

Lack of Communication and Transparency: Leadership in Strengthening an Inclusive Organizational Culture

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ABSTRACT This study examines the role of leadership in strengthening inclusive organizational culture, with a particular focus on communication and transparency. Effective leadership not only guides organizations toward achieving their goals but also plays a crucial role in fostering an open, fair, and participatory work environment. However, many organizations in Indonesia still face challenges related to ineffective communication and limited transparency, which negatively affect trust, employee engagement, and the development of an inclusive organizational culture. This research employs a descriptive quantitative approach, utilizing observation and literature review as data collection methods. The findings indicate that the lack of two-way communication and leadership transparency significantly hinders the implementation of an inclusive organizational culture. Therefore, the application of communicative, transparent, and inclusive leadership is essential to creating a collaborative, harmonious, and sustainable organizational environment.

Keywords: *Leadership, Communication, Transparency, Organizational Culture, Inclusivity.*

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a fundamental element that determines the direction, quality, and sustainability of an organization. A leader plays a key role in shaping, guiding, and motivating organizational members to achieve shared goals without relying on coercive power. Effective leadership is not only oriented toward achieving organizational targets but also emphasizes the development of human resources through education, empowerment, and the creation of a supportive work environment that encourages individual growth. This indicates that leadership approaches significantly influence employees' attitudes, ethics, and performance within an organization (Northouse, 2021; Yukl & Gardner, 2020). In modern organizational contexts, leadership is increasingly expected to foster collaboration and inclusivity, ensuring that every member of the organization feels valued and motivated to contribute to organizational success.

An appropriate leadership approach can influence the development of a positive and adaptive organizational culture. Organizational culture serves as the identity and guiding

framework that shapes the way members think, behave, and interact while carrying out organizational tasks. It encompasses shared values, norms, and practices that guide employee behavior and decision-making processes. A strong organizational culture supported by effective leadership has been shown to enhance creativity, employee engagement, and organizational efficiency in achieving goals (Schein & Schein, 2021; Alvesson, 2020). When leaders actively reinforce organizational values and model desired behaviors, employees are more likely to internalize these values and translate them into daily practices. As a result, leadership becomes a critical factor in shaping and sustaining a healthy organizational culture.

Research in recent years has emphasized the close relationship between leadership and organizational culture in improving organizational performance. Leaders who align their leadership styles with organizational values are more likely to create a harmonious and productive work environment. For instance, studies have shown that transformational leadership positively influences organizational culture by encouraging innovation, collaboration, and shared responsibility among employees (Banks et al., 2021; Astuty & Udin, 2020). Transformational leaders inspire employees by articulating a clear vision, fostering trust, and encouraging participation in decision-making processes. This leadership style not only enhances employee motivation but also strengthens the sense of belonging within the organization, which is essential for building an inclusive culture.

However, one of the major challenges in strengthening organizational culture is the lack of communication and transparency in leadership practices. Ineffective communication can lead to misunderstandings, dissatisfaction, and a decline in trust among organizational members. When leaders fail to communicate clearly and openly, employees may feel excluded from decision-making processes, which can negatively affect their engagement and commitment to the organization (Men, 2021; Johansson et al., 2022). Poor communication also creates barriers to collaboration, as employees may hesitate to share ideas or provide feedback due to uncertainty or fear of negative consequences. Over time, this can weaken the organizational culture and reduce overall performance.

Transparency is closely related to communication and plays a crucial role in building trust within organizations. Transparent leadership involves openly sharing information, explaining decisions, and encouraging feedback from employees. Leaders who practice transparency are more likely to foster trust and create a sense of fairness within the organization. Trust is a key component of an inclusive organizational culture because it encourages employees to participate actively and express their perspectives without fear of discrimination or exclusion (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2021; Rawlins et al., 2023). When employees trust their leaders, they are more willing to collaborate and contribute to organizational goals, which ultimately strengthens organizational performance.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of open communication in creating a collaborative and participatory organizational culture. Leaders who engage in two-way communication allow employees to voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes. This participatory approach enhances employees' sense of ownership and responsibility toward organizational goals (Kim & Lee, 2021). Moreover, open communication helps leaders understand employees' needs and concerns, enabling them to address potential issues before they escalate into conflicts. In this way, communication becomes a strategic tool for maintaining a positive organizational climate and promoting inclusivity.

In addition to communication, transparency is essential for fostering an adaptive organizational culture in modern workplaces. Organizations today operate in dynamic environments that require flexibility and innovation. Transparent leadership enables employees to understand organizational changes and adapt more effectively to new challenges. When leaders clearly explain the reasons behind organizational decisions, employees are more likely to accept

and support these decisions, even when they involve significant changes (Lee & Li, 2021). Transparency also reduces uncertainty and helps employees feel more secure in their roles, which contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Transformational leadership is often considered an effective approach for promoting communication and transparency within organizations. Transformational leaders inspire and empower employees while emphasizing openness and trust. They encourage employees to share ideas, take initiative, and collaborate with others to achieve organizational goals. This leadership approach is particularly relevant in contemporary organizations that prioritize inclusivity and innovation (Banks et al., 2021). By fostering open communication and transparency, transformational leaders create an environment where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute their best efforts.

Despite the recognized importance of communication and transparency, many organizations still struggle to implement these principles effectively. In some cases, hierarchical structures and traditional leadership practices limit opportunities for open communication. Leaders may withhold information or avoid discussing organizational challenges, which can create a culture of secrecy and mistrust. This lack of transparency can hinder the development of an inclusive organizational culture and reduce employees' willingness to engage in collaborative activities (Johansson et al., 2022). Therefore, organizations need to adopt leadership practices that prioritize communication and transparency as essential components of organizational success.

Understanding the relationship between leadership approaches, organizational culture, communication, and transparency is crucial for improving organizational performance. Leaders who emphasize open communication and transparency are better equipped to build inclusive organizational cultures that support collaboration and innovation. Such cultures enable organizations to adapt to changing environments and maintain long-term sustainability. Consequently, leadership development programs should focus on enhancing communication skills and promoting transparent decision-making processes.

This study focuses on examining how the misalignment between leadership approaches and organizational culture, particularly those caused by deficiencies in communication and transparency, affects overall organizational performance. By exploring the role of leadership in fostering inclusive organizational cultures, this research aims to provide insights into effective leadership practices that support organizational development. Ultimately, this study highlights the importance of communication and transparency as key factors in strengthening organizational culture and improving organizational effectiveness in contemporary workplaces.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative method, which is a research approach aimed at systematically and factually describing a phenomenon using data obtained from observation and literature review. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for examining the impact of limited communication and transparency in leadership on the development of an inclusive organizational culture in institutions or organizations in Indonesia. Descriptive quantitative research focuses on analyzing numerical or structured data and presenting the results objectively without manipulating the research variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Through this approach, the study seeks to provide a clear description of leadership communication patterns and transparency practices within organizational settings.

The object of this research includes various public and private organizations in Indonesia that have formal leadership structures and implement internal communication mechanisms in their operational activities. The study does not focus on a single organization but rather examines organizations broadly, including educational institutions, social organizations, business entities,

and community organizations. The primary focus of the research is on leadership practices, internal communication patterns, levels of transparency, and the implementation of inclusive organizational culture within contemporary organizational environments. By examining these aspects, the study aims to identify how communication and transparency influence the development of inclusive organizational values and practices.

Data were collected using two main techniques: observation and literature review. Observation was conducted to obtain information about real conditions related to leadership interaction patterns, levels of openness, and the implementation of organizational values in daily activities. Through observation, researchers were able to gather direct evidence of workplace interactions and communication practices as they occurred in real time. Observation is an effective method for understanding organizational behavior because it allows researchers to capture actual practices rather than relying solely on reported perceptions (McGrath & Altermatt, 2022).

In addition to observation, a literature review was conducted to examine theories, concepts, and findings from previous studies related to leadership, communication, transparency, and organizational culture. The literature sources included accredited national journals, reputable international journals, academic books, and other scientific publications published within the last five years. The literature review was intended to strengthen the theoretical foundation of the research and provide a basis for interpreting the findings. By comparing observational data with existing theories and empirical studies, the research provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between leadership and inclusive organizational culture (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2021).

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive quantitative approach, which involves organizing and interpreting collected data to provide an objective description of the phenomenon under study. This approach was used to illustrate the level of leadership communication and transparency and their influence on inclusive organizational culture. The analysis focused on identifying patterns and relationships between leadership practices and organizational culture based on observational findings and theoretical perspectives. Descriptive analysis is particularly useful for presenting complex organizational phenomena in a clear and systematic manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

To ensure data validity, this study applied source triangulation by comparing observational findings with information obtained from relevant literature. Triangulation helps reduce bias and improves the credibility of research findings by confirming data through multiple sources. This process ensures that the conclusions drawn from the study are accurate, objective, and academically reliable. By combining observation and literature review, this study provides a well-rounded analysis of how communication and transparency in leadership influence the development of inclusive organizational culture in Indonesian organizations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Condition of Leadership Communication in Indonesian Organizations

Leadership communication is a crucial element that influences work dynamics and the quality of interactions between leaders and organizational members. Through communication, leaders convey vision, direction, expectations, and organizational values that guide employees in performing their roles. In Indonesian organizations, leadership communication practices vary widely depending on organizational culture, leadership style, and structural systems. Some organizations have implemented structured, transparent, and interactive communication systems that encourage collaboration and mutual understanding among employees. In such organizations, leaders tend to involve employees in discussions, provide clear explanations about policies, and create opportunities for dialogue. Effective leadership communication has been shown to

increase trust, engagement, and commitment among organizational members, ultimately contributing to organizational effectiveness (Men, 2021; Johansson et al., 2022). When employees feel that their voices are heard and appreciated, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging and responsibility toward organizational goals. As a result, communication becomes not only a tool for coordination but also a means of strengthening organizational relationships.

In organizations where communication flows smoothly, employees tend to feel more valued and involved in organizational processes, which supports the development of a positive work environment. Open communication allows employees to seek clarification, share feedback, and propose ideas for improvement. This process fosters mutual respect between leaders and employees and reduces the likelihood of conflict caused by misunderstandings. Moreover, effective communication enables leaders to better understand employee needs and challenges, allowing them to make more informed and responsive decisions. Consequently, communication plays an essential role in maintaining organizational stability and promoting continuous improvement.

However, in many Indonesian organizations, communication patterns still tend to be hierarchical and one-directional, with leaders primarily delivering instructions without providing opportunities for feedback. This communication style reflects the persistence of bureaucratic and paternalistic organizational cultures in which authority is centralized at higher levels of leadership. Leaders are often seen as the primary decision-makers, while employees are expected to follow instructions with limited input. One-way communication often creates distance between leaders and employees, increasing the risk of misunderstandings and dissatisfaction (Lee & Li, 2021). Employees in such environments may feel hesitant to express their opinions or share ideas, particularly if they fear negative consequences or believe that their input will not be valued.

This hierarchical communication style can also limit organizational learning and innovation. When employees are not encouraged to participate in discussions, valuable insights and creative ideas may remain unexpressed. Over time, this situation may reduce employee motivation and hinder organizational adaptability in responding to changing environments. Furthermore, limited communication can weaken trust between leaders and employees, making it more difficult to build effective teamwork and collaboration.

The gap between ideal communication practices and actual conditions in Indonesian organizations indicates that leadership communication is still evolving. Contemporary leadership theories emphasize the importance of open, honest, and reciprocal communication between leaders and followers (Banks et al., 2021). Such communication encourages transparency, mutual understanding, and shared responsibility in achieving organizational goals. In practice, however, structural barriers and cultural norms often limit the implementation of such communication models. Employees may be reluctant to express disagreement due to respect for hierarchy, while leaders may prefer to maintain control over information. This situation demonstrates that communication challenges are not only technical but also cultural in nature.

Observational findings and literature analysis suggest that leadership communication in Indonesia is currently transitioning from traditional hierarchical models toward more participatory approaches. Digital communication technologies and modern management practices have encouraged organizations to adopt more open and flexible communication systems. Tools such as instant messaging platforms, virtual meetings, and collaborative applications have made communication faster and more accessible across organizational levels. Nevertheless, this transition remains uneven, and many organizations still rely on conventional communication patterns. Improving leadership communication therefore requires systematic efforts, including leadership training, cultural transformation, and the development of transparent communication systems (Rawlins et al., 2023). Through these efforts, organizations can foster more inclusive communication practices that support both employee development and long-term organizational success.

The Level of Leadership Transparency in Indonesian Organizations

Transparency in leadership is a key factor in building trust, fairness, and openness within organizations. Transparent leadership enables employees to access relevant information, understand decision-making processes, and feel included in organizational activities. In Indonesian organizations, the level of leadership transparency varies significantly depending on organizational culture, leadership style, and management practices. Some organizations have implemented transparent practices by providing employees with access to important information, particularly regarding organizational strategies, performance evaluations, and major decisions. Leaders in such organizations often communicate openly about goals, challenges, and achievements, allowing employees to gain a clearer understanding of the organization's direction. Transparent leadership practices have been associated with increased trust and stronger employee engagement (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2021; Men, 2021). When leaders share information openly, employees are more likely to understand organizational goals and align their efforts with these objectives. As a result, transparency not only improves communication but also strengthens employees' sense of responsibility and belonging within the organization.

In organizations where transparency is practiced consistently, employees tend to perceive leadership as fair and accountable. Access to accurate and timely information allows employees to perform their tasks more effectively and make informed decisions in their daily work. Moreover, transparency helps reduce uncertainty and speculation, which often arise when employees lack information about organizational changes. When leaders communicate openly about policies and decisions, employees are more likely to trust leadership intentions and remain committed to organizational goals. This sense of trust contributes to a positive work environment in which collaboration and mutual respect can flourish. Transparency also supports ethical leadership by ensuring that decisions are made and communicated in a clear and accountable manner.

Despite these positive developments, many organizations still demonstrate limited transparency. In such cases, decisions are often made by top management without clear explanations to employees. Leaders may provide only general information while withholding details about decision-making processes or the reasons behind certain policies. This lack of transparency can create perceptions of unfairness and reduce employee motivation (Kim & Lee, 2021). Employees who feel excluded from organizational processes may become disengaged and less committed to their work. In some cases, limited transparency can also lead to misunderstandings and workplace conflicts, particularly when employees rely on informal communication channels to obtain information. Over time, this situation can weaken trust between leaders and employees and reduce organizational cohesion.

Several factors contribute to limited transparency in Indonesian organizations. One major factor is the persistence of paternalistic leadership cultures, where leaders assume full responsibility for decision-making and control the flow of information. Leaders in such environments may believe that sharing too much information could undermine their authority or create unnecessary conflict among employees. As a result, leaders may choose to limit communication to essential instructions rather than providing comprehensive explanations. Another factor is the absence of formal transparency policies in many organizations, which makes transparency dependent on individual leadership styles (Lee et al., 2022). Without clear guidelines, some leaders may adopt transparent practices while others maintain more closed communication approaches, resulting in inconsistent transparency across the organization.

In modern leadership theory, transparency involves not only sharing information but also explaining the reasoning behind decisions and encouraging employee participation (Rawlins et al., 2023). Transparent leaders create opportunities for employees to understand organizational processes, ask questions, and provide feedback. This approach fosters a sense of inclusion and encourages employees to take an active role in organizational development. However, many organizations still struggle to implement transparency consistently due to structural and cultural barriers. Hierarchical organizational structures may limit the flow of information, while cultural norms that emphasize respect for authority may discourage employees from seeking clarification

or expressing concerns. These challenges demonstrate that transparency is not only a managerial practice but also a cultural transformation that requires long-term commitment.

Overall, leadership transparency in Indonesian organizations can be described as developing but not yet optimal. While some organizations have made progress in adopting transparent practices, many still rely on traditional approaches that limit information sharing. Efforts to improve transparency should focus on strengthening organizational policies, promoting inclusive leadership practices, and encouraging open communication at all levels. Training programs can help leaders understand the importance of transparency and develop the skills needed to communicate effectively with employees. In addition, organizations can establish formal mechanisms for information sharing, such as regular meetings, written reports, and digital communication platforms. Consistent transparency can strengthen relationships between leaders and employees and provide a foundation for inclusive organizational cultures (Schnackenberg et al., 2021). By fostering openness and accountability, organizations can create environments in which employees feel valued, informed, and motivated to contribute to organizational success.

Implementation of Inclusive Organizational Culture

An inclusive organizational culture creates an environment in which all members feel valued, respected, and able to contribute meaningfully to organizational success. The importance of inclusive culture has increased significantly in modern organizations that emphasize diversity, collaboration, and innovation as key drivers of sustainability and competitiveness. Inclusive organizational culture is characterized by fairness, participation, equal opportunity, and mutual respect among organizational members (Randel et al., 2020). In such environments, employees feel psychologically safe and are more willing to express their ideas, share perspectives, and actively engage in organizational activities. As a result, inclusivity not only enhances interpersonal relationships but also contributes to improved organizational performance and long-term development.

In Indonesia, some organizations have demonstrated encouraging progress toward developing inclusive organizational cultures. These organizations have begun implementing policies and practices that encourage employee participation in decision-making processes, provide equal opportunities for career development, and promote collaborative work environments. For example, some institutions encourage open discussions, teamwork, and employee involvement in organizational planning. These practices align with research indicating that inclusive organizational cultures can improve employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance (Javed et al., 2021). Furthermore, inclusive cultures support innovation by encouraging employees from diverse backgrounds to share their knowledge and experiences, which can lead to more creative and effective solutions to organizational challenges.

Despite these positive developments, the implementation of inclusive organizational culture in Indonesia still faces several significant challenges. Many organizations do not yet have a comprehensive understanding of inclusivity and often treat it as a formal concept rather than an integrated organizational value. Inclusivity is sometimes presented in organizational policies or mission statements but is not consistently applied in everyday practices. Organizational hierarchies and seniority systems remain dominant in many institutions, limiting opportunities for employees at lower levels to express their ideas or concerns. This hierarchical structure can discourage open communication and reduce employee participation in organizational processes. Consequently, a gap often emerges between the theoretical concept of inclusivity and its practical implementation within organizations (Nishii & Leroy, 2022).

Another major challenge is the lack of transparency in decision-making processes and resource allocation. Employees who perceive unfair treatment or unequal access to opportunities may feel excluded from organizational activities. When leaders fail to communicate openly about decisions or policies, employees may develop mistrust toward management. This lack of trust can weaken teamwork and reduce employee motivation. Without transparent leadership, initiatives

aimed at promoting inclusivity may not achieve their intended outcomes. Research has shown that inclusive organizational cultures require consistent leadership support, role modeling, and clear communication in order to be effective (Randel et al., 2020). Leaders play a critical role in ensuring that inclusive values are not only communicated but also practiced in daily organizational activities.

Observational findings indicate that inclusive organizational culture in Indonesia is still in a developmental stage. While some organizations have adopted inclusive practices and demonstrated positive outcomes, many others continue to operate within traditional hierarchical frameworks that limit participation and openness. Strengthening inclusive organizational culture requires strong commitment from organizational leaders, as well as policies that support equality, participation, and fairness. Leaders must actively encourage open communication and create opportunities for employees to contribute their ideas and perspectives. Inclusive culture should not only be reflected in organizational policies but also embedded in daily practices and interactions among organizational members. Consistent implementation of inclusive values can help organizations create a collaborative, respectful, and supportive work environment that benefits both employees and the organization as a whole (Javed et al., 2021).

The Impact of Limited Communication and Transparency on Inclusive Organizational Culture

Communication problems are common in organizational processes, particularly within hierarchical structures where authority and information tend to flow from top to bottom. One of the most frequent issues is the lack of harmonious relationships between leaders and employees, which is often caused by insufficient communication and limited transparency. In many organizations, communication is still dominated by one-way instructions rather than interactive dialogue, reducing opportunities for employees to express their ideas and concerns. Effective communication plays a crucial role in maintaining organizational activities and achieving organizational goals because it supports coordination, collaboration, and mutual understanding among organizational members (Suryani & Warmana, 2024). When communication functions effectively, employees can clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, which contributes to smoother organizational operations.

Poor communication, on the other hand, can lead to misunderstandings, confusion, and delays in task completion. When information is not communicated clearly or in a timely manner, employees may misinterpret instructions or fail to complete tasks according to expectations. These problems ultimately reduce employee performance and organizational productivity (Men, 2021). Ineffective communication can also increase the likelihood of errors in the workplace, which may result in financial losses and damage to the organization's reputation. In addition, communication failures often create frustration among employees because they feel uncertain about expectations and organizational priorities. This frustration can lead to decreased motivation and engagement, making employees less committed to their work and organizational goals (Kim & Lee, 2021). Over time, persistent communication problems can weaken organizational cohesion and create a negative work environment.

Limited transparency further exacerbates communication problems within organizations. Employees who lack access to relevant information may feel undervalued and excluded from organizational processes. When leaders do not explain decisions clearly or fail to share important information, employees may develop mistrust toward management. This situation can weaken organizational commitment and reduce employee morale (Rawlins et al., 2023). Employees who perceive a lack of fairness or openness may become disengaged and less willing to contribute to organizational success. Transparency is therefore closely linked to communication effectiveness, as open communication allows employees to understand organizational goals and feel involved in decision-making processes.

Ineffective communication and limited transparency can also affect the quality of organizational services and outputs. Employees who do not fully understand organizational goals

or expectations may struggle to perform their tasks effectively. This can lead to decreased customer satisfaction and damage to the organization's reputation (Saidah, 2024). In competitive environments, organizations that fail to maintain effective communication may struggle to sustain long-term success because poor communication can hinder innovation and responsiveness to change. Clear and transparent communication is essential for ensuring that all organizational members work toward shared objectives.

Furthermore, limited communication and transparency hinder the development of an inclusive organizational culture. Inclusivity requires open dialogue, mutual respect, and active participation among organizational members. Without effective communication, employees may feel isolated and disconnected from organizational activities, reducing their sense of belonging (Nishii & Leroy, 2022). Transparency is also essential for ensuring fairness and equality within organizations, as employees need access to information in order to participate meaningfully in organizational processes. Research indicates that inclusive organizational cultures depend heavily on trust and collaboration (Randel et al., 2020). Communication and transparency are fundamental to building trust because they demonstrate respect and accountability from leadership.

Leaders who communicate openly and transparently are more likely to gain employee trust and support. Open communication encourages employees to share their ideas and feedback, which can improve decision-making and organizational performance. Conversely, leaders who withhold information may create suspicion and mistrust, which can damage relationships within the organization. Overall, communication and transparency are essential components of inclusive organizational culture. Organizations that prioritize open communication and transparent leadership are better positioned to create inclusive environments that support employee engagement, collaboration, and innovation. Improving communication and transparency requires strong leadership commitment, clear organizational policies, and continuous evaluation to ensure that inclusive practices are consistently implemented.

CONCLUSION

Leadership communication and transparency in Indonesian organizations still vary widely, with many challenges such as one-way communication models, paternalistic cultures, and limited transparency that hinder member participation and the implementation of inclusive organizational culture. This situation creates a gap between ideal theoretical concepts and actual practices in the field, where a lack of openness reduces trust, motivation, productivity, and service quality while increasing the risk of miscommunication, work errors, and reputational losses. To strengthen an inclusive organizational culture, leaders need to implement transparent two-way communication, promote cultural transformation, provide inclusive leadership training, and maintain consistent commitment in order to create a collaborative, harmonious, and sustainable work environment.

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