

The Role of Employee Advocacy in Enhancing Corporate Image on Social Media

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of internal communication and employee advocacy in shaping corporate image on social media platforms. In the digital age, employees serve as credible communicators who influence public perception through their voluntary online engagement. The research aims to examine the direct effect of internal communication on corporate image, the mediating role of employee advocacy, and how both variables contribute to a positive digital reputation. Using a quantitative approach with PROCESS Macro Model 4, data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed for validity, reliability, regression, and mediation. Findings reveal that internal communication significantly influences both employee advocacy and corporate image. Furthermore, employee advocacy acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between internal communication and corporate image, with an indirect effect value of 0.2059. This implies that employees not only reflect but amplify the impact of communication strategies through authentic advocacy behaviors. The model explains 46.92% of the variance in corporate image. The study concludes that organizations must shift from task-oriented communication models to empowering approaches that position employees as co-creators of corporate image. Practical recommendations include promoting two-way communication, training in digital storytelling, and recognizing advocacy behaviors.

Keywords: *Internal communication, Employee advocacy, Corporate image, Digital reputation, Social media.*

INTRODUCTION

The global economy is undergoing rapid digital transformation, driven by advancements in technology and the demands of Industry 4.0. This shift has created a pressing need for a digitally skilled workforce that can adapt to evolving industry requirements (Soekiman et al., 2025). The advancement of digital communication platforms, particularly social media, has transformed corporate strategies in shaping and maintaining public image. In this evolving landscape, companies increasingly position employees not merely as internal contributors but as credible and authentic representatives of the brand. Through their personal networks, employees engage in brand-related discourse that enhances loyalty and strengthens public perception by facilitating genuine communication. When employees share experiences and insights about their organization, they effectively extend the brand's reach and legitimacy within their social environment (Rosandi et al., 2024).

Technological progress also has profoundly impacted many areas of life, especially by enhancing production processes and market efficiency (Soekiman et al., 2025). Empirical studies have demonstrated that strategically implemented employee advocacy programs contribute to improved brand visibility and foster higher levels of trust and consumer engagement, both critical factors for achieving sustained brand success (Mutuzo, 2024). Employees who take on the role of brand ambassadors often communicate authentic enthusiasm, which increases their credibility among prospective customers (Abu-Salih et al., 2024). This interaction enables brands to cultivate an image that resonates with audience values and expectations, ultimately reinforcing consumer loyalty and stimulating further advocacy.

Consumer attitudes and purchasing power have undergone significant shifts in the postpandemic marketplace, especially in Indonesia, with a notable impact on online sales through social media (Purnomo et al., 2024). Social media channels serve as powerful tools for brand communication, customer engagement, and market research, offering unparalleled opportunities

for brands to connect with consumers on a personal level (Krisprimandoyo et al., 2024). Employee advocacy has emerged as a strategic initiative for organizations seeking to strengthen their corporate image on social media platforms. This concept refers to the deliberate encouragement of employees to disseminate company-related content through their personal social media channels, thereby broadening the organization's reach and fostering deeper engagement with target audiences (Kerpel et al., 2025; Thomas, 2020). By leveraging the credibility and social proximity of employees within their personal networks, this strategy often achieves more meaningful resonance with clients and stakeholders compared to traditional marketing approaches (Kerpel et al., 2025).

Empirical evidence shows the effectiveness of employee advocacy in shaping a positive public image. The dissemination of employee-generated content on platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter/X reflects voluntary expressions of support through posts, comments, and interactions that influence external perceptions. Unlike conventional branding efforts managed by corporate communications departments, employee advocacy offers a unique combination of authenticity and wider reach. Recent data shows that approximately 91% of employees engage in social media advocacy, highlighting a strong tendency to share organizational values and culture (Muendo et al., 2025). This behavior is largely driven by the extent to which individual and organizational values align, as well as the motivation to develop a cohesive personal brand. Employees who feel this alignment of values are more likely to engage in advocacy, thereby contributing positively to corporate reputation (Kamau, 2025; Özcan & Elçi, 2020).

Academic research on internal communication consistently emphasizes its crucial role in improving organizational engagement and alignment. However, limited empirical research has yet to prove a direct relationship between internal communication practices and employee behavior on external digital platforms. In the Indonesian context, most existing studies are still descriptive in nature, lacking testing of causal mechanisms or mediating variables that can support strategic communication planning. To address this gap, this study integrates Organizational Support Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Source Credibility Theory to analyze how internal organizational practices are reflected in public brand perception through employee advocacy.

By developing a quantitative mediation model, this study offers a comprehensive approach to assessing the influence of internal communication on corporate image, with employee advocacy as an intermediary variable. In the context of an increasingly digital and hybrid work environment, organizations are highly dependent on employees to act as brand ambassadors. Although internal communication shapes employee attitudes and perceptions, the mechanisms by which it influences public brand perception remain under-theorized and under-researched. Particularly in Indonesia, empirical studies on the mediating role of employee advocacy in this relationship are still scarce (Kamau, 2025; Rachmawati & Akbar, 2025). This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how perceptions of internal communication influence advocacy behavior and, subsequently, how that behavior shapes corporate image.

Without strong empirical evidence, organizations risk not optimally utilizing their most credible brand communicators namely, their own employees. This study aims to analyze the influence of internal communication on employee advocacy behavior, evaluate how such advocacy affects corporate image on social media, and determine the direct impact of internal communication on corporate image.

Furthermore, this study examines the mediating role of employee advocacy in the relationship between internal communication and corporate image, offering an integrated framework for understanding the mechanisms by which internal communication practices shape public perceptions through employee engagement.

This study investigates the influence of internal communication on employee advocacy behavior, the extent to which such behavior shapes public perceptions of corporate image on social media, the direct impact of internal communication on corporate image, and the mediating

role of employee advocacy in this relationship. The study aims to empirically determine how internal communication drives advocacy actions among employees and how such actions contribute to the formation of a positive corporate image in the digital public sphere.

The researchers conducted this study in urban areas of Indonesia in the fourth quarter of 2025, focusing on the dynamics of employee behavior and public perception in the digital environment, particularly on social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter/X. The scope of this study does not include discussions related to external marketing campaigns and crisis communication practices.

This research provides conceptual contributions through the development of a quantitative mediation model that integrates internal communication, employee advocacy, and corporate image within an integrated empirical framework. Referring to Organizational Support Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Source Credibility Theory, this study explains how perceptions of organizational support and reciprocal norms can trigger communicative behavior among employees that impacts the formation of public trust in corporate identity (Azhar et al., 2024; İmamoglu et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2020).

The model proposed in this study expands the conceptualization of internal communication by incorporating employee behavior as a quantitative variable in corporate branding strategies. This integration strengthens the strategic framework for managing corporate reputation in the context of digital transformation.

Employee involvement in social media communication is another aspect that is positively related to corporate image. Wang's study shows that positive organizational relationships motivate employees to participate more actively in social media, which helps build a strong external corporate reputation (Wang, 2023). Furthermore, Labban and Bizzi argue that the use of social media for internal communication can paradoxically increase support for the organization while potentially reducing work effort, demonstrating the complex dynamics of digital communication (Labban & Bizzi, 2021). By navigating these complexities, organizations can effectively leverage social media to transform internal communication into a tool for advocating the corporate strategic narrative. Based on the following explanation, the first hypothesis is **H1: Internal communication has a positive effect on corporate image on social media.**

Thelen and Men identified various factors driving employee advocacy, grouping them into individual, group, and organizational factors, with a particular emphasis on the role of internal communication strategies such as openness and positivity (Thelen & Men, 2020). This study suggests that the effectiveness of internal communication practices, including corporate communication strategies and recognition, significantly increases the level of employee advocacy. In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of organizations developing a communication culture that values and empowers employee voices. Based on the above explanation, the second hypothesis is **H2: Internal communication has a positive effect on employee advocacy.**

Employee advocacy has emerged as a key strategy for enhancing corporate image on social media platforms, driven by the authentic voices of employees interacting with various stakeholders. Research shows that employee-generated content and advocacy can enhance brand reputation, increase consumer trust, and shape employer branding (Joglekar & Tan, 2022; Mutuzo, 2024). The integration of employees into the corporate branding narrative is crucial as it provides a more relatable and credible perspective compared to traditional marketing strategies. Based on the following explanation, the third hypothesis is **H3: Employee Advocacy has a positive impact on Corporate Image on Social Media.**

The effectiveness of employee advocacy in further strengthening corporate image is mediated by the quality and reliability of the employee-employer relationship. Studies show that strong employee-organization relationships (EOR) play a mediating role in this dynamic, linking strategic internal communication with employee advocacy behavior (Lee & Dong, 2023). This is

particularly important in today's digital landscape, where employee-generated content can greatly influence the perceptions of potential customers more than traditional advertising (Elemonie, 2020). Employees are often seen as credible sources, thus amplifying the potential impact on brand trust and engagement when they share positive narratives about their company (Venciūtė et al., 2023). Based on the above explanation, the fourth hypothesis is **H4: Employee Advocacy acts as a mediator in Internal Communication related to Corporate Image on Social Media.**

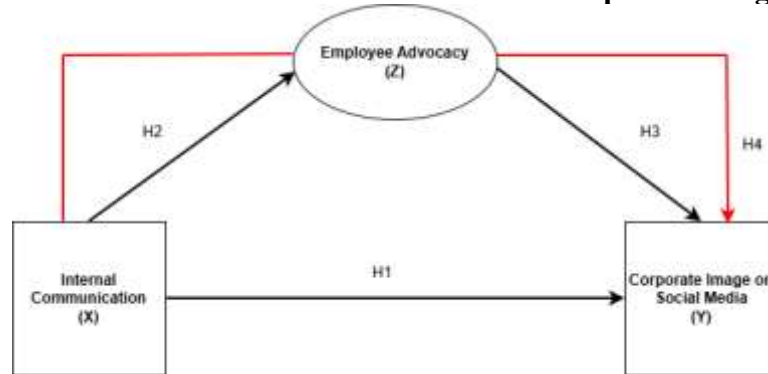


Figure 1. Hypothesis Diagram

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a quantitative method with an explanatory design to investigate and test causal relationships among variables embedded within a theoretical model. This methodological orientation is appropriate for hypothesis testing through statistical procedures and for analyzing the impact of independent variables, mediating factors, and dependent variables across a range of organizational contexts. The study used a cross-sectional survey to gather data at a single point in time, enabling the researcher to capture participants' perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral tendencies relevant to the constructs under investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research population comprised employees from technology, service, and manufacturing industries located throughout Indonesia. These sectors were intentionally selected due to their critical roles in advancing digital transformation, enhancing customer-oriented services, and improving production efficiency within the national economy. To achieve proportional representation across different organizational categories, the study implemented a stratified purposive sampling method. This approach facilitated the purposeful selection of participants based on industry type and job function while maintaining balance across strata. Additionally, the inclusion of public consumers was considered as a supplementary validation group, particularly for constructs associated with customer perspectives.

Sample size determination adhered to the guideline proposed by Hair et al. (2019), which recommends a minimum sample of ten times the number of indicators in the most complex construct. Accordingly, a minimum of 100 participants was deemed sufficient to ensure the statistical validity of measurement and structural model assessments. To improve generalizability and enable comparative subgroup analysis across industry types, the study aimed for a larger respondent base.

Data were obtained using a structured questionnaire disseminated through both digital and physical channels. The instrument captured latent constructs through multiple indicators adapted from validated scales in prior studies. Each item employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Before the full distribution, experts from academia and industry conducted a content validation to evaluate the clarity, contextual relevance, and construct

alignment of the items. A pilot test involving 20 respondents was performed to examine internal consistency and preliminary reliability.

Statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS. The process involved sequential stages, beginning with preliminary data screening, descriptive statistics, and normality assessment. Measurement model evaluation included reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, along with validity testing via Average Variance Extracted for convergent validity and the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity. The structural model was assessed by estimating path coefficients, R^2 values for explanatory power, f^2 for effect size, and Q^2 for predictive relevance. Mediation effects were tested through bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) using Hayes' Process Macro v4.2, which generated confidence intervals for indirect effects and mediation pathways. These analytic procedures ensured methodological rigor and alignment with the theoretical model, thereby enabling robust empirical validation of the proposed hypotheses (Hayes, 2013).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study examines employee advocacy as a strategic communication channel that strengthens corporate image in the digital landscape. In the context of social media, employees transcend their traditional roles as internal stakeholders and emerge as credible and influential agents who shape public perception through voluntary digital engagement. This study specifically analyzes how internal communication within an organization facilitates advocacy behavior, which in turn influences public perceptions of corporate branding on platforms such as Instagram, LinkedIn, and X (formerly Twitter).

Validity Test

The purpose of validity testing is to confirm that each questionnaire item accurately measures the construct it is intended to represent. In this study, validity was assessed using the Pearson correlation coefficient (R count), which measures the relationship between each item score and the total construct score. An item was deemed valid when its correlation coefficient (R count) exceeded the critical value of the R table at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) with a sample size of 100 respondents. The corresponding R table value applied in this analysis was 0.1966.

Table 1. Validity Test

Internal Communication (X)		
No	Rcount	Rtable
1	0.472	0.1966
2	0.401	0.1966
3	0.436	0.1966
4	0.446	0.1966
5	0.530	0.1966
Corporate Image on Social Media (Y)		
No	Rcount	Rtable
1	0.492	0.1966
2	0.615	0.1966
3	0.330	0.1966
4	0.345	0.1966
5	0.597	0.1966
Employee Advocacy (Z)		
No	Rcount	Rtable

1	0.707	0.1966
2	0.566	0.1966
3	0.559	0.1966
4	0.641	0.1966
5	0.715	0.1966

All five items within the Internal Communication (X) construct recorded Pearson correlation coefficients above the threshold of 0.1966, with values ranging from 0.401 to 0.530. These results confirm that each item is statistically valid and accurately captures the intended construct. The consistency of responses across all items suggests that participants interpreted and evaluated the statements in a coherent manner, reflecting their understanding of internal communication.

For the corporate Image on social media (Y) construct, all items also demonstrated correlation values exceeding the R table threshold, with coefficients ranging from 0.330 to 0.615. This indicates that each item meaningfully contributes to measuring the public’s perception of corporate image as reflected through social media channels. The significant correlations suggest that the instrument reliably captures the intended reputational dimensions.

The employee advocacy (Z) construct exhibited even stronger item-total correlations, ranging from 0.559 to 0.715. These high coefficients confirm the validity of the items in representing employee advocacy behavior. The results indicate that the items effectively reflect the degree to which employees actively support and promote their organization, particularly through digital or social media engagement.

All items across the three constructs passed the validity test, as each correlation coefficient exceeded the critical value of 0.1966. Therefore, the measurement instrument demonstrates robust construct validity. Each latent variable is operationalized through empirically supported indicators, making the dataset appropriate for subsequent statistical analysis, including regression, structural equation modeling, or mediation testing.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing evaluates the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results when measuring the same construct under comparable conditions. In this study, reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, a statistical indicator that captures the internal consistency among items within a single construct. A construct is deemed reliable when its Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient reaches or exceeds 0.60, a threshold widely accepted in social and behavioral science research.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	R table	Description
Internal Communication (X)	0.721	0.60	Reliable
Corporate Image on Social Media (Y)	0.735	0.60	Reliable
Employee Advocacy (Z)	0.742	0.60	Reliable

All Cronbach’s Alpha values surpass the threshold of 0.60, indicating that each construct demonstrates strong internal consistency. The interpretation is as follows. The internal communication construct (X) recorded an Alpha of 0.721, confirming that the five items used exhibit substantial inter-item correlation and reliably capture the underlying dimension. The corporate image on social media construct (Y) attained a coefficient of 0.735, signifying that the items consistently reflect respondents’ perceptions of corporate reputation on digital platforms. The employee advocacy construct (Z1) yielded the highest reliability score of 0.742, suggesting

a high degree of consistency among items in capturing employee behaviors that promote the organization, especially within digital environments.

These results confirm that all constructs possess satisfactory reliability. The instrument is capable of generating stable and trustworthy data, with each set of items effectively measuring a single conceptual domain. Accordingly, the instrument is suitable for application in advanced statistical procedures, including regression analysis, structural equation modeling (SEM), and mediation testing.

Classical Assumption Test

The normality test serves to evaluate whether the data for each research variable follows a normal distribution. A normal distribution is a fundamental assumption underlying parametric statistical analyses, including classical linear regression. This study employed the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is suitable and statistically sensitive for sample sizes below 200 respondents, including the current sample of 100. The interpretation of results is based on the significance value: when the Sig. value exceeds 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed; conversely, a Sig. value below 0.05 indicates a deviation from normality.

Table 3. Classical Assumption Test

Tests of Normality			
	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Internal Communication (X)	,980	100	,078
Corporate Image on Social Media (Y)	,977	100	,091
Employee Advocacy (Z)	,982	100	,085
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction			

All significance values exceed the threshold of 0.05, indicating no substantial deviations from a normal distribution. Consequently, the three variables X, Y, and Z meet the assumption of normality. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test confirm that the data in this study follow a normal distribution. As a result, researchers can apply parametric statistical techniques, including linear regression and t-tests, without the need for data transformation. The presence of a normal distribution strengthens the validity of the estimation model and enhances the reliability of hypothesis testing.

Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity testing serves to identify the presence of strong linear relationships among independent variables within a regression model. When multicollinearity exists, it can compromise the stability of coefficient estimates and weaken the validity of statistical conclusions. Therefore, this test is essential to verify that each predictor contributes uniquely and meaningfully to the model without redundancy. The assessment relies on two principal indicators. Tolerance quantifies the proportion of variance in an independent variable that is not accounted for by other predictors. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) indicates the extent to which multicollinearity inflates the standard error of a regression coefficient. Interpretation follows these criteria: values of Tolerance greater than 0.10 and VIF below 10 suggest the absence of multicollinearity, whereas Tolerance values below 0.10 or VIF equal to or exceeding 10 indicate the presence of multicollinearity.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test

Coefficients ^a								
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta				Tolerance	VIF

(Constant)	23,304	3,039		7,668	0,000		
Mobile App Usage (X)	,012	,104	,011	,112	,911	,845	1.183
Perceived Ease of Use (Z)	-,061	,066	-,097	-,932	,354	,811	1.233

a. Dependent Variable: Corporate Image on Social Media

All tolerance values exceed 0.10, and all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values remain well below the critical threshold of 10. These results confirm the absence of strong linear relationships among the independent variables. Consequently, each predictor, namely X and Z indicates a distinct contribution to the dependent variable without redundancy.

The regression model is therefore free from multicollinearity, allowing its use in subsequent analyses such as multiple regression or mediation testing. These findings indicate that the model satisfies the classical assumptions of multiple linear regression. The regression estimates are not distorted by intercorrelations among predictors, ensuring that the analytical results can be interpreted reliably through inferential methods, including the Process Macro.

Hypothesis Testing

The purpose of the Process Macro analysis is to examine the direct, indirect, and total effects among variables within a mediation framework. Specifically, this test assesses the influence of the independent variable (Internal Communication) on the dependent variable (corporate image on social media), with employee advocacy functioning as a mediating variable. This analysis applies Model 4 of Hayes' Process Macro, which is designed to evaluate simple mediation relationships within a regression-based approach.

Table 5. Process Macro

TOTAL EFFECT MODEL						
OUTCOME VARIABLE: Corporate Image on Social Media (Y)						
Model Summary						
R	R ²	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
0.6850	0.4692	1.3921	68.745	1	98	0,0000
Model						
	Coeff	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	17.432	1.1120	15.672	0.0000	15.226	19.638
X	0.6185	0.0749	8.257	0.0000	0.4700	0.7670
Standardized Coefficients						
	Coeff					
X	0.6850					
TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y						
Total Effect of Internal Communication (X) on Corporate Image on Social Media (Y)						
Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c' cs
0.6185	0.0749	8.257	0.0000	0.4700	0.7670	0.6850
Direct Effect of Internal Communication (X) on Corporate Image on Social Media (Y)						
Effect	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	c' cs
0.4126	0.0792	5.209	0.0000	0.2553	0.5700	0.4563
Indirect Effect(s) of Internal Communication (X) on Corporate Image on Social Media (Y) via Employee Advocacy (Z)						
Mediator	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	Mediator	Effect
Z	0.2059	0.0411	0.1320	0.2982	0.2059	0.0411
Completely Standardized Indirect Effect						
Mediator	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	Mediator	Effect
Z	0.2287	0.0379	0.1544	0.3135	0.2287	0.0379

The results show that internal communication has a statistically significant and positive total effect on corporate image as reflected on social media platforms, with a coefficient of 0.6185 and a p-value of 0.0000. The standard coefficient ($\beta = 0.6850$) indicates strong predictive power, suggesting that an increase in internal communication is positively associated with an increase in corporate image in the digital domain.

When assessing the direct effect of internal communication on corporate image without considering mediation, the model produced a coefficient of 0.4126 ($p = 0.0000$), with a standard beta of 0.4563. This confirms that internal communication still has a significant independent influence on corporate image, regardless of the mediating role.

The indirect effect, mediated by employee advocacy, is also statistically significant. The unstandardized coefficient is 0.2059, with a bootstrap standard error of 0.0411 and a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.1320 to 0.2982, which does not cross zero. The fully standardized indirect effect is 0.2287, with a confidence interval from 0.1544 to 0.3135, reinforcing the mediating role of employee advocacy. This suggests that internal communication encourages advocacy behavior among employees, which in turn strengthens the company's social media image.

Overall, the findings show that both the direct and indirect effects are significant. Employee advocacy functions as a partial mediator, as the direct path from internal communication to company image remains significant despite the presence of the mediator. This model explains 46.92% of the variance in company image on social media ($R^2 = 0.4692$), indicating strong explanatory power.

Discussion

This analysis explores the interrelationship among internal communication, employee advocacy, and corporate image on social media, drawing from results of validity, reliability, normality, multicollinearity assessments, and Process Macro Model 4 analysis. The strong construct validity is evident from the Pearson correlation coefficients for all indicators within the three core variables (X, Y, Z), which exceeded the critical threshold of 0.1966. These results confirm that each item significantly represents its corresponding latent variable. Internal communication reflects consistent interpretations of organizational dialogue, while corporate image and employee advocacy capture public reputation and active employee support behavior in digital contexts. The proven validity and reliability of these measurement instruments support rigorous hypothesis testing.

Reliability coefficients further reinforce this, with all Cronbach's Alpha values surpassing the 0.60 benchmark. Notably, employee advocacy demonstrated the highest internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.742$), indicating a uniform understanding among respondents regarding the employees' proactive role in promoting the organization via social media. These findings justify inferential testing of H2 and H3. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > 0.05$) affirm normality, while multicollinearity diagnostics show acceptable Tolerance (> 0.10) and VIF (< 10) values, confirming that each independent variable contributes uniquely to the model without redundancy.

Process Macro results validate H1, with internal communication exerting a significant positive effect on corporate image ($\beta = 0.6850$; $p < 0.001$). This implies that stronger internal communication practices correlate with improved digital reputations. H2 is similarly supported; internal communication significantly influences employee advocacy, suggesting that open, participative communication encourages employees to act as brand advocates. H3 is confirmed as employee advocacy positively affects corporate image on social media, consistent with the view that employees shape public perception by sharing organizational values and achievements.

H4 is also empirically supported. The indirect effect of 0.2059 (BootLLCI = 0.1320; BootULCI = 0.2982) shows that employee advocacy serves as a partial mediator between internal communication and corporate image. Since the direct effect remains significant with the mediator included, mediation is partial. This underscores that effective internal communication enhances

corporate image both directly and by fostering advocacy behavior. The model explains 46.92% of the variance in corporate image ($R^2 = 0.4692$), indicating substantial explanatory power. Together, the findings reinforce the strategic value of employee-centered communication approaches in shaping organizational reputation in digital settings.

The findings of this study confirm the crucial role of internal communication in shaping corporate image on social media, both directly and indirectly through the mediating effect of employee advocacy. These results are in line with the principles of Organizational Support Theory (OST), which emphasizes the importance of perceived organizational support (POS) in encouraging positive employee behavior. Effective internal communication, characterized by transparency, inclusiveness, and recognition, fosters a sense of value and support among employees.

This perception, as noted by İmamoğlu et al. (2022) and Chhabra and Srivastava (2022), increases employee loyalty and affective commitment, which often manifests as voluntary advocacy behaviors such as promoting organizational content on digital platforms.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) further reinforces this dynamic by positing that the relationship between individuals and institutions is based on reciprocal expectations. When internal communications consistently convey organizational values and support, employees are more likely to reciprocate through actions aligned with institutional goals.

Tan et al. (2020) highlight that a work environment based on reciprocal exchange encourages voluntary contributions, including digital brand advocacy. The identification of employee advocacy as a partial mediator between internal communication and corporate image supports the reciprocal mechanism that is central to SET. Employees who perceive high communication value from their organization demonstrate stronger commitment as brand representatives.

In addition, Source Credibility Theory provides a convincing explanation of the significant impact of employee advocacy on corporate image. Employees are often considered a more credible and relevant source of information than formal corporate channels. Their perceived trust and similarity in values and identity with the audience, known as homophily, increase the authenticity and effectiveness of the message (Azhar et al., 2024; İmamoglu et al., 2022). When employees voluntarily convey the organization's message, the public tends to give higher credibility to the narrative, thereby reinforcing positive perceptions of the company's image in the digital space.

The significant indirect effect value (0.2059) with a bootstrap confidence interval that does not include zero confirms the mediating role of employee advocacy while also showing its independent contribution to corporate reputation. This means that while strong internal communication is essential, it must be complemented by strategies that empower employees to act as credible digital communicators.

This model explains 46.92% of the variance in corporate image, demonstrating strong explanatory power. The combination of internal strategies (through effective communication) and external actions (through advocacy) significantly improves the organization's public image in the online context.

These insights have practical implications for organizations operating in the digital age. Building a supportive communication environment and positioning employees as co-creators of corporate image rather than passive executors should be a strategic priority. The interaction between perceived organizational support, mutual commitment, and message credibility forms the basic framework for building a robust and trusted corporate presence in the digital landscape.

A strategic approach for organizations in the digital age to foster a communication culture that supports and empowers employees as co-creators of corporate image involves implementing an internal communication framework rooted in digital employee empowerment. This approach includes several key initiatives.

Organizations must first establish a transparent, two-way digital communication system, using platforms such as workplace, slack, or microsoft teams to facilitate open dialogue, cross-functional discussions, and real-time feedback. This type of infrastructure strengthens perceived organizational support and fosters a sense of ownership of the corporate narrative among employees. Second, it is important to develop structured programs focused on advocacy and digital storytelling training.

Regular workshops on brand storytelling, digital ethics, and content creation enable employees to confidently represent the organization on online platforms and contribute authentically to its public image. Instilling organizational values, such as trust, collaboration, and empathy, into daily practices strengthens mutual commitment. When employees experience these values in action, they are more likely to respond with proactive and loyal behavior.

Encouraging authenticity over rigid messaging further enhances credibility. By giving employees autonomy to share personal work experiences in their own voices, organizations build trust with external audiences and avoid the pitfalls of corporate monotony. Recognition systems should acknowledge digital contributions through performance evaluations, peer spotlights, and symbolic incentives, reinforcing positive engagement behaviors.

Finally, organizations must continuously monitor and evaluate the impact of advocacy using metrics such as engagement rates, sentiment analysis, and content reach. This evidence-based evaluation ensures continuous improvement and strategic alignment. By implementing these steps, organizations shift from a centralized image management model to a distributed, trust-based communication ecosystem driven by employee voices. This transformation strengthens digital reputation through authenticity, sustainability, and internal-external alignment.

CONCLUSION

Internal communication has a significant influence on employee advocacy behavior. Empirical findings verified through reliability assessments, regression analysis, and mediation testing using the PROCESS 4 Macro Model show that open and participatory communication practices that value employee contributions can stimulate positive advocacy behavior. Employees who feel they have strong organizational support tend to show loyalty and voluntarily express organizational values through their digital presence.

Employee advocacy plays a critical role in influencing public perceptions of corporate image on social media platforms. Employees who share positive work experiences and corporate-related content on LinkedIn, Instagram, and X are considered more trustworthy than official corporate channels. This is in line with Source Credibility Theory, which states that the alignment of trust and values between the communicator and their audience increases the effectiveness of the message.

Internal communication also has a direct and significant influence on corporate image. Although employee advocacy acts as a mediator, path analysis confirms that communication alone contributes substantially to brand perception, indicating that a strong internal communication culture is the foundation of a company's digital reputation.

Furthermore, employee advocacy partially mediates the relationship between internal communication and corporate image. An indirect effect of 0.2059, with a confidence interval that does not include zero, confirms a significant mediating role. This indicates that internal communication enhances corporate image both directly and indirectly through advocacy behavior.

This model explains 46.92% of the variance in corporate image ($R^2 = 0.4692$), highlighting the substantial contribution of internal communication and employee advocacy to corporate reputation in the digital landscape.

To build a credible and resilient brand presence, organizations must combine a supportive internal communication framework with strategies that empower employees as co-creators of corporate identity. The integration of perceived support, mutual commitment, and employee-driven authenticity forms the basis of a strong and trustworthy digital corporate image.

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