

# Exploring the Link between Internal Communication and Job Performance: A Case of Siaya County Government, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Internal communication significantly influences employee job performance. While existing research highlights this relationship in general organizational contexts, no specific studies have examined it within the Siaya County Government (SCG). Despite its importance, communication barriers—such as delays, poor feedback, bureaucratic channels, and low morale—persist, negatively affecting performance. This study explored the link between internal communication and job performance at SCG, focusing on communication channels, employee interaction patterns, and their impact. Anchored in Ludwig Von Bertalanffy's *Systems Theory* (1930s), which emphasizes interconnectedness and organizational wholeness, the research employed a case study design. The study purposively sampled 27 SCG headquarters employees (out of 250) and collected data via interviews and focus group discussions. Thematic analysis revealed that SCG employees relied on oral/written communication (e.g., memos, letters, WhatsApp), with top-down and bottom-up information flows. Delays due to bureaucracy hindered performance. Findings offer insights for policymakers and future research.

**Keywords:** Internal Communication, Job Performance, Siaya County Government (SCG), Systems Theory.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's complex organizational landscape, internal communication (IC) has emerged as a critical factor for organizational success (Muriungi, 2021). Effective IC serves as the backbone of employee engagement, enabling managers to align workforce efforts with strategic objectives (Santiago, 2020; Mbaru, 2022). As Welch and Jackson (2007) posit, IC plays a pivotal role in interpreting corporate strategy and facilitating coordinated operations. When properly developed, IC enhances information flow and significantly improves overall organizational performance (Sinčić Ćorić et al., 2020). Despite this recognized importance, many organizations continue to struggle with implementing effective communication strategies, particularly in public sector settings (Muthotho, 2020; Muriungi, 2021).

Organizations employ various communication channels, each serving distinct purposes. Formal communication flows vertically (downward and upward) and horizontally, while informal grapevine networks emerge spontaneously (Mbaru,

2022). Downward communication facilitates instruction and coordination, upward channels enable feedback, and lateral communication promotes peer collaboration (Bovee & Thill, 2000). The effectiveness of these channels depends on careful selection based on message content, employee preferences, and organizational resources (Welch, 2011; Tkalac Verčič, 2019). Modern organizations now utilize diverse platforms, from traditional face-to-face interactions to digital media, though their effectiveness varies based on employee acceptance and contextual factors (Enke & Borchers, 2021).

The quality of IC directly impacts job satisfaction and organizational performance. Effective communication fosters employee understanding of roles and responsibilities, leading to improved service delivery (Emanoil & Nicoleta, 2013). Conversely, poor IC results in decreased morale, increased turnover, and diminished productivity (Kang & Sang, 2017). Employees who feel adequately informed and involved demonstrate greater commitment to organizational goals (Dolphin, 2005). This connection between communication quality and employee engagement underscores IC's strategic

importance in building organizational trust and brand reputation (Cornelissen & Christensen, 2011). Despite this, many managers struggle to evaluate their communication effectiveness, creating barriers to organizational success (Quirke, 1996; Robson & Tourish, 2005).

The Siaya County Government (SCG) exemplifies these communication challenges. Employees face persistent issues including information delays, bureaucratic barriers, and unclear messaging, leading to reliance on informal rumor networks. These communication breakdowns negatively impact morale, teamwork, and ultimately, service delivery to the public. While existing research acknowledges IC's importance, few studies examine its specific impact on public sector performance in developing nations. This study addresses this critical gap by investigating the relationship between IC and job performance at SCG.

Understanding this relationship is particularly crucial for devolved governments like SCG, where effective communication directly affects public service delivery. The study's findings provide valuable insights for improving IC systems in similar organizational contexts. By identifying communication barriers and their impact on performance, the research contributes to both academic discourse and practical organizational management.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ➤ *Internal Communication Channels*

Face-to-face communication represents the most direct and personal form of internal communication, playing a fundamental role in organizational dynamics. From a social constructivist perspective, organizations essentially emerge through members' interactions, language use, and collective sense-making processes (Vásquez & Schoeneborn, 2018). This view positions employees not merely as passive recipients of information but as active communicators who shape organizational reality through their daily interactions (Heide et al., 2018). Employees engage in strategic communication when they actively seek, interpret, and share information, formulating messages that influence colleagues, managers, and customers (Heide & Simonsson, 2011; Mazzei, 2010). The situational theory of problem-solving distinguishes between active communication behaviors (information seeking, selecting, and sharing) and passive processing, with proactive employees initiating interactions rather than waiting for information to come to them (Kim & Grunig, 2011; Crant, 2000). These face-to-face interactions, whether formal meetings or informal conversations, create immediate feedback loops and foster stronger interpersonal connections that digital channels often cannot replicate. The richness of nonverbal cues and the ability to address complex issues in real-time make face-to-face communication indispensable for building organizational culture and addressing sensitive matters.

Digital media has revolutionized internal communication by enabling instant, borderless information exchange within organizations. A well-designed digital workplace policy provides employees with the infrastructure to collaborate

effectively while maintaining social connections (Khisro, Lindroth & Magnusson, 2022). Digital platforms foster relatedness among employees, enhancing both social bonds and knowledge sharing, which directly impacts performance (Lee et al., 2015; Bouncken & Reuschl, 2018). The adoption of emerging technologies like AI and IoT further transforms employee capabilities, influencing organizational outcomes such as innovation, decision-making, and productivity (Koufaris, 2002; Xu et al., 2013). According to the Resource-Based View theory, digital competencies represent valuable organizational assets that distinguish high-performing companies (Barney, 1991). Digital channels offer advantages in speed, accessibility, and documentation, allowing for asynchronous communication across locations and time zones. However, their effectiveness depends on proper implementation and digital literacy among employees, as poorly managed digital communication can lead to information overload or reduced interpersonal connection. Organizations must balance technology adoption with human factors to maximize the benefits of digital media while mitigating potential drawbacks.

Written communication serves as the formal backbone of organizational record-keeping and policy dissemination. As Subarna (2000) notes, written documents prevent misunderstandings and provide essential evidence for organizational processes and decision-making. In contexts requiring precision and accountability, such as financial transactions or policy changes, written communication offers clarity and permanence that verbal exchanges cannot match (Hermawan, 2022; Julianto & Carnarez, 2021). Managers frequently use written channels to deliver important instructions, ensuring consistency in implementation across departments. While often perceived as less dynamic than digital or face-to-face communication, written media plays critical roles in compliance, legal protection, and institutional memory. The formality of written communication lends authority to organizational messages and creates reference materials for employees. In practice, most organizations combine written communication with other channels - for instance, following up meetings with written minutes or supplementing policy documents with digital announcements. This multimodal approach ensures that information is both accessible and properly documented, addressing different learning styles and organizational needs while maintaining an audit trail for future reference.

### ➤ *The Interplay between Internal Communication, Employee Empowerment, and Job Performance*

Effective internal communication (IC) serves as a critical driver of organizational success, influencing employee engagement, motivation, and job performance (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2009). Empirical studies consistently demonstrate a positive correlation between well-structured IC systems and enhanced employee productivity (Asamu et al., 2014). When employees participate in organizational initiatives, they exhibit higher engagement levels and lower turnover intentions, reinforcing the value of inclusive communication strategies (Benn et al., 2015). However, communication alone is insufficient without complementary motivational mechanisms. While financial incentives remain a primary

motivator—particularly in production-oriented sectors—their long-term impact on performance is limited (Sara et al., 2004; Whitley, 2002). Sustainable motivation requires a balanced approach, integrating non-financial factors such as recognition, feedback, and empowerment (Bennis, 1989).

Employee empowerment emerges as a pivotal factor in fostering organizational effectiveness. By granting employees autonomy and decision-making authority, organizations unlock their full potential, leading to innovation and productivity gains (Bennis, 1989). Empowerment cultivates a sense of ownership, where employees perceive their contributions as meaningful to organizational success. This aligns with Edmondson's (2006) assertion that trust and transparency in IC are essential for mitigating adversarial dynamics between management and staff. When employees feel heard and valued, their engagement and performance improve significantly (Truss et al., 2010). Welch and Jackson (2007) further emphasize the need for clear, consistent, and upward feedback-driven communication to sustain engagement. However, managerial reluctance to share information—often viewing it as a source of power—can stifle openness, leading to disengagement and attrition (Tourish & Hargie, 2004). Organizations must thus cultivate a culture where IC not only disseminates information but also actively incorporates employee input into decision-making processes.

Despite extensive research on IC, a critical gap persists in understanding its specific impact on job performance within public sector contexts, particularly in devolved governments like the Siaya County Government (SCG). Existing studies, such as Mandu's (2011) examination of Kenya Commercial Bank, focus narrowly on corporate settings, while others (Ruao et al., 2023; Aziz, 2024) explore IC in multinational or corporate culture frameworks. Research by Amal and Omar (2022) and Sakala and Phiri (2020) addresses social performance and product implementation but neglects the public sector's unique communication challenges. Moreover, many relevant studies were conducted in dissimilar contexts or are now outdated. This study bridges this gap by investigating IC's role in enhancing job performance at SCG, offering insights into how tailored communication strategies can optimize public sector efficiency and service delivery.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### ➤ *Research Design*

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine the relationship between internal communication (IC) and employee job performance at Siaya County Government (SCG). As Creswell (2018) notes, a case study enables in-depth exploration of a bounded system—in this context, SCG as an organizational entity—through extensive data collection. The design was selected to provide contextual insights into how IC practices influence performance within a public sector setting. By focusing on SCG specifically, the study aimed to uncover nuanced patterns that broader survey-based approaches might overlook. The case study approach aligns with the research objective of testing predictive relationships while accommodating the complex, real-world

dynamics of organizational communication (Nachmias & Nachmias, 2014).

#### ➤ *Study Area and Population*

The study was conducted at SCG headquarters, which houses all devolved departments and employs approximately 250 staff (SCG HRMS, 2023). Siaya County, spanning 2,530 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 993,183 (2019 census), comprises six sub-counties. The headquarters was chosen as the study site due to its centralized role in county administration and its representation of diverse departmental functions. The target population included employees across three cadres: top management (upper cadre), departmental heads (middle cadre), and frontline staff (lower cadre). This stratification ensured comprehensive coverage of communication flows (upward, downward, and lateral) within the organizational hierarchy.

#### ➤ *Sampling Strategy*

The study employed purposive sampling to select 27 participants, strategically chosen to represent key stakeholder groups within SCG. Three key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with senior personnel: one top manager, one HR head, and one communication officer, selected for their expert knowledge of organizational policies and strategic communication processes. Additionally, twenty-four staff members participated in three focus group discussions (FGDs), with eight participants per group drawn from various devolved departments to ensure representation of ground-level perspectives. The sample size was determined based on the principle of qualitative saturation (Malterud et al., 2015), where data collection continued until no new themes emerged, ensuring theoretical sufficiency. The sampling strategy prioritized information-rich cases (Nikolopoulou, 2023) while maintaining balanced representation across hierarchical levels.

#### ➤ *Data Collection and Instruments*

Primary data collection utilized two complementary methods: semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The KIIs, conducted in person, employed open-ended questions to explore internal communication policies, challenges, and their perceived impact on employee performance. The FGDs, each lasting 60–90 minutes and moderated to ensure productive dialogue, focused on daily communication practices and their influence on work efficiency. Prior to the main study, a pilot test was conducted at Busia County Government to refine the research instruments and enhance question clarity. Secondary data, including SCG internal reports and national census records, supplemented the primary findings, providing contextual depth and supporting triangulation of results.

#### ➤ *Data Analysis*

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) guided the data examination process, structured into six iterative phases. First, data familiarization involved thorough transcription and review of all interview and discussion transcripts. Next, coding identified recurrent patterns, such as "delayed feedback" and "reliance on WhatsApp for official communication." These codes were then synthesized into broader themes (e.g., "Hierarchical Barriers to Information

Flow"), which were rigorously reviewed against the raw data to ensure consistency. The fifth phase involved precisely defining and naming each theme to capture its conceptual essence. Finally, the reporting phase organized the findings around these themes, supported by illustrative participant quotations to enhance interpretive validity.

#### ➤ *Ethical Considerations*

Ethical rigor was maintained throughout the study by adhering to guidelines set by MUERC and NACOSTI. Prior to participation, all respondents provided written informed consent, with explicit assurances of confidentiality through the use of role-based identifiers (e.g., "HR Manager" instead of personal names). Data security protocols ensured protected storage of all recordings and transcripts, and participation remained voluntary at all stages, with respondents retaining the right to withdraw without consequence. These measures safeguarded participant rights while aligning with established standards for social science research.

#### ➤ *Reliability and Validity*

Methodological robustness was achieved through multiple strategies. Reliability was strengthened via pretesting of instruments during the pilot phase and maintenance of detailed audit trails documenting all analytical decisions. Validity was enhanced through data triangulation, combining insights from KIIs, FGDs, and documentary analysis, as well as member checking, where preliminary findings were shared with select participants to verify interpretive accuracy. These approaches collectively ensured the study's findings were both dependable and contextually grounded.

## IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

### A. *Abbreviations and Acronyms*

Define abbreviations and acronyms the first time they are used in the text, even after they have been defined in the abstract. Abbreviations such as IEEE, SI, MKS, CGS, sc, dc, and rms do not have to be defined. Do not use abbreviations in the title or heads unless they are unavoidable.

#### ➤ *Theme 1: Internal Communication Tools and Platforms*

This theme explores the devices and platforms used for internal communication at Siaya County Government (SCG). Findings revealed that both *written* and *verbal* communication methods are prevalent, with *written communication* being the most formal and widely recognized channel. Participants identified *internal memos*, *formal letters*, *circulars*, and *reports* as key written tools (FGD 1 Respondent 1 & 2; Interviewee 1 & 2). These documents serve as official records, ensuring accountability and future reference (Shahid, 2020). While traditional print-based communication persists, digital platforms—particularly *WhatsApp*—have emerged as efficient tools for task delegation and information dissemination.

*"In our organization, we have a WhatsApp group where communications are done. If the manager wants to give an assignment, he just marks the officer, who then acts on it. It has really helped us."* (FGD 3 Respondent 6).

Despite its informal nature, *WhatsApp* was widely adopted for its accessibility and immediacy, though some employees questioned its effectiveness (Interviewee 1; FGD 3 Respondent 4). Other digital tools, such as *email* and *noticeboards*, were also mentioned, but platforms like *Instagram*, *X (Twitter)*, and *Facebook* were rarely used for official communication (FGD 1 Respondent 3/4; FGD 2 Respondent 5).

*Verbal communication* remained essential, particularly through *face-to-face* interactions in meetings. Employees emphasized its role in ensuring clarity and facilitating feedback:

*"We always hold meetings to discuss issues arising."* (FGD 3 Respondent 7).

This aligns with existing literature (Battiston et al., 2021; Koester, 2022), which highlights the advantages of in-person communication for real-time clarity and engagement. However, SCG maintains a strong preference for *written* communication when addressing formal or welfare-related matters, requiring approvals through hierarchical channels (Interviewee 1).

The findings reflect a blend of traditional and modern communication methods, with *written* and *verbal* modes remaining dominant despite technological advancements (Ruswandi & Arief, 2024). While digital tools like *WhatsApp* and *email* enhance efficiency, their use is often supplementary rather than replacing formal documentation. This duality underscores the need for structured yet adaptable communication strategies in public sector organizations.

#### ➤ *Theme 2: The Communication Process*

This theme examines how information flows within Siaya County Government (SCG), revealing a predominantly *hierarchical* communication structure. As noted by Widhiastuti (2012), such systems are typical in bureaucracies, where information must follow formal chains of command. Participants confirmed that messages are relayed sequentially—from junior staff to supervisors, then upward through leadership tiers:

*"If you have a problem, you share it with your supervisor first. The supervisor then escalates it to higher leaders... A WhatsApp group exists where everyone can contribute."* (FGD 1 Respondent 3).

While bottom-up communication adheres strictly to this hierarchy, *top-down* communication often bypasses intermediate steps. Executives use *written memos* or *WhatsApp* to disseminate directives directly to middle managers or frontline staff (FGD 1 Respondent 5). This dual dynamic—rigid upward channels but flexible downward flows—reflects the tension between bureaucratic formality and operational pragmatism.



- *Formality and its Discontents*

Officially, SCG mandates *written* communication for formal directives, particularly those affecting staff welfare or policy:

*"In government, communication should be official—written. Verbal orders like 'Yvonne, do this' demoralize staff."* (FGD 3 Respondent 1).

However, traditional methods (e.g., *noticeboards*, *office messengers*) are declining, deemed inefficient by employees (FGD Respondents 2–4). This aligns with Servaes' (2022) observation that digital tools are displacing older practices, though their adoption remains uneven across hierarchies.

- *Informal Undercurrents*

Despite formal protocols, *informal* communication thrives among peers:

*"Staff communicate informally with peers, but formal issues follow top-down or bottom-up paths."* (Interviewee 1).

Such *grapevine* exchanges, spontaneous and unstructured (Elsayed et al., 2024; Bovee & Thill, 2000), fill gaps left by rigid hierarchies but risk misinformation.

- *Capacity Gaps and Training Needs*

A critical finding was the lack of communication skills among technically proficient staff. Interviewee 2 emphasized *refresher training* to bridge this gap, echoing Diers-Lawson et al. (2021):

*"Many employees excel technically but struggle with writing or speaking clearly. Targeted training is essential."*

This aligns with Oba and Berger's (2024) call for institutionalized communication upskilling to enhance organizational efficiency.

➤ *Theme 3: Effectiveness of Communication Channels*

This theme evaluates how well SCG's communication channels achieve their intended objectives. Effective channels facilitate clear information transmission with minimal distortion (Ratna, 2019). Participants identified *written communication*—particularly *letters*, *reports*, and *minutes*—as the most effective for formal exchanges due to their permanence and reliability:

*"Written feedback is better for future reference...phone calls are less effective."* (FGD 2 Respondent 1).

*WhatsApp* and *phone calls* were also deemed effective for specific purposes:

- **WhatsApp** enabled quick dissemination of documents (Interviewee 2).
- **Phone calls** proved valuable for urgent directives or invitations (Interviewee 2).

However, *written modes* (e.g., *memos*) were preferred for top-down communication, ensuring clarity and

accountability (FGD 2 Respondent 5). As Holley (2023) notes, well-crafted memos not only inform but also foster respect by providing structured guidance:

*"Effective memos make employees feel valued."* (FGD 3 Respondent 3).

- *Impact on Organizational Dynamics*

Effective channels reduced conflicts by promoting mutual understanding (FGD 3 Respondent 5). Participants advocated for *flattened hierarchies* to minimize message distortion:

*"Direct manager-to-admin communication enhances service delivery."* (FGD 3 Respondent 3).

Timeliness emerged as a critical factor in motivation:

*"Timely information boosts morale—employees can prepare and deliver on schedule."* (FGD 2 Respondent 1).

A case in point was agricultural programs, where clear, early communication fostered teamwork (Interviewee 3). Conversely, ineffective communication bred conflicts and inefficiencies (FGD 3 Respondent 3).

➤ *Theme 4: Bureaucratic Barriers to Timely Communication*

This theme reveals how SCG's hierarchical structures impede efficient information flow, creating delays that negatively impact organizational performance. The data highlights a critical disconnect between communication policies and practical implementation, with three key dimensions emerging:

- *Systemic Delays in Feedback Loops*

The study found that *written communication*, while formal, often fails to meet timeliness requirements due to multilayered approval processes:

*"A letter may take weeks to get a response...this makes written communication ineffective for urgent matters"* (FGD 3 Respondent 2).

These bureaucratic hurdles create a paradox where the very systems designed to ensure accountability (*memos*, *letters*) become barriers to operational efficiency. As Guttman et al. (2021) note, the value of feedback diminishes when detached from the relevant context in time.

- *Technological Gaps and Channel Ineffectiveness*

Participants identified specific communication failures:

- ✓ *Email* systems undermined by staff non-responsiveness (Interviewee 2)
- ✓ *WhatsApp* exclusions due to uneven smartphone access (FGD 2 Respondent 2)
- ✓ Information silos where *memos* go unchecked during absences (FGD 1 Respondent 3)

These technological barriers compound bureaucratic delays, creating what Monteiro and Adler (2022) term "structural communication poverty" - where systems

theoretically enable but practically constrain information flow.

#### ➤ *Human and Cultural Factors*

The data reveals behavioral dimensions exacerbating structural barriers:

*"Some hide information in documents...this makes communication incomplete"* (Interviewee 1)

Such behaviors, coupled with *blame-shifting* cultures (FGD 2 Respondent 5), create what participants described as a *demoralization cascade* - where delayed responses lead to disengagement, rushed work, and ultimately, service delivery failures.

#### • *Organizational Consequences*

The impacts are measurable and severe:

- ✓ **Project Delays:** Critical inputs arrive late, stalling operations (FGD 2 Respondent 6)
- ✓ **Financial Impacts:** Missed deadlines due to untimely facilitation (FGD 1 Respondent 3)
- ✓ **Cultural Erosion:** Trust erosion between cadres (Interviewee 3)

As Santiago (2020) and Mbaru (2022) observe, such bureaucratic communication environments create *performance paradoxes* - where systems designed to ensure control actually undermine organizational effectiveness.

#### ➤ *Theme 5: Limited Shared Understanding of Information*

This theme reveals critical disconnects in how information is interpreted across different levels of SCG's hierarchy. The data highlights a fundamental *asymmetry of understanding* between technical staff and management, creating operational inefficiencies.

#### • *Key Findings:*

##### ✓ *Knowledge Gaps in Communication*

- Frontline staff frequently receive instructions from non-technical managers lacking subject matter expertise:

*"When told to handle engineering reports...we don't understand engineering or accounting terms"* (FGD 3 Respondent 6)

- This *expertise mismatch* leads to implementation failures and subsequent disciplinary actions, despite employees' inability to comprehend requirements (Interviewee 1)

##### ✓ *Language and Expression Barriers*

- Staff often understand operational needs but struggle to articulate them to management:

*"They know what they want but can't express it properly - that's a language barrier"* (Interviewee 1)

- Current mitigation involves callback systems for clarification, indicating reactive rather than preventive solutions

#### ✓ *Policy vs. Practical Reality Divide*

- Top-down communication of policies often lacks contextual adaptation:

*"Guidelines come from above...but bosses may not understand field challenges"* (Interviewee 1)

- This creates a *compliance paradox* where staff are penalized for failing to implement instructions they fundamentally don't understand

#### ➤ *Theme 6: Internal Communication and Job Performance*

The study establishes a direct correlation between communication effectiveness and measurable performance outcomes at SCG:

#### • *Operational Impacts:*

Delayed Information Access leads to:

- ✓ Incorrect task execution due to missing guidelines
- ✓ Poor appraisal scores from misunderstood expectations
- ✓ Customer dissatisfaction from unauthorized service limitations

#### • *Performance Consequences:*

*"You score low points in appraisals...clients lash out at you...but the problem wasn't yours to fix"* (FGD Respondent)

#### • *The Data Reveals a Vicious Cycle where:*

Communication breakdowns → 2. Task failures → 3. Disciplinary actions → 4. Demoralization → 5. Further performance decline.

#### • *Structural Insights:*

- ✓ Current systems prioritize *policy transmission* over *understanding verification*
- ✓ There's no formal mechanism to bridge the *knowledge-power gap* between decision-makers and implementers
- ✓ Performance metrics don't account for communication-quality variables

These findings align with Broadbent's (2020) concept of *communication poverty traps* - where systemic barriers create self-reinforcing cycles of underperformance. The study suggests SCG needs *bidirectional understanding audits* to ensure shared comprehension across hierarchies.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The study's findings reveal critical insights into Siaya County Government's (SCG) internal communication (IC) dynamics and their impact on organizational performance. Six key themes emerged: (1) The predominance of *written communication* (memos, letters) alongside growing use of *WhatsApp* for quick dissemination, though digital adoption remains uneven; (2) A *hierarchical communication*

process that rigidly controls upward flows while allowing flexible top-down directives, creating efficiency paradoxes; (3) *Channel effectiveness* varying by purpose—written tools for accountability, digital platforms for speed—with timeliness being a universal success factor; (4) *Bureaucratic barriers* causing systemic delays, technological exclusions, and demoralization cascades that undermine service delivery; (5) *Limited shared understanding* due to knowledge gaps between technical staff and management, exacerbated by language barriers; and (6) A demonstrable *IC-performance nexus*, where communication failures trigger cycles of task errors, punitive responses, and declining morale. These findings align with Broadbent's (2020) concept of *communication poverty traps*, where structural and cultural barriers reinforce underperformance.

#### ➤ Theoretical and Practical Implications

The study extends organizational communication theory by highlighting how *public sector contexts* amplify bureaucratic communication challenges. While SCG's blend of traditional (*written memos*) and modern (*WhatsApp*) tools reflects adaptive hybridity (Ruswandi & Arief, 2024), the persistence of *hierarchical silos* and *understanding gaps* suggests that technology alone cannot overcome systemic issues. Practically, the findings advocate for: (1) *Flattened communication protocols* to reduce distortion; (2) *Bidirectional training* to bridge technical-managerial language divides; and (3) *Multi-channel strategies* that account for uneven digital access. As SCG typifies many African public sector organizations, these recommendations offer a template for balancing accountability with agility in bureaucratic environments. Future research should explore interventions like "*understanding audits*" to quantify comprehension gaps across hierarchies.

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