



COMMUNICATION AUDITS IN ORGANIZATIONS: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF THEIR URGENCY, STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

A communication audit is an assessment activity conducted to determine the extent to which communication processes within an organization are running effectively. Good communication is a crucial factor in supporting cooperation, information delivery, and the achievement of organizational goals. This article aims to examine the concept of a communication audit, focusing on the importance of conducting the audit, the objectives to be achieved, and its impact on the organization. The article was written using a literature study method by reviewing various scientific sources, such as relevant books and journals. The results of the study indicate that a communication audit can help organizations identify various obstacles in information delivery, assess the effectiveness of communication channels, and identify communication gaps that occur. In addition, a communication audit also serves as a basis for improving the quality of communication, both internally and externally. The implementation of a communication audit provides various benefits, such as increased work efficiency, quality of coordination, satisfaction of organizational members, and the effectiveness of overall organizational management. Therefore, a communication audit can be seen as an important evaluation tool to support organizational development and improve the achievement of goals more optimally.

Keywords: Communication Audit, Communication Effectiveness, Communication Evaluation, Organization, Organizational Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are dynamic social systems whose sustainability and achievement of objectives depend substantially on the effective management of information and relationships among members. Organizational communication is therefore not merely a technical mechanism for transmitting instructions, but an integrative process that connects individuals, units, structures, and institutional goals (Dalimunthe et al., 2024; Zerfass & Link, 2024). Effective communication strengthens coordination, facilitates feedback, and supports decision-making, while disrupted information flows, unclear messages, and ineffective channels may contribute to miscommunication, declining motivation, and reduced organizational trust (Kumar, 2025; Ritonga et al., 2024). These conditions indicate the importance of systematically assessing organizational communication rather than responding only after problems become visible.

Previous literature has addressed communication audits from various perspectives. Murire (2024) emphasizes the importance of evaluating organizational communication practices, while Jaafari et al. (2023) position communication audits as diagnostic instruments for identifying communication barriers, mapping information flows, and assessing communication processes. Other studies associate communication audits with improvements in communication networks, organizational climate, and institutional productivity (Janiukštis et al., 2024; Suhendar et al., 2023). However, these studies often discuss the urgency, objectives, and implications of communication audits as overlapping concepts. Identifying information barriers, for example, may simultaneously be presented as a reason for conducting an audit, an audit objective, and an organizational outcome. This conceptual overlap makes it difficult to distinguish between audit processes, direct findings, follow-up interventions, and longer-term organizational impacts.

In this article, a communication audit is operationally defined as a systematic and comprehensive diagnostic assessment of an organization's communication system to identify how information is produced, distributed, received, interpreted, and responded to across organizational levels. Its scope may include communication flows and networks, vertical and horizontal communication, communication climate, communication satisfaction, message quality, feedback mechanisms, information overload, and the suitability of communication channels. This definition differentiates

communication audits from general communication evaluation, communication effectiveness, communication satisfaction, internal organizational audits, and evaluations that focus only on particular communication media.

A literature review is appropriate for this study because the central problem concerns conceptual fragmentation rather than the empirical performance of a particular organization. Synthesizing existing studies allows the article to compare different conceptualizations, identify recurring dimensions, and clarify the distinction between direct audit results and organizational impacts. The novelty of this article therefore lies in proposing an integrated conceptual sequence in which organizational communication conditions serve as audit triggers, followed by a diagnostic process, identification of communication gaps, formulation of recommendations, organizational implementation, and subsequent organizational consequences. These consequences may occur at operational, relational, strategic, and institutional levels. Accordingly, communication audits should not be assumed to automatically improve productivity, trust, or organizational sustainability, because such outcomes depend on how audit recommendations are implemented.

Based on this conceptual problem, the article addresses four study questions: (1) Under what organizational communication conditions does a communication audit become particularly relevant? (2) What strategic objectives can be pursued through a communication audit? (3) How can communication audit findings and their implementation contribute to organizational effectiveness and sustainability? and (4) How are the urgency, objectives, findings, follow-up actions, and implications of communication audits conceptually related? This article consequently aims to synthesize the literature, clarify conceptual boundaries, and develop a more coherent framework for understanding the strategic position of communication audits in organizational communication governance.

2. RESEARCH METHODE

This study employed a qualitative integrative literature review to synthesize theoretical and empirical studies concerning the urgency, objectives, and implications of communication audits in organizational contexts (Creswell, 2021). An integrative review was selected because it enables the combination of conceptual perspectives

and findings from different organizational settings while addressing conceptual fragmentation within the existing literature (Cronin & George, 2023). The literature search was conducted through Google Scholar and Scopus for publications issued between 2015 and 2025 using combinations of keywords such as “organizational communication audit,” “communication audit AND organization,” “communication evaluation AND organization,” “communication satisfaction,” and “communication effectiveness.” Seminal theoretical sources published before 2015 were selectively retained when necessary to establish the conceptual foundation of organizational communication.

Studies were included if they focused on communication audits or closely related organizational communication dimensions, were available in full text, and were published as peer-reviewed journal articles, academic proceedings, or recognized scholarly books. Studies addressing accounting audits, auditor communication, marketing communication without an organizational audit dimension, duplicate publications, and non-academic sources were excluded. Following title, abstract, and full-text screening, fewer than 20 relevant publications were retained for final analysis. Information from each study was extracted into a literature matrix covering author and year, organizational context, methodology, audit focus, key findings, and synthesis category. Source quality was assessed based on publication credibility, methodological clarity, conceptual relevance, and contribution to the research questions.

The selected literature was analyzed using qualitative descriptive-analytical content analysis (Imani et al., 2025). Three categories urgency, objectives, and implications were established deductively based on the study questions, while specific subthemes emerged inductively through comparative analysis. The synthesis distinguished audit triggers, diagnostic findings, recommendations, implementation, and organizational impacts to avoid assuming a direct causal relationship between communication audits and organizational performance.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Urgency of Implementing Communication Audits in Organizations

Communication audits are increasingly relevant because organizational activities depend on the accuracy, timeliness, and clarity of information exchanged among leaders, employees, and organizational units. A communication audit provides a systematic mechanism for examining whether information flows operate as intended and for detecting potential barriers before they develop into broader organizational problems (Sanusi et al., 2024; Sewpersadh, 2025). Communication problems such as incomplete information, delayed messages, unclear responsibilities, and weak coordination may disrupt work processes and reduce the ability of organizational members to respond effectively to institutional demands (Abbas & Miller, 2025; Dalimunthe et al., 2025).

The urgency of communication audits has also increased alongside the growing complexity of organizational communication systems. Contemporary organizations use multiple communication channels, including email, instant messaging applications, virtual meetings, internal platforms, and social media. Although these technologies accelerate information exchange, they may also create information overload, message inconsistency, fragmented communication, and differences in interpretation among recipients (Müller et al., 2023). Therefore, organizations need diagnostic mechanisms capable of assessing whether communication channels remain appropriate for their structures, member needs, and operational environments.

Communication audits are particularly relevant when organizations experience recurring misunderstandings, communication dissatisfaction, declining information transparency, ineffective feedback, or difficulties coordinating across organizational levels. In such circumstances, audits enable management to identify communication conditions requiring further attention rather than relying solely on assumptions or responses to visible conflicts (Sewpersadh, 2025). Their relevance, however, may vary depending on organizational size, complexity, communication structure, and environmental dynamics. Accordingly, communication audits should not be regarded as an automatic solution to organizational problems, but as an evidence-based

diagnostic process that becomes increasingly important when organizations require systematic information to understand communication gaps, support adaptation, and strengthen communication governance.

Strategic Objectives of Conducting Communication Audits

The primary strategic objective of a communication audit is to generate a comprehensive diagnosis of how communication operates within an organization. Rather than directly improving organizational performance, an audit initially seeks to identify whether messages are appropriately distributed, received, understood, and responded to by organizational members (Kholil et al., 2024; Oladeinde et al., 2023). This diagnostic function provides management with systematic evidence concerning the strengths and weaknesses of existing communication practices and enables communication problems to be distinguished from broader managerial or structural problems.

A second objective is to identify barriers affecting organizational information flows. These barriers may include limited transparency, ineffective channel selection, unclear message structures, information overload, weak feedback mechanisms, or communication gaps between organizational levels. Identifying these conditions allows organizations to determine the sources of communication problems and formulate corrective recommendations based on diagnosed needs rather than managerial assumptions (Mołęda et al., 2023). Communication audits can also map effective practices that should be maintained, allowing organizations to recognize both communication deficiencies and existing strengths (Sintia et al., 2022).

Another strategic objective is to provide relevant information for managerial decision-making. Audit findings concerning member information needs, communication satisfaction, channel effectiveness, and communication patterns can serve as evidence for developing communication policies and improvement programs (Jefferson, 2025). In digitally mediated environments, audits may additionally evaluate whether communication technologies remain appropriate, accessible, and consistent with organizational needs (Suhendar et al., 2024). Thus, the direct objective of communication audits is not to produce productivity, loyalty, or organizational sustainability automatically, but to generate reliable diagnostic

evidence and actionable recommendations. These outputs provide a foundation upon which management can redesign communication practices, improve channel selection, strengthen feedback mechanisms, and determine appropriate interventions according to organizational conditions.

Implications of Communication Audit Results for Organizational Sustainability

The implications of communication audits emerge primarily when audit findings are translated into organizational recommendations and subsequently implemented through concrete managerial actions. Communication audits produce information regarding message flows, communication barriers, channel effectiveness, member information needs, and other weaknesses or strengths within the communication system (Danish et al., 2024). However, these findings do not automatically improve organizational performance. Their organizational value depends on whether management uses the diagnostic evidence to redesign policies, improve communication channels, strengthen feedback mechanisms, or adjust organizational communication practices.

At the operational level, implementation of audit recommendations may improve information distribution, coordination, and clarity of work processes. Corrective actions targeting inappropriate channels, incomplete information, or communication gaps can support more efficient interactions between organizational units (Saraan et al., 2024; Vicente et al., 2026). At the relational level, improvements in transparency, feedback, and information accessibility may contribute to more positive relationships between leaders and employees and reduce communication-based misunderstandings or conflicts. These changes may also support employee engagement when organizational members perceive that their information needs and communication experiences receive institutional attention.

At the strategic level, audit results can provide management with evidence for developing communication policies that correspond more closely to organizational conditions and environmental changes. Evaluation of digital communication practices may further help organizations adjust communication channels in response to technological developments. In the longer term, consistent implementation and follow-up of audit recommendations may contribute to institutional adaptability,

stakeholder trust, and organizational sustainability. Therefore, organizational sustainability should be understood as a potential downstream implication of sustained corrective action rather than as a direct consequence of conducting a communication audit itself.

4. CONCLUSION

A communication audit is a crucial evaluation activity for assessing the quality and effectiveness of communication within an organization. Through a communication audit, organizations can determine whether the information delivery process is running smoothly and identify any obstacles that could potentially hinder the achievement of organizational goals.

This study demonstrates that communication audits play a strategic role in improving the quality of work relationships, strengthening coordination between departments, and helping leaders obtain more accurate information in the decision-making process. Furthermore, communication audits serve as a basis for developing communication policies and strategies that better align with the organization's needs.

The results of a communication audit provide various benefits, such as improving the flow of information, reducing misunderstandings, increasing member participation, and creating a more open and productive work environment. Amidst increasingly rapid technological developments and environmental changes, conducting regular communication audits is crucial for organizations to adapt and maintain their performance. Thus, communication audits serve not only as an assessment tool but also as a means of organizational development that can support work effectiveness, increase productivity, and help organizations achieve their goals sustainably.

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