

## Analysis of Internal Communication Channels in Enhancing Employee Relations Management in the Nigeria Customs Service

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### Abstract

*This study analyzes internal communication channels and their role in enhancing employee relations management within the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS). Effective internal communication is critical to fostering trust, promoting transparency, and ensuring employee satisfaction in public institutions. The objectives of the study are: To investigate how the different communication channels influence employee relations in the Nigeria Customs Service; to evaluate the effectiveness of the current internal communication channels employed by the Nigeria Customs Service; to examine the extent to which internal communication influences improved employee performance in the Nigeria Customs Service; to investigate the employee relations strategies employed by the Nigeria Customs Service to motivate and enhance job performance among its staff; and to examine the challenges of internal communication and employee relations in the Nigeria Customs Service. The study adopted the positivist approach of research design using survey method. The study used purposive sampling to investigate top-down communication at operational level, while bottom-top communication (feedback), the study used stratified random sampling. Two-Way Symmetrical Theory was used. The study demonstrates that internal communication is pivotal in enhancing employee relations and organisational performance, especially in paramilitary organisations like the NCS. The findings provide significant insights into the role of communication in fostering employee engagement, satisfaction, and motivation. They underscore the importance of clear, inclusive, and transparent communication strategies, the need for feedback loops and the integration of digital tools to enhance employee participation. The study highlights the critical role of leadership in shaping communication practices and driving organisational success. These conclusions align with previous studies on internal communication, employee engagement, and organisational performance, confirming the vital role of communication in shaping both employee behaviour and organisational outcomes.*

### Keywords

Channels, Employee Relations, Internal Communication, Management, Nigeria Customs Service



## I. Introduction

Internal communication is a critical component of organizational effectiveness, particularly in public sector institutions where bureaucracy often complicates information flow and employee engagement. In contemporary organizational studies, internal communication is seen as a strategic tool for fostering transparency, mutual understanding, employee motivation, and alignment with institutional goals (Mazzei, 2010). In the context of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), an organization with paramilitary structure and

wide-ranging responsibilities in border security, trade facilitation, and revenue generation, effective internal communication is not only desirable but essential. This study explores the role of internal communication channels in enhancing employee relations management within the NCS, a domain that has received limited empirical scrutiny in Nigerian public institutions (Maiwada et al., 2025).

Effective internal communication fosters trust, minimizes conflict, and creates a culture of mutual respect between management and employees (Tourish & Robson, 2006). Communication channels, ranging from formal (emails, memos, newsletters, intranet systems) to informal (face-to-face interactions, peer discussions, instant messaging) serve as conduits for delivering expectations, policies, and performance feedback. According to Karanges et al. (2015), organizations that strategically manage internal communication are more likely to enjoy higher levels of employee engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour. However, in bureaucratic institutions like the NCS, the challenge often lies in the hierarchical flow of information which may impede horizontal and bottom-up communication, thus weakening employee voice and morale (Oyetayo & Amadi, 2020; Idris, M. K., & Msughter, 2022; Aondover et al., 2023).

A study by Downs and Adrian (2012) highlights that communication within organizations is not simply about dissemination but about meaning-making and relational exchange. This perspective aligns with the employee relations management approach, which emphasizes mutual respect, fairness, and involvement of employees in decision-making processes (Brewster et al., 2016). Internal communication serves as the medium through which employees feel recognized, informed, and empowered. For example, employees who are regularly updated on organizational changes and performance expectations tend to exhibit a greater sense of belonging and commitment. Therefore, the communication process directly shapes employee attitudes, job satisfaction, and interpersonal trust, core tenets of effective employee relations management.

In the Nigerian public service, and particularly within security-related agencies like the NCS, communication is often top-down and directive, with limited room for feedback and dialogue (Nwagbara, 2010). This approach, while useful for enforcing discipline, can lead to disengagement and resentment among employees. There is increasing scholarly and policy interest in how public institutions can adopt more participatory communication models that support collaboration and inclusiveness (Ejiogu, 2018). Studies suggest that where internal communication is inclusive and responsive, organizations enjoy greater levels of loyalty, efficiency, and conflict resolution (Welch, 2012).

Despite the centrality of the NCS to Nigeria's economic and security architecture, there is a dearth of scholarly literature exploring the intersection between internal communication and employee relations in the Service. This gap is significant because the nature of communication systems within the NCS potentially affects morale, operational efficiency, and compliance with organizational goals (Maiwada & Oshionebo, 2023). This study therefore seeks to fill that void by examining the internal communication channels used by the NCS and how these contribute to or undermine employee relations management.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the different internal communication channels that influence employee relations in the Nigeria Customs Service?

2. How effective are the existing internal communication channels within the Nigeria Customs Service?
3. To what extent does internal communication influence the improved performance of employees in the Nigeria Customs Service?
4. What employee relations strategies does the Nigeria Customs Service employ as motivations to enhance job performance?
5. What are the challenges of internal communication and employee relations in the Nigeria Customs Service?

## II. Review of Literature

A study by Siciliano (2020), titled *“The Role of Strategic Communication in Effective Leadership within Business Organisations,”* reveals that successful leaders tend to possess more effective communication strategies across various job descriptions and departments within business organisations than their less successful counterparts. This underscores the crucial role of strategic communication as a defining attribute of effective leadership. The perspectives offered by Siciliano (2020) and Shannon (2018) collectively highlight the indispensable role of internal communication in shaping leadership outcomes and fostering employee engagement. Siciliano’s findings reflect a truth increasingly acknowledged in organisational leadership circles, that strategic communication is not merely a soft skill, but a core competence that directly impacts departmental cohesion and performance. Likewise, Shannon’s work rightly highlights that communication is not value-neutral; poor communication strategies can breed disengagement, while good ones can foster motivation and alignment. These insights are particularly valuable for public institutions and paramilitary organisations like the Nigeria Customs Service, where hierarchical structures must be complemented by inclusive and responsive communication to drive engagement and operational efficiency.

Omotoye et al. (2020), in their study titled *“The Impact of Remuneration and Employee Performance in Global Communication Limited, Lagos, Nigeria,”* investigate the relationship between remuneration and employee performance within Global Communication Limited. A total of 120 employees participated in the study, with 69 (62.2%) males and 51 (37.8%) females. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into several sections for data collection, with 120 copies distributed. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis, with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 used for the analysis. The results reveal a significant relationship between the remuneration scheme and employee performance in Global Communication Limited. Furthermore, the study identified significant problems within the payment scheme that affected employee performance in the company.

The findings of Omotoye et al. (2020) emphasise the critical role of remuneration in influencing employee performance. The significant relationship between the remuneration scheme and performance is consistent with existing literature highlighting the importance of fair and motivating compensation systems in enhancing employee productivity and job satisfaction. Additionally, the study's identification of problems in the payment scheme reinforces the idea that inadequate or poorly structured remuneration systems can negatively impact employee motivation and performance. These insights are valuable, especially for organisations seeking to optimise their compensation strategies to drive employee engagement and performance effectively.

Adetipe (2020), in his study titled “*Investigating How Internal Communication Motivates Employees in Organisations,*” explores the role of internal communication in motivating employees within Nigerian organisations. An online questionnaire was administered to 100 randomly selected bank employees. The results revealed that 86.02% of respondents acknowledged a feedback relationship between managers and employees. Moreover, 65.59% of respondents indicated that salaries and a healthy work environment were key motivators for them. The finding challenges previous research by highlighting that job security, which is often regarded as a critical motivator in other contexts, is not viewed as a top priority in Nigeria. The study's findings were explained through systems theory, which posits that organisations can succeed through awareness of their environment and effective interaction. The study, therefore, indicates that the relationship between internal communication and employee motivation is increasingly being recognised in Nigeria.

Adetipe's findings provide valuable insight into the specific motivators for employees in Nigerian organisations. The emphasis on salaries and a healthy work environment as primary motivators, rather than job security, adds an important cultural context to understanding employee motivation in Nigeria. This differs from global perspectives, where job security is often seen as a fundamental need. Furthermore, recognising internal communication's role in motivating employees aligns with the growing understanding of how effective communication can foster better workplace dynamics and employee engagement. Applying systems theory to explain these relationships is also appropriate, as it acknowledges the interconnectedness of communication and motivation within the organisational environment.

Arubayi et al. (2020), in their study titled “*Employee Relationship Management and Employee Performance: Reward as a Moderating Variable in the Nigerian Telecommunications Sector,*” observe that employee relationship management (ERM) is a comprehensive approach that reflects a delicate balance in an organisation's development, recognition of human capital, and interaction. In today's competitive business environment, ERM has become a crucial strategy for gaining a competitive advantage and enhancing overall performance. The reward system is a practice that can achieve favourable organisational outcomes among the various ERM mechanisms. These theoretical connections formed the foundation for their study, which examined the relationship between ERM mechanisms and employee performance, specifically focusing on reward as a contributory and moderating factor. Data for the study were gathered using a questionnaire survey method.

A total of 222 employees from organisations within the Nigerian telecommunications sector were selected, and 210 valid responses were analysed. The findings revealed that reward significantly moderates the relationship between components of ERM and employee performance, suggesting that reward systems enhance the impact of employee relationship strategies on individual output. The findings by Arubayi et al. reflect the practical reality that employee engagement strategies are most effective when reinforced by meaningful incentives. Identifying reward as a moderating variable deepens our understanding of how psychological and motivational factors intersect with structural relationship management efforts. This study offers valuable insights for sectors beyond telecommunications, including paramilitary and public service organisations like the Nigeria Customs Service, where structured ERM frameworks paired with performance-based rewards could significantly boost employee morale, accountability, and outcomes. It underscores that when institutionalised recognition becomes a powerful catalyst for staff performance and organisational excellence.

Therefore, previous studies reveal a considerable focus on internal communication and employee relations across various organisational contexts, including corporate firms (Lee & Kim, 2021), municipal administrations, and academic institutions (Worlu et al., 2016). These studies emphasise the role of internal communication in enhancing employee participation, job satisfaction, and organisational performance. Despite these insights, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the specific dynamics of internal communication within paramilitary organisations. While research by Eugene and Henry (2016) provides a rare glimpse into internal communication within the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), it focuses primarily on the role of intranet systems without a comprehensive evaluation of broader employee relations management. Studies on organisational culture and employee commitment, remuneration (Omotoye et al., 2020), and technological change (Dauda & Akingbade, 2011) offer valuable perspectives. However, they are primarily situated in civilian workplace environments, where communication flows and hierarchical constraints differ significantly from paramilitary institutions.

Notably, studies examining internal communication within hierarchical, command-and-control structures such as the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) are sparse, often limited to anecdotal or descriptive analyses that fail to rigorously interrogate internal communication practices' dynamics, channels, and strategic orientation. Moreover, much of the extant literature seems not to consider the unique cultural, bureaucratic, and operational complexities that characterise paramilitary institutions in transitional democracies like Nigeria.

Furthermore, although frameworks such as the Two-Way Symmetrical Model of Public Relations have been widely validated in corporate settings, their applicability within rigidly structured government agencies like the NCS has yet to be systematically evaluated. There is a notable absence of theoretically grounded, empirically driven research that interrogates how strategic internal communication affects staff motivation, job satisfaction, accountability, and ultimately, organisational performance within such institutions. Thus, this study bridged these gaps by providing contextually nuanced, empirically substantiated insights into the effectiveness of internal communication strategies within the Nigeria Customs Service. It explored how these strategies influence staff performance, with attention to structural, cultural, and operational variables that shape communication flows within paramilitary bureaucracies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this study, the Two-Way Symmetrical Theory was used. In 1984, Todd Hunt and James Grunig put up the two-way symmetrical public relations theory. The theoretical assumptions were predicated on authentic, reciprocal communication. Instead of one-sided action, it entails mutual engagement. In order to accomplish the goals of generating positive media hype, the philosophy emphasizes respect and understanding amongst people. A willingness to compromise and make adjustments is necessary for two-way balanced public relations. Public relations is necessary for organizations to make significant changes to meet the needs of the public. According to James Grunig's 1992 "Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management" preliminary reports of the IABC Excellence Study, all businesses with effective communication systems have adopted a two-way symmetric approach to public relations (Mullins, 2005). "Communication management" is a basic two-word definition. The term "communication between the organization and the public" describes it. The idea's significance and comprehension are clear. There are particular problems with it, though. Public relations is

not the only component of communication. The relationship between corporate communication and public relations, as well as between marketing and public relations, must be explained.

The two-way symmetrical communication model has been used extensively in literature to investigate how social media might help organizations and their audiences develop positive relationships. Public relations scholars and practitioners have long supported the use of new media platforms, such as organizational social media, as a means of promoting two-way communication between organizations and their audiences (Hile et al., 2023). This is because websites provide a special chance for public relations practitioners to engage in conversation with their audiences. Critics assert, however, that the idea is audience-oriented. It argues in favor of public relations by suggesting two-way communication as opposed to one-way flow. Furthermore, because different audiences behave and react differently and need different techniques to address, the theory did not take audience differences into account. Internal social media is one example of a communication medium that can be utilized as a tool for internal communication, even though two-way communication is good. These exclusions were not taken into consideration in the theory's propositions. The theory remains applicable to this investigation in spite of this criticism.

The Two-Way Symmetrical Theory goes beyond one-sided activities to emphasize the value of reciprocal connection in communication. Adopting a two-way communication perspective is consistent with the theory's tenets, as the research aims to investigate the internal communication channels and strategies within the NCS. This facilitates a deeper comprehension of the processes that facilitate mutual understanding and respect between the organization and its employees (Aliyu et al., 2023). According to the thesis, in order to meet public expectations, organizations should be prepared to negotiate and make adjustments. Research on how the NCS's internal communication tactics change to accommodate employee needs can be conducted in this environment. To improve employee engagement and satisfaction, this may entail negotiating and making changes.

The two-way communication theory is applicable in today's digital media landscape (Maikaba & Msughter, 2019; Vitalis et al., 2025). This study explores the usefulness of digital media in fostering positive relationships with employees by examining how the NCS uses it to enable two-way communication. Even though the Two-Way Symmetrical Theory encourages two-way communication, audience differences must be taken into consideration. The study explores how the NCS adapts its internal communication strategies to accommodate different staff preferences and demographics. Furthermore, the study evaluates how feedback systems, such as internal social media, might help resolve these discrepancies and improve communication (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022). The hypothesis is nevertheless applicable in the context of this investigation, notwithstanding certain criticisms. It offers a theoretical framework for comprehending the significance of internal communication and how it supports productive employee performance. By using this theory to examine internal communication within the NCS, the study advances the fields of employee relations and organizational communication.

As a result, the Two-Way Symmetrical Theory provides insightful information and a theoretical framework that complements the aims and objectives of the study. In order to better understand these dynamics in modern organizational contexts, it offers a prism through which the study can examine internal communication patterns within the NCS and their effects on staff performance and employee relations.

### III. Research Methods

The study employed the positivist approach of research design. In this context, the study adopted survey method. According to Babbie (2000), survey design is probably the best method available to the social researcher interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly. Johnson and Christensen (2014), identify four critical points in survey research. According to the Human Resource Department of the Nigeria Customs Service, the entire population of the Nigeria Customs Service is Sixteen Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy-Five (16,875).

**Table 1.** Population Strength Based on Locations

	ZONES	POPULATION
1.	ZONE A	5,847
2.	ZONE B	2,976
3.	ZONE C	1,823
4.	ZONE D	1,067
5.	HQ	5,162
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,875</b>

Source: (Human Resource Department, Nigeria Customs Service 2024)

Determining the sample figure to answer research questions entails totalling all the heads and deputies, staff officers and assistants, PROs and deputies of Command/units/formations in Nigeria Customs Service. There were six (6) respondents in the following categories:

**Table 2.** Categorisation of Nigeria Customs Service Formations

S/No.	Zones	Formations
1.	Zone A	16*6
2.	Zone B	10*6
3.	Zone C	9*6
4.	Zone D	6*6
5.	Federal Operations Unit (FOU)	4*6
6.	Training Institutions and Headquarters	3*6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>288</b>

Therefore, having six (6) respondents in each formation makes the total number of respondents for category ‘A’ of the survey two hundred and eighty-eight (288). Thus, using Krejcie and Morgan’s formula, a sample size of 164 from the population is determined as follows:

$$s = \frac{X^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

Where:

s = required sample size.

$X^2$  = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size

P = the population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

$$d = \text{the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (0.05).}$$

$$s = 3.841 \times 288 \times 0.5(0.5) \div 0.05 \times 0.05(288-1) + 3.841 \times 0.5(1-0.5)$$

$$s = 276.552 \div 0.7175 + 0.96025$$

$$s = 276.522 \div 1.67775$$

$$s = 164$$

The second segment of the investigation studied a sample of officers and men across four cadres (Customs Assistant, Inspectors, Superintendent, and Comptrollers' cadres). This entails investigating bottom-top (feedback) communication. The sample size for the study was determined based on Akarika's (2019) guideline for research, which states that 50 = very poor; 100 = poor, 200 = fair, 300 = good, 500 = very good, and 1,000 = excellent. Based on this, the researcher selected 300 respondents as the sample size, which is good, according to (Akarika, 2019). The study used purposive sampling to investigate top-down communication at operational level, while bottom-top communication (feedback), the study used stratified random sampling, which involves dividing the population into homogenous sub-groups and using simple random sampling in each sub-group. The primary data was collected with a structured questionnaire.

**Table 3.** Summary of Scale Analysis Performed with SPSS

SECTION	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
<b>B</b>	8	0.817
<b>C</b>	7	0.770
<b>D</b>	3	0.848
<b>E</b>	4	0.893
<b>F</b>	10	0.888
<b>Whole Scale</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0.850</b>

Source: SPSS, v24.0

From the table above, it can be observed that both the sections (B-F) Alpha coefficients were quite significant, and thus, the questionnaire is quite reliable and within the region indicated by Teo & Fan, 2013; Teo, 2010; Garland, (1991); Louise, Manion, & Morrison (2010) and Field, (2005) a co-efficient of 0.7 – 0.8 is an acceptable value for Cronbach's alpha.

#### IV. Results and Discussion

**Table 4.** Internal Communication Channels Most Used for Receiving Critical Operational Information

	Bottom-Top		Top-Down	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Email</b>	36	10.5	23	14
<b>In-person Meeting</b>	56	16.4	3	1.8
<b>Phone Calls</b>	20	5.8	8	4.9
<b>Chat Apps</b>	56	16.4	11	6.7
<b>Video Conferencing</b>	1	0.3	0	0.0

<b>Official Memos/Circulars</b>	14	4.1	44	26.8
<b>Intranet/Internet Portal</b>	2	0.6	0	0
<b>Notice Board</b>	1	0.3	17	10.4
<b>Parades</b>	40	11.7	58	35.4
<b>Two to Three Channels</b>	63	18.4	0	0.0
<b>All the Channels</b>	53	15.5	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

**Table 5.** Perceptions on Capacity of Current Internal Communication Channels to Facilitate Coordination and Collaboration among Officers for Effective Operations

	<b>Bottom-Top</b>		<b>Top-Down</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	3	0.9	48	29.3
<b>Agree</b>	14	4.1	91	55.5
<b>Neutral</b>	51	14.9	20	12.2
<b>Disagree</b>	167	48.8	3	1.8
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	107	31.3	2	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

**Table 6.** Extent to Which Internal Communication Channels Influence Ability to Make Informed Decisions Related to Operations

	<b>Bottom-Top</b>		<b>Top-Down</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Not Influential</b>	6	1.8	3	1.8
<b>Somewhat Influential</b>	13	3.8	3	1.8
<b>Moderately Influential</b>	59	17.3	29	17.7
<b>Very Influential</b>	182	53.1	75	45.8
<b>Highly Influential</b>	82	24.0	54	32.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

**Table 7.** Extent to Which Internal Communication Channels Have Significantly Contributed to Improved Decision-Making or Collaboration in Day-to-Day Work

	<b>Bottom-Top</b>		<b>Top-Down</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	0.9	2	1.2
<b>To a Small Extent</b>	13	3.8	5	3.0
<b>To a Moderate Extent</b>	48	14.0	25	15.2
<b>To a Large Extent</b>	168	49.1	72	43.3
<b>To a Very Large Extent</b>	110	32.2	61	37.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

**Table 8.** Correlation Matrix

<i>Bottom-Top</i>			
	<b>JPI</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ERS</b>
<b>JPI</b>	1		
<b>ICC</b>	-.026	1	
<b>ERS</b>	.660**	-.003	1
<i>Top-Down</i>			
	<b>JPI</b>	<b>ICC</b>	<b>ERS</b>
<b>JPI</b>	1		
<b>ICC</b>	.089	1	
<b>ERS</b>	-.639**	-.188	1

Source: Computed using SPSS Version 22

**Table 9.** Regression Results

<b>Dependent Variable:</b>	<b>Bottom-Top</b>			<b>Top-Down</b>			
	<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>t-statistic</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Coefficient t</b>	<b>t-statistic</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>JPI</b>							
<b>(Constant)</b>		.975	5.340	.000	5.068	18.228	<b>.000</b>
<b>ICC</b>		-.012	-.578	.564	-.019	-.428	<b>.670</b>
<b>ERS</b>		.656	16.201	.000	-.668	-8.407	<b>.000</b>
<b>R-squared</b>		0.437			0.409		
<b>Adj. R-squared</b>		0.433			0.398		
<b>F-statistic</b>		131.429			360.35		
<b>Prob. (F-statistic)</b>		0.001			0.001		

Source: Data Computed using SPSS Version 22.

The data from Table 4 offers insightful patterns of internal communication channels utilised for critical operational information in both bottom-top and top-down communication. For bottom-top communication, email (10.5%), parades (11.7%), and chat apps (16.4%) emerge as the most frequently used channels. These channels, particularly parades and chat apps, highlight the preference for real-time, face-to-face or digitally informal communication in environments where immediate feedback is essential. The substantial reliance on multiple communication channels (18.4%) further reflects a diverse approach to ensuring employees receive necessary operational updates. In comparison, top-down communication reveals a contrasting pattern. Official memos/circulars (26.8%) and parades (35.4%) dominate the information flow, indicating a more formal, structured dissemination of critical information. Interestingly, video conferencing and intranet (0% for top-down) suggest minimal engagement with digital tools, highlighting potential barriers to technology adoption in formal communication channels.

These results resonate with the studies by Lee et al. (2019) and Salim (2022), which emphasise the significance of both formal and informal communication tools in enhancing employee involvement and organisational performance. The preference for face-to-face communication, particularly in bottom-top communication, mirrors findings from Lee and Kim (2021), who noted that effective communication leads to positive advocacy intentions and engagement in organisational matters. The contrast between the channels used in

bottom-top versus top-down communication also underscores the importance of understanding how different communication methods foster engagement and satisfaction, as suggested by Kulachai et al. (2018). Furthermore, while official memos are still a dominant tool in top-down communication, their low presence at the bottom top suggests a potential gap in the feedback loop, aligning with the findings of Shannon (2018) on the need for improving engagement strategies across different organisational levels. Thus, the observed patterns reflect a critical need for organisations to balance formal and informal communication channels for optimised performance and employee satisfaction.

The results in Table 5 reveal significant differences in perceptions regarding the capacity of internal communication channels to foster coordination and collaboration among officers, segmented into bottom-top and top-down communication. The bottom-top communication shows a stark contrast, with 48.8% of respondents disagreeing and 31.3% strongly disagreeing regarding the effectiveness of these channels. This high percentage of negative responses suggests a need for more perceived efficiency in communication flowing from lower to upper levels within the organisation. Only 0.9% strongly agree with its effectiveness, which aligns with previous findings by Lee et al. (2019), indicating that internal communication issues may contribute to negative information dissemination when employees feel disconnected or constrained in their roles. Conversely, top-down communication fares better, with 29.3% strongly agreeing and 55.5% agreeing that these channels are conducive to effective coordination.

The higher positive perception may be attributed to hierarchical structures that typically favour top-down directives and clearer organisational goals, as Foot and Hook (2011) noted in emphasising the importance of clear communication for operational success. The substantial disparity in these results points to the need for more balanced communication strategies that equally address the needs of both bottom-top and top-down communication. It also highlights the importance of addressing internal communication barriers to improve employee involvement and organisational cohesion, as supported by Lee and Kim (2021), who found that a symmetrical communication approach can increase employees' positive engagement. Additionally, Salim (2022) suggested that multiple communication tools, particularly in dispersed settings, can help mitigate challenges in coordination and improve overall organisational performance.

The results from Table 6 illustrate the influence of internal communication channels on employees' ability to make informed operational decisions in organisations, both from a bottom-top and top-down communication perspective. In the bottom-top communication category, a majority of respondents (53.2%) found internal communication "Very Influential," followed by 24.0% who considered it "Highly Influential." The combined percentage of those who rated it as "Moderately Influential" or higher reached 94.5%, emphasising the significant role of internal communication in empowering employees to make well-informed decisions. Comparatively, the top-down communication channel saw 45.7% of respondents rating it as "Very Influential" and 32.9% as "Highly Influential," with a total of 78.5% considering it moderately to highly influential. While both communication flows highlight strong perceptions of influence, bottom-top communication had a higher frequency of positive influence, reflecting its crucial role in enhancing employee decision-making.

The empirical review supports these findings, particularly the work of Lee et al. (2019), which indicates that internal communication is vital in increasing employee involvement and reducing constraints, fostering better decision-making behaviour. Similarly, Salim (2022) stresses the importance of internal communication tools in

improving organisational performance, aligning with the strong influence observed in both communication directions.

The results in Table 7 highlight the varying impact of internal communication channels on decision-making and collaboration in both bottom-top and top-down communication processes. For bottom-top communication, the most significant percentage (49.1%) of respondents reported that internal communication contributed to decision-making and collaboration to a large extent, followed by 32.2% who felt it had a very large extent. In contrast, for top-down communication, 43.3% believed it contributed to a large extent, while 37.2% saw it as having a very large impact. These findings suggest that employees value bottom-top communication more significantly regarding decision-making and collaboration. The higher percentage in the bottom-top category could reflect a greater sense of employee involvement and engagement, aligning with Lee et al. (2019), who noted that employees become more cognitively involved in internal issues, leading to more positive communication behaviour.

### **1. Correlation Results**

The correlation results show the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable as explained in Table 4. The correlation matrix presented in Table 5 provides insights into the relationships between Job Performance Improvement (JPI), Internal Communication Channels (ICC), and Employee Relations Strategies (ERS) within the context of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS). These variables are crucial for understanding how communication and employee relations influence job performance.

### **2. Regression Result**

The regression result shows the impact of each independent variable to the dependent variable as explained in Table 6. The regression results presented in Table 7 reveal insightful implications regarding the factors influencing the Job Performance Index (JPI) across two categories: bottom-top and top-down. For both categories, the independent variables and their coefficients, statistical significance, and model fit offer important insights into the relationship between internal communication, employee relations, and organisational performance.

### **3. Bottom-Top Model Interpretation**

The dependent variable in the bottom-top regression model is JPI, with Employee Relations Strategy (ERS) and Internal Communication Channels (ICC) as the independent variables. The coefficient for ICC is negative (-0.012), but statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.564$ ), indicating that ICC does not significantly impact JPI in the bottom-top approach. This is consistent with findings from Salim (2022), where internal communication tools have an ambiguous role in organisational performance depending on the context and the methods of communication used. The negative sign suggests a marginal detrimental effect, but its insignificance implies that other factors may be more critical in determining job performance in this context.

Conversely, the coefficient for ERS is significant and positive (0.656) with a highly significant t-statistic (16.201,  $p = 0.000$ ). This implies that Employee Relations Strategy (ERS) strongly and positively impacts job performance in the bottom-top model. The significance of ERS aligns with the empirical review by Worlu et al. (2016), who found that recognition, mentoring, and equitable policies in employee relations enhance job performance. The effect size of ERS suggests that it is a critical driver of job performance

in this framework. These results reinforce the role of strategic employee relations in fostering organisational performance and job satisfaction.

The R-squared value of 0.437 and the adjusted R-squared of 0.433 suggest that the independent variables can explain approximately 44% of the variation in JPI, while the rest may be attributed to other unaccounted factors. The F-statistic value of 131.429, along with its significance ( $p = 0.001$ ), supports the robustness of the model, showing that the independent variables collectively explain a substantial portion of the variance in JPI. While the model captures key relationships, other unmeasured factors may still influence job performance.

#### **4. Top-Down Model Interpretation**

In the top-down regression model, the results diverge significantly from the bottom-top model, particularly regarding the ICC and ERS coefficients. The coefficient for ICC in this model is also negative (-0.019) but remains statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.670$ ). This suggests that, in the top-down approach, internal communication does not significantly influence job performance, which may be explained by the top-down hierarchical nature of communication, where information flows mainly from top management to employees, possibly hindering open communication and feedback (Shannon, 2018). This can make employees feel disconnected from the communication process, leading to less effective engagement in performance-enhancing behaviour.

On the other hand, ERS in the top-down model has a negative coefficient (-0.668) with a highly significant t-statistic (-8.407,  $p = 0.000$ ). This negative relationship suggests that employee relations may harm job performance in a top-down communication structure. This finding contrasts with the bottom-top model and highlights the potential drawbacks of top-down management styles, where employees may feel less empowered and more disengaged, as observed in studies such as Lee et al. (2019), where employees were found to exhibit negative communication behaviour when they experienced issues within their organisations.

In this case, the top-down model may lead to a more constrained and less communicative work environment, adversely affecting employee motivation and job performance. The R-squared value for the top-down model is 0.409, and the adjusted R-squared is 0.398, showing that the model explains about 41% of the variation in job performance. Although the R-squared is slightly lower than that of the bottom-top model, the F-statistic value of 360.35 ( $p = 0.001$ ) indicates that the model is still highly significant and provides a good fit to the data despite the negative relationship between ERS and JPI.

### **V. Conclusion**

The study demonstrates that internal communication is pivotal in enhancing employee relations and organisational performance, especially in paramilitary organisations like the NCS. The findings provide significant insights into the role of communication in fostering employee engagement, satisfaction, and motivation. They underscore the importance of clear, inclusive, and transparent communication strategies, the need for feedback loops and the integration of digital tools to enhance employee participation. Moreover, the study highlights the critical role of leadership in shaping communication practices and driving organisational success. These conclusions align with previous studies on internal communication, employee engagement, and organisational performance, confirming the vital role of communication in shaping both employee

behaviour and organisational outcomes. As organisations evolve in the face of technological advancements and changing workforce dynamics, investing in effective communication strategies will be essential for maintaining a motivated, engaged, and high-performing workforce.

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