The Role of Transformational Leadership in Improving Organizational Communication during Change

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the role of leadership in improving organizational communication. The methodology used was quantitative. A questionnaire was distributed to 73 respondents, representing the population data. Instrument testing was conducted using SPSS version 27, which included validity and reliability tests. Indicator tests, fit tests, and hypothesis testing were carried out using SmartPLS. The results indicated that transformational leadership had a significant positive relationship with organizational communication. Effectively implementing transformational leadership results in improved organizational communication. This research provides new insights into the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational communication, as studies exploring these variables in governmental environments remain limited. It offers valuable perspectives on the role of transformational leadership in enhancing organizational communication, reducing resistance, and increasing employee support during organizational changes.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Organizational Communication, Change

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational communication plays a central role in ensuring smooth operations and the success of an institution. In organizational change, effective communication becomes increasingly important to bridge information gaps, address uncertainties, and build mutual understanding. Communication is creating and exchanging messages within an interdependent network of relationships to address environmental uncertainties [1]. When an organization undergoes transitions, be it strategic, cultural, or structural, good communication facilitates the clear dissemination of information, reduces confusion, and minimizes resistance from stakeholders, particularly employees. During organizational change, internal communication is a critical factor influencing employees' engagement to achieve organizational goals [2].

Organizational changes often bring new challenges that require adaptive and innovative leadership approaches. In this context, effective communication becomes a key element in supporting transformational leadership, a leadership style focused on empowering individuals, building a collective vision, and fostering innovation. Through transparent and inclusive communication, transformational leaders can develop trust-based relationships with employees, motivate them to contribute optimally, and ensure organizational goals are achieved despite uncertainties.

Transformational leadership relies not only on communication skills to deliver messages but also on listening and understanding employees' needs and concerns. This enables leaders to provide guidance and solutions tailored to the organization's circumstances. Communication between leaders and employees is a major factor influencing job satisfaction [3]. In times of change, this ability enhances employee engagement and satisfaction and strengthens team synergy, which is essential for a successful transition.

Therefore, organizational communication and transformational leadership are two complementary elements in facing change. During these transitional periods, effective communication helps build trust between leaders and

employees [4]. When effective communication is a foundation, transformational leadership can flourish, creating a conducive work environment and driving organizational performance toward better outcomes. The close relationship between the two illustrates how successful change management relies on the combination of strategic communication and visionary leadership.

The subject of this research is a government agency in Yogyakarta Special Region Province, specifically Dinas Sosial Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (Dinas Sosial DIY). Dinas Sosial DIY is a regional government agency tasked with assisting the Governor of DIY in addressing social issues in the region. In dealing with complex social problems such as poverty, neglect, disabilities, and disasters, the Dinas Sosial DIY requires human resources with good performance. One factor contributing to good performance is effective communication among employees and between employees and leadership.

Dinas Sosial DIY underwent a structural reorganization as an implementation of the Governor's Regulation No. 106 of 2022 concerning the Position, Organizational Structure, Duties, Functions, and Work Procedures of the Social Service Office. This organizational restructuring began to take effect in mid-2023. The Governor's Regulation is a follow-up to the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform of the Republic of Indonesia Regulation No. 7 of 2022. This regulation governs the simplification of organizational structures, equalizing positions, and adjusting work systems to create a dynamic, agile, and professional bureaucracy. This regulation applies to central and regional government agencies and other institutions funded by the State Budget as mandated by law. In response, the Special Region of Yogyakarta government has gradually begun adapting to the new regulations.

This organizational restructuring may increase workloads and responsibilities for employees and leaders. Consequently, this policy cannot be immediately implemented smoothly. Adapting to these changes requires time and energy, as the old regulations, which had been implemented for years, have created habits within the system and working methods that are not easy to change. Research shows that negative consequences of organizational change tend to be common in the public sector [5].

During organizational change, leadership is crucial in managing and communicating the direction and objectives of the change. Therefore, it is important to conduct this research to understand the role of leadership, specifically focusing on the influence of transformational leadership on organizational communication during organizational change.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Transformational Leadership

Leadership has been defined in various ways. According to [6], leadership is the ability of an individual to persuade and influence others toward achieving organizational goals. Another definition of leadership, as stated by [7], views leadership as an interaction between the leader and the leader, indicating that leadership is dynamic and involves interpersonal relationships based on mutual desires. Meanwhile, [8] emphasizes the role of leadership in managerial processes, stating, "Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher goals, raising their performance to higher standards, and building their personality beyond their normal limits."

One leadership style considered effective for organizational change is transformational leadership. According to [3], transformational leadership is "a person who seeks potential motives in their followers, strives to satisfy their higher needs, and engages all followers." Transformational leadership is characterized by individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence [8]. Adopting from [9], there are four indicators of transformational leadership: (1) Intellectual Stimulation, which involves the leader encouraging followers to think critically and creatively in facing problems and challenges, including rethinking old issues in new ways. (2) Supportive Leadership includes leader behavior that shows concern and support for followers and helps resolve their work-related problems. (3) Inspirational Communication is the leader's ability to express positive and encouraging messages about the organization, along with statements that build motivation and confidence. (4) Personal Recognition, which involves leaders giving rewards and recognition to subordinates for their achievements and contributions by praising and acknowledging improvements in the quality of work.

2.2. Organizational Communication

Organizational communication is the comprehensive interaction with the internal and external environment to achieve organizational goals and sustainable management through communication and information exchange among organizational members based on hierarchical structures [10]. Organizational communication is also defined as communication organized within an organizational environment that involves sending and receiving messages between two or more individuals, groups of individuals, or units or work divisions, which will affect organizational behavior.

Meanwhile, [1] defines organizational communication: "Organizational communication is the process of creating and exchanging messages within a network of interdependent relationships to address environmental uncertainty." Adopting the indicators of organizational communication according to [11] and [12], there are four indicators of organizational communication: (1) Coworker Communication, which includes the extent to which horizontal and informal communication is accurate and flows freely. (2) Supervisor Communication focuses on formal and informal communication with direct supervisors and the extent to which supervisors pay attention to their employees, listen to them, and so on. (3) Media Quality, which describes the quality of meetings held and the solutions and directions obtained. (4) Communication Climate includes information about promoting organizational values and goals, such as how communication helps employees feel that they are important to the organization and helps them identify with the organization.

2.3. The Role of Transformational Leadership in Organizational Communication

Bridging environmental uncertainty during organizational change requires good organizational communication between various parties. Transformational leadership is generally recognized as effective in organizational change because of its approach to handling crises and change, where effective communication helps strengthen trust between leaders and staff [4].

Transformational leadership builds trust within a work team, thus creating a more comfortable and conducive work atmosphere. This supportive atmosphere among coworkers or leaders can be a foundation to achieve better performance and productivity.

[3] found that transformational leadership is related to organizational communication, as transformational leadership influences the way communication takes place within an organization. This finding aligns with the research conducted by [8], which found that employees' perceptions of transformational leadership positively affected employee communication.

This conceptual framework explains the relationship between two main variables within an organization. The independent variable is transformational leadership, which enhances trust within the work team, creates a more supportive work environment, and influences organizational communication. With its inspiring and motivating approach, transformational leadership can foster stronger connections between leaders and team members. Meanwhile, the dependent variable in this framework is organizational communication, which is influenced by the quality of transformational leadership. Effective leadership strengthens relationships among team members and facilitates more effective communication, improving information flow and overall organizational performance. From these findings, the following hypothesis can be drawn: *Transformational leadership positively affects organizational communication.*
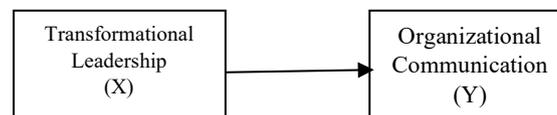
Transformational Leadership (X) → Organizational Communication (Y)

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. METHOD

The data type used in this study is primary data obtained directly from the main source, including quantitative data [13]. The data were collected from questionnaires completed by respondents who are employees of the Dinas Sosial DIY. This study is a population study. The questionnaire used a Likert scale with scores ranging from 1 to 5. Next, instrument testing was conducted using SPSS version 27, including validity and reliability tests. The validity test was performed by correlating the score of each item with the total item score [13]. A two-tailed test was conducted with a significance level of 0.05. An item is considered valid if it significantly correlates with its total score. The validity test uses Pearson bivariate correlation analysis. The significance is determined if the two-tailed value is below 0.05 or the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) exceeds the critical r table value.

The reliability test uses Cronbach's Alpha with a significance level 0.05. An instrument is reliable if the alpha value exceeds the product-moment r value. Reliability is considered poor if the alpha value is less than 0.6, acceptable at 0.7, and good above 0.8.

3.1. Indicator Test

The outer or measurement model's indicator test evaluates the relationship between the indicators and their construct variables. This test provides output for the validity and reliability of the model, measured by the following criteria: Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and Composite Reliability. Convergent Validity is assessed based on the correlation between the indicator scores and their respective constructs. An individual indicator is considered valid if it has a correlation value above 0.50. If it does not meet this criterion, the indicator is not used. Discriminant Validity is evaluated through cross-loadings between the indicators and their constructs. An indicator is considered valid if its correlation with its construct is higher than with other constructs. A construct is deemed reliable if the composite reliability value is above 0.70.

3.2. Model Fit Test

The results of the model fit test, with an SRMR value less than 0.10, are considered adequate and represent a goodness-of-fit measure for PLS-SEM that can be used to avoid model misspecification.

3.3. Hypothesis Test

In the PLS method, the significance value (P-value) and the t-table value determine whether to accept or reject the hypothesis. The parameter coefficient and t-statistic significance values are observed using the SmartPLS application. Based on the hypothesis acceptance or rejection criteria, Ho is accepted if the P-value is less than 0.05 at a 5% significance level.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive data of respondents provide information about the characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The respondents in this study are classified based on several categories, including gender, age, education level, employment status, and length of employment.

The classification of respondents by gender is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Respondents by Gender.

Category	Number	Percentage
Male	39	53,42%
Female	34	46,58%
Total	73	100,00%

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024.

Based on Table 1, the majority of respondents in this study are male, totaling 39 individuals or 53.42%. Meanwhile, the number of female respondents is 34, accounting for 46.58%.

The classification of respondents by age in this study is presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Respondents by Age.

Category	Number	Percentage
21 - 30 years old	16	21,92%
31 - 40 years old	24	32,88%
41 - 50 years old	18	24,66%
51 - 60 years old	15	20,55%
Total	73	100,00%

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024.

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that out of the 73 respondents who were sampled in the study, 16 are aged 21-30 years, 24 are aged 31-40 years, 18 are aged 41-50 years, and 15 are aged 51-60 years. It is evident that the largest number of respondents are in the 31-40 age group.

The classification of respondents based on education level in this study is presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Respondents by Education Level

Category	Number	Percentage
High School	23	31,51%
Diploma 3 (D3)	11	15,07%
Diploma 4 (D4)	2	2,74%
Bachelor's Degree (S1)	29	39,73%
Master's Degree (S2)	8	10,96%
Total	73	100,00%

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024.

Based on Table 3, it shows that the respondents' highest level of education is quite diverse. The majority of respondents in this study have a Bachelor's degree (S1), totaling 29 people or 39.73%, followed by 23 respondents with a high school education, accounting for 31%. Then, 11 respondents have a Diploma 3 (D3), 8 respondents hold a Master's degree (S2), and lastly, 2 respondents have a Diploma 4 (D4).

The classification of respondents based on employment status in this study is presented in Table 4 as follows:

Table 4. Respondents by Employment Status

Category	Number	Percentage
Civil Servant (PNS)	47	64,38%
Non-Civil Servant (Non-PNS)	26	35,62%
Total	73	100,00%

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024.

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that out of the 73 respondents who were sampled in the study, the majority of respondents are Civil Servants (PNS), totaling 47 people or 64.38%, while Non-Civil Servant respondents total 26 people or 35.62%.

The classification of respondents based on length of employment in this study is presented in Table 5 as follows:

Table 5. Respondents by Length of Employment

Category	Number	Percentage
>2 to 5 years	24	32,88%
>5 to 10 years	16	21,92%
More than 10 years	33	45,21%
Total	73	100,00%

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024.

Table 5 shows that out of the 73 respondents who were sampled in the study, 24 have worked for more than 2 years to 5 years, accounting for 32.88%; 16 have worked for more than 5 years to 10 years, accounting for 21.92%, and 33 have worked for more than 10 years, representing 45.21%. The majority of respondents have a length of employment exceeding 10 years.

4.1. Instrument Test

4.1.3. Validity Test

4.1.3.1. Transformational Leadership Variable (X)

Based on the validity test results conducted using SPSS version 27, the validity of the Transformational Leadership variable is presented in Table 6 as follows:

Table 6. **Transformational Leadership Variable Validity Test**

statement	Pearson Correlation	Significance Value	Remark
Q1	0,560	0,000	Valid
Q2	0,627	0,000	Valid
Q3	0,637	0,000	Valid
Q4	0,635	0,000	Valid
Q5	0,684	0,000	Valid
Q6	0,648	0,000	Valid
Q7	0,579	0,000	Valid
Q8	0,593	0,000	Valid

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024

Based on the table above, the validity test for the Transformational Leadership (X) variable, which consists of 8 question items, exceeds the critical value of 0.2303 with a significance level of 0.000. This indicates that all the questions in this variable are valid.

4.1.3.2. Organizational Communication Variable (Y)

Based on the validity test results conducted using SPSS version 27, the validity of the Organizational Communication variable is presented in Table 7 as follows:

Table 7. Organizational Communication Variable Validity Test

statement	Pearson Correlation	Significance Value	Remark
Q1	0,531	0,000	Valid
Q2	0,370	0,000	Valid
Q3	0,579	0,000	Valid
Q4	0,683	0,000	Valid
Q5	0,677	0,000	Valid
Q6	0,604	0,000	Valid
Q7	0,638	0,000	Valid
Q8	0,631	0,000	Valid

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 7 above, the validity test for the Organizational Communication (Y) variable, which consists of 8 question items, exceeds the critical value of 0.2303 with a significance level of 0.000. This indicates that all the questions in this variable are valid.

4.1.4. Reliability Test

The reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha method. Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess the reliability of an instrument with scores obtained from a range of values or in the form of a scale. The criteria for the reliability test are as follows:

Cronbach's Alpha> 0.70: Reliable

Cronbach's Alpha < 0.70: Not Reliable

After calculating with the help of SPSS, the reliability values (Cronbach's Alpha) are as follows:

Table 8. Reliability Test

Variable	Alpha Value	Critical Value	Remark
Kepemimpinan Transformasional	0,902	0,70	Reliable
Komunikasi Organisasi	0,841	0,70	Reliable

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024

From the table above, it can be seen that Cronbach's Alpha values for both variables are above 0.70. Since these values are greater than 0.70, the questionnaire measuring instruments are declared reliable and meet the reliability criteria.

4.1.5. Inferential Analysis

Figure 2. Research Model Output

The figure above presents the analysis results of the model in this study, which shows the research variables along with their indicators.

4.1.5.1 Convergent Validity Test

The results of the outer loading in the Convergent Validity test are presented in Table 9 below:

Table 9. Convergent Validity Test

	Transformational Leadership (X1)	Organizational Communication (Y1)
X2.1	0,856	
X2.2	0,884	
X2.3	0,869	
X2.4	0,786	
Y1.1		**0,657**
Y1.2		0,856
Y1.3		0,828
Y1.4		0,801

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 9, the output results indicate that almost all loading factor values exceed 0.70, meaning that all indicators in this study are valid except for indicator Y1.1.

4.1.5.2 Discriminant Validity Test

The results of the cross loading in the Discriminant Validity test are presented in Table 10 below:

Tabel 10. Uji Discriminant Validity

	Transformational Leadership (X1)	Organizational Communication (Y1)
X2.1	0,851	0,557
X2.2	0,880	0,656
X2.3	0,872	0,566
X2.4	0,792	0,661
Y1.2	0,700	0,858

Y1.3	0,573	0,854
Y1.4	0,553	0,835

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 10 above, the cross-loading output shows that all constructs demonstrate good Discriminant Validity.

4.1.5.3 Composite Reliability Test

The results of the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha tests are presented in Table 11 below:

Table 11. **Composite Reliability Test**

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Transformational Leadership (X1)	0,871	0,912
Organizational Communication (Y1)	0,808	0,886

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 11 above, it can be seen that the Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.70, thus concluding that the tested variables are reliable.

4.1.5.4 Model Fit Test

The Model Fit Test shows an SRMR value of 0.090, indicating that this research model is good, as the obtained SRMR value meets the criterion of 0.090 < 0.10.

4.1.5.5 Hypothesis Test

The results of the Path Coefficient test for hypothesis testing are presented in Table 12 below:

Table 12. Hypothesis Test Based on Path Coefficient

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
X=>Y	0,724	0,730	0,061	11,806	0,000

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 12 above, the findings show a significant relationship between Transformational Leadership (X1) and Organizational Communication (Y1). "The hypothesis that Transformational Leadership affects Organizational Communication is supported by the data, with statistically significant results ($p < 0.05$)." This indicates that the hypothesis in this study is accepted.

4.1.5.6 The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Communication

This study aims to analyze the impact of transformational leadership on organizational communication at the Dinas Sosial DIY. Based on the data analysis, it was found that transformational leadership has a positive and significant relationship with organizational communication. Transformational leadership is key to effective communication, especially when institutions face change. Transformational leaders can facilitate these changes effectively, helping organizations or employees adapt through effective communication. The leaders at the Dinas Sosial DIY communicated the information about structural changes before the regulations were established. The leaders invited employees to prepare alternative solutions to potential issues that might arise from the effects of the changes. They ensured that all parties received the latest information, understood the goals of the changes, and were aware of their roles in the process. Meanwhile, comfortable communication made employees appear more open to facing the changes. The success of

building effective communication by a leader is also influenced by the bond between the leader and employees, which has developed over time.

The findings of the data in this study regarding length of service show that 24 respondents have worked for 2 to 5 years, representing 32.88%, 16 respondents have worked for 5 to 10 years, representing 21.92%, and 33 respondents have worked for over 10 years, representing 45.21%. Most respondents have worked for over 10 years, which suggests they have a strong attachment to the organization, making communicating and adapting to the work environment easier. According to Kreitner and Kinicki [14], a long duration of work tends to make employees feel more comfortable within the organization. This is because the adaptation process has been ongoing for a while, which makes employees feel more at ease with their work and work environment.

This aligns with Kotter's theory, which states that change management approaches changes in individuals, groups, and organizations to adapt to future conditions as desired. Transformational leaders can manage change effectively by utilizing their organizational communication skills. [15] their book "Change Management" states that communication is one of the key drivers of change, often identified with explaining the need for change and how it will be achieved. One leadership style considered effective during organizational changes is transformational leadership. [3], the synergy of transformational leadership in fostering communication during periods of change will positively impact organizational performance.

The research conducted [16] found that transformational leadership and organizational communication significantly impact employee performance. This study shows that transformational leadership contributes to effective organizational communication and improves employee performance. Another study conducted by [9] found that transformational leadership plays a role in the company's relocation and organizational restructuring, and it maintains employee engagement, meaning transformational leaders carry out good communication. Meanwhile, research by on organizational changes in the form of public sector reforms found that two dimensions of transformational leadership related to idealized influence and inspirational motivation contributed to the success of implementing organizational change. This finding aligns with research by [8], which shows that employees' perceptions of transformational leadership positively influence employee communication. When employees see their leaders exhibit an inspiring transformational leadership style that supports change and motivates them, they are more likely to communicate better and more effectively in the workplace. Meanwhile, another study by [3] found that organizational communication is a significant mediator in the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. This means that transformational leadership strongly influences organizational communication, which mediates the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction, with job satisfaction being related to improved organizational performance.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational communication. This indicates that transformational leadership impacts improving organizational communication at the Dinas Sosial DIY. This is due to the role of leaders who can create effective communication that is well-received by employees. In addition to the transformational leader's ability to communicate, the employees' long duration of service also influences the ease of building effective communication between leaders and employees, as they have become familiar with each other and can collaborate and adapt to the organizational changes that occur.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this study's analysis and conclusions, it is recommended that leadership be developed through training in transformational leadership styles so that leadership sustainability and effective communication can be maintained well into the future. Maintaining leadership that listens to employee voices and understands their needs and aspirations will, in turn, make them feel valued and more involved in achieving organizational goals.

Building a collaborative culture through team-building activities will strengthen the bonds among employees. Utilizing information technology for collaboration will accelerate access to information. Lastly, routine evaluation and monitoring of leadership and communication strategies will help the organization continue learning and adapting, ensuring that community services continually evolve.

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