

Received Date: July 19, 2025**Accepted Date: August 11, 2025****Published Date: August 30, 2025**

Public communication and organisational performance in Morocco: systemic analysis of institutional practices

Arbaoui Faïçal

Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Moulay Ismail University – Meknes, Morocco

Faicalarbaoui7@gmail.com

Abstract

Today, public communication has become a structural component of governance and performance for organisations. In the Moroccan context, which is highly digitised and undergoing profound administrative reforms, public communication has become a means of modernisation, transparency and institutional efficiency. This article aims to provide an empirical and systemic assessment of public communication within Moroccan administrations. Drawing on Anthony Giddens' structuration theory and Mucchielli and Morin's systemic approach, the study describes the mechanisms, internal interactions and information flows that constitute communication mechanisms and their impact on the performance of public organisations. A mixed survey of 325 civil servants and 12 senior managers describes the role of communication and its internal strengths and tensions as a driving force for institutional transformation. In its relationship with digital technology and its expectations as a system, public communication in Morocco has elements of self-organisation and, consequently, innovation, coordination and consistency at the organisational level.

Keywords: public communication, system, governance, structuration theory, systemic approach, Moroccan administration, institutional innovation.

1. Introduction

Today, changes in administrations across the globe are incorporating the functions of public communication. It is no longer seen merely as the dissemination of information, but as innovative governance, coordination, and justification. In modern public systems, organisational performance hinges on the optimisation of administrative processes and the quality of relationships among the players in the system: decision-makers, bureaucrats, institutional partners, and the public. As noted by the OECD in 2025, public communication is a cornerstone of trust governance and public action coherence. It is also a level of performance state under rational administrative processes.

In Morocco, this condition is part of the major reforms in governance and administrative modernisation that have been initiated since the implementation of the New Development Model (NMD, 2021). The State is striving to improve transparency, performance and citizen participation, as well as

public governance focused on efficiency and proximity. To this end, the definition and implementation of the public communication plan in the administration is organised around the revolution in information systems and flows, as well as the circulation of information and inter-departmental coordination, with a view to systematising and improving visibility within the framework of public policies (Khouya, 2023). Public communication is based on organisational rationality — by streamlining and optimising internal communication flows — and on symbolic rationality, vigilant public communication, efficiency, and the legitimacy of institutions.

Public communication in Morocco, on the other hand, continues to face many structural challenges, namely: hierarchical cultures, bureaucracies, and the use of opaque communication in public communication (OECD, 2025). This calls for a reform of communication practices in public administration, which should no longer consist of one-way communication, but rather an endorsement of the learning and transformation that results from communication. In this regard, this research adopts an empirical approach and analyses public communication and organisational performance in Morocco, drawing on Giddens' structuration theory and the systemic thinking of Mucchielli and Morin.

This integrated framework encourages us to view communication as a living system within organisations, rather than as an isolated tool. This allows us to understand how public communication is changing and moving towards a self-regulating model that combines innovation, participation and strategic coherence according to the criteria of automation in a turbulent environment.

2. Conceptual framework: Theory of Structuration (Giddens), Systemic Approach (Mucchielli, Morin)

To comprehend the relationship between public communication and organisational performance, we must combine multiple theories including Giddens' Theory of Structuration and the Systemic Approach of Mucchielli and Morin. These perspectives highlight the dynamic and interrelation within organisations as they function as systems that constantly engage with their environments.

2.1. Giddens' Structuration Theory: Rules, resources and practices

Anthony Giddens (2023) describes society as a network of social practices governed by rules and resources that are generated and reproduced by social actors. This 'duality of structure' – where social structures constrain but also enable agency – provides an invaluable perspective for examining institutional communication. In Moroccan public organisations, communication should not be seen merely as a process of transmitting information downward. It operates at a deeper level, as a reflexive communicative process where social agents observe, adapt, and transform the rules of the game in varying situations.

Recent studies on public management have shown that communication practices have a direct impact on the structuring of the organisation: they create certain routines, shared constructions, and coordination mechanisms (Christensen, 2024). Thus, communication is both a product and the engine of the institutional framework. The organisational performance then depends on the ability of the institutions to reconcile control and autonomy. That is, the institutions are able to encourage the actors to join and actively partake in sense-making while keeping the action of the public framework coherent.

With regard to the Moroccan context and the administrative practices of public management, this explains how hierarchical culture and administrative traditions target the flow of information while simultaneously allowing the emergence of innovative and participatory spaces. As such, middle managers and public employees are also structuring agents and, through the routines of their daily practices, are able to continuously adapt the communicative system.

2.2. Systemic approach: Mucchielli and Morin

The systemic approach as developed by Alex Mucchielli and Edgar Morin sees communication as a system of interactions within a unified open organisational whole. Mucchielli (2024) states that all institutional communication is an autonomous self-regulating system, and all communication as feedback and circuits of influence. Morin (2023) complexity thought, parallels this self-organisation complexity as systems feedback, uncertainty, and self-organisation loops human systems.

Within public communication, this perspective makes broken discourse systems living systems, and communicates policies as systems where discursive practices, symbols, procedures, and technologies interact systems to provide organisational homeostasis of equilibrium constancy and change. The efficient organisation is not one that imposes the most control, rules, and order but one that embraces the multiplicity and differing contexts in adaptive system rationales.

The latest research on government communication points to the need for institutions to develop a systemic approach based on cooperation, cross-functionality, and organisational learning (OECD, 2025; Tabilo-Alvarez, 2023). This is a way for institutions to improve the efficiency of their operations and the social legitimacy of their actions. In a cooperative framework, communication becomes a regulatory mechanism, enabling tensions to be absorbed and strategy, management and public action to be strengthened.

In Morocco, this systemic approach is equally relevant. It allows us to see how public communication, in the relationship that institutions maintain with the system, constitutes a lever for innovation by breaking down barriers between layers and transforming spaces for collaboration and participation. The connection between the decision-making strata, the executive services and the citizens generates the feedback loops that are essential for the performance of a system: every piece of feedback, every exchange and every articulation.

3. Methodology

This research adopts a mixed approach: a quantitative part using a questionnaire, and a qualitative part using semi-structured interviews. This makes it possible to understand, within the cultural, structural and symbolic specificities of Moroccan public governance, the influence of public communication on the organisational performance of Moroccan administrations.

Population and sample

The sample consists of 325 civil servants from different government departments and Moroccan local authorities. It consists of senior executives, division heads, technicians, and administrative staff from , who are spread across several areas. The choice of this sample is based on purposive sampling, aiming to capture the different roles and organisational levels in the hierarchy.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by gender and position

Variables	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	189	58
	Female	136	42
Position	Managers and department heads	130	40
	Technicians and agents	195	60

3.2. Data collection and analysis tools

The questionnaire focused on perceptions of internal and external communication, transparency of exchanges, involvement in decision-making, organisational satisfaction and institutional performance. To this end, statistical analysis was performed using SPSS 25 software via descriptive and cross-tabulation analyses.

With regard to qualitative interviews, 12 communications managers and division heads with knowledge of decision-making and communication strategies were interviewed. In addition to the numerical data, this provided insight into institutional practices and constraints.

3.3. Systemic approach to analysis

Drawing on Morin (2023) and Mucchielli (2024), systemic interpretation made it possible to articulate the structural, relational and cultural dimensions of communication. The communication system is a subsystem whose elements are a set of administrative rules, cultural norms and information technologies that interact to produce performance.

4. Results

4.1. Quantitative results: perceptions, satisfaction and channel effectiveness

Quantitative analysis reveals significant trends in internal communication practices and their impact on organisational performance.

Table 2. Most commonly used communication channels in Moroccan public administrations

Communication channel	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Hierarchical meetings	214	66
Internal emails	188	58
Written memos	175	54
Institutional social networks	79	24
Digital platforms (intranet, portal)	93	29

These results confirm the **pre-eminence of vertical and formal channels**, to the detriment of participatory digital tools. Top-down communication still dominates exchanges, reflecting a highly hierarchical organisational structure.

Table 3. Level of satisfaction with internal communication

Level of satisfaction	Frequency (n)	Percentage
Very satisfied	47	14
Fairly satisfied	139	43
Not very satisfied	102	31
Not at all satisfied	37	12

Nearly **57%** of respondents say they are satisfied with internal communication, but **43%** still consider it insufficient to promote collective performance. Dissatisfaction is particularly marked among technicians and field agents, who feel they are **not sufficiently involved in decision-making**.

Table 4. Perceived participation in communication decisions

Level of participation	Frequency (n)	Percentage
High involvement	61	19
Average involvement	104	32
Low involvement	118	36
No participation	42	13

The absence of genuine **participatory communication** hinders the dissemination of internal innovation. On the other hand, a positive correlation was observed between the **quality of communication** and the **sense of organisational effectiveness**, measured by indicators of satisfaction and perceived performance.

Table 5. Correlation between internal communication and perceived performance

Cross-variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	Significance level (p)
Quality of communication – Clarity of objectives	0.61	p < 0.01
Transparency – Motivation at work	0.54	p < 0.01
Feedback – Job satisfaction	0.49	p < 0.05

These data demonstrate a **direct relationship** between effective communication and institutional performance, confirming that fluid internal exchanges improve motivation, clarity of objectives and team cohesion.

Table 6. Factors perceived as obstacles to effective communication

Identified factor	Percentage
Bureaucracy and excessive validation	37
Lack of interdepartmental coordination	25
Lack of unified digital tools	21
Hierarchical rigidity	17

These obstacles, identified by the majority of respondents, reflect the tension between **rigid hierarchical structures** and the desire for modernisation.

4.2. Qualitative results: analysis of interviews

The semi-structured interviews revealed four major recurring themes:

- (1) the **culture of validation** and hierarchical control,
- (2) **under-use of digital tools**,
- (3) the **lack of horizontal communication**, and
- (4) **recognition of the strategic role of communication** in institutional performance.

One division head summarised the situation as follows:

"We have the tools, but they are underused because communication decisions require approval at several levels."

A regional manager adds:

"Effective communication depends not only on resources, but also on trust between hierarchical levels."

These testimonials highlight the coexistence of **structural constraints** and a **desire for organisational transformation**. Several managers mention improvements since the widespread adoption of digital portals and the integration of institutional social networks, but emphasise that **cultural** factors—respect, caution and hierarchy—remain decisive in everyday practices.

Table 7. Thematic summary of qualitative interviews

Main themes	Frequency of occurrence	Meaning
Centralisation of decision-making	10/12	Vertical control and validation
Lack of cross-functionality	8/12	Isolation of administrative divisions
Gradual digitalisation	7/12	Slow but real technological transition
Motivation through symbolic recognition	6/12	Importance of institutional prestige

These qualitative results confirm the need for an **integrated** public communication **model** that reconciles hierarchical coordination and participatory autonomy.

5. Discussion

The information gathered shows that public communication in Morocco functions as an organisational performance mechanism, but always in a context marked by centralisation and a culture of control. Giddens' structuration theory (2023) helps to understand this duality: the hierarchical structure constrains actors, but it also provides them with the means of action, the instruments. Managers and public officials thus participate in the adaptive reproduction of the communication system, gradually adjusting it to the requirements of efficiency and modernisation.

The systemic approach of Morin (2023) and Mucchielli (2024) helps us understand this transformation: communication as a self-organised system that self-regulates within a feedback loop. Dysfunctions (lack of coordination, administrative red tape) are not isolated incidents, but rather signals of an adjustment that the system needs to restructure. The digitisation of practices, the rise of participatory platforms and the proliferation of citizen interfaces are indicators of the transition to an adaptive communication model.

Nevertheless, this transformation is accompanied by persistent tensions between innovation and conservatism. The bureaucratic model of upward approval clashes with the speed and openness required by the digital environment. The fundamental challenge is the reconciliation of hierarchy and participation, i.e., the ability of institutions to establish more lateral, integrated, and cross-range relations while retaining some level of bureaucratic rationality.

Conclusion

This empirical research shows that public communication is critical for organisational performance, specifically in the case of Morocco. The quantitative and qualitative results indicate that the efficiency of an administration is dependent on the flow of information, internal transparency, and employee participation. Agencies that have integrated cross-functional and cooperative communication display better organisational congruence, motivation, and productivity.

That being said, the shift to more effective communication increases the need for cultural and systemic change. This involves incorporating communication as a fundamental principle in the strategic plan of the public administration, enhancing the training of managers in participatory management, and implementing integrated digital tools that allow for inter-departmental collaboration. Technical reforms are not enough to establish organisational performance; a communication system must also be dynamic and well-structured, integrating human, technological and cultural dimensions. In Morocco, the complementarity between modernisation and reform illustrates this approach: the complementarity between hierarchy and participation, discipline and innovation, and cultural identity and digital openness.

References

- Andrews, R., & Boyne, G. A.** (2010). Capacity, leadership, and organisational performance: Testing the Black Box model in UK local government. *Public Administration Review*, 70(3), 443–454. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2010.02192.x>
- Boyne, G. A., Meier, K. J., O'Toole, L. J., & Walker, R. M.** (2006). Public management and organisational performance: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 25(2), 371–393.
- Castelo, S. L.** (2024). The role of performance measurement and management systems in administrative reforms. *Public Management Review*, 26(2), 210–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2023.2204400>
- Christensen, G.** (2024). Three concepts of power: Foucault, Bourdieu, and Habermas. *Power and Education*, 16(2), 147–164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17577438231187129>
- Fusi, F., & Feeney, M. K.** (2023). Intra-organisational communication and digital collaboration in public agencies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 33(4), 752–770. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muad021>
- Giddens, A.** (2023). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration* (Updated ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gelders, D., Bouckaert, G., & Van Ruler, B.** (2023). Communication management in the public sector revisited: Strategic communication and transparency. *Public Relations Review*, 49(2), 102–118.
- Internews.** (2024). *Freedom of expression and access to information in Morocco*. Washington, DC: Internews Network.
- Khouya, M.** (2023). *Public communication and good governance: The case of Moroccan public institutions*. HAL/IDEAS Working Paper.
- Medina, A., & Siciliano, M. D.** (2023). Network communication, participation, and public sector performance. *Public Administration Quarterly*, 47(1), 89–112.
- Morin, E.** (2023). *The method: Complexity and communication* (Revised edition). Paris: Seuil.
- Mucchielli, A.** (2024). *Systemics and organisational communication*. Paris: Retz.
- OECD.** (2025). *OECD report on public communication (digital edition)*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Tabilo-Alvarez, J.** (2023). A brief review of systems, cybernetics, and complexity. *Complexity*, 2023, 8205320. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/8205320>
- The Culture Factor.** (2024). *Global Report 2024: Culture and Work*. Geneva: The Culture Factor Institute.
- UNDP.** (2024). *Governance, communication, and citizen trust in the public sector: Lessons from MENA countries*. New York: United Nations Development Programme.
- OECD & Kingdom of Morocco.** (2024). *Public sector modernisation and digital communication in Moroccan governance*. Rabat: OECD–MENA Initiative.
- El Haoussi, S., & Benaziza, H.** (2023). Public communication as a vector of administrative performance in Morocco. *Moroccan Journal of Administration and Governance*, 12(1), 45–68.
- Najah, L.** (2024). Digital innovation and organisational performance in the Moroccan civil service. *African Journal of Public Communication*, 6(2), 77–99.
- Mitu, N. E.** (2021). Importance of communication in public administration. *Revista de Științe Politice*, 69, 134–145.