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Author Name(s): Novianty Elizabeth Ayuna, Abdorrahman Gintings

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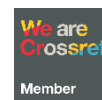
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# The synergistic effects of transformational leadership and communication competence on organizational culture in nonprofit organizations

Novianty Elizabeth Ayuna<sup>1</sup>, Abdorrahman Gintings<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Communication Sciences, Jayabaya University, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Langlangbuana, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of transformational leadership and communication competence on organizational culture in a nonprofit organization. The problem addressed was the lack of clarity regarding how these two factors interact to shape culture in the Indonesian context. A quantitative survey with an ex-post facto design was conducted involving all 36 employees of a foundation. Data were collected through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire, tested for validity and reliability, and analyzed using regression techniques. The results indicated that transformational leadership significantly influenced organizational culture ( $R^2 = 0.653$ ), while communication competence also had a significant effect ( $R^2 = 0.476$ ). Combined, both factors explained 87.1% of the variance, demonstrating a strong synergistic effect. The study concluded that strengthening leadership and communication simultaneously is essential for developing adaptive and sustainable organizational cultures in nonprofit institutions.



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## Corresponding Author:

Novianty Elizabeth Ayuna,  
Jayabaya University,  
Email: [novi.ayuna05@gmail.com](mailto:novi.ayuna05@gmail.com)

## Introduction

Contemporary organizations operate amid rapid and unpredictable disruptions brought about by globalization and technological advancement—conditions often associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Such turbulence has rendered many traditional business models increasingly unsustainable (Kazali, 2017), intensifying the demand for leadership approaches capable of steering institutions through profound transformation. Among the models proposed, transformational leadership has frequently been cited as pivotal for navigating complexity and fostering organizational resilience (Asbari, 2020). Other organizations, however, have demonstrated adaptability through visionary leadership combined with an agile culture. A notable illustration is the revitalization of PT

Kereta Api Indonesia under Ignatius Jonan, whose leadership transformed a declining enterprise into a benchmark of efficiency and public trust (Jans, 2018).

While these examples underscore leadership's potential to drive cultural renewal, nonprofit institutions such as Yayasan Pakar Indonesia contend with a distinct set of challenges. For such organizations, effective transformation hinges on cultivating an adaptive and learning-oriented culture. Evidence from Indonesian nonprofit settings indicates that flexibility in organizational culture is a strong predictor of successful change management (Mailangkay et al., 2024). Related studies on Islamic philanthropic institutions, such as LAZISNU Doro, further reveal that entrepreneurial leadership plays a decisive role in fostering resilience and institutional independence (Mufid & Elizabeth, 2025). Within this broader context, examining the leadership dynamics shaping Yayasan Pakar Indonesia becomes essential for understanding how cultural adaptability and organizational sustainability are achieved.

In volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous conditions, leadership is required to move beyond administrative routines toward guiding collective adaptation. Transformational leadership that are rooted in vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration has emerged as a particularly effective framework for navigating turbulence. By mobilizing members toward shared purpose and higher performance, it functions as a catalyst for deep organizational change (Moradi Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016; Kusuma et al., 2023). Its influence becomes even more apparent when considered alongside the cultures it helps to shape, both of which have been linked to stronger organizational outcomes (Nugroho & Pudiastuti, 2021).

However, leadership effectiveness is also contingent upon communicative capacity. The ability to articulate vision and align values determines whether leadership influence translates into cultural cohesion. Studies on large-scale organizational change emphasize communication as the essential medium that keeps the organizational "engine" running smoothly during transformation (Samsudin, 2021). In this view, communication competence functions less as an auxiliary skill and more as a strategic mechanism for cultivating trust and enabling cultural renewal (Feriyanto & Triana, 2019; DeVito, 2011). Evidence further shows that well-structured communication strengthens organizational climate and facilitates the implementation of change (Addimando, 2024).

Organizational culture itself, expressed through shared values, assumptions, and behaviors still remains a cornerstone of institutional effectiveness. A cohesive culture not only enhances performance but also deepens commitment, reinforces identity, and unites members around collective goals (Akpa et al., 2021). Such culture evolves continuously through the interplay between individuals and their environments, reflecting an ongoing negotiation of meaning and practice (Greenberg & Baron, 2003, as cited in Wibowo, 2021; Bahaudin, 2023).

Although the interconnections among leadership, communication, and culture are increasingly recognized, focused empirical exploration within the Indonesian context remains limited. Emerging research has begun to highlight the influence of transformational leadership and organizational culture on employee outcomes in Indonesian organizations (Rojak et al., 2024). Yet, an important area remains insufficiently examined the combined impact of leadership and communication competence on the development of organizational culture, particularly within the nation's pivotal nonprofit sector. Similar concerns have been raised in other non-Western contexts, where cultural dynamics shape how leadership functions. Broader reviews suggest that the effectiveness of transformational leadership is culturally contingent, as its charismatic and stimulating qualities may exert less influence in collectivist and high power-distance environments that emphasize formal structures and social harmony (Poturak et al., 2020). This view finds empirical support in studies identifying cultural dimensions such as power distance as direct moderators of leadership outcomes (Al-Shibami et al., 2019; Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2024; Nordby, 2020).

While some research has successfully linked leadership and culture to outcomes such as motivation and performance (Putra & Dewi, 2019), prior work often examines these constructs in isolation either separating leadership from communication or reducing communication to a technical process (Morrison, 2009; Yuliana, 2012). Consequently, the integrative role of transformational leadership and communication competence in shaping organizational culture remains an underexplored yet critical frontier for understanding how enduring cultural transformation takes root.

The present study addresses this gap by investigating how transformational leadership and communication competence influence the organizational culture of Yayasan Pakar Indonesia. The objective is twofold: to extend leadership and communication theory into an underexamined nonprofit and Indonesian context, and to provide practical insights for nonprofit governance.

## Method

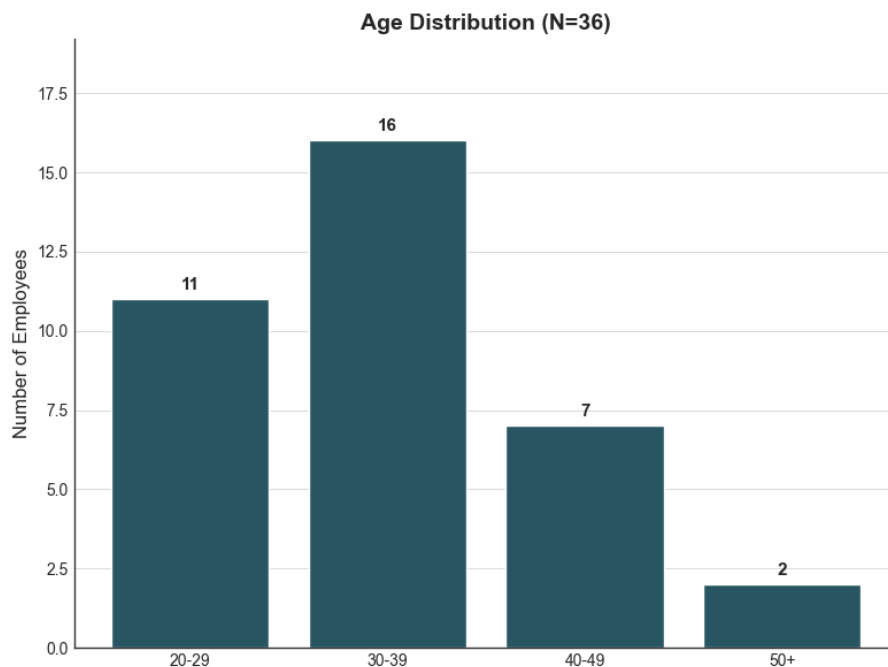
### Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative approach with a survey method, adopting an ex-post facto design. The approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine relationships between variables that have already occurred, without manipulation. Transformational leadership and communication competence are organizational phenomena that cannot be experimentally controlled; hence, the design suits the objective of assessing their influence on organizational culture in a natural setting.

### Population and Sampling

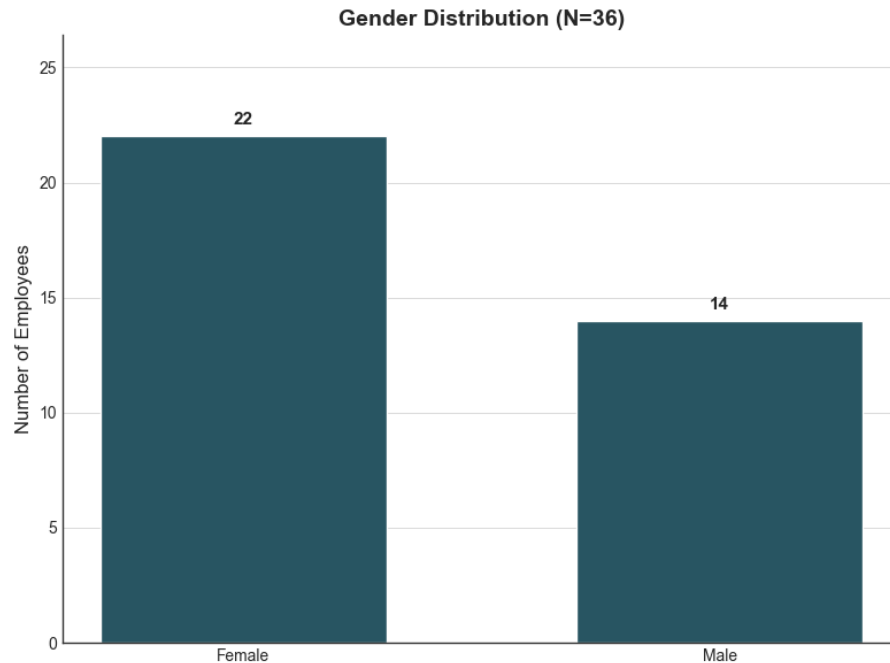
The study was conducted at Yayasan Pakar Indonesia, a nonprofit organization in Indonesia. The research population comprised all 36 employees of the foundation, representing a variety of functional roles and hierarchical levels. Given the small and well-defined size of the population, a total sampling (or census) technique was employed. This approach was selected to ensure a comprehensive representation of all employees, thereby minimizing sampling bias and providing a holistic view of the organization's internal dynamics. The participants that were selected were at least have 3 months tenure and are a full time employee.

To provide a clear context for the study's findings, the demographic characteristics of the participants were analyzed. The sample's age distribution is detailed in Figure 1. The workforce was predominantly composed of employees under the age of 40 (75%), with the largest cohort being the 30-39 age group (n=16, 44.4%), followed by the 20-29 age group (n=11, 30.6%). A smaller number of employees were in the 40-49 (n=7, 19.4%) and 50+ (n=2, 5.6%) age brackets.



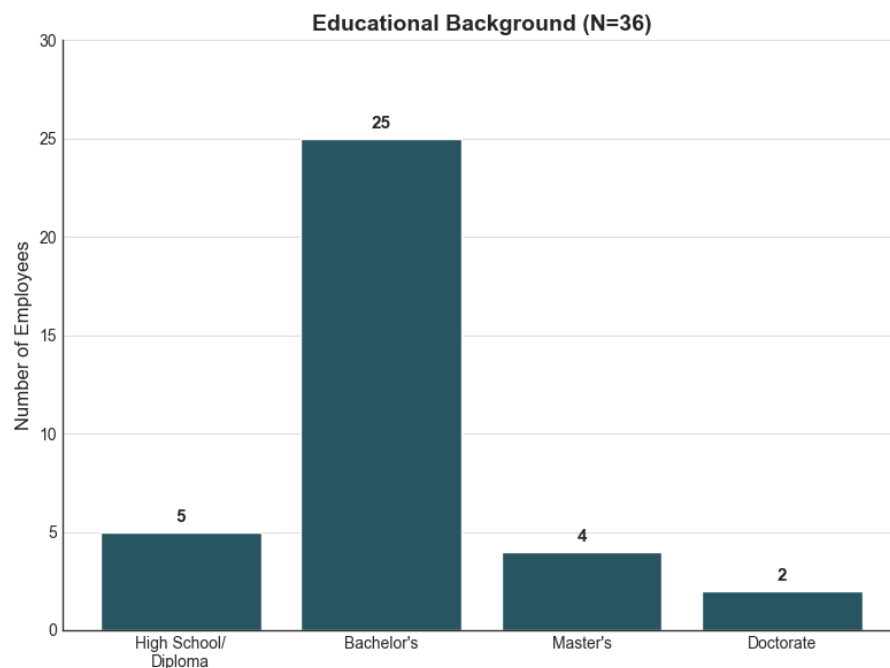
**Figure 1.** Age Distribution

The gender distribution of the participants, shown in Figure 2, indicated a female majority. The sample consisted of 22 female employees (61.1%) and 14 male employees (38.9%).



**Figure 2. Gender Distribution**

Participants' educational backgrounds, detailed in Figure 3. The vast majority held a Bachelor's degree (n=25, 69.4%). A notable portion of the staff held postgraduate degrees, including Master's (n=4, 11.1%) and Doctorates (n=2, 5.6%). The remaining employees had completed high school or held a diploma (n=5, 13.9%).



**Figure 3. Educational Background**

Finally, employee tenure within the organization, illustrated in Figure 4. The largest group consisted of employees with 1-3 years of service (n=14, 38.9%). This was followed by those with 4-6 years of tenure (n=9, 25.0%). A significant segment of the workforce was relatively new, with less than one year of service (n=7, 19.4%), while a core group of long-term employees had 7+ years of experience (n=6, 16.7%).

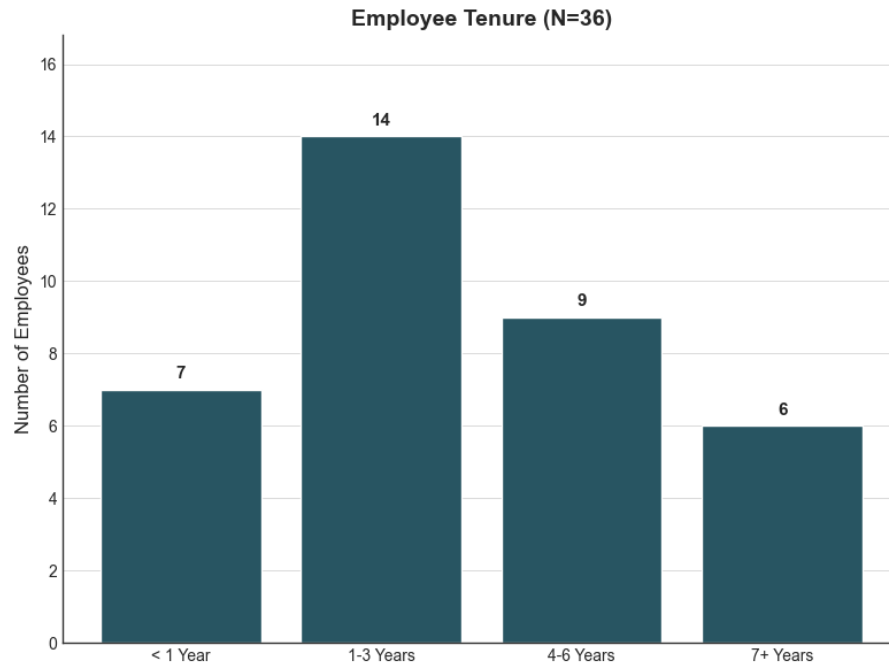


Figure 4. Employee Tenure

### Instrument

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire based on previously validated instruments. Each construct in this study was measured using multiple indicators, adapted as follows: 1) Transformational Leadership was measured using an instrument adapted from Bass (as cited in Robbins & Judge, 2012), including four indicators: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration; 2) Communication Competence was measured using dimensions developed by Muhammad (2010), covering downward, upward, and horizontal communication; 3) Organizational Culture was measured based on concepts from Greenberg and Baron (as cited in Wibowo, 2021) and Bahaudin (2023), focusing on shared values, norms, and group identity; 4) All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### Data Collection Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed directly to employees and collected after a one-week interval. Respondents were briefed about the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. The data collection process took place within the operational setting of Yayasan Pakar Indonesia to minimize external interference.

### Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using simple and multiple linear regression techniques with the assistance of SPSS version 23. The analysis aimed to test the partial and simultaneous effects of transformational leadership and communication competence on organizational culture. For each regression model, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), significance values (p-values), and regression coefficients ( $\beta$ ) were examined to determine the strength and direction of relationships. Prior to analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure the validity and reliability of the regression results. The t-test was used to examine partial influences of each independent variable, while the F-test was used to evaluate the simultaneous effect of the variables. This statistical approach was selected based on its appropriateness for testing causal relationships among observed variables in a small sample size ( $n = 36$ ).

## Results and Discussions

### Instrument Validity and Reliability

Prior to conducting hypothesis testing, the study assessed the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments to ensure their appropriateness in capturing the constructs of transformational leadership (X1), communication competence (X2), and organizational culture (Y). The validity assessment was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment correlation via SPSS 23, where the significance value (Sig.) threshold was set at  $< 0.05$ . All items in each construct demonstrated significance levels below this threshold, confirming their construct validity as shown in Table 1

**Table 1.** Validity Test of Variables

Variable	Item Number with the highest Sig	Sig Value	Summary
Leadership Style Transformational (X1)	All items have the same Sig value	0,000 < 0,05	All items are valid
Communication Competence (X2)	All items have the same Sig value	0,000 < 0,05	All items are valid
Organizational Culture (Y)	All items have the same Sig value	0,000 < 0,05	All items are valid

Following the validation process, the reliability of the items was assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha method. The results showed that each construct had reliability coefficients above the 0.6 threshold: 0.780 for transformational leadership, 0.773 for communication competence, and 0.771 for organizational culture. These values indicate a high internal consistency across the measurement items, as seen in table 2

**Table 2.** Reliability Ttest of Variables

Variable Instrument	Test Result	Decision
X1	$\alpha = 0,780 > 0,6$	All items are reliable
X2	$\alpha = 0,773 > 0,6$	All items are reliable
Y	$\alpha = 0,771 > 0,6$	All items are reliable

These findings affirm that the research instruments used in the study are both valid and reliable, which is crucial for ensuring the robustness of the subsequent statistical analysis. As noted in organizational behavior literature (Robbins & Judge, 2012; Hery, 2023), reliable instruments are a prerequisite for producing dependable research outcomes, especially when dealing with psychological and behavioral constructs.

### Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables

**Table 3.** Mean and Category Range

Mean	Category
1,00 – 1,49	Very Low
1,50 – 2,49	Low
2,50 – 3,49	Moderate
3,50 – 4,49	High
4,50 – 5,00	Very High

A descriptive analysis was conducted to understand the current state of the three main variables. Each construct was assessed based on mean scores and categorized using the interpretative criteria outlined show in table 3.

**Table 4.** Category of each Variables

Variabel	Mean	Category
Leadership Style (X <sub>1</sub> )	3,6074	High
Communication Competence (X <sub>2</sub> )	2,8889	Moderate
Organizational Culture (Y)	3,2740	Moderate

From Table 4, transformational leadership (X<sub>1</sub>) recorded the highest mean score (3.6074), placing it within the “High” category. This finding indicates that leaders at Yayasan Pakar Indonesia generally demonstrate a strong transformational orientation in guiding their teams. In contrast, communication competence (X<sub>2</sub>) obtained a mean value of 2.8889, categorized as “Moderate,” while organizational culture (Y) also registered a “Moderate” level with a mean of 3.2740.

The pattern reveals a notable disparity: while leadership behavior is relatively strong, communication and cultural dimensions have yet to reach comparable maturity. This imbalance suggests that leadership initiatives may not be fully diffused across the organization, potentially limiting their cultural impact. The existence of a “pervasive communication gap,” as described by Rony et al. (2023), reinforces the notion that insufficient information flow can constrain collaboration and hinder institutional growth, even under capable leadership.

These results imply that leadership effectiveness alone cannot guarantee cultural cohesion. Transformational leadership must be accompanied by strong communication competence to translate vision into shared meaning and collective action. This interpretation resonates with prior research emphasizing that cultural transformation relies not only on leadership but also on communicative effectiveness and participatory engagement (Bahaudin, 2023; Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2024).

Comparable evidence from Indian social enterprises demonstrates that ethical leadership can directly nurture collaborative and adaptive cultures, thereby enhancing organizational responsibility (Pasricha et al., 2017). This finding highlights how the moral and value-driven qualities of transformational leadership play a pivotal role in shaping the shared norms and trust that underpin a resilient organizational culture especially in Indonesian non profit organization like Yayasan Pakar Indonesia.

### The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Culture

Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of transformational leadership (X<sub>1</sub>) on organizational culture (Y). The statistical output for this test is presented in Table 5 and Table 6.

**Table 5.** Coefficient X1 to Y

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.550	5.690		.272	.787
	Leadership	.757	.095	.808	7.999	.000

According to table 5, the significance value (Sig.) for the regression coefficient is 0.000, which is well below the accepted threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the effect of transformational leadership on organizational culture is statistically significant. The regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ) is 0.757, and the corresponding t-value is 7.999, suggesting a strong positive influence. These results support the first hypothesis (H1): that transformational leadership has a significant and positive effect on organizational culture.

In addition, table 6 reports an R Square value of 0.653. This means that 65.3% of the variance in organizational culture can be explained by transformational leadership behavior, while the remaining 34.7% is likely influenced by other factors not included in this model.

**Table 6.** Table Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.808 <sup>a</sup>	.653	.643	10.018

These findings suggest that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organizational culture at Yayasan Pakar Indonesia. This dynamic is particularly pronounced in value-driven institutions. For instance, a case study of a Malaysian Sufi organization found that spiritual leadership relies on structured vertical communication not merely for operational direction, but as a 'moral trust' to transmit values, reinforce purpose, and ensure leadership continuity (Abdul Hamid et al., 2025). This illustrates how leadership and communication work in concert to embed and sustain a specific organizational culture. Indeed, this connection is not isolated. A direct and significant effect of transformational leadership on culture has been documented in the Indonesian corporate sector (Rizki et al., 2019). The implication that leaders foster adaptive organizations by first building a supportive culture (Elshanti, 2017) is especially relevant locally. In Indonesia, sustainable leadership is defined by harmony, ethics, and care, behaviors that naturally cultivate the shared values and trust of a strong culture (Candra & Sundiman, 2020). This cultural creation thus becomes a primary pathway for leadership to influence employees, even serving as the essential mediator for inspiring actions beyond formal job requirements (Arifiani et al., 2020).

And also Rothwell, Stavros, and Sullivan (2016) argue that transformational leaders are instrumental in fostering trust, motivation, and commitment. This link between leadership and motivation has been confirmed within the Indonesian public sector, where studies show that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee performance, partially through the mechanism of increased job motivation (Putra & Dewi, 2019). Similarly, Bader, Gielnik, and Bledow (2023) highlight that transformational leadership satisfies employees' basic psychological needs, which in turn helps embed a values-based culture across the organization.

In the context of Yayasan Pakar Indonesia, where adaptive change and internal cohesion are organizational priorities, the presence of transformational leadership behaviors appears to be a foundational driver of cultural alignment. These results underline the importance of nurturing leadership qualities that are capable of not just guiding operational change but also cultivating a lasting cultural transformation.

### Simultaneous Influence of Transformational Leadership and Communication Competence on Organizational Culture

The third hypothesis examined whether transformational leadership ( $X_1$ ) and communication competence ( $X_2$ ) jointly and significantly influence organizational culture ( $Y$ ). As shown in Table 7, the regression model produced an R value of 0.933 and an R Square of 0.871, indicating that 87.1% of the variation in organizational culture can be explained by the combined effect of transformational leadership and communication competence. This is an exceptionally high explanatory value in social sciences, suggesting that these two behavioral variables are dominant predictors of cultural outcomes in the organizational setting of Yayasan Pakar Indonesia. The Adjusted R Square value (0.863) further confirms the model's robustness, accounting for potential inflation due to the number of predictors included.

**Table 7.** Coefficient of X2 to Y

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.933 <sup>a</sup>	.871	.863	6.209

The significance of the overall regression model is confirmed in Tabel 8, which reports an F-value of 111.036 with a Sig. value of 0.000. This clearly indicates that the model is statistically significant and that the combination of  $X_1$  and  $X_2$  provides a meaningful prediction of  $Y$ . The high F-statistic demonstrates that the model significantly outperforms a model without any predictors, justifying the simultaneous inclusion of both variables

**Table 8.** ANOVA result

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8561.628	2	4280.814	111.036	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1272.261	33	38.553		
	Total	9833.889	35			

These results are aligned with what Hypothesis 3 is and reinforce the results of the earlier individual regression analyses. While transformational leadership alone accounted for 65.3% of the variance in culture, and communication competence accounted for 47.6%, their combined influence strengthens the model significantly. The interdependence of leadership and communication appears central to shaping a culture that sustains organizational vitality. Environments where both are mutually reinforcing tend to foster positive employee states that drive performance. For instance, such cultures are known to build stronger employee commitment (Rahmatullah et al., 2022; Wibowo et al., 2023) and, as other Indonesian studies show, they also significantly enhance work engagement, which serves as another crucial mediator on the path to improved performance (Sutrisno et al., 2022). Focusing on one dimension in isolation is therefore insufficient; enduring cultural transformation is more likely when both are cultivated in tandem.

This interpretation resonates with contemporary views of how culture takes form within organizations. Leadership provides the strategic compass, while communication animates and maintains that direction through shared meaning and collective understanding (Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2024; Adimando, 2024). Emerging evidence further nuances this relationship, indicating that cultural intelligence underpins a leader's communicative capacity, enabling influence that is both contextually sensitive and clearly articulated (Resho & Singh, 2025). In this sense, leadership intentions alone rarely suffice; it is through communication that vision becomes culture, when messages are coherent, credible, and consistently enacted throughout the organization.

In the context of Yayasan Pakar Indonesia, this model provides evidence that both the leadership style and the communication abilities of employees are critical for cultivating a strong organizational culture. These findings suggest that development programs focusing exclusively on leadership without strengthening communication competence or vice versa may be insufficient. Instead, a dual strategy that invests in both areas is likely to yield the most sustainable cultural transformation.

### Managerial Implications

Management at Yayasan Pakar Indonesia faces a critical misalignment: high-rated leadership behaviors are not translating into a correspondingly strong organizational culture, with both culture and communication competence lagging. This gap points directly to communication as a bottleneck, demanding an integrated strategy that simultaneously develops leadership capabilities and communication skills. Practically, this means embedding communication training, such as active listening and dialogue facilitation within leadership development rather than treating them as separate initiatives. By intentionally cultivating both areas in tandem through mechanisms like 360-degree feedback and inclusive dialogue platforms, leadership can more effectively foster the adaptive and sustainable organizational culture required.

## Conclusions

The synergy between transformational leadership and communication competence emerges as a dominant driver of organizational culture within Yayasan Pakar Indonesia, where their combined effect is substantially more powerful than their individual influences. By empirically validating this relationship in the under-researched context of an Indonesian non-profit, a culturally-specific lens is offered on a widely accepted organizational theory, while also providing managers an evidence-based pathway for sustainable cultural transformation through a dual-strategy. Given the single-organization focus, the broader applicability of this synergistic model now requires validation. Replication across larger, diverse samples is the necessary next step to determine if this powerful interplay is a fundamental component of cultural development in other contexts.

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