



Exploring Internal Communication Practices and Their Impact on Corporate Reputation: A Phenomenological Study of Technology Employees

Diana Rina

Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia

dianarina@unismuh.ac.id

Article Info

Article history:

Received 27-02-2025

Revised 25-03-2025

Accepted 17-04-2025

Keyword:

Internal Communication;
Corporate Reputation;
Phenomenology; Employee
Perceptions; Technology
Companies; Social Media.

ABSTRACT

Internal communication is a critical element in shaping corporate reputation, yet its influence on employee perceptions remains underexplored in the context of technology companies. Existing research has primarily focused on external communication strategies, leaving a gap in understanding how employees' subjective experiences of internal communication affect their view of the company's reputation. This study addresses this gap by exploring the lived experiences of employees in relation to internal communication practices using a phenomenological approach. By conducting in-depth interviews with employees from various levels of technology companies, the study reveals that transparent, consistent communication fosters trust, alignment with organizational values, and positive external representation. Social media, while a potential risk, was also identified as an opportunity for employees to engage in shaping the company's public image. These findings highlight the importance of internal communication in managing corporate reputation, suggesting that companies need to refine their strategies to better align with employees' perceptions. The study contributes to the understanding of how internal communication practices shape corporate reputation and offers insights for future research on communication in organizational settings.



©2025 Authors. Published by PT Mukhlisina Revolution Center.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

Internal communication plays a crucial role in shaping the perception of corporate reputation, particularly within the context of modern technology companies. In today's dynamic business environment, where organizations are increasingly reliant on digital communication tools and global networks, the manner in which information flows internally can significantly influence both the internal and external image of a company (Ma & Zhou, 2024). Communication practices within companies have evolved from traditional methods to more digital and collaborative formats, which reflects the growing need for transparency, consistency, and engagement across all organizational levels.

The phenomenon of internal communication's impact on corporate reputation is particularly relevant in the context of technology companies, which are often at the forefront of innovation and digital transformation. These companies rely heavily on their image and reputation to attract talent, investors, and consumers. As a result, the ways in which employees perceive and engage with internal communication can directly affect how the company is viewed externally. The corporate reputation, in turn, influences how stakeholders—both internal and external—interact with the company, further emphasizing the interdependence between communication strategies and corporate image.

The relevance of this phenomenon extends beyond organizational boundaries and touches on broader societal and cultural aspects (Maqableh dkk., 2021). Internal communication, when effectively managed, can foster a sense of belonging and trust among employees, which is essential in

maintaining a positive corporate culture. However, when communication breaks down or becomes fragmented, it can lead to confusion, distrust, and misalignment with the company's values. This raises the need for an in-depth exploration of the subjective experiences of employees in relation to internal communication, as their perceptions are key to understanding how communication practices are internalized and acted upon.

Given the significance of these experiences, there is a clear need for a phenomenological approach to explore how employees at various levels within technology companies make sense of their communication experiences (Jackson dkk., 2022). Such an approach allows for a deeper understanding of the meaning they attach to internal communication processes and their subsequent impact on corporate reputation. By capturing the lived experiences of employees, this study aims to provide insights that can help refine communication practices within organizations, ultimately enhancing both internal coherence and external perception.

Research into the subjective experiences of individuals in the context of organizational phenomena has increasingly become a critical area of study, particularly in the field of communication and corporate reputation. This line of inquiry focuses on how employees perceive and internalize communication practices within their organizations, offering insights that are not merely concerned with statistical or quantitative data, but with the deeper meanings and lived experiences that inform their behaviors and attitudes. These experiences are pivotal in understanding how internal communication shapes the reputation of a company and the broader implications it has on organizational success.

However, studying such subjective phenomena presents several methodological challenges. Traditional quantitative methods, which focus on statistical correlations and generalizable outcomes, often fail to capture the complexity and richness of human experiences (Gallacher dkk., 2022). These methods are ill-suited for probing the depths of individual perceptions, emotions, and the nuanced ways in which internal communication affects the psyche of employees. In contrast, qualitative approaches, particularly phenomenology, offer a means to explore these intricate dimensions, but they too are not without their challenges. The reliance on narrative data, such as interviews, necessitates careful consideration of how experiences are articulated, as well as the influence of the interviewer-participant relationship on data collection.

Despite the growing body of research in organizational communication, much of it is still limited by an over-reliance on quantitative models that overlook the subjective and experiential nature of communication within the workplace. These limitations render many previous studies insufficient in fully capturing the essence of the phenomenon. As a result, the current understanding of how internal communication influences corporate reputation remains incomplete, as previous research has primarily focused on surface-level metrics or external communication strategies, neglecting the internal, personal experiences that shape the perceptions of employees themselves.

This gap in understanding underscores the need for a phenomenological approach that delves deeper into the lived experiences of employees, allowing for a more holistic comprehension of how communication practices within a company are perceived and internalized (Kynø dkk., 2021). By addressing these challenges and focusing on subjective experiences, this study aims to contribute valuable insights to the field of corporate communication and organizational behavior.

Current research on internal communication and corporate reputation predominantly utilizes practical, often quantitative, approaches to analyze the relationship between communication practices and company image. These approaches typically focus on metrics such as employee engagement, satisfaction, or external perception, offering valuable insights into general trends and outcomes. However, these methods fall short in capturing the deeper, subjective meanings that employees attach to their experiences with communication within the organization (Nina-Gutiérrez dkk., 2024). By relying on surface-level data, they fail to explore the rich, nuanced experiences that shape how employees perceive and internalize communication strategies, thus offering an incomplete understanding of the phenomenon.

The limitations of these conventional approaches lie in their inability to fully grasp the personal, lived experiences of employees. While useful for assessing general patterns or outcomes, they do not account for the individual variations in how communication is understood, experienced, and acted upon (Zhang dkk., 2021). This gap in understanding calls for an alternative method that can more deeply explore the essence of these experiences. A phenomenological approach, which focuses on the subjective and lived experiences of individuals, provides a valuable solution. This method allows for the exploration of the meanings that employees attach to internal communication practices and how these meanings influence their perceptions of corporate reputation.

Adopting a phenomenological approach offers an opportunity to uncover the rich, complex layers of experience that quantitative methods cannot reach. By focusing on the personal and subjective aspects of internal communication, this study aims to fill the gap in our understanding of how communication shapes corporate reputation, providing a more holistic and nuanced view of the phenomenon. This deeper exploration can contribute to more effective communication strategies that align with employees' lived experiences, ultimately fostering a stronger organizational culture and a more positive public image.

Previous research on internal communication and corporate reputation has primarily relied on quantitative methodologies to examine general trends, often overlooking the personal and subjective experiences of employees. Studies have highlighted the importance of communication strategies in shaping corporate image, but few have focused on the deep meanings and lived experiences that employees associate with these strategies. For instance, research by Saini (2025) emphasized the role of internal communication in fostering trust, while Voillot dkk. (2022) explored crisis communication. However, these studies did not delve into the nuances of how employees perceive or internalize communication practices. The theoretical foundation for this research is grounded in phenomenological theory, which prioritizes the lived experiences of individuals and their subjective interpretations of organizational phenomena.

The phenomenological approach was chosen for this study because it allows for a deeper exploration of employees' lived experiences with internal communication and its impact on corporate reputation. Unlike traditional methods, phenomenology seeks to uncover the essence of personal experiences without imposing preconceived categories. This method provides a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon by focusing on the meanings employees attach to their experiences within the company. By addressing the knowledge gap identified earlier, phenomenology offers a means to explore how employees' perceptions and interpretations shape the reputation of the organization, thus providing more comprehensive insights.

This article is structured to guide the reader through the various components of the study. Following this introduction, the context of the phenomenon will be explored, highlighting the significance of internal communication in technology companies (Sanders, 2019). The methodology section will describe the phenomenological approach used, detailing the data collection process and the analysis methods employed. Next, the results will be presented through thematic analysis, followed by a discussion of the findings. Finally, conclusions will be drawn, offering implications for future research and practical applications in the field of corporate communication.

RESEARCH METHODS

Study Design

A phenomenological approach was adopted to explore the subjective experiences of employees regarding internal communication and its influence on corporate reputation. This design was selected due to its ability to uncover deep meanings and perceptions related to the lived experiences of individuals. Phenomenology focuses on understanding how people make sense of their experiences, providing valuable insights into the personal meanings that employees attach to their interactions with communication practices within their organizations (Bogen dkk., 2022). Specifically, a descriptive phenomenological approach was employed to capture the essence of these

experiences without imposing preconceived theoretical frameworks. This method allowed for a thorough exploration of the participants' lived experiences, emphasizing the significance of their personal perspectives in understanding the phenomenon.

Participants

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, aimed at including individuals who had direct experience with internal communication within their respective companies. The inclusion criteria required participants to be employees of technology companies, with at least one year of experience within the organization, and familiarity with both the company's internal communication processes and its corporate reputation (Chen dkk., 2023). Exclusion criteria involved employees without direct involvement in communication practices, or those with less than one year of tenure at the company.

In total, 12 participants were included in the study, with an equal distribution of gender, and their ages ranged from 25 to 50 years, with an average age of 35 years. These participants held various positions, including entry-level, mid-level, and senior management roles, providing a broad spectrum of insights into how internal communication practices are experienced at different organizational levels.

Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, designed to allow participants to express their experiences and perspectives freely. The interview guide was developed to explore themes related to internal communication, corporate reputation, and the perceived impact of social media on these aspects. Interviews were conducted individually in a quiet, comfortable setting to ensure that participants felt at ease and able to share their thoughts openly. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

Interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants and transcribed verbatim for further analysis (Schuck dkk., 2024). No standardized instruments or protocols were modified; however, follow-up questions were incorporated into the guide to deepen the understanding of responses where necessary.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method well-suited to the phenomenological framework for identifying and interpreting key themes from participant narratives. The process involved multiple stages, beginning with the careful reading of transcribed interviews to gain familiarity with the data. Significant statements were then identified, and these were coded into categories that reflected central themes related to the participants' experiences of internal communication and its impact on corporate reputation.

Thematic analysis was performed iteratively, with constant comparison across the data to refine themes and capture the essence of each participant's experience. NVivo software was utilized to assist with the coding process, though the focus remained on the interpretative and phenomenological nature of the analysis (Farokhnia Hamedani dkk., 2024). This approach ensured that the themes identified were grounded in the participants' subjective experiences.

Ethics

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the relevant research ethics committee. Informed consent was secured from all participants, and they were assured of their right to withdraw at any point without consequence. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study, with all data securely stored and accessible only to the research team. Personal identifiers were removed from the transcripts to protect participants' identities. Participants were also informed of the purpose of the research and how the data would be used. The study adhered to ethical standards in accordance with international and local guidelines for human subject research.

RESULTS

The Impact of Internal Communication on Employee Perceptions of Corporate Reputation

The participants expressed varied experiences regarding the role of internal communication in shaping their perception of corporate reputation. For many employees, effective internal communication was viewed as a key factor in fostering a sense of belonging and trust within the company. One participant, a senior marketing manager, shared:

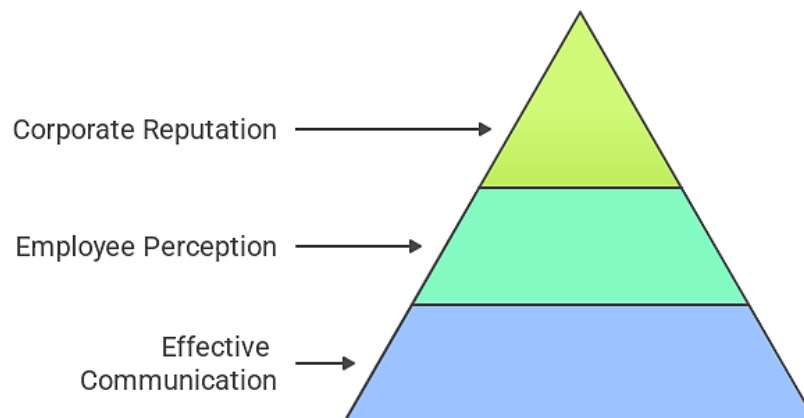
"When communication flows clearly from top to bottom, I feel like I am a part of something bigger. It builds trust and shapes my understanding of the company's values, which in turn, impacts how I represent the company externally."

Another employee in a mid-level position highlighted how communication not only influenced their understanding of corporate reputation but also impacted their approach to interacting with external stakeholders:

"Clear communication internally gives me the confidence to explain the company's vision to others. I feel aligned with the company's goals, and that translates into how I represent the company to external partners."

These findings reveal that employees perceive internal communication as integral to their understanding and representation of corporate reputation, linking it closely to their professional identity.

Internal Communication's Impact on Reputation



The Role of Social Media in Shaping External Perceptions of the Company

Participants also identified the growing influence of social media on the company's reputation. Employees at different levels spoke about how social media has become a primary channel through which the public forms perceptions about the company. A junior employee in customer service stated:

"What we share on social media is so important; people outside the company judge us based on those posts. Sometimes, I feel like we have to be extra cautious, because everything we do can affect the company's image."

In contrast, some employees felt that social media provided a platform for more open communication, where they could actively participate in shaping the company's reputation. A senior HR executive remarked:

"I believe that our presence on social media can help humanize the company. It's not just about corporate messages, but also showing the human side of our work culture, which resonates with external stakeholders."

This theme highlights the dual role of social media: as a potential risk when not managed carefully, but also as an opportunity for employees to contribute to the company's public image.

Transparency in Internal Communication and Its Impact on External Trust

Transparency emerged as a significant theme in how employees viewed the company's reputation. Many participants felt that when internal communication was transparent, it built trust both within the company and with external stakeholders. A project manager reflected on this:

"When the company shares both good and bad news transparently, it strengthens my belief in the company's integrity. I can then confidently talk about our products and services, knowing I'm fully informed."

On the other hand, employees who felt that communication was not transparent noted feelings of disconnect and doubt. A mid-level employee from the finance department stated:

"When I don't get the full picture, it's hard to defend the company's decisions. It makes me question what's going on, and that hesitation may be noticed by external contacts."

These observations underline the crucial role of transparent communication in fostering both internal alignment and external trust.

The analysis reveals that internal communication significantly influences how employees perceive the company's reputation and how they communicate this to external stakeholders. Effective internal communication fosters trust, clarity, and a shared understanding of the company's values, which in turn, positively impacts corporate reputation. Additionally, the growing role of social media and the need for transparency have become critical factors in how employees engage with and represent the company externally. The findings suggest that internal communication is not only essential for internal coherence but also for managing the company's external reputation, emphasizing the need for strategic communication efforts in both domains.

DISCUSSION

Summary of Key Findings

The findings of this study highlight the significant role that internal communication plays in shaping employees' perceptions of corporate reputation. The data revealed that when internal communication is clear, transparent, and aligned with the company's values, employees feel a deeper connection to the organization, which positively influences their representation of the company to external stakeholders. Additionally, social media emerged as a dual-force in shaping perceptions, both as a potential risk and an opportunity for reputation management. These experiences underscore the importance of communication strategies in maintaining internal coherence and external credibility, providing insights into the essential elements that impact corporate image.

Contribution of Findings to Research Question

The study provides valuable answers to the research question by revealing how internal communication shapes the corporate reputation from the perspective of employees (Marty dkk., 2024). By focusing on employees' lived experiences, the research sheds light on the internal dynamics that influence external perceptions of the company. The findings demonstrate that effective internal communication fosters trust, a sense of alignment with organizational goals, and an enhanced ability to represent the company externally. These experiences directly address the gaps in understanding the subjective nature of internal communication and its subsequent impact on corporate reputation, offering a nuanced perspective that was previously underexplored in the literature.

Relation to Literature and Previous Theories

The findings of this study align with previous research on the importance of internal communication in shaping organizational outcomes. For example, Timimi dkk.(2019) emphasizes the role of clear communication in establishing trust, which is echoed by the participants' experiences in this study. The finding that transparency enhances both internal trust and external reputation also

supports the work of Perella dkk. (2023), who discussed how transparency in corporate communication fosters credibility. However, this study goes further by examining how these factors are internalized by employees, offering a deeper understanding of the subjective meaning they attach to communication practices. Additionally, the influence of social media on corporate reputation, as explored by Morini dkk.(2025), is reinforced in this study, with participants acknowledging both the benefits and risks of digital platforms in shaping public perceptions. These comparisons highlight how the present study builds on existing theories and enriches our understanding of internal communication's role in corporate reputation.

Explanation of Findings Implications

The findings of this study carry significant implications both scientifically and practically. On a scientific level, the study deepens our understanding of how internal communication influences employees' perceptions of corporate reputation, emphasizing the need for transparent, consistent, and values-aligned communication strategies. From a practical perspective, organizations, especially those in the technology sector, can benefit from these insights by revising their internal communication practices to foster trust and enhance employee engagement, which, in turn, can positively affect external perceptions. Furthermore, the study highlights the dual role of social media, suggesting that companies need to carefully manage their online presence to mitigate risks while also leveraging it as an opportunity to reinforce their corporate image. Socially and culturally, the study underscores the growing expectation that organizations maintain open and authentic communication with employees, as these internal dynamics play a significant role in shaping the broader public perception of the company.

Study Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights, there are several limitations to consider. The research sample was relatively small, consisting of 12 employees from technology companies, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other industries or broader employee populations. Additionally, the study focused on employees from a specific geographical context, which may not capture the global variation in experiences or perceptions of internal communication. The methodological approach, though effective in exploring subjective experiences, is inherently limited by the participants' ability to articulate their feelings and experiences accurately (Kar dkk., 2021). Future research could address these limitations by expanding the sample size, exploring different industries, and conducting longitudinal studies to observe how perceptions of communication and reputation evolve over time.

Prospective Directions for Future Research

The findings of this study open avenues for further research that can expand the current understanding of internal communication and its role in shaping corporate reputation. Future research could investigate how internal communication practices impact employees in other industries, including those outside the technology sector, to see if the findings hold across different contexts. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine how changes in communication strategies influence employee perceptions and, consequently, the external reputation of a company over time (Schoultz dkk., 2021). Another promising area for research is exploring the impact of emerging digital communication tools and platforms on internal communication and corporate reputation, particularly as more companies embrace remote and hybrid work environments. These directions could provide further insights into the evolving nature of communication within organizations and its broader implications for corporate success.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the impact of internal communication on employees' perceptions of corporate reputation within technology companies, addressing a gap in the literature regarding the subjective experiences of employees. The findings revealed that clear, transparent, and values-aligned communication enhances employees' trust, sense of alignment with organizational goals, and their

ability to represent the company externally. Additionally, social media was identified as both a risk and an opportunity for reputation management. These results contribute to a deeper understanding of how internal communication practices shape corporate reputation, which previous research had not fully explored. The study highlights the need for companies to refine their internal communication strategies to foster a positive internal culture and external perception. Future research could extend these findings by examining other industries and exploring how digital communication tools further impact internal communication and reputation over time.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. All funding sources and affiliations have been disclosed, and the research was conducted without any commercial or financial influences that could affect the integrity of the study.

REFERENCES

- Bogen, K. W., Mulla, M. M. M., Haikalis, M., & Orchowski, L. M. (2022). Sexual Victimization Among Men: A Qualitative Analysis of the Twitter Hashtag #UsToo. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(9–10), NP7825–NP7849. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520967167>
- Chen, S., Gu, C., Wei, J., & Lv, M. (2023). Research on the influence mechanism of privacy invasion experiences with privacy protection intentions in social media contexts: Regulatory focus as the moderator. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1031592>
- Farokhnia Hamedani, M., Esmaeili, M., Sun, Y., Sheybani, E., & Javidi, G. (2024). Paving the way for COVID survivors' psychosocial rehabilitation: Mining topics, sentiments, and their trajectories over time from Reddit. *Health Informatics Journal*, 30(2). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14604582241240680>
- Gallacher, K., Pennington, D., Quinn, T., & Petrie, D. (2022). Stroke recovery—What are people talking about on Twitter? *Annals of family medicine*, 20. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.20.s1.2730>
- Jackson, A. C., Grande, M. R. L., Rogerson, M. C., Ski, C. F., Amerena, J., Smith, J. A., Hoover, V., Alvarenga, M. E., Higgins, R. O., Thompson, D. R., & Murphy, B. M. (2022). The cardiac distress inventory: A new measure of psychosocial distress associated with an acute cardiac event. *BMC Cardiovascular Disorders*, 22(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12872-022-02897-y>
- Kar, A. K., Kumar, S., & Ilavarasan, P. V. (2021). Modelling the Service Experience Encounters Using User-Generated Content: A Text Mining Approach. *Global Journal of Flexible Systems Management*, 22(4), 267–288. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40171-021-00279-5>
- Kynø, N. M., Fugelseth, D., Knudsen, L. M. M., & Tandberg, B. S. (2021). Starting parenting in isolation a qualitative user-initiated study of parents' experiences with hospitalization in Neonatal Intensive Care units during the COVID-19 pandemic. *PLoS ONE*, 16(10 October). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0258358>
- Ma, Y., & Zhou, S. (2024). The Impact of Perceived Timeliness of Information Release on Subjective Well-Being: A Heterogeneity Perspective. *Journalism and Media*, 5(4), 1413–1432. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia5040089>
- Maqableh, M., Abuhashesh, M., Dahabiyeh, L., Al Nawayseh, M. K., & Masa'deh, R. (2021). The effect of facebook users' satisfaction and trust on stickiness: The role of perceived values.

- International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 5(3), 245–256. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2021.6.009>
- Marty, T., Khadar, M., Autelitano, L., Baissac, C., Mebarki, A., Texier, N., Schück, S., Boiteux, M.-C., & Richard, M.-A. (2024). Patients' testimonies, feelings, complaints and emotional experiences with dermatoses on open social media: The French infodemiologic patient's free speech study. *Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology*, 38(7), 1373–1382. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jdv.19781>
- Morini, V., Citraro, S., Sajno, E., Sansoni, M., Riva, G., Stella, M., & Rossetti, G. (2025). Online posting effects: Unveiling the non-linear journeys of users in depression communities on Reddit. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 17. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2024.100542>
- Nina-Gutiérrez, E. A., Pacheco-Alanya, J. E., & Morales-Arevalo, J. C. (2024). SocialBullyAlert: A Web Application for Cyberbullying Detection on Minors' Social Media. *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications*, 15(7), 769–778. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.14569/IJACSA.2024.0150776>
- Perella, C., Steenackers, M., Robbins, B., Stone, L., Gervais, R., Schmidt, T., & Goswami, P. (2023). Patient Experience of Sjögren's Disease and its Multifaceted Impact on Patients' Lives. *Rheumatology and Therapy*, 10(3), 601–614. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40744-023-00531-7>
- Saini, Y. K. (2025). Social Media Shopping Activities, Emotions, and Loneliness on Well-Being in South Africa. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 31(1), 125–150. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2024.2443469>
- Sanders, J. (2019). Sharing special birth stories. An explorative study of online childbirth narratives. *Women and Birth*, 32(6), e560–e566. Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2018.12.009>
- Schultz, M., Leung, J., Bonsaksen, T., Ruffolo, M., Thygesen, H., Price, D., & Geirdal, A. Ø. (2021). Mental health, information and being connected: Qualitative experiences of social media use during the COVID-19 pandemic from a trans-national sample. *Healthcare (Switzerland)*, 9(6). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare9060735>
- Schuck, S., Loussikian, P., Mebarki, A., Malaab, J., Foulquié, P., Talmatkadi, M., & Kearney, M. (2024). Perceived unmet needs and impact on quality of life of patients living with advanced bladder cancer and their caregivers: Results of a social media listening study conducted in five European countries. *BMC Cancer*, 24(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12885-024-13092-x>