

Managerial Communication Skills and Stakeholder Productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB), Cameroon

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ABSTRACT: Effective communication is essential to the coordination of complex organisational activities, particularly in examination bodies that depend on the timely collaboration of internal and external stakeholders. This study examined the relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB), Cameroon. A mixed-method case study design was adopted. The study involved 140 participants: 120 internal stakeholders who completed a questionnaire and 20 external stakeholders (chief examiners and assessors) who participated in interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlation, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings revealed generally favourable perceptions of managerial communication, although weaknesses were identified in feedback, direct access to management and the timely dissemination of information. The correlation analysis showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity ($\rho = .582$, $p < .001$), indicating that stronger communication

practices were associated with higher perceived productivity. Qualitative evidence further showed that delayed information, limited feedback and dependence on slower communication channels could hinder stakeholder preparedness and work efficiency, whereas telephone calls and digital communication facilitated faster information flow. The study concludes that timely, clear, responsive and multidirectional communication is important for effective stakeholder coordination and productivity within the examination-management process. It recommends strengthening upward and downward communication, improving feedback mechanisms, and expanding the appropriate use of digital communication channels.

Keywords: *managerial communication, stakeholder productivity, organisational communication, examination management, General Certificate of Education Board*

1. Introduction

Organisational productivity depends not only on the availability of human and material resources but also on the quality of interaction through which organisational members understand responsibilities, coordinate activities, provide feedback and respond to emerging demands. Communication is therefore a core managerial process because it connects leadership intentions with employee action and facilitates the exchange of information required for coordinated performance. Recent research shows that effective internal and managerial communication is associated with stronger employee engagement, role clarity, job satisfaction and work performance (Balakrishnan et al., 2024; Gede, 2026; Tkalac Verčič & Men, 2023). In complex organisations where tasks are interdependent and time-sensitive, weak communication may consequently delay action, weaken coordination and reduce operational effectiveness.

Managerial communication is particularly important in institutions whose activities depend on the coordinated participation of numerous internal and external stakeholders. Examination bodies represent one such organisational setting. Their operations involve the planning, production, administration, supervision, marking, processing and certification of high-stakes examinations, often within strict schedules and regulatory requirements. Effective communication in such institutions must therefore ensure that information is timely, accurate, sufficiently clear and capable of moving across hierarchical and

functional boundaries. Contemporary organisational research suggests that meaningful communication between managers and employees strengthens engagement and helps employees understand how their roles contribute to organisational goals (Arif et al., 2023). Similarly, evidence from different organisational contexts indicates that communication strategies and supportive managerial communication are positively associated with employee performance and productivity (Igbokwe, 2024; Md Subre, 2023).

In Cameroon, the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB) occupies a central position in the administration of national examinations within the English-speaking subsystem of education. Created in 1993 (General Certificate of Education Board, n.d.), the GCEB coordinates General and Technical and Vocational Education Examinations and works with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders. Its internal stakeholders include administrative and support staff involved in examination planning, registration, typesetting, moderation, printing, distribution, monitoring, processing and publication of results. External stakeholders include assessors, chief examiners, examiners, education officials, candidates and parents. The effectiveness of the Board therefore depends on continuous information exchange among individuals and groups whose tasks are sequential, specialised and mutually dependent.

The organisational complexity of examination management makes communication especially consequential. Examiners need timely invitations and operational instructions; staff require accurate directives and feedback; managers depend on information from subordinate units; and external stakeholders require clear channels through which concerns and responses can be communicated. When communication is delayed, unclear or predominantly one-directional, stakeholders may be less able to prepare adequately for assigned responsibilities or coordinate their activities efficiently. Recent studies reinforce the importance of this concern. Tkalac Verčič and Men (2023), using data from 3,457 employees, found that satisfaction with internal communication positively influenced employee engagement. In another study, supervisor communication and employee engagement were found to contribute significantly to performance outcomes (Imam et al., 2023). Evidence from the African context similarly suggests that communication strategies can influence employee productivity and organisational performance (Igbokwe, 2024).

At the GCEB, communication occurs through both conventional and increasingly digital channels, including official letters, memoranda, telephone calls, electronic mail and online messaging platforms. However, evidence contained in the present study indicates that stakeholders have experienced challenges relating to delayed dissemination of information, limited feedback and restricted direct communication with management. External stakeholders, in particular, reported that invitation letters sometimes arrived late, while some respondents expressed dissatisfaction with feedback on concerns communicated to the Board. These experiences raise an important organisational question because examination activities are highly time-sensitive and delays in communication may affect stakeholder preparedness and work efficiency.

The problem is therefore not merely whether communication occurs at the GCEB, but whether the communication practices used by managers are sufficiently timely, responsive and multidirectional to support stakeholder productivity. Existing research has established broad relationships between organisational communication, employee engagement and work performance in business, educational and public-sector settings (Balakrishnan et al., 2024; Gede, 2026; Igbokwe, 2024; Md Subre, 2023; Tkalac Verčič & Men, 2023). However, comparatively little empirical attention has been paid to communication processes within examination-management institutions in Cameroon, where organisational performance depends on coordination between permanent staff and large numbers of temporary external stakeholders participating in examination activities.

This study addresses that gap by examining the relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB). Specifically, it investigates whether stakeholders' perceptions of managerial communication are associated with their perceived productivity and explores how external stakeholders experience the communication channels used in the organisation. By focusing on the GCEB, the study contributes context-specific evidence on organisational communication within a specialised public examination institution.

Objective of the Study

The study sought to:

Examine the relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB).

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no statistically significant relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB).

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Managerial Communication Skills

Communication is fundamental to organisational functioning because coordinated action depends on the timely exchange, interpretation and use of information. Within organisations, managerial communication extends beyond the transmission of instructions. It encompasses the ability of managers to convey information clearly, listen to stakeholders, provide feedback, facilitate upward and downward information flow, select appropriate communication channels and create opportunities for dialogue. Contemporary internal communication scholarship consequently treats communication as a strategic organisational process rather than merely the movement of messages from one individual to another.

Recent scholarship defines internal communication broadly as the management of information, ideas and relationships among organisational actors in ways that facilitate understanding, engagement and organisational effectiveness. Sutton and Le Roux (2026), in a systematic review of African internal communication research spanning 1990–2024, note that contemporary understandings of internal communication increasingly emphasise strategic interaction, stakeholder relationships, trust and organisational effectiveness rather than one-directional information dissemination. Their review further shows that internal communication research in Africa remains comparatively limited, with published studies concentrated in only a small number of countries. This underrepresentation strengthens the need for context-specific research from institutions such as the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB) in Cameroon.

Managerial communication may take downward, upward, horizontal and increasingly digital forms. Downward communication enables managers to communicate policies, responsibilities, deadlines and operational expectations to subordinates and other stakeholders. Upward communication enables employees and stakeholders to report progress, raise concerns, seek clarification and provide feedback. Horizontal

communication supports coordination among actors operating at similar organisational levels. In practice, effective organisational communication requires interaction among these directions rather than excessive dependence on a single flow of information.

The quality of communication is equally important. Information may be formally transmitted yet remain ineffective if it is delayed, unclear, incomplete or delivered through channels that stakeholders cannot access conveniently. In organisations characterised by time-sensitive activities, timeliness becomes particularly consequential. Communication quality therefore involves clarity, accessibility, responsiveness, adequacy of feedback and appropriateness of the communication medium.

This is especially relevant to the GCEB because examination administration involves highly interdependent activities conducted within predetermined schedules. Internal staff, assessors, chief examiners, examiners and other stakeholders require information concerning examination preparation, moderation, marking, coordination and related responsibilities. Delays or ambiguities at one stage may affect activities occurring later in the examination-management process. Managerial communication at the GCEB should therefore be considered both an interpersonal competence and an organisational coordination mechanism.

Digital transformation has further changed the communication environment of contemporary organisations. Telephone calls, electronic mail, instant messaging applications and organisational digital platforms increasingly complement conventional letters, memoranda and face-to-face communication. These channels can improve communication speed and reach, although their effectiveness depends on accessibility, appropriate use and organisational communication policies. The present study is particularly interested in how stakeholders perceive these different communication practices within the context of examination management.

2.2 Stakeholder Productivity

Productivity generally concerns the relationship between resources invested in organisational activity and the outputs generated from those resources. At the individual or stakeholder level, however, productivity is broader than numerical output. It may be reflected in the timely completion of responsibilities, quality of task performance, efficient

use of resources, preparedness for assigned duties, responsiveness to organisational expectations and contribution towards institutional objectives.

In the context of the GCEB, stakeholder productivity must be understood in relation to the particular responsibilities assigned to different categories of stakeholders. Internal stakeholders undertake activities such as examination registration, preparation of examination materials, coordination, monitoring, processing and publication of results. External stakeholders, including assessors and chief examiners, perform specialised functions associated with item development, moderation, marking, coordination and grading. Productivity therefore depends considerably on stakeholders receiving adequate information about what they are expected to do, when activities will occur, where responsibilities will be performed and how problems should be communicated and resolved.

Productivity should nevertheless be distinguished from the overall performance of the organisation. Candidates' examination results, for example, cannot be used directly as an indicator of stakeholder productivity because examination performance is influenced by numerous factors outside the administrative operations of the GCEB, including teaching quality, learner characteristics, school resources and curriculum implementation. For the present study, stakeholder productivity is therefore understood primarily in terms of stakeholders' perceived efficiency, preparedness, timely execution of responsibilities and contribution towards the achievement of organisational tasks.

Communication can contribute to these outcomes by reducing uncertainty and facilitating coordination. Where stakeholders understand expectations and receive information early enough to prepare, they are better positioned to organise their activities efficiently. Conversely, delayed information or inadequate feedback may interrupt workflow, generate avoidable uncertainty and affect the timely execution of responsibilities.

2.3 Managerial Communication and Stakeholder Productivity

Contemporary empirical literature provides substantial evidence that communication is associated with positive employee and organisational outcomes. Tkalac Verčič and Men (2023), using survey data from 3,457 employees, found that satisfaction with internal communication positively influenced employee engagement. Their findings demonstrate

that communication is not simply a mechanism for transferring organisational information; employees' perceptions of communication quality influence how connected and engaged they feel within the organisation.

The relationship between communication and performance is also evident in research that directly incorporates managerial support and employee outcomes. Imam et al. (2023) examined 249 employee–supervisor dyads and found that supervisor support and internal communication contributed to employee engagement and subsequent performance. Their findings emphasised internal communication as an important organisational condition through which leadership relationships can influence employee behaviour and performance.

Similarly, recent research has shown that meaningful manager–employee communication can strengthen employees' understanding of organisational goals and their own contribution towards those goals. A 2023 study published in *Public Relations Review* found that meaningful manager–employee communication increased employee engagement and supported the development of strategic employee attributes associated with organisational success. This finding is particularly relevant to institutions in which organisational outcomes depend on employees and other stakeholders understanding how their specific responsibilities connect with wider institutional processes.

African evidence supports a similar relationship. Mmutle (2022), examining internal communication and employee engagement in an African organisational setting, found that collaborative, open and transparent communication strengthened employee engagement and helped employees perform beyond narrowly prescribed expectations. The study highlighted dialogue and opportunities for employee voice as important components of communication associated with operational effectiveness.

However, the African evidence base remains comparatively limited. Sutton and Le Roux's (2026) systematic review identified only 79 relevant peer-reviewed studies on internal communication conducted in Africa between 1990 and 2024, with research concentrated in only ten African countries. The authors concluded that African perspectives remain substantially underrepresented in the global internal communication literature. This geographical imbalance is particularly important because organisational structures,

communication cultures, technology access and institutional arrangements may differ substantially across contexts.

Furthermore, much of the existing research concentrates on conventional employees within business, corporate or general public-sector environments. Less attention has been directed towards organisations that rely simultaneously on permanent internal staff and temporary or periodic external stakeholders. Examination institutions present such a context. Their productivity depends upon coordination among permanent administrators and large numbers of specialist external actors who participate during particular phases of the examination cycle.

The GCEB therefore presents an analytically useful context. Examination processes require communication across organisational boundaries and between stakeholders who may not be physically located within the institution. Invitations, instructions, schedules, feedback and changes in examination arrangements must reach relevant stakeholders sufficiently early to permit appropriate preparation. The coexistence of conventional communication methods such as official letters with digital channels such as telephone calls and WhatsApp further raises questions concerning communication timeliness, accessibility and effectiveness.

Existing studies establish a broad relationship between internal communication, employee engagement and organisational performance, but comparatively limited empirical evidence exists concerning communication and stakeholder productivity within examination-management organisations in Cameroon. The present study addresses this contextual gap by examining the relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the GCEB and by exploring how external stakeholders experience the communication processes through which their examination responsibilities are coordinated.

2.4 Theoretical Framework: Social Exchange Theory

The present study is anchored in Social Exchange Theory (SET), principally associated with Blau (1964). Social Exchange Theory proposes that relationships develop through reciprocal exchanges in which individuals respond to favourable treatment, support and resources received from others. Within organisations, employees who perceive those

managers or institutions provide support, respect, useful information and fair treatment are more likely to reciprocate through positive attitudes and behaviours towards the organisation.

Social Exchange Theory provides a stronger theoretical explanation for the present study than a purely efficiency-oriented theory because managerial communication involves a relational exchange between management and stakeholders. Communication communicates more than operational information. Timely information, attentive listening, opportunities for feedback and responsiveness to stakeholders' concerns may signal that the organisation values their contribution. Conversely, delayed communication, lack of feedback or restricted opportunities for stakeholders to express concerns may weaken perceptions of organisational support and reduce the quality of the exchange relationship.

Recent empirical research supports the application of Social Exchange Theory to organisational communication. Imam et al. (2023), explicitly applying SET, demonstrated that supervisor support and communication contributed to employee engagement and performance. Tkalac Verčič and Men (2023) similarly found that the relationship between internal communication satisfaction and employee engagement was partly explained by employees' perceptions of organisational support, a central construct within social exchange relationships. This application is consistent with contemporary internal communication research that uses relational and exchange-based perspectives to explain employee attitudes, engagement and performance (Imam et al., 2023; Tkalac Verčič & Men, 2023).

Applied to the GCEB, Social Exchange Theory suggests that internal and external stakeholders who experience communication as timely, clear, respectful and responsive may interpret such practices as evidence of organisational support. Such perceptions may encourage greater preparedness, cooperation and commitment to assigned responsibilities. For example, an examiner who receives an invitation sufficiently early, obtains clear instructions and receives feedback when clarification is sought is more likely to be adequately prepared for the assigned examination activity than one who receives delayed or incomplete information.

The theory is also relevant to external stakeholders even though they may not be permanent employees of the GCEB. Assessors, chief examiners and other examination personnel enter recurring professional relationships with the organisation and depend upon the Board for information, coordination and administrative support. These interactions constitute exchange relationships in which the quality of organisational communication can influence stakeholder perceptions and responses.

Within the present study, the theoretical relationship can therefore be expressed as:

Effective managerial communication → positive stakeholder perceptions of organisational support and coordination → stronger stakeholder engagement and preparedness → higher perceived productivity.

Social Exchange Theory does not imply that communication alone determines stakeholder productivity. Productivity may also be influenced by remuneration, working conditions, professional competence, workload, technology, organisational structures and other contextual factors. Rather, the theory provides a plausible explanation for why variations in stakeholders' experiences of managerial communication may be systematically associated with variations in their perceived productivity. On this basis, the study hypothesises that better managerial communication skills will be positively associated with stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods case study design to examine the relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB). The case-study orientation was appropriate because the investigation focused on a single organisational setting, while the mixed-method approach enabled the integration of quantitative evidence from internal stakeholders with qualitative evidence from external stakeholders. The quantitative component provided information on perceptions of managerial communication and productivity, whereas the qualitative component offered deeper explanations of how communication practices were experienced during examination-related activities.

3.2 Population of the Study

The target population comprised 4,491 internal and external stakeholders of the GCEB. This population included 4,000 examiners, 320 chief examiners, 39 assessors, 120 Board staff, 11 members of the Board of Directors and the Registrar.

The accessible population consisted of stakeholders who were directly involved in the administration and coordination of examination activities and who possessed relevant experience of the communication processes used within the organisation.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The study involved a total sample of 140 participants, comprising 120 internal stakeholders and 20 external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders consisted of Board staff, while the external stakeholders comprised 15 chief examiners and five assessors.

All 120 Board staff in the internal-stakeholder category were included in the quantitative strand, effectively constituting a census of that group. For the qualitative strand, purposive sampling was used to select 15 chief examiners and five assessors because their direct experience of examination coordination and communication processes positioned them to provide information relevant to the study. Combining these groups enabled the study to examine communication from within the organisation and from the perspective of external stakeholders who interact with the Board periodically during examination-related activities.

3.4 Instruments for Data Collection

Two instruments were used for data collection: a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire was administered to the 120 internal stakeholders. It contained closed- and open-ended items designed to obtain information on managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity. The communication items addressed issues such as direct access to management, listening, feedback, timeliness of information, communication of work objectives and clarity of instructions.

The interview guide was administered to the 20 external stakeholders comprising chief examiners and assessors. It explored their experiences of information flow, communication

channels, timeliness, feedback and the perceived influence of communication practices on their preparedness and execution of examination responsibilities.

3.5 Validity of the Instruments

Face and content validity procedures were used to determine the appropriateness of the instruments. The questionnaire and interview guide were first reviewed by the research supervisor for clarity, grammatical accuracy, item construction, relevance and absence of ambiguity. The instruments were subsequently examined by experts with knowledge of management and stakeholder productivity to determine whether the items adequately represented the variables under investigation.

The expert review resulted in an overall Content Validity Index (CVI) of 1.00, indicating that the judges considered the items relevant to the constructs being measured. Recommendations arising from the validation process were incorporated into the instruments before field administration.

The interview guide was similarly reviewed to ensure that the questions were clear, appropriately sequenced and directly related to managerial communication and stakeholder productivity.

3.6 Reliability of the Instruments

A pilot study was conducted with seven GCEB stakeholders who possessed characteristics similar to those of the main study participants but were not included in the final sample. The pilot exercise assessed the clarity of the questionnaire items and the internal consistency of the scales.

Reliability was estimated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The communication-skills scale yielded an alpha coefficient of .793, while the stakeholder-productivity scale produced an alpha coefficient of .897. The overall questionnaire yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .861. These coefficients exceeded the commonly accepted minimum threshold of .70 and indicated satisfactory internal consistency of the instrument.

The interview guide was also pilot-tested to assess the clarity, sequencing and relevance of its questions. Feedback from the pilot exercise was used to refine the wording and organisation of the interview questions before the main data collection.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from internal and external stakeholders of the GCEB. The questionnaire was administered to internal stakeholders, while external stakeholders participated in face-to-face interviews.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and participated voluntarily. Confidentiality of responses was maintained, and information obtained was used solely for research purposes. The use of both quantitative and qualitative instruments enabled the study to obtain numerical evidence on managerial communication and productivity while also capturing stakeholders' explanations of how communication processes affected their work.

3.8 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 25. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages and mean scores, were used to summarise respondents' perceptions of managerial communication practices. For item-level interpretation on the four-point response scale, mean scores of 2.50 and above were treated as agreement/acceptance, while mean scores below 2.50 were treated as disagreement/rejection.

The relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity was examined using Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient. Spearman's rho was appropriate because the data were derived primarily from ordinal questionnaire responses and the analysis sought to establish the strength and direction of association between the variables. The hypothesis was tested at the .05 significance level.

Qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analysed thematically. Responses were organised around recurring themes, including information flow, timeliness of communication, feedback, communication channels and suggestions for improving managerial communication. Selected quotations were used to illustrate the themes and complement the quantitative findings.

The quantitative and qualitative findings were subsequently interpreted together to provide a more comprehensive understanding of managerial communication and stakeholder productivity at the GCEB.

4. Findings

The findings are presented in relation to the study objective, which examined the relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB). Quantitative findings from the 120 internal stakeholders are presented first, followed by qualitative evidence from the 20 external stakeholders. The section concludes with the test of the research hypothesis.

4.1 Internal Stakeholders' Perceptions of Managerial Communication Skills

Internal stakeholders assessed both direct and indirect forms of managerial communication. The findings are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 *Internal Stakeholders' Perceptions of Managerial Communication Skills*

Communication item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Mean	Decision
I can tell from my manager's behaviour when they are not satisfied with my work.	105 (87.5)	15 (12.5)	3.31	Accepted
I have direct communication with top management when I have a concern.	71 (59.2)	49 (40.8)	2.57	Accepted
My manager pays attention to the concerns of subordinates.	66 (55.0)	54 (45.0)	2.52	Accepted
My manager listens to me and other subordinates.	65 (54.2)	55 (45.8)	2.51	Accepted
I am able to seek further clarification when instructions are not well understood.	61 (50.8)	59 (49.2)	2.43	Rejected
Aggregate: Direct communication	74 (61.7)	46 (38.3)	2.66	Accepted
I receive relevant information about examination processes on time.	95 (79.2)	25 (20.8)	3.03	Accepted
Top management regulates information before disseminating it to subordinates.	90 (75.0)	30 (25.0)	2.97	Accepted

Communication item	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Mean	Decision
My manager ensures that employees understand assigned tasks before implementation.	88 (73.3)	32 (26.7)	2.78	Accepted
Top managers communicate work objectives to stakeholders.	80 (66.7)	40 (33.3)	2.61	Accepted
My manager provides feedback on information communicated.	53 (44.2)	67 (55.8)	2.34	Rejected
Aggregate: Indirect communication	81 (67.5)	39 (32.5)	2.75	Accepted

Overall, internal stakeholders expressed relatively favourable perceptions of managerial communication. Direct communication recorded an aggregate agreement level of **61.7%**, while indirect communication recorded **67.5%**.

The strongest positive perception concerned managers' non-verbal indication of dissatisfaction with work, reported by 87.5% of respondents. Timely receipt of examination-related information was also rated positively by 79.2%, while 75.0% agreed that top management regulated information before dissemination.

Nevertheless, two areas reflected comparatively weak communication. Nearly half of the respondents (49.2%) indicated difficulty obtaining further clarification when instructions were not understood, while a majority (55.8%) reported inadequate feedback from managers. These findings suggest that although information generally reaches internal stakeholders, communication may be less effective when stakeholders require clarification or expect responses to information already communicated.

4.2 External Stakeholders' Experiences of Communication at the GCEB

The interviews with 20 external stakeholders revealed four recurring themes: **timeliness of information, feedback, communication channels, and preparation for examination activities.**

Table 2: Themes Emerging from External Stakeholders' Experiences of Managerial Communication

Theme	Summary of participants' experiences	Illustrative evidence
Timeliness of communication	Participants generally associated early communication with better preparation and work efficiency, while late information was perceived to delay activities.	<i>"The flow of information is good because I receive information about a job to be done at the Board on time and prepare myself on time. But when it comes late, it retards productivity."</i>
Inadequate feedback	Some participants reported that concerns communicated to the Board did not always receive responses.	<i>"There is no feedback from the complaints ... and it affects my work negatively."</i>
Communication channels	Telephone calls and WhatsApp were generally perceived as faster than conventional letters.	<i>"Phone calls and WhatsApp groups ... help examiners to get quick information."</i>
Need for early scheduling	Participants emphasised the importance of timely invitations and advance communication of examination activities.	<i>"Information for markers should be sent out on time."</i>

The qualitative findings generally reinforced the quantitative results. External stakeholders viewed communication positively when information was received early enough to allow adequate preparation. Conversely, delays in sending invitations or operational information were perceived as reducing efficiency.

Participants also drew attention to the communication channels used by the GCEB. Conventional letters were frequently described as slower, particularly when invitations reached examiners close to the commencement of examination activities. By contrast, telephone calls and WhatsApp groups were viewed as more immediate means of communication, especially where stakeholders required rapid notification.

Feedback emerged as another concern. Some external stakeholders indicated that although they could communicate concerns to the Board, responses were not always received. This finding corresponds with the quantitative evidence from internal stakeholders, where feedback recorded the lowest level of agreement.

4.3 Relationship Between Managerial Communication Skills and Stakeholder Productivity

The research hypothesis stated that:

Ho: There is no statistically significant relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB).

Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 3: Relationship Between Managerial Communication Skills and Stakeholder Productivity

Variables	Spearman's ρ	p-value	N	Decision
Managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity	.582	< .001	120	Significant

The analysis produced a moderate-to-strong positive correlation between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity ($\rho = .582$, $p < .001$). Since the p-value was below the .05 significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The result indicates that more favourable perceptions of managerial communication were associated with higher levels of perceived stakeholder productivity. In practical terms, stakeholders who experienced communication as clearer, more timely and more responsive also tended to report stronger productivity.

The quantitative relationship was supported by the qualitative evidence. External stakeholders repeatedly associated timely communication with better preparation and smoother execution of examination responsibilities, while delayed communication and inadequate feedback were perceived as constraints on work efficiency.

Taken together, the quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that managerial communication is meaningfully associated with stakeholder productivity at the GCEB. The findings further suggest that **timeliness, feedback, accessibility and choice of communication channel** are particularly important dimensions of this relationship.

5. Discussion

The study examined the relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB). The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity ($\rho = .582, p < .001$). This indicates that stakeholders who perceived communication practices more favourably also tended to report higher levels of productivity. The finding should not be interpreted as evidence that communication alone causes productivity; rather, it demonstrates that communication constitutes an important organisational condition associated with how effectively stakeholders perform their responsibilities.

This finding is consistent with contemporary organisational communication research. Tkalac Verčič and Men (2023) found that satisfaction with internal communication positively influenced employee engagement among 3,457 employees, demonstrating that the quality of communication within organisations is closely connected to employees' willingness to invest themselves in organisational activities. Similarly, Imam et al. (2023) found that internal communication played an important role in the relationship among supervisor support, employee engagement and job performance. Their findings suggest that communication strengthens the organisational exchange processes through which employees understand expectations, perceive support and contribute more effectively to organisational goals.

The present findings extend this relationship to the context of examination management. The operations of the GCEB in Cameroon require coordination among permanent internal staff and external professionals whose participation is concentrated around particular phases of the examination cycle. In such a setting, productivity depends substantially on whether stakeholders receive appropriate information sufficiently early to organise their activities. The association observed between managerial communication and stakeholder productivity therefore appears reasonable because unclear or delayed information can interrupt a sequence of highly interdependent examination activities.

The descriptive findings further showed that internal stakeholders generally held favourable views of managerial communication. A majority reported receiving relevant

information about examination processes on time and indicated that management communicated work expectations and ensured that assigned tasks were understood. These practices are important because effective managerial communication reduces uncertainty and enables organisational members to align their individual activities with wider institutional objectives. Mmutle (2022), within an African organisational context, similarly found that open and collaborative internal communication strengthened employee engagement and encouraged employees to contribute beyond narrowly prescribed expectations.

However, the findings also revealed important weaknesses. Feedback emerged as the least favourably rated communication dimension, with more than half of the internal stakeholders indicating that managers did not consistently provide feedback on information communicated. External stakeholders expressed similar concerns, reporting that complaints or concerns communicated to the Board did not always receive responses. This convergence between the quantitative and qualitative evidence suggests that communication at the GCEB may function more effectively as a mechanism for transmitting information than as a fully reciprocal process of organisational dialogue.

This distinction is important. Effective managerial communication requires more than the downward transmission of directives. Employees and stakeholders also require opportunities to ask questions, seek clarification and receive responses. Mbhele and de Beer (2022) emphasise that effective internal communication depends on a supportive communication climate in which employees experience openness, leadership communication and opportunities for engagement. Likewise, Mmutle (2022) highlights dialogic communication and employee voice as important components of organisational engagement and operational effectiveness.

The finding concerning feedback is also consistent with Social Exchange Theory. From a social exchange perspective, timely responses, attentive listening and opportunities for dialogue may signal that management values stakeholders and recognises their contribution. Such experiences can strengthen perceptions of organisational support and encourage reciprocal commitment to organisational responsibilities. Conversely, when stakeholders repeatedly communicate concerns without receiving feedback, the exchange relationship may be weakened. Imam et al. (2023) similarly demonstrate that perceived

supervisor support and internal communication contribute to employee engagement and performance through relational exchange processes.

Timeliness constituted another important theme. External stakeholders repeatedly indicated that early communication enabled them to prepare adequately for examination activities, whereas delayed invitations or operational information created difficulties. This finding is particularly significant in the GCEB context because examination administration operates within fixed calendars and tightly connected activities. An invitation received after an examiner has already committed to other professional responsibilities may affect preparedness, travel arrangements or timely participation. Communication delays therefore have organisational consequences beyond simple dissatisfaction.

The importance of timeliness also relates to the choice of communication channels. External stakeholders generally viewed telephone calls and WhatsApp groups as faster and more effective than conventional letters, particularly for urgent examination-related information. This does not imply that formal written communication should be abandoned. Rather, it suggests that formal communication may be strengthened by complementary digital channels that improve immediacy while preserving official documentation. Research on internal communication also shows that communication channels can shape employees' perceptions of organisational communication, particularly during periods of disruption (Tkalac Verčič & Špoljarić, 2023).

The coexistence of formal letters, telephone communication and digital messaging at the GCEB therefore presents both an opportunity and a managerial challenge. Digital platforms can accelerate information flow, but their use requires appropriate protocols concerning accuracy, authority, record keeping and equitable access. The findings suggest that a blended communication system may be more appropriate than dependence on a single medium. Official letters can retain their formal and documentary function, while telephone and secure digital channels can provide rapid notification, reminders and clarification.

The findings also have theoretical implications. Social Exchange Theory helps explain why communication practices may be associated with productivity, but the present study shows that the exchange relationship extends beyond permanent employees. External stakeholders

such as assessors and chief examiners may participate only periodically in the activities of the GCEB, yet their effectiveness still depends on how the organisation communicates with and supports them. This suggests that organisational exchange relationships can develop across institutional boundaries where external actors repeatedly collaborate with an organisation.

The study therefore contributes to the literature by demonstrating that managerial communication is relevant not only to employee engagement within conventional workplaces but also to the coordination of mixed stakeholder systems involving permanent staff and periodic external professionals. This is particularly important in African examination-management institutions, where relatively little empirical attention has been given to the communication processes through which complex national assessment activities are coordinated.

Overall, the findings suggest that managerial communication at the GCEB in Cameroon is generally functional but not uniformly effective. The principal weaknesses lie less in the absence of communication than in feedback, responsiveness, timeliness and opportunities for clarification. Strengthening these dimensions may enhance stakeholders' preparedness, coordination and perceived productivity. The findings therefore reinforce the view that organisational communication should be treated as a strategic management function rather than merely an administrative mechanism for transmitting instructions.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity at the General Certificate of Education Board (GCEB) in Cameroon. The findings showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between managerial communication skills and stakeholder productivity, indicating that stakeholders who perceived communication practices more favourably also tended to report higher levels of productivity.

The descriptive and qualitative findings further showed that communication at the GCEB is generally functional, particularly in relation to the dissemination of examination-related information and communication of work expectations. However, important weaknesses

were identified in feedback, responsiveness, opportunities for clarification and the timeliness of some communication processes. External stakeholders especially highlighted delays in receiving invitations and operational information, while both internal and external participants expressed concerns about limited feedback.

These findings suggest that the effectiveness of communication at the GCEB depends not only on whether information is transmitted, but also on whether it is timely, clear, responsive and multidirectional. In an organisation whose activities depend on close coordination among permanent staff and periodic external stakeholders, communication must support both information flow and reciprocal interaction.

The study therefore concludes that managerial communication constitutes an important organisational factor associated with stakeholder productivity at the GCEB. Strengthening feedback mechanisms, improving the timeliness of communication and expanding opportunities for upward as well as downward communication may enhance stakeholder preparedness, coordination and work efficiency.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen feedback mechanisms.

Management should establish clearer procedures for acknowledging and responding to concerns raised by internal and external stakeholders. Feedback should form an integral part of communication rather than being treated as an optional follow-up activity.

2. Improve the timeliness of examination-related communication.

Invitations, schedules, instructions and other operational information should be communicated sufficiently early to enable examiners and other stakeholders to prepare adequately for assigned responsibilities.

3. Promote multidirectional communication.

Communication should not operate primarily from management to stakeholders. Structures should encourage upward communication, clarification, consultation and constructive feedback from staff, assessors, chief examiners and other relevant stakeholders.

4. Adopt a blended communication system.

Formal letters and memoranda should be complemented by faster communication channels such as telephone calls, electronic mail and appropriate digital messaging platforms. This blended approach can preserve the formal character of official communication while improving speed and accessibility.

5. Develop clear protocols for digital communication.

The increasing use of digital platforms should be guided by institutional procedures that address authority, accuracy, confidentiality, record keeping and appropriate use of official communication channels.

6. Enhance managerial communication competence.

Managers and unit heads should receive periodic professional development in listening, feedback, interpersonal communication, conflict-sensitive communication and the management of stakeholder relationships.

7. Institutionalise communication review.

The GCEB should periodically assess stakeholders' experiences of internal and external communication in order to identify emerging weaknesses and improve organisational communication practices.

6.3 Implication for Practice

The findings indicate that communication within examination-management organisations should be treated as a strategic management function rather than merely as an administrative process. For the GCEB, improvements in timeliness, feedback and responsiveness may contribute to better stakeholder coordination and preparedness during examination activities.

6.4 Limitation and Direction for Further Research

The study was conducted within a single examination institution and relied largely on participants' perceptions of communication and productivity. In addition, the pilot test used to estimate internal consistency involved only seven stakeholders, so the reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients should be interpreted as preliminary reliability evidence. The findings should therefore be interpreted within the context of the GCEB. Future studies could examine similar relationships across other examination or educational institutions, use larger pilot samples, incorporate objective measures of productivity and explore how specific communication channels influence organisational performance over time.

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