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Communication Strategies Finance Leaders Use to Increase Employee Productivity and Organizational Profitability

Tricia Ashbourne
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Tricia Ashbourne

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Ashley Riebel, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2025

Abstract

Communication Strategies Finance Leaders Use to Increase Employee Productivity and

Organizational Profitability

by

Tricia Ashbourne

MBA, Walden University, 2023

BS, Walden University, 2022

Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

November 2025

Abstract

A lack of effective communication strategies to increase employee productivity and profitability is a concern among leaders in the finance industry. This problem is important because, without such strategies, organizations might experience decreased employee morale and misalignment, which could reduce productivity and profitability. Grounded in leader–member exchange theory, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry was to identify and explore the effective communication strategies that senior finance leaders use to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability. Participants were six senior leaders from the finance industry in the Cayman Islands, each with at least 5 years of executive responsibility over multiunit or enterprise functions. Data were collected through semistructured interviews, analysis of secondary data, and studies on similar topics. Thematic analysis revealed six key themes: (a) designing and shaping leadership as communication architecture, (b) providing clarity and alignment to increase productivity, (c) orchestrating channels and norms, (d) embracing inclusion, dialogue, and recognition, (e) developing measurement and continuous adaptation, and (f) enabling autonomy and adoption. A key recommendation is for senior leaders to institutionalize disciplined communication cadences that combine clear strategic intent with transparent key performance indicators and compliance-aligned guidance. The implications for positive social change include the potential for finance leaders to deploy targeted communication strategies that elevate trust, develop local talent, strengthen an ethical and resilient financial ecosystem, and increase employee productivity and organizational profitability, leading to better economic outcomes for all.

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Dedication

This doctoral research project is dedicated to my family, whose unwavering love, encouragement, and sacrifices made this achievement possible. To my parents, Mr. Cliveous and Mrs. Marva Morant, who instilled in me the value of education and perseverance; to my husband and to my children, Shyan and Andabo (Andy) Harris, who supported me through the long hours and challenges of this journey; and to all those who inspired me to pursue excellence, this work stands as a testament to your belief in me and a reflection of the power of persistence, faith, and resilience.

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Special thanks to my colleagues and the participants who generously contributed their time and perspectives to this project. Their willingness to share insights and engage in collaborative discussions significantly enriched the depth and quality of the research. Ultimately, it is their openness and commitment that made this endeavor possible and helped ensure that the findings resonate with authenticity and relevance.

I am also grateful to the faculty and staff of Walden University for fostering a supportive learning environment that challenged me to grow both academically and personally. Finally, to my friends and extended family, thank you for your constant encouragement, understanding, and belief in my ability to see this project through to completion.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Project

Background of the Problem

Effective communication in the finance industry is critical for increasing employee performance and organizational profitability by fostering trust, improving efficiency, and aligning employees with company goals. Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, vague objectives, incomplete tasks, and diminished employee morale, ultimately hindering productivity (Elsafty & Oraby, 2022). In contrast, effective communication enhances motivation and fosters a more engaged workforce, which, in turn, contributes to organizational effectiveness. Motivated employees are linked to high productivity levels (Al-bawaia et al., 2022). Since employees in the financial industry deliver essential services to consumers and organizations, their productivity is crucial for the overall economy. Consequently, financial industry leaders may benefit from developing and implementing effective communication strategies to enhance employee productivity and organizational profitability.

Business Problem Focus and Project Purpose

The specific business problem was that some senior leaders in the financial industry lack effective communication strategies to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability. Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative pragmatic inquiry project was to identify and explore effective communication strategies used by senior leaders in the financial industry to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability. In my research project, I focused on a specific group of senior leaders in the financial industry who had experience with implementing successful communication

strategies to increase employee productivity. The sampling method was purposeful sampling of at least six senior leaders in the financial industry in the Cayman Islands. The participant eligibility criteria included being a senior leader in the financial industry and having successfully used effective communication strategies to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability. The primary data source was semistructured interviews, which allowed participants to share their experiences and insights on implementing and managing successful communication strategies to increase employee productivity.

The conceptual framework that guided my research project was the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Dansereau et al., 1975). Researchers can use LMX theory to highlight the importance of individualized relationships between leaders and team members, illustrating how these interactions influence job satisfaction, performance, and organizational effectiveness. Developed by Graen and colleagues in the 1970s, LMX theory stresses the need for leaders to cultivate unique relationships with each employee rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach (Dewanto, 2021; Scandura & Meuser, 2022). This differentiation impacts employee engagement and effectiveness, showcasing the value of strong leader-follower bonds. In the LMX theory, reciprocity is a central principle, as followers often respond to the support they receive from leaders, influencing their workplace attitudes and behaviors. In enhancing communication strategies in the financial sector, LMX theory is a crucial framework for addressing gaps hindering employee productivity and profitability. By recognizing in-group and out-group dynamics, leaders can tailor communication to promote inclusivity (Buengeler et al.,

2021). High-quality LMX relationships foster open communication, encouraging feedback and collaboration that can lead to innovative productivity solutions (Ahmed et al., 2024). Transitioning employees from out-group to in-group through improved support will enhance morale and business outcomes. LMX theory provides a structured approach to assess the positive impact of effective leadership on job satisfaction and organizational success, enabling leaders to develop better communication strategies that drive productivity and profitability.

Research Question

What effective communication strategies do senior leaders in the financial industry use to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability?

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are beliefs considered to be true but are not actually verified (Cambridge, n.d.-a). In my research project, I made the following four assumptions. The first was that effective communication is essential for successful business leadership within the financial industry, directly impacting employee performance and satisfaction. A foundational belief underpins this assumption: enhancing communication can significantly improve employee productivity and overall workplace morale. Second, I assumed that senior leaders across the financial sector face similar communication strategy challenges, providing applicable insights and learning opportunities that can be generalized across the sample group. Third, I assumed that purposeful sampling of qualified senior leaders would yield meaningful insights about their communication

strategies, reflecting broader best practices within the industry. Fourth, I assumed that participants would accurately and honestly recount their experiences during semistructured interviews, thereby contributing to the validity and credibility of the research findings. My research was grounded on the premise that the LMX theory is relevant to the financial sector, providing valuable insight into communication dynamics and the nature of employee relationships.

Limitations

Limitations refer to potential weaknesses of the research (Cambridge, n.d.-b). My findings may be limited due to a relatively small sample size of at least six senior leaders, which might not comprehensively represent the diverse communication practices across the broader financial industry. This limitation is further compounded by the geographic focus on senior leaders in the Cayman Islands, potentially restricting the applicability of the findings to other regions or global contexts where communication dynamics may vary significantly. While the qualitative nature of the research offers depth and richness in understanding participants' experiences, a qualitative methodology may not enable broad statistical analyses that could reinforce my research project's conclusions. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data collected through interviews introduces the risk of bias, as participants might portray their experiences in an overly favorable light. The context-specificity of the findings could be influenced by current industry trends, economic conditions, or internal organizational cultures, all of which may change over time and impact the long-term relevance of the research.

Transition

In Section 1, I covered the background of the problem, the business problem focus, and project purpose, the research question, and the assumptions and limitations of my research project. In Section 2, I will provide a comprehensive literature review of communication strategies used to increase productivity and organizational profitability. In Section 3, I will outline the research project methodology, including project ethics, the nature of the project, data collection and analysis activities, and reliability and validity. In Section 4, I will present the findings and conclusions of the research, noting the implications for business practice, social change, and further research.

Section 2: The Literature Review

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In this qualitative pragmatic inquiry, I identified and explored effective communication strategies used by senior leaders in the financial industry to increase employee productivity and profitability. The specific business problem was that some senior leaders in the financial industry lack effective communication strategies to increase employee productivity and profitability. The research question that guided project was: What effective communication strategies do senior leaders in the financial industry use to increase employee productivity and profitability?

In this literature review, I aimed to present a critical analysis and synthesis of the literature relevant to communication strategies, performance, and profitability in the financial industry. I searched the literature using databases such as EBSCO, ProQuest, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The keywords included in the search were *financial industry*, *leader-member-exchange (LMX)*, *communication strategies*, *leadership styles*, *innovative leadership*, *employee engagement*, *performance*, *productivity*, and *organizational profitability*. I narrowed the search by focusing on recent publications from 2022 to 2025, ensuring peer-reviewed journals, titles, and abstracts aligned closely with my research topic. The review includes 19 sources published in the last 3 years, of which 79% are from peer-reviewed scholarly journals. This selection ensured the credibility of the information presented, reflecting the dynamic nature of communication strategies, productivity, and profitability in the financial industry.

My review of the literature was comprehensive and systematic. First, I addressed the conceptual framework, including a critical analysis of supporting theories. Second, I critically analyzed and synthesized the literature about potential themes and phenomena relating to my project's purpose: to identify and explore the effective communication strategies some financial industry leaders use to increase organizational productivity and profitability. Last, I compared different perspectives and evaluated the relationship of my research project to previous research and findings. I provided a robust, substantiated review of the professional and academic literature related to my research project on effective communication strategies some financial industry leaders use to improve productivity and increase profitability.

Transformational Leadership and Employee Engagement

Transformational leadership enhances employee engagement and productivity by fostering a positive work environment that promotes trust, recognizes contributions, and encourages collaboration. A positive work environment cultivates higher performance and increases employee satisfaction. Santoso et al. (2022) highlighted the critical interplay between transformational leadership and employee engagement, particularly during the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Santoso et al. (2022) emphasized that strong and empathetic leadership and effective communication strategies are crucial in helping organizations navigate crises. Santoso et al. (2022) revealed that leaders who prioritize transparent communication and actively engage with their teams can significantly foster employees' sense of belonging and commitment. A sense of belonging and commitment, in turn, enhances organizational productivity and

resilience during difficult times, suggesting that a supportive leadership style is instrumental in maintaining high morale, even amidst uncertainty. As organizational leaders increasingly recognize the value of transformational leadership, it becomes essential to understand how leadership styles can be integrated into daily operations and strategic initiatives. The evidence presented by Santoso et al. (2022) from various organizations illustrated that when leaders engage consistently with employees, they recognize individual contributions and build a culture of collaboration that drives collective success. Collaborative engagement is likely to offer a pathway to survive crises and emerge stronger, positioning organizations to thrive in the face of future challenges.

The impact of transformational leadership is profound, particularly in fostering an environment where employees feel valued and engaged. By prioritizing open dialogue and collaboration, leaders can create a workplace culture that encourages innovation and accountability, enabling employees to contribute to organizational goals actively. As we move forward, leaders should embrace transformational practices to address immediate challenges and cultivate a resilient workforce equipped for sustainable growth and long-term performance amid an ever-evolving business landscape. Strong leader–member relationships, characterized by trust and effective communication, foster innovation and enhance organizational productivity. Exploring the nexus between strategic leadership, team innovation, and LMX theory, a qualitative study by Singh and Jha (2024) demonstrated, based on interviews with leaders from diverse sectors, how strong leader–member relationships contribute to fostering an innovative environment. Singh and Jha emphasized that building trust through effective communication is critical for fostering

innovation and increasing productivity, ultimately enhancing organizational profitability. Singh and Jha's qualitative study is particularly pertinent to my research, as cultivating such relationships can significantly mitigate communication gaps identified among senior leaders in the financial industry. Singh and Jha's findings revealed various themes and factors that affect the innovation orientation of leaders and their team members, advocating for communication strategies prioritizing relational dynamics and highlighting the importance of trust and collaboration as facilitators of employee productivity. However, the specific sectors studied, consisting solely of leaders engaged in the innovation process, may limit the applicability of the findings, encouraging further comparative research in the financial environment.

Balancing Productivity and Employee Well-Being

Balancing workplace productivity with employee well-being is a critical challenge for leaders who require effective strategies to prevent burnout. Whiteoak et al. (2023) examined the critical challenge leaders face in enhancing workplace productivity while mitigating the risk of employee burnout. Whiteoak et al. argued that traditional productivity approaches often overlook employees' psychological well-being, which can lead to detrimental outcomes for both personnel and profitability in the long run. Through a comprehensive literature review and case studies, Whiteoak et al. identified effective leadership strategies that promote a healthy work-life balance and advocated for communication practices fostering open dialogue about workload expectations and employee concerns. Whiteoak et al. found that transparency and support are important in creating an organizational culture that prioritizes both performance and employee well-

being. Whiteoak et al.'s quantitative research is particularly relevant to my inquiry, as it addressed leadership in high-pressure sectors, such as finance, where the drive for productivity must be carefully balanced with awareness of employee mental health. The insights provided in the Whiteoak et al. can inform leadership training programs focused on developing sustainable productivity strategies that also protect employee morale and, consequently, organizational profitability.

Exploring leadership behaviors among Iranian healthcare professionals reveals critical themes of effective leadership during transitions. Razavi et al. (2022) highlighted the need for further research into the impact of leadership behaviors on patient outcomes and team dynamics. Razavi et al. explored leadership behaviors among Iranian healthcare professionals, including physicians and nurses. Using direct content analysis involving semistructured interviews with 15 participants, Razavi et al. identified themes such as transition, action, and interpersonal skills, highlighting the importance of leadership during transition processes in achieving team success. These findings underscore the significance of team leadership behaviors in unpredictable situations, providing implications for improving leadership training in healthcare environments. Nonetheless, there is a need for further research on the relationships between leadership behaviors and patient outcomes (Razavi et al., 2022). While Razavi et al. emphasized proactive leadership development, they also highlighted significant gaps, including the connection between team leadership behavior and patient outcomes. Additionally, focusing primarily on transition processes may overlook broader team dynamics and authentic leadership styles, limiting the study's generalizability to various healthcare settings.

Effective leadership behaviors play a crucial role during transitions, highlighting the necessity for additional studies to explore how leadership behaviors impact organizational outcomes. Patrianti et al. (2022) addressed the role of integrated marketing communications (IMC) in Sharia banking by exploring how IMC strategies can enhance the visibility and understanding of Sharia banking products among consumers, which is critical for the growth of the banking sector. Patrianti et al. highlighted the specific challenges that Sharia-compliant banks encounter in promoting their products, underscoring the importance of customized marketing strategies that adhere to Islamic principles. Patrianti et al. also presented case studies and examples of successful IMC strategies implemented within the Sharia banking industry, providing valuable insights for practitioners and scholars. Patrianti et al. contributed to understanding how effective communication can foster awareness and acceptance of Sharia banking, thereby supporting its growth in the broader financial landscape.

Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance

The relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance garnered attention in contemporary management literature. Mansor et al. (2023) contributed to the discourse on employee engagement and organizational performance by exploring how various dimensions of employee engagement impacted organizational performance outcomes, particularly in the context of accounting firms. Mansor et al. built on the foundation of employee engagement and organizational performance by employing a mixed-methods approach to analyze the nuances of employee engagement in the accounting profession. Mansor et al.'s findings affirmed that leadership styles and

organizational culture significantly influenced employee attitudes and behaviors. Mansor et al. addressed the role of the work environment in shaping engagement levels and asserted that a positive workplace atmosphere, characterized by mutual respect and collaboration, enhanced employee commitment. Mansor et al.'s insights underscore the critical importance of fostering an engaging workplace to drive organizational success.

The significance of employee engagement in driving organizational performance is well-documented in recent research. Mansor et al. (2023) also explored the tangible impacts of employee engagement on organizational performance, specifically in terms of financial metrics and customer satisfaction. By quantitatively measuring the effects of employee engagement and organizational performance, Mansor et al. provided empirical evidence reinforcing the need for organizations to focus on engagement strategies to improve performance. Ultimately, Mansor et al. highlighted the necessity for businesses to invest in employee engagement as a strategic lever for enhancing overall organizational effectiveness. Exploring employee engagement is essential for understanding its impact on organizational performance. Mansor et al. offered practical recommendations for management practitioners, emphasizing the importance of investing in employee engagement initiatives. Mansor et al. contributed valuable insights to the ongoing discussion surrounding employee engagement and organizational performance. By situating Mansor et al.'s findings within the broader context of existing literature, Mansor et al. highlighted the critical interplay between engaged employees and organizational success, proposing a cohesive framework for management practices to

foster a committed workforce. Future researchers could build on these findings, exploring the longitudinal effects of engagement initiatives in diverse organizational contexts.

The impact of leadership styles on communication competency and employee engagement is crucial for enhancing organizational effectiveness in the hotel industry. Rabiul et al. (2023) conducted a thorough analysis, demonstrating that transformational leadership positively influences communication competency and employee work engagement. Using empirical data from various hotels, Rabiul et al. highlighted the significance of effective communication in driving employee motivation and performance. Rabiul et al. found that leaders who adopt a transformational approach create an environment that encourages open dialogue and collaboration, enhancing employees' psychological investment in their work. Therefore, Rabiul et al. emphasized the need for hotel management to prioritize the development of transformational leadership practices to improve overall service quality and employee satisfaction. Rabiul et al. contributed to the literature on leadership within the hospitality sector, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding how communication and engagement are intertwined with leadership styles. Furthermore, Rabiul et al. outlined practical implications for hotel managers seeking to improve workforce dynamics and organizational effectiveness. Rabiul et al.'s study served as a valuable resource for researchers and practitioners interested in the interplay between leadership, communication, and employee engagement in hospitality contexts.

Leadership Communication and Organizational Culture

Effective leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organizational culture, where leaders design cultures that foster inclusive environments, enhance employee engagement, and align organizational values with strategic objectives through effective communication. Suwanda and Nugroho (2022) presented a systematic literature review of the McKinsey 7S Framework, which comprises seven interconnected elements: strategy, structure, systems, shared values, skills, style, and staff. Suwanda and Nugroho highlighted how organizations can leverage the 7S model to enhance performance by ensuring alignment among the seven components. The authors discussed various studies that demonstrate the practical applications of the 7S model across different sectors, illustrating its versatility as a management tool. Suwanda and Nugroho revealed that organizations that assess and adjust 7S elements can achieve a more holistic improvement in performance and agility. By understanding and implementing the principles outlined in the 7S framework, leaders can better position their organizations to respond to changing market dynamics and foster a strong, adaptable culture. Integrating effective leadership and the 7S model is a foundation for sustained organizational success.

Strategies for managing innovation in the digital age emphasize the importance of organizations adjusting to swiftly evolving technologies and fostering a culture that encourages collaboration, embraces risk-taking, and effectively utilizes digital tools to maintain ongoing innovation. Raza and Jabeen (2023) reviewed the strategies and best practices associated with innovation management in the digital era. Raza and Jabeen examined how organizations adapt to rapid technological advancements and the

requirements for fostering a culture of innovation. Raza and Jabeen's literature review categorized best practices into various themes, such as fostering collaboration, utilizing new technologies, and encouraging risk-taking. Raza and Jabeen argued that organizations must adopt digital tools and reshape their organizational culture to support continuous innovation. Raza and Jabeen's review is a roadmap for practitioners implementing effective organizational innovation strategies.

Some organizations face challenges with their performance management systems. In their thematic analysis, Brudan et al. (2024) explored the challenges organizations face with performance management systems. Brudan et al. assessed existing literature to identify key themes such as performance measurement, organizational alignment, and stakeholder engagement. Brudan et al. highlighted the importance of adapting performance management practices in response to environmental changes and internal dynamics. Brudan et al. provided case studies that illustrated different approaches to overcoming challenges, emphasizing the need for a cohesive strategy that integrates qualitative and quantitative performance indicators to achieve desired outcomes.

Over the decades, the evolution of strategy-focused organizations has highlighted the need to integrate strategic management theories into contemporary practices, emphasizing the importance of adapting to modern challenges. The ongoing transformation reflects the dynamic nature of the business environment, where organizations must continuously refine their strategies to remain competitive. Musov (2024) provided a comprehensive reflection on the evolution of strategy-focused organizations over the past two decades, shedding light on how strategic management

theories have been woven into modern organizational practices. In their analysis, Musov discussed key developments in strategic thinking, mainly focusing on the profound impact of globalization and technology on organizational strategies. The proliferation of digital technologies and the interconnectedness brought about by globalization have compelled organizations to reassess their strategic priorities and frameworks. As Musov argued, while the foundational principles of strategy-focused organizations remain relevant, they should be adapted to address contemporary challenges such as rapid technological advancement, shifting consumer preferences, and increasing competition on a global scale.

Furthermore, Musov (2024) evaluated various case studies that illustrate the successful application of strategy-focused approaches in different organizational contexts. Musov's analysis served as a testament to the adaptability and resilience of strategy-focused organizations that have embraced change. By highlighting real-world examples, Musov demonstrated the effectiveness of implementing strategic management theories and provided practical insights into how organizations can enhance their strategic frameworks. These insights highlighted the necessity for organizations to remain agile and responsive in a rapidly changing environment. Integrating strategic management theories, coupled with an understanding of contemporary challenges, can empower organizations to survive and thrive. As organizations continue to navigate the complexities of the modern landscape, Musov's recommendations can serve as a guiding framework for enhancing their strategic initiatives and ensuring long-term success.

Leadership Communication in the Banking Sector

Leadership communication styles across various corporate governance structures in the banking sector can significantly impact organizational effectiveness, employee morale, and stakeholder relationships. The interplay between communication style and organizational impact highlights the importance of effective communication as a foundational element of successful leadership. Thaiduong (2024) conducted a comparative analysis focusing on leadership communication styles within different corporate governance structures in the Vietnamese banking sector, providing valuable insights into the dynamics at play. Thaiduong synthesized existing literature on leadership communication, emphasizing its pivotal role in shaping organizational effectiveness and stakeholder relationships. By examining the diverse governance frameworks within the banking sector, Thaiduong highlighted how communication styles are influenced by and vary significantly across specific structures. Varying communication styles can have profound implications for employee morale and engagement, as the effectiveness of communication directly correlates with how employees perceive their leaders and the organization. Thaiduong suggested that leadership communication styles significantly affect employee morale and engagement, which, in turn, can influence organizational performance. For instance, a more inclusive and participatory communication style within a flat governance structure can lead to higher employee engagement levels compared to a more hierarchical model that may stifle open dialogue. Thaiduong highlighted the need for a more nuanced understanding of how leadership communication can be tailored to fit specific organizational contexts.

As organizations strive for improved governance and performance outcomes, Thaiduong advocated adapting communication strategies to enhance effectiveness. Adapting communication strategies is crucial for leaders to cultivate a culture of transparency and collaboration in their organizations.

Considering Thaiduong's (2024) insights, a one-size-fits-all approach to leadership communication is insufficient; instead, leaders must develop strategies that resonate with their organizational structures and employee expectations. Thaiduong underscored the significance of leadership communication styles in the banking sector and their influence on employee morale and organizational performance. Organizations can foster stronger stakeholder relationships and achieve greater effectiveness by recognizing and adapting communication styles to fit various governance structures. As the banking sector evolves, embracing tailored communication practices will be vital for leaders aiming to enhance governance and drive sustainable performance.

Effective internal communication is essential for boosting employee advocacy, engagement, trust, and organizational commitment. The significance of transparent communication cannot be overstated, as it is the backbone of a healthy organizational culture. By fostering open dialogue between management and employees, organizations can significantly enhance morale and performance while providing strategic guidance for improving communication systems. Thelen and Men (2023) emphasized how effective internal communication promotes employee advocacy and plays a vital part in shaping an organization's success. Thelen and Men illustrated a direct correlation between robust internal communication strategies and heightened employee engagement, trust, and

organizational commitment. For instance, when employees feel informed and included in decision-making processes, they are more likely to advocate for the organization, amplifying its message and goals. Thelen and Men highlighted that fostering open dialogue between management and staff boosts morale and enhances organizational performance. Thelen and Men suggested that organizations must prioritize creating an environment where communication flows freely, allowing for the exchange of ideas and feedback.

When employees trust that their voices are heard, they are more likely to invest themselves in their work and align their personal goals with those of the organization. Thelen and Men (2023) provided practical recommendations for businesses seeking to improve internal communication frameworks to support employee advocacy initiatives. Thelen and Men underscored the necessity for organizations to actively evaluate and refine communication processes. Companies can foster an inclusive culture that inspires employee trust and commitment by implementing structured communication strategies. Thelen and Men underlined the crucial role of effective internal communication in enhancing employee advocacy and organizational performance. Organizations can foster a culture of trust and engagement by prioritizing open dialogue and tailored communication frameworks, ultimately driving success. As businesses navigate an increasingly complex environment, effective communication will be paramount to achieving organizational goals and sustaining a motivated workforce.

Transformational leadership enhances employee engagement and productivity by cultivating a positive work environment that promotes trust, recognizes contributions, and

encourages collaboration. Transformational leadership style not only empowers employees but also drives higher performance and satisfaction within the organization. The significance of transformational leadership is particularly evident in times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where effective leadership can make a substantial difference in maintaining morale and performance. Santoso et al. (2022) analyzed the impact of transformational leadership on employee engagement during the pandemic, with a specific emphasis on the vital role of internal communication. Santoso et al. illustrated how strong, empathetic leadership coupled with effective communication strategies can help organizations navigate crises more successfully. For instance, leaders who maintain open lines of communication tend to foster a sense of safety and support, enabling employees to feel more secure and engaged even amid uncertainty. Santoso et al. presented evidence from various organizations that demonstrated how leaders who engage with employees through transparent communication cultivate a sense of belonging and commitment.

A sense of belonging is crucial for employee engagement, as it encourages individuals to invest in their roles and contribute to collective goals. Santoso et al. (2022) showcased that when employees feel acknowledged and valued, their productivity and resilience in the face of challenges significantly improve. Shifting to the implications of Santoso et al.'s findings, it is evident that organizations need to focus on transformational leadership and robust communication strategies to succeed in uncertain situations. By investing in leadership development programs emphasizing empathy and engagement, organizations can equip their leaders with the necessary skills to navigate challenges and

promote a cohesive team environment. Santoso et al. highlighted the importance of transformational leadership in enhancing employee engagement and driving organizational productivity. The interplay between empathetic leadership and transparent communication plays a role in fostering resilience during crises. As organizational leaders adapt to ever-changing circumstances, embracing transformational leadership will create a supportive work culture that benefits employees and the organization.

Innovative leadership skills are necessary to implement communication strategies in the financial industry. Purwadi et al. (2024) explored the necessity of developing global leadership competencies tailored to the complex and interconnected environment of the banking industry. Purwadi et al. emphasized key attributes such as cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, and global networking capabilities. Purwadi et al. utilized qualitative analysis of various leadership practices, highlighting that effective leadership within the banking sector is grounded in a deep understanding of cross-cultural dynamics and a commitment to continuous learning. Purwadi et al. argued that conventional leadership models do not address the nuanced challenges that leaders face today. Through structured competency development programs, Purwadi et al. advocated for equipping leaders with essential skills to navigate complexities successfully. Purwadi et al. suggested that fostering global leadership competencies is critical for banks to remain competitive in an increasingly globalized market. Emphasizing continuous education and cultural adaptability will enhance leadership effectiveness and improve institutional performance. As the banking industry evolves, so does the necessity for

innovative leadership approaches that prioritize employee well-being and engagement, leading us to explore happiness management in corporate governance.

Happiness management plays a role in increasing employee engagement and enhancing organizational productivity and profitability. Ravina Ripoll et al. (2022) examined the significance of happiness management within organizational frameworks, especially during the transformative era of Industry 4.0. Ravina Ripoll et al. proposed that employee happiness is necessary for achieving sustainability goals and improving organizational communication. Ravina Ripoll et al. argued that traditional management strategies often neglect the psychological needs of employees, which can hinder productivity. Focusing on happiness management enables organizations to foster a more engaged workforce that acts as advocates for the organization. Key factors such as organizational culture, leadership styles, and employee involvement were analyzed to underscore transparent communication's impact on employee satisfaction and performance. Ravina Ripoll et al. underscored the importance of integrating happiness management into corporate strategies, suggesting that organizations can thrive and adapt amidst rapid technological changes by prioritizing the emotional well-being of employees. While fostering employee happiness is essential, understanding the governance structures that support sustainable practices is equally crucial.

Corporate Governance in Banking

Corporate governance is necessary to improve financial outcomes in the banking industry. Athar et al. (2023) provided an empirical analysis of corporate governance practices in Pakistan's banking sector and their influence on financial performance,

focusing on governance mechanisms such as board structure and ownership concentration. Through quantitative methodologies, Athar et al. demonstrated a positive correlation between strong corporate governance and enhanced financial outcomes. Athar et al. highlighted the importance of accountability and transparency in building trust within banking institutions. Athar et al. indicated that effective governance mitigates risks and facilitates sustainable practices that foster long-term shareholder value. Athar et al. contributed significantly to understanding the relationship between governance practices and performance in emerging markets, reinforcing that effective corporate governance is vital for stability and growth in the banking sector. Complementing the discussion on corporate governance, adopting cutting-edge technologies such as business intelligence and analytics (BIA) is essential for banks seeking to enhance decision-making capabilities.

The banking sector holds significant promise for transformation through BIA, which can enable performance and profitability. Bany Mohammad et al. (2022) examined the adoption of BIA in the banking sector, employing the technology-organization-environment (TOE) framework to analyze the elements influencing BIA adoption. The authors' mixed-methods approach identified critical factors such as technological readiness and organizational culture as pivotal in successfully implementing BIA tools. Bany Mohammad et al. illustrated how external pressures, including regulatory compliance and competitive dynamics, shape banks' strategic decisions regarding analytics. Additionally, Bany Mohammad et al. argued that well-executed BIA initiatives can significantly improve operational efficiency and decision-making processes, giving

banks a competitive edge. Bany Mohammad et al. enhanced the academic discourse on digital transformation in the banking sector and provided practical implications for institutions leveraging data analytics to achieve better performance outcomes.

Conceptual Framework: Leader–Member Exchange Theory

The LMX theory underscores the importance of individualized relationships between leaders and followers, demonstrating that these distinct interactions significantly affect employees' job satisfaction, performance, organizational effectiveness, productivity, and profitability. The LMX theory, primarily developed by Graen and their colleagues in the 1970s, highlights the significance of the interpersonal relationships between leaders and their followers (Dewanto, 2021). The key point of LMX theory is that leaders cultivate distinct relationships with each team member rather than treating all subordinates uniformly (Scandura & Meuser, 2022). This differentiation significantly influences employees' job satisfaction, performance, and effectiveness. Understanding LMX is crucial as it provides insights into how leaders can foster strong relationships that ultimately benefit individual employees and the organization.

LMX theory encompasses several essential concepts that frame its approach to understanding leader-follower dynamics. First, the LMX theory categorizes employees into in-groups and out-groups. In-group members enjoy high-quality exchanges with their leaders, receiving greater attention, support, and resources. In contrast, out-group members typically experience lower-quality exchanges, hindering their engagement (Buengeler et al., 2021). Second, trust, respect, and mutual obligation influence the quality of the leader–member exchange. High-quality exchanges create positive work

environments, while low-quality exchanges can lead to dissatisfaction (Dami et al., 2022). Lastly, LMX emphasizes the concept of reciprocity, indicating that followers often reciprocate the support they receive from leaders, which can shape their attitudes and behaviors at work (Tremblay et al., 2022). These concepts are vital for improving leader-follower interactions and communication within organizations.

LMX theory is underpinned by several key propositions and hypotheses that further elucidate its implications. One prominent proposition posits that the quality of leader-member exchanges influences self-reported work performance through communication satisfaction and employee work engagement. Additionally, LMX theory frames the connection between leader-member exchange quality and employee engagement as also mediated by communication satisfaction (Santalla-Banderali & Alvarado, 2022). Supporting this, Santalla-Banderali and Alvarado (2022) found that communication satisfaction and employee work engagement mediated the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and work performance. Santalla-Banderali and Alvarado also asserted that the relationship between leader-member exchange quality and work engagement is mediated by communication satisfaction. Santalla-Banderali and Alvarado provided a framework for understanding how the quality of leader-member exchanges influences employee outcomes, such as work performance and engagement, with communication satisfaction as a key mediator. Santalla-Banderali and Alvarado suggested a framework that integrates leader-member exchange quality, communication satisfaction, and employee work engagement as contributing factors influencing self-evaluated work performance, productivity, and profitability.

Application to the Research Project

When addressing the business problem that some senior leaders in the financial industry lack effective communication strategies to increase employee productivity and profitability, LMX theory is a vital framework for enhancing leader–member relationships. By identifying and addressing the dynamics of in-group and out-group classifications within teams, leaders can tailor their communication practices to meet the needs of each group, promoting inclusivity and engagement (Buengeler et al., 2021). Moreover, by leveraging high-quality LMX relationships, senior leaders can foster an open communication environment, encouraging feedback and collaboration that leads to innovative solutions for enhancing productivity and profitability (Ahmed et al., 2024). Striving to move employees from the out-group to the in-group through better communication and support will further boost morale and motivation, ultimately leading to improved business outcomes. LMX theory provides a systematic way to measure the positive effects of these enhanced leadership practices on job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness within the financial industry context. By implementing the principles of LMX Theory, senior leaders in the financial industry can develop more effective communication strategies that foster stronger relationships with employees and drive significant improvements in productivity and profitability.

Potential Themes and Phenomena

Transformational Leadership and Its Impact on Employee Engagement

Transformational leadership is a central pillar in enhancing employee engagement and productivity. This leadership style fosters a work environment characterized by trust,

recognition of individual contributions, and collaboration, which is especially vital during challenging periods such as the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Santoso et al. (2022), transformational leaders are committed to building a positive work atmosphere where employees feel valued and empowered. This positive culture translates into higher employee satisfaction, commitment, and productivity levels.

Effective communication is critical in an environment shaped by transformational leadership. Leaders who prioritize transparent interaction can create a culture of empowerment and engagement, enabling employees to feel heard and included. Research by Santoso et al. (2022) indicated that leaders who maintain open lines of communication during crises can bolster employee morale. A sense of belonging cultivated through transparent communication enhances resilience and productivity while ensuring employees are motivated to contribute fully to organizational goals.

Building on these insights, organizational leaders should invest in training programs to develop transformational skills, including empathetic communication and active engagement strategies. Such initiatives enhance leaders' capabilities, ultimately fostering innovation, accountability, and a collaborative work environment that aligns with broader organizational objectives. By harnessing transformational practices strategically, organizations can navigate crises with adaptability and resilience, laying the groundwork for long-term success.

Effective Internal Communication as a Driver of Organizational Culture

The interplay between leadership communication and organizational culture cannot be understated. Effective internal communication is crucial in fostering an

inclusive environment, aligning organizational values, and enhancing performance.

Rabiul et al. (2023) argued that leaders in the hotel sector demonstrated that communication styles directly influence employee motivation and work performance.

Transformational leaders who adopt an open and inclusive approach significantly impact their teams' communication quality, fostering a more innovative and productive work environment.

There is a strong positive correlation between transparent communication and increased employee advocacy, trust, and commitment. Thelen and Men (2023) highlighted that transparent communication directly correlates with increased employee advocacy, trust, and commitment. When organizational leaders promote open dialogue and actively engage with employees, they create a culture that motivates advocates committed to the mission. This open organizational culture increases morale and performance, aligning employees' personal and professional goals with those of the organization.

Organizational leaders who seek to enhance internal communication should adopt structured frameworks that facilitate information flow. These efforts encourage collaboration and feedback while fostering an environment where employees feel valued and equipped to share their ideas. To effectively shape organizational culture, leaders should prioritize evaluating and refining their communication strategies to ensure they remain relevant and responsive to employee needs. By doing so, leaders can create a dynamic workplace conducive to sustained performance and growth.

Balancing Employee Well-Being and Productivity

Balancing productivity and employee well-being presents a significant challenge for modern leaders. As outlined by Whiteoak et al. (2023), traditional productivity metrics often overlook employees' psychological well-being, which can lead to adverse outcomes for both personnel and organizational profitability. Leadership strategies prioritizing mental health and well-being are essential for mitigating employee burnout while maintaining high performance.

Leaders are encouraged to initiate open dialogues with employees about workload expectations and concerns to create a healthy work-life balance. Whiteoak et al. (2023) emphasized that transparency and support are crucial in fostering a culture that prioritizes employee well-being and productivity. Organizational leaders who foster such discourse enhance employee morale and create environments where staff members feel supported, contributing to improved productivity, particularly in high-pressure sectors such as finance.

Integrating well-being practices into leadership frameworks is crucial for fostering a resilient, engaged, and high-performing workforce. Whiteoak et al. (2023) underscored the importance of integrating well-being practices into leadership frameworks. By developing leadership competencies that promote sustainable productivity strategies, organizational leaders can protect employee morale while enhancing overall organizational performance. Leadership development initiatives focused on resilience and empathy will position organizations favorably to achieve short-term productivity and long-term profitability.

Enhancing Workplace Dynamics Through Communication Competency

As leadership dynamics evolve, so too does the emphasis on communication competency among leaders. Singh and Jha (2024) highlighted that strong leader–member relationships, characterized by trust and effective communication, are key components in enhancing organizational productivity and innovation. By understanding the importance of relational dynamics and collaboration, leaders can create environments that foster employee engagement and drive organizational success.

Leaders should prioritize communication training to enhance interaction quality within their teams. The empirical analysis conducted by Rabiul et al. (2023) demonstrated that effective leadership practices in the hotel industry translate into improved service quality, reflecting the broader applicability of these findings across sectors. By fostering a culture of open communication, organizations eliminate barriers to innovation and enable teams to work cohesively to achieve strategic goals.

Summary

This literature review explored the vital link between transformational leadership, employee engagement, and effective communication in boosting organizational productivity and profitability. Transformational leadership fosters a positive work environment that enhances employee trust and collaboration. Santoso et al. (2022) stressed the importance of empathetic leadership and transparent communication, particularly during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, as these elements cultivate a sense of belonging that drives resilience and productivity. Singh and Jha (2024) further emphasized the relationship between strong LMX dynamics and innovation,

demonstrating that effective communication fosters trust and boosts productivity and profitability. Meanwhile, Whiteoak et al. (2023) highlighted the necessity of balancing productivity with employee well-being to avoid burnout, which can diminish performance.

Research across various sectors, including healthcare and banking, underscores the need for adaptable leadership styles tailored to industry challenges. Both Razavi et al. (2022) and Purwadi et al. (2024) stressed that effective communication is essential for building trust and improving outcomes. Furthermore, Mansor et al. (2023) indicated that a positive workplace culture enhances employee engagement, leading to better performance. Rabiul et al. (2023) revealed how transformational leadership positively influences communication competency, impacting employee motivation and service quality. The literature emphasized that effective leadership characterized by open communication and transformational practices is crucial for enhancing employee productivity and driving profitability. Such leadership development is necessary for organizations aiming to thrive in today's complex business landscape.

Transition

In Section 2, I synthesized and analyzed recent academic literature, highlighting its relevance to my business problem. In Section 3, I discuss project ethics, nature of the study, and the data collection and analysis, focusing on reliability and validity. In Section 4, I present findings and their implications for business practice, social change, and potential avenues for future research.

Section 3: Research Project Methodology

In Section 3, I present the research methodology, which encompasses ethical considerations, the nature of my research project, the population and sampling strategy, the interview protocol and questions, and the methods for data collection, organization, and analysis. Additionally, I emphasize the significance of validity and reliability in qualitative research. Additionally, in Section 3, I address ethical concerns in this research to ensure that I protect the rights of all participants in the project. I also describe the nature of the project, the population, data collection methods, organization techniques, and the steps I took to ensure the project's reliability and validity.

For my research project, I employed a qualitative pragmatic inquiry design to identify and explore the effective communication strategies used by senior leaders in the financial industry to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability. By conducting semistructured interviews with these senior leaders, I identified and explored the effective communication strategies senior leaders in the financial industry use to improve employee productivity and organizational profitability. By interviewing financial industry leaders with successful experience in managing their employees, I uncovered the motivators, decisions, and behaviors that inform effective communication strategies. I conducted an in-depth analysis of financial industry leaders' choices in real-world situations regarding employee productivity and organizational profitability.

In this section, I address the ethical concerns in this research to ensure that I protect the rights of all participants in the project. I also describe the nature of the

research project, population, data collection methods, organization techniques, and steps I took to ensure the reliability and validity of the project.

Project Ethics

In the data collection process, my role as the researcher was to facilitate a comprehensive, ethical, and rigorous approach to gathering qualitative data through semistructured interviews with senior leaders in the financial industry. According to Lim (2024), the researcher serves as the primary instrument for data collection in qualitative studies, which requires an in-depth understanding of the research topic and the ability to engage meaningfully with participants. This engagement was crucial, as it allowed for the exploration of nuanced perspectives that quantitative methods may overlook. By employing semistructured interviews, I was able to adapt my questions in response to the flow of conversation. According to Hwang et al. (2023), this approach can foster richer dialogue and encourage participants to delve deeper into their communication strategies. Hwang et al. further explained that the flexibility of semistructured interviews can enhance the quality of the data collected and help build trust and rapport with the participants, which are critical components in qualitative research. Additionally, I committed to upholding ethical standards throughout this process, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring participant confidentiality, which aligns with the guidelines set by the American Psychological Association (2020).

My relationship to the financial industry and this topic is vast. As a senior manager in the financial industry, specifically in banking, I have over 20 years of experience to this research. My professional background has provided me with unique

insights into the communication practices and challenges faced by finance industry leaders. This extensive experience has shaped my understanding of daily operational dynamics and deepened my awareness of the ethical nuances inherent in financial practices and stakeholder interactions.

In my role as a researcher, I committed to adhering to the ethical standards outlined in *The Belmont Report* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). *The Belmont Report* emphasizes the importance of respecting persons, promoting beneficence, and ensuring justice throughout the research process (Kuhnt et al., 2025). I will take the necessary steps to uphold these principles while conducting research, which includes obtaining informed consent and prioritizing participants' rights and well-being. Yusof et al. (2022) explained that informed consent serves as a protective measure for potential research participants by ensuring they are informed about my research project's procedures, risks, benefits, their right to decline or withdraw without penalty, confidentiality assurances, any compensation, and the researchers' contact information, typically provided through a participant information sheet and a written consent document before participants involvement in the project clearly outlined the informed consent process for all participants. The form detailed the purpose of my research, procedures, potential risks, and benefits while also emphasizing the participants' rights to withdraw from the study at any point without any repercussions.

Participant autonomy in research emphasizes individuals' rights to informed consent, to refuse participation, to manage their identity, to control their information, and to withdraw consent along with their data. Researchers are primarily tasked with

safeguarding these rights (Dahal, 2024). Therefore, as the researcher, I informed the participants about their right to withdraw from the interviews at any time, without penalty. Participants could have withdrawn at any time by telling me verbally or in writing, ensuring they feel comfortable and secure in their involvement. I did not offer participants financial rewards or gifts; however, I will express my gratitude with an email upon completing my research project.

I implemented measures to ensure the ethical protection of participants. These measures include masking the identities of participants and locations in any reporting or analysis and utilizing a coding system for data that ensures anonymity. I referenced more detailed protocols in the Guidance document on Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) website. I received approval from Walden University's IRB (Approval No. 07-15-25-1132441). Additionally, instead of using actual names or personal details, I referred to participants by codes such as P1, P2, P3, etc. This method helps maintain anonymity and prevents any individual from being identified, thus safeguarding their identities and keeping their personal information confidential. To prioritize the safety of participants in my research project, I implemented various protective strategies. I ensured confidentiality by assigning each participant a unique code rather than using their real names or personal details. For example, I labeled them as P1, P2, P3, and so on. This method ensures that the information I collected remains anonymous and cannot easily be linked back to any specific person, thus safeguarding their identities and personal information.

I will store all data securely on devices protected by passwords and in encrypted storage systems for 5 years. Additionally, I avoided including any questions or topics that could potentially cause distress or discomfort to my participants. Emphasizing these protective measures fostered a safe and respectful atmosphere for everyone involved.

Nature of the Project

I employed a qualitative research methodology for my research project, as it involves collecting and analyzing firsthand textual data to understand opinions and real-life experiences. This approach can be effective in assessing the communication strategies of senior leaders in the financial industry of the Cayman Islands. By conducting interviews with participants, I gathered valuable insights into their individual experiences with communication strategies, which enhanced my understanding of their perceived effects and identified areas that require improvement (Taherdoost, 2022). Using a qualitative research methodology allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of how communication strategies are developed and implemented.

A researcher engaged in pragmatic inquiry aims to focus on resolving real-world practical problems through their research (Allemang et al., 2022). A pragmatic inquiry looks to address recognized issues by exploring and taking action, making it particularly effective for tackling the practical challenge of ineffective communication strategies designed to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability. A pragmatic inquiry aims to identify effective solutions for real-life issues. By focusing on effective practices, I was able to uncover practical insights and suggestions for enhancing communication strategies (see Allemang et al., 2022). Adopting a pragmatic approach

emphasizes the significance of context, allowing my research project to be specifically adapted to the distinctive environments and challenges faced by leaders in the Cayman Islands financial industry. Contextual relevance is crucial for understanding the nuances of communication strategies across various settings within the financial sector.

Population, Sampling, and Participants

The population for my research project consisted of senior leaders in the financial industry in the Cayman Islands who have successfully implemented effective communication strategies to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability. I employed purposeful sampling to select participants who have successfully implemented effective communication strategies. Purposeful sampling, commonly used in qualitative research, entails a researcher choosing participants from a specific population based on certain traits, experiences, or criteria to effectively represent that group in the study (Stratton, 2024). Purposeful sampling ensured that the chosen individuals possess relevant experience and can provide valuable insights into effective communication strategies. To be eligible, participants had to be senior leaders in the financial sector and have successfully used effective communication strategies to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability, specifically within the Cayman Islands. I selected six senior leaders to capture a range of viewpoints and experiences, which enriched the findings of my research project and contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the topic. I continued to recruit and interview participants until I achieved data saturation. Data saturation occurs when no additional data or themes emerge from the data, indicating that the information has been thoroughly explored

(Naeem et al., 2024). A comprehensive approach ensured a well-rounded analysis and deeper insights into the research topic.

To connect with participants, I leveraged my extensive professional relationships in the financial industry to engage those who may feel more comfortable joining a research project led by someone they know. Leveraging professional relationships and social networks was a valuable approach to reaching participants, as these existing connections enhanced the legitimacy of the researcher-participant relationship (Wong et al., 2021). Furthermore, I employed a mix of email invitations and professional networking sites like LinkedIn, which helped me access a broad range of senior leaders in the financial industry who have effectively used communication strategies to improve employee performance and organizational productivity. I fostered a working relationship with participants by introducing myself and engaging in casual conversations to establish trust and rapport (Saragih, 2025). Furthermore, I checked in with participants regularly, ensuring we maintained our connection and that I demonstrated genuine interest in their experiences and well-being.

Data Collection Activities

In my research project, I served as the primary data collection instrument, utilizing semistructured interviews as the primary data collection method. Employing an interview protocol lies in the need for a structured yet adaptable framework that facilitates a comprehensive exploration of participants' experiences with effective communication strategies in the financial industry. Establishing an interview protocol allows participants to understand the procedures from the outset of the interview (de

Villiers et al., 2022), facilitating in-depth insight into leaders' perspectives on how communication affects employee productivity and enhances organizational profitability. This approach enhanced the consistency of the data collected and created a comfortable environment in which participants could share their experiences openly. An interview protocol (see Appendix) guided my interactions with participants, allowing for the exploration of emergent topics during the interviews. This method ensured the collection of rich qualitative data relevant to my research questions.

To ensure clarity and consistency in the data collection process, I adhered to a well-defined interview protocol. This protocol consisted of an introductory statement, a list of predetermined questions, prompts for probing deeper into responses, and a concluding statement. I used the online meeting platform Zoom (<https://www.zoom.com>) for the interviews. I audio-recorded and transcribed all interviews verbatim to capture detailed responses. Additionally, I applied a systematic coding process to categorize and identify themes within the transcribed data. All transcriptions, coding, and analysis will be stored securely in a digital format to ensure confidentiality and easy access for further analysis. Ensuring the credibility of research findings is crucial for meaningful analysis and interpretation.

To ensure the reliability and validity of my data collection process, I conducted member checking. Member checking involves sharing my annotations with participants so they can review my notes and confirm that I have accurately understood their responses and represented their intended messages. I also triangulated the data by sourcing information from various places, such as public finance industry records, and I

reflected on my role in the research process through reflexivity. By using these strategies, I enhanced my accuracy, trustworthiness, and confidence in the results of my project.

Interview Questions

I conducted semistructured interviews aimed at gathering detailed and thoughtful responses, which would offer a thorough understanding of the effectiveness of the leadership communication strategies within the organization. The questions included the following:

1. How would you describe your role in creating effective communication strategies to engage employees to increase productivity in remote work environments?
2. What effective communication strategies do you use to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability?
3. What challenges did you face in implementing the strategies?
4. What do you do to mitigate the impact of the challenges?
5. How do you assess the effectiveness of communication strategies?
6. What additional information regarding communication strategies you have used to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability would you like to share that we have not already discussed?

Data Organization and Analysis Techniques

I used a semistructured interview protocol to maintain consistency and reliability in my data collection process. This protocol included an introductory statement, a set of predetermined interview questions, follow-up questions for deeper exploration, and a

closing statement. I recorded and transcribed all interviews verbatim to capture thorough responses. Furthermore, I utilized a systematic coding approach to categorize and identify key themes within the transcribed data. All transcriptions, codes, and analyses will be securely stored in a digital format to protect confidentiality and facilitate easy access for further review.

I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis to analyze my data.

According to Braun and Clarke, thematic analysis is a technique used to identify, analyze, and present patterns (themes) within data. The six steps involved in Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis include familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Therefore, I first immersed myself in the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts to capture the comprehensive context. Next, I generated initial codes that highlighted key features of the data related to effective communication strategies. Following this, I grouped these codes into potential themes that reflect recurring patterns of communication within the financial industry. The thematic analysis involved verifying whether the themes resonated with both the coded extracts and the broader data, ultimately refining and naming themes before producing the final report. I concentrated on the main themes, linked them to the literature (including recent studies published since I wrote my proposal), and aligned them with the conceptual framework. I will securely store all raw data for 5 years, then delete it, ensuring its integrity and confidentiality.

Reliability and Validity

To enhance the reliability and validity of my data collection process, I implemented strategies such as member checking—sharing findings with participants to validate interpretations—and transcript reviews, which involved revisiting interview transcripts for accuracy (Motulsky, 2021). These measures enhanced the rigor of my research and ensured that the participants’ voices were accurately represented and effectively integrated into the final analysis. To ensure validity, I established credibility through triangulation by comparing insights from interviews with relevant literature and organizational documents. Additionally, I provided a dependable account of my research process so others could replicate it. This facilitates transferability, allowing others to assess the applicability of the findings in different settings (Saunders et al., 2020). I achieved confirmability by maintaining detailed audit trails and practicing reflexivity to mitigate any biases throughout the research process. Lastly, to ensure data saturation, I continued analyzing the data until no new themes or insights emerged, thereby confirming the depth and completeness of my findings (Naeem et al., 2024). These combined strategies reinforced the overall integrity of my research, enhancing confidence in the outcomes and their implications.

Transition and Summary

In Section 3, I discussed the project’s research methodology. I described the problem and purpose, outlined the nature of the project, and addressed the ethical considerations guided by established protocols. I also discussed interview questions, data collection procedures, methods for organizing and analyzing data, participant population,

and sample strategies, and the project's reliability and validity. After data collection, Section 4, I discuss the findings and their implications for business practice, social change, and further research, concluding with a summary.

Section 4: Findings and Conclusions

Presentation of the Findings

The purpose of my qualitative pragmatic inquiry project was to identify and explore effective communication strategies finance leaders use to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability. The overarching research question was: What effective communication strategies do senior leaders in the financial industry use to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability?

I gathered data directly from leaders in the Cayman Islands financial sector who have held leadership positions for at least 4 years. I used semistructured interviews via Zoom to collect the data. I audio-recorded the interviews. After the interviews, I shared my annotations with the participants to ensure they accurately reflected their experiences. Participants had the opportunity to review and make corrections where necessary, ensuring that I captured their thoughts and perspectives accurately.

I created initial codes using a color scheme to categorize the data. I iteratively improved the coding and combined it to form six themes: (a) designing and shaping leadership as communication architecture; (b) providing clarity & alignment to increase productivity; (c) orchestrating channels and norms; (d) embracing inclusion, dialogue, and recognition; (e) developing measurement and continuous adaptation; and (f) enabling autonomy and change adoption. The themes I identified aligned with the conceptual framework of the LMX theory.

Theme 1: Designing and Shaping Leadership as Communication Architecture

Effective leadership requires the strategic design of a robust communication system that encompasses various components, including tone, norms, channels, cadence, and expectations. I observed pertinent examples of designed communication in the actions of Participants 2, 3, 5, and 6.

Participant 2, who served as a strategic advisor within the organization, played a crucial role in curating relevant information and maintaining a consistent weekly update cadence, which significantly reduced informational noise. By implementing regular updates, team members could stay informed without becoming overwhelmed by excessive data (Tannenbaum et al., 2021). Furthermore, Participant 3 took ownership of the operating model, ensuring that meetings remained purpose-driven while decisions were effectively communicated through email or face-to-face interactions. This focus on meaningful engagement, coupled with quick and predictable responses, streamlined the decision-making process, enhancing organizational efficiency. These proactive measures highlight how tailored communication strategies can significantly improve operational effectiveness within organizations.

Moreover, Participant 5 was instrumental in connecting vertical and lateral communication flows, ensuring that both remote and on-site staff received equal information and support. This effort promoted a sense of parity among team members, enhancing collaboration and engagement across the organization. Participant 6 effectively governed a multi-channel communication stack, utilizing platforms such as Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp, and email. This integrated communication approach was closely

linked to organizational goals, emphasizing the importance of follow-up and reinforcing the connection between communication practices and desired outcomes. Such initiatives illustrate how intentional communication design fosters inclusivity and contributes to a collaborative culture in the workplace.

The structured approach to communication serves as an essential infrastructure within an organization, operating as a designed system rather than a collection of ad hoc exchanges. This framework supports coordination of activities but also enhances the speed at which information is disseminated and responses generated (Thelen & Men, 2023). By establishing explicit norms and channels, organizations can ensure compliance and foster an environment conducive to collaboration. In this manner, cultivating a strong communication infrastructure is key to achieving sustainable growth and adaptability in an ever-evolving business landscape.

Theme 2: Providing Clarity and Alignment to Increase Productivity

In the context of organizational performance, clarity, alignment, and productivity are crucial for translating strategic objectives into consistent execution. Explicit goals, defined roles, established standards, and a clear definition of outcomes are essential elements that contribute to effective teamwork and project management (Musov, 2024; Thelen & Men, 2023). When all team members understand their responsibilities and what constitutes successful task completion, they are better equipped to focus on delivering value rather than navigating ambiguity, enabling disciplined execution across functions. This framework not only enhances operational efficiency but also fosters a culture of

accountability and transparency within teams, as work practices visibly and predictably align with strategy.

The evidence gathered from various participants highlights the positive impact of clarity on productivity and team dynamics. For instance, Participant 1 demonstrated the effectiveness of establishing clear expectations by employing a fact-first framing that aligned team efforts with client values. This strategy effectively minimized counterproductive behaviors, often described as “drama,” which can derail projects and create a toxic work environment (Santoso et al., 2022; Whiteoak et al., 2023). Furthermore, Participant 3’s approach to minimizing micromanagement involved upfront communication of desired outcomes and standards. This shift streamlined the decision-making process and empowered team members to take ownership of their tasks, fostering a more autonomous and productive workforce (Singh & Jha, 2024). Participant 6 took this a step further by cascading enterprise objectives to role-level key performance indicators and reinforcing progress through recognition. These practices clarify individual contributions and motivate sustained effort toward shared goals.

The implications of these findings are profound. When individuals clearly understand their roles and the significance of their work, there is a marked decrease in rework and inefficiencies. Additionally, improved clarity facilitates smoother handoffs between team members, which is pivotal in maintaining workflow and ensuring timely delivery of projects (Brudan et al., 2024; Thelen & Men, 2023). Therefore, effective communication and alignment within teams can lead to heightened throughput and a

more robust organizational performance, ultimately contributing to the achievement of strategic objectives as organizations navigate increasingly complex environments.

Theme 3: Orchestrating Channels and Norms

The concept of channel orchestration and norms revolves around the strategic alignment of communication methods to specific messages, enhancing both traceability and accountability in organizational processes. This alignment ensures that the most effective medium is employed for the intended message, thereby fostering more transparent communication and more efficient interactions among stakeholders (Thelen & Men, 2023; Thaiduong, 2024). Evidence from this research project highlights several practices that promote effective channel orchestration. Participant 2 developed practical guidelines for channel usage, which included implementing small-group breakouts to create more precise communication interactions. This approach not only clarifies roles and expectations but also enhances engagement by allowing for tailored discussions.

Furthermore, Participant 3 mandated the use of email and face-to-face meetings for critical decisions, establishing clear norms for responsiveness within the team. This requirement ensures that stakeholders are held accountable for timely communication, which enables more effective decision-making processes and is consistent with disciplined internal communication. Participant 6 adopted a disciplined approach to informal communications by consistently summarizing brief, quick chats in emails that identified decision owners and associated timelines. Participant 5 also supported this practice, reinforcing the importance of documentation and accountability in everyday communications, which kept commitments visible and trackable.

The implications of maintaining channel discipline within organizations are significant. This approach effectively reduces communication noise, thereby enhancing clarity and focus in environments where regulatory compliance is crucial. Preserving records becomes essential, as it provides a dependable reference for past communications and decisions (Musov, 2024). Moreover, adopting consistent communication practices mitigates the risks associated with cross-functional drift, ensuring that all team members remain aligned with organizational goals and objectives, a foundational condition for accountability and operational effectiveness.

Theme 4: Embracing Inclusion, Dialogue, and Recognition

Inclusion, dialogue, and recognition are essential components of organizational culture that foster a sense of belonging and discretionary effort among team members. These concepts hinge upon structured two-way communication, which allows for genuine interaction and feedback, as well as visible recognition that acknowledges individual contributions within the team context (Santoso et al., 2022; Thelen & Men, 2023). Regular communication practices can facilitate an environment of trust and openness, ultimately leading to enhanced employee engagement (Mansor et al., 2023). Leadership behaviors reinforce norms that make inclusion tangible in daily work.

The findings from the research project highlight various strategies employed by participants to promote inclusion and recognition. For instance, Participant 2 utilized one-on-one meetings and recognition initiatives to maintain high levels of engagement among team members; these personalized interactions align with evidence that communication quality and acknowledgment of contributions strengthen work engagement (Mansor et

al., 2023; Rabiul et al., 2023). Participants 4 and 5 took a more collective approach by establishing open forums and rotating meeting times and formats to ensure parity and inclusiveness across the team; they also implemented anonymous surveys to allow individuals to voice concerns that may be difficult to express openly, ensuring diverse perspectives are heard (Santoso et al., 2022; Thelen & Men, 2023), practices that kept participation broad and psychologically safe.

Furthermore, Participant 1 shifted the focus of team discussions from mere venting to effective problem-solving, thereby enhancing productivity and collaborative spirit, while Participant 6 augmented communication through development-signal messaging and awards that reinforced expectations and recognized key accomplishments within the team (Whiteoak et al., 2023). These practices collectively illustrate how dialogue and recognition can be operationalized within organizational settings to foster engagement, translating cultural intent into observable, repeatable routines.

The implications of these findings suggest that fostering continuous dialogue strengthens employee commitment to the organization, reinforcing a sense of belonging while encouraging open communication. Additionally, visible forms of recognition not only acknowledge individual and team efforts but also help to establish and repeat healthy norms within the workplace (Mansor et al., 2023). Therefore, the integration of structured communication and recognition strategies can enhance team dynamics and overall organizational effectiveness, sustaining inclusive performance over time.

Theme 5: Developing Measurement and Continuous Adaptation

Measurement and continuous adaptation revolve around systematically monitoring engagement and performance metrics to enhance content and communication strategies based on empirical evidence. This definition underscores the importance of utilizing quantifiable data to inform decision-making processes within organizations (Pantović et al., 2024). The continuous loop of measurement and adaptation enables organizations to stay agile, efficiently responding to changes in engagement and performance, which keeps execution aligned with strategy in practice.

Evidence collected from various participants underscores the significance of data triangulation in understanding team dynamics and accountability. Participant 1 reported employing a triangulated approach that involved analyzing engagement surveys, evaluating team effectiveness, and incorporating client feedback; this method resulted in observable reductions in escalations, indicating an increase in accountability among team members. Such findings highlight the interplay between monitoring tools and a culture of accountability, suggesting that when employees feel their efforts are recognized, they are more likely to engage constructively with their responsibilities (Mansor et al., 2023); Additionally, Participant 2 noted the importance of tracking attendance and participation, allowing for timely adjustments in response to any identified dips in engagement levels, which supported a norm of continuous improvement.

Further evidence from Participants 3 and 6 illustrated a direct connection between communication effectiveness and key performance indicators such as productivity, profitability, and delivery timelines. They utilized pulse surveys to gauge team sentiment

and aligned those insights with performance metrics, tying communication strategies directly to measurable outcomes (Rita et al., 2025). The ability to link routines like channel discipline and decision logging with innovation and throughput demonstrates how data-driven communication improves organizational results while balancing productivity with well-being. These insights not only reinforce the importance of communication in achieving operational excellence but also indicate that the iterative process of measurement can lead to substantive improvements over time.

The implications of these findings suggest that effective leadership requires an ongoing commitment to measuring the impact of communication strategies and their role in shaping behavior within teams. By closing the loop on feedback mechanisms and adapting messaging accordingly, leaders can cultivate a workplace culture that values accountability and engagement while sustaining a continuous cycle of improvement. This evolving narrative positions measurement and continuous adaptation as critical components for navigating the complexities of organizational dynamics in today's fast-paced environment, aligning communication practice with performance and client outcomes.

Theme 6: Enabling Autonomy and Change Adoption

The theme of enablement for autonomy and change adoption focuses on the importance of structured coaching, clear guidelines, and tailored training, which collectively foster independent problem-solving capabilities among team members. This approach aligns with contemporary leadership research showing that empowering conditions and high-quality leader-member relationships strengthen initiative,

engagement, and innovation (Singh & Jha, 2024). By establishing a supportive framework that encourages autonomy, organizations can create environments conducive to innovation and adaptability, allowing employees to take ownership of work with confidence and clarity.

Evidence from the data collected in this research highlights various practices that contribute to this theme. For instance, Participant 3 implemented a strategy that transitioned newcomers from intensive, high-touch support to periods of independent work; this progression was reinforced with a proposed leader manual to codify expectations and reduce ambiguity, consistent with strategy-focused operating routines and capability-building practices in financial services (Musov, 2024; Purwadi et al., 2024). Additionally, Participant 6 demonstrated an understanding of diverse learning needs by differentiating training based on cohort characteristics, maintaining psychologically supportive check-ins, and using benefit framing to motivate adoption—an approach aligned with evidence that communication quality and recognition practices bolster engagement and reduce burnout risks during change. Furthermore, Participant 5 emphasized ongoing support complemented by actionable follow-ups, and Participant 1 empowered frontline employees to make decisions within defined limits, reflecting research that links LMX-based empowerment to innovative work behaviors and discretionary effort.

The implications of these findings are profound. As autonomy is enhanced through clear boundaries, relevant skill development, and adequate support, organizations can experience improved adoption of new practices and changes while protecting quality

and well-being. This process accelerates adaptation by aligning enablement with operating rhythms and feedback, positioning autonomy not as laissez-faire but as guided independence that sustains performance in a rapidly evolving workplace. Therefore, leadership's focus on coaching, guardrails, and cohort-tailored learning cultivates a culture of empowerment and continuous improvement, translating strategy into everyday execution.

Measuring the Success of Communication Strategies

In my research project, I identified and explored the effective communication strategies that some senior leaders in the financial industry use to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability. To do this, I used a multi-level, evidence-based approach consistent with LMX theory's emphasis on reliable, reciprocal exchanges that improve performance (Ahmed et al., 2024; Tremblay et al., 2022). Leading indicators examined reach and engagement (e.g., attendance, participation, timely responses) and comprehension (e.g., brief polls, paraphrase checks in one-to-ones), aligning daily communication quality with observable participation and understanding (Rabiul et al., 2023; Santoso et al., 2022). In contrast, mid-cycle indicators captured behavioral change (e.g., adherence to the "definition of done," completion of decision logs, and service-level follow-through), translating norms into practice while protecting well-being and execution reliability (Brudan et al., 2024; Whiteoak et al., 2023). Lagging indicators focused on team performance (on-time delivery, rework/defect patterns, cycle time, and portfolio productivity/profitability), employee sentiment (pulse and engagement surveys), client outcomes (satisfaction narratives, complaint resolution trajectories,

renewal/retention signals), and risk/compliance safeguards (audit-ready decision trails), integrating a strategy-focused view of measurement with sector-relevant competencies.

Triangulation paired at least one leading and one lagging indicator for each initiative (e.g., channel norms were assessed by consistently capturing decisions in writing alongside observed reductions in rework and cycle time), creating a closed-loop for learning and adjustment. Review cadence followed weekly tracking of engagement and decision logging, monthly reviews of behavioral adherence and delivery quality, and quarterly pulses of sentiment and client outcomes to sustain disciplined adaptation. Participants' practices aligned with this framework: Participant 1 emphasized year-over-year improvements in engagement and fewer escalations; Participant 2 tracked attendance and one-to-one comprehension; Participant 3 linked portfolio productivity to communication practices; Participant 4 adjusted cadence using pulse findings and key performance indicators; Participant 5 combined anonymous surveys with delivery quality reviews; and Participant 6 monitored survey pulses, session turnout, delivery timelines, and decision-logging discipline. Taken together, these qualitative indicators operationalize LMX by assessing access, understanding, reciprocity, and perceived support alongside observable performance consequences, consistent with contemporary evidence on communication-enabled performance.

Table 1*Justification for Theme Selection Based on Data Saturation*

| Theme | Participant 1 | Participant 2 | Participant 3 | Participant 4 | Participant 5 | Participant 6 |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Designing and Shaping Leadership as Communication Architecture | Framed leadership as the architect of clarity and trust. Sets explicit expectations, insists on fact-based dialogue, and re-centers work on client priorities to suppress counterproductive ‘drama.’ Emphasizes credibility through consistency and follow-through, using face-to-face cadence to strengthen belonging and execution discipline. | Defined the role as a strategic advisor and facilitator of clarity in the workplace. Bridges leadership goals with employee understanding through weekly updates, channel stewardship, and appraisal of what information is truly necessary, thereby designing the communication system rather than sending ad-hoc messages. | Positioned self as tone-setter and system owner. Publishes expectations (objectives, responsiveness norms), minimizes ritualized but low-value meetings, and grants autonomy with clear outcomes—creating governance (how/when to communicate) and modeling professional decorum (email/TF as primary record). | Described self as strategist–bridge who aligns messaging with mission and maintains a human touch. Establishes huddles/touchpoints as system elements, uses recognition to reinforce norms, and calibrates frequency/quality to protect attention while sustaining connection across time zones. | Acted as a facilitator–connector who designs transparent, inclusive pathways for information to flow up and down. Builds safe channels for upward feedback, specifies communication norms, and anchors practices in shared goals, ensuring that both remote and on-site staff feel equally engaged and accountable. | Functioned as a finance/compliance leader who governs channels (Teams/Zoom/WhatsApp vs email), sets top-line annual objectives, and institutionalizes two-way engagement. Advocates formal follow-ups for traceability and uses leadership cadence to connect business goals to role-level work. |
| Providing Clarity & Alignment to Increase Productivity | Operationalizes clarity via explicit expectations, fact-based messaging, and client-first framing; tracks gains through improved engagement indices and fewer escalation requests—evidence that alignment is increasing autonomy and throughput. | The focus is on clarity, transparency, and recognition to align work. Uses guidelines, KPIs, and small-group formats to reduce ambiguity; monitors attendance/participation as salience proxies—linking message clarity to productivity in a remote environment. | Avoids unnecessary meetings and replaces micromanagement with outcome clarity. Publishes objectives and availability, trusting experts to self-organize—yielding higher quality outputs with less supervisory overhead. | Tailors messages by level and maintains a predictable rhythm (huddles/touchpoints) so priorities ‘stick.’ Balances frequency and quality to avoid overload while sustaining strategic alignment. | Sets measurable objectives and conducts regular check-ins to align priorities. Uses multi-channel reminders and follow-ups to ensure interpretation consistency, improving timeliness and handoffs. | Implements annual goal cascades, role contribution mapping, and visible KPIs (attendance, delivery quality). Recognition and growth-path signaling reinforce clarity, strengthening the productivity–profitability linkage. |
| Orchestrating Channels & Norms | Prefers in-person collaboration for rapport/trust; uses virtual tools for regional meetings. Emphasizes parsimony—minimize noise, maximize signal—so channel use supports focus and execution. | Drafts communication guidelines to curb overload; deploys breakout rooms to resolve misreads; uses KPIs to confirm understanding—advocates one-to-one when group channels hinder comprehension. | Governs media: use email and face-to-face for essential matters, and avoid informal apps for records. Reduces standing meetings; relies on prompt, professional responses to sustain momentum and civility. | Selects media by task complexity and sensitivity; uses surveys to verify clarity of campaigns. Manages virtual fatigue and time-zone variance through disciplined scheduling and recap artifacts. | Defines norms (what warrants email vs chat vs video). The team rotates meeting times for equity, follows with concise summaries to create a durable record, and keeps distributed teams synchronized. | Optimizes tool–task fit: WhatsApp for micro-nudges, Teams/Zoom for formal collaboration, email for archival decisions. Reinforces the ‘informal → formal’ loop (chat to email) to ensure traceability. |

| Theme | Participant 1 | Participant 2 | Participant 3 | Participant 4 | Participant 5 | Participant 6 |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| Embracing Inclusion, Dialogue & Recognition | Promotes authentic relationships and trust, helping team members move from venting to problem-solving; publicizes collective accountability and celebrates collaborative wins to reinforce inclusive norms. | Builds a culture where recognition validates effort, and transparent two-way updates encourage speaking up. Uses one-on-ones to surface concerns that may be muted in group channels. | Creates an 'operating manual' concept to demystify leader preferences and protect equity for newcomers; trust-based autonomy invites voice and professional respect across a highly skilled team. | Institutionalizes open forums, huddles, and post-meeting recognition to build belonging. Stresses empathy and 'human touch' to maintain trust amid digital mediation and time-zone gaps. | Encourages two-way communication and recognition/feedback cycles, and accommodates different working styles and tool comfort, so quieter or less tech-savvy contributors can be heard. | Runs quarterly awards and visible appreciation linked to outcomes; ensures preference-aware channels so all segments (generational/functional) can participate and feel valued. |
| Developing Measurement & Continuous Adaptation | Uses engagement surveys, team effectiveness indicators, and client feedback; observes a reduction in escalations as a behavioral proxy for rising accountability and clarity. | Tracks attendance/participation and uses qualitative check-ins to correlate communication changes with productivity signals; iterates when miscommunication suppresses engagement. | Employs portfolio productivity/profitability metrics and (in prior role) 360-degree feedback to triangulate communication effectiveness. | Combines staff surveys, KPI reports, and direct feedback; pivots when evidence shows frequency/format misfit or diminished clarity. | Applies anonymous surveys, one-on-ones, and performance metrics (deadlines, output quality, collaboration) to monitor comprehension and adapt cadence. | Uses SurveyMonkey pulses, participation rates, and delivery/timeline adherence; reads attendance at 'mini-sessions' as salience. Adjusts strategies when indicators soften. |
| Enabling Autonomy & Change Adoption | Empowers employees to make decisions within guardrails, reinforcing confidence and speed. Confronts 'drama' by recentering on client value and fact patterns to enable collaborative problem-solving. | Introduces guidelines, small-group dialogue, and explicit KPIs to scaffold understanding, alternating between group and one-to-one contact to build confidence in new practices and channels. | Onboards newcomers with more touchpoints, then coaches toward self-sufficiency. Provides trust plus availability, enabling experts to perform without micromanagement. | Balances frequency and quality to reduce fatigue; actively listens and adapts cadence. Schedules communication across the fiscal calendar to normalize expectations and reduce friction. | Sets explicit norms, rotates times for equity, and provides targeted training for tool adoption. Follows up with summaries so diverse preferences do not compromise shared understanding. | Segments enablement by cohort (hands-on for some; self-paced for others). Frames change in benefit terms, builds psychological safety in check-ins, and models the informal→formal reinforcement loop to prevent error and rework. |

Business Contributions and Recommendations for Professional Practice

In regulated financial services, my research advances leadership communication by positioning it as an integrated operating system rather than a set of ad hoc exchanges. The findings showed that governance (clear rules and roles), cadence (predictable rhythms), and documentation (confirming quick chats with brief emails) collectively improve execution speed, traceability, and cross-functional consistency (Brudan et al., 2024; Thaiduong, 2024). The analysis also linked clarity to performance through providing clarity and alignment to increase productivity: when expectations and success criteria are explicit, handoff errors decline, escalations decrease, and delivery becomes more reliable (Mansor et al., 2023; Musov, 2024). Leaders further demonstrated evidence-driven adaptation by using engagement signals, alignment to key performance indicators, and client feedback to refine message content and frequency (Thelen & Men, 2023). They also codified enablement with guardrails, ensuring that coaching, psychological safety, and cohort-tailored training translate strategy into independent problem-solving at the organization's edge, consistent with LMX-aligned empowerment and innovation findings.

For professional practice, leaders should publish a communication operating model that specifies channel rules (what belongs in chat, email, or meetings), response expectations, decision-logging standards, and meeting cadence. These norms should then be socialized during onboarding with periodic refreshers. They should cascade a clear outcomes for each strategic objective with short written alignment briefs; artifact decisions by converting quick chats into concise email summaries capturing the decision,

owner, due date, key risks, and the next checkpoint in a searchable repository; and design for inclusion by rotating meeting times across time zones, supplying pre-reads and post-meeting recaps, and using small-group sensemaking and one-to-one conversations to elevate quieter voices (Santoso et al., 2022). Leaders should enable autonomy by clearly defining decision rights, escalation thresholds, and risk boundaries. They should also coach managers to use inquiry-based prompts rather than micromanaging, thereby supporting engagement while avoiding burnout risks associated with poor workload and cadence design (Whiteoak et al., 2023). Additionally, they should calendarize the operating rhythm (e.g., through weekly team notes, monthly operations reviews, quarterly strategy updates) to reduce noise and build predictability as part of a strategy-focused management system.

Finally, the findings from my research project further suggest that organizations should train for channel discipline with brief, role-relevant micro-learning. These should guide media selection (e.g., chat for coordination, email for decisions, face-to-face or video for complex or sensitive topics) and illustrate compliance-critical scenarios common to finance (Thaiduong, 2024). Measurement should pair engagement indicators (attendance, participation, survey sentiment) with delivery metrics (timeliness, quality, rework, client input) in a recurring communication-effectiveness review that informs iterative improvements. Taken together, these contributions and recommendations provide a practical blueprint to institutionalize leadership communication as a managed system—one that supports transparency, inclusion, and accountability while improving productivity and profitability.

Implications for Social Change

The effectiveness of communication governance in financial services can drive significant social change by fostering equitable participation and amplifying diverse voices. The findings from my research project indicates meaningful implications for social change in the financial services context by showing how communication governance can expand equitable participation and voice (Thaiduong, 2024; Thelen & Men, 2023). Practices such as rotating meeting times across time zones, offering multi-channel access (chat, email, meetings, face-to-face), and issuing concise written recaps of decisions address structural barriers that often sideline remote, junior, or less vocal employees. These practices broaden reach and reduce participation bias. By normalizing small-group sensemaking and one-to-one conversations alongside open forums, leaders broaden opportunities for contribution, reduce participation bias, and create clearer pathways to advancement in line with my research project's themes—designing and shaping leadership as communication architecture, as well as orchestrating channels and norms—so that strategy becomes routine practice that is inclusive by design rather than inclusive by exception.

The findings from my research project also suggest that psychologically safe, non-punitive check-ins, coupled with explicit norms for responsiveness and decision logging, can improve individual well-being and organizational health. Leaders who set clarity up front (e.g., goals, roles, “definition of done”) and document outcomes (e.g., chat-to-email summaries with owners and dates) reduce ambiguity, rework, and interpersonal friction—conditions that often generate stress and discourage help-seeking,

while supporting healthier workload rhythms (Whiteoak et al., 2023). In LMX terms, these behaviors strengthen high-quality exchanges by making access predictable and support visible, which encourages early problem reporting and collaborative problem-solving consistent with empowerment and engagement pathways (Santalla-Banderali & Alvarado, 2022; Singh & Jha, 2024). My research project's theme of enabling autonomy and change adoption further underscores how coaching, guardrails, and cohort-tailored training (e.g., generationally responsive enablement) can close digital and experience gaps, supporting workforce resilience and employability as tools and practices evolve, particularly in regulated service environments.

At the community interface, clearer role expectations, consistent decision trails, and evidence-based adaptation (survey pulses, attendance and participation analytics, delivery quality, and client feedback) improve service reliability and reduce errors in a high-stakes, regulated sector. Such reliability strengthens client confidence and, by extension, community trust in financial institutions that underpin local economic stability, aligning measurement routines with strategy-focused management (Mansor et al., 2023; Musov, 2024). Theme 2, providing clarity and alignment to increase productivity, and its strategy recommendations—publishing a communication operating model, cascading goals to role-level success criteria, and measuring what matters—promotes transparency and accountability beyond any single firm, shaping sector-wide expectations for ethical communication as norms diffuse. In sum, the strategies I identified—governance, artifacting, inclusive design, psychological safety, and adaptive measurement—offer a practical blueprint for social impact: healthier workplaces, broader opportunity, and more

trustworthy financial services that benefit the wider community through consistent, well-governed communication practice.

Recommendations for Further Research

Exploring the impact of established communication rules and routines across different sectors could yield important insights into their effectiveness in enhancing employee productivity and organizational profitability. Future researchers should investigate whether established communication rules and routines improve workplace performance, including productivity, reduced rework, faster turnaround times, and enhanced client experiences. By comparing data across various industries and regions, such as the legal industry and the United States, researchers can identify consistent and divergent effects of these strategies.

Subsequent researchers should also focus on inclusive communication practices benefiting remote workers, junior employees, and quieter team members. Strategies to explore include rotating meeting times for time zone considerations, offering diverse communication methods (chat, email, meetings), utilizing small-group discussions, and conducting one-on-one check-ins. Additionally, assessing training programs aimed at different demographics and implementing digital confidence initiatives could enhance employee engagement.

Another area to explore is artifacting, where quick conversations are documented via email or decision logs. Research can assess how these practices affect error rates, audit readiness, and perceptions of fairness while addressing potential negatives like message overload. Linking internal communication changes to external outcomes will

shed light on their overall effectiveness. Future studies might combine communication network analysis with language assessment to further understand clarity and support in daily interactions.

Lastly, directly assessing employee well-being and psychological safety through non-punitive check-ins tied to stress levels, help-seeking, retention, and inclusivity is crucial. Conducting cost-benefit analyses or return on investment studies may help determine if investing in a comprehensive communication model—covering training, communication adjustments, and new tools—delivers a valuable return through improved productivity, quality, and client outcomes. By comparing data across various industries and regions, such as the legal industry and the United States, researchers can identify consistent and divergent effects of these strategies.

Conclusion

In this qualitative pragmatic inquiry, I identified and explored the effective communication strategies used by some senior leaders in the financial industry to increase employee productivity and profitability. Grounded in LMX theory originating in the 1970s (Dansereau et al., 1975), explored how high-quality leader–member relationships—marked by trust, respect, and mutual obligation—shape leaders’ commitment to communication practices that are actionable, auditable, and performance-linked rather than symbolic or ad hoc. Within this lens, leaders treat communication as an operating model (i.e., tone, norms, channels, cadence, and documentation) that enables clarity, reciprocity, and consistent execution in a regulated, client-facing context.

I conducted semistructured interviews with six senior finance leaders (identified alphanumerically as P1–P6), following an interview protocol to support consistency, credibility, and dependability. To ensure data saturation, I continued interviewing until later transcripts yielded no materially new codes, and I triangulated the analysis by pairing interview data with peer-reviewed literature and sector guidance identified in the literature review. I maintained confidentiality through alphanumeric participant identifiers and secure, restricted cloud storage for transcripts, coding files, and audio records. During the analytic process, I used systematic coding in Excel, moving from initial codes to grouped code families and, ultimately, to the final thematic framework. I employed triangulation of sources (i.e., semistructured interviews and scholarly literature), an audit trail of coding decisions, and attention to alignment with the LMX framework.

Across interviews, I conducted data analysis to uncover six themes to reveal the effective communication strategies that senior leaders in the finance industry use to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability: (a) designing and shaping leadership as communication architecture (i.e., leaders design the system: tone, norms, channels, cadence, and documentation); (b) providing clarity and alignment to increase productivity (i.e., explicit goals, roles, and definition of done reduce rework and accelerate delivery); (c) orchestrating channels and norms (i.e., fit message to medium; formalize outcomes via brief email decision records); (d) embracing inclusion, dialogue, and recognition (i.e., structured two-way voice and visible reinforcement to build belonging and discretionary effort); (e) developing measurement and continuous

adaptation (i.e., engagement, performance, and client signals guide iteration); and (f) enabling autonomy and change adoption (i.e., coaching, clear guardrails, and cohort-tailored training to foster confident, independent problem-solving). Together, these themes demonstrate that communication functions as infrastructure—not merely policy—aligning daily work with business outcomes while fostering a motivated and engaged workforce, leading to higher quality work and better collaboration, thereby increasing employee productivity and organizational profitability.

The findings from my research highlight that successful leadership communication requires discipline and courage: leaders must set and uphold norms, document decisions, and create psychologically safe spaces where issues surface early and are resolved constructively. Practices such as rotating schedules, multi-channel access, small group sensemaking, and one-to-one check-ins reduce participation bias for remote, junior, or quieter employees and strengthen high-quality exchanges (i.e., LMX). Clear expectations and audit-ready decision trails lower errors and rework, while recognition and feedback reinforce the behaviors the organization seeks to scale. In short, leaders who govern communication deliberately—anchoring messages to key performance indicators and client value, measuring uptake, and enabling autonomy with guardrails—produce reliable execution and stronger client outcomes in a high-compliance sector.

Finally, the findings from my research show that authentic communication programs are co-created with stakeholders, continuously refined through feedback, and tied to measurable outcomes. Leaders who model inclusive behaviors, invest in targeted

enablement, and ensure parity of access to information foster cultures of belonging that extend beyond performative action. By integrating LMX as the guiding theory, this research clarifies the psychological and relational mechanisms through which communication governance improves productivity and profitability. The implications for social change are meaningful: fairer access to information and opportunity, stronger psychological safety and well-being, and enhanced community trust through more reliable financial services. When finance organizational leaders commit to courageous, inclusive, and evidence-driven communication, they improve organizational results while contributing to a more equitable and trustworthy economic environment.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

| Action | Script |
|--|--|
| <p>Introduce the interview and set the stage—often over a meal or coffee.</p> | <p>“Hello, thank you for taking the time to participate in this research study. I appreciate the criticality you attach to the expected findings, and I hope to add practical solutions for a business problem affecting many financial leaders. I have been working on a degree for a Doctor of Business Administration for the past few years. In this study, I am identifying and exploring effective communication strategies used by senior leaders in the financial industry to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability.”</p> <p>“A few days ago, you agreed to sign an informed consent form. Do you have any questions for me or any matter that requires my attention? This interview is confidential, and your identity and that of your organization shall remain anonymous and represented by codes.”</p> <p>“I will collect data using semistructured interview questions. The idea is to allow you to explain any strategies, events, and memories that answer the interview questions. During your narration, I may prompt you for further explanation and details.”</p> <p>“I will need to record your responses so that I do not miss anything.”</p> <p>“Note that you may rescind your decision to participate in the research anytime.”</p> |
| <p>Ask Interview Questions to get in-depth responses. Listen for nonverbal cues. Paraphrase as needed.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “How would you describe your role in implementing effective communication strategies to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability?” 2. “What effective strategies have you implemented to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability?” 3. “What challenges did you face when implementing these strategies?” |

| Action | Script |
|--|---|
| | <p>4. “What do you do to mitigate the impact of these challenges?”</p> <p>5. “How did you evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies you implemented?”</p> <p>“What additional information regarding effective communication strategies to increase employee productivity and organizational profitability would you like to share that we have not already discussed?”</p> <p>“In a few days, I will need your assistance in authenticating my understanding of your responses to the interview questions as part of the research process. You may adjust the script or add to your initial responses if needed. I will send the transcript by email, and we can discuss it by phone if you agree.”</p> <p>6.</p> <p>“Thank you for agreeing to meet me today to finalize what I heard from you during the interview and the meaning I have provided for each response.”</p> |
| <p>Schedule transcript review either by phone or email.</p> | <p>“Your contribution to this doctoral research has been most impressive, and I thank you very much for helping me to achieve the doctoral degree. I hope you will find the research findings beneficial to your organization and professional development.”</p> |
| <p>Introduce a member checking review and set the stage. Wrap up the interview by thanking participants.</p> | |