

Effectiveness of Internal Communication Channels in Enhancing Information Flow and Employee Engagement: A Case Study of the Zambia Development Agency

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African Journal of Commercial Studies, 2026, 7(2),155–165

DOI Link: <https://doi.org/10.59413/ajocs/v7.i2.16>

Abstract

Effective internal communication is critical for public institutions to align strategic objectives, facilitate information flow, and enhance employee engagement. This study examined the effectiveness of internal communication channels at the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) in promoting timely, accurate, and accessible information, as well as fostering engagement across departments. Guided by Organisational Communication Theory and the Excellence Theory, the study adopted a pragmatic, mixed-methods design. Data were collected from 64 survey respondents and 20 interview participants using structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Findings indicate that ZDA employs multiple communication channels, including emails, newsletters, the intranet, departmental meetings, and one-on-one supervisory interactions. Employees generally perceive communication as timely (62%), accurate and reliable (66%), and accessible (70%), with face-to-face channels and one-on-one meetings rated more positively than digital platforms. Despite these strengths, challenges were identified in interdepartmental coordination, functional feedback mechanisms, and the effectiveness of digital channels, limiting two-way communication and horizontal information flow. Structural barriers such as bureaucracy, siloed departments, and resource constraints further constrained engagement. The study concludes that while ZDA's communication system functions adequately, it is not fully integrated, relying heavily on top-down and interpersonal interactions. Recommendations include institutionalising structured communication schedules, improving digital platforms, establishing functional feedback mechanisms, and training managers in relational communication skills to enhance engagement and information flow.

Keywords: Internal Communication, Employee Engagement, Information Flow, Public Institutions, Communication Channels, Organizational Communication

Article Info

Volume 7, Issue 2

Publication history:

Accepted on 3 February 2026;

Published: 3 April 2026

Article DOI:

10.59413/ajocs/v7.i2.16

1. Introduction

Effective communication in public institutions is essential for aligning strategic objectives, coordinating operations, and strengthening stakeholder engagement (Chirwa & Boikanyo, 2022). In today's complex governance environment, agencies are expected to communicate with clarity, consistency, and strategic intent. This underscores the need for a structured communication strategy embedded in institutional culture and daily operations.

For investment promotion agencies such as the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), communication is central to fulfilling its mandate of promoting trade, investment, and business development. Given its national economic role and engagement with diverse stakeholders, effective communication is critical for managing its image and aligning messaging with government priorities. However, communication must extend beyond ad hoc messaging to a well-coordinated strategy supported by internal systems, policies, and performance monitoring (Wuerscha & Neher, 2024).

Evaluating the effectiveness of communication strategies in public institutions is both conceptually complex and practically important. Public agencies must demonstrate that their communication efforts align with strategic goals and contribute to measurable improvements in public engagement, policy implementation, and institutional credibility. However, existing literature highlights a lack of standardised metrics, methodological inconsistencies, and weak feedback systems, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (Macnamara, 2016; Luoma-aho & Vos, 2010).

One foundational approach to evaluating communication effectiveness in the public sector is the Excellence Theory proposed by Grunig and Grunig (2000), which advocates for two-way symmetrical communication as a benchmark of effective public relations. According to this model, communication is effective when it fosters mutual understanding between institutions and stakeholders. While widely cited, the framework has been criticized for its normative assumptions, particularly in contexts characterized by limited public participation or hierarchical structures (Grunig et al., 2013). Nevertheless, it has informed numerous empirical studies examining both output and outcome dimensions of government communication.

Macnamara (2016) advanced this discourse by proposing the “Organizational Listening” model, which emphasizes responsiveness, integration of stakeholder feedback, and evidence-based communication planning. His study of Australian public sector institutions found that most agencies prioritized content dissemination metrics such as the number of press releases or social media posts over assessing whether messages were understood, trusted, or acted upon. He therefore called for evaluation frameworks that go beyond quantitative indicators to capture meaning-making, behavioral change, and institutional learning. This perspective is particularly relevant to agencies like ZDA, which communicate complex investment procedures and regulatory frameworks to diverse audiences.

In sub-Saharan Africa, similar challenges have been documented. Mutasa and Munzhedzi (2021), in a study of Zimbabwean public institutions, found that communication effectiveness was rarely evaluated systematically. Most agencies lacked tailored monitoring and evaluation tools, relying instead on anecdotal feedback or managerial opinion. Their findings suggest that weak evaluation practices undermine accountability and limit organizational learning.

Similarly, Ramutloa and Singh (2016), in a South African study, found that although many government departments had formal communication strategies, few conducted systematic evaluations. Constraints included limited capacity, unclear evaluation criteria, and a lack of baseline data. In some cases, proxy indicators such as citizen complaints and service uptake were used, but these approaches were not consistently applied. This highlights the need for contextually relevant and methodologically robust evaluation frameworks in African public institutions.

Lee et al. (2022), through a global survey of over 500 public relations professionals, identified commonly used indicators of communication effectiveness, including media coverage quality, stakeholder satisfaction, website analytics, and social media engagement. However, agencies in low-income contexts were less likely to assess behavioral outcomes or policy impact due to resource and capacity constraints.

Luoma-aho and Vos (2010) introduced “relational indicators,” such as trust, reputation, and stakeholder empowerment, as key measures of communication effectiveness. Although largely theoretical, their framework has informed empirical studies incorporating qualitative feedback mechanisms such as public consultations and stakeholder mapping. These indicators are particularly relevant for institutions like ZDA, which rely on trust and collaboration with private sector stakeholders.

In Zambia, limited research has systematically assessed communication effectiveness in public institutions. However, Mweetwa and Mulenga (2021) identified weak feedback mechanisms in local authorities and noted that communication performance was rarely integrated into institutional monitoring and evaluation systems. As a result, communication units often operate in isolation, relying on outdated or ineffective practices.

Overall, the literature shows broad recognition of the importance of evaluating communication effectiveness but reveals significant inconsistencies in methods and indicators. While some scholars emphasize symmetrical communication and stakeholder engagement, others highlight organizational listening, relational indicators, or performance-based metrics. These variations suggest that communication evaluation should adopt a multidimensional approach incorporating input, process, output, and outcome measures.

Accordingly, this study underscores the need for context-specific evaluation models tailored to institutional realities. It contributes to the growing body of knowledge on public sector communication by examining how the Zambia Development Agency evaluates its internal communication strategy. By analyzing institutional perceptions, feedback mechanisms, and existing monitoring frameworks, the study aims to address empirical gaps and propose an operational framework for assessing communication performance.

This study, therefore, analyses ZDA’s internal communication strategy to determine how it can be strengthened to enhance employee engagement.

2 Materials and Methods

This chapter outlines the study’s methodology, including the research paradigm, design, sampling, data collection, analysis, ethics, and limitations. The approach ensured reliability, validity, and rigour in analysing ZDA’s internal communication strategy.

2.1 Philosophical Paradigm and Research Design

The study adopted a pragmatic paradigm, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to address the research problem and generate practical, context-based insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

A descriptive, mixed-methods design was used to examine ZDA’s communication systems, including channels, information flow, and engagement patterns. A convergent parallel approach enabled simultaneous data collection, separate analysis, and integrated interpretation for triangulation and validity.

2.2 Scope, Study Population and Sample Size

The study focused on ZDA's internal communication strategy, examining effectiveness, practices, coordination, and challenges affecting employee engagement. Only internal stakeholders were included. The population comprised 106 ZDA staff involved in communication and decision-making, including directors, assistant directors, and operational staff.

Using Yamane's formula, a sample of 84 was obtained. Of these, 64 participated in surveys, while 20 were purposively selected for interviews to ensure data saturation.

Simple random sampling was used for surveys to ensure representativeness, while purposive sampling selected knowledgeable participants for interviews.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure and Instruments

Data were collected using structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to ensure comprehensive and triangulated findings.

Tools were pre-tested to improve clarity, validity, and reliability, including pilot surveys and mock interviews.

Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document review, with informed consent obtained and confidentiality maintained.

2.4 Data Analysis, Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings were integrated into the interpretation.

Ethical approval was obtained, and principles of consent, confidentiality, and data security were upheld throughout the study.

Limitations included integration challenges, resource demands, and possible access constraints, though these did not compromise the study's overall validity.

3 Results

3.1 Internal Communication Channels

The first research question examined the effectiveness of ZDA's internal communication channels in facilitating timely and accurate information flow, as well as enhancing employee engagement across departments. These practices are critical to the Agency's efficiency, as the way staff access, share, and use information directly influences institutional performance. The findings in this section are based on quantitative survey data (n = 64). The analysis begins by identifying available communication channels, followed by an assessment of their effectiveness in promoting employee engagement. The channels examined include email, newsletters, the intranet, departmental meetings, and one-on-one sessions with supervisors.

Email as a Communication Channel

Email is officially recognised as the Agency's primary medium for internal communication; however, staff perceptions of its effectiveness vary considerably. A total of 8 respondents (13%) reported being very dissatisfied, while 18 respondents (33%) indicated dissatisfaction. In contrast, 14 respondents (22%) were satisfied, and 3 respondents (5%) were very satisfied, resulting in 17 out of 64 respondents (27%) expressing a positive view of email. The remaining 21 respondents (33%) were neutral.

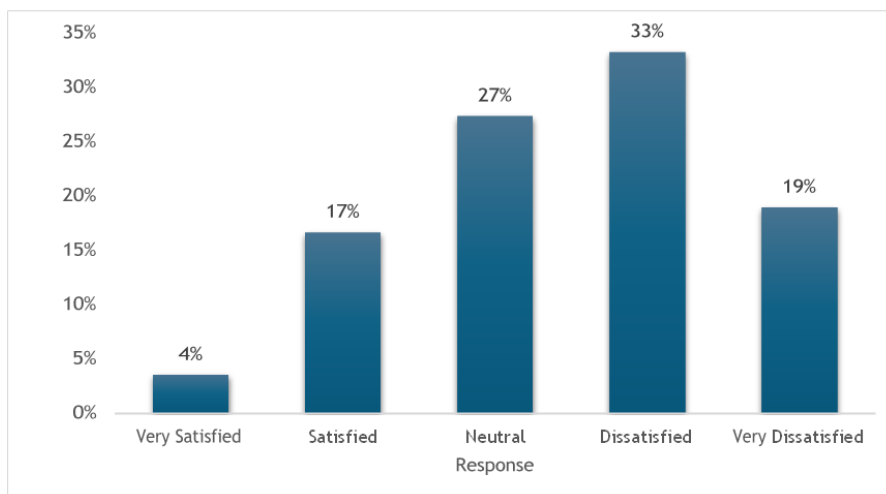


Figure 1: Response Levels - Email as a Channel of Communication
Source: Field Data (2025)

These results revealed that while email carries institutional authority, its efficiency as a communication channel is questioned by many members of staff. Interviews provided context for these results. The findings, therefore, suggested that email remained important for accountability and documentation but needed to be complemented by other mechanisms to improve speed and reach.

Newsletters

Newsletters were also examined as part of ZDA’s internal communication toolkit. The survey revealed a distribution of opinions. 8 respondents (13.1 percent) reported being very dissatisfied with newsletters, and 14 respondents (21.4 percent) were dissatisfied. On the other hand, 16 respondents (25 percent) were satisfied, and 5 respondents (7.1 percent) were very satisfied, resulting in 21 out of 64 respondents (32.1 percent) who viewed newsletters positively. Meanwhile, 21 respondents (33.3 percent) adopted a neutral position.

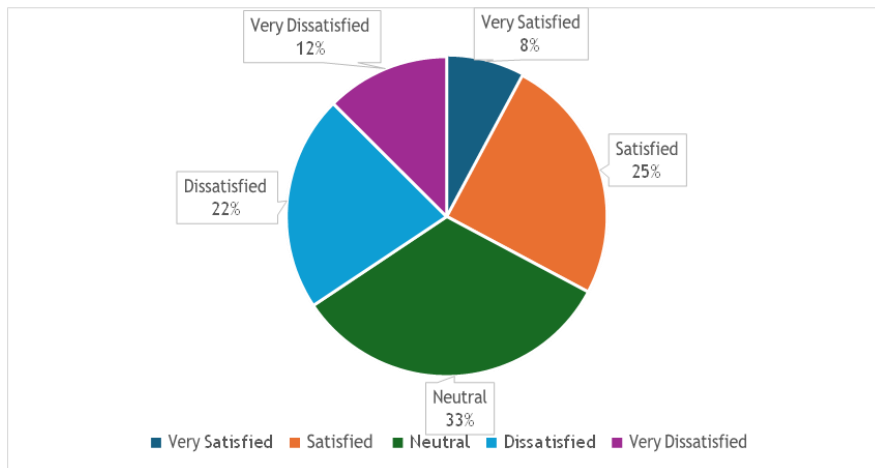


Figure 2: Response Levels - Newsletter as a Channel of Communication
Source: Field Data (2025)

The Intranet

The intranet was assessed as a digital platform for internal communication and resource sharing, with results indicating higher levels of dissatisfaction. A total of 12 respondents (19%) reported being very dissatisfied, while 21 respondents (33.3%) indicated dissatisfaction, resulting in 33 respondents (52.3%) expressing negative views. In contrast, 11 respondents (16.7%) reported being satisfied and 2 respondents (3.6%) were very satisfied, giving a combined 13 out of 64 respondents (20.3%) who viewed the intranet as effective. The remaining 18 respondents (27.4%) were neutral.

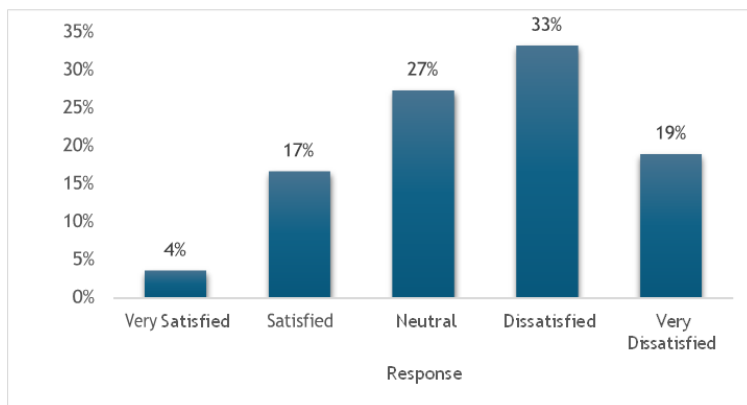


Figure 3: Response Levels - Intranet as a Channel of Communication
Source: Field Data (2025)

These perspectives highlight that, while the intranet is currently underperforming, it is recognised as a valuable channel that, with improvement, could transform ZDA’s communication culture.

Departmental-Level Meetings

Departmental meetings were rated more positively than digital communication channels. A total of 6 respondents (9.4%) reported being very dissatisfied, while 18 respondents (28.1%) indicated dissatisfaction, resulting in 24 respondents (36.9%) expressing negative views. In contrast, 21 respondents (32.8%) were satisfied, and 7 respondents (10.9%) were very satisfied, giving a total of 28 respondents (44%) who found departmental meetings effective. The remaining 12

respondents (18.8%) were neutral.

Table 1: Response levels - Departmental-Level Meetings

| Response Category | Number of Respondents | Percentage (percent) |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Very Satisfied | 7 | 10.9 |
| Satisfied | 21 | 32.8 |
| Neutral | 12 | 18.8 |
| Dissatisfied | 18 | 28.1 |
| Very Dissatisfied | 6 | 9.4 |
| Total | 64 | 100 |

Source: Field Data (2025)

The data, therefore, suggests that departmental meetings are among the stronger practices within ZDA, but their potential impact is constrained by inconsistency.

One-on-One Meetings with Supervisors

Finally, one-on-one meetings with supervisors were highly rated compared to other channels. A total of 5 respondents (7.8 percent) reported being very dissatisfied, and 14 respondents (21.9 percent) reported being dissatisfied, together making 19 respondents (31.7 percent) with negative views. On the other hand, 22 respondents (34.1 percent) indicated satisfaction, and 9 respondents (14.1 percent) were very satisfied, representing 31 out of 64 respondents (48.2 percent) who viewed this mode of communication positively. A further 14 respondents (21.9 percent) were neutral.

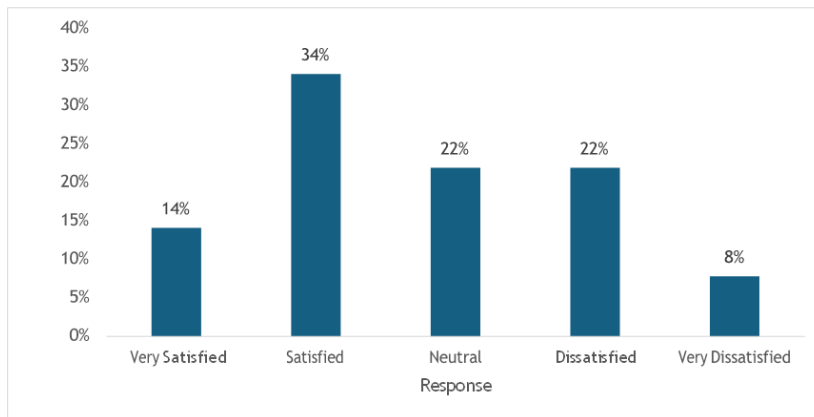


Figure 4: Response Levels - One-on- One Meeting with Supervisor

Source: Field Data (2025)

These reflections reveal that the strength of one-on-one communication lies in its ability to personalize information, though its effectiveness depends largely on supervisors' leadership style.

3.2 Effectiveness of Internal Communication Channels

The results indicate that perceptions of internal communication were generally positive. A total of 62% of respondents reported that communication was timely, while 70% expressed overall satisfaction with its accessibility. In contrast, assessments of interdepartmental information flow were more varied. Specifically, 48% rated cross-departmental information exchange positively, 34% rated it negatively, and 18% remained neutral. These differences suggest the presence of structural or procedural barriers that may be limiting effective horizontal communication within the organization.

Table 2: Effectiveness of Internal Communication

| Statement | Very Dissatisfied (%) | Dissatisfied (%) | Neutral (%) | Satisfied (%) | Very Satisfied (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Timely | 8 | 12 | 18 | 42 | 20 |
| Accurate and reliable | 6 | 11 | 17 | 45 | 21 |
| Accessible | 5 | 10 | 15 | 46 | 24 |
| Helps the understanding of decisions | 9 | 14 | 20 | 39 | 18 |
| Enhances employee engagement | 7 | 13 | 19 | 41 | 20 |
| Information flows across departments | 15 | 19 | 18 | 32 | 16 |

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results generally reflect positive perceptions regarding timeliness, accuracy, and accessibility of communication. Nevertheless, information flow across departments recorded comparatively lower satisfaction levels, suggesting coordination challenges.

The mean scores for most variables fall within the satisfied range (1.81–2.60), indicating general satisfaction with internal communication channels. Nevertheless, the mean score for interdepartmental information flow (M = 2.78) falls within the neutral range, highlighting weaknesses in horizontal communication.

3.3 Two-way Communication, Feedback, and Participation

The second research question of the study focused on ZDA’s internal communication practices that enable two-way communication, provide accessible feedback mechanisms, and promote meaningful employee participation in decision-making.

Results indicate that while ZDA encourages employee feedback on paper, the effectiveness of feedback mechanisms remains limited. Although 38 (58 percent) of respondents were generally satisfied that feedback is encouraged, only 26 (41 percent) believed that feedback mechanisms are functional. Furthermore, just 24 (38 percent) respondents felt that their suggestions were taken seriously.

Opportunities for participation and clarification received moderate ratings, indicating that two-way communication exists but is not fully institutionalized or consistently practiced across the organization.

Table 3: Two-way communication and feedback Mechanisms

| Statement | Very Dissatisfied (%) | Dissatisfied (%) | Neutral (%) | Satisfied (%) | Very Satisfied (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Employees are Encouraged to give feedback | 10 | 14 | 18 | 38 | 20 |
| Feedback mechanisms are functional | 14 | 20 | 25 | 28 | 13 |
| Suggestions are taken seriously | 16 | 22 | 24 | 26 | 12 |
| Communication allows meaningful participation | 11 | 17 | 21 | 34 | 17 |
| Opportunities to ask questions exist | 9 | 15 | 19 | 37 | 20 |

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results suggest that even if ZDA supports feedback, fewer respondents believed that feedback mechanisms are effective or that employee suggestions are acted upon. This points to a limitation between policy intent and practical implementation within the organization. Mean scores indicate satisfaction with the encouragement of feedback (M = 2.56), but neutrality to dissatisfaction regarding whether feedback mechanisms are functional and highlights are acted upon (M ≥ 2.94). This indicates that while feedback is encouraged, it is not effectively institutionalized.

3.4 Interdepartmental Coordination

The third research question examined whether departments coordinate in the planning, approval, and dissemination of internal communications, and whether bottlenecks or duplication occur within the workflow.

Several variables were assessed using a Likert scale, and the key findings reveal notable limitations in interdepartmental coordination. Only 28 respondents (44%) expressed satisfaction that departments collaborate effectively in communication planning. Bottlenecks in approval processes were reported by 39 respondents (61%), while 36 respondents (57%) agreed that duplication of communication efforts occurs across departments.

Table 4: Interdepartmental Communication and Coordination

| Statement | Strongly Disagree (%) | Disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Agree (%) | Strongly Agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Departments collaborate effectively | 13 | 18 | 25 | 29 | 15 |
| Approval processes are clear | 11 | 16 | 22 | 33 | 18 |
| Communication roles are clearly defined | 9 | 17 | 24 | 31 | 19 |
| Bottlenecks occur during approval | 6 | 12 | 21 | 38 | 23 |
| Duplication of efforts occurs | 7 | 14 | 22 | 36 | 21 |
| Departments share information openly | 12 | 18 | 20 | 32 | 18 |

Source: Field Data (2025)

These results point to inconsistencies in coordination structures and role clarity, which may undermine communication effectiveness. The Mean scores indicate neutrality regarding collaboration and role clarity, while lower mean scores for bottlenecks and duplication reflect dissatisfaction with bureaucratic inefficiencies. These insights suggest structural coordination challenges within ZDA.

3.5 Structural, Cultural, and Operational Challenges

The fourth research question of the study focused on the structural, cultural, and operational factors within ZDA that constrain employee engagement in internal communication processes. Several variables were assessed using a Likert scale, and the following were highlighted. It was divided into communication challenges and employee engagement.

Table 5: Structural, Cultural, and Operational Challenges

| Statement | Strongly Disagree (%) | Disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Agree (%) | Strongly Agree (%) |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Limited resources affect communication | 5 | 10 | 16 | 41 | 28 |
| Bureaucracy slows communication | 4 | 8 | 16 | 44 | 28 |
| Organisational culture encourages openness | 12 | 14 | 20 | 34 | 20 |
| Departments operate in silos | 6 | 11 | 20 | 40 | 23 |
| Employees trust internal communication | 8 | 12 | 22 | 38 | 20 |
| Communication challenges affect engagement | 5 | 9 | 15 | 43 | 28 |

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results identified bureaucracy, silo mentality, and resource limitations as the major barriers to effective communication, with clear implications for employee engagement. The low mean scores for bureaucracy and resource constraints signal strong agreement that the factors negatively affect communication. The organizational culture variable borders on neutrality, indicating inconsistency in openness across departments.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement levels were generally positive but uneven. While 44 of the respondents (68 percent) felt committed to contributing positively to ZDA, only 33 respondents (52 percent) reported feeling valued as employees. Clear communication was strongly linked to engagement, with 49 (76 percent) respondents overall agreeing that effective communication enhances their enthusiasm and motivation.

Table 6: Employee Engagement Levels

| Statement | Strongly Disagree (%) | Disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Agree (%) | Strongly Agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|
| I feel motivated at work | 8 | 13 | 21 | 38 | 20 |
| My work contributes to ZDA goals | 6 | 10 | 16 | 42 | 26 |
| I feel valued as an employee | 12 | 18 | 18 | 32 | 20 |
| Clear communication enhances engagement | 4 | 6 | 14 | 46 | 30 |
| I am committed to ZDA | 5 | 9 | 17 | 41 | 28 |

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results reinforce the central role of communication in shaping employee engagement outcomes. Employee engagement levels were satisfactory on average, with the very satisfied observed in the relationship between clear communication and engagement ($M = 2.05$). Feeling valued recorded a neutral mean score, indicating an area requiring management attention.

3.6 Qualitative Findings (n = 20)

The analysis of open-ended responses revealed three key themes related to the effectiveness and limitations of the organisation's communication strategy in enhancing employee engagement: strengths of the communication strategy, communication challenges, and suggested improvements.

Strengths of the Communication Strategy

Respondents identified several strengths in the institution's communication practices. Management memos, emails, and staff meetings were consistently described as reliable and effective channels for conveying official messages. Participants noted that these mechanisms promote clarity and transparency, particularly in communicating institutional priorities and strategic direction.

One participant from the Corporate Strategy department emphasized the credibility of information from senior leadership, stating:

"When information comes from management through memos, emails, or staff meetings, it is mostly clear and authoritative."

Another senior administrator noted:

"Email is the one channel that is always cited as the official record, and for that reason, we respect it. However, not everyone checks their inbox daily, and important information is sometimes delayed. As a result, staff may hear news through WhatsApp before seeing the official message."

These findings suggest that structured, top-down communication remains a valued component of the organization's internal communication system.

Communication Challenges

Despite these strengths, respondents reported several communication-related challenges, including delays in approval processes, inconsistencies in messaging across departments, and limited feedback mechanisms. Many participants observed that communication is predominantly top-down, which restricts opportunities for staff consultation and engagement.

One respondent from Business Development remarked:

“We are mostly informed but rarely consulted.”

A staff member from a regional office added:

“The main challenge is that meetings are sometimes postponed or cancelled. When this happens, especially for those of us outside Lusaka, we feel disconnected from core operations.”

These findings highlight a perceived gap between leadership communication and employee participation, indicating the need to strengthen two-way communication processes.

3.7 Discussion of Findings

Effectiveness of Internal Communication Channels

The results indicate that ZDA employs a variety of communication channels, including emails, newsletters, the intranet, departmental meetings, and one-on-one supervisory interactions, which collectively form the organization’s internal communication system. Survey data reveal positive employee perceptions regarding the timeliness (62%), accuracy and reliability (66%), and accessibility (70%) of these channels. From the perspective of Organizational Communication Theory, these attributes are essential components of a healthy communication environment, which emphasizes clarity, accessibility, and trust as prerequisites for effective organizational functioning and employee engagement (Mishra et al., 2014). The presence of these core elements suggests that ZDA maintains communication structures that support the basic transmission of information, enabling employees to access essential institutional information as needed.

However, the varying perceptions across channels indicate structural differences within ZDA’s communication system. Email communication, valued for its formality and archival qualities, received mixed satisfaction ratings from staff. In contrast, face-to-face channels, such as staff meetings and one-on-one discussions, are perceived more positively and consistently praised in qualitative responses for their clarity, transparency, and accuracy. Organizational Communication Theory posits that interpersonal and synchronous communication channels create richer communication environments, allowing employees to clarify meaning, ask questions, and engage in mutual feedback loops (Rhoads, 2010). These channels strengthen the communication climate by fostering openness, relational trust, and improved understanding. Within the systems-thinking framework, interpersonal communication also enhances interdependence among employees, as information flows are more immediate, reciprocal, and contextually grounded.

In contrast, ZDA’s digital communication channels, specifically the intranet and newsletters, showed lower levels of employee satisfaction. Effective digital communication platforms must be user-friendly, consistently updated, and aligned with employee information needs to sustain efficient organizational information flows (Putro, 2023). Underperforming digital platforms disrupt internal communication processes by weakening feedback loops, reducing accessibility, and creating information bottlenecks. This disruption affects interdepartmental interdependence, as employees rely on digital systems to access policies, updates, and operational directives.

The qualitative data support these findings. One director noted, “When information comes from management through memos, emails, or staff meetings, it is mostly clear and authoritative,” highlighting the organization’s reliance on top-down channels to compensate for weaknesses in its digital infrastructure. This aligns with literature suggesting that when digital channels are perceived as unreliable, employees gravitate toward hierarchical, formal, and interpersonal communication as more trustworthy sources of institutional messages (Rhoads, 2010; Mishra et al., 2014). This dynamic points to a communication climate that depends heavily on centralized authority and interpersonal reassurance rather than decentralized, self-service digital systems.

These results suggest that while ZDA’s communication channels function adequately in isolation, they do not yet operate as a fully integrated and mutually reinforcing system. Organizational Communication Theory emphasizes the importance of channel complementarity, feedback processes, and interdependence among communication units. ZDA’s uneven use of channels, particularly the weaknesses in its intranet, limits the institution’s ability to ensure continuous, consistent, and accessible communication across all levels. Even though face-to-face channels strengthen the communication climate and enhance engagement, their effectiveness is constrained when digital systems fail to support routine information dissemination.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

The findings indicate that ZDA maintains a range of internal communication channels, including emails, newsletters, the intranet, departmental meetings, and one-on-one supervisory interactions, which collectively support the organization’s information flow. Employees generally perceive these channels as timely, accurate, and accessible, reflecting a functional communication system that underpins basic organizational operations and engagement.

However, satisfaction varies across channels. Face-to-face interactions, staff meetings, and one-on-one discussions are viewed more positively due to their clarity, transparency, and ability to support feedback and mutual understanding. In contrast, digital channels, particularly the intranet and newsletters, are less effective, limiting accessibility, feedback loops,

and interdepartmental coordination.

Overall, while ZDA's communication channels perform adequately in isolation, they are not yet fully integrated. The organization relies heavily on top-down and interpersonal communication to compensate for weaker digital systems, which constrains the continuous, consistent, and organization-wide flow of information.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for the Zambia Development Agency.

- Institutionalize regular communication schedules to ensure updates are shared promptly and enhance staff engagement.
- Improve the intranet and digital archives to make information up-to-date, easily retrievable, and accessible to all staff.
- Establish structured feedback mechanisms that enable two-way communication and staff participation in decision-making.
- Develop clear communication guidelines to ensure consistency and reduce reliance on individual leadership styles.
- Complement official circulars with simplified summaries, infographics, or other accessible formats to enhance clarity and inclusivity.
- Train managers and supervisors in relational communication skills to foster responsiveness, trust, and motivation.
- Regularize departmental meetings and one-on-one sessions as participatory spaces that complement digital communication.

Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare that they are not aware of any competing financial interests or personal relationships that may have influenced the work described in this document.

Funding

This research did not receive specific grants from any public, commercial, or non-profit sector funding bodies.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who made a contribution to this research

Ethical considerations

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

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