



COMMUNICATION AUDIT MODELS AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION PERFORMANCE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Communication is a fundamental element in organizational management that determines operational effectiveness and goal achievement. However, many organizations do not yet have a systematic communication evaluation system. This study aims to examine the application of communication audit models to improving organizational communication performance through a literature study approach. The method used is library research with descriptive-analytical analysis techniques and literature synthesis from national and international scientific journal sources, textbooks, and proceedings published between 2000 and 2024. The results of the study show that communication audit models such as the ICA Communication Audit, Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ), and Organizational Communication Profile (OCP) significantly contribute to identifying weaknesses in internal communication, improving the communication climate, and measuring the communication satisfaction of organizational members. Periodic application of communication audits has been proven to increase the effectiveness of two-way communication, strengthen cross-divisional coordination, and promote employee engagement. This study concludes that a communication audit is not only a diagnostic tool, but also a strategic instrument for improving organizational performance on an ongoing basis.

Keywords: Communication Audit, Organizational Communication, Communication Performance, Organizational Effectiveness, Audit Model.

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is fundamental to the operation of an organization because organizational members depend on communication to coordinate activities, distribute information, construct shared meanings, manage uncertainty, and pursue collective objectives. Bondeli & Havenvid (2022) define organizational communication as the process of creating and exchanging messages within a network of interdependent relationships to cope with an uncertain environment. This definition indicates that organizational communication is not limited to the one-way transmission of information. Instead, it constitutes a dynamic system involving message production, interpretation, feedback, interpersonal relationships, communication channels, and organizational adaptation to environmental change.

In contemporary management, communication is increasingly viewed as a strategic organizational capability rather than merely an administrative or supporting function. The quality of organizational communication affects coordination, employee understanding, participation, job satisfaction, and team cohesion (Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Jerab, 2024). Nevertheless, the existence of communication activities does not necessarily indicate that an organization has an effective communication system. Organizations may continue to experience information distortion, communication overload, delayed message delivery, unequal access to information, inappropriate channel selection, inadequate feedback, and inconsistencies between formal communication policies and actual organizational practices. Therefore, organizations require a systematic mechanism for diagnosing the performance of their communication systems and identifying areas that need improvement.

One evaluation mechanism developed for this purpose is the communication audit. Jaafari et al, (2023) define a communication audit as a systematic diagnostic process used to examine the strengths, weaknesses, patterns, channels, and consequences of communication within an organization. Unlike general employee opinion surveys or partial evaluations of individual communication programs, a comprehensive communication audit examines multiple components of the organizational communication system. These components may include information flows, communication networks, message quality, channel use, communication climate, employee perceptions, and feedback mechanisms. A communication audit primarily

produces a diagnosis of communication problems and recommendations for improvement. Consequently, improvements in organizational outcomes do not result automatically from the audit itself but depend on whether the recommendations are implemented, monitored, and evaluated.

The urgency of communication audits has increased in the context of digital transformation, hybrid working arrangements, information overload, and the proliferation of organizational communication platforms. Organizations must manage communication across face-to-face interactions, formal documents, email, instant messaging applications, social media, virtual meetings, and internal information systems. The multiplication of communication channels may accelerate information distribution, but it can also create message duplication, fragmented information, inconsistent interpretations, and unequal participation among organizational members. Under these conditions, communication audits can help organizations determine whether their communication channels, messages, information flows, and feedback systems function according to organizational needs.

Previous studies have demonstrated that effective organizational communication is associated with employee motivation, satisfaction, coordination, and work performance. Ufuophu-Biri & Ayewumi (2022), for example, found that effective communication factors were related to improved employee performance, while Suryani, Ibrahim et al., (2022), reported a positive relationship between organizational communication effectiveness and employee work motivation. These findings confirm the strategic importance of communication within organizations. However, studies examining the relationship between communication and employee outcomes should not automatically be categorized as communication audit research. Such studies generally measure the effect or association of communication variables, whereas communication audits systematically diagnose communication structures, processes, networks, channels, perceptions, and problems to formulate organizational recommendations.

In this article, organizational communication performance is defined as the extent to which an organizational communication system enables relevant information to be produced, distributed, accessed, understood, and responded to accurately and effectively. Its direct indicators include message clarity, information accuracy, timeliness, channel accessibility, message and channel appropriateness, feedback

responsiveness, information transparency, communication satisfaction, and the effectiveness of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal communication flows. These indicators represent the quality and effectiveness of the communication process. They must be distinguished from employee behavioral outcomes, such as motivation, engagement, productivity, and job performance, as well as from broader organizational outcomes. Employee and organizational performance are influenced not only by communication but also by leadership, organizational culture, competence, compensation, workload, resources, and working conditions. Therefore, communication satisfaction, employee performance, and organizational performance should not be treated as equivalent indicators without explaining the relationships among them.

A structured examination of Indonesian literature indicates that communication audit research has developed across several organizational contexts, although the studies remain fragmented and methodologically heterogeneous. Existing studies have examined internal organizational communication, educational and cultural communication programs, government communication, environmental organizations, crisis communication, and social media management. Umutoni (2025) primarily discussed internal communication audits from a theoretical perspective, Suhendar et al., (2023), applied a social media communication audit in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. Other studies have examined communication programs and digital media management within educational and governmental contexts. This publication pattern shows that communication audits have been used in various settings, but the studies are generally conducted as separate case evaluations and do not yet form a cumulative framework for comparing audit approaches.

The literature mapping also reveals several methodological tendencies. First, Indonesian studies commonly use interviews, questionnaires, observations, document analysis, and social media analysis, but they do not always clearly distinguish between a comprehensive communication audit model, a survey instrument, a data-collection technique, and a communication evaluation indicator. Second, the selection of audit instruments is frequently determined by the immediate needs of a single organizational case rather than by an explicit comparison of the strengths, limitations, and suitability of available audit approaches. Third, most studies focus on identifying

communication problems and formulating recommendations, while evidence concerning the implementation of recommendations and subsequent changes in communication performance remains limited. Fourth, indicators such as communication satisfaction, employee motivation, productivity, communication effectiveness, and organizational performance are sometimes positioned at the same analytical level, even though they represent different stages and types of outcomes.

At the international level, several established approaches provide important foundations for communication auditing. Hecimovic (2026) developed the International Communication Association Communication Audit as a multi-method audit system that combines several techniques to evaluate organizational communication. Špoljarić & Tkalac Verčič (2022) introduced the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, which measures employees' perceptions of various dimensions of communication satisfaction. Other approaches include the Organizational Communication Profile, the LTT Communication Audit, communication network analysis, communication climate assessment, and critical-incident analysis. However, these approaches differ in their main focus, dimensions, data requirements, instruments, analytical scope, and suitability for particular organizational settings.

The distinctions among these approaches are important because not every measurement instrument constitutes a comprehensive communication audit model. The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, for example, is primarily a survey instrument for measuring employees' perceptions of communication satisfaction. Although it can provide important diagnostic information, its use as a comprehensive audit requires integration with other techniques, such as interviews, observations, document analysis, focus-group discussions, or communication network analysis. Similarly, communication network analysis is a technique for examining relationships and information flows among organizational members, but it may not independently evaluate message quality, communication satisfaction, communication climate, or organizational policies. Therefore, communication audit systems, measurement instruments, data-collection techniques, and performance indicators need to be conceptually and methodologically differentiated.

Based on this literature mapping, the research gap addressed in this article does not merely concern the quantity of communication audit publications in Indonesia. The more substantive problem lies in the fragmentation of concepts, models, instruments,

indicators, and organizational applications. Previous studies have not adequately provided a systematic comparison of the major communication audit approaches based on their focus, dimensions, instruments, strengths, limitations, and appropriate contexts. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to mapping the dimensions measured by each audit approach onto clearly defined organizational communication performance indicators. Existing research also rarely explains the sequence through which audit diagnosis is transformed into recommendations, implemented as organizational improvements, and evaluated in relation to subsequent communication performance.

Accordingly, this article addresses four interrelated gaps. First, it clarifies the conceptual distinction between communication audit systems, survey instruments, data-collection techniques, and communication performance indicators. Second, it systematically compares the principal communication audit approaches according to their focus, dimensions, instruments, strengths, limitations, and appropriate organizational contexts. Third, it maps the dimensions of each audit approach onto organizational communication performance indicators. Fourth, it develops an implementation framework that connects organizational characteristics, audit objectives, model selection, data collection, communication-gap identification, recommendation formulation, improvement implementation, and performance evaluation.

As a conceptual literature review, this study does not directly conduct a communication audit within a particular organization. Instead, it analyzes theories, audit approaches, measurement instruments, and evidence from previous organizational applications. The contribution of the study is therefore demonstrated through the analytical outputs presented in the results: a comparative matrix of communication audit approaches, a mapping of audit dimensions to organizational communication performance indicators, a framework for selecting an audit approach according to organizational characteristics, and a staged communication audit implementation framework. These outputs provide a more concrete basis for understanding how different audit approaches can be selected and combined to assess organizational communication performance.

Based on the identified problems and research gaps, this article addresses the

following research questions:

- 1) What conceptual and methodological distinctions exist among communication audit systems, survey instruments, data-collection techniques, and organizational communication performance indicators?
- 2) What are the main focus, dimensions, instruments, strengths, limitations, and appropriate contexts of the major communication audit approaches?
- 3) How can the dimensions measured by communication audit approaches be mapped onto organizational communication performance indicators?
- 4) How can organizations select, implement, and evaluate a communication audit according to their characteristics, communication risks, and strategic needs?

Correspondingly, this study aims to: (1) explain the concepts and principal approaches used in communication auditing; (2) define and identify the main indicators of organizational communication performance; (3) analyze the correspondence between communication audit dimensions and organizational communication performance indicators; and (4) formulate a conceptual framework for selecting, implementing, and evaluating communication audits in organizational settings.

2. RESEARCH METHODE

This study uses a library research approach, which is a research method that focuses on collecting, reading, reviewing, and analyzing various relevant scientific literature sources (Chigbu et al., 2023). This approach was chosen because the research objective is to build a conceptual framework based on synthesis of existing literature, rather than collecting new empirical data from the field.

The data sources in this study consist of two categories, namely primary sources in the form of scientific journal articles, proceedings, and dissertations, as well as secondary sources in the form of textbooks and research reports. Data collection was conducted through searches of scientific databases, including Google Scholar, SINTA (Science and Technology Index Kemdikbud), Portal Garuda, as well as Emerald Insight and ResearchGate for international sources.

Literature inclusion criteria include: (1) relevant to the topics of communication audit, organizational communication, and communication performance; (2)

published between 2000 and 2024, with emphasis on publications from 2020-2024 (minimum 70% of references); (3) available in Indonesian or English; (4) from trusted and indexed sources. Exclusion criteria include articles whose full text cannot be accessed, publications without a clear author's name, and articles that are not substantially relevant to the topic. Data analysis techniques used content analysis and narrative synthesis. All literature meeting the criteria was read critically, its main themes identified, and then synthesized to build a cohesive and comprehensive argument. The validity of findings was maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing perspectives from various authors and from different contexts (national and international).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics and Quality of the Reviewed Sources

The sources examined in this review can be grouped into four main categories: seminal methodological publications, conceptual literature, empirical organizational studies, and institutional or context-specific studies. Seminal publications provide the theoretical and methodological foundations of communication auditing, while conceptual literature explains the development and adaptation of audit approaches. Empirical studies offer evidence concerning communication problems, employee perceptions, information flows, and organizational outcomes. Institutional and context-specific studies illustrate the use of communication evaluation in particular organizational environments.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Sources Used in the Review

Source category	Representative sources	Main contribution	Evidentiary strengths	Evidentiary limitations
Seminal methodological publications	Downs and Hazen (1977); Goldhaber and Rogers (1979); Goldhaber (1993)	Development of communication audit systems, instruments, dimensions, and methodological foundations	Provide original concepts and standardized measurement foundations	Relatively old; developed in organizational and cultural contexts that may differ from contemporary Indonesian organizations

Comprehensive conceptual literature	Hardjana (2000, 2014); Hargie and Tourish (2009)	Definition, classification, adaptation, and practical interpretation of communication audits	Offer systematic explanations of audit functions, procedures, and organizational applications	Primarily conceptual; do not independently demonstrate performance changes following audit implementation
Empirical organizational studies	Rosalina et al. (2020); Riono et al. (2020); Purba et al. (2021); Fatmawati et al. (2021)	Evidence concerning information gaps, communication processes, employee participation, and organizational performance	Provide contextual evidence from educational, public, healthcare, and other organizational settings	Commonly use single organizations, cross-sectional designs, and context-specific samples

The quality of evidence differs substantially across these source categories. Seminal publications possess strong conceptual authority because they introduced the original audit systems and measurement instruments. However, their instruments were developed several decades ago and may not fully represent digital, hybrid, platform-based, and culturally diverse organizational communication environments. Their continued use therefore requires contextual adaptation and validation.

The recent empirical literature provides greater contextual relevance, particularly in relation to contemporary organizational communication, employee participation, digital media, leadership, and organizational performance. Nevertheless, much of this evidence is based on case studies or cross-sectional research. Such designs can identify communication conditions, employee perceptions, or statistical associations, but they cannot independently demonstrate that a communication audit causes improvements in organizational performance.

An additional limitation concerns the heterogeneity of the literature. The reviewed studies differ in their definitions of communication audits, organizational settings, units of analysis, instruments, dimensions, and outcome variables. Some studies examine a complete audit process, whereas others only measure

communication satisfaction, communication effectiveness, leadership communication, or the statistical relationship between communication and employee performance. Consequently, evidence from these different research designs cannot be treated as methodologically equivalent.

The strongest evidence within the reviewed literature concerns the capacity of communication audit approaches to identify information gaps, communication barriers, channel problems, dissatisfaction, weak feedback, and ineffective communication flows. Evidence that audits directly improve productivity, coordination, or organizational effectiveness is comparatively less conclusive. Such improvements depend on whether audit recommendations are accepted, implemented, monitored, and evaluated by organizational management.

Concept and Scope of Communication Audits

A communication audit is a systematic and comprehensive examination of communication structures, processes, channels, messages, relationships, and outcomes within an organization. Zidi et al, (2023) defines a communication audit as a systematic and independent investigation undertaken to obtain evidence concerning communication activities and evaluate that evidence objectively. This definition emphasizes methodological systematicity and the need for an evidence-based assessment.

Brockhaus & Zerfass (2022) extend this definition by positioning communication auditing as a diagnostic process that evaluates formal and informal communication channels, communication relationships, information flows, message quality, and organizational members' perceptions. From the Indonesian perspective describes a communication audit as a comprehensive examination and evaluation of communication management conducted by an organization (Dalimunthe et al., 2023). This definition gives greater emphasis to the managerial use of audit findings.

Communication audits differ from ordinary opinion surveys because they do not merely document whether employees are satisfied or dissatisfied. A comprehensive audit identifies the organizational conditions that produce communication problems, examines the relationships among communication components, and develops

recommendations for improvement. However, not every questionnaire or communication evaluation can be categorized as a complete communication audit. A distinction must therefore be made among four related concepts.

First, a communication audit system is a comprehensive methodological arrangement that combines several instruments and analytical techniques. Second, a survey instrument measures a particular communication dimension, such as communication satisfaction or perceptions of information quality. Third, a data-collection technique, such as interviews, observations, network analysis, or document analysis, produces evidence for the audit. Fourth, a communication performance indicator represents an aspect of the communication system that is being evaluated.

The functions of communication audits can be classified into diagnostic, evaluative, and prescriptive functions. The diagnostic function identifies communication problems, barriers, distortions, and information gaps. The evaluative function assesses the extent to which communication processes meet organizational needs and standards. The prescriptive function translates audit findings into recommendations for organizational improvement (Velte, 2023).

These functions are related but should not be assumed to occur automatically in every audit approach. A survey instrument such as the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire can support diagnosis and evaluation, but it does not independently provide a comprehensive organizational diagnosis. Its prescriptive value depends on its combination with qualitative evidence, organizational context analysis, and interpretation by auditors or organizational decision-makers.

Communication audits therefore produce diagnoses and recommendations rather than direct organizational performance improvements. Performance change can occur only when recommendations are implemented and their consequences are monitored. The distinction between auditing, recommending, implementing, and evaluating is essential for avoiding excessive causal claims regarding the benefits of communication audits.

Comparative Analysis of Communication Audit Approaches

The reviewed literature identifies several approaches commonly associated with communication auditing, including the International Communication Association Communication Audit, Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, Organizational Communication Profile, LTT Audit, communication network analysis, and communication climate audit. These approaches differ in analytical scope, dimensions, instruments, resource requirements, and appropriate organizational contexts.

The ICA Communication Audit is more accurately understood as a comprehensive audit system or methodological package rather than a single instrument. It combines standardized surveys with qualitative and relational techniques. By contrast, the CSQ is primarily a survey instrument for assessing communication satisfaction. The OCP provides a systemic profile of organizational communication based on members' perceptions, while network analysis focuses specifically on relational patterns and information flows. Communication climate audits concentrate on openness, trust, support, participation, and relational conditions.

Table 2. Comparison of Communication Audit Approaches

Approach	Main focus	Principal dimensions or components	Main instruments	Strengths	Limitations	Appropriate organizational context
ICA Communication Audit	Comprehensive diagnosis of the organizational communication system	Information received and needed, communication relationships, channels, critical communication experiences, and communication networks	Standardized questionnaire, interviews, critical incident technique, communication experience analysis, and network analysis	Comprehensive, multi-method, and capable of identifying gaps between information received and needed	Requires substantial time, expertise, cost, and organizational access; normative database may require contextual updating	Large organizations, government institutions, universities, hospitals, and organizations experiencing structural or communication-

						system problems
Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire	Employees' satisfaction with organizational communication	Communication climate, supervisor communication, organizational integration, media quality, horizontal communication, organizational perspective, personal feedback, subordinate communication, and openness	Standardized employee questionnaire	Efficient, widely recognized, easy to administer, and useful for comparing employee perceptions	Measures perceptions and satisfaction rather than the entire communication system; vulnerable to self-report bias	Organizations seeking an initial diagnosis of employee communication satisfaction
Organizational Communication Profile	Overall profile of organizational communication quality	Amount of information, information quality, accessibility, channel efficiency, meetings, timelines, and overall satisfaction	Perception-based organizational survey	Provides a broad communication profile and supports comparison among divisions or units	May overlook informal relationships, message interpretation, power dynamics, and actual communication networks	Medium-sized and large organizations requiring cross-unit or cross-divisional benchmarking
LTT Communication Audit	Identification of differences between	Information availability, communication	Survey and organizational communication	Useful for identifying discrepancies	Less frequently used in Indonesian	Organizations assessing employee information

	expected and received communication	cation adequacy, channel use, and employee communication experiences	cation assessment	between expected and actual communication	studies; contextual validity may require further testing	on needs and communication adequacy
Communication Network Analysis	Actual relationships and information flows among organizational members	Centrality, density, reciprocity, isolates, gatekeepers, bridges, and communication clusters	Network questionnaires, communication logs, interaction data, and social network analysis	Reveals actual communication structures that may differ from formal organizational charts	Requires specialized analytical skills; relational data collection can raise privacy concerns	Large, complex, project-based, dispersed, or digitally networked organizations
Communication Climate Audit	Relational and psychological conditions of organizational communication	Openness, trust, support, participation, credibility, and freedom to communicate	Surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observations	Sensitive to relational barriers and leadership communication conditions	Narrower than a full-system audit and strongly influenced by subjective perceptions	Organizations experiencing conflict, distrust, low participation, or leadership communication problems

The comparison demonstrates that no single approach is universally appropriate. Model selection must depend on the audit objective, organizational size, communication complexity, available resources, risk level, and the nature of the problem being investigated. An organization experiencing employee dissatisfaction may begin with the CSQ, whereas an organization facing information bottlenecks across units may require network analysis or the ICA Audit. A communication climate audit is more suitable when problems involve trust, openness, or leadership relationships.

The approaches can also be combined. For example, an organization may use the CSQ to measure employee perceptions, network analysis to identify communication structures, and interviews to explain why particular information gaps or relational barriers occur. Such methodological integration can increase the diagnostic depth of the audit and reduce the limitations associated with relying on a single instrument.

However, combining several approaches also increases cost, complexity, and data-management requirements. Organizations must therefore balance comprehensiveness with feasibility. A smaller organization may obtain adequate diagnostic information from a focused survey, interviews, and document review, while a large organization may require a multi-method audit involving several organizational units and communication levels.

Organizational Communication Performance Indicators and Model-Indicator Matrix

Organizational communication performance refers to the extent to which an organizational communication system enables relevant information to be produced, distributed, accessed, understood, and responded to accurately, appropriately, and efficiently. This concept should be distinguished from employee performance and overall organizational performance.

Communication performance is primarily concerned with the quality of communication processes. Its proximal indicators include message clarity, information accuracy, timeliness, accessibility of communication channels, message-channel appropriateness, feedback quality, information transparency, communication satisfaction, and the effectiveness of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal information flows.

Employee motivation, engagement, productivity, and job performance are more distal outcomes. Although these outcomes may be influenced by communication, they are also affected by leadership, competence, compensation, workload, organizational culture, technology, and working conditions. They cannot therefore be treated as direct or equivalent indicators of communication performance.

Cyrious & Adriana (2023) identify clarity, timeliness, channel accessibility, and feedback quality as important communication factors related to employee performance. Suryani et al. (2023) emphasize information accuracy, speed of information flow, alignment between intended and received messages, communication satisfaction, and feedback. Andamisari et al. (2023) adds information openness between leaders and subordinates, while Fatmawati (2022) indicate that educational organizations require indicators involving pedagogical communication, policy information, and structured feedback.

These findings demonstrate that communication performance contains both general and context-specific indicators. General indicators can be applied across organizations, whereas sector-specific indicators must be adapted to organizational functions. For instance, academic service communication is important in universities, patient-safety communication is critical in hospitals, and policy consistency and public accountability are central in government institutions.

Table 3. Matrix of Communication Audit Approaches and Communication Performance Indicators

Audit approach	Clarity and accuracy	Time lines	Channel accessibility and quality	Feedback	Communication satisfaction	Openness and climate	Information flow and network	Context-specific outcomes
ICA Communication Audit	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Supporting	Supporting	Primary	Can be adapted
Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire	Supporting	Supporting	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Supporting	Limited unless additional instruments are used
Organizational Communication Profile	Primary	Primary	Primary	Supporting	Primary	Supporting	Supporting	Suitable for unit-level comparison

LTT Commu nication Audit	Prim ary	Prima ry	Prima ry	Supp ortin g	Supporti ng	Limit ed	Suppo rting	Can assess infor matio n adequ acy
Commu nication Networ k Analysis	Limit ed	Limit ed	Suppo rting	Supp ortin g	Limited	Limit ed	Prima ry	Strong for coordi nation and relatio nal analys is
Commu nication Climate Audit	Supp ortin g	Limit ed	Suppo rting	Prim ary	Primary	Prim ary	Suppo rting	Strong for leader ship, trust, and partici pation issues

The matrix indicates that comprehensive communication performance assessment usually requires more than one audit approach. The ICA Audit covers a broad range of indicators because it uses multiple methods. The CSQ is strongest in communication satisfaction, climate, supervisory communication, and feedback, but is less suitable for mapping actual communication networks. Network analysis is highly effective for examining communication flows, central actors, gatekeepers, and isolated members, but it does not independently explain message clarity or satisfaction.

The OCP is useful when organizations need to compare the quantity, quality, accessibility, and timeliness of information across units. Communication climate audits are particularly relevant when the primary problems concern trust, openness, leadership credibility, psychological safety, or employee participation. Therefore, the analytical adequacy of an audit depends on the correspondence between the organizational problem, selected approach, and performance indicators.

This synthesis also demonstrates that communication performance should be interpreted as a layered construct. The first layer consists of communication inputs, including channels, media, information resources, and communication policies. The second layer consists of communication processes, including message delivery, interpretation, feedback,

and information flows. The third layer consists of proximal communication outcomes, including satisfaction, understanding, openness, and coordination. The fourth layer contains distal employee and organizational outcomes. Audit instruments should specify which layer they measure to avoid conflating communication quality with broader organizational performance.

Communication Audits and Organizational Effectiveness: Evidence and Contextual Implications

The literature indicates that communication audits can identify weaknesses that may not be visible through routine management observation. Such weaknesses include unmet information needs, ineffective channels, weak feedback, inconsistent messages, communication bottlenecks, limited employee participation, and discrepancies between formal and actual communication structures.

The organizational study reported by Swiss German University illustrates how structured communication evaluations were used to identify weaknesses in internal communication (Dalimunthe, 2022; Nguyen & Ha, 2023). However, the information presented in the reviewed source is insufficient to establish whether the subsequent changes in work efficiency were measured through a controlled or longitudinal evaluation. The study therefore provides contextual evidence of audit usefulness but should not be interpreted as definitive causal proof.

In higher education, reported a gap between the information needed by the academic community and the information available within an academic service organization (Chatzipanagiotou & Katsarou, 2023; Dalimunthe et al., 2023). This finding illustrates the diagnostic value of communication auditing in identifying discrepancies between expected and received information. Nevertheless, any claim regarding improved academic service satisfaction requires evidence that communication-system recommendations were implemented and that satisfaction was measured following implementation.

Riono et al. (2020) found that organizational communication was associated with employee performance within a hospital context. However, the study primarily examined the relationship between communication and employee performance rather than evaluating a complete communication audit process. Its findings support

the importance of vertical and horizontal communication, but they do not independently demonstrate the effectiveness of a particular communication audit model.

Similarly, Yasir (2021) found that organizational communication in decision-making contributed to employee participation, while Perkasa & Aditia (2023) linked leadership communication strategies with team performance. Fatmawati et al. (2021) also associated well-managed organizational communication with leadership and positive organizational behavior. These findings provide indirect support for the strategic relevance of communication, but they should be distinguished from studies that evaluate audit implementation.

Based on the reviewed evidence, the relationship between communication auditing and organizational effectiveness is better understood as a staged process:

Audit implementation → identification of communication gaps → development of recommendations → managerial acceptance → implementation of improvements → monitoring → communication performance evaluation → possible organizational outcomes.

An audit does not improve performance merely because it has been conducted. It contributes to improvement only when its findings are translated into realistic interventions. These interventions may include redesigning communication channels, clarifying responsibilities, improving meeting procedures, strengthening feedback, revising information-distribution systems, training leaders, or reducing communication bottlenecks.

The impact of communication audits also depends on organizational context. Different types of organizations face different communication risks and therefore require different audit priorities.

Table 4. Implications of Communication Audit Approaches for Different Types of Organizations

Organization type	Primary communication risks	Recommended audit emphasis	Practical implications
Government and public organizations	Hierarchical barriers, policy inconsistency, bureaucratic	ICA Audit, OCP, communication climate assessment, and document analysis	Emphasize policy clarity, interdepartmental coordination, public

	delays, and limited upward feedback		accountability, and upward communication
Higher education institutions	Information gaps among leaders, lecturers, administrative staff, and students	ICA Audit, CSQ, service communication assessment, and interviews	Focus on academic services, policy dissemination, student feedback, and cross-unit coordination
Hospitals and healthcare organizations	Delayed information, professional silos, handover failures, and patient-safety risks	Network analysis, ICA Audit, critical incident analysis, and focused interviews	Prioritize communication accuracy, timeliness, interprofessional coordination, and escalation procedures
Private companies and large corporations	Cross-divisional fragmentation, leadership communication problems, and information overload	OCP, CSQ, ICA Audit, and network analysis	Assess channel efficiency, leadership feedback, employee satisfaction, and cross-functional communication
Small and medium-sized organizations	Limited resources, informal communication, and dependence on key individuals	Mini audit, CSQ, interviews, and communication-flow mapping	Use affordable instruments and identify overdependence on owners or central employees
Digital and hybrid organizations	Platform fragmentation, message duplication, virtual isolation, and reduced informal interaction	Digital communication mapping, network analysis, OCP, and communication climate assessment	Evaluate platform use, virtual participation, accessibility, response time, and digital communication overload

For government and public organizations, communication audits can identify barriers created by hierarchy, procedural complexity, and fragmented institutional responsibilities. In higher education, audit priorities include academic information, service communication, policy dissemination, and feedback from students and staff. Hospitals require greater emphasis on timeliness, accuracy, handover procedures, and communication across professional groups because communication failures can produce operational and safety consequences.

Large corporations may require multi-method audits because their communication systems involve numerous divisions, geographical locations, and technological platforms. Small organizations should not automatically adopt resource-intensive audit systems. Focused interviews, brief satisfaction surveys, document analysis, and simple communication-flow mapping may provide sufficient initial evidence. Digital and hybrid organizations require additional attention to platform fragmentation, online meeting practices, information overload, virtual exclusion, and unequal access to digital communication.

Communication audits may therefore contribute to organizational effectiveness when their recommendations are contextually appropriate, implemented by management, and evaluated through measurable communication indicators. The available literature supports the diagnostic value of audits more strongly than it supports direct causal claims concerning productivity or overall organizational performance.

Challenges and Conceptual Framework for Communication Audit Implementation

Communication audit implementation faces managerial, methodological, cultural, technological, and resource-related challenges. One major challenge is management resistance. Organizational leaders may interpret an audit as an evaluation of personal failure rather than as a diagnostic instrument. Such resistance can limit access to information, reduce employee participation, or prevent implementation of audit recommendations.

A second challenge concerns resources. Comprehensive audits require time, financial support, methodological expertise, and access to organizational data. The ICA Audit, for example, offers extensive diagnostic coverage but may be difficult for smaller organizations to implement. A phased or scaled approach is therefore more appropriate than prescribing the same audit design for every organization.

A third challenge is methodological validity. Instruments developed in different organizational and cultural settings cannot automatically be applied without adaptation. Translation, terminology, organizational hierarchy, communication norms, and employees' willingness to provide critical feedback can influence

responses. Instrument adaptation should therefore include expert evaluation, pilot testing, reliability assessment, and examination of contextual relevance.

A fourth challenge involves the protection of participants and communication data. Interviews, communication logs, email records, network relationships, and employee perceptions may contain sensitive information. Audit procedures must protect confidentiality, explain the purpose of data collection, limit access to identifiable information, and prevent audit results from being used to punish individual employees.

A fifth challenge is the tendency to stop the process after producing an audit report. An audit has limited organizational value when recommendations are not assigned to responsible units, accompanied by measurable targets, supported by resources, and reviewed within an appropriate timeframe. Follow-up mechanisms are therefore a central component of audit effectiveness.

The interval between audits should not be prescribed uniformly. Audit frequency must be determined by organizational risk, structural change, technological transition, previous audit findings, communication crises, mergers, leadership turnover, regulatory requirements, and organizational learning needs. High-risk organizations or organizations undergoing major transformation may require more frequent evaluation, whereas stable organizations may use longer audit cycles supplemented by focused monitoring. Based on the synthesis, the following conceptual model is proposed.

4. CONCLUSION

This study produces a number of important findings that contribute to the understanding of organizational communication audits. First, a communication audit is a diagnostic instrument that comprehensively evaluates all components of the organizational communication system, from vertical and horizontal information flows to member communication satisfaction and the effectiveness of communication media used. Second, the existing communication audit models, whether the ICA Communication Audit, the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire, or the Organizational Communication Profile, each have strengths and limitations that need

to be considered in the context of their application. There is no single model that is universally perfect for all types of organizations; the choice of model must be tailored to the goals, size, and characteristics of the organization in question.

Third, the application of communication audit models has been proven to have a positive impact on organizational communication performance through the identification of information gaps, improvement of the communication climate, and increased member communication satisfaction. Fourth, despite their significant benefits, the implementation of communication audits in Indonesia is still constrained by low management awareness, limited resources, and the lack of validated instruments for the Indonesian cultural context.

Theoretically, this article contributes through a comprehensive synthesis of various communication audit models and their integration with contemporary organizational communication performance indicators. Practically, this article offers a phased communication audit implementation framework that can be adapted by various types of organizations in Indonesia. For further research, it is recommended to develop empirically validated communication audit instruments for the Indonesian cultural context and test them on various types of organizations, both public and private, so that locally relevant normative data are available for comparison.

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