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A conceptual study on the relationship between internal communication and business performance among administrative staff in the manufacturing sector

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ABSTRACT

Effective internal communication is widely recognised as a critical determinant of organisational success, particularly in dynamic and competitive business environments. However, many organisations continue to experience communication-related challenges that hinder coordination, reduce decision-making quality, and negatively affect overall organisational performance. This conceptual paper examines the relationship between communication practices, communication channels, communication challenges, communication strategies, and business performance among administrative staff in the manufacturing sector. Drawing on established organisational communication and management theories, this study synthesises existing literature to explain how these dimensions collectively influence business performance. The proposed conceptual framework illustrates how internal communication contributes to organisational effectiveness, employee productivity, and decision-making efficiency, which in turn enhance business performance. This study contributes to the theoretical development of internal communication literature and offers practical insights for organisations seeking to strengthen communication systems. Future research is recommended to empirically validate the proposed framework in similar organisational contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Effective internal communication is widely recognised as a critical factor influencing organisational success, particularly in dynamic and competitive business environments (Men, 2021; Zerfass et al., 2020). It plays an important role in ensuring coordination, supporting decision-making processes, and enhancing overall organisational efficiency. However, organisations continue to face communication-related issues such as poor information flow, coordination challenges, and ineffective communication practices, which negatively affect organisational performance. Similar issues have also been highlighted by Sulaiman et al. (2024), who emphasised the impact of communication on decision-making effectiveness, as well as by Suratmoko and Adnan (2024) and Alharbi (2025), who identified persistent communication barriers and inefficiencies within organisations. These issues are particularly evident in manufacturing organisations, which require structured processes and strong interdepartmental collaboration. In such environments, ineffective communication may disrupt workflow coordination, delay decision-making, and reduce operational efficiency. In this context, administrative staff play an important role in facilitating communication flow across departments; however, their contribution to organisational performance through internal communication practices remains underexplored, particularly within manufacturing settings.

Although internal communication has been widely studied, existing literature is largely concentrated in Western and service-based contexts, resulting in limited empirical evidence within developing economies and manufacturing sectors (Musheke & Phiri, 2021; Hussain, 2020). Recent studies further indicate that internal communication research remains fragmented, with limited integration across different organisational contexts and industries (Sinitsyna et al., 2023). In addition, prior research has mainly focused on isolated outcomes such as employee engagement, teamwork, and job satisfaction, rather than integrating communication practices, channels, challenges, and strategies within a single framework. Furthermore, limited studies have examined how these communication dimensions interact collectively to influence business performance, particularly in manufacturing organisations and in relation to the role of administrative staff as communication coordinators. Moreover, recent literature highlights several persistent challenges in internal communication, including digital communication overload, lack of feedback mechanisms, technological barriers, and insufficient communication training, which continue to hinder effective information flow and organisational alignment (Fuciu & Șerban, 2024; Suratmoko & Adnan, 2024). Additionally, the increasing shift towards digital and hybrid work environments has introduced new communication complexities, including reduced interpersonal interaction, communication breakdowns, and difficulties in maintaining message clarity across organisational levels (Fahmi, 2024). Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between communication practices, communication channels, communication challenges, communication strategies, and business performance among administrative staff in the manufacturing sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on internal communication consistently emphasises its crucial role in enhancing business performance through improved coordination, decision-making, and employee productivity. Effective communication practices such as clear information flow, appropriate use of communication channels, and timely dissemination of accurate information are widely associated with positive organisational outcomes.

Therefore, this literature review critically synthesises and evaluates existing empirical and theoretical studies on internal communication and business performance to identify key themes, contradictions, and research gaps and to establish a strong foundation for the development of the conceptual framework in this study.

2.1 Business performance

Business performance is widely conceptualised as a multidimensional construct that extends beyond financial outcomes to include operational, social, and environmental dimensions. Abdallah et al. (2022) emphasise that business performance is increasingly linked to sustainability reporting, where environmental and social disclosures are associated with improved operational outcomes such as efficiency. Similarly, Nogueira et al. (2025) define business performance as the extent to which organisations achieve economic, social, and environmental objectives, reflecting a broader evaluation beyond financial indicators. Further supporting this view, Adnan et al. (2025) highlight that business performance encompasses both financial and non-financial outcomes, including productivity, innovation capability, and operational effectiveness. From the perspective of the Resource-Based View (RBV), business performance reflects the extent to which organisations effectively utilise and leverage internal resources and capabilities to achieve competitive advantage. In this context, operational performance is viewed as an outcome of how well internal resources such as communication systems, employee competencies, and coordination mechanisms are developed and deployed. In this regard, recent literature suggests a growing consensus that operational performance provides a more appropriate lens for assessing internal organisational effectiveness, particularly in terms of efficiency, workflow quality, and task performance (Cupertino et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2023).

2.2 Business performance and communication practices

Some studies suggest that open and transparent communication enhances coordination, cooperation, and operational efficiency within organisations (Kalogiannidis, 2020). In contrast, Adnan (2021) argues that top-down communication remains effective in achieving organisational objectives, particularly in environments characterised by strong managerial control, indicating that communication effectiveness is context-dependent. Further evidence highlights that communication practices contribute to operational performance by improving coordination, reducing ambiguity, and enhancing task clarity. For instance, Musheke and Phiri (2021) emphasise that management–employee communication strengthens organisational effectiveness through improved coordination and reduced uncertainty, while Sulaiman et al. (2023) show that structured communication systems enhance information flow and decision-making efficiency. Wen et al. (2021) demonstrate that digital communication tools enhance coordination efficiency and responsiveness, although their effectiveness depends on organisational readiness and consistent adoption. However, existing studies have largely overlooked communication dynamics within manufacturing organisations, where structured processes, hierarchical communication flows, and interdepartmental coordination are critical to operational efficiency and performance outcomes. This limitation highlights the need for further investigation into how internal communication practices influence business performance within manufacturing contexts, particularly from the perspective of administrative staff.

2.3 Communication practices

Communication practices refer to routine operational communication behaviours and information exchange processes within organisations, while communication strategies represent the structured and intentional design of communication systems aimed at aligning communication activities with organisational goals. More specifically, communication practices involve structured patterns through which information is exchanged, interpreted, and understood within organisational settings (Said, 2024). These practices play a central role in facilitating coordination, decision-making, and employee engagement (Men, 2021). Extending this view, Ansgar Zerfass et al. (2020) position communication practices as strategic mechanisms that align employees' actions with organisational goals and performance outcomes. However, prior studies also indicate that the effectiveness of communication practices is contingent upon organisational structure, leadership style, and cultural context, suggesting that their impact may vary across different organisational environments. In relation to business performance, communication practices are expected to influence organisational outcomes through improvements in clarity, coordination, and efficiency in information exchange among administrative staff. These improvements contribute to enhanced operational performance, higher decision-making quality, and overall organisational effectiveness. From the perspective of the Transactional Model of Communication, communication practices function as continuous and interactive processes in which meaning is co-created through feedback, shared understanding, and mutual interpretation. Consequently, effective communication practices minimise misunderstandings and strengthen coordination, thereby improving business performance in manufacturing organisations. Therefore, it is hypothesised that communication practices have a significant effect on business performance.

2.4 Communication challenges

Zerfass et al. (2020) conceptualise communication challenges as both strategic and operational breakdowns that disrupt alignment between organisational objectives and employee comprehension. Kamal Bahrain et al. (2023) further highlight that such communication breakdowns can contribute to reduced morale and weakened collaboration, particularly in highly regulated industries. In addition, Wijaya (2022) and Soid et al. (2025) emphasise that ineffective communication may result in operational inefficiencies and diminished team cohesion. Communication challenges are therefore expected to negatively influence business performance by disrupting information flow, increasing misunderstandings, and reducing decision-making efficiency. Within the Transactional Model of Communication (TMC), communication barriers interfere with the continuous feedback process and distort shared meaning between communicators. As a result, coordination among administrative staff becomes less effective, leading to reduced organisational efficiency and weaker business performance outcomes. Therefore, it is hypothesised that communication challenges have a significant effect on business performance.

2.5 Communication channels

Communication channels refer to the formal and informal mediums through which information is transmitted within organisations, including downward, upward, lateral, and network-based flows (Kramer & Bisel, 2024; Men & Yue, 2020). Traditionally, organisational communication relied heavily on face-to-face interaction, memos, and meetings as primary channels for information exchange. In contrast, modern organisations increasingly rely on digital communication channels such as email, instant messaging platforms, and collaborative systems. Effective communication channels are expected to positively

influence business performance by ensuring timely, accurate, and efficient information flow across organisational levels. From the perspective of the Transactional Model of Communication (TMC), communication channels enable a simultaneous and continuous exchange of messages, where feedback is immediate, and meaning is jointly constructed. Well-integrated communication channels enhance shared understanding, reduce misinterpretation, and improve coordination among administrative staff, thereby strengthening organisational performance. Therefore, it is hypothesised that communication channels have a significant effect on business performance.

2.6 Communication strategies

Communication channels refer to the formal and informal mediums through which information is transmitted within organisations, including downward, upward, lateral, and network-based flows (Kramer & Bisel, 2024; Men & Yue, 2020). Traditionally, organisational communication relied heavily on face-to-face interaction, memos, and meetings as primary channels for information exchange. In contrast, modern organisations increasingly rely on digital communication channels such as email, instant messaging platforms, and collaborative systems. Effective communication channels are expected to positively influence business performance by ensuring timely, accurate, and efficient information flow across organisational levels. From the perspective of the Transactional Model of Communication (TMC), communication channels enable a simultaneous and continuous exchange of messages, where feedback is immediate, and meaning is jointly constructed. Well-integrated communication channels enhance shared understanding, reduce misinterpretation, and improve coordination among administrative staff, thereby strengthening organisational performance. Therefore, it is hypothesised that communication channels have a significant effect on business performance.

3. UNDERPINNING THEORY

3.1 Transactional Model of Communication (TMC)

The transactional model of communication conceptualises communication as a continuous, dynamic, and reciprocal process in which meaning is co-created through ongoing interactions between communicators. Rather than functioning as a linear transmission of information, communication within this model involves simultaneous encoding and decoding, where individuals act as both senders and receivers. Effective communication is therefore characterised by continuous feedback loops that facilitate mutual understanding and minimise misinterpretation. Such clarity in meaning construction supports improved coordination, enhances the quality of decision-making, and ultimately contributes to organisational performance. Furthermore, communication is shaped by contextual factors, including social, organisational, and psychological environments, reinforcing its adaptive and interactive nature (Bragg et al., 2021; Cyfeku, 2024; Tripathi, 2024). Extending this perspective, Sabila and Yuliawati (2025) emphasise that elements such as clarity, active listening, and critical thinking are essential in enabling shared understanding, highlighting that meaning is collaboratively constructed rather than unilaterally delivered.

3.2 Resource-based view (RBV)

The Resource-Based View provides a complementary theoretical lens by positioning internal communication as a strategic organisational capability that is valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate. Within

this framework, effective communication practices are regarded as intangible resources that contribute to sustained competitive advantage by enhancing coordination and decision-making efficiency. When systematically developed and embedded within organisational processes, these capabilities improve operational effectiveness and overall business performance, particularly in manufacturing contexts. Empirical evidence supports this view, demonstrating that internal resources such as knowledge sharing and strategic leadership significantly influence performance outcomes, including efficiency and effectiveness (Khalifa et al., 2025). In relation to the present study, communication practices are linked to key dimensions of business performance by facilitating clearer information flow, accelerating task completion, improving interdepartmental coordination, and strengthening employee performance through enhanced role clarity and decision-making (Rahman et al., 2021; Nadales-Gallego et al., 2025). Additionally, RBV underscores the role of both tangible and intangible resources in fostering organisational resilience and long-term strategic effectiveness (Monson, 2024; Mailani et al., 2024).

4. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a conceptual research design on the relationship between communication practices, communication channels, communication challenges, communication strategies, and business performance among administrative staff in the manufacturing sector. The study does not involve primary data collection; instead, it relies entirely on secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and established theoretical works in organisational communication and management. The purpose is to synthesise existing literature to develop an integrated conceptual framework that explains how communication practices, communication challenges, communication channels, and communication strategies influence business performance. A deductive and literature-based analytical approach is employed, where existing theories such as the Transactional Model of Communication and the resource-based view are used to guide the identification and interpretation of key constructs and relationships. Relevant studies are critically reviewed to extract conceptual insights, identify recurring themes, and highlight gaps in the literature. Through this process, the four dimensions of internal communication aresynthesised into a coherent framework that explains their potential influence on business performance, forming the theoretical foundation for this study.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this study is primarily grounded in the Transactional Model of Communication (TMC), which conceptualises communication as a continuous, dynamic, and reciprocal process involving simultaneous feedback exchange and the co-construction of meaning among organisational members. Within this perspective, communication is not viewed as a one-way transmission process, but rather as an interactive system where meaning is continuously shaped through interpretation, response, and shared understanding. Accordingly, the four dimensions of internal communication in this study, including communication practices, communication challenges, communication channels, and communication strategies, are derived from key principles embedded within the Transactional Model of Communication (TMC) and supported by the reviewed literature.

Firstly, communication practices represent routine communication behaviours and structured information exchange processes within organisations. Within the TMC framework, these practices reflect ongoing interactions where employees continuously exchange feedback, clarify messages, and negotiate meaning. Such interactive communication processes are expected to reduce ambiguity and enhance coordination among administrative staff. As a result, improved communication practices are hypothesised to strengthen organisational effectiveness and contribute to better business performance.

Secondly, communication challenges represent communication breakdowns, distortions, or barriers that disrupt the flow of information and interfere with shared understanding. In terms of the Transactional Model of Communication, these challenges function as "noise" within the communication process, disrupting feedback loops and weakening the co-construction of meaning. When communication barriers exist, misunderstandings are more likely to occur, leading to poor coordination and reduced efficiency. Therefore, communication challenges are expected to hinder organisational processes and negatively influence business performance.

Thirdly, communication channels refer to the formal and informal mediums through which information is transmitted across organisational levels, including downward, upward, lateral, and digital communication flows. From the TMC perspective, communication channels are essential enablers of continuous interaction, as they determine how effectively feedback is transmitted and interpreted among employees. Efficient and well-integrated channels facilitate real-time communication, enhance message clarity, and reduce misinterpretation. Consequently, effective communication channels are expected to improve coordination and support higher levels of business performance.

Fourthly, communication strategies refer to planned and structured approaches used by organisations to manage communication processes, ensure message consistency, and align communication activities with organisational goals. Within the TMC framework, communication strategies strengthen the quality of interaction by promoting systematic feedback mechanisms and ensuring shared understanding across organisational members. Well-designed communication strategies enhance clarity, alignment, and decision-making efficiency, which are critical in improving organisational performance outcomes.

In addition to the Transactional Model of Communication, the framework is further supported by the Resource-Based View, which positions communication as a valuable organisational capability that contributes to sustained competitive advantage. From this perspective, communication practices, channels, strategies, and even the management of communication challenges are considered intangible organisational resources that enhance coordination efficiency, decision-making quality, and operational effectiveness. When effectively developed and integrated into organisational processes, these communication capabilities enable organisations to optimise internal coordination and improve overall business performance.

Based on the integration of TMC and RBV, this study posits that all four dimensions of internal communication are expected to influence business performance. Specifically, effective communication practices, channels, and strategies are expected to enhance business performance, while communication challenges are expected to hinder it. This conceptualisation provides the foundation for the hypotheses developed in this study and supports the conceptual model presented in Figures 1 and 2.

TMC Element	Related Independent Variable
Message clarity & feedback	Communication practices
Communication noise	Communication challenges
Channel/context	Communication channels
Mutual adaptation & critical thinking	Communication strategies

Fig. 1. Link between the Transactional Model of Communication elements and the conceptual framework variables.

Source: Developed by the author (2026)

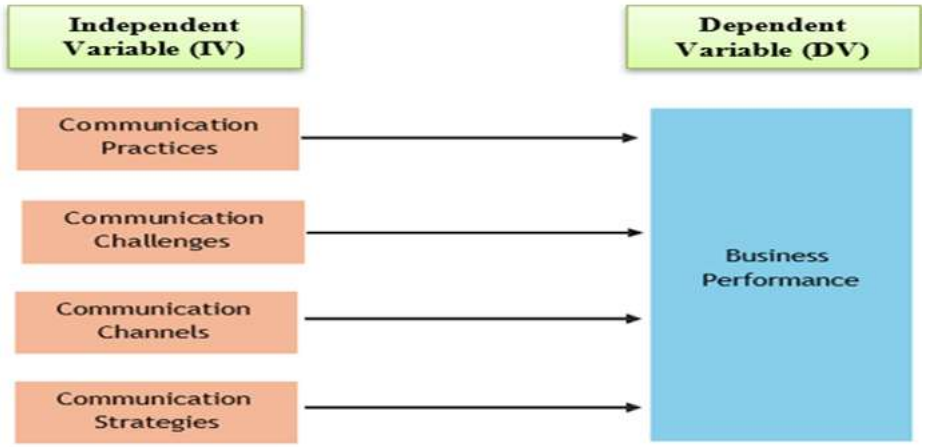


Fig.2. A conceptual framework for internal communication elements and their potential influence on business performance.

Source: Developed by the author (2026)

6. DISCUSSION

The synthesis of existing literature suggests that internal communication practices play a critical role in shaping organisational outcomes and are conceptually linked to business performance. Effective communication, characterised by clarity, participative dialogue, and structured feedback systems, enhances information flow, reduces ambiguity, and strengthens alignment between organisational goals and employee actions. These elements collectively contribute to improved coordination, task performance, and overall operational effectiveness, particularly in structured organisational environments where accuracy and timeliness of information are essential (Men & Bowen, 2021; Karanges et al., 2022).

The findings also indicate that internal communication influences performance not only directly but also through important relational and behavioural factors such as trust and employee engagement. Transparent and two-way communication promotes trust, strengthens employee–organisation relationships, and increases engagement, which ultimately contributes to higher productivity, stronger commitment, and

clearer role understanding (Men, 2022). This highlights that communication functions as both an informational and relational mechanism within organisations, shaping how employees perceive and respond to organisational objectives.

In addition, the increasing use of digital communication tools has transformed how information is shared within organisations. While digital platforms improve speed, accessibility, and coordination, they may also create challenges such as information overload and reduced interpersonal interaction quality, which can affect trust development and communication effectiveness (Men, 2022; Verčič et al., 2024). This suggests that a balanced integration of digital and face-to-face communication channels is necessary to maintain communication effectiveness and support sustainable performance outcomes.

Overall, the conceptual evidence supports the argument that internal communication practices are closely associated with business performance, both directly and indirectly through engagement and trust. These relationships highlight the importance of adopting structured and strategic communication approaches to enhance organisational effectiveness and performance outcomes. These findings support the proposed framework, which integrates communication practices, channels, challenges, and strategies as key determinants of business performance. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the internal communication literature by integrating multiple communication dimensions into a single conceptual framework to explain business performance in manufacturing settings. Practically, the findings provide insights for administrative staff in improving communication effectiveness to enhance performance outcomes. Future research is recommended to empirically test this framework in different industrial sectors and geographical contexts to validate and extend the proposed relationships.

7. CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper examines the impact of internal communication practices on business performance by synthesising existing literature and integrating key theoretical perspectives. The findings highlight that internal communication is a multidimensional construct encompassing communication practices, communication challenges, communication channels, and communication strategies, all of which collectively influence organisational effectiveness, coordination, and decision-making processes. Effective communication facilitates clarity, enhances collaboration, and supports operational efficiency, while communication barriers disrupt information flow and negatively affect performance outcomes. By developing a structured conceptual framework, this study contributes to the theoretical advancement of organisational communication literature by clarifying the relationships between internal communication dimensions and business performance. The framework also offers practical implications by emphasising the need for organisations to adopt structured communication practices, select appropriate communication channels, address communication challenges, and implement effective communication strategies to enhance overall performance. However, as a conceptual study, the proposed relationships require empirical validation. Future research is therefore encouraged to test the framework across different organisational contexts, particularly within manufacturing settings, to examine its applicability and strengthen its generalisability. Overall, this study provides a foundation for a deeper understanding of how internal communication can be strategically managed to improve business performance.

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9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The author declares no conflict of interest in the subject matter discussed in this manuscript.

10. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Jamaludin, B. N. contributed to the conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, and investigation of the study, as well as the writing of the original draft and the review and editing of the manuscript.

Zolkifly, B. N., contributed to the supervision of the research process and critically reviewed and edited the manuscript.

Mohammad Yusof, B. N., contributed to the review of the manuscript and provided academic feedback to improve the quality of the study.

11. DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author used an AI-assisted language tool to improve the readability and language quality of the manuscript. After using this tool, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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