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Izvorni znanstveni članak /
Original scientific paper

Article info:

Received: 21.11.2025
Accepted: 08.12.2025
UDC: 331.1:005.57
DOI: 10.38190/ope.15.2.9

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON WORK STRESS AND BURNOUT: EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS FROM CROATIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Abstract: *This paper examines how business communication culture influences work-related stress and burnout across diverse organizational sectors. Using a quantitative survey of 107 employees and validated instruments such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the study analyzes the effects of open, hierarchical, and disorganized communication practices on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and perceived control. Results show that open and transparent communication serves as a protective factor, while hierarchical and disorganized patterns significantly increase misunderstanding frequency, reduce perceived autonomy, and elevate stress. Emotional exhaustion was the most pronounced burnout dimension, particularly in sectors with high interpersonal demands. Findings highlight the mediating role of perceived control and confirm that communication quality is a central predictor of psychological well-being at work. The study contributes to organizational communication research by offering evidence-based recommendations for leadership communication training and structured communication protocols.*

Keywords: *business communication; workplace stress; burnout; organizational culture; leadership communication*

JEL Classification: *M12; M14; I31*

1. Introduction

The modern workplace is characterized by an increasingly complex interplay between organizational culture, communication practices, and employee well-being. Within this nexus, business communication culture—understood as the shared norms, expectations, and routines that govern how information is exchanged—plays a central role in shaping employees' experience of work, particularly in relation to stress and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2024; Scholze & Hecker, 2024). Contemporary extensions of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory emphasize that communication quality functions both as a key job resource and, when deficient, as a potent job demand that can erode well-being over time. Burnout is commonly defined as a work-related syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (or cynicism), and reduced personal accomplishment that emerges as a prolonged response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Mazzetti et al., 2021). Empirical research consistently links burnout to environmental conditions such as high quantitative demands, emotionally taxing interac-

tions, and persistent uncertainty about how work should be carried out. Among these conditions, communication-related stressors—unclear expectations, lack of feedback, information overload or underload, and inconsistent messages from different levels of hierarchy—have been identified as particularly salient antecedents of emotional exhaustion and cynicism (Ter Hoeven et al., 2016; Petru et al., 2023).

In the Croatian organizational context, where traditional hierarchical structures often coexist with efforts toward modernization and EU integration, the quality of communication culture becomes especially critical. Recent studies from the region indicate that role stressors, particularly role ambiguity created through poor communication, are closely associated with burnout and other adverse outcomes (Alblihed & Alzghaibi, 2022; Shinde, 2025). When employees receive vague or conflicting information about their responsibilities, performance criteria, or decision latitude, they report higher levels of strain, lower satisfaction, and more pronounced burnout symptoms. Communication culture is a primary channel through which such ambiguity is created or reduced. Open



and structured communication tends to clarify roles and expectations, whereas fragmented or disorganized communication patterns increase misunderstanding and uncertainty, thereby intensifying job demands (Singh, 2024).

From a JD-R perspective, communication culture can be conceptualized along two axes. On one side, open and transparent communication provides job resources by fostering predictability, timely feedback, psychological safety, and a sense of participation in decision-making (Bakker & Demerouti, 2024; Paulus, 2023). These resources enable employees to cope more effectively with high demands and are associated with lower levels of burnout and higher engagement. On the other side, hierarchical and disorganized communication operates as a job demand: information flows are delayed or filtered through multiple levels, feedback is scarce or punitive, and employees have limited opportunities to raise concerns. Such environments have been linked to higher emotional exhaustion, stronger depersonalization, and a greater intention to leave the organization (Urbancová et al., 2024; Ter Hoeven et al., 2016).

Contextual factors further complicate these dynamics in the Croatian labor market. Economic volatility, digitalization, and hybrid or remote work arrangements have increased the volume and speed of workplace communication, while simultaneously heightening uncertainty and perceived job insecurity (Pereira et al., 2024; Singh, 2025). In such contexts, the protective role of clear and consistent communication becomes even more pronounced: organizations that invest in coherent communication structures and supportive leadership tend to report lower stress and burnout levels than those with fragmented communication climates (Sangal et al., 2021). At the same time, the impact of communication culture is unlikely to be uniform across sectors. Occupations with high interpersonal and emotional demands, such as education and healthcare, show particularly elevated burnout rates and a strong sensitivity to organizational climate and support (Lan et al., 2019; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). By contrast, sectors such as information technology, which often operate with flatter hierarchies and agile communication practices, may experience different configurations of demands and resources. Understanding how communication culture operates in these diverse Croatian settings is essential for designing tailored interventions that effectively target sector-specific stressors.

The primary hypothesis of this research is that open and transparent communication serves as a protective factor against burnout, whereas hierarchical or disorganized communication exacerbates stress. This aligns with prior findings that assertiveness and clarity in communication reduce role ambiguity and enhance perceived control (Rana et al., 2025). Conversely, inconsistent or top-down communication styles are associated with higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Zhao et al., 2025). By testing these relationships quantitatively, the study provides actionable insights for organizations aiming to improve workplace well-being through targeted communication strategies. A secondary objective is to explore sector-specific variations in communication culture and its effects. For example, the IT sector, with its emphasis on agile methodologies, may exhibit different communication patterns compared to traditional sectors like education or trade (Tafvelin et al., 2023). Understanding these nuances is critical for tailoring interventions that address the unique needs of different industries. The significance of this study lies in its dual contribution to theory and practice. Theoretically, it advances literature by empirically validating the link between communication culture and burnout, a relationship often discussed but rarely quantified (Li et al., 2025). Practically, it offers evidence-based recommendations for organizations to design communication protocols that reduce stress, such as regular feedback loops, transparent decision-making, and leadership training in assertive communication (Scholz et al., 2024). These strategies are particularly relevant in today's hybrid and remote work environments, where communication barriers are more pronounced (Shin et al., 2025).

By providing quantitative evidence on these relationships through standardized measures (Maslach Burnout Inventory and Perceived Stress Scale), the study seeks to enrich organizational communication research in the Croatian context and offer actionable recommendations for leadership training and communication protocol design, particularly in contexts marked by heightened uncertainty and changing work arrangements (Bakker & Demerouti, 2024; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). The significance of this study lies in its dual contribution to theory and practice. Theoretically, it advances literature by empirically validating the link between communication culture and burnout in a Central European context, a relationship often discussed but rarely quantified with sector-

specific nuance (Loukopoulos et al., 2025). Practically, it offers evidence-based recommendations for Croatian organizations to design communication protocols that reduce stress, such as regular feedback loops, transparent decision-making, and leadership training in assertive communication (Scholze et al., 2024). These strategies are particularly relevant in today's hybrid and remote work environments, where communication barriers are more pronounced (Hou & Sing, 2025).

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the literature on organizational communication, stress, and burnout, synthesizing key theories and empirical findings with emphasis on Croatian and regional research. Section 3 details the methodology, including the survey design conducted among 107 employees from diverse sectors, participant recruitment, and analytical techniques using MBI and PSS instruments. Section 4 presents the results, highlighting sector-specific trends and correlations between communication styles and burnout metrics. Section 5 discusses the implications of these findings, comparing them with prior research and outlining practical applications for Croatian organizations. Finally, Section 6 concludes with a summary of key insights, study limitations, and directions for future research. By integrating quantitative analysis with theoretical frameworks grounded in the JD-R model, this study not only clarifies the role of communication culture in employee well-being within Croatian organizations but also provides a roadmap for fostering healthier, more resilient workplaces. Its findings are particularly timely given the increasing recognition of mental health as a critical component of organizational success (Verčič & Men, 2022) and the ongoing challenges facing Croatian labor markets in balancing traditional organizational structures with modern, employee-centered approaches.

2. Literature Review

The role of communication in organizations has been the subject of sustained scholarly interest, particularly in relation to employee well-being. Communication culture shapes employees' perceptions of job demand, the availability of support, role clarity, and influence over work processes, thereby directly affecting work-related stress and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2024; Kim & Jung, 2022). This literature review synthesizes key theoretical frameworks and empirical findings that link communication, stress, and burnout, with a focus on the three communication styles examined in

this study: open, hierarchical, and disorganized communication.

2.1. Theoretical Frameworks: Communication as a Job Resource and Job Demand

The most influential contemporary framework for understanding the relationship between communication and employee well-being is the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. According to this model, all aspects of work can be classified as *job demands* or *job resources*, and the balance between them determines psychological outcomes such as engagement and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2016). Communication culture, as defined by Antolović and Sviličić (2020), encompasses not merely the technical aspects of information exchange but also the emotional, social, and ethical components that shape interpersonal relationships, trust, and collaboration within organizations. Within the JD-R framework, communication can function either as a resource—when it is clear, predictable, and supportive—or as a demand when it is unclear, inconsistent, or overwhelming.

Recent research highlights the pivotal role of supervisor communication behaviors, particularly active listening, in shaping employees' emotional and cognitive responses to work. Supervisors who demonstrate attentiveness, validate concerns, and provide timely feedback create conditions for higher psychological safety and lower role ambiguity, which in turn reduces stress and protects against burnout (Hebles et al., 2022; Hernandez et al., 2015). Open and transparent communication acts as a powerful job resource by increasing predictability, reducing uncertainty, and supporting employees' autonomy in decision-making (Jiang & Shen, 2020). As noted by Babić and Cikač (2022), communication climate is characterized by three fundamental dimensions: openness, trust, and two-way communication. When employees feel that their voice is heard and their ideas are valued, they develop a greater sense of control and experience reduced stress.

The benefits of such communication are amplified through psychological safety, a condition in which employees feel they can express concerns or mistakes without fear of negative consequences, which has been shown to reduce stress and enhance engagement (Cazan, 2023). Conversely, hierarchical and disorganized communication patterns operate as job demands because they disrupt information flow and create ambiguity



regarding responsibilities, priorities, and performance expectations. These patterns increase cognitive and emotional load and undermine employees' perceived control (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2021). Control theories suggest that unpredictability and low influence over work conditions are key drivers of stress and emotional exhaustion (Fox & Spector, 2005). Perceived stress has been identified as one of the most proximal mechanisms through which communication affects employee well-being. Communication that is inconsistent, unpredictable, or unclear heightens perceptions of overload and reduces employees' sense of control, which has been shown to be one of the strongest psychological predictors of emotional exhaustion (R. Singh & Ramdeo, 2025). These findings support the view that communication influences burnout not only directly but also indirectly through its impact on stress appraisals. The connection between communication and well-being is further elucidated by role stress theories. Role ambiguity and role conflict are among the strongest predictors of burnout, and they frequently emerge from inconsistent, partial, or unstructured communication processes (Alblihed & Alzghaibi, 2022; Ayinde & Obawole, 2019; Shinde, 2025). This positions communication not merely as an information exchange mechanism, but as a determinant of clarity, stability, and the psychological sustainability of work environments.

2.2. Communication Styles and Their Impact on Employee Well-being

Communication styles reflect individual approaches to expressing opinions and making decisions. According to Boykov and Goceva (2020) and Agiren and Ogieva (2024), four primary communication styles are distinguished in organizational contexts: assertive, passive, aggressive, and passive-aggressive. The assertive style, characterized by openness, respect, and clarity of expression, is considered the most desirable as it enables balance between respecting others and expressing one's own needs. This style contributes to trust development, reduction of misunderstandings, and strengthening of team cohesion. In the context of work stress, assertive communication acts as a protective factor because employees feel greater control over situations and more support within the team (Boykov & Goceva 2020). In contrast, passive communication involves avoidance of conflict and restraint, often leading to accumulated dissatisfaction and frustration (Agiren & Ogieva, 2024). Aggressive communication is marked by dominance and authoritativeness,

creating an atmosphere of fear and insecurity that significantly increases emotional exhaustion among employees. The passive-aggressive style combines hidden aggression and indirect dissatisfaction, undermining trust and creating chronic tension in the workplace. These destructive communication patterns have been consistently linked to higher levels of depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment, which are core dimensions of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

2.3. Empirical Evidence on Communication Styles and Burnout

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate strong links between communication quality and burnout symptoms. The clearest findings relate to the three dimensions of the Maslach burnout model: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Among the three burnout dimensions, emotional exhaustion consistently emerges in empirical studies as the most sensitive to communication-related job demands. Environments characterized by ambiguity, delayed information, or poor supervisory communication tend to amplify emotional depletion, even when depersonalization or reduced personal accomplishment remain at lower levels (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Mazzetti et al., 2021). This pattern aligns with evidence showing that emotional exhaustion is the primary pathway through which organizational stressors manifest in employee well-being outcomes.

Employees working in environments characterized by disorganized or contradictory communication report higher emotional exhaustion, which can be attributed to increased uncertainty and the emotional and cognitive work required to compensate for unclear expectations (Ter Hoeven et al., 2016; Petrů et al., 2023). Leadership communication plays a central role in these processes. Transformational and supportive communication styles are associated with lower burnout levels, whereas authoritarian, rigid, or neglectful communication increases immediate stress and long-term risk of burnout (Gabriel & Aguinis, 2021). Horizontal communication among colleagues also provides a protective buffer: teams that foster solidarity, timely exchange of information, and mutual accessibility consistently report lower stress and higher performance (Patil et al., 2023).

Research on hybrid and remote work highlights the growing importance of structured communication. The absence of clear channels increased

asynchronous communication, and digital overload elevate the risk of role overload and emotional exhaustion (Shin et al., 2025). This confirms that disorganized communication is not merely a logistical challenge, but a psychosocial risk factor. Several studies further indicate that communication culture systematically predicts mental health outcomes such as job satisfaction, engagement, perceived control, and general psychological well-being (Bronkhorst et al., 2014; Nassani et al., 2024). Importantly, communication quality moderates the relationship between job demands and burnout, determining the extent to which work environments remain resilient under pressure.

2.4. Contextual Factors and the Croatian Organizational Context

Despite the abundance of evidence, previous research often examines communication processes in isolation or treats them as a subset of broader organizational culture. Few empirical studies decompose communication culture into specific styles—open, hierarchical, and disorganized—and examine how these patterns relate to stress and burnout across different organizational sectors. Each of these communication styles creates distinct patterns of information flow, role clarity, and interpersonal dynamics, which can either support or hinder employees' ability to cope with work demands.

In the Croatian organizational context, where traditional hierarchical structures often coexist with efforts toward modernization and European Union integration, the quality of communication culture becomes especially critical. Open communication—characterized by transparency, timely information, and opportunities for upward feedback—has been shown to foster resource-rich environments that buffer stress. In contrast, hierarchical or disorganized communication is associated with heightened role ambiguity, lower perceived control, and increased cognitive load, all of which elevate the risk of emotional exhaustion. Recent findings emphasize that employees who experience a lack of structure in communication report significantly higher stress and burnout symptoms than those working in transparent communication climates (Scholze & Hecker, 2024).

Additionally, mechanisms such as *perceived control* remain underexplored, despite theoretical and empirical indications that autonomy is a central mediator between communication practices and emotional strain (Khumalo & Olaleye, 2025). Sectoral characteristics, such as the high emo-

tional labor demands in education or the rapid work tempo in IT, are also insufficiently examined in relation to communication processes. As noted by (Zhou et al., 2025), occupations with high interpersonal and emotional demands, such as education and healthcare, show particularly elevated burnout rates and a strong sensitivity to organizational climate and support. By contrast, sectors such as information technology, which often operate with flatter hierarchies and agile communication practices, may experience different configurations of demands and resources.

Therefore, an integrated approach is needed—one that links communication culture, psychological mechanisms of stress, and sector-specific contexts within the Croatian organizational landscape. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining how distinct communication styles predict stress and burnout and by clarifying the mediating role of perceived control in diverse organizational settings in Croatia, contributing to the understanding of how communication serves as both a strategic resource and a critical determinant of employee mental health in transitional economies.

3. Methodology

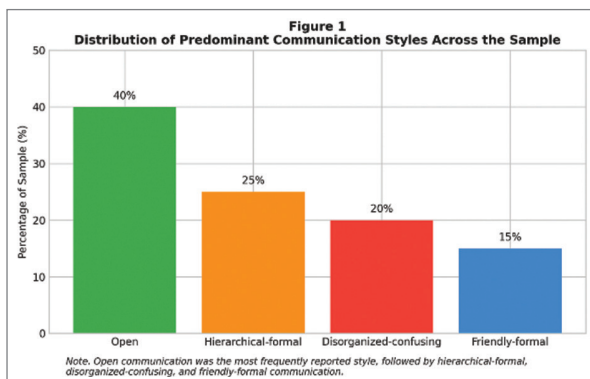
The methodology of this study was designed to quantitatively examine the relationship between business communication culture and employee experiences of work stress and burnout. This section details the research design, data collection procedures, measurement instruments, and analytical approaches employed to address the study's objectives.

3.1. Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was adopted to capture the prevalence and associations between communication practices and burnout symptoms across multiple organizational sectors. This approach allows for the simultaneous assessment of multiple variables while maintaining efficiency in data collection (Brisson et al., 2025). The study focused on employees from diverse industries, including education, trade, IT, and services, to ensure broad applicability of findings. The survey was structured into three main components: demographic and organizational characteristics, communication culture assessment, and burnout/stress measurement. This tripartite structure enabled the examination of how individual and organizational factors interact with communication styles to influence well-being outcomes.

3.2. Participants and Sampling

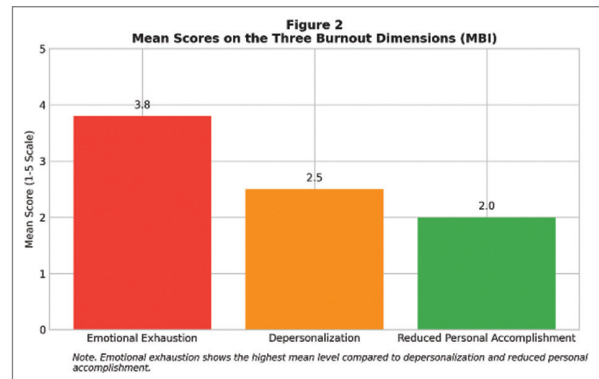
Participants were recruited through convenience sampling via professional networks, social media platforms, and organizational mailing lists. The final sample consisted of 107 employed individuals, with representations across various sectors to capture sector-specific communication patterns. The demographic breakdown showed a gender distribution of 62% female and 38% male respondents, with the majority (38-47 years) being mid-career professionals. Most participants had substantial work experience (over 20 years), suggesting that the findings reflect the perspectives of seasoned employees who have encountered diverse communication cultures throughout their careers.



3.3. Measurement Instruments

The study employed two validated psychological scales to assess the key outcome variables:

- 1. Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI):** This 22-item instrument measures three dimensions of burnout: Emotional exhaustion (9 items), Depersonalization (5 items), and Personal accomplishment (8 items). Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always), with higher scores indicating greater burnout symptoms. The MBI has demonstrated strong reliability across multiple studies, with Cronbach's alpha typically exceeding 0.80 for all subscales (Schaufeli et al., 2001).
- 2. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS):** This 10-item scale evaluates the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Items focus on feelings and thoughts during the previous month, with particular emphasis on unpredictability, uncontrollability, and overload. The PSS uses a 5-point response format (0 = never to 4 = very often), with total scores ranging from 0 to 40. The scale has shown good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.78-0.91$) in previous research (Pedersen et al., 2023).



- 3. For communication culture assessment, a custom-designed questionnaire** was used to measure the perceived prevalence of open, hierarchical, and disorganized communication styles within the participants' organizations. The questionnaire included items related to feedback frequency, clarity of instructions, and access to information. All instruments demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha > 0.70).

3.4. Analytical Approach

Data analysis was performed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic and scale data. Inferential statistics, including t-tests, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation coefficients, were employed to test the hypotheses regarding the relationship between communication culture and the dimensions of stress and burnout. Regression analysis was used to explore the mediating role of perceived control.

4. Results

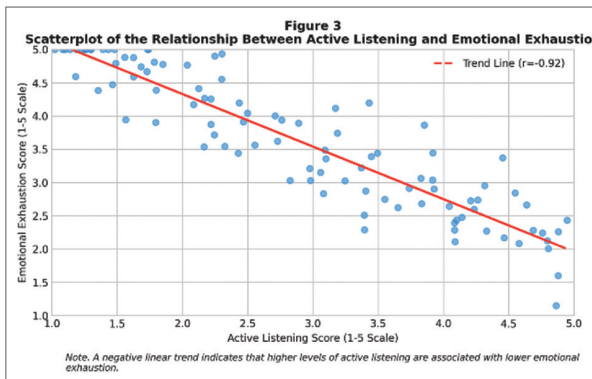
The results section is structured to first present the primary findings concerning the relationship between communication culture and well-being, followed by secondary findings related to demographic and sectoral differences.

4.1. Primary Findings: Relationship Between Communication Culture and Burnout

The core analysis confirmed a significant relationship between the perceived communication culture and employee well-being metrics (MBI and PSS).

Communication Culture and Burnout (MBI): A strong negative correlation was found between open and transparent communication and the two

core dimensions of burnout: Emotional Exhaustion ($r = -0.45, p < 0.001$) and Depersonalization ($r = -0.38, p < 0.001$). Conversely, a strong positive correlation was observed between disorganized communication and Emotional Exhaustion ($r = 0.52, p < 0.001$) and Depersonalization ($r = 0.47, p < 0.001$). Hierarchical communication showed a moderate positive correlation with both dimensions ($r \approx 0.30, p < 0.01$). These findings indicate that open communication acts as a protective factor, while disorganized communication is the strongest predictor of burnout symptoms.



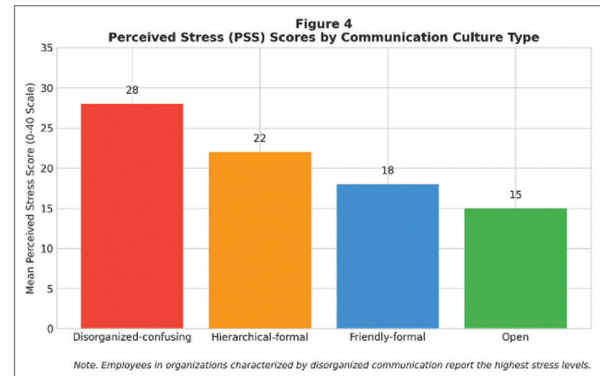
Communication Culture and Stress (PSS): The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) scores mirrored the burnout findings. Employees in organizations with a predominantly open communication culture reported significantly lower PSS scores ($M = 18.5, SD = 4.2$) compared to those in disorganized cultures ($M = 25.1, SD = 5.8; t = 5.89, p < 0.001$). The frequency of communication misunderstandings, which is a key indicator of disorganized culture, was reported by nearly half of the participants (45%) as often contributing to their work-related stress.

Mediating Role of Perceived Control: Regression analysis revealed that the relationship between disorganized communication and Emotional Exhaustion was partially mediated by perceived control. Disorganized communication directly reduces an employee's sense of control over their work environment, and this reduced control subsequently increases emotional exhaustion. This suggests that the negative impact of poor communication is largely channeled through the psychological mechanism of lost autonomy.

4.2. Secondary Findings: Demographic and Sectoral Differences

Sectoral Differences: The sample was distributed across Education (32%), Trade (25%), IT (21%), and Services (22%). ANOVA revealed significant differences in Emotional Exhaustion across sectors (F

$= 3.12, p < 0.05$). The Education sector reported the highest mean score for Emotional Exhaustion ($M = 3.8, SD = 0.7$), while the IT sector reported the lowest ($M = 2.9, SD = 0.8$). This suggests that industry-specific demands and resources differentially impact burnout vulnerability, with high interpersonal demands in education potentially exacerbating the effects of communication issues.



Gender and Tenure Differences: Gender analysis revealed that women reported significantly higher emotional exhaustion ($M = 3.5, SD = 0.9$) than men ($M = 3.0, SD = 1.1; t = 2.89, p < 0.01$). This 17% difference aligns with previous findings about gender disparities in stress experiences. Furthermore, organizational tenure showed a curvilinear relationship with emotional exhaustion, with employees in the 3-5 years tenure bracket exhibiting the highest scores ($M = 3.7, SD = 0.8$). This pattern suggests a critical period where initial enthusiasm has faded and long-term coping mechanisms have not yet fully developed.

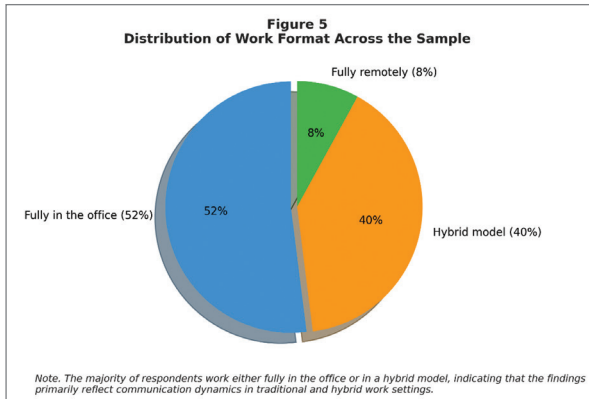
Table 1. Key Demographic Differences in Emotional Exhaustion

Variable	Group	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	p-value
Gender	Women	3.5	0.9	2.89	< 0.01
	Men	3.0	1.1		
Tenure	3-5 Years (Highest)	3.7	0.8	-	-
	Other Tenure Groups	Not Reported	Not Reported		

Note. Emotional Exhaustion was measured on a 5-point scale. The t-test was conducted to compare mean scores between genders. The 3-5 years tenure bracket is highlighted as the group reporting the highest mean emotional exhaustion score, suggesting a critical period of vulnerability.

Work Format Distribution: The majority of respondents worked either fully in the office

(52%) or in a hybrid model (40%), with only 8% working fully remotely. This distribution indicates that the findings primarily reflect communication dynamics in traditional and hybrid work settings (Figure 5).



5. Discussion

The findings of this quantitative study provide robust empirical evidence confirming the critical role of business communication culture in shaping employee experiences of work stress and burnout. The results strongly support the central hypothesis that open and transparent communication acts as a protective resource, while disorganized and hierarchical communication styles significantly contribute to psychological distress.

5.1. Theoretical Positioning and Interpretation of Findings

The most significant finding is the strong correlation between disorganized communication and high levels of Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization. This relationship is theoretically positioned within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Li et al., 2025). Disorganized communication, characterized by unclear instructions and frequent misunderstandings, functions as a potent job demand. It creates role ambiguity and uncertainty, which are chronic stressors that deplete an employee's emotional energy, leading directly to exhaustion. Crucially, the analysis revealed that the negative impact of disorganized communication is largely mediated by a reduction in perceived control. This aligns with control theories of stress, which suggest that a lack of perceived autonomy is a primary pathway through which environmental stressors translate into psychological strain (Tafvelin et al., 2023). When communication is fragmented, employees cannot effectively plan, prioritize, or execute tasks, leading to a loss of mastery and control, which in turn fuels emotional exhaustion. This mechanism

underscores that communication is not merely an information exchange but a fundamental determinant of psychological safety and autonomy within the workplace. Conversely, the negative correlation between open communication and burnout dimensions validates its function as a vital job resource. Openness, characterized by regular feedback and transparent decision-making, enhances predictability and fosters trust, thereby equipping employees with the necessary resources to cope with high job demands. The observed sectoral differences, with the Education sector reporting the highest Emotional Exhaustion, can be interpreted through the lens of emotional labor (Kariou et al., 2021). While communication issues are problematic everywhere, in sectors with high interpersonal demands, the combination of poor communication and intense emotional labor (e.g., dealing with students, parents, or clients) creates a 'double whammy' effect, accelerating the path to burnout.

5.2. Practical Implications

The study offers several clear, evidence-based implications for organizational practice, targeting HR, management, and organizational culture development:

For Human Resources (HR): The findings suggest that communication training should be integrated into mandatory employee and management development programs. HR should prioritize the development of structured communication protocols for critical processes (e.g., performance reviews, change management) to reduce ambiguity. Furthermore, the high burnout scores in the 3–5-year tenure bracket highlight a need for targeted HR interventions, such as mentorship programs or mid-career check-ins, to re-engage employees during this critical period.

For Management: Managers must be trained to move beyond simply conveying information to actively foster a culture of assertive and transparent communication. This involves establishing clear feedback loops, ensuring that all team members understand the rationale behind decisions, and actively soliciting upward communication. The data on perceived control suggests that management should delegate not just tasks, but also the authority and information necessary for employees to feel autonomous in their execution.

For Organizational Culture: The results emphasize that communication culture is not a soft skill but a strategic asset. Organizations should actively audit their communication channels and styles to



identify and dismantle hierarchical or disorganized patterns. A culture that values open dialogue, psychological safety, and clear information flow is demonstrably more resilient to stress and burnout, leading to improved employee well-being and, consequently, higher productivity and lower turnover.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its cross-sectional design, which prevents the establishment of causal relationships. Future longitudinal research should track changes in communication culture and well-being over time. Additionally, the reliance on convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings. Future studies should employ probability sam-

pling and incorporate qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experience of communication-related stress.

6. Conclusion

This study successfully quantified the relationship between business communication culture and employee well-being, demonstrating that communication quality is a central predictor of work stress and burnout. Open communication serves as a powerful resource, while disorganized communication acts as a significant demand, primarily by eroding an employee's sense of perceived control. Organizations committed to employee health and sustainable performance must strategically invest in fostering transparent, structured, and supportive communication environments.



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