transparent, and audience-sensitive business communication strategies. Ultimately, this inquiry positions language as a strategic asset – one that not only conveys meaning but also shapes public legitimacy and understanding.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Evolving Definitions of Business Performance

The notion of business performance has transitioned from being purely profit-driven to a multi-dimensional concept encompassing growth, efficiency, stakeholder satisfaction, and ethical conduct. Gilsing et al. (2021) highlight how qualitative and linguistic summaries are now used to define KPIs in early-stage business model development, reflecting the ambiguity and subjectivity often present in strategic communication. The gap between how organizations define performance internally and how the public interprets it is central to this study. This underlines the importance of evaluating how terms like "Performance" or "Success" are received by non-expert audiences, (H3 and H4).

2.2 Interpretation of KPIs and Strategic Indicators

Despite the widespread use of KPIs in Business discourse, public understanding of these indicators remains limited. Gilsing et al. (2021) argue that even within organizations, KPIs often lack linguistic clarity during early adoption. The finding of the study that formal education in business improves KPI awareness directly supports this (H1). Understanding KPI terminology is not just about financial literacy, but also about how language is framed-making interpretation a cognitive and communicative challenge.

2.3 Communication Barriers in performance Disclosures

Vince Kellen (2003) outlines cognitive and organizational barriers that hinder effective interpretation of business performance information. Rigid structures, jargon, and lack of intuitive design in performance reports often lead to disengagement. Kieser (2002) similarly points out that language simplification by consultants can enhance understanding but also risks distortion. These tensions are reflected in the hypothesis (H8), where comprehension of reports was significantly correlated with belief in public understanding of business terms.

2.4 Role of Education and Formal training

Education significantly shapes how individuals interpret abstract business concepts Dahmen & Rodriguez (2014) and Aristei et al. (2024) both show that business and financial education improves decision-making and term comprehension. The research confirms this by identifying associations between education and understanding of "Success" and "KPI" (H1 and H4). This also supports policy-oriented calls for more accessible education on financial and business literacy for non-specialist audiences.

2.5 Influence of Occupation and real-world exposure

The professional background of individuals plays a role in shaping how they decode business language. Ferreira (2011) emphasized that distributed and virtual teams interpret performance differently depending on context. Your findings similarly show that employed individuals and students interpret strategic impact differently (H5), suggesting that real-world exposure to business environments fosters deeper comprehension of strategic terms.

2.6 Perception of efficiency and semantic variability

The term "Efficiency" carries different meaning across demographics. While some view it as a cost-cutting measure, others associate it with innovation or process optimization. Tangen (2004) and Bititci et al. (2001) emphasize that even withing organizations, the understanding of performance terminology is inconsistent. The hypothesis (H2) Confirms this discrepancy in the public realm, with varied interpretations of "Efficiency" significantly associated with age group.

2.7 Buzzwords, framing, and Jargon Fatigue

Jing (2015) and Koh et al. (2022) argue that excessive use of Buzzwords in reports reduces credibility. Public fatigue with overused terminology can dilute message clarity. The correlation analysis supports this, showing a significant relationship between preference for simple language and the perception that buzzwords are overused (H12). This highlights the communicative trade-off between sounding strategic and being understood.

2.8 Format preferences in strategic Communication

Studies such as Dennis et al. (2008) and Shahriar & Habibul (2024) demonstrate that digital tools and visuals enhance the clarity of complex ideas, especially ins strategic settings. The findings show gender-based variation in preferred communication format (H6), indicating that inclusive business reporting must consider cognitive and media-based preferences to maximize engagement and comprehension.

2.9 Interpersonal variables and interpretation confidence

Beyond education and occupation, perception variables such as simplicity preference, belief in transparency, and clarity of reports deeply affect confidence in understanding. As supported by (H9 and H10), individuals who prefer plain language are more likely to believe strategies affect customers and to find performance terms meaningful. This affirms the need for audience-sensitive framing in corporate language. ‘

2.10 Conceptual integration and Hypothetical Mapping

Bringing together the reviewed literature and empirical findings, a clear model emerges: demographic variables shape perception filters, which in turn influence understanding, trust, and engagement. This model aligns with our tested hypothesis (H1 to H12) and supports the conclusion.

3.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To investigate how individuals interpret commonly used business performance
2. To examine the role of demographic factors in shaping public interpretation and comprehension of business performance terminology
3. To analyse the public's awareness, familiarity, and perceived clarity of strategic terms, and how these influence trust, perceived transparency, and engagement with business reporting
4. To assess public preferences in the modes and formats of business communication with particular attention to visual, textual, and multimedia formats and their accessibility across diverse groups.

5. To identify communication gaps between organizational strategy and public understanding and propose directions for improving the clarity and accessibility of business performance language.

4.0 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do individuals interpret commonly used business performance terms such as “Efficiency”, “Success”, and “KPI”, in organizational communication?
2. To what extent do demographic variables like age, gender, education background, occupation, and formal Business education – influence awareness and interpretation of business performance language?
3. What levels of awareness and perceived clarity exist among the public regarding strategic terms used in corporate and institutional reports?
4. What are the preferred communication formats for business performance updates, and how do these preferences vary across different demographic groups?
5. What are the existing gaps between organizational strategy communication and public understanding, and how can these be addressed to improve transparency and engagement?

5.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative, descriptive and exploratory research design to examine how the public interprets business performance language, and how demographic and perceptual variables influence such interpretations. The aim was to assess the awareness, comprehension, and reception of commonly used business terms such as “KPI”, “Efficiency”, and “Success”, along with preferences in communication style.

A structure questionnaire was developed and administered through google forms to 120 respondents across diverse demographic categories. The instrument included a mix of nominal and ordinal variables – spanning demographic characteristics, awareness of business terminology, and Likert-scale items measuring preferences, perceptions, and attitudes toward business communication.

Data collection was conducted using non-probability purposive sampling, targeting participants with varied educational and occupational backgrounds to ensure a mix of business-educated and non-business respondents. The questionnaire ensured simplicity in language to capture responses from non-specialist participants without compromising the research focus.

The data was analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to profile respondent characteristics and summarize patterns of term understanding. Chi-square tests were employed to explore associations between demographic variables (E.g., Education, occupation, gender) and perception-based variables (e.g., awareness of KPI, communication preference). Pearson’s correlation analysis was used to assess the strength and direction of relationships between attitude-based Likert-scale items, such as preference for simplicity and belief in strategic impact. The final set of analyses enables interpretation of both categorical associations and cognitive-perceptual trends withing the public understanding of business language.

6.0 DATA ANALYSIS

This section presents the results of the data analysis conducted using SPSS Statistical software. Descriptive statics were employed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their general perceptions related to business performance language. To explore deeper associations, chi-square tests were used to examine categorical relationships between demographic and interpretive variables, while Pearson’s correlation analysis assessed the strength and direction of relationships among attitudinal and perception-based factors. Together, these analyses offer a comprehensive understanding of how the public interprets and responds to the language used in communicating business performance

6.1 Demographic Profile of respondents

Demographic Profile of Respondents		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age group of the Respondent	Below 18	2	1.7	1.7
	18 to 25	92	76.7	78.3
	26 to 35	18	15.0	93.3
	36 to 45	4	3.3	96.7
	46 to 60	4	3.3	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Gender identity of the respondent	Male	56	46.7	46.7
	Female	64	53.3	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Current Occupation Status	Student	80	66.7	66.7
	Employed	33	27.5	94.2
	Self-Employed	2	1.7	95.8
	Retired	1	.8	96.7
	Homemaker	4	3.3	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Highest Level of Education attained	Secondary School (SSLC or 10)	3	2.5	2.5
	High School	5	4.2	6.7
	Undergraduate	33	27.5	34.2
	Post Graduate	68	56.7	90.8
	Professional Degree	11	9.2	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Formal education received in Business, Commerce or Management	Yes	87	72.5	72.5
	No	33	27.5	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	

Age group of the Respondent: Most of the people who took part in this study (nearly 77%) were between the ages of 18 and 25. This shows that the responses mainly reflect how younger adults – such as college students and early-career individuals think about business language. Since this age group is highly active online and interacts with brands and businesses through social media and digital content, it's especially important that business terms and performance reports are clear and easy for them to understand. If companies want to connect well with the younger generation, they must use simple and relatable terms when communicating their growth, success, or performance.

Gender identity of the respondents: The gender split among participants was quite balanced, with 53% female and 47% male respondents. This even distribution means we can explore how both men and women interpret business-related words and messages. Since people of different genders might respond differently to the tone and complexity of business language, this balance helps ensure that business communication strategies can be made more inclusive and understandable for everyone.

Current Occupation Status: A large part of the sample (67%) consisted of students, while about 28% were employed. This tells us that most participants are still learning or just starting to understand the business-related terms or performance-related communication. Since many are not yet fully involved in business environments, their responses can highlight where confusion or misunderstanding happens. It also shows how important it is for companies to use plain and practical language when explaining their performance-especially for people who are still new to these terms.

Highest level of Education Attained: More than half of the respondents (57%) had completed postgraduate education, and nearly 28% ad undergraduate degrees. This means that most people in the study were fairly well-educated, which could influence ow they interpret complex business terms. However, even highly educated individuals may not always be familiar with business-specific language, especially if they come from non-commerce backgrounds. This suggests that using clearer and more general terms can benefit a wider audience-not just those with business degrees.

Formal Education in Business, Commerce, and Management: About 73% of the participants had formal education in business, commerce, or management. This gives us a chance to compare how trained individuals interpret business terms compared to those who haven't had such education. If even business-educated individuals find some terms unclear or overused, it would strongly suggest the need for businesses to rethink how they communicate performance. This makes it clear that companies must focus on simplifying their messages-not just for the general public but also for people with some background in the field.

6.2 Respondent understanding of Key terms

Understanding of Core Business Performance Terms		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Interpretation of the term "Business Performance"	Making money or earning profits	26	21.7	21.7
	Reaching company goals and targets	47	39.2	60.8
	Getting bigger or expanding	12	10.0	70.8
	Keeping customers happy and building a good reputation	35	29.2	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Perception of the term "Efficiency" in a business setting	Cutting down on waste and saving money	16	13.3	13.3
	Using time and resources in the best way	81	67.5	80.8
	Improving how things are done within the company	20	16.7	97.5
	Giving customers faster service	3	2.5	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Understanding of the term "Productive" in a business context	Producing a lot with fewer resources	32	26.7	26.7
	Finishing work on time and efficiently	69	57.5	84.2
	Using Machines or technology to help	5	4.2	88.3
	Getting the most out of workers	14	11.7	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	

Interpretation of the term "Business Performance": The responses that a majority of participants (39.2%) associated "Business Performance" with the idea of **Reaching company goals and targets**. This indicates that public tends to interpret performance in goal-oriented or strategic terms rather than purely financial ones. Interestingly, only 21.7% of respondents related it to making money and earning profits, suggesting that performance is not seen solely through a profit-centric lens. Furthermore, 29.2% considered keeping customers happy and building a good reputation as a key performance indicator, reflecting a strong customer-oriented understanding. This diversity in interpretation underscores the importance of clearer business communication, as "Performance" remains a multidimensional term in public perception. For companies aiming to communicate success or progress effectively, it becomes essential to clarify whether they are referring to financial outcomes, operational goals, or customer satisfaction.

Perception of the term "Efficiency" in a Business Setting: A substantial portion of respondents (67.5%) interpreted "Efficiency" as using time and resources in the best way. This dominant perception shows that public generally relates efficiency to optimal resource utilization, which aligns with standard business definitions. However, a smaller group (13.3%) associated it with cutting down on waste and saving money, and 16.7% viewed it as improving internal processes. Only 2.5% equated efficiency with faster customer service, which suggests that customer-facing outcomes are less likely to be linked with efficiency in the minds of the public. These findings indicate that while the term "Efficiency" is somewhat well understood, it may carry different nuances depending on context. Therefore, business communications that use the term "Efficiency" should be specific about the intended meaning-whether it refers to internal operations, cost-saving, or service speed- to avoid ambiguity and enhance strategic clarity.

Understanding of the term "Productivity" in a Business Context: The analysis shows that 57.5% of respondents understood "Productive" as finishing work on time and efficiently, indicating that timeliness and task completion are strongly associated with productivity. Around 26.7% believed it means producing a lot with fewer resources, while only 11.7% and 4.2% linked it to maximizing worker output and using technology, respectively. This suggests that the public tends to interpret productivity from an outcome-oriented perspective rather than a process-oriented one. The relatively low association of productivity with technology or human resource optimization implies a potential gap in understanding modern productivity drivers, especially in a digitalized and AI-enhanced business environment. For businesses communicating performance in terms of productivity, it is therefore essential to contextualize the term-explaining whether productivity stems from speed, volume, automation, or team effectiveness- to ensure the public accurately understands the source of business outcomes.

6.3 Respondent Awareness of strategic Metrics

Awareness and Interpretation of Strategic Metrics		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Awareness of the term KPI (Key Performance Indicator)	Yes	92	76.7	76.7
	No	28	23.3	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Belief about the meaning of KPI	A Measure of how well a company is doing	81	67.5	67.5
	A report showing how much money the company makes	23	19.2	86.7
	A List of the company's expenses and budget	15	12.5	99.2
	A document for investors	1	.8	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	

Awareness of the term KPI (Key performance Indicator): The findings indicate that a large majority of respondents (76.7%) reported being familiar with the term KPI. This high level of awareness suggests that strategic business vocabulary-particularly terms frequently used in performance communication-has entered the broader public lexicon, especially among educated or professionally exposed individuals. However, the fact that nearly one-fourth (23.3%) of the participants still lack familiarity with such a fundamental performance term signals that business communication may not be as inclusive or accessible as it appears. This gap reflects the need for businesses to define or explain such strategic terms when addressing the general public, especially in consumer-facing communication, annual reports, or digital updates. A lack of clarity around foundational terminology like KPI could hinder the public's ability to critically evaluate or interpret business performance messages.

Belief about the meaning of KPI: When asked to define the term, 67.5% of respondents correctly identified as KPI as a measure of how well a company is doing. While this shows that a majority not only recognize the term but also understand its core function, nearly one-third of participants held incorrect beliefs. About 19.2% thought it referred to a report showing how much money the company makes, and 12.5% believed it meant a list of the company expenses and budget. One respondent even identified it as document for investors. These misconceptions highlight that even when awareness exists, interpretation may be flawed or incomplete. This misalignment reinforces the idea that business performance language-though widely used-is not always clearly understood by the public. For businesses seeking transparency and trust through communication, it is critical to not assume shared understanding of strategic metrics. Instead, organizations should aim to simplify or contextualize such terms within performance reports or public messages, ensuring more accurate interpretation and stronger public engagement.

6.4 Respondent perception of Success and Communication.

Perception of Business Success and Growth		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Indicators that define company success	Earning more money or profit	57	47.5	47.5
	Happy and Satisfied employees	30	25.0	72.5
	Having loyal customers who keep coming back	24	20.0	92.5
	Doing good things for the community or environment	9	7.5	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Expectations when companies claim they are growing or doing well	New Products being Introduced	30	25.0	25.0
	More Advertisements and Media coverage	21	17.5	42.5
	Hiring more people or opening new locations	38	31.7	74.2
	Announcements of more profits or earnings	31	25.8	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	

Indicators that define company success: Nearly half of the respondents (47.5%) viewed earning more money or profit as the primary indicator of a company's success. While this aligns with traditional business perspectives, it is important to note that a substantial portion of participants also emphasized employee satisfaction (25%) and customer loyalty (20%) as critical success markers. Only 7.5% associated success with doing good for the community or environment. These insights suggest that while financial outcomes still dominate public understanding of business success, non-financial indicators-

such as internal wellbeing and customer retention- are increasingly recognized as essential to long-term performance. This implies that businesses that highlight not only profits but also employee and customer-centric outcomes may align more effectively with evolving public expectations. It further reinforces the idea that business performance communication should broaden beyond profitability to include relational and ethical dimensions, which are becoming more valued by society.

Expectations when companies claim they are growing or doing well: When asked what signals business growth, respondents provided a range of expectation. The most cited indicator was hiring more people or opening new locations (31.7%), followed by announcements of more profits or earnings (25.8%) and introduction of new products (25%). Only 17.5% associated growth with media visibility or advertising. These findings reveal that the public tends to interpret growth through visible operational or structure expansions rather than purely promotional efforts. The emphasis on hiring and expansion indicates a a preference for tangible, people-centred evidence of progress, which may also be easier to interpret without specialized business knowledge. This reflects a need for companies to communicate their growth in terms that are relatable and transparent – such as employment generation, geographic reach, and product innovation- rather than relying solely on abstract financial statements or media hype. The data underscores a key theme in your study: growth-related language, when vague or overused, may not align with public's expectations unless anchored in concrete developments.

6.5 Respondent Attitude towards business language and communication

Attitudes Toward Business Language and communication		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Belief that performance-related terms are understood by the general public	Strongly Agree	18	15.0	15.0
	Agree	48	40.0	55.0
	Neutral	44	36.7	91.7
	Disagree	7	5.8	97.5
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.5	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Perception that business reports and updates are easy to comprehend	Strongly Agree	15	12.5	12.5
	Agree	53	44.2	56.7
	Neutral	41	34.2	90.8
	Disagree	10	8.3	99.2
	Strongly Disagree	1	.8	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Preference for Simpler terminology in business communication	Strongly Agree	25	20.8	20.8
	Agree	65	54.2	75.0
	Neutral	25	20.8	95.8
	Disagree	3	2.5	98.3
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.7	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Perception that company strategies impact customers directly	Strongly Agree	20	16.7	16.7
	Agree	58	48.3	65.0
	Neutral	32	26.7	91.7
	Disagree	8	6.7	98.3
	Strongly Disagree	2	1.7	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Opinion that business buzzwords are overused	Strongly Agree	31	25.8	25.8
	Agree	57	47.5	73.3
	Neutral	28	23.3	96.7
	Disagree	3	2.5	99.2
	Strongly Disagree	1	.8	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	

Belief that performance-related terms are understood by the general public: A combined 55% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that performance related terms used by businesses are understood by the general public, while 36.7% remained neutral and only 8.3% disagreed. This cautious agreement suggests that while many believe business terminology is accessible, a considerable portion remains uncertain about clarity of such language the high neutrality rate may indicate ambiguity or lack of confidence in judging whether others understand these terms, possibly reflecting inconsistency in how such language is experienced or explained. This finding underscores the importance of consistency and clarity in strategic communication, as it suggests that while understanding may appear sufficient on the

surface, the lack of strong consensus reveals underlying gaps in interpretation.

Perception that Business reports and updates are easy to comprehend: Most respondents (56.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that business reports are easy to understand, while a significant 34.2% chose a neutral stance, and nearly 9% disagreed. This indicates that although a majority perceive business updates as somewhat clear, a sizeable portion neither confirms nor denies this clarity, revealing a lack of confidence or potential confusion among lay readers. The findings suggest that business documents may still be overly technical or generalized, causing readers to neither understand nor challenge them. For companies aiming to build trust through transparency, it is essential to ensure that such reports are not only accurate but reader-friendly for a non-specialist audience, thereby enhancing public comprehension of performance strategies.

Preference for simpler terminology in Business communication: An overwhelming majority (75%) of respondents expressed a preference for simpler language in business communication, with 20.8% strongly agreeing and only a minimal 4.2% in disagreement. This clear demand reinforces the notion that strategic terms, buzzwords, jargon may hinder public understanding rather than enhance it. The data strongly supports the idea that accessibility and plain language are vital components of effective business communication, especially when engaging with diverse stakeholders. This also suggests that businesses could significantly improve their public perception by translating performance metrics and updates into every day, relatable language.

Perception that company strategies impact customers directly: A Combined 65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that company strategies have a direct impact a customer, while 26.7% remained neutral. This reflects a reasonably strong awareness among the public about the link between strategic decisions and their real-world consequences. It suggests that the general audience does not view strategy as an internal-only matter but something that shapes customer experience, product accessibility, and pricing. For businesses, this insight implies a need to communicate strategic decisions with greater transparency and clarity, making it clear how these decisions are designed to benefit the public or meet their needs.

Opinion that business buzzwords are overused: A striking 73.3% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that buzzwords such as "Growth", "Efficiency", and "Success" are disagreeing, the data reveals a strong public perception that strategic language has become repetitive or hollow. This result aligns with concerns about jargon fatigue, where repeated use of vague terms dilutes their meaning and reduces public engagement. To address this, companies must critically evaluate how they frame their messages – moving beyond buzzwords and focusing on specific, measurable, and relatable explanations of performance to enhance both clarity and credibility.

6.6 Trust, Transparency, and communication preference of respondents

Trust, Transparency, and Communication preferences		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Perception of transparency in business performance communication	Yes	36	30.0	30.0
	No	36	30.0	60.0
	Maybe	48	40.0	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Preferred method of performance explanation by companies	Visual Summaries (Infographics, Charts)	47	39.2	39.2
	Short Videos or explainers	39	32.5	71.7
	Plain-Language reports	16	13.3	85.0
	Social Media Updates	18	15.0	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Opinion on who should ensure understandable business communication	Company Leadership	56	46.7	46.7
	Marketing team	45	37.5	84.2
	Media and Journalists	14	11.7	95.8
	Customers must adapt to business language	5	4.2	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	

Perception of Transparency in Business Performance communication: The responses to business performance transparency are evenly distributed, with 30% of participants responding "Yes," 30% saying "No", and the largest group – 40% responding "Maybe". This split reflects a significant degree of uncertainty and scepticism regarding whether companies communicate their performance in a open and truthful manner. The large "Maybe" group suggests that many people are unsure whether to trust the information and public interpretation. For companies striving to build reputation and

trust, these findings highlight the urgent need to communicate performance more clearly, consistently, and credibly, especially to audiences that feel left out or confused by strategic jargon or selective reporting.

Preferred method of performance explanation by companies: A Majority of respondents preferred visuals formats: 39.2% chose infographics or charts, and 32.5% opted for short videos or explainers. In contrast, only 13.3% preferred plain-language reports, and 15% selected social media updates. This indicates a strong public inclination toward visually-driven and simplified modes of business communication, which offer quicker comprehension and greater engagement than text-heavy reports. These preferences align with contemporary digital communication trends and suggest that companies must adopt multimedia tools when reporting performance, particularly when targeting younger or general audiences. The findings reinforce your study's central claim that public understanding can be significantly enhanced when businesses use accessible, visual, and dynamic communication methods.

Opinion on who should ensure understandable business communication: Almost half of the respondents (46.7%) believe that company leadership is primarily responsible for ensuring clear business communication, followed by 37.5% who place this duty on the marketing team. Only a small fraction attributed this responsibility to the media and journalists (11.7%) or the public themselves (4.2%). This response strongly positions the responsibility for clarity within the organization, particularly at the leadership level, emphasizing that the onus lies with businesses—not external agents or consumers – to simplify their language. These findings underline the growing expectation that transparency and clarity should originate from the top of the organization, and that simplifying responsibility tied to trust-building and public engagement.

6.7 Association Between Demographic Factors and public interpretation of Business performance language: A Chi-square Analysis

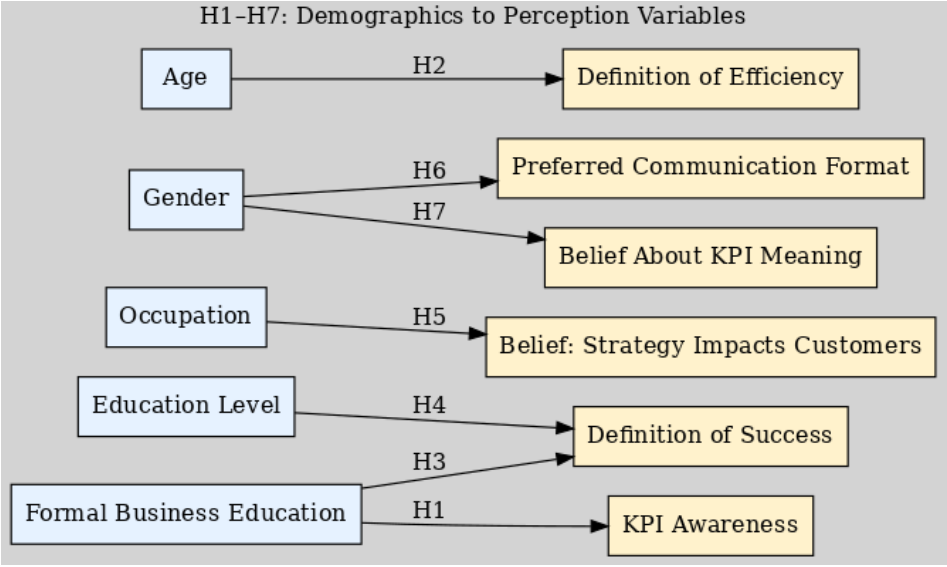


Fig. 1: Conceptual Mapping of Associations Between Demographic Variables and Perception of Business Performance Language (H1–H7)

Hypothesis	Association Tested	Chi-Square Value	df	P-Value	Significant
1	The Association between Formal Education Received in Business, Commerce or Management and Awareness of the term KPI (Key Performance Indicator)	12.451	1	0.000	Yes, Significant
2	The Association between Age Group and Perception of the term "Efficiency" in a Business Setting	26.316	12	0.010	Yes, Significant
3	The Association between Formal Education Received in Business, Commerce or Management and Indicators that define company success	8.282	3	0.041	Yes, Significant
4	The Association between Highest Level of Education Attained and Indicators that define company success	29.411	12	0.003	Yes, Significant
5	The Association between Current occupation status and perception that company strategies impact customers directly	29.000	16	0.024	Yes, Significant
6	The Association between Gender identity of the respondent and preferred method of performance explanation by companies	10.124	3	0.018	Yes, Significant
iation between Gender identity of the respondent and Belief meaning of KPI		7.378	3	0.061	No, not significant

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Association between Formal Business Education and Awareness of the term KPI

Since P-value is 0.000, which is less than the significance level 0.05. The chi-square test showed a statistically significant association between formal education in business, commerce, or management and awareness of the term KPI. Respondents

with formal business education were much more likely to be aware of what a KPI is. This indicates that such strategic terms are not uniformly understood by the general public. Businesses should define key terms when communicating performance to non-expert audiences.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Association between Age group and Perception of the term "Efficiency"
Since P-value is 0.010 which is less than the significance level 0.05. The chi-Square test revealed a significant association between respondents' age group and their perception of efficiency. Younger participants (18 to 25) mostly linked efficiency with optimal use of resources, while older groups had more varied views. This suggests that age influences how people decode performance language. Strategic communication should consider generational differences in interpreting business terms.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Association between formal Business education and perceived indicators of company success
Since P-Value is 0.041 which is less than the significance level 0.05, A significant association was found between formal business education and views on what defines company success. Those with business education were more likely to emphasize profits, while others also valued employees and customers. This highlights different mental models of success across educational backgrounds. Businesses should tailor their messaging to reflect diverse success indicators.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Association between highest education level and indicators of company success
Since P-Value is 0.003 which is less than the significance level 0.05. The chi-square test showed a strong and significant association between respondents' highest education level and their definition of company success. Postgraduates and professionals gave more diverse responses, valuing customers and ethical practices beyond profits. Education level broadens one's understanding of what success means in business. Performance communication should be multidimensional to connect with educated audiences.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Association between occupation and perception that company strategies impact customers
Since P-Value is 0.024 which is less than significance level 0.05. There was a significant association between current occupation and belief about the impact of company strategies on customers. Students and employed respondents were more likely to believe that strategies affect customers directly. Different occupational groups interpret strategic decisions based on personal exposure businesses must explain the real-world impact of strategies in customer-facing communications.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Association between gender and preferred method of performance explanation
Since P-Value is 0.018, A significant association was found between gender identity and preferred communication format. Males preferred visuals and reports, while females leaned more toward short videos and social media. Communication preferences vary by gender, impacting message reception. Companies should diversify their formats to reach different audience segments effectively.

Hypothesis 7 (H7): Association between gender and belief about the meaning of KPI
Since P-Value was 0.061, the association between gender and beliefs about the meaning of KPI was not statistically significant. Both males and females showed similar patterns in understanding KPI, though with slight variations. This suggests gender may not be a key factor in strategic metric interpretation. Companies can focus on clarity of explanation rather than gender-specific messaging for KPIs.

6.8 Correlation Analysis: Exploring relationships between perceptions of Business communication and understanding of strategic language

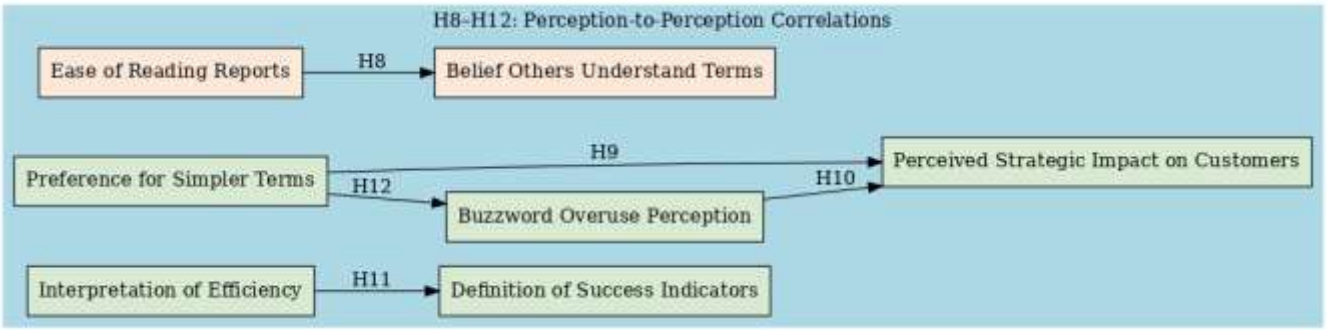


Fig. 2: Conceptual Mapping of Interrelationships Among Perception Variables Influencing Understanding of Business Performance Language (H8–H12)

Hypothesis No.	Relation Tested	Pearson Correlation	P - Value
8	Perception that Business reports and updates are easy to comprehend and belief that performance-related terms are understood by the general public	0.418	0.000
9	Preference for simpler terminology in business communication and Perception that company strategies impact customers directly	0.417	0.000
10	Opinion that business buzzwords are overused and perception that company strategies impact customers directly	0.318	0.000
11	Perception of the term "Efficiency" in a business setting and Indicators that define company success	0.316	0.000
12	Preference for simpler terminology in business communication and Opinion that business buzzwords are overused	0.308	0.001

Hypothesis 8 (H8): Relationship between perception that Business reports are easy to comprehend and belief that performance-related terms are understood by the general public

A Moderate positive correlation (r=0.418, P=0.000) was found between perceived ease of business reports and belief in public understanding of performance terms. Respondents who found business reports easy to read were also more likely to believe that performance-related language is widely understood. This suggests that clear reporting enhances not just individual comprehension but also confidence in public understanding. Organizations should simplify reporting to strengthen both transparency and trust in public interpretation.

Hypothesis 9 (H9): Relationship between preference for simpler terminology and perception that company strategies impact customers directly.

A moderate positive correlation (r=0.417, p=0.000) was observed between preference for simpler language and belief the strategies impact customers. Those who preferred simpler communication were more likely to recognize the practical effects of business strategies. This indicates that when messages are clearer, people connect better with their meaning and relevance. Simplified language may be key to bridging the gap between strategy and public understanding.

Hypothesis 10 (H10): Relationship between opinion that business buzzwords are overused and perception that company strategies impact customers directly.

A Moderate Positive correlation (r=0.318, p=0.000) exists between frustration with buzzwords and belief in the customer impact of strategy. Even those who finds business language filled with buzzwords still acknowledge that strategy affects customers. This suggests that clarity problems do not always prevent people from grasping core intent. However, overused language may still weaken the quality of connection-urging companies to communicate with substance over jargon.

Hypothesis 11 (H11): Relationship between perception of the term "Efficiency" and indicators that define company success

A moderate positive correlation (r=0.316, p=0.000) was found between how efficiency is perceived and what is considered a sign of business success. Respondents who viewed efficiency in practical or resourceful terms were more likely to associate success with financial or operational outcomes. This reflects how interpretation of technical terms shapes broader business judgments. Businesses should ensure performance terms like "Efficiency" are well-contextualized in public communication.

Hypothesis 12 (H12): Relationship between preference for simpler terminology and opinion that buzzwords are overused

A Moderate positive correlation (r=0.308, p=0.001) was observed between preference for simpler language and the belief that business buzzwords are overused. Respondents who favoured simpler terms were also more likely to feel overwhelmed by buzzword-heavy communication. This reinforces public demand for straightforward, authentic business language. To improve message reception, companies should avoid excessive jargon and prioritize clarity.

6.9 Summary of Data Analysis*: The analysis reveals that both demographic characteristics – such as education, occupation, and gender and key perception variables – such as preference for simpler language and sensitivity to buzzword usage – play a significant role in shaping how individuals interpret business performance communication. The findings suggest that while awareness of terms like KPI is relatively high, interpretations vary across groups and are influenced by factors like education level and communication style preferences. These results support the study's central argument: that strategic business language must be accessible, contextually grounded, and audience-sensitive in order to enhance public understanding and engagement with performance communication.*

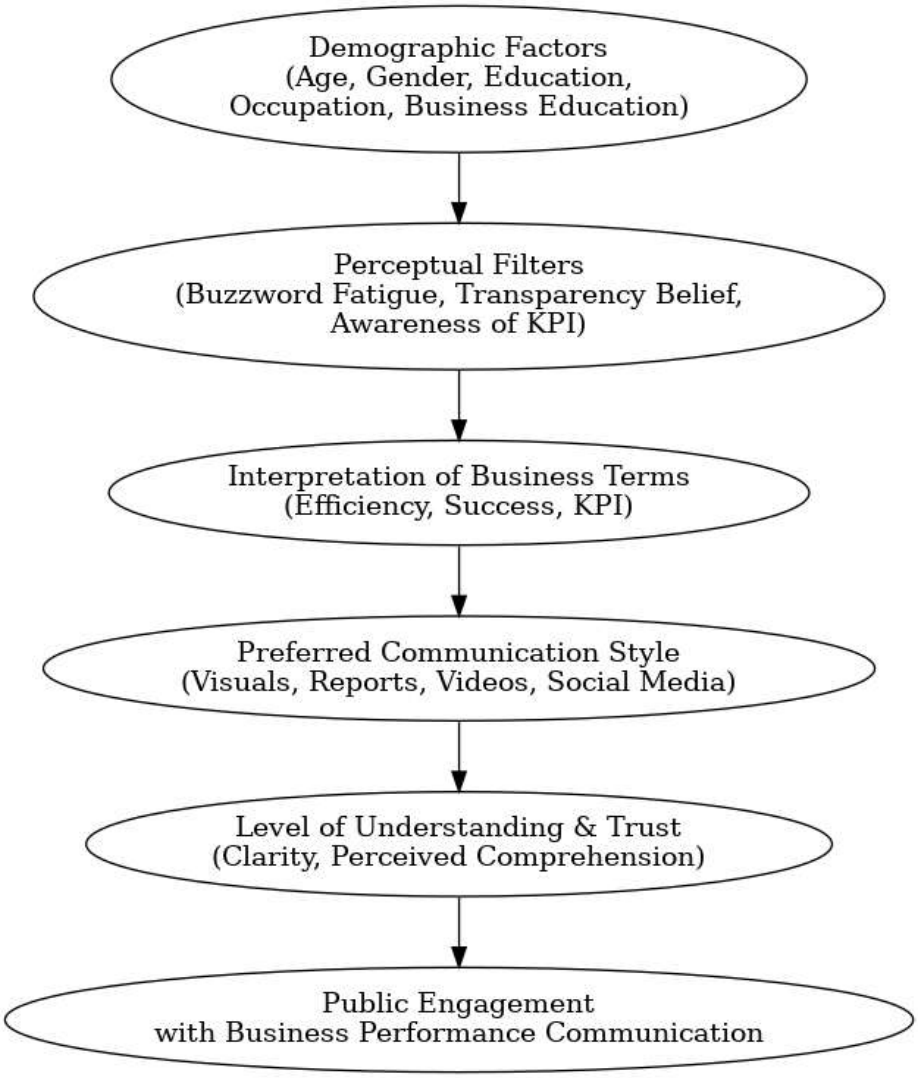


Fig. 3: Conceptual model illustrating the influence of demographic and perceptual variables on public interpretation of Business performance communication

7.0 FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

7.1 Business Education significantly enhances KPI Awareness: The Chi-Square analysis found a strong association ($p = 0.000$) between formal business education and awareness of the term KPI. This suggests that strategic terms such as KPI are still domain-specific, and the general public – especially those without business backgrounds – may not be familiar with their meaning. This creates a linguistic divide in interpreting performance language.

7.2 Perception of efficiency differs by Age group: Respondents' interpretation of the term "Efficiency" varied significantly with age, with younger participants associating it more with optimal use of resources and older groups showing a less unified understanding. This generational difference implies that the same term may carry different cognitive associations, leading to communication gaps.

7.3 Definitions of business success vary with educational attainment: There was a significant relationship between education level and what respondents viewed as indicators of company success. While those with higher education valued intangible outcomes like employee satisfaction and ethical practices, others leaned toward profit-centric views. This divergence shows that public perception of success is not universally defined, requiring more nuanced communication by companies.

7.4 Occupation influences perceived customer impact of strategy: The test showed a significant association between occupation and the belief that business strategies directly impact customers. Employed individuals and students acknowledge this impact more strongly than other groups, suggesting that practical exposure to organizational environments shapes perception of strategic intent.

7.5 Gender affects Communication format preference: There was a statistically significant link between gender and preferred model of performance explanation. Males leaned toward visual summaries and reports, while females preferred short videos and social media updates. This highlights the need for communication strategies that are inclusive of varied cognitive and media preferences.

7.6 Internal consistency between simplicity and Buzzword perception: A strong positive correlation was found between

preference for simpler terminology and the opinion that business buzzwords are overused. This suggests that public frustration with jargon is directly linked to their desire for more direct and accessible communication, underscoring a widespread fatigue with corporate language inflation.

7.7 Belief in strategic impact increases with language simplicity: Respondents who preferred simpler communication were significantly more likely to believe that business strategies affect customers. This reveals that comprehension is not just about literacy but also meaningful connection – when people understand language, they engage more with the content.

7.8 Ease of reading reports is tried to perceived public understanding: A strong correlation was found between report readability and the belief that strategic terms are widely understood. This shows that structural clarity in reports contributes not only to individual understanding but to confidence in collective comprehension, impacting public trust.

7.9 Interpretation of Abstract terms shapes broader performance judgements: The way respondents interpreted the term "Efficiency" was significantly related to how they defined company success. This highlights that core performance terms act as cognitive anchors – how people interpret one term can influence their whole view of business effectiveness.

8.0 SUGGESTIONS

8.1 Define strategic terms in All Public-Facing communication: Given that even commonly used terms like KPI are not universally understood, organizations should define key performance terms in investor reports, websites, and advertisements. This small step can close the gap between internal strategy and public understanding.

8.2 Tailor communication formats by Audience profile: With visual and video formats preferred differently by gender and occupation, organizations should adopt a multi-modal communication strategy. A one-format approach alienates a section of the audience and undermines message impact.

8.3 Incorporate simpler, outcome-oriented language in reports: Simplifying language is not about "Dumbing down" but about enhancing clarity. Reports should focus on outcomes that people value – like customer satisfaction, innovation, or social impact – rather dense financial metrics alone.

8.4 Use communication to bridge generational interpretation gaps: Age was found to influence understanding of performance terms. Companies and government communication teams should use more inclusive metaphors, examples, and explanations that resonate across generations.

8.5 Train business communicators in public – sensitive framing: Instead of only financial training, communication officers should receive training in audience centred framing, i.e., explaining strategy in terms of public relevance. This bridges the gap between business planning and public interpretation.

8.6 Replace Buzzwords with contextual clarity: Buzzwords like "Growth" and "Efficiency" should always be accompanied by real examples or related outcomes. Overuse of jargon diminishes message retention and may lead to public disengagement.

8.7 Public policy communication should adopt performance literacy tools: Policymakers sharing updates on public sector performance or reforms must introduce tools such as infographics, explainer videos, and plain-language glossaries to support interpretation by lay audiences.

9.0 FURTHER SCOPE FOR RESEARCH

The study focused on public interpretation of business performance language with a sample skewed toward educated and younger respondents. Future research can explore the same themes among less-educated, rural, or non-digital populations to identify deeper linguistic access gaps. Comparative studies between private-sector and public-sector communication approaches could also yield insights into the institutional role in shaping performance language. Moreover, qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups could uncover emotional and psychological responses to corporate language choices, which are not captured in quantitative analysis.

10.0 CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the way businesses communicate their performance is neither universally understood nor neutrally received. Variables such as education, gender, age, and occupational exposure shape how individuals interpret terms like efficiency, success, and KPI. While awareness of strategic language may be growing, comprehension remains fractured and perception-driven. The public increasingly demands clarity, simplicity, and authenticity in how performance is presented. For businesses and policymakers alike, the takeaway is clear. Communication is no longer a secondary function – it is the strategy itself.

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