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Optimizing Internal Communication Through Public Relations to Reduce Employee Burnout: A Case Study of PT Sage Pangan Adikara

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ABSTRACT

Ineffective internal communication can lead to miscommunication, diminish the quality of workplace relationships, and increase the risk of employee burnout. This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how public relations can optimize internal communication to reduce employee burnout. The study employs a qualitative approach using the case study method at PT Sage Pangan Adikara. The study involved 9 informants, consisting of 1 Public Relations Manager, 1 member of the management team, and 7 employees from various departments who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, then analyzed using thematic analysis with validity testing through triangulation of sources and techniques. The results indicate that internal communication characterized by two-way interaction, empathy, transparency, and consistency is perceived by employees as a form of organizational support that enhances engagement, builds mutual trust, and supports psychological well-being in the face of burnout. This study concludes that internal communication serves not only as a managerial tool but also as a preventive strategy for maintaining employees' mental health and strengthening organizational sustainability

Keywords: optimization; internal communication; employee burnout; two-way communication; psychological well-being

ABSTRAK

Komunikasi internal yang tidak efektif dapat menyebabkan miskomunikasi, menurunkan kualitas hubungan kerja, dan meningkatkan risiko burnout pada karyawan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui gambaran mendalam mengenai optimalisasi komunikasi internal oleh public relations dalam mengurangi burnout karyawan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui metode studi kasus, di PT Sage Pangan Adikara. Informan penelitian berjumlah 9 orang, terdiri atas 1 Manajer Public Relations, 1 anggota tim manajemen, dan 7 karyawan dari berbagai departemen yang dipilih secara purposive. Data dikumpulkan melalui wa[IKF2.1]wancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik dengan uji keabsahan melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi internal yang bersifat dua arah, empatik, transparan, dan konsisten dimaknai karyawan sebagai bentuk dukungan organisasi yang meningkatkan keterlibatan, membangun rasa saling percaya, serta mendukung kesejahteraan psikologis dalam menghadapi burnout. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa komunikasi internal tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai instrumen manajerial, tetapi juga sebagai strategi preventif dalam menjaga kesehatan mental karyawan dan memperkuat keberlanjutan organisasi.

Kata Kunci: optimalisasi; komunikasi internal; burnout karyawan; komunikasi dua-arah, kesejahteraan psikologis.

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INTRODUCTION

Burnout has become one of the occupational health issues receiving widespread attention as the workplace grows increasingly complex and dynamic. Organizations are expected to achieve high productivity amid changes in the business environment, technological advancements, and ever-increasing work demands. These conditions can increase employees' psychological stress if not balanced by adequate organizational support. According to the WHO (2024), mental health in the workplace is influenced by various factors, such as excessive workloads, long working hours, role ambiguity, interpersonal conflicts, and low organizational support. The WHO also emphasizes that burnout is one consequence of chronic work-related stress that has not been successfully managed, characterized by emotional exhaustion, increased cynicism toward work, and decreased professional effectiveness. These conditions not only impact individual well-being but also affect productivity, service quality, absenteeism, and high employee turnover rates (Huang et al., 2023). Employee burnout is a serious problem for many organizations, leading to emotional exhaustion, low job satisfaction, and a decline in personal health (Destrity & Wardasari, 2022).

Burnout is also a concern in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. According to research data from the Naluri website on the prevalence of employee burnout in Southeast Asia, the potential for burnout among workers reaches 63%. The data, collected from a sample of adult workers in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines, indicates high levels of exhaustion among workers, with more than 60% of adult workers in the region experiencing exhaustion. However, after Malaysia, Indonesia has a lower burnout rate than the other two countries (Naluri, 2026). According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, burnout occurs as a result of an imbalance between job demands and the resources available to employees. If left unaddressed, burnout can impact an individual's health and cause harm to the organization, such as increased absenteeism, presenteeism, intention to leave, counterproductive work behavior, and decreased performance (Abdul Aziz & Ong, 2024).

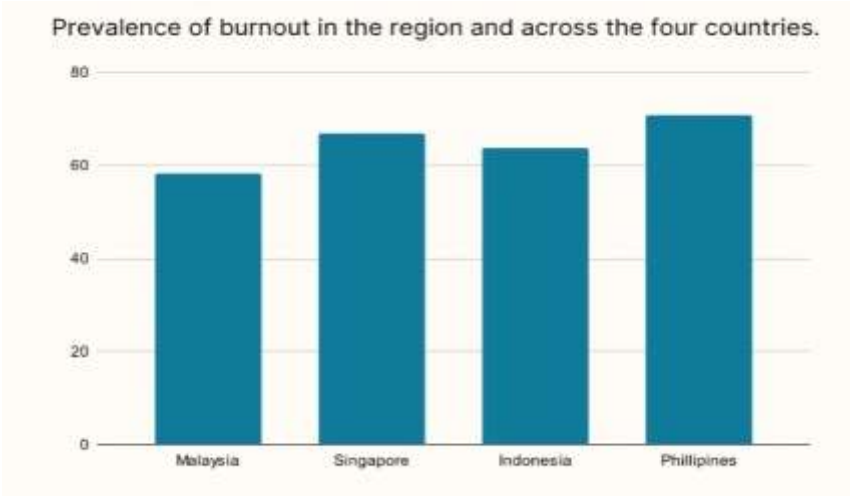


Figure 1. Burnout Rates in Southeast Asia
Source: (Naluri, 2026)

A similar phenomenon was also observed at PT Sage Pangan Adikara. Based on internal company data obtained from the Human Resources division in 2024, the employee well-being assessment results—used as part of the company's occupational health monitoring—revealed that approximately 37% of employees were identified as being at risk of burnout. Preliminary observations indicate an increase in sick days, tardiness, and resignations across several operational divisions. These conditions suggest that burnout not only impacts employees' psychological well-being but also has the potential to reduce organizational effectiveness. Therefore, organizational strategies are needed to foster a more supportive work environment, such as by strengthening internal communication practices.

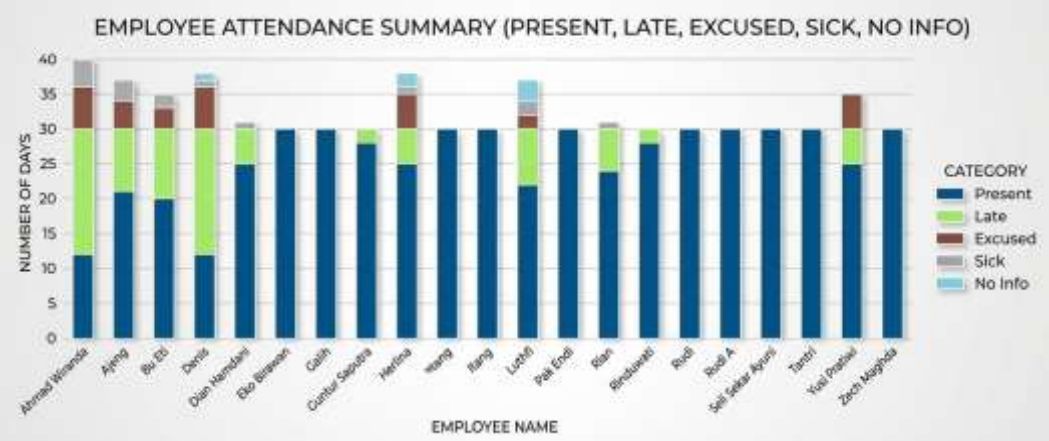


Figure 2. Employee Attendance Summary
(Source: PT. Sage Pangan Adikara, 2024)



Figure 3: Percentage of Employee Bournout Potential
(Source: PT. Sage Pangan Adikara, 2024)

In an organizational context, internal communication is the process of exchanging information, ideas, and feedback—both vertically and horizontally—to foster coordination, engagement, and harmonious working relationships. Public Relations (PR) plays a strategic role in managing internal communication because it is responsible not only for conveying organizational information but also for facilitating dialogue, building trust, and creating opportunities for employee

participation (Mmutle, 2022; Gandariani, 2023). Public Relations plays a role in communicating health information as part of efforts to educate and change the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of employees or members of an organization (Destrity & Wardasari, 2022). Open, empathetic, and consistent internal communication enables organizations to understand employees' needs and aspirations, thereby enhancing employee engagement and psychological well-being. In the context of burnout, effective internal communication is viewed as a form of organizational support that helps employees cope with work-related stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Openness and empathy in human relationships, especially in certain situations, are very necessary as long as they are mutually beneficial to each other so that mental health is maintained (Wahyuningsih, 2021).

The Theory of *Two-Way Symmetrical Communication by* Grunig & Hunt (1984) was used as an analytical framework to interpret interview data regarding internal communication practices at PT Sage Pangan Adikara. This theory views organizational communication as a dialogic process that emphasizes openness, participation, reciprocity, and the organization's responsiveness to to stakeholders' needs (Pavla et al., 2024). In this study, this theory is used as an analytical framework to interpret employees' experiences and perceptions of the internal communication practices implemented by the Public Relations department, particularly in understanding how participatory communication is perceived as a form of organizational support in coping with burnout.

This study uses the concept of two-way communication to explain that the effectiveness of internal communication is determined not only by the availability of communication channels, but also by the organization's ability to listen to, respond to, and substantively accommodate employees' aspirations. Therefore, participatory internal communication serves as a strategy that supports employees' psychological well-being and creates a supportive work environment (Răceanu & Deliu-Pasol, 2023).

Reviewing previous research by Kim & Lee, (2021) indicates that transparent internal communication can reduce the negative impact of emotional exhaustion on employee-organization relationships. Ramadani's (2020) study shows that management-led internal communication strategies can motivate employees, but employee cliques and budget constraints still hamper their effectiveness. Furthermore, research by Destrity & Wardasari (2022) recommends a health promotion model based on internal communication and highlights its importance in reducing stress and burnout. Most of these studies still treat internal communication as part of organizational management or human resource management. Studies that specifically examine the role of Public Relations as the manager of internal communication in fostering a work environment that supports employees' psychological well-being—particularly through the lens of employees' experiences and interpretations—remain relatively limited. Furthermore, research on internal communication practices within food industry companies in Indonesia has also been scarce.

This research is urgent given the rising rates of burnout among employees as a result of work-related stress, unclear communication, and low emotional engagement within the organization. Burnout not only reduces individual productivity but also seriously impacts overall organizational performance, including high turnover, workplace conflicts, and the company's reputation. The Public Relations (PR) function plays a strategic role in an organization's internal communication. When PR can conduct internal communication effectively, transparently, and symmetrically, it can serve as a powerful stress management tool to foster a psychologically healthy work environment.

This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how public relations can optimize internal communication to reduce employee burnout. The findings of this study are expected to contribute theoretically to public relations research, particularly in internal communication focused on employee well-being, while also serving as practical recommendations for organizations in designing communication strategies that are more participatory, empathetic, and focused on mental health in the workplace.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using the intrinsic case study method to gain an in-depth understanding of internal communication practices at PT Sage Pangan Adikara and how employees interpret these practices in relation to their experiences of maintaining work-life balance and coping with burnout. The intrinsic case study was chosen because the research focuses on gaining an in-depth understanding of a specific case within a particular organizational context, rather than making generalizations about other organizations (Stake in Naeem & Thomas, 2025).

According to Yin (in Ningrum et al., 2024), a case study is a research method that focuses on an in-depth examination of one or more cases as units of analysis. This approach allows researchers to gain a comprehensive understanding of internal communication as experienced by participants within an organizational setting. In line with the constructivist paradigm, this study seeks to uncover how employees construct meaning from the internal communication practices they experience and how they interpret those experiences in relation to work-life balance and burnout (Leppäkumpu & Sivunen, 2024).

The object of this study is the internal communication practices implemented by the Public Relations division at PT Sage Pangan Adikara, specifically as a stress management tool to reduce employee burnout. The research subjects consist of parties directly involved in the internal communication process, namely company management, the Public Relations team, and employees from various departments. The selection of these subjects was based on the consideration that they have firsthand experience with the implementation of internal communication and are therefore able to provide in-depth information in line with the research objectives (Fadli, 2021).

The research was conducted at PT Sage Pangan Adikara, located at Jl. Anggrek No. 51, Cihapit, Bandung. This company was selected through purposive sampling because it has implemented an internal communication system that involves the Public Relations function in managing employee relations and possesses organizational characteristics relevant to the research focus on internal communication, work-life balance, and burnout. The study was conducted over three months, from January to March 2025, and included the preparation, data collection, data analysis, and research report writing phases.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves selecting informants based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. The criteria for Public Relations Managers were at least three years of experience in internal communications and direct involvement in the development and implementation of corporate communication strategies. Management informants were selected because they have the authority to make organizational decisions. Meanwhile, employees were selected based on the criteria of having worked for at least one year and coming from various divisions and job levels so that they could provide diverse perspectives on internal communication experiences within the company.

There were a total of nine informants, consisting of one Head Manager, one Head of Public Relations, and seven employees from various divisions.

Table 1: Informant Profiles

Initials	Age	Gender	Occupation/Position
A1	45	Man	Head Manajer
A2	43	Women	Head PR
A3	26	Man	Captain
A4	24	Man	Head Bar
A5	25	Women	Cashier&Waitress
A6	23	Women	Admin 2
A7	22	Man	Admin 1
A8	23	Women	Cashier
A9	24	Women	Waitress

(Source: Research Findings (2025)

Data collection techniques, from the perspective of data sources, can use primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are data sources that directly provide data to the data collector, namely in-depth interviews and non-participant observation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using interview guidelines so that researchers retained the flexibility to explore information that emerged during the interview process. Each interview lasts approximately 45–60

minutes and is conducted at a time mutually agreed upon with the informant. With the informant's consent, the entire interview process is recorded using a digital recording device and then transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Some interview guidelines include: (1) What form of internal communication do you most frequently engage in or receive at the company? (2) What role does the Public Relations division play in fostering internal communication that supports employee well-being? (3) What are the most effective internal communication efforts for fostering a healthy work environment?

Secondary sources are those that do not directly provide data to the data collector; rather, they are obtained through company documents, standard operating procedures (SOPs), internal communication activity reports, company archives, and various scientific literature relevant to organizational communication, burnout, and work-life balance.

Data validity is ensured through source triangulation and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing information obtained from management, the Public Relations department, and employees, while methodological triangulation is conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, the study employed member checking—reconfirming the transcription and interpretation results with several informants to ensure they aligned with the experiences they described—as well as peer debriefing to enhance the credibility of the research findings.

This study also adhered to research ethics. Before data collection began, each informant was provided with an explanation of the study's objectives, its benefits, and their right to refuse or terminate the interview at any time without consequences. All informants provided informed consent before the interviews began. The informants' identities were kept confidential through the use of codes or initials, and all data were used solely for academic purposes.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis based on the qualitative data analysis framework developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (in Brouard et al., 2023). The first stage involved transcribing the entire interview verbatim. This was followed by open coding, which involved identifying data segments that held significant meaning in relation to the research focus. Related codes were then grouped into categories to form main themes regarding internal communication practices, work-life balance experiences, and burnout.

The second stage involves presenting the data in the form of matrices, narratives, or thematic tables to facilitate the identification of relationships between themes. The third stage involved drawing conclusions and conducting continuous verification by comparing the coding results with observational data, documentation, and triangulation results to obtain an interpretation that is valid, credible, and capable of explaining the relationship between internal communication and efforts to minimize burnout at PT Sage Pangan Adikara.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Internal communication is a crucial element in fostering a healthy work environment that supports employee productivity. More than just an exchange of information, internal communication also encompasses emotional and relational aspects that can alleviate stress and strengthen cohesion among individuals within an organization. In this regard, the Public Relations (PR) department at PT. Sage Pangan Adikara plays a key role as a facilitator of strategic and targeted internal communication.

To explain how the Public Relations department at PT. Sage Pangan Adikara implements internal communication to create a work environment with minimal burnout, the researcher examined three main components that form the focus of this study: (1) The forms of internal communication implemented by PT. Sage Pangan Adikara, (2) the role of PR in maximizing internal communication to reduce employee burnout, (3) Effective internal communication efforts in building a healthy work environment.

Forms of Internal Communication Implemented by PT Sage Pangan Adikara

The interview results indicate that internal communication channels at PT Sage Pangan Adikara are carried out through a combination of formal, informal, verbal, written, and digital communication. These various communication channels are used to ensure that organizational information is effectively conveyed while also providing employees with an opportunity to provide feedback to management.

The Head Manager (A1) explained that the company uses several communication channels simultaneously.

> *"Kalau di sesi ini dibagi menjadi tiga bagian. Secara tertulis ada internal memo yang ditempel di mading, kemudian komunikasi melalui grup WhatsApp, dan yang ketiga komunikasi secara lisan". (*This session is divided into three parts. In writing, there is an internal memo posted on the bulletin board; then, communication via a WhatsApp group; and third, verbal communication". (A1)

This statement was reinforced by the Head of Public Relations (A2), who noted that digital communication also takes place via the company's email system.

> *"Biasanya alur komunikasi selain lisan ada juga melalui grup chat, email, atau internet perusahaan."* In addition to verbal communication, communication usually also takes place through group chats, email, or the company's intranet". (A2)

In addition to communication channels, the study also found that communication takes place regularly through operational briefings. The restaurant captain (A3) stated:

> *"Briefing dilakukan setiap hari, pagi, sore, dan malam sebelum operasional" (*Briefings are held every day—in the morning, afternoon, and evening—before operations begin). (A3)

This finding is supported by A5, which reveals that briefings serve as the primary means of conveying information and evaluating work.

> *"Saat briefing kami bisa menyampaikan kendala pelayanan dan biasanya langsung diberi solusi oleh atasan."* (During the briefing, we can bring up service-related issues, and our supervisors usually provide solutions right away). (A5)

A7 made a similar statement.

> *"Kalau ada masalah di operasional biasanya dibahas saat briefing sehingga semua tim tahu apa yang harus diperbaiki." (*If there are any operational issues, they're usually discussed during the briefing so that the whole team knows what needs to be fixed). (A7)

In addition to formal communication, informal communication is also part of the organizational culture. A1 explains that activities such as eating together or having coffee after work provide a more relaxed setting for communication.

> *"Biasanya teman-teman mengajak ngopi atau makan bersama. Di situ kami sering berdiskusi tanpa suasana formal." (*Usually, my friends invite me out for coffee or a meal. That's when we often have discussions in a casual setting). (A1)

A8 added that informal communication helps build closer relationships among employees.

> *"Kalau ngobrol santai setelah kerja biasanya lebih enak menyampaikan pendapat daripada saat rapat."* (When having a casual conversation after work, it's usually easier to express your opinion than during a meeting). (A8)

However, not all communication processes are symmetrical. A4 states that under certain conditions, communication remains instructive in nature.

> "Sifatnya ada kalanya dua arah, ada kalanya satu arah" (It can be two-way at times, and one-way at other times". (A4)

A9 corroborated that statement.

> *"Kalau menyangkut SOP atau kondisi operasional" (*When it comes to SOPs or urgent operational matters, we usually just follow the instructions). (A9)

To explain the form of internal communication implemented by the PR department of PT. Sage Pangan Adikara, the researcher created a framework diagram based on the findings obtained, as follows:

Table 2. Forms of Internal Communication Implemented by PT Sage Pangan Adikara

Initial Code	Category	Theme	Supporting Quotes	Interpretation
Memo, WhatsApp, email	Formal communication media	Multichannel communication	A1, A2	Public Relations utilizes various communication media to ensure that information reaches all employees.
Daily briefing	Operational dialogue	Two-way communication	A3, A5, A7	Daily briefings serve as a platform for delivering information while also receiving feedback.
Coffee breaks, shared meals	Interpersonal relationships	Informal communication	A1, A8	Informal communication strengthens emotional bonds among organizational members.
Management instructions	Vertical communication	One-way or instructive communication under certain circumstances	A4, A9	Certain operational situations still require communication that is directive in nature.

(Source: Informant Interview, 2025)

The research findings indicate that the forms of internal communication implemented by PT Sage Pangan Adikara consist of (1) multi-channel communication, (2) two-way communication, (3) informal communication, and (4) one-way communication. The variety of communication channels allows employees with different characteristics to choose the communication medium they are most comfortable with. On the other hand, the presence of informal communication strengthens emotional bonds, making it easier for employees to voice their aspirations and the problems they face. However, the study also found that two-way communication has not been fully implemented in all situations. In operational conditions requiring quick decisions, communication remains top-down. This indicates that the organization employs a combination of symmetrical and instructive communication depending on operational needs.

The presence of one-way communication in certain situations indicates that communication practices at PT Sage Pangan Adikara have not yet fully achieved a symmetrical model. Instructions related to operational standards or urgent service conditions are still dominated by vertical communication. This situation is understandable because the restaurant industry requires rapid decision-making to maintain the quality of service provided to customers.

Interpersonal relationships between management and employees. Based on the Two-Way Symmetrical Communication Theory proposed by Grunig & Hunt (1984), Effective organizational communication is characterized by dialogue, the exchange of feedback, mutual understanding, and the creation of mutually beneficial relationships. Research findings indicate that daily briefings, regular meetings, WhatsApp groups, and informal discussions are examples of two-way communication because they provide employees with opportunities to express their opinions, seek clarification, and receive immediate feedback from management.

These findings are consistent with Maiwada (2025), which explains that effective internal communication depends not only on the dissemination of information, but also on an organization's ability to foster dialogue and employee participation. The findings of this study also support Kang & Sung (2017), which found that two-way communication enhances trust, commitment, and the quality of the relationship between organizations and employees. Thus, the more opportunities for dialogue an organization provides, the greater the likelihood of fostering healthy working relationships, thereby minimizing the risk of burnout.

Overall, the form of internal communication implemented by PT Sage Pangan Adikara demonstrates a predominance of two-way communication practices combined with both formal and informal communication. This combination demonstrates that the Public Relations function serves not only as a conduit for organizational information but also as a facilitator of dialogue that builds mutual trust between management and employees. The theory of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication serves as the conceptual foundation for explaining how internal communication contributes to the creation of a healthy work environment.

The Role of PR in Maximizing Internal Communication to Reduce Employee Burnout

Research findings indicate that Public Relations (PR) at PT Sage Pangan Adikara not only serves as a conduit for organizational information but also acts as a communication facilitator that builds interpersonal relationships between management and employees. This role is realized through open communication, providing opportunities for dialogue, personal mentoring, and offering psychological support to employees experiencing work-related stress.

The Head Manager (A1) explained that the communication established by management is based on the principles of empathy and equality.

> *"Saya selalu memposisikan bagaimana kalau saya menjadi teman-teman. Keterbukaan atau sharing penting menurut manajemen termasuk saya pribadi."* (I always try to put myself in my colleagues' shoes. Openness and sharing are important, according to management—and I personally agree) (A1)

This statement was reinforced by the Head of Public Relations (A2), who emphasized that internal communication is designed to ensure that every employee has access to information and the opportunity to express their opinions.

> *"Karyawan yang merasa didengar dan diberikan akses terhadap informasi biasanya tingkat burnout-nya lebih rendah." (*Employees who feel heard and have access to information typically experience lower levels of burnout). (A2)

From the employees' perspective, communication that allows for dialogue is seen as a way to foster a sense of security at work. The restaurant manager (A3) stated:

> *"Saya lebih nyaman kalau diberi ruang untuk bertanya dan berdiskusi kapan saja kepada atasan." (*I feel more comfortable when I'm given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss things with my supervisor at any time). (A3)

A5 made the same point.

> *"Kalau ada kesulitan kerja kami bisa langsung bicara ke atasan tanpa takut dimarahi."* (If we run into any difficulties at work, we can talk directly to our supervisor without fear of being scolded). (A5)

A6 also explained that open communication makes the workload feel lighter.

> *"Kalau pekerjaan sedang ramai biasanya kami saling membantu karena komunikasi dengan atasan juga terbuka."* (When things get busy at work, we usually help each other out because we have open communication with our supervisors). (A6)

In addition to creating opportunities for dialogue, the company also provides various forms of psychological support. A2 explained:

> *"Kami mengadakan sesi sharing dan memberikan kesempatan konsultasi dengan HR ketika karyawan mengalami tekanan kerja."* (We hold sharing sessions and provide opportunities for employees to consult with HR when they are experiencing work-related stress). (A2)

Employees consider the program to be beneficial. A8 stated:

> *"Kalau ada masalah pribadi atau pekerjaan kami bisa menyampaikan saat sharing sehingga tidak dipendam sendiri."* (If there are any personal or work-related issues, we can bring them up during our sharing sessions so we don't keep them bottled up inside). (A8)

In line with that, A9 stated that open communication fosters closer relationships with leadership.

> *"Atasan lebih mudah diajak berdiskusi sehingga kami tidak sungkan menyampaikan kendala saat bekerja."* (Our supervisors are more open to discussion, so we don't hesitate to bring up any challenges we face at work). (A9)

Overall, the findings indicate that internal communication goes beyond the mere transmission of information; it serves as a mechanism for emotional support that helps employees cope with work-related stress.

Table 3. The Role of Public Relations in Maximizing Internal Communication

Initial Code	Category	Theme	Supporting Quotes	Interpretation
Openness	Dialogue	Open communication	A1, A3, A5	Public Relations creates an open and safe communication space for employees.
Being heard	Feedback	Employee participation	A2, A8	Employees are given opportunities to express their aspirations and receive responses.
Counseling	Psychological support	Emotional support	A2, A8	Internal communication is used as a means of managing stress.
Personal approach	Interpersonal relationships	Empathy	A1, A6	Public Relations builds emotional closeness through interpersonal communication.
Discussion with supervisors	Trust	Employee–organization relationship	A3, A9	Dialogue enhances employees' sense of trust in the organization.

(Source: (Informant Interview, 2025)

Research findings indicate that, in its role of maximizing internal communication, PR is capable of creating: (1) open communication; (2) opportunities for employees to voice their concerns and receive feedback; (3) internal communication as a means of stress management; (4) emotional closeness through interpersonal communication; and (5) dialogue to enhance trust in the organization.

In this study, PR serves a strategic function as a bridge between management and employees. This function is not merely administrative but also relational. Open communication fosters more equitable relationships, making employees feel valued as part of the organization. Internal communication has evolved into a tool for stress management. In this context, communication is not merely the process of conveying messages but a means of fostering psychological safety, allowing employees to feel more comfortable sharing the challenges they face.

The study also found that a personalized approach by both leadership and PR enhances employees' trust in the organization. When communication is conducted empathetically, employees tend to be more open about their issues, enabling potential conflicts and psychological stress to be identified earlier.

Internal communication practices at PT Sage Pangan Adikara reflect the principles of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication developed by Grunig & Hunt (1984). This model views communication as a dialogic process that enables organizations and their internal audiences to influence one another through the exchange of information, feedback, and the joint search for solutions.

The dialogue that emerged through briefings, discussions, sharing sessions, and consultations with HR revealed a feedback mechanism that is a key feature of symmetrical two-way communication. In this model, the organization not only communicates policies to employees but also adjusts those policies based on the

employees' feedback. Thus, communication becomes a process of negotiation that fosters mutual understanding.

These findings support Men & Yue (2019), which states that open, empathetic, and responsive internal communication enhances employees' psychological well-being and strengthens their commitment to the organization. In this study, employees who felt they were being heard expressed more positive perceptions of their work environment than employees who merely received instructions.

Next, Kang & Sung (2017) explain that symmetrical two-way communication strengthens the employee–organization relationship by increasing trust, commitment, and participation. The findings of this study confirm this view because open communication fosters closer relationships between leaders and employees. The trust that is built encourages employees to raise issues before they escalate into more serious work-related stress.

The study's results also support Maslach & Leiter's (2016) view that unclear organizational communication is one of the main causes of burnout. Conversely, communication that provides clear information, social support, and opportunities for participation can reduce psychological stress in the workplace. At PT Sage Pangan Adikara, this function is carried out through a combination of formal and informal communication facilitated by the Public Relations department.

In addition, Y. Kim (2021) emphasizes that internal communication must foster long-term relationships between the organization and its employees. Research findings show that the role of public relations is not only to manage the flow of information but also to manage interpersonal relationships based on empathy, trust, and openness. Thus, internal communication serves as a preventive strategy to reduce burnout while strengthening the organizational climate.

Effective Internal Communication Efforts in Building a Healthy Work Environment

The research findings indicate that internal communication efforts at PT Sage Pangan Adikara are not only focused on conveying operational information but also aim to foster a healthy work environment through humanistic, participatory, and sustainable communication. These findings indicate that the Public Relations (PR) department, together with management, strives to create an organizational climate that supports employees' psychological well-being through recognition, leadership engagement, regular communication, and informal interactions.

One of the communication efforts that employees find most beneficial is the provision of motivation during briefings. A4 noted that briefings are not only used to convey work targets but also serve as a means of boosting morale.

> *"Kadang saat briefing kami diberi semangat dan terus didukung supaya tetap fokus mencapai target."* (Sometimes during briefings, we're encouraged and supported so we can stay focused on achieving our goals). (A4)

This finding is supported by A5, which states that briefings provide an opportunity to evaluate work without creating undue pressure.

> *"Kalau briefing biasanya kami membahas pekerjaan hari sebelumnya, tetapi penyampaiannya cukup santai sehingga kami tidak merasa disalahkan."* (During briefings, we usually go over the previous day's work, but the tone is pretty relaxed, so we don't feel like we're being blamed). (A5)

In addition to routine communication, direct involvement by leadership is also a hallmark of internal communication within the company. The Head Manager (A1) explained:

> *"Owner atau BOD sering turun langsung membantu operasional sehingga komunikasi dengan karyawan lebih dekat."* (The owner or the Board of Directors often gets directly involved in helping with operations, which fosters closer communication with employees). (A1)

This was confirmed by A7, who noted that leadership being on the ground facilitates communication.

> *"Kalau pimpinan turun langsung kami jadi lebih mudah bertanya dan menyampaikan kendala pekerjaan."* (When management comes out to the front lines, it's easier for us to ask questions and bring up work-related challenges). (A7)

The study also found that informal communication plays an important role in building healthy working relationships. A8 states:

> *"Obrolan santai setelah bekerja membuat hubungan antarteman semakin dekat sehingga kerja sama lebih baik."* (Casual conversations after work bring friends closer together, leading to better teamwork). (A8)

In line with that, A9 noted that informal communication reduces awkwardness between employees and their supervisors.

> *"Kalau ngobrol di luar jam kerja suasananya lebih santai, jadi lebih berani menyampaikan pendapat."* (When we chat outside of work hours, the atmosphere is more relaxed, so I feel more comfortable sharing my opinions). (A9)

From a management perspective, one aspect of internal communication aimed at fostering a healthy work environment is paying attention to employees' comfort and emotional needs as part of successful organizational communication. This is reflected in the statement by the Head Manager (A1), who noted that internal

communication is not only measured by the smooth flow of information but also by employees' comfort at work and their willingness to remain with the organization.

> *"Kalau ukuran bagi saya sederhana, selama karyawan tetap bertahan dan nyaman bekerja berarti komunikasi yang dibangun sudah berjalan dengan baik."* (As far as I'm concerned, it's simple: as long as employees stay on and feel comfortable at work, that means the communication we've established is working well). (A1)

These findings indicate that internal communication is viewed as a process of building sustainable social relationships, rather than merely an administrative activity.

To explain how internal communication efforts contribute to building a healthy work environment, the researcher compiled a table of the findings obtained in the field from the informants, as follows:

Table 4. Internal Communication Efforts to Foster a Healthy Work Environment

Initial Code	Category	Theme	Supporting Quotes	Interpretation
Daily briefing	Routine communication	Work motivation	A4, A5	Daily briefings serve as a medium for delivering information as well as providing psychological support.
Management presence in the field	Participative leadership	Management–employee proximity	A1, A7	Management presence reduces communication barriers and increases trust.
Casual conversations	Informal communication	Interpersonal relationships	A8, A9	Informal communication strengthens solidarity and reduces communication barriers.
Workplace comfort and employee loyalty	Attention to employees' emotional needs	Healthy work environment	A1	Attention to employees' emotional needs can improve workplace comfort and employee retention.

(source: Informant Interview, 2025)

From the table above, the researchers found that PR efforts to foster internal communication in building a healthy work environment are carried out through several measures, namely: (1) conducting regular briefings accompanied by motivational messages; (2) management visiting the front lines; (3) facilitating informal communication; and (4) paying attention to employees' emotional needs.

The research findings indicate that the effectiveness of internal communication is determined not only by the number of communication channels used but also by the quality of the relationships built through such communication. Regular briefings, leadership engagement, expressions of appreciation, and informal communication foster an open communication climate, making employees feel valued as part of the organization.

Furthermore, informal communication complements formal communication.

Interactions outside of official forums facilitate the exchange of experiences, spontaneous problem-solving, and the strengthening of interpersonal relationships—outcomes that are difficult to achieve through formal communication alone.

This study also shows that consistent communication can enhance a sense of belonging to the organization. When leaders are directly involved in operational activities and provide employees with opportunities for dialogue, work relationships evolve into more egalitarian ones. This creates a sense of psychological safety, which ultimately fosters a healthy work environment—one that meets employees' emotional needs and provides them with comfort, thereby encouraging many employees to remain loyal to the organization. This serves as an indicator that the communication established is functioning effectively.

From the Perspective of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication, Grunig & Hunt (1984) characterize effective organizational communication as ongoing dialogue, the exchange of feedback, and the creation of mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and its internal stakeholders. The research findings indicate that internal communication practices at PT Sage Pangan Adikara have aligned with these principles through daily briefings, open discussions, informal communication, and active leadership involvement.

These research findings are consistent with Men & Yue (2019), who state that empathetic and transparent internal communication enhances psychological well-being and organizational commitment. Findings by Kang & Sung (2017) explain that the quality of the relationship between an organization and its employees is influenced by two-way communication practices that provide employees with opportunities to participate in the communication process. In this study, such participation is evident through briefings, discussion forums, informal communication, and management's involvement in day-to-day activities.

Furthermore, Maslach & Leiter (2016) explain that a work environment lacking in social support and communication is one of the factors contributing to burnout. Conversely, when organizations foster open, consistent, and supportive communication, psychological stress can be reduced because employees feel supported by their work environment. The findings of this study show that internal communication serves as a preventive mechanism for reducing work-related stress while also enhancing employees' psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the optimization of internal communication by public relations to reduce employee burnout, it can be concluded that the internal communication implemented by the Public Relations department of PT. Sage Pangan Adikara plays a crucial role as a stress management tool in reducing employee burnout. Internal communication by PR can serve as a proactive contingency plan for addressing psychological crises in the workplace, where internal

communication functions not only as a managerial tool but also as a preventive strategy capable of safeguarding employees' mental health and strengthening organizational sustainability. The PR department at PT. Sage Pangan Adikara employs two-way communication verbal, written, and digital through memos, WhatsApp, briefings, and emails, although directive communication is still used in certain operational situations. The role of PR in maximizing internal communication is not limited to conveying management messages; it also involves facilitating openness, providing forums for discussion and counseling, and supporting employees' psychological well-being. Internal communication efforts including regular briefings accompanied by motivational messages, direct leadership involvement, informal communication, and attention to employees' emotional needs serve as key strategies for creating a healthy work environment. The research findings indicate that, despite the use of various channels, internal communication has not been fully effective in preventing burnout. Shortcomings such as a lack of two-way communication and openness persist. Therefore, the role of Public Relations needs to be strengthened through an empathetic approach and regular communication to create a healthy work environment and reduce employee burnout.

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