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Influence of Digital Communication Strategies on Employee Engagement and Productivity in Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission

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ABSTRACT

This study examined digital communication, employee engagement and productivity in the Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission (AKSLGSC). The objectives were to: identify the digital communication systems adopted; determine their suitability in enhancing employee engagement and productivity; ascertain the relationship between digital communication, employee engagement and productivity; examine the impact of digital communication on employee engagement and productivity; and identify challenges facing the usage of digital communication in the commission. Survey research design was adopted, with a structured questionnaire and interview schedule as instruments. The target population comprised 9,750 staff of Local Governments in Akwa Ibom State. Using Taro Yamane formula, a sample of 385 respondents was determined and simple random sampling employed. Validity was established through face validation and reliability via test-retest method yielding a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .83. Data were analysed using frequency counts and percentages. Anchored on Theory Z, Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory and the Organisational Information Theory, findings revealed that 80.4% of respondents confirmed the use of portable/cellular phones and computer network systems as their primary communication tools. The adopted communication systems were rated very suitable (WMS = 3.23), and a significant positive relationship was established between digital communication, employee engagement and productivity ($r = 0.56 > r$ critical $= 0.514$, $p < 0.05$). Challenges include noise, interference, faulty equipment, network congestion and high cost of technology. The study concludes that digital communication is a pivotal driver of employee engagement and organisational productivity at AKSLGSC and recommends investment in communication infrastructure and a dedicated communication management functio

Keywords: *Digital communication, employee engagement, productivity, Local Government Service Commission, Akwa Ibom State*

I. INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has fundamentally and irreversibly transformed the architecture of modern organisational communication, making it one of the most consequential variables in determining workforce outcomes in the 21st century. According to Gallup's State of the Global Workplace: 2024 Report, only 23% of the global workforce was actively engaged, while 62% remained disengaged and 15% were actively disengaged — a crisis of workforce connectivity that translates to an estimated US$8.9 trillion in lost global productivity, equivalent to 9% of the world's GDP (Gallup, 2024). These alarming statistics become even more significant when juxtaposed with the finding that organisations with high employee engagement experience a 23% increase in profitability and a 68% improvement in employee well-being (Gallup, 2024).

In sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is equally precarious, with only 20% of employees reporting active engagement — the lowest of any global region (Gallup, 2024). In Nigeria, where the public sector employs millions and the local government system forms the bedrock of grassroots administration, these disengagement figures represent not merely a human resource crisis but an institutional failure with profound consequences for public service delivery, civic trust, and national development. As digital communication technologies — from mobile networks to computer-based platforms — become the primary medium through which employees receive directives, access information, and remain connected to their organisations, the quality, reliability and accessibility of such technologies emerge as a non-negotiable determinant of whether employees

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remain engaged, motivated, and productive. Understanding this relationship is therefore urgent, imperative, and practically indispensable.

Effective communication, as Nwanwene (2007) and Hahn (2007) argue, is pivotal to productivity because it directly shapes employee behaviour: clear, consistent and timely communication from management increases employees' sense of role clarity, reduces decision-making latency and motivates higher performance. Organisations in which employees receive regular feedback, are informed about strategic priorities and are equipped with reliable communication tools tend to report higher levels of both individual and collective productivity (Samson & Udosen, 2019). The relationship between these three concepts — digital communication, employee engagement and productivity — is therefore not coincidental but structurally interdependent, with digital communication serving as the infrastructural conduit through which engagement is built and sustained, and through which productivity is ultimately realised or undermined.

Scholarly evidence has established that the quality and nature of internal communication are significantly and positively correlated with employee engagement and organisational performance. Nadales-Gallego, Galindo-Reyes and Garrido-Moreno (2025)confirmed that employee engagement and internal communication are increasingly recognised as central to organisational performance, particularly amid rapid technological innovation and post-pandemic workplace restructuring. Rani, Raman and Kavya (2025) assert that digital communication platforms, performance management software and AI-powered feedback mechanisms are effective strategies for building motivated and engaged workforces, with organisations that successfully implement digital engagement strategies reporting higher employee satisfaction, increased productivity and reduced turnover rates. Similarly, Karimi and Alavi (2024) found that organisations that strategically leverage digital communication channels — particularly those supporting transparency, personalisation and bidirectionality — achieve significantly higher levels of workforce engagement, especially in remote and hybrid work configurations. In the Nigerian public sector specifically, Alazigha and Amanawa (2024) documented both the opportunities and challenges of digital communication in improving public service delivery, finding that while digital tools hold enormous transformative potential, their effectiveness is consistently constrained by inadequate ICT infrastructure, digital literacy gaps and high costs.

While Rani et al. (2025) and Karimi and Alavi (2024) emphasise the transformative potential of digital tools such as AI-driven platforms, cloud collaboration systems and performance analytics software, scholars focused on developing-country contexts such as Alazigha and Amanawa (2024) and Umoren and Ukpe (2025), caution that such optimism may be misplaced in contexts marked by power instability, limited broadband infrastructure and unequal digital access. Others such as Karimi and Alavi (2024) locate the primary driver of engagement in the sophistication and interactivity of the digital platform itself. There is also a tension in the literature between those who view digital communication as primarily a structural resource that organisations must invest in and those who view it as a relational practice that depends on leadership style, organisational culture and communication climate (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002).

Despite the growing volume of scholarship on digital communication and employee engagement, a conspicuous lacuna persists in the literature regarding the specific dynamics of this relationship within Nigerian public sector commissions, particularly at the local government level. The absence of empirical evidence on how digital communication affects employee engagement and productivity in this setting of Akwa Ibom State means that policy decisions about communication infrastructure investment at the state and commission levels are being made without a sound evidence base. This study therefore examines the digital communication systems adopted, their suitability, their relational impact on engagement and productivity, and the challenges that constrain their effectiveness, the study provides critical insights that can inform evidence-based communication management policy in AKSLGSC and, by extension, other local government service commissions across Nigeria and the broader African public sector landscape.

Statement of the Problem

In the modern public sector, digital communication has ceased to be a supplementary operational convenience and has become a central infrastructure without which employee engagement and organisational productivity cannot be sustained at requisite levels. Against this operational background, there are observable and growing concerns about the quality and reliability of digital communication in the commission: network

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congestion, faulty equipment, poor connectivity and high data costs have been reported as persistent barriers to seamless organisational communication. These infrastructural deficiencies create information gaps, generate role ambiguity, dampen morale, and produce a working environment in which employee disengagement becomes a predictable outcome rather than an aberration.

The gap identified above is consequential both academically and practically. Academically, it means that the existing theoretical and empirical frameworks for understanding digital communication and employee engagement have not been tested against the specific institutional, infrastructural and socio-political conditions that characterise a state-level local government commission in southern Nigeria. Practically, it means that decision-makers at AKSLGSC and the Akwa Ibom State Government are formulating communication infrastructure policies and employee engagement initiatives without the benefit of institution-specific empirical evidence. This study was therefore motivated by the urgent need to close this gap by providing the first systematic, survey-based investigation of digital communication, employee engagement and productivity within AKSLGSC.

The central question driving this investigation is: What is the nature of the relationship between digital communication systems, employee engagement and organisational productivity in the Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission, and what institutional, infrastructural and managerial factors moderate this relationship?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

i. identify the digital communication systems adopted by the Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission in their communication with employees;
ii. determine the suitability of the digital communication systems adopted in enhancing employee engagement and productivity at the Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission;
iii. ascertain the relationship between digital communication, employee engagement and productivity at the Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission;
iv. examine the impact of digital communication on employee engagement and productivity at the Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission; and
v. identify the challenges facing the usage of digital communication for employee engagement and productivity at the Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Review of Concepts

Digital Communication

Digital communication refers to the transfer of information — encoded as discrete binary signals — between a sender and a receiver through electronic channels, encompassing voice telephony, data networks, video conferencing, email, instant messaging, and broadcast media (Gupta, 2013; Mfon & Uford, 2024). It encompasses a wide variety of systems including the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), cellular and satellite networks, radio and television broadcasting, and internet-based platforms. Unlike analog transmission, which conveys information through continuously varying signals, digital communication transmits data as discrete binary codes (ones and zeroes), offering superior signal clarity, greater resistance to interference and noise, and the capacity for error detection and correction (Connor, 2020). The evolution from analog to digital communication has been described as one of the most transformative shifts in the history of human organisation, enabling the near-instantaneous transmission of massive volumes of information across geographical distances that would have been operationally insurmountable in previous eras (Gupta, 2013; Mitchell, 2008). For organisations, the adoption of digital communication systems provides critical competitive and operational advantages, including faster decision-making cycles, enhanced coordination across dispersed units, real-time monitoring of operations, and greater responsiveness to both internal and external stakeholders.

In the context of the public sector, digital communication encompasses the entire spectrum of technology-mediated channels through which government agencies, commissions and departments communicate with their staff, citizens and inter-agency partners. This includes internal enterprise communication tools such as official email systems, management information systems (MIS), intranet portals, and video-conferencing platforms, as well as informal but increasingly institutionalised channels such as WhatsApp groups, SMS broadcasts and social media platforms (Alazigha & Amanawa,

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2024). The adoption and effective utilisation of these channels in public institutions is significantly shaped by factors including the budgetary allocations for ICT infrastructure, the digital literacy of staff, the reliability of telecommunications networks in the geographic jurisdiction, and the leadership disposition towards communication technology (Umoren & Ukpe, 2025). In Nigeria, the ICT sector contributed approximately 19.78% to the nation's real GDP in Q2 2024, with over 163 million Nigerians having internet access by March 2024 — reflecting a national telecommunications landscape that is growing rapidly but unevenly, with significant rural-urban and inter-sectoral disparities in connectivity quality (U.S. Trade, 2024).

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a multidimensional psychological and behavioural construct that describes the degree to which employees invest their cognitive, emotional and physical energies in the performance of their work roles (Kahn, 1990; Inseng & Uford, 2019). The concept was formally introduced into the organisational psychology literature by Kahn (1990), who described personal engagement as the harnessing of organisational members' selves in their work roles — a process through which individuals bring their full selves to bear on their professional responsibilities, whereas disengagement involves the withdrawal of self from the role. Schaufeli et al. (2002) subsequently developed the most widely adopted operationalisation of work engagement, defining it as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterised by three dimensions: vigour (high energy and mental resilience), dedication (sense of significance, enthusiasm and pride), and absorption (deep concentration and engrossment in work). Importantly, Schaufeli et al. (2002) treated engagement as a persistent, pervasive affective-cognitive state, not as a momentary or task-specific reaction — a perspective that has significant implications for understanding how systemic communication practices, rather than isolated messages, shape engagement levels over time.

Organisational Productivity

Organisational productivity is fundamentally concerned with the ratio of outputs produced to inputs consumed within an organisational system, and reflects the effectiveness with which human, financial, and technological resources are deployed to achieve institutional goals (Stoner & Freeman, 2005; Uford, 2017). At the macro level, it encompasses indicators such as output per employee, service delivery quality, operational efficiency and the achievement of strategic targets. At the micro or employee level, productivity refers to the efficiency and quality of an individual worker's performance relative to established role expectations and performance standards. Stoner and Freeman (2005) identify two broad categories of productivity: organisational productivity — which concerns the overall efficiency of the organisation in transforming inputs into outputs — and employee productivity — which focuses on the performance of individual workers and is shaped by factors including motivation, job design, management quality, and the quality of communication received from organisational leaders. The centrality of communication to productivity has been theorised and empirically documented extensively: Nwanwene (2007) argues that effective communication increases productivity by directly influencing employee behaviour, while Martinez and Hurtado (2018) demonstrate that internal communication issues constitute a primary contributor to productivity losses in organisational settings.

Theoretical Framework

Organisational Information Theory

The Organisational Information Theory (OIT) was developed by Karl Weick (1969, revised 1979) as an application of general systems theory to the study of how organisations process information from their environments. The major assumptions of OIT are: (a) all organisations exist in information environments characterised by uncertainty and equivocality; (b) the primary function of organisational communication is to reduce equivocality to levels that enable effective decision-making and coordinated action; (c) organisations develop repertoires of communication rules and communication cycles that they apply to incoming information based on the level of equivocality encountered; and (d) the effectiveness of an organisation's information-processing capacity is a direct determinant of its performance outcomes. The key constructs of OIT are equivocality, information richness, double-interacts (message-response-adjustment cycles), enactment (the process through which organisations create their information environments), selection (the process of choosing interpretations from among available alternatives) and retention (the storage of interpretations for future use).

OIT is directly applicable to the present study because it provides a process-level

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explanation for why the quality of digital communication systems at AKSLGSC matters for employee engagement and productivity.

Review of Empirical Studies

Rani, Raman and Kavya (2025), publishing in the NPRC Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, examined employee engagement strategies in the digital era and found that organisations that successfully integrate digital communication platforms, AI-powered feedback mechanisms and data-driven performance management software into their people management practices experience significantly higher levels of employee satisfaction, motivation and productivity. The study, which drew on case studies and empirical data across multiple industries, found that personalised digital engagement strategies produce the strongest engagement outcomes. Karimi and Alavi (2024), however, offered a more nuanced view, finding through semi-structured interviews with 29 participants across diverse industries that while digital transformation creates new opportunities for engagement, it also introduces risks of technostress, digital overload and relational disconnection. Karimi and Alavi (2024) therefore diverge from Rani et al. (2025) on the question of whether technology-driven engagement strategies are sufficient in themselves, arguing instead that digital tools must be embedded within a broader organisational culture of trust and leadership visibility to be effective.

Niveditho and Balu (2023), presenting at the 11th International Conference on HR for Organisational Sustainability in Mysuru, India, examined employee engagement in digital workplaces and found that while digital tools provide significant flexibility advantages — enabling employees to stay connected and productive across time zones and locations — they also generate new forms of isolation, particularly for employees who lack digital literacy or stable internet access. This finding is particularly resonant for the AKSLGSC context, where not all staff have equivalent access to digital communication tools. Nadales-Gallego et al. (2025), synthesising 55 peer-reviewed studies through a PRISMA-compliant systematic review, found convergent evidence that internal communication quality is the single most modifiable predictor of employee engagement across all organisational contexts reviewed, with studies consistently showing that organisations that invest in structured, bidirectional communication systems outperform those that rely on ad hoc or top-down communication on every measured engagement metric. Importantly, Nadales-Gallego et al. (2025) note that the majority of studies in their review were conducted in private sector or developed-country settings, explicitly calling for empirical investigation in public sector and emerging market contexts — a gap that the present study directly addresses.

Umoren and Ukpe (2025) found that while trends such as mobile-first communication, cloud collaboration and integrated digital ecosystems are gaining traction in Nigerian organisations, systemic weaknesses — including unreliable network infrastructure, high data costs, inadequate digital literacy and poor communication governance — consistently undermine the productivity gains that digital communication systems are expected to deliver. Umoren and Akarika (2024) add an important institutional dimension to this conversation: their study of communication patterns in the Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation found that the structure and directionality of communication flow within Nigerian public organisations significantly affect organisational efficiency, with institutions characterised by predominantly downward, one-way communication flows experiencing lower levels of employee cooperation, commitment and performance.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design, which was considered appropriate given its capacity to gather systematic empirical data on attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours from a large population within a structured, replicable framework. The target population comprised all staff of the Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission, totalling 9,750 employees across the 31 local government councils of the state (AKSLGSC Administrative Records, 2025). Using Taro Yamane's (1967) sample size formula, $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$, where $N = 9,750$, $e = 0.05$, the calculated sample size was 385 respondents. Simple random sampling was employed to ensure that each member of the population had an equal probability of selection, thereby enhancing the representativeness and generalisability of findings across staff cadres and council units.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended items rated on a four-point Likert scale. Reliability was determined using the test-retest method, with the instrument administered to a pilot sample of 30 respondents outside the study population at a two-week interval; a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .83 was obtained, confirming a high level of internal

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consistency and temporal stability. Data were analysed using exploratory data analysis (EDA) techniques, specifically frequency counts and percentages, which enabled clear, accessible representation of the distribution of respondents' responses across all study dimensions, consistent with the descriptive objectives of the inquiry.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Table 1: Digital Communication Systems Adopted by AKSLGSC

Communication System	SA+A (Agree)	SD+D (Disagree)	Percentage (%)
Portable/Cellular Phones & Computer Network Systems	298	72	80.4%
Radio/TV and Internet	213	157	57.6%
Telephone Network (PSTN)	140	230	37.8%
LAN/WAN Systems	101	269	27.3%
Satellite Systems	62	308	16.8%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1 revealed that 80.4% of respondents confirmed the use of portable/cellular phones and computer network systems as the primary digital communication tools at AKSLGSC, with supplementary use of radio/television and internet platforms affirmed by 57.6% of respondents.

Table 2: Suitability and Influence of Digital Communication Systems

Measure	WMS	Decision
Suitability of adopted communication systems	3.14	Very Suitable
Extent of influence on employee engagement	3.31	Great Influence
Perception as employee engagement tool	3.18	Very Satisfactory

Source: Field Survey, 2025
Table 2 revealed that respondents assessed the adopted digital communication systems as very suitable (WMS = 3.14), exerting a great influence on employee engagement (WMS = 3.31), and generally satisfactory as an engagement tool (WMS = 3.18).

Table 3: Hypothesis Testing using PPMCC

Hypothesis	r calc.	r crit.	df	Sig.	Decision
HO1: Digital comm. & Employee Engagement	0.056	0.51	3	0.05	HO1 Accepted
HO2: Digital comm. & Employee Productivity	0.56	0.514	1.77	0.05	HO2 Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 confirmed the acceptance of both hypotheses: HO1 (r = 0.056 > r critical = 0.51) and HO2 (r = 0.56 > r critical = 0.514), establishing statistically significant positive relationships between digital communication and employee engagement, and between digital communication and employee productivity, at the 0.05 level.

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Table 4: Impact of Digital Communication on Employee Engagement and Productivity

Impact	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Enhances productivity	181	48.7%
Enhances employee well-being and satisfaction	162	43.6%
Positive organisational culture and climate	144	38.7%
Enhances economic outcomes	131	35.2%
All of the above	248	66.7%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 revealed that 66.7% of respondents identified all of the listed impacts simultaneously, highlighting widespread recognition of the multidimensional nature of digital communication's positive effects on the commission.

Table 5: Challenges Facing Digital Communication at AKSLGSC

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Noise and interference	249	66.9%
Transmission issues and packet loss	237	63.8%
Faulty equipment	225	60.5%
Network congestion	212	57.0%
Poor communication network	197	53.0%
High cost of communication technologies	188	50.5%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 5 indicated that 66.9% of respondents identified noise and interference as the most prevalent challenge, followed by transmission issues and packet loss (63.8%), faulty equipment (60.5%), network congestion (57.0%), poor communication network (53.0%) and high cost of technology (50.5%).

V. Discussion of Findings

Table 1 revealed that 80.4% of respondents confirmed the use of portable/cellular phones and computer network systems as the primary digital communication tools at AKSLGSC. This finding establishes that mobile and computer-based communication constitutes the dominant digital communication ecology within the commission. The predominance of these channels aligns with Gupta (2013), who identifies cellular transmission and computer networks as the cornerstone examples of functional digital communication systems, and with Umoren and Ukpe (2025), who found that mobile-first communication is the prevailing digital communication trend in Nigerian organisations. The institutional Head of Administration corroborated the survey findings by affirming the commission's use of computer network systems and cell phones, further confirming that these represent both the most invested-in and most relied-upon channels. From the perspective of Organisational Information Theory, the prevalence of these channels reflects the commission's efforts to reduce equivocality through the deployment of accessible, widely owned communication technologies; however, the relatively low adoption of more integrated platforms such as LANs (27.3%) and satellite systems (16.8%) suggests that the commission's information-processing architecture remains functionally limited in scope and interactivity.

Data from Table 2 revealed that respondents assessed the adopted digital communication systems as very suitable (WMS = 3.14), exerting a great influence on employee engagement (WMS = 3.31), and generally satisfactory as an engagement tool (WMS = 3.18), indicating that the commission's communication infrastructure is perceived by the majority of staff as functionally adequate for the purposes of organisational communication. These findings are consistent with Nwanwene (2007) and Hahn (2007), who argue that effective communication directly

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influences employee behaviour and productivity, and with Samson and Udosen (2019), who found a positive association between communication quality and productivity in Nigerian organisations. Umoren and Akarika (2024) similarly found that when communication systems are perceived as functional and equitable, they create the conditions for organisational efficiency by aligning staff behaviour with institutional goals. However, the relatively modest WMS values — none exceeding 3.31 on a four-point scale — suggest that while the systems are adequate, they fall short of the high-quality, high-interactivity communication infrastructure associated with genuinely high engagement organisations. This is consistent with Maslow Hierarchy of Needs, which suggests that merely satisfying lower-order communication needs (transmitting directives and basic information) is insufficient to drive engagement and productivity; what is needed is communication that addresses higher-order needs for recognition, inclusion and growth — needs that require richer, more bidirectional and more reliable communication channels than those currently available.

The results presented in Table 3 confirmed the acceptance of both hypotheses: HO1 ($r = 0.056 > r$ critical $= 0.51$) and HO2 ($r = 0.56 > r$ critical $= 0.514$), establishing statistically significant positive relationships between digital communication and employee engagement, and between digital communication and employee productivity, at the 0.05 level. These findings are consistent with the conclusions of Rani et al. (2025), who found that digital communication platforms are effective strategies for building motivated and engaged workforces, and with Karimi and Alavi (2024), who demonstrated that digital transformation strategies that enhance communication quality significantly improve engagement outcomes. They also align with the findings of Umoren and Akarika (2024), who established that communication patterns are significantly associated with organisational efficiency within Nigerian public institutions. The theoretical anchor provided by Theory Z (Ouchi, 1981) is particularly instructive here: the theory predicts that organisations in which trust and inclusive communication are embedded in management practice will produce higher levels of employee engagement and productivity — a prediction that is empirically supported by the significant relationships found in this study. The finding also converges with Nadales-Gallego et al.'s (2025) systematic review conclusion that internal communication is the single most modifiable predictor of employee engagement, further validating the study's central argument.

Table 4 revealed that 48.7% of respondents identified enhanced productivity as the most salient impact of digital communication at AKSLGSC, followed by enhanced employee well-being and satisfaction (43.6%), positive organisational culture and climate (38.7%), and enhanced economic outcomes (35.2%). Notably, 66.7% of respondents identified all of these impacts simultaneously, suggesting widespread recognition of the multidimensional nature of digital communication's positive effects on the commission. These findings corroborate the arguments of Bakker and Leiter (2010), who demonstrate that engaged employees — produced by effective communication environments — do not merely perform their assigned duties but willingly expend discretionary energy in ways that enhance both personal and organisational productivity. They also align with Umoren (2025), whose study at Akwa Ibom State University found that structured communication channels and platform-based feedback mechanisms improve job understanding and task clarity, which are foundational preconditions for productive performance. The identification of positive organisational culture and climate as an impact of digital communication further supports the theoretical position of Theory Z (Ouchi, 1981), which places organisational culture and the sense of collective belonging at the centre of the engagement-productivity relationship. Importantly, these findings also demonstrate that digital communication's impacts extend beyond the instrumental (productivity) to encompass the affective (well-being, culture) — indicating that it functions simultaneously as a performance management tool and a relational infrastructure.

Data from Table 5 indicated that 66.9% of respondents identified noise and interference as the most prevalent challenge, followed by transmission issues and packet loss (63.8%), faulty equipment (60.5%), network congestion (57.0%), poor communication network (53.0%) and high cost of technology (50.5%). The Head of Administration additionally cited the poor quality of communication networks as a major barrier, noting its impact on the commission's ability to coordinate operations effectively. These findings are consistent with Yusmadie (2022), who documented noise, interference and transmission issues as the primary technical challenges in data communication environments, and with Babatunde and Al-Debagy (2014), who identified network congestion and faulty equipment as major contributors to packet

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loss and communication failure. They also align with Umoren and Ukpe (2025), who found that Nigerian organisations are disproportionately affected by infrastructural constraints — unreliable networks, power instability and high data costs — that undermine the potential of digital communication to deliver the engagement and productivity outcomes it theoretically promises. From the perspective of Organisational Information Theory, these challenges constitute sources of equivocality: when communication channels are degraded, messages arrive incomplete, distorted or delayed, and employees are left in states of uncertainty and confusion that impede coordinated action and erode the sense of institutional connection that sustains engagement. The theoretical and empirical convergence of these findings underscores the urgency of addressing communication infrastructure deficits as a prerequisite for organisational performance improvement at AKSLGSC.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Conclusion

This study has established, through systematic empirical investigation, that digital communication is a pivotal and statistically significant driver of employee engagement and organisational productivity at the Akwa Ibom State Local Government Service Commission. Mobile phones and computer network systems constitute the dominant communication infrastructure; these are perceived as suitable but not transformatively effective, suggesting that incremental improvements in system quality could yield substantial gains in engagement and productivity. The significant positive relationships confirmed between digital communication and both employee engagement ($r = 0.056$) and productivity ($r = 0.56$). However, the study also reveals that the full potential of digital communication as an engagement and productivity driver is systematically constrained by persistent infrastructural challengesthat demand urgent institutional and governmental intervention. These findings contribute original, context-specific empirical knowledge to the growing body of literature on digital communication and employee engagement in the African public sector, and provide a rigorous evidence base for communication management policy reform at AKSLGSC and analogous institutions across Nigeria.

VII. Recommendations

The study recommends that:

i. the commission should formalise and standardise their institutional use through a comprehensive digital communication policy that governs usage protocols, access rights, and quality benchmarks;
ii. AKSLGSC should establish a dedicated Communication Management Unit headed by a qualified communication professional to design, implement and monitor communication strategies that promote bidirectional, inclusive, and feedback-rich engagement;
iii. the Akwa Ibom State Government should allocate dedicated budgetary provisions for upgrading the commission's ICT infrastructure, including the procurement of high-capacity network hardware and the subscription to reliable broadband services; and,
iv. the commission should invest in digital literacy training for all staff to maximise their ability to leverage available communication tools and enhance their individual engagement and productivity.
v. the Akwa Ibom State Government should partner with telecommunication service providers to negotiate institutional data plans and infrastructure support agreements specifically for the local government service commission, thereby reducing barriers to consistent digital communication.

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