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Harnessing Internal Communication for Enhanced Institutional Performance: Insights from the University of Bertoua, Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

This paper sought to investigate the effect of internal communication on the performance of the University of Bertoua. The study adopted a quantitative approach using cross-sectional data collected from a sample of 53 respondents conveniently. The data were analyzed in SPSS 20 and in Stata 14, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics specifically ordinary least squares. The findings indicated that vertical communication showed a positive relationship with organizational performance; however, this relationship is not statistically significant, suggesting that communication between supervisors and subordinates does not have a meaningful influence on performance in the institution. Lateral communication, on the other hand, had a positive and statistically significant effect on organizational performance, indicating that improved communication among colleagues at the same level contributes to better performance outcomes. Similarly, diagonal communication showed a positive and significant effect on organizational performance, suggesting that communication across levels and departments plays a crucial role in improving overall organizational performance. From a policy perspective, management should institutionalize structured communication protocols that require supervisors and unit heads to disseminate information at specific intervals and through standardized channels such as official memos, email briefings, and scheduled feedback sessions. In relation to lateral communication, which emerged as the strongest and most consistent form of communication within the institution, the results indicate an already conducive environment of information sharing, collaboration, and mutual respect among colleagues.

INTRODUCTION

Internal communication constitutes the foundation upon which the coordination of administrative, academic, and support functions rests. Despite its significance, internal communication in many universities, especially in developing economies, remains ineffective, fragmented, and poorly managed. Organizational theorists have long emphasized the importance of communication to organizational efficiency and sustainability. As Tariszka-Semegine (2012) observed, communication processes not only sustain and develop organizations but also determine their internal dynamics, cohesion, and performance. Communication provides the necessary linkages among the hierarchical levels of management, departments, and staff members; it ensures that tasks are understood, resources are coordinated, and institutional culture is sustained. In the absence of effective internal communication, even well-designed organizational strategies and policies may fail to translate into tangible results.

In the University of Bertoua, internal communication operates at multiple levels vertical, horizontal, and diagonal and can be formal or informal. The vertical dimension allows information to flow between different levels of hierarchy: top management, deans, heads of departments, and staff. The horizontal flow facilitates coordination across departments or faculties, while the diagonal flow allows interaction across divisions and units.

However, these flows are often disrupted by structural bottlenecks, unclear communication hierarchies, and lack of feedback mechanisms. Many university employees report dissatisfaction with downward communication, citing delays, information distortion, and lack of transparency. Similarly, upward communication is weakened by fear of reprisal, absence of open feedback systems, and perceptions that management does not value employees' input (McClelland, 1988). As a result, communication becomes one-directional, policy-driven, and reactive rather than interactive and participatory.

Another growing challenge relates to the mediums of internal communication employed in universities. Traditionally, universities relied on face-to-face meetings, memos, notice boards, and circulars as primary communication channels. With technological advancement, however, new digital tools emails, intranets, WhatsApp groups, and virtual meeting platforms have emerged as alternative means of internal communication. While these tools have improved speed and accessibility, they have also introduced new problems such as information overload, message distortion, lack of message coherence, and breaches of confidentiality. In the institution, the absence of clear communication policies on digital media use has led to inconsistent practices, where some staff depend on informal WhatsApp groups while others rely solely on formal email systems. Consequently, information dissemination

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becomes fragmented, and critical messages sometimes fail to reach all stakeholders.

A further dimension of the problem concerns the balance between formal and informal communication. While formal communication follows defined channels and documentation protocols, informal communication through conversations, rumors, and social media plays an equally vital role in shaping perceptions, building trust, and fostering cooperation. Tariszka-Semegine (2012) observed that informal communication, though sometimes viewed as an obstacle, can complement formal communication if effectively managed. However, in the institutions, poor formal communication systems have led to an overreliance on informal networks, often resulting in misinformation, gossip, and internal tension. The conflict between formal and informal communication, when left unmanaged, undermines institutional trust and morale, leading to decreased productivity and low job satisfaction among staff.

Managerial attitudes and leadership communication styles also influence the efficiency of internal communication. Research indicates that effective downward communication requires top managers to communicate directly with immediate supervisors, who then relay information to their subordinates. When this chain is disrupted or when supervisors lack authority and accurate information, communication effectiveness declines. In universities, the hierarchical nature of decision-making sometimes results in communication gaps between senior management and junior staff. The absence of regular feedback mechanisms and participatory communication channels exacerbates this problem, leaving staff uninformed about decisions that affect their roles and responsibilities. Over time, this erodes trust in management and weakens institutional cohesion. Furthermore, the problem of internal communication is compounded by the lack of systematic measurement of communication efficiency. Unlike financial or operational performance, communication effectiveness is rarely quantified or evaluated in most universities. Poor communication leads to loss of confidence in management, low identification with institutional goals, high staff turnover, and increased reliance on informal networks. These outcomes, though intangible, directly affect productivity, morale, and service delivery in universities.

Against this backdrop, it becomes evident that internal communication in universities faces a multi-dimensional problem spanning structural, technological, behavioral, and cultural dimensions. The persistent gaps in the flow of information, the inconsistency in communication mediums, the weak feedback mechanisms, and the lack of communication planning collectively undermine institutional efficiency. These challenges call for an empirical investigation into how internal communication systems operate within universities, what barriers exist, and how they can be addressed to improve coordination, staff performance, and institutional effectiveness.

Ultimately, the problem of internal communication in

universities is not merely a technical or administrative issue; it is a strategic concern that affects institutional identity, culture, and performance. As information becomes a critical organizational resource, the need for universities to adopt structured, inclusive, and technology-supported internal communication systems cannot be overemphasized. Unless these challenges are addressed through deliberate communication planning, capacity building, and infrastructural development, universities will continue to experience inefficiencies that limit their ability to fulfill their academic and societal mandates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Systems Theory- Katz & Kahn, 1978

Katz and Kahn (1978) developed the Systems Theory as part of their work on organizational behaviour, emphasizing the interdependence and interconnectedness of various components within an organization. The primary objective of the theory is to explain how organizations function as open systems that interact continuously with their environments, processing inputs and transforming them into outputs to achieve set goals. Scholars such as Scott (2020) and Morgan (2021) have reviewed the application of Systems Theory, highlighting its utility in understanding complex organizations like universities where multiple units must coordinate effectively to achieve institutional objectives. The theory posits that organizations are not isolated; they are affected by internal and external forces, and performance depends on how efficiently resources, information, and personnel are managed across different subsystems (Katz & Kahn, 1978). This perspective allows for a holistic view of organizational processes, emphasizing that changes or dysfunctions in one part of the system can have ripple effects throughout the institution (Daft, 2021).

Systems Theory operates under several assumptions. One key assumption is that organizations are composed of interrelated and interdependent parts, meaning that efficiency and performance are contingent upon the smooth functioning of all subsystems (Scott, 2020). Another assumption is that organizations are open systems that interact with their external environment, requiring adaptation and responsiveness to maintain equilibrium and achieve sustainability (Morgan, 2021). The theory assumes that inputs, processes, and outputs are linked through feedback mechanisms, which allow organizations to monitor performance, correct errors, and improve processes continuously (Daft, 2021). Additionally, it presumes that no single component operates in isolation; the performance of individuals, departments, and faculties is influenced by communication flows, decision-making structures, and resource availability across the system (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

The explanation of Systems Theory centers on the idea that organizations, including universities, function as dynamic entities where each unit or department contributes to overall performance. Inputs such as human resources, financial resources, information, and policies

enter the system and are processed through institutional structures and routines to produce outputs, including academic results, administrative efficiency, and stakeholder satisfaction (Scott, 2020). Feedback loops are integral, as they provide information on performance gaps, enabling continuous adjustments and improvements (Morgan, 2021). The theory highlights that effective internal communication is essential for the smooth operation of these subsystems, as it ensures that information flows appropriately between staff, management, and students, facilitating coordination, problem-solving, and alignment with institutional goals (Daft, 2021). In this regard, Systems Theory provides a framework for understanding the interdependence between communication processes and overall organizational performance.

One of the advantages of Systems Theory is that it offers a comprehensive perspective, enabling administrators and researchers to view the university as a whole rather than focusing on isolated components (Katz & Kahn, 1978). This holistic view helps identify the interconnections between departments, faculties, and administrative units, ensuring that interventions target the system as a whole rather than just individual parts (Scott, 2020). Another advantage is its emphasis on feedback and adaptability, which allows institutions to respond effectively to changes in the internal and external environment, such as policy shifts, technological developments, and evolving student needs, thereby enhancing performance (Morgan, 2021). The theory also supports strategic planning and resource allocation by highlighting the dependencies and interactions among organizational components, ensuring that decision-making aligns with institutional objectives (Daft, 2021).

Despite its advantages, Systems Theory has limitations. One limitation is its complexity, as analyzing all subsystems and their interrelations can be challenging and resource-intensive, making practical application in large institutions like universities difficult (Scott, 2020). Another limitation is that the theory tends to focus on structure and processes, potentially underemphasizing human factors such as motivation, culture, and interpersonal relationships, which are also critical for performance (Morgan, 2021). Additionally, while the theory highlights feedback mechanisms, it does not always account for the nuances of informal communication or power dynamics that can affect how information flows and is interpreted within the system (Daft, 2021). These limitations suggest that while Systems Theory is highly useful for understanding organizational interdependencies, it may need to be complemented with other theories to capture the full complexity of university operations.

The relationship between Systems Theory and internal communication in universities is significant because the theory emphasizes that effective functioning depends on the smooth interaction of all organizational subsystems (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Internal communication serves as the channel through which inputs, policies, and feedback are transmitted across departments, faculties, and

administrative units, ensuring alignment with institutional goals (Scott, 2020). Ineffective communication disrupts these interdependencies, potentially causing delays, errors, and reduced performance outcomes (Morgan, 2021). By applying Systems Theory, university administrators can understand the critical role of structured and transparent communication in facilitating coordination, monitoring progress, and fostering adaptive responses to challenges (Daft, 2021).

Communication Satisfaction Theory- Downs & Hazen, 1977

Downs and Hazen (1977) developed the Communication Satisfaction Theory to examine how employees perceive and evaluate the effectiveness of communication within organisations. The primary objective of the theory is to link the level of satisfaction employees derive from internal communication to their overall engagement, productivity, and organisational commitment. The theory emerged from the recognition that organisations are social systems in which the quality of communication influences both individual attitudes and institutional performance. Subsequent reviews and studies, including those by Jablin and Putnam (2001) and Men (2020), have reinforced the relevance of this theory in understanding employee satisfaction with upward, downward, and horizontal communication, highlighting how perceptions of clarity, accuracy, and timeliness of information affect workplace outcomes. The theory assumes that communication is not merely a transmission of messages but a critical process that shapes employees' understanding, attitudes, and motivation, ultimately influencing organisational effectiveness.

The underlying assumptions of the Communication Satisfaction Theory include the belief that employee attitudes and perceptions toward communication directly impact their satisfaction, performance, and commitment to organisational goals. It assumes that communication satisfaction is multidimensional, involving aspects such as clarity of messages, adequacy of information, openness of channels, and the degree to which employees feel heard and valued (Downs & Hazen, 1977). Additionally, the theory presumes that organisations are dynamic systems where feedback loops are essential, and information must flow effectively across hierarchical levels to sustain motivation and reduce uncertainty. Men (2014) supports this by demonstrating that employee satisfaction with internal communication significantly correlates with engagement, trust in leadership, and intention to remain in the organisation. The theory also assumes that employees are active participants in communication processes rather than passive recipients, emphasizing the importance of two-way communication channels and responsive organisational practices.

The Communication Satisfaction Theory explains that the quality and effectiveness of internal communication influence employees' attitudes, behaviours, and performance outcomes (Downs & Hazen, 1977). It

posits that when employees perceive communication as clear, timely, and transparent, they experience higher satisfaction, greater motivation, and improved collaboration, which positively affects organisational performance. Subsequent studies, including those by Ruck and Welch (2012) and Tarique *et al.* (2021), indicate that communication satisfaction fosters a sense of belonging, reduces misunderstandings, and strengthens alignment with organisational goals. The theory underscores that internal communication is not merely informational but relational, impacting trust, cooperation, and employee engagement. When organisations prioritise communication quality, it facilitates knowledge sharing, decision-making efficiency, and institutional adaptability, making communication a strategic tool for enhancing overall performance.

One advantage of the Communication Satisfaction Theory is that it provides a structured framework for measuring employee perceptions of internal communication across multiple dimensions, including clarity, adequacy, and openness (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Men, 2014). This allows organisations, including universities, to identify areas of communication strengths and weaknesses systematically. Another advantage is that the theory directly links communication satisfaction to tangible organisational outcomes such as performance, productivity, and engagement, enabling leaders to implement targeted interventions that improve both employee well-being and institutional effectiveness (Ruck & Welch, 2012). Its multi-dimensional approach also accommodates variations across organisational contexts and hierarchical levels, making it broadly applicable across diverse institutional settings.

Despite its usefulness, the Communication Satisfaction Theory has limitations. One limitation is that it primarily focuses on employee perceptions and satisfaction, potentially underestimating structural, cultural, and technological factors that influence communication effectiveness (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Tarique *et al.*, 2021). Another limitation is that it assumes a relatively linear relationship between communication satisfaction and performance, which may not capture the complex, dynamic interactions within organisations where multiple variables simultaneously affect outcomes (Men, 2020). The theory also relies heavily on self-reported measures, which may introduce biases and fail to account for informal or emergent communication practices that significantly shape organisational dynamics.

The relevance of the Communication Satisfaction Theory to the study of internal communication and university performance lies in its emphasis on how employees' perceptions of communication quality influence institutional outcomes. In a university setting, effective communication between administration, faculty, and staff ensures that policies, procedures, and academic directives are understood, coordinated, and implemented efficiently, directly impacting administrative efficiency, academic quality, and service delivery (Men,

2020; Tarique *et al.*, 2021). When faculty and staff experience high communication satisfaction, they are more likely to engage proactively in teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities, contributing to overall institutional performance.

Organisational Information Theory- Weick, 1976

Organisational Information Theory, developed by Weick in 1976, is a foundational framework in understanding how organisations collect, process, interpret, and use information to reduce uncertainty and improve decision-making. Weick's work primarily aimed to explain how complex organisations function effectively in dynamic and unpredictable environments through structured communication and information processing. The theory emerged from organisational studies and communication research, emphasizing that organisations are not static entities but interpretive systems that rely on constant information flow to coordinate activities, adapt to changes, and achieve their goals. Subsequent reviews of this theory by Daft and Lengel (1986) and Alavi and Leidner (2001) highlight its relevance in both management and knowledge-based contexts, noting that effective information processing is essential for organisational learning, performance improvement, and strategic alignment.

The theory is built on several key assumptions that define how information shapes organisational behaviour and outcomes. One primary assumption is that organisations exist in environments characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity, requiring constant interpretation and adaptation of information to reduce disorder and make decisions (Weick, 1976). Another assumption is that communication is the central mechanism through which organisations process information, linking individuals, teams, and departments in continuous feedback loops (Daft & Lengel, 1986). A further assumption is that organisational structures, routines, and technologies serve as information processing tools, enabling the capture, storage, and dissemination of relevant data to support decision-making and coordination (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). These assumptions collectively portray organisations as dynamic systems that rely on timely, accurate, and relevant information to function effectively in uncertain and complex environments.

The core explanation of Organisational Information Theory is that organisations are sense-making systems that actively reduce uncertainty through information collection, interpretation, and dissemination. Weick (1976) argues that the greater the uncertainty in the organisational environment, the higher the demand for effective information processing mechanisms. Information must be gathered from both internal and external sources, interpreted through cognitive frameworks shared among employees, and then communicated across the organisation to guide action. Subsequent studies, such as those by Galbraith (1973) and Tushman and Nadler (1978), reinforce this perspective

by suggesting that information processing capacity and communication clarity directly influence organisational adaptability, efficiency, and overall performance. The theory explains that by managing information flow strategically, organisations can align activities, anticipate challenges, and enhance decision quality, which ultimately contributes to improved outcomes.

Organisational Information Theory offers several advantages that make it particularly useful in analysing organisational performance and internal communication. One advantage is that it provides a structured lens to understand how information flows influence decision-making, coordination, and organisational efficiency, offering actionable insights for managers (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Another advantage is its applicability across various organisational settings, including educational institutions, where the processing and dissemination of accurate information among faculty, administration, and students is critical for institutional success (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Furthermore, the theory emphasizes adaptability and continuous learning, allowing organisations to develop mechanisms to respond to environmental changes, improving resilience and long-term sustainability. This focus on information as a strategic asset enables organisations to optimise workflows, reduce redundancy, and improve performance outcomes systematically.

Despite its contributions, the theory has limitations that must be considered. One limitation is that it primarily focuses on the processing of information while giving less attention to the human, emotional, and cultural factors that may influence interpretation and decision-making within organisations (Weick, 1976). Another limitation is the complexity involved in quantifying information flow and processing capacity, making empirical testing and practical implementation challenging, especially in large, multifaceted institutions like universities (Daft & Lengel, 1986). Additionally, the theory assumes rational interpretation and uniform understanding of information across organisational members, which may not hold true in contexts with diverse stakeholders, varying skill levels, and differing cognitive frameworks. These limitations suggest that while the theory provides valuable insights, it should be complemented with perspectives that address social, cultural, and behavioural dimensions of organisational functioning.

The relationship of Organisational Information Theory to internal communication and university performance is direct and significant. The theory posits that the effectiveness of an organisation depends on its ability to gather, interpret, and disseminate information to reduce uncertainty and guide action (Weick, 1976). In a university context, internal communication channels, feedback mechanisms, and timely information sharing are crucial for coordinating academic and administrative functions, managing student services, and aligning faculty and staff efforts with institutional goals (Afolabi, 2022). By applying this theory, universities can understand how information flow affects decision-making, employee

engagement, and student satisfaction, thereby improving overall performance (Komba, 2023).

Empirical Literature

A study by Mensah (2024) on the effect of communication channels on the performance of tertiary institutions focused on understanding how formal and informal communication modes influence staff efficiency and academic outcomes. The study employed a descriptive research design with a case study approach, concentrating on three major universities in Ghana. Stratified random sampling was used to select 180 staff members across administrative and academic departments, representing a population of 600 employees. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, and analyzed using both descriptive statistics and regression analysis to establish relationships between communication channels and performance indicators. Findings revealed that formal channels such as email, intranet, and official memos significantly improved administrative coordination and teaching efficiency, while informal channels like staff WhatsApp groups fostered collaboration and timely problem-solving. However, the study acknowledged limitations related to self-reported data, potential bias in perceptions of channel effectiveness, and the exclusion of student perspectives. Recommendations included strengthening formal communication infrastructure, integrating feedback mechanisms, and conducting regular training for staff on effective use of both formal and informal channels to enhance overall institutional performance.

A study by Komba (2023) investigated the influence of internal communication channels on the operational performance of universities in East Africa, aiming to determine how channel selection affects task completion, coordination, and decision-making. The research adopted a mixed-methods design, combining cross-sectional survey techniques with in-depth case study observations in five universities. Purposive sampling targeted 250 administrative and academic staff members from a total population of 950, while data collection included questionnaires, focus group discussions, and document reviews of communication protocols. Quantitative data were analyzed using correlation and multiple regression, whereas qualitative responses underwent thematic analysis. Results demonstrated that interactive channels such as departmental meetings and collaborative digital platforms enhanced problem-solving and knowledge sharing, while reliance on one-way channels like bulletins or notices limited feedback loops and slowed response times. Limitations identified were the potential for social desirability bias and the focus on staff only, neglecting student perceptions. Recommendations emphasized adopting multi-channel strategies, integrating ICT-based communication platforms, and establishing clear policies for timely dissemination of critical information to boost institutional performance.

A study by Afolabi (2022) on communication channels

and academic staff performance in Nigerian universities sought to explore the relationship between channel accessibility, timeliness, and productivity. The study employed an explanatory research design with a cross-sectional survey targeting 300 academic staff across six universities, selected through stratified random sampling from a total population of 1,200. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and hierarchical regression to test hypotheses on the impact of various communication channels. The findings indicated that channels characterized by immediacy and interactivity, such as emails and internal messaging systems, significantly correlated with improved teaching performance, administrative coordination, and research output. Conversely, channels lacking feedback capability, like printed notices or memos, were less effective in promoting timely decision-making and problem-solving. The study acknowledged constraints such as limited geographic coverage and reliance on self-reported perceptions of communication effectiveness. It recommended the adoption of integrated communication systems, continuous training for staff on digital communication tools, and routine evaluation of channel effectiveness to optimize university performance.

A study by Edwin *et al.* (2021) examined the role of communication channels in enhancing staff productivity and service delivery in higher education institutions in Kenya. The study used a case study approach with a descriptive survey design, targeting 200 employees from a population of 750 across three universities. Simple random sampling was applied, and data were collected through structured questionnaires and participant observation, followed by analysis using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression models. The study found that multi-channel communication strategies, combining formal channels such as emails and meetings with informal social platforms, significantly enhanced coordination, reduced errors, and promoted engagement among staff. Limitations included potential response bias, the cross-sectional nature of the study that restricted causal inferences, and a limited focus on administrative staff. The study recommended that universities develop comprehensive communication policies, promote adoption of technology-enabled platforms, and encourage feedback mechanisms to ensure effective information dissemination, thereby improving overall institutional performance.

A study by Mensah and Boateng (2019) explored the impact of internal communication channels on university performance, focusing on how information flow affects academic delivery, staff collaboration, and administrative efficiency. The research adopted a descriptive survey design and a case study approach, involving 220 respondents selected via stratified sampling from a population of 900 staff members across four universities. Data collection involved structured questionnaires and interviews, analyzed using descriptive statistics,

regression, and thematic analysis. Findings indicated that effective use of formal channels such as university intranet, emails, and official meetings was associated with higher levels of task completion, coordination, and student satisfaction, while informal channels supported knowledge sharing and peer support but required careful moderation. Limitations included reliance on self-reported measures, limited generalizability due to case study focus, and insufficient consideration of technological constraints. Recommendations included continuous improvement of ICT infrastructure, training on effective use of communication channels, and combining formal and informal channels to enhance overall university performance.

A study by Komba (2023) examined the relationship between internal information dissemination and the performance of higher education institutions in Tanzania, with the objective of assessing how upward, downward, and horizontal communication channels affect academic and administrative outcomes. The research used a mixed-methods approach combining a cross-sectional survey of 250 academic and administrative staff with semi-structured interviews of 15 senior managers. Simple random sampling was used to select survey participants, while purposive sampling targeted managers with decision-making authority. Quantitative data were analyzed using structural equation modeling, while thematic analysis was applied to qualitative interviews. The study found that robust downward communication improved compliance with policies and enhanced timely decision-making, upward communication facilitated feedback and problem-solving, and horizontal communication strengthened collaboration among faculty. Limitations included the small qualitative sample size, which may limit generalizability, and the study recommended establishing standardized reporting protocols and training programs to strengthen communication competencies among university staff.

A study by Edwin *et al.* (2022) focused on the effect of information flow on operational efficiency and academic performance in Nigerian universities, aiming to investigate the degree to which information sharing influences both administrative and teaching outcomes. The study adopted a case study design and selected two universities using purposive sampling. A total of 180 participants, including faculty members and administrative officers, were engaged through questionnaires and document review of university records. Data were analyzed using correlation and regression techniques to determine relationships between information flow and performance indicators such as course completion rates, administrative processing times, and student feedback scores. Results indicated that institutions with well-structured information channels experienced faster decision-making, higher academic output, and improved staff satisfaction, while poor information flow led to duplication of tasks and delays in academic processes. The study's limitations included its focus on only two institutions, limiting broader

applicability, and it recommended investing in digital communication platforms and regular workshops to enhance information sharing practices.

A study by Nwankwo and Chukwu (2021) investigated the impact of internal communication on university performance in Nigerian private universities, specifically exploring the effect of information flow on teaching quality, administrative efficiency, and research productivity. The study utilized a correlational research design and employed stratified random sampling to select 350 respondents across five private universities, including academic staff, administrative officers, and postgraduate students. Data collection instruments included structured questionnaires validated through a pilot study, and analysis was conducted using multiple regression and ANOVA to test hypotheses. Findings showed that efficient information flow positively correlated with improved coordination of teaching schedules, timely processing of administrative tasks, and higher research output. The study's limitations included potential response bias from self-reported questionnaires and suggested the implementation of centralized information portals and regular feedback mechanisms to enhance communication practices and improve institutional performance.

A study by Afolabi and Ibrahim (2019) on information flow and university performance in selected Nigerian federal universities sought to evaluate the influence of communication channels, timeliness, and accuracy of information on administrative and academic outcomes. The research adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 1,200 academic and administrative staff, from which 400 respondents were selected through simple random sampling. Data collection was conducted using structured questionnaires, and analysis employed descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression techniques. The study revealed that effective information flow was a significant predictor of timely decision-making, operational efficiency, and improved student satisfaction. However, limitations included its cross-sectional nature, which restricted the ability to infer causality, and reliance on self-reporting, which may introduce bias. The study recommended the development of institutional communication policies, investment in ICT infrastructure, and regular training for staff to enhance the effectiveness of information flow and improve overall university performance.

Despite extensive research on internal communication and university performance, several gaps remain in understanding the specific dynamics at the University of Bertoua, Cameroon. Past studies by Mensah (2024), Edwin and Kofi (2023), Afolabi (2022), Komba (2021), and Nwankwo and Chukwu (2019) have consistently highlighted the importance of communication timeliness, channels, information flow, and transparency in enhancing academic and administrative performance. However, most of these studies focused on universities in Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania, limiting contextual relevance for Cameroonian higher education institutions.

Additionally, while Mensah (2024) and Edwin and Kofi (2023) emphasized timeliness in communication, and Afolabi (2022) examined prompt information sharing among administrative units, none of these studies comprehensively integrated the perspectives of students, administrative staff, and academic staff simultaneously in one model, which is crucial for capturing the holistic communication-performance nexus. Furthermore, Komba (2021) and Nwankwo and Chukwu (2019) relied heavily on self-reported perceptions of staff and did not sufficiently triangulate these with institutional records or performance metrics, creating a potential bias in the measurement of actual performance outcomes. These gaps suggest a need for research that contextualizes communication practices within the University of Bertoua, incorporates multi-stakeholder perspectives, and links reported communication effectiveness directly with measurable performance indicators.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The University of Bertoua is located in the city of Bertoua, the capital of the East Region of Cameroon. As a public institution, UBe was created in 2022 by presidential decree (No. 2022/0008). Rather than gathering all faculties on a single – central – campus inside city center, the planners opted for a multi-campus model. Among the first sites identified for the physical infrastructure of UBe is a location in the village Ndoumbi I a village in the Diang commune, within the Lom-et-Djérem department, at a distance of several kilometers from the city of Bertoua. This approach reflects a strategy of decentralizing campus infrastructure, maybe to allow expansion, relieve city-center congestion, and integrate the university within less urbanized areas, offering land and space for growth without the constraints of urban density. Moreover, other sites have been proposed beyond Ndoumbi I for example in a locality called Yadia (as well as other surrounding towns in some cases). This multi-site dispersion suggests that UBe is not just a single campus but a network of locations, linking the city core with peripheral areas (and even with outlying towns for some institutes), likely to serve a broad regional catchment and permit flexible spatial growth.

As an institution, University of Bertoua encompasses four faculties and four “higher-education schools” (or “grandes écoles / institutes”), combining traditional university faculties with specialized professional and technical training units. The four faculties are: Faculty of Arts, Letters and Human Sciences; Faculty of Sciences; Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences; and Faculty of Law and Political Sciences. The higher-education schools include: the Higher Teacher Training College (ENS), the Higher Institute of Agriculture, Wood, Water and Environment (ISABEE), the Higher School of Urbanism and Tourism Sciences (ESSUT), and the Higher School of Mining and Energy Resources Transformation (ESTM). At its inception, some of these constituent institutions were already operating in

borrowed or temporary premises (e.g. inherited annexes of other universities or shared buildings). To transition from this provisional status to a full-fledged university infrastructure, officials launched formal construction and land-development works. Specifically, on 14 June 2023, the first earthworks (terracing, platform creation,

roads and networks) were initiated at the Ndoumbi I site, marking the physical birth of the “permanent” campus infrastructure. The plan calls for dedicated academic buildings: lecture halls, amphitheatres, administrative blocks, offices essentially a full campus plan to host teaching, administrative, and support services.

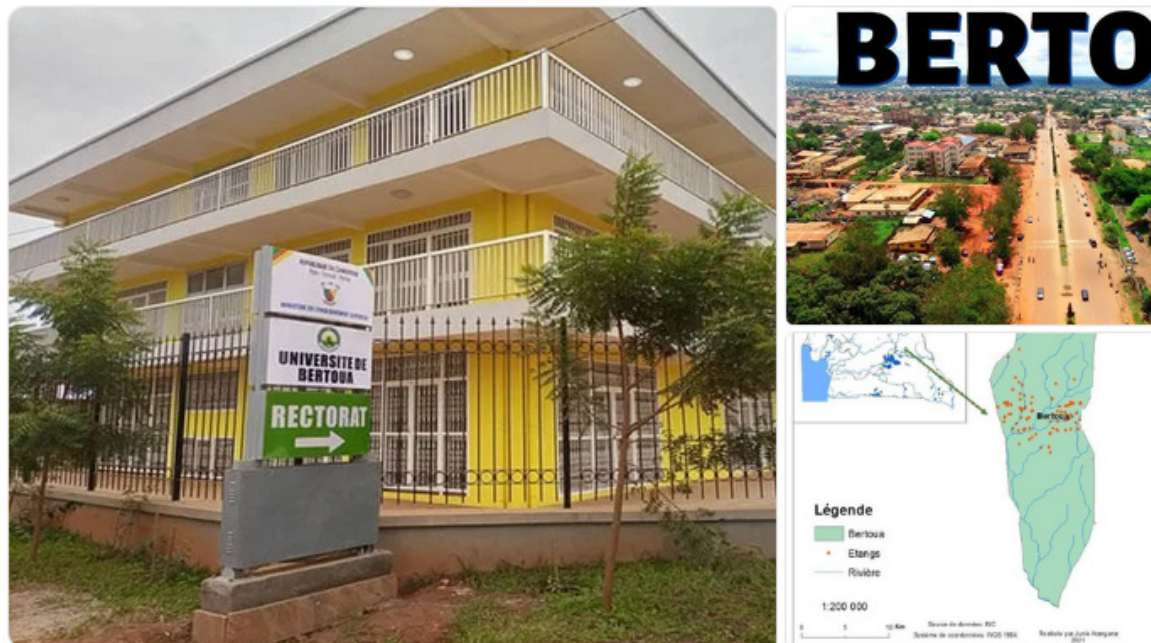


Figure 1: Administrative Building of the University of Bertoua and Location Map of Bertoua, Cameroon

The focal point of this study was to investigate the effect of internal communication on the performance of the University of Bertoua. This implies that our endogenous variable is organisational performance. The research adopted a causal research design. The paper utilized primary data collected through questionnaire that were administered to participant who were administrative personnel. The study adopted a purposive sampling technique to choose the respondents who participated in this study. In order to test our hypotheses, we specified an organisational performance equation based on theoretical considerations, empirical literature and intuition. Based on data availability constraint, the model is thus specified as follows:

$$OPEF = \beta_0 + \beta_1 VEC + \beta_2 LAC + \beta_3 DIC + \epsilon$$

Where

OPEF: Organizational Performance

VEC: Vertical Communication

LAC: Lateral Communication

DIC: Diagonal Communication

$\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, are respectively the constant term and the coefficients of VEC, LAC and DIC measuring the change in the dependent variable resulting from a unit change in each of those variables holding any other thing constant. From economic theory, it is expected that the signs of the coefficients $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3 > 0$.

ϵ Is the disturbance term which is assumed to follow a normal distribution.

The study employed the Ordinary Least Square technique for the estimation of the parameters of the model specified above. This is because it possesses the best linear unbiased estimator (BLUE) property and has been widely used in literature. Unbiased means that the estimated coefficients are a true representation of the population parameters and it is also said to have the minimum variance amongst all other estimators rendering it efficient. The OLS technique of estimation is used when the dependent variables vary in the range negative infinity to positive infinity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is concerned with the presentation, interpretation and discussion of the results from results analysis. Consequently, the section consists of tables' analysis of variables used for the study, the descriptive analysis, the correlation analysis, the regression results and discussion of findings respectively.

The distribution of respondents by gender shows that the sample is dominated by males, who constitute 64.2% of the total respondents, while females account for 35.8%. This indicates that nearly two-thirds of the participants in the study are male, suggesting a gender imbalance that may reflect the structure of the workforce or the target population.

Regarding educational level, all the respondents (100%) reported having higher education qualifications. None of the participants were from the primary or secondary

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Description	Elements	Frequency	Percent
Distribution of respondents by gender	Male	34	64.2
	Female	19	35.8
	Total	53	100.0
Distribution of respondents by educational level	Primary	0	0.0
	Secondary	0	0.0
	Higher Education	53	100.0
	Total	53	100.0
Distribution of respondents by position	Support staff	10	18.9
	Middle management	3	5.7
	Management cadre	4	7.5
	Senior management	15	28.3
	Teacher	21	39.6
	Total	53	100.0
Distribution of respondents by marital status	Married	43	81.1
	Single	10	18.9
	Total	53	100.0

Author's Computation

educational categories. This implies that the study population is highly educated, which may influence their understanding of organizational processes, decision-making, and responses to work-related issues.

The distribution by position reveals considerable diversity in job roles. Teachers form the largest category of respondents, representing 39.6% of the sample. Senior management follows with 28.3%, while support staff account for 18.9%. Management cadre (7.5%) and middle management (5.7%) constitute smaller segments. Overall, the distribution shows that the study incorporates views from both academic and administrative staff, covering multiple hierarchical levels within the institution or organization under study.

With respect to marital status, the majority of respondents are married, accounting for 81.1% of the sample, while 18.9% are single. This suggests that most respondents have family responsibilities, which could influence their perceptions of job stability, work-life balance, and organizational support systems.

Reliability Test

The study performed a pilot study to validate the accuracy of the research instruments used to assess the independent and dependent variables. The explanatory variables were used to compute Cronbach's alpha, and the resulting values are shown in the table below. The outcome of the

dependent variables, namely the performance, was also shown in the same table.

The distribution of respondents by gender shows that the sample is dominated by males, who constitute 64.2% of the total respondents, while females account for 35.8%. This indicates that nearly two-thirds of the participants in the study are male, suggesting a gender imbalance that may reflect the structure of the workforce or the target population.

Regarding educational level, all the respondents (100%) reported having higher education qualifications. None of the participants were from the primary or secondary educational categories. This implies that the study population is highly educated, which may influence their understanding of organizational processes, decision-making, and responses to work-related issues.

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The result shown in table 9 demonstrates the dependability of four distinct scales or dimensions, as determined by

Table 2: Cronbach Alpha Coefficient table for both dependent and independent variables

Dimension	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Organizational Performance	7	0.9101
Vertical Communication	6	0.9060
Lateral Communication	5	0.9058
Diagonal Communication	5	0.9072

Author's Computation

their respective Cronbach's alpha coefficient values. Cronbach's alpha is a metric that assesses the consistency of measurements within a set of items that are intended to measure the same underlying construct. It provides an indication of how well the items within each dimension or scale are aligned with each other. A higher value of Cronbach's alpha suggests superior scalability and dependability.

The findings indicate that the scales or dimensions are dependable indicators of their intended constructs, and may be confidently used in both research and practical contexts. Nunnally (1978, 1994) in his seminal work psychometric theory, suggested that for early stages of research, a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.5 or 0.6 is acceptable. However, for applied research, he recommended a higher threshold of 0.8. Hair *et al.* (2006) in multivariate results analysis, the authors consider a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.6 as acceptable, particularly in exploratory studies. Peterson (1994) in a meta-analysis of marketing research, Peterson found that many studies reported acceptable reliability with alpha values ranging from 0.6 to 0.7. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) suggested that alpha values below 0.6 are considered poor, but values in the range of 0.6 to 0.7 may be acceptable in some contexts. Ogbazi and Okpala (2014) in their guide for researchers in education and social sciences, they recommend a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.6 as acceptable

for a good instrument.

Some authors argue that Cronbach's alpha values of 0.70 or more indicate acceptable reliability, while others argue that this threshold is too low. They suggest that values of 0.80 or even 0.90 are required for strong internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha is a statistical measure used to assess the internal consistency or reliability of a set of items or variables in a research study. According to George and Mallery (2003), it is recommended to use a cutoff of 0.70. However, they highlight that this is a general guideline and the suitable value may vary based on the specific purpose and context of the measure. DeVellis (2017) states that Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 are generally deemed satisfactory for research purposes. However, the specific threshold may vary depending on the measurement context and objective. Streiner (2003) states that Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.70 to 0.80 are considered minimally acceptable for research purposes. However, it is suggested to have values of 0.80 or higher. It is crucial to note that these suggested criteria are not universally acknowledged, and researchers should thoroughly examine the specific context and objective of their measurement when determining what qualifies as an acceptable value of Cronbach's alpha.

The results show that organizational performance has a low average score, with a mean of 0.210 and a median

Table 3: Summary of Descriptive Statistics

stats	Organizational Performance	Vertical Communication	Lateral Communication	Diagonal Communication
	(OPEF)	(VEC)	(LAC)	DIC
sum	11.1181	16.22359	21.03023	3
mean	.2097754	.3061055	.3967967	.0566038
p50	.0422218	.1328307	.3607856	0
variance	.0958122	.1300232	.1191054	.0544267
sd	.3095355	.3605872	.3451165	.2332953
kurtosis	4.686998	2.178979	2.036411	15.72667
skewness	1.768311	.9283649	.5417278	3.837534

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of 0.042, indicating that most respondents reported low performance levels, while a few high values pulled the average upward. Vertical communication has a moderate mean of 0.306 and a median of 0.133, showing that communication between supervisors and subordinates exists but is uneven across the institution, with some units communicating more effectively than others. Lateral communication displays the highest average score (mean = 0.397; median = 0.361), and the closeness between the mean and median suggests that communication among colleagues and departments at the same hierarchical level is stronger and more consistently practiced.

Diagonal communication has a very low mean of 0.057 and a median of 0, showing that cross-department, cross-level communication is largely absent. The

variation patterns further support these observations. Organizational performance, vertical communication, and lateral communication all show moderate dispersion, meaning respondents differ considerably in how they perceive these aspects. Diagonal communication, on the other hand, shows less variation, but this is mainly because most respondents consistently reported very low or zero values.

The distribution shapes reinforce these findings. Organizational performance is positively skewed with a leptokurtic distribution, meaning most responses are clustered at low values with few high outliers. Vertical and lateral communication are mildly skewed and closer to a normal distribution, suggesting more balanced responses. Diagonal communication is highly skewed and extremely

peaked, reflecting that most respondents report no diagonal communication, with only a few reporting any level of it.

Organizational performance has a moderate positive correlation with vertical communication (0.474),

Table 4: Matrix of correlations

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) OPEF	1.000			
(2) VEC	0.474	1.000		
(3) LAC	0.619	0.354	1.000	
(4) DIC	0.631	0.434	0.432	1.000

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suggesting that as communication between supervisors and subordinates improves, performance also tends to increase. The relationship between organizational performance and lateral communication is even stronger, with a correlation of 0.619, indicating that

teamwork and communication among colleagues at the same hierarchical level play a significant role in enhancing overall performance. The strongest association with organizational performance is observed with diagonal communication (0.631), showing that when communication flows effectively across different departments and hierarchical levels, performance benefits greatly.

Vertical communication also shows a moderate positive relationship with both lateral communication (0.354) and diagonal communication (0.434). This means that units with stronger top-down and bottom-up communication also tend to maintain better communication with peers and across levels. Lateral communication and diagonal communication, with a correlation of 0.432, also move together moderately, indicating that departments that collaborate well horizontally are also more likely to communicate effectively across hierarchical boundaries.

Results from the table indicate that the coefficient of vertical communication is positive (0.143), meaning

Table 5: Linear regression

OPEF	Coef.	Robust St.Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf Interval]	Sig
VEC	.143	.107	1.33	.191	-.073	.359
LAC	.351	.155	2.27	.028	.04	.663
DIC	.517	.134	3.87	0	.249	.786
Constant	-.002	.044	-0.06	.956	-.092	.087
Mean dependent var		0.210		SD dependent var		0.310
R-squared		0.567		Number of obs		53
F-test		498.533		Prob > F		0.000
Akaike crit. (AIC)		-11.283		Bayesian crit. (BIC)		-3.402

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

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there is a direct effect of vertical communication on organizational performance. However, this effect is statistically insignificant since the probability value (0.191) is greater than 10%. This implies that an increase in communication between supervisors and subordinates does not significantly influence performance in the institution.

The coefficient of lateral communication is positive (0.351), indicating a direct or positive effect of lateral communication on organizational performance. A unit increase in lateral communication will lead to a corresponding increase in organizational performance by 0.351, all other factors being held constant. This result is statistically significant since the probability value (0.028) is less than 5%.

Also, diagonal communication has a positive coefficient of 0.517, showing a direct effect of diagonal communication on organizational performance. This means that a one-unit increase in diagonal communication will cause a corresponding increase in organizational performance

by 0.517, holding other factors constant. This effect is statistically significant since the probability value (0.000) is less than 1%.

The constant term has a negative coefficient (-0.002), implying that in the absence of communication, organizational performance would be slightly negative, although this result is statistically insignificant because the probability value (0.956) is greater than 10%. Overall, the findings show that lateral and diagonal communication significantly enhance organizational performance,

Table 6: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Test for Multicollinearity

	VIF	1/VIF
DIC	1.384	.723
VEC	1.286	.777
LAC	1.283	.779
Mean VIF	1.318	

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while vertical communication, though positive, has no significant impact.

Result of VIF indicates that there is no major problem of multicollinearity as the mean VIF does not exceeds 2.5. In the context of OLS regression, several authors have justified the use of mean VIF as a criterion for assessing the severity of multicollinearity. O'Brien (2007) argues that a mean VIF of 2.5 or greater indicates the presence of moderate to severe multicollinearity. He notes that this threshold is consistent with the rule of thumb proposed by Neter *et al.* (1996) and also corresponds to the point at which the R-squared value for a regression model begins to level off. Kutner *et al.* (2005) suggest that a mean VIF of 5 or greater is a sign of serious multicollinearity. They note that this threshold is based on simulation studies and empirical evidence, and that it is also consistent with the rule of thumb proposed by Neter *et al.* (1996). Gujarati (2003) recommends using a mean VIF of 10 or greater as a criterion for identifying severe multicollinearity. He notes that this threshold is based on the results of simulation studies and is also consistent with the rule of thumb proposed by Neter *et al.* (1996).

Finally, we conclude the section by checking for the existence of the issue of heteroskedasticity within

Vertical communication is moderately effective, as most employees find management's communication clear and feedback adequate, but many remain neutral, suggesting leadership practices are not experienced uniformly across units. Lateral communication is the strongest dimension, marked by peer information sharing, teamwork, trust, and cross-departmental coordination, although some teams still face challenges and high neutrality shows the strength is uneven. Diagonal communication is generally positive, with 94.3% agreeing it is easy to contact staff across levels and units, and it supports problem-solving and reduces delays; however, it has the weakest mean, and a median of zero suggests such interactions are not practiced consistently, while unit heads also vary in how they share information with junior staff. Performance indicators show strong agreement that effective communication improves productivity, goal alignment, motivation, decision-making, and conflict reduction, yet views on its role in fostering innovation are mostly negative, pointing to a gap in linking communication to innovation and academic excellence. Management should therefore strengthen vertical communication by institutionalizing structured protocols that require supervisors and unit heads to share information at set intervals through standardized channels such as memos, email briefings, and scheduled feedback sessions, while also promoting consistent lateral and diagonal communication across all units.

Table 7: Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg Test for Heteroskedasticity

Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity	
	Ho: Constant variance
	Variables: fitted values of OPEF
	chi2(1) = 3.82
	Prob > chi2 = 0.0506

Author's Computation

our model. To achieve this, we employ the Breusch Pagen and Cook Weisberg test of heteroskedasticity. From the result presented above, the null hypothesis of constant variance is rejected showing that our estimated model does suffers from heteroscedasticity problem. There are several authors who have discussed the use of heteroscedasticity in Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression and have suggested rejection thresholds for detecting heteroscedasticity. White (1980) proposes a test for heteroscedasticity and suggests a rejection threshold of 5%. Greene (2000) discussed the consequences of heteroscedasticity and suggests a rejection threshold of 10%. Kennedy (2003) discussed the various tests for heteroscedasticity and suggests a rejection threshold of 5%.

CONCLUSION

Internal communication significantly shapes organizational performance at the institution, and the overall communication climate is positive, though strength and consistency vary across dimensions.

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