IJNRD.ORG ISSN : 2456-4184
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NOVEL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (IJNRD) | IJNRD.ORG
An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

"Information Dissemination and Institutional Performance in Post-Bureaucratic Systems: An Appraisal of Post-Bureaucracy in the Higher Education Sector of Cameroon"

By

Dr. Theresia ENANGA MBUA NDOKO

(Assistant Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Yaounde I)

Abstract

This study investigates the role of information dissemination in enhancing institutional performance within post-bureaucratic structures in Cameroon's higher education sector. As institutions transition from rigid bureaucratic frameworks to more flexible, decentralized models, effective communication has become critical to organizational efficiency and service delivery. Despite these reforms, challenges such as poor coordination, limited transparency, and ineffective communication channels persist.

Using a triangulated methodology, data were collected from a study population of 1,163 through questionnaires, interviews, and observations involving administrative personnel in the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP), 11 state universities, and 3 private universities in Yaoundé. A sample of 837 respondents was determined using Taro Yamane's (1976) formula. Data analysis employed IBM SPSS v23 and Atlas.ti v6. Findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between information dissemination and institutional performance (H_0: $\mu = 0.000 < 0.05$). The results suggest that although post-bureaucracy is formally adopted, its implementation is hindered by informal and inconsistent communication practices.

The study recommends that policymakers and education managers prioritize the development of structured, transparent, and timely communication systems. Doing so would support innovation, accountability, and effective service delivery, thereby advancing the goals of post-bureaucratic reform in Cameroon's higher education landscape.

Keywords: Post-bureaucracy, information dissemination, higher education, institutional performance, decentralization

Introduction

The evolution from traditional bureaucratic governance to post-bureaucratic systems has been driven by globalization, technological advancements, and the demand for greater institutional responsiveness. Post-bureaucracy emerged as an alternative model designed to overcome the rigidity, centralization, and procedural delays inherent in classical bureaucratic systems. Scholars such as Johnson et al. (2009) describe post-bureaucracy as a move toward decentralized authority, flexible structures, and participatory decision-making, particularly in public sector institutions.

Central to post-bureaucratic reform is the concept of "public value" (Moore, 1995), which encourages institutions to move beyond rigid rules and hierarchical command structures in favor of more dynamic and inclusive governance models. In this context, the quality and flow of information become critical. Timely, transparent, and accessible information is essential to support decentralized decision-making, foster internal collaboration, and enhance institutional performance.

The higher education sector in Cameroon—comprising the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP), state universities, and private higher institutions—has adopted elements of post-bureaucratic governance. However, the effectiveness of these reforms remains uncertain. Information dissemination, a key pillar of post-bureaucracy, often suffers from inefficiencies, lack of structure, and limited digital integration, undermining institutional performance and innovation.

As post-bureaucratic models call for openness, knowledge sharing, and collective responsibility, the ability of institutions to disseminate accurate and timely information significantly influences service delivery, coordination, and stakeholder engagement. Inadequate communication systems can hinder transparency, delay decision-making, and limit accountability, thus weakening institutional effectiveness.

This study investigates how information dissemination affects institutional performance within the post-bureaucratic structures of Cameroon's higher education sector. It aims to assess the extent to which effective communication contributes to the realization of post-bureaucratic goals and to identify challenges that may be impeding the full implementation of this governance model.

Problem Statement

In today's globalized and knowledge-driven society, institutions are expected to adopt governance models that support flexibility, transparency, and timely communication. The post-bureaucratic model, which emphasizes decentralized decision-making, digital engagement, and collaborative structures, was introduced as a corrective to the rigid, hierarchical nature of traditional bureaucracy. However, in practice, many institutions—particularly within Cameroon's higher education sector—struggle to implement these ideals effectively.

Despite the formal adoption of post-bureaucratic structures in the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP), state universities, and private higher education institutions, information dissemination remains inconsistent, poorly coordinated, and often hindered by outdated communication systems and practices. The lack of timely and transparent information flow undermines intra-organ coordination, delays decision-making, weakens staff engagement, and ultimately affects institutional performance.

Rather than serving as a tool for empowerment and innovation, information management in these institutions is frequently characterized by opacity, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability. This disconnect between the ideals of post-bureaucracy and their operational reality raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of reforms intended to improve service delivery and responsiveness.

Given that information dissemination is central to post-bureaucratic performance, this study seeks to examine how communication practices influence institutional outcomes in Cameroon's higher education sector. It aims to uncover the extent to which post-bureaucratic principles are being implemented in practice, and how communication gaps may be limiting the potential of these reforms.

General Objective:

To determine how information dissemination influences institutional performance in the execution of post-bureaucratic activities within the higher education sector of Cameroon.

Specific Objectives:

1. To examine the current channels and methods of information dissemination in post-bureaucratic higher education institutions in Cameroon.
2. To assess the relationship between timely information sharing and decision-making effectiveness.
3. To evaluate how transparency and openness in communication impact service delivery and staff performance.
4. To identify challenges associated with information dissemination in post-bureaucratic higher education settings.

Research Questions:

1. What are the prevailing methods and channels of information dissemination in Cameroon's higher education sector?
2. How does the quality and timeliness of information dissemination affect institutional performance?
3. In what ways does transparent communication influence staff engagement and service delivery?
4. What are the major barriers to effective information dissemination in post-bureaucratic higher education institutions?

Hypotheses:

1. **H_0:** There is no significant relationship between information dissemination and institutional performance in post-bureaucratic higher education institutions in Cameroon.
   H_1: There is a significant positive relationship between information dissemination and institutional performance in post-bureaucratic higher education institutions in Cameroon.

Literature Review: Information Dissemination

Effective communication is a cornerstone of institutional performance, particularly within post-bureaucratic systems where decision-making is decentralized and reliant on real-time information exchange. Information dissemination—the process by which facts, messages, or data are conveyed across organizational levels—plays a critical role in ensuring clarity, coordination, and collaboration within institutions.

Fatimayin (2018) describes communication as a dynamic social interaction between a sender and a receiver, often involving verbal, non-verbal, written, or visual elements. Similarly, Lunenburg (2010) traces the term to its Latin root *communis*, meaning "common understanding," emphasizing that effective communication requires shared meaning between parties. In organizational settings like the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP), communication typically flows hierarchically—from top leadership through various administrative channels—yet the mode and quality of that flow are crucial to achieving performance outcomes.

Types and Forms of Communication

Communication within institutions can be classified into **verbal** and **non-verbal** categories. Verbal communication involves spoken or written language and is commonly used during meetings, announcements, memos, and reports. It enables immediate feedback and is instrumental in direct instruction or guidance (Khabaz, 2013). However, non-verbal communication—such as body language, facial expressions, and tone—can either reinforce or contradict verbal messages. Gholipour (2007) argues that leaders must be intentional about both their words and delivery to maintain clarity and foster trust.

In support, Haneef et al. (2014) highlight that non-verbal cues often carry more weight than verbal communication, especially in leadership settings. Subtle gestures like eye contact, posture, and tone of voice can shape how messages are perceived and influence subordinate motivation and response.

Additionally, **written**, **visual**, and **listening-based** communication serve critical roles in post-bureaucratic environments. Written communication (e.g., policy circulars, emails) provides documentation and reference, while visual tools (e.g., charts, graphs) enhance understanding of complex information. Drexel (2018) emphasizes that combining multiple forms of communication increases message clarity and effectiveness.

The Communication Process

The communication process involves key steps: message formulation (encoding), transmission through an appropriate channel, reception and interpretation by the receiver (decoding), and feedback. Lipuma (2017) and LinkedIn (2021) expand this model to include environmental factors and "noise"—barriers that distort or block the message. Shannon and Weaver's model further underscores the importance of feedback in verifying that the intended message has been understood.

In post-bureaucratic systems, where responsiveness and adaptability are paramount, breakdowns in any stage of this process can lead to poor coordination, delayed decisions, and reduced performance. According to Negi (2009), alignment between verbal and non-verbal communication enhances message effectiveness, while misalignment may result in confusion, reduced morale, and inefficiency.

Implications for Post-Bureaucratic Performance

In a post-bureaucratic context, effective information dissemination supports transparency, accountability, and collaborative problem-solving. However, when communication lacks clarity or timeliness, institutions may experience delays in execution, fragmented inter-departmental relations, and poor staff engagement.

Studies by Gholipour (2007) and Porter & Kramer (2006) suggest that leadership communication style—particularly how leaders frame and convey messages—can significantly influence institutional culture and performance. In Cameroon's higher education sector, where digital communication infrastructure and informal practices coexist, the need for structured, responsive, and inclusive information flow becomes even more critical.

This review underscores that for post-bureaucratic reforms to translate into improved performance, institutions must prioritize clear, timely, and multidirectional communication. Only then can higher education institutions in Cameroon fully realize the potential of participatory governance, innovation, and service excellence.

Research Design

According to Amin (2005), a research design is the plan for carrying out a research work. Creswell and Clark (2007), also holds that a research design is the procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies. It sets the procedure on the required data, the methods applied to the collection and analysis of data leading to the response to the research question (Grey, 2014). This study made use of a correlational survey research design. This permits the researcher to provide insights on the relationship between variables. A survey looks at the individual, groups, institutions, methods and materials to describe, compare, contrast, classify, analyze and interpret the entities and events in the field, (Cohen et al, 2007). The survey is employed in this study to enable the researcher study a large population and have a greater statistical power. Moreover, it gives the researcher the ability to collect a large amount of information and having the availability of validated models. According to Nworgu (1991), a correlation design is one which a group of people or items are studied through collecting and analyzing data from a few people or items that can be considered to be representative of the entire group of population. The findings of this sample of the population therefore can be generalized on the entire population.

Area of the Study

This study covered all the ten Regions in Cameroon, precisely the 11 State Universities namely: University of Bamenda (North West), University of Bertoua (East), University of Buea (South West), University of Douala (Litoral), University Dschang (Western), University of Ebolowa (South), University of Garoua (North), University of Maroua (Far North), University Ngaoundere (Adamaoua), University of Yaounde I and University of Yaounde II (Centre), as well as 03 private universities:- Catholic University of Central Africa Yaounde (Centre), Siantou University Institute Yaounde (Centre), and International Bilingual Institute of Science and Management (IBISMA).

Population of the Study.

According to Shukla, (2020), research population is a set of units (people, events, things) that possess variable characteristics under study and for which the findings of the research can be generalized. A population determines the limit within which the research findings are applicable. Population in research can be defined as the assembly of individuals to whom the results of the research work can be applicable (Mbua, 2003). Ndie, (2006,) defines

population as an infinite set of elements defined in advance on whom the results of a study are applied. It is also an assembly of individuals, who possess the same characteristics, live and function in the same locality.

In this study, the population was 1163, the totality of those specific individuals about which the researcher intends to make some inferences through collecting data from sample about which information was collected for analysis.

The population of this study was made up of all the senior officials and administrative assistants in the Ministry of Higher Education, in all the State Universities and the 3 private universities as mentioned above.

The Target Population

This is the population to which the researcher ultimately wants to generalize the results (Amin, 2004). It is the set of individuals on which the researcher wishes to apply her results. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), opine that the target population is the actual population to which the researcher would like to generalize its findings, (it is the researcher's ideal choice). The target population of this study is made up of the administration in the Ministry of Higher Education and in the Universities. This is the population to which the researcher ultimately wants to generalise the results. This population is made up of two different heterogeneous groups of people in the Higher Education Sector (senior officials and administrative assistants in both MINESUP and Universities) in Cameroon.

Accessible population

According to Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie (2017), accessible population refers to the portion of the target population to which the researcher has reasonable access and from which sample can be drawn. The accessible population of this study is drawn from the target population. From the table, we have 11 state universities and 3 private Higher Institutions with a population of 1163. Using the table in Amin (2005), and the Taro Yamane (1976), sample formula, we arrived at a sample size of 837.

Sample size and sampling technique

Sample size

Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie (2017), stipulate that a sample is the selected elements (people or objects) procedurally chosen for participation in a study to represent the target or accessible population. A sample is a part or section of a population study. It is a mirror image of the target population; a segment of population selected to represent a whole. Ryan (2000), cited by Maloba (2016), defines a sample as a set of choices that the researcher makes in order to move from all potential data which is analyzed and used on the final result or report of the investigation.

The accessible population was 1163 and the sample size of 837 was calculated using the Yamane (1976), and also supported by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which states that any research work with a given population, can find the respective sample size from the table below. It is from this table that the researcher identified the sample size based on the population of the study.

Taro Yamane formular.

$$= \frac{N}{1+N(e)2}$$

Table 1 shows how the total sample of 837 senior officials and administrative assistants from the Ministry of Higher Education and State and Private Universities were proportionately stratified.

Table 1 also shows the different types of populations and their respective sample sizes. From the sample size and population indicated, the researcher was able to determine the representativeness of the population by the sample using the calculation indicated, in table 3 to get the sample rate of representation:

Table 1: Stratified distribution of sample size among MINESUP and Higher Institutions

	Institution	**Accessible Population**	**Sample size**
	MINESUP	150	109
	University of Yaounde 1	125	95
	University of Yaounde 2	113	88
	University of Douala	148	108
	University of Buea	85	70
	University of Bamenda	80	67
	University of Dschang	119	92
	University of Ngaoundere	100	80
	University of Maroua	92	78
	University of Garoua	27	25
	University of Ebolowa	15	14
	University of Bertoua	20	17
	UCAC Yaounde	49	43
	SIANTOU University Institute Yaounde	28	26
	IBISMA Yaounde	12	11
Total		**1163**	**837**

Sample rate = $\frac{sample\ x\ 100}{\text{accessible population}}$

SR = $\frac{837\ x\ 100}{1163} = 71.9\%$

Our survey rate is 71.9% so it is representative of the accessible population.

Sampling technique

The multistage and stratified sampling techniques were used in this study. Multistage sampling is the taking of samples in stages using smaller and smaller sampling units at each stage (Bhandari, 2022). We used the multistage because it allows researchers to apply cluster or random sampling after determining the groups. Researchers can apply multistage sampling to make clusters and sub-clusters until the researcher reaches the desired size or type of group. With multistage, the researcher started firstly by sampling all the state universities in the ten regions of Cameroon from which the sample was randomly selected. Secondly, the researcher sampled some three private higher institutions in the Centre region which made part of the sample.

Stratified sampling is a method of obtaining a representative sample from a population that researchers have divided into relatively similar subpopulations (strata). Researchers use stratified sampling because it helps to ensure that specific subgroups are present in their sample. It also helps them obtain precise estimates of each group's characteristics. So with the help of stratified sampling technique, the researcher selected various senior officials and administrative assistants in MINESUP and in the Universities.

Data Analysis and Results

Exploratory Factor Analysis for Information Dissemination [ID= 5]

To downsize research constructs, it is important to highlight that a total of five [5] indicators were modeled for dimensions reduction in the case of Information Dissemination [ID = 5], In order to complete the analysis of EFA, two assumptions must be fulfilled. The coefficient of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy must exceed 0.5 [KMO > 0.5], and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity must have a significant P-value [P-Value < 0.05]. Other requirements for appropriate loading are premised that indicators must cross-load into other components or have coefficients less than 0.5. Based on the aforementioned, the analysis of EFA was conducted with the use of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) technique as mode of extraction with defined fixed factor of two [2]. Rotation method was Promax with Kaiser Normalization converged in 3 iterations. Factor loadings and coefficient were suppressed to 0.4 in order to minimise noise in the final factor loadings. The guiding provisions for appropriate factor loadings must not cross-load and must have a coefficient of at least 0.5. Any indicator with factor loading of less than 0.5 and/or is cross-loaded must be rejected. The Pattern matrix is shown on table 2.

Table2: Exploratory Factor Analysis for Information Dissemination

Pattern Matrix[a]		
	Component	
	1	2
ID1	.787	
ID3	.854	
ID4		.899
ID5		.725
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.		
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

Source: Field data (2022)

The resulting outputs revealed appropriate factor loadings with evidence of no cross loadings and coefficients of less than 0.5. Based on the aforementioned table, dimension reduction was approved, and component 1 was retained as relevant.

Table 3: Test of specific Hypotheses

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.660	.073		22.618	.000		
	ID_Mean	-.081	.013	-.231	-6.081	.000	.658	1.520

a. Dependent Variable: PS_Mean

Source: Field data (2022)

Decision

Ha: There is a relationship between information dissemination (communication) and performance in post-bureaucracy. P-Value at 95% (CI)=[H_0: $\mu = 0.00 < 0.05$, $\beta = -0.161$]. Reject the null hypothesis and conclude that

there is significant statistical evidence to suggest that there is a relationship between communication and performance in post-bureaucracy.

Implications and Recommendations

Effective communication is a critical component of post-bureaucratic systems, especially within the higher education sector where timely, clear, and accessible information shapes institutional performance. The fifth research question of this study explored how information dissemination influences service delivery in post-bureaucratic environments. Scholars such as Ezeukwu (2000) emphasize that communication is a multifaceted process involving a sender, message, medium, and receiver, with both verbal and non-verbal elements playing vital roles. In essence, communication extends beyond spoken or written words to include gestures, tone, body language, and structured organizational channels.

Despite the centrality of communication, multiple studies have identified poor dissemination and implementation of policies in higher education systems across Africa. Dania and Adebayo (2019), for instance, report that many institutions struggle with weak policy communication frameworks, leading to fragmented understanding and ineffective execution. Similarly, Sarkin-Kebbi and Kwashabawa (2017) highlight a persistent gap between policy formulation at the ministerial level and its awareness or adoption by stakeholders in universities. This challenge is not unique to Cameroon but extends across Sub-Saharan Africa, as supported by studies in Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana, and Ghana (Rasesemola et al., 2019).

In Cameroon, the absence of a structured conceptual framework to guide information dissemination within the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP) and affiliated universities has hindered the performance of services. Factors such as inadequate resources, resistance from leadership, limited awareness, poor motivation, and lack of legal protections for staff further undermine communication efficiency (Adebayo et al., 2018). These shortcomings weaken the implementation of institutional policies and contribute to inconsistencies in academic and administrative outcomes.

The findings of this study reaffirm the hypothesis that effective information dissemination positively correlates with improved performance in post-bureaucratic systems. The rejection of the null hypothesis confirms that transparent, structured, and timely communication enhances service delivery in the Cameroonian higher education sector. As institutions increasingly adopt post-bureaucratic models, communication must shift from rigid, top-down channels to more inclusive, interactive, and technology-enabled frameworks.

In response to these challenges, the study recommends the development of a practical **conceptual framework** to guide communication strategies in higher education institutions. This framework should align with post-bureaucratic principles by promoting open dialogue, cross-departmental feedback loops, and digital communication platforms. Such an approach would address not only policy implementation gaps but also foster staff engagement and institutional responsiveness.

The **Shannon-Weaver model of communication** (1948) provides a useful foundation, emphasizing the importance of clarity, message encoding, appropriate channel selection, and effective feedback. Managers and institutional leaders must recognize that poor communication can distort meaning, reduce efficiency, and demotivate staff.

Leaders in MINESUP and universities should therefore prioritize strategic communication planning, train personnel in effective communication techniques, and institutionalize routine mechanisms for information flow.

Ultimately, improved information dissemination stands as a reliable driver of performance in post-bureaucratic settings. For post-bureaucracy to be meaningful and impactful in Cameroon's higher education sector, communication must be treated not as a support function but as a central pillar of governance, service delivery, and innovation.

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