

**BRIDGING DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION GAPS IN QUASI-  
INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF ZESCO LIMITED**

**BY**

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the Award of Master of Science in Corporate  
Communication**

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## DECLARATION

I **Joan Mumba** declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation on the topic; **Bridging Departmental Communication Gaps in Quasi - Institutions: A Case Study of ZESCO Limited**. This is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree examination in any other college or university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references. I further declare that the views and opinions contained in this report do not in any way represent those of the University of Zambia (UNZA), but my own.

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**CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL**

This dissertation by Joan M. Mumba has been approved as fulfilling the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Science in Corporate Communication by the University of Zambia.

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## ABSTRACT

Communication is seen as the key factor in the success of any organization but when it comes to effective communication, there are certain barriers that every organization faces. Large organisations have deficiencies in their decentralized departments especially when dealing with large volume of clientele whose needs are divided amongst their personal and organizational obligations. Hence communication gaps leading to conflicts and information breakdown among employees in the organization. The ramifications of these conflicts and broken information flow has been poor performance of team members, negative impact on general productivity, inefficiencies in responding to clients' demands, bad publicity for the company and lose of millions in service delay. It is against this background that the aim of this study was to identify the major factors leading to intra and inter departmental communication gaps in Quasi-Institutions and how to address these factors. The first objective was to identify the existing communication gaps, secondly to establish their causes and the last objective was to come up with a model in order to address communication gaps within and between departments in Quasi-Institutions. To address the first objective, the study used a quantitative study approach based on the distribution of 150 self-administered survey questionnaires with 83% response. A sample size was purposively selected from ZESCO Head office and Service Centers in Lusaka, Zambia. In order to address the second objective; quantitative data was analysed using Chi-square and P-value statistical analysis with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software tool. The study found that there are existing communication gaps due to conflicts within and between departments; this was validated by the results from chi-square test which yielded a chi-square value of 4.419 and the p-value of 0.036. The difference was statistically significant at 4.419, because p-value (0.036) was less than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggested that respondents deal with conflict at their place of work. Further results revealed that, personal conflicts are not always sorted out quickly by supervisors and managers, poor inter-personal communication, and poor inter-departmental communications are the causes of the existing communication gaps. Based on the findings, and to address the third and last objective, a model was designed to bridge departmental communication gaps, thereby meeting all the research objectives. The study therefore recommended that management should provide conflict resolution training which gives employees more assurance in their capability to resolve both personal and professional conflicts.

**Key words:** *Communication, Conflict, Departments, Gaps, Model, Quasi-Institutions*

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband George Mwenya Chellah and my children Tukwiza, Yande and Kalwila for the financial and moral support they rendered throughout my period of study. I thank them for the understanding and support during the time that I burnt the midnight oil in pursuit of this achievement, for the laughter, the fun, tolerating the bad meals, and for simply keeping me sane.

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## ACRONYMS

<b>HQ</b>	-	Headquarters
<b>PR</b>	-	Public Relations
<b>SPSS</b>	-	Statistical Package for Social Science
<b>UNZA</b>	-	The University of Zambia
<b>ZESCO</b>	-	Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation,

# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter, talks about the importance of communication in organisations, businesses and generally. It also introduces the focus of the study which is departmental communication gaps. Communication is the glue that holds a society together. The ability to communicate enables people to form and maintain personal relationships. And the quality of such relationships depends on the caliber of communication between the parties (Brennan, 1974). Communication is a vital part of personal life and is also important in business, education, and any other situations where people encounter each other (Encarta, 1998). Therefore, Communication is important for any organization to function effectively. Employees should feel that they can easily communicate with their team members in the department as well as upper management because this contributes to productivity and overall results (Lewis, 1975). Communication is the process of sharing ideas, information, and messages with others in a particular time and place. Communication includes writing and talking, as well as nonverbal communication (such as facial expressions, body language, or gestures), visual communication (the use of images or pictures, such as painting, photography, video or film) and electronic communication (telephone calls, electronic mail, cable television, or satellite broadcasts).

## **1.2 Background to the study**

Poor communication is one of the main causes of organizational failure and subsequently, causes cost and time overruns in the form of rework occurrence (Emuze and James, 2013). The significance of effective communication in an organization is to motivate employees and engage them to fulfill the goal of the organization. The existence of effective communication helps the organization to identify the problem and resolve that problem quickly. Otherwise, the operation process of the organization may face some problems. Canavor, Meirowitz and Covey (2014) holds that internal communication plays two important roles of conveying important message from the higher authority to the lower section of the company and vice versa and transforming the future strategy related information from the managers' level to the employee section.

Communication is seen as the key factor in the success of any organization. When it comes to effective communication, there are certain barriers that every organization faces. People often

feel that communication is as easy and simple as it sounds. No doubt, but what makes it complex, difficult and frustrating are the barriers that come in its way<sup>1</sup>. Giving undivided attention and meeting customer needs can bring about developments in business products and services, firms that put into practice effective employee communications utensils and policies are also likely to recognise bottom line benefits. In many instances, contented employees translate into happy customers. Habitually, organizations have concentrated on formal ways of communicating with employee. While these practices continue to be used and sometimes provide valuable information that helps shape a business, they often times do not provide a true snapshot of the pulse of the organization or the feelings of the majority of their employees (Dunn, 1993). According to Lattimore et al. (2004), when organizations achieve effective employee communication, the results include more satisfied and productive employees, improved achievement of organizational goals, and improved customer, community and investor relations. Employees work in organizations with specific cultures. Effective employee communication rests on the formation of positive organizational culture, through clear communication policies, programs, and assistance with organizational change. Employee communication will assist staffs become well-versed about their institution and encourage them express their opinions to management. When organizations commit themselves to effective communication with their employees, a number of important benefits result. Quirk (1996) explained that, well-informed employees are usually satisfied employees. They are better, more productive workers who get more out of their work and do a better job for the organization. Employees will be the voices for their organization outside of work. Well-informed employees networking with an organization's stakeholders will bear significant positive impact on relationships with customers, the community, investors, and the media. When lines of communications are unlocked between employers and employees, organizational goals are likely to be achieved. Because the nature of this study is undoubtedly involving and demanding, majority of related studies conducted on bridging departmental communication gaps, have been conducted in the developed world. Which clearly indicated the need and necessity to extend these studies into the developing world such as Zambia, and specifically Quasi- Institutions where as far as academic records have shown, very little studies have been conducted.

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<sup>1</sup> (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/communication)

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Large organisations like ZESCO Limited have deficiencies in their decentralized departments especially when dealing with large volume of clientele whose needs are divided amongst their personal and organizational obligations. Hence the repeated industrial disharmony in most Quasi- institutions or organizations over communication issues between departments. These communication gaps lead to conflicts and information breakdown among employees in the organization. The ramification of these conflicts and broken information flow has been poor performance of team members, negative impact on general productivity, inefficiencies in responding to clients' demands, bad publicity for the company and lose of millions in service delay. It is against this background that the study embarks on bridging departmental communication gaps in ZESCO Limited and other utility firms.

### **1.4 Aim of the Study**

To identify the major factors leading to communication gaps and how to address these factors.

### **1.5 Study Objectives**

- i. To identify the existing communication gaps within and between departments in Quasi - Institutions.
- ii. To establish the causes for communication gaps within and between departments in Quasi-Institutions.
- iii. To develop a model in order to address communication gaps within and between departments in Quasi-Institutions.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

- i. What are the communication gaps that exist within and between departments in Quasi-Institutions?
- ii. Why are there communication gaps within and between departments in Quasi-Institutions?
- iii. How can the communication gaps within and between departments be bridged in Quasi-Institutions

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Evidence based decision making is critical in many organisation. Therefore, the researcher undertook this investigation in order to bridge departmental communication gaps in Quasi-Institutions, with ZESCO Limited as a case study, by using the proposed communication model, in order to enhance communication in the organisation, as Communication is the heart of any successful organisation. The researcher added to the body of knowledge through a journal publication. Additionally, the study findings would also provide a basis for further academic research especially to other researchers who might want to undertake research in the same area of study. This study was also necessary for the award of my Masters in Corporate Communication at the University of Zambia (UNZA).

## **1.8 Scope of the Research Study**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on providing an understanding on how the communication gaps within and between departments could be reduced and communication enhanced. The researcher limited the research to ZESCO employees at HQ and service centers in Lusaka District. This study was for academic purposes only but could be used by organisations in bridging departmental communication gaps.

## **1.9 Organisation of the Dissertation**

This chapter introduced the dissertation by outlining the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research objectives, questions and propositions, significance of the study and scope of the study. The rest of this dissertation is structured as follows;

Chapter Two: Literature Review: Reviews the theoretical and empirical literature behind departmental communication gaps in organisations.

Chapter Three: Methodology: gives an outline of the adopted research design and tools that were used to obtain and analyse data for the study.

Chapter Four: Data analysis and Results: presents results in form of tables and figures (Charts and graphs) from the tests for the stated variables. Findings are also analysed using Chi-square and P- value.

Chapter Five: Discussion, conclusion and Recommendations: Discussions of the Findings are presented relating the results of the study to the reviewed literature. It also gives closure to the study by giving a summary of the research findings, give some concluding remarks, make recommendations to the various stakeholders and suggest areas of further research.

### **1.10 Chapter Summary**

This chapter provided the introduction of the study, defined what communication is. It further outlined the statement of the problem, aim of the study, research objectives and research question were outlined. It also stated the significance of the study and the scope. The objectives of this study, were to identify the major factors leading to communication gaps and how to address these gaps.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In all organisations around the world, Communication is the heart of any business; it is the most important of all entrepreneurial skills. This is because the destiny of every business depends on the quality of relationships within the organisation. The employee's ability to transmit information helps both internal and external stakeholders feel they can communicate with and ultimately trust the company (Black Enterprise, Charles, 1998, 116). Therefore, this chapter focused on reviewing relevant literature which identifies what has been done by other researchers in other developed and developing countries. More importantly literature review helped to identify gaps in the previous studies upon which the statement of the problem for this study was anchored to fill up those gaps.

### **2.2 Communication gaps that exist in organizations and companies**

There are a number of gaps that exist in organizations and companies where communication is concerned. Some of these are human made while others are system and bureaucratic made. This sub theme will discuss studies on the communication gaps in different companies and organizations in the world.

#### **2.2.1 Attitudinal barriers**

A study conducted by Tannen (2013) in Ethiopia found that there were attitudinal barriers which existed within the operations of major companies. The study asserts that these were communication barriers which were held by different people towards others. For instance, if a manager has a poor attitude towards the junior staff, communication between them may not be effective. More especially, if the manager has the tendency of imposing things on the junior staff or intimidating them, the junior staff may not be free to share information to their superiors (managers). Thus, (Charles, 1998) expands that some members in the departments have the negative attitude towards the employees who do not belong to their department. For instance, a study by Mambwe (2011) revealed that the journalist at Lusaka Zambia national broadcasting television (ZNBC) complained that the people who are found in the news room gave a negative attitude towards the employees who are found in the marketing departments. For this reason, the flow of information between these two departments was disturbed.

### **2.2.2 Behavioral barriers**

A study by Newstrom and Devis (2013) on communication barriers in mega factories found that these communication barriers occur when individuals display a behaviour which may prevent them from knowing more information from other people. The study further indicated that when an individual has stereotyping views towards other people, they make conclusions about those people before they acquire more information from them. For instance, if a manager stereotypes against the female workers to be lazy, the manager may be treating every female as a lazy individual, even before he/she sees the performance of such individuals. In the same view, a study by Brennan (2004) found that there is also information gap when the departments stereotype against each other. That is because some departments have the tendency of judging other departments based on the past experiences and other departments do not want to take advice from others because of their rankings. This means that such departments do not give other departments the benefit of doubt, more especially where improvement in operations is concerned. Newstrom and Devis (2013) add that if one department referred a case to another department, unfortunately that department also fails to successfully solve that case; then the department which transferred the case may begin to underrate the other department and eventually stop referring cases to them. Such tendencies are common in large organizations which have both the PR and CS departments.

### **2.2.3 Cultural barriers**

Luthans (2010) conducted a study in a multiracial factory and claims that differences in cultural values, beliefs and attitudes may result in miscommunication. For instance, some cultures may regard silence during communication with elders or superior people to be respect, while other cultures regard the same act of silence during the conversations to be rudeness. In this context, a study by Clernons (2003) found that the work culture of some departments are barriers to smooth communication because some departments have long and complicated channels of communication. In addition, D'Aprix (1996) emphasises that when the departments lack the spirit of urgency, they usually delay to communicate the information to the other relevant departments. As a result, the information may be distorted or some files end up missing because of long period of communication. Indeed, most public offices have the tendency of heaping the incoming files for a long period of time, they delay acting upon the files which needs their attention. It is for this reason that most files go missing from public offices.

#### **2.2.4 Language barriers**

Newstrom and Devis (2013) state that language barriers occur when people are speaking two or more different languages which are not clear to each other. For instance, when a Chinese is speaking to an English person on a genuine complaint over goods and services, due to pronunciation and intonation, the two may not understand each other well thereby creating barriers in communication flow. The study further found that language barriers may also occur when people are speaking the same language, but different levels of languages are used in a conversation. For instance, when two people are speaking English but a customer care officer is using jargons and ambiguous words while the client is using slang, the two may not understand each other.

In another study which was conducted by Galvin (1996) revealed that the barriers in communication arises when the letters which are written between two or more departments are not clear enough, as to whom they are directed to and what ought to be done. This usually occurs when the recipient of the letter is explicitly stated by the name, instead of the job position. This means that when the letter happens to be received by another officer on duty, then no action will be taken because that officer will distance himself/herself from that letter, simply because the recipient is stated by name and not by the position or title.

#### **2.2.5 Environmental barriers**

Tannen (2013) asserts that these barriers originates from the environment in which communication takes place from. For instance, a workplace may be too noisy such that it becomes difficulty for people to understand each other. In addition, distractors such as televisions or events outside the workplace may also negatively affect communication. It further adds that for written communication, barriers to effective communication may be the inclusion of irrelevant information, causing a reader to lose focus. A study by Holtz (2004) asserts that the environmental distractors to effective communication may also refer to the delays in approving the letters of communication between two or more departments. This includes some superiors in the department have the tendency of taking a very long time before they can approve a document. They claim that they are very busy and needs to counter check the work before the approval could be granted. Such are common barriers in large organizations.

Meanwhile, a study by Nucifora (2003) has identified three (3) major and common business communication gaps which exist in many large organizations. These involve business processes or workflows. They relate to the way information moves around a company or department. That is because business process information can move in a number of directions: between people, between systems, or from people to systems (and back again).

### **2.2.6 People – People Gaps**

Reina and Reina (2005) explain that this means that, when one employee needs information from another in order to execute a task, the transfer of information becomes a critical part of the business process. When employees fail to pass on the appropriate information to their counterparts in a timely, concise, and accurate manner, inefficiencies and errors can occur. People gaps can occur either within a single department, or across departments.

### **2.2.7 People – System Gaps**

Thus, Schonfeld (1994) in his study articulates that people-system gaps occur when the information a person needs from a system is not easily accessible, readily available, or accurate. When people-system gaps occur, systems fail to provide people with the information they need to do their jobs and inefficiencies occur. Schonfeld (1994) concluded that people-system gaps occur when people fail to enter the appropriate information back into systems. The employees may decide to neglect updating the database, rendering it useless to anyone who seeks up-to-date information. Similarly, employees may create a work-around solution, defeating the purpose of having a data base at all for customers to access. These lapses in information provision and processing makes large organisations to be ineffective in their service provision to the public.

### **2.2.8 System – System Gaps**

In another study, Alessandra and Hunsaker (1993) claims that often times, system-system gaps occur when a business process is cross-departmental or cross functional. Sharing information among systems from different departments, or among multiple systems in different areas, can present a communication challenge. When different departments or business units use different information technology (IT) systems, data must be entered and re-entered, leaving room for data entry mistakes and creating gaps between different parts of an

organisation. When communication lapses or errors occur in any of these information transfers, it can cause significant inefficiencies, waste, and business process delays.

### **2.3 Causes of communication gaps in companies and organizations**

Poor communications in the workplace can result in friction, frustration, confusion and an extremely tense environment wherein people are not motivated to be productive and are not inspired to collaborate. This lack of motivation can then spill over to how staff members relate to clients and potential customers. When poor communication occurs, it is not enough to simply point out particular issues and challenges. In order to truly be able to counter the effects of poor communication, it is important to look into its causes. By realizing and learning these cases, companies may be able to solve issues at the root so as to stifle the further progression of the disintegration of communication lines in the workplace.

It is important to note that in most organisations, communication is managed by channels in all the organizations hence each department or section in the organization is responsible of disseminating the related information to formulate complete communication system. However due to the complexity in work places several concurrent communication problems occur because no proper channeling is adopted to manage and control the communication process (Fichet, & Giraud, 2007). Below are reasons why communication fails between departments in an organisation:

#### **2.3.1 Broken information flow**

Probably the only one field of life where we need more communication is internal communication in the workplace. While everybody is busy doing their work a lot of information slips through the cracks and does not get shared internally, which negatively affects productivity. Lee & Bernold (2008) reported that effective communication in organisations is seriously hampered due to a lack of appropriate data channels, improper channel and inaccurate data transfers. Tipili et al (2014) stated that, unclear channels of communications result in project delay.

#### **2.3.2 Unclear Goals and Duties**

From the moment an employee step into their workplaces they should have a proper understanding of what's expected in the role they are fulfilling. Most jobs do this by providing employees with a job description and list of duties, but it's also important to sit

with employees and come up with measurable goals. By communicating this information to employees up front, it's easier for employers to communicate responsibilities, get feedback on the status of ongoing projects and solicit ideas and suggestions later on. Darvik & Larsson (2010) report on the impact of material delivery deviations on costs and performance in construction projects showed that quality defects and delivery deviation of materials occurred due to lack of communication among relevant parties and communication failure.

### **2.3.3 Undertrained Employees**

When employees are not properly trained upon joining a company, it can bring problems on communication. According to Berger, and Calabrese (1975), the more employees know about the company, how each department works together and how their roles affect the overall success of the company, the better the employee is at communicating with management, co-workers and customers. Poor training leads to employees transferring incorrect information both internally and externally.

### **2.3.4 Limited Feedback**

When employers encourage their employees to provide them with feedback about everything from day-to-day processes and procedures to ideas for developing new products or projects and services, employees are motivated to communicate (Axelson, 1976). Employers, who discourage this type of discussion and feedback from their employees, often find poor communication within their workplaces.

### **2.3.5 Employees Disengaged**

Poor communication in an organisation causes low employee moral results in disengaged employees. When employees become disengaged from a company, they lose sight of their goals, are less likely to be invested in the company's success and do not put forth the effort to communicate ideas and feedback to their co-workers and managers. They are also less likely to provide ideal customer service to clients. Literatures have revealed that poor communication is one of the main factors contributing to delay in construction (Abdul, Memon, Karim& Tarmizi, 2013). Delay caused by poor communication can be in the form of slow information flow, improper communication channels, wrong design, wrong interpretation, reworks (Dainty, Moore, and Murray, 2006).

### **2.3.6 Virtue Teams**

Technology is a driving force in how businesses operate, so it is no wonder many organisations have employees from all over the world. Since employees are housed in different office spaces, it is not as simple as walking down the hall to get a question answered. Instead, employees often rely on technology to stay in touch. However, this can be challenging if employees are in different time zones, have out-of-date technology and software work different hours than their fellow employees (Stewart, 1971). Unless they are using video conferencing, they must do without the body language and facial signals we rely on during face-face discussions. Relying only on email can lead to misunderstandings in organisations.

### **2.3.7 Personal conflicts between department managers**

Even if there are only two persons involved in a direct disagreement, their dispute will affect processes within the company and interrupt the entire workflow. This is the thinking out and execution of a plan since it is one of the keenest satisfactions for an intelligent man to experience. Fayol exhorts Superiors as to sacrifice personal vanity in order to permit subordinates to exercise it. This principle allows workers to participate in solving of problems and in the running of the organization. It encourages and enables Workers to see their idea carried through to a successful conclusion. However, most companies have failed because they do not recognize the importance of good communication (Garbaugh, 1985).

### **2.3.8 Objectives are not clear**

While a well-worded job description given along with a job offer is certainly welcomed, it is not enough. Make sure to have a face-to-face discussion with an employee in order to go through his or her responsibilities and the expectations that go along with his or her job. If an organization fails to do this, not only could this lead to confusion and frustration, a staff member may end up underperforming without meaning to (Stewart, 1971). Along with the expectations that go hand in hand with their positions, employees also need to be made aware of the purpose and goals of the whole company itself. By doing this, not only will communications in the workplace improve, staff members are able to align themselves with the objectives of the company so they can be contributors to its progress and success.

### **2.3.9 Poor leadership**

Staff members look to business owners and their managers for direction. However, if people given managerial roles are poor leaders, it is highly likely that communication in the workplace will deteriorate. While good leaders are able to be good examples and are able to motivate staff members, poor and incompetent leaders are indecisive and are unable to inspire their team. They may also be so bad at communication that they are unable to answer questions and clarify points so much so that their subordinates are left even more confused and frustrated than when they started (Atwater, 1998).

### **2.3.10. Cultural diversity in the workplace**

The world is getting smaller, and work environments are getting more and more diverse. It is not unusual to find individuals from different cultures, races, religious beliefs, genders and others working in the same workspace, for the same company. While diversity is certainly a good development, it does present a few challenges – including the potential for poor communications in the workplace. Different people from different backgrounds will relay messages in different ways, with varied nonverbal cues. Interpretations of messages will be different as well (Davison, 2008).

### **2.3.11. Demoralised employees**

When staff members lose interest in their work and the organization, they are considered to be demoralized. An employee who is demoralized feels unvalued, unappreciated, and even disrespected and disregarded despite their capacities and talents. He or she tends to be unproductive and irritable, and are more likely to look for opportunities elsewhere instead of helping the company move forward (Sundaray, 2011).

### **2.3.12 Personal issues and challenges of employees**

While employees should only be concentrating on work while at the workplace, some may be distracted by their own personal issues and challenges, such as a death in the family or divorce. Due to distractions and personal issues, a staff member may communicate the wrong way, and react in a negative fashion. When you notice this occurrence, make sure to give your employees time off so they can deal with their personal issues.

Furthermore, findings by Brennan (1974) on worker attitude towards work in companies revealed that employees are more likely to have a negative attitude towards one another when

they lack the spirit of team work. This is mostly caused when the departments and the organisation at large does not regularly hold workshops or meetings which emphasizes on the need for the employees to co-ordinate in all the activities. That is because the meetings and workshops are assumed to foster the attitude for togetherness. This helps the employees to begin to understand the critical role which different departments play and the interconnectedness of those departments. Thus, (Charles, 1998) claims that when the employees are not regularly brought together, they tend to develop unhealthy competition. They begin to think that one department is superior to the other. As a result, the employees in different departments may deliberately fail to pass on the information to each other with the view of maintaining the status quo of competition. Consequently, it is the operations of the organisation which are negatively affected.

Another study by Clernons (2003) on handling employee misconducts in private organization indicated that weak penalty for professional misconduct also contributes to the communication gaps amongst the departments in an organisation. In most cases, there is no penalty which is given to an erring department. It is because of this reason that many departments seem to be relaxed and unconcerned when the information is not quickly disseminated to other departments of the organisation. Furthermore, a South African study by Xhosa (2012) revealed that employees tend to have a negative attitude towards passing on information from their department to the other when they know that the penalty will not be directly charged on them, but on the department. And if the penalty has been charged on the department, then the employees in that department share the cost or consequences. Thus, (Galvin, 1996) clarifies that it is for this reason that employees perceive the penalty to be insignificant. Consequently, they continue to provide poor services to the organisation.

Hills (2009) in his study on challenges of information delivery in organization concluded that lack of clear communication channel also contribute to communication gaps among departments. This usually happens when the employees do not really know how their organizational hierarchy flows. This means that the workers may report the matter to the office which is not directly responsible for solving a particular problem. He adds that if there is a delay in solving a particular problem, the other departments assume that the department handling the problem is not committed towards work. For instance, when the department writes to another department, but to an incorrect office and they are advised to rewrite the letter to the correct office, the department which is writing the letter of communication may

easily perceive the process to be hectic and tiresome. As a result, the communication between two or more departments may be negatively affected.

A study by Holtz (2004) also observed that long communication procedure leading to breakdown in communication. That is because one letter needs to be approved by many officers, this means that when one officer is not available, then the letter will be stack in that office not until that officer reports for work. As a result, some information is greatly delayed. This situation causes the people to lose the confidence in the system of operations and communication of an organization. In doing so Kumbakonam (2016) claims that some employees may deliberately opt to bypass some departments so that they can save some time for processing the information or solving a particular problem.

Laura (2014) in her study argues that lack of trust or confidence in another department also contributes to communication gaps. That is because when one department believes that another department is not serious with its duties, they may not share the information with such a department, more especially on the issues which require consented effort from different departments. In addition, a study Luthans (2010) reported that lack of memorandum of understanding (M. O. U) also causes the departments not to work together. That is because when one department gives the information to another department, the other department may not act on the information if they don't really understand the interconnectedness or interdependence which they share. The department which does not understand the interconnectedness may be thinking that the other department is passing on its work to their department. As a result, they may be relaxed to act upon the information which they receive.

Newstrom and Devis (2013) contribute that poor communication or writing skills also contributes to communication gaps amongst the departments. That is because when the letters of communication are either not clear, then the corresponding action may not be quickly obtained because of poor communication skill. This is because each employee in that department will be thinking that another employee will handle the case. Consequently, the concerns in such a letter may not be quickly attended to. Further, Nucifora (2003) in her study affirms that the letter of communication may also not be given the attention when it explicitly states the name to the officer, instead of it stating the job position. Thus, the officers occupying a given office may not take any action towards such letters until the officer who was mentioned on the letter occupies the office. As a result, some letters spend a

lot of time without any action being taken. This is more especially the case in situations where the officer whom the letter was directed to, went on leave.

Findings from Reina and Reina (2005) also established that many managers pay too much attention on financial growth of the organization and pay less attention to the effectiveness of communication in an organization and there are no strategic solutions to communication crisis. This situation meant that the problem may be noticed, but there is no clear guideline on the way forward in order to help the organizations to close the communication gaps which exists in many organizations. Furthermore, Schonfeld (1994) contends that there is a communication gap between the office of the auditor general and the office of the anti-corruption commission in Zambia. That is because the office of the anti-corruption commission does not react to the issues which are highlighted in the auditor general's report.

## **2.4 Possible strategies to improve communication gaps in an organization**

The following list includes actionable steps for improving communication gap between and among departments in the organisation:-

### **2.4.1 Make “Sticky” Information Accessible**

Every organization has its own set of internal knowledge, or “sticky” information, that all employees come to understand. It can take time to learn how the company does things, from protocol for preparing client-facing documents to other types of best practices. Help employees learn this information faster by including it as a part of training and by creating internal documents to be used for reference that can make communication problem resolved (Al-Jenaibi, 2014).

### **2.4.2 Make the Mission and Vision Clear**

Take the time to explain the company values and mission, whether as part of corporate training or as a regular reminder to employees. When employees are unified in their understanding of the company goals, they will be able to communicate with one another more effectively in order to reach them (Bryson, 2004).

### **2.4.3 Strengthen Connections**

Not only should communication be improved between team members who work together, but between employees and their managers. Make sure to address this during management training programs. Managers who take the time to get to know their employees and are willing to listen to them will find it easier to communicate and keep direct reports on task. When employees feel that managers are able to address their individual concerns, they are more likely to feel connected (Kram, 1985).

### **2.4.4 Create Open Dialogue**

It is important for every organisation to keep employees up-to-date on company changes, progress and future plans. This could be through a bi-monthly newsletter or at company meetings. Furthermore, allow employees to be involved in this discussion. Encourage questions and comments, and show that all ideas are welcome. Axelson (1976) state that Employees are more likely to communicate well when they feel they have a part in where the company is headed. In addition, provide an online platform for knowledge sharing. Employees are likely reading about industry news and trends on a regular basis, so offer them a place to share this information. Davison, (2008) argued that by having an opportunity to show what they know, employees will be eager to stay involved in this endeavor. Not only will this create more energy and purpose behind communication, but the sharing of valuable insights will be helpful to business.

### **2.4.5 Online Project Management Tools**

There are many types of online tools that can be used to facilitate communication. These tools can help keep track of a project's progress so that everyone knows what is left to be done. While face-to-face communication is always important, online tools can aid in this process by saving time and helping to document the work (Davison, 2008).

### **2.4.6 Plan External Events**

Create opportunities for employees to meet outside of the office. Nothing hinders communication more than when there are employees in the company who have not truly met one another. Plan a holiday party or a happy hour after work. This also gives employees something to look forward to, which can facilitate improved engagement and stronger communication. Not only that but also identifying the information each department needs

every day is also key to the successful flow of information within the company. Such information can be a report on available supplies in the storage, the number of orders made by customers. Without this data production process would stop. After identifying key information, use the internal blog to share this essential information between departments in an easy and transparent way, every day. This archives company knowledge in one place and gives everyone the information they need to make faster and smarter decisions (Redding, 1972).

#### **2.4.7 Open Transparent, Two-Way Communication Channel Within the Company.**

The internal blog should provide an open channel for employee feedback, encouraging them to share ideas and suggestions for increasing productivity within the company. Regularly post open ended questions around actual topics and ask employees to provide their thoughts and opinions in the comments (Davison, 2008). Arguably, it is not enough to simply request feedback by acting on employee suggestions keeps them engaged and eager to provide further input as well as being able to find ways to reward employees with their own ideas.

#### **2.4.8 Regular post on blog, news sharing and updates on the work among departments**

The communication gap between different departments gaps within the company are frequently caused by the lack of transparency and communication. Each department is encouraged to regularly post on the blog and share news and updates on the work they are doing. This will keep everyone up-to-date on what is going on in the company and how their own work fits into the bigger picture. It will also help everybody to better understand and appreciate work done by others (Redding, 1972).

#### **2.4.9 Include Communication in Your Working process**

Communication should be one of the most important procedures in your company. Write it down (as a blog post) and explain to people how they can communicate, when can they do it and in what way. For example, Al-Jenaibi, (2014) argued that your employees should ask not what information the other departments should deliver to them, but what information they can provide to the others. This test will help them walk the mile in the other department's shoes and see how important some info is for them.

#### **2.4.10 Organize Effective Team Building Activities**

Team building activities are very helpful and bring people closer. There is need to ensure that the entire team can make it. You can schedule and announce it on your internal blog. The Internal blog can help you improve communication between different departments in your company, enjoy benefits of higher engagement of your employees and get an effective inner organization with a mechanism to prevent conflicts (Axelson, 1976). On top of that, other departments will be much happier because they will receive better care and treatment.

Further Recommendations from a study by Laura (2014) suggested that there is need for everyone at the workplace to have positive attitudes towards others. This means that, all workers should be approachable and tolerant to diverging views. At the same time, the organizations should encourage the spirit of inclusiveness (togetherness). In addition, Tannen (2013) adds that this could be successfully achieved when the organization regularly hold workshops which tries to identify some of the weaknesses of the communication system within an organization and how best they can improve the communication system so that they could easily avoid the communication gaps. This means that the workers need to be properly explained to, on the need to co-exist and particularly on the need to teamwork in order for them to achieve the organizational goals.

A study by Alessandra and Hunsaker (1993) also suggested that promoting health competition amongst employees and departments at large is very important. That is because when the employees are not properly oriented on how to have a health competition, they may end up frustrating the efforts of an organization in the process of competing amongst the departments. To this Brennan (1974) affirms that organisations need to give credit to the departments which assists or contribute more work to other departments of the same organization. This means that the departments will be encouraged to embrace the values of teamwork and togetherness. Thus, they will be more willing to work on the information which they receive from other departments.

Findings from the research by Charles (1998) emphasizes that all the workers should be willing to find out more information about their colleagues or other people, and not stereotyping. That is because every individual or department is different from one another. Therefore, when the employees have a better understanding of the duties and responsibilities of other departments, then will be more willing to engage other departments so that they can help them to solve the problems which they may be facing at a particular time. For this

reason, Laura (2014) also suggests that organizations should be able to provide an interactive environment so that the employees can easily relate with each other and also network. This is because it is assumed that the employees who understand the challenges of other departments will be more willing to help out in cases where the other departments are finding it very difficult to deliver.

Another study conducted by Laura (2014) proposes that there is great need for people from different cultures to learn the values, beliefs, and attitudes of each other so that miscommunication could be avoided. In this context, the language that is written in the letters must be simple and clear enough for anyone to understand, the use of jargons and ambiguous words should be discouraged at all times. This is because, when the language creates the barrier in communication, the issues which require urgent response may not be attended at the appropriate time. For instance, the use of legal terms which can only be interpreted by the lawyers would cause the solution to the particular problem to be delayed because no one in the department understands the meaning of the letter.

In addition, Laura (2014) suggests that language barriers could be avoided when verbal communication is combined with non-verbal communication, and the verbal communication should be simple and loud enough for the other people to clearly understand the information which is being communicated to. That is because the use of verbal communication alone can cause so many misunderstandings; this arises from the differences in pronunciation of words and also the difference in voice projection. For instance, when verbal communication alone is used, the information can easily be forgotten by the bearer, and in some cases the recipient may misunderstand the information due to manner in which the words are being pronounced. Therefore, writing the information on a piece of paper helps the officers to relay or pass on the same information without any distortions.

A study by Clernons (2003) on employer-employee relation asserts that the supervisors can also follow the following communication techniques which can be used by any leader to increase the level of internal communication in the company and therefore improve the level of the company's efficiency. The strategy included finding out if those listening to you hear what you say and interpret it correctly. One way of doing this is to ask questions that will show the understanding level of those with whom you are talking to. If the speaker is addressing a group meeting, allow time at the end of the meeting for questions. This provides informed contribution to the company.

The other strategy is to share business and management information with employees whenever possible. However, D'Aprix (1996) explains that one of the most sensitive areas in management involves how much company information should be shared with employees. That is because many managers feel that information should be given on a need-to-know basis. Their reason is that information given loosely can result in company secrets getting out to the competitors. Company supervisors can also share information with the employees through weekly meetings. The study further added that the supervisor should include in their meetings any information that is bringing about a change within the organization. If representatives and unit leaders have questions about other personnel issues the supervisor should direct the customer service representatives to the correct source that can give them an answer

Furthermore, Laura (2014) articulates that managers need to ensure that communication takes place in a conducive environment. Meaning that, the place should be quiet and free from distractors, which can cause the employees to miss out on important information and instructions. And the written documents should be logical, brief, and straight on point. That is because when the document has a lot of irrelevant information in it, Galvin (1996) explains that it ends up frustrating the reader such that they could either stop reading the whole document or they could form a negative conclusion towards such a document. A situation which may cause them to delay in responding to the concerns which are raised in the letters.

## **2.5 Importance of Communication in a Business Organisation**

The main importance of the effective communication in a business organization is to enable and motivate the employees and engaged to fulfill the goal of the organization. The existence of the effective organization helps the organization to identify the problem and resolve that problem quickly. Otherwise, the operation process of the organization may face some problems. Arguably, internal communication plays two important roles of conveying important message from the higher authority to the lower section of the company and vice versa and transforming the future strategy related information from the managers' level to the employee section (Canavor, Meirowitz and Covey, 2014). Moreover, some importance of communication within a business organization is stated below:

**Employee Trust:** Employees of an organization are the most pivotal elements that play the most significant role in driving the firm towards success. Moreover, employees of an

organization should trust the management, which will make them work for the management and not only for fiscal benefits from the management. Mounter (2013) opined that open communication reduces various feelings of cluelessness and uncertainty regarding the state of the firm within the employees.

**Relationships:** Free flow of communication is highly essential in building strong relationships between employees and the management of the firm, which will create a blossom of an environment within the organization. Feeling of being isolated often reduces the production quality of an employee, which can be eliminated by building relationships within employees of a firm by means of effective and fluent communication (Thomson and Hecker, 2014). Strong relationships between the employees and the management will help to trust each other and do the needful more efficiently in their respective roles.

**Clarity:** Ambiguity and various types of confusion within a firm can create misunderstandings within the employees and management that will adversely affect the business operations. Therefore, it can be stated that clarity within the communication process will enable the employees understand their job roles in a better manner, which will automatically make them work in a more efficient manner. At the same time this will also the productivity of the employees, which will be a massive added advantage for the organization (Tan, 2011). Moreover, once there is fluent communication within the organization the employees will also be able to convey messages in a more effective manner to the customers, which will augment the count of satisfied consumers of the firm.

**Collaboration:** Communication will help the employees collaborate in an effective manner and build a strong team, which will definitely make a massive difference. Team -work is highly pivotal within any organization in order to build a cross - culture diversity environment, which has brought in success form many well renowned companies in the recent time (Rosner, Halcrow and Levins, 2011). Therefore, it can be said that collaboration within employees can ensure that everyone is on the desired page and avert tribulations down the road.

## **2.6 The Impacts of Poor/Ineffective Communication:**

From the above discussion, it is very clear that, an effective internal communication is very important to run an organization successfully. The consequences of the poor internal communication among the departments are as follows:

**Lack of cohesive culture:** There will be lack of cohesive culture where everyone is focused on the same goal. This will make the work process a bit saturated, which can bring down productivity of the employees to a certain extent (Mounter, 2013).

**Stakeholders of the firm unable to put in their best:** The stakeholders of the organization will not be able to work effectively together, which may cause different types of problems that might affect the internal as well as the external business process of the company (Mounter, 2013).

**Lack in knowledge of employees to make right decision:** Employees of the organization lacked the tools and knowledge to make right decision in line with the organization's goal. This might decrease the number of satisfied consumers of the firm, which is a massive threat for any organization in the modern era (Otto, 2011). Additionally there can be the duplication of work due to department's inability to share information and there can be day to day conflict can occur because of the lack of information (Ostendorf, 2012).

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

The term 'theory' is often intimidating to students. Theories provide an abstract understanding of a process and it is simply a summary of a process. Hoover (1984) defines it as "a set of inter-related propositions that suggest why events occur in the manner that they do". Foss and Griffin (1999) defines theory as, "a way of framing an experience or event in an effort to understand and account for something and the way it functions in the world". Any thoughts or ideas about how things work in the world or one's life are personal theories. Theories are essentially frameworks for how the world works, and therefore guide how to function in the world. Theory is an idea of how something happens. It is an attempt to explain or represent an experience. The term communication theory may refer to a single theory or an entire set of theories related to communication. "Theories are not just things to be read and learned, they are constantly evolving works." (Littlejohn, 2002).

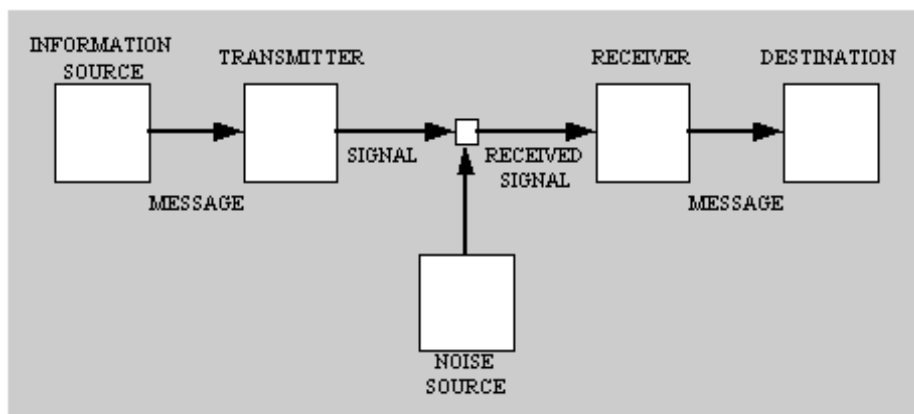
There are many theories which can be used to explain communication in organizations. Ideally, the communication structure within the organization follows the set-up rules and guidelines and pathways. If these communication pathways are well utilized, they help to determine the culture of the organization or company. If the communication systems are developed randomly, they can end up with a less-than-efficient style. Therefore, there is need

to familiarize and understand the traditional approaches to communication in order to decide which format best suits the company.

### 2.7.1 Information Theory

Information theory is concerned with how information travels with the fewest mistakes. If you view your communications through the lens of information theory, there is need to focus on how to fix messages so that they cannot be altered. There is need to put measures in place to confirm communications for accuracy. Additionally, there is need to even hold the message recipient more accountable than the sender for the final version of the communication.

Three theoretical perspectives guide the study of communication under information theory: the technical, the contextual and the negotiated perspectives. The technical view of communication is associated with information theory and usually traced back to Claude, Shannon and Warren Weaver (1949). Shannon, an engineer at Bell Laboratories, portrayed communication as a mechanistic system, as shown in Figure 1 below. The important question in information theory is “how can an information source get a message to a destination with a minimum of distortions and errors?” In applying this mechanistic approach to interpersonal communication, the question is the same although the mechanistic system is altered to some extent and the analysis is less technical and mathematical. The technical view of communication persists as a common basis for organizational communication discussions.



*Figure 1: Information Theory: Communication as a mechanistic system.*

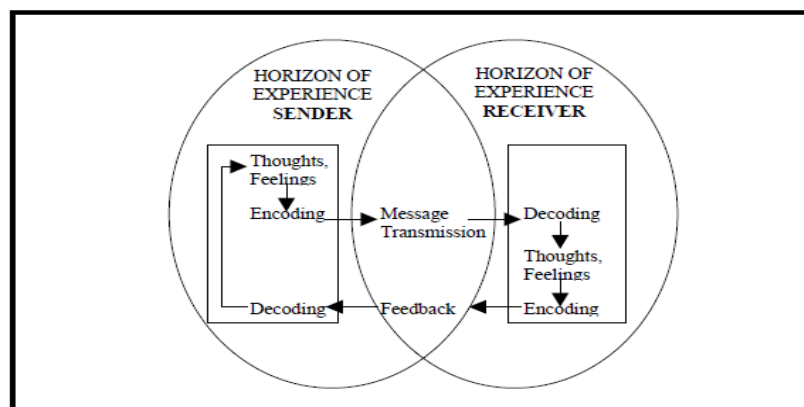
#### **Adopted from Shannon and Weaver (1949)**

White and Chapman (1996) introduced into this communication system both human (the person’s horizon of experience, thoughts/feelings, the acts of encoding/decoding) and

interpersonal feedback elements, as illustrated in Figure 2 below. Since that time, an array of human filters that are influenced by the person's horizon of experience (such as motive, affect, attention, knowledge, attitudes, values, and beliefs) have been specified. Although the social context affects these human filters, the larger social context is not directly addressed in these approaches.

The contextual approach to communication focuses not just on content (e.g. the accurate exchange of information or adequacy of conveying the intended meaning) but on the larger context of communication. It focuses on nonverbal cues as well as verbal content. It also looks at the relational context between the sender and receiver within the larger social/organizational/cultural context. It sees words as symbols interpreted in context. Mead (1934) and Blumer (1972) stressed communication as symbolic interaction that created meaning and one's sense of both self and society.

Discourse analysis is an extension and elaboration of the contextual perspective. Rather than looking at a particular interpersonal exchange or sequences of exchanges, discourse analysis looks at an overall body of communication (including formal and informal, oral and written communication of all kinds). The goal of the analysis is to relate discourse patterns to patterns of social relations. It seeks to explicate how the creation and maintenance of social relations materialize in talk (Manning 1992; Pearce 1994, 1995; and Cronen 1991, 1995). Through discourse about itself, the organization enacts (shapes, defines, and marks the boundaries of) itself. Discourse gives rise to objectively known collective representations that have inter-subjective validity. In this sense, discourse is both interpersonal and collective, both inter-subjective and contextual.



*Figure 2: Technical sender-Receiver Model of Communication*

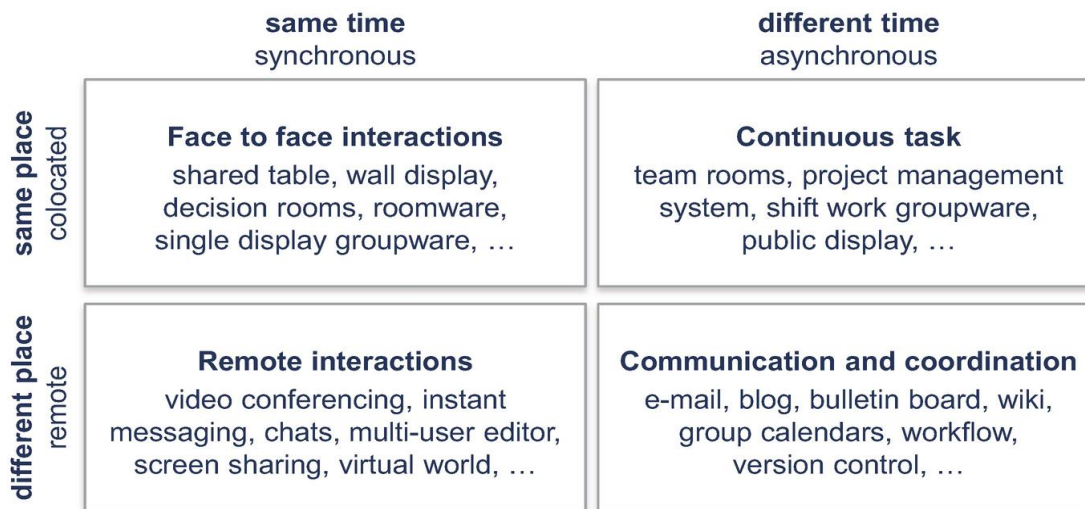
**Adapted from White and Chapman (1996:11)**

Lazega (1992) goes beyond the contextual to the negotiated view of communication and meaning. Rather than examining how discourse helps create, maintain, and give meaning to social relations, he examines how the communication context itself is negotiated. For example, how judgment of appropriateness and knowledge claims (standards by which something is deemed to be technically satisfactory) come to be constructed. In this sense he elaborates on the interactive feedback component of the technical approach. Feedback exchanges can be viewed as a process of interpersonal negotiation. This approach can be traced back to the notion of language games and word playing introduced by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein.

### **2.7.2 Groupware Theory**

The groupware theory suggests that old lines of communication may change along with rapid technological advances. Employees can communicate through computers and mobile devices so quickly that information can spread throughout a company before management wants it to. Even positive information might flow from one department to another before management has time to notify all stakeholders of a change in policy or an initiative. The use of advanced technological devices between the departments could be a good platforms and channels for effective communication and information dissemination. What communication platforms are being used in the public relation and other departments in the organisation?

The most notable advances in communication technology are groupware or computer facilitated group communication technologies. Johansen (1984) distinguishes groupware in terms of temporal (synchronous/asynchronous) and spatial (distributed/co-located) contexts as shown in Figure 3. These communication technologies can help traditional organizational groups work together more effectively. But, more importantly, they help dispersed individuals work as a team. The development of collaborators, designed to help dispersed scientists conduct collaborative research and development as if they were co-located in a laboratory, may be one of the most exciting applications of the new communication technologies and computer-enabled environments. By capitalizing on new communication technologies, an organization should be able to realize a competitive advantage in its performance and in the marketplace (Lucas 1996; Tucker et al. 1996; Desanctis and Fulk1999).



*Figure 3: Characterizations of Groupware by Temporal and Spatial Attributes*

Although communication technologies have opened up new opportunities, scholars and practitioners recognize that neither the theory nor the practice of organizational communication has kept up with this rapidly changing situation. Organizational communication “best practices,” to the extent that they exist, are typically years out-of-date (Sapienza 1995). Also the introduction of new communication technologies has caused problems as well as opportunities. Some communication technologies have led to communication overload. It is a common fallacy to assume that because communication is generally seen as a good thing, the more communication the better. Communication overload is a real problem – what is needed is better, not more, communication (Richmond and McCroskey 1992; Conrad 1994).

In relation to this study, the theory below was used to assess if there were inter-departmental coordination in the delivery of information through the normal process of identifying needs and solutions in the company. It was also used to figure out if there were specific channels of information flow which should be followed before it reaches the clients and how these systems work to perfect this communication for all departments to have one language as they attend to customers.

### 2.7.3 Systems Theory

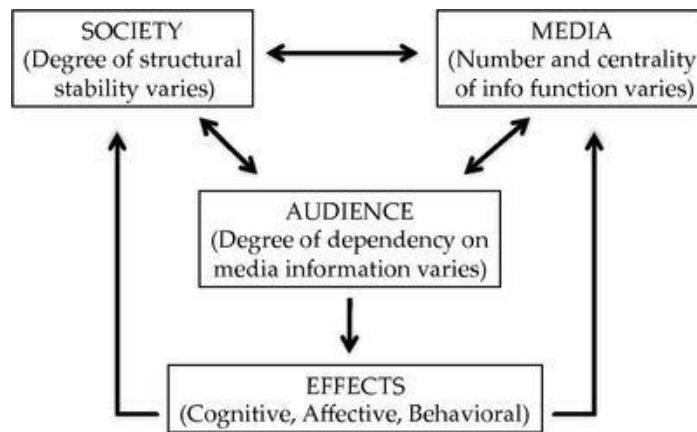
The systems theory of communication is one of the most critical for a public relations practitioner to understand if they want to meet the goals of their organization. In general, systems theory states that all things can be evaluated as part of a larger whole. This applies to communications and public relations in the sense that a public relations professional must

evaluate their organization as just one piece of a puzzle that is interdependent on their many stakeholders and their constituents in the community for success. Systems theory has a history in many other disciplines, but it is worthwhile to examine the history of systems theory as it applies to communications, and which crucial pieces of the theory helps public relations be successful within an organization.

Systems theory was proposed first by Ludwing Von Bertalanffy and later developed further by Ross Ashby in the 1950's. Bertalanffy was a biologist hailing from Austria and his development of systems theory encompassed much more than just communications. Bertalanffy suggested that studying entities as systems that are related to one another and affect one another could help better understand the function of a specific system (Drack, 2008). Bertalanffy originally applied this theory to biology, engineering, and psychology. For example, in psychology, Bertalanffy suggested that studying human behavior is most beneficial and can achieve the best results when studying humans interactions with one another as part of a system, rather than considering a person as an individual with no bearing on their surroundings (Drack, 2008). Ashby, the second contributor to systems theory was an English psychiatrist. From 1962-1964, Ashby was the president of the Society for General Systems Research. This society, which was established in 1956, legitimized systems theory as a true area of study especially in the social sciences.

One of the most important concepts from systems theory is the emphasis on self-correcting systems. That is, when an entity receives feedback, it will correct the next cycle of activity it performs with regards to that feedback. This concept can be easily related to public relations when keeping in mind the rest of the theory that an organization must be evaluated as one part of an interdependent whole.

For example, if a public relations team launches a campaign meant to further the goals of its organization, it must consider how its stakeholders, the intended audience and the media will perceive the campaign. In the figure 4 below, it can be clearly seen how all of these aforementioned entities are connected (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). This figure also demonstrates how important it is to consider the self-correcting feedback loop portion of the theory. Public relations professionals can take the feedback they receive, be it positive or negative, to re-engineer their next campaign in a way that is more pleasing and effective in the eyes of the stakeholders.



**Figure 4: Self-correcting feedback loop portion of the theory**

This theory has been used in a number of different instances in public relations. One particular area of public relations where this self-correcting feedback loop becomes extremely important is in recovery from a crisis (Rhee, 2004). One specific crisis that is an exemplary model for correcting and improving the actions of an organization to better fit the needs of the system it resides in is the Tylenol arsenic poisoning crisis of 1982. Seven Chicago residents were reported dead after purchasing and taking extra strength Tylenol, and it was later discovered that the bottles of Tylenol they had bought had been tampered with to add cyanide, a deadly chemical (Stewart & Paine, 2011). This incident had the power to completely destroy the reputation of Johnson and Johnson, Tylenol's parent company, and had to be handled with great care. The only way to achieve success in this situation was to think about the role of the company within a larger societal setting, and listen to the concerns being voiced by the stakeholders and the publics. The crisis management team responded nearly perfectly using the principles of systems theory. The three most important steps that Johnson and Johnson took while examining how to respond to the crisis were identifying the ethical issues and points of conflict, identifying the most relevant affected parties, and identifying the relevant community standards that should guide a decision made by a person of integrity (Stewart & Paine, 2011). Considering these points before creating a response shows that the public relations team was fully aware that they were in a fragile interdependent network. Johnson and Johnson called for an immediate recall of Tylenol that cost over \$100 million, even though it was well known that the company itself was not responsible for the poisoning (Stewart & Paine, 2011). Though the recall was extremely costly, the overall benefits outweighed the initial monetary cost. Johnson and Johnson solidified their image as a company who cares about the safety of its consumers first and foremost. By using the self-correcting feedback loop and considering what the public's

thought was the most important factor in resolving the crisis, Johnson and Johnson was able to ensure success in recovery from the crisis (Rhee, 2004). If Johnson and Johnson had not practiced the principles of systems theory when resolving their crisis and had not considered their organization as part of a larger societal whole, it may not have put itself in the place of its publics and decided to take a large financial hit in order to return to the good graces of its customers (Stewart & Paine, 2011). Systems theory, when applied in public relations, can enhance the results of any output from a public relations team. Though systems theory has been historically used in many different areas of study, it is one of the most critical theories to understand in the field of communications. Systems theory demands public relations professionals to examine their organization as one part of a larger whole that is interdependent on its stakeholders and publics for success. When using this method, public relations teams can tailor their actions to satisfy the wants and needs of the system in which they reside. This theory will also be used to determine how information flow is perceived and used from the company, to the audience and the wider society as well as when it comes back to the company through the customer care service. This will enable the research to examine how the company respond and also manage the information they disseminate to their clients through the various platforms.

## 2.8 Conceptual Framework



*Figure 5: Thayer's organizational Communication Model*  
*(<http://bizcommunication/>)*

This adopted model creates a link between personal communication and organizational structure. This is to say that, personal communication affects how one (manager)

communicates with undertrained employees (subordinates) within and between departments and across the entire organisation (organizational structure). In his model, Thayer has shown that the attempt to accomplish any task through personal communication greatly influences the process of organizational communication. The model as shown above; mentioned four levels in this Business Communication Model, such as-intra-personal or individual, interpersonal, organizational communication and the technological aspect can affect communication in an organization; and result into communication gaps within and between departments if not handled well. This model also shows how a person does communication functions at organizational level. The behavior of sender and receiver can be influenced by four elements biological, psychological, social and technological. Actually, this model shows how communication process is affected by a person in organizational atmosphere. In relation to the theoretical framework, this study depicts the importance and role of human interaction with one another as part of an organizational communication system, rather than considering a person as an individual with no bearing on their surroundings.

## **2.9 Knowledge Gaps**

The researcher had difficulties in finding journals which relate to this area of study, meaning not much has been done in this area of study. The researcher was only able to find the nearest related Journals just similar to the area of study but not direct relating to this area of study. The reason the researcher decided to do this study is because there no research which was conducted on departmental communication gaps in quasi-institutions, especially in developing countries like Zambia. Most of the views which were reviewed were general in nature. Thus, this research seeks to give a specific situation on the communication gaps which exists within and between departments. That is because all departments in an organization serve the same goal of addressing the concerns of the people and achieving the mission and vision of the institution. Thus, this research seeks to identify if there are any communication gaps which exists, and the causes of these communication gaps, finally the research seeks to propose possible solutions which will be appropriate to those causes of communication gaps.

**2.9.1 Below is a summary of literature review and gaps nearest to the research study.**

**Table 1: Literature Review and Gaps**

S/N	TITLE OF RESEARCH	YEAR	AUTHOR(S)	FINDINGS	GAPS
1	Interpersonal communication increases organizational performance: Keeping HR as a mediating variable	2012	Gondal and Shahbaz	The results revealed that, HRM to be strongly mediating the relationship of interdepartmental communication and organizational performance	The study did not bring out the departmental challenges and conflicts within and between departments in an organisation
2	Internal Communication between and within Two IT Departments	2015	Karima and Larsson	The study revealed that too many media channels put strains on the internal communication within and between IT departments which results in unsynchronisation.	The study did not encompass other departments in the organisation that play a pivotal role to the success of the organisation, other than the IT department.
3	Lack of Communication a stumbling block to the Development of an Organisation	2012	Agrawal	The findings revealed that managers should have good communication skills, be good orators and listeners if there is to be good communication leading to the development of the organization.	The gap is that the study ignored the fact that personal conflicts and other factors lead to lack of proper communication in the organisation, despite the managers having good communication skill, being good orators and listeners.
4	The communication Gap: its Business and it's Personal	2016	Arnold	The results revealed that communication gaps in a business and between its personal can be closed with a well-developed plan by IT.	The study concentrated on helping enterprise decision -makers understand why the communication gap is so important, along with the steps they need to take to close the gaps,

					without examining the trends that give rise to these gaps
5	Research gaps in organizational conflicts: Future research perspectives	2017	Weerarathna	Results from this study showed that there is less empirical evidence on the relationship between organizational conflicts and other affective variables.	The study was about identifying the research gaps in organizational conflicts and not on how conflicts lead to communication gaps in organisations.
6	Communication within the work place	2005	Beverly	The results revealed that supervisors communicated well. And like other organisations they usually received most of their information through grapevine.	The study was about discovering whether or not there was a communication gap between supervisors and customer service leaders, and not communication gaps within and between departments.

## 2.10 Chapter Summary

Communication amongst the employees within and between departments is very important, which is because all the employees in an organization work towards achieving the organizational goal. And this organizational goal can only be successfully achieved when all the departments are working together. Therefore, the barriers which cause the flow of information to have gaps; includes employees and departments attitudes towards one another, the work culture and behaviour of the departments, as well as the environment where the employees interacts from. The chapter covered research gaps in the area of study. On Interpersonal communication increases organizational performance: Keeping HR as a mediating variable. The results revealed that, HRM to be strongly mediating the relationship of interdepartmental communication and organizational performance. The study did not bring out the departmental challenges and conflicts within and between departments in an organization. Another study by Karima and Larsson (2015) on Internal Communication between and within Two IT Departments, revealed that too many media channels put strains on the internal communication within and between IT departments which results in

unsynchronisation. The study did not encompass other departments in the organisation that play a pivotal role to the success of the organisation, other than the IT department. In another study on Lack of Communication a stumbling block to the Development of an Organisation. The findings revealed that managers should have good communication skills, be good orators and listeners if there is to be good communication leading to the development of the organization. The gap is that the study ignored the fact that personal conflicts and other factors lead to lack of proper communication in the organisation, despite the managers having good communication skill, being good orators and listeners. Yet another paper on Communication Gap: its Business and its Personal. The results revealed that communication gaps in a business and between its personal can be closed with a well-developed plan by IT. The study concentrated on helping enterprise decision -makers understand why the communication gap is so important, along with the steps they need to take to close the gaps, without examining the trends that give rise to these gaps. In addition, a study by Weerathna (2017) on Research gaps in organizational conflicts: Future research perspectives. Results showed that there is less empirical evidence on the relationship between organizational conflicts and other affective variables. The study was about identifying the research gaps in organizational conflicts and not on how conflicts lead to communication gaps in organisations. Further studies on Communication within the work place, revealed that supervisors communicated well. And like other organisations they usually received most of their information through grapevine. The study was about discovering whether or not there was a communication gap between supervisors and customer service leaders, and not communication gaps within and between departments in an organisation. The chapter also encompasses the theoretical framework comprising a number of theories used to explain communication in organizations and finally a conceptual framework explaining that any task through personal communication greatly influences the process of organizational communication.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the Research methodology. Research methodology is a very important part of any research because it acts as a backbone. A research methodology is defined as an outline which shows the steps or procedures that are used in order to obtain pieces of facts that are relevant to a particular study. This chapter also describes the Research design that was used for the study, the procedures used to collect and analyse data. The chapter further states the population, sampling methods, sample size, data collection and analysis tools used in the study. According to Creswell (2013) a research design is a course of action that guides a researcher in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data and observations to find answers to research questions.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Descriptive studies involve gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection (Glass & Hopkins, 1984). Descriptive studies are usually the best methods for collecting information that will demonstrate relationships and describe the world as it exist (Marxwell as cited by Gor, 2015). It often uses visual aids such as graphs and charts to aid the reader in understanding the data distribution. This study used quantitative method. Quantitative research is aimed at determining the relationship between one thing (an independent variable) and the other (a dependent or outcome variable) in a population. Quantitative research designs are either descriptive (subjects usually measured once) or experimental (subjects measured before and after a treatment). According to Trochim (2006) quantitative research often translates into the use of statistical analysis to make the connection between what is known and what can be learned through research. This allowed the researcher to examine the relation between independent variables and dependent variables. It also helped to determine the correlation between independent and dependent variables.

### **3.3 Population**

Population is the totality of all subjects that conform to a set of specifications, comprising the entire group of persons that is of interest to the researcher and to whom the research results

can be generalised (Polit and Hungler, 1999). Additionally, Bryman et al (2003) stated that a study population is the whole group that the research focuses on. In this study the population consisted of all employees of ZESCO at HQ and service centers around Lusaka, Zambia.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

The sample was purposively selected from various employees in Lusaka Zambia ZESCO HQ and service centres. This was to ensure that all departments were included in the sample size. The sample size was determined by using the formula  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$  where n is the sample size, N is the population and e is the level of precision. Based on 10% precision level, it gave a sample size of 150. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed which had 83% response rate from the targeted respondents.

### **3.5 Data Collection Tools**

Primary data was collected by use of a semi – structured questionnaire. Secondary data was obtained from literature review of similar studies.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Tools**

The data collected was analyzed and interpreted using the statistical package for social science. The statistical analysis was based on Chi-square and P-Values. The research model that was used highlights the relationship between five variables that contribute to factors of communication gap within and between departments in an organization. The factors among them include “personal conflicts between department managers and undertrained employees”; “demoralized employees and broken information flow”; “cultural diversity in the workplace and employees disengaged”. Furthermore other factors include; “poor leadership and limited feedback”; and “unclear objectives of roles for staff”. The study looked at these factors in relation to their impact on department communication gaps in quasi-institutions. This was in an effort to bridging the existing communication gaps in the power utility firm.

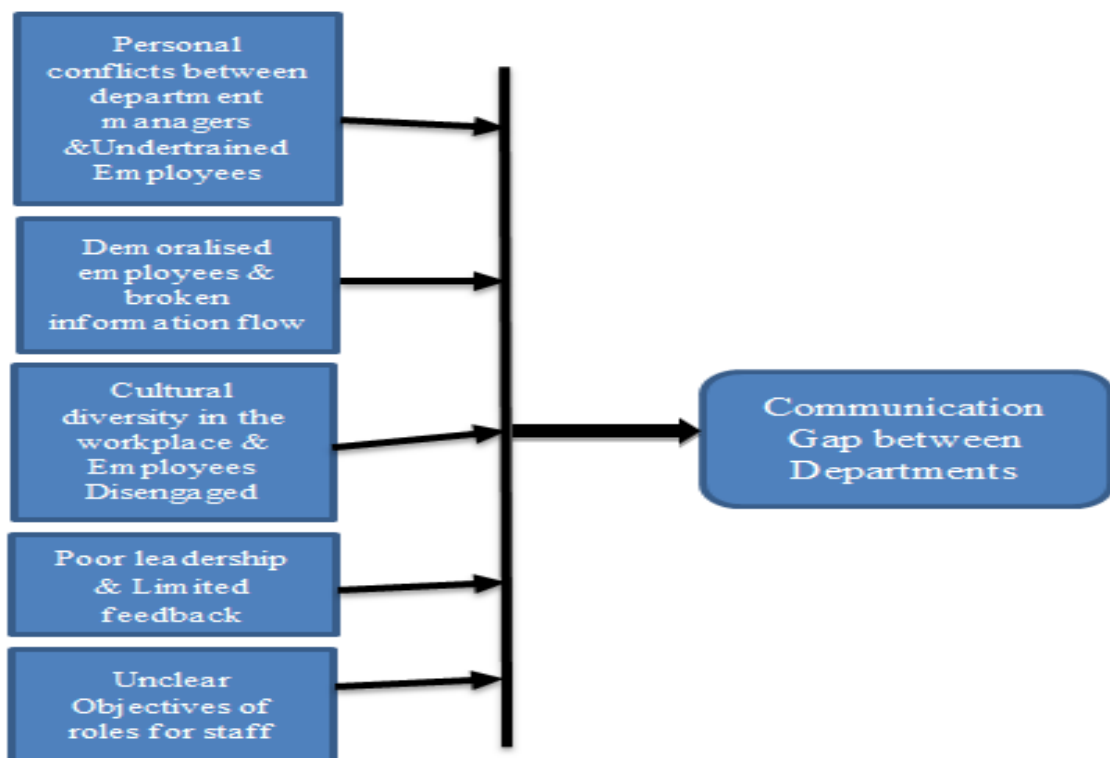
### **3.7 Research Methodology Used**

Table 2 below is the research design matrix used which shows the objectives, research questions and methodology.

**Table 2: Research Design Matrix**

#	Objectives	Research Questions	Methodology
1	To identify the existing communication gaps between Public Relations and other units in Quasi - Institutions	What are the communication gaps that exist between Public Relations and other units in Quasi-Institutions?	Questionnaire
2	To establish the causes for communication gaps between Public Relations and other units in Quasi-Institutions.	Why are there communication gaps between Public Relations and other units in Quasi-Institutions?	Questionnaire
3	To develop a model in order to address communication gaps between Public Relations and other Units in Quasi-Institutions.	How can the communication gaps between Public Relations other units be bridged in Quasi-Institutions?	Questionnaire

**3.8 Research Conceptual Model**



**Figure 6: Research Model used in this research; it shows the variables for Communication gaps between departments.**

The figure above illustrates the model used in this research. The research model was formulated based on the literature reviewed. It highlights the relationship between five variables; from the research model, there are many contributing factors of communication gap within and between departments in an organization. The factors among them include personal conflicts between department managers; undertrained employees; demoralized employees; broken information flow and cultural diversity in the workplace. Furthermore other factors include employees disengaged; poor leadership; limited feedback; and unclear objectives of roles for staff. The results showed that communication gaps within and between departments were as a result of the above indicated five independent variable.

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability**

According to Yaremko et al (1982) Validity and Reliability are concepts used to evaluate the quality of research. They indicate how well a method, technique or test measures something. Validity is about the accuracy of a measure, and reliability is about the consistency of a measure.

#### **3.9.1 Validity**

Validity according to Orodho (2005) is concerned with the degree to which empirical measure or several measures of a concept accurately represent that concept. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), opines that validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data actually represent the phenomenon under study. The common definition of validity is the exemplified by the question: Are we measuring what we think we are answering?

Therefore, data validity has to do with how accurately the data obtained in the study represents the variables under study. It determines the degree to which the research is measuring what claims to be measured. There are two perspectives on validity;

Is the research investigation providing answers to the research questions for which it was undertaken?

If so, is it providing these answers using appropriate methods and procedures?

The results from the tools used in this study was cross checked to make sure the questions used answered what was required to be obtained. Data validity of the results from the tools

employed in the study was measured by content validity through the extent to which the test items represent research questions (research being measured).

### **3.9.2 Reliability**

Reliability is defined according to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) as the consistency of an instrument to yield the same results at different times. Other scholars like Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. The most common way of measuring reliability is piloting. Bell (1993) says that piloting is one way of checking reliability of instruments. In relation to this study, the findings from the pilot study were checked if the instruments were consistent with bringing out the desired responses to answer the set research questions of the study.

Reliability of the instruments was also determined by establishing whether there were ambiguities in the question items and whether the instruments brought out the type of data anticipated and also if the type of data desired was meaningfully analyzed in relation to research questions of the study. Necessary changes to the instruments were made in order to collect the required data for the questions after piloting and before conducting the main study.

### **3.10 Ethical considerations**

The term ethics usually refers to the moral principle and guiding conduct, which are held by a group or even a profession” (Wellington, 2015). Ethics also refer to discussions around what is considered acceptable or justifiable behavior in the practice of social research (Makhanya, 2006). Therefore, during this study, ethical issues were observed and guided by ethical guidelines of the University of Zambia in conducting this research.

The researcher applied for ethical clearance and permission was granted by the DRGS ethics committee to carry out the study. The researcher applied to UNZA’s Graduate School of Business (GSB) for an introductory letter to ZESCO Limited, and the letter was granted. The researcher submitted the introductory letter to ZESCO (through the Human Resource and Training Department) as well as sought permission to collect data and permission was granted. Respondents participated in the survey voluntarily. Questionnaires did not contain offensive, discriminatory, or other unacceptable language. The works of other authors used in this study were acknowledged by the referencing system.

### **3.11 Chapter summary**

This chapter outlined the methods used to gather data, the sampling methods used, the population and the sample size adopted in this study. The Chapter also presented the research design matrix, the research model. It also considered validity; reliability and ethical considerations applied when doing this research.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. For clarity and chronology, it is arranged by the three research questions that the study sought to answer as per the objectives. The chapter is organized into two main sections. The first section provides the demographic information of the respondents while section two gives the analysis for each of the following three study questions.

### 4.2 Demographic information of the respondents

The study sought to establish the information on the respondents used in the study with regards to the gender, marital status, age, level of education, type of employment, and occupation. These bio data, points at the respondents' appropriateness in answering the questions.

#### 4.2.1 Gender distribution of the respondents

The study sought to investigate on the gender characteristic of respondents in Lusaka district. The results are shown in Table 3.

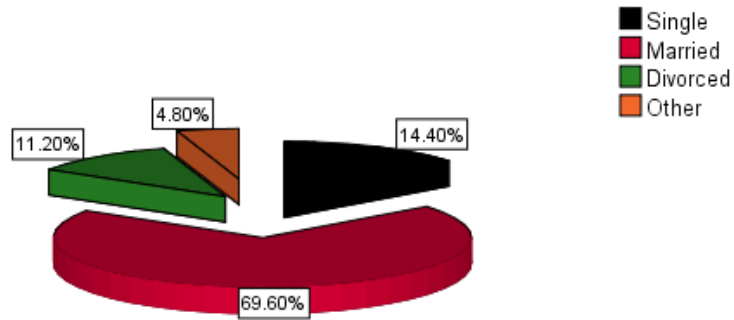
*Table 3: Gender distribution of respondents*

		<b>Frequenc y</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	Male	53	42.4	42.4	42.4
	Femal e	72	57.6	57.6	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The study findings in Table 3 above show that a majority of the respondent (57.6%) were female while (42.4%) were male. The study findings show that the information collected to investigate the bridging department communication gaps in Quasi-institutions reflected perspectives from both gender.

#### 4.2.2 Marital status of respondents

The respondents were requested to reveal their marital status because these variables could influence their ability to supply credible information about the variables that were involved in the study. The findings on these are summarized in Figure 7.



*Figure 7: Marital status of respondents*

The study findings in the Figure 7 show that 69.60% of the respondents were married, 11.20% were divorced, 14.80% were single, and 4.80% were others. These findings indicate majority of respondents were married and are therefore knowledgeable enough to provide information relevant to the study.

*Table 4: Age group distribution of respondents*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Valid</b>	21 to 30	52	41.6	41.6	41.6
	31 to 40	37	29.6	29.6	71.2
	41 to 50	22	17.6	17.6	88.8
	51 to 60	9	7.2	7.2	96.0
	61+	5	4.0	4.0	<b>100.0</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

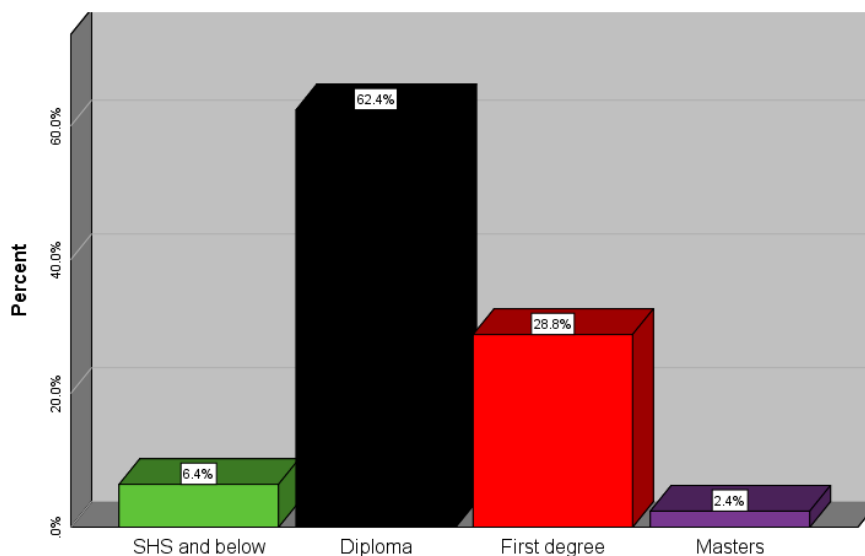
### 4.2.3 Age group distribution of respondents

The respondents' questionnaire also elicited information on their age groups because these variables could influence their ability to supply credible information about the variables that were involved in the study. The findings on these are summarized in Table 4.

The findings in Table 4 above reveal that the respondents who participated in the study, 41.6% of them were aged between 21 and 30 years, 29.6% of them were aged between 31 and 40 years, 17.6% of them were aged between 41 and 50 years, 7.2% of them were aged 51 between 60 years, and 4.0 % of them were 60 years and above. These findings indicate majority of the respondents who participated in this study were between 21 and 30 years and are therefore knowledgeable enough to provide information relevant to the study.

### 4.2.4 Level of education distribution of respondents

Information was also collected in the characteristics of the respondents' that were involved in the study. This information pertained to the respondents' level of education. The findings are summarized in Figure 8.

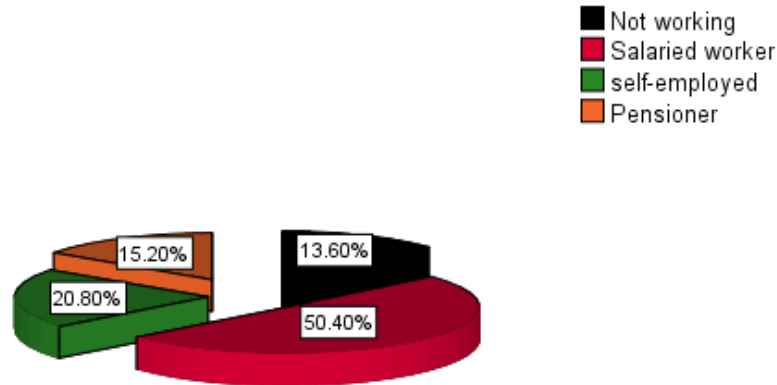


**Figure 8: Level of Education Distribution of Respondents.**

The study findings in Figure 8 show that 6.4% of the respondents had SHS and below, 62.4 % had Diploma, 28.8% had First degree, and 2.4% had Masters. These findings indicate majority of respondents had attained Diploma and are therefore knowledgeable enough to provide information relevant to the study.

#### 4.2.5 Type of employment distribution of respondents

The study also sought information of respondents' type of employment. The findings on these are summarized in Figure 9.

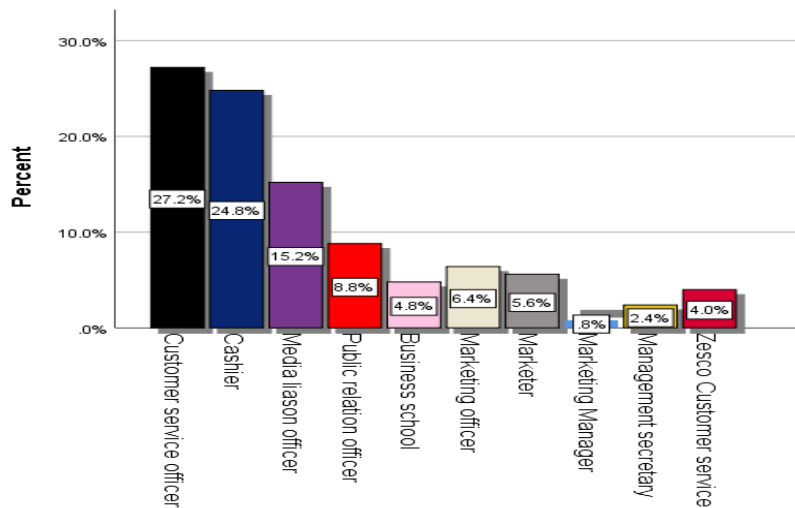


*Figure 9: Type of employment distribution of respondents*

The study findings in Figure 9 above, shows that 20.80% of the respondents were self-employed, 15.20% were pensioners, 13.60% were not working, and 50.40% were salaried workers.

#### 4.2.6 Occupation distribution of respondents

The study sought to establish occupation characteristic of respondents.



*Figure 10: Occupation distribution of respondents*

The findings reveal that most of the respondents were salaried workers. The findings are shown in Figure 10.

The findings in the table above reveal that the respondents who participated in the study, 27.2% were Customer service officers, 24.8% were Cashiers, 15.2% were Media liaison officers, 8.8% were Public relation officers, 4.8% were in Business development, 6.4% were Senior marketing officers, 5.6% were Marketing officers, 0.8% were Managers, 2.4% were Management secretaries, and 4.0% ZESCO general customer service staff. This suggests that the majority of the respondents who participated in the study were Customer service officers.

### 4.3 Personal conflicts between department managers and undertrained employees

The study sought to establish personal conflicts between department managers and undertrained employees with regards to dealing with conflict at work, if there are conflict at the place of work, if managers explore conflicts with other to find a lasting solution that meet everyone’s needs, if personal conflicts are always sorted out quickly by supervisors in departments.

#### 4.3.1 Dealing with conflict at work

In order to achieve this, the respondents were asked to indicate if they deal with conflict at their workplace. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 3 below:

**Table 5: Dealing with conflict at work**

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.419 <sup>a</sup>	1	.036		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	3.689	1	.055		
Likelihood Ratio	4.450	1	.035		
Fisher's Exact Test				.046	.027
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.384	1	.036		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 25.79.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 5 above shows that the results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 4.419 and the p-value was 0.036. The difference was statistically significant at 4.419, because p-value (0.036) was less than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggest that respondents deal with conflict at their place of work between department managers and undertrained employees.

#### 4.3.2 Conflict between departments in their company

The researcher sought to find out if there is conflict between departments in their company and the findings were as shown in Chi-square Test Table 6 below:

**Table 6: Conflict between departments in their company**

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.827 <sup>a</sup>	1	.020		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	2.837	1	.092		
Likelihood Ratio	4.513	1	.034		
Fisher's Exact Test				.059	.039
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.796	1	.051		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.60.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 6 above shows that the results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 3.827 and the p-value was 0.02. The difference was statistically significant at 3.827, because p-value (0.02) was less than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggest that respondents experience conflict between departments in their company.

**4.3.3 Managers explore conflict with others to find a lasting solution that meets everyone’s needs.**

Additionally, the study further sought to find out if managers explore conflicts with others to find a lasting solution that meet everyone’s needs. The findings were as shown in Chi-square Test Table 7 below:

**Table 7: Managers explore conflict with others to find a lasting solution that meets everyone’s needs.**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.859 <sup>a</sup>	1	.07		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	14.356	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	15.978	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.728	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 17.70.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 7 above shows that the results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 15.859 and the p-value was 0.07 the difference was statistically significant at of 15.859, because p-value (0.07) was greater than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggest that managers do not explore conflicts with others to find a lasting solution that meets everyone’s needs.

**4.3.4 Personal conflicts are always sorted out quickly by supervisors in departments.**

Besides, the study also sought to find out if personal conflicts are always sorted out quickly by supervisors in departments and the findings were as presented in Chi-square Test Table 8 below:

**Table 8: Personal conflicts are always sorted out quickly by supervisors in departments**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.773 <sup>a</sup>	1	.09		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	5.808	1	.016		
Likelihood Ratio	6.800	1	.009		
Fisher's Exact Test				.012	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.719	1	.010		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.24.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Table 8 above shows that the results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 6.773 and the p-value was 0.009. The difference was not statistically significant at of 6.773, because p-value (0.09) was greater than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggest that personal conflicts are not always sorted out quickly by supervisors in departments as managers do not explore the conflict to find a lasting solution that meet everyone's needs. .

#### **4.3.5 Conflict between managers and workers are always resolved amicably**

Additionally, the study further sought to find out if conflict between managers and workers are always resolved amicably. The findings were as shown in Chi-square Test Table 9 below:

**Table 9: Conflict between managers and workers are always resolved amicably**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.393 <sup>a</sup>	1	.08		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	11.680	1	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	20.494	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.286	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	125				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.56.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 9 above shows that the results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 13.393 and the p-value was 0.10. The difference was not statistically significant at 0.08, because p-value (0.08) was greater than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggest that personal conflicts are not always resolved amicably between department managers and undertrained employees.

#### 4.3.6 We are all responsible for conflicts resolution at the work place

The study sought to establish if everyone at the place of work is responsible for conflicts and the results were summarized in Chi-square Test Table 10 below:

**Table 10: We are all responsible for conflicts resolution at the work place**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.761 <sup>a</sup>	1	.0433		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	4.049	1	.0733		
Likelihood Ratio	2.009	1	.020		
Fisher's Exact Test				.06	.060
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.032	1	.025		
N of Valid Cases	125				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.00.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

The results from Table 10 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 3.761 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.0433) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that respondents at the place of work are responsible for conflicts resolution.

#### 4.3.7 Poor inter-personal communication is the main cause of conflicts in departments

Moreover, the study sought to find out if poor inter-personal communication is the main cause of conflicts in departments. The findings are summarized in Chi-square Test Table 11 below:

**Table 11: Poor inter-personal communication is the main cause of conflicts in departments**

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.073 <sup>a</sup>	1	.024		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	4.109	1	.043		
Likelihood Ratio	5.339	1	.021		
Fisher's Exact Test				.026	.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.032	1	.025		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 11 above shows that the results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 5.073 and the p-value was 0.024. The difference was statistically significant at 0.24, because p-value (0.024) was less than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggest that poor inter-personal communication is the main cause of conflicts within departments.

#### **4.3.8 Poor inter-departmental communication is the main cause of conflicts between departments**

Furthermore, the study sought to find out if poor inter-departmental communication is the main cause of conflicts between departments. However, the data collected was analysed and presented in Chi-square Test Table 12 below:

**Table 12: Poor Inter-Departmental Communication Is The Main Cause Of Conflicts Between Departments**

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.073 <sup>a</sup>	1	.012		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	4.109	1	.043		
Likelihood Ratio	5.339	1	.021		
Fisher's Exact Test				.026	.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.032	1	.025		
N of Valid Cases	125				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.00.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 12 above shows that the results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 0.012 and the p-value was 6.073. The difference was statistically significant at 0.012, because p-value (0.012) was less than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggest that poor inter-departmental communication is the main cause of conflicts between departments.

#### 4.4 Demoralised employees and broken information flow

The study sought to establish the relationship between demoralized employees and broken information flow, demoralisation brings about information gap between individuals and departments, poor leadership skills from management is the main causes of information brake down, heavy workload and lack of human resource is the main cause of conflict in departments, is it every employees ultimate responsibility to ensure conflict in the work place is managed more effectively?, Are staffs satisfied with the communication procedure in the department, is the evaluation of the internal newsletter excellent, and is there proper information sharing from supervisors in the departments. Questions which represent demoralized employees and broken information flow was presented to the respondents with the aim of establishing the relationship between demoralised employees and broken information flow. Chi-square Test analysis was used in this research paper in order to test demoralized employees and broken information flow effects.

##### 4.4.1 Are employees demoralised in your department/ company?

The study sought to establish if employees are demoralised in departments/company and the results were summarized in Chi-square Test Table 13 below:

**Table 13: Are employees demoralised in your department/ company?**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.013 <sup>a</sup>	1	.002		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	5.109	1	.063		
Likelihood Ratio	3.339	1	.051		
Fisher's Exact Test				.046	.020
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.032	1	.025		

N of Valid Cases	125			
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a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Results from Table 13 above shows that the results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 3.013 and the p-value was .002. Thus, the difference was statistically significant at of 0.02 because p-value (.002) was less than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggest that employees are demoralised.

#### 4.4.2 Does a demoralised workforce bring about information gaps between individuals and departments?

Respondents were asked if a demoralised workforce bring about information gaps between individuals and departments, and the results were summarized in Chi-square Test Table 14 below:

**Table 14: Does a demoralised workforce bring about information gaps between individuals and departments?**

##### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.13 <sup>a</sup>	1	.04		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	8.109	1	.093		
Likelihood Ratio	3.379	1	.051		
Fisher's Exact Test				.026	.040
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.032	1	.045		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

As depicted from Table 14 above, results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 9.13 and the p-value was .04. Thus, the difference was statistically significant at of .04 because p-value (.04) was less than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Based on these findings it can be deduced that demoralized employees bring about information gap between individuals and departments.

**4.4.3 Poor leadership skills from management is the main cause of information brake down**

Moreover, respondents were asked if poor leadership skills from management are the main causes of information brake down. The findings are as shown in Table 15 below:

**Table 15: Poor leadership skills from management is the main causes of information brake down**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.03 <sup>a</sup>	1	.016		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	3.149	1	.013		
Likelihood Ratio	5.309	1	.054		
Fisher's Exact Test				.026	.0015
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.232	1	.005		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 15 show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 8.03 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.016) is less than alpha 0.05 between yes and no observations. Therefore, findings reveal that poor leadership skills from management are the main causes of information brake down.

**4.4.4 Heavy workload and lack of human resource are the main causes of broken information flow in departments/company.**

Respondents also indicated what they think about heavy workload and lack of human resource as one of the main cause of broken information flow in departments/company. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 16 below.

**Table 16: Heavy workload and lack of human resource are the main causes of broken information flow in departments/company.**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.31 <sup>a</sup>	1	.013		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	3.049	1	.043		
Likelihood Ratio	5.009	1	.004		
Fisher's Exact Test				.006	.080
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.032	1	.025		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 16 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 2.31 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.013) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that heavy workload and lack of human resource is not the cause of broken information flow.

#### **4.4.5 Are staffs satisfied with the communication procedure in the department?**

Besides, respondents were asked if they are satisfied with the communication procedure in their departments. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 17 below:

**Table 17: Are staff satisfied with the communication procedure in the department?**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.101 <sup>a</sup>	1	.06		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	8.949	1	.034		
Likelihood Ratio	6.809	1	.070		
Fisher's Exact Test				.002	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.222	1	.084		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 17 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 9.10 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.06) is greater than alpha 0.05. Thus, findings reveal that respondents are not satisfied with the communication procedure in their departments.

**4.4.6 Is your overall evaluation of the internal newsletter excellent?**

In addition, respondents were asked if their evaluation/ rating of their internal newsletter are excellent. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 18 below:

*Table 18: Our newsletter is excellent about our communication skills in the departments*

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.04 <sup>a</sup>	1	.879		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	5.903	1	.09		
Likelihood Ratio	6.670	1	.047		
Fisher's Exact Test				.008	.12
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.44	1	.213		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Chi-square Test Table 18 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 11.04 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.879) is greater than alpha 0.05. Thus, findings reveal that respondents find their internal newsletter (communication) not excellent as it is not made available to all employees.

**4.4.7 is there proper information sharing from supervisors in the departments?**

In addition, respondents were asked if there is proper information sharing from supervisors in their departments. The findings are as shown in Table 19 below:

**Table 19: Is there proper information sharing from supervisors in our departments**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.24 <sup>a</sup>	1	.98		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	13.13	1	.67		
Likelihood Ratio	7.10	1	.021		
Fisher's Exact Test				.28	.092
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.74	1	.35		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 19 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 1.24 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.98) is greater than alpha 0.05. Thus, findings reveal that there is no proper information sharing from supervisors in their departments.

**4.5 Cultural diversity in the work place and Employees Disengagement**

The study sought establish cultural diversity in the work place and employees disengagement with regards to leadership in the department encourage diversity, management show that diversity is important through action, company respecting individuals and values their differences, company appreciating other races and ethnic grouping in departments, Personal discrimination at the company, employees of different backgrounds encouraged to apply for higher positions, and career development path for all employees at the company. Questions which represent cultural diversity in the work place and employees disengaged were presented to the respondents with the aim of establishing whether cultural diversity and disengaged employees lead to communication gaps. Chi-square Test analysis was used in this research paper in order to test cultural diversity in the work place and employees' disengagement.

**4.5.1 Does Leadership in the company encourage diversity?**

The study sought to establish if leadership in company encourages diversity and the results were summarized in Chi-square Test Table 20 below:

**Table 20: Leadership in the company encourage diversity**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.61 <sup>a</sup>	1	.092		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	3.109	1	.023		
Likelihood Ratio	3.339	1	.077		
Fisher's Exact Test				.022	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	.032	1	.038		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table.

Results from Table 20 above shows that the results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 28.61 and the p-value was .092. Thus, the difference was not statistically significant at of 0.92 because p-value (.092) was greater than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Hence, the results suggest that leadership in the company does not encourage diversity.

#### **4.5.2 Management show that diversity is important through action**

Respondents were asked if management show that diversity is important through action and results were summarized in Table 21 below:

**Table 21: Management show that diversity is important through action**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	22.34 <sup>a</sup>	1	.84		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	9.109	1	.03		
Likelihood Ratio	3.29	1	.001		
Fisher's Exact Test				.001	.011
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.132	1	.005		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

As depicted from Table 21 above, results from chi-square test yielded a chi-square value of 22.34 and the p-value was .84. Thus, the difference was statistically significant at of .84, p-value (.84) was greater than alpha level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Based on these findings it can be deduced that management does not show that diversity is important through action.

#### 4.5.3 Company respecting individuals and values their differences

Moreover, respondents were asked if the company respect individuals and values their differences. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 22 below:

**Table 22: Company respecting individuals and values their differences**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.01 <sup>a</sup>	1	.024		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	10.9	1	.056		
Likelihood Ratio	5.309	1	.08		
Fisher's Exact Test				.064	.05
Linear-by-Linear Association	.232	1	.009		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 22 show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 13.01 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.024) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that the company respect individuals and values their differences.

#### 4.5.4 Company appreciating other races and ethnic grouping in the company

The study also sought to find out if the company appreciates other races and ethnic grouping in company. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 23 below.

**Table 23: Company appreciating other races and ethnic grouping in departments**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.355 <sup>a</sup>	1	.03		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	11.9	1	.0553		
Likelihood Ratio	.9	1	.009		
Fisher's Exact Test				.01	.0220
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.332	1	.0009		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 23 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 19.355 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.03) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that the company appreciates other races and ethnic grouping in departments.

#### **4.5.5 Personal discrimination at the company**

The study sought to establish if respondents experience personal discrimination their place of work and the results were summarized in Chi-square Test Table 24 below:

**Table 24: Personal discrimination at the company**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.71 <sup>a</sup>	1	.0489		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.449	1	.033		
Likelihood Ratio	2.999	1	.002		
Fisher's Exact Test				.006	.0330
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.032	1	.08		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 24 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 15.71 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.0489) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that respondents experience personal discrimination at their place of work.

#### 4.5.6 Employees of different backgrounds encouraged to apply for higher positions

Besides, respondents were asked if employees of different backgrounds encouraged to apply for higher positions. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 25 below:

**Table 25: Employees of different backgrounds encouraged to apply for higher positions**

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.01 <sup>a</sup>	1	.07		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.909	1	.074		
Likelihood Ratio	.09	1	.091		
Fisher's Exact Test				.052	.08
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.22	1	.084		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 25 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 5.01 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.07) is greater than alpha 0.05 between. Thus, findings reveal employees of different backgrounds are not encouraged to apply for higher positions.

#### 4.5.7 Career development path for all employees at the company

In addition, respondents were asked if there is career development path for all employees at their place of work. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 26 below:

**Table 26: Career development path for all employees at the company**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.74 <sup>a</sup>	1	.009		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.903	1	.04		
Likelihood Ratio	.70	1	.017		
Fisher's Exact Test				.08	.02
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.04	1	.23		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 17.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 26 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 12.74 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.009) is less than alpha 0.05. Thus, findings reveal that there is career development path for all employees at their place of work.

**4.6 Poor leadership and limited feedback**

The study sought to establish data on poor leadership and limited feedback with regards to finding out if leaders at ZESCO keep people informed about what is happening, if employers have access to the things they need to do their job, if they have access to the learning and development you need to do their job well, and if the systems and processes at ZESCO support them to do their work effectively. Questions which represent poor leadership and limited feedback were presented to the respondents with the aim of establishing conflict between department managers and understanding employers. Chi-square Test analysis was used in this research paper in order to test poor leadership and limited feedback.

**4.6.1 Leaders at ZESCO keep people informed about what is happening**

The study sought to establish if leaders at ZESCO keep people informed about what is happening and the results were summarized in Chi-square Test Table 27 below:

**Table 27: Leaders at ZESCO keep people informed about what is happening**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.01 <sup>a</sup>	1	.078		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.17	1	.003		
Likelihood Ratio	7.9	1	.012		
Fisher's Exact Test				.02	.05
Linear-by-Linear Association	.092	1	.006		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 27 show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 18.01 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.078) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that leaders at ZESCO do not keep people informed about what is happening.

**4.6.2 Employees have access to the things they need to do their job**

Respondents were asked if employees have access to the things they need to do their job and results were summarized in Chi-square Test Table 28 below:

**Table 28: Employees have access to the things they need to do their job**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.83 <sup>a</sup>	1	.004		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	2.90	1	.23		
Likelihood Ratio	7.89	1	.0891		
Fisher's Exact Test				.561	.093

Linear-by-Linear Association	6.54	1	.675		
N of Valid Cases	125				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.00.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

As depicted from Table 28 above, the results show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 2.83 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.04) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings indicate employers have access to the things they need to do their job.

#### 4.6.3 Employees have access to the learning and development they need to do their job well.

Moreover, respondents were asked if they have access to the learning and development they need to do their job well. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 29 below:

**Table 29: Employees have access to the learning and development**

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.13 <sup>a</sup>	1	.014		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	1.97	1	.046		
Likelihood Ratio	4.05	1	.08		
Fisher's Exact Test				.04	.035
Linear-by-Linear Association	.142	1	.009		
N of Valid Cases	125				

- a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.00.
- b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 29 show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 9.13 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.014) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that employers have access to the learning and development they need to do their job well.

#### 4.6.4 Systems and processes at ZESCO support employees to do their work effectively

Besides, respondents were asked if the systems and processes at ZESCO support them to do their work effectively. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 30 below:

**Table 30: Systems and processes at ZESCO support employees to do their work effectively**

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.43 <sup>a</sup>	1	.003		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	8.87	1	.46		
Likelihood Ratio	6.103	1	.67		
Fisher's Exact Test				.079	.59
Linear-by-Linear Association	.002	1	.45		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 19.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 31 show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 3.43 which is statistically significant because the p-value (0.03) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that the systems and processes at ZESCO support them to do their work effectively.

#### 4.7 Unclear objectives of roles for the staff

The study sought to establish data on unclear objectives of roles for the staff with regards to finding out if the responsibility for achieving objectives is assigned and documented, if the information system provide management with necessary reports on the department's performance relative to establish objectives, including external and internal information, if procedures been implemented in the department verify the accuracy of received information, if the information is provided to the right people in sufficient detail and on time to enable employees carry out their responsibility, if management communicate to employees duties and control responsibilities in an effective manner, if communication channels established for people to report suspected improprieties, if communication flow across the company

adequately (e.g. from department to department) to enable people to discharge their responsibilities effectively, and if management take timely and appropriate follow-up action on communication received from customers, vendors, regulators, or other external parties.

Questions which represent poor leadership and limited feedback were presented to the respondents with the aim of establishing conflict between department managers and undertrained employees. Chi-square Test analysis was used in this research paper in order to test unclear objectives of roles for the staff.

#### 4.7.1 Responsibility for achieving objectives is assigned and documented

Respondents were asked if the responsibility for achieving objectives is assigned and documented and the results were summarized in Chi-square Test Table 31 below:

**Table 31: Responsibility for achieving objectives is assigned and documented**

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.81 <sup>a</sup>	1	.084		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	4.77	1	.003		
Likelihood Ratio	4.29	1	.003		
Fisher's Exact Test				.01	.035
Linear-by-Linear Association	.0782	1	.072		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 31 show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 4.81 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.084) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that the responsibility for achieving objectives is not assigned and documented.

**4.7.2 Information system provide management with necessary reports on the department’s performance**

Respondents were asked if the information system provides management with necessary reports on the department’s performance relative to establish objectives, including external and internal information and results were summarized in Chi-square Test Table 32 below:

*Table 32: Information system provide management with necessary reports on the department’s performance*

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.15 <sup>a</sup>	1	.062		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	8.90	1	.03		
Likelihood Ratio	4.19	1	.91		
Fisher's Exact Test				.061	.023
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.54	1	.15		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

As depicted from Table 32 above, the results show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 15.15 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.062) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings indicate the information system does not provide management with necessary reports on the department’s performance relative to establish objectives, including external and internal information.

**4.7.3 Procedures been implemented in the department verify the accuracy of received information**

Moreover, respondents were asked if procedures been implemented in the department verify the accuracy of received information. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 33 below:

**Table 33: Procedures been implemented in the department verify the accuracy of received information**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.81 <sup>a</sup>	1	.074		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	11.7	1	.056		
Likelihood Ratio	3.45	1	.026		
Fisher's Exact Test				.089	.07
Linear-by-Linear Association	.76	1	.025		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 33 show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 3.81 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.074) is less than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that procedures been implemented in the department do not verify the accuracy of received information.

**4.7.4 Information is provided to the right people in sufficient detail and on time**

Besides, respondents were asked if the information is provided to the right people in sufficient detail and on time to enable employers carry out their responsibility. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 34 below:

**Table 34: Information is provided to the right people in sufficient detail and on time**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.73 <sup>a</sup>	1	.68		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	4.8	1	.78		

Likelihood Ratio	5.4	1	.89		
Fisher's Exact Test				.029	.19
Linear-by-Linear Association	.022	1	.45		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 34 show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 23.73 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.68) is greater than alpha 0.05. Therefore, findings reveal that the information is not provided to the right people in sufficient detail and on time to enable employees carry out their responsibility.

#### **4.7.5 Management communicates to employees' duties and control responsibilities in an effective manner**

Besides, respondents were asked if management communicate to employers' duties and control responsibilities in an effective manner. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 35 below:

***Table 35: Management communicates to employees' duties and control responsibilities in an effective manner***

#### **Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.76 <sup>a</sup>	1	.76		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	4.67	1	.084		
Likelihood Ratio	3.8	1	.088		
Fisher's Exact Test				.082	.098
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.9	1	.058		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

#### 4.7.6 Communication channels established for people to report suspected improprieties

In addition, respondents were asked if communication channels established for people to report suspected improprieties, if communication flow across the company adequately (e.g. from department to department) to enable people to discharge their responsibilities effectively. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 36 below:

**Table 36: Communication channels established for people to report suspected improprieties**

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	41.45 <sup>a</sup>	1	.59		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	5.903	1	.99		
Likelihood Ratio	6.670	1	.047		
Fisher's Exact Test				.038	.78
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.8	1	.63		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 36 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 41.45 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.59) is greater than alpha 0.05 between. Thus, findings reveal that communication channels established for people to report suspected improprieties, if communication flow across the company adequately (e.g. from department to department) does not enable people to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

#### 4.7.7 Management takes timely and appropriate follow-up action on communication

In addition, respondents were asked if management take timely and appropriate follow-up action on communication received from customers, vendors, regulators, or other external parties. The findings are as shown in Chi-square Test Table 37 below:

**Table 37: Management take timely and appropriate follow-up action on communication**

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.84 <sup>a</sup>	1	.78		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	13.13	1	.31		
Likelihood Ratio	7.10	1	.38		
Fisher's Exact Test				.78	.67
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.7	1	.95		
N of Valid Cases	125				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16.00.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The results from Table 37 above show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 15.84 which is not statistically significant because the p-value (0.78) is greater than alpha 0.05. Thus, findings reveal that management does not take timely and appropriate follow-up action on communication received from customers, vendors, regulators, or other external parties.

#### 4. 8 Summary of the Findings

Results have shown that there are some existing communication gaps in the organization due to personal conflicts between departments with regards to managers not exploring conflicts to find a lasting solution that meet everyone’s needs, personal conflicts are not always sorted out quickly by supervisors and managers, poor inter-personal communication, and poor inter-departmental communication between departments. Study findings also shows that employees are demoralized due to conflict in departments, poor leadership skills from management, employees not being satisfied with the communication procedure in their

department, newsletters are not excellent about their communication skills in the departments, and poor information sharing from supervisors in our departments. Besides, study findings show that cultural diversity is a contributing factor to the existing communication gaps as leadership does not encourage diversity nor show its importance through action. Hence employees remain disengaged. The study findings further reveal that managers and supervisors in the organization do not always keep people informed about the happenings in the organization, hence creating vacuums, room for speculation and dependence on grapevine information, which in the long run gives birth to communication gaps. Furthermore, the study has established that unclear objectives of roles for the staff have contributed to the existing departmental communication gaps.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses research findings that are presented in chapter 4. The purpose of this study was to bridge departmental communication gaps in Quasi – Institutions using ZESCO Limited as a case study. To obtain results that related to this purpose, a questionnaire was formulated based on the themes in the research model in chapter three. The results obtained following data collection and analysis validated the research model, which in turn addressed the research objectives in chapter one.

### **5.2 Discussion of Results**

This discusses results obtained in an effort to answer the research questions in chapter one.

#### **5.2.1 Communication gaps within and between departments in Quasi-Institutions?**

The study revealed that there are communication gaps within and between departments in Quasi-Institutions. This category of communication gap is as a result of attitudinal barriers in the manner the duo communicates. According to Tannen (2013) attitudinal barriers are communication gaps which are held by different people towards others. For instance, if a manager has a poor attitude towards the junior staff, communication between them may not be effective, leading to a communication gap. This usually happens when a manager has the tendency of imposing things on the junior staff or intimidating them, the junior staff may not be free to share information to their superiors (managers). Generally, it can be argued that this type of communication gap indicated above also applies to some members in the departments who have the negative attitude towards the employees who do not belong to their department. This negative attitude brings about communication gaps between employees in different departments. This is the reason why the results also indicate that there is a communication gap between employees in different departments.

Besides, findings also revealed that there are communication gaps within and between departments in ZESCO caused by behavioral barriers. This occurs when employees within the department display a behavior which prevents them from consulting others when they do not know something, hence hindering them from learning and knowing more information from their colleagues. This further encompasses a situation where an individual has

stereotyping views towards other people; they make conclusions about those people before they acquire more information from them. In the same view, a study by Brennan (2004) found that there is also information gap when the departments stereotype against each other. That is because some departments have the tendency of judging other departments based on the past experiences. Additionally, research findings have shown that there are cultural gaps which contributes to communication gaps between departments. In view of this finding, Luthans (2010) reported that cultures of some departments are barriers to smooth communication because they tend to apply long and complicated channels of communication. In addition, D'Aprix (1996) emphasises that when the departments lack the spirit of urgency, they usually delay to communicate the information to the other relevant departments. As a result, the information may be distorted or some files end up missing because of long period of communication. Furthermore, results also suggest that there is a communication gap between departmental managers, this happens when some departmental managers feel that their departments are more superior to others. Some departmental managers have the tendency of judging other managers based on the past experiences and also do not what to take advice from them because of their rankings. This finding aligns with Charles (1998) who contended that when the employees are not regularly brought together, they tend to develop unhealthy competition and they begin to think that one department is superior to the other. Based on the above finding, I can infer that if some departmental managers feel that their departments are more superior to others, it breeds people-people communication gaps. This however means that, when one employee needs information from another in order to execute a task, the transfer of information becomes a critical part of the business process. When employees fail to pass on the appropriate information to their counterparts in a timely, concise, and accurate manner, inefficiencies and errors can occur. My argument is in agreement with Hills (2009) who on his study entitled "challenges of information delivery in organization" concluded that lack of clear communication channel also contribute to communication gaps among departments. This usually happens when the employees do not really know how their organizational hierarchy flows. In addition, this finding is in line with information theory which is concerned with how information travels with the fewest mistakes.

### **5.3 Causes of communication gaps within and between departments in Quasi-Institutions?**

The findings below validated the research model which in turn answered Research Question two:

#### **5.3.1 Personal conflicts between department managers and undertrained Employees**

With regards to personal conflicts between department managers and undertrained employees, study findings revealed that there are communication gaps due to the various existing conflicts within the organization such as managers not exploring conflicts with others to find a lasting solution that meets everyone's needs, personal conflicts not always sorted out quickly by supervisors in departments, and conflicts between managers and junior staff (undertrained employees) are not always sorted out amicably. Literature reviewed has also shown that communication gaps exist with the organization as a result of supervisors and managers not solving conflict issues on time and poor conflict management skills that causes conflict escalation and negative results (Zhang, Cao & Tjosvold, 2011; Lester, Parnell, & Carraher, 2010).

Additionally, the study has established that poor inter-personal and inter-departmental communications are the causes of communication gaps in the organization. The results of this study are in harmony with the study done by several researchers who found that when employees from different departments perceive they have competitive interdepartmental goals, they expect each other to work for their own department's goals at the expense of other departments' goals. They are suspicious that if they identify issues and mistakes that others may use this knowledge against them to obstruct the goal progress so that they can "win" and in the end this cause communication gaps between different departments (Scott & Kowalski, 2011; Umphress, Bingham, & Mitchell, 2010). In fact, Aust (2004) explains that when interdepartmental goals are perceived negatively related, employees from different departments doubt that they will combine their information and ideas to solve identified conflicts.

#### **5.3.2 Demoralised employees and broken information flow**

The results indicate that there are existing communication gaps in the organization as a result of demoralized employees and broken information flow. However, employees are demoralized due to conflicts in their departments and the organization at large, poor

leadership skills from management causing information breakdown, employees are not satisfied with the communication procedures in their departments, not impressed with communication through the newsletter as it is not made available to all employees, and due to lack of proper information sharing by supervisors in their departments. This finding is aligned to Newstrom and Devis (2013) who explained that poor communication or writing skills also contributes to communication gaps amongst the departments. That is because when the letters of communication are either not clear, then the corresponding action may not be quickly obtained because of poor communication skill. This is because each employee in that department will be thinking that another employee will handle the case.

In addition, a similar result was concluded by a study done by Holtz (2004) who observed that long communication procedure leading to breakdown in communication. That is because one letter needs to be approved by many officers, this means that when one officer is not available, then the letter will be stack in that office not until that officer reports for work. As a result, some information is greatly delayed. This situation causes the people to lose the confidence in the system of operations and communication of an organization. Moreover, literature has also shown that poor leadership skills by superiors contributes to information and communication breakdown (Edwards & Peccei, 2010; Jiang & Law, 2012).

### **5.3.3 Cultural diversity in the workplace and Employees Disengaged**

The findings suggest that there are departmental communication gaps in the organization owing to cultural diversity and disengaged employees. The results further suggest that not only does leadership in the organization fail to encourage diversity, management also does not show that diversity is important through action. Further, the results suggest that communication gaps are as a result of fear of some employees to speak out and share divergent views as they have witnessed discrimination in their organization, and that employees of different backgrounds are not encouraged to apply for higher positions. The findings of this study are supported by the study done by Luthans (2010) who claimed that differences in cultural values, beliefs and attitudes may result in miscommunication. Similarly, a study by Clernons (2003) found that the work culture of some departments are barriers to smooth communication because some departments have long and complicated channels of communication. Based on these findings, I can infer that differences in cultural norms, beliefs, philosophy, and attitudes causes communication gaps in different departments. As a result, the information may be distorted or some files end up missing

because of long period of communication. Indeed, most public offices have the tendency of heaping the incoming files for a long period of time, they delay acting upon the files which needs their attention. It is for this reason that most files go missing from public offices.

#### **5.3.4 Poor leadership and limited feedback**

Study findings show that poor leadership and limited feedback lead to communication gaps between departments as a result of leaders not always keeping people informed about what is happening, employees only knowing about some developments in their organization through the press (electronic and print media). In view of this finding, the 2015 CIPD survey on conflict found that the number one cause of communication gaps in a workplace is poor leadership or styles of working and conflict with one's line manager or colleagues is most prevalent (Gifford, 2015). It has been argued that in order to bridge communication breakdown between departments, managers or supervisors should poses good leadership skill. Moreover, organization or companies should provide for a number of conflict management practices or training practices, based on rights-based practices, interest-based practices, leadership practices, and power-based process, if necessary, depending on the situation (Gifford, 2015).

#### **5.3.5 Unclear objectives of roles for staff.**

Study findings have shown that unclear objectives of roles for staff lead to communication gaps with and between departments. The results further reveal that the communication gaps are as a result of responsibilities for achieving objectives not being assigned and documented, information system not providing management with the necessary reports on the department's performance relative to establish objectives, including external and internal information, procedures being implemented in the department does not verify the accuracy of received information, information is not provided to the right people in sufficient details and on time to enable employers carry out their responsibility, management does not communicate to employers duties and control responsibilities in an effective manner, and that management does not take timely and appropriate follow-up action on communication received from customers, vendors, regulators, or other external parties. Similarly, Putnam and Poole (1987) viewed the competition for resources, doing tasks not assigned to you, coordination of systems, work distribution, poor communication strategies by managers and supervisors, and participation in decision making as key factors to conflict in organizations. In addition, researchers have argued that the rising conflicts between departments within

organizations are attributed to the increasing strains produced by resource and workflow interdependence between departments and differences in their short-term objectives and their desires for autonomy (Gresham et al., 2006; Lovelace et al., 2001).

Based on the findings, I can argue that clear goals and objectives of any organization can enhance communication because by ensuring that employees are on the same page regarding objectives, goals, priorities and plans, mission, and vision it decreases the chances that dysfunctional conflict will occur due to differences over facts, goals or methods. My argument is supported by Lattimore and colleagues (2004) who postulated that when an organization has clear objectives, values, and mission, it can achieve effective employee communication and results can include satisfied and productive employees.

#### 5.4 Developed model for how communication gaps within and between departments can be bridged in Quasi-Institutions

With regards to develop a communication model that will enhance communication and bridge intra and inter departmental communication in ZESCO Limited and other Quasi - Institutions, Figure 11 below illustrates the model proposed in this study.

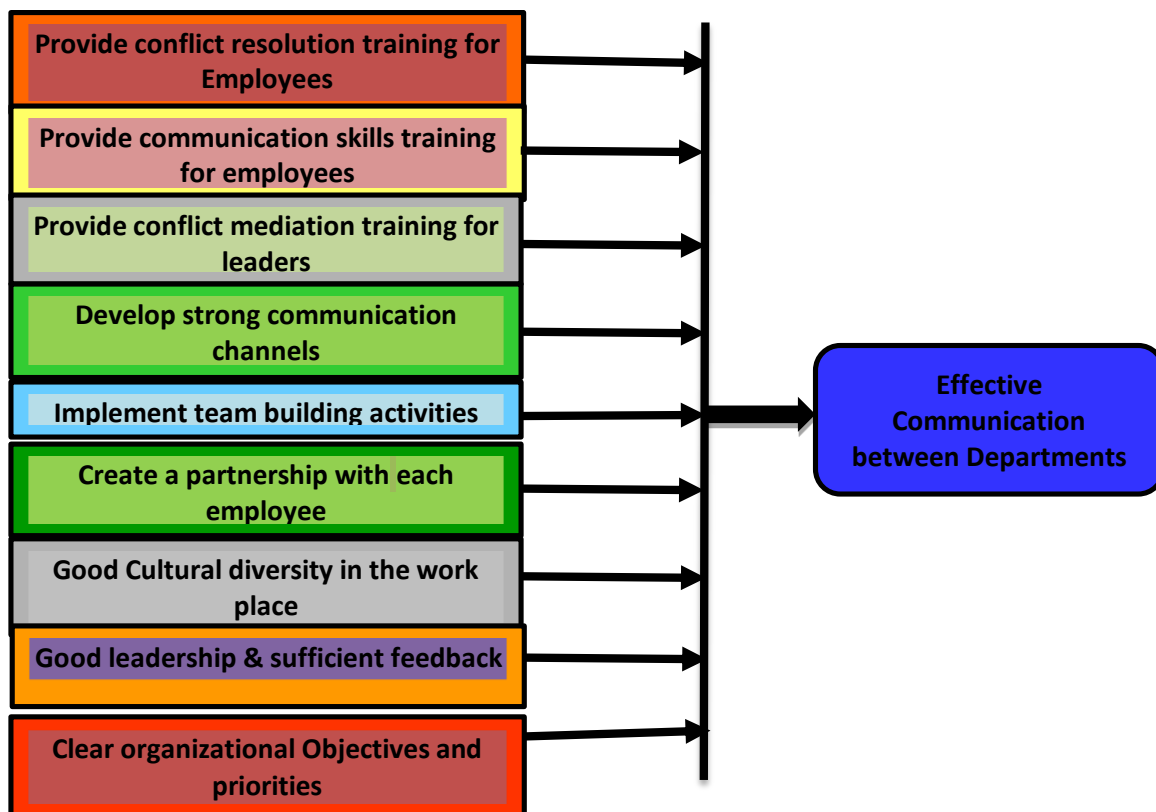


Figure 11: Proposed communication model

The above model explains that if conflict resolution training for employees, communication skills training for employees, conflict mediation training for leaders, develop strong communication channels, implement team building activities, create a partnership with each employee, provide good cultural diversity in the work place, good leadership and sufficient feedback, and clear organizational objectives and priorities are put into consideration, then communication gaps can be bridged within and between departments in an organisation. Below is a discussion on how each of the identified causes of communication gaps will be addressed by the proposed model.

#### **5.4.1 Provide conflict resolution training for employees**

Generally, providing conflict resolution training for employees gives them more assurance in their capability to resolve both personal and professional conflict can bridge communication gaps between departments. Conflict resolution training makes people more effective on sorting out minor conflicts as they occur. Therefore as proposed by the model, providing conflict resolution training for all employees will educate and equip them with more knowledge on conflict management, thereby reducing or alleviating conflicts between managers and undertrained employees, enable managers to explore conflicts with others to find a lasting solution that meets everyone's needs and sort out personal conflicts and other types of conflicts quickly and amicably. Once this is done, communication gaps caused as a result of demoralized employees due to conflicts in the organisation will be no more.

#### **5.4.2 Providing communication skills training for employees**

Providing communication skills training for employees can increase their ability to communicate effectively with a diverse range of individuals, and manage the communication problems that are often at the heart of organizational conflict. Once employees are subjected to communication training skills as proposed by the model, communication gaps caused as a result of poor inter-personal and inter-departmental communication will be a thing of the past. Employees at all levels will learn to appreciate the importance of communicating properly and peacefully with one another; and how that impacts the overall objectives of the organisation.

### **5.4.3 Provide conflict mediation training for leaders**

Providing conflict mediation training for leaders so that organizational leaders should improve their conflict mediation skills and help employees resolve the conflicts that will inevitably arise.

### **5.4.4 Develop strong communication channels**

Besides, developing strong communication channels in order to improve communication within a team or organization by strategically employing informational and problem-solving meetings can bridge communication gaps. It is rare that communication gaps can exist in the organisation once strong and well defined communication channels are established. Strong communication channels will rectify communication problems that exist within/between department and across the organisation as a result of weak communication channels. This will ensure smooth top-down, vertical-horizontal communication and vice versa.

### **5.4.6 Creating a partnership with each employee**

Creating a partnership with each employee could give them a chance to grow and learn new skills. This can show them how management can help them meet their goals within the context of meeting the organization's goals. Through partnership, management can be helped to provide specific feedback about the performance of the employee, the department, and the organization and also strive to create a work environment that is open, trusting, and fun. This will enhance communication between management and its subordinates as well as prevent broken information flow.

### **5.4.5 Implementing team building activities**

Also, implementing team building activities can significantly improve team relationships and performance through the team development process. Such activities could provide an opportunity for team members to get more comfortable with each other, identify acceptable behaviours and modes of interaction, and be able to determine how team problems and conflicts can be resolved. Team building activities aids employees within and between departments create a rapport and prevent intra-departmental and inter-departmental communication gaps.

#### **5.4.7 Develop diversity management training**

Additionally, developing diversity management training can ensure effective management of cultural diversity. Amid increased globalization at workplaces, diversity management training programs such as cross-cultural training can help overseas managers to learn about different cultures and help them develop skills of managing cultural diversity issues. That so doing can significantly decrease the potential costly failure due to cultural difference problems. Moreover, not only managers, diversity management training should be implemented at all levels in the organization. This will show that management and its leadership encourages diversity and that diversity is important. This will further eliminate communication gaps caused as a result of fear of some employees to speak out and share divergent views.

#### **5.4.8 Good leadership and sufficient feedback**

Good leadership and providing sufficient feedback to the employees can enhance and bridge communication gaps between departments. Thus, managers and supervisors in organizations should be able to keep people informed about what is happening. In order to bridge communication break down between departments, managers or supervisors should poses good leadership skills. Employees should have first-hand information about their organisation, instead of only getting to know about some developments in their organisation through electronic or print media. This only creates communication vacuums leading to rumor mongering and encourages grapevine communication.

#### **5.4.9 Sharing information with employees**

Besides, sharing information with employees whenever possible with their supervisors can bridge communication breakdown. In view of this, supervisors can also share information with the employees through weekly and or biweekly meetings. In addition, the supervisor should include in their meetings any information that is bringing about a change within the organization. If representatives and or unit leader have questions about other personnel issues the supervisor should direct them to the correct source that can give them an answer. This will eradicate communication gaps caused by poor information sharing in an organisation.

#### **5.4.10 Clear organizational objectives and priorities**

Last but not the least, making sure employees are clear about organizational goals and priorities will reduce communication gaps caused by unclear roles of staff and blurred

organizational objectives. There is need for managers to make sure employees are clear about organizational goals and priorities. Generally, speaking, conflicts occur because of differences over facts, goals, methods or values. By ensuring that employees (especially the members of a given work team) are on the same page regarding objectives, priorities and plans, the model will decrease the chances that dysfunctional conflict and communication gaps will occur due to differences over facts, goals or methods.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there are some existing communication gaps within and between departments at ZESCO with regards to managers not exploring conflicts to find a lasting solution that meet everyone's needs, personal conflicts are not always sorted out quickly by supervisors and managers, poor inter-personal communication, and poor inter-departmental communication between departments. The study also established that employees are demoralized due to conflict in departments, poor leadership skills from management, employees not being satisfied with the communication procedure in their department, newsletters are not excellent about their communication skills in the departments, and poor information sharing from supervisors in the departments.

Besides, the study has revealed that cultural diversity is a contributing factor to the existing communication gaps within departments and other Units in Quasi-Institutions at ZESCO as a result of; leadership does not encourage diversity nor show its importance through action, personal discrimination at the company and that employees of different backgrounds are not encouraged to apply for higher positions.

The study further reveals that unclear objectives of roles for the staff have also contributed to the existing intra and inter departmental communication gaps at ZESCO with regards to achieving objectives not being assigned and documented, information system not providing management with the necessary reports on the department's performance relative to establish objectives, including external and internal information, procedures being implemented in the department does not verify the accuracy of received information, information is not provided to the right people in sufficient details and on time to enable employers carry out their responsibility, management does not communicate to employers duties and control responsibilities in an effective manner, and that management does not take timely and appropriate follow-up action on communication received from customers, vendors,

regulators, or other external parties. In view of the findings I made the following recommendations:

## **5.6 Recommendations**

From the results of the study, as well as the research gaps noted in the literature review, This study recommends the followings:

Provide conflict resolution training which gives people more assurance in their capability to resolve both personal and professional conflict.

Provide communication skills training for employees in order to increase their ability to communicate effectively with a diverse range of individuals, and manage the communication problems that are often at the heart of organizational conflict.

Provide conflict mediation training for leaders so that organizational leaders should improve their conflict mediation skills and help employees resolve the conflicts that will inevitably arise.

Develop strong communication channels in order to improve communication within a team or organization by strategically employing informational and problem-solving meetings.

Implement team building activities which will significantly improve team relationships and performance through team development process. Such activities provide an opportunity for team members to get more comfortable with each other, to identify acceptable behaviors and modes of interaction, and to determine how team problems and conflicts will be resolved.

Create a partnership with each employee. This will give them a chance to grow and learn new skills.

Management should be helping employees meet their goals within the context of meeting the organization's goals. This will illuminate conflict between different departments.

Management should provide specific feedback about the performance of the employee, the department, and the organization, strive to create a work environment that is open, trusting, and fun, and encourage new ideas and initiatives.

Develop a diversity management training to ensure effective management of cultural diversity. Amid increased globalization at workplaces, diversity management training

programs such as cross-cultural training can help overseas managers to learn about different cultures and help them develop skills of managing cultural diversity issues.

Managers should be sharing information with employees whenever possible i.e. weekly and or biweekly meetings.

Ensure that managers treat everyone fairly as some managers are accused of preferential treatment which triggers conflicts; it is therefore, incumbent upon organizational leaders to make sure they are behaving in a fair manner.

Make sure employees are clear about organizational goals and priorities. Generally, speaking, conflicts occur because of difference over facts, goals, methods or values. By ensuring that employees (especially the members of a given work team) are on the same page regarding objectives, priorities and plans, you will decrease the chances that dysfunctional conflict will occur due to differences over facts, goals or methods.

### **5.7 Opportunities for Future Research**

Considering the findings of this study as well as the limitations highlighted some further research should be carried out in order to gain a deeper insight into the topic, further studies could include:

A study can be undertaken to cover ZESCO branches in other parts of the country other than Lusaka to understand if the results are applicable across the organization. Sample size can be determined using random sampling to enable generalization of research findings. A mixed method study approach can be selected for future research as current research used descriptive survey and results may be limited.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**



**The University of Zambia**  
**Graduate School of Business**

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**By Joan. M. Mumba (GSB152104)**

For more information or any queries, kindly get in touch on 0977- 479644

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at the University of Zambia in my final stage, pursuing a Masters in Corporate communication, as partial fulfillment for the award of a Master's degree, I am conducting a baseline study on: "Bridging departmental communication gaps in Quasi- Institutions – A case study of ZESCO Limited."

You have been purposively sampled to provide information for the topic indicated above. The information being collected is purely for academic purposes as such, it will be treated with maximum confidentiality.

Subsequently, you are not supposed to indicate your name or any personal information that can lead to revealing of your identity.

Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated.

For further information or any queries, kindly get in touch with the following:

Project Supervisor: Dr. Jackson Phiri (0966 693 731) or

Coordinator: Ms. Jessie Nkowanani (0979-140866)

**(Section A) Demographic information (Please tick [√])**

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Marital Status: Single [ ] Married [ ] Divorced [ ] Other [ ]
3. Age: 20 or under [ ] 21-30 [ ] 31-40 [ ] 41-50 [ ] 51-60 [ ] 61+ [ ]
4. Highest level of education: SHS and below [ ] Diploma [ ] First degree [ ] Masters [ ] Ph.D. [ ]
5. Type of employment: Not working [ ] Salaried worker [ ] Self-employed [ ] Pensioner [ ]
6. Occupation (Please specify, e.g. "University lecturer in business school")

**Section B Part one: Personal conflicts between department managers & Undertrained Employees**

**(Please tick [√])**

Do you usually deal with conflict at your work place?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are there conflicts between departments in your company?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do managers explore conflict with others to find a lasting solution that meets everyone's needs?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are personal conflicts always sorted out quickly by supervisors in departments?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are conflict between managers and workers always resolved amicably?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Is it every employee's ultimate responsibility to ensure conflict in the work place is managed more effectively?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Poor inter-personal communication is the main cause of conflicts in departments Yes [ ] No [ ]

Poor inter-departmental communication is the main cause of conflicts between departments?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

**Part Two: Demoralised employees & broken information flow (Please tick [√])**

Are employees demoralised in your department/ company?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Does a demoralised workforce bring about information gaps between individuals and departments?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are Poor leadership skills from management the main cause of information brake down?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Is Heavy workload and lack of human resource the main cause of communication gaps in departments?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are staffs satisfied with the communication procedure in the department?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Is your overall evaluation of the internal newsletter excellent?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Is there proper information sharing from supervisors in the departments.

Yes [ ] No [ ]

**Part Three: Cultural diversity in the work place & Employees Disengaged (Please tick [√])**

Does the leadership in your department encourage diversity?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Does management show that diversity is important through action?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Does the company respect individuals and values their differences?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Does your company appreciate other races and ethnic grouping in your department?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Have you personally witnessed discrimination at this company?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are employees of different backgrounds encouraged to apply for higher positions?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

7. Is there career development path for all employees at this company?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

**Part Four: Poor leadership & Limited feedback (Please tick [√])**

1. DO leaders at ZESCO keep people informed about what is happening?

Yes [ ]      No [ ]

2. Do you have access to the things you need to do your job well?

Yes [ ]      No [ ]

3. Do you have access to the learning and development you need to do your job well?

Yes [ ]      No [ ]

4. Do most of the systems and processes in ZESCO support you get your work done effectively?

Yes [ ]      No [ ]

**(Section C Part Five: Unclear Objectives of roles for staff (Please tick [√])**

Questions	Yes	No	N/A	<u>Remarks</u>
1. Has the responsibility for achieving objectives been assigned and documented?				
2. Does the information system provide management with necessary reports on the department's performance relative to established objectives, including relevant external and internal information?				
3. Have procedures been implemented in the department to verify the accuracy of received information?				
4. Is the information provided to the right people in sufficient detail and on time to enable them to carry out their responsibilities efficiently and effectively?				
5. Does management communicate employees' duties and control responsibilities in an effective manner?				
6. Are communication channels established for people to report suspected improprieties?				
7. Does communication flow across the company adequately (e.g. from department to department) to enable people to discharge their responsibilities effectively?				
8. Does management take timely and appropriate follow-up action on communications received from customers, vendors, regulators, or other external parties?				

## APPENDIX II: INTRODUCTORY LETTER



### THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

Telephone: +260 953 975662  
Email: [gso@unza.zm](mailto:gso@unza.zm)  
Tel/Fax: +260 760 630656

Graduate School of Business  
P. O. Box 32379  
Lusaka, Zambia

27<sup>th</sup> June, 2019

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

#### **RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR JOAN MUSONDA MUMBA GSB152104**

This letter serves to introduce Joan Musonda Mumba GSB152104 a bonafide student in our Master of Science (MSc) Corporate Communication programme at the University of Zambia – Graduate School of Business (UNZA–GSB). In partial fulfillment of their Postgraduate studies, each student is required to undertake a research in the final year of study.

May you kindly assist the student in granting permission for her to collect data from your institution. The research is purely for academic purposes and the student is ethically bound to treat the provided information with strict confidentiality.

Should you have any queries or would like further information about the student, please contact the UNZA–GSB on the above e-mail address or telephone numbers.

Yours Faithfully,

**Dr Erasmus Mwanambo**  
**ACTING DIRECTOR – GRADUATE SCHOOL BUSINESS**

cc Assistant Registrar – Graduate School of Business



## APPENDIX III: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

ZESCO Limited

Box 33304

LUSAKA

9 July 2019.

The Senior Manager-Human Resources Development

ZESCO Limited

P O Box 33304

LUSAKA

Dear Madam


**RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA (MSc - CORPORATE COMMUNICATION)**

With reference to the above, I wish to apply for permission to collect data for research as a pre-condition to completing a Master of Science – Corporate Communication at the University of Zambia's Graduate School of Business under the topic: *Bridging departmental communication gaps in Quasi-Institutions - A case study of ZESCO Limited.*

The research will be carried out at ZESCO HQ, Lusaka South Region, Lusaka East Region, Lusaka West Region and Lusaka East Region under Lusaka Division.

The requested data is purely for academic purposes.

Yours Faithfully



**JOAN. M. MUMBA (MAN #15519).**

## APPENDIX IV: APPROVAL LETTER



Powering the Nation & the Region

**Our Ref: A200/HRD/1349/2019**

25 June 2019

Ms Joan M Mumba  
C/O ZESCO Limited  
Lusaka Division  
**LUSAKA CENTRAL – CUSTOMER SERVICES**

Dear Ms Mumba

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT AN ACADEMIC RESEARCH**

Reference is made to your letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2019, in which you requested ZESCO Management to grant you permission to carry out an academic research on '*Bridging Departmental Communication Gaps in Quasi - Institutions' Case study of ZESCO Limited*. This is in line with the Master of Science – Corporate Communication you are studying with the University of Zambia, (UNZA).

This serves to inform you that permission has been granted to you on the following terms and conditions:

1. That all information regarding the research should be handled with all the confidentiality it deserves and shall be used for academic purposes only.
2. The final report should be availed to the office of the undersigned before submission to your school for a go ahead in writing.
3. A copy of the final report shall be retained by ZESCO Limited for future reference.

Kindly fill in the attached form to indicate whether you are agreeable to these Terms and Conditions and return a copy to the office of the undersigned.

Please report to the Public Relations Manager and Human Resource Manager – Lusaka Division for commencement of your research.

Yours sincerely  
**ZESCO LIMITED**

**CHILESHE M LUPUTA (MRS)**  
**SENIOR MANAGER - HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

**CC:** Director – HR  
Divisional Manager - Lusaka  
Human Resource Manager – S &CS  
Human Resource Manager – Lusaka  
Training File  
Personal File

ONL/jcs

All correspondence to be addressed to the Managing Director

## APPENDIX V: COPY OF A JOURNAL PUBLICATION



Open Journal of Business and Management, 2019, 7, 2009-2019  
<https://www.scirp.org/journal/ojbm>  
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ISSN Print: 2329-3284

# Bridging Departmental Communication Gaps in Quasi-Institutions: A Case Study of ZESCO Limited

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### Abstract

Communication is seen as the key factor in the success of any organization but when it comes to effective communication, there are certain barriers that every organization faces. Large organisations have deficiencies in their decentralized departments especially when dealing with large volume of clientele whose needs are divided amongst their personal and organizational obligations. Hence communication gaps leading to conflicts and information breakdown among employees in the organization. The ramifications of these conflicts and broken information flow has been poor performance of team members, negative impact on general productivity, inefficiencies in responding to clients' demands, bad publicity for the company and lose of million in service delay. It is against this background that the aim of this study was to identify the major factors leading to intra and inter departmental communication gaps in Quasi-Institutions and come up with a model in order to address these communication gaps. The study used a quantitative study approach based on a sample space of 150 self-administered survey questionnaires with 83% response from Quasi-Government Institutions. Quantitative