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Chapter 2: A review on effective communication and organizational efficiency: Models, barriers, and strategic alignment

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprehensively reviews relevant literature including conceptual frameworks, methodologies, empirical evidence, theoretical foundations, propositions, hypotheses, key findings, and conclusions from prior scholarly work related to the study.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

This study adopts a conceptual framework that explores the impact of communication on organizational performance (Robbins & Judge, 2023). Communication is fundamental to every organization's success, serving as the foundation for interaction, coordination, and mutual understanding between management and employees. Haiemann (2011) defines communication as the transmission of ideas and the ability to make oneself understood by others. It involves the transfer of information between individuals or organizations using mutually agreed-upon symbols. Effective communication is crucial for organizational growth, as it strengthens management-employee relations and enhances overall staff performance.

Robbins (2011) describes communication as the "exchange and flow of ideas from one individual to another". According to Trevithick (2003), this process involves a sender conveying ideas, knowledge, or directives to a receiver. Harper (2003) and McLeod (2007) both emphasize that "communication is only effective when the receiver accurately understands the sender's intended message". Poor communication is a common cause of confusion and failure in organizational planning. Karen and Kamyabs (2004) argue that effective communication is a vital element of administration. Communication occurs across multiple levels—including intra-individual,

interpersonal, and group settings (Keith, 2014). At the intra-individual level, information is transmitted internally (e.g., from sensory organs to the brain) (Carlson & Birkett, 2021). At the relational level, it involves the exchange of messages between individuals. Regardless of the level, meaningful communication must inform, educate, and motivate employees across all organizational tiers (Barrett, 2002).

Banihashemi (2011) views communication not only as a means to achieve performance outcomes but also as a fundamental organizational function in itself. Stephen (2011) supports this view, emphasizing that communication is central to directing and mobilizing the workforce toward achieving organizational goals. Williams (2007) highlights that "effective, transparent communication between managers and employees is essential for success". McKinney et al. (2004) liken communication in organizations to the circulation of blood in the human body, underscoring its essential role in team performance and coordination. Effective communication ensures the alignment of various organizational functions and resources. Managers spend a significant portion of their time communicating, as key managerial processes—planning, organizing, leading, and controlling—are all communication-dependent.

Russu (2001) defines communication as the transmission of information through symbolic messages—such as sounds, letters, facial expressions, and gestures—to foster mutual understanding and accomplish both individual and collective objectives. Communication is embedded in all human activities and has become an expansive field of study.Modern management increasingly emphasizes the importance of communication in leadership. Luthans and Larsen (1986, as cited in Hargie & Tourish, 2009) estimate that managers devote 60% to 80% of their time to communication-related tasks. Previous research emphasizes the central role of interpersonal communication in managerial functions (Mintzberg,1973). Existing research by Sims and Lorenzi (1992, as cited in Hargie & Tourish, 2009) affirms that effective leadership relies heavily on communication to create shared meaning, convey vision, and foster a sense of common purpose.

I. Effective Communication

Effective communication is defined as "a process through which a sender conveys a message and receives feedback from the receiver in the manner intended"(Peter, 2015). It involves not only transmitting information but also ensuring that the message is accurately decoded and understood by the receiver. When the receiver misinterprets or fails to understand the message, communication becomes ineffective. Feedback plays a critical role in confirming that the message has achieved its desired impact (Berrelas, 2010).

Effective communication occurs when the intended recipient fully comprehends the meaning of the message and responds appropriately. It involves translating ideas, instructions, or guidance into spoken or written words—or even actions—in a way that ensures the receiver accurately interprets the message and responds appropriately (Victor Akam, 2011).

Within an organizational context, effective communication fosters commitment and supports the principles of Total Quality Management (Allen, 1992). It has also been

linked to higher employee satisfaction (De Rider, 2004), as it provides the clarity necessary for employees to perform their roles effectively (Adler, 1999). When communication is clear and timely, employees are more likely to have immediate access to the tools and information they need to complete their assignments efficiently.

Moreover, effective communication within organizations is essential for coordination, leadership, control, and performance evaluation. Miscommunication, on the other hand, can result in poor decision-making with potentially harmful consequences for the organization. According to Asamu (2014), "open and clear communication between employees and managers is vital. Employees need to understand what is expected of them, and managers must provide clear, detailed job descriptions to guide performance.

Effective communication within an organization contributes significantly to fostering a motivational organizational climate. Barriers such as language differences, perceptual distortions, and contextual misunderstandings can be overcome by implementing measures that enhance the quality of communication. These measures may include adopting an open managerial style, establishing clear communication protocols, appointing a dedicated communication officer, and developing a comprehensive communication strategy, along with training programs to build essential communication skills (Zagan-Zelter, 2008).

ii) Organizational Communication

Kreps (1990) defined "organizational communication as the process by which members gather relevant information about their organization and the changes occurring within it". Generally, organizational communication serves two main objectives: The primary objective is to inform employees about their responsibilities and the organization's policies (De Ridder, 2003; Francis, 1989). Previous literature on communication describes it as the transmission of work-related information from the organization to its employees, as well as among the employees themselves (Phattanacheewapul & Ussahawanitchakit, 2008; Chen et al., 2005) as well as to cultivate a sense of belonging and community within the organization (Francis, 1989; Postmes et al., 2001; De Ridder, 2003). In recent years, communication has come to be identified as "the key to organizational excellence and efficiency" (Grunig, 1992) and as "one of the most critical functions within an organization" (Harris & Nelson, 2008).

The nature and structure of an organization's communication system often depend on its culture, size, and profile. "According to Burlacu (2003), 'managerial communication is a component of both managerial and organizational culture, with its primary aim being to enhance organizational performance.'". While larger companies tend to establish formal communication systems, communication is not always prioritized. Nonetheless, it is essential that communication becomes a central focus on the management agenda.

Organizational communication encompasses internal communication, which involves the exchange of information and interactions among employees and members within the organization (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Cornelissen (2008) defines internal

communication as communication that takes place within an organization among its employees. Common tools used for internal communication include emails, intranet platforms, and video conferencing, which help inform employees about organizational activities and developments. According to Dolphin (2005), organizational communication addresses employee information needs, facilitates change management, and enhances employee motivation.

Furthermore, organizational communication is recognized as a key antecedent of self-categorization, contributing to the development of group identity and fostering a sense of community aligned with organizational values (De Ridder, 2003; Postmes et al., 2001; Meyer & Allen, 1997). Communication plays a central role in helping employees understand the organization, its values, and their contributions to its goals, thereby enhancing motivation and reinforcing a shared organizational identity (Postmes et al., 2001; De Ridder, 2003).

Elving (2005) emphasized that communication builds a strong internal community within organizations, encouraging employee commitment, fostering trust in management, and promoting organizational identification. Research has shown that the adequacy of information provided by an organization directly impacts employee job satisfaction, reinforcing engagement and performance (Giri & Kumar, 2010; Downs & Adrian, 2004). Effective communication enables employees to internalize organizational goals and values, aligning their behavior with those objectives. Despite their position in the hierarchy, all members of an organization engage in communication for most of their workday.

According to Zagan-Zelter (2009), communication within a firm can be classified into the following categories:

1. **Operational Communication** – This consist of all messages that connect members in the execution of operational plans and the procedures required to achieve specific objectives. It encompasses instructions from supervisors, discussions about work-related issues, and documents generated by operational staff across various departments (e.g., production, sales, finance, inventory, and maintenance) to report on task completion.
2. **Institutional Communication** – This refers to the structural functioning of the communication system, encompassing who communicates with whom and identifying which organizational units are central or peripheral in the communication process (Monge & Contractor, 2003).

Communication is a foundational element in the structure and operation of an organization. It serves as the primary mechanism for integrating and coordinating activities across different units and hierarchical levels. Organizational communication may be horizontal, upward, downward, formal, or informal, each playing a crucial role in ensuring organizational effectiveness and cohesion.

Horizontal (or lateral) communication is intended to integrate related tasks, work units, and departments within an organization. Its significance grows with increased specialization and structural complexity (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Lateral communication was first highlighted by Fayol (1949), who introduced the concept of a "gang plank" to facilitate communication between similar hierarchical positions. Horizontal communication can occur through interdepartmental meetings, open information channels such as newsletters and notice boards, and digital platforms like intranets. This form of communication promotes unity within the organization and enhances coordination, particularly in the production process.

Formal Communication

Zagan-Zelter (2008) described formal communication as the structured exchange of information through official channels, both upward and downward in the organizational hierarchy.

Downward Communication

Downward communication refers to messages sent from higher hierarchical levels to lower ones. It includes both work-related instructions and information about organizational goals, procedures, and feedback (Greenberg & Baron, 2008):

- **Written and electronic means**: newsletters, posters, memos, emails, manuals, policy documents, and other internal documents that regulate work practices and behaviors.
- **Oral communication**: phone calls, conversations, formal interviews, speeches, briefings, and workgroup meetings.

Upward Communication

Upward communication flows from the lower levels of the hierarchy to the top. It is conveyed through methods such as group meetings, interviews, suggestion systems (e.g., suggestion boxes), rewards for innovative ideas, surveys, and posters (Robbins & Judge, 2013). This type of communication is critical for understanding employee aspirations, resolving workplace conflicts, and enhancing organizational performance by enabling genuine feedback (Kreps, 2011).

Informal Communication (The Grapevine)

The informal communication network, or grapevine, refers to unofficial exchanges of information that occur without formal authorization. These include casual conversations among colleagues during breaks or at informal events like company anniversaries, parties, and social gatherings.

Broader Perspectives on Organizational Communication

Robson et al. (2006) describe organizational communication as a process that enables groups and partners to learn from one another, coordinate tasks, and build sustainable relationships. From a social constructionist perspective, organizational communication involves using language to shape social structures within the organization, such as relationships, teams, and networks.

Effective organizational communication enhances commitment, supports total quality management (Allen, 1992), The literature indicates that strong communication between managers and employees increases an organization's chances of success. Consequently, organizational communication has received growing attention, as it is vital across all dimensions of organizational performance (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001; De Ridder, 2004; Abugre, 2010b).

Purpose and Scope of Organizational Communication

Organizational communication refers to the exchanges of information within an organizational context. Its primary objectives include communicating policies, ensuring coordination among members, resolving internal problems, and sharing relevant information (Karakütük, 2011).

Redding and Sanborn "define organizational communication as the process of sending and receiving information within complex organizations" (as cited in Arni, 2008, p. 65). It is also commonly referred to as managerial or internal communication. This includes human relations, relationship management, and communication between superiors and subordinates. Zelko and Danse (as cited in Arni, 2008, p. 66) defined "organizational communication as a system of interdependence that includes both internal and external communication". Internal communication occurs within the organization—between employees, subordinates, and managers—while external communication refers to interactions between the organization and its external stakeholders (Arni, 2008).

Theoretical Foundations

Traditionally, communication is often viewed as a linear process in which a sender transmits a message to a receiver, who then interprets, internalizes, and responds to it (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). Research in organizational communication has long focused on improving this process to enhance efficiency, productivity, and profitability. The field has been explored extensively by both scholars and practitioners. From classical theories to modern approaches, many scholars have underscored the importance of communication. For example, Taylor emphasized the role of communication in maintaining hierarchy, while Fayol recognized the critical need for horizontal communication.

iii) Organizational Efficiency

To define *organizational efficiency*, it is essential to first understand the terms *organization* and *efficiency* independently. According to the Business Dictionary (2017), an organization is defined as a "social unit of people that is structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals" (Business Dictionary, 2017). *Efficiency*, on the other hand, refers to the relationship between inputs and outputs—specifically, how effectively inputs are transformed into outputs (Low, 2000). In essence, efficiency is the ratio between results achieved and the resources used.

Organizational efficiency, as described by Pinprayong and Siengthai (2012), reflects improvements in an organization's internal processes, including its structure, culture, and internal community. High organizational efficiency leads to improved performance in key areas such as management effectiveness, productivity, product or service quality, and overall profitability (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). According to Kumar and Gulati (2010), organizational efficiency is fundamentally about the effective allocation of resources across alternative uses.

The efficiency and effectiveness of an organization largely depend on a manager's ability to communicate effectively both within and outside the organization. Certain skills are essential for enhancing communication effectiveness. As message senders, managers should be able to:

- Communicate messages clearly and completely.
- Use symbols and language that the receiver can easily understand
- Choose the most suitable environment or channel for delivering the message.
- Ensure the message reaches an environment monitored by the receiver
- Avoid filtering or distorting information
- Incorporate a feedback mechanism in their messages
- Provide accurate information to prevent the spread of rumors *(Jones & George, 2008)*

Similarly, managers must be effective receivers of communication. Essential listening and comprehension skills include:

- Paying attention to all messages, regardless of workload
- Practicing active listening by not interrupting, maintaining eye contact, asking clarifying questions, and paraphrasing key points as feedback
- Demonstrating empathy
- Understanding linguistic styles and being sensitive to cultural differences *(Jones & George, 2008)*

Communication is widely recognized as a critical factor for organizational excellence and effectiveness (Grunig, 1992). The strength of any company lies in the effectiveness of its communication system. Communication is often described as the "glue" that holds organizations together and drives effectiveness (Clampitt, 2016).

Organizational efficiency refers to how well an organization utilizes its resources. In non-profit organizations, efficiency is often measured by evaluating the relationship between fundraising effectiveness and organizational expenditure (Pinprayong & Siengthai, 2012). In publicly traded companies, efficiency is measured by how well a firm maximizes profits from capital acquired through equity and debt (Will, 2005).

iv) Employee / Organisational Communications

Employee or organizational communication refers to the interactions and information exchanges that occur among employees or members within an organization. This is also commonly known as *internal communication* (Berger, 2008). According to Deetz (2001), communication among employees "is a central process through which they exchange information, build relationships, construct meaning, and shape the organizational culture". This process entails dynamic interaction among individuals, messages, meanings, practices, and purposes (Shockley-Zalabak, 1995).

Communication is one of the most dominant and essential activities within organizations (Harris & Nelson, 2008). Relationships are formed and sustained through communication, and the survival of organizations depends on the effectiveness of these relationships among individuals and groups. Organizational capabilities are cultivated through social and communicative processes (Jones et al., 2004).

Berger (2008) highlights that employee communication occurs on multiple levels:

- **Interpersonal communication** involves face-to-face interactions between individuals and is considered the most fundamental form of communication.
- **Group-level communication** takes place within teams, units, and departments, focusing on discussions, problem-solving, and task coordination.
- **Organizational-level communication** addresses broader topics such as the organization's vision and mission, policies, strategic initiatives, institutional knowledge, and performance.

v) Managerial Communications

The purpose of managerial communication in any organization is to ensure the accurate and effective flow of information—both vertically (between different hierarchical levels) and horizontally (across departments or units)—in order to meet internal and external demands in alignment with managerial and organizational objectives (Niculae, 2006).

A key component of managerial communication is direct interaction between superiors and subordinates. Challenges arise when perceptual differences between the two parties are significant and persistent, rather than when disagreements are minor. According to Johns (1998, p. 329), research shows that superiors and subordinates often perceive

situations differently. The link between leadership and communication is central to effective managerial communication (Hackman & Johnson, 2013).

Communication in leadership can be understood through four core dimensions (Zagan-Zelter, 2008):

1. **Support** – behaviors that enhance individuals' self-perception and self-worth.
2. **Facilitating interaction** – behaviors that encourage the development of interpersonal relationships within a group.
3. **Emphasis on purpose** – behaviors that inspire enthusiasm toward achieving shared goals.
4. **Facilitating activity** – behaviors that help achieve objectives through planning, coordination, and execution.

With effective communication, a leader can support their team, foster collaboration, align efforts toward common goals, and ensure successful completion of tasks. A leader's mission is to leverage communication to shape employees' attitudes toward their work, ultimately enhancing organizational well-being.

Communication also serves as a fundamental tool for staff appraisal. When managers communicate regularly and openly with employees, they are better able to understand individual needs and fairly assess their performance. Conversely, excessive strictness or criticism can create stress within the organization, leading employees to avoid communication out of fear or caution. Poor communication between management and staff can result in reduced productivity and conflict with labor unions. In performance appraisal interviews, communication is especially important, as informal, respectful dialogue fosters a positive and constructive atmosphere.

Ultimately, **managerial communication** is a critical factor for an organization's competitiveness and strategic advantage. Through clear and effective communication, management can implement decisions by informing those responsible for execution, while also enabling employees to express their contributions, concerns, and aspirations—and be genuinely heard and understood.

vi) Communication Networks Within An Organization
Communication networks illustrate how information flows within an organization and can be categorized as either formal or informal (Berger, 2008). In a formal communication network, messages are transmitted through official channels—such as newsletters, memos, and policy statements—which reflect the organization's hierarchical structure. In contrast, informal communication occurs through unofficial pathways, including gossip, rumours, personal opinions, and instant messaging via mobile chat platforms (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

vii) Communication Channels
A communication channel serves as the medium for transmitting and receiving messages. These channels are typically categorized into three main types: print, electronic, and interpersonal. Print channels commonly include memos, brochures,

newsletters, reports, and posters. Electronic channels encompass emails, voicemails, intranets, blogs, podcasts, chatrooms, business television, and instant messaging systems. Interpersonal, or face-to-face, channels involve speeches, team meetings, focus groups, social events, and informal gatherings.

Among these, listening stands out as the most frequently used communication channel, accounting for nearly half of the communication time (Harris & Nelson, 2008; Johnson, 1996). Effective listening is crucial for learning, enhancing understanding, resolving conflicts, and fostering productive teamwork. Furthermore, it empowers leaders at all levels to improve employee morale, enhance retention, and address organizational challenges.

viii) Impact Of Communication on Organizational Efficiency

Organizations that recognize the importance of communication embed it within their operational systems. Effective communication facilitates coordination among key production elements, particularly human and material resources, thereby improving network efficiency and driving positive organizational outcomes (Robbins & Judge, 2019). It is a critical contributor to organizational effectiveness and overall performance.

Husain (2013) emphasized the essential role of communication in managing organizational change. Employees are central to driving growth, and to foster their support for change, organizations must address employee concerns. Reducing job insecurity and fostering a sense of belonging encourages responsibility and engagement. When employees understand the need for change and its benefits, they are more motivated to participate and help implement change initiatives.

Effective communication among staff is a cornerstone of improved organizational performance (Kibe, 2014). When employees are empowered to share feedback, ideas, and even criticisms across all levels, it directly contributes to enhanced organizational outcomes. Similarly, Bery, Otieno, Waiganjo, and Njeru (2015) found that robust employee communication facilitates the exchange of ideas and opinions, consequently boosting operational efficiency and overall organizational performance.

Effective communication strategies are essential for enabling seamless information sharing both within and outside the organization. Neves and Eisenberger (2012) noted that management communication directly impacts performance by signaling to employees that the organization values their well-being and contributions. A positive communication climate cultivates employee identification with the organization, which, in turn, contributes to financial performance and long-term success (Smidts, Pruyn, & van Riel, 2001). Supporting this, Watson (2004) found that improvements in communication and organizational culture correlated with a significant 29.5% increase in market value.

Efficient communication fosters trust and commitment—both are vital for building strong and resilient organizations. This, in turn, influences customer behavior, directly affecting profitability.

Beardwell and Holden (2001) observed that, during the 1990s, many organizations came to understand that effective communication is a vital component of efficient administration. Clodagh (2004) added that when employees are well-informed about decisions and understand the rationale behind them, they are more likely to support management initiatives.

Harris and Hartman (1992) highlighted Thayer's (1968) classification of organizational communication into five functional categories:

1. **Information Function**: Provides employees with data regarding their jobs, the organization, and available resources.
2. **Command and Instruction Function**: Informs individuals of their roles and responsibilities.
3. **Influence and Persuasion Function**: Motivates individuals to perform or behave in certain ways.
4. **Integrative Function**: Aligns employee activities to ensure collaboration rather than conflict.
5. **Innovation Function**: Facilitates adaptation to internal and external changes.

Yuksel (2005) argued that openness in communication, feedback, and constructive criticism directly improve job satisfaction. Pettit Jr. (1997) similarly concluded that open, positive communication significantly boosts satisfaction. Ayrancı (2011) emphasized that communication between business owners and employees is itself a key factor in job satisfaction and overall organizational performance.

According to Adler (1999), effective communication helps employees clearly understand the information required to perform their jobs. Without it, frustration and inefficiency can arise. Ambler and Barrow (1996) posited that effective communication builds a cohesive corporate identity. This is achieved by keeping employees informed about the organization's vision and strategy, which subsequently enhances their satisfaction.

Communication is also essential in executing decisions and completing tasks. Managers rely on communication to issue directives, and subordinates rely on feedback mechanisms to ensure tasks are understood and properly executed. Without clear communication, instructions may be misinterpreted, and the organization risks confusion. Effective communication helps align staff with management decisions, ensuring shared understanding and organizational coherence.

Furthermore, communication is crucial for regulating, coordinating, controlling, and evaluating organizational activities. Miscommunication can result in poor decision-

making. In executing strategy, communication increases employee involvement and alignment with organizational goals.

The proper functioning of an organization relies on internal communication between its units. The manager plays a pivotal role by processing internal and external information and acting as both a disseminator to staff and a spokesperson to external parties.

Communication, along with motivation and professional competence, is central to organizational efficiency. All members of a company, regardless of rank, spend a significant portion of their time communicating. Teamwork cannot be effective without active collaboration and communication. As Zagan-Zelter (2008) notes, leaders must communicate in a way that inspires teamwork and commitment to the organization's mission.

Communication facilitates the exchange of information and opinions across the organization. Every individual process is part of an interdependent decision-making network. Strategy formulation and decision-making depend on access to relevant information, and once decisions are made, communication ensures they are implemented. Without effective communication, even the most innovative or strategic ideas may fail to be implemented or understood (Robbins & DeCenzo, 2011).

All messages and communications should align with the organization's strategic objectives. Because each interpersonal relationship is embedded within a broader network, interpersonal communication becomes a foundational skill essential to all organizational activities (Clampitt, 2016). Improved communication enhances collaboration and the effectiveness of collective efforts toward shared goals. Internal and external communication of organizational goals significantly influences overall effectiveness. As Maes, Weldy, and Icenogle (1977) state, interpersonal communication skills are consistently identified by employers as crucial for job success.

Effective communication strengthens teamwork and reduces grievances. Without it, dissatisfaction and conflict may arise. High levels of communication lead to improved employee performance and help organizations manage obstacles during periods of change.

ix) Barriers In Communication

Despite the importance of communication in organizational settings, there are often barriers that prevent messages from reaching their intended receivers effectively. These barriers include the following:

1. **Language Barriers**
   Differences in language, vocabulary, accents, and dialects can pose significant national or regional barriers. Semantic gaps—where words have similar pronunciations but different meanings (e.g., *round*)—can cause confusion.

Poorly expressed messages, misinterpretations, and unqualified assumptions can also contribute. The use of complex, inappropriate, or ambiguous words may result in misunderstandings.

2. **Cultural Barriers**
   Factors such as age, education, gender, social status, economic background, cultural upbringing, temperament, health, physical appearance, popularity, religion, political beliefs, ethics, values, motivations, assumptions, aspirations, and established norms can create differences that hinder communication. These differences may prevent mutual understanding and create conflict or misalignment.

3. **Individual (Psychological) Barriers**
   These arise from an individual's personal perceptions and psychological state. Even when two people witness the same event, their interpretations may differ. Barriers may include differences in communication style, selective perception, the halo effect, poor attention or retention, defensiveness, close-mindedness, and inadequate mental filtering.

4. **Organizational Barriers**
   Organizational structure and climate can hinder communication. Rigid rules, hierarchical status differences, and strained relationships can create barriers. Furthermore, physical organizational issues—such as dispersed workspaces, inadequate lighting, staff shortages, outdated equipment, and background noise—can also interfere with message delivery and reception.

5. **Interpersonal Barriers**
   These barriers arise from the dynamics between employers and employees.
   - *From Employers:* Barriers to effective organizational communication include lack of trust, limited awareness of non-verbal communication (e.g., facial expressions, gestures, posture, and eye contact), time constraints, disregard for employee needs, desire to maintain control, fear of losing authority, bypassing formal communication channels, and information overload (Clampitt, 2016).
   - *From Employees:* Lack of motivation, cooperation, or trust; fear of penalties; and poor relationships with employers.

6. **Attitudinal Barriers**
   These stem from negative staff attitudes within the organization. Limitations in physical or mental capacity, intelligence, comprehension, preconceived notions, or distrust of the message source can divide attention and create mechanical blocks to communication. These factors influence how messages are received and interpreted, ultimately affecting attitudes and opinions.

(Rupal Jain, Workplace Communication, June 2008)

Additional Barriers Include:

- Ineffective communication between departments.
- Lack of transparency regarding sensitive topics such as salaries, benefits, and promotion opportunities.

- Barriers like inadequate education, lack of time, or rigid mindsets.
- Insufficient feedback, both vertically (between levels of hierarchy) and horizontally (across departments).

(Zagan-Zelter, 2008)

2.3 **Theoretical Framework**

Smith (1776) implicitly acknowledged the role of communication in facilitating the division of labor, as individuals must exchange information and coordinate activities within a system of interdependence. According to Smith, communication plays a vital role in organizing collective work and shaping the economic environment (Smith, 1776).

Theoretical approaches and communication models have evolved significantly since the early foundations. One of the first major frameworks was Lasswell's Model—*Sender – Message – Channel – Receiver – Effect*. While foundational, this model notably omits the feedback process, which was incorporated in later refinements. General communication theories have since been adapted for use in organizational contexts under various forms such as managerial and internal communication, institutional and operational communication, media and product communication, as well as social communication and public relation (Zagan-Zelter, 2009).

Modern communication theories offer a more integrated and holistic perspective, extending the study of communication to encompass the entire organization. Emerging paradigms such as postmodernism**,** critical psychology**,** and feminism introduce alternative frameworks for understanding organizational life—emphasizing issues of power, domination, flexibility**,** and self-management**.** The continuous evolution of communication theory is deeply influenced by the contemporary context of the information society, characterized by rapid globalization and technological advancement (Zagan-Zelter, 2009).

In current research, organizational excellence is defined as "the ability of people to use technology for creative solving of complex problems" (Zlate, 2004). However, such excellence is unattainable without effective communication. Three major theoretical perspectives guide the study of communication:

- The Technical Perspective, rooted in Shannon and Weaver's Information Theory (Shannon & Weaver, 1949).
- The Contextual Perspective**,** which considers both verbal and non-verbal cues within broader situational contexts (Tubbs & Moss, 2006).
- The Negotiated Perspective, which highlights communication as an interpersonal negotiation process, particularly through feedback mechanisms (Lazega, 1992).

These theoretical foundations have informed the development of several organizational communication models (Deetz, 1995; Shockley-Zalabak, 2015; Tukiainen, 2001), including:

1. Stanley Deetz's Model **(**Deetz, 1995)
2. Pamela Shockley-Zalabak's Model (Shockley-Zalabak, 2015)
3. Tukiainen's Agenda Model (Tukiainen, 2001**)**

The next model, developed by Shockley-Zalabak (2015), retains fundamental communication elements—sender, receiver, message, channel, and noise—as well as key processes such as encoding, decoding, and feedback. However, it goes further by incorporating the interaction of sender and receiver experience fields, the organizational communication context**,** and communication competences**.**

Shockley-Zalabak (2015) identifies four key communication competencies:

- **Knowledge Competence**: Understanding the organizational communication environment.
- **Sensitivity Competence**: Accurately interpreting others' feelings and meanings
- **Skills Competence**: Analyzing organizational situations and managing communication effectively.
- **Values Competence**: Taking responsibility for ethical and effective communication.

This model is significant for introducing these competences—critical for managerial effectiveness—and for emphasizing the central role of communication within organizational contexts.

Nevertheless, beyond any theoretical framework, it is important to recognize that each organization ultimately constructs its own unique communication model. This model is shaped by its organizational culture**,** industry-specific factors**, and** members' perceptions of communication (Zagan-Zelter, 2009).

2.4 Review of Empirical Studies

Effective communication is crucial for an organization's success, directly influencing goal attainment, employee engagement, and adaptability to change. Ayatse (2005) observed that communication is essential for establishing and disseminating an enterprise's goals. This process ensures employees' competencies and skills are channeled into work behaviors that are appropriate and relevant to job performance.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of robust communication. Brunetto and Farr-Wharton (2004), for instance, found a strong positive relationship between

effective communication processes, job satisfaction, and strong job commitment. Similarly, in their interview-based study on organizational change, Elving and Hansma (2008) concluded that the successful dissemination of and adaptation to change significantly hinges on the communicative and informative skills of managers across all levels. These findings collectively underscore communication as a foundational element for a well-aligned, satisfied, and adaptive workforce.

Kibe (2014) investigated the effects of communication strategies on organizational performance and concluded that effective performance requires an open communication environment. When employees feel empowered to share feedback, ideas, and even constructive criticism, organizational performance tends to increase. This assertion is supported by the work of Bery, Otieno, Waiganjo, and Njeru (2015), who explored the effect of employee communication on organizational performance within Kenya's horticultural sector. Their study specifically found that effective communication facilitates the exchange of information and opinions, which in turn significantly improves operational efficiency and, ultimately, overall organizational performance. Based on their findings, the researchers recommended that organizations develop robust communication strategies to ensure the efficient flow of information both internally and externally.

Weimann, Hinz, Scott, and Pollock (2010) studied communication practices among distributed teams in a large German manufacturing firm. They concluded that communication tools and culture in such teams were imperfect due to inconsistent behaviors and limited tools. Face-to-face meetings, email, and phone calls were found to be pivotal. Team satisfaction and success, they argued, depend on aligning communication culture with the technologies used and the distributed work environment. A study by Inedegbor, Ahmed, Ganiyat, and Rashidat (2012) investigated the impact of business communication on organizational performance within Nigerian companies. Their findings, derived from a contextualized, literature-based instrument, indicated a strong emphasis on effective business communication in these firms. The extent to which communication practices were effective was found to vary by business category and size.

Neves (2012) examined how the temporal relationship between management communication and perceived organizational support (POS) influences organizational performance. The study found that management communication enhances performance primarily because it signals that the organization values and supports its employees. Effective communication is unequivocally central to an organization's success or failure (Orpen, 1997). Communication is vital for resolving workplace contradictions, thereby enabling organizational progress. Furthermore, understanding individual behavior within organizations is best achieved through a communication lens (Rogers & Rogers, 1976).

Effective communication flourishes when employees feel their efforts are valued and will be rewarded, and when they actively support the organization and its leadership. Managers significantly influence employee performance through their

leadership behaviors (Foong, 2001). Research also indicates that effective interpersonal communication, flexible work schedules, and learning opportunities all positively contribute to organizational commitment (Ng, Vandenberg, & Wilson, 2006). Indeed, efficient managers dedicate a substantial portion of their time to communication-related activities. Mintzberg (1973) underscored the centrality of interpersonal communication in managerial roles. Similarly, effective workplace leadership involves using communication tools to create meaning, share a vision, and build shared purpose (Sims & Lorenzi, 1992, as cited in Hargie & Tourish, 2009).

Leading Fortune 500 companies identify strong interpersonal, communication, and teamwork skills as paramount for success in management roles (Buckley, Peach, & Weitzel, 1989; Kane, 1993). Moreover, job satisfaction improves when superiors communicate courteously and consistently with subordinates and provide feedback aligned with the nature of the work (Halis, 2000). This foster increased employee participation in achieving organizational goals. Gray and Laidlaw (2004) further found that meeting employee communication needs cultivates effective workplace relationships. Finally, Pinprayong and Siengthai (2012) identified seven key dimensions for measuring organizational efficiency:

- Corporate structure design
- Management and business systems
- Corporate and employee development
- Staff motivation and commitment
- Employee skill development
- Alignment of subordinate goals
- Organizational strategy

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