261	0,068	3,821	0,000	H3 Accepted
Transformational Leadership Style (X1) → Internal Communication (M)	0,315	0,308	0,075	4,224	0,000	H4 Accepted
Work Motivation (X2) → Internal Communication (M)	0,264	0,275	0,075	3,500	0,001	H5 Accepted
Work Culture (X3) → Internal Communication (M)	0,344	0,348	0,074	4,665	0,000	H6 Accepted
Internal Communication (M) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,305	0,305	0,089	3,433	0,001	H7 Accepted

Based on the direct-effect testing results in Table 4, all relationships among the variables show positive and significant effects because the t-statistics values are greater than 1.96 and the p-values are less than 0.05. Transformational Leadership Style has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance with a coefficient of 0.271 ($t = 3.103$; $p = 0.002$). Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance with a coefficient of 0.166 ($t = 2.279$; $p = 0.023$), while Work Culture has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance with a coefficient of 0.262 ($t = 3.821$; $p < 0.001$).

Furthermore, Transformational Leadership Style has a positive and significant effect on Internal Communication with a coefficient of 0.315 ($t = 4.224$; $p < 0.001$). Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Internal Communication of 0.264 ($t = 3.500$; $p = 0.001$), while Work Culture has a positive and significant effect on Internal Communication of 0.344 ($t = 4.665$; $p < 0.001$). Internal Communication also has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance with a coefficient of 0.305 ($t = 3.433$; $p = 0.001$).

Thus, all direct-effect hypotheses in this study, namely H1 through H7, are accepted. These results indicate that improvements in transformational leadership style, work motivation, work culture, and internal communication are associated with improved employee performance at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat.

The following is a test of the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables and must be significant at a t-statistic value greater than 1.96.

Table 5. Total Indirect Effect

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision	Description
Transformational Leadership Style (X1) → Internal Communication (M) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,096	2,932	0,004	Significant	Partial Mediation
Work Motivation (X2) → Internal Communication (M) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,081	2,182	0,030	Significant	Partial Mediation
Work Culture (X3) → Internal Communication (M) → Employee Performance (Y)	0,105	2,756	0,006	Significant	Partial Mediation

Based on the indirect-effect testing results, Transformational Leadership Style has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance through Internal Communication, with a coefficient of 0.096, t-statistics of 2.932, and a p-value of 0.004. Because the direct effect of Transformational Leadership Style on Employee Performance is also significant, Internal Communication is proven to act as a partial mediator.

Work Motivation also has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance through Internal Communication, with a coefficient of 0.081, t-statistics of 2.182, and a p-value of 0.030. The direct effect of Work Motivation on Employee Performance remains significant, so the mediation is partial.

Furthermore, Work Culture has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance through Internal Communication, with a coefficient of 0.105, t-statistics of 2.756, and a p-value of 0.006. Because the direct effect of Work Culture on Employee Performance is also significant, Internal Communication acts as a partial mediator.

Accordingly, the indirect-effect results support H8, H9, and H10. The results show that Internal Communication not only directly affects Employee Performance, but also serves as a mechanism that channels part of the influence of Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, and Work Culture on Employee Performance.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Employee Performance at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Transformational Leadership Style has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. This finding indicates that leadership in an organization does not merely function as a mechanism for giving instructions, but also as a process that shapes how employees understand their work, complete tasks, and direct their efforts toward achieving organizational goals. Thus, when leaders are able to build a vision, provide role models, encourage new thinking, and pay attention to employee needs, these conditions can create a work environment that is more supportive of performance achievement.

From a theoretical perspective, transformational leadership emphasizes four main dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Robbins and Judge (2023) state that transformational leaders are able to inspire employees to place organizational interests above personal interests and encourage them to achieve higher performance. This theory is relevant to the characteristics of this study because the indicators of Transformational Leadership Style used here cover these four aspects.

The findings are consistent with Haryadi et al. (2021) and Zikrillah (2025), who found that transformational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Ferine et al. (2021) also showed that leadership has a positive influence on performance in the context of public sector organizations in Indonesia. More recent research by Putri and Sumartik (2024) also indicates that transformational leadership plays a role in improving employee performance in Indonesia.

According to the researchers, this relationship occurs because work characteristics at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat require coordination, direction, and alignment of goals among employees. Leaders who can provide examples, clarify work direction, build trust, and encourage employees to seek solutions will increase employees' willingness to work optimally. Thus, transformational leadership becomes an important mechanism for converting employee potential into tangible performance.

The Influence of Work Motivation on Employee Performance at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. This finding indicates that employee performance is influenced not only by individual capabilities and organizational systems, but also by internal and external drives that encourage employees to consistently exert effort in completing their work.

Theoretically, motivation is a force that directs the intensity, direction, and persistence of work behavior. In this thesis, work motivation is associated with achievement motivation, reflected through hard work, future orientation, level of aspirations, task orientation, efforts to advance, persistence, and use of working time. Robbins and Judge (2023) also emphasize the importance of achievement orientation and personal responsibility in promoting productive work behavior.

The findings are consistent with Wiranti et al. (2023), who found that work motivation has a positive and strong effect on employee performance. Similarly, Maisyuroh and Ubaidillah (2023) found that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Prawibowo and Prapanca (2024) also showed that motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

The researchers assume that this influence occurs because employees with an achievement orientation tend to allocate their time, energy, and abilities more actively to completing their work. In government settings, motivation is important because some tasks are administrative and require accuracy and consistency. Therefore, the stronger the drive to achieve, take responsibility, and complete work, the greater the likelihood that employees will produce performance consistent with organizational demands.

The Influence of Work Culture on Employee Performance at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Work Culture has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. This finding demonstrates that employee performance is not merely the result of individual characteristics, but is also shaped by the collective values and habits that develop within the organization.

Theoretically, work culture is a set of values, beliefs, norms, and behavioral patterns that guide organizational members in carrying out their work. In this study, work culture includes internalization of organizational values, a spirit of family and mutual cooperation, openness in communication, and the ability to adapt to bureaucratic changes. A culture that promotes responsibility, cooperation, openness, and adaptation creates work behavior that is more consistent with organizational goals.

This finding is supported by Ferine et al. (2021), who found that organizational culture has a positive effect on employee performance in public sector organizations in Indonesia. Sopiah et al. (2021) also examined the relationship between organizational culture and performance in Indonesian banking. Furthermore, Tardin and Rahman (2023) found that organizational culture has a significant effect on employee performance.

According to the researchers, work culture can serve as a social mechanism that guides employees regarding work behaviors considered appropriate and expected by the organization. When values of responsibility, cooperation, openness, and shared goal orientation become habitual, employees can more easily adjust their behavior to work demands. Therefore, a strong work culture can serve as a foundation for behavior that supports improved employee performance.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Internal Communication at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Transformational Leadership Style has a positive and significant effect on Internal Communication. This finding means that the quality of communication within an organization is determined not only by the existence of formal communication channels, but also by the leadership style used to build interaction with subordinates.

Theoretically, transformational leaders act as communicators who convey vision, provide inspiration, encourage openness of thought, and pay attention to individual needs. In organizational communication, internal communication functions as a means of coordination, control, motivation, and information delivery. Robbins and Judge (2023) also position communication as an important mechanism for providing direction, feedback, and information needed by employees to perform their work.

This finding is supported by Santoso et al. (2022), who showed that transformational leadership plays an important role in strengthening employee engagement through internal communication. Transformational leaders encourage innovation, creativity, and proactive action by strengthening internal communication. Recent research also shows that transformational leadership and internal communication are important factors that jointly relate to employee performance (Jaimes-Soncco et al., 2026).

The researchers assume that leaders at the Regional Secretariat have a strategic position as a link between organizational policies and work implementation. Leaders who are open to input and able to provide clear explanations will reduce information gaps between leaders and employees. Thus, transformational leadership can create more two-way communication rather than communication that is merely instructional.

The Influence of Work Motivation on Internal Communication at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Internal Communication. This finding indicates that organizational communication is influenced not only by formal structures but also by employees' willingness to actively participate in information exchange.

Theoretically, highly motivated employees tend to have achievement orientation, responsibility, and a desire to receive feedback. These characteristics encourage employees to seek information, report work progress, clarify instructions, and communicate when facing obstacles. Thus, motivation can strengthen the intensity and quality of communication within the organization.

This finding can be associated with Dhone (2022), which demonstrated a relationship between internal communication, motivation, and employee performance. The study emphasized that internal communication is an important function in human resource management. Raharjo et al. (2022) also examined the relationship between internal communication and motivation in the context of government employees.

According to the researchers, highly motivated employees are more active in seeking clarity about their work and are not passive recipients of information. They tend to use communication as a tool to complete tasks,

obtain feedback, and ensure that work proceeds according to targets. Therefore, work motivation can be a psychological factor that promotes the effectiveness of internal communication.

The Influence of Work Culture on Internal Communication at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Work Culture has a positive and significant effect on Internal Communication. This finding indicates that communication patterns formed within an organization are strongly influenced by the values and habits shared by employees.

Theoretically, a work culture emphasizing openness, cooperation, family spirit, and adaptation creates social conditions that allow information to flow more freely. Conversely, an overly closed or hierarchical culture can inhibit employees' willingness to convey information to leaders or colleagues. In this study, openness of communication channels is even one of the operational aspects of work culture.

This finding is consistent with Hanifah and Salendu (2024), who demonstrated the importance of organizational culture and organizational climate in shaping symmetrical internal communication and employee behavior. In addition, research on internal communication and organizational culture in service organizations shows that both factors are important in shaping employee performance (Saleh & Hidayaty, 2024).

The researchers assume that the work culture developing at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat can serve as a social norm that determines how employees interact. When openness and cooperation are regarded as normal behaviors, employees can communicate more easily across hierarchical levels and departments. This explains why Work Culture makes a relatively strong contribution to Internal Communication in the research model.

The Influence of Internal Communication on Employee Performance at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Internal Communication has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. This finding indicates that internal communication is not merely an activity of exchanging information, but part of the work mechanism that enables employees to understand what must be done, how work should be carried out, and how work results need to be improved.

Theoretically, communication serves functions of control, motivation, emotional expression, and information. The information function enables employees to obtain data needed to make decisions and perform tasks, while the motivational function provides clarity of objectives and feedback on work. Therefore, effective communication can logically improve the quality of work processes and outcomes.

This finding is consistent with Dhone and Sarwoko (2022), who found that internal communication can improve employee performance. Maulana and Sumartik (2022) also positioned organizational communication as one factor related to employee performance. More recent research also indicates that internal communication is an important predictor of job performance (Jaimes-Soncco, 2026).

According to the researchers, this effect is highly relevant to the characteristics of government work, which involves many units, hierarchical levels, and administrative processes. Errors or delays in information can cause work to be completed late or not according to standards. Conversely, clear communication enables coordination, feedback, and problem solving to be carried out more quickly, ultimately supporting employee performance.

The Role of Internal Communication in Mediating the Influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Employee Performance at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Internal Communication significantly mediates the influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Employee Performance. The form of mediation identified is partial mediation because

the direct effect of transformational leadership on performance remains significant while the indirect effect through internal communication is also significant.

Theoretically, transformational leadership operates through changes in how employees understand organizational goals, values, and responsibilities. This process requires effective communication. Leaders cannot change employee behavior solely through role modeling, but need to communicate vision, provide feedback, clarify expectations, and create space for dialogue. Therefore, internal communication becomes a mechanism that translates leadership characteristics into employee work behavior.

This finding is consistent with Santoso et al. (2022), which showed that internal communication is an important means through which transformational leadership strengthens employee engagement. Haryadi et al. (2021) also demonstrated a positive relationship between transformational leadership and performance and the role of organizational mechanisms in that relationship. The researchers assume that partial mediation indicates that two pathways operate simultaneously. First, transformational leaders can directly improve performance through inspiration, role modeling, and intellectual stimulation. Second, this influence is strengthened through internal communication because vision, instructions, evaluation, and feedback must be translated into everyday interactions. Thus, internal communication is not the only mechanism, but it is one important mechanism connecting leadership and performance.

The Role of Internal Communication in Mediating the Influence of Work Motivation on Employee Performance at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Internal Communication significantly mediates the influence of Work Motivation on Employee Performance, and the form of mediation is partial. This means that work motivation can improve performance through a direct pathway as well as through improved effectiveness of internal communication.

Theoretically, motivation provides energy and direction for work behavior, while communication provides the information and feedback needed to direct that energy toward goal achievement. Motivation without clear information can cause employees' efforts to be insufficiently directed, while communication without motivation can result in minimal compliance. Therefore, the two can work in a complementary manner.

Dhone and Sarwoko (2022) demonstrated a relationship among internal communication, motivation, and employee performance. A more recent study by Bina Insan et al. also indicates that internal communication and work motivation are positively related to employee performance in the context of state civil apparatus. Meanwhile, research on motivation and performance consistently shows that motivation is an important factor in performance achievement. According to the researchers, this mediation mechanism occurs because highly motivated employees tend to communicate more actively about their targets, obstacles, and work results. Such communication then helps employees obtain direction and feedback, making their work efforts more focused. However, because the direct effect remains significant, internal communication is not the only channel explaining this relationship. Intrinsic factors such as achievement motivation and responsibility continue to contribute directly to performance.

The Role of Internal Communication in Mediating the Influence of Work Culture on Employee Performance at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat

The results show that Internal Communication significantly mediates the influence of Work Culture on Employee Performance, and the form of mediation is partial. Thus, work culture can shape performance directly, but its influence also occurs through communication patterns that develop within the organization.

Theoretically, work culture provides norms concerning how employees should act, cooperate, solve problems, and interact. Internal communication then becomes the channel for maintaining and translating these norms into everyday work activities. When organizational culture emphasizes openness, cooperation, responsibility, and adaptability, communication is more likely to facilitate information exchange and coordination that support performance.

This finding is consistent with Ferine et al. (2021), who found that organizational culture has a positive effect on performance in Indonesian public sector organizations. Tardin and Rahman (2023) also found an influence of organizational culture on performance. Meanwhile, Hanifah and Salendu (2024) demonstrated the importance of organizational culture in shaping internal communication and employee behavior.

The researchers assume that partial mediation indicates that work culture has two mechanisms of influence. In the first pathway, cultural values and norms directly shape employee behavior, such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and result orientation. In the second pathway, the culture is manifested through internal communication in the form of information sharing, coordination, discussion, and feedback. Therefore, the stronger the open and collaborative work culture, the greater the likelihood of effective internal communication, which in turn supports employee performance.

Study limitations and future research. This study is limited to one local-government organization and 115 employees, which restricts the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other government institutions or organizational settings. In addition, the cross-sectional design captures the variables at one point in time and therefore does not establish temporal causality. The model also leaves 45.3% of Employee Performance variance and 56.2% of Internal Communication variance unexplained. Future studies can address these limitations by involving multiple public organizations or regions, using larger and more diverse samples, and incorporating additional variables that may explain employee performance and internal communication. Longitudinal or other designs capable of establishing temporal ordering may also provide stronger evidence about the mechanisms proposed in the model.

Practical implications and future research. the pidie regency regional secretariat can strengthen internal communication through regular target-oriented briefings, coordination, feedback, and follow-up. leaders can also reinforce transformational practices and translate work-culture values into observable standards concerning discipline, responsibility, cooperation, openness, timeliness, and service orientation. future research should test the model across multiple public organizations and regions, consider additional explanatory variables, and use larger or longitudinal samples where feasible to improve external validity and clarify temporal relationships.6. **practical implications and future research.** the pidie regency regional secretariat can strengthen internal communication through regular target-oriented briefings, coordination, feedback, and follow-up. leaders can also reinforce transformational practices and translate work-culture values into observable standards concerning discipline, responsibility, cooperation, openness, timeliness, and service orientation. future research should test the model across multiple public organizations and regions, consider additional explanatory variables, and use larger or longitudinal samples where feasible to improve external validity and clarify temporal relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, and Work Culture have positive and significant effects on Employee Performance at the Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat. The three variables also have positive and significant effects on Internal Communication, while Internal Communication has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. Internal Communication is proven to partially mediate the effects of Transformational Leadership Style, Work Motivation, and Work Culture on Employee Performance. The research model explains 54.7% of the variation in Employee Performance and 43.8% of the variation in Internal Communication. These findings confirm that improving employee performance requires not only effective leadership, motivation, and work culture, but also effective internal communication.

Suggestion

The Pidie Regency Regional Secretariat is advised to strengthen internal communication through regular briefings and coordination focused on targets, obstacle resolution, feedback, and work follow-up. Leaders should also provide regular performance feedback through appreciation of employee achievements and guidance for improving work that has not met targets. In addition, work culture should be translated into

measurable behavioral standards, particularly regarding discipline, responsibility, cooperation, information openness, timeliness, and service orientation. Future research is recommended to consider other variables outside the model to obtain a more comprehensive explanation of the factors influencing employee performance.

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