

Original Article

Structural Communication Barrier and Administrative Deficiency in Bayelsa State Ministries

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines the interface between structural communication barriers and administrative deficiencies within ministries in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Specifically, it examines how rigid structures, delayed information dissemination, and ineffective feedback channels affect underachievement and ineffectuality in selected Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). Utilizing a descriptive survey research design, the study collected data through structured questionnaires administered to 154 administrative staff using a combination of census and simple random sampling techniques. The analysis of data, done using SPSS version 25.0, utilized descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient in measuring communication structures and administrative outcomes. The findings demonstrated a strong to moderate positive relationship between administrative weaknesses and communication structural barriers, in terms of 0.511 and 0.409 correlation coefficients for ineffectiveness and poor performance, respectively. The study confirms that structural communication weakness in ministries significantly hinders staff performance and delivery of services. It demands serious internal audits of communication systems, training of staff on communication, and engagement with digital communication tools, as well as policy-level change in order to enhance communication effectiveness.*

KEYWORDS: *Structural communication barriers, Administrative deficiencies, Underperformance, Ineffectiveness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is the foundation of effective administration and organizational effectiveness. In any administrative system, in the private as well as public sector, structural devices that enable the flow of information are required for systematic management practices and decision-making. Structural communication barriers, however, often mar administrative processes by restricting the free flow of information, degrading the quality of feedback, and distorting clarity. These barriers are founded on organizational hierarchies, bureaucratic inefficiencies, procedural rigidity, and physical or technological infrastructural deficiencies (Jenifer & Raman, 2015; Robbins & Judge, 2018).

Organizational design and management create structural communication barriers. For instance, vertical organizational structures with rigid hierarchical layers have a tendency to cause delays and distortion of messages as they pass through several administrative levels. This reduces the transparency of directives from top management and curbs positive critique by subordinated members, thus promoting misinterpretations and bureaucratic gridlocks (Greenberg, 2011). Similarly, inadequacies in appropriate technological platforms, over-reliance on paperwork, and red tape can discourage effective and timely communications across administrative platforms (Adewale & Anthonia, 2017).

The integration of structural communication barriers and administrative inefficiencies creates a vicious circle: poor communication breeds inefficiency, and inefficiency reinforces poor communication. This is most evident in public sector organizations in developing countries, where administrative inefficiencies are further spurred by outdated communication systems, central decision-making, and a lack of human resource development (Aliyu & Usman, 2020). Poor communication structures lead to low levels of employee morale, effort duplication, conflict escalation, and ultimately the failure to accomplish organizational goals (Daft, 2016).

Administrative weakness entails failure by organizational leadership and structure to plan, coordinate, or execute responsibilities efficiently. It manifests in weak supervision, poor policy compliance, lack of accountability, ineffective use of resources, and underperformance. These weaknesses are mostly compounded by structural dysfunctions, including lack of decentralization, improper delegation of tasks, and a lack of feedback channels. The entire administrative machinery is thus made insensitive to internal and external stakeholder interests (P.G. Dass, 2014; Gupta, 2021).

In the contemporary organizational climate, where digitalization and agile leadership are the new paradigms, structural communication bottlenecks and administrative deficiency challenge organizational competitiveness and promptness. For instance, firms that have few channels of internal communication are more prone to disjointed workflows, poor service

delivery, and uncoordinated implementation of projects. Also, administrative systems that are unable to instil open communication and collective leadership are likely to cultivate corruption, inefficiency, and policy failure (Nordin et al., 2014). Communication theorists emphasize that successful communication should be whole, timely, unambiguous, and interference-free (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). If there are structural restraints such as an ineffective chain of command, withholding information, or a lack of infrastructure, the channel of communication is disrupted. That hamper's not only the routine activities but also strategic planning and policymaking. For example, performance at the ground level may not be made known to the top leadership precisely due to red tape in bureaucracy, causing poor strategic decisions that adversely affect the overall organization (Schermerhorn, 2012).

Administrative inefficiency due to structural communication gaps is the new order of the day within educational institutions, government ministries, health care services, and corporate organizations. It is established by research that employees working in dysfunctional communication settings have increased job dissatisfaction, lower productivity, and higher turnover intentions (Amah & Ahiauzu, 2013). Conversely, organizations that put effort into flattening their communication structure, integrating technology, and empowering lower-level administrators are more likely to attain greater efficiency and employee satisfaction (Gupta & Sharma, 2021).

In addition to this, the global shift towards knowledge economies and information-based management further emphasizing the need to eliminate structural communication bottlenecks. Organizations that remain dependent on paper-based documentation, hierarchical reporting structures, or time-delayed feedback loops are sure to be plagued with administrative lag and inefficiency. Consequently, there is a critical need to examine how administrative deficiencies supplement structural obstacles to communication to impact organizational performance, with particular focus on the public administration and new economies like Nigeria.

The scenario is even more conspicuous in public administration, where efficient delivery of services has a direct linkage with the well-being of citizens and country development. Poor communication systems can slow down timely policy responses, hinder interdepartmental coordination, and limit transparency. These, in turn, weaken public confidence and subvert democratic leadership (Olaopa, 2014). Where administrators gain no timely access to information or no capacity to release it, the decision-making process becomes reactive and not proactive.

Briefly, the record of structural communication obstructions and governance failures highlights a complex yet vital challenge for today's organizations. It is the product of archaic organizational design, ineffective communication systems, and poor responsiveness of leadership. Resolving these issues does not only require organizational redesign but also investment in communication technology, staff training, decentralized administrative tools, and a feedback and open culture.

1.1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Communication is, by all means, the pillar of effective administration. Nevertheless, in most organizations, especially those in the global South, communication is hampered by structural barriers that have a direct consequence on administrative inefficiency. Despite numerous reforms, most administrative arrangements remain excessively centralized, rigidly hierarchical, and poorly equipped with communication infrastructure, which negates transparency, coordination, and productivity (Okotoni & Erero, 2005).

One of the most significant problems is the tendency of hierarchical communication systems to create bottlenecks. Information becomes filtered or somehow distorted as it travels along and up and down the line of administration, leading to misreadings, sluggish decision-making, and policy breakdown. For instance, a message from a subunit may take days or weeks to reach the decision-makers due to procedural procedures and clearance processes, thereby rendering the information stale or irrelevant when received. The delay has direct consequences for policy implementation and service delivery, especially in time-sensitive areas such as healthcare, security, and disaster management (Adenugba & Florounsho, 2012).

Also, most organizations do not have a valid technology platform to facilitate internal communication. Organizations that do not embrace technology for live communication in the age of the internet lose the competitive battle. Their failure to use email systems, enterprise resource planning (ERP) tools, or feedback portals eliminates coordination of work, sharing of data, or performance monitoring. This creates a communication vacuum where the workers are not sure of their roles, expectations, or status of the project, leading to confusion and administrative backlog (Obi & Okeke, 2019).

Yet another endemic issue is over-reliance on bureaucratic procedures, which tends to be procedure over pragmatism. While bureaucracies are necessary for standardization and accountability, excessive procedural rigidity inhibits the exchange of communication. Workers will not provide feedback, report errors, or offer suggestions because they are afraid of responses or do not have access to senior officers. This command-and-control top-down culture discourages learning organization, innovation, and responsiveness (Ayeni, 2015).

Administrative inefficiency, however, is cause and result of inefficient communication systems. Managers who are unable to communicate objectives efficiently or who fail to elicit feedback from subordinates will find it challenging to coordinate teams, delegate tasks, and monitor performance. Under conditions of decentralized communication, administrative efforts are bound to be decentralized, and organizational goals remain elusive. This inefficiency is compounded in public institutions where oversight, accountability, and results-based management are most critical to governance and service provision (Ali, 2018).

In addition, the lack of training and communication skills among administrators has also led to the poor expression of goals and poor communication of policies. The majority of public administrators in developing economies are not formally educated in administrative communication, writing reports, and analyzing feedback. As a result, they are unable to effectively communicate with stakeholders or handle crises. The result is an inefficient administrative system that can easily make errors, cause public disillusionment, and institutional decline (Chukwuemeka, 2013).

Despite the widespread acknowledgement of such problems, there are limited empirical studies linking structural barriers to communication and administrative inefficiency, especially during organizational reforms, public service delivery, and employee motivation. Most of the studies just treat generic issues of communication or management and fail to ask how some structural restraints like organizational setup, technological efficiency, or bureaucratic proceedings undermine effective administration (Ejumudo, 2012). In light of the above, this study tries to respond to the urgent question: how do structural barriers to communication result in administrative deficiencies in ministries in Bayelsa State.

1.2. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between structural communication barriers and administrative deficiencies in ministries in Bayelsa State. However, the specific objectives of the study are to;

1. Determine the relationship between structural communication barriers and underperformance in ministries in Bayelsa State.
2. Find out the relationship between structural communication barriers and ineffectiveness in ministries in Bayelsa State.

1.3. HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

H01: There is no significant relationship between structural communication barriers and underperformance in ministries in Bayelsa State.

H02: There is no significant relationship between structural communication barriers and ineffectiveness in ministries in Bayelsa State.

2. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

2.1. STRUCTURAL COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Structural communication barriers are those that are embedded within an organisation's framework and thus hinder the unhampered transmission of information across various levels of operation. They are typically founded on hierarchical frameworks, bureaucratic red tape, organisational policies, and infrastructural shortcomings, all of which have the effect of distorting, delaying, or completely blocking the passage of messages among workers. Within most organizations, particularly public sector organizations, structural communication barriers are a primary cause of inefficiencies and administrative deficiencies. Perhaps the most obvious structural issue is hierarchical rigidity. In highly centralized organizations, messages have to pass through multiple layers of authority, and in the process, delays, message distortion, and the lack of timely feedback are rampant (Robbins & Judge, 2018). This kind of vertical communication structure, in so far as it is designed to ensure order and control, tends to hamper fast decision-making and discourages lower-level employees from communicating upwards, for fear of breaching protocol.

In addition, excessive bureaucracy in public institutions leads to structural bottlenecks that frustrate the smooth flow of information. Bureaucratic organizations tend to emphasize strict adherence to formal procedures, documentation, and the chain of command, which can slow down the processes of communication. Staff have to pass through long administrative hierarchies before they can get approvals or pass on information, thus reducing organizational responsiveness (Okotoni & Erero, 2005). This is even more so in government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), where decisions may be held up for weeks or months as they must pass through numerous desks, offices, or committees. Such structural hindrances not only waste time but also destroy staff morale and foster a culture of laxity and inefficiency (P.G Dass, 2014). The inflexibility of such administrative frameworks also stifles innovation and discourages participatory collaboration, further undermining productivity.

Absence of modern communication infrastructure is another structural barrier that hinders information flow in the majority of public sector organizations. Lack of connectivity to email systems, intranet websites, or centralized communication systems forces employees to resort to outdated methods such as paper memos, word of mouth, or handwritten reports. This opens up a likelihood of lost documents, delayed feedback, and a general lack of accountability in communication (Obi & Okeke, 2019).

Even where electronic devices are present, human incompetence and lack of ICT support often counteract their use. Consequently, important communications fail to reach the right people in time or reach the wrong individuals, generating confusion, inefficiency, and misalignment of organizational goals. In addition, physical layout i.e., the architectural layout of office buildings and the absence of special communication centers can lead to physical distance between departments, thereby hindering interpersonal communication and cross-functional coordination (Daft, 2016).

Organizational culture also sustains structural communication barriers. Open communication is not encouraged in most institutions, especially those with authoritarian leaders. They may fear victimization or feel that their contribution is not valued, thus keeping quiet and withdrawn from giving discourse that can help improve operations (Jenifer & Raman, 2015). The fact that feedback loops are absent further worsens the situation because the employees do not receive any confirmation that their messages were heard and understood. Such one-way communication results in a gap between employees and the management, ultimately affecting decision quality, service delivery, and overall administrative effectiveness. Thus, structural communication barriers—if not addressed—pose a great threat to institutional effectiveness, particularly in environments where openness, timeliness, and coordination are most essential to organizational success.

2.2. ADMINISTRATIVE DEFICIENCIES

Administrative deficiencies are gaps, weaknesses, or breakdowns in the performance and operation of administrative procedures within an organization. These weaknesses often manifest in the form of ineffective decision-making, delayed service delivery, coordination breakdowns, resource inefficiency, and overall ineffectiveness in achieving goals. In public sector organizations such as Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), administrative weaknesses can have far-reaching implications, especially in policy implementation, citizen engagement, and institutional trust. Among the underlying causes of administrative failures is role and responsibility ambiguity in organizations. When work duties are ill-defined, duplication of effort or neglect of important activities is the typical result, and it generates confusion and inefficiencies (Balogun, 1983). Administrative role ambiguity is also heightened by the absence of standard operating procedures or adherence to set rules. Another common form of administrative weakness is poor record management and documentation. In the majority of public institutions, essential files and documents are missing, incomplete, or cannot be retrieved due to a lack of proper filing systems and information management practices. This weakness compromises decision-making, transparency, and accountability as administrative officers do not have credible information to support their actions or adhere to institutional development (Ibeto & Justine, 2013). Furthermore, inadequate training and capacity development for administrative staff weaken their ability to perform at their best. The majority of MDAs do not invest in the professional development of their staff, resulting in outdated skills, ineffective communication skills, and resistance to change. Without continuous learning and feedback on performance, staff will not be able to keep up with changing public administration practice, thus fostering a culture of inefficiency and low productivity (Adebayo, 1981).

Administrative frailties are also significantly influenced by managerial and leadership practices within an institution. Unvisionary, unaccountable, and unserious commitment to service delivery by leadership has the tendency to create a culture of mediocrity and inaction. Decision-making in these settings is delayed, communication is weak, and strategic goals are ignored or half-heartedly implemented (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2020). This leadership vacuum results in low staff morale and the normalization of administrative inertia. In addition, political interference in public administration has been known to be one of the leading causes of administrative dysfunctions. When appointments are carried out on the basis of favoritism and not merit, and administrative decisions are subjected to political manipulations, the integrity and efficacy of the system are eroded (Aliyu, 2017). Such acts compromise professionalism and institutional autonomy, reducing the capacity of administrators to perform at their best within their jurisdictions.

Finally, the absence of performance measurement and feedback mechanisms in public institutions buttresses administrative weakness. The majority of organizations do not track performance indicators nor receive periodic feedback from stakeholders, and therefore cannot establish areas of improvement or reward staff inputs. It results in demotivation and a lack of accountability, so that no standards can be upheld or reforms enforced. In addition, corruption and fiscal mismanagement thrive where administrative systems are weak or under-regulated. Where procurement regulations, budgeting, and reporting frameworks are not strictly enforced, public resources are wasted, and service delivery suffers. In essence, administrative weaknesses are systemic problems that require strategic planning, capacity building, open leadership, and good communication to overcome. There is a need to resolve these issues in order to possess working governance and improved institutional performance, particularly in developing states like Bayelsa State.

2.3. UNDERPERFORMANCE

Underperformance in public institutions is the recurring failure of employees or administrative organizations to meet set targets, deliver quality services, or achieve institutional objectives. It is a widespread practice in public institutions where accountability is weak, motivation is lacking, and communication is poor. Underperformance erodes not just organizational efficacy but also public confidence in governance and service delivery. Among the drivers of underperformance is the absence of clear performance standards and expectations. In the majority of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), job

descriptions do not exist or are not specific, and therefore, it is difficult to measure employee outputs or enforce accountability (Okotoni & Erero, 2005). Without clear performance standards, employees may not be aware of what is expected of them, leading to laxity and underperformance.

Poor management and supervisory attention are another root cause of underperformance. Poor monitoring of workers' activities readily translates to absenteeism, lateness, and neglect of duty. Managers who fail to provide regular feedback or hold employees to performance standards make mediocrity the norm. In the majority of public organizations, performance appraisal systems are either weak or do not exist at all, denying the managers the opportunity to observe and seal performance gaps. Employees are barely held accountable for their output in the absence of regular appraisals, which leaves space for complacency and inefficiency. In addition, reward and promotion systems are not pegged to merit or performance, thereby discouraging hard workers and promoting a culture of complacency (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2020).

Lack of motivation is another main reason for chronic underperformance. In the public service, workers' morale is repeatedly undermined by delayed salaries, unattractive welfare packages, limited career development opportunities, and poor working conditions. When employees are not supported or valued, their dedication and level of enthusiasm decrease tremendously. Herzberg's two-factor theory identifies that although hygiene factors such as job security and salary do not inspire employees, their absence leads to dissatisfaction and disengagement (Herzberg, 1968). In the majority of MDAs, the absence of basic motivational incentives has led to a decline in service effectiveness as well as overall employees' output. Furthermore, underperformance is exacerbated by weak capacity development. The majority of public institutions do not provide periodic training or capacity-enhancement programs to their personnel, rendering them unprepared to adopt modern administrative practices or to leverage emerging technologies (Adebayo, 1981).

Moreover, communication breakdowns contribute to underperformance by creating gaps in the relay of instructions, feedback, and progress of operations. When employees are deprived of timely or clear instructions, they will either misread assignments or procrastinate. Red tape in bureaucracies, hierarchical inflexibility, and poor access to modern communication tools are structural communication barriers that also slow down processes and lead to poor job performance (Robbins & Judge, 2018). Poor performance in these environments becomes deep-seated and difficult to turn around without fundamental structural reforms. Managing underperformance in public sector organizations like Bayelsa State organizations is a multifaceted process that includes clear job expectations, sound supervision, periodic performance monitoring, employee motivation, training, and improved internal communication.

2.4. INEFFECTIVENESS

Ineffectiveness in public administration is the inability of government agencies and their employees to achieve desired outcomes or deliver quality services to the citizens. This condition is typically marked by a gap between goal and actual achievement, with ongoing challenges in planning, coordination, execution, and evaluation of programmes. In the majority of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), particularly in developing nations such as Bayelsa State, ineffectiveness is a long-term issue that undermines institutional credibility and citizens' faith in public governance. A root cause of ineffectiveness is the gap between organizational goals and staff capacity to deliver them. The majority of administrative employees operate in environments where expectations are unrealistic, resources are limited, and decision-making power is limited or uncertain (Olowu & Sako, 2002). These structural limitations result in bureaucratic bottlenecks that retard service delivery and institutional effectiveness.

Added to that, ineffectiveness is also perpetuated by resistance to change and antiquated administrative processes. The majority of public organizations continue to adhere to manual, paper-based systems despite the availability of modern technologies to improve communication, record-keeping, and workflow automation. Resistance to the implementation of digital systems not only slows down processes but also increases the likelihood of errors, duplication of effort, and loss of information (Ibeto & Justine, 2013). Public officials often lack technical expertise and digital literacy to transition to more effective systems, and it is a source of general inefficiency. Also, where innovation is not encouraged and systems are rigid, the organization stagnates and cannot respond to the evolving demands of public administration (Adebayo, 1981). Inefficiency in budgeting, procurement, and implementation of services then becomes the order of the day.

Leadership shortcomings are also a significant source of administrative ineffectiveness. In the majority of public institutions, top managers lack the strategic vision and leadership skills to steer performance. Without goal setting, strategic planning, or performance measurement, institutions drift. Leaders who fail to motivate, inspire, or hold their workers accountable will likely preside over fragmented and ineffective systems. Moreover, where leadership is selected on a political rather than merit or competency basis, decision-making becomes politicized with little attention to public interest or service outcomes (Aliyu, 2017). Ineffectiveness is also driven by weak interdepartmental coordination. In most cases, there is little collaboration or sharing of information among units, resulting in fragmented efforts, duplication of efforts, and wastage of resources. This silo mentality hinders joint problem-solving and undermines overall agency performance (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2020).

Poor performance measurement systems also rank highly in sustaining ineffectiveness. In the absence of key performance indicators (KPIs), regular reviews, or feedback mechanisms, it is difficult to determine whether programs are successful or where improvements should be made. This lack of evaluative capacity reduces accountability and renders policy continuity and budgetary commitments hard to rationalize. In other cases, performance failures are simply overlooked due to weak institutional controls, patronage, or fear of confronting poorly performing staff (Balogun, 1983). Ineffectiveness is lastly a product of inadequate stakeholder engagement. Public organizations that fail to involve citizens, civil society, and other stakeholders in policymaking and service delivery end up instituting programs that are irrelevant or unsustainable. Top-down implementation of this sort only works to alienate the people and reduces the impact of government interventions. To reverse ineffectiveness in public administration, therefore, structural reform, leadership, technological investment, and a culture of transparency and accountability are necessary.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is grounded on two grand theories that give an insightful understanding of the interplay between structural communication barriers and administrative deficiency: Structural Functionalism Theory and Shannon and Weaver's Model of Communication Theory. These theories are foundational lenses through which organizational communication dynamics and administrative functions can be probed and interpreted.

3.1. STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM THEORY

The Structural Functionalism Theory, which is based on classical sociology and supported by theorists such as Talcott Parsons (1951) and Emile Durkheim, holds the view that society or any organization is a sophisticated system comprised of interdependent structures that function together towards encouraging stability and functionality. In accordance with this theory, all elements of an organization (rules, roles, departments, communication structures) have a particular function to play in facilitating the successful functioning of the entire system (Parsons, 1951).

Extended to administrative settings, the theory posits that communication is a key structural function that maintains organizational performance and coordination. When structures of communication are effective, information flows effortlessly between hierarchical levels, enabling decision-making, accountability, and performance monitoring. When there are structural communication obstacles like bureaucratic bottlenecks, rigid hierarchies, or outdated procedures, they disrupt the smooth operation of the administrative system. This often leads to administrative inefficiency characterized by delays, role conflict, low staff morale, and ineffective policy implementation (Durkheim, 1964; P.G Dass, 2014).

Structural Functionality also points to the importance of balance in an organization. Failure in one subsystem, such as the communication system, can lead to other parts, such as leadership effectiveness, policy implementation, and employee coordination, to lose their balance also. Therefore, theory stresses the requirement for adaptive communication structures that can respond to the changing demands of modern administration in a flexible manner (Olaopa, 2014). This reinforces the point that communication systems must evolve in relation to environmental complexity, technological advancement, and institutional goals in order to maintain organizational coherence and effectiveness.

3.2. SHANNON AND WEAVER'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION THEORY

Developed by Shannon and Weaver in 1949, the communication model is considered to be the foundation of communication theory in the present times. The model was initially discovered to enhance telecommunication systems, but subsequently, it was introduced in other departments like organizational behavior, public administration, and management studies (Shannon & Weaver, 1949).

The model illustrates communication as a linear process made up of five key elements: the source of the information (sender), transmitter (encoder), channel, receiver (decoder), and destination. The critical addition to the model is the inclusion of the term "noise," which refers to any interference that disrupts or hinders the communication of the desired message. Within an administrative environment, structural communication barriers also act as "noise" they could be rigid hierarchies, technological shortcomings, excessive formalities, or a lack of feedback mechanisms that get in the way of effective message transmission (Greenberg, 2011).

As the Shannon-Weaver model posits, effectiveness demands that the communication go through the correct channel without distortion at the receiving end to the receiver. In bureaucratic organizations, though, most of these messages go through layers on their way to the receiving end, which makes delay and distortion more likely. Feedback-the response of the receiver-is also vital; however, in most hierarchical organizations, the communication is one-way and avoids upward feedback, creating administrative gaps and ineffectiveness (Jenifer & Raman, 2015).

The model also stresses the need to use the right channel. For instance, memos are inappropriate for use when decisions have to be made in real-time and, therefore, experience administrative lags. However, failure to have digital tools such as emails, intranets, or real-time messaging can slow down and blur administrative communication. Shannon and Weaver's theory,

therefore, presents a technical, but practical, model to describe how organizational structures and systemic barriers are involved in communication breakdown and administrative efficiency (Robbins & Judge, 2018).

Here, the communication issues causing administrative shortage can be diagnosed by seeing where the "noise" is coming from in the chain of communication whether at the sender level (poorly clear directives), the channel (bureaucratic bottlenecks), or the receiver (absence of interpretation or feedback). This model is highly effective in diagnosing structural communication problems and suggesting changes in organizational communication structure and procedures.

3.3. PRIOR STUDIES

P.G. Dass (2014) conducted a study on the impact of communication on public administration effectiveness in Nigeria, premised on some of the ministries in Enugu State. The research followed a quantitative methodology whereby 150 civil servants were interviewed through structured questionnaires. Findings showed that ineffective communication structures, lack of feedback mechanisms, and bureaucratic delays significantly undermined administrative effectiveness. Most of the respondents indicated that the structural flow of information in their ministries was hierarchical, which resulted in misinterpretation of directives and duplication of functions, slowing the implementation of tasks. In conclusion, the study established that proper communication systems contribute significantly to effective decision-making and service delivery.

In that regard, Nordin et al. examined the organizational communication implications on job satisfaction and administrative performance of the Nigerian public sector in 2014. The mixed-methods design implemented in the research-to-collect surveys and conduct interviews with 200 Lagos State public servants was employed to create solid connections between communication practices and employee outcomes. Specifically, the study revealed that job satisfaction and administrative performance of organisations would be outstanding when their communication frameworks are highly transparent and inclusive. Conversely, bureaucratic communication systems exhibited low morale, misinformation, and a mismatch of department-to-leadership goals.

Amah and Ahiauzu (2013) aimed at participatory structures in public institutions to investigate the relationship between employee involvement and organizational effectiveness. It involved 180 public servants spread across three states in South-South Nigeria. By employing cross-sectional survey methods, the researchers established that, when employees are excluded from communication processes, especially in hierarchical institutions, the related administrative outcomes deteriorate. The conclusion indicated that the bureaucratic structures, such as centralized communication and top-down decision-making, are the obstacles to responsiveness, innovation, and operational effectiveness. The study recommended greater consultative communication methods for supporting administrative coordination and employee involvement.

Gupta and Sharma (2021) examined the impact of communication structures on administrative effectiveness in Indian public institutions. Founded on a sample of 250 public university employees, the article contemplated the utility of digital communication media in surmounting routine bureaucratic obstacles. With a quantitative design, the study ascertained that organizations that utilized centralized digital platforms such as intranet, enterprise messaging, and shared cloud documentation experienced fewer gaps in communication and improved performance. The research concluded that digital integration supports the dismantling of structural barriers through increased decision-making speed, coordination of tasks, and monitoring of administrative activities.

Aliyu and Usman (2020) conducted an exploratory qualitative study on communication breakdowns in Nigerian public organizations. Through in-depth interviews of mid-level administrators, they concluded that excessive documentation needs, lack of interdepartmental communication, and absence of upward feedback mechanisms were major contributors to inefficiency in administration. The study further revealed that many departments often work in isolation without departmental communication because of the existence of silos, which promotes inter-unit rivalry and misaligns objectives. The research concludes that without deliberate structural reforms aimed at promoting open communication, administrative efficacy in public institutions will remain an illusion.

Obiekwe (2018) investigated public health administration in Nairobi, Kenya, and the impact of structural communication barriers on healthcare service delivery. By using a qualitative case study approach of observation and focus group interviews, the study highlighted that communication breakdowns between junior staff and management delayed responses to emergencies and led to inefficient coordination of patient care. Structural hierarchies within hospitals prevented effective escalation of service issues in a timely fashion, which resulted in administrative deficiencies. The study concluded that flattening organizational structures of communication could render healthcare more responsive, reduce error rates, and enhance overall healthcare outcomes.

Ejumudo (2012) also examined critically the failure of public service reforms in Nigeria through a critical analysis of bureaucratic communication bottlenecks. Using data based on reform documents and interviews with senior administrators, the study confirmed that a majority of the reform attempts failed due to the fact that implementers were not part of the communication process. The lack of directives, combined with hierarchical rigidity, was so pronounced that lower-level staff

workers were not adequately informed and empowered to execute reform strategies. The study reaffirmed the necessity of participatory communication and bottom-up feedback in the implementation of policy reforms and the achievement of administrative objectives.

These empirical studies together validate that structural communication barriers such as hierarchical structures, less technological support, and a little feedback mechanism are major causes of administrative weaknesses in various settings. The results all indicate that restructuring of communication structures through digital integration, strong leadership, and decentralized decision-making is required to improve administrative effectiveness, service delivery, and organizational performance.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a descriptive survey research design in studying the correlation between structural communication barriers and administrative deficiency among administrative staff in the selected Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in Bayelsa State. The survey technique was suitable because it allowed the researcher to gather standardized answers from a large population, making generalization and identification of patterns possible. The population consisted of all administrative officers, i.e., Executive Officers, Administrative Officers, and Principal Officers working in the main MDAs, i.e., the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, and the Civil Service Commission. The census sampling technique was employed where possible due to the relatively small size of the population. Where it was not feasible to carry out a complete census, simple random sampling was adopted to give every staff member an equal chance of being chosen. The sample size of 154 respondents was determined by applying Yamane's formula for determining sample size.

Data were collected by administering a structured questionnaire with three sections: demographic information, structural communication barriers indicators, and administrative deficiency indicators. On a 5-point Likert scale, the items ranged from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. The instrument content was pretested on some academic experts and civil service professionals in order to enhance content validity. The pilot test was pretested to provide reliability of the instrument by attaining the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.83, showing a strong measure of internal consistency. Questionnaires were personally administered and collected within two weeks during working hours. Anonymity and voluntary participation were guaranteed to the participants, and ethical clearance was sought from the respective civil service authorities.

The statistical software SPSS version 25.0 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics like means, frequencies, and percentages were used in explaining demographic features and the trend of responses. In order to test the hypotheses of the study, inferential statistics (Spearman Rank Correlational Coefficient) were used to establish the direction and magnitude of the relationship between administrative inefficiency and communication barriers. All the hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 significance level, and findings were displayed in tables and charts for ease of comprehension.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the one hundred and four questionnaires distributed, 116 (75.3%) were retrieved and collated for analysis. Data collected was coded, input, and analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to test the hypotheses. Each hypothesis was tested at a 0.01 significance level to establish statistical relevance, enabling a clear interpretation of the correlation between the variables under study.

TABLE 1 Correlational outcome between structural communication barriers and underperformance in ministries in bayelsa state

| Correlations | | | |
|--|---------------------|--------|------------------|
| | | SCB | Underperformance |
| SCB | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .409** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 116 | 116 |
| Underperformance | Pearson Correlation | .409** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 116 | 116 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

Source: SPSS Output, 2025.

The Pearson correlation result presented in Table 1 reveals a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between structural communication hindrances and underperformance among administrative personnel within ministries in Bayelsa State. The correlation coefficient measure (r) is 0.409, which implies that as structural communication hindrances increase, e.g., rigid hierarchies, sluggish information flow, or lack of appropriate feedback channels, underperformance increases. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level according to the p-value of 0.000 (2-tailed), which signifies that the result is not a coincidence. The sample size ($N = 116$) contributes to the validity of the study. This indicates that inefficient

communication systems are to blame for low employee efficiency and administration productivity in public institutions. Practically, the discovery highlights the need for ministries to improve internal communication infrastructures and dismantle structural barriers to information flow if they are to address the overarching issue of underperformance in the public sector.

TABLE 2 Correlational outcome between structural communication barriers and ineffectiveness in ministries in bayelsa state.

| Correlations | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------|-----------------|
| | | SBC | Ineffectiveness |
| SBC | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .511** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 116 | 116 |
| Ineffectiveness | Pearson Correlation | .511** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 116 | 116 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Output, 2025.

Table 2 displays that correlation analysis indicates a statistically significant moderate to strong positive correlation between structural communication barriers and ineffectiveness in ministries working in Bayelsa State. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) is 0.511 because it indicates that as the structural communication barriers, such as fragmented channels of communication, lack of interdepartmental coordination, and overbureaucracy, increase, organizational ineffectiveness also increases. The significance of the correlation at the statistical level is 0.01, as reflected by the p -value of 0.000, and there is therefore less than a 1% chance that the association occurred by chance. Since the sample was 116, the evidence reflects valid proof that poor communication frameworks are highly accountable for inefficiency in public administrative settings. This finding implies that ministries with poor service delivery, weak program implementation, and a lack of staff responsiveness may need to assign the highest priority to communication barrier-breaking. Enhancing clarity, feedback loops, and coordination among units can significantly reduce inefficiencies and enhance overall administrative performance.

6. CONCLUSION

The above study sought to investigate the connection between structural communication barriers and administrative weaknesses, i.e., underperformance and ineffectiveness, among Bayelsa State ministries. The findings indicate that structural communication barriers such as fixed hierarchies, delayed information, and inadequate feedback mechanisms have a statistically significant and positive relationship with underperformance and ineffectiveness. A correlation coefficient of 0.409 for structural communication barriers and underperformance, and 0.511 for structural communication barriers and ineffectiveness, indicates that the barriers contribute moderately to significant administrative deficiencies. These results indicate that dysfunctional communication structures are a root obstacle to peak employee performance and public sector organizational effectiveness. The study therefore concludes that structural communication obstacles are not only detrimental to employee productivity but also undercut the capacity of ministries to deliver quality public services.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Underpinning the conclusions of this study, several critical recommendations are provided.

1. Next, Bayelsa State ministries must undertake an in-depth internal communication system audit to identify and deconstruct impediments to the free and timely flow of information. This entails flattening inordinately hierarchical structures, establishing open communication procedures, and installing open feedback loops among administrative levels.
2. Second, training and sensitization must be undertaken to develop employees' communication skills and cultivate an information-dissemination and responsiveness culture. Third, electronic communication media and software must be adopted for the ease of speed, accuracy, and consistency in message flow from one department to another.
3. Lastly, policy interventions must be instituted at the state level to make communication efficiency requirements obligatory for MDAs and supported by monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that track performance results tied to communication effectiveness. Such measures will not only curtail underperformance and ineffectiveness, but also strengthen service delivery and citizens' satisfaction.

8. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study contributes to the pool of knowledge through empirically establishing a positive link between structural communication barriers and administrative inefficiencies in the context of Nigerian public sector ministries in a developing state such as Bayelsa State. While communication barriers in organizational environments have been studied, this study sets the problem distinctly in the context of government bureaucracies in Nigeria, with a specific focus on how structural inefficiencies undermine institutional productivity and performance. It provides measurable evidence, via Pearson correlation analysis, showing that ineffective communication frameworks are the primary cause of underperformance and ineffectiveness.

Such a contribution is most beneficial for policymakers, reform-oriented administrators, and scholars in public management seeking context-sensitive tools to improve governance outcomes in sub-Saharan African bureaucracies.

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