

## Original Article

# Communication Strategies in Change Management and Their Influence on Employee Engagement

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### Abstract:

Changes in work systems and organizational policies demand the implementation of effective change management, where communication strategies are a key factor in building employee engagement. However, in practice, change communication is often not optimally managed, hindering the creation of sustainable employee engagement, especially in private companies operating in dynamic business environments. This study aims to analyze the influence of communication strategies in change management on employee engagement by emphasizing the relative role of each dimension of change communication. The study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey design. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire on the Likert scale of 120 employees of medium- and large private companies in Semarang City who experienced changes in work systems and organizational policies. Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression to test the influence of information clarity, communication openness, message consistency, two-way communication, and communication media on employee engagement. The results show that communication strategies in change management have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement, with clarity of information and two-way communication emerging as the most decisive dimensions. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of change communication does not only depend on the intensity of information delivery, but on the quality of message clarity and dialogue space provided to employees. This research provides an empirical contribution by emphasizing the importance of configuring a change communication strategy oriented to transparency and participation in strengthening employee engagement in private companies in the local context of Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Communication Strategies, Change Management, Employee Engagement, Change Communication.

### Introduction

Organizational changes triggered by globalization, digitalization, and market competition demand organizations to implement effective change management to maintain business sustainability and adaptation to a dynamic environment (Sulaeman et al., 2023). One of the important aspects of change management is the internal

communication strategy, which plays a role in reducing resistance, building clarity of goals, and creating employee trust in organizational decisions (Mahmood & Khattak, 2022; Zainab et al., 2022). Employee engagement is the main indicator of the success of the change process, because employees who are emotionally and cognitively involved tend to be more responsive to innovation and change in strategy (Davis & Van der Heijden, 2023). However, while organizations are increasingly aware of the importance of internal communication, their implementation practices are often not effective enough in the context of complex work change, especially in private companies that face high competitive pressures.

Previous research has shown that internal communication has a significant influence on employee engagement, but empirical evidence on the more detailed role of different dimensions of communication strategies in the context of organizational change is still limited (Arif et al., 2023). Systematic studies have shown that many studies focus only on the effectiveness of communication channels or overall communication satisfaction without examining specific contributions such as communication openness, message consistency, and communication media to engagement (Špoljarić & Tkalac Verčić, 2022). In addition, most internal communication studies and organizational change still use a qualitative approach or narrative review (Sun et al., 2023), so statistically tested empirical findings are very rare, especially in the context of the private business sector in developing countries.

The existing research gap shows a lack of quantitative studies that assess the relative role of each dimension of communication strategy in influencing employee engagement in the context of organizational change. For example, although two-way communication is often considered important in the internal communication literature, it is not clear how much it contributes to the clarity of information or communication media in a company setting that has experienced real changes in the work system. Available research also does not link the communication dimension to employee engagement simultaneously in a single empirical model tested, making it difficult for organizations to identify which communication strategies are most practically effective.

From a theoretical perspective, existing internal communication models often place communication as aggregate variables without separating the effects of different communicative aspects, whereas the Job Demands-Resources Model theory states that specific communication resources can affect engagement differently based on their quality and characteristics (Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). A more structured and specific approach to internal communication in the literature is still urgently needed to strengthen the theoretical framework that links communication strategies to employee engagement in complex change processes.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the influence of communication strategies in change management on employee engagement, by emphasizing the individual role of each dimension of change communication such as clarity of information, openness of communication, consistency of message, two-way communication, and communication media. This study was carried out on 120 employees of medium and large private companies in Semarang City who experienced changes in work systems and organizational policies, using quantitative approaches and multiple linear regression as data analysis techniques to answer these problems empirically.

This research makes a theoretical contribution by expanding the understanding of the mechanism of the relationship between change communication strategies and employee engagement through the identification of the relative role of each of these

communication dimensions in an empirical model. The results of this research are expected to enrich the literature on change management and organizational communication, especially by providing more detailed quantitative evidence than previous research that was more descriptive. In practical terms, this study provides recommendations for management and HR practitioners in private companies to design more effective change communication strategies and focus on aspects that have been proven to improve employee engagement.

This research is also important locally because it provides empirical evidence in the Indonesian context, where studies on measurable communication strategies in the change management process are still minimal even though many companies face the challenge of rapid organizational change. The findings are expected to be not only academically relevant but also can serve as a guide for corporate managers in Indonesia in formulating strong internal communication policies to strengthen employee engagement and organizational transformation success.

## **Method**

### **Research Type and Design**

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey design, which aims to explain the causal relationship between communication strategies in change management as an independent variable and employee engagement as a dependent variable. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for the objective and measurable testing of the influence between variables through inferential statistical analysis. Explanatory design was used to test the strength and direction of the influence of each dimension of change communication on employee engagement levels based on systematically collected empirical data (Thomas & Zubkov, 2023).

### **Research Variables and Operational Definitions**

This study involves two main types of variables, namely independent variables and dependent variables. An independent variable is a communication strategy in change management, which is defined as the way an organization designs and communicates change information to employees to build understanding, trust, and participation during the change process. This variable is operationalized into five dimensions, namely: (1) clarity of information, which reflects the level of clarity of the purpose, reason, and impact of change; (2) open communication, which shows the extent to which the organization is transparent and honest in conveying information about changes; (3) consistency of messages, which describes the alignment of change information conveyed by management; (4) two-way communication, which reflects the existence of a space for dialogue and feedback between management and employees; and (5) communication media, which refers to the effectiveness of communication channels used in conveying change.

The dependent variable in this study is employee engagement, which is defined as the level of employee cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with work and organization during the change process. Employee engagement is measured through indicators that reflect work focus, emotional attachment to the organization, and willingness of employees to actively contribute to supporting organizational change (Kossyva et al., 2024).

## **Population and Sampling Techniques**

The population of this study is employees of medium- and large private companies in Semarang City who have experienced changes in work systems and organizational policies in the last two years. The selection of the population is based on the consideration that private companies in urban areas face more intensive change pressures due to market competition and accelerated digitalization. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with the purposive sampling method, which is the selection of respondents based on certain criteria relevant to the research objectives, such as status as a permanent employee and direct involvement in the organizational change process (Makwana et al., 2023). The sample size of 120 respondents was considered to have met the minimum size for multiple linear regression analysis and provided an adequate level of statistical strength (Al-Harbi, 2023).

## **Data Collection Techniques and Instruments**

The research data was collected using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The research instrument was developed by adapting indicators from previous literature that has been tested, especially related to the dimensions of change communication strategies and employee engagement (Bridger, 2022; Rachmad, 2022). Each item is designed to represent the operational definition of a variable in a clear and contextual manner, as well as to be adjusted to the changing organizational conditions of the private company to be empirically relevant and easy to understand by respondents.

## **Instrument Validity and Reliability Test**

Before the main analysis, the research instrument is tested for validity and reliability to ensure the quality of the data obtained. The construct validity test is carried out through item-total correlation and exploratory factor analysis to ensure that each indicator is able to accurately represent the measured construct. The reliability test was performed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient with a value of  $\geq 0.70$  as an indicator of acceptable internal consistency (Kennedy, 2022). This stage is important to guarantee that the data being analyzed has an adequate level of reliability.

## **Research Hypothesis**

Based on the conceptual framework and operational definition of variables, the research hypothesis is formulated as follows:

- H1: Clarity of information in change communication has a positive effect on employee engagement.
- H2: Open communication in change management has a positive effect on employee engagement.
- H3: Consistency of messages in communication of change has a positive effect on employee engagement.
- H4: Two-way communication in the process of organizational change has a positive effect on employee engagement.
- H5: Communication media in change management has a positive effect on employee engagement.

This hypothesis was formulated to empirically test the partial influence of each

dimension of the change communication strategy on employee engagement.

### **Research Implementation Procedure**

The research procedure starts from the stage of problem formulation and preparation of research instruments based on relevant literature reviews. The next stage is a limited questionnaire trial to ensure language clarity and comprehension of the item. After the instrument was declared feasible, the questionnaire was distributed to respondents in person and online by paying attention to the ethical principles of the research, including consent to participation and data confidentiality. The collected data is then selected, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression to test the simultaneous and partial influence of independent variables on dependent variables. This technique was chosen because it is able to explain the relative contribution of each dimension of the change communication strategy in one integrated analysis model. Before testing the hypothesis, a classical assumption test was carried out which included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure the feasibility of the regression model (Marisetty, 2024). The entire data analysis process is carried out with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software to ensure the accuracy and replication of research results.

## **Results**

### **1. The Effect of Information Clarity on Employee Engagement**

The results of the analysis show that clarity of information has a positive and significant influence on employee engagement. These findings indicate that the clearer the information conveyed regarding the goals, reasons and impact of organizational change, the higher the level of employee involvement in the change process. Clarity of information helps employees rationally understand the direction of change, reducing uncertainty and increasing focus and work commitment.

Table 1. Regression Results for Information Clarity on Employee Engagement

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Information Clarity	0.312	0.071	0.328	4.394	0.000

Based on Table 1, the value of the information clarity regression coefficient is 0.312 with a significance level of 0.000 (< 0.05), which shows a positive and significant influence on employee engagement. The relatively high beta value reflects the substantial contribution of this variable in explaining the variation in employee engagement. Thus, H1 accepted, which confirms that clarity of information is an important factor in building employee engagement during the organizational change process.

### **2. The Effect of Open Communication on Employee Engagement**

Open communication has also been proven to have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement. These findings show that organizational transparency in communicating change information, including openness to challenges and risks, drives the emergence of employee trust in management. Employees who feel they are informed honestly and openly are more likely to show higher involvement in supporting organizational change.

**Table 2. Regression Results for Communication Openness on Employee Engagement**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Say.</b>
Communication Openness	0.185	0.064	0.201	2.891	0.005

Table 2 shows that the openness of communication has a regression coefficient of 0.185 with a significance value of 0.005. These results confirm the positive and significant influence of open communication on employee engagement. Thus, H2 accepted, which indicates that communication transparency is an important prerequisite for creating sustainable employee engagement.

### **3. The Effect of Message Consistency on Employee Engagement**

The results of the analysis show that the consistency of messages in change communication has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement. The consistency of the message reflects the harmony of information conveyed by various management parties, thereby reducing confusion and different interpretations among employees. When the message of change is conveyed consistently, employees are more likely to understand and accept the direction of organizational change.

**Table 3. Regression Results for Message Consistency on Employee Engagement**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Say.</b>
Message Consistency	0.164	0.058	0.176	2.828	0.006

Based on Table 3, the consistency of the message has a regression coefficient value of 0.164 with a significance of 0.006. These results show that message consistency contributes significantly to increased employee engagement. Therefore, H3 accepted, which emphasizes the importance of uniformity of messages in communicating organizational change.

### **4. The Influence of Two-Way Communication on Employee Engagement**

Two-way communication has emerged as one of the most decisive dimensions in influencing employee engagement. These findings show that employee engagement increases when organizations provide spaces for dialogue, listen to input, and actively provide feedback during the change process. Two-way communication creates a sense of appreciation and participation, which directly strengthens employees' attachment to the organization.

**Table 4. Regression Results for Two-Way Communication on Employee Engagement**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>Say.</b>
Two-Way Communication	0.341	0.069	0.356	4.942	0.000

Table 4 shows that two-way communication has the highest regression coefficient of 0.341 with a significance of 0.000. The largest beta value compared to other variables indicates that two-way communication is the most dominant dimension in influencing employee engagement. Thus, H4 accepted, and these findings confirm that dialogue and employee participation are key to successful change communication.

### **5. The Influence of Communication Media on Employee Engagement**

Communication media has also been proven to have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement, although its contribution is relatively small compared to other dimensions. These findings show that the effectiveness of communication channels used by organizations plays a role in supporting the delivery of messages of change, but it is not the main factor if it is not accompanied by clarity of messages and two-way interactions.

Table 5. Regression Results for Communication Media on Employee Engagement

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Say.
Communication Media	0.128	0.055	0.142	2.327	0.022

Based on Table 5, communication media has a regression coefficient of 0.128 with a significance value of 0.022. These results show that communication media has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement. Therefore, H5 accepted, although the effect is more moderate than the clarity of information and two-way communication.

## Discussion

The results of this study as a whole show that communication strategies in change management have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement. These findings confirm that communication is not just a tool for conveying information, but a strategic mechanism that shapes employee perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors during the organizational change process. When changes in work systems and organizational policies are communicated in a structured and qualitative manner, employees tend to show higher cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. This result is in line with the view that the success of change management is highly dependent on the organization's ability to manage internal communication as a crucial organizational resource (Abrantes et al., 2024). Thus, this study strengthens the argument that employee engagement is a direct outcome of the effectiveness of change communication, especially in the context of private companies facing high business dynamics.

The positive and significant influence of information clarity on employee engagement shows that employees' understanding of the goals, reasons, and impacts of change is the main foundation of engagement. Information clarity serves as a cognitive mechanism that reduces ambiguity and uncertainty, so that employees can interpret changes rationally and in a directed way. These findings are consistent with organizational sensemaking theory, which emphasizes that individuals need clear information to build meaning over the changes they are facing (Turner et al., 2023). In the context of this study, clarity of information was shown to increase work focus and employee commitment, which is reflected in the high value of the regression coefficient. The theoretical contribution of these findings is the affirmation that message clarity is a major prerequisite before an organization expects emotional or participatory engagement from employees.

Open communication and message consistency have also been shown to have a significant effect on employee engagement, although the contribution is more moderate than information clarity and two-way communication. Open communication reflects the organization's transparency in conveying the reality of change, including the challenges and risks faced, which in turn builds employee trust in management. Meanwhile, message consistency plays a role in maintaining the alignment of change interpretation at all levels of the organization, thus avoiding confusion and distortion of information. These findings are in line with the concept of internal communication climate which emphasizes the importance of honesty and uniformity of messages in shaping positive employee attitudes (Okunade, 2025). Thus, this study shows that engagement is not only influenced by what is conveyed, but also by the extent to which the message is consistent and transparent.

Two-way communication emerged as the most dominant dimension in influencing employee engagement, which shows that spaces for dialogue and participation have a central role in the context of organizational change. These findings indicate that employee engagement increases when they are not only recipients of information, but also actors who are heard and involved in the change process. From the perspective of the Job Demands-

Resources Model, two-way communication can be understood as a social resource that strengthens employee motivation and attachment (Okunade, 2025). The highest regression coefficient value in this variable confirms that the quality of interaction and feedback is more decisive than the frequency of communication alone. The main contribution of this study is to provide empirical evidence that participatory dialogue is at the core of effective change communication strategies.

Communication media also has a positive and significant effect on employee engagement, but with a relatively smaller contribution than other dimensions. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of communication channels serves as a supporting factor, rather than a major determinant in building employee engagement. The right medium of communication helps accelerate the distribution of information and expand the reach of messages of change, but it will not be effective without message clarity and two-way interaction. These results support the view that digital transformation in internal communication must be balanced with good content quality and communication relations (Wuersch et al., 2023) Zerfass & Brockhaus, 2023). Thus, this study warns organizations not to get caught up in media selection alone without paying attention to the substance and process of communication.

Conceptually, this study enriches the change management literature by showing that the dimensions of communication strategies have different influences on employee engagement in one integrated empirical model. In practical terms, these findings imply that human resource management and practitioners need to prioritize information clarity and two-way communication in designing change communication strategies. However, this study has limitations, including the use of latitude cutting design and the scope of the research area which is limited to the city of Semarang, so the generalization of the findings needs to be done carefully. Further research is recommended to use longitudinal design to capture engagement dynamics throughout the change process and include mediating variables such as organizational trust or readiness for change. Thus, an understanding of the mechanisms of communication of change and employee engagement can be developed more comprehensively.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that communication strategies in change management have a positive and significant effect on employee engagement in medium- and large private companies in Semarang City. All dimensions of change communication tested—clarity of information, openness of communication, consistency of message, two-way communication, and communication media—were shown to contribute to increased employee engagement, with clarity of information and two-way communication being the most decisive factors. These findings show that the success of change communication is not determined by the intensity of information delivery alone, but by the quality of clear, consistent, transparent messages, and the availability of dialogue spaces that encourage employee participation. Thus, this study confirms that the configuration of a change communication strategy oriented to transparency and participatory interaction is key in strengthening employee engagement and supporting the effectiveness of implementing organizational change in a dynamic business environment.

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