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**Faculty of Graduate Studies**

**The role of business communication in promoting quality  
control in Palestinian agribusiness sector**

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**This thesis was submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the Master's degree in  
Strategic Planning and Fundraising**

**August/ 2021**

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Three handwritten signatures are displayed in a vertical column. The top signature is in black ink, the middle one is in blue ink, and the bottom one is in red ink. Each signature is a stylized, cursive representation of a name.

## **Declaration**

The work provided in this thesis, unless otherwise referenced is the researcher's own work and has not been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification.

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Date: 22/08/2022

## **Dedication and Acknowledgment**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Abdelrahman Tamimi, my thesis supervisor, for his continuous support of my study and research, and for his patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and wealth of knowledge.

Finally, I want to express my sincere appreciation to my family and friends for their unwavering support and never-ending encouragement throughout my academic journey, specifically through the making of this research. Without them, this achievement would not have been possible.

## **Abstract (English)**

Effective communication is a very important factor in maintaining quality control; it provides critical links and joins people throughout ideas and information that are vital for a project's success. Without a proper communication plan, the flow of information between project team members would be inhibited. Given the uncertain occupied quality of life Palestinians encounter, we can only imagine the amount of instability within any project plan. Occupation imposes severe restrictions on the development of the Palestinian agricultural sector, as well as the entire economy, which makes the goal of sustainable development nearly impossible.

This research investigates the major factors that impact the role of effective business communication in promoting quality control, as well as to what extent effective communication impacts the social and economic revenues of the agribusiness. The study introduction clarifies the importance and background of the subject, and identifies the research objective. A comprehensive literature review chapter led to the development of a conceptual model. This conceptual model presents a relationship between major factors that impact effective communication and major factors that impact the effective promotion of quality control.

Six different organizations were selected to participate in a qualitative research method, including an interview questionnaire, which was used to collect data from six different participants. Accordingly, data was collected, analyzed, and discussed. The study concludes that there is a strong positive relationship between effective communication and its impact on promoting quality control. The study also concluded that certain factors such as interpersonal communication skills, team diversity of knowledge and commitment, and level of trust, are all required to ensure effective

communication in promoting quality control. The researcher recommends the implementation of innovative information symmetry to reduce the knowledge gap among employees and to provide them with relevant information regarding the whole agriculture value chain.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

It is an established fact that one of the founding stones upon which a sector rests is a system of communication. “Communication is the flow of accurate information which people want, need and are entitled to have for successful completion of the job” (Adhikary, 2021)

Effective communication is very important in maintaining quality control, without a communication plan the exchange and flow of information between project team members would be inhibited, aside from the already existing instability in project planning, a given result from the occupied quality of life Palestinians encounter. Studies, introduced in detail further into this research, were conducted to determine the essential business and communication skills required in the agricultural industry, based on data collected through different focus groups. The findings of these studies suggest that employees in the agribusiness industry are aware that communication skills are of utmost importance and that there is a need for curriculum reform within the agriculture industry. In agribusiness, the planning and execution of a well thought out quality strategy, combined with ongoing monitoring and optimal management, results in improved development and service, optimal output, fewer defects, and fewer waste.

Agricultural, one of the lead sectors in Palestinian business, has an important economic, cultural and social significance to the land. Its role in the generation of income, food, and employment symbolizes the Palestinian resistance in the face of the

ongoing occupation. Due to the occupation, Palestinians face constraints on the development of the agricultural sector, from land limitations and confiscation to mobility restrictions and scarcity of agricultural resources and tools, agricultural production and output is relatively scarce and insufficient to the demand from other sectors dependent on agriculture. Agriculture remains of great significance to the Palestinian people and their identity, however the sector has been operating below potential. To heighten the output of the agricultural industries performance in terms of quality and quantity production, the sector requires public support and sufficiency, with the ultimate beneficiary being the buyer of the agricultural products. Here steps in the crucial role of communication, which not only makes this public connection possible but also creates partnerships that bring support to a cause, idea, or an activity vital for a sectors success.

Exploring the role of business communication in promoting quality control within the Palestinian agribusiness sector is the main theme of this research; studying several effective fundamental commandments of communication, managerial methodology, and their detailed relation, usage, and vitality to agribusiness in Palestine's uncertain socioeconomic and political conditions.

## **1.2 Statement of The Problem**

Given the uncertain political and socioeconomic conditions, project managers are up to face many communicational obstacles when it comes to effective planning. Agriculture remains of great significance to the Palestinian people and their identity, however the sector has been operating below potential. How does the role of optimizing the value-chain communication analysis and the absent of institutionalized mechanisms

serve as a part of the challenges facing the agribusiness? Does the role of business communication affect promoting quality control in optimizing the value-chain analysis in Palestinian agribusiness?

### **1.3 Aim of Dissertation**

To investigate the role of business communication in promoting quality control by considering its role in optimizing the value-chain analysis in Palestinian agribusiness sector.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The research will discuss the following objective statements in depth in order to fulfill the dissertation's goal:

- 1- Examine how a communication plan contributes into value-chain analysis in agribusiness under uncertain socioeconomic and political conditions.
- 2- Investigate how a communication plan affects the quality control of planning in the agribusiness.
- 3- Investigates how a communication plan affects the social and economic revenues of the agribusiness.

### **1.5 Research Question**

Research question:

To what extent does the role of business communication affect promoting quality control in optimizing the value-chain analysis in Palestinian agribusiness?

Sub questions:

- 1- How does the communication plan contribute into value-chain analysis in agribusiness under uncertain socioeconomic and political conditions?
- 2- To what extent does a communication plan affect the quality control of planning in the agribusiness?
- 3- To what extent does the communication plan affect the social and economic revenues of the agribusiness?

## Chapter 2: Literature Review, Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Literature Review

#### 2.1.1 Business Communication

Communication has long been acknowledged as critical to society's food and agricultural enterprises. Thousands of studies and surveys have reported the critical importance of information and human contact in this industry, in every field of agriculture related production from local to global. Zumalt (2007) stated that agricultural communication refers to all forms of human contact pertaining to agriculture, livestock, and resources. It clearly concerns two distinct fields of study: communication and agriculture. Agricultural communications, as a discipline, aims to efficiently link these two well-established channels to the function of lubricant, which is essential to an engines operation. All forms of agriculture are touched and served by communications, in effect, it is central to and woven across them all.

Zumlat (2007) stated that a Venn diagram, a tool often used to depict the intersection of two sets, in this instance agriculture and communications, may be used to represent agricultural communications (Figure A).

Figure A: Agricultural Communications

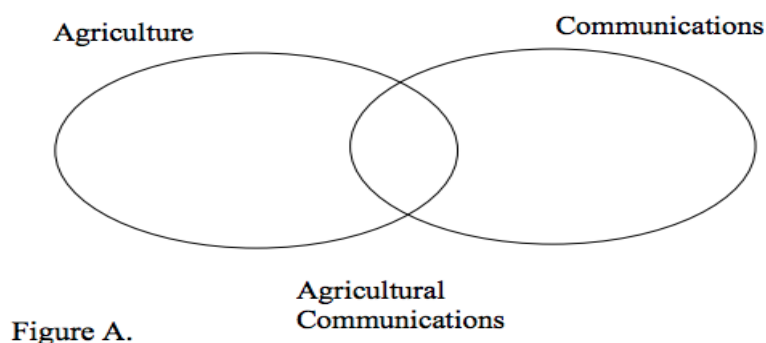


Figure A.

However, notice how this viewpoint characterizes agricultural communications as a fragmented business that exists on the outside of both of these big clusters but is not integrated into either. Figures B and C depict agricultural communications in relation to those clusters in a more realistic and instructive manner.

Figure B: Literature of Agriculture

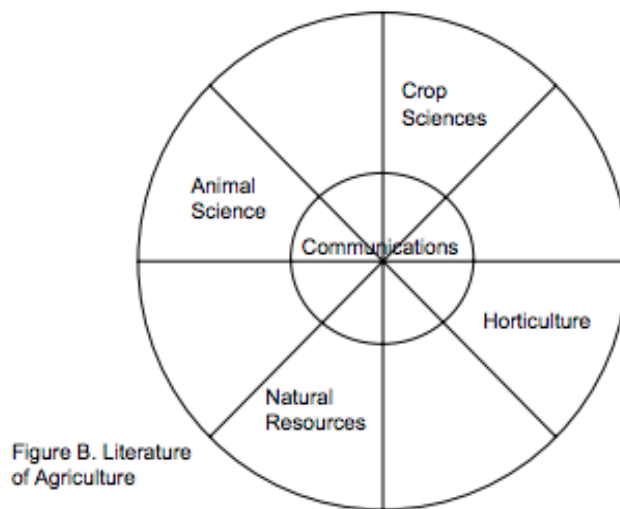
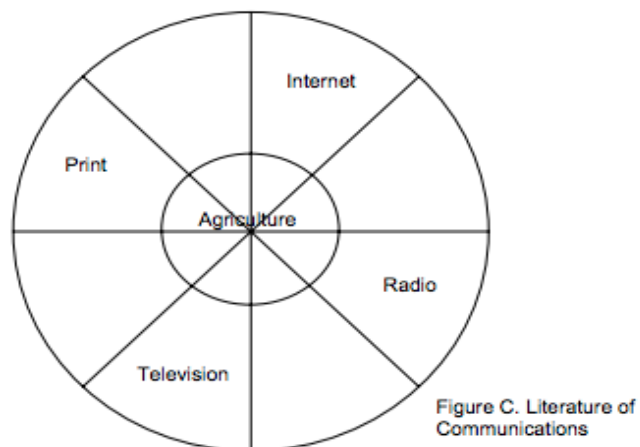


Figure C: Literature of Communications



In Figure B, a pie chart viewpoint shows that every area of a society's food and agricultural industry includes a human interaction dimension. All parts of agriculture are touched and served by communications; in fact, it is fundamental to and woven across them all.

Similarly, in Figure C, this perspective depicts how the food and agriculture industry utilizes all means and ways of communication. The many types of mass media (such as newspapers, magazines, television, and radio) are represented by pie pieces, as are emerging information technologies (such as the Internet); information and education systems (such as libraries); group techniques (such as meetings and field events); one-on-one contacts (such as friend-to-friend discussions); and even intra-personal communications.

In addition to Zumalt's concept of agricultural communication, (Alina, 2014) also argued that in agribusiness, the communication process must begin with the manager. An agribusiness manager is in charge of guiding and controlling a diverse collection of processes. Since receiving and transmitting messages is a crucial aspect of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling, therefore agribusiness managers must have excellent communication skills.

Alina (2014) stated several communication types and how they may affect agribusiness, such as:

**Online Communication:**

In agriculture, communication, the most contemporary type of communication, including the lowest cost, is still a weak presence. True many farmers utilize the internet to publicize their products, promote their brands, and find consumers or suppliers.

(Alina,2014) believed when talked about associative institutions, such as cooperatives or producer association, the situation changes , in which this may be the reason why these groups are being publicly misunderstood.

### **Outside Communication:**

A visit to the websites of various associations or cooperatives in countries where agriculture is an efficient and competitive business reveals the reality that these structures use most forms of communication on public space, from communication within groups to communication through mass media, from consumer education to institutional discourse. Inheriting and investing resources of time, energy, money and professional experience achieve such programs.

### **Local Communication:**

Image, respectability and a good reputation do not just refer to the aims of each individual, but also the to the organization as a whole. Image and respectability, as well as the association's strong local image appear to be improper. In fact, it is critical that individuals seeking information get to where they seek.

The agricultural industry forces a fierce rivalry and slim market share all while working in a fast paced world (Harris, 1989). Bruening and Scanlon (1995) conducted a study to determine the essential business and communication skills required in the agricultural industry, based on data collected through different focus groups. The questions were created to elicit knowledge about the agricultural industry's business and communication curricula needs.

Bruening and Scanlon (1995) used methods such as “Synchronic Reliability”, a form of reliability, which includes looking for patterns and continuity among data collected over the same time period (Kirk & Miller, 1986). This process was evaluated by the data collected from four different focus groups. Responses were divided into four groups: management, intellectual, communication competencies, and interpersonal skills. Under management, the groups emphasized that to increase efficiency within the agriculture industry, those within the industry should be encouraged to apply quality control, planning, accountability, and time management to improve one's marketability. In the agricultural industry, intellectual skills help understand the importance of qualities such as human relations, management behavior, and organization structure. The focus group participants often listed excellent communication skills as the most important ability they look for in workers within the industry. Interpersonal skills such as teamwork, leadership, and problem solving were defined as desirable qualities in an employee. These findings suggest that employees in the agribusiness industry are aware of that communication skills are most important and there is a need for curriculum reform within the agricultural industry.

### 2.1.2 Promoting Quality

The process of quality control is used to ensure that a product or service attains the required level of quality or higher. It usually involves a thorough examination of the product or result of service (Brown, 2014). Mitra (2016) stated that quality control may be defined as a system that maintains a desired level of quality, through feedback on product/service characteristics and implementation of actions effective communication is logical, rational, and persuasive. Choudhary and Rathore (2013) stated that there is a strong positive relation between good communication and

successful quality control. Although communication is a necessary element for good management, it is even more important in terms of implementing quality control. Quality control includes general methods such as accuracy checks, approved procedure, and measurements, while higher quality control activities include reviews of technical sources, activities and methods (Mangino, 2001). Popescu and Dascalu (2011) elaborated on certain methods to improve the organizations current activities and strategic initiatives; such as extending the use of value-chain based approaches to manage quality. Establishing quality objectives implies the value chain analysis to identify changes that can bring competitive advantage, as well as creating a unique way to combine resources and skills, making it difficult for competitors to recognize. That being said, the essence of value added is about planning and monitoring the continuous improvement of the quality of the process from the value chain. The underlying goal is to ensure that the examined process has reached its needed requirements.

Based on the above mentioned, the value chain analysis is a structured process for studying the organizations core competencies and behaviors that assess competitive advantage (Popescu & Dascalu, 2011). In his book, “Competitive advantage: developing and maintaining supper efficiency”, Michael Porter introduced the term. The value chain, interpreted by Porter is a series of interrelated actions linked by connections (Porter, 1985). Analysis of the value chain helps businesses to recognize certain value-creating business areas, especially any who don’t generate value. In such a competitive world, understanding such factors is incredibly important (Popescu & Dascalu, 2011).

Furthermore, in the sense of quality control, (Popescu & Dascalu, 2011) deal with the use of value chain analysis. The distinguishing characteristics of the organizations overall management is to establish instruments from which the value chain activities

are constantly and systematically evaluated and improved. Quality control incorporates study of the value chain into particular type. Two of the main elements necessary for conducting and finalizing quality improvement are described as the following: value added assessment through enhancing value chain process, performance metrics, unique management approaches, added value monitoring and enhancement tools.

Therefore, identifying and evaluating the value added holds an effective place throughout quality control management, which includes quality improvement, managing and value creation. Identifying and measuring the value added emphasizes the variety of metrics an organization must use and adopt them in order to direct and monitor the performance of the organization. Acquiring quality control with an organization requires establishing the required level of quality and obtaining tools to analyze and monitor performance. Choosing the most appropriate indicator level belongs to the strategic actions examining and enhancing the added value. Quality strategic planning includes establishing levels of mobilization for quality targets and is determined by a number of variables including business strategy and the quality management system maturity (Popescu, 2010). The value added analysis is primarily concerned with planning, monitoring and the ongoing enhancement of the value chain quality process.

To retain, let alone raise market share in today's business climate, executives must prepare strategically. Consumers now pay a great emphasis on quality than loyalty to domestic suppliers, resulting in the price not being the most important factor in consumer decision-making. Value has supplanted price in sectors such as manufacturing, service, hospitality, and many others. For an organization to be truly successful, each component must function in concert with the understanding that each individual and action has an impact on and is influenced by others. Everyone has a role

to play in quality management, from executives to the newest, youngest employee, ensuring that quality is everyone's priority, is one of the key objectives in a successful quality policy. If an organization wants to start implementing quality management in agribusiness, then a successful quality policy is a must (Sofijanovska et al., 2013).

In agribusiness, the planning and execution of a well thought out quality strategy, combined with ongoing monitoring, results in improved development or service, less defects, and less waste. Management must be committed to continuous quality improvement to an appropriate level. These concepts should be enshrined in a quality strategy, which allows top management to create a quality "organization", define consumer expectations and priorities of demands and determine the organizations capacity to satisfy these needs cost effectively (Sofijanovska et al., 2013).

Mitreva et al (2009) stated that in order to enforce the quality management strategy for planning a fine quality system in agribusiness that will ensure our products competitive position, it is important to modify all product develop, adopt, strategies and procedures for perfect results, maximize the process, set up a framework for ongoing employee training, encouragement and an excellent communication network.

The following outcomes are obtained by implementing the quality management strategy with in the preparation of a quality management system and a well- established quality information system (Mitreva and Cepujnoska, 2007):

1. Producing high quality goods and that meet the needs of customers
2. Ensuring the efficiency of business process, enabling businesses to function more effectively.
3. Improve the business process
4. Synchronization of strategic and operational management
5. Establishing a foundation for continuous quality management.

Thus, implementing procedures and strategies for excellent results will lead to efficient process management thus producing the expected output at a low cost of labor. The adoption of the quality management strategy into the agribusiness attempts new practices in the areas of employee training, consistency of procedures, statistical process management to ensure flawless results, and a unique strategy to value analysis.

### 2.1.3 Palestinian Agribusiness

The agricultural sector's importance in Palestine derives from its contribution to Palestinian households' food security, as well as the development of job possibilities in the Palestinian local market. The number of agricultural holdings is steadily increasing, owing to the inheritance system, which divides agricultural land among heirs. In addition, the agriculture industry is a major engine of the Palestinian economy since it provides jobs in the local Palestinian market (Issac et al., 2015).

An examination of the agriculture industry and its activities reveals that it faces several problems and impediments. On the one hand, the political conflict in Palestine is the most serious of these challenges, characterized by Israeli practices such as land confiscation, control over natural resources, particularly water, and restrictions on product mobility between Palestinian areas; on the other hand, the political conflict in Palestine is characterized by Israeli practices such as land confiscation, control over natural resources, particularly water, and restrictions on product mobility between Palestinian areas, on one hand, and worldwide markets on the other, raising the cost of agricultural production and selling (Issac et al., 2015).

Issac and others (2015) stated that a set of practical processes is required to ensure the agricultural sector's long-term viability in terms of economic, historical, social, and political strength. In terms of planning initiatives, the Palestinian government's institutions need to provide more assistance and dedication in terms of turning strategic plans and sector evaluations into actionable measures. The agricultural sector should be protected first and foremost, as it is one of the most exposed to Israeli restrictions and activities. Furthermore, increased financial allocation to the agricultural sector is required, as is the establishment of a national fund to compensate farmers for losses caused by natural catastrophes, severe weather, and economic shocks.

Furthermore, (Issac et al., 2015) stated that other recommendations are expected to propel the agricultural sector forward, including the protection of small and medium-sized farms, encouragement of research in various fields of agriculture, the creation of a national agricultural database with an information management system, and the reevaluation of signed agricultural agreements. National initiatives are required to build agricultural infrastructure, encourage the implementation of best practices for water usage, and support agro businesses. Efforts are also required to promote agro marketing by enhancing the competitiveness of Palestinian agro goods on a local and worldwide scale, as well as restricting the entry of Israeli products into the Palestinian market. Effective communication amongst all players in the agriculture industry is required for all of these efforts to be successful.

According to Reima and Nuseibah, Palestine lacks the use of information management in agricultural management, thus we'd want to look at other emerging nations' experiences with information management in agriculture. The goal of using information management is to assist us attain agribusiness employees benefit and hence achieve efficiency, which leads to lower product costs, which will benefit the whole

agricultural chain and ensure the sector's long-term viability, as well as properly managing this sector and meet the needs of the community.

Reima and Nuseibah also found that in the Ministry of Agriculture's structure there is no department to sponsor this sector's activity, concerning data or information management, which would provide such data to various departments in order to study the state of the sector and the procedures for providing services. More than one government institution in Palestine has a direct or indirect link with agriculture, which may be regarded as both strength and a weakness at the same time.

#### 2.1.4 Discussion and Knowledge Gap

This chapter examines the literature on various aspects of communication in quality control, especially in the agribusiness field. In agribusiness, communication does not refer to subjects or technical terms, but rather to the ways in which this issue is modeled in communications that are understood and supported by the public. Communication is a necessary element for good management, it is even more important in terms of implementing quality control. Effective communication is a very important factor in maintaining quality control; it provides critical links and joins people throughout ideas and information that are vital for a project success (Sangera, 2014). Without a proper communication plan the flow of information between project team members would be inhibited (Kisielnicki, 2011). Given the uncertain occupied quality of life Palestinians encounter, we can only imagine the amount of instability within any project plan. Occupation imposes severe restrictions on the development of the Palestinian agricultural sector, as well as the entire economy, which makes the goal of sustainable development nearly impossible

Clearly, there is a connection among linkages in quality and information, as well as the level of communication needed for effective quality management assurance in the agribusiness sector. Because of the high levels of communication and information linkages, the type of communication needed to ensure quality management performance is diverse. However, few researches have been published on the specific strategies, which can be used to improve communication in the field of agribusiness quality control, as well as the importance between communication planning and consultation of stakeholders with the key performance indicator of the agricultural sector. More research is required to determine how communication efficiency can be improved to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of quality management in the agribusiness industry.

**Based on the reviewed literature in regards to this topic in Palestine it is still under-research and indicates a significant gap in terms of how a communication plan will optimize the value-chain of agribusiness under uncertain socio-economic and political. This is a vital study in the field of agribusiness management optimizing business communication in promoting quality control in Palestinian agribusiness sector. The importance of communication among agribusiness' various stakeholders such as NGOs, private sector, and the government will increase the added value of sector's efficiency, primarily through systematic coordination, and result in better planning, higher revenue, reduced cost, and quality control management.**

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

### 2.2.1 Agribusiness Communication

In agribusiness, communication does not refer to subjects or technical terms, but rather to the ways in which the issue is portrayed in communication that are recognized and accepted by the public (Alina, 2014). The company is designed and planned by managers and specialists. Businesses, including agriculture, include an internal, local communication aspect in performance models, as well as communication with the public and institutions. Agriculture, like any other field, requires public support to perform at its best, with the ultimate beneficiary being the buyer of the agricultural products. To communicate is more than just looking, it also entails making oneself known and being understood, as well as developing a partnership that brings the public together to support a cause, a idea, or an activity (Alina, 2014). It is a required process for such topics and goals to be included in the institutions priority agenda. Communication can also be defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another (Keyton, 2011). The word communication is derived from the later word *communis*, meaning *common*, which underscores that unless a common understanding results from the exchange of information, there is no communication. (Alina, 2014) also stated that agribusiness is a term used in common conversations to describe the types and sectors of activity directly connected to agriculture production that are created and grown using business concept and practices. Agribusiness may be described as any activity linked to agriculture that has progressed beyond the level of substance production.

Alina (2014) stated that the main way to obtain success in agribusiness communication is through; first, asking questions, using questions more effectively in our business encounters, is a key factor in creating valuable facts, get a deeper understanding of the other persons opinion, emotions and experience. Asking questions also shows the other party that we are paying close attention and are interested in whatever they have to say. Second, paying attention, even when our minds are completely concentrated with an individual, our minds tend to wander and get distracted, which we can change by becoming more mindful while we are wandering and create a deliberate effort to refocus. Finally, to be an active listener, there is a distinction to be made between simply listening and actively listening, which is critical for effective agribusiness communication. Active listening allows us to communicate and comprehend with the individual we are speaking to. Paying attention and using body language are two techniques for active listening.

### 2.2.2 Indigenous Agricultural Knowledge System

Alemu et al. (2018) stated that indigenous knowledge is the key success factor for agricultural development. It is well acknowledged that indigenous knowledge plays a critical part in the agricultural production systems of developing countries. Indigenous knowledge, on the other hand, is no longer reliable on its own, necessitating its integration with scientific knowledge and practices for agricultural sector improvement, as stated by (Alemu et al., 2018). Davenport and Prusak, as cited in Alemu et al. (2018) defined knowledge as “a dynamic combination of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that serves as a framework for assessing and absorbing new experiences and information”. Scientific

and indigenous knowledge are the two types of knowledge generated and utilized in the agricultural industry. All procedures and activities that are guided by theoretical models and regulated by hypothesis testing and experimentation are considered scientific knowledge. While indigenous knowledge, is the experience and knowledge gained and passed over through generations (Lanzo, 2013)

### 2.2.3 Agribusiness and the Economy

The agricultural industry is confronted with modern and significant issues. Such issues seem to be the product of ongoing significant distinctions between the national and international economic scenario. As a result of shortsighted decisions, natural resources are becoming increasingly scarce and endangered. Such topics were discussed in the EU commission in regards to the green deal that outlines a modern development plan, which will convert the union into modern, resource efficient and sustainable economy (Malorgio & Marangon, 2021). Agriculture has a major environmental effect that can be assessed from both a socioeconomic and ethical standpoint. This type of relationship has become more intense and complex.

Agribusiness management is involved with decision-making within the food systems organization. King et al., (2010) have helped agribusiness companies consider and sustain their organizational, financial, and strategic decisions. Agricultural economists have developed reliable approaches and techniques to help the agribusiness industry run more efficiently, as well as aiding in the development of business strategies by monitoring, understanding and predicting changes in the agricultural economic environment. Understanding how organizations, companies and economics influence vertical and horizontal alignments within the food sector is the focus of agribusiness economic. King et al., (2010) described several contributions made to the design and

analysis of the organization and market. First, agricultural economists have made significant contributions to the field of agricultural cooperative marketing and management by applying economic reasoning and developing analytical advances. They also aided to the emergence and development of organizations that serve as the basis for agricultural credit markets.

Agricultural and analytical economists concentrated their efforts on value-chain analysis and design. According to (Boehlje, 1999) a value-chain is a set of “value creating activities in the production distribution phase, as well as the explicit framework of linkages among these activities or processes.” The key problem in the value-chain design and management is how to provide consistency and added value to consumers in the most efficient way possible.

Malorgio and Marangon (2021) stated that agriculture is involved in process transformation of the production system today more than ever before, with the goal of designing a strategy that preserves economic vitality while improving environmental and social sustainability. It also involves the development of organizational and technical expertise that ensures a productive partnership with suppliers, and also a strategy for implementing sustainable production methods for environmental conservation, resource efficiency and the promotion of local resources. Much of this adds to the complexity of the strategies and functions that agribusiness must execute, and the numerous complex technological and socio-environmental constraints which they must contend in order to sustain and enhance their economic viability and productivity.

Therefore, agricultural economists are constantly being challenged to set their sights and expertise on the research of agribusiness and economics, along with various leadership and operational types found in the production process, in order to help define

and motivate sustainable development and transition directions that are appropriate for existing and anticipated scenarios. In terms of territorial methods, (Malorgio & Marangon, 2021) stated that methods should be re-examined with a socioeconomic and environmental balance in mind, highlighting the diversity of territorial agriculture systems and local markets. As a result agribusiness plays a greater role in the growth of more sustainable, inclusive and competitive strategies. All parties involved in the agricultural industry would benefit from adopting the idea of sustainability. For far too long, agribusiness has been a victim of economics, consumers and competition. Malorgio and Marangon (2021) also stated that it is time to rediscover the agricultural sectors active positions, emphasizing the importance of tough decisions taken under a variety of restrictions.

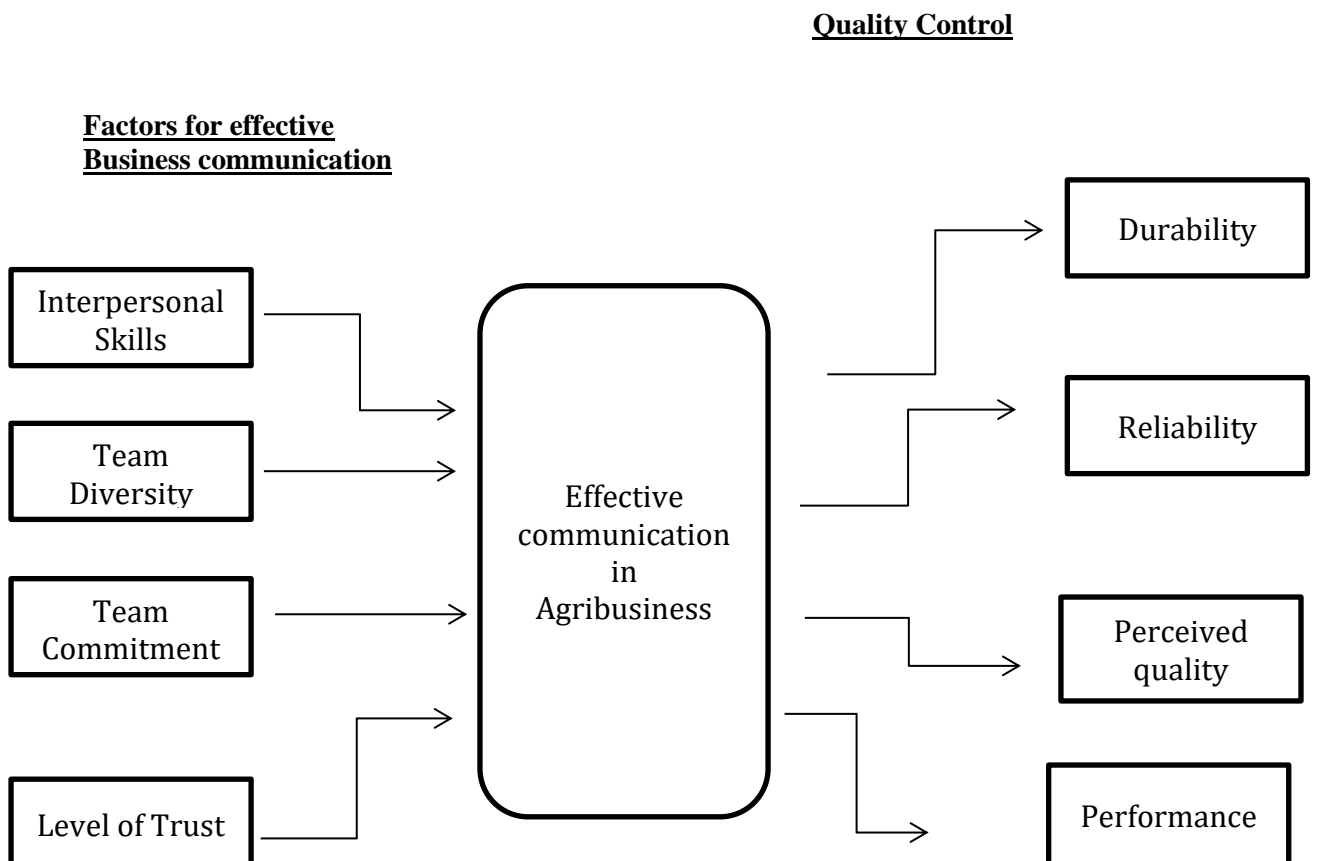
Priyarsono et al. (2016) stated that a strong agricultural sector is needed to ensure a rapid growth of the economy, however the agricultural sector can only support the economic growth only if the other sectors in the economy highly demand the commodities produced by the agricultural sector. Their study concludes that agribusiness, specifically small and medium agricultural based businesses are critical to improving the economies efficiency. Agribusiness can also greatly increase the income of poor rural people while also generating substantial jobs. As a result, there will be more equal distribution of incomes. Priyarsono et al. (2016) discussed that small scale agribusiness are the most promising industrial sectors for accelerating economic development. Agricultural industries, which are largely domestically available, supply these sectors output inputs. Recommended industries are characterized by their small scale, most likely because smallness allows for greater versatility in adapting to different economic conditions. Priyarsono et al. (2016) also stated that giving rural areas (instead of urban areas) higher priority would lead to a greater economic situation.

Priyarsono et al. (2016) argued that due to the inelastic nature of agricultural demand, a change in the supply curve to the right would result in a price decrease rather than a commodity increase. Since the agricultural sector will be paid less, the overall welfare impact may be negative, at least in the long run. As a result, a change in the demand curve to the right is required to improve the economies long-term viability.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

In this research the conceptual framework will be constructed by two main variables communication and quality control. As noted, an effective communication plan has an influence on quality control.

**Conceptual Framework model:**



### 2.3.1 Conceptual Framework Description

The literature review contributed to the emergence of the above conceptual model, which portrays the main factors that affect successful communication and quality control in the agricultural sector. The relationship between the two major variables, efficient communication and quality control, is also depicted in the model. Effective communication and promoting quality control have a positive relationship, as stated in the previous chapter. In agribusiness, (Bruening & Scanlon, 1995) discuss the importance of effective communication. They also tie good communication to interpersonal skills between all agribusiness individuals and employees. The interpersonal skill factor and the efficient communication factor have a positive relationship, as seen on the left side of the model.

The model also reveals that a positive relationship exists between a high level of trust and effective communication. Effective communication, according to (Batt & Rexha, 2000), necessitates a high degree of trust between and among personnel involved in the implementation of various components in the agricultural industry. As a result, effective communication and trust have a positive relationship. Diversity of information and educational backgrounds, as seen on the left side of the figure, has a beneficial impact on successful communication. Because variety of expertise eased the sharing of information and enhanced communication from diverse viewpoints, teams of members with various knowledge and education backgrounds appeared to perform better. In addition, the model shows a connection between team commitment and successful communication. In this regard, Kiseilnicki (2011) states that arranging team management in a way that fosters positive environments would enable team engagement to effectively interact with one another.

Quality isn't represented by a single attribute. It is a dynamic system that creates a forum for suppliers and other supply chain players to collaborate in meeting customer standards and needs. It is generally acknowledged and known that superior product quality can be used as a strategic tool (Opara & Mazaud, 2001). The products quality or service is widely acknowledged as a key factor in agribusiness performance. Mitra (2016) stated that quality control may be defined as a system that maintains a desired level of quality, through feedback on product/service characteristics and implementation of actions. According to Garvin (1987) there are eight dimensions of product quality control, in which we will be using five of these dimensions; durability, reliability conformance, perceived quality, and performance. The agricultural business should then identify the dimensions of quality on which they expect to perform, and concentrate their capabilities and resources on such dimensions.

Joslin and Muller (2015) stated that communication is considered as an important element to project activities. Communication works just like a blood stream, it pushes oxygen throughout the body to maintain life, and similarly communication is considered the backbone of tasks and projects. Communication covers the practical trade and knowledge of information between interested parties. The accomplishment of project results from powerful communication. Baker (2003) stated that communication is nominated as the most critical factor in project success and yet can still be the most significant factor in the failures of a project. Communication is also found critical for timely delivery and with-in cost completion of a project, in which both timely delivery and quality of project performance are directly affected by the project managers communication skills (Lawrence et.al.,1977). Project managers must frequently update both team members and stakeholders about the progress of project activities. A key for good communication is to first understand the process of communication, known as the

Basic Model of Communication. The basic model of communication involves a sender and a receiver in which information is sent back and forth between both parties leading to message feedback between both sender and receiver.

The process of quality control is used to ensure that a product or service attains the required level of quality or higher. It usually involves a thorough examination of the product or result of service (Brown, 2014). Effective communication is logical, rational, and persuasive. Choudhary and Rathore (2013) stated that there is a strong positive relation between good communication and successful quality control. Although communication is a necessary element for good management, it is even more important in terms of implementing quality control. Quality control includes general methods such as accuracy checks, approved procedure, and measurements, while higher quality control activities include reviews of technical sources, activities and methods (Mangino, 2001). Popescu and Dascalu (2011) elaborated on certain methods to improve the organizations current activities and strategic initiatives; such as extending the use of value-chain based approaches to manage quality. Establishing quality objectives implies the value chain analysis to identify changes that can bring competitive advantage, as well as creating a unique way to combine resources and skills, making it difficult for competitors to recognize. That being said, the essence of value added is about planning and monitoring the continuous improvement of the quality of the process from the value chain. The underlying goal is to ensure that the examined process has reached its needed requirements.

Kiseilnicki (2011) sought to prove or disapprove the hypothesis that “the communication systems aid the most effective framework for project management.” According to his study outcomes, effective communication that leads to project implementation has been hindered by two issues; the first is caused by external

communication factors such as a delay in supplies, unplanned team absence, changes in goals, objectives and so on. The second issue being communication challenges caused by internal factors such as poor communication channels, internal conflicts, and mistakes in project management strategies. Conclusively, communication serves as a booster to enhance the contribution of project team members towards successful goal attainment.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the qualitative analysis approach that was used in this research and discusses why it was chosen. In addition, the chapter discusses the data source, how the data was obtained, the process of study, and the limitations.

### **3.2 Study Design**

In the agribusiness industry, effective communication is a standard concept. Effective communication and quality control go hand in hand, and they also connect effective communication to interpersonal skills for both agribusiness individuals and employees. As a result, effective communication management is critical for quality control management. As a result, it's critical to look at effective communication for quality control monitoring.

The key goal of this research was to look at how effective communication would help promote quality control in the agricultural industry. For this dissertation, data was obtained from six different organizations.

To facilitate analysis, a qualitative research approach was used, which included data collection, observations (being a part of a meeting, and a training between the organization and the beneficiary), and face-to-face encounters with individuals. Because of the qualitative methodology, the researcher was able to communicate directly with selected individuals from each organization. It also gave the researcher access to more participants in the project and to project records, which included relevant evidence to back up the findings.

### 3.3 Population Sample

Six different organizations were selected to obtain data from for this research. The first was a private shareholder limited company that aimed to address the efforts of agricultural cooperatives to improve their social and economic situation through improving the quality of their products. In this organization the interview was held with the general director. The second organization was a non-governmental organization, which focuses on building capacity and sustainable agricultural development. In this organization the interview was held with the executive director. The third organization is a non-profit organization that provides services and support to those willing and ready to entry new markets to sustain economic growth. The interview in this organization was held with the executive manager. The fourth organization was a non-governmental, national development organization that strives to mobilize and develop the agricultural sector. The interview in this organization was held with the project manager. As for the fifth participant the interview was held with the ex-minister of agriculture in Palestine. Lastly, the sixth organization is a non-governmental which strives to promote sustainability and development of the agricultural sector by empowering beneficiaries. The interview in this organization was held with the project manager. The above mentioned six organizations were randomly selected based on the Palestinian agribusiness sector listed in the Palestinian ministry of economics. Accordingly, interviews were conducted with each of the above-mentioned members, in which relevant information was gathered.

### 3.4 Analysis Tool

Based on the literature review, a conceptual model was developed. Data was compared to each element in the conceptual model using interviews, documents, historical information, and reports.

### 3.5 Data Collection

This research sample includes two different factors within the company: communication and quality. To ensure that enough data was collected for the study goals, interview questions were formulated based on the factors and variables listed in the conceptual model. As a result, one member from each organization (each a different position) was interviewed. Face-to-face interviews, and findings by the researcher were the primary tools used. More detail about the activities was found on the company websites.

The questionnaire was designed with two stages of data collection in mind: first, the general manager, and second, the project managers.

#### **Interview questions:**

- 1- Does effective communication exist within your organization?
  - This question investigated information symmetry.
  
- 2- What are the different communication practices that you use? To which extent are these practices effective?
  - This question addressed the level of the project managers and general managers communication skills.

3- Who formulates your communication plan? How?

- This question investigated who prepares the communication plan and how it is prepared.

4- What are the challenges you face given your communication plan?

- This question investigated the projects challenges, which will provide an indication of the effective delivery of the project.

5- To which extent do members of your team have different education backgrounds? To which extent does the diversity of knowledge in your team impact your team communication effectiveness?

- This question investigated the diversity of knowledge and education backgrounds in the organization and the impact of this diversity on effective communication between team members.

6- To what extent does a communication plan affect the quality control of planning in the agribusiness? To what extent does the communication plan affect the social and economic revenues of the agribusiness?

- This question investigated and defined the standards of the communication plan that affect quality control and its benefit to individuals and the organization.

7- What are some indicators your organization uses to measure the impact communication has on your business?

- This question investigated what effective tools or benchmarks are used to measure progress and performance.

8- How do you track your plan?

- This question provided insight by identifying transparency and information that can be used to provide useful benchmarks.

9- If beneficiaries have a problem with perceiving the needed quality, what assistance do you provide to maintain quality?

- This question emphasized the role of the organization on the beneficiary and the assistance it provides to maintain quality.

10- Small business owners need to live up to certain quality standards in-order to enter the market, which may result in a problem, what role do you play?

- This question highlighted the role of the organization in aiding small business owners in entering the market.

11- How do you measure quality to ensure it is up to market standards?

- This question investigated the methods used to analyze as well as evaluate the quality against the specified standards to ensure that the quality standards are satisfied.

### 3.6 Limitations

There were multiple limitations to this research. To begin with, it was difficult to locate literature that addressed effective communication and quality control in tandem. Furthermore, few studies focused on effective communication, especially in the context of agribusiness. Another drawback was the participant's lack of time, which prevented from discussing further case studies (human and time limitation). As well as the lack of organizations specialized in the concept of agribusiness (organization limitation), and the global pandemic (Covid 19), affecting the access mobility while conducting face-to-face interviews.

### 3.7 Summary

A qualitative analysis approach is used in this research. The research begins by defining the terms "effective communication" and "quality control." It also looks at the main factors that influence agribusiness communication. The role and problems of communications in agribusiness, as well as the effects of successful communications on quality control, were discussed in the literature review. The literature starts with a review of general hypotheses of effective communication. Gradually, the emphasis of the research shifts to the importance of effective communication in fostering quality control. A conceptual model was created as a result of the literature review, and it was used to interpret and discuss the interviews and case studies.

The conceptual model represented the major factors that influence successful agribusiness communication. The relationship between effective communication and quality control was also represented in the model. Information symmetry, project manager communication skills, team depth in expertise, team commitment to interact,

and effective communication in a project all have a positive relationship. Effective communication, on the other hand, has a beneficial association with the promotion of quality control. For this research, data was obtained and analyzed from six different organizations. The main obstacles were the lack of literature on the topic, which was described as a research weakness.

## Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

The following table of results will present the similarity and differences of the opinions stated by the interviewed individuals on the identified issues in this research, following the researcher's elaboration on the overall opinion of each interviewed individual.

**Table 1: Table of Results**

Issue	Similarity	Differences	Researcher Comments
The existence of communication within the organization	All interviewee's agreed upon the existence of effective communication in the organization	It was noticeable that there is a difference in regards to the perception of the extent of effectiveness in each organization and the way it is perceived	Effective concept is not fully clear
Different communication tools used and the extent to which these tools are effective.	The communication tools used are all the same throughout all targeted groups	There was stand out among interviewee's as to which extent a communication tool can be most effective, due to dealing with different parties	Lack of documentation
The formulation of the communication plan.	Interviewee's mentioned that the plan comes from existing strategies, policies, manuals, and organization structure	The communication plan may vary and be altered with in a minimal way according to the project and target group	No interim evaluation of the effectiveness
Challenges faced throughout the communication plan	Challenges faced throughout the communication plan were seen very common	The result of challenges differed among several interviewee's, some claimed it is a result of lack of	Uncertainties is the main challenge that effects efficiency

	among interviewee's	resources, while others said it's a matter of transparency	
The effect that the diversity of knowledge and different education backgrounds has on communication effectiveness	Diversity of knowledge depends on the different techniques and skills used when trying to communicate	Some stated that regardless the level of education or background within a team, there must be a harmony of communication for it to be effective	Absent of knowledge harmonization effects the communication plan
The effect communication has on quality control and social and economic revenues	All interviewee's stated that communication has an effect on quality control	Opinions differed when it came to the topic of social and economic revenues and how communication affects quality. Some stated that if trust and transparency exist within the communication plan it will positively affect quality control, whereas the effect of social and economic revenues results due to politics, while others stated it is a result of the lack of the communication being transparent and implemented	Lack of monitoring and evaluating
Indicators used to measure impact of communication plan	An indicator that was commonly used and mentioned was the dependence on the feedback process	Each organization had its own way of measuring the overall impact. Some stated the increase in market share served as an indicator, while others stated trust and honesty, as well as impact	Lack of feedback is a common case in particular the feedback of beneficiary or client

		assessment throughout the projects	
The tracking of the plan	Majority of the interviewee's agreed upon the tracking of the communication plan is done through the assurance that the plan is implemented effectively	Details in regards to the process of tracking differed. Some stated it to be tracked through impact assessment, while others stated it as assuring the strategy is well communicated	No documentation of the tracking
The assistance provided to beneficiaries in-order to perceive the needed quality	Assistance provided to beneficiaries throughout all interviewee's answers were very similar, such as providing training, mentoring, guidance, field visits, and the assurance of needed skills were obtained	Others stated that the providence of certificates, quality assurance and control help perceive the needed quality	The assistance provided needs to be well institutionalized
The role played if a problem occurs while a small business owner is trying to enter the market	All interviewee's agreed upon playing a role when it came to problems, they would interfere by trying to understand how it occurred, how to resolve it, and assure it meets market standards by understanding the market	Interviewee's added that the assistance of a highly experienced individual is an effective tools to resolve a problem	The small owners started to diminished
Measurement of quality control to ensure it is up to market standards	It was seen common between interviewee's that the quality control is primarily measured according to local and global market	Other interviewee's mentioned that measurement of quality can be done through the consistent un-changing level of	Last years very good improvement of quality of the product in particular small scale business

	standards, mainly the market standards the product is going to	the product, or a written quality agreement between both parties	
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- There is a strong positive relationship between a communication plan and quality control.
- Communicating a misleading communication plan, will most likely affect the overall quality.
- There must be full awareness of the plan in-order to convey it in an effective way and result in effective quality control.
- Communication is a matter of trust
- Independence may be the most important factor for sustaining an effective communication plan and the avoidance of negative affects on social and economic revenues
- The ongoing need to improve communication methods
- Assuring the distribution of tasks among the team to ensure an effective process in promoting quality
- Trust as a factor may affect communication and quality control
- Factors that should be taken into consideration to ensure effective communication, proper implantation and consideration for information harmony between team members, interpersonal communication skills, team diversity of knowledge and commitment are required

## Chapter 5: Conclusion and Discussion

Six different organizations were selected by the researcher as target groups for the interview questions in order to investigate the level of communication effectiveness in each organization and to examine the relationship between effective communication and the promotion of quality control. The conceptual model and interview questions presented opinions on factors that impact effective communication and clarified the relationship between effective communication and promoting quality control.

Data analysis was made to examine the impact a communication plan has on affecting the quality control of planning in the agribusiness sector, and the impact the communication plan has on affecting the social and economic revenues of the agribusiness. It was made clear by all interviewee's that there is a strong positive relationship between a communication plan and quality control, meaning the communication plan does affect quality control in the agribusiness, but yet differed to agree in-terms of to what extent does the communication plan affect quality control. One interviewee stated that if you communicate a misleading communication plan, convey the wrong message, and techniques it will most likely affect the overall quality. In-order to prevent such from happening; it must be made sure effective communication is sufficient throughout the entire organization. While another interviewee stated that when implementing a communication plan there must be full awareness of the plan in-order to convey it in an effective way and result in effective quality control. It was also stated that by another interviewee, that communication is a matter of trust, if breached it would result in a major negative affect on quality. The responses from interviewee's indicated that communication does affect quality control. I noticed that in-order to achieve an effective communication plan that positively affects quality control several

factors must be considered such as; awareness, trust, and sufficiency between organization members and beneficiaries.

When it came to analyzing the extent to which a communication plan has on affecting the social and economic revenues in the agribusiness sector, I noticed mixed responses from our interviewee's. A majority of the interviewee's stated that such affect due to our un-independent political situation, while a few argued that occupation may result in such affect, but believed it was rather the result of a lack in communication, transparency, and implementation. In regards to the un-independent political situation, it was stated by an interviewee that plans are hostages under the occupation, whether it was a communication plan or quality plan, the occupation controls everything and it is greatly possible for revenues to collapse or accelerate. Another interviewee also mentioned that the distress and depression the beneficiaries go through due to the many harsh obstacles faced by the occupation lead to a great negative impact on social revenues. One interviewee stood out by stating that even if we do face such factors that may affect us, it is to never be stated or talked about, for it will affect business and reputation between markets and customers. As noted by what has been mentioned above, I think the most important factor for sustaining an effective communication plan and the avoidance of negative affects on social and economic revenues is independence.

Interviewee's stated that a variety of communication tools were being used, such as emails, meetings, field visits, but most effectively; face to face encounters. Although the majority implemented and mentioned the same tools, some mentioned the ongoing need to improve communication methods such as introducing social activities, field visits, exhibitions, social media, and workshops to enhance the diversity and effectiveness of communication.

In most interviewee's I found the diversity of team knowledge and experience mostly having the same response, such as developing new skills in-order to sustain, compete, and being very active and being able to switch up methods of communication depending on the targeted party, as well as assuring the distribution of tasks among the team to ensure an effective process in promoting quality. While one interviewee argued that in-order to succeed, despite educational background and diversity, one must be able to obtain the skill of communication and the existence of harmony in-terms of communication.

However there was a major difference in the existence of the level of trust between interviewee's, one interviewee only mentioned trust as a factor that affects communication and quality control. As well as being an indicator that is used to measure the impact on a communication plan. The way communication has been portrayed by the interviewee's indicates that effective communication does exist.

The hypothesis that an effective communication plan has an influence on quality control was confirmed by the data. Therefore for the effective delivery of quality control, organizations need to ensure there is an effective communication plan among all involved parties such as team members, other departments in the organizations, and beneficiaries.

Moreover, analysis of the interview questions drew a clear picture of factors required to create effective communication. Interview question analysis and conceptual model illustrated a positive relationship between interpersonal communication skills, team commitment and diversity, as well as the level of trust, to effective communication in the agribusiness. Both the literature review and the analysis of the interview questions confirmed a relationship between effective communication and factors

affecting quality control such as; performance and perceived quality, durability and reliability.

Finally, after discussing the main results of this research, I can conclude that the most important factors that should be taken into consideration to ensure effective communication, proper implantation and consideration for information harmony between team members, interpersonal communication skills, team diversity of knowledge and commitment are required. In addition standard processes and procedures for communication must be developed to ensure the harmony of the information being shared.

## Recommendation

This research was intended to be an important step forward paving the way for future research on the effect of effective communication on promoting quality control. Since many results in this research indicated that effective communication, interpersonal communication skills, and other factors are important for promoting quality control. Further research is recommended to gain more detail in-regards to the factor of level of trust and its impact on promoting quality control. The following research recommends the following:

- 1- The implementation of innovative information symmetry to reduce the knowledge gap among employees and to provide them with relevant information regarding the whole agriculture value chain.
- 2- The need of information to be delivered in appropriate manner and to be prioritized according to agricultural value chain stages, which ultimately will lead to increase the productivity of agribusiness employees.
- 3- It is relevant to the Palestinian context to recommend that there is a need to take effective measures against the emerging challenges in the agriculture sector, by strengthening information dissemination and to turn agricultural extension into more diversified, knowledge intensive, and thus more effective tool in meeting employees.
- 4- Planned interventions at all links in agricultural supply chain such as delivery of inputs, increasing production through efficient management at all agricultural business projects.
- 5- A form of governmental actions to encourage the growth of rural business hubs and supply chains consolidation as small and growing projects in the agricultural processing industry, by providing supply technology and market

opportunities to poor farmers and job opportunities to landless labors given the uncertain socioeconomic conditions.

- 6- This study recommended the exploitation of new opportunities in content development and its applications to ensure the community's sustainability goals through innovative use of models for effective communication system.
- 7- Integration of modern communication systems in agriculture would help any organization to regulate its overall financial positions and trade.
- 8- The need to involve all the stakeholders in agribusiness (farmers, extension workers, policy makers, and scientists, business communities, IT firms and NGOs) to generate more data, which could help in using other instruments of analysis to enrich the research methodologies and analytical analysis.
- 9- Approaches to design indigenous knowledge content locally in context of social factors such as, language, culture, information delivery that it must be locally relevant and appropriate in regards to the Palestinian agribusiness industry.
- 10- Policy recommendation for governments to implement more effective and easy financial service provisions to agricultural business industry.

## Annex:

### Interview Questions:

1. Does effective communication exist within your organization?
2. What are the different communication practices that you use? To which extent are these practices effective?
3. Who formulates your communication plan? How?
4. What are the challenges you face given your communication plan?
5. To which extent do members of your team have different education backgrounds? To which extent does the diversity of knowledge in your team impact your team communication effectiveness?
6. To what extent does a communication plan affect the quality control of planning in the agribusiness? To what extent does the communication plan affect the social and economic revenues of the agribusiness?
7. What are some indicators your organization uses to measure the impact communication has on your business?
8. How do you track your plan?  
If beneficiaries have a problem with perceiving the needed quality, what assistance do you provide to maintain quality?
9. Small business owners need to live up to certain quality standards in-order to enter the market, which may result in a problem, what role do you play?
10. How do you measure quality to ensure it is up to market standards?

### List of Interviewed Organizations:

<p>1- Union of agricultural work committees اتحاد لجان العمل الزراعي</p>	<p>2- Palestinian farmers union اتحاد جمعيات المزارعين الفلسطينيين</p>
<p>3- PARC - Agricultural Development Association الإغاثة الزراعية الفلسطينية</p>	<p>4- Paltrade مركز التجارة الفلسطيني</p>
<p>5- Al-Reef for agricultural marketing شركة الريف للاستثمار والتسويق الزراعي</p>	<p>6- Former Minister of Agriculture وزير الزراعة السابق</p>

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## Abstract (Arabic)

يرتكز نجاح أي مشروع أو مؤسسة على فعالية خطة التواصل بين كافة الفاعلين، ويعد ضعف التواصل بين الفاعلين من العوامل التي تشكل خلا في النتائج المرجوة. وفي ظل الظروف الفلسطينية المعقدة تكتسب خطة التواصل أهمية خاصة من حيث أهميتها في قطاع الزراعة بشكل خاص وتحقيق أهداف التنمية المستدامة بشكل عام.

يركز هذا البحث على أهمية خطة التواصل في تحسين جودة العمل ومؤشرات الأداء ومردودها الاقتصادي والاجتماعي، وقد تم تطوير نموذج مفاهيمي لتوضيح اليات التواصل. ويركز البحث على المؤسسات ذات العلاقة والتي لديها معرفة في تطوير خطة التواصل وهو جزء أساسي من عملها.

وتبين النتائج أن الاتصال الشخصي ومهارات الاتصال وتنوع الفريق من العوامل الأساسية لنجاح خطة التواصل الفعالة بالتأثير على جودة العمل.