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EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

INFLUENCE OF CLEAR COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF CHURCH BASED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: To assess the influence of clear communication strategy on the performance of church based educational institutions in Tanzania

Problem Statement: In Tanzania, church-based educational institutions form an important pillar of the education system by providing holistic, value-based, and affordable education to learners across the country. However, the performance of these institutions has increasingly raised concern. In several diocesan and parish-based schools, performance outcomes continue to fluctuate. These challenges underscore the critical need for clear communication strategies to enhance accountability, streamline decision-making, and improve institutional

Methodology: The study adopted positivism research philosophy and explanatory research design. The unit of analysis was 281church based education institutions in Dar es Salaam Tanzania while the unit of observation was 281 administrators of the targeted institutions. A stratified random sampling technique was used to determine a sample size of 165 administrators. Data was collected using a structured-close ended questionnaire was constructed on a five-point Likert scale. Before the main study, a pilot study was conducted in Christian-Based education institutions in Arusha where 17 questionnaires were distributed. Data was collected using both drop-and-pick-later method and google forms. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis

where version 26 of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. A multiple linear regression was used to predict the relationship between independent and dependent variable.

Conclusion: The study concluded that communication of the strategy has a statistically significant and positive effect on the performance of church-based educational institutions in Tanzania. Institutions that prioritize clear, timely, and transparent communication of strategic goals are more likely to achieve superior performance outcomes.

Recommendation: In light of the findings, the study recommended that institutional managers prioritize establishing clear and consistent communication channels to ensure that all stakeholders are well informed about the institution's strategic goals and progress.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Performance, Church Based Educational Institutions

INTRODUCTION

Clear communication strategy refers to the systematic approach through which institutions design, deliver, and evaluate information flows to ensure shared understanding among stakeholders. It encompasses clarity of message, appropriate channels, timeliness, feedback mechanisms, and alignment with institutional goals. In educational institutions, effective communication strategies are critical for enhancing coordination, promoting transparency, building trust, and ensuring smooth implementation of academic and administrative functions (Githu & Minja, 2025). For church-based educational institutions, communication strategies play an even greater role as these institutions operate at the intersection of faith-based values, community expectations, and the pursuit of academic excellence.

Globally, communication strategies in faith-based schools and universities vary across contexts, yet their influence on institutional performance remains significant. In the Philippines, studies highlight how Catholic universities have adopted structured communication systems that integrate administrative, academic, and spiritual messaging to strengthen community engagement and institutional growth (Bautista & Cruz, 2020). Similarly, in the United States, faith-based schools emphasize strategic communication through integrated digital platforms and stakeholder feedback loops, which have been linked to improved student retention and institutional credibility (Henderson, 2021).

In Africa, communication within church-based educational institutions has attracted increasing attention as a driver of institutional effectiveness. In Nigeria, research demonstrates that clear and consistent communication strategies enhance trust, promote accountability, and contribute to improved academic performance in faith-based universities (Okafor & Adebayo, 2022). These institutions often rely on structured channels that integrate administrative notices, pastoral guidance, and academic communication, thereby fostering both spiritual and intellectual growth. In Kenya, church-sponsored schools and universities benefit from communication systems that emphasize inclusivity and transparency. Studies indicate that effective communication channels between school leadership, teachers, parents, and sponsoring churches contribute to improved financial accountability and better student outcomes (Njeru & Mwangi, 2021). For example, communication strategies in Catholic and Anglican-sponsored institutions have been credited with strengthening stakeholder collaboration and sustaining value-based education (Otieno & Wanjala, 2022).

In Tanzania, church-based educational institutions continue to play a central role in shaping access to education, particularly in underserved regions. Institutions established by the Catholic Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, and Anglican Church of Tanzania not only provide academic opportunities but also serve as vehicles of moral and spiritual formation (Ngonyani & Komba, 2022). However, challenges persist regarding communication, including limited stakeholder engagement, inadequate use of digital platforms, and weak feedback mechanisms. With increasing competition from private secular institutions, stricter government regulations, and growing parental expectations, the need for effective communication strategies has become even more pressing. Recent studies show that clear communication significantly influences institutional performance by improving coordination, enhancing stakeholder satisfaction, and strengthening credibility (Mwalimu & Shayo, 2023).

Despite the recognized importance of communication, gaps remain in understanding how clear communication strategies specifically influence the performance of church-based educational institutions in Tanzania. Existing studies largely focus on general communication practices in public schools or higher education, with limited emphasis on faith-based contexts. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining the influence of clear communication strategy on the

performance of church-based educational institutions in Tanzania, with attention to how message clarity, channel effectiveness, and stakeholder feedback shape institutional outcomes.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Tanzania, church-based educational institutions form an important pillar of the education system by providing holistic, value-based, and affordable education to learners across the country. However, the performance of these institutions has increasingly raised concern due to persistent challenges in clarity, timeliness, and effectiveness of communication between administrators, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. According to the Tanzania Education Authority (2022), cases of misinterpretation of institutional policies, delays in relaying information, and inadequate feedback mechanisms remain prevalent, contributing to inefficiencies in curriculum delivery and declining academic performance in selected regions such as Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, and Arusha.

In several diocesan and parish-based schools, performance outcomes continue to fluctuate, with statistics from the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) between 2019 and 2022 showing inconsistent pass rates, low transition to tertiary education, and declining competitiveness compared to private and public schools. These challenges underscore the critical need for clear communication strategies to enhance accountability, streamline decision-making, and improve institutional performance. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of clear communication strategy on the performance of church-based educational institutions in Tanzania.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on Social Learning Theory, which was originally developed by Bandura (1977) to explain how individuals acquire new behaviors, skills, and attitudes through observation, imitation, and interaction within social contexts. The theory emphasizes that learning does not occur solely through direct experience but also through observing others, modeling their actions, and receiving feedback from the environment. According to Bandura, individuals are more likely to adopt behaviors when they observe them being rewarded, validated, or reinforced in social settings.

In the context of church-based educational institutions in Tanzania, Social Learning Theory provides a useful lens for understanding how clear communication strategies influence

performance. Teachers, students, administrators, and parents operate in environments where they constantly observe, interpret, and replicate communication patterns. When communication is structured, participatory, and aligned with Christian values, it fosters accountability, collaboration, and trust among stakeholders. Conversely, unclear or inconsistent communication may breed misunderstandings, reduce motivation, and hinder institutional performance.

The theory is particularly relevant in explaining the role of leadership communication. School leaders who demonstrate open dialogue, transparent reporting, and constructive feedback provide observable models that shape how staff and students communicate and behave within the institution. Such practices not only improve instructional delivery and stakeholder engagement but also reinforce a culture of excellence and shared responsibility. By applying Social Learning Theory, this study underscores the idea that communication is not merely an operational process but a social mechanism through which behavior is shaped, norms are reinforced, and performance is enhanced. In church-based educational institutions, the ability of leaders and staff to model clear, transparent, and value-driven communication is critical to strengthening academic outcomes, institutional credibility, and long-term sustainability.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Musheke and Phiri (2021) conducted a study on the effects of effective communication on organizational performance. The study adopted quantitative approach to describe and analyse data collected for the study. Questionnaire was used to identify factors affecting effective communication based on systems theory. Descriptive analysis and Pearson's correlation were used to analyse the results. The findings indicated there is a relationship between channel of communication used and effective communication. In addition, the findings indicated that effective communication has a positive effect on organizational performance at. However, conceptually, the study focused broadly on communication and its general effect on organizational performance, without linking communication specifically to strategy implementation practices. Contextually, it was conducted in general organizations rather than within educational institutions, and not in church-based settings in Tanzania. Methodologically, the study relied on descriptive analysis and simple correlations, while the current study uses multiple linear regression and includes a moderating variable employee engagement to examine causal relationships more comprehensively.

Kabanda and Barrena-Martinez (2025) conducted a study on the effective communication in management focusing on its role in building relationships, coordinating actions, and sharing information. The chapter provides a practical guide for practitioners to enhance communication effectiveness in organizational settings, addressing common barriers, fostering openness, and aligning efforts with organizational goals, using techniques like technology and active listening. It provides valuable insights into intercultural communication and skilful navigation of cultural differences, empowering both students and practitioners to thrive in the complex, globalized business world. In contrast, conceptually, the study focused on general communication management techniques and intercultural communication rather than on communication as a strategic implementation practice that influences institutional performance. Contextually, the research was global and business-oriented, and not conducted in Tanzanian church-based education institutions. Methodologically, it was largely conceptual and descriptive, without empirical data analysis, unlike the current study which uses structured questionnaires, statistical analysis, and regression modelling.

Haroon and Malik (2018) explored the impact of organizational communication on organizational performance in the universities. The research was quantitative and descriptive in nature. The population of the study was students and teachers of public and private sector universities. Sample of 600 students and 120 teachers was selected from public and private universities through proportionate stratified sampling technique. For the collection of data two self-developed research questionnaires were used; one for students and other for teachers. Experts' opinion was utilized to ensure the validity of the questionnaires. Whereas, reliability was measured through pilot testing on 100 students and 20 teachers; 50 students and 10 teachers from each public and private sector universities. Quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS software. Linear Regression was applied to see the impact of overall organizational communication on organizational performance. The findings revealed that there was significant effect of organizational communication on organizational performance. Nevertheless, conceptually, the study measured communication's effect on university performance through ranking scores, not within a framework of strategy implementation practices. Contextually, it was conducted in Pakistan's higher education sector, differing significantly from church-based education institutions in Tanzania. Methodologically, the population included students and teachers, whereas the current study focuses on administrators, and it uses multiple regression to assess moderating effects.

Ufuophu-Biri and Adewunmi (2021) conducted a correlation between organization communication on employee's job motivation and job performance in the broadcast organizations in Delta State, Nigeria. This study was anchored on the unitary theory of industrial relations due to its relevance to the scope of this study. To achieve the general and specific objective of this study, the descriptive survey research design was adopted and primary data were obtained from questionnaire responses administered to one hundred and seventy-one staff of the seven broadcast organizations used for the study. Hypotheses were formulated and tested. The findings revealed that organizational communication has a significant positive linear relationship with employee job motivation in broadcast organizations in Delta State. On the contrary, conceptually, the study focused on communication's influence on employee motivation rather than overall organizational performance or strategy implementation practices. Contextually, the study was conducted in broadcast organizations, which differ from Tanzanian church-based education institutions in terms of culture and operational focus. Methodologically, the study applied correlation analysis, while the current research uses explanatory design and regression to explore causal relationships and moderation effects.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework

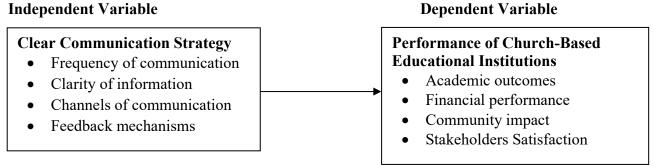


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was guided by a positivist research philosophy, which is grounded in the belief that reality is objective and can be measured through empirical observation and statistical analysis. In line with this philosophical stance, the study adopted an explanatory research design to investigate the influence of communication strategy on the performance of church-based educational institutions in Tanzania. This design was considered appropriate as it enabled an in-depth

examination of the causal relationships between the study variables. The target population comprised all 281 church-based educational institutions in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The study focused specifically on institutional administrators, who were considered knowledgeable and directly involved in governance and management practices within their institutions. To determine a representative sample, the study employed a stratified random sampling technique, which ensured that different categories of church-based institutions were proportionately represented. From this process, a sample size of 165 administrators was selected.

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted among 17 administrators from Christian-based educational institutions in Arusha to test the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The study relied on primary data, which was collected using structured questionnaires constructed on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaires were distributed through both the drop-and-pick-later method and online platforms such as Google Forms, providing flexibility and increasing the response rate. To analyse the data, the study employed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Both descriptive statistics (such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics were utilized. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the characteristics of the respondents and provide insights into patterns within the dataset. Inferential statistics, particularly multiple linear regression analysis, were applied to test the hypothesized relationships and predict the effect of communication on organizational performance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The researcher issued out 165 questionnaires to the respondents. Out of 165 questionnaires issued, 140 were successfully filled and returned for analysis thus giving the study 85% response rate

Table 1: Response Rate

Response		Frequency]	Percentage (%)
Expected response		165		100
Received response		140		85
Un-received response	25		15	

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Reliability of the Research Questionnaire

Before the main study the study conducted a pilot study among Christian-Based education institutions in Arusha where 17 questionnaires were distributed to administrator of Christian-Based education institutions representing. Table 2 shows the result of the findings.

Table 2: Reliability Test Results

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Communication	17	0.876
Performance of church based educational	17	0.889
institutions		
Overall Reliability		0.810

Source: Research Data (2025)

The reliability test results show that all the variables in the study have Cronbach's Alpha values above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7, indicating good internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales. Specifically, communication had 0.876, and performance of church based educational institutions had 0.889, further confirming that the survey items reliability measures the constructs under the study.

Demographic Data

Duration of Service

The researcher sought to establish the gender distribution of the respondents. The findings were as indicated in table 3

Table 3: Duration of Service

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	83	59
Female	57	41
Total	140	100

From the findings, the majority of respondents were male, accounting for 59% of the sample. This indicates that men form a larger proportion of the workforce within church-based educational institutions covered in the study. Female respondents made up 41% of the sample, representing a

significant portion of staff who also contribute valuable perspectives on strategy implementation and institutional performance. The gender distribution suggests that the study captured views from both male and female employees, ensuring that the analysis reflects a balanced perspective in terms of gender representation. However, the higher proportion of male respondents may also reflect underlying gender patterns in employment within church-based educational institutions in Tanzania, particularly in administrative, governance, and managerial roles.

Education Qualification

The researcher sought to establish the education qualification of the respondents. The findings were as indicated in table 4.

Table 4: Education Qualification

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	15	11
Degree	66	47
Masters	49	35
PhD	10	7
Total	140	100

Source: Survey Data (2025)

From the findings, 11% of the respondents held a diploma, representing individuals with foundational training who may be involved in more operational and administrative aspects of church-based educational institutions. The majority of respondents, 47%, possessed a degree qualification, indicating that a large proportion of staff have undergraduate-level education that equips them with the professional skills necessary for effective strategy implementation and institutional performance. A further 35% had attained a master's degree, reflecting a strong presence of employees with advanced academic preparation, which can enhance strategic thinking, policy formulation, and leadership capacity. The smallest group, 7%, held a PhD, signifying the availability of specialized expertise that may contribute to high-level decision-making, research, and governance. The overall distribution suggests that church-based educational institutions in Tanzania benefit from a workforce with diverse academic backgrounds, blending practical skills, professional competence, and advanced scholarly insight.

Descriptive Findings for Communication on Performance of Church Based Educational Institutions

The researcher further sought to assess the aspects of communication among church based educational institutions in Tanzania. The responses were rated from 1-5 where 1 is the lowest meanwhile and 5 indicated the highest mean. Key SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree. The study findings were as indicated in table 5.

Table 5: Communication on Performance of Church Based Educational Institutions

Communication	Mean	Std.
Strategy-related information is communicated regularly across all	4.0500	.95454
levels of the organization.		
Communication about the institution's strategic goals is consistent	4.1357	.78850
and timely.		
Clear and transparent communication of strategy enhances the	4.5143	.59356
overall performance of the institution.		
The information provided about the strategy is clear and easily	4.0786	1.03234
understood by all stakeholders		
Strategic communications are concise and free of ambiguity.	4.3286	.80861
Various communication channels like emails, meetings, newsletters	4.2786	.78720
are used effectively to communicate the strategy.		
The institution utilizes both traditional and digital communication	4.2929	.67319
methods to ensure the strategy reaches all stakeholders.		
Open feedback channels in strategic planning improve institutional	4.2929	.70452
efficiency		
The institution encourages feedback from stakeholders about the	4.3143	.66879
strategic goals.		
Feedback on the strategy is effectively collected and used to	4.2500	.75983
improve its implementation		
Average	4.2536	0.7771

Source: Survey Data (2025)

From the analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that strategy-related information is communicated regularly across all levels of the institution, with a mean of 4.0500 and a standard deviation of 0.95454. This implies that church-based educational institutions generally maintain frequent and structured communication practices that support coordination and alignment of objectives. Respondents further agreed that communication of strategic goals is consistent and timely, with a mean of 4.1357 and a standard deviation of 0.78850. This indicates that institutions prioritize timeliness and clarity in sharing strategic priorities, which contributes to effective performance.

The findings also revealed that clear and transparent communication significantly enhances institutional performance, as reflected in a mean of 4.5143 and a standard deviation of 0.59356. This suggests that transparent communication builds trust and accountability, ensuring that all stakeholders understand their roles in achieving institutional goals. Additionally, respondents agreed that information provided about strategies is clear, concise, and free from ambiguity, with means of 4.0786 (SD = 1.03234) and 4.3286 (SD = 0.80861), respectively. This highlights that clarity and precision in messaging are key practices that reduce misunderstandings and strengthen engagement among staff and stakeholders.

Furthermore, respondents indicated that multiple communication channels such as emails, meetings, and newsletters are effectively utilized, with a mean of 4.2786 and a standard deviation of 0.78720. The effective use of both traditional and digital methods was also emphasized, with a mean of 4.2929 and a standard deviation of 0.67319. This implies that institutions recognize the importance of diversifying communication platforms to reach different stakeholders effectively. The study also showed that feedback mechanisms are actively encouraged and integrated into strategic planning. Respondents strongly agreed that feedback on strategic goals is collected and applied to improve implementation, as indicated by means ranging between 4.2500 and 4.3143, with standard deviations between 0.66879 and 0.75983. This suggests that participatory communication practices are well established, fostering inclusivity and shared ownership of institutional strategies.

Overall, the aggregate mean score for communication strategy was 4.2536, with a standard deviation of 0.7771, indicating strong agreement among respondents on the effectiveness of communication practices in church-based educational institutions. These findings imply that

regular updates, message clarity, diverse communication channels, and open feedback systems are key drivers of effective communication. However, the moderate variation across responses suggests that while many institutions excel in these areas, others still need to strengthen the consistency of implementation to enhance overall institutional performance.

Performance of Church Based Educational Institutions

The researcher further sought to assess the level of agreement with the statements Performance of Church Based Educational Institutions in Tanzania. The responses were rated from 1-5 where 1 is the lowest meanwhile and 5 indicated the highest mean. Key SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree. The study findings were as indicated in table 6.

Table 6: Performance of Church Based Education Institutions

Performance of Church Based Education Institutions	Mean	Std
The institution has consistently achieved high academic results, such	4.5214	.59334
as graduation rates and exam performance, as a result of strategic		
implementation		
Students' academic performance has improved significantly since the	4.4429	.54007
strategy was implemented.		
The financial health of the institution has improved following the	4.3357	.72579
implementation of the strategy		
The institution has become more financially sustainable due to the	4.0929	.76710
strategic initiatives.		
The institution's stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, donors) are	4.0929	.88875
satisfied with the strategic direction and outcomes		
Stakeholder feedback indicates that they believe the strategy has	4.2714	.60979
benefited the institution		
The institution has a positive impact on the local community through	4.3429	.80262
outreach programs and its reputation.		
The strategic initiatives have led to an improvement in the	4.3429	.63213
institution's relationship with the community		
Aggregate	4.3054	0.69495

Source: Survey Data (2025)

From the analysis, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that the institution has consistently achieved high academic results, such as graduation rates and exam performance, with a mean of 4.5214 and a standard deviation of 0.593. This implies that strategic implementation has directly contributed to improved academic performance. Respondents also strongly agreed that students' academic performance has significantly improved since the strategy was implemented, with a mean of 4.443 and a standard deviation of 0.540. This implies that strategic initiatives have had a measurable effect on learning outcomes.

Further, respondents agreed that the financial health of the institution has improved following strategy implementation, with a mean of 4.336 and a standard deviation of 0.726. This implies that the institution has become more financially stable. Similarly, respondents noted that the institution has achieved greater financial sustainability as a result of strategy implementation, with a mean of 4.093 and a standard deviation of 0.767. This implies that strategic resource management has supported long-term viability. The findings also showed that stakeholders, including parents, students, and donors, are satisfied with the outcomes of the strategic plan, with a mean of 4.093 and a standard deviation of 0.889. This implies that stakeholder confidence has been strengthened. Respondents further agreed that stakeholder feedback reflects positive perceptions of the benefits of strategy implementation, with a mean of 4.271 and a standard deviation of 0.610. This implies that stakeholder trust and legitimacy have improved.

It was also noted that the institution has had a positive impact on the local community through outreach programs and reputation, with a mean of 4.343 and a standard deviation of 0.803. This implies that strategic initiatives have enhanced community engagement and social responsibility. Respondents strongly agreed that community relationships have improved as a result of the strategy, with a mean of 4.343 and a standard deviation of 0.632. This implies that the institution has fostered stronger cooperation and trust with the local community. Overall, the aggregate mean of 4.305 and a standard deviation of 0.695 imply that church-based educational institutions are perceived to be performing strongly across academic, financial, stakeholder, and community dimensions. This suggests that strategic implementation has played a critical role in driving institutional success and sustainability.

Diagnostic Tests

Before conducting the inferential statistics, the study conducted a normality tests.

Table 7: Normality Assumption Test Results

Variable	Kolmogorov- Smirnov	Sig
Clear communication	.276	.788
Performance of church based educational institutions	.654	.786

The findings indicated that communication strategy had a Kolmogorov-Smirnov significance value of p=.276>0.05 while performance of church based educational institutions had a Kolmogorov-Smirnov significance value of p=.654>0.05. Since the p-values were greater than the significance level (0.05), this implies that the data were normally distributed.

Inferential Statistics

Under inferential statistics the study conducted both correlation and regression analysis. The findings are indicated below

Table 8 : Correlation Results

		Performance of Church Based Educational Institutions
Communication Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.481**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	140

The results revealed there is very strong and positive statistically significant relationship between communication strategy and the performance of church based educational institutions in Tanzania (r = 0.481, p = 0.000). This result demonstrates that frequency of communication, clarity of information, channels of communication, and feedback of communication play a pivotal role in performance of church-based education institutions. This exceptionally strong correlation suggests that the quality and adaptability of governance structures are critical drivers of performance of church based educational institutions in Tanzania. This result agrees with Ochieng (2023), who found that clear communication of objectives, timelines, and expectations significantly enhanced project milestones and team satisfaction in a non-governmental organization in Kenya.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that communication of the strategy has a statistically significant and positive effect on the performance of church-based educational institutions in Tanzania. Institutions that prioritize clear, timely, and transparent communication of strategic goals are more likely to achieve superior performance outcomes. Effective communication ensures that staff and stakeholders are continuously informed about institutional objectives, expectations, and progress, which minimizes misunderstandings and prevents misalignment between individual and organizational goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, the study recommended that institutional managers prioritize establishing clear and consistent communication channels to ensure that all stakeholders are well informed about the institution's strategic goals and progress. Leadership should invest in training communication skills and develop communication policies that foster transparency and openness. Regular feedback mechanisms should be institutionalized to gauge stakeholder understanding and engagement with the strategy, thereby improving alignment and commitment at all organizational levels.

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