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# **The role of internal communication in employee satisfaction via communication channels**

Case study in multilingual international organization

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**ABSTRACT :**

The focus to internal communication emerged in 1990's when economic crisis occurred and organizations needed to be reorganized. Organizations needed to increase the trust among employees and management and it was observed, that the role of internal communication is vital for organizations. It can be conducted in multiple ways and practices utilizing various communication channels, which are chosen according to the needs of organization. Internal communication practices and chosen channels have an impact to employee's internal communication satisfaction. In multilingual organizations the language and communication strategy need to be competent, as internal information needs to reach all employees in the same manner, and it needs to be accessible to every employee to ensure high levels of internal communication satisfaction.

The main purpose of this research is to investigate the role of internal communication in employee satisfaction via communication channels. Specifically, this study examines the role of internal communication and level of communication satisfaction originated from chosen communication channels in multilingual environment in international case company.

The main concepts and theory are based on prior literature and researches related to research topic. Theoretical framework is composed from internal communication, multilingualism, types of communication channels and employee satisfaction on communication. This study examines one case company in finance sector operating in Finland, but originates from Sweden and operates in multiple locations in Europe. This research is qualitative, and consist from six thematic interviews from three various departments of case company.

The findings of this study revealed the differing levels of internal communication satisfaction in the case company. The variation within internal communication satisfaction between the examined departments was evident, and especially one department stood out from the results with low levels of internal communication satisfaction. Low levels of internal communication satisfaction originated from department specific internal communication practices and communication channels. Interviewees working in other departments had notably higher levels of internal communication satisfaction. Internal communication from management had high levels of internal communication satisfaction. Multilingualism of case company did not bring challenges to internal communication as the language and communication strategy of case company is successful and the level or language skills among employees is high. The findings of this study showed, that the role and position in organization has remarkable role in internal communication, how well the information is received and what is the level of communication satisfaction.

**KEYWORDS:** internal communication, internal communication satisfaction, communication channels, multilingualism, employee satisfaction, digital communication channels, information management

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**Tiivistelmä:**

Sisäiseen viestintään keskittyminen alkoi 1990-luvulla talouskriisin jälkeen, kun yritys rakenteita oli järjesteltävä uudelleen. Yrityksen pyrkivät lisäämään luottamusta työntekijöiden ja johdon välillä, ja sen lisäksi havaittiin, että sisäinen viestintä on yrityksille erittäin merkityksellistä. Sisäistä viestintää voidaan toteuttaa monin eri tavoin ja hyödyntäen eri kommunikaatiokanavia, jotka on valittu yksilöllisesti yrityksen tarpeiden mukaisesti. Tavot toteuttaa sisäistä viestintää ja valitut kommunikaatiokanavat vaikuttavat työntekijöiden sisäisen viestinnän tyytyväisyyteen. Monikielisissä yrityksissä kieli- ja viestintästrategia ovat tärkeässä roolissa, sillä sisäisen viestinnän ja tiedon on saavutettava kaikki työntekijät tasa-arvoisesti, ollen samalla saavutettavissa jokaisen työntekijän toimesta. Tämä edesauttaa korkeaa tyytyväisyyttä sisäisen viestinnän suhteen.

Tämän tutkimuksen päätavoitteena on selvittää sisäisen viestinnän roolia työtyytyväisyyteen kommunikaatiokanavien kautta. Pääkäsitteet ja teoria perustuvat aikaisempaan kirjallisuuteen ja tutkimusaiheeseen liittyviin aikaisempiin tutkimuksiin. Teoreettinen viitekehys muodostuu sisäisestä viestinnästä, monikielisyydestä, kommunikaatiokanavista ja työtyytyväisyydestä. Tutkimus on toteutettu tapaustutkimuksena suomalaisessa monikielisessä rahoitusalan yrityksessä, jolla on kansainvälistä toimintaa. Tämä tutkimus on laadullinen, ja se koostuu kuudesta eri teemahaastattelusta, jotka toteutettiin tapausyrityksen kolmella eri osastolla.

Tämän tutkimuksen tulosten myötä kävi ilmi, että sisäisen viestinnän tyytyväisyyden tasot ovat vaihtelevia eri osastojen välillä. Erityisesti yksi osasto erottui tuloksissa alhaisella sisäisen viestinnän tyytyväisyydellä. Alhainen tyytyväisyys johtui osastokohtaisista sisäisen viestinnän käytännöistä ja kommunikaatiokanavista. Muilla osastoilla työskentelevien haastateltujen viestintätyytyväisyys oli selkeästi korkeampi. Johdon sisäiseen viestintään olivat kaikki tyytyväisiä. Tapausyrityksen monikielisyyden ei tuonut juurikaan haasteita sisäiseen viestintään, sillä yrityksen kieli- ja viestintästrategia on onnistunut ja työntekijöiden kielitaito on korkea. Tämän tutkimuksen tuloksen osoittivat, että työntekijän roolilla ja asemalla yrityksessä on merkittävä rooli sisäisen viestinnän kannalta, kuinka vaivattomasti tieto on saavutettavissa ja miten sitä vastaanotetaan, sekä mikä on sisäisen viestinnän tyytyväisyyden taso.

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**AVAINSANAT:** sisäinen viestintä, sisäisen viestinnän tyytyväisyys, kommunikaatiokanavat, monikielisyyden, työtyytyväisyys, digitaaliset kommunikaatiokanavat, tietohallinto

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# 1 Introduction

In this chapter, the background of this study and practical significances are introduced. In addition, the purpose of study, aim and delimitations is outlined regarding this research. Furthermore, an overview of the structure of this thesis is presented in the end of this chapter.

## 1.1 Background of the study

Internal communication in business has a vital role in a performance of a business. It informs the employees about the internal information, changes and work tasks of an organization, and also acts as a voice for employees. In other words, internal communication functions in both ways between the employees and the organization. However, there are many ways how internal communication can be done which also has a straight correlation to a business performance. In addition, creating internal communication strategy for the company brings more efficiency to internal communication and enables the organization to notice the parts, which are not functioning well. (Wright, 2009).

The upswing of internal communication can be placed to the 1990's, when the organizations needed to be reorganized after the economic crisis. Lack of trust between the employees and management required the organization to create and have high-quality internal communication and interaction. At the same time among the employees, loyalty, wellbeing and the level of work decreased. With the help of internal communication, it was possible to re-create the relationships and bring the employees closer again. (Vercic et al., 2012).

More and more organizations have become multilingual during last years. Naturally, language has a remarkable role in the communication of an organization and multiple languages in daily operations of an employee has an impact for example to the understanding, interaction, learning, sense of community and also to the progress of a career. This leads organizations to consider language awareness in workplaces. Paying attention to

language awareness supports the fluency and effectiveness of work tasks. (Bergbom, 2023). Language awareness is crucial especially in international companies in order to be able to guarantee coordinate and manage the activities, people and resources efficiently. Multilingualism creates challenges to the companies, and it requires them to create a communication strategy which includes for example a corporate language. (Welch et al., 2005).

Since the internal communication started developing, it has had a remarkable role as a strategic part of organizations business plan. It has been noted by organizations, that open communication, and especially face-to-face communication, is a source for gaining competitive advantage. (Sarka, 2014). However, it has been noted, that in many cases the employees think that the internal communication only has a role for information from management to employees or as a tool to control which is executed without real contact and interaction. This leads to the situation, where employees might think, that their interaction is not an important part of internal communication. (Vercic et al., 2012).

Employee satisfaction and internal communication are strongly linked with each other. Sufficient communication enables the organization to support the employee satisfaction and wellbeing. This leads to satisfied and motivated employees, who are willing to participate and contribute to the organizational goals. By taking care of both of these areas, they will support each other. (Dziuba et al., 2020; Raziq & Maulabakshs, 2015).

Internal communication and employee satisfaction has been researched separately quite much from different viewpoints. Vercic (2021) studied internal communication satisfaction, more precisely that does employee engagement, employer branding and support from organization have an impact to internal communication satisfaction. Vercic and Spoljaric (2020) studied internal communication and communication channels. Carrière and Bourque (2008) in turn studied internal communication practices, employee satisfaction and employee's organizational commitment. In the research made by Vorina et

al. (2017), they analyze the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement. Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2012) discussed about language issues in international internal communication. Tange and Lauring (2009) studied language management and social interaction in multilingual organization. However, there is a limited number of studies focusing on multilingual companies in the field of financing examining the significance of internal communication channels in terms of employee satisfaction on communication.

## **1.2 Aim, Research questions and Delimitations**

This research aims to increase the understanding on how internal communication channels influence the employee satisfaction on internal communication in multilingual organization. The aim of this research is aimed to be answered with the help of following sub questions: *“What is the role of internal communication in employee satisfaction?”*, *“What is the impact of communication channels in internal communication satisfaction?”* and *“How internal communication channels influence employee satisfaction on international communication in a multilingual organization in finance sector?”*

This research focuses to examine how important is internal communication in terms of employee satisfaction on communication, what should be considered in multilingual organization, does the multilingual aspect of case company have a significant role to the internal communication in the daily work of employees and what internal communication practices support the employee satisfaction the most in terms of communication channels. Also, the means to improve internal communication in terms of employee satisfaction on communication channels are examined through theory and empiricism from the interviews. In addition, the research topic is examined in Finnish financing environment. This research also brings important information to the case company about the preferences of their employees on internal communication practices and employee satisfaction on communication. The employee satisfaction on communication channels is examined from various standpoints. This research is focuses to the research topic from

the perspective of chosen internal communication channels and employee satisfaction on communication.

This research examines especially the satisfaction on communication channels of employees in terms of internal communication across the case company. In this research, the internal communication is limited between the organization's subunit in Finland and employees in Finland's subunit. This means e.g., sharing information about the new regulations related to individual or team's work tasks, general information or new information about the ongoing work tasks, or work tasks in the future. Internal communication also includes the channels where information is being shared, such as teams or the conversations in the office. The multilingual aspect of case company is being considered in this research. In the field of financing, it is extremely important to consider GDPR as the employees handle personal data of the customers. Therefore, it is crucial that the internal communication and communication channels are efficient and the flow of internal information is effective regarding for example the possible new regulations related to GDPR.

Based on this chapter, there are multiple unanswered questions related to the research topic and especially from the field of financing. Also, the case company can contribute to the advancement of their knowledge from the research areas, and therefore possibly make adjustments to their internal communication practices and enhance employee satisfaction on communication.

### **1.3 Structure of the study**

This research consists from five main chapters. The first chapter introduces the reader to the topic and is familiarizes it. After that, the aim, research questions and structure of the study are addressed and the necessity of research is explained. In the second chapter the theory related to the research topic is examined and relevant theory in terms of this

research is acquainted. Also, the previous studies and literature of the topic has been introduced and analyzed.

In the third chapter of this research, the research methodology, case company, data collection method and the analysis method are introduced. After that in the fourth chapter the results of the study are presented, and the observations are analyzed mirroring them to the previous literature and to the chosen theory. In the fifth and last chapter the conclusions are created from the entire research, the practical improvement suggestions are given to the case-company according to the observations, the implemented research is critically analyzed and suggestions for future studies are formed. In the end of the thesis are references and appendices.

## **2 Internal Communication and Employee Satisfaction**

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework of this thesis by addressing the concepts and phenomena in more detail. The literature review combines the fundamental concepts and elements of this research. First, the chapter begins by covering internal communication, its importance, multilingualism and information management. Also, some of the prior researches related to internal communication are addressed. Second, types of communication channels are conveyed, and the impact of digital communication channels and some of the prior researches related to communication channels are addressed. Finally, employee satisfaction on communication is discussed in the context of possible consequences.

### **2.1 Internal communication, multilingualism and information management**

#### **2.1.1 Internal communication and its importance**

Internal communication refers to the communication, which is organizational or occurs between employees. It includes for example sharing information and news related to the company as well as sharing and exchanging information and ideas inside the company, not forgetting the possibility of employees to express opinions. Internal communication can occur in different forms, such as written, digital and verbal and one of its purposes is to help in achieving the goals of the organization. (Vercic et al., 2012). Internal communication should bring information to employees also about the goals and policies of organization. When it comes to the employee satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees, internal communication and its effectiveness has a remarkable role in it. (Borca & Baesu, 2014).

Smidts et al. (2001) stated, that there are many ways how internal communication can be done, and which correlates to a business performance. In that sense, functional habits and practices, such as face-to-face conversations and formal meetings, on internal

communication in organization have a vital role, since they act as a voice for employees and narrates them the guidelines on how to work within a company. According Jacobs et al. (2016), who was cited by Argenti (2003), competent internal communication aims at an atmosphere where mutual respect prevails between employees and organization. Mutual respect can also regarded as sharing information about the state of the company, such as current key issues. When the key issues of an organization are shared to employees at all levels, they are able to contribute more entirely to the success of organization. Effective internal communication has proven to be beneficial in problem solving, attaining certain goals and achieving good employee satisfaction. (Tourish and Hargie, 1996).

In terms of the business competition, maintaining a good level of internal communication is important. It enables the employees to be up-to-date regarding the important details and therefore the work is will be more efficient. A high efficiency in internal communication enables the company to channel their assets where they are needed the most in terms of business performance (Tariszka, 2012). Also, according to Jacobs et al. (2016), effective internal communication it vital to achieve satisfied employees and therefore enhance the performance of organization and the coordination of information, material and financial assets. In the best-case scenario in terms of internal communication, it acts as an motivator for employees when pursuing for example a better engagement of customers (Vercic et al., 2012).

Internal communication itself is pivotal for companies to have successful functions in various teams and in whole organization. Well-functioning internal communication hab-its prevents misunderstandings in organizations and therefore smoothens the actions of organization. However, the different ways of conducting internal communications needs to be observed, and corrective actions needs to be taken if necessary. An effective internal communication enhances the productivity and performance of employees, which in turn increases the satisfaction of stakeholders and customers. The role of internal communication is very important when the company's operations are monitored, when job

performance is enhanced and when possible behavior issues of employees are implemented in order to be able to accomplish the vision and mission the company. (Habib & Ishtiaque, 2023).

**Table 1.** Previous researches related to internal communication.

Author	Study area	Main issue	Outcome
Vercic, (2021)	Internal communication satisfaction	Does employee engagement, organizational support and employer branding have an impact to the internal communication satisfaction?	The relationship between all variables was positive and significant.
Jacobs et al., (2016)	internal communication and employee satisfaction	The impact of internal communication and employee satisfaction to supply chain integration from the perspective of social capital theory	Employee satisfaction somewhat mediates the effect of internal communication in terms of internal integration. In general, the study found that internal communication has significant positive impact on employee satisfaction.
Carrière and Bourque (2008)	Internal communication practices,	What is the impact that internal communication brings	Internal communication practices have a

	employee satisfaction and organizational commitment	to employee satisfaction and organizational commitment	strong relation to internal communication satisfaction and slightly weaker relation to employee satisfaction and organizational commitment.
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Internal communication has been researched widely from various angles. Some of the studies are summarized to table 1. These specific studies were chosen since the topics of them are related to the first sub research question of this thesis. By reviewing these studies, valuable insights are aimed to be gained from the findings and methodologies used in previous researches. This enables to achieve a comprehensive understanding of existing literature and will act as a foundation to investigation conducted in this study.

In the study of Vercic (2021) the impact of employee engagement, organizational support and employer branding to internal communication satisfaction was researched. Employees from twelve large organizations participated to this study. According to the results, there is significant and positive relationship between all the variables of this research. These results highlight the importance of truly understanding the factors affecting the employee satisfaction and in addition, they guide to form better practices on internal communication. However, as Vercic (2021) mentioned, this research relies on the self-reports on employees. This might raise the possibility of bias in reporting. The bias is attempted to be reduced by using scales, which are well established.

According to Jacobs et al., (2016), internal communication has an impact to the employee satisfaction. The study was conducted from the perspective of social capital theory for manufacturers based in China. In addition, the results revealed the fact that there

was a continuous entity as internal communication impacts employee satisfaction, employee satisfaction has an influence to internal integration, which in turn afterwards has an impact to external integration. Also, the level of employee satisfaction affects to the relationship of internal integration and internal communication. External integration is positively affected by internal communication.

Carrière and Bourque (2008) conducted a research which examined the impact of internal communication practices to employee satisfaction, employee satisfaction on communication and organizational commitment. The results were gathered utilizing questionnaire among paramedics from Canadian municipal land ambulance service. The most important finding from this research was that internal communication practices have an impact to employee satisfaction on communication and employee satisfaction in general and as well to organizational commitment. However, it is important to note that this research was conducted to specific area of industry, which creates a need to conduct additional researches to other industries.

In conclusion all the studies in Table 1 collectively highlight the remarkable impact of internal communication on employee satisfaction across various organizational contexts. These studies underline the importance of various factors, such as employee engagement, when internal communication satisfaction is being shaped. Also, the role of internal communication practices is emphasized when employee satisfaction is sought. However, there is a need for further studies to be able to generalize all findings across various industries.

### **2.1.2 Multilingualism**

Nowadays as organizations are more and more international or might have international operations, it has created a multilingual environment in many organizations. In multilingual environment, multiple languages are used in organizational environment. This has created a question about efficiency in business operations and internal communication,

including the various communication channels. Multilingual companies with agencies or subunits in multiple locations usually hire local employees in order to access certain market. Multiple cultures and languages increase the need for functioning internal communication, and it has created a need for employees to adapt to multilingual environment for example by translating manuals, notices and documents. (Marschan-Piekkari et al., 1999). However, multilingualism has generated a new work genre, where literacy and oral demands have a remarkable role in employee's skills. The organization can support employees by offering language training and aiming to simplify the language. (Auer & Wei, 2007).

In Finland multilingualism in organizations means in most cases, that the employees are using a foreign language in organizational environment and in their work tasks. This might create challenges for some employees, if the foreign language skills are not developed to desired and needed level. This might cause inconveniences in internal communication if the employee does not understand the content. (Welch & Welch, 2018). Different age groups have received different support for language studies throughout their life, for example the older age group has generally received more minor support. In addition, general globalization has supported the language skills of the younger age group throughout their life as they have seen and heard different languages in the environment. Therefore, the organization has the responsibility to ensure that employees understand the content in their workplace. Effective ways to do this is agreeing the common corporate language, and agree the specific situations where other languages are used. Also, parallel language can be utilized in internal communication in various communication channels to ensure the full understanding of employees. The language system should be in line with the strategy or organization and should be adaptative along with the global environment. (Luo & Shenkar, 2006).

Well-formed communication strategy brings efficiency in the operations of an organization. The strategy needs to be formed individually according to the features and needs of every company, and it needs to match to its goals. In addition, the communication

needs to be realistic in terms of the organization. While forming the communication strategy, employee surveys has turned out to be beneficial in terms of examining the perception of the employees. It offers a possibility to have an insight of the manners, which are functioning. In multilingual company, communication strategy needs to be well thought as it needs to consider the multiple languages in organization. In terms of clarity and efficiency, the organization benefits from clear policies, for example regarding the corporate language and internal communication channels. While creating an unique communication strategy, Inspiration can be searched from other companies which have well-functioning strategy. Other communication strategy activities, which consider multilingualism are multilingual intranet, language training for employees who feel that the level of needed languages is not strong enough, aim to simplify the language where it is possible and raise language awareness among the organization. Communication processes can have different patterns, which have an impact to the success rate of communication inside a company. While creating an effective communication strategy, both positive and negative sides of each option should be displayed in a certain situation and therefore provide a resolution to a possible problem (Markovic & Salamzadeh, 2018).

Employees in multilingual companies usually experiences also intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is a form of communication, where communication takes place throughout various cultural boundaries. More in depth, it requires two or a group of people from different cultures interacting and communicating (Issa et al., 2015). Alongside internal communication, intercultural communication has a remarkable role in an organization. When intercultural communication takes place different values and beliefs are merged, and therefore intercultural communication is a vital competence (Maheshwari, 2018).

Louhiala-Salminen and Kankaanranta (2012) have conducted a study about international internal communication which examines the language strategy and the use of language in internal communication in organization, which communicates internationally, also in-

side the organization, and operates across borders. According to the findings of the research, having more than one official corporate languages might confuse employees. However, if there are multiple corporate languages, clear and precise guidelines should be established to indicate that when and how all corporate languages should be used. Corporate language is stated in the language strategy of the organization. Common language in organization is beneficial in terms of coordination, value creation and organizational learning. Therefore, language planning can be considered as a strategic tool. According to Feely & Harzing (2003), language management is considered as corporate asset, which can even cause damaged relationships if the planning has been passed.

### **2.1.3 Organizational information management**

The term “information” refers to all kinds of valuable information originating from outside or inside the organization encompassing the data resources. The data resources can be for example production data which includes personnel related files and records. In addition, market research data and competitive intelligence is kept as part of information. (Kaur, 2004). Information can be strategic resource for an organization, and it has price, value and cost. Therefore, it should have similar management processes as other resources of the company, such as financial or human resources. (Victoria, 2022).

Noorzihidayah et al. (2023, p. 75) cites Wan Idros & Ooi Li Woei (2017), that the definition of organizational information management is the process, where information is being identified, classified, preserved and erased. It also ensures, that the received information in organization is true and correct. In organizations the communication process normally takes place when specific information is transferred between superior and subordinate, or if information is shared between colleagues. Therefore, well-functioning strategy in information management and information system are vital for organizations. (Aznil, 2021, cited in Noorzihidayah et al., 2023, p. 73). The strategy related to information management is a long-term strategy or guideline to implement, supervise and direct information management (Reponen, 1994, p. 30).

Organizational Information Management is considered as an important factor and resource in company's business strategy and being competitive. Internal information from the organization can give a competitive advantage for the company, when the information is being utilized and development ideas are gathered from it. Internal information helps with training of the employees in order to gain more experience for them and make plans inside the organization related for example to structure of organization and plan coordination and control systems. Organization can optimize their internal processes, and therefore gain competitive advantage over their competitors (Amaya et al, 2022). Professionals can work with information related administrative problems in the field of distribution, treatment, identification and collection to be utilized both in administrative processes and production processes. A proper strategy in information management increases the competitiveness of an organization. (Victoria, 2022).

Internal information from the organization can give a competitive advantage for the company, when the information is being utilized and development ideas are gathered from it. Internal information helps with training of the employees in order to gain more experience for them and make plans inside the organization related for example to structure of organization and plan coordination and control systems. Organization can optimize their internal processes, and therefore gain competitive advantage over their competitors (Amaya et al, 2022).

When organizational information management practices are being discussed and decisions are made, alongside the management of the company, also the users of the information should be involved to the decision-making process. This is beneficial, as the organization wants to find the most efficient way to utilize information system. (Reponen, 1994). Nowadays organizations rely heavily on information technology, so the skill to adapt information between computer system and different business processes is extremely important. In internal communication the communication channels are nowadays mostly virtual, so therefore being able to adapt information as an employee is a

vital skill. At its best, it can help to boost various business processes and at its worst, it can cause problems with business due to the problems with adapting information and interruption of information flow. (Isfandyari-Moghaddam, 2014).

## **2.2 Types of communication channels**

### **2.2.1 Internal communication channels**

Internal communication can be done through various channels. The purpose of these channels is to connect the organization and the employees with each other. This allows the employees to be responsive to the information the organization has shared internally. These channels might be e.g., leadership communication, top-down communication which refers management communicating to employees, bottom-up communication which refers to employees communicating to management, and peer-to-peer communication. All of these styles differ from how formal they are or in what situations they are used in and the communication can occur in face-to face-situations as well in the technological internal channels of the organization. Each of these styles can be efficient if they are used correctly, but also provide inconsistent information, if the main procedures related to internal communication are not polished. (Ahmed, 2022). However, organization should plan carefully to choose the internal communication that channels are necessary, since too many communication channels might confuse employees and some of the information might be left unnoted. The internal communication channels should be chosen considering for example the preferences and needs of employees, speed of data transfer and the sender goals. The choice of internal communication channels might be varying according to the work tasks. (Vercic, 2020).

Communication channels can be either transmittal or receptive. The purpose of transmittal internal communication channels is to transmit the information to employees. Receptive internal communication channels are also meant to transmit information to employees but also to get a response from them to shared information. (Cleary, 2023).

Alongside face-to-face communication, other internal communication channels are written communication, digital communication, verbal communication and specialized channels such as employee newsletters, employee surveys or training sessions. These channels can be used either individually or combine them to enable effective internal communication within organization. All these channels include various elements, such as verbal communication can be phone calls or meetings, written communication can be emails or reports. Digital communication in turn has achieved many new dimensions during last years, such as intranet, instant messaging and virtual meetings. (Taiminen & Karjaluoto, 2014).

Well-thought communication channels bring many benefits for the company. When communication channels are planned to be as efficient as possible, it improves the internal collaboration activities of the organization as it clarifies the organizational processes to employees at all levels and therefore reduces the confusion of employees. Efficient communication channels tend to increase the productivity of employees since there is internal information available which might be needed for performing work tasks efficiently, or the internal information acquired from various channels might increase the motivation of employees. (Vercic & Vokic, 2017).

One of the most efficient communication channels is face-to-face conversations, as it allows the participants to give feedback and ask for specifications (Men, 2014). In addition, the level of employee satisfaction is enhanced as the employees receive accurate and versatile information related for example to the work tasks or generally to the organization they work at. The development of technology has created new possibilities for communication, and therefore, also for communication channels. Social media has multiple various channels such as blogs and internal social media of an organization. (Vercic & Vokic, 2017).

Choosing specific communication channels is important for organization, as they might either enhance or reduce the efficiency of information flow. Channels should be chosen

according to the desired outcome of internal communication, for example channels that enable quick and direct communication, such as instant messaging platforms or emails, can enhance the flow of work and reduces delays. In addition, some channels provide more clarity in communication than others, and some channels are more prone to misunderstandings if the content used in internal communication is not crafted carefully. Chosen communication channels should be inclusive and accessible to everyone in order to guarantee equal participation and engagement. However, the confidentiality and security of communication channels should still be considered. For organizations, it is vital to protect confidential data. In order to achieve the efficiency from communication channels, they should also have adaptability. Occasionally the needs of organization or context might change, and in that situation it is important to have a variety of channels available. This allows the employees to choose the most suitable internal communication channel to be used according to the information and urgency. (Vercic & Spoljaric, 2020; Byrne & LeMay, 2006).

**Table 2.** Types of communication channels in previous researches.

Author	Study area	Addressed communication channel	Main issue	Outcome
Vercic & Spoljaric, (2020)	Internal communication and communication channels	Rich media (e.g. video chats) Moderate media (e.g. internal blogs and organized chats with top management)	What is the impact of specific communication channels to internal communication	Especially existence of rich and moderate media influences to the employee satisfaction on communication channels.

		Lean media (e.g. newsletters and memos within organization)		
Wuersch et al., (2023)	Digital internal communication	Digital channels	The link between internal communication and digital transformation	Digital internal communication supports creating socially constructed organization, and competency development results to better digital trust-building.
Kovaite et al., (2020).	Internal communication and digital communication channels	Digital channels	How efficient digital communication channels are in the process of changing business model?	The most efficient digital communication channel during the business model change was electronic media and least effective was online employee profiles.

Study conducted by Vercic and Spoljaric (2020) examines the impact of chosen internal communication channels to communication satisfaction. In this study the addressed communication channels were rich media, moderate media and lean media. As a result, they found out that the existence of rich and moderate media, such as team building meetings and corporate social networks, brought the highest level of satisfaction in terms of quality of communication media. Therefore, rich and moderate medias have qualities that are able to enhance the level of satisfaction in communication. According to Vercic and Spoljaric (2020), “traditional” media channels affect employee satisfaction more than new digital communication channels, which leads to a suggestion that internal information should mostly be transmitted via traditional communication channels, as it is the most preferred way for all generations of employees.

Wuersch et al. (2023) studied the link between internal communication and digital transformation. The study was conducted by utilizing comprehensive literature review, and by creating a sample from academic online databases utilizing journal articles and other scholarly works. They found out, that there is a link between internal communication and digital transformation, digital internal communication supports creating socially constructed organization. The core of digital internal communication is developing competencies on every level, which also leads to digital trust-building. By utilizing digital communication channels, organizations can contribute to socially constructed environment, which stimulates employees to collaborate, share knowledge and innovations across all levels.

Kovaite et al. (2020) examined the efficiency of digital communication channels during business model changing process. The research was conducted in the context of Industry 4.0, which refers to a trend that enhances both business models and communication channels within commercial enterprises (Ruck et al., 2017). This research utilized expert judgement method, where experts are asked to make judgements based on their experience. The business model changing process was divided into three stages, awareness,

understanding and acceptance. According to the results, the least effective digital communication channel was online employee profile in every stage. All the other digital communication channels were more or less at the same level during different stages, especially electronic media, streaming audio or video, instant messaging and social networks turned out to be efficient. These findings highlight the importance of utilizing digital communication channels effectively during organizational change. By being able to understand the strengths and weaknesses of various communication channels and tailoring them specifically to each organization, organizations can enhance their decision making, collaboration and successful implementation of new business models by identifying the most efficient communication channels for each stage of the process. (Kovaite et al., 2020).

### **2.2.2 Digital communication channels**

Information and communication technology (ICT) is nowadays closely linked to internal communication, as it provides the technological tools and an underlying base to digital internal communication. ICT reinforces the activities, which include information, and ICT activities are for example processing, presenting, gathering and storing data. In addition, also communication and collaboration are accounted as part of ICT as they involve handling information. Technological devices, such as software applications, laptop computers and both wireless and wired communication technologies, not to forget internet, are a part of ICT. (Rouse, 2023). During last decades, the digital transformation has been ongoing and it has changed internal communication to more digital form, which has created digital internal communication. Internal communication channels are more emphasized to digital channels, not forgetting the importance of face-to-face conversations and other human-related interactions, where internal communication happens. Digital internal communication is a part of the organizational strategy as the development of information and communication technology has offered various new possibilities for organizations to be used in internal communication. Organizations enjoy from digital trust, which appears by employees are digitally skilled and feel confident to take part in digital communication. (Wuersch et al., 2023).

The development of ICT has been massive during the last century, as many revolutionary technological inventions have been released. Radio and television were the first devices which enabled mass communication effectively. Today, the internet and smartphones are the main tools which are used for communication. (Rouse, 2023). ICT creates interaction between organization and technology, and in terms of internal communication, ICT offers new possibilities and innovations and the existing processes can be enhanced with the help of it (Bouwman et al, 2005, p. 20). An effective and accurate use of ICT tools in organizations leads to higher productivity which is beneficial in terms of business goals. During the last decades, when ICT has been improving alongside other technological solutions, organizations have been influenced and forced to change their strategy to keep up with their competitors. Nowadays technology is an important part of organizations' business strategies and it allows organizations to have an efficient business model including agencies in various countries. (Bouwman et al., 2005).

In today's world, ICT is crucial for organizations. In terms of overall communication, ICT helps to maintain the relationships, such as relationships between suppliers and employees. In the context of this research, modern ICT practices allow the organization to perform the internal communication in a way, that is efficient and versatile. Organization can utilize various communication channels in internal communication. The channels can be chosen for example according to the nature of the company or to the preferences of employees. Options on communication channels are wide, so they should be chosen based on the efficiency and functionality. In terms of employee satisfaction, ICT can be very beneficial for companies. ICT has allowed working away, enhanced communication and it lowers the threshold for example to whistleblowing, or other feedback since it is able to be presented online for example with virtual forms. These factors intrinsically increase the satisfaction and wellbeing of employees. (LinkedIn, 2022).

Information and communication technology is part of digital transformation of internal communication. Digital transformation has led the communication channels of internal

communication to be emphasized to digital technologies and online media. Digital internal communication can be also considered as strategic function as it can help organizations to achieve its goals for example by delivering internal information faster among the employees. (Welch & Jackson, 2007). ICT and digital internal communication have emphasized their importance during last years, especially during COVID-19, when ICT allowed for example remote work and still maintained the flow of internal communication, as it was able to be done digitally (Lopez-Leon et al., 2020). Digital workplaces tend to have increased transparency, productivity and operational efficiency, and data access is not independent from a place. However, organizations should not focus solely on digital internal communication, as it excludes the “human software” out of it. Human-focused perspective is important for organizations in more complex elements, such as when artificial intelligence is used and when digital trust is observed. Therefore, it can be noted that ICT and digital internal communication are still developing and their full potential has not been yet achieved among organizations. (Wuersch et al., 2023).

### **2.3 Employee Satisfaction on communication**

Addressing general employee satisfaction along communication satisfaction is needed to achieve a comprehensive understanding about dynamics in organization and well-being of employees. In addition, it offers precious feedback on what can be improved. Employee satisfaction describes the state of the employee’s satisfaction at work e.g., needs and desires at work and reflects to overall wellbeing of organization. Also, employee satisfaction includes work tasks one likes and doing them well and achieving rewards for efforts. The level of employee satisfaction, especially towards communication, has an impact to the employee’s engagement towards an organization as well as to the efficiency of employee. In addition, employee’s satisfaction with communication channels impacts directly engagement and retention of employees. The satisfaction of employees can be impacted for example by pay scale, work environment and opportunities to promotions. (Sriram & Lathabhavan, 2020). In the eyes of an organization, employees are a

valuable asset in terms of business performance, and employees should meet the organization's criteria which are set to achieve certain level of performance. Employee satisfaction is worthwhile to be aligned with communication satisfaction, as it ensures that communicational efforts are aligned with the goals and objectives of organization. Enhancing organizational communication supports organizational success. However, if employee's level of satisfaction is poor or inferior, it might be hard or impossible to meet the performance criteria. Employees which are satisfied and feel heard and valued through effective communication channels are normally motivated to work. According to Dziuba et al. (2020), employee who is satisfied and happy, is more responsible and performs better.

The superior or leader has a huge impact to the employee satisfaction, various leader styles have different impact to different individuals. Superiors should be able to connect with employees and stimulate their knowledge and thinking. Poor communication skills create dissatisfaction among employees. As Dziuba et al. (2020) cited Brenninger (2015), there are four main determinants, which have an impact to the level of employee satisfaction. The determinants are job design, workplace environment, supervisor or leader and performance pay.

The highest rate of employee satisfaction has been achieved with participatory management style. The motivation of employees can be challenging to observe, whereas the development of motivation can be done more easily by actively participating to the organization's life. (Dziuba et al., 2020). According to the study of Brenninger (2011), the best way to achieve good results and satisfied employees is to involve employees to the decision-making process.

Kumari (2011) cited Clark, Oswald and Warr (1996) who found in their study, that in most cases job satisfaction increases as the person ages. The growth of job satisfaction is linear. It was also found, that circumstances in personal life and other non-job factors have an impact to the level of job satisfaction. Also, the understanding of expectations in work

and the change in expectations in higher among the people with more aged age groups. Kumari (2011) also cited Miles, Patrick and King Jr. (1996), whose study showed that employee satisfaction is also affected by the job position and the communication between superior and the subordinate.

According to Brenninger (2013), respect at work, creditability, pride and fairness are all part of employee satisfaction and these elements have an impact to the value of an organization and high rate of employee satisfaction increases the value of the company. The empirical evidence in his study shows, that companies which have high employee satisfaction rate are ascendant over other companies, where employee satisfaction rate is not as good. However, this result is based only to the Brenninger's (2023) study, where the sample size was relatively low.

**Table 3.** Previous researches related to employee satisfaction.

Author(s)	Study area	Main issue	Outcome
Fida et al. (2019)	Employee satisfaction in Pakistan bank industry	Does emotional intelligence have significance to workplace environment?	Emotional intelligence has significance to workplace environment, regardless the gender
Dziuba et al. (2020)	Employee satisfaction	Does employee satisfaction and work performance have an impact to the work safety?	Satisfied employees have better performance-rate and are more responsible.

Kumari, (2011)	Employee Satisfaction	Different aspects of employee satisfaction	Factors which lead to the greatest job satisfaction are team work, culture, training, commitment and communication
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Employee satisfaction has diversely been researched from various angles. Table 3 presents some of the prior studies from this field. These studies were chosen as their topics help to answer to second and third sub research questions of this thesis. By examining these studies, valuable insights are pointed from the methodologies and findings of these studies. This enables deeper understanding of existing literature and offers a good base for research in this thesis and allows to answer research questions effectively.

According to the study of Fida et al. (2019), job satisfaction, workplace environment and emotional intelligence have remarkable correlation. The study examined job satisfaction in the banking industry in Pakistan. However, the environment of the research leads to the fact, that it cannot be generalized to other studies with similar research topics. Intercultural factors might have a remarkable impact to the result of the study. In addition, The sample size of the study was 200, which consisted from 169 males and 31 females. Also, from 200 samples 114 samples were from private banking sector, and 86 samples were from government sector. The difference is not dramatic, but it is clear. According to Faber and Fonseca (2014, pp. 27-29), the sample size of the study should not be too immoderate, but also not too minor. In the research of Fida et al. (2019), it is challenging to understand whether the sample size is big or small, since it is not mentioned if the samples are from one specific company, or from multiple companies.

Dziuba et al. (2020) also conducted a research about job satisfaction, and how it is related to the work performance in terms of work safety. The research was done in a specific metallurgical company which location was not shared. Also, the number of employees in the company was not announced, so the sample size of 47 cannot be classified to

be big, small or sufficient. In addition, it was mentioned in the research that men form the majority of employees in this industry as women usually work in organizations and offices. However, it was not specified whether the sample size of this study consists only from men, or both from women and men. The information to the research was gathered via survey. The survey itself consisted from quite simple questions where the respondent answered based on a scale between 1-10. The answers are clear in terms of analyzing results, but the survey allows the respondent to answer untruthfully.

Neeraj Kumari (2011) conducted a research on job satisfaction at the workplace for employees of NTPC Ltd, which is a thermal power station in Badarpur, India. The data for research was gathered by making a survey and enquiry for 125 employees, which were chosen by using random sampling method. The results were analyzed by using SPSS-tool and different parameters. The addressed parameters were for example team work, communication, training, opportunities and rewards. The results showed that the overall level of job satisfaction among employees was good, but some actions should be made to improve the satisfaction level even more. According to the results of the study, the division between parameters to be worked on and to be on sufficient level was equal. Team work, commitment, culture, communication and training were at a good level, whereas delegation, job design, opportunities, rewards and leadership required improvement. The research was conducted in a consistent way and regarded different parameters very distinctly. However, the results cannot be generalized anywhere else than to the case-company. In order to measure the development of job satisfaction and to achieve accurate new results also for the company, it would require a new study with same employees after the modifications to parameters which needed it.

Communication satisfaction refers to the level of personal satisfaction of an individual that is experienced during communication, for example how clear or effective communication is e.g. in work place. Other characteristics of communication satisfaction are timeliness, accuracy, relevance, clarity, possibility to receive and give feedback, bottom-up and top-down communication, transparency and trust. Communication satisfaction

has a remarkable role in employee satisfaction overall. Employees can be considered as the assets of organization and therefore the organization should pursue to have satisfied and motivated employees as communication satisfaction or dissatisfaction might have an impact to the job performance, which also explains the increased interest towards communication satisfaction.

In recent decades, communication satisfaction has been researched broadly, and it has been strongly linked to employee satisfaction (Pettit et al., 1997; Pincus, 1986). Communication satisfaction is a responsibility of managers and is rather easy to maintain for example by having regular one-to-one meetings with employees, providing adequate feedback and taking them along to the decision-making processes. Appropriate practices and actions of internal communication will provide favorable outcomes for the organization. (Gray & Laidlaw, 2004).

Communication interactions are sought by employees from coworkers and managers in order to satisfy the need of inclusion and pleasure, which in turn leads to building effective relationships in work when interpersonal needs are satisfied (Anderson & Martin, 1995; Rubin, 1993). If communication satisfaction is low, it has consequences, such as, reduced the commitment of employees, increased absenteeism and reduced productivity on work tasks. Low communication satisfaction in most cases indicates that the level on internal communication is poor, and therefore it can also lead to increased uncertainty about work tasks, increased stress and even to burnout. (Hargie et al., 2002; Ray, 1993).

Gray and Laidlaw (2004) cited Clampitt & Downs (1993) and found out, that individuals might have various levels of satisfaction for distinct communication dimensions of an organization. This might emerge for example with the chosen communication channels. Some of the employees might be satisfied with certain communication channels, whereas other employees' level of satisfaction might be low. Therefore, organizations should pay attention to the preferences of employees in order to increase the level of

communication satisfaction. (Ruck & Welch, 2012). The importance of various communication channels in communication satisfaction was also emphasized in the study made by Vercic and Spoljaric (2020), where especially the existence of rich media, such as, team building meetings, video chats and chats with top management, had a significant impact to the level of internal communication satisfaction.

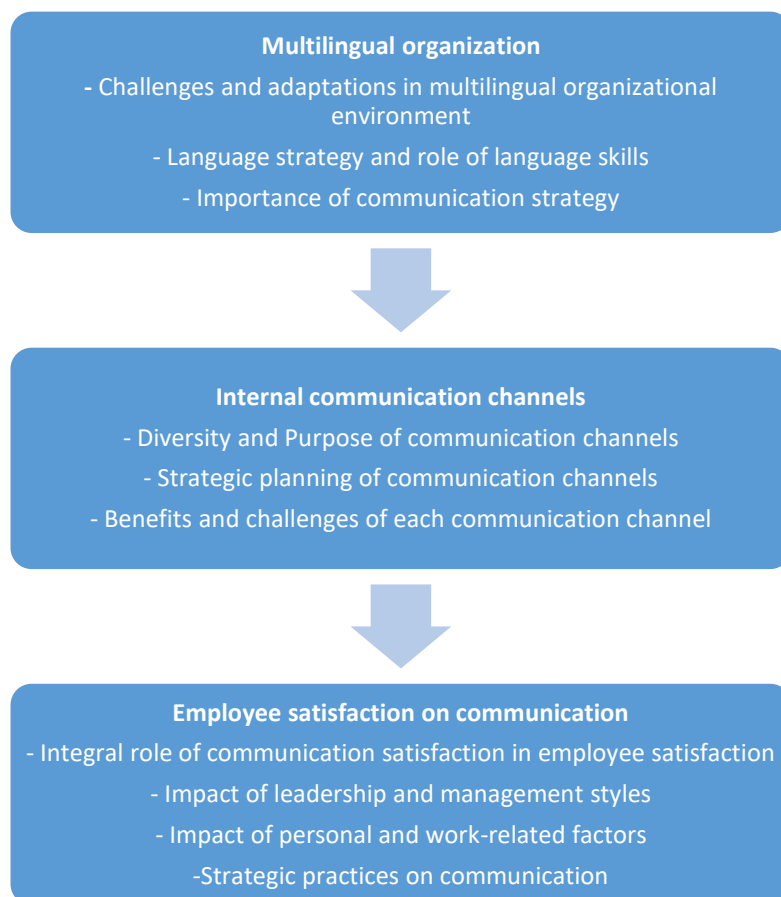
## **2.4 Summary of theoretical framework**

Internal communication channels have very important role in internal communication when employee satisfaction is being formed in multilingual organizations. Efficient communication channels support employees exchange process of ideas, information and feedback, and in multilingual organization this should be able to be done efficiently regardless of the language of an individual. Communication channels should be easily accessible, inclusive and transparent for all employees in order them to feel themselves valued and therefore engaged to organization. This increases the level of communication satisfaction, and therefore also general employee satisfaction. Effective internal communication channels for multilingual organization are for example video conferences, multilingual intranet, face to face-conversations and organized chats with management. Shortly, suitable communication channels for multilingual organizations are accessible in multiple languages and accessible for everyone, they enable communication to both ways and they ensure the confidentiality and security of data.

When communication channels are chosen and tailored according to the diverse language practices in certain organization, it contributes the feeling of understanding and sense of community among all employees. The other way around, if chosen communication channels are ineffective due to for example language barrier or limited access, it can remarkably impact negatively to the effectiveness of communication, effectiveness of an organization and to employee satisfaction. For this reason, it is crucial to ensure the availability and easy access of diverse communication channels. It also enhances the

general employee satisfaction and communication satisfaction in multilingual organizations.

Employee satisfaction on internal communication reflects to how employees experience the relevancy, transparency, effectiveness and the accessibility of communication in their organization. When the employee satisfaction on internal communication is at high level, it supports the positivity in work place, productivity and engagement of employees and the success of an organization. Moreover, high levels on communication satisfaction supports the trust and loyalty of employees. Trust and transparency encourage employees and management for open discussions, where the environment is comfortable to share feedback or other ideas.



**Figure 1.** Theoretical framework in summary.

### **3 Research methodology**

This chapter introduces, discusses and argues the research philosophy, chosen approach and the design of this thesis. In addition, sample of the study is presented, data collection is explained and the analysis is described. Lastly, reliability and validity assist on evaluating the quality of this research.

#### **3.1 Qualitative case study**

This study is done as qualitative study. Qualitative study aims to achieve understanding from various human experience and to further this, it addresses focus groups and interviews as an entry to the thoughts and perspectives of an individual. Also, a qualitative study requires evidence and theory. However, it requires the empathetic skills of the researcher to be at the certain level to be able to achieve the understanding the experience and perspectives of interviewees. (Silverman, 2020). Qualitative study was chosen as a research method as it aims to investigate different experiences from people, and therefore it aids comprehending the significance and priorities in people's life. A single case study was chosen as a research strategy as the material for interviews are gathered from one company. Case study in turn tries to examine individuals, groups, institutions and communities in order to be able to answer the research question of the research. The evidence to answer the research question is sought according to the setting of the specific case to achieve the best possible answers. One of the key characteristics of a case study is using multiple sources of evidence, each with various weaknesses and strengths. (Gillham, 2010).

Qualitative research method was chosen in order to achieve a deep understanding about the phenomenon which is being researched. The description of real life can be considered as a baseline of qualitative research and the researched object is aimed to be research comprehensively (Seale et al., 2004). This research is cross-sectional study, as it examines the phenomenon pervasively in specific point of time (Setia, 2016, p. 261).

Quantitative study in turn strives to generalize matters. It has been stated, that in quantitative study the aim is to find or reveal facts instead of trying to verify already existing veritabilities. (Vilkka, 2007).

Comprehensive acquisition of information is a typical feature for qualitative research, where the material will be gathered from genuine and natural situations. The researcher's own observation skills are highlighted as they are trusted more than other measuring instruments. In addition, the deductive content analysis is being utilized. This means, that the researcher interprets a phenomenon with the help of theoretical frame of reference. (Seale et al., 2004).

### **3.2 Case Company**

The case company of this research is a multilingual international company which offers services among financing, debt collection, account ledger handling and payment solutions. The company originates to Sweden but it has multiple office locations in Europe, including Finland. Therefore, the company uses various languages in its operations and is multilingual. The services and operations are continuously developed according to the needs of customers. The company has been operating about 40 years in the field, and in 2021, the revenue was 384 million euros and the company employed over 2000 people. In Finland, the number of employees is over 200.

### **3.3 Data collection**

The qualitative material for this research has been gathered by conducting thematic interviews. Interviews as a method are considered as a flexible method to gather information, as they enable steering the information acquisition during the interviews. In this research, thematic interviews are considered as suitable method as they highlight the subjectivity of a human in the research situation. It also enables the researcher to ask

the interviewee to elaborate their answers for example in the form of additional questions or reasonings. (Guest et al., 2012). In this study, various employees from case company are interviewed, and based on their answers the level of employee satisfaction in terms of internal communication and communication channels is concluded.

Thematic interview falls between open interview and structured interview. In thematic interview, the subjects are known beforehand as the interview usually has specific targeted themes. However, there is not strict form nor order for the questions. The starting point is, that individual's beliefs, experiences and feelings can be examined with thematic interviews. The essential feature is, that theme interview proceeds along beforehand defined themes. (Guest et al., 2012). While acquiring the research material, methods where different viewpoints of examinees are observed. (Seale et al., 2004). A suitable method for this is theme interviews. The interviewees are chosen practically and not randomly in order to achieve relevant information in terms of this research.

The weakness of thematic interviews is, that it requires skills and experience from the interviewer, and the role requires training. The thematic interviews for this study have been prepared by studying relevant literature and familiarizing with previous thematic interviews that have already been conducted. In addition, interviews are considered as time consuming and high expense method. There is also room for mistakes both for interviewer and interviewee. Reliability might be decreased by answers which are not truthful. Interpreting and analyzing material which is in free form is difficult since there is not completed models to use as a help. (Nowell et al., 2017).

The primary data for this research is gathered from case company, which operates in the field on financing, debt collection, payment solutions and account ledger handling and it has multiple office locations in Europe. In order to achieve comprehensive results, the selection of interviewees is highlighted to be representative among employees who are

working in Finland. However, the business operations in each country are slightly different due to regulations and legislation, but the fundamentals are the same and management has cooperative operations among all office locations.

In this research, qualitative data was gathered by conducting thematic interviews using an interview guide. The interview guide (see Appendix 1) was developed on ground of relevant literature and aim of this thesis. The interviewees were chosen to this research to achieve sample from the company, including employees from all genders and age classes but still considering the suitability of the interviewee. Therefore, this research uses discretionary sampling method.

The aim of the interview is to acquire relevant information from employees in terms of internal communication, multilingualism and employee satisfaction on communication channels. It is important to have achieve answers representatively from the company to achieve accurate information, and therefore acquire answers to the research questions. The questions in interviews are able to gather versatile information from interviewees, but still in a way, which gives certain type of freedom for the interviewee to answer the question. The interview questions do not have a strict order, but are possible to be presented in modified order according to each interview.

The interview guide consists of open-ended questions which are designed to investigate the experiences, perspectives and insights of interviewees. Interview questions aim to achieve comprehensive detailed responses, which can be analyzed to be able to find themes, connections and patterns within the data. The interviewees will remain anonymous in order to achieve truthful answers. Interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewee, and they were deleted after they were transcribed. Interviews were transcribed in standard language, where repetitions and expletives were removed. However, if some of the interviewees used words or other expressions which are recognizable and connectable to the specific person, they were modified to be more general but still maintain the same meaning. This was done to maintain the anonymity of interviewees.

**Table 4.** A table regarding the division of genders in interviews and the duration of each interview.

	Gender	Duration	Department	Language of interview
Interviewee 1	Woman	21 min	A	Finnish
Interviewee 2	Man	23 min	A	Finnish
Interviewee 3	Man	27 min	A	Finnish
Interviewee 4	Woman	35 min	B	Finnish
Interviewee 5	Woman	40 min	B	English
Interviewee 6	Woman	33 min	C	English

To be able to form a comprehensive perception of the sample of this research, all interviewees were asked question related to their position and background in case company. The interviews were conducted to both women and men in different roles from different departments of case company. The age cap of interviewees was 23-30 years, and the duration of interviews was 21-40 minutes. The division of genders in interviews and duration of each interview can be seen form Table 4. Some of the interviewees answered very widely and considered various aspects in their answers, and their answers in the early stages of interview covered some questions partly or almost entirely which were upcoming in the later phases of interview.

## **3.4 Data Analysis**

### **3.4.1 Analysis method**

The analysis method in this research is content analysis, which can be used in all qualitative researches. The purpose of content analysis is to achieve a summary from researched phenomenon in general form. The gathered information can be arranged with the help of content analysis for the conclusion. However, this is also a weakness since the material can be presented only as results, if the researcher is not able to form a conclusion from that. (Elo et al., 2022).

The aspiration of content analysis is to describing documents verbally. In other words, there needs to be clear and verbal description of the phenomenon. The arrangement of the material should be done in a way, which maintains the clarity and compactness of the material but not lose the information it contains. Content analysis can be described as deductive, abductive or inductive. Analysis helps to create clarity and reliability to the conclusions from the research. Content analysis is suitable method for this research, as the purpose is to form a clear picture of the phenomenon which is researched. In this matter, content analysis helps to form a clear and verbal description. The content analysis of this research is deductive, which means that theoretical concepts are already existing concepts, but in rather new environment. In inductive content analysis the theoretical concepts would be created from the material of research. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). The concepts which were used in this research were internal communication, multilingualism, information management, internal communication channels, digital communication channels and employee satisfaction on communication. The data which was gathered from the interviews raised some new concepts, which were not considered in literature review, such as the impact of organizational hierarchy to internal communication and language diversity. The data speaks for itself, and these concepts were included in the findings of this research due to their significant role in the research outcomes.

The gathered data was coded based on the transcribed material from interviews. Different themes emerged from the data (Figure 2.), which enabled identifying various relationships, patterns and insights. The emerged themes and subthemes were used to share the results of interviews into different chapters.

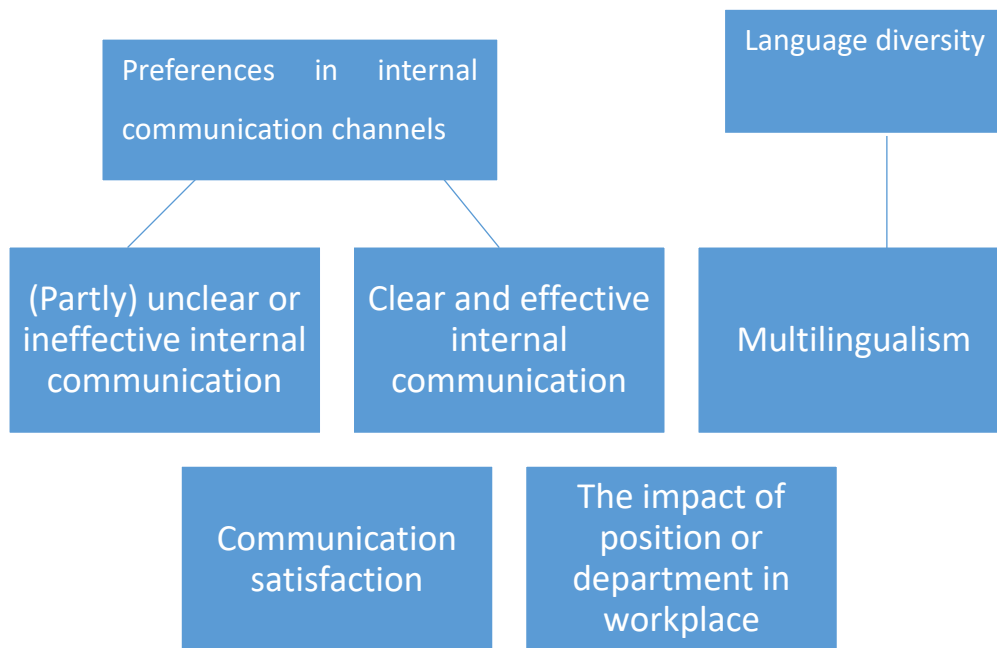


Figure 2. Main themes and subthemes after coding the interviews

### 3.4.2 Reliability and validity

The trustworthiness of a research can be measured with validity and reliability. In qualitative research, validity refers to the goal to ensure that the research the report or description is correct and accurately reflects the situation or phenomenon that is being researched. Reliability of the research relates to the possibility to achieve similar result and findings if the research is repeated by another researcher. However, the use of these in qualitative researches have been criticized as they are originally generated for quantitative researches. The researcher can also utilize construct validity, which means that

the researcher documents how examinees worldview had been classified and described. When it comes to reliability, the material needs to be considered and transcribed correctly. The results should mirror the worldview of examinees. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Every good research should be ethical. An ethical research fulfills Merton's (1957) four norms for scientific ethos. These norms are universalism, altruisticness, systematic critique and publicity of information. In most cases the ethical concerns are related to the information of interviewees, presentation of results or anonymity. Research integrity supports the research ethics. It concludes for example applying ethically sustainable procedures in terms of information acquisition, evaluation procedures and research procedures. Earlier works by other researchers should be considered and give value for their accomplishments. The research should be planned in a way, which follows requirements for scientific knowledge. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). In this research, the interviewees have and will maintain full anonymity.

## **4 How internal communication channels influence the employee satisfaction on internal communication in multilingual organization**

This chapter presents the findings of the empirical study which was conducted as one part of this master's thesis. The chapter provides an overview of characteristics of the sample to achieve deeper understanding of the sample. Also, the role of internal communication in employee satisfaction via communication channels is examined. Furthermore, the grounds for emerging themes and subthemes are scrutinized in detailed manner. The findings are analyzed by coding the gathered data, which enables observed various repetitive themes in interviews. In addition to main themes, some subthemes have also been formed.

### **4.1 Multilingualism and language diversity**

Multilingual organizational environment where employees feel themselves comfortable and are able to use and communicate with corporate language is crucial in terms of good workplace culture. The language strategy of the case company is that the internal communication which applies the whole company,, including all departments in every country, is in English. The country-specific information usually comes in English and in the language, which is used in each country. The role of language skills in the case company is significant. In the Finnish departments, in addition to Finnish, especially good skills on English are required and Swedish skills are seen as an advantage, as Finland is bilingual country and the case company originates from Sweden. However, regardless the language or skills on foreign language, the case company aims to provide an easy access to internal information for every employee. In addition, the case company offers yearly Swedish courses in Finland, as it is usually the language, which needs more practicing or revising.

After the interviews, it appeared that the multilingualism does not have a significant impact any of the interviewees daily work tasks. The reasons for that are **the position** of some of the interviewees, where multilingualism does not have significant role in their work tasks, **good skills in English** or **English as native language**. The main role multilingualism had was related to internal communication, when the communication was coming from organization and was written in English.

Some of the interviewees had more work activities, where the multilingual aspect is shown, but none of these interviewees had encountered any challenges or difficulties related to it. All of the interviewees perceived to have good English-skills, which naturally affects how multilingualism impacts to daily work tasks. Sometimes some internal communication from organization comes in Swedish, upon which interviewees need to take more time to assimilate the information or to use translator to understand the information. However, none of the interviewees considered this as a problem either. Therefore, it can be concluded that communication satisfaction in terms if multilingualism was either neutral or good.

Multiple languages in internal communication practices did not affect significantly to interviewees daily work tasks. According to interviewees, all important internal information for Finnish employees is received in Finnish and in English, to ensure that everyone understands it. Internal news or other information which is received either in English or Swedish is not considered as crucial. Majority of the interviewees start by reading the heading of information, and then decide if they will read the information. The decision is impacted for example by current work situation.

*“From my experience, it doesn’t have significant impact to my work even though internal information is received in multiple languages. Speaking and reading English is very natural and easy for me, and I don’t even pay attention whether the information is received in English or Finnish.” – Interviewee 3*

*“If the internal information is in English, it doesn’t impact my work at all, as I am very comfortable in English. I don’t read all the internal information which is provided in intranet, first I read the heading of the specific article, and then decide if I read it. The language doesn’t impact to the decision. Except if the information is provided only in Swedish or if the heading is in Swedish, then I don’t ever read it. However, this happens quite rarely.” Interviewee 1*

The level of language diversity was considered to be on a good level according to the interviewees. In the case company, language diversity is considered through common corporate language, English, which is widely understood generally. In company’s intranet, internal information is usually published in the main language of the country, where the information is published, and the internal information concerning whole organization is published in English. According to the interviewees, the variation of languages in internal communication does not cause problems in understanding and assimilating information. However, some of the interviewees considered, that what is the level of English-skills among the older employees of case-company.

*“I don’t have any problems assimilating offered internal information even though it would be in another language, for example in English. However, I don’t know how well older employees cope with that, as the English-skills can be very different among older age groups. If some parts of the internal information are not understood, they can probably use translator.” - Interviewee 2*

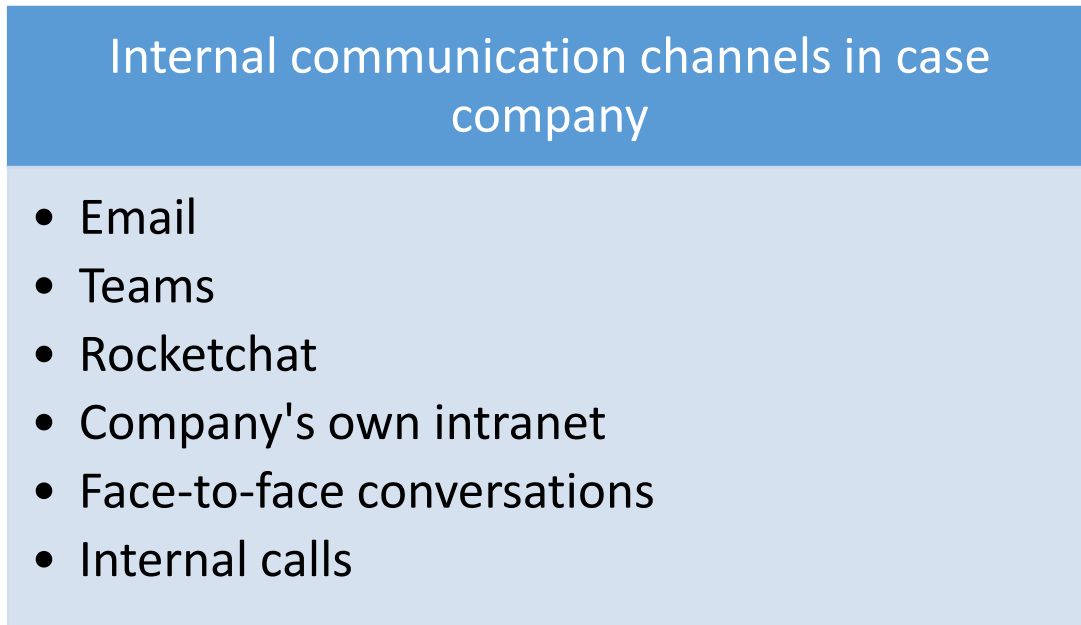
*“From my experience, I haven’t encountered any challenges regarding corporate language. I haven’t heard about any challenges from other employees either. I think that might be because the case company’s employees are young and/or youthful, and they have heard and used especially English throughout their lives, and therefore it is easy to assimilate information in English.” – Interviewee 6*

Other practices where language diversity is considered are regular quartal summaries after each quartal, which are held in own language of each country to ensure the assimilation of information properly. However, this does not consider those employees, whose native language is English as these summaries are held in team meetings company-wide. Case company also offers at least Swedish language courses for employees to be concluded. However, any of the interviewees did not have experience from language courses. Also, the language of intranet is possible to be changed according to the preferences of an individual user. Therefore, based on these interviews and the experiences of interviewees, the language diversity in case company is mainly in a good level, and is supports communication satisfaction.

#### **4.2 Internal communication channels and the level of communication satisfaction**

The case company of this research utilizes many different internal communication channels. Interviewees described the internal communication channels to be email, Teams, RocketChat, company's own intranet, face-to-face conversations and internal calls. The most used channels among the interviewees were email, Teams and face-to-face conversations, and the least used channel was RocketChat. Most of the interviewees reported highest level of communication satisfaction with written internal information, and one interviewee found that internal calls and face-to-face conversations provided the greatest satisfaction on communication and had the best qualities to achieve more internal information.

The preferences of communication channels are affected by each interviewee's role and daily work tasks. RocketChat was described to be pointless and only a few of interviewees used that either to communicate internally or search for internal information. It was experienced to be time consuming to search information and interviewees did not see a clear purpose for RocketChat to be used as everyone uses Teams for instant messaging.



**Figure 3.** Internal communication channels described by the interviewees.

Email as an internal communication channel was preferred due to its features, and the fact that information is received in written form, which allows the recipient to return to the information every time it is needed. Email was also perceived as useful because the user can modify the layout of it according to own preferences, such as creating folders and customizing inbox or other message settings. Also, a majority of internal information comes through email, which was perceived as a good communication channel for that purpose. However, the amount of information some interviewees receive through email is so massive, that sometimes important information might get lost among all the emails. However, according to interviews, email was regardless the most preferred internal communication channel and communication satisfaction related to it was high.

Advantages and disadvantages of email as communication channel	
<p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Used by everyone</li> <li>- Can be modified according to own preferences, e.g. subfolders</li> <li>- All information comes written</li> <li>- Notifications form new emails</li> </ul>	<p><b>Disadvantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sometimes important information can be left unnoted if there is a stream of emails</li> </ul>

**Figure 4.** A summary of advantages and disadvantages of email as an internal communication channel according to the interviews.

Also, Teams was considered as an internal communication channel, which contributes to high levels of communication satisfaction, especially with informal internal information. It was preferred because of the easiness and effortlessness of it. It opens up automatically, and everyone uses it so therefore it enables quick and easy communication. It is also possible to be modified according to various needs and preferences of users, such as group chats or removing read receipts. The notifications were perceived to be both good and bad feature, depending from the interviewee. Some interviewees thought that it is good to have notifications on and to be alerted from new messages, but some of the interviewees considered it also as a negative attribute, as it might interrupt working or create a need to answer immediately to messages. This has been solved by removing notifications and read receipts.

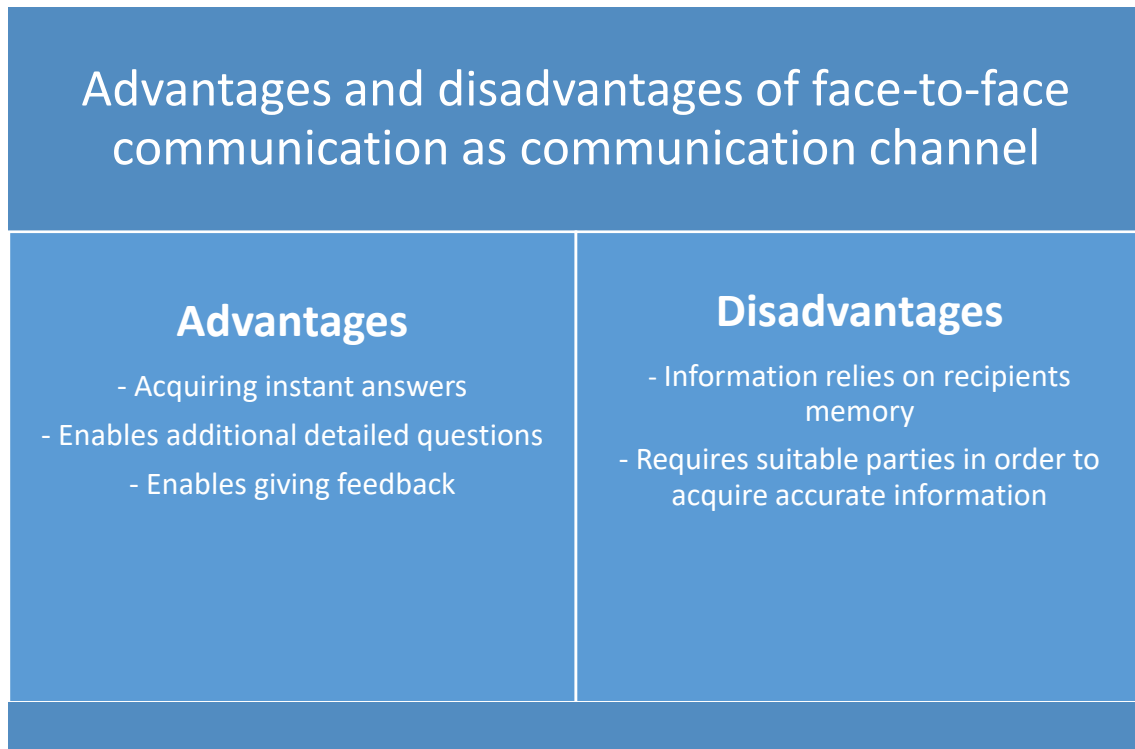
*“I use Teams to communicate information related to work, but I am aware that some people use that also for sharing informal and personal information. Sometimes I also chat with my workmates if the situation allows, but in general, I consider the notifications from Teams as disturbing. I find it very hard to focus on my actual work tasks, if the notifications pop to my computer screen. I answer to messages when I have time and suitable moment. I have taken off the notifications.” – Interviewee 6*

Based on the interviews, using Teams as internal communication channel increased communication satisfaction by contributing for example to clarity, timeliness and accuracy of internal communication as it is used by everyone, enables modifications according to one’s preferences, offers written information and also possibility to give feedback or ask additional information.

Advantages and disadvantages of Teams as communication channel	
<p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Used by everyone</li> <li>- Easy and effortless to use</li> <li>- Has some attributes which allows it to adapt into various preferences and needs</li> <li>- Has notifications from new messages</li> <li>- Logs in the user automatically</li> </ul>	<p><b>Disadvantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not suitable for formal internal information</li> <li>- Does not guarantee immediate answers to users</li> <li>- Might interrupt working</li> </ul>

**Figure 5.** A summary of advantages and disadvantages of Teams as an internal communication channel according to the interviews.

Face-to-face communication was also viewed as an internal communication channel that significantly contributes to high levels of communication satisfaction. It was considered good since face-to-face conversations allow to ask additional clarifying questions and it obtains answers right away. However, the interviewees pointed out, that to be able acquire relevant information, both parties of conversation need to be accurate. Interviewees also detected, that information received through face-to-face conversations relies on their memory, which might cause inadequacy or falsity if the information is not written down, or some parts of it are forgotten. Based on the interviews, communication satisfaction in the case of face-to-face communication is dependent from the individual and the individuals' personal habits to memorize important information.



**Figure 6.** A summary of advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face communication according to the interviews.

Therefore, according to this research, most of the communication channels the case company uses are considered to contribute to high levels of communication satisfaction,

regarding the nature of the intended use. All of the most used channels have more advantages than disadvantages, and therefore the level of communication satisfaction can be considered at least satisfactory or good. Most of the interviewees preferred to receive internal information in written form as it was perceived to be reachable, easy and allowed recalling the information easily, whereas some of the interviewees preferred face-to-face conversations and internal calls for acquiring internal information.

From the findings, it can be noted that preferences related to communication channels are **personal and related to the interviewee's work tasks and role** in the case company. The communication channels are valued for various reasons, for example email for its features and the ability to receive the information in written form and teams for its easiness and accessibility. However, all opinions of communication channels were not homogenous and the answers had some diversity in them. Nevertheless, according to these interviews, **communication channels have an impact to communication satisfaction**. Similar results were found from the study by Vercic and Spoljaric (2020), where they found that specifically existence of rich and moderate media influences to the communication satisfaction. The use of lean media, such as digital newsletters and memos and mail within case company, has low or mixed impact on communication satisfaction and it is related to how they are used. This aligns with the findings of this research, as the internal communication patterns related to guidelines and internal information through email were considered to be ineffective and somewhat unclear. Consequently, these aspects do not enhance the overall level of communication satisfaction. Also, Wuersch et al. (2023) found in their study, that digital internal communication supports socially constructed organization, where communication satisfaction has an important role. Since communication satisfaction encompasses resources for feedback, trust, and transparency within the organization, as well as positively impacts organizational culture, digital communication channels like Teams and email are likely to enhance the socially constructed nature of organizations.

### 4.3 Unclear or ineffective internal communication

Unclear or poor internal communication was defined by interviewees to not have clear patterns or strategy to distribute internal information, employees have inconveniences when trying to search or receive internal information, or information does not reach employees at all. Unclear, ineffective or partly unclear internal communication was clearly the main theme of the interviews. All of the interviewees thought that the internal communication is unclear, ineffective or partly ineffective. The organization-wide internal communication was considered generally to be in good level, and the communication satisfaction was good regarding the internal communication coming from higher levels of organization and management. However, most of the interviewees thought that especially the internal communication inside individual teams is not in sufficient level, and their communication satisfaction was deficient.

Poor internal communication practices and communication channel choices were mentioned to have an impact to personal motivation and to the perception of how important or significant one's contribution is. However, the variation in communication satisfaction could be noted between various teams and roles. Interviewees which were working lower in the organization hierarchy were not pleased with internal communication and their communication satisfaction was not high, whereas interviewees working a bit higher in hierarchy level were pleased with internal communication and their communication satisfaction was good. However, the communication satisfaction was good especially in top-down management, but they were not as pleased to bottom-up communication. Also, horizontal communication between colleagues was considered to be almost unpleasant from time to time. Only few of interviewees reports unpleasant horizontal communication, but it is a strong indicator for low levels of communication satisfaction.

*“Sometimes I feel like bottom-up communication doesn't reach me and some of the mix ups and confusions comes as a surprise for me. I wish that people would*

*report about problems or inconveniences more and would keep me on track better, so I could react faster to problems. Otherwise, I feel satisfied with the level of internal communication.” -Interviewee 5*

*“I think that internal communication is sufficient when it is organization wide, but when it comes to internal communication inside our team, I think it is quite ineffective and complicated. Sometimes I have to work really hard to find or acquire the needed information, and there are not certain practices where I could start searching. It is pretty much everyone’s own responsibility to keep updated and find the relevant information.” -Interviewee 3*

*“I have encountered multiple situations where I have operated incorrectly only because I thought it was the right way to operate, and the new updates have not reached me for some reason. After that I tried to search for the correct way to operate, but I wasn’t able to find it anywhere written, the updated routines had to be relied on others memory which might be varying, and I consider that a bit unsure if everyone’s remembrance are differing from each other.” -Interviewee 2*

Low levels of communication satisfaction might originate for example from personal motivational factors or stress-levels, but according to Fida et al. (2019), the level of emotional intelligence has a significant impact to the environment in workplace. In addition, it affects also communication satisfaction by creating a certain atmosphere. Similar results have been found from the study conducted by Dziuba et al. (2020), where they found that the level of employee satisfaction and therefore also communication satisfaction correlates to performance-rate of organization and the responsibility of employees.

Most of the used communication channels in case company were considered to be good and effective, but interviewees considered some of the channels to be ineffective or unnecessary. Ineffective internal communication was considered to be received mainly through RocketChat, which is an instant messaging tool. Some of the interviewees considered also face-to-face communication and email as ineffective internal communication. Face-to-face communication was considered ineffective because the received information is depending on the memory of the members in conversation. Email was considered sometimes ineffective, because in order to deliver clear information and communicate clearly, the sender needs to have good communication skills.

*“I do not get the point of RocketChat since we have Teams. I think RocketChat is unnecessary and complicated to use as it does not open automatically like Teams, and information is hard to find from there. If I am looking for some specific information, I have to scroll up all the way when it has been posted. For non-urgent organization-wide information it is ok, but the information would reach employees also through other channels.” -Interviewee 4*

*“I prefer face-to-face communication or internal calls as I get the information right away. It is also easier to ask additional questions.”-Interviewee 6*

*“In internal communication I think that Teams, face-to-face conversations and Intranet are the most effective ways to acquire information. Email is ok too, but sometimes important information might be left unnoted as I receive so many email through the day.” -Interviewee 5*

Main challenges in internal communication practices appears to be, that the **internal communication practices inside teams are varying**, and generally they were considered to be **ineffective and they did not have any pattern**. Also, the internal communication

rarely reached each one of the interviewees similarly, and almost every week some confusions can be noted. Most of the interviewees wished to have clearer internal communication patterns and they think that it would make their jobs easier.

Interviewees experienced low levels of communication satisfaction to impact on motivation, efficiency and confidence while working. Therefore, based on the findings of this research it can be established that the experience of internal communication and its effectiveness and communication satisfaction is **very personal and dependent of the role** in the case company. The experience is also impacted by the personal traits of interviewees, for example motivation, the level of initiativeness and personal relationship with other employees.

Significant positive impact between internal communication and employee satisfaction especially on communication was found also from the study of Jacobs et al. (2015). In their study, they found out that managers should focus on communication practices with employees along with employee satisfaction and that effective internal communication leads to satisfied employees and improved performance of company. In addition, communication campaigns for employees as important as corresponding campaigns for customers, as they are found to be linked to improves market and financial performance. Also, study by Vercic (2021) has similar findings, where the significance of understanding the contributing factors to employee satisfaction and internal communication practices are highlighted. This study has similar internal communication satisfaction objects as this research, such as satisfaction with communicating with management, satisfaction with informal communication and satisfaction with communication climate. Internal communication satisfaction was showed to have significant and positive association with employee engagement, employer attractiveness and to perceived organizational support. These results might predict congruences to results of case company, if this study would be developed even further,

#### 4.4 Clear and effective internal communication

Good internal information was defined by interviewees to have clear content, it is easy to access and updated, and the employees can trust the information to be accurate and transparent. Clear and effective internal communication was considered to be received especially from management level, and the communication satisfaction of every interviewee was good. Inside various departments, good internal communication was apparent in bit higher levels in organization hierarchy, which was a minority group in this research. This stems from daily work tasks, which vary from the work tasks in lower hierarchy levels, and include more communication and other actions with other higher levels of organization. Therefore, based on these interviews, **the flow of internal information seems to be more natural in higher hierarchy levels.**

*“I feel like I am well updated from the updates and important information from management. I also think that the channels which are used to share the information are working well for that purpose.” -Interviewee 4*

*“From my experience, the internal communication from the high management levels functions well. I know what channels they use and where to find or search for information. If I don’t find something which I know should come from them, it is easy to approach the higher management levels and ask.” – Interviewee 1*

Clear and effective internal communication was considered to be achieved through several internal communication channels. Different communication channels were described to be **efficient in various occasions and purposes**. Most of the interviewees considered email, intranet of case company and Teams the most effective channels as the information in those platforms is written and therefore it can be rechecked if needed. Some of the interviewees experienced that written information is easier to be assimilated. However, some interviewees did not agree, and experienced for example email as slightly inefficient due to high amount of received emails, which might cause forgetfulness and confusion.

According to these interviews, **the working years in the case company increases the quality of internal communication**. This is due to the structure of organization, where various departments which are operating amidst different functions might have same customers, but for different purposes. The longer one has worked in case company, the more contact they achieve. Therefore, the barrier to acquire information internally will get lower, and it is easier to evaluate where the right information can be acquired from. It emerged from the interviews, that this is difficult to teach to anyone, but it is learned through the years of work and contacts in case company.

Based on the findings of these interviews, the internal communication and communication satisfaction is higher in higher levels of hierarchy and internal communication practices have positive relation to communication satisfaction. However, the flow of information to lower levels of hierarchy is not sufficient, or alternatively either the case company or individual departments are lacking proper internal communication practices. This is aligned with the results of study conducted by Carrière and Bourque (2008) where they found significant evidence, which supports the positive relationship between internal communication practices and communication satisfaction. The most significant common finding between this research and research by Carrière and Bourque (2008) are the relationship between communication satisfaction and internal communication practices, which in turn impact to general job satisfaction.

#### **4.5 The impact of position or department in workplace**

According to the interviews, the position in workplace or department the individual is working has a significant impact to the experience of internal communication and the level of communication satisfaction. The interviews revealed that in many situations, internal communication is experienced to be inefficient, depending on the used communication channel or general practices inside department. The interviewees were from three different department from the case company, and it is evident, that the internal

communication practices are different. One department stood out with clearly inefficient internal communication and practices. Interviewees from this department perceived the internal communication to be inefficient and have lack of clear internal communication practices, especially in top-down communication. Also, bottom-up communication was mentioned to be somewhat inefficient. The most used channels for internal communication in this department were face-to-face conversations and email. Interviewees were quite satisfied to the choice of channels, but the internal communication practices, such as updating and sharing guidelines and top-down internal communication received plenty of feedback.

*“From my experience, I feel like some of the important internal information regarding our department is only told to few people, and then the information might spread to everyone, or some employees might not get the information at all. If the internal information spreads through face-to-face communication, the content of information changes very often. Some parts of it might be forgotten and not told forward, and some parts are memorized in incorrect ways. To make everyone’s job easier, I hope that we would have more distinct practices when it comes to internal communication.” -Interviewee 1*

*“I feel that the internal information isn’t always easily accessible and I need to make an effort to find the information I need, for example the correct and updated guidelines, and it takes a lot of time from my actual work. Also, if I’m searching for guidelines, I usually find many different guideline-files regarding the same activity, and I can’t be sure which one is the correct and updated one. This increases my insecurity about the work task I am about to do, since I can’t be sure I’m following correct guidelines.” -Interviewee 2*

*“I feel that I am up to date and aware where all internal information is located, and if I don’t find it or it doesn’t exist, I know where to start investigation. I am aware that I am updated with internal information partly because I have for*

*example created the folders and guidelines for other members of our departments. Also, part of my job is to be updated with internal information and I need to be able to utilize it in my own work tasks. My position in case company ensures the flow in internal information for me in daily basis.” – Interviewee 5*

The interviewees from other departments had different experiences. They felt that internal communication works well and efficiently contributes to a sense of cohesion and teamwork across the case company. Interviewees presented examples of clear communication channels and opportunities for face-to-face-conversations. Overall, they experienced their communication satisfaction to be on a high level, and they appreciated the internal communication practices of case company.

*“I have been working in few different departments in the case company, and my experience is that internal communication has worked well. However, I am aware that everyone in the case company isn’t happy with it. I haven’t worked in these departments where dissatisfaction occurs, so I don’t have personal experience of that.” -Interviewee 6*

*“My experience is that internal communication and practices related to it functions well. I have received internal information in efficient manner, and it enhances teamwork and social cohesion of case company.” -Interviewee 5*

Therefore, the varying experiences of internal communication practices and channels between different departments is evident. Interviewees from departments with **robust and efficient internal communication practices have reported their communication satisfaction to be on a good level**, whereas interviewees from departments with less efficient internal communication practices have reported that their level of communication satisfaction leaves room for improvements.

## 4.6 Summary of findings

The interviews revealed many relevant findings related to the internal communication practices and communication channels of case company, communication satisfaction of interviewees and the impact of multilingualism of case company. Internal communication practices were described to be rather varying, depending from the department and role of the interviewee. Some of the interviewees were satisfied, and some felt not as satisfied, as they felt that internal communication in case company is sometimes inefficient and complicated.

Case company uses various range of internal communication channels, which are mainly digital. Communication channels were mainly experienced as good, and the ability to modify some of them according to preferences and needs increased communication satisfaction. Regarding communication satisfaction, most of the interviewees expressed dissatisfaction at least towards some practices.

Dissatisfaction towards internal communication practices and low communication satisfaction did not distribute evenly among the interviewees, the interviewees from one specific department had the lowest levels of communication satisfaction and experiences from ineffective internal communication. Lastly, the impact of multilingualism within the company did not have significant impact to daily work tasks among the interviewees because the level of English skills was high among interviewees.

**Table 5.** A summary of main findings.

Area	Findings
Internal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="667 1693 1359 1794">- Has remarkable variation within case company according to the department</li> <li data-bbox="667 1798 1359 1919">- Is impacted by the role and position in case company</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Top-down communication from management was considered to be efficient.</li> </ul>
Communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multiple internal communication channels</li> <li>- Most of them are considered as effective</li> <li>- Many of the channels can be modified according to the preferences and needs of user</li> <li>- Use of specific channel varies according to the individual work tasks</li> </ul>
Employee satisfaction on communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has remarkable variation according to the department in case company</li> <li>- Variates according to the communication channel</li> <li>- Low levels of communication satisfaction have an impact to motivation, confidence and efficiency.</li> <li>- Low satisfaction impacts to personal motivation towards job</li> </ul>

## 5 Conclusions

The final chapter presents the summary of this study, highlights the key findings and answers to the aim and sub-research questions of the study. In addition, the theoretical contributions and managerial implications are discussed. In the end, the limitations of this study are acknowledged and suggestions for further research are presented.

### 5.1 Summary and key findings

In this research, the main aim was to examine *How internal communication channels influence the employee satisfaction on internal communication in multilingual organization*. Based on the findings from interviews, internal communication channels have an impact to employee satisfaction on internal communication. Internal communication channels can make daily work tasks easier or alternatively delay and create challenges on daily work tasks. The role of choosing accurate communication channels for each situation is evident, but also personal preferences and motivations are critical when communication satisfaction is examined. Personal preferences have an influence to what channels are preferred in receiving internal information. The most preferred channels were mainly digital channels, which enables information to be received in written form, such as email, Team or Intranet. In addition, face-to-face conversations were preferred, as they enable asking additional questions or giving feedback.

However, there were clear differences in communication satisfaction between different departments of case company, which indicates to differing internal communication practices. Therefore, communication satisfaction in various department is also dependent from personal preferences, and how well these attributes are matching to specific internal communication practices. Communication satisfaction and internal communication channels are distinctly related to the role in the case company, and various channels are used differently in various hierarchy levels. When it comes to internal communication from management, the communication satisfaction was generally very high despite the

role in the case company, and the chosen communication channels were clearly successful. According to the findings, digital channels are effective in top-down communication from management of case company. Digital channels are considered as efficient and to have high clarity.

Sub questions of this research were *“What is the role of internal communication in employee satisfaction?”*, *“What is the impact of communication channels in internal communication satisfaction?”* and *“How internal communication channels influence employee satisfaction on international communication in a multilingual organization in finance sector?”* Based on the interviews, it can be noted that internal communication generally has a massive role in employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction includes multiple aspects, such as engagement and retention of employees, which are crucial in terms of the performance and success of organization. Therefore, based on the findings, communication channels should be chosen considering the preferences of employees and feasibility of them for the specific organization.

Multilingualism of organization did not have specific impact to the communication satisfaction, due to language skills, native language and internal communication practices, which clearly ensure the understanding of important internal information. In finance sector, it is crucial that all regulations and rules are understood extremely well in order to guarantee the success of organization, meet legal requirements, manage risks, protect customers and maintain the competitive position. Based on the findings of this research, communication channels were chosen well to provide internal information considering the multilingual environment on the case company. The end result of successful aspects of multilingualism might also originate from the successful language and communication strategy of case company. Based on the findings, it is evident that the case company has managed to create a strategy, which considers all employees and offers alternative ways for internal communication channels for those situations when it is needed.

## 5.2 Theoretical contributions

The field of internal communication, employee satisfaction on communication, multilingualism and communication channels and their reciprocal impacts have been examined widely mostly how various factors impact to employee satisfaction on communication, for example how internal communication channels influence to employee's satisfaction on internal communication and internal communication channels. However, no previous researches have been found that examines the impact of internal communication channels on employee satisfaction in multilingual organizations within Finland's finance sector. There are previous studies related to some or multiple topics of this research considering other fields of business (Carrière and Bourque, 2008; Dziuba et al, 2020), finance or banking sector in other country (Fida et al, 2019) or the field of business or country was not targeted to any specific group (Kumari, 2011; Vercic & Spoljaric, 2020; Kovaite et al., 2020; Vercic, 2011; Jacobs et al., 2016). This study brings more content to internal communication channels in multilingual environment. Insights and observations made from the interviews furthers emphasizing the role of internal communication channels in terms of communication satisfaction in the context of financial sector in Finland.

The most significant new insight from this study is how the role of employee or placing in the hierarchy of organization influences the flow of information and communication satisfaction. This did not come up in previous studies which were found, but can be regarded as a significant factor in communication satisfaction and one of the key factors when the functionality of internal communication channels is examined. Other observations from this study were in line with the prior studies, such as internal communication channels have an impact to communication satisfaction of employees.

Other important insight from this study is that multilingualism of organization does not always have an impact to internal communication channels and communication satisfaction. Naturally, this is dependent from the used corporate language. Regardless, the English language skills seem to be very good, as multilingualism of case company did not

bring challenges in terms of internal communication in English. This might originate also from language and communication strategy of case company.

In addition to the new insights of this research, the other findings are supported by previous researches which were found. The most preferred internal communication channels in this research were email, face-to-face conversations and Teams. These as internal communication channels have been mentioned in the study by Erjavec et al. (2018) to improve communication satisfaction especially in top-down information sharing. Especially email and face-to-face conversations were found particularly to increase communication satisfaction, but also instant messaging was mentioned. The use of more traditional digital internal communication channels is supported also in the study of Friedl and Vercic (2011), where employees prefer for example email and intranet over social media adoption in internal communication. Internal communication satisfaction has been found to impact attitudes towards workplace in the study of Nikolic et al. (2013). This supports the findings of this study regarding the low personal motivations due to unclear internal communication practices.

The results of this research are also supported by Ruck & Welch (2012), who argued that internal communication satisfaction and employee engagement are influenced by internal communication in organizations, and also communication within teams. In their study, the most preferred internal communication channel were face-to-face conversations, emails and online newsletters, which supports the findings related to most preferred communication channels in terms of communication satisfaction in this research. Vercic and Vokic (2017) cited Ruck & Trainor (2012), who found that the role of internal communication in organizations is significant, especially in terms of employee engagement. Employee engagement indicated to high levels of employee satisfaction, and therefore the results are in line with the results of this research. Furthermore, according to Vercic & Vokic (2017), the most relevant internal communication elements are possibility for feedback, informal communication and communication during meetings in terms of internal communication satisfaction. These findings strengthen the findings

from this research from their part. Lee (2023) in turn established that use of information and communication technology was related to high levels of internal communication satisfaction, research mentioned especially email and instant messaging.

### **5.3 Managerial implications**

The findings of this study possess value for the case company about the employee satisfaction on communication and the satisfaction to their communication channels, and how the communication channels impact to employee satisfaction on communication. This research provides worthy insights for organizations, and enables them to adapt their internal communication practices and internal communication channels according to recommendations. By emphasizing the factors detailed in the study, case company can enhance their employee's satisfaction on communication and the use of communication channels.

While some departments reported robust and efficient communication practices, others indicated areas for improvement or suggested tailored approaches to meet their communication requirements in more superior way. Recognizing and addressing these differences can help cultivate a more cohesive and inclusive communication culture across the organization and therefore enhance the role of internal communication and communication channels. Internal communication practices that do not enhance communication satisfaction will not contribute to general employee satisfaction or engagement of employees. Thus, case company and managers should focus on providing timely information which is accurate. In order to achieve that, it requires from manager understanding of communication practices and the preferences of employees and the amount and quality of information which is needed by employees for them to be able to perform well in their job.

Scrutinizing used communication practices is fundamental when communication satisfaction is pursued. Scrutinizing could be done for example by conducting regular audits

related to internal communication practices and channels, where current practices and communication channels are reviewed in order to be able to identify the strengths and areas, which needs improvement. This would help the case company to align better with the preferences of employees and needs of each department as they might be varying and specific according to department's work tasks. Audits can be done for example by conducting interviews or surveys. Also, the case company of this research can provide and arrange training sessions for both managers and employees. The goal of training sessions is to provide accurate information and communication techniques, including the use of various communication tools which are used in case company. This helps to further clear and efficient internal communication, as the role of it is significant. Training sessions can include for example various workshops related to different communication themes.

Another recommendation which would bring more additional value for the case company, is developing a feedback system especially for internal communication within departments, as that is where most of the communicational challenges are centered. Feedback system would allow constant improvement based on the input of employees. Employees can share their experiences and suggestions for improvements, as they are experts in their own job. In this way, the level of internal communication satisfaction could be enhanced especially in the departments, where it is low, and also the possible adjustments related to multilingualism could be considered in a way, which is the most convenient for employees.

Language and communication strategy of case company is working well according to the interviewees. Despite the efforts the case company does to maintain balanced and well-functioning multilingual organization, varying levels of language skills can form challenges in internal communication and therefore in internal communication satisfaction. To avoid these situations, the case company needs to monitor possible challenges for example by implementing supportive activities, such as language workshops more frequently regarding English in addition to Swedish-courses.

## **5.4 Limitations and suggestions for further studies**

This research has multiple limitations, which needs to be acknowledged. Firstly, the material for this research was gathered from one case company, and included six interviews. The number of interviews is rather small, even to be from one company, and therefore the results are prone to interviewees' personal motivations and attitudes. The results cannot necessarily be generalized to other organizations or other fields of businesses. Additionally, it is important to note, that this research was carried out within limited geographical context focusing only to the case company's office in Finland. Therefore, the findings originated from this study might not be relevant in other locations of case company's offices. In addition, it is consequential to recognize that the selection of interviewees has a major influence to the findings of this study.

Three of six interviewees were from one department, which seemed to have unclear internal communication practices according to interviewees. This caused the tone of research to be slightly negative in terms of internal communication satisfaction. It is important to note, that other interviewees from other departments could have different experiences, perspectives and attitudes. Therefore, a suggestion for further research is the same as in this research, but with larger scale of interviewees and more diverse sample. Also, a research could be done in every department to achieve extremely explicit information. By conducting this kind of research, it would be easier to note the departments which employees have lower levels on internal communication satisfaction, and the problems could be tamed efficiently and unnecessary actions could be avoided. If this would be taken even further, similar studies could be conducted also in offices in other locations to be able to gather information throughout the whole organization.

When it comes implementing interviews, some limitations were encountered. The selection of interviewees turned out to be unfavorable in the sense of achieving comprehensive answers related to research topic. Some of the interviewees answered quite

shortly, and needed more guidance and additional questions to achieve enough information for this research. This made the maintaining the personality and personal aspect of interviewees more challenging, as it gives an opportunity to personal aspects of interviewer to impact to the guiding questions of tone of them.

Diversity between the engagement of interviewees towards the interview might have impacted to the depth of gathered material and insights. Some of the interviewees were more hesitant to express experiences and opinions, which created a need for additional guiding questions to achieve enough material. In addition, the possible bias towards the interview might have impacted the answers by interviewees giving socially desirable answers or simply holding certain information. To be able to avoid these limitations in possible studies in the future, the interviewees could be chosen more carefully and choose employees, which have more in-depth information and are able to express themselves in clear and assertive manner. In addition, more structured interview guide and better preparation from interviewer furthers to achieving prompt answers and consistent interviews.

The topic of this research is prone to changing situations, such as changes in management, changes in sector specific regulations and changes in the personnel of case company, and therefore the research would be challenging to repeat in the future. The results of the study are prone to various factors, including personal chemistry between the depart managers and employees and possible differences on preferences on internal communication practices and how does chosen practices impact to every employee's daily work tasks. This creates the possibility for the findings of this study to become outdated. In the future, this can be solved by conducting more longitudinal researches.

Considering these variables, it would be beneficial for future research to track changes related to these topics in a longer period of time. This would help to understand how changes in regulations, management and employees' impact to internal communication and internal communication satisfaction. Also, expanding the topic to other organization

which are operating also in the finance sector, would offer more insights and might enable the generalization of the results, when the sufficient amount of material has been gathered. Nowadays when technology has a remarkable role in everyone's daily lives, it could offer an interesting opportunity to examine solely the impact of technology to internal communication and internal communication satisfaction.

The language and communication strategy of case company could be researched even further to gain a deeper understanding to differing levels of internal communication satisfaction between various departments. The strategy was not examined in this research, which can be considered as limitation as it could offer more explanations for the findings of this study. Future research could consider specific factors or parts of language and communication strategy, such as the reasoning behind the chosen corporate language, what are case company's policies to conduct multilingual communication and more precisely what are their methods to distribute internal information across various hierarchy levels of case company. Also, a deeper dive into each department's ways to conduct these strategies would bring more additional value when differing levels of internal communication satisfaction are examined.

However, every organization is different and therefore there is not any universal guideline regarding internal communication or employee satisfaction. For this reason, it is important for every organization to examine and scrutinize the functionality of their own internal communication habits and employee satisfaction. In addition, the other factors which have an impact to the result of this research is the location of the case company, the chosen theory, industry, sample size of the interviews and the selection of interviewees. This research did not consider cross-cultural dynamics at all and what is their possible impact to the internal communication satisfaction, which could be researched in the future. This would bring new aspects in terms of diversity when the results of this research are examined.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Interview guide

1. General background from the interviewee
  - a. Name
  - b. Position
  - c. Experience
2. Can you tell me about your team?
3. What do you think is good or bad internal communication? What are their impacts?
4. What is your experience with internal communication and how does it impact to your job?
5. What internal communication channels are used in the organization you work at?
6. What are the internal communication channels you use most often in your daily work tasks? What attributes makes these channels preferred or effective for you? How do they impact to your satisfaction on communication?
7. Are you satisfied with overall effectiveness and quality of internal communication in your organization? If not, what are the challenges you have encountered? What channels or practices have impact to your satisfaction on internal communication?
8. From your experience, what are most and least efficient communication channels in your organization?
9. What is the role of digital communication channels in your communication practices?
10. From your experience, how well do internal communication channels adapt to diverse preferences and needs of employees?
11. How does multilingualism appear in your daily work tasks?
12. From your experience, how does presence of multiple organizational languages impact to internal communication and its effectiveness?

13. How do you usually receive important information from management or colleagues? What channels do you find especially useful for that?
14. Do you feel well-informed about important changes, updates or decisions of your organization?
15. From your experience, what are the successful internal communication practices that have addressed language diversity and supported employee satisfaction on communication?
16. Do you think that there are some limitations in your organization's current internal communication practices that might prevent effective communication, especially from the multilingual perspective?

## **Appendix 2. Interview guide in Finnish**

1. Yleistä taustatietoa haastateltavasta
  - a. Nimi
  - b. Asema/työnimike
  - c. Kokemus
2. Voitko kertoa omasta tiimistäsi, jossa työskentelet?
3. Mikä on mielestäsi hyvää tai huonoa sisäistä viestintää? Mitkä ovat sen vaikutukset?
4. Mikä on oma kokemuksesi sisäisestä viestinnästä ja miten se vaikuttaa omiin työtehtäviisi?
5. Mitä sisäisen viestinnän kanavia on käytössä työpaikallasi?
6. Mitä sisäisen viestinnän kanavia käytät useimmiten päivittäisissä työtehtävissäsi? Mitkä ominaisuudet tekevät näistä ensisijaisia tai tehokkaita? Miten ne vaikuttavat sinun viestintätyytyväisyyteesi?
7. Oletko tyytyväinen kokonaisvaltaiseen sisäisen viestinnän tehokkuuteen ja laatuun yrityksessä, jossa työskentelet? Jos et, mitä haasteita olet kohdannut? Mitkä kommunikaatiokanavat tai sisäisen viestinnän käytännöt ovat vaikuttaneet tyytyväisyyteesi sisäisen viestinnän suhteen?

8. Oman kokemuksesi perusteella, mitkä ovat tehokkaimmat ja tehottomimmat kommunikaatiokanavat yrityksessä, jossa työskentelet?
9. Oman kokemuksesi perusteella, ovatko digitaaliset kommunikaatiokanavat merkityksellisiä omissa viestintä käytännöissäsi?
10. Oman kokemuksesi perusteella, Kuinka hyvin kommunikaatiokanavat mukautuvat työntekijöiden erilaisiin tarpeisiin ja mieltymyksiin?
11. Miten yrityksen monikielisyys näkyy päivittäisissä työtehtävissäsi?
12. Oman kokemuksesi perusteella, miten useat yrityksessä käytettävät kielet vaikuttavat sisäiseen viestintään ja sen tehokkuuteen?
13. Miten yleensä vastaanotat tärkeää informaatiota johdolta tai vaihtoehtoisesti kollegoilta? Mitkä kommunikaatiokanavat ovat mielestäsi hyviä siihen?
14. Koetko olevasi ajan tasalla tärkeistä muutoksista, päivityksistä ja päätöksistä liittyen yritykseen, jossa työskentelet?
15. Oman kokemuksesi perusteella, mitkä kommunikaatiokanavat tai sisäisen viestinnän käytännöt onnistuneesti huomioivat kielten monimuotoisuuden ja tukeneet työntekijöiden tyytyväisyyttä sisäisen viestinnän suhteen?
16. Koetko, että yrityksen nykyisissä sisäisen viestinnän käytännöissä on rajoituksia, jotka saattavat estää tehokkaan sisäisen viestinnän, erityisesti monikielisyyden näkökulmasta?