



"Intra-Organ Relationships and Institutional Performance in Post-Bureaucratic Structures: An Appraisal of Post-Bureaucracy in the Higher Education Sector of Cameroon" *By*

Dr. Theresia ENANGA MBUANDOKO

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

Abstract

This study investigates the influence of intra-organ relationships on institutional performance within the context of post-bureaucratic reforms in Cameroon's higher education sector. It critically appraises the transition from traditional bureaucratic models to more flexible, decentralized, and interactive organizational structures. The research highlights how ineffective coordination, rigid hierarchies, and limited subordinate involvement continue to challenge performance despite the adoption of post-bureaucratic principles. Using a triangulated methodology, data were collected from a population of 1,163 through questionnaires, interviews, and direct observation targeting senior civil servants, university personnel, and officials in the Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP). A sample of 837 respondents was determined using Taro Yamane's formula. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS v23 and Atlas.ti v6. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between intra-organ relationships, particularly communication, decision-making, and interdepartmental collaboration, and institutional performance under post-bureaucratic structures ($H_0: \mu = 0.000 < 0.05$). The study concludes that while post-bureaucracy is practiced in form, its implementation remains superficial, hindered by remnants of hyper-bureaucratic culture. It recommends that policymakers and administrators embrace genuine participative governance, improved communication systems, and strategic decentralization to enhance performance and adaptability in a globalized education landscape.

Keywords: Post-bureaucracy, intra-organ relationships, higher education, institutional performance, decentralization.

Introduction

Post-bureaucracy has emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional bureaucratic systems, particularly in the face of globalization, digitalization, and the growing demand for institutional adaptability. Heckscher (1994), has developed a model, the post-bureaucratic organization, whereby decisions are established on discussion and agreement rather than autocracy, the organization is a system rather than a hierarchy, open at the borders.

Scholars such as Johnson et al. (2009) describe post-bureaucracy as a shift away from rigid hierarchies toward more decentralized, flexible, and collaborative organizational models. This transformation aims to enhance institutional performance by promoting participation, accountability, and innovation within public administration. In recent years, the concept of "public value" has gained prominence as a framework for evaluating government performance, policy implementation, and service delivery (Moore, 1995; O'Flynn, 2005; Macron, 2014). This approach challenges the traditional economic models that emphasize market efficiency and minimal government intervention. Instead, it calls for governance models that respond to complex societal needs, particularly in sectors like education where human development is a critical priority.

Cameroon, like many other nations, has adopted elements of post-bureaucratic governance, particularly within its higher education sector. However, the effectiveness of these reforms remains uncertain. Despite formal decentralization and policy reforms, institutional performance is often constrained by poor intra-organ relationships, weak coordination, and persistent bureaucratic practices. Understanding how these internal dynamics influence the performance of higher education institutions is crucial for realizing the full potential of post-bureaucratic governance in the Cameroonian context.

This study therefore seeks to examine the role of intra-organ relationships in shaping institutional performance within post-bureaucratic structures in Cameroon's higher education sector. It provides a critical appraisal of the extent to which post-bureaucratic ideals are being implemented and the challenges that persist in achieving effective, collaborative, and performance-driven institutional management.

Statement of the Problem

In the evolving landscape of public administration, especially within knowledge-driven societies, the transition from traditional bureaucratic models to post-bureaucratic structures is expected to enhance institutional responsiveness, flexibility, and performance. However, in Cameroon's higher education sector, this transformation remains largely superficial. Despite the theoretical shift towards decentralization, participatory governance, and flexible intra-organ collaboration, institutional practices are still marred by rigid hierarchies, poor communication, limited subordinate involvement, and resistance to innovation.

The persistence of bureaucratic bottlenecks, such as centralized decision-making, formalized procedures, and weak interpersonal coordination, continue to hinder performance and adaptability in higher education institutions. Post-bureaucracy, though introduced to foster innovation and efficiency, often functions as a symbolic rather than substantive reform. Instead of encouraging a truly collaborative and agile environment, intra-organ relationships remain fragmented, poorly managed, and disconnected from performance-driven outcomes.

This raises critical concerns about the actual impact of post-bureaucratic reforms on institutional effectiveness in higher education. As such, there is a need to empirically examine how intraorgan relationships, particularly in communication, coordination, and decision-making, affect performance within this post-bureaucratic framework. Understanding these dynamics is essential for informing policy reforms, improving governance, and enhancing service delivery in Cameroon's higher education sector.

General Objective:

To determine the role of intra-organ relationships on institutional performance within postbureaucratic structures in Cameroon's higher education sector.

Specific Objectives:

1. To describe the nature and quality of intra-organ relationships in selected higher education institutions in Cameroon.
2. To assess the influence of intra-organ communication and collaboration on institutional performance.
3. To examine how post-bureaucratic reforms shape intra-organ dynamics in universities.
4. To identify the challenges affecting intra-organ relationships in the post-bureaucratic era.

Research Questions:

1. What is the nature of intra-organ relationships in Cameroon's higher education institutions under post-bureaucratic systems?
2. How do intra-organ relationships influence institutional performance in higher education?
3. In what ways do post-bureaucratic reforms impact the effectiveness of intra-organ relationships?
4. What are the major challenges affecting intra-organ collaboration in the post-bureaucratic higher education context?

Hypotheses:

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between intra-organ relationships and institutional performance in post-bureaucratic higher education institutions in Cameroon. **H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant positive relationship between intra-organ relationships and institutional performance in post-bureaucratic higher education institutions in Cameroon.

Literature Review: The Concept of Post-Bureaucracy and Intra-Organ Relationships

Post-Bureaucracy: A Conceptual Overview

Post-bureaucracy, a term used interchangeably with virtual organizations, network organizations, and web-based organizations, emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional bureaucratic systems. Initially, the bureaucratic model, with its rigid hierarchies and centralized decisionmaking, was highly effective in managing large-scale, standardized tasks. However, as global dynamics evolved, including advancements in technology and increasing demands for flexibility, the rigid structures of bureaucracy became insufficient (Ateş, 2008). Post-bureaucratic organizations challenge these traditional norms, focusing on flexibility, decentralization, and adaptability, with the aim of removing the distance between organizations and their environments to embrace change and control opportunities (Maravelias & Hansson, 2005).

The shift towards post-bureaucracy signifies changes in autonomy and power. Unlike bureaucratic systems, where autonomy is limited by hierarchical structures, post-bureaucratic organizations grant greater independence, allowing individuals to make decisions based on the contextual environment rather than a fixed chain of command. This shift is part of broader public sector reforms aimed at enhancing management effectiveness, productivity, and economic efficiency, with an increasing reliance on market-driven models (Grey & Garsten, 2001).

Intra-Organizational Relationships and Their Impact

Intra-organizational relationships, particularly those within post-bureaucratic systems, have received growing attention for their role in organizational performance. While much research has focused on emotional regulation and surface acting between front-line employees and customers, there is limited exploration of how these dynamics play out in intra-organizational contexts (Kramer & Hess, 2002). In higher education institutions, particularly in Cameroon, intraorganizational relationships can be characterized by delays, lack of transparency, and inefficiency, often exacerbated by political or familial ties that distort decision-making processes. This phenomenon, often referred to as "surface acting," occurs when employees modulate their emotional expressions to comply with institutional expectations, despite misalignments between their true feelings and external expectations (Hochschild, 1983).

This study proposes a theoretical model to analyze the antecedents and outcomes of surface acting within intra-institutional relationships. The model draws from socio-meter theory and selfpresentation theory, which explain how employees adjust their behavior to meet the expectations of others, particularly when those expectations conflict with their true emotions. Surface acting within the workplace is linked to emotional exhaustion, decreased performance, and lower levels of engagement, particularly in environments where favoritism and nepotism prevail (Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

In post-bureaucratic organizations, the tendency to surface act may be intensified by organizational politics, where employees seek approval from those in power or favor certain ingroups. This can lead to inefficiencies and frustration, particularly in contexts where roles are misallocated, unqualified individuals occupy critical positions, and policies are poorly implemented (Wharton & Erickson, 1993). The lack of alignment between organizational practices and employee expectations further undermines the effectiveness of post-bureaucratic reforms in improving institutional performance.

The Role of Intra-Organizational Relationships in Performance

The research demonstrates that the quality of intra-organizational relationships significantly impacts performance within post-bureaucratic systems. Positive relationships, characterized by mutual respect, coordination, and effective communication, are essential for fostering institutional performance. In contrast, poor intra-organizational relationships hinder performance by fostering an environment of mistrust, inefficiency, and lack of accountability.

The findings align with Henri Fayol's principles of management, which emphasize coordination, communication, and cooperation among organizational units (Kalpesh, 2017). Furthermore, systems theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy underscores the importance of synergy and interdependence among organizational components for optimal performance. In the higher education sector in Cameroon, organs such as the Consultative Committee of University Institutions (CCIU) for state universities and the Cameroonian Association of Private Higher Education Institutes (ACIPES) play a crucial role in fostering collaboration and alignment between different organizational units under the guidance of MINESUP. These mechanisms promote consultation, harmonization, and shared decision-making, which are essential for the successful implementation of post-bureaucratic reforms.

Methodology

Research Design

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

analyzing data from a few people or items that can be considered to be representative of the entire group of population. The findings of this sample of the population therefore can be generalized on the entire population.

Area of the Study

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

Population of the Study.

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

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

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

The Target Population

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

Accessible population

According to Asiamah, Mensah and Oteng-Abayie (2017), accessible population refers to the portion of the target population to which the researcher has reasonable access and from which sample can be drawn. The accessible

population of this study is drawn from the target population. From the table, we have 11 state universities and 3 private Higher Institutions with a population of 1163. Using the table in Amin (2005), and the Taro Yamane (1976), sample formula, we arrived at a sample size of 837.

Sample size and sampling technique Sample size

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

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

Taro Yamane formular.

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

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

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

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

	Institution	Accessible Population	Sample size
1.	MINESUP	150	109
2.	University of Yaounde 1	125	95
3.	University of Yaounde 2	113	88
4.	University of Douala	148	108
5.	University of Buea	85	70
6.	University of Bamenda	80	67
7.	University of Dschang	119	92
8.	University of Ngaoundere	100	80
9.	University of Maroua	92	78
10.	University of Garoua	27	25
11.	University of Ebolowa	15	14

12.	University of Bertoua	20	17
13.	UCAC Yaounde	49	43
14.	SIANTOU University Institute Yaounde	28	26
15.	IBISMA Yaounde	12	11
Total		1163	837

Sample rate = $\frac{\text{sam}}{\text{accessible population}} \times 100$

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

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

Sampling technique

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

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

Data Analysis and Results

Exploratory Factor Analysis for Intra-organ Relationship [IR]

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

Table 2: Factor analysis for intra-organ relationship

Pattern Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
IR1	.861	
IR2	.709	
IR3		.656
IR4		.899
IR5	.725	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.		
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

Source: Field data (2022)

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

Table 3: Test of specific Hypothesis

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1.660	.073		22.618	.000		
	IR_Mean	.100	.013	.312	7.485	.000	.547	1.828
a. Dependent Variable: PS_Mean								

Source: Field data (2022)

Decision

H_a: There is a correlation between intra-organ relationship and performance in a postbureaucratic organization. P-Value at 95% (CI) = [H₀: $\mu = 0.000 < 0.05$, $\beta .100$]. Reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significant statistical evidence to suggest that there is a correlation between intra-organ relationship and performance in post-bureaucratic higher education institutions in Cameroon.

Implications and recommendations

This study explored the question: *What role does intra-organ relationship play in enhancing institutional performance under post-bureaucratic governance?* The inquiry focused on understanding how collaboration, coordination, and internal dynamics among departments and personnel influence the effective implementation of post-bureaucratic reforms in Cameroon's higher education sector.

Intra-organ relationships, interactions among different administrative units and personnel, are foundational to post-bureaucratic principles, which lays emphasis on decentralization, flexibility, and horizontal collaboration. Yet, findings revealed persistent dysfunctions such as delays in service delivery, limited coordination, and poor follow-up mechanisms. These issues are often exacerbated by surface-level compliance, interpersonal biases, and a lack of institutional accountability, especially within some private universities. Misapplication of policies, exploitation of human resources, and inconsistent enforcement of academic standards are common challenges.

Research by Kramer and Hess (2002), and Saarni (1993), underscores how emotional regulation and interpersonal sensitivity shape intra-organ relations. However, in the Cameroonian higher education context, practices are often undermined by nepotism, tribalism, favoritism, and lack of meritocracy are barriers that weaken trust and transparency within and across departments.

Statistical findings from this study supported the hypothesis that strong intra-organ relationships significantly enhance service performance. These relationships are reflected in structured communication, mutual respect among units, shared decision-making, and coordinated workflows. This aligns with post-bureaucratic principles, where institutions must remain adaptive by strengthening internal networks and reducing hierarchical barriers (Maravelias & Hansson, 2005).

The research also highlighted practical examples of institutional cooperation, such as the Consultative Committee of University Institutions (CCIU) for public universities and Cameroonian Association of Private Higher Education Institutes (ACIPES) for private institutions. These bodies foster mutual consultation on academic and operational matters under MINESUP's guidance. Academic affiliation arrangements, curriculum harmonization, and collaborative frameworks like National Federation of University Sports (FENASU) for university sports further demonstrate the value of intra-organ coordination in achieving unified sectoral goals.

The relevance of this finding is reinforced by classical organizational theorists. Henri Fayol emphasized planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling as essential leadership functions (Kalpesh, 2017), while Ludwig von Bertalanffy's systems theory advocates for synergy and interdependence among institutional components.

Nonetheless, several challenges persist. Respondents reported limited autonomy, inadequate technological infrastructure, and unclear communication structures. These conditions hinder the practical implementation of

post-bureaucratic ideals. Institutions must therefore prioritize restructuring internal systems, improving staff engagement, and promoting transparent and collaborative cultures.

From the study's findings, the following key recommendations are proposed:

- Strengthen intra-organ communication frameworks to facilitate timely decision-making and information flow.
- Promote cross-departmental coordination and reduce overlapping roles through clear job descriptions and accountability lines.
- Encourage participatory leadership and bottom-up feedback mechanisms to enhance subordinate involvement in institutional processes.
- Establish performance-monitoring systems that support continuous improvement and foster institutional learning.
- Institutionalize collaboration platforms like joint committees, regular consultative forums, and digital tools for integrated management.

In conclusion, intra-organ relationships are not merely operational concerns but are integral to the successful performance of institutions within post-bureaucratic systems. For Cameroon's higher education sector to fully benefit from post-bureaucratic reforms, deliberate efforts must be made to cultivate trust, cohesion, and collaboration among all institutional organs. As Winston Churchill once noted, "Success is moving from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm", and so, improvement must remain a continuous institutional mission.

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