

The Effect of Internal Communication on Employee Engagement at Zambia Information Technology Authority

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of internal communication on employee engagement at the Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA). The primary aim is to critically examine the internal communication system within ZICTA and assess its influence on employee motivation and productivity. A mixed-method research design was employed, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Key findings reveal a strong positive correlation between internal communication and employee engagement. However, barriers such as lack of timely communication, poor management responsiveness, and inconsistent messaging were identified as significant challenges affecting employee engagement. The study recommends prioritizing timely communication, investing in modern communication technologies, implementing regular feedback mechanisms, and fostering a culture of inclusivity to enhance internal communication effectiveness. This research emphasizes the critical role of effective internal communication in promoting employee engagement and organizational success at ZICTA.

Keywords: Internal Communication, Employee Engagement, Organizational Effectiveness, Communication Barriers, ZICTA

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1. Introduction

Communication is a fundamental life skill essential for effective human interaction and socialization. It plays a crucial role in family relationships, friendships, and professional collaborations (Bolfek et al., 2021). While external communication often garners more attention, internal communication is equally vital, serving as the "lifeblood" of an organization. Effective internal communication ensures a continuous flow of information, facilitates teamwork, and aligns efforts across departments. When communication is clear and open, it fosters a culture of trust and engagement, driving long-term organizational success and growth (Clampitt, 2023). This study will focus on understanding how internal communication impacts employee engagement at the Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA).

The significance of internal communication extends beyond training employees in effective communication skills; it also addresses the unique challenges organizations face. As recent studies emphasize, communication is a core element of organizational effectiveness (Smith & Lewis, 2020). In today's competitive global market, organizations must manage resources—including human resources effectively to remain profitable. This involves navigating employees' thoughts, emotions, and motivations to optimize productivity (Rajhans, 2022). Employee engagement, defined as the level of emotional and intellectual commitment an employee has towards their organization, is crucial for achieving higher performance and organizational success (Saks, 2019).

During crises, employees expect timely and accurate information from their organizations (Heide & Simonsson, 2021). In such situations, effective internal communication becomes critical, as ambiguity can lead to confusion and disengagement (Strandberg & Vigso, 2022). Research emphasizes the importance of managerial efforts in fostering two-way communication and building positive employee relationships before crises occur (Zink, 2024). This proactive approach not only enhances organizational resilience but also supports motivation and engagement, which are vital for navigating challenges effectively.

Internal communication strategies encompass various forms, including downward, upward, horizontal, and diagonal communication (Marcovic et al., 2023). Vertical communication follows the formal hierarchy, while horizontal communication facilitates coordination across departments. A well-implemented internal communication strategy is essential for enhancing the accuracy and efficiency of employee roles (Haas, 2022). Employees are not merely receivers of information; they actively participate in the communication process by processing, interpreting, and disseminating information, which contributes significantly to organizational performance and competitive advantage (Baumruk et al., 2023).

The Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) is responsible for regulating the growth and governance of the ICT sector in Zambia. Its primary functions include overseeing ICT infrastructure, managing spectrum allocation, protecting consumers, and promoting ICT development. However, ZICTA currently employs a one-way communication system, where management disseminates information without actively seeking employee feedback. This lack of two-way communication can lead to feelings of undervaluation among employees, negatively impacting motivation and morale. To fulfill its mandate effectively, ZICTA must address the factors affecting internal communication, ensuring that employees are engaged and aligned with the organization's goals, ultimately enhancing service delivery to the public.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework

The study was guided by the following theories: Public Relations Excellence Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Social Exchange Theory.

Public Relations Excellence Theory: The Public Relations (PR) Excellence Theory, developed by James E. Grunig and his colleagues in the 1980s and 1990s, focuses on how public relations practices contribute to the overall effectiveness of an organization. This theory identifies factors that enhance the success of PR programs and communication strategies within an organization and its relations with external stakeholders. Key aspects include two-way symmetrical communication, relationship management, strategic PR planning, and cultural and ethical considerations.

Two-way symmetrical communication is a central concept, emphasizing mutual understanding and collaboration between an organization and its stakeholders. This approach encourages a balanced exchange of feedback, allowing both parties to negotiate and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, which is essential for building trust and fostering long-term relationships (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). In the context of ZICTA, effective internal communication grounded in this theory can significantly shape employees' understanding of organizational goals and their engagement within the workplace. By prioritizing open communication channels, ZICTA can foster a culture of transparency and mutual respect, enhancing employee motivation and commitment (Grunig & Grunig, 2000).

Furthermore, the theory highlights the importance of feedback in the communication process. Establishing a feedback loop that regularly solicits and acts on employees' opinions will foster a sense of ownership and engagement. When employees feel their voices influence decision-making, their overall engagement is likely to increase (Grunig & Grunig, 2000). This makes the PR Excellence Theory particularly relevant for exploring the impact of internal communication on employee engagement at ZICTA.

Self-Determination Theory: Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), posits that employee engagement is fostered when essential intrinsic needs autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. This theory asserts that engagement is driven not just by external rewards but by intrinsic motivation that arises from satisfying these core psychological needs. Organizations that cultivate environments where these needs are fulfilled are more likely to develop a highly engaged workforce.

In the context of ZICTA, promoting autonomy, competence, and relatedness can lead to greater productivity and job satisfaction. Encouraging employees to take ownership of their projects and make decisions about their work can strengthen their sense of autonomy. For instance, ZICTA could implement flexible work arrangements or involve employees in decision-making processes concerning organizational objectives. By fostering an environment where these intrinsic needs are prioritized, SDT suggests that employees will become more intrinsically motivated, resulting in higher engagement and improved productivity. This approach aligns with ZICTA's objectives of innovation, efficiency, and employee satisfaction, making SDT a valuable framework for understanding and enhancing employee engagement.

Social Exchange Theory: Social Exchange Theory, introduced by Blau (1964), suggests that employee engagement is driven by a reciprocal relationship between employees and the organization. When employees perceive support, respect, and fair treatment from their organization, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and committed. This theory emphasizes the mutual benefits that arise when employees feel valued, leading to increased engagement and performance.

For ZICTA, the application of Social Exchange Theory underscores the importance of creating a supportive work environment. Providing resources, professional development opportunities, and fair performance evaluations can foster commitment and engagement. When employees' contributions are acknowledged, they are motivated to stay engaged and contribute positively to the organization's goals. By creating a culture of mutual respect and recognizing employee contributions, ZICTA can enhance engagement, productivity, and alignment with its mission of advancing Zambia's ICT sector. This theory is particularly relevant for ZICTA as it seeks to build a collaborative and inclusive organizational culture

that supports employee well-being and performance.

3 Research Methodology and Design

3.1 Research Design

The research utilized both Qualitative and Quantitative methods. Qualitative research was employed to explore the depth and complexity of human experiences, attitudes, and behaviors, focusing on non-numerical data to understand intricate, contextual, or subjective phenomena (Dehalwar and Sharma, 2023). This approach is useful for capturing nuanced insights into participants' motivations, views, and social contexts (Creswell, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). In this study, Qualitative data was collected through focus group discussions (FGDs), allowing for an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives and providing valuable insights into the underlying factors related to the research topic.

3.2 Data Collection

For the Quantitative component, a structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed to gather numerical data on employee engagement and internal communication processes within ZICTA. It included closed-ended questions that allow respondents to select from predefined answers, providing quantifiable data for analysis.

3.3 Data Analysis

For data analysis, Quantitative data from the structured questionnaire were analysed using a Software package for Statistical analysis, SPSS version 25.0. SPSS will be used to perform descriptive and inferential analyses, including measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and regression analysis to examine relationships between variables. For the Qualitative data, thematic analysis was applied to transcriptions of interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis involved coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns. This approach provides deeper insights into internal communication and engagement dynamics within ZICTA. By integrating SPSS for Quantitative data analysis and Qualitative data analysis, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

4 Findings and Interpretation

4.1 Relationship Between Internal Communication, Employee Motivation, and Productivity

Importance of considering internal communication to the success of ZICTA

Table 1: Importance of Internal communication

How important do you consider internal communication to the success of ZICTA?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Important	15	13.6	13.6	13.6
Not important	1	.9	.9	14.5
Very important	94	85.5	85.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Source: field data, 2026

The findings clearly indicate that internal communication is overwhelmingly considered crucial to the success of ZICTA, with 85.5% of respondents rating it as "Very important" and an additional 13.6% deeming it simply "Important." Only a negligible 0.9% viewed internal communication as "Not important." This distribution demonstrates a strong consensus among participants on the vital role that effective internal communication plays in achieving organizational success, highlighting its significance in fostering collaboration, coordination, and overall performance within ZICTA.

Rating of overall effectiveness

According to the findings above, a majority (45.5%) rate the communication as Good, followed by a substantial share that view it as Neutral (32.7%), indicating that while nearly half of respondents are satisfied, a significant portion remain ambivalent. Smaller segments interpret the communication as Excellent (8.2%), Poor (12.7%), and Very Poor (0.9%), suggesting that while there are positive assessments, there are notable areas of dissatisfaction and opportunities for improvement, particularly among those who perceive the communication as only neutral or poor. The findings imply that the organization should focus on elevating clarity and accessibility to convert neutrality into higher ratings and address the concerns of the minority who rate communication poorly.

Feeling that internal communication contributes to understanding

Source: field data, 2026

The study findings established that, majority strongly agree or agree, with 64% frequency and 58.2% percent in the “Strongly agree” category dominating the top end, indicating that most participants feel the communication effectively clarifies goals. The “Agree” category also accounts for a substantial share (40 frequency, 36.4 percent), reinforcing overall positive sentiment. Very few respondents fall into the neutral or disagree categories, and there is minimal with strong disagreement or dislike (1 frequency, 0.9 percent). Overall, the findings suggest that internal communication is perceived as generally effective in conveying goals, though a small portion remains neutral or slightly dissatisfied, highlighting potential opportunities to bolster clarity and alignment for a minority.

4.1.4 Extent of believing that internal communication facilitates collaboration between departments

Table 2: Rating of overall effectiveness

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Neutral	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
Not at all	1	.9	.9	3.6
To a great extent	91	82.7	82.7	86.4
To a limited extent	1	.9	.9	87.3
To some extent	14	12.7	12.7	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Source: field data, 2026

The table summarizes responses on the extent to which respondents believe internal communication facilitates collaboration between departments. A large majority view communication as beneficial, with 82.7% indicating it helps “To a great extent” and an additional 12.7% stating it helps “To some extent,” bringing the total affirmative responses to 95.4%. Very few respondents see little or no impact: 2.7% selected “Neutral,” 0.9% said “Not at all,” and another 0.9% chose “To a limited extent.” The distribution suggests a strong perception that internal communication substantially supports cross-department collaboration, though a small minority perceive only minimal or no benefit. This indicates an opportunity for the organization to reinforce and maintain effective communication practices while monitoring the minority concerns that may hinder broader collaboration.

Satisfaction

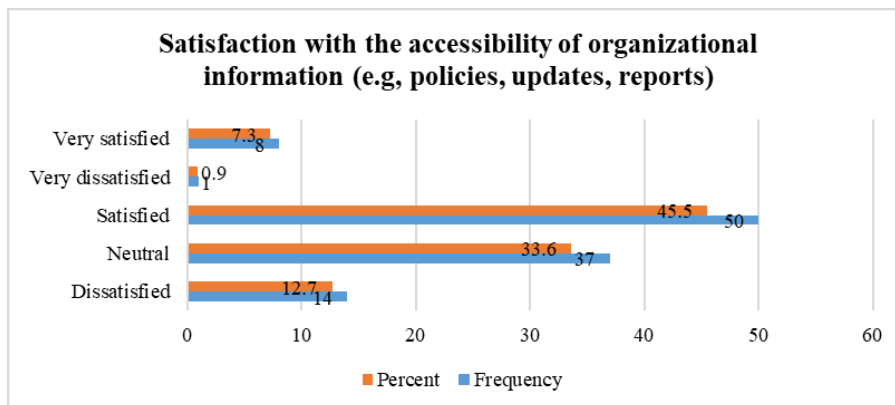


Figure 1: Satisfaction with Organization information accessibility (Source: field data, 2026)

The chart depicts satisfaction with the accessibility of organizational information, showing both percent and frequency across five response categories. The largest share of respondents’ reports being Satisfied, with 45.5% (50 frequency) in the percent column and 50 respondents in the frequency column, followed closely by Neutral, at 33.6% (37 frequency). Moderate dissatisfaction appears at 12.7% (14 frequency), while very satisfied and very dissatisfied are small in both measures, each under 9% and with minimal counts. This pattern suggests overall moderate to high satisfaction with information accessibility, but a noticeable portion remains neutral or slightly dissatisfied, indicating room for improvement in policies, updates, or reporting mechanisms to push respondents toward clearer and more readily available information.

Feeling of being well informed

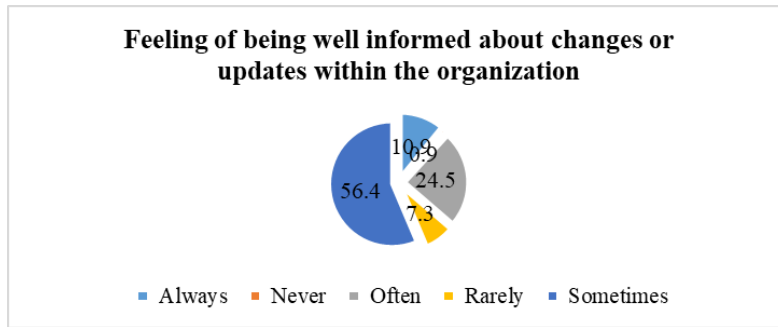


Figure 2: Feeling of wellbeing (Source: field data, 2026)

According to the information above, the dominant segment is “Always,” comprising 56.4% of responses (frequency 56.4), followed by “Often” at 24.5% (frequency 24.5). “Sometimes” makes up 10.9%, while “Rarely” and “Never” are small, at 7.3% and 0.9% respectively. This pattern indicates that the vast majority feel well informed most of the time, with only a small minority reporting infrequent or no information. In short, internal communications effectively keep most staff updated, though there is room to reduce the share who rarely or never feel informed.

Communication policies and guidelines and organization values

Table 3: Communication policies

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Are communication policies and guidelines clear and consistently applied across the organization?	4	39	45	20	2
Do you think the organization values employee feedback in internal communication processes?	5	47	34	20	4

Source: field data, 2026

The findings in the table above indicates a substantial portion perceives policies as unclear or inconsistently applied, with 45 respondents neutral and only 4+39 in agreement. The second item reveals a more favorable stance toward feedback: 5 strongly agree, 47 agree, 34 neutral, 20 disagree, 4 strongly disagree. While a sizeable share supports valuing feedback (52 total either strongly agree or agree), a notable minority remains neutral or disagrees, suggesting room to enhance mechanisms for collecting and acting on employee input and to communicate that feedback is valued.

Frequency of having meetings

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bi-weekly	8	7.3	7.3	7.3
Monthly	32	29.1	29.1	36.4
Rarely	57	51.8	51.8	88.2
Weekly	13	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Source: field data, 2026

The majority of respondents report very infrequent dissemination through staff meetings: 51.8% indicated Rarely, followed by 29.1% Monthly, 11.8% Weekly, and 7.3% Bi-weekly. The data reveal a heavy reliance on infrequent meetings for distributing critical information, with only a minority experiencing more frequent updates (weekly or bi-weekly). This pattern suggests potential gaps in timely information sharing and implies that increasing the frequency of staff meetings or supplementing with other timely channels could improve the reach and rapidity of critical communications across the organization.

Effectiveness of communication tools

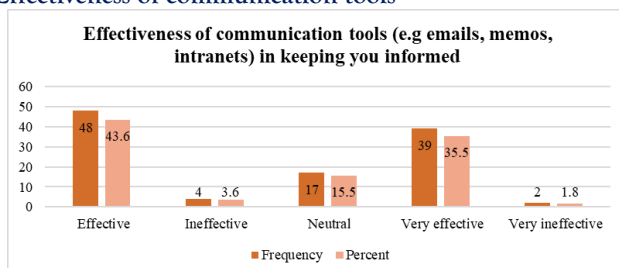


Figure 3: Effectiveness of communication tools (Source: field data, 2026)

Findings in the figure above established that the majority rate tools as effective, with a high frequency of 48 and a corresponding percent of 43.6% for “Effective.” A smaller portion views tools as very effective (39 frequency, 35.5%), indicating strong overall satisfaction with information delivery via emails, memos, intranets, etc. Very few report inefficiency, with only 4 in the “Ineffective” category (3.6%) and 2 in “Very ineffective” (1.8%), suggesting only a small minority experience poor information flow. The neutral category (17 frequency, 15.5%) implies some ambivalence or gaps in usefulness. The results indicate that most employees feel well-informed by current tools, though there is still room to improve the less-than-fully effective channels and reduce the few cases of ineffective information dissemination.

Belief that language or cultural differences affect internal communication at ZICTA

Table 5: Belief that language or cultural differences affect internal communication at ZICTA

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	28	25.5	25.5	25.5
Disagree	34	30.9	30.9	56.4
Neutral	18	16.4	16.4	72.7
Strongly agree	14	12.7	12.7	85.5
Strongly disagree	16	14.5	14.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Source: field data, 2026

The results show a mixed view on whether language or cultural differences hinder internal communication. Disagree (30.9%) slightly outnumbers Agree (25.5%), while a sizable portion remains Neutral (16.4%). Strongly disagree (14.5%) and Strongly agree (12.7%) indicate divergent experiences: some staff feel these differences disrupt communication, while others see little impact or even see differences as manageable. Overall, the distribution suggests that language and culture are a factor for a portion of staff, but it is not uniformly viewed as a major obstacle. This implies a need to explore targeted language support, intercultural training, or inclusive communication practices to reduce miscommunication and improve cross-cultural collaboration.

Specific areas of internal communication that would want to see improved

Table 6: Areas of internal communication that would want to see improved

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Accessibility of information	27	24.5	24.5	24.5
Clarity of messages	15	13.6	13.6	38.2
Opportunities for employee feedback	34	30.9	30.9	69.1
Timeliness of communication	28	25.5	25.5	94.5
Use of communication tools	6	5.5	5.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Source: field data, 2026

Opportunities for employee feedback top the list (30.9%), followed by accessibility of information (24.5%), timeliness of communication (25.5%), and clarity of messages (13.6%). Use of communication tools garners the smallest interest (5.5%). This pattern suggests that staff value channels that enable them to provide input and access information readily, while they also expect more timely and clear messaging. The findings indicate a need for expanding feedback mechanisms, improving information accessibility, and ensuring messages are delivered promptly and clearly, with a particular emphasis on fostering an inclusive, responsive communication environment.

4.2 Barriers to Effective Internal Communication and Their Impact on Employee Engagement

Barriers to effective internal communication have you encountered in your organization

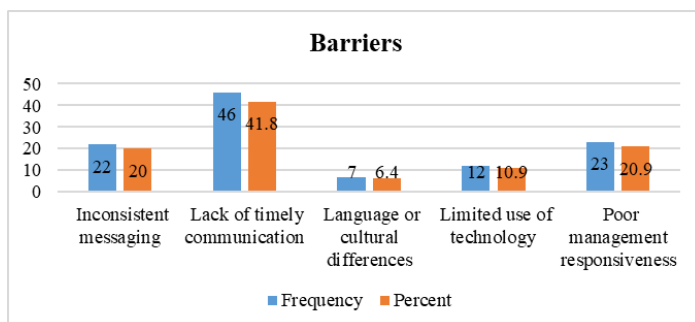


Figure 4: Barriers to Effective Internal Communication (Source: field data, 2026)

The study findings, established that, the strongest barrier appears to be lack of timely communication, with the highest frequencies (46) and a high percent (41.8%), suggesting that delayed or outdated messages are a widespread issue that likely undermines engagement and responsiveness. Poor management responsiveness also stands out (23 frequency; 20.9 percent), indicating that employees feel management does not react quickly enough to concerns or information, which can erode trust and involvement. Inconsistent messaging and limited use of technology are both notable but less dominant barriers (inconsistent messaging: 22 frequency, 20 percent; limited use of technology: 12 frequency, 10.9 percent), implying gaps in clarity and access to digital channels. Language or cultural differences, while less prevalent (7 frequency, 6.4 percent), still signal potential cross-cultural communication challenges for a minority. Therefore, the findings suggest that to enhance engagement, the organization should prioritize timely and responsive communication, ensure consistency in messaging, and expand appropriate technology use while remaining attentive to language/cultural considerations.

Perceptions of the impact of technology and structure on internal communication

Table 7: Perceptions of the impact of technology

Statement	Positively	No impact	Negatively
To what extent does the use of technology affect internal communication at ZICTA?	88	16	6
Do you believe the current communication structure (e.g., hierarchy, reporting lines) affects the flow of information?	61	22	27

Source: field data, 2026

The first table shows that technology is perceived to positively affect internal communication by a large majority (88), with a smaller minority reporting no impact (16) or a negative impact (6). This suggests that technology, when effectively implemented, supports information sharing and collaboration across ZICTA. The second item asks about the current communication structure; a majority (61) believes it positively affects information flow, but a substantial portion (22) reports no impact and a notable minority (27) perceives a negative effect. Taken together, the findings indicate that while technology and organizational structure generally facilitate communication, there are pockets where current systems and hierarchies hinder information flow, highlighting the need for targeted improvements in both technology adoption and structural processes to optimize cross-level communication.

How workload pressure affect ability to communicate effectively with colleagues

Table 8: How workload pressure affect ability to communicate effectively

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Does not affect at all	3	2.7	2.7	2.7
Greatly affects (causes frequent communication delays or errors)	32	29.1	29.1	31.8
Neutral (no significant impact)	19	17.3	17.3	49.1
Rarely affects (minimal challenges)	7	6.4	6.4	55.5
Somewhat affects (occasional challenges in communication)	49	44.5	44.5	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Source: field data, 2026

This table reveals mixed views on how workload influences communication efficiency. The largest group reports that workload somewhat affects communication (44.5%), followed by those who perceive a great negative impact (29.1%), with 19 respondents neutral (17.3%), 7 who rarely experience effects (6.4%), and 3 who see no effect at all (2.7%). The pattern indicates that heavy workload typically introduces occasional communication delays or errors, creating a risk for miscommunication and missed information during peak periods. However, a sizable minority experiences only minimal impact, suggesting that current processes may be resilient for many staff, yet there is clear room to bolster workload management, streamline information flows, and provide contingency strategies to maintain timely and accurate communication during busy times.

Language, culture, and message delivery

Table 9: Language, culture, and message delivery

Statement	Always	Never	Often	Rarely	Sometimes
Are language differences or communication styles a challenge in ZICTA’s multicultural environment?	8	14	13	30	45
Does poor internal communication lead to misunderstandings about job roles and responsibilities?	28	0	29	10	43

Source: field data, 2026

The table reveals two key issues affecting internal communication at ZICTA. First, language differences and varying communication styles emerge as a moderate challenge within the multicultural environment, with responses spread across all categories but a notable emphasis on “Sometimes” (45) and “Rarely” (30). This pattern suggests that while language and style barriers exist, they are not uniformly crippling, indicating a need for targeted intercultural communication training and language support to reduce sporadic misunderstandings. Second, poor internal communication is linked to misunderstandings about job roles and responsibilities, as shown by 28 respondents who indicated “Always,” 29 in the “Often”/“Sometimes” range, and 43 in “Sometimes,” with zero selecting “Never.” This distribution points to a frequent association between communication gaps and role ambiguity, underscoring the importance of clearer role definitions, improved messaging, and feedback mechanisms to ensure everyone understands their duties and how information flows within the organization.

Perceptions of management attitudes and empowerment

Table 10: Perceptions of management attitudes and empowerment

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Do management attitudes and responsiveness affect the effectiveness of communication?	52	44	10	4	0
Do you feel empowered to raise concerns about communication challenges in your department?	17	35	34	20	4

Source: field data, 2026

This table assesses management attitudes and empowerment to raise concerns. A majority strongly agrees or agrees that management attitudes and responsiveness affect communication effectiveness (52 strongly agree, 44 agree, 10 neutral, 4 disagree, 0 strongly disagree). This indicates a strong perception that leadership behavior shapes the quality of organizational communication. Additionally, empowerment to raise concerns is more modest but meaningful (17 strongly agree, 35 agree, 34 neutral, 20 disagree, 4 strongly disagree). While many feel able to raise issues, a sizable portion remains neutral or disagrees, suggesting opportunities to enhance psychological safety, feedback channels, and the process for addressing concerns to ensure staff feel heard and respond to communication challenges.

Cultural norms, affect the openness of communication within ZICTA

Table 11: Cultural norms, affect the openness of communication within ZICTA

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Language differences	10	9.1	9.1	9.1
None	18	16.4	16.4	25.5
Other (please specify)	2	1.8	1.8	27.3
Preference for indirect communication styles	22	20.0	20.0	47.3
Respect for hierarchy (discourages open feedback)	58	52.7	52.7	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Source: field data, 2026

According to the study findings in the table presented above, majority of the respondents cites respect for hierarchy as a barrier to open feedback (58 respondents, 52.7%), with a smaller share indicating preferences for indirect communication styles (22, 20%), and a minority noting language differences (10, 9.1%) or other factors (2, 1.8%). A smaller group reports no cultural barriers (18, 16.4%). These results imply that hierarchical norms and indirect communication preferences significantly constrain open and frank communication at ZICTA. To foster a more inclusive and transparent environment, initiatives to flatten hierarchies, encourage direct feedback, and train staff in open communication across levels may yield substantial improvements in collaboration and engagement.

4.3 Actionable recommendations for improving communication strategies that can increase workforce motivation and alignment with institutional goals

How effective are emails as a communication tool in your department

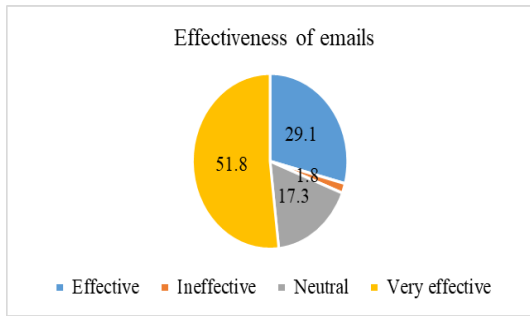


Figure 5: Emails as a Communication Tool (Source: field data, 2026)

The findings in the pie chart above shows how respondents rate the effectiveness of emails as a communication tool within the department. The largest segment is “Very effective,” at 51.8%, indicating that about half of staff find email communications highly useful for disseminating information. “Effective” accounts for 29.1%, suggesting a solid majority view emails as beneficial. A smaller portion rates emails as “Neutral” (17.3%), while “Ineffective” and “Very ineffective” together make up only 1.8% and 0.0% respectively, implying very few experience poor email communication. Overall, emails appear to be a reliable and valued channel for routine information sharing, with room to address the neutral minority to further enhance effectiveness.

Are face-to-face meetings or briefings more effective than other communication methods? Why or why not?

Table 12: Face-to-Face Meetings

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Always more effective (clear and direct)	58	52.7	52.7	52.7
Less effective (time-consuming or unclear)	1	.9	.9	53.6
Neutral (no difference from other methods)	6	5.5	5.5	59.1
Sometimes more effective (context-dependent)	45	40.9	40.9	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Source: field data, 2026

The table suggests that face-to-face meetings are generally perceived as highly effective, but not universally so. A majority of respondents (52.7%) view in-person briefings as "Always more effective (clear and direct)," indicating strong support for direct, real-time communication when clarity and immediacy are crucial. An additional 40.9% consider face-to-face meetings "Sometimes more effective (context-dependent)," which implies that effectiveness depends on situational factors such as urgency, complexity, or need for immediate feedback. A small share sees them as "Neutral" (5.5%) and only a tiny minority regard them as "Less effective" (0.9%), suggesting limited belief that in-person meetings are generally time-consuming or unclear. Taken together, the findings indicate that face-to-face meetings are valued for their directness and clarity in many contexts, but their superiority is not absolute; hybrid communication approaches that mix in-person and other channels may best accommodate varying circumstances and maximize overall effectiveness.

Ofteness of using Instant Messaging Platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Teams) for work-related communication

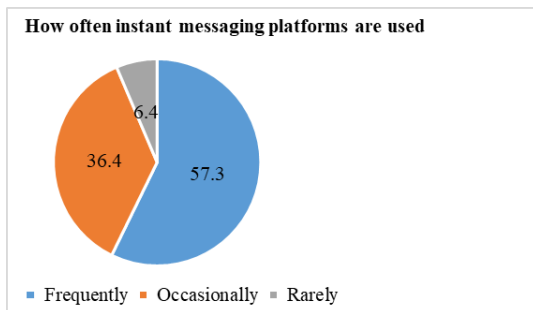


Figure 6: Instant Messaging Platforms Frequency of use (Source: field data, 2026)

The findings in the chart indicates that instant messaging is a widely used work communication tool, with the majority of respondents using it frequently (57.3%). A substantial portion uses it occasionally (36.4%), suggesting it remains a mainstay for quick updates and collaboration. A small minority rarely uses these platforms (6.4%), implying limited adoption among some teams or roles. The data show strong reliance on instant messaging for work-related communication, but usage varies by context, with most staff relying on it regularly while a meaningful share uses it only intermittently.

Tailoring communication channels to meet the needs of specific employee groups (e.g., technical vs. administrative staff)

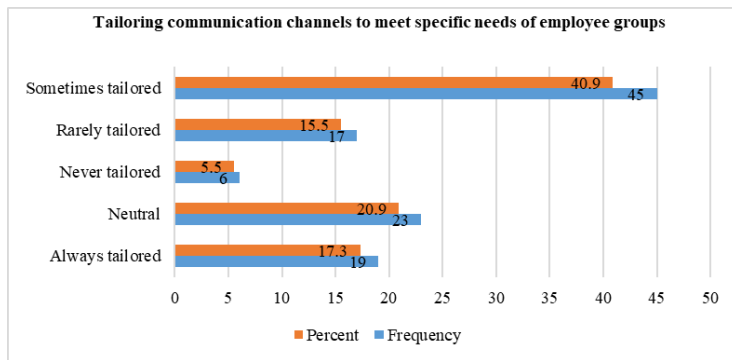


Figure 7: Tailoring communication channels (Source: field data, 2026)

According to the findings above the highest response is for “Sometimes tailored,” with 40.9% (orange) and 45% (blue) frequency, indicating a notable portion of staff see some customization but not consistently applied. A smaller group believes tailoring occurs “Always” (17.3% frequency; 19% percent), suggesting a minority experience ongoing, deliberate tailoring. “Neutral” responses are around one-fifth (20.9% percent; 23% frequency), implying a substantial share do not perceive or require differentiated channels. Very few respondents report “Rarely” or “Never” tailored communications (5.5%/6). Overall, the findings imply that while there is recognition of tailoring in some contexts, a majority neither consistently sees nor requires differentiated channels, pointing to opportunities to standardize or clarify tailored practices and ensure explicit, documented approaches for department-specific communication needs.

Extent of relying on Informal Communication Networks to access critical information

Table 13: Informal Communication Networks

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Always rely on them (primary source of information)	26	23.6	23.6	23.6
Neutral (occasionally use)	27	24.5	24.5	48.2
Never rely on them	3	2.7	2.7	50.9
Often rely on them (frequently use)	39	35.5	35.5	86.4
Rarely rely on them (not primary)	15	13.6	13.6	100.0
Total	110	100.0	100.0	

Source: field data, 2026

The table reveals a substantial reliance on informal communication networks, though the pattern shows variation in how often they are used. The largest group reports using them “Often rely on them (frequently use)” (35.5%), followed closely by those who “Always rely on them (primary source of information)” at 23.6%. A sizable portion is in the “Neutral (occasionally use)” category (24.5%), indicating intermittent use of informal channels. Few respondents “Never rely on them” (2.7%), suggesting formal channels are not universally preferred over informal ones. Additionally, 13.6% “Rarely rely on them (not primary).” The collective response suggests informal networks play a prominent role in accessing critical information for many staff, though a meaningful minority neither relies on them consistently nor treats them as their main information source, underscoring the need for clear, formal communication channels to ensure critical information is accessible to all.

4.4 Qualitative findings

Theme i: Variability and Inconsistency in Internal Communication

The qualitative data revealed that while internal communication at ZICTA is generally structured, its application is inconsistent across different departments and regional offices. The most commonly shared information includes administrative circulars, operational updates, policy revisions, Human Resources notifications, and announcements about training opportunities. These communications are delivered primarily through formal channels such as emails, internet portals, official memos, departmental meetings, as well as informal platforms like WhatsApp group chats. Despite the regular dissemination of official updates, there are notable variations in how timely and clear this information is communicated, especially between headquarters and regional offices. Staff in regional locations frequently reported receiving important information later than their counterparts in headquarters, often only through indirect or secondary channels, which undermines the immediacy and accuracy of the message. These disparities in communication practices stem from both structural issues such as hierarchical layers and departmental silos and technological limitations, including inconsistent internet access and outdated communication infrastructure in regional offices. Such inconsistencies

negatively impact the organization's ability to coordinate activities efficiently, leading to confusion, misinterpretations, and delays during project execution. The lack of uniform communication protocols occasionally results in misunderstandings and uneven implementation of organizational directives, which ultimately affects overall organizational performance and staff cohesion.

Theme ii: Limited Two-Way Communication and Feedback Mechanism

A major theme emerging from the discussions was the limited opportunities for upward communication within ZICTA. Participants highlighted that communication predominantly flows in a top-down direction, with leadership frequently disseminating information but seldom actively seeking or incorporating feedback from staff at various levels. This one-way communication approach diminishes employee engagement and contributes to a decline in staff morale, as employees feel their voices and concerns are neither solicited nor valued. Participants from headquarters expressed a clear desire for more robust and systematic feedback loops that would allow their input to influence decision-making processes meaningfully. Meanwhile, regional staff underscored the challenges of delayed responses from leadership and a lack of consultation on operational matters that directly affect their work. This lack of reciprocal communication creates a disconnect between management and frontline employees, weakening collaboration and reducing organizational effectiveness. Without effective feedback mechanisms, important insights from those implementing policies on the ground are lost, and frontline challenges remain unaddressed. Strengthening two-way communication channels is therefore critical to fostering a participatory culture where dialogue, transparency, and shared ownership of organizational goals enhance both employee satisfaction and operational outcomes.

Theme iii: Effectiveness and Limitations of Existing Communication Channels

Participants consistently identified email, memos, WhatsApp groups, and meetings as the dominant communication channels within ZICTA but noted significant variability in their effectiveness. Meetings were widely regarded as the most reliable mode of communication due to their interactive nature, allowing for immediate clarification, discussion, and feedback. In contrast, emails were often described as overwhelming, with frequent issues of information overload leading to important messages being overlooked or ignored. This challenge is exacerbated in regional offices where inconsistent internet connectivity hampers access to timely virtual meetings and email updates, further limiting effective communication. The reliance on WhatsApp group chats for informal updates was recognized for its convenience but also criticized for lacking formality and sometimes contributing to information fragmentation. Participants expressed a strong need for upgrading communication infrastructure and adopting more advanced, integrated digital platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Slack, or an improved intranet system. These tools would facilitate more seamless collaboration, centralized information sharing, and real-time communication across departments and locations. Enhancing communication channels is essential to improving information flow, reducing misunderstandings, and fostering a cohesive organizational culture that supports both compliance and innovation.

Theme iv: Unequal Access to Information Between Headquarters and Regional Offices

The analysis highlighted a significant disparity in how information flows between ZICTA's headquarters and its regional offices. Regional employees consistently reported experiencing delays in receiving critical updates on policy changes, operational guidelines, and organizational announcements compared to their headquarters counterparts. This unequal access to timely and accurate information created a palpable sense of exclusion among regional staff, undermining their ability to coordinate effectively during public awareness campaigns and other operational activities. Participants attributed these challenges to multiple factors, including dissemination delays caused by hierarchical communication structures, infrastructural limitations such as poor internet connectivity, and an over-reliance on email as the primary communication tool. The cumulative effect of these barriers is a fragmented organizational information network, which impacts employee morale and reduces the efficiency of service delivery in regional areas. Addressing this information asymmetry is important for fostering inclusion, ensuring consistent messaging, and enabling all staff to perform their roles with up-to-date knowledge. Improving dissemination strategies and investing in infrastructure enhancements are vital steps toward bridging this gap and promoting organizational cohesion.

Theme v: Influence of Organizational Culture and Leadership Communication on Engagement

Participants described ZICTA's organizational culture as professional and mission-driven but also highly centralized, which shaped the nature of internal communication and staff engagement. Leadership communication was generally perceived as transparent, with efforts made to share information openly. However, it was noted that communication was not always timely or sufficiently interactive, limiting opportunities for dialogue between leaders and staff. The hierarchical organizational structure was cited as a factor that sometimes-inhibited open communication and slowed down decision-making processes. Both headquarters and regional staff emphasized that timely recognition of efforts, visible leadership presence, and inclusive communication practices positively influenced their motivation and engagement in organizational goals. Participants suggested that when leaders actively acknowledge staff contributions and maintain regular, two-way communication, it fosters a stronger sense of belonging and commitment. Therefore, leadership style and communication practices play a critical role in shaping organizational culture and enhancing employee engagement, which in turn supports effective implementation of policies and service delivery.

4.5 Inferential statistics

Model summary

Table 14: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.516a	.266	.255	.402

a. Predictors: (Constant), Internal communication

Source: field data, 2026

The model summary indicates that internal communication explains a meaningful portion of the variance in employee engagement. The model’s multiple correlation coefficient (R) is 0.516, corresponding to an R-squared of 0.266, meaning about 26.6% of the variance in employee engagement is accounted for by internal communication. The adjusted R-squared is 0.255, slightly lower to reflect the small sample size and model complexity, but still suggests a moderate explanatory effect. The standard error of the estimate is 0.402, which provides a sense of the typical deviation of observed engagement scores from the predicted values. Overall, internal communication is a significant and practical predictor of employee engagement, though other factors also contribute to engagement beyond communication quality.

ANOVA

Table 15: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.453	1	11.453	28.568	.000b
	Residual	32.011	108	.296		
	Total	43.464	109			

^a. Dependent Variable: 3. Employee engagement
^b. Predictors: (Constant), Internal communication

Source: field data, 2026

The ANOVA results show that the regression model predicting employee engagement from internal communication is statistically significant. The regression sum of squares is 11.453 with 1 degree of freedom, yielding a mean square of 11.453. The F-statistic is 28.568 with a p-value of 0.000, well below the standard 0.05 threshold, indicating that internal communication explains a significant portion of the variance in employee engagement beyond what would be expected by chance. The residual sum of squares is 32.011 with 108 degrees of freedom, and the total is 43.464 with 109 degrees of freedom. These results collectively support the conclusion that the relationship observed is robust within the data.

Regression Coefficients

Table 16: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.511	.188		8.049	.000
	Internal communication	0.211	.065	.306	3.233	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement

Source: field data, 2026

The regression coefficients reveal a positive and statistically significant relationship between internal communication and employee engagement. The intercept is 1.511 ($p < 0.001$), indicating the baseline engagement when internal communication is at zero (in the scale used). The unstandardized coefficient for internal communication is 0.211 (SE = 0.065, $p = 0.002$), meaning that for each unit increase in internal communication, employee engagement increases by about 0.211 units on the engagement scale. The standardized beta coefficient is 0.306, suggesting a moderate effect size. Together, these results confirm that improvements in internal communication are associated with meaningful gains in employee engagement.

Correlation analysis

Table 17: Correlations

		Internal communication	Employee engagement
Internal communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.452**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	110	110
Employee engagement	Pearson Correlation	.452**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	110	110

Source: field data, 2026

The Pearson correlation between internal communication and employee engagement is 0.452, a positive and moderate relationship that is highly statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher levels of effective internal communication tend to accompany higher employee engagement. The correlation is not near perfect, implying that while internal communication is an important factor, other variables also influence engagement.

4.6 Discussion

i. The Relationship Between Internal Communication and Employee Motivation, and Productivity at ZICTA

The findings reveal a strong positive correlation (0.452) between internal communication and employee engagement, indicating that effective communication is vital for fostering a motivated workforce and enhancing overall organizational performance. A significant majority (85.5%) of respondents view internal communication as crucial to ZICTA's success, reinforcing the need for the organization to prioritize and invest in communication strategies to improve collaboration and employee morale. Employees appreciate face-to-face interactions for their clarity, suggesting that ZICTA should balance communication methods to cater to diverse preferences and maximize engagement and productivity, as highlighted by Markos and Sridevi (2010).

ii. Barriers to Effective Internal Communication Within ZICTA That Contribute to Employee Disengagement

Key barriers to effective communication include a lack of timely information and poor management responsiveness, which contribute to employee disengagement and highlight the importance of prompt and clear communication in maintaining morale and trust (Goldhaber, 1993; Baumr. Language and cultural differences pose additional challenges, indicating a need for intercultural training and support initiatives to foster a more inclusive communication environment (Strandberg & Vigsø, 2016). Limited feedback mechanisms hinder employee engagement, suggesting that ZICTA should establish structured channels for upward communication to value employee contributions and enhance satisfaction and belonging, as emphasized by Iyer and Israel (2012).

iii. Actionable Recommendations for Improving Communication Strategies That Can Increase Workforce Motivation and Alignment with Institutional Goals

ZICTA should implement timely communication protocols and modern technologies to enhance information flow and collaboration, thereby mitigating feelings of exclusion and improving employee trust and engagement. Fostering a culture of feedback through regular surveys and focus groups can enhance employee involvement and satisfaction, demonstrating management's commitment to valuing their insights (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Prioritizing face-to-face communication for critical updates and addressing cultural differences through training can improve inclusivity and understanding, ultimately leading to enhanced employee engagement and organizational effectiveness (Heide & Simonsson, 2014).

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Objective 1: To Examine the Relationship Between Internal Communication and Employee Motivation, and Productivity at ZICTA

The findings of this study indicate a strong positive correlation between internal communication and employee engagement, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.452. This suggests that effective internal communication is crucial for fostering a motivated workforce, which aligns with existing literature emphasizing the role of communication in enhancing employee motivation and productivity (Clampitt & Downs, 1993; Harter et al., 2002). The model summary reveals that internal communication accounts for approximately 26.6% of the variance in employee engagement, highlighting its significance as a strategic resource. This underscores the necessity for ZICTA to prioritize internal communication as a key driver of employee motivation and productivity, ultimately contributing to better organizational performance.

Objective 2: To Identify Barriers to Effective Internal Communication Within ZICTA That Contribute to Employee Disengagement

Despite the positive findings regarding the importance of internal communication, several barriers hinder effective

communication at ZICTA, contributing to employee disengagement. The most significant barrier identified was a lack of timely communication, with 41.8% of respondents indicating that delayed messages undermine engagement. This aligns with the literature, which emphasizes the critical role of timely communication in maintaining employee morale and trust (Goldhaber, 1993). Delays can lead to confusion and misinterpretations among employees, particularly those in regional offices who may receive information later than their headquarters counterparts. Addressing these delays is essential for ensuring that all employees are informed and engaged, especially during critical organizational changes.

Objective 3: To Develop Actionable Recommendations for Improving Communication Strategies That Can Increase Workforce Motivation and Alignment with Institutional Goals

The study provides several actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing internal communication and employee engagement at ZICTA. First, ZICTA should prioritize timely communication by establishing clear protocols for disseminating information and setting regular communication schedules. This will help mitigate feelings of exclusion and enhance employee trust in management, thereby increasing engagement (Yates, 2006). Second, investing in modern communication technologies, such as Microsoft Teams or Slack, can facilitate real-time information sharing and improve collaboration across departments and regional offices (Dhone & Sarwoko, 2022). Training employees on these tools will further enhance their effectiveness and adoption.

5.2 Recommendations

Some of the recommendations from the study included the following:

1. Establish Clear Communication Protocols
 - (i) Develop and implement clear protocols for timely information dissemination
 - (ii) Establish regular communication schedules to ensure all employees are informed promptly
2. Invest in Modern Communication Tools
 - (i) Adopt modern communication technologies (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Slack)
 - (ii) Facilitate real-time information sharing and enhance collaboration across departments and regional offices
3. Implement Regular Feedback Mechanisms
 - (i) Establish structured feedback channels (e.g., surveys, focus groups)
 - (ii) Gather employee input on communication practices and organizational initiatives
 - (iii) Foster a culture of open communication
4. Prioritize Face-to-Face Communication
 - (i) Schedule regular in-person meetings or town halls
 - (ii) Provide opportunities for direct interaction, clarification, and immediate feedback
 - (iii) Enhance employee engagement and trust
5. Address Cultural and Language Differences
 - (i) Implement intercultural training programs
 - (ii) Help employees navigate language and cultural challenges
 - (iii) Promote inclusivity and effective communication
6. Enhance Management Responsiveness
 - (i) Develop strategies to improve management responsiveness to employee concerns
 - (ii) Ensure staff feel valued and heard to maintain high levels of engagement.

First and foremost, since e-recording is another innovation, its rollout should go couple with mindfulness and training to the citizens. Likewise, as show in the discoveries that social impact is huge for the two clients and non-clients it is critical to recognize steadfast and moderate citizens who have impact in the general public to be prepared and worked with to utilize e-documenting, as this might bear some effects on the social impact.

Besides, the need to improve arrangement of specialized upholds and backstopping administrations to the clients. Such help might incorporate however not restricted to actual visit, online help or unique call place for e-fillers. Specialized help may likewise zero in on settling availability difficulties to ensure that the framework is accessible consistently. High availability diminishes issues of non-conveyance of profits and improves generally speaking effectiveness.

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The article followed all ethical standards appropriate for this kind of research.

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