

ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING COMMUNICATION EFFICIENCY IN THE IT OUTSOURCING PROCESS IN THE ASPECT OF OWN RESEARCH

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Purpose: The aim of the study is to analyze actions supporting effective communication in IT outsourcing and to identify those that are perceived as the most effective. The study focuses on assessing the impact of communication strategies on the quality of cooperation between organizations and IT service providers.

Design/methodology/approach: The study was conducted using a quantitative method based on a survey sent to 723 respondents in 2023. The data was analyzed using multivariate correspondence analysis (MCA) to identify relationships between variables.

Findings: The results of the study indicate that the most important factors supporting communication in IT outsourcing are communication standards, the use of technology and building a culture of trust. It was also discovered that the ability to flexibly respond to challenges has a significant impact on the effectiveness of cooperation.

Research limitations/implications: The limitation of the study is its reliance on a single method, i.e. a survey, which may affect the subjective nature of the responses. The study was conducted on a sample that may not be fully representative of the various IT outsourcing sectors.

Practical implications: The study results provide practical guidance for organizations on how to improve communication with IT service providers by standardizing processes, leveraging technology, and developing a culture of trust.

Social implications: The use of activities supporting effective communication can increase trust and commitment in business relationships, which has a positive impact on the social dimension of cooperation.

Originality/value: The study contributes to the literature on communication management in IT outsourcing by combining a theoretical perspective with empirical research results. The use of MCA provides a novel approach to the analysis of communication activities in this context.

Keywords: IT outsourcing, organization, communication, management strategies, business.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

IT outsourcing plays an increasingly important role in the management strategies of modern organizations, offering access to advanced technologies and specialized resources that are difficult to develop internally. However, the success of such collaboration largely depends on the quality of communication between the organization and external providers. Effective communication is essential for precisely defining expectations, minimizing the risk of misunderstandings, and efficiently responding to changing conditions of cooperation. The complexity of outsourcing processes necessitates adequate communication support that fosters the development of sustainable and effective partnerships (Zhen, Xie, Dong, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to investigate actions supporting effective communication in IT outsourcing processes and to identify those perceived as the most effective. The following research hypotheses are proposed: (1) Standardizing communication processes significantly enhances the effectiveness of outsourcing collaboration; (2) The use of modern technologies supports the fluidity and precision of information exchange; (3) Building a culture of trust positively affects the quality of outsourcing relationships; (4) Flexible responses to communication challenges minimize the risk of disruptions in project implementation.

The research methodology included an analysis of responses from 723 participants, collected via a survey, and the application of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), which enabled the identification of patterns in the perception of specific actions supporting communication. The introduction of these analytical techniques yielded innovative results, highlighting key factors that determine communication success in IT outsourcing.

The current state of research indicates that the effectiveness of communication in IT outsourcing depends on the integration of several interrelated factors. Key publications (Felipe, Leander, Roldan, Leal-Rodriguez, 2020; Zhen, Xie, Dong, 2021) emphasize the role of technology, standardization processes, and trust in shaping outsourcing relationships. This paper builds upon these findings, providing practical recommendations for organizations.

The added value of this article lies in combining theoretical perspectives with empirical research findings, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the problem and offering practical insights. The results can be particularly useful for managers and specialists involved in managing outsourcing relationships, offering concrete guidance on actions that enhance communication effectiveness.

2. Literature review

2.1. The essence of IT outsourcing

The essence of IT outsourcing is to transfer part or all of an organization's IT functions to an external service provider in order to achieve operational, strategic or financial benefits. IT outsourcing has become an important management tool in many organizations that want to focus on their core competencies while using specialized external resources. This allows access to modern technologies, expert knowledge and advanced IT solutions that would be difficult or expensive to achieve internally (Chakrabarty, 2006).

IT outsourcing covers a wide range of services, such as IT infrastructure management, software development and maintenance, cybersecurity, cloud storage, and technical support. Organizations often decide on such solutions to reduce the costs associated with hiring and training IT staff, purchasing equipment, and maintaining internal IT systems. Outsourcing also allows them to flexibly adapt IT resources to changing needs, which is especially important in a dynamic business environment (Lacity, Willcocks, 2013).

The key element of IT outsourcing is cooperation between the organization and the service provider, which requires effective communication, clearly defined goals, and appropriately formulated agreements. This process involves the need to precisely define the scope of tasks, expected results, and quality standards (Kłos, 2009). Outsourcing agreements, such as SLA (Service Level Agreement), are the basis of the relationship between the parties and ensure that the service provider meets the customer's requirements (Raišienė, Bilan, Smalskys, Gečienė, 2019).

IT outsourcing allows organizations not only to reduce costs, but also to increase innovation and improve efficiency. Service providers often have advanced technologies and experts who can introduce new solutions, support digital transformation, and contribute to achieving strategic goals. Outsourcing can also reduce technology risk, as service providers have greater ability to manage updates, compliance with regulations, and data protection (Krull, Mackinnon, 2016).

However, IT outsourcing also involves certain challenges and risks. Organizations must consider potential problems such as loss of control over key processes, dependence on external suppliers, data protection risks, and conflicts resulting from cultural and time differences. Effective outsourcing management therefore requires appropriate control mechanisms, constant monitoring of service quality, and building long-term, trust-based relationships with suppliers (Porter Heppelmann, 2014).

In summary, IT outsourcing is a complex process that can bring significant benefits to organizations if managed properly. Its essence is to use external resources to achieve higher efficiency, flexibility, and competitiveness in a rapidly changing technological and business environment.

2.2. The role of effective communication in an organization

Effective communication plays a key role in the functioning of any organization, as it is the foundation on which cooperation, decision-making and the implementation of strategic goals are based (Quelin, Duhamel, 2003). Without an efficient flow of information between individuals, teams or departments, the organization is exposed to misunderstandings, delays in task implementation and a decrease in efficiency. Communication in an organization is not only an operational tool, but also an element of building an organizational culture that affects employee motivation, commitment and satisfaction (Dhillon, Backhouse, 2001).

Effective communication supports the exchange of knowledge and experience, which is particularly important in a dynamic business environment, where innovation and adaptability become key success factors (Lacity, Willcocks, 2009). Organizations that are able to ensure transparency of information and openness in dialogue gain a competitive advantage because they respond faster to changing market conditions and implement new solutions more effectively (Cullen, Seddon, Willcocks, 2005). Transparent communication also helps build trust in both internal and external relationships, which is important in the context of cooperation with business partners, customers, and suppliers (Kern, Willcocks, Van Heck, 2013). In an organization, communication also plays a role in supporting the change management process. In transformation situations, such as restructuring, introducing new technologies, or changes in the organizational structure, effective information transfer helps minimize employee resistance and increase their acceptance of the changes being introduced. Clear and consistent messages help explain the reasons for decisions, present expected benefits, and define new roles and responsibilities, which reduces uncertainty and tensions within the team (Qureshi, 2016).

An important aspect of effective communication is its impact on decision-making processes (Lacity, Willcocks, 2010). Quick and precise access to information allows leaders to make good decisions based on reliable data. At the same time, openness to diverse perspectives resulting from dialogue with employees allows for taking into account various aspects of problems and approaching them in a more comprehensive way. In turn, in relations between employees, communication helps clarify doubts, resolve conflicts and create an atmosphere of cooperation (Gupta, Puranam, Srikanth, 2006), which affects better team integration (Pandita, Singhal, 2017).

Effective communication also contributes to strengthening employee engagement by building a sense of belonging to the organization. Employees who are informed about the company's goals, values, and strategy better understand their roles and their importance in achieving the organization's mission. Communication based on openness and dialogue also promotes identification with the organization, which translates into higher loyalty and willingness to take additional actions for the company (Kane, Palmer, Nguyen Phillips, Kiron, Buckley, 2015).

Effective communication, however, requires the right tools, technologies and skills. Organizations must invest in the development of employee communication skills and provide platforms that allow for quick and easy access to information. It is also crucial to adapt the communication style to the needs and preferences of different groups of recipients, which allows for increasing its effectiveness. In the era of digital transformation, effective communication is becoming an increasingly strategic element of management, which determines the success of an organization in an increasingly competitive market.

2.3. IT outsourcing and ensuring effective communication in the organization

IT outsourcing poses numerous challenges for organizations related to ensuring effective communication, which is the foundation of successful cooperation with external suppliers. This process requires not only the implementation of appropriate mechanisms and tools, but also the development of standards that will allow for the consistency and clarity of information exchange between the parties (Kern, Willcocks, Van Heck, 2015). Effective communication in this context includes both precise definition of expectations and goals, as well as ongoing exchange of information during project implementation, which allows for a faster response to emerging challenges (Constantinides, 2014). One of the key elements supporting communication in IT outsourcing is the implementation of communication standards that regulate the method, frequency and form of information transfer. Standardization of these processes allows for the elimination of potential misunderstandings and improves cooperation between internal teams and external suppliers. The introduction of such standards allows for the organization of the communication process, which increases the transparency of activities and facilitates monitoring of progress in project implementation (Yin et al., 2020).

The second important factor supporting the effectiveness of communication in IT outsourcing is the use of modern technologies that enable the smooth flow of information. Tools such as project management systems, online collaboration platforms or data analysis applications allow for the ongoing exchange of information in a fast, precise and accessible manner for all stakeholders (Danneels, Kleinschmidt, 2016). Technology also supports the automation of certain aspects of communication, which minimizes the risk of errors resulting from the human factor and increases the efficiency of the entire process. Another important aspect in the context of communication is building a culture of trust and transparency in

outsourcing relationships (Galvin, 2019). Trust between the parties is the foundation of successful cooperation and allows for the open expression of needs, concerns and suggestions regarding implemented projects. Transparency of activities, including regular progress reporting, clearly defined expectations and openness to dialogue, favors building lasting partnerships that are less susceptible to conflicts and misunderstandings (Turban, Outland, King, Lee, Liang, Turban, 2018).

Effective communication in IT outsourcing also requires the ability to respond quickly to emerging challenges and problems. Flexibility in adapting to changing conditions or unforeseen circumstances allows for minimizing losses and ensuring business continuity. Organizations that are able to quickly adapt their communication processes to crisis situations are able to better manage risk and maintain a high level of efficiency (Uhl-Bien, Arena, 2017).

Ensuring effective communication in IT outsourcing is not limited to tools and procedures, but also includes developing soft skills among employees responsible for cooperation with suppliers. Skills such as active listening, negotiation skills or clear formulation of thoughts are key to building positive relationships and increasing the effectiveness of communication. Employees equipped with the right skills are able to manage relationships better, which translates into greater trust and commitment of both parties (Ravichandran, 2016).

In summary, effective communication in IT outsourcing is a complex process that requires the integration of many elements, such as process standardization, use of technology, building a culture of trust, and the ability to flexibly respond to changing conditions. These activities are key to the success of outsourcing projects and allow for the creation of stable and effective relationships between organizations and suppliers.

3. Methods

The aim of the conducted research was to identify actions supporting the effectiveness of communication in IT outsourcing and to analyze their perception by respondents in the context of key aspects of outsourcing cooperation. It was assumed that effective communication between internal teams and IT service providers, supported by specific actions, significantly affects the quality of cooperation and achievement of business goals. The research hypothesis indicated that specific actions, such as implementing communication standards, using new technologies or building a culture of trust, differ in terms of their perceived effectiveness by the research participants.

The research method was a survey conducted in 2023 on a sample of 723 respondents. The survey allowed for collecting data on the perception of individual activities supporting communication in IT outsourcing. In order to deepen the analysis and identify patterns in the respondents' responses, multidimensional correspondence analysis (MCA) was used.

MCA analysis allowed for a graphical illustration of the dependencies and similarities between variables, which facilitated the interpretation of data. Thanks to this method, it was possible to identify groups of activities that are perceived as similar in terms of effectiveness, and to isolate key factors differentiating the responses of the study participants.

The study obtained sociodemographic data characterizing the studied group of respondents, which numbered 723 people. The gender distribution was almost equal, with a slight predominance of women, who made up 50.5% of the group, while men made up 49.5%. Age analysis showed that people under 25 years of age made up 20% of the participants. The largest age group was made up of people aged 26 to 35, who represented 30.4 % of the respondents. The next age groups, from 36 to 45 years and over 45 years, made up 24.9% and 24.6%, respectively. The respondents also differed in the positions they held. In the group of respondents, 6.9% were members of the top management, 21.1% represented middle management, and 29% low-level management. The largest percentage, 42.9%, were employees not associated with management functions.

In terms of length of service in the profession, the largest group, 27.6%, were respondents with up to 5 years of professional experience. The next groups, with experience from 6 to 10 years and from 11 to 15 years, represented 24.9% and 20.7%, respectively. Smaller groups were employees with 16-20 years of experience (16.6%) and over 20 years (10.1%). The study also covered various sizes of enterprises in which respondents worked. Among them, 27.6% were microenterprises, 24.9% small and medium-sized enterprises, while 22.5% represented large enterprises. The period of operation of the companies in which respondents worked also varied. Companies operating for over 1 year accounted for 13.8%. Companies operating for 1 to 3 years and 4 to 7 years represented 27.6% and 30.8%, respectively, while the longest-operating companies, over 8 years, accounted for 27.6%.

In terms of industry, the largest share of respondents were automotive, retail, education, and healthcare, each accounting for 20% of the sample. The remaining industries were grouped into the "other" category, which also accounted for 20% of respondents. Analysis of the geographical scope of operations of the companies showed that 27.6 % of the companies operated locally, 24.9% regionally, 23.5% nationally, and 23.9% internationally.

4. Results

The research attempted to analyze actions supporting the effectiveness of communication in IT outsourcing, taking into account four key variables (see Table 1). The first of these was the implementation of communication standards between internal teams and suppliers. The data indicates that 34 respondents assessed these actions as definitely inappropriate, while 65 considered them rather inappropriate. 120 people expressed no opinion on this issue.

At the same time, 200 respondents indicated that such actions were rather appropriate, and 304 people considered them definitely appropriate, which gives a total of 723 responses.

Table 1.

Activities supporting communication efficiency in the IT outsourcing process

| Variable | Definitely NOT | Rather NOT | I don't have an opinion | Rather YES | Definitely YES | Total |
|---|----------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------|-------|
| Implementing communication standards between internal teams and vendors (1) | 34 | 65 | 120 | 200 | 304 | 723 |
| Using technologies supporting smooth information flow (2) | 45 | 58 | 115 | 210 | 295 | 723 |
| Building a culture of trust and transparency in outsourcing relationships (3) | 56 | 72 | 100 | 198 | 297 | 723 |
| Responding to communication challenges in real-time (4) | 38 | 66 | 125 | 202 | 292 | 723 |

Source: Own study based on research.

The second variable was the use of technologies supporting the smooth flow of information. In this category, 45 respondents expressed a strong opposition, and 58 people had a rather negative opinion. 115 people had a neutral attitude to this issue. In turn, 210 respondents described such technologies as rather appropriate, and 295 people rated them as definitely appropriate, which also sums up to 723 answers.

The third variable was building a culture of trust and transparency in outsourcing relationships. The results showed that 56 people considered these actions to be definitely inappropriate, while 72 considered them to be somewhat inappropriate. 100 respondents declared no opinion. On the other hand, 198 people assessed these actions as somewhat appropriate, while 297 respondents assessed them as definitely appropriate, giving a total of 723 responses.

The last variable concerned responding to communication challenges in real time. Here, 38 people expressed strong disapproval, and 66 described their position as rather negative. 125 respondents declared no opinion on this issue. At the same time, 202 people considered these activities as rather appropriate, and 292 rated them as definitely appropriate, which gives a total of 723 responses. These data provide the basis for further analyses of the effectiveness of activities supporting communication in IT outsourcing.

In order to better understand the relationships between variables describing actions supporting communication effectiveness in IT outsourcing, multivariate correspondence analysis (MCA) was conducted (see Figure 1). This technique allows for a graphical representation of dependencies and similarities between variables in a multidimensional space, which allows for the identification of patterns and groups of variables of a similar nature. In the case of this study, MCA was used to illustrate how individual actions, such as implementing communication standards, using technologies supporting the flow of information, building a culture of trust, and responding to communication challenges, differ in the context of respondents' answers.

The MCA chart shows variables in two dimensions, which helps in interpreting the main axes of data differentiation. Variables that are closer to each other on the chart are more related in terms of the structure of respondents' answers, while variables that are farther apart indicate greater differences in their assessments. The chart is therefore a tool that allows for quick identification of key similarities and differences, which in further analysis can be helpful in formulating practical recommendations for improving the effectiveness of communication in IT outsourcing.

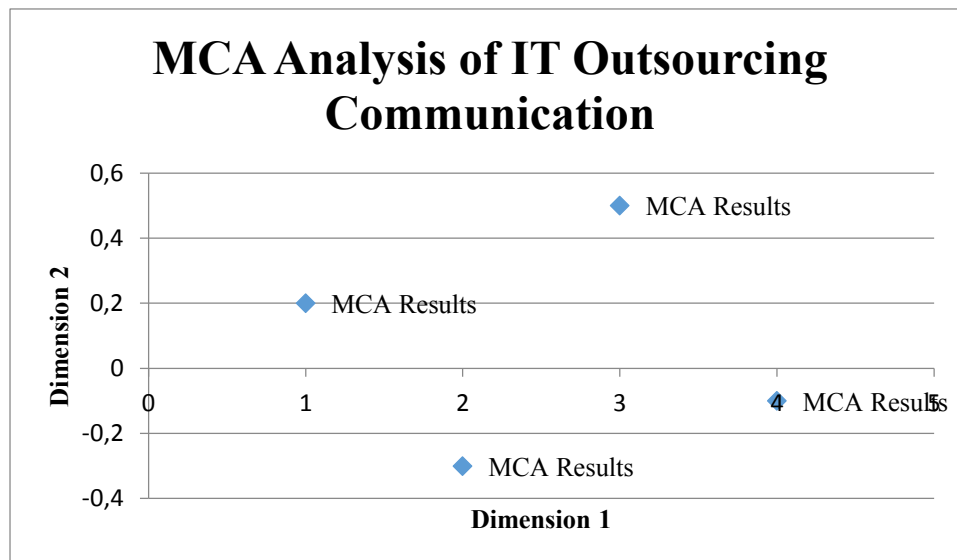


Figure 1. MCA analysis of IT Outsourcing Communication.

Source: Own study.

MCA analysis also provides valuable information about the structure of the data and potential relationships between variables, which allows for a better understanding of which activities are perceived as more or less effective by respondents. Thanks to this analysis, it is possible to indicate the directions of strategic actions that are key to improving outsourcing relationships in IT organizations. In this way, the results of the analysis become the basis for managerial decisions and planning further communication initiatives.

5. Discussion

The research shows that the effectiveness of communication in IT outsourcing is strongly dependent on the implementation of activities supporting cooperation between the internal teams of the organization and external suppliers. Communication standards play a key role, ensuring consistency and transparency in the transfer of information, which reduces the risk of misunderstandings and delays in project implementation. It has been shown that activities based on building a culture of trust and transparency are of particular importance for strengthening

relations between the parties, which translates into greater efficiency and stability of cooperation. Technologies supporting the smooth flow of information were assessed as an important element in the process of improving communication. The use of appropriate digital tools allows for more effective task management, quick access to necessary information and easier tracking of work progress. The research highlighted the importance of responding to communication challenges in real time, which emphasizes the need for flexibility and the ability to quickly adapt to changing conditions.

Multivariate correspondence analysis revealed patterns in the perception of communication support activities, which indicates differences in the priorities and expectations of individual groups of respondents. Identification of these patterns allows for matching communication strategies to the specific needs of organizations and suppliers. The results of the study also emphasize that the effectiveness of communication in IT outsourcing is not only the result of applying individual activities, but requires a coherent approach encompassing many mutually complementary elements.

Research shows that the lack of effective communication mechanisms can lead to problems in project implementation, reduced efficiency and decreased trust between partners. Consequently, implementing communication support activities allows not only to improve relationships, but also to increase the satisfaction and commitment of outsourcing process participants. The obtained results can be the basis for developing practical recommendations that will help organizations better manage outsourcing relationships and maximize the benefits resulting from this form of cooperation.

Based on the results obtained, it is recommended that companies take action to strengthen communication standards in outsourcing processes. The introduction of consistent procedures and clear rules for the exchange of information between internal teams and external suppliers is crucial. Standardization of communication will help avoid misunderstandings and increase the efficiency of project implementation. It is also important to use modern technologies supporting the flow of information, which enable ongoing access to data, monitoring of work progress and quick response to emerging problems. Selecting the right digital tools, such as project management systems or communication platforms, can significantly improve the quality of cooperation.

It is recommended to invest in building a culture of trust and transparency in outsourcing relationships. Regular communication based on openness and clear definition of goals and expectations allows for reducing tensions and strengthening partnerships. Striving for greater transparency in the activities of both parties has a positive impact on the quality of cooperation and the level of commitment.

Companies should also ensure flexibility in responding to communication challenges. Quick identification of problems and their ongoing resolution allows for minimizing disruptions in project implementation and building positive experiences for both the customer and the

supplier. Creating dedicated teams responsible for monitoring communication and providing support in crisis situations can contribute to greater efficiency of operations.

The need to adapt communication strategies to the specific needs of different outsourcing partners is also emphasized. Analysis of patterns of perception of activities by process participants allows for better adjustment of tools and methods of cooperation, which increases the effectiveness of undertaken activities. Companies can introduce training programs aimed at improving communication skills of employees, which will affect better understanding of expectations and challenges of both parties.

6. Conclusions

The results of the conducted research on actions supporting communication effectiveness in IT outsourcing are consistent with the findings of other researchers in this field. In particular, the emphasis on the importance of implementing communication standards and building a culture of trust and transparency is reflected in the literature on the subject.

Research conducted by Annarelli, Colabianchi, Nonino, and Palombi (2021) indicates that the effectiveness of cybersecurity outsourcing practices is strongly related to the management of relationships between organizations and service providers. The authors emphasize that differences in the effectiveness of cybersecurity management are due to whether these processes are managed internally or outsourced, suggesting that communication standards and a culture of trust play a key role in the success of outsourcing.

Similarly, Murphy (2024) in his study analyzes the impact of IT outsourcing on organizational success and innovation. The results indicate that effective communication between internal teams and external suppliers is crucial to achieving positive results. The author emphasizes that the lack of appropriate communication mechanisms can lead to failures in outsourcing projects. Additionally, research conducted by Ali and Green (2009) on IT governance mechanisms indicates that the effectiveness of IT governance in an organization has a direct impact on IT outsourcing decisions. The authors emphasize that organizations with effective IT governance are better prepared to make outsourcing decisions, which suggests that communication standards and a culture of trust are crucial for the success of such initiatives.

In summary, the results of this study are consistent with the findings of other researchers, emphasizing the importance of communication standards, a culture of trust, and transparency in the effective management of IT outsourcing processes. The literature on the subject indicates that these elements are crucial for achieving success in outsourcing projects and minimizing the risks associated with such initiatives.

The limitations of research based on the analysis of actions supporting the effectiveness of communication in IT outsourcing result primarily from the methodological approach used and the specificity of the research sample. One of the main limitations is basing the analysis on data collected exclusively by means of a survey. Although this method allows for the collection of a large amount of information in a short time, the results may be susceptible to the subjective nature of respondents' answers. This may affect the accuracy of the assessment of actions supporting communication and limit the possibility of their generalization to other groups.

An additional limitation is the fact that the survey was conducted on a sample of 723 respondents, which, although it provides a broad picture of opinions, may not be fully representative of all sectors and types of IT outsourcing. The characteristics of the respondents, such as their professional experience, role in the organization or industry specificity, may affect the perception of the surveyed activities. This limits the possibility of applying the results to sectors significantly different from the surveyed group.

MCA analysis, although it provides valuable information about the relationships between variables, is based on reducing data to dimensions, which is associated with the loss of some detailed information. In addition, the interpretation of MCA results requires the adoption of certain assumptions that can affect the final conclusions. In particular, the choice of the number of dimensions used in the analysis can limit the full reflection of the complexity of the relationships between variables.

Another limitation is the lack of consideration of the cultural and organizational context, which can significantly affect the perception of communication effectiveness in IT outsourcing. Differences in management practices and expectations towards IT service providers may mean that these results will not be fully translatable to other countries or organizations with different organizational cultures.

The results could also be influenced by changes in the dynamically developing technological environment. The study was conducted in 2023, which may limit its relevance in the context of rapidly changing technologies supporting communication and their impact on outsourcing processes. For this reason, it is recommended to continue the study in subsequent years to take into account technological developments and the changing needs of organizations.

Future research directions may focus on a deeper analysis of the effectiveness of different communication strategies in IT outsourcing, taking into account variables such as industry specificity, organization size, and cultural differences. It will be important to examine how new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, business process automation, and data analytics tools, can improve communication and cooperation between outsourcers and IT service providers. Considering these technologies will allow for a better understanding of their role in increasing the effectiveness of outsourcing activities.

An important research area may also be the analysis of the long-term effects of implementing specific communication standards and their impact on partner relationships. Research may focus on assessing the durability of the effects of the introduced changes and

determining which activities have the greatest impact on building trust and commitment of the parties in the long term. It will also be important to examine how different models of communication management in outsourcing affect business results and the satisfaction of the process participants.

Another direction of research may be to explore specific communication challenges in the context of international outsourcing. Analysis of cultural differences, time zones and language barriers may provide valuable information on how to cope with difficulties resulting from the globalization of IT services. Research may also take into account the impact of dynamically changing legal regulations and data security requirements on communication processes and outsourcing cooperation.

Another interesting research topic may be the role of soft skills in managing communication in IT outsourcing. Examining which interpersonal skills are key to effectively building relationships may contribute to better design of training programs and increase the effectiveness of teams responsible for cooperation with suppliers.

The current research could also be extended by using new analytical methods, such as social network analysis or simulation models, to gain a deeper understanding of the structure and dynamics of communication relationships in IT outsourcing. This would allow for the development of more advanced tools to support communication management and optimization of outsourcing processes. Finally, including the perspective of IT service providers in future research could provide a more comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities in the area of outsourcing communication and cooperation.

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