

THE IMPACT OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ON VIETNAMESE GEN Z EMPLOYEES' WORK SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore how effective internal communication influences the job satisfaction of Vietnamese Gen Z employees, and to understand whether good internal communication can enhance Gen Z employees' comprehension of their job roles, promotion opportunities, relationships with supervisors, and co-worker interactions, ultimately leading to increased job satisfaction. The research comprises two phases: a pilot survey and in-depth interviews. The pilot survey confirmed the importance of internal communication and its perceived influence on job satisfaction. Subsequently, in-depth interviews provided nuanced insights into how internal communication practices affect their understanding of work nature, promotion opportunities, relationships with supervisors, and co-workers. The findings indicate that effective internal communication positively affects Gen Z employees' understanding of their job roles, increases their awareness of training and promotion opportunities, enhances relationships with supervisors, and fosters productive co-worker interactions. While it did not directly influence salary levels, these internal communication efforts significantly improved job satisfaction.

Keywords: internal communication, employee satisfaction, Gen Z, Vietnam

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana komunikasi internal yang efektif mempengaruhi kepuasan kerja karyawan Gen Z di Vietnam, dan untuk memahami apakah komunikasi internal yang baik dapat meningkatkan pemahaman karyawan Gen Z tentang peran pekerjaan mereka, peluang promosi, hubungan dengan atasan, dan interaksi dengan rekan kerja, yang pada akhirnya meningkatkan kepuasan kerja. Penelitian ini terdiri dari dua fase: survei pendahuluan dan wawancara mendalam. Survei pendahuluan mengonfirmasi pentingnya komunikasi internal dan pengaruhnya terhadap kepuasan kerja yang dirasakan. Selanjutnya, wawancara mendalam memberikan wawasan yang lebih mendetail tentang bagaimana praktik komunikasi internal memengaruhi pemahaman mereka tentang sifat pekerjaan, peluang promosi, hubungan dengan atasan, dan rekan kerja. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi internal yang efektif secara positif mempengaruhi pemahaman karyawan Gen Z tentang peran pekerjaan mereka, meningkatkan kesadaran mereka tentang peluang pelatihan dan promosi, memperbaiki hubungan dengan atasan, dan mendorong interaksi yang produktif dengan rekan kerja. Meskipun tidak secara langsung mempengaruhi tingkat gaji, upaya komunikasi internal ini secara signifikan meningkatkan kepuasan kerja.

Kata kunci: komunikasi internal, kepuasan karyawan, Gen Z, Vietnam

1. Introduction

In today's dynamic global landscape, organizations grapple with managing a diverse workforce, shaped by distinct generational characteristics, perspectives, and communication preferences. The emergence of Generation Z (Gen Z), born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, brings a unique set of challenges and opportunities to the forefront, redefining the dynamics of employee engagement and satisfaction.

As the first true digital natives, Gen Z individuals, characterized by their upbringing in a world saturated with internet access, social media, and advanced technology, introduce distinctive expectations, values, and communication preferences, necessitating organizational adaptability (PwC Vietnam, 2021).

The significance of understanding and engaging Gen Z is underscored by their willingness to switch jobs in pursuit

of a more suitable work environment, a trait observed amidst the broader context of the Great Resignation. This global phenomenon, marked by a surge in voluntary job exits, has intensified the challenge for companies to retain talent and minimize turnover rates. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported over 47 million Americans voluntarily leaving their jobs in 2021, contributing to labor shortages across industries (Teevan et al., 2022). This trend is not only in the U.S., but also in European and Asian countries. Microsoft's 2022 Work Trend Index identified a shift in priorities, with individuals prioritizing family, personal life, health, and well-being during the Great Resignation (Teevan et al., 2022). Consequently, maintaining employees' work satisfaction has become a critical aspect of talent retention and attraction, necessitating a focus on improving human resources strategies and internal practices, particularly concerning the burgeoning Gen Z workforce (Tessema et al., 2022; Đurović et al., 2023).

Within the context of Vietnam, a nation experiencing substantial economic growth and globalization, there is a noticeable shift in attitudes toward work-life balance, job satisfaction, and professional development (Nguyen & Ngo, 2021). This shift is particularly pronounced among the Gen Z demographic in Vietnam, as they prioritize factors extending beyond financial incentives, including meaningful work, transparency, and a sense of belonging within their organizations. Research on turnover intention among Vietnamese Gen Z employees highlights the mediating role of affective commitment, suggesting that effective internal communication can strengthen commitment and reduce turnover intentions (Do et al., 2023). With Gen Z expected to comprise about a third of the Vietnamese workforce by 2025

(PwC Vietnam, 2021), understanding the factors influencing their work satisfaction becomes pivotal for organizational success and talent retention.

This research addresses the critical question of how internal communication practices impact the work satisfaction of Gen Z employees in the Vietnamese context, an area that remains relatively unexplored. The study aims to investigate the influence of internal communication on various facets of Gen Z employees' work experience, including their understanding of their work nature, opportunities for advancement, relationships with supervisors and co-workers, and how these factors collectively contribute to job satisfaction. Previous literature emphasizes the role of internal communication in building trust, fostering a positive and transparent culture, and increasing employee engagement (Mishra et al., 2014; Men & Yue, 2019; Ewing et al., 2019). Notably, Verčič and Vokić (2017) found a significant correlation between internal communication satisfaction and employees' engagement, while Li et al. (2021) highlighted its pivotal role in navigating unplanned organizational changes such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The distinctive contribution of this research lies in its exploration of the intersection of factors: the Gen Z demographic, the rapidly globalizing economy of Vietnam, and the evolving landscape of internal communication. By addressing the specific communication needs and preferences of Gen Z within this context, the study offers insights relevant not only to the Vietnamese workforce but also to organizations worldwide navigating the changing dynamics of their multigenerational workforce. The research question, "How does internal communication affect the work satisfaction of Gen Z employees in

Vietnam?” guides the investigation, offering organizations valuable insights to tailor their internal communication strategies for effective engagement and motivation of Gen Z employees. These insights, in turn, hold the potential to enhance both individual well-being and organizational outcomes. The subsequent literature review delves into the characteristics of Generation Z, highlighting their unique traits, values, and the challenges they present in the workplace, setting the stage for a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing their work satisfaction.

2. Literature review

2.1. Internal communication

Internal communication is described as communication between the company and its employees, who are the company’s internal stakeholders (Dolphin, 2005), to promote organizational identification and commitment (Welch & Jackson, 2007). There have been various studies to examine the role of internal communication, as summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *The Roles of Internal Communication in Organizations*

<i>Role</i>	<i>Reference sources</i>
Help organizations gain trust and support from shareholders/ investors and organizational members.	(Mishra <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Welch and Jackson, 2007)
Help organizations disseminate their mission, vision, and regulations so that everyone understands and adheres to them.	(Verčič, 2021; Chong, 2007)
Increase pride, gain support from each employee, help them work more efficiently and productively.	(Verčič, 2021, Lemon, 2019; Karanges <i>et al.</i> , 2015; Meechan & Wonglorsaichon, 2024)
Promote, strengthen, and maintain organizational culture, image, and loyalty of employees.	(Kang and Sung, 2017; Vasquez, 2014; Đurović <i>et al.</i> , 2023)
Communicate organizational changes and respond to unplanned crises.	(Qin and Men, 2022; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2021)

Welch and Jackson (2007) took a stakeholder approach to examine the role of internal communication within an organization and suggested that internal communication can promote a sense of belonging and a common understanding of the organizational goals, which in turn drive employee engagement (Mishra *et al.*, 2014) and loyalty (Kang & Sung, 2017; Vasquez, 2014). Internal communication allows the organization to build a supportive environment, which is believed to improve productivity among staff (Lemon, 2019; Karanges *et al.*, 2015; Meechan & Wonglorsaichon, 2024).

During critical situations, including communicating change and

crisis, internal communication can be deployed to provide guidance and sustain morale. Qin and Men (2022) found that having clear internal communication during COVID-19 contributed to maintaining employees’ mental health and organizational trust. Similar research in the pandemic context by Li *et al.* (2021) also indicated that transparent internal communication supported organizations to cope with sudden change and unplanned crises.

Effective internal communication should be transparent and two-way, this includes offline face-to-face interaction or online communication through the company’s intranet and company

newsletter. Byrne and LeMay (2006) analyzed surveys on 598 employees from a U.S. high-tech organization, and found that rich communication (face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, and departmental meetings) bring a higher level of satisfaction when exchanging job-relevant information; while lean media (company-wide meetings, newsletter, written memos) are more effective when communicating the company updates; and emails are well-perceived for urgent news. The study by Lee and Dong (2023) further emphasizes the role of transparent internal communication in fostering employee advocacy, highlighting how trust and satisfaction are built through effective communication practices. Other previous studies have suggested that symmetrical internal communication could boost job satisfaction, trust, and empowerment (Jo & Shim, 2005; Kim & Rhee, 2011). Therefore, Mishra et al. (2014) suggested that public relations professionals should work closely with upper-level managers to bridge the communication gap between them and their employees.

Effective internal communication would increase employees' sense of belonging and identify themselves with the company's mission. This fosters trust between the organization and the employee, which leads to employee engagement and job satisfaction. And thus, it is important to identify whether an organization can strengthen its bond with Gen Z workers through internal communication, which this paper aims to look into. In this research, the authors aim to analyze the factors affecting employees' satisfaction from the viewpoint of internal communication, thus helping organizations to come up with more effective communication strategies based on the conclusions obtained.

2.2. Employee's satisfaction

Work satisfaction significantly impacts Gen Z's task performance and organizational commitment. Factors such as a flexible work environment, fair reward and recognition system, compensation and benefits, functional feedback, digital orientation, and volunteering work positively influence Generation Z employees toward job satisfaction (Aggarwal et al., 2020). To understand how internal communication affects job satisfaction, this research drew on three frameworks: the Social exchange theory, the Job characteristics model, and the Job descriptive index.

Social exchange theory (SET), proposed by Blau (1964), provides valuable insights into the relationship between employees and organizations. According to SET, individuals engage in social exchange with their employers, where they invest their time, effort, and skills in return for rewards, which can include tangible (e.g., salary, benefits) and intangible (e.g., job satisfaction, positive work relationships) outcomes. This theory would guide the examination of how internal communication practices contribute to the perceived fairness and quality of the exchange, ultimately affecting job satisfaction.

The Job characteristics model (JCT), developed by Hackman and Oldham (1976), focuses on the design of jobs to enhance employee motivation and satisfaction. This model identifies five core job characteristics - skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback - that influence an individual's psychological state and job satisfaction. This study would explore how internal communication impacts these job characteristics and, consequently, job satisfaction among Gen Z employees.

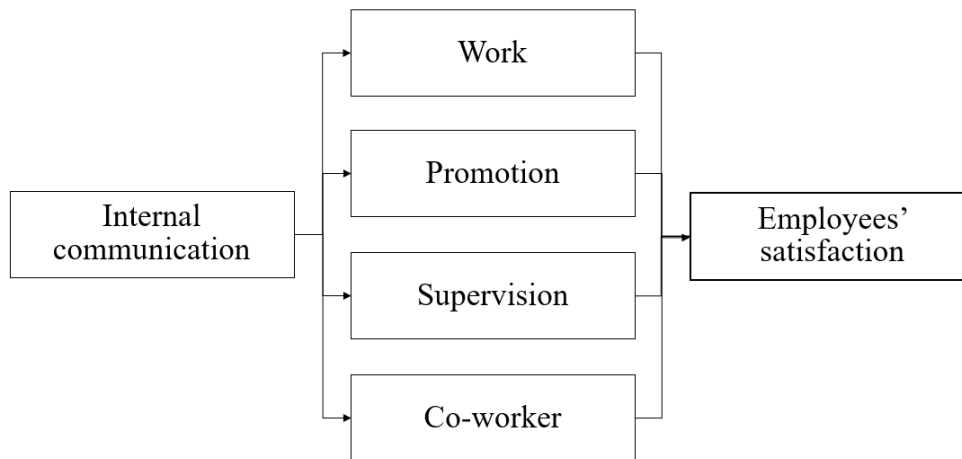
The third framework, Job Descriptive Index (JDI), established in 1969 by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin,

stands as a prominent job satisfaction scale, widely acknowledged as a “gold standard” (Landy et al., 1994). Consisting of five factors – nature of work, opportunities for training and promotion, leadership, colleagues, and salary – it has become a common model in diverse studies, including those on IT companies in Vietnam (Duong & Tran, 2021), in Greece (Tasios & Giannouli, 2017), and in the public sector of Jordan (Rawabdeh & Nawafleh, 2019).

This study focuses on specific aspects of the JDI to assess the impact of internal communication on job satisfaction: (i) Work: Defined as “the feeling a worker has about his job” (Smith et al., 1969), it encompasses employees’ understanding of their roles and tasks. Clear internal communication, facilitated by supervisors or HR personnel, can provide a realistic job preview, managing expectations and reducing turnover for Gen Z. (ii) Training and Promotion: Crucial for self-development, training and promotion contribute to a sense of achievement and increased job satisfaction. Transparent communication regarding these opportunities is essential, aligning with research supporting the positive impact of good training sessions (Rahayu et al., 2019; Nauman et al., 2021). (iii) Supervision: Leadership performance, positively correlated with work satisfaction, emphasizes the role of guidance and mentorship from supervisors (Cakmak et al., 2015; Meng

& Berger, 2019). Internal communication enforcing a shared vision can motivate employees and influence their expectations, satisfaction, and performance. (iv) Co-worker: Positive relationships with colleagues are crucial, contributing to job satisfaction (Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011). Internal communication plays a vital role in building a healthy work culture, fostering positive relationships among employees, essential for maintaining motivation and job satisfaction. (v) Salary: While salary is traditionally associated with job satisfaction, this research does not extensively delve into this aspect, recognizing that internal communication does not directly impact salary levels. This research investigates the factors affecting job satisfaction among Gen Z employees through internal communication activities. Specifically, it explores how internal communication can enhance Gen Z employees’ perceptions of work nature, promotion opportunities, supervision, and co-worker relationships, ultimately increasing their job satisfaction. In response to the research question, the authors propose that effective internal communication efforts can significantly improve Gen Z employees’ understanding of work nature, promotion opportunities, and their relationships with supervisors and co-workers, thus leading to heightened job satisfaction (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Contributing Elements of Employees' Satisfaction among Gen-Zers*



3. Research design

This research includes two phases: a pilot survey, and a series of in-depth interviews. The survey is to confirm the model of contributing elements of employees' satisfaction proposed above. The pilot survey aimed to reach out to a big enough sample of Gen-Zers to give reliable measures to their insights about internal communication and how it affects their job satisfaction. It used purposive and convenience sampling techniques to find initial respondents. Subsequently, the snowball sampling technique was employed when the respondents were encouraged to share the survey with other suitable Gen-Zers in their networks. The survey was administered until it gathered a minimum of 400 respondents.

The interviews were semi-structured to fill in more details about the survey results, exploring how internal communication contributes to each factor of satisfaction. The interviews also used purposive and convenient sampling methods to recruit participants. There was no ideal sample size planned. The sample size was decided by data saturation, as the researcher continued to interview until the participants gave similar responses. The interviews were analyzed thematically.

The discrepancies among coders' analyses were compared and adjusted with discussion. Krippendorff's alpha was used to determine the intercoder reliability. The accepted reliability scores were above 0.80. For both phases, the target participants are Gen-Zers. The selection criteria are Vietnamese university students, aged from 18 to 25, who have worked at least part-time through an internship, field experience, or official working position. Gender and location are not included in the selection criteria. To prevent misunderstanding of the term, at the beginning of the survey and interviews, the internal communication media were suggested to the participants as print media, bulletin boards, intranet, internal forums, documentaries about the organization, internal meetings and briefings, or any other forms of information transmission to internal groups in the organization.

4. Results

The survey gathered 575 respondents, who represented both genders and ages from 18-25. The age and gender distributions are presented in Tables 2a and 2b.

Table 2a. *Age of Survey Respondents*

<i>Age</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
18	89	15.5%
19	158	27.5%
20	178	31.0%
21	90	15.7%
22	35	6.1%
23+	25	4.3%

Source: Data processing (2024)

Table 2b. *Gender of Survey Respondents*

<i>Gender</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	327	56.9%
Female	217	37.7%
Unspecified	31	5.4%

Source: Data processing (2024)

Almost all the respondents considered internal communication an important contributor to their understanding of the characteristics and expectations of their work, promotion process, supervisors and

co-workers. More than 98.5% of the respondents perceived internal communication as at least somewhat important to the four examined factors, as detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Perceived Importance of Internal Communication Activities on the Job Descriptive Indices*

Perception	Work		Promotion		Supervision		Co-worker	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Very important	507	88.2%	503	87.5%	515	89.6%	527	91.7%
Somewhat important	60	10.4%	67	11.7%	56	9.7%	40	7.0%
Neutral	7	1.2%	5	0.9%	4	0.7%	8	1.4%
Somewhat unimportant	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Very unimportant	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
TOTAL	575	100%	575	100%	575	100%	575	100%

Source: Data processing (2024)

Similarly, when asked whether the internal communication effort could improve their job satisfaction, almost all the respondents agreed. Internal communication seems to affect the level of satisfaction across all examined factors. The results are consistent with

more than 97.5% of the respondents at least agreed the four factors of internal communication (work, promotion, supervision and co-workers) would help improve their work satisfaction (Table 4).

Table 4. *Levels of Agreement on How Employees' Satisfaction Could Be Improved Through Better Understanding of . . .*

Level	Work		Promotion		Supervision		Co-worker	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly agree	472	82.1%	488	84.9%	511	88.9%	504	87.7%
Agree	89	15.5%	80	13.9%	47	8.2%	64	11.1%
Neither agree or disagree	11	1.9%	4	0.7%	12	2.1%	7	1.2%
Disagree	3	0.5%	3	0.5%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.7%	0	0.0%
TOTAL	575	100%	575	100%	575	100%	575	100%

Source: Data processing (2024)

After the results from the survey confirmed the importance of internal communication and the perceived effect of internal communication on employee's satisfaction, the researchers conducted a series of in-depth interviews to delve deeper into the expectations of Gen-Zers for internal communication efforts.

There were twelve participants in the interview phase. The participants vary in age, with different levels of work exposure and working experience. A significant degree of consistency in the replies appeared after these twelve

interviews, which is a reasonable indication of saturation. This number of interviews was also supported by the recommendations of Jugenheimer et al. (2015). When there is no official, "accepted" sample size for in-depth interviews, as in this case, the population of Gen-Zers is too large, these authors suggested that a sample size of twelve might be sufficient to demonstrate patterns of ideas and perceptions. The profiles of the participants are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *Profiles of Interview Participants*

Participant	Gender	Age	Job Experience	Job Requires Education Background
A	Male	18	Part-time	No
B	Male	21	Internship	Yes
C	Male	21	Internship	Yes
D	Male	20	Part-time	No
E	Male	19	Part-time	No
F	Female	18	Part-time	No
G	Female	22	Part-time	Yes
H	Male	23	Full-time	Yes
I	Female	19	Part-time	No
J	Female	24	Full-time	Yes
K	Female	20	Part-time	No
L	Male	19	Part-time	No

Source: Data processing (2024)

4.1. Internal communication with technology improves transparency at work

All twelve participants in the study unanimously conveyed that Generation Z employees have elevated

expectations for workplace communication. They expressed a desire for transparency, authenticity, and honesty from their employers, considering effective communication as pivotal to organizational success. “I believe that communication is key to any organization’s success. I wouldn’t be satisfied with a company that does not communicate well with its employees. I want to see more transparency, authenticity and honesty from my employer.” – Participant C. When asked for more details on how internal communication affects work nature, the participants have different perspectives. Three perceived advantages emerged: aiding in the understanding of work duties and expectations, helping grasp the traits and skills necessary for the job, and monitoring the work progress of team members. Eight participants highlighted the role of internal communication in guiding newcomers. “I find [internal communication tools] very helpful for me, a newbie in the office. Most job descriptions out there are not clear enough for me to understand what the companies expect of me, so even when I joined [this company], I struggled to understand what I’m supposed to do and how I’m supposed to perform. And I joined the discussion board and got a lot of support from my colleagues to get through my probation.” – Participant H.

Although internal communication is usually seen as a way for organizations to convey their policies and procedures to the employees, it becomes beneficial for both the employers and employees. According to eight participants, through internal communication, they can understand how to improve their performance and hone the necessary work-related skills. “I’m very eager to learn, if I know what to learn. I can’t ask my supervisor and colleagues directly what I need to learn to [perform well].

There is an “employee of the month” award, and it highlights the winner’s work, achievements, and why they were chosen. Through the weekly meetings and monthly newsletters, I get a sense of what the company is looking for to improve myself.” – Participant G. Another set of answers, also agreed by eight participants, is that through peer communication on the discussion board or intranet, the employees can track the work progress, know how other team members are doing and divide their tasks more efficiently. When asked which internal communication platform or channel the participants expect their organizations to use, all participants mentioned technology tools. Gen-Z workers prefer to use messaging apps for quick communication, video conferencing tools for remote collaboration, and project management tools for organization and task management.

Employers who use modern communication tools that cater to the preferences of Gen-Z workers are more likely to improve their work satisfaction and engagement. “I appreciate when my employer uses project management tools like Trello to keep track of tasks and deadlines. It helps me stay organized and on top of my workload, and I can see what my teammates are working on as well. It’s a great way to stay on the same page and work towards our common goals.” – Participant J. “I think video conferencing tools like Zoom or Google Meet are essential for remote work and long-distance collaboration. Being able to see my coworkers’ faces and have face-to-face conversations even when we’re not in the same place helps build relationships and fosters a sense of community within the team.” – Participant H.

4.2. Internal communication could lead to better understanding of promotion and development, if done right

When asked whether internal communication could influence promotion and development opportunities, the replies were mixed. While the participants generally thought internal communication channels might help them understand their work and manage the company's expectations, they did not think the current practice is good enough.

Most of the participants agreed that internal communication could support their training and promotion activities through the transparency of promotion pathways (chosen by eight participants), better understanding of how the work can contribute to personal development (seven participants), and better understanding of how company's trainings can contribute to personal development (six participants). "I think people now get to understand the role of internal communication, especially for us Gen-Zers. It helps us understand our work and what we should expect from it. It also helps us to perform better in our jobs by helping us know how promotion opportunities are created and we can take advantage of them. All in all, I think that internal communication is important for understanding, managing and taking advantage of promotion and development opportunities." – Participant F. "I'm doing a part-time job at [a fast-food chain]. I don't hope to work for the restaurant after I graduate [from college] but for now, I always look for opportunities to get promoted. The restaurant has a bulletin board where the manager and employees can exchange messages, company updates and all. A glance at it each day gives me insights into what the restaurant looks for, who gets promoted and why, and I can see if I can be the next person in line for promotion." – Participant K. On the other hand, seven out of twelve participants thought the current internal

communication practice was not enough to leave an impact. Participant K, who previously agreed on the role of internal communication, shared her thoughts on how it should have been: "Shouldn't internal communication be planned and consistent? Of course, the bulletin board helps, but I expect quite a lot more. A message or two each day on the board doesn't give much information, and I have to pick up the news here and there and pierce them together to understand what I'm supposed to do..." to which other participants concurred. "I believe that it is important to be transparent with the company and be accountable for our own performance. Internal communication should be planned, and it also should be two-way. I don't think we want to wait until review day to showcase our work and receive comments, while we can share the good things we did in the day with our manager, receive feedback right away, and know well that we're on track for development or promotion. The current practice at my company doesn't support that, while I think it should." – Participant E. "I don't have a permanent job yet, but I want to give a comment on the future companies that I'll apply to after graduation. Very few job descriptions on the recruitment site give details on training and promotion. I asked my seniors who are in the workforce and they said the companies don't usually give clear information on those either. I think if companies care more about this topic and share more clue, it would make the employees happier." In summary, Gen-Z workers recognize that clear communication with their managers, ongoing training and development opportunities, and transparency about the promotion process are all essential for their career growth and development. Employers who prioritize internal communication for career development are more likely to retain Gen-Z workers

who are motivated and engaged in their work.

4.3. Two-way personal communication improves relationship with supervisors

In the previous two factors, the participants focused on the more indirect internal communication media, such as bulletin boards, video conferencing, forums, and intranet. When asked whether internal communication could improve their relationship with the supervisors, all participants discussed the use of meetings and face-to-face briefings. All participants expressed positive expectations of their supervisors, and believed that personal, two-way communication is the best way to improve their relationships. “While [technologies] could help me understand the company, they don’t help the company understand me. I want to show that I care about work and want to share it with [my supervisor] who might not know what I’m doing at work. Meetings are a good way to do so.” – Participant H. “I appreciate when my supervisor is approachable and open to feedback. When there is open communication and a culture of transparency, it helps me feel more comfortable sharing my thoughts and ideas. It also helps me build a stronger relationship with my supervisor.” – Participant C. There are three main ideas of how internal communication could improve the participants’ relationships with their supervisors, which were all agreed by eight out of twelve participants: work performance is evaluated seriously, effectively, and fairly by the team leader; work contribution is acknowledged; and opportunities to learn and gain support from the supervisor. “Acknowledgement is also important. When the supervisor acknowledges our hard work and contributions, it makes us feel valued and motivates us to do even better.” – Participant C. However, the seven

participants who had been working part-time or seasonal positions, without a requirement for formal education, did not present much consideration for improving their relationship with their supervisors. They liked to engage in conversations with their supervisors, but they did not actively seek one, or think it is necessary. “I work part-time here, and I don’t think it’s necessary to have a deep relationship with my supervisor. We talk and joke around, but I don’t see the need to improve the relationship.” – Participant F.

4.4. Social media and collaboration tools foster sense of community, but personal communication works better to improve coworkers’ relationships

When asked if internal communication could improve the perception of their coworkers, five out of twelve participants agreed. “[Internal communication] could facilitate communication and collaboration. By providing opportunities for employees to connect and collaborate with their peers, organizations can create a sense of community and teamwork that can increase job satisfaction.” – Participant J. “Social media and collaboration tools can help to foster a sense of community and support among employees, particularly when used for informal communication and relationship-building. The use of such tools can also help to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among us, which can lead to improved job performance and job satisfaction.” – Participant H. It is worth noting that all five participants who agreed were holding a more stable job that required a formal education background. The other seven participants working seasonal positions did not make any comments on the effect of internal communication in this case. Instead, they mentioned personal communication would be a better way to improve coworkers’ relationships, and

that organizations that encourage personal communication are more desired. “Good communication with my coworkers is essential for building trust and respect. When we communicate regularly and provide feedback on each other’s work, it helps us understand what is expected of us and how we can improve. It makes me feel more comfortable working with them.” – Participant A. “I prefer to work for a company that doesn’t restrain personal conversations at work. I believe that open and transparent communication among co-workers is associated with higher levels of trust, cooperation, and knowledge sharing, which positively impact employees’ job satisfaction.” – Participant K.

4.5. Discussion

These findings align with previous research by Rahayu et al. (2019) and Nauman et al. (2021), which established a positive relationship between good training sessions and job satisfaction. However, in the current study, the participants, who were predominantly Gen-Z workers holding junior-level positions or engaged in seasonal jobs, may not have immediate expectations of promotion, which could explain their limited indication of job satisfaction improvement through internal communication.

The findings also reveal that internal communication was not seen as effective in improving the relationship between the participants and their work supervisors. Instead, the participants emphasized the importance of personal, two-way communication for better understanding and support from their supervisors. They highlighted the need for direct communication channels, such as meetings and face-to-face briefings, to foster a stronger relationship. The participants expressed positive expectations of their supervisors and

believed that personal communication is the best way to improve their relationships. They emphasized that direct communication allows them to share their work progress, concerns, and ideas with their supervisors, enabling their supervisors to understand them better. The participants viewed this understanding as essential for fair evaluations, acknowledgment of their contributions, and opportunities for learning and support. These findings align with the research conducted by Byrne and LeMay (2006), which emphasized the importance of face-to-face meetings and personal communication in exchanging job-relevant information and enhancing job satisfaction. The findings also support Lee and Dong’s (2023) research, indicating that transparent internal communication practices can empower Gen Z employees, leading to higher job satisfaction and stronger advocacy behaviors.

The participants’ focus on direct communication channels suggests that they value the opportunity to have open and meaningful conversations with their supervisors. It is worth noting that the participants did not actively seek communication with their supervisors or consider it necessary to develop a deep relationship. The reason could be similar to the aforementioned, that as Gen-Z workers are holding junior-level positions or engaged in seasonal jobs, they have short-term plans for their current job positions, and may not see the need for a long-term relationship with their supervisors.

On the relationship between the participants and their work coworkers, the findings of this study indicate that internal communication was not perceived as effective either. The participants emphasized the importance of personal communication to build trust, respect, and a sense of community among coworkers.

They believed that personal communication fosters work transparency, encourages knowledge sharing, and positively impacts job satisfaction. The participants recognized the value of personal interaction in fostering teamwork and creating a positive work environment. These findings align with previous research by Rue (2018), which emphasizes that Gen-Z workers prioritize inclusion and value intangible workplace factors. The study conducted by Nguyen Ngoc et al. (2022) among Vietnamese Gen Z workers also supports these findings, as it revealed that this generation places greater importance on intangible values, such as workplace ethics and personal relationships, than physical infrastructures. Notably, only the participants holding more stable jobs with formal education backgrounds acknowledged the potential impact of internal communication on coworkers' perceptions. The participants in seasonal positions did not provide any comments on this aspect. However, all participants recognized the significance of personal communication for building trust and respect among coworkers. Overall, the findings of the survey and interviews confirm the significance of internal communication and its perceived impact on employee satisfaction among Gen-Z workers.

The participants expressed the importance of internal communication in understanding their work nature and the promotion process. These factors were found to positively influence job satisfaction among the respondents. However, the study did not find a significant association between internal communication and the relationships with supervisors and coworkers, as measured by Smith et al.'s (1969) Job Descriptive Index factors.

4.5.1 Internal communication and Social exchange theory

The results of this study showcase how effective internal communication practices can contribute to improved job satisfaction among Gen Z employees. Clear internal communication helps manage expectations, giving employees a realistic job preview and reducing turnover. Through these communication efforts, mutual expectations between the company and Gen Z employees are matched, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction. Gen Z employees, being tech-savvy and digitally oriented, value communication that resonates with their preferences, as it fosters a sense of transparency and fairness in the employment relationship, aligning with the core principles of SET.

4.5.2 Internal communication and the Job characteristics model

Gen Z employees, when offered clear internal communication about their job roles and tasks, experience an increased understanding of their job significance, task identity, and skill variety, leading to improved job satisfaction. Effective internal communication aligns with the principles of the JCM by providing employees with the necessary information and support to experience these job characteristics. This connection highlights the significance of internal communication in shaping the job characteristics crucial for Gen Z employees' job satisfaction.

4.5.3 Beyond internal communication

The findings also highlight the need for organizations to recognize the value of personal communication in fostering positive relationships among employees. While internal communication plays a vital role in conveying information about work and promotion, it may not directly contribute

to enhancing the supervisor-employee and coworker relationships. Thus, organizations should place equal emphasis on personal interactions and open communication channels to build trust, cooperation, and knowledge sharing among employees.

Moreover, the study reveals that Gen-Z workers prefer the use of technology tools for internal communication. Messaging apps, video conferencing tools, and project management platforms were identified as essential communication channels. Employers who leverage these modern communication tools that align with the preferences of Gen-Z employees are more likely to enhance work satisfaction and engagement. These tools enable quick and efficient communication, remote collaboration, and organized task management, which contribute to a positive work experience for Gen-Z workers.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of internal communication on the work satisfaction of Gen Z employees. Through interviews with twelve Gen Z employees from various industries, the findings revealed the significance of effective internal communication in shaping their perception of work nature, promotion, supervision, and co-workers, ultimately leading to higher work satisfaction. The use of digital communication tools, including instant messaging apps, email, and video conferencing, was seen as particularly effective in improving internal communication and enhancing work satisfaction.

5.1. Managerial implications

The managerial implications of this study are valuable for employers who want to enhance employee satisfaction and commitment, especially among Gen

Z workers. The findings emphasize the importance of investing in robust internal communication practices that cater to the preferences and needs of Gen Z employees. Incorporating digital communication tools and platforms that facilitate quick and efficient information exchange, collaboration, and knowledge sharing can contribute to improved work satisfaction and engagement among Gen Z workers. Employers should recognize the value of personal communication in building trust and fostering positive relationships among employees, alongside formal internal communication channels.

This research contributes to the existing scholarship by providing empirical evidence of the positive impact of internal communication on work satisfaction specifically among Gen Z employees. While prior literature has highlighted the importance of internal communication for employee satisfaction and well-being, this study specifically focuses on the Gen Z cohort, shedding light on their unique preferences and expectations regarding internal communication practices. By addressing the needs of Gen Z workers, organizations can attract and retain this generation workforce, enhancing overall organizational performance and success. The implications of this research extend beyond the academic sphere and have practical implications for organizations. Employers who prioritize effective internal communication can expect increased employee satisfaction, higher levels of engagement, and improved retention rates among Gen Z employees.

5.2. Suggestions for future research

Future research could study this topic across different generations, such as millennials or baby boomers, which would provide insights into the unique communication needs and preferences of

each generation and how organizations can tailor their internal communication strategies accordingly. Understanding the similarities and differences among

generations can aid in developing effective communication practices that cater to the diverse workforce.

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