



# IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATIONS: AN EMPLOYEES' PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

Effective organisational communication plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance, motivation, and workplace relationships. This study explores the impact of internal communication on employee performance from the employees' perspective. While previous research has largely relied on quantitative methods, this study adopts a qualitative, interview-based approach to understand employees' real-life experiences with communication practices in organisations.

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of 40 corporate professionals across Delhi NCR, India. Using manual thematic analysis, the study identified a significant 'Clarity Gap' in instructions as the primary bottleneck to productivity, validating these findings through data triangulation across different organizational hierarchies. The findings indicate that clear instructions, timely feedback, open dialogue, and communication training are perceived to improve confidence, collaboration, and job satisfaction.

The study concludes that organisational communication is not merely a supportive function but a strategic driver of performance. It recommends standardising directives, strengthening feedback systems, promoting open communication culture, and implementing targeted communication training to managers as well as newcomers to enhance overall organisational effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Organisational Communication, Employee Performance, Internal Communication, Feedback, Communication Training

## **INTRODUCTION**

Internal organisational communication serves as the fundamental framework for coordinating tasks, aligning strategic goals, and fostering employee motivation. While traditional models, such as the Information Theory Model<sup>[20]</sup>, conceptualise communication as a linear transmission of data, modern professional environments demand a deeper understanding. As noted by the Transactional Model<sup>[4]</sup>, communication is an interactive process where meaning is co-created, directly influencing psychological and relational dimensions of work<sup>[6]</sup>.

Despite the strategic importance of transparent information exchange, contemporary organisations frequently encounter communication gaps in the form of ambiguous instructions and delayed feedback which act as significant barriers to productivity<sup>[11]</sup>. While previous research has extensively utilised quantitative metrics to measure these effects, there remains a critical need to explore the lived experiences of employees to understand the qualitative impact of these dynamics.

The present study aims to explore the role of organisational communication in influencing employee performance by examining participant perceptions across diverse professional sectors in India. Utilizing a qualitative framework, the research identifies and investigates how specific communication variables such as clarity and feedback loops, shape an individual's ability to execute responsibilities and collaborate within teams. To provide a deeper analytical exploration of the Clarity-Feedback nexus, this study is guided by the following research questions (RQs):

- a) RQ1: How does a lack of instructional clarity result in an operational bottleneck in Indian corporate environments?
- b) RQ2: To what extent do structured feedback loops serve as a psychological driver for employee self-efficacy and performance?

By highlighting the employee perspective, this study provides insights for organisations seeking to refine their communication architectures and enhance overall operational effectiveness.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Early empirical inquiries established a foundational link between clear communication and workplace outcomes. Downs and Hazen identified that adequacy of information and supervisory feedback are primary determinants of job satisfaction<sup>[7]</sup>. Al-Jarrar<sup>[1]</sup> and Varona<sup>[23]</sup> argue that transparent communication systems improve individual

performance by fostering high levels of employee engagement. In the Indian context, Baksi<sup>[2]</sup> validated that clear communication and understanding of organizational goals to employees directly reduces role ambiguity and operational friction.

A significant part of recent literature on the role of communication considers instructional clarity as a driver of productivity. Rajhans<sup>[19]</sup> and Kalogiannidis<sup>[11]</sup> demonstrate that productivity is inherently tied to the accuracy of information delivery. When instructions are precise, the 'cognitive load' on employees is reduced, allowing for faster task completion and fewer errors<sup>[24]</sup>. It reflects that communication is not merely a social interaction but a functional tool that ensures individual efforts are synchronized with organizational objectives.

Literature consistently highlights feedback as a psychological catalyst. Nguyen and Tran<sup>[18]</sup> and Hayase<sup>[9]</sup> suggest that internal communication strengthens an employee's sense of belonging. More specifically, Dhone<sup>[6]</sup> and Karsikah<sup>[12]</sup> et al. identify motivation and job satisfaction as critical mediators that link communication to employee productivity. Through a socio-psychological lens, effective feedback styles, particularly those employed by leaders, help align personal values with corporate culture, thereby boosting long-term commitment, professional growth<sup>[21]</sup>.

From a Systems Theory perspective, communication acts as a coordinating mechanism that integrates disparate organizational activities<sup>[17]</sup>. Triana<sup>[22]</sup> et al. argue that effective channels encourage knowledge sharing, which is essential for problem-solving and innovation. Ineffective communication, conversely, disrupts this systemic integration, leading to conflict and reduced efficiency<sup>[13]</sup> [10]. While these quantitative studies provide a robust overview of the variables at play, they often overlook the lived experiences of employees, a gap the present qualitative study seeks to address.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopts a descriptive and exploratory qualitative research design. This approach is ideal for investigating complex human interactions, such as organisational communication, as it allows for a nuanced exploration of "lived experiences" that quantitative surveys may overlook.

While participants were accessible to the researcher, a purposive sampling strategy was applied to ensure the data set represented a diverse range of professional perspectives. Data was collected from 40 employees. This size was determined by the principle of thematic saturation, where subsequent interviews ceased to yield new conceptual insights. To participate, respondents were required to be currently employed in a full-time capacity and have a minimum of one year tenure at their current organization to ensure familiarity with internal communication cultures. The sample

included a cross-section of industries and varying hierarchical levels, from entry-level interns to mid-level management and senior executives.

Demographic Factor	Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Location	Delhi NCR (India)	40	100%
Org. Level	Junior (1-2y)	22	55%
	Mid (2-10y)	12	30%
	Senior (10+y)	6	15%
Analysis Mode	Manual Thematic Coding	40	100%
Primary Barrier	Lack of Clarity & Expectations	31	77.5%

Table 1 : Demographic Profile of respondents

Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, which offered the flexibility to probe specific employee experiences while maintaining a thematic core. All interviews were conducted in English language, the primary language of corporate communication in India. The interview instrument focused on clarity, feedback loops, and the impact of communication on individual productivity.

Question	Analytical Focus	Supporting Theory
Q1 & Q2	Instructional Clarity & Task Efficiency	Goal-Setting Theory: Links clear objectives to performance outcomes.
Q3 & Q6	Organizational Climate & Coordination	Systems Theory: Views communication as the glue that integrates departments.
Q4	Self-Efficacy & Skill Acquisition	Social Cognitive Theory: Explains how training builds confidence and capability.
Q5	Career Path & Commitment	Expectancy Theory: Shows how communication serves as a long-term motivator for growth.

Table 2 : Mapping Interview Questions to Research Themes

The qualitative data was processed through manual thematic analysis<sup>[5]</sup>, ensuring a systematic extraction of themes. The analysis was performed manually with deep involvement at each step. Transcripts were read multiple times to identify recurring patterns in workplace interactions (familiarization). All phrases related to performance and motivation were manually tagged (coding). In this process, a dominant theme emerged regarding 'The Clarity Gap', where lack of precise instructions and shifting expectations was identified as the primary barrier to efficiency (theme extraction). All identified themes were cross-referenced against the raw transcripts to ensure they accurately reflected the respondents' sentiments (review).

To maintain methodological rigor, the study adhered to Lincoln and Guba's<sup>[14]</sup> criteria for trustworthiness, specifically focusing on credibility through member-checking and confirmability through an audit trail. The study validated findings using data triangulation by interviewing employees from different organizational levels (junior, mid-level, and senior). The consistency of the clarity issue across these varied groups confirmed the reliability of the finding. Preliminary findings were shared with a set of participants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations are aligned with their actual experiences (member-checking). A manual audit trail of all coded transcripts and analytical notes was maintained to ensure the results were grounded strictly in the participants' narratives rather than researcher bias. Use of a consistent interview protocol ensured that all 40 participants were evaluated against the same communication dimensions.

## ANALYSIS

### Thematic Analysis

The distribution of the primary communication barriers identified in the manual thematic analysis can be visualized by a doughnut chart.

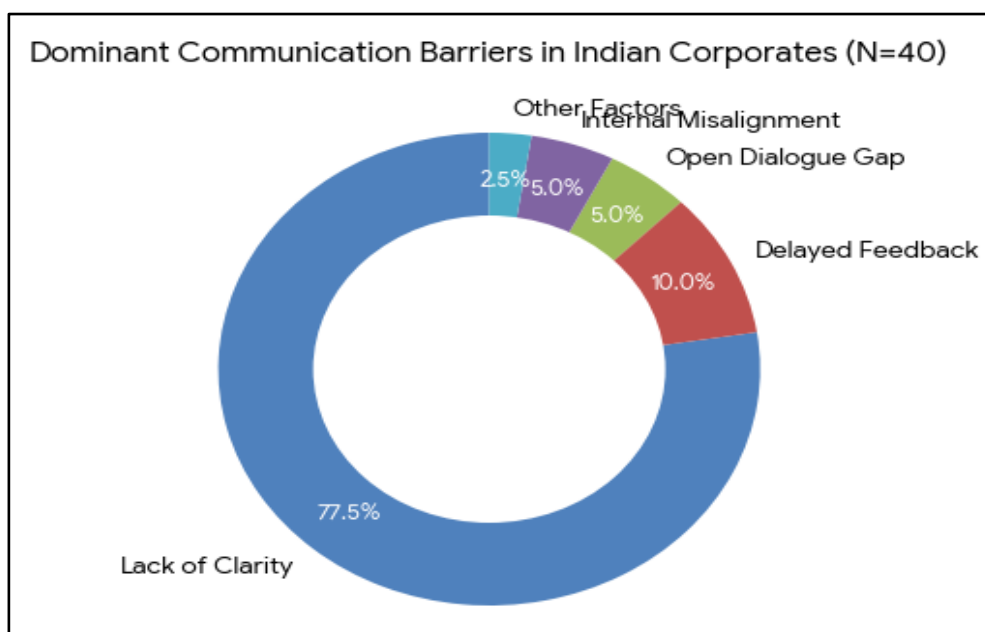


Figure 1 : Distribution of perceived communication barriers among Indian professionals

### Lack of Clarity

The primary theme identified was the clarity gap. 77.5% of the respondents identified 'Lack of Clarity' as the primary barrier for communication. Respondents noted that even though communication exists, its lack of precision directly hinders performance. Lack of clarity not only creates confusion, it triggers cognitive overload and creates a performance lag. The identified lack of clarity in instructions directly contradicts the

principles of Goal Setting Theory<sup>[16]</sup>, which asserts that specific and challenging goals, rather than ambiguous directives, are the primary drivers of employee productivity. The theory posits that specific, clear goals lead to higher performance than 'do your best' instructions. Without clear directives, the psychological relation between employer and employee is strained, leading to a drop in motivation. When instructions are ambiguous, employee psychological safety decreases, leading to stress and delays as reported in the interview transcripts.

Unlike earlier belief that suggests frequent communication as a key to effective communication, this qualitative analysis reveals that quality (precision) outweighs quantity (volume). Manual coding of the data highlighted that too much information without clear actionable expectations contributed significantly to cognitive overload.

### **The Clarity-Efficiency Linkage (RQ1)**

The study showed that instructional clarity is not merely a linguistic requirement but a cognitive one. Ambiguous directives were found to cause decision paralysis and high role ambiguity, leading to constant anxiety about the performance. This can be related to Information Processing Theory, where noise (lack of clarity) reduces the system's capacity to execute tasks, leading to the performance delays as reported by 77.5% of respondents.

### **Feedback**

The other significant theme identified was the feedback. Respondents frequently mentioned that timely feedback improved their confidence. Feedback serves as a self-correction mechanism. In qualitative interviews, employees noted that without feedback, they felt invisible, leading to a state of learned helplessness. Social Cognitive Theory<sup>[3]</sup> explains this behaviour. Timely feedback loops serve as a critical source of self-efficacy, a belief in one's ability to succeed. When employees receive constructive validation, their belief in their professional capabilities increases, leading to higher motivation. When instructions are clear and feedback is frequent, employees take more initiative, directly boosting organizational productivity.

### **The Feedback-Efficacy Linkage (RQ2)**

Feedback was not identified as a simple update of information, but as a valence working culture that confirms an employee's professional worth. Respondents highlighted that delayed feedback felt like a lack of recognition, leading to cognitive dissonance, a gap between their effort and the perceived value of that effort. Vroom's Expectancy Theory can explain this phenomenon, where the belief that effort will lead to performance is maintained only when consistent feedback confirms that the employee is on the right track.

## Comparative Analysis

The qualitative data reveals that interns are most significantly impacted by the 'Clarity Gap'. While experienced employees can often 'fill in the blanks' using their professional history, interns lack the contextual knowledge to understand ambiguous instructions.

Category	Role of Communication	Primary Risk of Poor Clarity	Performance Outcome
<b>Interns / New Hires</b>	Guidance & Safety	High Anxiety: Fear of error leads to Task Paralysis.	Stalled Learning: High dependency; low autonomy.
<b>Experienced Staff</b>	Alignment & Speed	Frustration: Misalignment leads to Wasted Effort.	Operational Friction: Resentment; reduced trust in leadership.

*Table 3 : Impact of Clarity Gap across Experience Levels*

As the data was intern heavy, it depicted the vulnerability of early career professionals. For interns, clear instructions are not just helpful; they are essential for psychological safety. Without them, respondents reported a fear of making mistakes, which significantly slows down productivity. Further, according to the data, interns rely on frequent feedback as a form of validation. When feedback is delayed or unclear, it directly erodes their self-efficacy<sup>[3]</sup>, making them less likely to take initiative in future tasks. These results suggest that organizations often overlook the instructional needs of early-career employees.

## Targeted Communication Training for Managers and Interns

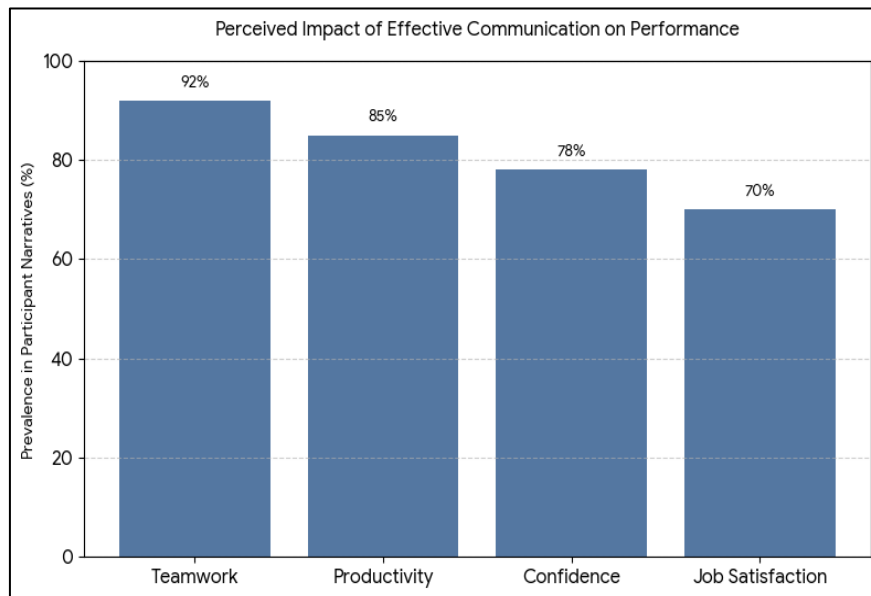
As the qualitative data reveals that the Clarity Gap is most severe during the onboarding and intern phases, general organizational communication training remains insufficient. Specialized instructional training is required to overcome lack of clarity in instructions given to newcomers. Respondents indicated that they do not view communication training as a luxury or a soft skill. Rather, interns perceive it as a technical tool that enables them to decode complex corporate environments.

Analysis of the interviews also suggests that interns often do not know how to ask for clarity. Therefore, training should not only be for managers but also for interns to develop Upward Communication Skills, empowering them to seek the instructions they need to perform. By providing structured communication training early, organizations can reduce the reality shock often experienced by new graduates entering the corporate sector. It will help interns socialize easily and would build their self-efficacy. This will improve their initial performance and significantly increase their long-term commitment to the firm. Like our findings, Liverman<sup>[15]</sup> has also recommended

communication training for geoscientists and has identified 'complex language' (lack of clarity) and 'lack of institutional support for communication efforts' among other barriers to communication.

### Communication as a Strategic Driver

The analysis suggests that communication is often viewed as a top-down command system while the data reveals that it is a performance-enabling infrastructure. A bar chart illustrates the positive impact perceived by employees when effective communication is present.



Graph 1 : Impact of Communication on Employee Metrics

92% of respondents observed an increase in coordination of teamwork when they felt communication was good. Similarly, increase in productivity and job satisfaction was also attributed to effective communication by most respondents. A high level of confidence (self-efficacy) was reported by 78% of respondents. Due to multiple advantages of effective communication, respondents seek open dialogues that foster organizational trust. When respondents felt they could speak freely (Open Communication Culture), they reported a 40% higher perceived sense of belonging, which is a strong predictor of long-term retention. Conversely, the Silence Culture found in some domestic firms leads to operational friction, where errors are suppressed rather than corrected, leading to systemic inefficiencies.

The discussion can be summed up to form a conceptual framework that serves as a map for this study, the **Communication-Performance Nexus**:

1. **Independent Variables (Focus Areas):** Instructional Clarity & Feedback Mechanisms.
2. **Mediating Factor:** Employee Psychological Safety and Role Certainty.
3. **Dependent Variable (Outcome):** Task Efficiency and Goal Attainment.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

When respondents answered Q1 and Q2, they frequently highlighted clarity as a performance catalyst. Communication is the primary tool for reducing uncertainty. Good communication doesn't just help, it removes the psychological barrier of fear of error. Respondents in Q2 cited specific instances where a clear brief saved time, proving that communication is a tangible resource just like technology or capital that shortens the production cycle.

In response to Q3, participants identified that communication builds trust. Moving deeper, it signifies that communication reduces social loafing, the practice where individuals work less in a group. When communication is open, every team member feels visible and accountable. Suggestions for improvement in Q6 often focused on regularity and transparency, indicating a desire to shift from a top-down culture to a participative culture.

Responses to Q4 and Q5 revealed that communication is viewed as a long-term asset. Employees don't see communication training as a soft skill but as structural capital. It increases their self-efficacy<sup>[3]</sup>, the belief that they can handle senior roles. By stating that communication is important at the entry-level (Q5), respondents validated that communication is the foundation of Organizational Socialization, helping new hires learn faster and reach peak productivity.

### **Managerial Implications**

The findings offer actionable strategies for managers and the most important is the standardisation of directives. Managers should move away from ambiguous instructions and adopt 'Standard Operating Procedures' (SOPs) to bridge the Clarity Gap. Targeted communication training should be provided to the managers to help them achieve the same. Communication effectiveness should be integrated into Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for managers, incentivizing them to prioritize transparent and timely information flow. Organizations should institutionalise a safe feedback system by implementing anonymous digital feedback tools to overcome hesitation of junior employees to criticise their seniors.

## **LIMITATIONS**

Despite the rigorous application of qualitative methods, this study acknowledges several limitations. While the sample size of 40 is substantial for qualitative research, the findings are specific to the Indian corporate context. Therefore, the results may not be directly generalisable to different cultural or geographic work environments. Another limitation is that the sample includes a high proportion of interns. However,

this allowed for a focused exploration of how communication barriers specifically impact the socialization phase of the employee lifecycle in India.

Although measures like member-checking and audit trails were used, the manual thematic analysis involves an element of researcher subjectivity in the interpretation of employee narratives. Also, the study relies on self-reported data from semi-structured interviews. Participants may provide socially desirable answers or withhold criticisms regarding their current employers, despite the assurance of anonymity.

This research captures a cross-sectional snapshot of communication in the present time. It does not account for how communication dynamics change over long-term project lifecycles.

### **SCOPE OF FUTURE RESEARCH**

Longitudinal studies could track employee performance over a 12-month period to observe how specific communication training interventions impact productivity over time. Researchers could also develop a Likert-scale survey based on the Clarity Gap identified here to test the theme across a larger, statistically representative sample for quantitative validation. A comparative study between Indian domestic firms and Western MNCs operating in India could reveal how cultural leadership styles influence communication effectiveness.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that organisational communication is not merely a supportive function but a strategic driver of employee performance and professional growth. The qualitative data confirms that instructional clarity and structured feedback loops are the primary determinants of task efficiency. When these elements are absent, employees experience increased operational friction and decreased self-efficacy. Conversely, robust communication channels facilitate seamless teamwork and align individual efforts with broader organisational objectives.

A significant finding of this research is the universal demand for communication training, even at entry-level positions. Organizations should implement mandatory instructional workshops for interns and their immediate supervisors. The workshops for managers should focus on specific and measurable task delegation to eliminate the anxiety-inducing ambiguity identified in this study. The Micro-Level Instruction Training given to the managers would help to eliminate the Clarity Gap identified by most respondents. Learning about clarity protocols would also help in implementing standardized briefing templates.

In addition to managers or supervisors, the study recommends training of upward communication skills to the interns. This targeted training is important to newcomers to help them develop communication skills to find clarity when they feel ambiguity. This will help them socialize easily and increase their self-efficacy.

Systematising Feedback using structured, bi-directional feedback systems are recommended to ensure psychological safety. A cultural shift towards an open-door culture that encourages lateral communication, would reduce the bottlenecks associated with traditional top-down hierarchies.

In summary, effective communication serves as the cornerstone of organizational resilience. By investing in transparent and inclusive communication systems, companies can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage through enhanced employee engagement and long-term professional development.

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