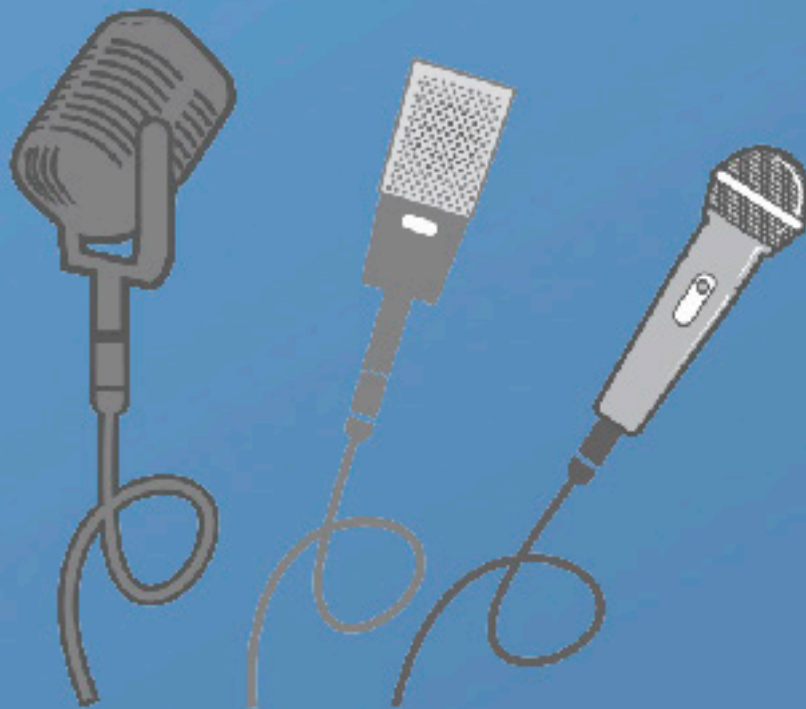




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Interlinking Communication and Commitment in Public Institutions: A Case Study of Temeke Municipal Council, Dar Es Salaam

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ABSTRACT

Public institutions increasingly face challenges related to low employee motivation and declining organisational commitment, creating a need to understand the factors that strengthen workforce engagement. This study addresses this gap by examining how internal organisational communication shapes employee commitment within Temeke Municipal Council (TMC) in Dar es Salaam. Grounded in Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1973) and Organisational Commitment Theory (Meyer & Allen, 1997), the research investigates how clarity, responsiveness, and participatory communication practices influence affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Using a mixed-methods approach involving 261 questionnaire respondents and four key informant interviews, the study finds that employees perceive internal communication as effective in enhancing understanding, improving coordination, and fostering teamwork. The results show that communication functions as both an operational mechanism and a relational tool that builds trust, loyalty, and organisational identification. The study recommends strengthening feedback systems and institutionalising transparent and participatory communication practices to enhance employee commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Effective internal organisational communication has long been recognised as a critical driver of employee engagement, performance, and organisational stability (Clampitt *et al.*, 2022; Harris & Nelson, 2017). In public institutions, where hierarchical structures and bureaucratic processes often limit open interaction, communication becomes essential for shaping employee attitudes and strengthening organisational commitment (Bekkers, 2021; Anderson *et al.*, 2023). Transparent, timely, and participatory communication enhances employees' understanding of organisational expectations, increases involvement in decision making, and reinforces alignment with institutional goals (Brown & Miller, 2023; Ali & Green, 2022).

International evidence consistently shows that transparent and responsive communication improves trust and affective commitment (Smith & Jones, 2023; Lee *et al.*, 2024). African studies similarly report that participatory communication environments foster motivation, loyalty, and organisational identification, even within traditionally hierarchical systems (Donkor *et al.*, 2021; Anyarayer & Kwaku, 2022). In Tanzania, however, research has focused more on communication tools than on communicative behaviours that shape employee experiences and commitment (Mhando *et al.*, 2023; Mwakisambwe *et al.*, 2022).

Guided by Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles, 1973) and Organisational Commitment Theory (Meyer & Allen, 1997), this study examines employees'

perceptions of internal communication effectiveness at Temeke Municipal Council. It further explores how communicative practices influence affective, normative, and continuance commitment within the municipal governance context, thereby contributing to ongoing discourse on communication, leadership, and employee engagement in public-sector organisations.

Internal organisational communication is a critical determinant of employee attitudes, engagement, and commitment, particularly within public institutions where bureaucratic structures may limit effective interaction. Clear and responsive communication helps employees understand expectations, participate in decision making, and align their roles with organisational goals. Global studies demonstrate that transparent, inclusive communication enhances affective commitment and fosters trust between employees and management. Evidence from African public institutions similarly highlights the importance of participatory communication in overcoming hierarchical barriers and improving morale.

Despite these insights, communication research in Tanzania has often focused on tools and channels rather than the behavioural and relational dimensions that shape employee attachment. Guided by Communication Accommodation Theory and Organisational Commitment Theory, this study evaluates employees' perceptions of communication effectiveness at Temeke Municipal Council. It further explores how communication practices influence affective, normative, and continuance commitment within a municipal governance context.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

The study draws on Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), Organisational Commitment Theory (OCT), Social Exchange Theory (SET), and Media Richness Theory (MRT). CAT explains how accommodative communication fosters trust and reduces hierarchical distance. OCT highlights the emotional, moral, and cost-related dimensions of organisational attachment. SET frames communication as reciprocal exchange, where supportive communication promotes commitment. MRT emphasises the suitability of rich communication channels for complex organisational tasks. Combined, the theories demonstrate how appropriate, clear, and responsive communication enhances employees' psychological attachment and motivation

Empirical Literature Review

The empirical literature review examines how internal organisational communication influences employee commitment through the collection and analysis of evidence from prior studies. In this section, findings from international, African, and Tanzanian contexts are discussed thematically to highlight how communication practices, channels, and leadership approaches shape employees' affective, continuance, and normative commitment. The review further connects these empirical findings to Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Organizational Commitment Theory (OCT), both of which provide explanatory mechanisms for understanding communication–commitment dynamics in organisations.

Communication Channels and Employee Commitment

A significant body of international research has demonstrated that the type and use of communication channels within organisations play a central role in shaping employee commitment. In the United States, Kahn *et al.* (2023) and Smith and Jones (2023) reported that email updates, intranet platforms, and newsletters were associated with greater employee satisfaction and loyalty. These tools ensured transparency and consistency of information, allowing employees to feel more connected to organisational goals. Similarly, ICMA (2024) found that combining these digital tools with face-to-face or virtual meetings significantly enhanced trust, job satisfaction, and affective commitment.

In Denmark, Bakker *et al.* (2023) and Johnson and Lee (2024) discovered that the use of both formal channels (reports, emails, and official briefings) and informal ones (internal social media, chats, and team gatherings) supported a transparent communication culture, which correlated positively with affective and normative commitment. By contrast, in the Gambia, Tolasa (2019) noted that organisations relied heavily on face-to-face communication, bulletin boards, and phone calls;

however, managerial interference and language barriers limited their effectiveness, reducing employee motivation and organisational trust.

Within Tanzania, Mhando *et al.* (2023) established that participatory staff meetings and the use of clearly written email communication contributed to greater awareness of organisational objectives and stronger affective commitment. In public sector settings, where communication is often top-down, such interactive channels improved perceptions of inclusion and fairness. These findings align with CAT's convergence principle where communicators adapt their language and tone to reduce social distance demonstrating that communication which is accessible, culturally sensitive, and dialogical enhances emotional attachment and identification with the organisation. Conversely, divergence communication that is distant, technical, or non-responsive—was found to weaken commitment.

Leadership Communication and Trust-Building

Leadership communication has consistently been identified as a powerful determinant of employee commitment. Empirical studies from diverse contexts reveal that when leaders communicate openly, transparently, and respectfully, employees exhibit stronger affective and normative bonds with their organisations. In Bangladesh, Olomu (2021) and Iffat (2022) found that frequent communication and transparent leadership fostered commitment, especially when aligned with supportive organisational culture. Similarly, in the United States, Lee *et al.* (2024) confirmed that leaders who encouraged two-way dialogue and demonstrated authenticity promoted higher affective commitment among employees.

African studies show comparable trends. Tolasa (2019) observed that in Gambian municipal councils, employees demonstrated stronger loyalty and lower turnover when managers held consultative meetings and involved them in decision-making processes. The pattern reflects the CAT framework leaders who converge their communication styles to be more approachable and empathetic reduce hierarchical distance, which in turn nurtures trust and belonging. Through the lens of OCT, such accommodative leadership communication supports affective and normative commitment by satisfying employees' emotional and moral connections to their institutions.

Within the Tanzanian public service, similar dynamics are observed. Studies by Lyamuya (2021) and James (2023) reported that employees in municipal councils felt more committed when supervisors adopted participatory communication styles during meetings or appraisal reviews. The presence of feedback mechanisms and acknowledgement of employee contributions reinforced perceptions of fairness, increasing both affective and normative commitment. Conversely, hierarchical, one-way communication reduced trust and led employees to remain only out of continuance commitment the perceived cost of leaving rather than a genuine attachment to the organisation.

Ways in which Organisational Communication Fosters Employee Commitment

Across various national and sectoral contexts, internal communication has been found to significantly shape how employees connect to their organisations. A national survey in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2024) revealed that 78% of employees who received regular updates about company developments felt more aligned with organisational goals and values. Furthermore, organisations that encouraged open-door communication policies experienced 25% higher retention rates than those with restricted leadership accessibility (Conference Board of Canada, 2023). Similarly, Smith and Jones (2024) found that workplaces with systematic feedback channels recorded a 30% annual increase in employee commitment levels.

In the UK tourism sector, Igwe and Okonta (2023) established that internal communication was a major determinant of employee commitment and performance. Effective leadership communication improved job satisfaction and fostered organisational identification. Khan *et al.* (2022) argued that leadership communication competence acts as both a mediator and predictor of employee commitment, especially in diverse workplaces. Similarly, Petric *et al.* (2024) demonstrated that transparent and responsive communication positively affected job satisfaction—a strong predictor of commitment across European organisations.

Research in Asia supports these findings. In Japan, Kobayashi and Sato (2022) discovered that transparent communication regarding goals and decision-making increased municipal employees' affective commitment by over 50%. Employees who perceived communication as open reported higher trust and loyalty. Following the pandemic, Japanese councils adopted digital collaboration tools (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Slack), which enhanced clarity and real-time updates. Yoshida *et al.* (2023) found that this adoption correlated with a 22% rise in continuance commitment as employees became more dependent on reliable, consistent communication channels. Similarly, in China, Watanabe and Takahashi (2019) and Wang (2022) found that open communication reduced uncertainty and built trust identified as a foundational element of organisational commitment.

In African contexts, these patterns are echoed. Ansong *et al.* (2023), in a survey of 250 employees across Ghana's Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs), found that transparent communication was a significant predictor of affective commitment. Employees reported 34% higher job satisfaction when they perceived that leadership was open about strategic objectives. Regular feedback sessions and consultative meetings further improved affective and normative commitment, as evidenced by Nomura and Takano's (2021) two-year longitudinal study in Nagoya municipal councils, which reported an 18% rise in commitment following such interventions.

However, barriers remain. Hayashi (2023) observed that

hierarchical communication patterns in Osaka's municipal councils limited employees' willingness to communicate upwards, with 63% of respondents reporting fear or hesitation when addressing superiors. Such findings parallel challenges found in Tanzanian institutions, where formalism, bureaucracy, and lack of responsiveness restrict participatory communication.

In Tanzania, Mwakisambwe *et al.* (2022) conducted interviews with 300 employees from five municipal councils and found that transparent and regular internal communication was the most powerful predictor of affective commitment. Employees who felt informed about organisational objectives and decision-making processes demonstrated 27% higher commitment, with trust in leadership mediating the relationship ($\beta = 0.43, p < 0.01$). The study underscores the role of communication not merely as information sharing but as a relational process that cultivates respect, belonging, and engagement core principles of CAT and OCT.

Synthesis and Implications for the Current Study

The reviewed literature collectively confirms that communication its clarity, inclusiveness, and responsiveness serves as a fundamental determinant of employee commitment across cultural and institutional settings. From the CAT perspective, accommodative communication practices such as empathy, feedback, and linguistic convergence foster relational harmony and employee inclusion. From the OCT standpoint, these communicative behaviours enhance affective and normative commitment, strengthening emotional attachment and moral obligation to the organisation.

In the Tanzanian context, where hierarchical and bureaucratic cultures often constrain dialogue, the challenge lies in creating communication environments that balance authority with approachability. By integrating insights from CAT and OCT, this study analyses how employees at Temeke Municipal Council perceive the effectiveness of internal organisational communication in influencing their commitment. The synthesis of empirical findings reveals that participatory, transparent, and culturally sensitive communication is not merely a managerial function it is the cornerstone of trust, motivation, and sustainable organisational commitment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative questionnaires and qualitative interviews to assess communication effectiveness at Temeke Municipal Council. Structured questionnaires were administered to 261 randomly selected employees across 35 public health facilities, capturing perceptions of communication practices and their influence on commitment. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four purposively selected key informants to obtain deeper insights into communication processes and challenges. Data collection adhered to ethical standards, including informed consent and confidentiality. The mixed-methods

design enabled triangulation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how internal communication shapes employee commitment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Employees’ Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Internal Organisational Communication

The third objective of the study sought to determine employees’ perceptions of the effectiveness of internal organisational communication in enhancing their commitment within Temeke Municipal Council (TMC). Data were collected from 261 healthcare employees through questionnaires and supported by key informant interviews with senior administrators.

Table 1 illustrates employees’ responses regarding the perceived effectiveness of internal communication

Table 1: Employees’ Responses Regarding Perceived Effectiveness of Internal Communication Practice

Employees’ perceptions of the effectiveness	Frequency	Percent
Easy understanding of information	70	26.8%
Easy dissemination of important information	55	21.1%
Improving coordination of task	50	19.2%
Enhancement of teamwork	46	17.6%
Facilitating problem solving and decision making	40	15.3%
TOTAL	261	100%

practices. The findings indicate that easy understanding of information (26.8%) and easy dissemination of important information (21.1%) were the most cited benefits of effective communication. This was followed by improved coordination of tasks (19.2%), enhancement of teamwork (17.6%), and facilitation of problem-solving and decision-making (15.3%).

These results suggest that employees perceive internal communication as central to organisational functioning and commitment. Effective communication enhances clarity, fosters teamwork, and supports coordination and problem-solving processes across departments. The overall implication is that employees recognise communication not merely as a channel for information flow but as an enabler of cooperation, accountability, and mutual understanding that strengthen commitment to organisational goals.

Discussion

Internal Communication Channels and Perceived Effectiveness

The findings revealed that TMC employs a blend of formal and informal communication channels, each contributing uniquely to enhancing employees’ commitment. Formal meetings emerged as significant forums for

clarifying expectations, aligning departmental goals, and reducing uncertainty. Employees viewed meetings as participatory spaces rather than top-down briefings, which fostered ownership and inclusion. This aligns with Lunenburg (2010) and Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), which emphasise that communicative accommodation reduces social distance and promotes engagement.

Similarly, internal memos and emails were considered authoritative and efficient tools for disseminating official information. Memos enhanced accountability and institutional memory, while emails ensured message consistency, reduced ambiguity, and allowed traceability of communication. Together, they strengthened employees’ normative commitment through clarity and documentation.

Notice boards were particularly valued for their accessibility and transparency. They acted as a “single source of truth,” bridging information gaps between staff with and without digital access. Their visibility promoted fairness and inclusivity, leading to a sense of belonging and organisational solidarity.

Team briefings and instant messaging platforms (such as WhatsApp groups) further reinforced communication effectiveness. Briefings facilitated coordination and daily planning, while instant messaging supported real-time interaction, rapid updates, and collaborative problem-solving. This immediacy fostered emotional connection, mutual accountability, and a culture of responsiveness key determinants of affective and normative commitment (Stephens *et al.*, 2025).

In sum, the integration of multiple communication channels formal meetings, memos, emails, notice boards, briefings, and messaging platforms created a robust system that balanced structure, participation, and immediacy. Employees’ perception of communication effectiveness was therefore tied to its clarity, inclusiveness, timeliness, and interactivity.

Relationship between Internal Communication and Employee Commitment

The results further demonstrated a strong positive relationship between effective internal communication and employee commitment. Employees associated clear, timely, and transparent communication with motivation, trust, and identification with organisational goals.

Clarity and Consistency: Clear messages helped employees understand expectations and align their daily activities with the Council’s strategic objectives. This reduced role ambiguity and improved focus, echoing findings by Men *et al.* (2024) that leader clarity enhances engagement and loyalty.

Timeliness: Timely communication was reported to improve coordination and morale by reducing confusion and fostering confidence in management. Employees who received early updates felt valued and motivated to meet performance targets, supporting Welch and Charles (2021), who highlight timeliness as a determinant of

organisational trust.

Transparency: Open and authentic communication strengthened trust and reduced misinformation. Employees felt more loyal and involved when management was transparent, confirming Rawlins *et al.* (2022) that organisational transparency fosters stakeholder trust and commitment.

Two-Way Communication and Feedback: Interactive communication between staff and management was essential in cultivating inclusion and responsibility. Employees felt listened to and empowered when feedback loops were open and constructive. Supervisory feedback, in particular, was seen as a source of motivation, direction, and affirmation elements central to affective and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 2018).

These dimensions collectively underline that effective internal organisational communication operates as both a functional mechanism for coordination and a psychological mechanism for engagement. The alignment between managerial communication practices and employee expectations converts information sharing into emotional and moral attachment to organisational goals.

CONCLUSION

Internal organisational communication at Temeke Municipal Council is perceived by employees as a vital element that strengthens their commitment and improves overall workplace functioning. Clear, timely, and transparent communication enhances understanding, reduces ambiguity, and creates an environment where employees feel informed, valued, and connected to organisational goals. The combination of formal channels such as meetings, memos, emails, and notice boards with informal mechanisms like team briefings and instant messaging fosters both structural clarity and relational trust. These channels collectively promote teamwork, coordination, and effective problem-solving, while also supporting a culture of openness and participation that nurtures emotional and normative commitment among staff.

Sustaining this positive communication climate requires deliberate efforts to reinforce feedback mechanisms, ensure timely dissemination of updates, and maintain equitable access to information across all departments. Strengthening supervisors' communication competencies, promoting participatory discussion during departmental engagements, and upholding open-door practices can deepen trust and enhance mutual accountability. Continued integration of digital tools, guided by clear standards of professionalism, will help maintain responsiveness without compromising accuracy. By prioritising communication practices that amplify clarity, inclusion, and collaboration, Temeke Municipal Council can further consolidate employee commitment and enhance organisational cohesion.

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