Rifat Jahan

Exploring the Role of Internal Communication in Managing Employees' Emotions During Digital Strategy Implementation in the Banking Sector in Bangladesh

[Subject]

School of Management
Master's thesis in Strategic Business Development

Vaasa 2025

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA
School of Management
Author: Rifat Jahan
Title of the thesis: Exploring the Role of Internal Communication in Managing Employees' Emotions During Digital Strategy Implementation in the Banking Sector in Bangladesh: [Subject]
Degree: Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration
Degree Programme: Master's Degree in Strategic Business Development
Supervisor: Aušrinė Šilenskytė
Year: 2025 **Pages: 87**

ABSTRACT:

The adoption of digital strategy is now one of the strategic goals in most of the organizations, including the banking sector in developing countries. The digital strategy implementation process is not easy for all companies. The success depends on many aspects. Among them, employees' emotions are very important and influence the process of digital strategy implementation digital. Moreover, emotional preparedness of frontline employees depends on how well they are informed or communicated with during digital strategy execution.

This study investigates the significant role of internal communication during digital strategy implementation in the banking sector in Bangladesh. This study applies a qualitative case study methodology. The case company is a private commercial bank, and it focuses mainly on two departments, which have recently implemented significant digital strategies.

For data collection, this study conducted semi-structured interviews where the participants were managers and their team members. It was also supported by secondary data online, public resources, and the company's official website. The analysis integrated thematic analysis and content analysis through an abductive approach. Three main themes were developed by thematic analysis, which focused on how transparent communication, training sessions, and leadership communication generated reliability and confidence of employees in digital strategy implementation process.

The results show that supportive, clear, rewarding, and reciprocating internal communication assists workers in shifting their emotions from anxiety to engagement. This study provides useful insights on addressing employee emotions in the process of digital strategy implementation and specific recommendations for the banking sector in hierarchical settings like Bangladesh.

KEYWORDS: Digital strategy, digital strategy implementation, internal communication, employees' emotions, banking sector, Bangladesh.

Contents

Pictures

No pictures

Figures

Tables

Abbreviations

RBV= Research Based View
DT= Digital Transformation
IC= Internal Communication
UAT= User Access Test

1 Introduction

The advent and adoption of digital technology appear to be natural, especially in the financial sector. Financial companies are contributing to substantial advances in tech operations. This offers them an identifiable image over opponents to improve customer service (Al Afaishat et al., 2024, p. 201). Past study results hint that the viability of these tactics necessarily relies on human resources. If employees frequently feel a broad spectrum of emotions, such as fatigue, refusal, or passion, it indicates that the new practices are conflicting with routine standards. In this case, effective interpersonal interaction is the key, and without this, any kind of change is hardly possible (Atikur Rahaman et al., 2023, p. 1). According to (Rani & Danu, n.d.), digital abilities influence the experts' attitudes and the implementation of ICT. Thus, the preparedness of the workforce to acclimate to the new strategic mechanisms is determined by the combination of workplace collaboration and digital knowledge. This study therefore examines how internal communication regulates employees' reactions during digital strategy implementation—a problem in the financial sector, like banking.

The digital strategy can be used like an umbrella for an organization, as it is a broad concept (Li, 2023, p. 3). The technological evolution of an organization is defined by its digital strategy (Li, 2023, p. 3). Therefore, digital strategy is the lengthy business plan by which any organization takes advantage of modern technological resources (Li, 2023, p. 3). It helps to develop or create new business approaches (Li, 2023, p. 8). Digital strategy not only advances the IT division but also encourages new businesses (Li, 2023, p. 8).

In addition, the planning and establishment of digital strategy is very important to achieve desired outcomes (Correani et al., 2020, p. 38). Sometimes the digital strategy execution process can be unsuccessful because of poor relationship between the plan and the ultimate action (Correani et al., 2020, p. 38). Research shows that almost 66% to 84% of technological initiatives struggle due to a gap between strategy formation and implementation (Correani et al., 2020, p. 38).

Successful digital strategy implementation depends on artificial intelligence, a clear goal, internal and external platforms, adequate staff, an adaptable process, and finally converted solutions (Correani et al., 2020, pp. 46–51). The Vodafone case shows that it improved its customers' satisfaction by adopting digital tools and techniques (Correani et al., 2020, pp. 46–51). The creation and execution of digital tactic is a process through which measurable actions are articulated to attain the overall organization's strategic targets (Correani et al., 2020, pp. 46–51).

During digital strategy implementation, various emotions arise among employees; however, it depends on how well they accept the change and how it affects their comforts and goals (Huy, 2002, pp. 31–33). Unexpected changes promote negative reactions, whereas clear direction fosters enthusiastic emotions (Huy, 2002, pp. 31–33). There are four basic types of emotions: pleasant/high-energy, pleasant/low-energy, unpleasant/high-energy, and unpleasant/low-energy (Huy, 2002, pp. 31–33). To handle these emotions, internal communication is very important.

Internal communication is not just about message communication; it is an important process through which employees become more efficient and engaged (Welch & Jackson, 2007, p. 178). IC does not consider an employee as an individual; it considers all employees from top management to frontline employees, and in this way communication is done in a systematic way (Welch & Jackson, 2007, p. 178). Effective IC allows employees to integrate with their work, and it also gives them the knowledge about development (Welch & Jackson, 2007, p. 178).

1.1 Statement of the research problem

Every sector is looking for ways to implement digital strategies to drive business expansion. The financial service sector is no exception. As a modern enterprise, they can redefine their organizational infrastructure, operational method, and product development through the introduction of a digital strategy (Verhoef et al., 2021, pp. 890–891). Evaluating the results of their business efforts has implications for the financial service

industry (Bueno et al., 2024, p. 1). Additionally, financial service providers like banks are also trying to adopt and introduce new strategies like electronic payment systems, online financial statements, mobile payment systems, electronic authentication of documents for transactions, and online servers in order to increase client fulfillment (Kitsios et al., 2021, pp. 1–2). However, people working in these organizations can react emotionally because of these drastic modifications.

Past studies show that employees frequently suffer from uncertainty and struggle during the development of a new digital strategy; normally it happens when the transition-related message is inconsistent or upward-oriented (Kutlutürk Yıkılmaz et al., 2024, pp. 4–5; Begum et al., 2025, p. 441). Moreover, effectiveness also depends on employees' comprehending capacity to the newly implemented strategy.

Consequently, employees may support the digital initiatives, or they may become resistant to change (Huy, 2002, pp. 34–35). How financial sectors like banking can deal with these emotional states through internal interactions and managerial behavior has not been studied much. Studies also show that top-level managers and supervisors serve a crucial function to govern the reactions of workers during the time of change (Huy, 2002, pp. 31–69; Vuori & Huy, 2016, pp. 9–51). But these considerations are seldom thought of in the context of digital strategic change.

Furthermore, very often the success of change relies on how employees feel about changes, and here comes the role of internal communication, as it is linked with employee engagement, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty (Nguyen & Ha, 2023, p. 8). Research anticipates that symmetrical communication and employee satisfaction are correlated with each other (Men, 2014, p. 267).

In addition, it is predictable that digital business strategy will replace the traditional business approach (Bharadwaj et al., 2013, p. 473). One of the reasons is that many industries now depend on information as well as communication (Bharadwaj et al., 2013). There have been many studies on digital strategy (D'Cruz et al., 2015, pp. 127–136; Ross et al., 2018, pp. 127–136; Van Zeebroeck et al., 2023, pp. 3183–3197). However, how

internal communication regulates employees' sentiments during the establishment of a digital strategy is often overlooked (Correani et al., 2020, pp. 37-56; Hrebiniak, 2006, pp. 12–31; Ritala et al., 2021).

Research regarding language and global teams further states that communication helps to regulate employee emotions and power dynamics where language also matters (Hinds et al., 2014, p. 547). Therefore, it is necessary to know how internal relationships help in managing employees' emotions during the digital change. However, fewer studies have discussed the significance of internal communication in transforming employees' negative thoughts into constructive reactions during digital strategy utilization.

This imbalance is crucial in the financial industry. Handling staff sentiment is fundamental in the banking sector, as digital change is accelerating rapidly in this industry. Therefore, employee cooperation and handling employee emotions through internal relationship building are important. Research indicates that clear communication can work in improving satisfaction and confidence among workers (Men, 2014, pp. 267–271; Yue et al., 2021, pp. 171–175). However, how internal communication can work as an instrument for navigating the feelings of workers during the digital strategy implementation in the banking sector has not received adequate focus.

Transparent and balanced internal interaction can lower personal frustration and disruptive attitudes due to the lack of strategic communication (Yue et al., 2024; Kim & Lee, 2021). Vuori and Huy (2016) showed how leaders were incapable of recognizing fear and shared emotions during digital innovation, which resulted in Nokia's failure in the smartphone battle (Vuori & Huy, 2016). However, emotional imbalance was one of the reasons besides other issues (Vuori & Huy, 2016). In these circumstances, strategic leadership along with good internal connection may facilitate the successful execution of digital strategies and innovation.

Digital literacy is important for digital outcomes during digital transformation (Cetindamar Kozanoglu & Abedin, 2021, p. 1650). It is also necessary to know the workers' ability to adopt new changes. Resistance can be a challenge here. Employees can support or disagree with a shift to technology even if they believe the plan is logical (Klein et al., 2024). Employee resistance is a multidimensional reaction, and it can either foster or impede digital change (Cieslak & Valor, 2025). Although previous documentation confirms the link between clear IC with loyalty and association, there is little research on it during technological strategy initiation (Lee et al., 2022; Thelen & Men, 2023). Together, all these observations highlight the research problem.

1.2 Research Gap

Digital reformation from the mechanical and strategic ground has been studied widely; however, the psychological parts of digital strategy implementation are not examined (Bharadwaj et al., 2013, pp. 471-482; Kringelum et al., 2025, pp. 3-10). It is proven by previous studies that internal communication improves workers' productivity as well as loyalty (Welch & Jackson, 2007). Earlier studies have called for future research that links internal communication and employees' emotions (Yue et al., 2021). Previous research also suggested future investigation regarding different aspects of the internal interaction system and its implications for employees (Tkalac Verčič & Men, 2023, p. 7). The empirical data regarding highly regulated settings like banking and how their employees' emotions work during digital process implementation is still limited.

Digital literacy is a combination of five competencies, and it influences how employees use digital tools (Cetindamar Kozanoglu & Abedin, 2021, pp. 1660–1661). How digital literacy can be an emotional support system remains underexplored. Furthermore, previous research also shows that internal communication and the emotional intelligence of leaders may decrease technostress by creating a better emotional response when any digital change occurs (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 400–403). However, there is still a gap in the contexts of banks and digital strategy implementation in the above perspectives.

Finally, there are only a very few studies that focus on the Bangladeshi banking sector, where employees often face hierarchical supremacy and where group needs are seen as more important than individual needs (Atikur Rahaman et al., 2023, p. 1). Earlier research also showed that if the internal and external communication is not linked properly, the employees may not feel included (Harkness, 2000, pp. 68–69). Many of the papers in the Bangladeshi context have mainly focused on the digital-banking related issues, but how the internal communication process can support employees' emotions in coping with digital techniques has not been researched before. This gap highlights the need for a study that investigates meticulously how communication within an organization can influence employees' emotions throughout the time of digital strategies deployment.

1.3 Research question and objective

Investigating the benefits of internal interaction is the aim of this thesis. Especially how internal communication manages employees' behavioural oversight while adopting technology-based approaches is the aim of this paper. Recent research has shown that staff devotion is attached to communication (Sinitsyna et al., 2024). However, the psychological elements that happen due to initiating digital tactics in the banking sector and how these elements can be addressed through internal communication have been often ignored. The mental components, such as technological anxiety, job insecurity, and positive feelings like triumph and enthusiasm, have also been unexplored. This thesis aims at taking all these dimensions into account. The primary research question is:

How can internal communication play a crucial role in regulating employees' emotions while embracing digital strategy?

This research is guided by the following sub-objectives:

1. To better understand the value of internal communication in the process of digital transformation and how it facilitates the execution of digital strategy in financial enterprises.

2. To clarify how internal communication works as a tool to navigate employees' both positive and negative emotional responses, especially in the context of digital transformation in the banking sector.
3. To find out which channels of communication help in boosting favourable feelings like trust, determination, and satisfaction, and which ways of interaction help in minimizing adverse reactions, such as nervousness, refusal, and anxiety related to technology, especially while executing digital approaches.
4. To examine the mechanisms of internal communications through which it regulates the workers' reactions during digital strategy implementation.

This thesis focuses on the highly controlled sector like banking, where collaboration among employees is vital for successful operation. Moreover, this study also offers practical suggestions for management on how to balance emotions. It fills the research gap by linking communication, emotion, and digital strategy in the banking sector.

1.4 Delimitations of the study

There are some delimitations of this study that define the border and scope of it. This study explores employees' emotions during digital technique execution, not the actions that they take in response. This study specifically analyses how successfully IC can help employees to navigate their certain emotions that occur due to digital strategic change. For example, nervousness, anxiety, fear, work- and tech-related stress, and resistance. This study also covers some internal communication factors. Communication channels like short meetings, trainings, quizzes, messaging apps, and emails are included in this study. On the other hand, external communications and communication with vendors and customers are not included in this study. Moreover, leaders' empathy, approval of emotional issues, trust, and follow-up are all included in this study. However, performance assessment and general leadership skills are not included in this study.

This paper does not highlight the statistical implications of the digital change process. It pays attention to the psychological components of employees. It focuses on how employees feel during the adoption and execution of digital strategies in the financial sector. Moreover, this study excludes other variables such as the company's growth, achievement, and customer fulfilment. To see how internal interactions assist workers in managing their various types of mental states while adjusting to a new digital system is the main theme of this research.

In addition, this study focuses on communication within two departments of a single financial organization. Therefore, this study does not capture every aspect of internal communication within the organizations' walls. Thus, this study ensures predictability. Three main areas of internal communication are concentrated in this study. They are internal communications channels, communication approaches, and leaders' communication.

1.5 Structure of the paper

There are five chapters in this thesis. The first chapter is an introduction, and it explains the need for researching employees' reactions and communication within the organization during the launching of digital strategies. Moreover, it provides a preview of the overall framework, such as the statement of the research problem, the research gap, the aim of the study, and the research questions. Then the next section is a literature review, which critically identifies what scholars agree on as well as their contradictions and inconsistencies. Theories regarding personnel emotions, internal communication, and the assassination of digital plans are defined in this section.

The third is the methodology chapter, which covers the framework of the study and methods for collecting information. Information regarding the case company, moral dilemmas, and the limits of the chosen methods is included there. The next chapter is findings and analysis, where the outcome of the data collection is discussed. Analysis of the gathered information is also stated, and it evaluates the findings on the basis of previous research and theoretical framework. The final chapter is the conclusion, and it

connects the research findings with the objectives of this research. The conclusion section includes this study's shortcomings and also proposes suggestions for further inquiry. The last chapter of this paper emphasizes the overall reflection of the study, which concludes that the role of internal communication cannot be denied in managing workforce emotions in the process of strategy enforcement, as it acts as a strategic medium.

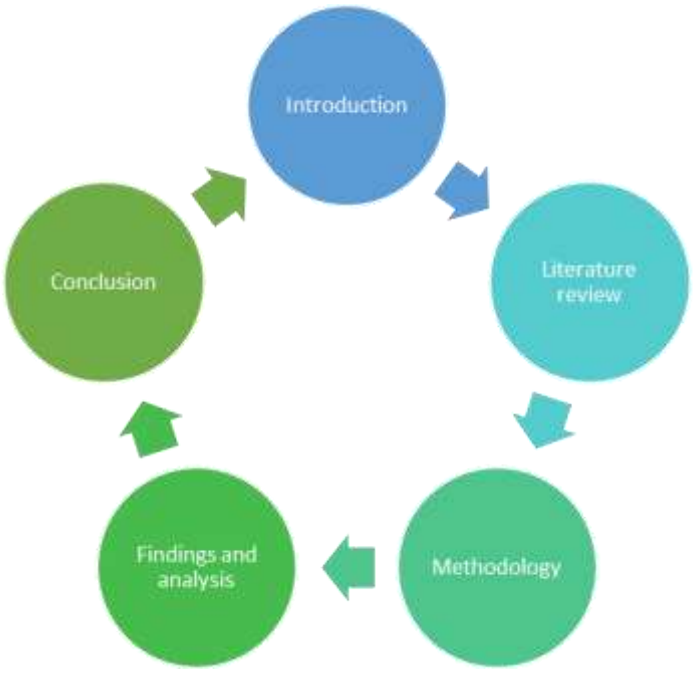

Figure 1. Structure of this paper.

Figure 1 shows the structure of this thesis, which starts with the introduction, literature review, methods description, findings and their evaluation, and drawing the conclusion. The references are listed at the end, and interview questions are presented in the appendix section. Overall, each section strengthens the whole study.

2 Literature Review

This is the most essential part of this thesis, which has critically assessed the existing papers regarding digital strategy, digital strategy implementation, employees' emotions and internal communication. This section aims to interconnect, contrast, and assess some related literature that contributes to the foundation of this paper. Finally, the banking sector context in Bangladesh are also discussed. The existing literature and theories provide a beneficial lens for examining the internal communication practices and their role in navigating volatility, aligning the employment with the employers' mission, and supporting employees' emotions during digital strategy establishment. Overall, the literature review has provided the chance to understand what is known and unknown about the specific topic and how this study might fill the gap.

2.1 Definitions of digital strategy and its implementation

The definition of digital strategy is changing rapidly (Li, 2023, p. 3). Digital strategy is the combination of digitization, digitalization, and digital transformation (Li, 2023, p. 3). Each phase is challenged by web-based assets, corporate structure, and valuation to specific constraints (Verhoef et al., 2021, p. 895). Digital transformation strategy introduces digital features like data analytics and automation in the company's operating framework, and it is apart from IT strategy (Matt et al., 2015, pp. 339–340). An organization's IT system is the centre of IT strategy, whereas digital strategy focuses on the growth of the business and technological innovativeness (Matt et al., 2015, p. 339).

Digital business technique is a digital business approach that modifies the way of value creation and distribution (Bharadwaj et al., 2013, p. 477). In addition, technological strategy planning is more than conventional IT strategy, and it is considered vital (Bharadwaj et al., 2013, p. 473). However, the current literature is unable to clearly differentiate IT strategy from digital strategy (D'Cruz et al., 2015, p. 4). The preparation of technological tactics includes the comprehensiveness of digital transformation and the element of the corporate structure (Correani et al., 2020, p. 38). Therefore, digital strategy incorporates

digital technologies to differentiate it from competitors (Ross et al., 2018, p. 7). New technologies, such as artificial strategies, machine learning blockchain, IoT, and cloud computing, are changing the way of value-creating operations and sharing information with other interested parties (Kringelum et al., 2025, p. 3).

Digital strategy formulation means the development of goods and services by using digital assets (Bharadwaj et al., 2013, p. 474). Then, converting the determined into multiple tasks is called digital strategy execution (Correani et al., 2020, p. 38). Implementation is not the consequence of taken steps but a set of steps, and one of the challenges of successful implementation is the managers' inability to push them (Hrebiniak, 2006, pp. 12–14). A large number of attempts fail, and the writer identified five barriers to running a strategy (Hrebiniak, 2006, p. 17). Therefore, it is obvious that designing a strategy is easier than accomplishing it.

In this study, digital transformation strategy implementation is considered. A digital transformation strategy is the company's integrative plan that guides the company throughout the entire digital transition process (Ismail et al., n.d., p. 14). It is a complex process, and it depends on technological elements as well as how easily the staffs of a company are willing to adjust to it.

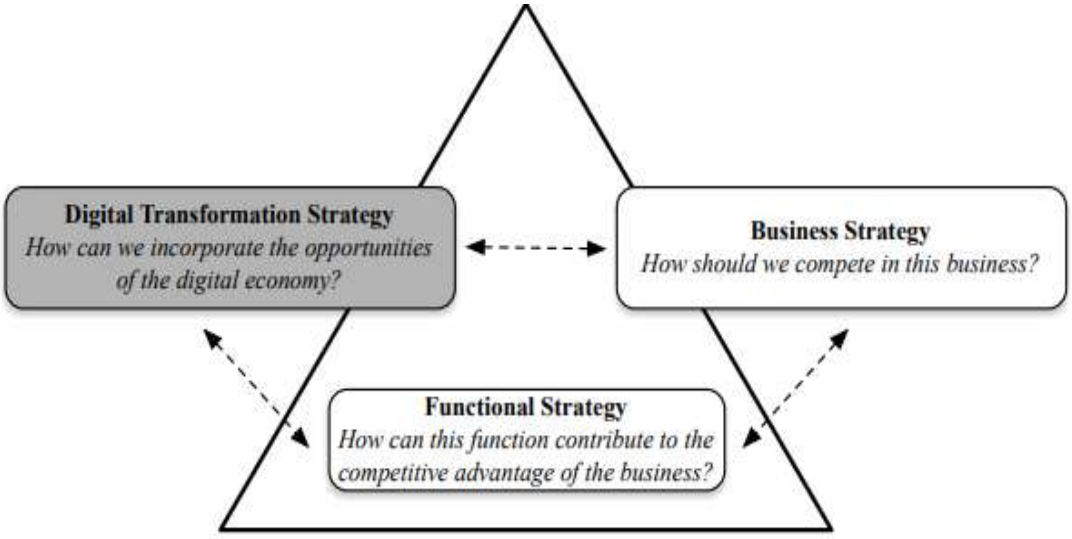

Figure 2. Positioning Digital Transformation Strategy (Ismail et al., n.d., p. 15).

Figure 3 presents the reciprocal relationship between DTS, business strategy, and functional strategy, where business figures out how to thrive, DTS uncovers potentials, and functional strategy orchestrates components in order to get an edge over others (Ismail et al., n.d., p. 15).

Digital strategy implementation is a journey of transformation, which links leadership with organizational culture and regulates digital endeavours through a set of actions (Correani et al., 2020, pp. 38–41; Kringelum et al., 2025, pp. 3–6). Business enterprises can be benefited from the adoption of digital strategies, however, the execution process faces some difficulties (Correani et al., 2020, p. 38). About 66% to 84% digital strategy attempts cannot succeed due to the lack of coordination across the emergence and application of strategy (Correani et al., 2020, p. 38).

For designing an effective digital strategy, it requires strategic planning, which involves the proper allocation of assets needed for accomplishing the organizational goal (Matt et al., 2015, p. 340). However, specific recommendations regarding the conceptualization and execution of any digital shift schemes are still under research area (Matt et al., 2015, p. 340). In addition, there are multiple impediments to overcome for defining and

deploying successful digital strategies (Hrebiniak, 2006, p. 12). The digital strategy work process is far harder than crafting it, as this requires extra time and additional personnel(Hrebiniak, 2006, pp. 12-15.).

Overall, the digital strategy formulation process is a cycle, where the initial step includes the allocation of technical scale, adjustments of added values, and the reconfiguration of company's structure, meanwhile, the final stage metabolizes these into managerial oversight and transition velocity (Matt et al., 2015, pp. 339–341). Planning and put strategy into actions are interrelated with each other and the feedback from accomplishment helps in tactical decision-making (Matt et al., 2015, p. 341). Therefore, focused training and multidisciplinary congruence are prerequisites for to maximize the potentials of change management (Matt et al., 2015, pp. 340–341).

2.1.1 Competencies and strategic coordination

For establishing a digital plan of action, it is essential to procure the capacity needed and synchronize digital endeavours with the business goals. Any company needs to be equipped with competencies that are compatible with its overall business plan and its surrounding industries (Beer et al., 2005, p. 446). In order to cope with the disruptive business, enterprises must possess flexible strengths (Karimi & Walter, 2015, pp. 41–43). Therefore, businesses should give importance to acquiring workers' talents (Schlegel & Kraus, 2023, p. 814). Digitally talented workers can show more creativity and perform well in the workplace (Ben Ghrbeia & Alzubi, 2024, p. 6). A person's educational qualification is also connected with knowledge regarding technology (Zulu et al., 2023, p. 11).

Correani and colleagues describe successful initiatives to digitize, requiring the alignment of resources, operations, and methods (Correani et al., 2020, p. 40). Competencies develop if the employee sees possibilities in technological development, they use their everyday experiences to shape their decisions, and they unlock prospective uses in their regular duties (Cetindamar Kozanoglu & Abedin, 2021, p. 1653). The importance of technological knowledge is also supported by the RBV concept (Ben Ghrbeia & Alzubi, 2024,

(Ben Ghrbeia & Alzubi, 2024, pp. 18–19). RBV is Resource-Based View Theory, recognized by Barney, and this theory shows how the capabilities of an organization can be utilized and the senior management's role in it (Ben Ghrbeia & Alzubi, 2024, p. 19).

Besides, digital transformation knowledge complements skills, as an organization demands additional abilities and actions from staff that support the transformation process (Cieslak & Valor, 2025, p. 2). If DT proficiency collaborates on cross-disciplinary solutions, like improving skills in a psychologically secured settings and standard dispute resolution sessions, it can streamline the execution of digital strategy (Cieslak & Valor, 2025, pp. 22–23).

2.1.2 Behavioural barriers in digital strategy implementation

There are some barriers to strategy establishment, such as employees' mentality to reject the change and lack of communication, and lack of precise roles are important to be considered (Hrebiniak, 2006, pp. 17–18). Klein, Spieth, and Söllner (2024) focus on a paradox, which helps to gain a greater understanding of employees' judgements regarding digital plans, where individuals' thoughts and behaviours matter (Klein et al., 2024, p. 103).

Nowadays, employees face a lot of anxiousness, as many businesses are now practicing artificial intelligence and automation of technology-based operations (Ertiö et al., 2024, p. 401). Businesses have been influenced by the adoption of technological advancements, and there is an additional fear that employees may be going to be displaced by these technologies (Liu et al., 2022, p. 1).

2.2 Employees' emotion toward digital transition

Throughout the past several years, the cutting-edge technology has been changing the strategic movements of the enterprises, and these changes are accompanied by anxiety (Van Zeebroeck et al., 2023, p. 3183). Hence, whenever an organization undergoes any

digital change, workers' emotions come naturally. When a change is suggested, staff members' emotions determine the ways of various groups' responses (Huy, 2002, p. 32). Research has demonstrated that employees may exhibit both negative and positive perceptions in response to DT strategy (Klein et al., 2024). Employees believe more in their own capacities if they have used the same strategies before, and they need less training (Kitsios et al., 2021, p. 9). However, employees' adaptable views help effortless digital strategy implementation (Muduli & Choudhury, 2025, p. 505).

It is suspected that the more skilled junior staff are, the more they will jump on the quickness of adopting contemporary technologies (Kitsios et al., 2021, p. 9). On the other hand, for workers with fewer qualifications, these platforms become pretty difficult (Kitsios et al., 2021, p. 9). Besides, employees who have a risk-taking mentality and proactiveness perform effectively in obtaining the firm's business goal, while a keen eye for innovation restricts the productivity of digital leadership (Ritala et al., 2021, p. 8). In addition, in a virtual team, executives must grasp the tremendous value of online communities and online management instruments (Tian et al., 2025, p. 19).

Previous research has discussed that the success of the technological shift depends on how the managers are guiding the feelings of their staffs (Huy, 2002, p. 33).
Furthermore, the case of Nokia illustrates that the innovation process of Nokia struggled because of multiple kinds of nervousness that were created because of the detached connection between the technology manager and the marketing manager (Vuori & Huy, 2016, p. 21). Therefore, the personal dimensions are folded by internal relationships, such as managerial training sessions, tutoring, and counselling for staff members who endure abusive language (Yue et al., 2024, p. 421).

2.2.1 Contradictions worker's support in digital shift

Workers' duties and actions in business settings are shifting following the ethical and environmental methods with the rise of the digital revolution (Hizam et al., 2023, pp. 1–4). The commencement of strategies can lead to unpredictable responses from

employees. The paradoxical viewpoint regarding the transformation influences the decision of whether the techniques will be accepted or not (Klein et al., 2024, p. 1001). However, they did not find any major impact of the paradoxical concept on the acceptance of the digital change procedure (Klein et al., 2024, p. 1001).

When change is essential, other factors like open communication and resources can be more paramount than using a “paradox” mentality (Klein et al., 2024, p. 1001). The establishment of a new tech strategy is intricate in nature, and it also means resolving clashes among people. Clear strategic internal communication can help to avoid mental exhaustion by strengthening worker-organizational relations (Kim & Lee, 2021, p. 411). It means leaders need to anticipate the mixed views and then respond with focused encouragement and interaction.

2.2.2 Disengagement and optimism as cognitive manifestations

There is a concept that is known as task-technology fit (Sun et al., 2025, pp. 1031–1032). According to this idea, the duties an employee performs in an organization that fits with technological instruments result in them feeling more contended and inspired (Sun et al., 2025, pp. 1031–1032). Thus, staff members’ positive beliefs can enhance their imaginative capabilities when the process of digital change starts (Sun et al., 2025, p. 1032). However, individuals who have high-level confidence in their artistic abilities can sometimes feel handicapped by digital tasks (Sun et al., 2025, p. 1032).

Workers may not have the proper expertise that is required to employ DT; as a result, sometimes they can be resistant to shift (Cieslak & Valor, 2025, p. 2). Moreover, they may also have the concern of being replaced by this kind of innovation (Cieslak & Valor, 2025, p. 2). Cieslak and Valor (2025) also argue that DT can be a promising instrument, and it does not create negative reactions (Cieslak & Valor, 2025, p. 5). They also criticize that workers can take advantage of these instruments (Cieslak & Valor, 2025, p. 5). Yue, Men, and Ferguson (2021) found that an optimistic emotional culture can expand staff engagement with the business (Yue et al., 2021, p. 189). It is clear that emotional culture

can fluctuate, and appropriate management, communication, and the right leadership are a must to handle this.

2.2.3 A sense of emotional depletion caused by digital strategy

Due to the enforcement of digital strategies, employees not only navigate potentials but also encounter different issues. For example, concerns regarding the replacement of jobs powered by AI heighten rating of anxiety, as it creates pressure for those staff members who have a poor sense of digital self-reliance; therefore, it has a detrimental effect on mental wellness (Zhao & Wu, 2025, pp. 305–307). Thus, employees struggle with ambiguity. Hence, adopting new technology greatly impacts employees' emotions.

When employed workers feel themselves exhausted with the ongoing demand imposed by technology, it can lead to technostress and feelings of burnout (Kutlutürk Yıkılmaz et al., 2024, pp. 4–5). Their inquiry reveals that if physical constraints like musculoskeletal and mental constraints connect together, the consequence may prolong. In addition, research on private commercial banks shows that employees plan to quit their current employment if they endure technological fatigue; therefore, they need to be accommodated by friendly institutional processes (Begum et al., 2025, pp. 435–441). Their analysis suggests that chronic stress remains untouched; it can cause damage to employees' psychological well-being.

Collectively these implications state that technostress is a risk that arises when a new digital initiative is enforced. If these risks are neglected, organizations may witness deteriorated health conditions of workers and ineffective execution of plans.

2.3 Employee reactions toward digital transition

The advancement of technology is changing continuously, and because of this reason, employees often respond stressed and challenged (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402). As a result, sometimes employees face difficulties in adopting and handling new digital

strategy (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402). These issues may display irritation, tiredness, anxiety, low dedication, and even poor efficiency in job performance (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402).

Employees can also feel pressure because digital technology works with speed, and sometimes it demands more work (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402). Furthermore, due to digital strategy adoption employees also feel that they are losing their right to go offline, and in some jobs they need to check the messages so that they do not miss anything, and this type of imbalance can increase the stress level (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402).

Moreover, some employees feel that digital initiatives are hard to adjust to because it is a challenging process and it may seem unfamiliar to some employees (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402). Therefore, sometimes workers find it complicated to navigate the new technology, and because of this, they may feel afraid that they might lose their jobs or careers (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402). Besides, they also think that automation can replace them in the future (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402). The rapid technological revolutions also demand continuous competency in digital knowledge (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402). If employees are afraid of making mistakes, accountability, and diminishing their power of ownership, it may cause dropped output, higher absences, and misunderstanding (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402). Thus, employees' reactions can lead to a higher turnover rate in the organization (Ertiö et al., 2024, pp. 401–402).

The fear of job substitution and the need for employee training arise so that the workforce can comply with the new professional duties (Ertiö et al., 2024, p. 401). The increased automation nature of tasks increases the number of details to handle, and the feeling of powerlessness and decreases an individual's responsibilities(Ertiö et al., 2024, p. 401). Leaders can help in mitigating tech anxiety by dealing with these feelings(Ertiö et al., 2024, p. 402). Therefore, the digital strategy adoption is not only about functionality but also about the ability to adjust employee sentiments.

This indicates that enacting digital tactics is not merely sophisticated; it also considers the workforce members' views, for example, how they act when any changes happen in the organization. Much research has highlighted digital strategy only from the technical context; psychological perspectives are bypassed.

However, recent research confirms that employees can have contradictory reactions toward digital transition (Klein et al., 2024, p. 1003). According to paradox theory, some workers can exhibit a positive response also by showing optimism, and on the other hand, some can feel distressed (Klein et al., 2024, pp. 1003–1004). Hence, communication pathways are important, and there are many ways of it, as multiple parties have distinct choices (Ertiö et al., 2024, p. 402). In order to make sure that everyone knows the latest news, communication is vital (Ertiö et al., 2024, p. 403). Ertiö et. al. (2024) also state that digital leadership and communication can help in encouraging social connections and discussing technological details of change.

2.4 The ways to manage employee responses to digital strategy implementation

This section presents three strategies to successfully oversee staff reactions while initiating digital strategies. Leadership, communication, and cognitive devotion are all necessary in assisting staff members to proceed through a changing landscape. The following ways can manage employee responses to digital strategy implementation with grace.

2.4.1 leadership as a communication device

We cannot deny the performance of mid-level managers in emotional factors management. During any technological change, employees may suffer from various tech-related stresses (Ertiö et al., 2024, p. 401). Leadership plays a vital role by reducing technological stress (Ertiö et al., 2024, p. 403). In order to ease employees' technological anxiety, digital leaders with emotional intelligence need to tackle the consequences of digital

change (Ertiö et al., 2024, p. 404). Huy investigated the job of middle managers by analysing a firm where the firm was experiencing a major change (Huy, 2002, p. 33).

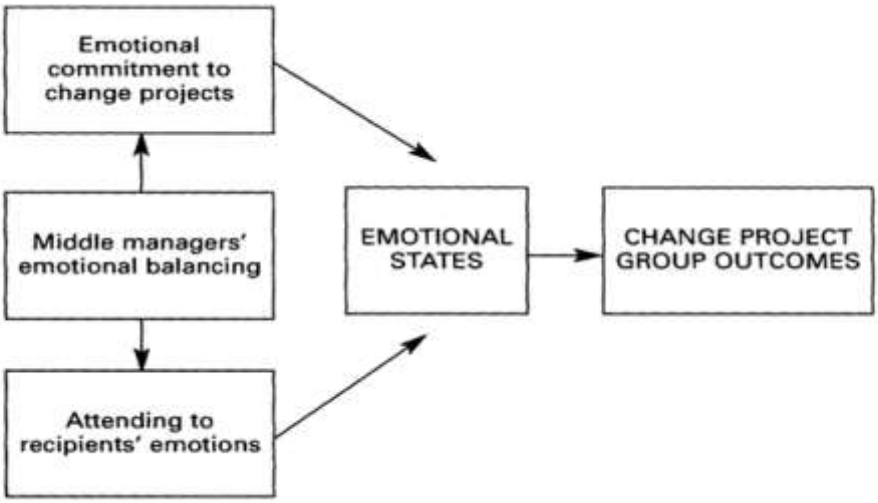

Figure 3. A model of emotional balancing during radical change (Huy, 2002, p. 33).

The figure 4 shows that middle management employees work as facilitators, and they also need to handle their thoughts in order to forward their change missions (Huy, 2002, p. 33). In order to cope with dramatic shifts, participants' emotions need to be closely monitored, as it guarantees smooth operation (Huy, 2002, p. 33). This is known as emotional balancing. In this case, managers pay attention to their employees' views without interrupting operations, and they also make a mental pledge to the evolving project (Huy, 2002, pp. 33–36). The good relationship among workers and top managers helps in sustaining employee representation (Thelen & Men, 2023, p. 1450).

However, dialogue from leaders can also produce negative consequences. Sometimes leaders diminish trustworthiness, and promote uncomfortable feelings in their team members (Yue et al., 2024, pp. 406–408). The prosperity of an organization is protected by the joint efforts of leaders and staff (Santoso et al., 2022, p. 15). These findings prove that leaders can thrive successfully in two ways, such as they can carry out change strategies along with controlling employees' reactions by using frank and sympathetic conversations.

2.4.2 Behavioural spirituality as a valuable weapon

Communication encompasses building an emotionally productive atmosphere by presenting details where individuals sense they are empowered and included (Men & Yue, 2019, pp. 4–6). According to their findings, enterprises with robust ways of interaction techniques sustain a culture of supportive pleasant emotions, which push workers to forward the commercial goals. Communication within an organization is accomplished by means of workers' subjective judgement instead of primarily affecting interests (Tkalac Verčič & Men, 2023a, pp. 2–4).

Therefore, it is important to construct a sense of feelings by undertaking communication methods for promising consistent attachment. The above observations argue that maintaining an ideal mental climate may influence the prosperity in banks that are experiencing a digital turnaround strategy.

2.4.3 Communication as a key to manage employees' reactions

Internal communication can work as an emotion protector by handling employees' hardships during digital approach implementation. In order to avoid mental fatigue, open discussion is advantageous, as it assures the workers that their fears are treated carefully (Kim & Lee, 2021, pp. 420–421). Thus, employees consider strategic transitions in a positive way, and they feel inspired. Similarly, the importance of linear internal communication in stimulating accountability, constructive feedback, and collaboration between staff and management is further emphasized by Lee et al. (Lee et al., 2022, pp. 266–270).

Their research states that symmetrical IC fosters bonding among the workers and organization. Factors like commitment, loyalty, and gratitude can help in preventing strains and increasing passion for jobs (Lee et al., 2022, pp. 266–270). It indicates that if employees get a chance to convey their concerns, they become emotionally capable. If the staff members feel that their participation is the key in the strategy enforcement process,

it reduces restlessness (Khan et al., 2022, pp. 2501–2507). Consistent and clear IC acts as a line of defence so that anxieties may not transform into reluctance.

2.5 Internal communication for managing employee reactions in digital strategy implementation

This chapter reviews the definition of internal communication, channels, cultural and practical components, and its impact on individuals' mental health in the digital strategy implementation process. In digital strategy implementation, internal communication works as a vital tool. When any digital transformation occurs in any organization, it changes how employees work, and it offers uneasiness.

2.5.1 Concept of internal communication

Internal communication is a process of exchanging knowledge and data among all the stakeholders in an organization (Sinitsyna et al., 2024, p. 367). Moreover, internal communication is a way of providing a better understanding of ongoing alteration of the company's settings, and it conveys both potential and challenges (Welch & Jackson, 2007, p. 186). The idea of internal business communication is constructive, as it considers reaching out to every employee (Welch & Jackson, 2007, p. 186). Consequently, employees feel more inclined to stay with the company for a long time, as proactive leadership and accessible communication offer an immediate benefit on worker fulfilment (Men, 2014, pp. 267–268). IC is very important in the communication administration system (Wuersch et al., 2023, p. 614). It is a tool that connects the whole organization in a single frame.

Recent research shows that if the company acknowledges their employees' opinions and updates them about notable changes, the employees start to trust more, where symmetrical and accountable communication play a significant role (Lee et al., 2022, p. 277). In settings of changing circumstances and technologically advanced tactics establishment, IC can evolve as a strategic tool. Internal control facilitates mutual confidence,

suppresses moods, and allows employees to be compatible with the firm's goal (Raj & Goute, 2025, pp. 3–5).

Motivating Language Theory explains how communication can help in reducing stress, lowers resistance, and how meaning- making communication enhances workforce engagement (Yue et al., 2021, pp. 173–175). This theory was first proposed by Sullivan (1988) and later modified by J. Mayfield & Mayfield (Yue et al., 2021, p. 173). This theory defines the way of verbal behaviour of management and its direct impact on employees' emotions. According to this theory, there are spoken communications that leaders can use: guided language, meaning– making language, and empathic language (Yue et al., 2021, p. 174). They state that positive emotive culture increases corporate affinity and diminish barriers to reform (Yue et al., 2021, pp. 173–175). This theory validates the importance of internal communication to manage mental state at the time of contemporary disruptions.

2.5.2 Routes of communication

There are different ways—formal, informal, and digital routes, through which information flows (Rabbani et al., 2024, p. 3).

Communication channels	Description
Formal channels	Meetings, emails, official memos.
Informal channels	Face to face, gossip, social gatherings.
Digital communication tools	Emails, instant messaging, collaboration.

Figure 4. Communication Channels and Practices (Rabbani et al., 2024, p. 3).

Figure 4 illustrates the communication channels and practices. Integrity is maintained in formal communication, such as meeting, intranet, electronic mails, and official news sites. Innovative leaders transmit their strategic objectives and transformational ideas

through various official avenues, such as social platforms and emails which maximizes employee accountability (Men, 2014, pp. 268–270).

Peer conversations, physical meetings, and workplace rumours are unofficial ways of internal communication. Barrett (2020) argues that informal exchanges display emotional backups with a higher value than traditional channels (Barrett, 2002, pp. 222–223). Rabbani et al. (2024) also emphasizes that casual relationships are the key in high- context sector like banking (Rabbani et al., 2024, pp. 2–3). Therefore, unofficial communication forums are a good way of communication. Virtual internal collaboration instruments, such as web portals, creative platforms, and instant messaging applications, help in alleviating tech anxieties (Raj & Goute, 2025, pp. 2–4).

2.5.3 The operational role of communication

Modern concepts consider internal communication as a tactical component. Progressive managers integrate with multimedia platforms, such as social networking sites and feedback processes, to encourage harmonious communication, which raises worker affiliation with the organization (Men, 2014, pp. 268–271). Internal communication is now the responsibility of managers because it has a strong relation with the outcome of the business and retention of staff (Dolphin, 2005, pp. 173–175). As a result, when employees see that their contributions make sense in the entire strategy, they feel more determined (Dolphin, 2005, pp. 174–175). This clarifies that they can see positive sides of digital strategy implementation rather than vulnerabilities.

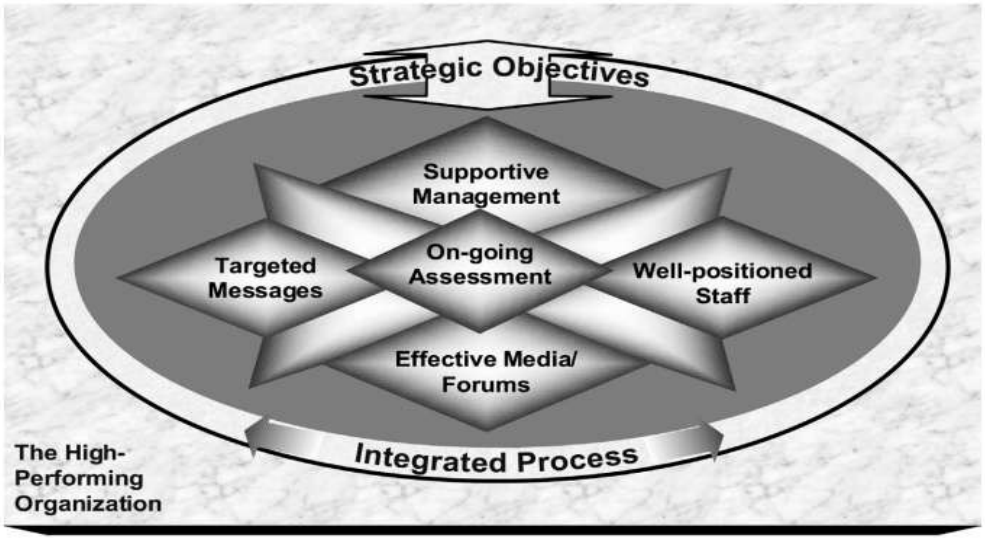

Figure 5. Strategic Employee Communication Model (Barrett, 2002, p. 221)

Figure 5 shows how a high-performing organization connects its strategic goals with integrated interaction procedures (Barrett, 2002, p. 221). The key elements are supportive management (leaders backing the process), well-positioned staff (people in the right roles), effective forums (ways for communication), ongoing assessment (continuos feedback). These elements create a communication cycle that connects employee and management.

Internal communication upgrades worker allegiance by offering them a sense of recognition (Sinitsyna et al., 2024, pp. 369–371). Similarly, Yue et al. (2020) also state that internal communication triggers interpersonal climate and the recognition of the organization (Yue et al., 2021, pp. 171–173). Moreover, communication among top-level managers and staff has a substantial impact on employee devotion. Therefore, internal communication acts as a powerful stimulant that protects employees' mental feelings. When robust communication techniques are paired with cooperative leading skills, it induces mutual confidence, and this is necessary for any change in the organization (Çetin et al., 2012, pp. 228–229).

2.5.4 Employee well-being and communication within the organization

When employers establish greater requirements from their employees, they need to make sure that workers are successful collaborators (Boswell & Boudreau, 2001, p. 851). In this case, digital internal communication and internal advertising can be beneficial in reducing tensions and tiredness among workers (Raj & Goute, 2025, pp. 2–4). This is critical for fields like financial service providers, as in this sector, demands regarding safety and continuous revolution of digital tactics are keeping staff members under pressure.

Therefore, ineffective interactions affect employee contribution, and on the other hand, clear, two-way communication promotes excitement (Yue et al., 2021, pp. 171–174). Their study provides clear reasons of internal communications two perspectives. Supervisors can analyse the mental wellness needs of their staff members by using massive amounts of data, statistics, and computational intelligence to offer modified psychological counselling (Tian et al., 2025, p. 19). However, it is not so easy to fully understand employees' mindset (Tkalac Verčič & Men, 2023b, p. 7).

Informally conducted behaviours, such as rumours, have a considerable impact on opinions, although hierarchical systems may block upward contacts (Rabbani et al., 2024, pp. 2–3). Therefore, internet-based communication requires sensible modifications. By encouraging shared confidence, managers can optimize internal interactions among different departments, which strengthens the team's productivity (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992, pp. 637–639). In addition, communication methods are heavily affected by social code of conduct and principles (Rabbani et al., 2024, p. 3). Language is also an cultural element that influences IC (Rabbani et al., 2024, p. 4).

2.6 The Banking sector context and Bangladesh

Digital strategy implementation process varies from one country to another and also from industry to industry because of having different regulatory rules, customer

segments, and technological preparedness (Verhoef et al., 2021, pp. 890–891). Every organization is required to embrace digital shift in response to the need for changes in technologies, high technological competition, and changing customer expectations (Verhoef et al., 2021, p. 890). In the banking sector, digital strategy implementation is very critical, as this sector provides customer-oriented service, which requires more security.

The country context also has an impact on the implementation of digital tactics. However, successful enforcement depends on both industry and country-specific issues, such as regulation, integration, customers, cultures, and employees' skills. Therefore, internal communication is an indispensable part of regulating employees' responses. One of the latest reports in Bangladesh indicates that there is an issue of immediate concern in terms of mental health issues like tension, burnout, depression, and anxiety among the bankers (Mosharrafa et al., 2024, p. 11). Technologies like AI pose a threat of job replacement, which impacts workers' mental health in a negative way (Zhao & Wu, 2025, p. e304).

Internal communication in the banking sector in Bangladesh is even more critical in this case, as workloads and customer expectations are already high. Consequently. Emotional stress arises, and it validates the need to assure employees' emotions in order to deal with uncertainty. Different kinds of digital programs are introduced in Bangladeshi banks to enhance efficiency. However, unless fruitful internal interaction is established to lead the employees, the digital change will lead to opposition or stress rather than empowerment.

Internal communication is highly affected by the organizational culture in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has high power distance and top-down communication approach practices in the organization where top management is the highest authority to take any decisions (Rabbani et al., 2024, p. 3). Thus, the communication process can restrict the open dialogue. This cultural dimension highlights the necessity of communication strategies, which will promote openness.

Physical fatigue and technostress are reasons that lead to burnout among the bank employees (Kutlutürk Yıkılmaz et al., 2024, p. 4). Recent studies also revealed that emotional drain and technology-related stress are still significant problems for bank workers, and it points out the relevance of effective communication (Begum et al., 2025, pp. 433–435). Implementation of technology and employees' mental distress have been the focus of research in Bangladesh; however, how internal communication can help in the management process of employees' emotions has not been researched much. This paper focuses on covering this gap.

2.7 Concluding analytical framework

This chapter clarifies what we already learned and displays gaps with a simple figure and explanation. There is limited understanding of how internal communication can influence employees' reactions in financial service sector companies, such as banks, when they capitalize on digital strategies. A wide range of studies ignore the philosophical facets of digitally changing circumstances in the banking sector by focusing on computational dimensions.

This concluding analytical framework integrates how digital strategy brings changes in employees' emotions and how IC handles these emotional responses. It proposes that different job responsibilities, technological proficiency, accessibility, and work pressure influence the emotional state of each individual, whereas IC strategies dictate how people perceive their needs.

This framework suggests that solid execution of digital strategy depends on operational units and established structure. It also indicates that digital strategy implementation constraints can be different from one department to another because of different delivery patterns and the content of the data. This study examines a bank through interviews to investigate how digital strategic changes create different emotional responses in

different departments even with the same strategic change initiatives. In this study, the actual experience of employees from two sections of a bank will help to understand how internal communication influences the psychological security of them in the situation of digital advances enrolment.

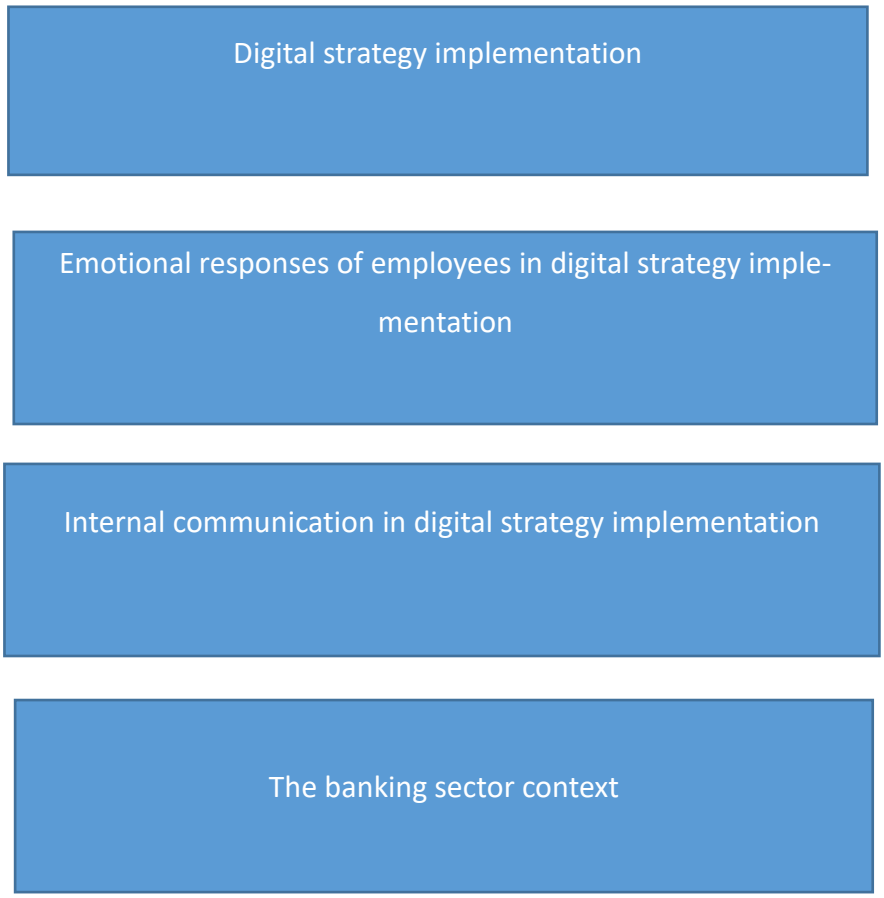

Figure 6. Concluding analytical framework

The above analytical framework in figure 6 governs this study and represents the rational sequence from the assassinations of digital strategies to the spiritual reactions of workers and the critical function of IC as mediator in this process, specifically in the banking sector. Bank employees often face unforeseen pressures, incertitude, and updates to their jobs because of adopting rapid digital strategies. To handle various unsaid

responses, how internal communication can act as a mechanism for a sustainable execution of digital strategy builds the main theme of this study. In the banking context, this paradigm comprehends the role out of digital strategy to the overall wellness of employees by considering IC not only as an emotional reaction stabilizer but also as an innovative propellant.

When we talk about digital strategy implementation in the financial sector, the first thing that comes to our mind is technology. Therefore, this study focuses on technological strategy implementation. Organizational arrangements, employees' job duties, and company protocols are all profoundly altered by the rise of technology (Bharadwaj et al., 2013, pp. 472–475; Verhoef et al., 2021, pp. 890–894). However, there are also some other elements related to it.

We know that, in the financial sector, like banking, digital strategies are often upgraded rapidly. The reason behind this can be that these institutions always strive to provide better customer service. They also want to maintain a combative stance in the banking industry. Consequently, in the banking sector, proper implementation of digital strategies will not only enhance the quality of financial services but also make the work easier than before.

The digital strategy implementation process is very important because it changes or improves the quality and speed of services. However, it is not an easy process for organizations, as they face different kinds of challenges, such as employees' emotional reactions. By aligning information with employee's emotions, an organization can execute a successful digital strategy.

Furthermore, employees' reactions to digital improvements are greatly influenced by their mental states (Huy, 2002, pp. 33–36; Vuori & Huy, 2016, pp. 12–15). Hence, this study also focuses on employees' emotions during digital strategy execution, as employees' reactions are closely tied to the application of digital strategy. It is very normal that

employees will react in various ways when a new technical strategy is introduced. These reactions, however, have logical reasons. The reasons can be elements such as technostress, confusion, the time needed to understand the new technology, challenges to understanding technical instructions, work pressure, fear of making mistakes, or resistance to accepting new digital tactics.

On the other hand, employees can also respond positively. For example, if the new strategy makes their job duties smoother than before, they may feel more encouraged. The top-level management and leaders can communicate changes transparently. It will create a good relationship in the workplace. Thus, it can motivate staff members in innovation. In addition, it can unlock the door of new possibilities.

Emotions of frontline employees differ from one department to another during the digitization process because of different job roles and different team leaders. Internal communication helps in managing workers' reactions that arise among the staff of different segments due to technological transitions. Mental responses can also turn into tangible actions like upgrading competency and digital technology usage through effective internal communication. Overall, employees' emotional responses in digital strategy implementation are very important, and the responses of individuals can be expressed differently in different units of the same organization.

We know that internal dialogue is pivotal; however, how internal communication dictates thoughts and feelings is not comprehended entirely. In challenging job environments like banking, handling workers' mental states through internal communication during digital shift is crucial. How leaders' interactions, workers' ability to adjust to digital transitions, and how their emotions are intricately interlinked in emerging economies is still not obvious.

Therefore, this thesis also highlights the internal communication and how it functions as an employee reactions-controlling tool during digital tactic application. Internal

communication is a component that simplifies the management's awareness regarding employees' thoughts, and it lowers objections (Men, 2014, pp. 268–270; Yue et al., 2021, pp. 171–174). If the leadership communication style is proper, the workforce may feel more emotionally secure, and it helps to be compatible with the company's digital goals (Yue et al., 2021, pp. 174–176).

The smoother the emotional journey of employees, the easier the digital strategy implementation process will be. In this journey, internal communication can perform as a connector to connect digital strategy and employees. In the context of digital strategy and the banking sector, internal communication can create a long-term effect. Effective interaction during the digital shifting process is not only about providing a message. It is also about listening to the frontline employees' thoughts and being together to attain the company's mission and vision. Thus, employees can be emotionally involved in the company.

If any company wants to carry out digital initiatives cooperatively, they need to concentrate on effective internal communication processes and their channels. A team or a department can decrease mental stress and can solve any problem easily through an open and two-way communication procedure. Effective internal interactions may guarantee employees' fulfilment and mental wellness, and thus, they can foster successful digital strategy establishment.

The financial sector of Bangladesh is also trying to join the race of digital transformation. The role of digital strategy in this sector cannot be denied; however, these changes sometimes put extra pressures on the workforce. Sometimes, some employees face emotional challenges in adjusting to these new procedures and high standards of service. Therefore, IC can be an element in the digital strategy execution process to address and handle employees' emotional responses so that they feel more supported and understood.

There is an insufficient amount of research on the Bangladeshi banking sector. In that sector, swift digitalization and bureaucratic communication processes trigger various emotive complexities. In the context of digital transformation, the interactions between internal communication methods, workers' personal reactions, and staff collaboration are not explored sufficiently.

3. Methodology

The previous chapter examined the existing literature on digital strategy, implementation of it, employees' emotional responses, and internal communication. It also highlighted the research gap and theoretical premises. Focusing on the discovered facts from the previous chapter, this chapter presents the chosen methodology to explore the research problem of this study. Research technique, research design and context, data collection plan, and overall study procedure are described in this section. Furthermore, this chapter also discusses the steps for ensuring the reliability.

3.1 Research technique

A qualitative research methodology was used to investigate this research topic. Predictions and assessments of observations and discussions are the fundamentals of qualitative research technique (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp. 7–8). The use of this technique for this research was suitable, as it assessed bank employees' actual interactions and thoughts from two departments that helped to attain the research objectives. Research is regarded as complete when data are gathered and processed methodically with an identifiable objective (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 5).

There are two types of qualitative research techniques- theoretical analysis and interpretative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Theoretical analysis is a deductive approach where categorizing is done on the basis of previously established ideas or structures (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Interpretative thematic analysis is an analysis that follows the apparent layer of the respondents' conversations and transfers data from narrative to analysis and interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 83–84). This thesis adopted interpretative thematic analysis while still conscious of relevant theories. This study uses this method as it explores how internal communication manages employees' emotions during digital change. The qualitative research method helps a researcher to interpret information in a way that is not possible through mathematical evaluation

(Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). To fully explore the thoughts of people in digital transitions, the qualitative research method was chosen for this study.

3.2 Research design and strategy

The design of this study is interpretative, which interprets interview data on how employees and managers feel about the communication practices during any digital strategy enforcement in the bank. The study is an abductive. It interchanged between interview data and theoretical ideas to continuously analyse and develop the concluding analytical framework. This study coded emotional data of interviews by reviewing the literature. Then, it went back to the data for testing and refocusing, and it is called systematic combining (Dubois & Gadde, 2014, pp. 1279–1281). This abductive study rotated data systematically from initial coding to engaging terms and then again returned to the interview data to interpret and uncover patterns that link IC and employees' mental reactions in the digital strategy implementation process (Dubois & Gadde, 2014, pp. 1279–1281).

This study conducted a case study in one case company and several embedded cases – individuals working in the case company in its two departments. Three respondents were from department one, and the other three respondents were from department two in the same bank. Besides, among these six participants, two were managers from two departments, and the others were frontline employees of the same department.

Case study is an appropriate research method because it helps to answer questions like 'how' and 'why' while examining various factors (Yin, 2009, p. 4). The method helps in maintain the attributes of actual incidents (Yin, 2009, p. 4). This research method can handle an extensive number of supporting materials, such as files, reports, discussions, inspections, etc. (Yin, 2009, p. 11). It indicates that the case study is based on many materials (Yin, 2009, p. 18). This thesis chooses case study as a research method, and this is based on interviews and some secondary data that are interpreted within the context.

The interviews were conducted in a private commercial bank in Bangladesh, as these banks are pioneering the way in digital transformation. Therefore, such a bank would represent a pertinent scenario for this investigation. Employees from these banks often encounter both possibilities and emotional difficulties that affect their performance (Atikur Rahaman et al., 2023, pp. 131–133). Therefore, a single private commercial bank in Bangladesh, which is going through rapid digital changes, was chosen for this study as a case.

3.3 The case company (a private commercial bank)

There are 58 commercial banks in Bangladesh. Among these, 43 banks are privately owned commercial banks. The case company chosen for this study is one of the reputed private commercial banks in Bangladesh, as this bank is going through rapid digital change.

This study selected the bank 'X' as the case company because of three important factors. First of all, this bank has recently adopted some digital strategies in different departments. Thus, this case company ensures the academic relevance. Secondly, there was availability of multiple roles like managers and frontline employees; each of them was from the same team and department. Thirdly, this company provides distinct viewpoints regarding the thesis topic through their two major departments. As a result, this setup helps this study to investigate how employees' emotions are correlated with strategic change and how they can be managed through internal communication. The legal name of the case company was kept hidden in order to uphold privacy.

The selected local bank serves various financial services through its several branches and online also. It has several departments through which they provide different kinds of financial services. However, this study chose only two specific departments., Recently those two units have witnessed a significant digital shift in order to automate procedures and accelerate customer services. As a result, the job roles of employees in these units have changed because of the growing dependency on technology. The department 1

mainly handles customers' complaints that they receive from different branches. The employees in this department try to find out the reason for clients' complaints. They try to improve customers' experience continuously by ensuring the quality of the financial services.

In addition, department 2 tries to answer customer queries through inbound and outbound calls. The employees of this unit try to meet the queries and requests of customers regarding bank services. In order to explore how internal communication supports emotional reactions like fear, worries, and assurance, these two departments are very helpful, as they have strong connections with technology and services.

3.4 Data collection

The data collection method for this paper is a semi-structured interview conducted in a private commercial bank. Therefore, the interview is the main technique for data collection for this investigation. The interviews were conducted in two departments. This process allowed the respondents from two particular departments to freely share their thoughts and instances. In addition, it helped to go further deeper when it was required.

Qualitative interview is a method of research that is regarded as a way of personal interactions, where data comes from discussions (Vaivio, 2012, pp. 187–189). This method helped this study in finding the workers' actual perceptions regarding the technological change process from an emotional level. The most important thing is how interviews are interpreted. Normally, exact interpretations of interviews are not possible, as every interview is structurally very sensitive (Vaivio, 2012, p. 188).

This study also used some secondary data and freely available documents from the case company's official website. For example, press releases, internal updates, and digital strategy disclosures, all provided valuable additional data. Such information regarding digital strategic initiatives helped to understand the specific bank's communication details, leadership styles, and digital goals. Thus, it facilitated the evaluation of the

interviews. Furthermore, the integration of secondary data for this investigation enhanced the authenticity of the case analysis, as it aligned staff members' personal viewpoints with the case company's formal statements.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with employees from two departments for this study. The study chose participants who have been working in that bank for more than one year and are affected by or involved in the digital strategy implementation process. It focused on two groups, managers and their team members. Thus, this study achieved not only the managerial insights but also the team members' opinions and aspects.

For this thesis purpose, participants were contacted and invited for the interviews through emails and WhatsApp texts. Moreover, these channels were also used for providing the interview guidelines and questionnaire. On the basis of participants choices, Zoom and Microsoft Teams were used for taking the interview online. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed with the permission of the participants.

The interview language was English. However, all the participants' mother language is Bangla. Actually, all the private banks in Bangladesh use English not only as their professional language but also as their functional way of communication, as English is an international language. As a result, all the respondents considered English as an appropriate method to express their experiences. In addition, employees also use English when they interact with top management, clients living abroad, and foreign stakeholders. The case company's formal language for internal communication is also English. Therefore, the participants enjoyed discussing their job-related topics in English.

The meeting recordings were thoroughly checked to address whether there were any obvious mistakes like spelling mistakes. Before starting every interview, the participants were reminded about this thesis's purpose. Identifiers like employees' names and

designations were hidden to ensure the confidentiality. Overall, this data collection process maintained the flexibility of this study by examining managers' and frontline employees' personal experiences in the context of digital strategy execution.

Table 1. Interview details.

Department name	Participant's name	Positions	Meeting format	Interview date	Interview duration
Department 1	A	supervisor	Microsoft teams	29/10/2025	16 min 22 sec
	B	Frontline employee	Microsoft teams	30/10/2025	10 min 56 sec
	C	Frontline employee	Zoom	31/10/2025	11 min 02 sec
Department 2	D	Manager	Zoom	30/10/2025	19 min 26 sec
	E	Frontline employee	Microsoft teams	29/10/2025	21 min 29 sec
	F	Frontline employee	Microsoft teams	30/10/2025	11 min 58 sec

3.5 Data analysis method

Mainly, the data from the interviews were considered as primary data for this study. The data were analyzed by following several data analysis methods. To analyze psychological parts, this study used thematic analysis, which is a popular method for qualitative study even though it is not a well-defined technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 77). In addition, data from the interviews were also analyzed on the basis of their contents. As this study is based on a relatively small number of employees from a single case company, data

analysis was done manually. This process guaranteed direct interaction with the data and transparency.

This data analysis strategy reflected the four main parts of the study. The components are digital strategy implementation, emotional responses of employees and ways to manage them, internal communication in digital strategy implementation, and the banking sector context. Thematic analysis is philosophically versatile, and it recognizes different types of themes from a dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 77–79).

There are six steps of thematic analysis, such as getting connected with the data, developing preliminary characters, mixing characters to find potential concepts, inspecting themes, labelling the theme, and finally drafting the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). All the stages of thematic analysis are not distinct, as they are corresponding to some other qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86).
The interview transcript was reviewed again and again to eliminate any recording issues. It helped to create discrete information limits for the emotional reactions and conceptual theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 83–88). By going through each recording, this analysis provides simple codes regarding emotions, as coding is the second phase of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88).

This study stimulates codes from the academic literature, such as uncertainty during change, leaders' communication, training, and transparency, to apply abductive thematic coding. Then, these codes were expanded and refined using accessible coding that emerged from the interview data. The refined codes were then categorized into themes that incorporated theory with empirical findings. The revised themes are turning uncertainty into confidence, IC as an emotion regulator, and safeguarding factors.

This abductive research reconciled theory and evidence-based logic. Themes like open communication and leadership comprehension are the base of the initial codes. In addition, emerging ideas were evolved from the interviews of the employees. Therefore,

coding used abductive logic by shifting concepts and evidence. Although the final ideas were determined by the interviews, the assessment was influenced by the prior theory.

Table 2. Initial coding according to abductive thematic analysis coding method

Code	Examples from data
Shyness	1. *"initially frontline employees are like feeling a bit shy"*
Confidence	1. *"Some of them are actually happy most"* 2. *"making my job easir"* 3. *"interested"*
Reassurance	1. *"our manager usually explain the update very clearly"* 2. *"When communication is transparent and regular, it reduces the confusion"* 3. *"Our manager is so proactive and helpful for us"*
uncertainty	1. *"but I feel sometime I feel uncertain about the adapting to the new process."* 2. *"I didn't know how to use it or how can I get the benefit"* 3. *"I'm facing some challenges like that whether I use these new policies or process"*
Anxiety and nervousness	1. *Initially they feel nervous because anything new coming"* 2. *"they feel very nervous initially"* 3. *"most of our employees are feel anxiety like they…"* 4. *"yes, basically as a manager I observes both nervousness and excitement"* 5. *"some of them were worried"*
Encouragement	

	1. *this is actually like practical terms which always motivating the team through empathy and encouragement* 2. *we all the employees are quite interested and curious to know the how it will work* 3. *"We gradually overcome all the challenges*."
Digital strategy related frustration	1. *"they are like stressful"* 2. *"System problem might be happen"* 3. *"faced difficulties"* 4. *"sometime feel stressed and confused, especially when any technical glitch arise or any malfunction occurred"* 5. *"so, I thought it might be take my place in my department"* 6. *"contionios change"*
Clarity & supports	1. *"show them some visual presentation which help them to understand what is actually happening"* 2. *"I try to give them relevant information, so the things"* 3. *"open discussion and proper training before launching"* 4. *"total team effort everyone get to know that the things"*
Hesitation	1. *Several reactions like is this really work or not ?* 2. *Sustainable or not.* 3. *They're very confused during the time.* 4. *some of them are encouraging but most of them feel very confused*

After assembling the emotional data, this study found some initial codes, so the third step was to identify possible themes according to the organized data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). The emergent codes from the lists are,

Technology-related stress: malfunctions, glitches, and login loops.

Overload: stress from rapid digital changes, stress from learning new tools.

Growing confidence through internal communication: comfort, interest and happiness.

Positive affect: Satisfaction, proper training, making the job easier.

The fourth step is reviewing the concepts. After reviewing the study, it suggests three concepts: uncertainty to confidence, internal communication as an emotion management tool, and training and team inclusion. These adjustments are done following thematic analysis. Then, this study analysed the theme and produced a final draft.

Revised theme

Turning uncertainty into confidence: In the initial stage of digital strategy execution, employees felt nervous, anxious, and worried; however, when they got used to it, they felt comfortable.

IC as an emotion regulator: Supportive leadership communication, relevant information, proactive leaders, and transparent communication helped to regulate employees' emotions.

Safeguarding factors: Open communication, training before adopting any new tech-based strategy, and overall team effort turned negative emotions into positive emotions.

3.6 Ethical considerations, validity and reliability

All attendees of the interview were informed before arranging the meeting online. The participation from two departments was voluntary, and participants were allowed to skip any question if they wanted. Moreover, they received a short interview guideline regarding the purpose of the interview and thesis. Such procedures were maintained to follow the corporate codes of conduct and standards of solitude that are already developed for qualitative research. Five steps, like defining the needs, using previous data,

developing the documentation, evaluating the data, and submitting the result as a whole, enhance the reliability of the study (Kallio et al., 2016, pp. 2959–2961).

The interview format was ideal for this study, as it allowed openness and additional inquiries, and all this validates the focus on the employees' emotional states during any tech-derived strategy execution process (Kallio et al., 2016, pp. 2958–2959). Internal communication, digital strategy, employees' emotions, and the banking sector in Bangladesh--all these contexts were integrated in this study, and readers can relate and compare it with the same context to justify the trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1–11).

The emotional parts of the conversations from the interviews were transcribed and analysed through thematic investigation. This method is used to study qualitative interviews, which fulfills the authenticity requirements (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 77–101; Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1–11). The personal experiences of the attendees are reliable when they are supported by enough proof, and in this study managers and employees in operations provided almost the same information regarding their emotions and IC even though from various angles. Overall, the process was simple and fair. Data were collected with due respect and reliability.

4. Findings and analysis

This chapter highlights the findings resulting from the six interviews with the upper management and frontline employees--one manager and his two team members from the department 1 and one manager with his two team members from department 2. This study provides the results in three parts, including digital strategy implementation and what changes have occurred due to the change, internal communication and leaders' support, and the emotional reactions of the team members throughout the process of digital strategy execution. Results come from the first two sections through content analysis and themes generated by thematic analysis for the third section. Therefore, themes generated by thematic analysis will be presented here in detail. To support the findings, this study also used some secondary data from the case company website.

4.1 Digital strategy implementation

Recently the case bank's two departments have encountered two significant strategic shifts, where one department experienced the establishment of foundational tools and the other department launched automation.

4.1.1 Manager views on digital strategy implementation

Managers from both departments were asked in the interview what changes have come in their day-to-day operations due to the establishment of digital strategies. The question was "Has any new digital strategy been introduced at your workplace in recent years that has changed your leadership responsibilities?"

To answer this question, the manager from department 1 said,

"*We recently developed a visual platform. Basically, this has changed so many things. My leadership responsibility, along with our coworkers' problems, and our coworkers face a lot of problems……. Before that they used to get complaints through hard copies or*

therefore, or they received the complaints from phone calls. So, this problem actually solved their dissatisfaction they face because that we also developed a process."

A manager from another unit said,

"Numbers of digital transformations are continuously implemented in the organization, and our bank is not out of it. The new system has significantly reduced our pressure. So, the pressure is reduced."

The interview data shows that the adopted digital strategy has changed the responsibilities of both the managers. The manager from department 1 said now they receive customer complaints through a single route instead of paper or phone calls. As a result, some employees face struggles, and dissatisfaction arises among them. Therefore, now he needs to solve the issues of his co-workers and assist them. On the other hand, the manager from department 2 said that the new strategy has decreased their pressure; hence, they feel more relaxed.

When any digital strategy is implemented in the case bank's unit 1, the manager chooses meetings as a communication tool. They arrange several conversations and conferences followed by emails to ensure that every employee in the specific unit understands the new technique and it fits their formal OAT (operational acceptance) process. The manager said,

"….basically initially we we conduct through a meeting, primarily meeting. Then after that we issued, we issued through e-mail. ……But mainly, mainly through meetings, because anything we develop, we need UAT (user access test) process like user access test. So for that reason we need several meetings. Then, we we deliver that information".

UAT a step where employees test the newly deployed technological initiative as if they were the customers. The important aspect was that this test is done before the final implementation of any new digital tools.

The manager from another department also gave emphasis on emails as a communication channel during any digital changing process. The information is also communicated through the company's internal portal. Additionally, they provide short quizzes with little incentives. Thus, it helps the employees to understand and evaluate the technological strategy. The manager said,

"…….many strategies to make the employee to know about the digital transformational strategy, usually email, and then we have internal portal and there have notification for all employees…….. and also quiz.

Both managers noted that some team members react to digital strategy as they feel discomfort. However, manager 1 stated that at the primary stage employees feel confused. They think about whether the new process would be sustainable or not. Gradually, their anxiety goes away as they try to adjust themselves to the new platform. Manager 1 said,

"Initially, they feel nervous because anything new coming, they face several, several reactions like is this really work or not?.....sustainable or not. But when they get used to it, they are actually, they're actually quiet.....happy to work."

Manager 2 explained most of the employees feel curious about the new process, although a few team members feel concerned regarding the new tactic, as they face challenges. He said,

"Ya, initially it's a positive response, they feel interested, it makes their task easy. But very few…….are worried about the process, because they might face some difficulties."

These data indicate that after a certain period of time employees' immediate reluctance turns into confidence.

Furthermore, both managers explained distinct communication strategies to make the digital tactics execution process understandable to their fellow colleagues.

Manager 1 said,

"Okay, primarily we try to, we try to give them some physical tests like they can get the things very well.... Besides that, we try to give them some, show them some visual presentations, which help them to understand what is actually happening."

Manager 2 said,

"*Okay, yeah, first we, me and two of my team members receive the strategy from the particular department and we learn about it properly, then we give training.....2 or 4 hours training and some quiz."*

It indicates that although the two managers are from the same bank, they follow different information delivery methods to their respective teams or departments. One manager uses visual presentations and physical tests prior to the launch. On the other hand, another manager applies two or four hours of training and a quiz test. However, the main planning methods are established by the organization level. Therefore, it is clear that the information can be the same, and it is set centrally; however, the managers or team leaders adjust it according to their nature and the responsibilities of their departments. As a result, employees' experiences can be varied.

4.1.2 Employee views on digital strategy implementation

Frontline employees were asked how they get informed about the new change. Participant B answered,

”Formally we get e-mail confirmation from the concerned department and after that it also shared in our official portal, and our managers also share it through our WhatsApp group officially.”

Participant E from another department answered,

”Usually we get it through e-mail official circular..... we received product FAQ is frequently asked questions, detailed details from the digital banking division.”

It indicates that both approaches are designed for providing transparent and clear updates. In addition, managers’ information is closely connected with the information provided by their team members. Thus, it ensures the reliability of this study. Digital strategy execution brings job threats and system malfunctions; therefore, employees feel uncertain. However, their fear decreases when they are well informed and they realize the effectiveness of the strategy. It is very fascinating that different managers emphasized different ways for educating their team members. Hence, it clearly indicates that the strategies of communication were greatly influenced by distinct departments’ operations and also by the respective leadership style.

Employee B said,

”Actually, when any digital strategy is implemented, we all, the employees, are quite interested and curious to know the how it will work. System problem might be happen, but I feel sometime I feel uncertain about the adapting to the new process.”

Further, he said,

”*Overall, it made it more easier because we can now access the information more faster, respond to the customer within an estimated time period. But the initial phase, it can feel a bit a little challenging until we get it more.”*

Participant E stated,

”Uh, though initially I thought it would, uh, make my life difficult here, but now I realize it is, uh, making my job easier..... So, then I feel comfortable with it. but if I say from the beginning it was like some stressful because I didn't know how to use it or how can I get the benefit or benefit from it. So, I was stressed like I thought I would make some mistakes to use it”

From the interview data, it is clear that both wings of the case company have experienced important change, as they shifted their operation from traditional to automated. The new tech strategy has reduced the repetitive work in department 2, although there are still some problems like system failure.

4.2 Internal communication and leader’s support

Internal communication and the support from leaders can be viewed from the manager perspective and the employee perspective.

4.2.1 Manager views on internal communication and their support

When the new digital strategies were executed, employees were informed through the internal communication channel. The managers said they use emails, WhatsApp, and meetings. In addition, the bank used their common platform where only employees can log in.

Manager 1: *“…. basically, we are communicating through emails, meetings and these are the things briefing with them the two-way communication so that they can get to know the things better.....This is actually happening from today onward. So, this is the main criteria and after that team meeting and zoom, WhatsApp, these are already also happening.”*

Manger 2:*”We use 3 or 4 channels, traditional channels, you know.... internal magazines.... quizzes. The new initiatives or innovations are placed in the magazines.”*

Managers from the two departments described various scopes regarding communication methods. All the information is quite similar to each other. The case company's communication channels include emails, WhatsApp, internal official magazines, the company's official website, quizzes, brief meetings, refresh sessions, and seminars. These communication channels can foster employees' focus and attention throughout the strategy enforcement process.

Furthermore, managers were asked what kind of reactions they observe among their team members in the digital strategy implementation process.

Manager 1: *"….they're very confused during the time..... But when when we try to give them the ideas, some of them are encouraging but most of them feel very confused, very resistance..... but it takes time. So I think they will, they will be, they will accept the change".*

Manager 2: "*there are two things, emotional issues have raised. Number one is job security and another part maybe they have some challenges to use these strategies or changes…*"

The above conversation indicates that both of the team leaders have noticed that their team members face some issues during digital change; however, they are hopeful that with time everyone will accept the process. As managers, both of them noticed not only nervousness but also excitement among employees. Therefore, strategy implementation always requires finding out individual goals, such as retaining job efficacy and protecting their job and reputation.

Manager 1: *"Yes, basically as a manager, I observe both nervousness and excitement. Initially the the enforcement created maybe they are like stressful, but later everyone has accepted."*

The managers were also asked, “How do you make a balance conveying technical details along with emotional guidance during any digital strategy execution?”

Manager 1*: “Okay, I primarily try to balance by explaining the technical details in a simple way. Some are giving them some examples. This is actually like practical terms, which always motivates the team through empathy and encouragement. This is, I believe, and this will help them understand the process clearly and confident during the digital strategy execution.”*

Manager 2:” This *is a big and difficult and challenging process, because the emotional parts come from human insights. So, sometimes you can’t understand properly. What they feel. In my opinion there are a few numbers of people who are not responding properly because of their emotional facts.....however, in our organization there are soft skills training sessions, internal and external.”*

The manager from unit 1 focused on translating technical terms to team member; it indicates that the manger is very proactive. However, it can be very time-consuming and it also depends on his digital competency. Besides, he may face workloads. In contrast, manager 2 emphasized soft-skills training to improve the base of the employees, as he thinks that employees’ emotions are not always obvious; sometimes they remain concealed. Managers were asked which type of communication tool is considered best to them.

Manager 1: “*Currently, yeah, currently everyone is convenient; everyone is convenient to use WhatsApp. So, we also prefer WhatsApp as an informal communication, and after that, e-mail or other other formal communication is also there. But the WhatsApp group is the main...”*

Manager2: *”Yes, WhatsApp, and email are regular communicating tools in our organization.... team meeting.... we have reward giving ceremonies sometimes”*

Manager of department 1 thinks WhatsApp is the best method of internal communication. Manager of department 2 also thinks that email, WhatsApp, and regular team meetings are bets.

Managers follow some strategies to communicate with the frontline employees. For example, in department 2, they conduct product- and process-related quizzes, and they have also launched a number of prizes for those who won the quizzes to inform employees about the new strategy.

Manager 1:" Basically talking about strategy, I would say that I I try to give them relevant information..."

Manager 2:" In *our department...contact center, we evaluate employees response and performance through all channels, we do RCA (root cause analysis) .....we have module.....through this module we can identify what are the difficulties for them"*

"we, we are conducting product and process related quiz on this particular digital strategy project, and and they have launched a number of prizes for those who know better about this strategy and do good in quizzes."

Manager 1 gives importance to supplying important data, while manager 2 focuses on RCA and a module by which he can identify his team member's problems.

4.2.2 Employee views on internal communication and leader's support

The frontline employees from the two units were asked, "How does your manager communicate the instructions or important guidelines regarding that strategy, and are these guidelines clear to you?

Employee B said," Our *manager usually explains the update very clearly, and he doesn't just forward it or forward any instruction to us but also explains why the change is being made and also clears all the confusion among us, and that also really help us to understand and."*

Employee E:" He *always guides us through the new technologies or something new when it comes to our job or in our department. He as a manager, he was well informed about it, and he know us. Uh.....So, he he knows actually how how he can teach us."*

Employee F*: "Communication channels……emails, short meetings, seminars or training sessions or daily refresher sessions"*

Employee C: "He discusses with us through short meetings."

Employee from the two departments also described various aspects of communication methods. They mentioned that their departmental supervisor were very supportive and different scopes of communication helped them to be informed about the new strategy.

The team members from the two departments were also asked that which type of communication tool is considered best to them. Team members from department 1 answered,

Participant B:" Okay, *I think meeting is the best, and open discussion is always best other than any other process. e-mails are also useful for record keeping, but direct discussions are always better I think."*

Participant C*:" Emails, emails, face to face meetings are the best communication channels..."*

Frontline employees from department 2 answered,

Employee E*:" I prefer the physical, one-to-one communication or like, physical meetings. Apart from it, I can say, like Google meets, Google meet is a common module."*

Employee F*:" I* think training sessions or short meetings are efficient to make us aware or informed during the digital strategy implementation."

From the data, we see the manager of department 1 thinks that WhatsApp is the best communication tool, whereas his team members thinks that meetings and open discussions are best. In addition, the manager of the second department also considers that

WhatsApp, team meetings, email communication are the best methods. His team members think that physical meetings and training sessions are best. The above conversations suggest that informal methods like WhatsApp are easy, but they can be ineffective if they are not supported by face-to-face meetings or participative dialogue.

Table 3. Best communication tools to team leaders and team members.

Department name	Participant's name	Positions	Considered as best communication tool
Department 1	A	Supervisor	WhatsApp, email, other formal communication tools.
	B	Frontline employee	Meeting, open & direct discussion, email.
	C	Frontline employee	Face to face meetings, emails.
Department 2	D	Manager	WhatsApp, email, team meeting, reward giving ceremony.
	E	Frontline employee	Physical meeting, one-to-one communication, *Google meet.*
	F	Frontline employee	Training session and short meetings.

Frontline employees were also asked how they share their opinions and thoughts regarding the digital strategy. They said, they share their opinions and concerns with their co-workers and team managers. They acknowledged their leader carefully listens to their problems and then provides necessary support. They also have feedback options to express their responses.

Employee F*: " If I face any struggles or challenges, at first I try to share with our colleagues or team leaders to find out the easier ways to reduce my challenges or reduce my problems, and they also support me. Always listens to my concerns or ideas."*

Employee E: "*Well, here in our organization there are several platforms, like we can give our feedback in the feedback box or as well as we have our digital, some digital modules."*

The next sub-section will cover employees' emotional reactions throughout the technological strategy implementation process.

4.3 Emotional reactions of the team members throughout the process of digital strategy execution

This section can be described from the managerial point of views and also from the employee point of views on team emotional reactions throughout the process of digital strategy execution.

4.3.1 Manager views on team emotional reactions throughout the process of digital strategy execution

Managers were asked how they can manage employees' emotional reactions through internal communication in digital strategy implementation.

Manager 1:" Yeah*, internal communication influences employees like emotions during digital transportation. But therefore, I would say clear communication, interaction with employees can reduce the uncertainty the like they feel actually not burdened in the company."*

Manager 2:" We *arrange quizzes with prize, so, if they good performance they can receive some award based on the performance."*

The interview data indicates that managers believe that IC can help them in reducing team members' uncertainty and burden. Because of proper communication, employees can perform better, and also, they can get some incentives as well.

Manager 1:*" ….. I shared information to my team members…….. internal communication with my team members helps me to understand through……. I try my level best so that my employees in my department feel like they are including the team. They are, they are welcoming."*
The case company's organizational culture regarding communication is open; however, the management still feels that some employees feel shy to share their opinions.

Manager 1:" In *our bank like managers and frontline employees are communicating openly, but initially frontline employees are like feeling a bit shy...."*

Fostering support network and having constant presence through communication was seen as important by manager:

Manger 1: "W*e always try to give them training or communicating with with with them continuously. Some of them are actually happy most. some employees are still not…"*

Preparing employees through open communication in training was also seen as vital:
He also said*, "Total team effort, everyone gets to know that the things then it is actually starting the journey for for us actually."*

The manager from department 2 provided a statement.

"We have separate training institute……so they conduct training & after this training they conduct feedback session. In that session employee can ask any question…."

4.3.2 Employee views on team emotional reactions throughout the process of digital strategy execution

It was noticeable in the interviews that employees' emotions were shifting from uncertainty to confidence. Their emotional reactions started with anxiety, uneasiness, fear, and confusion regarding the newly deployed systems and technical tools. However, over time their responses were turning into confidence and comfort in certain situations. Employees statements about digital strategic tools, like fear of making mistakes, system failure, and doubt about sustainability coverage, were noticeable. Although their team leaders are trying to encourage them through refresher sessions, training, and meetings. Employees said if they face any struggles, they directly go to the team leader and look for an explanation. Team leaders' patience is vital in that case.

Employees from the other department were asked how their team leader addresses and supports their emotional responses during digital tactics implementation and how the internal communication culture is in their particular department.

Employee F:" *I think emotion is closely related with contact center, because we have to go through more challenges or more changes in policy in the process. So, our manager handles our emotional responses through good communication during the digital changes*".

She again said," Their *communication or leadership styles have great impact on us. Our manager appreciates us when we handle tough, tough calls or any cases, any tough customers, when they acknowledge our reports".*

Employee B: "*Okay, in our department IC, it's very open and friendly. Everyone can share their ideas, their thought freely, and the teamwork is highly encouraged in our team and in our department.*

Across the interview statements, this study finds out that when IC between top management and frontline employees is open and participative, the staff members feel free to share their thoughts and concerns in the digital strategy implementation journey. The digital strategy adoption process also became comfortable and faster.

Employee E:" But *his guideline is clear enough to us because we are working here for so many years, for a long time together…… Well, emotional thing is really matter in our job role, because you already know that, know that I work in a contact center, "*

Across the interviews employees demanded training before launching any strategy so that they can prepare themselves with digital knowledge and expertise for the newly applied system. They also focused on team efforts. They said they also share their problems or thoughts with their colleagues. They mentioned their fear turning into confidence when the entire team supports each other throughout the rollout.

By suggesting training as a safeguarding factor employee B said:

"Definitely, I I would suggest if any short training session or any demonstration can be taken before any new system is introduced. That way everyone feels more prepared and confident from the starting of the implementation."

Furthermore, he mentioned," Open *discussion and proper training before launching any digital transformation".*

Participant C:" .....any official group where everyone can connect....."

So, one team member from department one suggested for any common official group to connect with each other, and another one suggested arranging any short training session before introducing the new digital strategy.

The team members from the same department emphasize more on informal communication, open sessions, and short trainings with their leaders.

Employee E: "*Also the physical communication and virtual communication or digital platform all are available here. So, I think it is good and sometimes our manager and the management persons, they get in touch with us not only like formally, they also care us informally.....when we are having problem outside my work."*

Employee F:" I think follow-up session or open question and answer session on short training to improve this digital literacy in this emotional supporting digital strategy adoption process."

A few numbers of staff members struggle with their emotional states regarding the change, and these circumstances suggest after and pre-training sessions, open IC, and team bonding that can help in turning employees' negative responses into positive ones.

4.4 Comparative analysis

Overall, the findings show that both departments have gone through digital strategic changes that shifted the operational system from manual work to platform-led. As a result, employees in both departments face emotional challenges in different ways, as they have different leaders, different job roles, and separate service requirements. Consequently, all these things foster different speeds of adoption and different reactions during the digital rollout procedures.

Although both departments executed different tools, team leaders and team members described almost the same emotional responses. Communication channels are also almost the same in two departments; however, a few of them are still struggling. Therefore, emails, WhatsApp, training, informal communication, group discussions, seminars, short meeting sessions, and town hall meetings are important communication tools in managing employees' emotions during digital strategy implementation.

The process and tools used to address employee emotions and communicate internally digital strategy was different. While unit two relied on WhatsApp and rapid assistance, department one relied on short briefings and user-friendly data to settle their emotions. Moreover, department 1 reported pre-launch training, while the employees of other departments reported the importance of follow-ups, and these things shifted hesitation into confidence.

In addition, quizzes to make employees aware of the new digital tools and prizes for quiz winners can help in reducing employees' stress during the implementation of digital strategies. While specific internal communication tools were used to inform employees about digital strategy, employees found interactions and meetings with manager as the most useful way to understand the strategy and address their feelings.

5 Conclusion

This is the last chapter of this thesis, and it includes the discussions of the findings, the deficiencies of this study, and the suggestions for future research avenues. The main research question of this paper is “How can internal communication play a crucial role in regulating employees’ emotions while embracing digital strategy?” Therefore, this chapter draws a conclusion on an overview of how internal communication can address employees’ reactions during the digital strategy implementation process in the financial sector. Moreover, in this section, the primary results of the findings are discussed and linked to the theoretical insights explaining how current study further enriches our understanding of the topic in question. Furthermore, this section highlights the drawbacks of this research, and it also provides beneficial alternatives for various research possibilities in the future.

The different aspects of digital strategy, interpersonal skills of leaders’, and internal communication’s influence on employees’ behaviour have already been researched (Bharadwaj et al., 2013, pp. 471–482; Matt et al., 2015, pp. 339–343; Men & Yue, 2019). How different methods of internal communication can turn employees’ negative responses into positive ones, how emotions and leadership styles differ from one department to another, and how these emotions can be handled effectively through internal communication during digital rollouts, especially across different banking operations, are explored through this study. This study used qualitative interviews and secondary data to investigate the research problem with the case study research strategy.

This study compares two departments of a leading local private commercial bank of Bangladesh. It indicates that the variety of emotional assistance, the apparent simplicity of different leadership communications, and the digital strategy adoption process vary from one department to another. However, the emotional reactions and communication styles are almost the same in both departments.

5.1 Discussion of the findings

The results show that the role of internal communication of different departments in handling employees' emotions throughout the digital strategy enforcement process is very important. Moreover, leadership support also has an impact on frontline employees' responses. From the case company, it is seen that throughout the time of change everyone faces some emotional issues. Therefore, the managers guided their team members to adjust to the new strategic tool. Basically, employees are the centre of the operations. As a result, employees of the case company went through an emotive excursion. Their emotions started with uncertainty, stress, and fear, which later turned into involvement during digital strategy implementation. Here lies the importance of internal communication.

Banks are highly regulated financial organizations, and they need to update their services over time. Therefore, they continuously adopt different kinds of digital strategies at their operations. They need strong and effective internal communication systems so that employees become aware of the new change timely. Because of poor internal communication, employees' mental health can be affected. This study indicates that employees' emotional reactions during technological change can be handled by optimum internal communication. When supervisors offer relevant information and constant updates, their team members feel included. In contrast, when internal communication is slow or unclear, workers feel stressed. These finding srelate to previous observations that open and reciprocal interactions would lessen the emotional tiredness in the time of change (Kim & Lee, 2021, pp. 410–424).

Furthermore, leadership communication also plays an important role in controlling emotion. Working as a team member, where the leader encouraged team effort, generates collective identity. Additionally, when the team members work under the same department and same leader for a long time, it cultivates an intense feeling of assurance and loyalty during the time of strategic change. Thus, this relationship additionally can minimize resistance and elaborate forthright discussions. According to motivating

language theory, supporting language and proper guidance help to build trust and mental resilience (Men & Yue, 2019, p. 268).

In the conducted case study, both departments witnessed digital change, and they faced different issues. For example, department one was facing technical system-related issues and deadline pressure. On the other hand, workers of department two were confused about the benefits of the new strategic tools. However, both groups acknowledged that continuous interaction, motivating leadership, and informal meetings helped team leaders to emotionally adjust to the new strategy.

The case company was conducting a quiz system where they offer prizes for those who know the new product and process best. It was a nice approach or tool to gamify awareness raising and learning new digital tools. It tests the workers' knowledge regarding that new tool. The participants also mentioned about UAT (user access test) process. This process of allowing employees to go through the customer experience before some digital tools are released can also enhance employees' knowledge regarding the digital change.

It is clear from the findings that individuals' anxiety and fear not only come from digital resources but also from worries, as they are concerned how new digital tactics would affect them individually as well as their potential to pursue their own objectives. The need to relate strategic and personal objectives to enable strategy implementation has been observed in the previous research (Šilenskytė, 2020, pp. 254-259). If overall strategic goals can be converted or into precise tactical procedures that are meaningful to employees, it can lead to successful execution of strategic plans (Šilenskytė, 2020).

Therefore, to understand individuals' needs and goals, internal communication is very important, especially meetings and continuous interaction with manager as observed in this study. Overall, the findings confirm that internal communication is not only a means for information but also an important element to handle employees' responses in the

time of digital strategy adjustments. It is such a mechanism that develops a psychological shield net among the team members. However, as it was observed, internal communication tools observed as most useful by managers may not be perceived the same way by employees. While managers prioritize more formal internal communication tools meant to inform, according to employees, internal communication, such as meetings, enables employees to express their thoughts and rebuild confidence during the change. Thus, internal communication routes must be chosen according to the needs of employees. Some employees feel comfortable with formal ways of communication systems, and some feel comfortable with casual communication.

5.2 Limitations of the study

Although this study provides some useful insights, it has some limitations. This study concentrates on a single bank by conducting an intensive qualitative investigation, which allows a complete understanding of the actual worker experiences. Thus, it maintains the focus and scalability of this research. In order to obtain relevant information on how employees' thoughts can be influenced by IC throughout the journey of digital strategy evolution. Overall, it signifies that the outcomes are rich and easily applicable for comparing banking settings. However, this study examines only two departments of a bank. Therefore, it limits the relevance to other industries.

Secondly, this study is a qualitative study. It used semi-structured interviews for collecting data. As a result, the results are based on managers' and frontline employees' personal experiences rather than any tangible outcomes. However, the data synthesis between managers and frontline employees of two departments was interesting, and it enhanced the transparency, the study could have been further strengthened by a large-scale observation, such as surveys on employee emotional reactions.

Third, this study explored psychological responses of employees in a specific sector and cultural setting, like the banking sector in Bangladesh. This cultural and organizational setting might be different from other settings. Lastly, even though all the interviews were

conducted in English, all the participants' mother tongue is Bangla. Consequently, in some places perhaps clear meanings have been lost in transcription because of minor grammatical mistakes. However, it was checked carefully, but language might have been a certain barrier to entirely express oneself.

5.3 Suggestions for future research

There are several areas to expand this study. First of all, this study compares two departments of a single private commercial bank. Therefore, future research can compare two or more banks to explore whether organizational sector, type and culture affect internal communication and emotions or not. This study is done on the banking sector. There are avenues to explore other sectors like technology, finance, healthcare, education, and manufacturing. Future research can also extend this same topic by doing continuous research by following emotional dynamics. For example, future research can study the role of different internal communication techniques, like training, in managing employees' reactions before, during, and after the adoption of digital strategies.

Moreover, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative methods might strengthen the future study. For example, combining semi-structured interviews with surveys can reinforce the case. In addition, this study only focuses on the Bangladeshi banks. Hence, future research comparing Bangladeshi banks with Western organizational cultures or multinational banks can explore how cultural norms govern internal communication as well as emotional reactions during digital strategy implementation. How the multilingual communication proficiency of team leaders or managers can play a role in handling employees' emotional journey in multinational corporations can be another avenue for future research.

Further investigation may relate internal communication and workers' psychological balance and its impact on customer satisfaction or employees' performance. For example, additional research can be on how employees' mental stability can influence their

performance or their service providing competency through internal communication during any strategic change in the organization.

Overall, internal communication is very important in managing staff members' emotional reactions during the adoption of digital strategy. When communication is clear and transparent between top management and frontline employees, it helps to direct employees' emotions from the feeling of nervousness to sustained reliance. Actually, employees' emotions and digital strategy execution are closely linked with each other. The findings point out how open discussions, regular feedback, and informal discussions alleviate the negative reactions of employees and make them prepared for accepting digital strategic changes.

Leadership support and their ways of conducting internal communication can be also explored further. This study shows that a workforce becomes more flexible and agile to change when their managers are emotionally connected with them. Employees also become more adoptable when their team leaders listen to them rather than just providing information. However, this finding could be further explored beyond the banking sector in other industries.

References

Al Afaishat, T., Al-Maadhedee, M., & Yamin, I. (2024). The impact of adopting the digital strategy on the competitive advantage: A moderating role of employee satisfaction in the Jordanian banking sector. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, *22*(1), 193–204. https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.22(1).2024.17

Ancona, D. G., & Caldwell, D. F. (1992). Bridging the Boundary: External Activity and Performance in Organizational Teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *37*(4), 634. https://doi.org/10.2307/2393475

Atikur Rahaman, Md., Dilip Taru, R., Gupta, A., Prajapat, V., & Abdul Latif Mahmud, Md. (2023). Factors influencing employee performance and their impact on productivity: A study of commercial banks in Bangladesh. *Banks and Bank Systems*, *18*(2), 127–136. https://doi.org/10.21511/bbs.18(2).2023.11

Barrett, D. J. (2002). Change communication: Using strategic employee communication to facilitate major change. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *7*(4), 219–231. https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280210449804

Beer, M., Voelpel, S. C., Leibold, M., & Tekie, E. B. (2005). Strategic Management as Organizational Learning. *Long Range Planning*, *38*(5), 445–465. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2005.04.008

Begum, A., Hashim, R. A., & Md.Som, H. (2025). The Moderating Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Mentorship, Job Autonomy, Technostress and Employee's Turnover Intention in Bangladesh Private Banking Sector. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation*, *XII*(II), 430–447. https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.12020038

Ben Ghrbeia, S., & Alzubi, A. (2024). Building Micro-Foundations for Digital Transformation: A Moderated Mediation Model of the Interplay between Digital Literacy and Digital Transformation. *Sustainability*, *16*(9), 3749. https://doi.org/10.3390/su16093749

Bharadwaj, A., El Sawy, O. A., Pavlou, P. A., & Venkatraman, N. (2013). Digital Business Strategy: Toward a Next Generation of Insights. *MIS Quarterly*, *37*(2), 471–482. https://doi.org/10.25300/MISQ/2013/37:2.3

Boswell, W. R., & Boudreau, J. W. (2001). How leading companies create, measure and achieve strategic results through "line of sight." *Management Decision*, *39*(10), 851–860. https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000006525

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bueno, L. A., Sigahi, T. F. A. C., Rampasso, I. S., Leal Filho, W., & Anholon, R. (2024). Impacts of digitization on operational efficiency in the banking sector: Thematic analysis and research agenda proposal. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, *4*(1), 100230. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jjimei.2024.100230

Çetin, M., Karabay, M. E., & Efe, M. N. (2012). The Effects of Leadership Styles and the Communication Competency of Bank Managers on the Employee's Job Satisfaction: The Case of Turkish Banks. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *58*, 227–235. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.996

Cetindamar Kozanoglu, D., & Abedin, B. (2021). Understanding the role of employees in digital transformation: Conceptualization of digital literacy of employees as a

multi-dimensional organizational affordance. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, *34*(6), 1649–1672. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEIM-01-2020-0010

Cieslak, V., & Valor, C. (2025). Moving beyond conventional resistance and resistors: An integrative review of employee resistance to digital transformation. *Cogent Business & Management*, *12*(1), 2442550. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2442550

Correani, A., De Massis, A., Frattini, F., Petruzzelli, A. M., & Natalicchio, A. (2020). Implementing a Digital Strategy: Learning from the Experience of Three Digital Transformation Projects. *California Management Review*, *62*(4), 37–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125620934864

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design* (Fourth edition). SAGE.

D'Cruz, M., Timbrell, G., & Watson, J. (2015). *Strategy in a Digital World*.

Dolphin, R. R. (2005). Internal Communications: Today's Strategic Imperative. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *11*(3), 171–190. https://doi.org/10.1080/1352726042000315414

Dubois, A., & Gadde, L.-E. (2014). "Systematic combining"—A decade later. *Journal of Business Research*, *67*(6), 1277–1284. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.03.036

Ertiö, T., Eriksson, T., Rowan, W., & McCarthy, S. (2024). The role of digital leaders' emotional intelligence in mitigating employee technostress. *Business Horizons*, *67*(4), 399–409. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2024.03.004

Harkness, J. (2000). Measuring the effectiveness of change – The role of internal communication in change management. *Journal of Change Management*, *1*(1), 66–73. https://doi.org/10.1080/714042457

Hinds, P. J., Neeley, T. B., & Cramton, C. D. (2014). Language as a lightning rod: Power contests, emotion regulation, and subgroup dynamics in global teams. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *45*(5), 536–561. https://doi.org/10.1057/jibs.2013.62

Hizam, S. M., Akter, H., Sentosa, I., Ahmed, W., Masrek, M. N., & Ali, J. (2023). Predicting Workforce Engagement towards Digital Transformation through a Multi-Analytical Approach. *Sustainability*, *15*(8), 6835. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15086835

Hrebiniak, L. G. (2006). Obstacles to Effective Strategy Implementation. *Organizational Dynamics*, *35*(1), 12–31. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orgdyn.2005.12.001

Huy, Q. N. (2002). Emotional Balancing of Organizational Continuity and Radical Change: The Contribution of Middle Managers. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *47*(1), 31–69. https://doi.org/10.2307/3094890

Ismail, M. H., Khater, M., & Zaki, M. (n.d.). *Digital Business Transformation and Strategy: What Do We Know So Far?*

Kallio, H., Pietilä, A., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: Developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *72*(12), 2954–2965. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031

Karimi, J., & Walter, Z. (2015). The Role of Dynamic Capabilities in Responding to Digital Disruption: A Factor-Based Study of the Newspaper Industry. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, *32*(1), 39–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2015.1029380

Khan, A. K., Khalid, M., Abbas, N., & Khalid, S. (2022). COVID-19-related job insecurity and employees' behavioral outcomes: Mediating role of emotional exhaustion and moderating role of symmetrical internal communication. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *34*(7), 2496–2515. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-05-2021-0639

Kim, K. H., & Lee, Y. (2021). Employees' Communicative Behaviors in Response to Emotional Exhaustion: The Moderating Role of Transparent Communication. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, *15*(5), 410–424. https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2021.1967959

Kitsios, F., Giatsidis, I., & Kamariotou, M. (2021). Digital Transformation and Strategy in the Banking Sector: Evaluating the Acceptance Rate of E-Services. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, *7*(3), 204. https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc7030204

Klein, S. P., Spieth, P., & Söllner, M. (2024). Employee acceptance of digital transformation strategies: A paradox perspective. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *41*(5), 999–1021. https://doi.org/10.1111/jpim.12722

Kringelum, L. B., Holm, C. G., Holmgren, J., Friis, O., & Jensen, K. F. (2025). Digital transformation: Strategy comes first to lay the groundwork. *Journal of Business Strategy*, *46*(1–2), 3–10. https://doi.org/10.1108/JBS-09-2023-0199

Kutlutürk Yıkılmaz, S., Yikilmaz, I., Bekmezci, M., Surucu, L., & Cetinkaya, B. (2024). Exploring the Moderating Effect of Musculoskeletal Pain on Technostress-Induced Burnout: A Cross-Sectional Study of Bank Employees. *Healthcare*, *12*(20), 2064. https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12202064

Lee, E., Kang, M., Kim, Y., & Yang, S.-U. (2022). Exploring the interrelationship and roles of employee–organization relationship outcomes between symmetrical internal communication and employee job engagement. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *27*(2), 264–283. https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-12-2020-0167

Li, F. (2023). What is digital strategy and does it really matter? In C. Cennamo, G. Dagnino, & F. Zhu (Eds.), *Research Handbook on Digital Strategy* (pp. 393–410). Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800378902.00031

Liu, Y., Bian, Y., & Zhang, W. (2022). How Does Enterprises' Digital Transformation Impact the Educational Structure of Employees? Evidence from China. *Sustainability*, *14*(15), 9432. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14159432

Matt, C., Hess, T., & Benlian, A. (2015). Digital Transformation Strategies. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, *57*(5), 339–343. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12599-015-0401-5

Men, L. R. (2014). Strategic Internal Communication: Transformational Leadership, Communication Channels, and Employee Satisfaction. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *28*(2), 264–284. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318914524536

Men, L. R., & Yue, C. A. (2019). Creating a positive emotional culture: Effect of internal communication and impact on employee supportive behaviors. *Public Relations Review*, *45*(3), 101764. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2019.03.001

Mosharrafa, R. A., Nazmunnahar, Baqui Khalily, M. A., & Islam, Md. R. (2024). Evaluation of mental health problems and psychological burnout among the bankers in Bangladesh: A cross-sectional study. *WORK: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment & Rehabilitation*, 10519815241292440. https://doi.org/10.1177/10519815241292440

Muduli, A., & Choudhury, A. (2025). Exploring the role of workforce agility on digital transformation: A systematic literature review. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, *32*(2), 492–512. https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-02-2023-0108

Nguyen, C. M. A., & Ha, M.-T. (2023). The interplay between internal communication, employee engagement, job satisfaction, and employee loyalty in higher education institutions in Vietnam. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, *10*(1), 329. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01806-8

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*(1), 1609406917733847. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Rabbani, G. M. Md. N., Fuad, M. N., Haque, T. A., Siam, S. A. J., & Mahbub, M. B. (2024). EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF BANGLADESHI ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES. *Cultural Communication and Socialization Journal*, *5*(1), 01–06. https://doi.org/10.26480/ccsj.01.2024.01.06

Raj, A. B., & Goute, A. K. (2025). Internal branding and technostress among employees—The mediation role of employee wellbeing and moderating effects of digital internal communication. *Acta Psychologica*, *255*, 104943. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.104943

Rani, S., & Danu, A. (n.d.). Does digital competence really matter? The impact of attitude and ICT on research performance. *Higher Education*.

Ritala, P., Baiyere, A., Hughes, M., & Kraus, S. (2021). Digital strategy implementation: The role of individual entrepreneurial orientation and relational capital. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *171*, 120961. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120961

Ross, J. W., Sebastian, I. M., & Beath, C. M. (2018). How to Develop a Great Digital Strategy. In Mit Sloan Management Review, *How to Go Digital* (pp. 3–12). The MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/11633.003.0004

Santoso, N. R., Sulistyaningtyas, I. D., & Pratama, B. P. (2022). Transformational Leadership During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Strengthening Employee Engagement Through Internal Communication. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 01968599221095182. https://doi.org/10.1177/01968599221095182

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students* (5. ed). Financial Times Prentice Hall.

Schlegel, D., & Kraus, P. (2023). Skills and competencies for digital transformation – a critical analysis in the context of robotic process automation. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, *31*(3), 804–822. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-04-2021-2707

Šilenskytė, A. (2020). Corporate strategy implementation: how strategic plans become individual strategic actions across organizational levels of the MNC. Acta Wasaensia 446. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Vaasa. https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-476-919-8

Sinitsyna, E., Anand, A., & Stocker, M. (2024). The role of internal communication on employee loyalty – a theoretical synthesis. *Journal of Asia Business Studies*, *18*(2), 367–384. https://doi.org/10.1108/JABS-05-2023-0179

Sun, Z.-Y., Zhong, X., Meng, L., & Zhao, Y.-Y. (2025). Does task-technology fit suppress employee innovation in digital transformation? The role of positive emotions and creative self-expectations. *Chinese Management Studies*, *19*(4), 1029–1050. https://doi.org/10.1108/CMS-06-2023-0269

Thelen, P. D., & Men, L. R. (2023). Commentary: The Role of Internal Communication in Fostering Employee Advocacy: An Exploratory Study. *International Journal of Business Communication*, *60*(4), 1441–1454. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488420975832

Tian, G., Yang, Y., Zhang, X., Zhao, M., & Tian, Y. (2025). From defensive reasoning to innovation: How digital tools foster positive emotions in organizations. *BMC Psychology*, *13*(1), 146. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-02486-6

Tkalac Verčič, A., & Men, L. R. (2023a). Redefining the link between internal communication and employee engagement. *Public Relations Review*, *49*(1), 102279. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2022.102279

Tkalac Verčič, A., & Men, L. R. (2023b). Redefining the link between internal communication and employee engagement. *Public Relations Review*, *49*(1), 102279. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2022.102279

Vaivio, J. (2012). Interviews – Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing. *European Accounting Review*, *21*(1), 186–189. https://doi.org/10.1080/09638180.2012.675165

Van Zeebroeck, N., Kretschmer, T., & Bughin, J. (2023). Digital "is" Strategy: The Role of Digital Technology Adoption in Strategy Renewal. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, *70*(9), 3183–3197. https://doi.org/10.1109/TEM.2021.3079347

Verhoef, P. C., Broekhuizen, T., Bart, Y., Bhattacharya, A., Qi Dong, J., Fabian, N., & Haenlein, M. (2021). Digital transformation: A multidisciplinary reflection and research agenda. *Journal of Business Research*, *122*, 889–901. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.09.022

Vuori, T. O., & Huy, Q. N. (2016). Distributed Attention and Shared Emotions in the Innovation Process: How Nokia Lost the Smartphone Battle. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *61*(1), 9–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/0001839215606951

Welch, M., & Jackson, P. R. (2007). Rethinking internal communication: A stakeholder approach. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *12*(2), 177–198. https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280710744847

Wuersch, L., Neher, A., & Peter, M. K. (2023). Digital internal communication: An interplay of socio-technical elements. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *25*(3), 614–639. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12323

Yue, C. A., Men, L. R., & Ferguson, M. A. (2021). Examining the Effects of Internal Communication and Emotional Culture on Employees' Organizational Identification. *International Journal of Business Communication*, *58*(2), 169–195. https://doi.org/10.1177/2329488420914066

Yue, C. A., Qin, Y. S., & Men, L. R. (2024). The dark side of leadership communication: The impact of supervisor verbal aggressiveness on workplace culture, employee–organization relationships and counterproductive work behaviors. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *29*(3), 405–429. https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-04-2023-0050

Zhao, H., & Wu, P. (2025). Artificial Intelligence Job Substitution Risks, Digital Self-efficacy, and Mental Health Among Employees. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*, *67*(5), e302–e310. https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000003335

Zulu, S. L., Saad, A. M., & Gledson, B. (2023). Individual Characteristics as Enablers of Construction Employees' Digital Literacy: An Exploration of Leaders' Opinions. *Sustainability*, *15*(2), 1531. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15021531

Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview procedures and interview questions

The purpose of the interview

This interview is an important part of my master's thesis research conducted at the University of Vaasa. The aim of my research is to explore how employees' emotional reactions can be managed through internal communication during digital strategy implementation in the financial sector. Therefore, your experience is very useful to understand how internal communication can make the digital revolution process more captivating and supportive for employees.

The participation process and duration

Your participation in this interview process is completely voluntary, and you can also skip any question if you want during the interview. You will remain anonymous during the interview, and any confidential data like your name and designation are not required for this interview. As a result, you will not be identifiable. Any identifiable information will not be presented in the study. In addition, your experience regarding emotions and communication will be used only for this thesis purpose. The interview will be recorded, as this process will help me to understand and remember your answers properly. The data from the interviews will be accessible only to the researcher and the thesis supervisor and located only within the University of Vaasa repositories. The interviews will be presented in an anonymized form in the thesis, in such way that respondents cannot be identified.

Interview questions designed for managers or supervisors

1. Would you please tell me about your roles and responsibilities in short at this bank?
2. How long have you been working in this financial organization?

3. Has any new digital strategy been introduced at your workplace in recent years that has changed your leadership responsibilities?

Key questions

Digital strategy application

4. When any digital change happens in your department, how do you notify everyone in your team regarding that transformation?
5. What kind of reactions to such modifications do you receive from your team members?
6. How do you communicate with your team members to ensure that they understand and embrace the overall digital strategy implemented in the bank?

leadership and internal communication

7. When a new strategy is implemented in your organization, what kind of communication style is followed to communicate with the employees regarding the change?
8. When a new strategy is implemented in this bank, then what kind of internal communication tools are used to communicate with the employees regarding the change?

9. How do you make a balance between conveying technical details along with emotional guidance during any digital strategy execution?
10. Which types of internal communication methods and tools normally work best to ensure that staff members feel encouraged and informed about the digital strategy?
11. What kinds of employee emotions arise, and how do you address them in the digital strategy implementation process?
12. Have you observed or not employees' nervousness or resistance during significant digital strategy enforcement, and if yes, how have you addressed them?

Employees' emotional aspect

13. What are the strategies that you follow to interact with the frontline employees who work in your department? Do you face any challenges? If yes, then how do you manage or handle with that difficult situation?
14. How does internal communication influence employees' emotions in digital transitions?
15. What impacts does the organizational culture in your bank have on the communication that flows from the top management to frontline employees?
16. How can the mental stability of frontline employees be protected through internal communication throughout the digital strategy implementation process?

Assessment and Suggestions

17. How can the efficiency of internal communication at your bank be developed to better handle employees' emotions during upcoming digital strategy implementation?
18. Is there any other issue or topic that you would like to share in relation to this topic that I did not enquire or mention?

Interview questions designed for frontline employees

1. Could you please tell me about your job roles and responsibilities in short at this department?
2. How long have you been working in this private commercial bank and in this department? In addition, would you please share what kind of digital initiatives or strategies have you experienced in your work in recent years?
3. How do you normally get informed about these digital strategies?

Key questions

Experience in digital strategy implementation

4. When you are initially informed about the digital changes, how do you feel regarding that?

5. Have these digital changes made your work more challenging or easier than before?
6. Did you face any emotional challenges? For example, any technological stress, any confusion, or any fear of making mistakes throughout the digital strategy implementation process?

Internal communication and support

7. When any digital tactic is applied, how does your manager communicate the instructions or important guidelines regarding that strategy? Are those guidelines always clear to you?
8. Which kind of communication channels are used to communicate the strategy?
9. Which kind of communication channels do you consider the most efficient to make you aware and informed in digital strategy implementation?
10. How do you share your opinions, and how do you share your struggles associated with the digital strategic tools?

Emotional aspect

11. How does your manager address and support your emotional reactions to these digital changes?
12. How do their communication styles influence your anxiety patterns and also inspire you?
13. How would you describe the internal communication culture in your department?
14. In your opinion, what is the role of internal communication in improving your confidence and mental wellness at work during technological strategy execution?

Suggestions

15. Would you like to share any ideas or suggestions how to further develop the internal communication to provide great emotional support in the digital strategy adoption process?
16. Is there anything else that you want to add about your interactions and your emotional experience in your department while experiencing any digital change?