

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS FOR INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION: THE POST-PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

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### Abstract

With today's organizations, effective leadership and internal communications are fundamental tools for success. The post-pandemic world has fundamentally reshaped communication patterns, the expectations of both management and employees as well as management practice and taught us to ponder how leaders in an organization can have an impact on the quality of communications in the organization. Research Questions: One study investigates how leadership skills correlate with internal communication efficiency in Lithuanian organizations in a hybrid and digital management context. Thus, an exploratory study was conducted. So quantitative questionnaire (N = 124) was conducted to measure the perception of employees about leaders' ability of the managers in leadership and overall quality internal communication. The statistical analysis reveals that the correlations between leadership competencies and internal communication show a strong, positive, and significant correlation. Findings demonstrate that leadership competency, most specifically regarding decision-making, empathy, or openness, is positively associated with trust, commitment, and communication satisfaction from the employees. This research demonstrates the necessity of lifelong leadership learning not only to improve internal communication mechanisms and organizational cohesion but also to support the overall organizational spirit and cohesiveness, particularly at an organizational level. The pragmatic significance revolves around training and mentoring to guide ethical and participative leadership and promoting the resilience and adaptability of post-pandemic organizations.

**Keywords:** leadership skills, internal communication, organizational trust, post-pandemic management, employee engagement, hybrid work.

### INTRODUCTION

The changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic had very great impacts on communication channels and leadership arrangements worldwide. At these periods of limited physical interaction, the need for effective internal communication systems (Qin, 2023) was evident. With a shift to hybrid and remote roles, the goal for leaders was not only to organize the tasks but also to build trust, motivation and psychological safety with these distributed teams (Osler et al., 2023). More specifically, in this area, leadership skills such as empathy, good ethical decision-making, and information sharing become vital determinants of the internal communication and the performance of the organisation (Sims et al., 2024). But for any organization that is functioning in the twenty-first century, the difficult combination of being efficient in an increasingly digital ecosystem and maintaining an authentic type of interpersonal communication presents distinct dual challenges (Verčič et al., 2023).

Consequently, leadership is pivotal for alignment between the efforts and communication of employees with the vision of the organization and to coordinate how information can spread to the rest of the organization (Cortelazzo et al., 2019). While various research has investigated leaders or communicators separately, little research exists considering leadership and communication at a higher structural level (Salman et al., 2023) as interconnected organizational factors. Research issue a study on this convergence is particularly relevant post-pandemic management as the well-being as well as the emotional stability of employees are closely related to leaders' communicative competence. Positive internal communication is a matter of facilitating internal communication and influencing how employees perceive fairness, workplace identity, and belonging (Beniušis, 2023). Poor leadership communication leads to misinformation and misunderstandings, emotional exhaustion and reduced engagement (Abduraimi, 2024). Conversely, excellent leaders who have interpersonal,

cognitive and ethical capabilities create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation, which, in turn, supports the performance of teams and their innovation (Khassawneh et al., 2022).

**Research topicality and problem.** At a time when the boundaries between work environments – both physical and virtual – keep eroding, so too has leadership itself become more real in communication – the blending of communication quality as a means of demonstrating leadership or even how effective leadership is. The pandemic sped up the demand of leadership to change. Managers were left to reconcile uncertainty, manage stress, and morale in the face of unpredictability (Videira, 2023). In a digital space, success in leadership was not just a function of output metrics but also of communicative agility, empathy, and the ability to keep engagement. Therefore, leadership skills are viewed as dynamic constructs encompassing technical skills, social communication skills, and emotional skills (Pellitteri, 2021).

**The aim of the research** – to learn how leadership skills influence internal organizational communication strategies in post-COVID-19 organizations. To this end, authors aim at identifying the relevance of executive ability for the analysis of employees' perception of leader's ability by examining the effect of executive ability on perceived employee internal communication effectiveness. Specifically, the study aims to address two hypotheses, namely:

H1: The effectiveness of internal organizational communication is positively related to leadership skills.

H2: Leadership skills predict internal communication quality significantly, controlling for demographic factors.

Through empirically examining these hypotheses, the paper adds to the literature on leadership and communication by drawing insights from behavioural and interpersonal perspectives and situating them within a post-pandemic organizational framework. It also offers management recommendations for businesses on how to enhance communications output through selective leadership training.

**Research methodology.** In recent research the relationship between leadership skills and internal communication effectiveness in hybrid and digital management context of Lithuanian organizations has been identified through empirical research. The quantitative questionnaire (N = 124) was used to assess the employee's perceptions about the leadership proficiency of the managers and the level of internal communication quality overall.

**Research results.** The statistical analysis reveals that the correlations between leadership competencies and internal communication show a strong, positive, and significant correlation. Findings demonstrate that leadership competency, most specifically regarding decision-making, empathy, or openness, is positively associated with trust, commitment, and communication satisfaction from the employees.

**Originality/Value of the article.** This research demonstrates the necessity of lifelong leadership learning not only to improve internal communication mechanisms and organizational cohesion but also to support the overall organizational spirit and cohesiveness, particularly at an organizational level. The pragmatic significance revolves around training and mentoring to guide ethical and participative leadership and promoting the resilience and adaptability of post-pandemic organization

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There is an evolution in leadership from an authority role to one of a friendly and personal and participatory role and effective models and emotionally intelligent practices. The successful leaders adjust their style and behavior from context and human traits to suit modern theories of leadership (Sims et al., 2024). Goleman's model of emotional intelligence, in Pellitteri (2021), suggests that leaders' effectiveness will be maximized to the extent that they understand and manage their emotions – and those of other people's – when he can be applied

against them on six types of styles: commanding, pacesetting, visionary, affiliative, participative and coaching. But there are more forms of leadership style and we need to investigate how these styles function in the internal communication department of the organization. They have different impacts of styles on communication research say that. For the example, both visionary and participative styles offer transparency, trust and empowerment thus creating a best communicative climate and involving the employee. In addition, leaders whose style of leading (i.e., who are authentic and responsive, have high degree of empathy and are optimistic) have been shown to decrease uncertainty and promote psychological well-being among employees. And it is well-established that it enhances the trust in the organization (Men, 2024).

As with human relations in general, it encourages empathy and better interpersonal relationships, but it is by caring about the well-being over a job need. Conversely, “commanding” and pace-setting strategies have been effective in crises, but tend to dampen dialogues and discourage feedback, and thereby quality of communication suffer. There is evidence to suggest that post pandemic organizations flourish when leadership is nuanced and emotionally robust, a directive clarity alongside participative collaboration (Marquardt et al., 2020; Ismail et al., 2023).

Ethical leadership is another dimension that is closely associated with internal communication. Ethical leadership moral role models are moral role models showing integrity, fairness, and transparency (Petruelis, 2021). And they achieve this through fostering psychological safety and open conversation, by cultivating organizational trust, and they mediate the relationship between communication satisfaction and leadership satisfaction through communication satisfaction. They contribute to improving or reducing the association of satisfaction with communication through leadership performance with satisfaction with communication.

These days, as Hartley (2018) notes, leadership authority is derived more from personal credibility than power, contributing to the communicative aspect of influence. Therefore, as much as the internal communication dimension should be examined, communication competence cannot be separated from leadership competence. However, inclusive leadership develops psychological sense of empowerment and safety and can positively influence adaptive communication activities in employees, such as internal voicing and external scouting (Yang & Kim, 2025). Leaders can influence and encourage employee trust and satisfaction of psychological need by using empathic, meaningful and directive language (Men, Qin, Jin, 2022), such as that which is used by supervisory leadership.

Internal communication describes the informal and formal message and information exchange within an organization, in which both the "subgroups" are interested and need to participate, and its importance lies in social situations (Pop et al., 2023). It is of the four dimensions: information distribution, media quality control, feedback systems and organizational assimilation. Santos et al. (2023) provides a definition of five elements of effective internal communication: clarity, transparency, bi-directionality, consistency, innovation. These characteristics are especially critical in hybrid workforces, where digital communication has replaced a lot of face-to-face interactions. COVID-19 had led to rapid digitalization of communication processes (Dhanesh et al., 2021). While virtual tools and social channels enabled operational continuity, they were not exempt from new problems – such as too much information and the loss of personal contact (Osler et al., 2023).

The effect of a good internal communication for the future depends increasingly on good leaders who can pass through technology-complexity with ease and keep up with the people side. Effective communication is expected to motivate employees' engagement in different domains; vigor, dedication and absorption and through the same, corporate performance (Abduraimi, 2024). The internal communication, as an interpersonal relationship, is not limited

to transmitting information, but that internal support is felt reciprocally in the social exchange theory (Woods et al., 2021). Workers assess their leader's communication for its reliability of information and accuracy in addition to authenticity and empathy. Verčič et al. (2023), this emotional layer turns communication into a form of social capital that maintains trust and identification. Communication in leadership is more than transactional, it becomes part of the company culture. In addition, effective internal communication, particularly done by senior leadership, is absolutely critical to both employee engagement and company success. It is the kind of communication which has the potential to increase trust, coordination, and cooperation within a company (Phan, 2025).

Based on the literature, we know from empirical studies that leadership behaviors can result in a great influence on the kinds of climate within which people want to communicate (Guo et al., 2023). Being a primary source of meaning at its core, leadership establishes rules of openness, feedback, and collaboration for organizations to follow. As stated by Videira (2023), direct supervisors have greater influence on an employees' evaluation of communication quality because they work closer to them, have more credibility, and interact with each other daily.

Leadership thus is a communicative affair in nature – it works by articulating rather than telling. In a post-pandemic world, a leadership repertoire predicated on empathy (especially in times of crisis), decision making, and adaptability had to also become more important than ever to ensure information is transferred to and from digital channels. Based on Qin, (2023), people employ internal communication in crises as it works psychologically eliminating uncertainty, and distress emotions. When leaders show good communication (good listening, being open and transparent, and being responsive) they establish an alliance with employees that in turn increase work-performance (Lavender, 2023).

This theoretical convergence implies that leadership competences and inward communication are mutually enhancing. Leadership competencies influence information exchange accuracy, tone, and inclusivity, and effective communication bolsters leaders' legitimacy, power, and trustworthiness. Thus, empirical evidences in the following section quantify these relations, in contemporary organizational settings, corroborating the hypothesized relationship between leadership skills and the effectiveness of internal communication.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, exploratory research design, selected to obtain an initial empirical understanding of how leadership skills relate to internal organizational communication effectiveness. Exploratory designs are particularly valuable when investigating relationships that have been theorized but not yet extensively validated in specific organizational or cultural contexts (Stebbins, 2001). Given the study's focus on identifying patterns rather than making population-level generalizations, this approach was deemed appropriate.

Data were collected using validated multi-item scales representing five leadership subdimensions Leading by Example, Decision-Making, Coaching, Information Sharing, and Care & Communion as well as five internal communication dimensions Communication Climate, Organizational Integration, Collaboration, Organizational Information, and Personal Feedback. All items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), consistent with recommended practices for measuring perceptions and attitudes (DeVellis, 2017).

**Sample and Procedure.** The sample consisted of employees working in a Lithuanian organization (N = 124). Participation in the study was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential, which aligns with ethical standards for survey research and helps reduce social desirability bias

(Bryman, 2016). Respondents represented diverse roles, tenure levels, and departments, allowing for a broader perspective on communication and leadership processes within the organization.

Data were gathered using an online questionnaire distributed via internal communication channels. Online data collection is widely recognized for its efficiency, accessibility, and suitability for organizational research (Evans & Mathur, 2018). The sample size was determined using Paniott (2004) formula for populations exceeding 100 individuals, ensuring adequate precision for correlational and regression-based analyses despite being modest in size. Because the study was exploratory, the goal was not statistical generalization but rather the identification of meaningful tendencies that could inform future, larger-scale investigations. Demographic information included gender and education level, which supported descriptive profiling and potential control variable considerations.

**Measurement and Reliability.** Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$ ) for the subscales ranged from  $\alpha = 0.77$  to  $\alpha = 0.95$ , indicating high reliability. Reliability thresholds above 0.70 are typically considered acceptable for social science research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), confirming that the scales used in this study demonstrated robust internal consistency. Normality assumptions were evaluated using skewness and kurtosis thresholds (2) and Shapiro-Wilk tests (recommendations by Kline, 2015).

**RESEARCH RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

For the collected quantitative data, the statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 28.0: Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, and ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions were computed to test the hypotheses. First, a simple linear regression assessed the predictive effect of overall leadership on internal communication (H1). Second, a multivariate regression included the five leadership subdimensions as predictors (H2).

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics for main scales (N = 101)**

Scale	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Internal communication	3.3	0.7	0.130	-0.083
Leadership	3.6	0.7	-0.172	-0.389

Source: compiled by the authors based on the research results

Both constructs had mean values ranging from moderate to high, which suggests favorable employee perceptions. Leadership was measured a little higher than internal communication, indicating that the employees rated higher managerial competencies rather than system coherence. In full detail summing these figures authors have found that those central tendencies show that respondents tend to view leadership somewhat more positively (M = 3.6) than internal communication (M = 3.3). The near-symmetric skewness and modest kurtosis indicate no large ceiling/floor effects, providing reasonable variance to use for the analysis of causation.

More broadly, the pattern corroborates new post-pandemic leadership research that argued leaders responded faster (empathy, transparency) than communication systems (policies, channels, feedback loops) adapted (Sims et al., 2024; Verčič & Men, 2023). That is, human capabilities adapted more quickly than organizational infrastructures did, hence room for improvement in communication.

**Table 2. Shapiro–Wilk normality tests**

Scale	Statistic	df	Sig.
Leadership	0.985	101	0.290
Internal communication	0.988	101	0.526

Source: compiled by the authors based on the research results

Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that both variables were normally distributed ( $p > .05$ ), validating the use of parametric statistical tests for further analyses. thus, non-significant Shapiro–Wilk results ( $p > .05$ ) and acceptable shape indices corroborate parametric assumptions for Pearson  $r$  and OLS. This matters because effect sizes reported later ( $r \approx .80$ ;  $R^2 \approx .64-.70$ ) are not artifacts of distributional distortions but represent substantive associations in the population (see also methodological guidance in Dhanesh & Picherit-Duthler, 2021, for parametric modelling on survey data).

**Table 3. Leadership subscales: descriptive statistics**

Subscale	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Leading by Example	3.6	0.7	-0.264	-0.173
Decision-Making	3.6	0.6	-0.222	-0.110
Coaching	3.6	0.7	-0.227	-0.521
Information Sharing	3.5	0.8	-0.204	-0.322
Care & Communion	3.7	0.7	0.010	-0.541

Source: compiled by the authors based on the research results

All leadership dimensions were found to be above the midpoint, and the highest was Care & Communion. It indicates that the leaders were perceived as empathetic and relationally oriented, an important characteristic in post-pandemic engagement and trust-building.

All five leadership facets have an average score above the midpoint of the scale with Care & Communion scoring slightly above this score ( $M = 3.7$ ). Given the post-pandemic context, this pattern corresponds to emotional–intelligence-informed leadership (Pellitteri, 2021) and ethical leadership (Petruilis, 2021; Hartley, 2018) in that caring behaviors, coaching, and participative decision-making typically restore safety and trust in hybrid teams (Osler & Zahavi, 2023). The dispersion ( $SD \approx 0.6-0.8$ ) leaves sufficient variability to explain differences in communication outcomes.

**Table 4. Internal communication subscales: descriptive statistics**

Subscale	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Communication Climate	3.2	0.8	0.154	-0.033
Organizational Integration	3.5	0.7	-0.097	-0.354
Collaboration	3.6	0.6	-0.130	-0.523
Organizational Information	3.4	0.8	0.057	-0.454
Personal Feedback	2.8	0.9	0.089	-0.288

Source: compiled by the authors based on the research results

Collaboration and Organizational Integration were rated highest in respect to communication, demonstrating functional team cooperation, and moderate satisfaction with the flow of information. The lowest dimension – Personal Feedback – indicates a possible space for managerial enhancement. Going into more detail explanation, Collaboration (M = 3.6) and Organizational Integration (M = 3.5) score highest, suggesting teams coordinate reasonably well; however, Personal Feedback (M = 2.8) showed the lowest score, demonstrating the low level of dyadic exchanges between a leader and employee.

All of this is in line with theory suggesting that strategic/top-down flows recover first, whereas two-way, individual feedback lags (Santos et al., 2023; Qin, 2023). The implication is practical: invest in regular, developmental feedback practices (Guo et al., 2023) to uplift the weakest communication dimension.

**Table 5. Pearson correlations between main scales (two-tailed)**

	Leadership	Internal communication
Leadership	1.000	0.801
Internal communication	0.801	1.000

Source: compiled by the authors based on the research results

A strong, positive correlation ( $r = 0.801, p < .001$ ) supports H1: effective leadership skills are directly associated with higher internal communication quality. The strong association ( $r = .801, p < .001$ ) provides direct support for H1, indicating that better leadership competencies covary with higher internal communication quality. The magnitude ( $\approx .80$ ) is theoretically plausible in settings where leaders are the primary sense-makers and communication role models (Verčič & Men, 2023; Videira, 2023). It also maps onto social-exchange logic: employees reciprocate leaders' transparency and care with openness and engagement (Woods et al., 2021).

**Table 6. Regression predicting internal communication from leadership**

Model	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	0.416	0.222	-	1.870	0.064	-	-
Leadership	0.803	0.060	0.801	13.308	0.000	1.000	1.000

Source: compiled by the authors based on the research results

Leadership was a strong predictor of internal communication ( $\beta = 0.801, p < .001$ ), explaining 64.1% of its variance ( $R^2 = 0.641$ ). This provides robust support for H2 and underscores leadership competence as a key determinant of communication effectiveness.

Leadership significantly predicts internal communication ( $\beta = .801, p < .001$ ), explaining 64.1% of variance ( $R^2 = .641$ ). This confirms H2 in its simple form: leadership competencies are not merely associated with but predictive of communication quality. The standard errors are small, and multicollinearity is absent (VIF = 1.00). The finding aligns with the view that leadership is fundamentally communicative (Cortelazzo et al., 2019; Verčič & Men, 2023).

**Table 7. Model summaries**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	SEE
Leadership → Communication	0.801	0.641	0.638	0.4286
Leadership subscales → Communication	0.834	0.695	0.679	0.4034

Source: compiled by the authors based on the research results

Including leadership subscales improved model accuracy ( $R^2 = 0.695$ ). Decision-Making and Coaching emerged as the most influential subdimensions, underscoring participative and developmental leadership approaches. Adding the five leadership subscales increments explanatory power to  $R^2 = .695$  (Adj.  $R^2 = .679$ ), suggesting the emergence of more behaviours (e.g. Decision-Making, Coaching) that contribute distinct variance independent of the global leadership dimension. This is consistent with subtle and differentiated theory: not every component of leadership has an equal weight; participative actions and conversations with coaches seem to have greater impact in hybrid contexts (Ismail et al., 2023; Sims et al., 2024).

Therefore, when summarising this literature on the main empirical evidence in the framework of leading theoretical perspectives, several things should be emphasised: the empirical findings offer compelling coherent empirical evidence that leadership competencies and internal communication efficacy are intertwined and mutually reinforcing constructs in post-pandemic organizational contexts. Descriptive, correlational and regression analysis consistently suggested that employees who rated leaders highly for their ability to make decisions, empathically empathetic, and transparently respond also had relatively higher internal communication climate ratings. Descriptive results indicated that both leadership ( $M = 3.6$ ) and internal communication ( $M = 3.3$ ) were rated above the midpoint, indicating generally favorable perceptions of management quality and communication structure. However, the relatively slight gap between these aspects indicates that although leaders have evolved their own skills (e.g. empathy, coaching, participative decisions), organization mechanisms for communication have not progressed at the same level of speed. This is consistent with our recent discussion that human capacity of leadership adapts faster than the institutions that change how they give feedback (Verčič & Men, 2023; Qin, 2023).

On the subscale level, Care & Communion and Decision-Making followed as the most constructed leadership dimensions, indicating the increasing relevance of emotional intelligence to participative behaviour in hybrid and remote work settings. From a communications point of view, Collaboration and Organizational Integration were reasonably strong, whereas Personal Feedback continued to be the weakest aspect and the one that showed a systematic feedback gap in vertical communication flows. Such an outcome emphasized that the quality of sustainable communication is related not only to structural information flows, but also to relational reciprocity and interpersonal trust among leaders and followers. This pattern was validated further through the quantitative relationships.

The strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.801$ ,  $p < .001$ ) clearly demonstrated that there is a high degree of co-variation between leadership skills and communication quality, thus providing strong support for H1. Workers who perceive leaders as authentic, transparent, and caring are more likely to see communication as authentic and welcoming. This association was cemented by regression analysis: leadership skills explained 64%–69% of the variance in internal communication effectiveness ( $R^2 = 0.641$ – $0.695$ ), while Decision-Making and Coaching behaviours, in this study, had the highest predictive role. These findings empirically support H2, indicating that one leadership competence – rather than the ability of a manager to manage broadly – predicts how communication systems work in practice. There were relatively

few significant perceptual differences based on sex. Women were more likely to evaluate leadership and communication a little bit more favourably, specifically in terms of collaboration and empathy traits. It suggests a difference in orientation toward relationships and communicative sensitivity, not structural inequality. Both groups, nevertheless, acknowledged the same important areas requiring improvement but not that different in magnitude, including the requirement for consistent, two-way feedback.

What the results suggest are, in theory, the combination of three major frameworks: EI (emotional intelligence), SET (social exchange theory) and ethical-participative leadership. Emotionally intelligent leaders build psychological safety and openness (Pellitteri, 2021) and are associated with higher communication climate scores via the EI perspective. Reciprocity of trust through SET (Woods et al., 2021) makes clear how transparent leadership engenders employee engagement: communication becomes reciprocal, in a way, framed as fair and respectable. Finally, ethical-participative leadership perspective (Hartley, 2018; Petrusis, 2021) may clarify how moral integrity and inclusive decision-making support greater communication trust and a higher level of organizational cohesion (see Table 8). Empirically and theoretically, they support one another and a conclusion is drawn – leadership is communication.

Great leaders are not just the conveyors of knowledge; they are the builders of the organization’s meaning and they create a communicative environment in which transparency, empathy and shared cause lead to involvement and trust. Thus, collaboration among leaders along with internal communication is a necessary precursor for sustainable organizations in post-pandemic times.

**Table 8. Summary of Key Empirical Insights**

Hypothesis	Empirical result	Theoretical linkage	Practical implication
<b>H1:</b> Leadership skills are positively associated with internal organizational communication effectiveness.	Supported ( $r = 0.801$ , $p < .001$ ). Leadership and communication are strongly correlated.	Consistent with <i>Social Exchange Theory</i> (Woods et al., 2021) – trust and reciprocity underpin communication quality.	Build transparent, bidirectional communication routines to strengthen trust and engagement.
<b>H2:</b> Leadership skills significantly predict internal communication quality after controlling for demographics.	Supported ( $R^2 = 0.641-0.695$ ). Decision-Making and Coaching are key predictors.	Aligned with <i>Emotional Intelligence</i> (Pellitteri, 2021) and <i>Ethical Leadership</i> (Hartley, 2018; Petrusis, 2021) frameworks – empathy and ethical behavior enhance clarity and inclusion.	Implement leadership development programs emphasizing coaching, participative decisions, and empathic listening.
-	<i>Subscale findings:</i> Care & Communion and Decision-Making highest; Personal Feedback lowest.	Reflects <i>Participative Communication Theory</i> – relational feedback as a cornerstone of healthy internal communication.	Create structured feedback systems and mentoring programs to close the feedback gap.
-	<i>Gender differences:</i> women rate leadership and communication slightly higher.	Tied to relational sensitivity in communication (EI theory).	Encourage inclusive leadership communication sensitive to diverse perspectives.

Source: compiled by the authors based on the research results.

The extraction of information from analysis further highlights that effective leadership is a significant predictor of the quality of internal communication. It is apparent that the communication processes and leadership processes are not two separate areas of management,

but that they are rather interconnected social constructs. Leaders who are empathetic, ethical and participative in the decision-making process provide communicative environments that empower employees, enhance trust, and increase organizational adaptability. More theoretically, this study follows up on research on leadership behavior and communication by examining applications of emotional intelligence and social exchange – and in the context of organizations in the post-pandemic world, adds additional insights. And from a practical perspective it highlights the need for continued leadership development in aspects like, for instance, communication competence, feedback culture and relational transparency – foundational dimensions of resilience and high-trust organizations.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of the current study reflect the overarching premise that leadership and internal communication are fundamentally intertwined with the functioning of organizations, especially in the post-pandemic environment of hybrid work and greater uncertainty. Strong statistical result shows interrelation between the internal communication quality and the leadership skills level that can predict the internal communication qualities. These results support the assertion that communicative leadership rooted in empathy, ethical reasoning, and participative decision-making forms the cornerstone for organizational cohesion and trust.

The findings are theoretically related to three well-established theory models; Emotional Intelligence Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Ethical Participative Leadership. Emotional intelligence theory also stresses that emotional-emotion-aware leaders can cultivate high psychological safety and open dialogue (Pellitteri, 2021). These new findings provide strong empirical evidence for this, and all of their highest leader dimension ratings relate to the types of leadership characteristics that are also most related to empathy and emotional self-awareness (Care & Communion and Decision-Making, respectively). It can be seen that these characteristics are used as a referent for employees to perceive credible and authentic and in that manner the transparent and fair communication perception also increases.

Social exchange theory offers another interpretive approach with reciprocity and mutual trust as the main mechanisms through which social relations are established (Woods et al., 2021). When the employees feel that their leaders treat them equitably, responsively, and actively interact, they are more engaged, open and cooperative in their work. The cornerstone of this reciprocal and mutual relationship the high associations observed between the leadership variable and the communication variable implies that this dynamic relationship between leadership and communication is established in the organization reviewed. Leaders are not just sparser instruments of information but relational anchors who convey respect and goodwill towards the assigned teams. That's because employees are even more devoted and open to share: this creates a virtuous cycle of trust and communication that works positively.

Furthermore, the findings provide evidence and validation for Fowler and Robbins (2022) and Araya et al. (2024) that continued education on the issue of communication is essential for leaders if they aim to sustain organizational resilience. This interpretation is strengthened by ethical-participative leadership theory (Hartley, 2018; Petrulis, 2021), which highlights moral integrity and inclusion as a source of legitimacy within an organization. When ethical reasoning (and choice involvement) is recognized as predictive qualities, it will reinforce the idea that ethics and having a voice in decision making is not only a moral imperative; which is what the research finds out, with the significant roles of Decision-Making and Coaching being two important aspects of decision-making that come out. It is a mode of communication that can help build staff trust.

At a time where there is an increase in employee demand for transparency and shared ownership, ethical leadership is also a behavioral in as well as communicative system, through which values are communicated and then materialized. Most intriguing is the repeated finding

that Personal Feedback is the weakest dimension of communication. It indicates a persistent disconnect between the company's objectives and the lives of people who work there. While general communication mechanisms do not appear to differ much from the personalized, developmental context of dialogue between the employee and the supervisor, some employees do not have that dialogue. This agrees with previous post-pandemic research (e.g., Santos et al., 2023; Videira, 2023) showing that the formal communication channels are recovering more quickly than personal feedback. They do so only when organizations re-humanize the internal conversation, often through routine coaching conversations, reflection on performance and two-way feedback to close this relational gap.

There are other interesting but subtle differences on the basis of gender, too. In total, female employees rated the leadership and communication relatively higher than males, particularly in regard to empathy and collaboration areas. This finding aligns with past research around whether women respond differently to relational and emotional cues when working with communication at the workplace. But these differences were not divisive but complementary and integrated. Yet as further evidence, they made it clear what the different ways of one's communication were. They provide another testimony that different perspectives contribute to organizational learning. Advocating for gender-balanced leadership communication with more gender balance in its communication style would thus allow for greater inclusiveness. A company with mixed leadership level would gain a better way for all levels of the enterprise to speak about things and engage with one another honestly.

Finally, the findings have broader implications for organizational resilience. The pandemic taught us that just changing the structure (say, through digital tools or new communication channels) is not enough without emotional and ethical leadership. The high explanatory power of the leadership skill on communication outcome also demonstrates that technological infrastructure cannot replace human interaction. In contrast, leaders exhibiting strategic clarity paired with empathic presence stay sharp – capable of remaining high spirited, shying from information fatigue, and preserving trust in challenging moments. Thus, leadership development programs must redefine communication as not only a soft skill (but a strategic capability) as well, embedded in ethical and emotional intelligence.

To conclude, the empirical findings of this study provide further evidence that leadership in the post pandemic organization is a communicative performance – a continuous, relational practice (in other words, rather than a position, or authority) rather than simply a position or authority. The empirical evidence indicates not that communication effectiveness is simply a matter of systems and channels but a function of the leader's ability as an emotional and ethical actor to encourage others to engage and participate in joint meaning-making.

*Limitations and future research.* This research is limited by its single-organization sample, restricting generalizability. Future studies should replicate the design across different sectors and countries to capture cultural variation. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference: thus, longitudinal or mixed-method approaches are recommended. Additionally, including moderating variables such as trust or organizational culture could expand the explanatory model.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Leadership capabilities are at the heart of internal communication quality and hence the health of the organization. The results are in line with both hypotheses, suggesting that leadership skills – specifically decision-making, coaching, and care – are good predictors of good communication. Such capabilities shape the mechanisms through which information is exchanged, trust is maintained, and mutual understanding is formed in hybrid firms of the 21st century.

2. These data contribute to the development of several pertinent conclusions: i) leadership and communication are not in tandem but mutually constitutive. Effective leadership is communication; it is through dialogue, feedback, and emotional exchange that authority receives legitimacy and meaning; ii) empathy and ethical reasoning become the defining qualifications of post-pandemic leadership.
3. As valuable as technical skills and long-range foresight can be, the effectiveness lies in both connecting with others and openly communicating common purpose. The organizational challenge now is to institutionalize human-centered communication patterns: to give practice in everyday management, not just the crisis phase, coaching, listening, and participative decision-making. They also must invest in leadership development programs that enhance a speaker's communicative intelligence from many angles.
4. Emotional, ethical, and interpersonal intelligence are blended into communication, which is the strength they need to achieve any success as leaders in today's world (Jensen, 2016). Continued structured feedback loops and regular mentoring, as well as transparent messaging about why decisions should be made and when they should be made may help bridge the gap between senior decision-makers' intentions at the highest levels and those of employees at the lowest level as well. In order so it will mean that organizations are going to generate better communication flows and not just better psychological contracts, but also, long term resilience.
5. From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the literature through its tangible case that leadership competence works as psychological and social infrastructure on which communication systems are built. When communications fail, most often they are indicative of a leadership failure, not a technical one. On the other hand, leaders who speak with empathy and transparency, even systems with poor processes are likely to work. It highlights that the communication between a person and an organization is relational, rather than simply instrumental.
6. However, the study was limited to a specific organizational context. Future research will assess the relevance of these findings in other industries and cultural contexts. Longitudinal designs would also help to follow how leadership-driven communication climates develop and persist, particularly with hybrid work. A closer qualitative inquiry could provide a more thorough understanding of workers' interpretations in the everyday life experiences of leaders' communicative behaviors.

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