LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION AND TEAM PERFORMANCE IN DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENTS

Costin Andrei BUTA
Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania
ca.butta@gmail.com

Irina BADIU
Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania
badiuirina12@stud.ase.ro

Abstract
This paper synthesizes research published between 2000 and 2025 on how leadership communication affects team performance in dynamic environments. Drawing on evidence across management, organizational behavior, and communication studies, the review identifies six recurring communication practices: clear direction, inquiry, sensegiving, regular cadence, channel–task fit, and closed-loop summaries. It argues that these practices influence performance through three mechanisms: psychological safety and trust, role clarity and alignment, and shared mental models. The paper proposes a bundled conceptual model (Figure 1) and six propositions that specify these links and the boundary conditions under which they strengthen or weaken. Key moderators include environmental dynamism, team virtuality, interdependence, tenure, team size, and compliance load.
Keywords: Leadership communication, Organizational culture, Business environments, Sensegiving, Team trust.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.24818/beman/2026.16.1-03

1. INTRODUCTION

The performance of teams has become a decisive factor for companies operating in fast-changing environments that face pressures from globalization, digitalization, shifting regulations, and volatile consumer demands. These pressures translate into shorter product cycles, tighter compliance requirements, and frequent changes in strategy. In this context, how leaders communicate with their teams has moved from being a supporting skill to being a central factor of success. Communication is the thread that links vision to execution, individual contributions to collective results, and adaptation to performance.

Research over the past two decades has documented this link. Leaders who provide clarity, encourage voice, and create shared meaning consistently achieve better outcomes at the team level (Men, 2014; Yue, 2019; Mayfield and Mayfield, 2021). Their teams commit more strongly, coordinate more smoothly, and deliver with fewer errors. This effect extends beyond simple productivity. Teams led with effective

Business Excellence and Management
Volume 16 Issue 1 / March 2026

communication show higher innovation output, respond faster to market changes, and sustain morale under pressure.

Yet, much of what we know comes from stable or semi-stable environments. Studies often examine teams in predictable settings where priorities are clear, and the rate of change is modest. While these studies are valuable, they leave open the question of how communication works when the environment itself is volatile. Dynamic business environments such as FMCG, Retail, IT&C, Banking, and heavily regulated industries like Tobacco do not offer stability.

In these contexts, ambiguity, time pressure, and uncertainty are the rule rather than the exception. Leaders must make sense of change while guiding their teams through it. The challenge is not only to set direction but to constantly refresh and reaffirm it.

Two main issues emerge from the existing evidence. First, research on mechanisms such as psychological safety, trust, and shared mental models has often been developed separately from work on contextual conditions, including dynamism and virtuality.

The result is a fragmented understanding: we know that safety supports learning and that dynamism requires fast decisions, but less about how these forces interact. Second, specific insights from different sectors exist but are rarely integrated. For example, studies in IT&C highlight ambiguity and interdependence, while work in FMCG stresses speed and execution. A synthesis across sectors is necessary to gain a broader perspective.

This article reviews empirical and theoretical work published between 2000 and 2025 on leadership communication and team performance in dynamic environments. It asks which communication practices matter, how they operate, and under what boundary conditions their effects intensify or fade.

The paper makes three contributions. First, it integrates evidence across management, organizational behavior, and communication research to build a cross-sector synthesis rather than a single-industry account.

Second, it proposes a bundled conceptual model that links six communication practices (P1–P6) to three mechanisms (psychological safety and trust, role clarity and alignment, shared mental models) and to team performance outcomes. Figure 1 visualizes this model.

Third, it specifies boundary conditions that moderate these links (environmental dynamism, virtuality, team size, tenure, interdependence, and compliance load), clarifying when the bundle strengthens or weakens.

This paper contributes to the literature by integrating evidence from multiple sectors to develop a conceptual bundle model of communication practices in dynamic environments, linking six practices to team-level outcomes through underlying psychological and cognitive mechanisms while explicitly accounting for key boundary conditions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

For this article, we reviewed key concepts and definitions, including leadership communication, team performance, and dynamic and complex environments. We attempted to identify the mechanisms of influence for communication, their boundary conditions, as well as their gaps and rationale.

When it comes to leadership communication, it is more than the transfer of information. It is the use of language, tone, and channels to give direction, create shared meaning, and build and strengthen relationships. Early studies described communication as the vehicle through which leaders provide sensegiving, helping teams interpret complex situations (Daft and Lengel, 1986; Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Later work has shown that it involves both task-related messages, which need to be done, and relational messages, which explain why it matters and how contributions fit together (Men, 2014; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2021).

Scholars converge on four core elements: clarity, openness, timeliness, and bidirectionality. Clarity reduces ambiguity and sets expectations. Openness encourages questions and dialogue. Timeliness ensures information arrives when decisions must be made. Bidirectionality means that communication flows both ways, with leaders listening as well as speaking. When these elements are present, teams are more likely to commit, coordinate, and adapt (Yue, 2019).

Team performance is a multidimensional construct. It cannot be reduced to output volume. Research highlights at least four dimensions: efficiency, quality, timeliness, and innovation (Hoegl and Gemuenden, 2001; Mathieu et al., 2019). Efficiency refers to resource use. Quality captures accuracy and compliance with standards. Timeliness measures speed in meeting deadlines. Innovation reflects the ability to generate and implement new ideas.

These dimensions matter because they capture the balance between short-term delivery and long-term adaptability. A team that delivers on time but with low quality damages organizational outcomes. A team that is efficient but never innovates risks obsolescence. Leaders must therefore balance communication to support all four dimensions.

Dynamic environments are defined by rapid change, uncertainty, and interdependence (Eisenhardt, 1989; Jansen et al., 2006). In such settings, past experience is a weak guide to future action. Plans shift quickly, and coordination must be recalibrated on the fly. The role of leadership communication grows in importance because it provides the sensemaking that enables adaptation.

Studies show that teams in dynamic environments need more frequent updates, clearer explanations of why changes occur, and tighter feedback loops. Without these, misalignment spreads and performance declines. Communication becomes not only a tool for guidance but also a mechanism for maintaining psychological stability under uncertainty.

Business Excellence and Management
Volume 16 Issue 1 / March 2026

The literature identifies several mechanisms of influence that explain how communication translates into performance. Psychological safety arises when leaders encourage open voice and respond without blame, enabling teams to surface problems earlier and adapt more quickly (Edmondson, 1999). Trust is built when leaders demonstrate both competence and care, creating affective and cognitive trust that sustain cooperation under pressure (McAllister, 1995). Goal alignment and role clarity are achieved through clear communication of priorities and responsibilities, which reduces duplication and missed handoffs, thereby improving efficiency and timeliness (Locke & Latham, 2002). Finally, shared mental models allow teams to hold a common understanding of tasks and interdependencies, resulting in smoother coordination and less need for supervision (Mathieu et al., 2000; DeChurch & Mesmer-Magnus, 2010).

These mechanisms are mutually reinforcing. Trust supports psychological safety. Shared mental models make goal alignment stick. Together, they create conditions that enable communication to lead to reliable performance.

The effect of communication depends on context. Environmental dynamism increases the payoff to clarity and timeliness, because plans change often and exceptions multiply (Jansen et al., 2006). Team virtuality reduces spontaneous information sharing, requiring more explicit communication, richer channels for handling ambiguous tasks, and structured check-ins (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2011). Team size and tenure alter coordination needs: larger teams and new teams need more structure, role clarity, and sensegiving to build a shared map (Mathieu et al., 2019).

Task interdependence amplifies the value of shared mental models, as tight linkages increase the cost of misalignment (DeChurch and Mesmer-Magnus, 2010). In heavily regulated sectors, compliance and risk load require leaders to pair openness with documented, auditable communication (Men, 2014).

Lastly, despite two decades of progress, gaps still exist. Mechanisms are often studied separately, and boundary conditions are rarely included in models. Sectoral studies are available, but they are fragmented, which limits cross-industry learning.

Few works have combined psychological, relational, and contextual factors into a single synthesis. This review addresses that gap by integrating findings across various contexts and sectors, emphasizing the interaction between mechanisms and conditions, and suggesting practical actions leaders can take.

3. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this article is to review and integrate what is known about how leadership communication affects team performance in dynamic business environments. To achieve this, the study employs a structured review process that strikes a balance between breadth and depth. Rather than presenting individual studies in isolation, the approach is concept-centric. It looks across two decades of research to

identify patterns in mechanisms, outcomes, and boundary conditions, while noting differences between sectors such as FMCG, Retail, IT&C, Banking, Tobacco, and entrepreneurial ventures.

The review proceeded in several stages. First, a clear design was set, specifying the scope of the review, the constructs of interest, and the level of analysis.

Second, five databases with strong coverage of management, psychology, and communication were searched: Emerald Management Journals, Sage Journals, Web of Science, SpringerLink Journals, and Wiley Online Library. Third, a search strategy was developed that combined terms for leadership communication, team outcomes, mediating mechanisms such as psychological safety or trust, and contextual conditions such as dynamism or virtuality.

The next stage was screening. Titles and abstracts were reviewed to exclude records unrelated to leadership communication or team-level outcomes. Full texts were then examined to confirm inclusion, with strict criteria ensuring that only peer-reviewed and conceptually relevant studies were retained. This was followed by systematic data extraction, where each study was coded for sector, region, constructs, outcomes, mechanisms, moderators, and methods.

Quality appraisal was also built into the process. Studies were assessed on whether they used validated measures, addressed common method bias, tested aggregation to the team level, and had an adequate sample size. These checks informed how much weight each study was given in the synthesis.

Finally, evidence was compiled around the main question of how communication affects performance. Findings were organized by mechanisms (psychological safety, trust, goal alignment, and shared mental models) and by boundary conditions, such as environmental dynamism, virtuality, team size, and task interdependence.

The process resulted in not only a set of tables documenting databases, search terms, inclusion criteria, extraction fields, and quality checks but also an integrated narrative that connects leadership communication practices to team outcomes across various contexts.

3.1 Review design

This review adopts a concept-centric approach. Rather than summarizing studies author by author, the design focuses on identifying how communication practices link to team outcomes through mediating mechanisms and under varying boundary conditions. The scope spans the period from 2000 to 2025, providing a comprehensive view of recent advances while incorporating foundational constructs as necessary. The unit of analysis is the team, and the focus is on organizational contexts: firms, startups, and entrepreneurial ventures. Sectors of interest include FMCG, Retail, IT&C, Banking, Tobacco, and entrepreneurship.

Business Excellence and Management
Volume 16 Issue 1 / March 2026

3.2 Databases

The choice of databases was guided by their coverage and relevance to management, psychology, and communication. Five sources were selected: Emerald Management Journals, Sage Journals, Web of Science, SpringerLink Journals, and Wiley Online Library. Together, these platforms provide access to a broad range of peer-reviewed work, from applied management studies to organizational psychology and communication research. Web of Science was also used for backward and forward citation tracking, ensuring influential works not captured by keyword searches were included.

3.3 Search strategy

The search strategy combined five concept blocks to cover relevant work comprehensively. The first block focused on leadership communication, using terms such as “leadership communication,” “leader communication,” “manager communication,” “sensegiving,” “purpose communication,” and “direction giving.” The second block addressed team outcomes, including “team performance,” “team effectiveness,” “project performance,” “innovation output,” and “team trust.” The third block centered on business purpose, with terms like “business purpose,” “purpose communication,” and “purpose alignment.” The fourth block targeted mechanisms, such as “psychological safety,” “goal alignment,” “role clarity,” and “shared mental models.” The fifth block reflected contextual factors, including “dynamism,” “volatility,” “high velocity,” “dynamic environment,” “virtual work,” and “dispersion.” Queries were adjusted to fit the syntax of each database. Additionally, citation chaining was used to identify studies not directly retrieved by the search terms but frequently referenced in the field.

3.4 Screening and eligibility

The screening process was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, titles and abstracts were reviewed to exclude records unrelated to leadership communication or team-level outcomes. In the second stage, full texts were examined to confirm eligibility and clarify constructs. The inclusion criteria required studies to be peer-reviewed, to focus on business or startup teams, and to use validated measures or clearly defined proxies for constructs. Only English and Romanian sources were considered. Excluded were working papers without peer review, theses, reports, and studies limited to individual-level outcomes. Pure student laboratory experiments, military units, and clinical teams were also excluded unless their findings could be clearly generalized to business contexts. Studies published before 2000 were included only if they introduced constructs that remain central to current research.

3.5 Data extraction and coding

Each included study was reviewed in depth and coded using a structured template. The fields captured included bibliographic details, sector, country or region, sample size, number of teams, and checks for aggregation to the team level. Constructs were recorded for leadership communication, mediators, moderators, and outcomes. Outcomes were grouped into four categories: efficiency, quality, timeliness, and innovation output. Mediators were coded as psychological safety, trust, goal alignment, role clarity, and shared mental models. Moderators included environmental dynamism, team virtuality, team size, team tenure, task interdependence, and compliance or risk load. In addition, studies that linked leader messaging about business purpose to alignment or performance were flagged separately. Effect directions and, when reported, effect sizes were documented, along with methodological notes such as survey design, field data, archival sources, or mixed methods.

3.6 Quality appraisal

Because conceptual reviews rely on the strength of underlying studies, quality checks were applied systematically. Five criteria were used: (1) use of validated measures; (2) explicit efforts to limit common method bias, such as temporal separation or marker variables; (3) use of multi-source data or temporal separation in studies making causal claims; (4) adequacy of sample size for the method used; and (5) clear reporting of team-level aggregation, including ICCs or equivalent tests. Each study was rated Yes, Partial, or No on each criterion. These ratings were not used to exclude studies automatically but to weigh the strength of evidence in the synthesis. Low-quality studies were treated with caution, while high-quality studies shaped the interpretation of findings.

3.7 Synthesis approach

The synthesis focused on linking leader communication practices to outcomes through mediating mechanisms and boundary conditions. Findings were grouped into evidence maps that traced how specific behaviors, such as clarity, openness, or timeliness, connected to mechanisms like psychological safety or trust and ultimately to team-level outcomes. Contextual conditions were layered onto this analysis to show when these links became stronger or weaker. Sector tags supported comparisons across FMCG, Retail, IT&C, Banking, Tobacco, and entrepreneurial settings.

This approach allowed the review to move beyond isolated results toward a coherent picture of how communication operates in dynamic environments. Instead of reporting every study in detail, the emphasis was on convergence of findings, contextual variation, and the interplay of mechanisms. Divergent results

Business Excellence and Management
Volume 16 Issue 1 / March 2026

were examined closely, with attention to sample size, measurement, and context, to assess whether they reflected genuine differences or methodological variation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The research produced a structured set of outputs that clarify the scope, process, and evidence base. The tables below document each stage, from definitions to sector-specific findings. Each is followed by a short commentary on its role in the review.

TABLE 1. CORE CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Concept	Definition	Key sources
Leadership communication	How leaders use language, tone, and channels to give direction and create meaning	Daft & Lengel (1986); Men (2014)
Team performance	Efficiency, quality, timeliness, and innovation as measured at team level	Hoegl & Gemuenden (2001); Mathieu et al. (2019)
Dynamic environments	Conditions marked by rapid change, uncertainty, and interdependence	Eisenhardt (1989); Jansen et al. (2006)

Source: The authors' own research

Table 1 presents the main concepts and terms used, thereby providing a clear and consistent basis for the synthesis and ensuring that the discussion on leadership communication, team performance, and dynamic environments remains clear and well organized.

TABLE 2. DATABASES SEARCHED

Database	Coverage focus
Emerald Management Journals	Management, applied organizational research
Sage Journals	Psychology, communication, leadership studies
Web of Science	Multidisciplinary, citation tracking
SpringerLink Journals	Business, economics, and social sciences
Wiley Online Library	Organizational behavior and applied psychology

Source: The authors' own research

Table 2 presents the databases that were consulted, which provided broad coverage of research in management, psychology, and communication. This contributed to minimizing weaknesses in the review process.

TABLE 3. SEARCH BLOCKS AND TERMS

Block	Sample terms
Leadership communication	"leadership communication," "sensegiving," "purpose communication," "direction giving"
Team outcomes	"team performance," "team effectiveness," "innovation output"
Business purpose	"business purpose," "purpose communication"
Mediators	"psychological safety," "trust," "goal alignment," "shared mental models"
Context	"dynamism," "volatility," "virtual work," "dispersion"

Source: The authors' own research

Table 3 presents the search blocks and sample terms used in this study, which ensure systematic coverage of leadership communication, team outcomes, mechanisms, and moderators.

TABLE 4. INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Peer-reviewed journals or books	Non-peer reviewed reports, theses
Business or entrepreneurial teams	Pure student labs, military or clinical teams (unless transferable)
Team-level outcomes and mediators/ moderators	Individual-level outcomes only
Validated measures or clear proxies	Ambiguous or unvalidated constructs
English or Romanian language	Other languages

Source: The authors' own research

Table 4 presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied in this study—criteria that defined the boundaries of the analysis, ensuring consistency and relevance to business contexts.

TABLE 5. DATA EXTRACTION FIELDS

Field	Examples
Sector	FMCG, Retail, IT&C, Banking, Tobacco, Entrepreneurial
Sample characteristics	N teams, aggregation checks
Constructs	Leadership communication, mediators, moderators, outcomes
Methods	Survey, archival, field study, mixed
Effect directions/measures	Positive/negative, coefficients, correlations

Source: The authors' own research

Table 5 highlights the fields and examples used for data extraction. By applying this structured approach, the study ensures comparability across different research and reduces the risk of selective interpretation.

TABLE 6. QUALITY APPRAISAL CHECKLIST

Criterion	Assessment notes
Validated measures	Yes/Partial/No
Common method bias addressed	Yes/Partial/No
Multi-source or temporal design	Yes/Partial/No
Sample size adequacy	Yes/Partial/No
Aggregation to team level tested	Yes/Partial/No

Source: The authors' own research

Table 6 presents the quality appraisal checklist used in this study. Quality checks informed the weighting in the synthesis, and studies with lower scores were not excluded outright but interpreted with caution.

TABLE 7. EVIDENCE MAP: LEADER BEHAVIORS, MECHANISMS, AND OUTCOMES

Leader behavior	Mechanism triggered	Outcome shift at team level
Direction-giving clarity	Goal alignment, role clarity	Faster cycle time, fewer handoff errors
Open questions and voice	Psychological safety, trust	More issue surfacing, fewer defects, higher effort
Sensegiving in change	Shared meaning, reduced ambiguity	Smoother pivots, less rework
Cadence and timeliness	Predictability, attention control	Better on-time delivery
Channel fit and richness	Better encoding/decoding	Fewer misunderstandings
Summaries, next steps	Shared mental models	Tighter coordination, less duplication

Source: The authors' own research

Table 7 maps leader behaviors, the mechanisms they trigger, and the resulting outcomes at team level. It captures the causal chain, showing how specific leader behaviors drive mechanisms that translate into performance shifts.

Business Excellence and Management
Volume 16 Issue 1 / March 2026

TABLE 8. SECTOR SNAPSHOTS

Sector	Typical pressure	Communication focus	Expected outcome shift
FMCG	Rapid cycles, promotions	Daily cadence, clear owners	Shorter cycle time, fewer field errors
Retail	Multi-site coordination	Channel fit, short briefings	Fewer stockouts, cleaner execution
IT&C	Ambiguity, interdependence	Sensegiving, rich media use	Faster decisions, fewer reworks
Banking	Compliance, risk	Clarity with guardrails	Lower error rate, steadier delivery
Tobacco	Regulation, scrutiny	Documented direction, Q&A	Fewer compliance misses

Source: The authors' own research

Table 8 provides sector-level snapshots, illustrating the typical pressures, communication focus, and expected outcomes across industries. It highlights sector-level differences, showing how context shapes communication practices and performance results.

TABLE 9. BOUNDARY CONDITIONS AND LEADER RESPONSES

Boundary condition	Communication adjustment
High environmental dynamism	Shorter loops, sensegiving before directives
High virtuality	Richer media, explicit summaries, structured check-ins
Large team size	Clear role assignments, named owners
Low tenure	Extra sensegiving, tighter cadence
High task interdependence	Visual maps of interlocks, confirmed handoffs
High compliance load	Documented direction, Q&A with audit trails

Source: The authors' own research

Table 9 presents boundary conditions and the corresponding leader responses. It distills moderator guidance into actionable insights, showing how leaders can adapt their communication to the specific context.

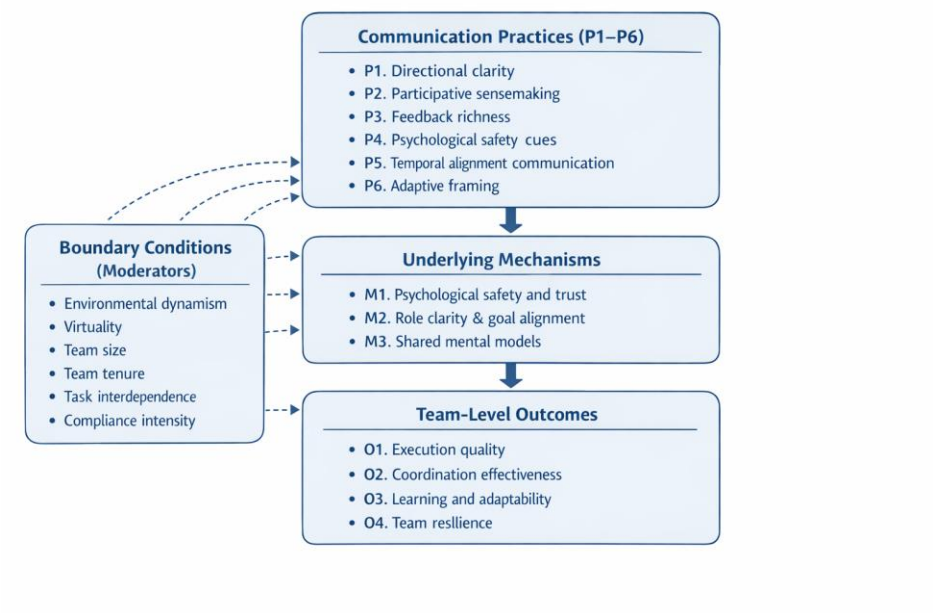

FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL MODEL DIAGRAM LINKING LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION PRACTICES, MECHANISMS, AND TEAM PERFORMANCE UNDER BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

Source: AI Generated with personal input.

4.1 Propositions derived from the evidence

In line with the conceptual model proposed in the abstract, six propositions were derived from the literature. The results of the review confirm these propositions as follows:

Proposition 1. Clear direction helps teams focus and align.

When leaders reduce noise and spell out a handful of priorities, teams know what matters and who owns what. The review shows this is especially true in FMCG and Retail, where speed and error-free execution drive results. The evidence is consistent and strong.

Proposition 2. Open questions create safety and trust.

Teams perform better when leaders ask rather than dictate, because people feel safe to surface problems and share ideas. IT&C and project-based teams illustrate this link most clearly, though regulated industries still show limits where compliance narrows the space for open dialogue.

Proposition 3. Sensegiving reduces ambiguity in times of change.

Explaining why a decision is made before telling people what to do makes pivots smoother and less costly. This pattern appears in entrepreneurial ventures and technology firms where change is constant. Large organizations likely need it too, but there is less evidence to confirm.

Proposition 4. Regular cadence keeps teams on time.

Short, predictable check-ins help people stay focused and meet deadlines. The strongest evidence comes from the FMCG and Retail Sectors, where timing is critical. Existing evidence suggests that virtual and cross-border teams may require an even stronger emphasis on regular cadence, although empirical research remains limited.

Proposition 5. Matching the channel to the task reduces mistakes.

Rich channels, such as video calls, work best when tasks are uncertain, while simple updates can be communicated via email or chat. Studies support this balance in IT&C and distributed teams. In Banking or Tobacco, documentation rules sometimes override this principle, producing mixed outcomes.

Proposition 6. Summaries and closed loops strengthen coordination.

Ending conversations with a recap and clear next steps helps teams anticipate one another and avoid duplicate work. Evidence from project teams is solid. Whether the same applies to very large or widely spread teams remains to be studied.

Together, the nine tables provided a structured synthesis of concepts, databases, search strategies, quality criteria, and evidence patterns, creating a comprehensive map of how leadership communication operates across different contexts. Building on this foundation, the results confirm that leadership communication influences performance through clear mechanisms such as safety, trust, alignment, and shared mental models. They also demonstrate that context alters the effectiveness of these mechanisms.

Business Excellence and Management
Volume 16 Issue 1 / March 2026

Under conditions of high dynamism or virtual work, the same practices produce stronger effects. In regulated industries, openness must be combined with proper documentation. Sector differences further show how communication adapts to different pressures: FMCG and Retail prioritize speed, IT&C focuses on sensemaking, Banking and Tobacco require compliance, while entrepreneurs rely on short, open-ended communication loops.

The results confirm that leadership communication influences team performance through identifiable mechanisms. The evidence shows consistent patterns: direction-giving supports role clarity, open questions build psychological safety, and steady cadence creates predictability. These mechanisms matter because they convert leader messages into team behaviors that improve efficiency, quality, timeliness, and innovation. Yet their effects are not uniform. Context changes both the strength and the form of the link.

4.2 Mechanisms in practice

Psychological safety emerges as the most studied mechanism. Teams perform better when members feel free to raise issues without fear. Leaders create this climate when they ask for input and avoid punitive reactions. Trust operates alongside safety, supporting cooperation under pressure. Teams rely on affective trust, grounded in relationships, and cognitive trust, grounded in competence. Both raise commitment and follow-through.

Goal alignment and role clarity reduce wasted effort. Leaders who set three to five clear priorities and confirm ownership see smoother execution. Shared mental models further strengthen coordination, allowing team members to anticipate each other's moves without constant clarification. Finally, cadence and attention control—short, regular check-ins and the choice of the right channel—anchor these mechanisms in daily practice.

4.3 Boundary conditions

The payoff to these mechanisms fluctuates depending on context. Environmental dynamism raises the cost of ambiguity. Under frequent change, the value of clarity, timeliness, and sensegiving rises sharply. Teams need not only instructions but also explanations of why priorities shift.

Virtuality adds another layer. Distributed teams lose spontaneous interactions, which makes explicitness and rhythm more important. Richer media for ambiguous tasks, paired with concise written summaries, counter the loss of cues. Without such structure, virtual teams drift.

Team size and tenure also matter. Larger teams require stronger role clarity and explicit ownership to prevent coordination losses. New teams, lacking shared norms, need extra sensegiving and tighter loops

until their own routines form. Interdependence amplifies these needs further: when work is tightly linked, a weak handoff or missing update cascades into delays.

Compliance and risk load reshape the balance between openness and documentation. In regulated industries such as banking or tobacco, leaders cannot rely on informal updates alone. Teams must be able to trace decisions and follow procedures. Leaders who pair open dialogue with documented direction reduce both compliance risk and silence.

4.4 Sectoral variation

The sector snapshots illustrate how these mechanisms and conditions play out in practice. FMCG and Retail depend on speed and flawless execution across sites. Here, clarity, cadence, and channel fit dominate. IT&C faces high ambiguity and interdependence, making sensegiving and rich media critical. Banking and Tobacco operate under a heavy compliance load, so leaders balance dialogue with audit trails. Entrepreneurs live with pivots and scarce resources, so short loops and open questions provide the agility needed to learn quickly.

4.5 Integrated picture

The evidence suggests that no single mechanism explains performance. Instead, outcomes result from bundles of communication practices. Safety, trust, alignment, and shared mental models reinforce each other, and cadence ties them together. Context then acts as an amplifier. In dynamic and virtual conditions, the bundle becomes not optional but essential. In regulated industries, documentation modifies but does not replace the need for openness.

Practical implications follow directly from the bundle logic. Leaders should not search for a universal formula. Instead, they should diagnose their context and adjust the mix. In fast-moving markets, they should emphasize clarity and short cycles. In virtual teams, explicitness and channel richness become more important. In large or new teams, they should invest in role clarity and sensegiving. In regulated contexts, they must embed compliance into communication routines without shutting down voice.

From a theoretical perspective, the integration of mechanisms and boundary conditions offers a more realistic model of leadership communication. It shifts the focus from static links between behavior and performance to contingent relationships shaped by context. Communication is not a single act but a system of practices that must adapt to the environment, team composition, and task design.

Business Excellence and Management
Volume 16 Issue 1 / March 2026

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study advances existing research by providing an integrative, cross-sector synthesis of team communication in dynamic environments and by proposing a conceptual bundle model that connects communication practices, underlying mechanisms, and team-level outcomes. By explicitly incorporating boundary conditions, the model clarifies how and under what conditions communication practices shape team performance.

The review supports a bundled model (Figure 1) in which six communication practices operate through psychological safety and trust, role clarity and alignment, and shared mental models to influence execution, coordination, learning, and resilience.

The evidence shows that mechanisms such as psychological safety, trust, goal alignment, and shared mental models convert words into action. When leaders provide direction and invite dialogue, they reduce uncertainty and strengthen coordination. When they build trust and create safety, they release discretionary effort and make teams resilient under pressure. When they close meetings with clear next steps and maintain a steady cadence, they protect attention and speed up decision-making. These practices matter across sectors, but their relative weight shifts with context.

Boundary conditions shape the return on communication. High dynamism makes clarity and short loops indispensable. Virtuality increases the premium on explicitness and channel choice. Large or young teams need a stronger structure, while interdependent tasks amplify the value of shared maps. In heavily regulated industries, documentation must anchor dialogue. Leaders who adapt communication to these conditions multiply the impact of their teams.

The sector analysis makes this even clearer. FMCG and Retail demand speed and flawless execution, which reward daily cadence and crisp ownership. IT&C firms face ambiguity and interdependence, requiring sensegiving and rich channels. Banking and Tobacco operate under scrutiny, where communication must balance compliance with openness. Entrepreneurs thrive in turbulence, where short cycles and open questions drive fast learning.

Taken together, these insights support a shift in how leadership communication should be understood. It is not a single behavior or style but a dynamic bundle of practices that leaders adjust to their environment. The most effective leaders are those who treat communication as a system: a set of routines and choices that translate uncertainty into direction, interdependence into coordination, and pressure into disciplined execution.

Future research should test the propositions empirically in dynamic settings, compare bundles across sectors using common measures, and examine how digital and AI-mediated channels change sensegiving, feedback loops, and trust. Three priorities stand out from this:

1. Integration with technology. As AI-driven tools reshape the workplace, leaders must learn to combine human-centered communication with digital systems that filter, summarize, and personalize messages without losing trust or meaning.
2. Cross-sector learning. Each industry teaches a lesson—speed from FMCG, ambiguity handling from IT&C, compliance balance from Banking, and agility from entrepreneurs. A forward-looking model of leadership communication should integrate these lessons across domains.
3. Embedding purpose. Beyond efficiency and innovation, teams today expect meaning. Leaders who link tasks to a shared purpose create durable alignment that endures even as goals shift. Purpose communication is likely to become the anchor mechanism in environments marked by volatility and moral scrutiny.

5.1 Limitations

Nevertheless, this study also presents a number of limitations. Among them is the fact that our analysis does not generate new empirical evidence but rather synthesizes secondary data. Furthermore, we must acknowledge that our review provides uneven sectoral coverage, with more evidence available in IT&C and FMCG than in highly regulated industries.

5.2 Future research directions

As a result of this research, we were able to outline several directions for future investigation, building on the limitations mentioned above. Future studies should examine additional sectors of activity as well as the integration of digital communication tools and artificial intelligence systems with traditional leadership communication practices. It is likely that these tools will profoundly shape team dynamics in the near future.

For scholars, the agenda is clear. Future research should quantify how these mechanisms interact under different contexts and test the long-term effects of communication bundles rather than isolated practices. Comparative studies across sectors and regions can refine our understanding of cultural and institutional influences. For practitioners, the imperative is immediate: treat communication not as a soft skill but as the architecture of collaboration.

The ultimate vision is simple but demanding. In an economy where complexity is only expected to increase, leaders who master effective communication will define which teams adapt, which organizations thrive, and which societies innovate responsibly. Communication is not support for leadership; it is leadership itself.

Business Excellence and Management
Volume 16 Issue 1 / March 2026

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The authors declare that they have not used any Generative AI and/or AI-Assisted technologies during the preparation of this work.

REFERENCES

Daft, R. L., & Lengel, R. H. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design. *Management Science, 32*(5), 554–571. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.32.5.554

DeChurch, L. A., & Mesmer-Magnus, J. R. (2010). The cognitive underpinnings of effective teamwork: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 95*(1), 32–53. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017328

Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 44*(2), 350–383. https://doi.org/10.2307/2666999

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Making fast strategic decisions in high-velocity environments. *Academy of Management Journal, 32*(3), 543–576. https://doi.org/10.2307/256434

Gioia, D. A., & Chittipeddi, K. (1991). Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. *Strategic Management Journal, 12*(6), 433–448. https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.4250120604

Hoegl, M., & Gemuenden, H. G. (2001). Teamwork quality and the success of innovative projects: A theoretical concept and empirical evidence. *Organization Science, 12*(4), 435–449. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.12.4.435.10635

Jansen, J. J. P., Van den Bosch, F. A. J., & Volberda, H. W. (2006). Exploratory innovation, exploitative innovation, and performance: Effects of organizational antecedents and environmental moderators. *Management Science, 52*(11), 1661–1674. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.1060.0576

Mathieu, J. E., Gallagher, P. T., Domingo, M. A., & Klock, E. A. (2019). Embracing complexity: Reviewing the past decade of team effectiveness research. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 6*(1), 17–46. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-012218-015106

Mathieu, J. E., Heffner, T. S., Goodwin, G. F., Salas, E., & Cannon-Bowers, J. A. (2000). The influence of shared mental models on team process and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85*(2), 273–283. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.85.2.273

Mayfield, J., & Mayfield, M. (2021). *Motivating language theory: Effective leader talk in the workplace.* Springer. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-66930-4

McAllister, D. J. (1995). Affect- and cognition-based trust as foundations for interpersonal cooperation in organizations. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*(1), 24–59.

Men, L. R. (2014). Strategic internal communication: Transformational leadership, communication channels, and employee satisfaction. *Management Communication Quarterly, 28*(2), 264–284. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318914524536

Mesmer-Magnus, J. R., DeChurch, L. A., Jimenez-Rodriguez, M., Wildman, J. L., & Shuffler, M. L. (2011). A meta-analytic investigation of virtuality and information sharing in teams. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 115*(2), 214–225. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2011.03.002

Sinnemann, M. F., & Weiss, M. M. (2022). Team virtuality and innovation: A meta-analysis of the moderating role of team design. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 43*(6), 1107–1132., *53*(4), 475–510. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2889

Yue, C. A. (2019). The effects of leader communication on employee outcomes: An integrated review. *Public Relations Review.* https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1062726X.2014.908720