

**The Effect of Internal Communication and Work Motivation on Employee
Job Satisfaction with Non-Material Appreciation as a Mediator
at PT Drimhos Digital**

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Keywords:	Abstract
Internal Communication; Work Motivation; Non-Material Appreciation; Job Satisfaction; SEM-PLS	<p>This study aims to examine (1) the impact of Internal Communication on Job Satisfaction, (2) the impact of Work Motivation on Job Satisfaction, (3) the impact of Internal Communication on Non-Material Appreciation, (4) the impact of Work Motivation on Non-Material Appreciation, (5) the impact of Non-Material Appreciation on Job Satisfaction, (6) the role of Non-Material Appreciation in mediating the impact of Internal Communication on Job Satisfaction, and (7) the role of Non-Material Appreciation in mediating the impact of Work Motivation on Job Satisfaction at Drimhos Digital. The research methodology employed is a quantitative approach with an explanatory design. The study was conducted at Drimhos Digital in 2025. The research population consisted of 113 employees, with a sample of 113 respondents obtained through a census or total sampling technique. Data were collected via closed questionnaires based on a Likert scale, which were tested for validity and reliability using convergent validity and composite reliability through SmartPLS software. Data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) technique, encompassing the evaluation of the outer model, inner model, and path analysis. The research findings indicate that (1) Internal Communication has a positive but non-significant effect on Job Satisfaction with a p-value of 0.086, (2) Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Job Satisfaction with a p-value of 0.000, (3) Internal Communication has a positive but non-significant effect on Non-Material Appreciation with a p-value of 0.132, (4) Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Non-Material Appreciation with a p-value of 0.000, (5) Non-Material Appreciation has a negative and significant effect on Job Satisfaction with a p-value of 0.014, (6) Non-Material Appreciation has a negative and non-significant effect in mediating the impact of Internal Communication on Job Satisfaction with a p-value of 0.282, and (7) Non-Material Appreciation mediates the impact of Work Motivation on Job Satisfaction negatively and significantly with a p-value of 0.012. Based on these results, it is recommended that the organization recalibrate its reward system to prevent it from being perceived as an additional burden (extra-role), which could decrease employee job satisfaction.</p>

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and increasingly advanced digitalization, companies are required to be able to adapt quickly to changes in the dynamic business environment. Especially for companies engaged in digital marketing such as Drimhos Digital, the speed of innovation and creativity is the main key to success. However, this success is highly dependent on the quality and satisfaction of the company's human resources (HR). Employees who are motivated and feel valued will make an optimal contribution. Conversely, dissatisfaction can lead to decreased productivity and high *turnover* rates.

This phenomenon is a crucial issue at Drimhos Digital, which is reflected in the data *turnover* which is highly volatile, namely 4.65% in July 2025, jumped sharply to 20.24% in August 2025, and fell again to 5.41% in September 2025. The drastic surge in August indicates a significant problem in employee satisfaction and loyalty that needs to be addressed immediately. A turnover rate as high as 20.24% in one month not only reflects internal instability, but also has the potential to disrupt overall operational performance. Theoretically, job satisfaction reflects the effectiveness of the entire human resource management policy (Luthans, 2011). In the context of Digital Drimhos, handling this problem requires an approach to internal communication and work motivation. Internal communication was chosen because of its crucial role in aligning visions in the fast-paced digital industry, where according to Robbins and Judge (2024), effective communication can reduce uncertainty. In line with that, work motivation is the main psychological driver that determines the quality of employees' creative output.

Understanding this, internal communication is one of the fundamental aspects that must be managed properly in every organization. Effectively managed communication functions more than just an information distribution channel; It is a crucial instrument in fostering mutual trust between staff and leadership. In line with the argument Viona *et al.* (2025), transparency in interacting can reduce the potential for friction and accelerate the decision-making process that is responsive to market changes. By creating a healthy ecosystem for information exchange, organizations not only encourage more solid cross-functional collaboration, but also strengthen employee motivation and job satisfaction which is a key driver in achieving the company's collective goals. In the context of digital marketing companies, where ideas and creativity are of great value, open and clear communication ensures that the entire team moves in harmony in achieving common goals (Dinda Keysa, Adam and Astuti, 2025). With good communication, the potential for conflict can be minimized and employees' work motivation can increase.

However, studies have shown mixed results regarding the influence of internal communication and work motivation on employee satisfaction. For example, research by Viona *et al.*, (2025) It was found that internal communication and work motivation had a significant effect on employee performance at Kopdit/CU "UNAM" Berastagi. In contrast, other studies highlight that factors such as work-life balance (*work-life balance*) and management support also play a big role in influencing job satisfaction (Revelation *et al.*, 2025). Studies in the field of digital marketing also show variations in results. Research Kurniawan and Nugroho (2024) digital marketing

employees in South Jakarta revealed that the work system *Hybrid* has a positive effect on work motivation, which then mediates the influence on job satisfaction. Study at Koja Container Terminal by Budiana and Ronda (2025) Proving that the integration of internet media and interpersonal communication is effective in improving employee satisfaction and performance. However, the findings also hint at the complexity of other variables that affect performance, especially in the digital marketing sector which is full of creative pressure and high flexibility. In this context, non-material appreciation plays a crucial role as a mediator that bridges communication stimulus and motivation towards job satisfaction. According to social exchange theory, satisfaction arises when employees receive psychological reciprocity for their contributions; Without this aspect of appreciation, intense internal interactions risk being perceived as mere administrative workloads that are dry with emotional meaning.

Although the majority of studies show a positive relationship, there are inconsistencies in the findings that suggest that internal communication and motivation do not always have a direct impact on job satisfaction. For example, research by Alamanda, Pasla and Nibowo (2025) It was found that internal communication that is too intense actually creates an excessive cognitive burden that is not significant to job satisfaction in digital startups. In line with that, Rahmah and Ma'rifah (2024) Proving that extrinsic motivation in the creative industry often fails to increase satisfaction if it is not accompanied by the comfort of the psychological environment. This inconsistency is also seen in the study Siswanto and Octafian (2024) which shows that work motivation does not have a significant effect on employee satisfaction at technology companies due to the existence of high work stress factors.

This inconsistency of results is also supported by research Ardiansyah (2011) stating that one-way communication from superiors often does not contribute to creative employee job satisfaction. Lastly, Princesses (2025) It found that even intrinsic motivational factors can be hampered if the appreciation system in the organization does not run fairly. Various differences in results (*Gap*) is a strong reason for researchers to place Non-Material Appreciation (*Z*) as a mediating variable to bridge the inconsistency of the influence of communication and motivation on job satisfaction

Correspondingly, non-material appreciation began to gain attention and emerged as a novelty variable (*novelty*) that can strengthen and bridge the influence of internal communication and work motivation on employee satisfaction. Non-material appreciation is a form of appreciation that is not in the form of financial compensation, but recognition, praise, self-development opportunities, and other forms of attention that are psychological (Rahmanda *et al.*, 2025). Mathis dan Jackson (2011) It also defines non-material appreciation as a non-financial reward that does not give money directly to employees but increases the psychological value of the job. This appreciation has been proven to increase employees' emotional attachment to the company, which ultimately contributes to increased job satisfaction and performance (Azis and Ubaidillah, 2025). The strategic role of non-material appreciation can be seen in its ability to create positive psychological effects, reinforce the meaning of messages and motivations that employees receive through effective internal communication (Ryan and Deci, 2020). This mechanism is increasingly relevant in the

digital marketing industry, where the pressure and demands for innovation are very high. However, research on non-material appreciation as a mediator in terms of internal communication, motivation, and job satisfaction is still rarely found empirically, so this research is expected to fill this gap and provide practical recommendations for the development of HR management in the digital era (Chi *et al.*, 2023; Rahmanda *et al.*, 2025).

However, the role of non-material appreciation as a mediating variable in the relationship between internal communication, work motivation, and employee satisfaction is still rarely studied empirically, especially in the digital marketing industry which has unique characteristics such as high creativity demands and flexible work patterns. This is an important gap that this research aims to fill, which brings novelty by placing non-material appreciation as a mediator that can strengthen the influence of internal communication and work motivation on employee satisfaction (Apriyanto, Poli and Bida, 2025). This research is expected to make a significant contribution in enriching the human resource management literature, especially in the context of digital marketing, as well as providing practical recommendations for companies in designing effective appreciation strategies to improve employee satisfaction and performance.

In addition to focusing on non-material appreciation, the study also considers other variables such as *work-life balance* and work environment, which some studies say have a significant influence on employee satisfaction. These findings confirm that employee satisfaction is not the result of a single factor, but rather is the product of the complex interaction of various aspects of both the organizational environment and the personal condition of employees. Therefore, a holistic approach in research is needed to capture these dynamics comprehensively. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how various factors interact with each other and affect job satisfaction, so that it can provide more precise and effective recommendations for companies, especially in the context of the dynamic and challenging digital marketing industry.

With this background, this research is very important to be carried out as an effort to fill the research gap related to the role of non-material appreciation mediation, as well as provide practical recommendations for Drimhos Digital and similar companies in managing human resources more effectively and efficiently. This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the human resource management literature, especially in the context of the digital marketing industry, as well as help companies design appropriate reward strategies to improve employee satisfaction and performance in a sustainable manner.

This research is motivated by the high turnover rate of employees at PT Drimhos Digital which is volatile, with a significant surge of 20.24% in August 2025, which indicates internal instability and potential financial losses. In addition, employee loyalty is relatively low, reflected in the Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) value of -10%, where the number of detractors is greater than promoters, even though the general satisfaction rate reaches 72%. This problem is reinforced by obstacles in internal communication, such as lack of transparency and aspirational space, as well as low work motivation due to mismatch of tasks and poor work-life balance. On the other hand, there are inconsistencies in the results of previous research related to the influence

of communication and motivation on job satisfaction, as well as theoretical gaps related to the role of non-material appreciation as a mediating variable, so this study seeks to fill this gap.

This study was limited to testing the influence of internal communication and work motivation on employee job satisfaction with non-material appreciation as a mediating variable. The object of the research is focused on PT Drimhos Digital employees with a quantitative approach through the distribution of questionnaires, and using turnover data for the period July to September 2025 as the basis for analysis. Based on this, problem formulation includes testing the direct and indirect influences between internal communication, work motivation, non-material appreciation, and employee job satisfaction.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of internal communication and work motivation on job satisfaction, either directly or through the mediation of non-material appreciation. In addition, this study also aims to examine the influence of communication and motivation on non-material appreciation and its impact on employee job satisfaction.

Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of human resource management science, especially related to the role of non-material appreciation as a mediator. Practically, the results of this research are expected to be the basis for recommendations for the management of PT Drimhos Digital in improving communication strategies, motivation, and non-material rewards to increase employee satisfaction and performance, as well as become a reference for other companies in managing human resources more effectively.

METHOD

Research Design

This study examined the influence of internal communication and work motivation on employee job satisfaction in the Company, with non-material appreciation as a mediating variable. The type of research used is quantitative, with a comparative approach that aims to identify the cause of a phenomenon based on a comparison of existing variables. This approach is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how internal communication and work motivation contribute to employee job satisfaction through the role of non-material appreciation in the context of digital enterprises.

Research Time and Place

This research was conducted from July to October 2025, and the place of this research was an employee of PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta.

Population Research and Data Collection Techniques

This study used all 113 employees of PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta as research subjects. The approach applied is non-probability sampling through the census method or saturated sample, in which all members of the population are involved without exception. Refer to the view Sugiyono (2019), this technique was chosen to ensure that the data obtained is truly representative and able to comprehensively capture organizational phenomena. By involving the entire population, researchers can reduce the risk of generalization errors (*sampling error*) to the minimum level, so that the results of the analysis reflect the real conditions in the field.

In the data processing process, the number of these 113 respondents was analyzed using *Structural Equation Modeling* based *Partial Least Squares* (SEM-PLS). The use of census data in this model is particularly relevant given the flexibility and stability of SmartPLS estimates in handling specific sample sizes (Hair, Hult dan Ringle, 2017). Technically, the number of participants has exceeded the minimum standards required in the SEM-PLS literature, both based on the criteria *ten-times rule* as well as the ratio of the number of indicators, so that the sufficiency of data for structural model testing has been validly fulfilled.

Furthermore, the methodological literature (e.g. Hair et al.) suggests a sample count between 100 and 200 in order to obtain sufficient *statistical power* in estimating the model. With a population of 113 people, partial sampling (e.g. only reduced to 80 respondents) risks making the results of statistical analysis insignificant or invalid due to the decrease in the sensitivity of the test. Therefore, the researcher sets the use of this total population as a priority to strengthen *statistical power* and ensure the validity and reliability of the overall analysis results, so that the conclusions drawn truly reflect the objective conditions of the organization.

Data Collection Techniques

The source of data in this study is in the form of primary data obtained directly from employees of PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta as the object of the research. Data was collected through a survey using a questionnaire, which is a list of questions that are systematically compiled and given to respondents. This method was chosen because it is effective in collecting quantitative data that can be used to analyze the influence of internal communication, work motivation, and non-material appreciation on employee job satisfaction accurately and measurably.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis technique in this study uses two main approaches, namely descriptive analysis to describe the characteristics of the data without generalization, and inferential analysis with the SmartPLS 3.0-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method to test the causal relationship between latent variables simultaneously. The analysis model included an evaluation of the outer model to test validity and reliability through convergent validity (loading factor > 0.7), composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha (> 0.7), and discriminant validity using Fornell-Larcker methods, cross loadings, and HTMT (< 0.90). Furthermore, the inner model was used to test the strength of the relationship between variables through R-Square (0.25 weak, 0.50 moderate, 0.75 strong), predictive relevance ($Q^2 > 0$), goodness of fit (GoF), and F-Square (0.02 low, 0.15 moderate, 0.35 high). Hypothesis testing was carried out using bootstrapping techniques based on t-statistical values (> 1.96) and p-values (< 0.05) to assess the significance of direct and indirect effects, including the role of mediation variables which are categorized as full or partial mediation depending on the results of the significance of direct and indirect relationships.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Uji Hypothesis

1) Direct Effects

Table 1. Direct Effect

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>T Statistics</i>	<i>P Values</i>
X1 → Y	0,116	0,125	0,067	1,722	0,086
X1 → Z	0,137	0,137	0,091	1,509	0,132
X2 → Y	1,033	1,032	0,096	10,712	0,000
X2 → Z	0,747	0,752	0,083	9,020	0,000
From → Y	-0,242	-0,250	0,098	2,471	0,014

Source: Primary Data 2025

H1: Internal Communication has a positive and significant effect on Employee Job Satisfaction.

Based on the results of the statistical test, it was found that the influence of Internal Communication (X1) on Job Satisfaction (Y) resulted in a T-statistic value of 1.722, which is smaller than the critical limit of 1.96. This is supported by the acquisition of P-values of 0.086 which is above the significance standard of 0.05. This data indicates that although there is an effect, statistically the effect is not significant. Thus, the first hypothesis (H1) was rejected.

H2: Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Employee Job Satisfaction.

Testing on the variable Work Motivation (X2) on Job Satisfaction (Y) showed very convincing results with a T-statistic value of 10.712, far exceeding the threshold of 1.96. In addition, the P-values obtained are 0.000 (< 0.05). The results of this estimate prove that there is a real and significant influence between variables. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) is declared accepted.

H3: Internal Communication has a positive and insignificant effect on Non-Material Appraisal.

The analysis of the relationship between Internal Communication (X1) and Non-Material Appreciation (Z) showed a T-statistic value of 1.509 (< 1.96) with a P-value recorded at 0.132 (> 0.05). These figures show that Internal Communication does not have a statistically significant impact on the formation of Non-Material Appraisal. Based on these findings, the third hypothesis (H3) is declared rejected.

H4: Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Non-Material Appreciation.

The results of the calculation for the effect of Work Motivation (X2) on Non-Material Appreciation (Z) recorded a T-statistic value of 9.020 (> 1.96) and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). These statistics confirm that Work Motivation has a very significant contribution in influencing Non-Material Appraisal. Thus, the fourth hypothesis (H4) is acceptable.

H5: Non-Material Appreciation has a positive and significant effect on Employee Job Satisfaction.

The results of the pathway test showed that Non-Material Appreciation (Z) had a significant influence on Job Satisfaction (Y) with a T-statistic value of 2.471 (> 1.96) and a P-value of 0.014

(< 0.05), so that the fifth hypothesis (H5) was statistically accepted. However, this finding presents an anomaly in the form of a negative original sample value of -0.242, which suggests that a higher intensity of non-material appreciation actually has an impact on a decrease in employee job satisfaction. This phenomenon is strongly suspected to arise due to a perception bias among PT Drimhos Digital employees, where symbolic appreciation such as praise or public recognition is often considered as a "diversion" or compensation in lieu of excessive workload in the absence of commensurate financial support. In a fast-paced digital work environment, employees tend to value tangible resource support and a balance between contributions and *material rewards*. As a result, the provision of non-material appreciation that is not accompanied by improvements in the financial incentive structure actually triggers cynicism and feelings of exploitation, which ultimately erodes their job satisfaction levels.

2) *Indirect Effects*

Table 2. *Indirect Effects*

	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>T Statistics</i>	<i>P Values</i>
Internal Communication → Non-Material Appreciation → Job Satisfaction	-0,033	-0,036	0,031	1,076	0,282
Work Motivation → Non-Material Appreciation → Job Satisfaction	-0,181	-0,186	0,071	2,532	0,012

Source: Primary Data 2025

H6 : Internal communication has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction through non-material appreciation

Based on the test results, hypothesis 6 was expressly rejected because the Non-Material Appreciation variable failed to carry out its mediation function. The T-statistical value of 1.076 (< 1.96) and P-values of 0.282 (> 0.05) prove statistically that the influence of Internal Communication on Job Satisfaction is direct without depending on the presence or absence of symbolic appreciation. The absence of this mediation effect confirms that the communication pattern at PT Drimhos Digital already has an independent impact that does not require intermediary variables to affect employee satisfaction.

This failure of mediation is also emphasized by the negative Original Sample value (-0.033), which shows that efforts to connect internal communication through non-material appreciation do not provide added value to job satisfaction. This indicates that employees are more concerned with the effectiveness and transparency of the information itself than with the accompanying non-material acknowledgments. Thus, the relationship between the two variables stops at the path of direct influence and does not form a causality chain through the proposed mediation variable.

H7: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction through non-material appreciation.

The seventh hypothesis test examines the role of Non-Material Appreciation (Z) in mediating the influence of Work Motivation (X2) on Job Satisfaction (Y). The data in Table 16 shows a path coefficient value (*Original Sample*) of -0.181 with a qualified significance level, evidenced by a T-statistic value of 2.532 (> 1.96) and a P-value of 0.012 (< 0.05). These findings confirm that there is a significant indirect influence. Therefore, statistically hypothesis 7 is accepted.

Furthermore, to determine the nature of mediation, it is necessary to compare it with its direct influence. Based on Table 4.16, it is known that the direct influence of Work Motivation on Job Satisfaction (X2 → Y) is also significant (P-values 0.000 < 0.05). Given that both direct and indirect influences are equally significant, it can be concluded that Non-Material Appreciation plays a role as *partial mediation* in bridging the relationship between motivation and job satisfaction.

Discussion

The effect of internal communication on job satisfaction

An analysis of the causal relationship between Internal Communication (X1) and Job Satisfaction (Y) shows interesting findings. The results of the data processing recorded a T-statistic value of 1.722, which is below the *cut-off value* of 1.96. This finding was strengthened by a probability value (P-values) of 0.086 which exceeded the significance level of 5% (0.05). This empirical data indicates that the intensity or quality of internal communication that occurs at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta, although it has a positive effect, is not strong enough to significantly affect the level of employee job satisfaction. Therefore, the statistical decision taken is to reject the first hypothesis (H1).

Statistical findings that show that there is no significant influence between internal communication on job satisfaction at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta can be explained logically through the perspective of *Two-Factor Theory* of Frederick Herzberg. In the context of a digital work environment dominated by the younger generation (aged 20-30 years), internal communication seems to have shifted its position to mere *hygiene factor* (maintenance factor), no longer as the main motivator. As affirmed by Robbins and Judge (2024) in his book *Organizational Behavior*, factors *Hygiene* are aspects of the work environment such as company and administrative policies that if available properly will only prevent dissatisfaction (*dissatisfaction*), but not necessarily able to create job satisfaction (*satisfaction*) that is deep. For employees at Drimhos who are *digital natives*, the smooth flow of information through technology is considered a minimum operational standard or fairness (*baseline expectation*), so that the fulfilment of this aspect does not provide a significant surge of psychological satisfaction.

In addition, the insignificance of the influence of internal communication on job satisfaction in this study indicates that employee satisfaction is no longer determined by the quantity or frequency of interactions, but rather by the affective content and quality of the message conveyed. This phenomenon is in line with the view Luthans (2011) which emphasizes that organizational communication must be a means of meaningful social exchange, not just the transmission of transactional work instructions. Considering that the majority of respondents are women who psychologically tend to prioritize relational aspects, communication that only focuses on tasks without personal validation will feel bland and fail to create satisfaction. This condition is reinforced by the findings Lestari and Kasmirudin (2017) in the context of organizations in Indonesia, where internal communication often loses its effectiveness if it is not accompanied by transparency of the organization's culture or when the basic (financial) well-being factor is still the main burden of employees' minds.

The effect of work motivation on job satisfaction

Testing a second hypothesis (H2) highlighting the relationship between Work Motivation (X2) and Job Satisfaction (Y) provides very strong empirical evidence. Based on structural analysis, a T-statistical value of 10.712 was obtained, a figure that substantially exceeded the critical limit of 1.96. The validity of this finding is further emphasized by the acquisition of a P-value of 0.000, which is well below the significance standard of 0.05. This statistical data

conclusively confirms that work motivation has a real and positive determinant role in shaping employee job satisfaction at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta. Thus, the statistical decision states that the Second Hypothesis (H2) is fully accepted.

The acceptance of this hypothesis with a value of *T-statistic* which is very high (10,712) indicates that work motivation is the most dominant predictor variable in determining job satisfaction at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta. These findings are in line with the postulate of human resource management theory put forward by Yunus and Sukartini (2013) which states that motivation is the provision of driving force that creates a person's enthusiasm for work so that they are willing to work together, work effectively, and be integrated with all their efforts to achieve satisfaction. In the context of this digital enterprise, the high influence of motivation implies that employees do not simply work to abort obligations, but have internal motivations (*intrinsic drive*) or strong external. When this encouragement is well facilitated by the company, the level of psychological satisfaction of employees will increase drastically.

Furthermore, the dominance of the influence of motivation on job satisfaction can also be explained through the perspective of modern organizational behavior. Robbins and Judge (2024) affirms that employees who are motivated by both job challenges, recognition, and incentives will feel engaged (*engagement*) that is deeper in his work, which ultimately leads to job satisfaction (*job satisfaction*). Given the results of the previous study (H1) showing that communication does not have a significant effect, it can be concluded that for Drimhos Digital employees, the "drive to achieve" (motivation) is much more valuable than just "fluency of information" (communication). This proves that in a dynamic work environment, employee satisfaction is formed from how much positive energy they feel to achieve the company's targets, not just from the daily operational routine.

The effect of internal communication on non-material appreciation.

The analysis of the causality relationship between the variables of Internal Communication and Non-Material Appreciation shows an interesting statistical phenomenon. The results of the model estimate recorded a *T-statistic* value of 1.509 (< 1.96) with a significance level (*P-values*) of 0.132 (> 0.05). These findings indicate that at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta, the smooth flow of communication between members of the organization does not necessarily translate as a form of appreciation or appreciation. In other words, the high frequency of communication does not guarantee a high sense of non-material appreciation by employees, so the statistical decision taken is to reject the third hypothesis (H3).

The insignificance of the influence of internal communication on non-material appreciation at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta can be explained through the perspective of the organizational communication function. Refers to the theory presented by Pace and Faules (2005), communication in an organization has two main functions: *Task* (duties) and functions *maintenance* (maintenance/social). The results of this study indicate that the communication pattern that occurs in the company is likely to be too dominated by task or instructional functions such as task delegation, coordination, and *deadline*, or technical evaluation, but with minimal emotional or supportive content. As a result, even though the flow of information is smooth,

employees do not catch any "appreciation" signals in it. Communication is only considered as a work operational mechanism, not as a form of validation of their existence or achievements.

In addition, the rejection of this hypothesis emphasizes that non-material appreciation is a stand-alone psychological construct and requires special treatment, not simply entrusted through routine communication. As explained by Mangkunegara (2013), psychological appreciation requires specific, sincere, and directed recognition of individual achievements, not just a general conversation. For younger generation employees in digital companies, simply being "talked to" or included in the office WhatsApp group does not necessarily make them feel appreciated. They make a clear distinction between "work coordination" (communication) and "performance recognition" (appreciation). These findings provide important insights for management that to create a sense of appreciation, companies cannot rely solely on improving communication channels, but must design an explicit and dedicated appreciation program.

The effect of work motivation on non-material appreciation.

The analysis of the fourth hypothesis (H4) aims to confirm the influence of Work Motivation (X2) on Non-Material Appreciation (Z). Based on statistical calculations, a T-statistic value of 9.020 was obtained, which significantly exceeded the critical threshold of 1.96. The consistency of these results is strengthened by a probability value (P-values) of 0.000 (< 0.05). The data provides very strong empirical evidence that the level of employee work motivation has a positive and significant contribution in determining the intensity of non-material appreciation they receive or feel at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta. Thus, the Fourth Hypothesis (H4) is declared accepted.

The acceptance of this hypothesis with a very high significance value indicates the existence of a reciprocal mechanism (*reciprocal*) in organizational behavior at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta. The positive relationship between work motivation and non-material appreciation can be explained through the Theory of Expectation (*Expectancy Theory*) by Victor Vroom. In this context, highly motivated employees tend to put in the effort (*effort*) and show superior performance. This outstanding performance then acts as a stimulus for the company's management to provide a response in the form of non-material appreciation, such as praise, public recognition, or the belief in more responsibility. As explained by Robbins Robbins dan Judge (2024), work behaviors driven by intrinsic motivation will create "performance visibility" that makes it easier for employers to identify and reward socially.

In addition, this high influence can also be interpreted that motivated employees have a more positive psychological perception of their work environment. Enthusiastic (motivated) employees tend to be more sensitive and appreciate non-financial forms of recognition than demotivated employees. This is in line with the view Mangkunegara (2013) which states that motivation is formed from a proactive mental attitude towards work situations. In a digital creative industry environment like Drimhos, proactive and motivated employees often engage in intensive collaboration, which naturally "invites" appreciation from peers and leaders. In other words, work motivation acts as a "catalyst" that allows employees to access and feel the non-material appreciation available within the organization.

The effect of non-material appreciation on employee job satisfaction.

Pathway testing in this research model showed that Non-Material Appreciation (Z) had a significant influence on Job Satisfaction (Y) with a T-statistic value of 2.471 (> 1.96) and a P-value of 0.014 (< 0.05). Based on these statistical data, the fifth hypothesis (H5) was declared accepted. However, a unique finding appeared in the original sample value which showed a negative coefficient of -0.242. This indicates that there is an opposite relationship, where the intensity of giving non-material appreciation is increasingly likely to reduce the level of employee job satisfaction in the object of this study. This phenomenon is suspected to occur due to the perception of employees that non-material appreciation such as the granting of new responsibilities or formal recognition is seen as an additional workload (*extra-role*) that is not accompanied by a commensurate increase in material compensation.

This argument is reinforced by the theory *Effort-Reward Imbalance* developed by Siegrist (1996), which states that an imbalance between the effort expended and the rewards received can trigger work stress and drastically decrease satisfaction. In this context, non-material appreciation given without adequate resource support or financial rewards can lead to emotional exhaustion. In addition, referring to the findings So, Koestner, Dan Ryan (1999) About *Over justifications Effect*, overly formal extrinsic rewards can sometimes erode employees' intrinsic motivation and autonomy because they are perceived as a form of managerial control rather than genuine support. Therefore, the negative results in this study provide an important signal to organizations that the effectiveness of non-material appreciation is highly dependent on the fulfilment of basic material needs and the way they are delivered so that they are not perceived as mere work demands.

The influence of internal communication on employee job satisfaction through non-material appreciation.

Mediation channel analysis was carried out to prove whether Internal Communication was able to increase Job Satisfaction through Non-Material Appreciation intermediaries. However, the statistical results show a different fact. With a T-statistical value of only 1.076 and a significance probability of 0.282, it can be ascertained that this mediation pathway is not statistically significant. This indicates that the flow of influence from communication to job satisfaction is interrupted halfway because the appreciation variable does not function as a valid bridge. Based on these findings, the statistical decision is to reject the sixth hypothesis (H6), which confirms the absence of a mediating effect in this research model.

The rejection of this mediation hypothesis is a logical consequence of the insignificance of the relationship in the first path, namely the influence of Internal Communication on Non-Material Appreciation (H3). In the concept of path analysis (*path analysis*) as explained by Baron and Kenny (quoted in Ghazali, 2021), the condition for mediation to occur is that independent variables must be able to influence the mediator first. The findings at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta show the existence of a "broken link" (*broken link*); Communication that occurs in the company fails to foster a sense of appreciation in employees. Because communication is not able to trigger appreciation, it cannot continue its positive impact on job satisfaction.

Theoretically, this failure of mediation can be explained using the Media Wealth Theory (*Media Richness Theory*) from Daft (2008). Employees in the digital age may use communication channels that are "poor" in social cues (such as *text messaging*) for everyday interactions, which are very effective for technical tasks but very poor for conveying appreciation or emotion. As a result, internal communication only ceases to be an exchange of information (*information exchange*) and does not transform into social exchange (*social exchange*) which means. Therefore, the mediation mechanism does not work because internal communication in this company stands separately and is not integrated with the employee psychological reward system.

The effect of work motivation on employee job satisfaction through non-material appreciation.

Further analysis was conducted to test whether the relationship between Work Motivation and Job Satisfaction was strengthened by the presence of Non-Material Appraisal. The results of the statistical test proved that this mediation path was effective and significant, marked by a T-statistical value of 2.532 and a P-value of 0.012. This finding is interesting because the results of previous tests also show that the direct effect of motivation on job satisfaction is significant. Conditions where direct and indirect influences are equally significant indicate the occurrence of *partial mediation*. This means that at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta, work motivation is able to create job satisfaction independently, but the impact will be amplified (stronger) when accompanied by non-material appreciation from the company.

The acceptance of this partial mediation hypothesis reveals the fact that the formation of job satisfaction at PT Drimhos Digital Yogyakarta occurs through a dual mechanism (*dual mechanism*). First, work motivation has an intrinsic power that is able to boost job satisfaction directly without any intermediaries. Motivated employees will feel satisfied because of their personal achievements. Second, the work motivation triggers positive work behaviour that invites non-material appreciation from management, which then leads to increased job satisfaction. This reinforces the Social Exchange Theory (*Social Exchange Theory*) from Blau (1967), where employees who perform best (out of motivation) expect to be rewarded in the form of social rewards (appreciation), which ultimately increases their attachment and satisfaction with the organization.

This partial mediation status also provides crucial managerial implications. These findings confirm that even though the internal motivation of Drimhos employees is already very strong, the existence of non-material appreciation still plays a vital role as a booster or reinforcement of satisfaction. Without appreciation, employees may remain satisfied (due to the direct influence of motivation), but their level of satisfaction will not be as optimal if it is accompanied by recognition. As explained by Luthans (2011), appreciation serves as *reinforcement* (strengthening) positive that validates employee efforts. Therefore, the synergy between maintaining work motivation and providing sincere non-material appreciation is the most comprehensive strategy to maximize employee job satisfaction in creative industry companies.

Research Limitations

1. This research was conducted in a limited time span, namely July to October 2025. The assumption of limitations is that employee perceptions of job satisfaction are dynamic and can change at any time; However, this study only recorded conditions at a specific point in time (*snapshot*), so it could not describe changes in employee behavior or attitudes in the long term.
2. There may be limitations in the indicators used to measure the Internal Communication variable, given that the test results show insignificant influence. The existing instruments measure communication in general and have not specifically distinguished between the dimensions of instructional communication (tasks) and interpersonal communication (social), so respondents may only consider it as a work routine.
3. The use of *self-administered questionnaires* has the potential for bias where respondents tend to give answers that are considered normative, 'good', or 'safe' in order to maintain their self-image in the eyes of the organization. This is a challenge in capturing objective psychological reality related to sensitive variables such as motivation and job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that internal communication has a positive but not significant influence on job satisfaction and non-material appreciation, so it has not been able to have a statistically significant impact. Conversely, work motivation was shown to have a positive and significant effect on both job satisfaction and non-material appreciation, which confirms that an increase in motivation will be followed by an increase in both variables. However, non-material appreciation actually showed a negative and significant influence on job satisfaction, which indicates an anomaly in the context of this study. In the mediation role, non-material appreciation is not able to mediate the influence of internal communication on job satisfaction because it is insignificant, but it is able to mediate the influence of work motivation on job satisfaction partially in a negative direction, thus contributing to a decrease in the total influence of motivation on job satisfaction.

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