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Madan Kandel
Assistant Professor, Nepal
Commerce Campus, FOM,
Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Jagat Timilsina
Associate Professor
Central Department of
Management, Tribhuvan
University, Nepal

The impact of organizational communication environment on employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks

Madan Kandel and Jagat Timilsina

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the impact of organizational communication on employee engagement within Nepalese commercial banks. It explores how superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, superior openness, opportunities for upward communication, and reliability of communication influence employee engagement.

Methodology: A descriptive-explanatory research design was employed, using a survey method to collect data from 400 employees of commercial banks in Kathmandu Valley. A structured questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale measured organizational communication and engagement. Statistical methods, including correlation and multiple regression analyses, were applied to test hypotheses and determine relationships among variables.

Findings: The study demonstrates that all communication factors significantly affect employee engagement, with opportunities for upward communication showing the strongest correlation. The regression model explains 53.3% of the variance in employee engagement, underscoring the critical role of communication in creating an engaged workforce.

Novelty: The study fills a research gap by investigating the relationship between organizational communication and employee engagement in Nepal's banking sector, providing insights from a developing economy perspective and contributing to global employee engagement literature.

Keywords: Employee engagement, organizational communication, banking sector, Nepal, upward communication

Introduction

Employee engagement represents an employee's emotional, cognitive, and physical connection with their organization and its goals. It drives organizational outcomes such as increased productivity, job satisfaction, and reduced turnover (Saks, 2006) ^[25]. Engaged employees actively contribute to achieving business objectives by fostering innovation, sustaining operational performance, and enhancing customer satisfaction. However, employee engagement remains a challenge, particularly in Nepal's banking sector, where issues such as poor job satisfaction, role ambiguity, and lack of communication mechanisms prevail. Despite global recognition of its importance, the connection between organizational communication and employee engagement in Nepal remains understudied, especially in commercial banks where human resource practices play a critical role in business success.

The Nepalese banking sector, although a lucrative employment market, faces low employee engagement due to inadequate organizational communication practices. Employees often report dissatisfaction arising from insufficient communication, lack of transparency, and limited opportunities for feedback. This affects their morale, job satisfaction, and overall productivity. While communication has been identified as a factor influencing engagement, there is little empirical evidence in the context of Nepal's banking sector (Iyer & Israel, 2012) ^[14]. This research addresses the need to understand the relationship between communication and engagement, particularly focusing on the Nepalese banking environment.

This study aims to explore the involved relationship between organizational communication and employee engagement within Nepalese commercial banks. Specifically, it seeks to identify the key elements of organizational communication that influence employee

Corresponding Author:
Madan Kandel
Assistant Professor, Nepal
Commerce Campus, FOM,
Tribhuvan University, Nepal

engagement, providing insights into how various communication practices affect employees' connection with their work and organization. Furthermore, the study endeavors to determine which specific communication factor—such as superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, superior openness, opportunities for upward communication, or reliability of communication—exerts the strongest correlation with employee engagement. By analyzing these factors collectively, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how communication dynamics contribute to fostering an engaged and motivated workforce, ultimately guiding the development of effective communication strategies for organizational success.

Alternative Hypothesis

The study proposes the following alternative hypothesis:

H1: Superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, superior openness, opportunities for upward communication, and reliability of communication are positively associated with employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks.

The study holds significance for practical domains in the area of banking and finance. It fills a research gap in understanding how organizational communication influences employee engagement in the context of developing economies like Nepal. For practitioners, particularly HR managers and organizational leaders, the study offers insights into creating effective communication strategies to enhance employee engagement, thereby improving retention, productivity, and customer satisfaction. On a broader level, the study provides a framework for analyzing communication dynamics in other service sectors, contributing to global research on employee engagement and organizational performance.

Limitations

The study acknowledges the following limitations:

Geographical Scope: Limited to commercial banks in Kathmandu Valley, potentially restricting its generalizability to other regions.

Sector Focus: Insights are specific to the banking sector and may not extend to other industries with different operational and communication dynamics.

Data Reliability: Reliance on self-reported questionnaire data may introduce response bias.

Population Sample: Excludes smaller, less-known banks, focusing on well-established institutions, which might limit representativeness.

Variables

Independent Variables

Superior-Subordinate Communication: Refers to the quality of interactions and transparency between managers and employees. Facilitates trust and alignment between employees and organizational goals, enhancing engagement (Kular *et al.*, 2008) ^[17].

Quality of Information: The clarity, accuracy, and comprehensiveness of organizational communication.

Ensures employees are well-informed, fostering a sense of purpose and direction (Attridge, 2009) ^[2].

Superior Openness: Managers' willingness to listen and share relevant information with employees. Encourages inclusivity and collaboration, strengthening emotional commitment to the organization (Iyer & Israel, 2012) ^[14].

Opportunities for Upward Communication: Availability of platforms for employees to voice their concerns or feedback. Promotes employee participation, creating a sense of ownership and belonging (Banaeianjahromi & Smolander, 2019) ^[6].

Reliability of Communication: Consistency and trustworthiness of the communication channels and messages. Reduces ambiguity and builds organizational credibility, positively influencing engagement (Sarangi & Srivastava, 2012) ^[26].

Literature review

Conceptual Review

Employee engagement is a multidimensional construct that encompasses the physical, emotional, and cognitive involvement of employees in their roles. Kahn (1990) ^[16] first defined engagement as the ability of individuals to express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally while performing their job roles. This definition laid the foundation for subsequent studies, emphasizing how personal and organizational factors interact to influence engagement levels. Later research by May, Gilson, and Harter (2004) ^[18] expanded on this by introducing the notion of psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability as critical factors driving engagement.

Engaged employees are characterized by their enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness to contribute to organizational success. Schaufeli *et al.* (2002) ^[27] proposed three dimensions of engagement: vigor, marked by high energy levels and persistence; dedication, reflecting a sense of significance and enthusiasm for work; and absorption, where employees are fully engrossed in their tasks. Studies show that engaged employees are more productive, loyal, and resilient, contributing positively to organizational performance (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002) ^[13].

In competitive landscape, engaged employees represent a key resource for organizational success. They are more likely to exceed performance expectations, exhibit innovative behavior, and contribute to a positive organizational culture (Balakrishnan & Masthan, 2013) ^[4]. Employee engagement also fosters retention, reducing turnover and associated costs. Research suggests that engaged employees enhance customer satisfaction, organizational profitability, and market reputation (Baumruk *et al.*, 2006) ^[7].

Organizational communication is the process of exchanging information within an organization to achieve common goals. Effective communication fosters trust, collaboration, and clarity, significantly influencing employee engagement. As noted by De Ridder (2004) ^[9], organizational communication plays a pivotal role in shaping employees' perceptions, organizational commitment, and productivity. Goldhaber highlighted key elements of communication, including openness, trust, and participative decision-making, which collectively create a supportive

communication climate.

Theoretical Review

Social Exchange Theory

Saks (2006)^[25] applied **Social Exchange Theory (SET)** to employee engagement, arguing that is a reciprocal relationship where employees invest their time and effort in exchange for organizational resources. When organizations provide resources such as growth opportunities, recognition, and support, employees respond by becoming more engaged and committed. This theory underlines the importance of trust and communication in fostering engagement.

Kahn's Psychological Conditions Theory

Kahn (1990)^[16] posited that engagement is influenced by three psychological conditions:

Meaningfulness: Employees must feel their work is significant and aligned with their values.

Safety: A supportive work environment ensures that employees feel secure in expressing themselves.

Availability: Employees must have the necessary resources and energy to engage fully.

Empirical Review

Research highlights that engaged employees are more productive and exhibit higher job satisfaction. May *et al.* (2004)^[18] demonstrated a positive correlation between engagement and psychological meaningfulness, with meaningfulness showing the strongest relationship. Similarly, Schaufeli *et al.* (2002)^[27] found that vigor, dedication, and absorption collectively define engagement and contribute to organizational performance.

Saks (2006)^[25] identified factors such as perceived organizational support and job resources as predictors of engagement. Employees who perceive their organization as supportive are more likely to engage fully. Additionally, studies by Baumruk *et al.* (2006)^[7] linked engagement with financial outcomes, demonstrating that organizations with highly engaged employees outperform their competitors.

Several studies establish the connection between effective communication and employee. Smidts, Pruyn, and Riel (2001)^[28] found that internal communication enhances employees' identification with their organization, fostering loyalty and commitment. De Ridder (2004)^[9] emphasized that communication clarity, openness, and trust-building contribute to employee satisfaction and engagement.

King demonstrated that supervisor communication style significantly impacts job satisfaction, with positive interactions leading to higher engagement. Similarly, research by Chen revealed that two-way communication promotes trust, enabling employees to feel valued and motivated.

A positive communication climate, characterized by openness, participation, and reliability, has been shown to enhance engagement. Goldhaber, Dennis identified elements such as trust, participative decision-making, and clarity as critical to fostering a constructive communication environment. Ayoko and Pekerti (2008)^[3] emphasized that effective communication between supervisors and employees builds mutual trust, strengthening organizational commitment.

Superior-Subordinate Communication: Research shows that open and supportive interactions between supervisors and employees foster engagement. Soltis highlighted the importance of servant leadership in creating a highly engaged workforce.

Quality of Information: Bartoo and Sias found that the adequacy and clarity of information significantly influence employees' perceptions of their organization.

Superior Openness: Studies by Meiners and Miller demonstrate that managers' transparency builds trust and encourages employee participation.

Opportunities for Upward Communication: Bambacas and Patrickson (2008)^[5] reported that employees who feel heard are more likely to engage with their organization.

Reliability of Communication: Reliable and consistent messaging enhances employees' trust in leadership, fostering engagement (Watson Wyatt Worldwide, 2008)^[29].

Research Gap

While existing literature establishes the importance of organizational communication in shaping employee engagement, several gaps remain. First, most studies focus on Western contexts, with limited research exploring these dynamics in developing economies like Nepal. Second, while communication factors such as openness and trust are linked to engagement, few studies provide empirical evidence specific to the banking sector.

There is limited understanding of how communication mechanisms influence engagement in hierarchical organizations, such as banks. Existing studies often overlook the role of cultural and contextual differences, which may significantly impact communication practices and their outcomes. This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the relationship between organizational communication and employee engagement in Nepalese commercial banks.

Research Design

The research adopts a **descriptive-explanatory design**, integrating survey methods to investigate the relationships between organizational communication factors (independent variables) and employee engagement (dependent variable) in Nepalese commercial banks. The survey design facilitates data collection from a significant sample size to analyze patterns, trends, and relationships systematically. A structured questionnaire was used to gather insights into communication variables such as superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, superior openness, opportunity for upward communication, and reliability of communication. The research is quantitative in nature, employing statistical analysis to test hypotheses and draw conclusions.

Quantitative methods align well with the research goals as they allow for the measurement of specific variables, the testing of hypotheses, and the derivation of statistically significant results. The survey was distributed primarily through Google Forms, ensuring accessibility and ease of response for the target audience of banking professionals.

Population and Sample

Population

The study targets employees of commercial banks in Kathmandu Valley, focusing on individuals involved in communication processes with their supervisors and colleagues. The total population size is approximately 47,500 employees from 19 commercial banks in Nepal.

Sample

The sample was calculated using the following formula for determining sample size:

Thus, the sample size is approximately 385 respondents, increased to 400 participants for improved reliability. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically snowball sampling, was employed to reach employees across various commercial banks. This technique was chosen due to the convenience of accessing respondents in a geographically defined and structured sector like banking.

Instrumentation

The research utilized a structured questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) to measure perceptions of the variables.

The questionnaire was pre-tested for validity and reliability. A Cronbach’s alpha analysis ensured internal consistency, with all constructs achieving a reliability score above the acceptable threshold of 0.7.

Regression Model

To test the relationships between the independent variables (communication factors) and the dependent variable (employee engagement), the study employs a multiple linear regression model. The regression model is expressed as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y: Employee Engagement (dependent variable)

β_0 : Intercept (constant term)

X₁: Superior-Subordinate Communication

X₂: Quality of Information

X₃: Superior Openness

X₄: Opportunities for Upward Communication

X₅: Reliability of Communication

ϵ : Error term (random disturbance)

Findings

Table 1: Respondent Demographics

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	233	58.3	58.3
	Female	157	41.7	100
Age Group	18-25	60	15.0	15.0
	25-45	325	81.3	96.3
	Above 45	15	3.8	100
Education	Intermediate	24	6.0	6.0
	Bachelor’s	226	56.5	62.5
	Master’s & Above	150	37.5	100
Job Tenure	Less than a year	163	40.8	40.8
	1-5 years	154	38.5	79.3
	5+ years	63	20.7	100
Job Title	Assistant	289	72.3	72.3
	Officer	55	13.8	86.0
	Manager & Above	56	14.0	100

Table 1 provides a demographic profile of the respondents. The majority were male (58.3%), aged between 25-45 years (81.3%), and held a bachelor’s degree (56.5%). Most

respondents were employed at the assistant level (72.3%) and had a job tenure of less than a year (40.8%).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Superior-Subordinate Communication	1	4.33	3.08	0.81
Quality of Information in Organization	1	4.60	3.22	0.98
Superior’s Openness	1	4.25	3.15	0.80
Opportunity for Upward Communication	1	5	3.17	1.04
Reliability of Communication	1	4.56	3.01	0.93
Employee Engagement	1	4.56	3.02	0.61

Explanation

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the variables. All means fall between 3.01 and 3.22, indicating neutral responses with a slight tendency toward agreement.

Standard deviations range from 0.61 (Employee Engagement) to 1.04 (Opportunity for Upward Communication), showing moderate variability.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Superior-Subordinate Communication	1.000	0.729**	0.649**	0.442**	0.272**	0.480**
2. Quality of Information in Organization		1.000	0.655**	0.350**	0.341**	0.478**
3. Superior’s Openness			1.000	0.387**	0.258**	0.468**
4. Opportunity for Upward Communication				1.000	0.335**	0.659**
5. Reliability of Communication					1.000	0.388**
6. Employee Engagement						1.000

Table 3 illustrates the correlation matrix between the variables. Employee Engagement is moderately correlated with Opportunity for Upward Communication ($r=0.659$), Superior-Subordinate Communication

($r=0.480$), and Quality of Information ($r=0.478$). The weakest correlation is with Reliability of Communication ($r=0.388$).

Table 4: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of Estimate
Superior-Subordinate Communication	0.480	0.231	0.229	0.5378431
Quality of Information in Organization	0.478	0.228	0.226	0.5386366
Superior’s Openness	0.468	0.219	0.217	0.5418459
Opportunity for Upward Communication	0.659	0.434	0.433	0.4613334
Reliability of Communication	0.388	0.150	0.148	0.5652161
Overall Model	0.730	0.533	0.527	0.4211300

Table 4 summarizes the regression analysis. The overall model explains 53.3% ($R^2=0.533$) of the variance in Employee Engagement. Among individual predictors, Opportunity for Upward Communication has the

highest explanatory power ($R^2=0.434$), while Reliability of Communication has the least ($R^2=0.150$).

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	P-value	Result
H01: Superior-Subordinate Communication impacts Employee Engagement.	0.009	Accepted
H02: Quality of Information impacts Employee Engagement.	0.000	Accepted
H03: Superior’s Openness impacts Employee Engagement.	0.001	Accepted
H04: Opportunity for Upward Communication impacts Employee Engagement.	0.000	Accepted
H05: Reliability of Communication impacts Employee Engagement.	0.002	Accepted

Table 5 presents the hypothesis testing results. All hypotheses were accepted, indicating significant relationships between the independent variables and Employee Engagement.

Discussion

The findings from this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of stock prices for banks in NEPSE. The positive relationships between Dividend Per Share (DPS), Earnings Per Share (EPS), Equity Multiplier (EM), Holding Period Return (HPR), and Market Price Per Share (MPS) underscore the multifaceted nature of stock price determinants. These results align with previous studies by Joshi and Bayra (2017) [15], Arshad *et al.* (2016) [1], Pradhan *et al.* (2016) [23], Giri (2023) [12], Chhetri (2023) [9], and Bhattarai (2018) [8], which highlight the significance of these financial indicators in influencing stock prices.

A critical finding is the strong positive correlation between DPS and MPS, which suggests that dividends play a crucial role in driving stock prices. This is consistent with the work of Paudel (2024) [22] and Parajuli (2023) [20], who emphasize the importance of dividends in stock valuation. The positive relationship between EPS and MPS, although not statistically significant, indicates that earnings performance is still a valuable metric for investors, as supported by the studies of Ghimire and Mishra (2018) [11] and Menika and Prabath (2014) [19].

However, the insignificance of EM and HPR as predictors

of MPS in the regression model points to potential issues such as high standard errors, high p-values, market perceptions, and multicollinearity. This observation aligns with the findings of Rosikah *et al.* (2018) [24] and Pariyar (2012) [21], who identified similar challenges in their analyses. The regression results show that while DPS has the most substantial impact on MPS, the contributions of EM and HPR are less pronounced, suggesting that these variables may be influenced by external factors not captured in the model.

The study's hypothesis testing results further validate the importance of communication factors in employee engagement. Superior-Subordinate Communication, Quality of Information, Superior’s Openness, Opportunity for Upward Communication, and Reliability of Communication all significantly impact employee engagement. These findings resonate with the existing literature, including studies by Saks (2006) [25], Iyer and Israel (2012) [14], and Goldhaber, which underscore the critical role of effective communication in fostering a motivated and engaged workforce.

Summary

The study aimed to explore the relationship between organizational communication and employee engagement within Nepalese commercial banks. By examining key elements of communication such as superior-subordinate communication, quality of information, superior openness,

opportunities for upward communication, and reliability of communication, the research identified the most influential factors on employee engagement. Descriptive statistics revealed neutral to slightly positive responses, with moderate variability among the measured variables. Correlation analysis showed moderate to strong relationships between communication factors and employee engagement, particularly highlighting the significance of opportunities for upward communication.

Regression analysis indicated that the overall model explains 53.3% of the variance in employee engagement, with opportunity for upward communication having the highest explanatory power. Hypothesis testing confirmed that all five communication factors significantly impact employee engagement, emphasizing the importance of these elements in shaping employees' connection to their work and organization.

Implications

The findings have several practical implications for bank management, investors, policymakers, and researchers. For bank management, understanding the key determinants of stock prices and employee engagement can aid in developing strategies to enhance financial performance and workforce motivation. Implementing effective communication practices can lead to higher employee engagement, reducing turnover and improving organizational outcomes.

Investors can use the insights to forecast stock prices and estimate returns, assisting in wealth management and investment decision-making. Recognizing the importance of dividends, earnings, and other financial metrics can help investors make informed choices about their investments in the banking sector.

Policymakers and regulators can benefit from the research by formulating policies that ensure transparency and accuracy in financial reporting, stabilizing the stock market, and fostering a positive investment environment. The findings can also guide policymakers in creating regulations that promote effective communication practices within organizations, enhancing employee engagement and productivity.

Future Research Directions

Future research should consider expanding the sample size to improve the accuracy and generalizability of the findings. Including additional microeconomic variables such as Return on Equity (ROE), Book Value Per Share (BVPS), Price Earnings Ratio (PER), Net Worth Per Share (NWPS), and firm size would provide a more comprehensive analysis of stock price determinants.

Additionally, exploring the impact of macroeconomic factors such as inflation, interest rates, monetary and economic policies, political factors, and money supply on stock market prices would offer deeper insights into the broader economic influences on stock performance. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to examine the long-term effects of communication practices on employee engagement and organizational outcomes.

By addressing these areas, future research can further elucidate the complexities of stock price determinants and enhance the strategic and operational insights for various stakeholders in the stock market. Overall, the study highlights the critical role of effective communication in

fostering an engaged and motivated workforce, ultimately contributing to organizational success in the Nepalese banking sector.

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