

BUREAUCRATIC DECISION-MAKING: LEVERAGING STRATEGIC INFORMATION USE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between strategic information use and bureaucratic decision-making dynamics within Local Government Councils in Rivers State, Nigeria. Utilizing a descriptive correlational survey design, the research explores how the systematic acquisition and integration of information influence the speed and quality of administrative outputs. The study is anchored on Information Culture Theory, Decision-Making Theory, and Sociotechnical Systems Theory. Data were collected from a cross-section of administrative officers and directors across the 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Findings reveal that dimensions of strategic information use, specifically data integration and information-seeking behavior, significantly predict decision timeliness and accuracy. The results underscore the critical role of robust information management systems in mediating bureaucratic processes, suggesting that the "administrative credibility gap" prevalent in local governance can be bridged through strategic digitalization and the cultivation of a data-driven organizational culture. Recommendations focus on institutionalizing evidence-based protocols and enhancing human capital development to facilitate agile governance at the grassroots level.

Keywords: Strategic Information Use, Bureaucratic Decision-Making, Data Integration, Decision Speed, Local Government Councils, Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

The administrative landscape of public sector organizations in Nigeria is undergoing a fundamental shift from rigid hierarchical structures toward more fluid, information-driven paradigms. In Rivers State, Local Government Councils (LGCs) represent the tier of government closest to the citizenry, making their decision-making processes pivotal for grassroots development and socioeconomic stability. Historically, bureaucratic decision-making within these councils has emphasized strict adherence to formal rules and centralized authority, often at the expense of agility and responsiveness (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025). The contemporary era of public administration requires that these institutions move beyond merely maintaining records to becoming strategic users of information. Strategic information use entails the deliberate orientation of an organization toward acquiring, processing, and applying data to reduce uncertainty and enhance the effectiveness of administrative actions (Citroen, 2011). In the context of Rivers State, where environmental and political complexities are high, the ability of local government administrators to seek and apply information strategically has become a primary determinant of organizational survival and service delivery efficiency (Obara & Alikornwo, 2025).

Integrating information as a strategic resource marks a departure from the historical “military hangover” that has characterized the Nigerian public service, which was typified by unitaristic principles and limited horizontal communication (Idoko, Paulinus, & Festus, 2025). Contemporary governance in Rivers State demands that administrators navigate fiscal constraints, infrastructure deficits, and heightened public expectations. Bureaucratic effectiveness is increasingly reliant not solely on procedural compliance but on the administrative intelligence and technological alignment of personnel (Alikornwo & Adiele, 2024). Prior studies indicate that when information flows are clear, accessible, and actionable, they foster transparency and accountability, which are essential for mitigating corruption and mismanagement (Obara & Alikornwo, 2025). Despite this, strategic information use in Rivers State LGCs remains inconsistent, often impeded by inadequate infrastructure and limited technical expertise among staff (Osai, Kalagbor, Amadi & Okene, 2023). The mediating role of Information Management Systems (IMS) has emerged as a critical factor in institutional governance. Evidence shows that robust digital platforms improve the speed and quality of decisions by providing structured mechanisms for data retrieval and organizational dialogue (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025). Within Rivers State government ministries and tertiary institutions, process automation and data integration have redesigned organizational routines to optimize performance, suggesting similar benefits could be realized in local government administration (Alikornwo, Adiele, & Dornanu, 2025). Strategic information use, therefore, involves not only technical data acquisition but also the behavioral competence of administrators to interpret and apply data in alignment with institutional objectives (Obara & Alikornwo, 2025). As LGCs face growing pressures for fiscal devolution and administrative autonomy, developing a sophisticated information architecture becomes essential for sustainable governance (Banigo, Ugben, & Amadi, 2024).

Finally, the quality of public sector human resources is a critical determinant of bureaucratic performance. The ability of local councils to convert information into effective policy outputs is often constrained by an “administrative credibility gap” and the difficulty of retaining skilled professionals capable of managing modern information systems (Suberu, 2004). This gap is further exacerbated when decision-makers rely on political patronage or intuition rather than credible evidence (Zeb-Obipi, 2023). By investigating the dynamics of strategic information use, this study aims to provide an empirical foundation for re-engineering bureaucratic processes in Rivers State LGCs, fostering a governance model that is both evidence-based and technologically agile, thereby ensuring that the benefits of democracy reach the grassroots (Adamolekun, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

The constitutional mandate of Local Government Councils (LGCs) in Rivers State is to drive socioeconomic development and promote grassroots welfare, yet their performance has persistently been described as abysmal, primarily due to systemic inefficiencies embedded in bureaucratic decision-making processes (Okolo & Kasikoro, 2021). A notable research gap exists concerning the role of internal information architecture—or the absence thereof—in shaping the administrative outputs of these councils. While much of the existing scholarship has concentrated on political interference, inadequate funding, and structural constraints as impediments to local government autonomy, there remains limited empirical exploration of how strategic information use directly affects bureaucratic decision-making dynamics (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025). Many LGCs in Rivers State continue to function with fragmented documentation practices, poorly coordinated record-keeping, and weak inter-departmental communication networks. These inefficiencies manifest as chronic delays, recurrent inaccuracies, and inconsistencies in policy formulation and implementation (Obara & Alikornwo, 2025). The failure to recognize and treat information as a strategic organizational resource has engendered an “administrative credibility gap,” where local government officials struggle to justify decisions with verifiable and actionable

data, undermining public trust and constraining effective grassroots development (Eke & Adama, 2023).

Compounding these challenges is a pervasive lack of technical literacy among local government personnel, coupled with a high rate of “brain drain,” which has depleted councils of the expertise required to manage modern information-driven processes effectively (Suberu, 2004). In the absence of skilled human capital, decisions are frequently guided by political expediency, personal judgment, or informal practices rather than empirical evidence, often resulting in outcomes that fail to address the genuine needs of the community (Akhakpe, 2012). Given this context, there is a compelling need to investigate how strategic information use can enhance bureaucratic decision-making within Rivers State LGCs. Specifically, this study examines the nexus between strategic information use and key administrative performance metrics, namely decision speed and decision quality. By doing so, it seeks to provide an empirical basis for understanding how well-designed information practices can reduce administrative inefficiencies, strengthen accountability, and foster more responsive and effective local governance.

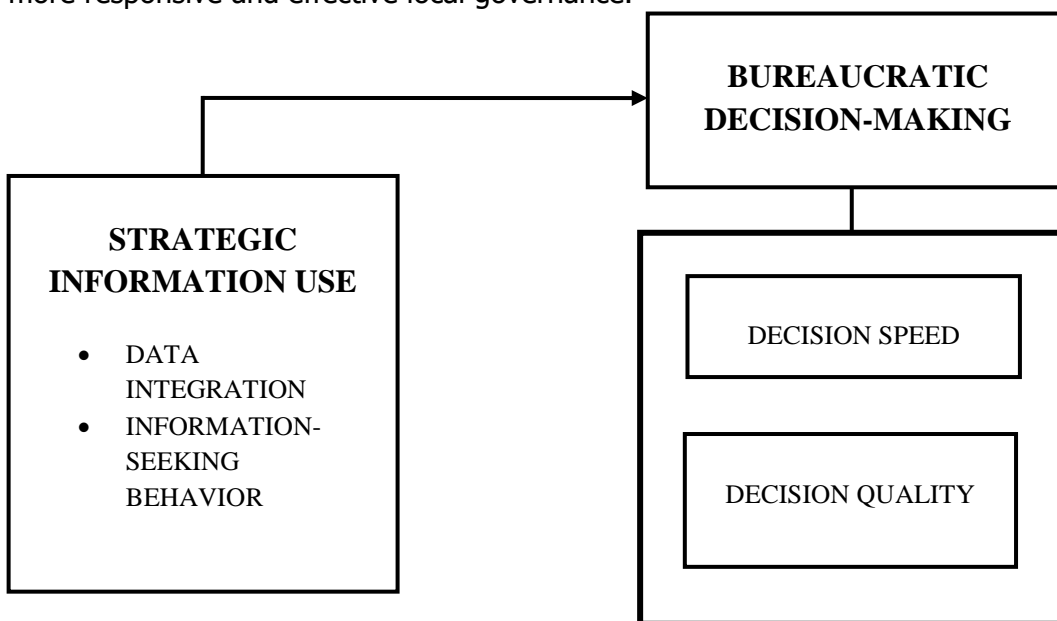


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of Strategic Information Use and Bureaucratic Decision-Making in Local Government Councils in Rivers State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic Information Use

Strategic information use refers to the deliberate acquisition, integration, and application of information to support organizational objectives and facilitate high-stakes decision-making. Unlike routine information processing, it requires significant cognitive effort and an institutional orientation toward leveraging data as a source of competitive advantage and a means of reducing uncertainty (Citroen, 2011). In the public sector, strategic information use is closely associated with the capacity of administrators to interpret environmental changes, generate actionable insights, and foster institutional innovation (Citroen, 2011). Within the context of Local Government Councils in Rivers State, this concept is operationalized as the ability to harness both internal and external datasets to optimize resource allocation, streamline administrative processes, and enhance service delivery.

The strategic dimension of information use implies a proactive and anticipatory approach in which administrators actively seek information on emerging technologies, societal trends, and

stakeholder needs to inform feasible alternatives (Citroen, 2011). This capacity is particularly critical in non-routine or extraordinary situations, where traditional procedures and established protocols may prove inadequate (Frishammar, 2003). In Rivers State, the strategic application of information technology has been recognized as an essential organizational competency that sustains continuity of operations during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Ahmed, 2017). By conceptualizing information as a strategic resource, Local Government Councils are better positioned to move from reactive management to a more agile, anticipatory, and evidence-based governance model, ensuring that administrative actions are timely, informed, and aligned with community needs.

Data Integration

Data integration refers to the systematic process of consolidating information from multiple, often heterogeneous sources into a unified and accessible framework. In the premise of Rivers State government ministries and Local Government Councils, data integration ensures that administrators have timely access to reliable, comprehensive, and structured datasets, which are essential for informed decision-making (Alikornwo et al. 2025). This process is particularly vital in bureaucratic environments, where departments often operate in silos, maintaining conflicting, duplicated, or incomplete records. By consolidating data into a cohesive structure, administrators gain a holistic understanding of organizational operations and environmental conditions, enabling them to make accurate and strategic decisions (Nwokoroeze, Onwuekwem, & Chukwu, 2025). In Nigerian local government contexts, achieving effective data integration is often hindered by legacy paper-based systems, lack of standardized protocols for data exchange, and limited digital infrastructure. Nevertheless, empirical evidence demonstrates that organizations investing in systematic data digitization and integration experience significant improvements in operational responsiveness, policy implementation accuracy, and resource management (Alikornwo & Adiele, 2024). For Rivers State LGCs, integrated data systems enable the synchronization of financial reporting, human resource management, and project monitoring, reducing operational errors, misappropriation risks, and delays in service delivery (Alikornwo & Adiele, 2024). Consequently, data integration constitutes a foundational pillar of strategic information use, providing the evidence base required for reliable bureaucratic action and enhancing organizational transparency and accountability.

Information-Seeking Behavior

Information-seeking behavior encompasses the deliberate activities through which individuals identify, search for, and utilize information to address specific administrative needs or organizational objectives. Within the Rivers State public sector, this behavior is closely linked to employees' self-efficacy, professional competence, and their capacity to interpret and apply data effectively (Obara & Alikornwo, 2025). Administrators who demonstrate proactive information-seeking behavior are more capable of making informed decisions, as they actively gather and evaluate data rather than relying on assumptions or incomplete knowledge. This behavior is influenced not only by individual traits but also by the organizational environment, including the availability of tools, support systems, and a culture that encourages data-driven decision-making (Obara & Alikornwo, 2025).

In local government councils, effective information-seeking behavior is critical for navigating the complex interplay of political, social, and economic factors. Administrators must engage with diverse stakeholders—including state government bodies, community leaders, civil society groups, and international development agencies—to ensure that decisions are both contextually appropriate and socially acceptable (Zeb-Obipi & Kpurunee, 2023). Research shows that active information-seeking promotes transparency, strengthens alignment with institutional objectives,

and reduces the reliance on informal “soft” information such as rumor or intuition, which may compromise decision quality (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025; Frishammar, 2003). By fostering a culture where bureaucrats are encouraged to pursue multiple sources of reliable data, LGCs in Rivers State can enhance the accuracy, timeliness, and legitimacy of their administrative actions, ultimately improving public sector effectiveness.

Bureaucratic Decision-Making

Bureaucratic decision-making refers to the systematic process by which public officials apply formal rules, established procedures, and organizational protocols to manage institutional resources and implement public policies. This approach is rooted in Weber’s concept of rational-legal authority, which emphasizes that decisions should be impersonal, predictable, and grounded in specialized expertise (Weber, 2009). In the idealized Weberian model, there exists a strict separation between politics and administration, with bureaucrats functioning as neutral implementers who apply rules defined by political authorities without bias or personal influence (Neuendorf, 2002). The goal of such a model is to ensure consistency, fairness, and legitimacy in administrative actions.

However, contemporary public administration, especially within Rivers State, illustrates that the boundaries between political discretion and rule-based administration are often indistinct. Modern governance challenges demand that bureaucrats exercise discretion and adaptive judgment, particularly in circumstances where rigid application of rules may not produce effective outcomes. Bureaucratic decision-making is increasingly recognized as a cognitive and interpretive process that involves analyzing incomplete or complex information, anticipating future consequences, and balancing competing interests (Estler, 1988). In Rivers State Local Government Councils, decision-making is shaped not only by formal procedures but also by historical precedents, social expectations, and the need to engage in forward-looking planning or “futuring” to meet emerging community needs (Estler, 1988).

Moreover, the quality and effectiveness of bureaucratic decisions in these councils are highly dependent on the integration of strategic information use and organizational knowledge management. Decisions that are informed by comprehensive, accurate, and timely information are more likely to satisfy both organizational goals and constitutional mandates, while also enhancing transparency, accountability, and public trust (Hoy & Tarter, 1995). In practice, this means that bureaucrats must not only follow procedural norms but also actively interpret data, coordinate across departments, and engage with stakeholders to ensure that administrative actions are responsive, equitable, and evidence-based. Consequently, effective bureaucratic decision-making in Rivers State LGCs represents a dynamic interplay between formal rules, discretionary judgment, and the strategic application of information resources, highlighting the critical role of information systems and cognitive competence in modern governance.

Decision Speed

Decision speed, also referred to as decision timeliness, captures the efficiency with which an organization identifies challenges and executes appropriate solutions. Within bureaucratic settings, speed is frequently constrained by hierarchical layers, procedural bottlenecks, and the requirement for multiple levels of approval, commonly described as “red tape” (Alikornwo et al. 2025). In Rivers State government ministries, the implementation of digital technologies and process automation has been empirically linked to substantial improvements in decision speed by streamlining workflows and bypassing traditional bureaucratic delays (Alikornwo et al. 2025). For Local Government Councils, the capacity to make timely decisions is critical for addressing public needs, allocating resources efficiently, and responding effectively to emergent challenges.

Decision speed extends beyond mere rapidity; it embodies the principle of “timely action on critical administrative issues,” ensuring that institutional operations do not stagnate (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025). In Rivers State public tertiary institutions, studies show that decision speed is enhanced when administrative communication is supported by robust information management systems, facilitating real-time access to data and coordinated action across departments (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025). Delays in administrative action can result in service failures, financial inefficiencies, and a diminished public trust in governance structures. Therefore, achieving optimal decision speed is not only a measure of operational efficiency but also a core determinant of institutional credibility and performance within local government contexts.

Decision Quality

Decision quality reflects the effectiveness, accuracy, and strategic alignment of administrative outcomes. High-quality decisions are characterized by their reliance on comprehensive and verifiable information, their minimization of errors, and their ability to resolve the underlying problems they target (Alikornwo & Nwinyokpugi, 2025). In the Rivers State public sector, decision quality is often operationalized through decision accuracy, defined as the degree to which decisions correspond to legal requirements, community needs, and policy objectives (Obara & Alikornwo, 2025). Enhancing decision quality is pivotal for fostering sustainable socioeconomic development, maintaining public confidence, and ensuring that government interventions achieve intended impacts.

Empirical evidence within Rivers State indicates that decision quality is significantly influenced by both data integration and the strategic use of information (Obara & Adiele, 2025). For local government councils, producing high-quality decisions entails balancing competing stakeholder interests, adhering to fiscal and ethical obligations, and providing transparent justifications for administrative choices (Zeb-Obipi, 2023). Decisions that are well-informed, evidence-based, and strategically aligned contribute directly to institutional effectiveness and demonstrate administrative competence (Egobueze, 2024). As such, decision quality serves as a key indicator of both the procedural robustness and the substantive impact of public sector governance, reinforcing the necessity for integrated information systems and a culture of strategic information use.

Theoretical Review

Information Culture Theory

Information Culture Theory asserts that an organization’s values, beliefs, and behavioral norms regarding information fundamentally shape its information practices and outcomes. Applied in the context of Rivers State by Obara and Adiele (2025), the theory emphasizes that a strategic information culture reflects a collective organizational commitment to treat information as a vital resource for decision-making, transparency, and accountability. A robust information culture is demonstrated through systematic data handling, adherence to evidence-based governance, and proactive sharing of accurate information (Mensah, 2023). Within Rivers State, disparities in institutional performance in digitalization often stem less from technological deficiencies and more from underlying cultural orientations toward information integrity and collaboration.

In Local Government Councils, fostering a strategic information culture is critical to bridging fragmented systems and ensuring that administrative actions are guided by verifiable data rather than subjective judgment or political expediency (Eke & Adama, 2023). By embedding a culture where information is consistently analyzed and strategically applied before decisions are made, LGCs can enhance both the speed and quality of bureaucratic decisions. Information Culture Theory thus underscores that technology alone cannot drive efficiency; enduring improvements require a shift in administrative norms and values that prioritizes data as a strategic asset.

Decision-Making Theory

Decision-Making Theory encompasses frameworks explaining how individuals and groups arrive at organizational choices. The rational-bureaucratic model, rooted in Weberian principles and Frederick Taylor's work, proposes a linear, systematic process that culminates in an optimal decision aligned with organizational objectives (Estler, 1988). In contrast, complex public sector environments like Rivers State often resemble the "garbage can model," where decisions emerge from a dynamic interplay of problems, solutions, and participants in an unpredictable and non-linear fashion (Cohen et al., 1972). Allison's bureaucratic politics model further adds that policy outcomes frequently result from negotiation and compromise among multiple agencies, reflecting competing interests and bargaining power (Allison, 1971).

For Rivers State LGCs, these theories illuminate the cognitive and structural constraints that affect decision-making, including groupthink, information overload, conflicting stakeholder preferences, and entrenched political patronage (Suberu, 2004; Janis, 1982). By applying these theoretical lenses, administrators can identify the obstacles that impede decision speed and decision quality, recognize the need for structured deliberation and stakeholder consultation, and implement mechanisms that enhance both procedural rigor and practical responsiveness in local governance.

Sociotechnical Systems Theory

Sociotechnical Systems Theory posits that organizational performance is maximized when the social and technical components of a system are aligned and mutually supportive. The technical system encompasses the tools, technologies, and formal procedures, while the social system includes employees, their relationships, and organizational culture (Alikornwo et al., 2025). In the Rivers State context, digital transformation initiatives in local councils often fail when attention is focused solely on technology without considering human capacity, organizational culture, and workforce engagement (Alikornwo et al., 2025).

Challenges such as brain drain, insufficient training, and low staff morale illustrate the risks of neglecting the social dimension of technological adoption (Aluko, 2006). Sociotechnical Systems Theory provides a framework for integrating digital infrastructure with targeted capacity-building programs and a supportive psychosocial environment, ensuring that technological interventions are adopted, understood, and effectively utilized (Samuel & Ekweozor, 2025). For LGCs, aligning social and technical systems ensures that strategic information use translates into practical improvements in decision speed and decision quality, ultimately strengthening local governance and service delivery outcomes.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated the positive impact of strategic information use on organizational performance across diverse sectors in Rivers State and internationally. Alikornwo and Adiele (2024) found that strategic data digitization significantly enhanced organizational performance in tertiary institutions by improving data accessibility, reliability, and overall workflow efficiency. The study highlighted that institutions that systematically integrated data from multiple sources were better positioned to make timely and accurate administrative decisions. Supporting this, Adiele and Alikornwo (2025) observed that artificial intelligence tools facilitated operational success in the FinTech sector by enabling data-driven decision-making, reducing human error, and streamlining routine processes. Collectively, these findings indicate that adopting similar strategic information practices in local government councils could substantially enhance operational outcomes and service delivery at the grassroots level.

In the public sector, Obara and Adiele (2025) empirically established a robust relationship between a strategic information culture and administrative decision-making efficiency in government ministries in Rivers State. Their study found that institutions with a proactive

information culture demonstrated significantly higher decision timeliness and decision accuracy, illustrating the critical role of organizational values and norms in leveraging information as a strategic resource. Similarly, Alikornwo and Nwinyokpugi (2025) demonstrated that administrative communication, when mediated by effective Information Management Systems (IMS), directly improved both the speed and quality of decisions in public tertiary institutions. These studies underscore that information flow and technological support are not peripheral concerns but core determinants of institutional governance and performance, particularly in complex bureaucratic settings like local government councils.

International empirical studies reinforce the relevance of these findings. Chen and Wong (2022) demonstrated that real-time executive information systems in banking significantly reduced service delays, while Rodriguez and Kim (2021) reported that the use of real-time data decreased decision-making time by 45 percent. Additionally, Kumar, Patel, and Gupta (2021) found that integrated information systems enhanced risk detection accuracy by 35 percent. These insights highlight the universal importance of timely and accurate information for organizational decision speed and quality, demonstrating that technology-mediated strategic information use is a critical enabler of institutional efficiency across contexts. In contrast, the absence of such systems in Nigerian local governments has contributed to their chronic underperformance, with councils frequently perceived as "failed institutions" plagued by corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability (Adamolekun, 2009).

The specific challenges confronting Local Government Councils in Rivers State are further documented in empirical research. Banigo et al. (2024) noted that councils largely operate as administrative extensions of state government, which undermines their constitutional autonomy and limits their ability to make independent, timely decisions. Zeb-Obipi and Kpurunee (2023) and Amadi, Osai, Kalagbor and Okene (2023) identified deficits in leadership capacity and persistent administrative credibility gaps as central barriers to achieving sustainable development at the grassroots. These deficiencies often result in slow decision-making, suboptimal policy implementation, and erosion of public trust.

Taken together, these empirical insights provide a strong rationale for investigating the relationship between strategic information use and bureaucratic decision-making in Rivers State LGCs. They justify the formulation of the study's hypotheses, focusing on the extent to which strategic information use enhances decision speed and decision quality in local councils. Accordingly, the following null hypotheses are tested:

H₀₁: Strategic Information Use does not significantly influence Decision Speed in Local Government Councils in Rivers State.

H₀₂: Strategic Information Use does not significantly influence Decision Quality in Local Government Councils in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive correlational survey design to examine the relationship between strategic information use and bureaucratic decision-making dynamics within Local Government Councils in Rivers State. The study population comprised administrative and technical personnel across all 23 councils, including directors, deputy directors, and administrative officers who are directly involved in the management of information and decision-making processes. A structured questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection instrument, specifically designed to capture comprehensive measures of both predictor variables (data integration and information-seeking behavior) and criterion variables (decision speed and decision quality). The instrument underwent rigorous validation through expert review to ensure content relevance and clarity and was pre-tested for reliability, yielding acceptable Cronbach's Alpha coefficients that demonstrated internal consistency. A total of 350 respondents were purposively and proportionally sampled to

reflect representation across various departments and councils. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize trends and regression-based inferential analyses to test hypotheses regarding the predictive influence of strategic information use on decision-making outcomes. All hypotheses were evaluated at a 0.05 level of significance, allowing for determination of both the strength and direction of relationships between the strategic use of information and the timeliness and quality of bureaucratic decisions within the local government purview.

RESULTS

The results focus on the regression analyses conducted to examine the predictive influence of strategic information use on bureaucratic decision-making dynamics in Rivers State Local Government Councils.

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Strategic Information Use and Decision Speed

Model R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	F-Change	Sig. F Change
1	0.642	0.412	0.409	148.32	0.000

The analysis in Table 1 indicates a strong positive correlation ($R = 0.642$) between strategic information use and decision speed. The R^2 value of 0.412 shows that approximately 41.2% of the variance in the timeliness of bureaucratic decisions is explained by the strategic use of information. The F-test ($F = 148.32, p < 0.001$) confirms that this relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_01) is rejected. This finding suggests that Local Government Councils that actively engage in information-seeking behavior and integrate data across departments experience significantly faster decision-making, highlighting the value of structured information management in enhancing administrative responsiveness.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Strategic Information Use and Decision Quality

Model R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	F-Change	Sig. F Change
1	0.701	0.491	0.385	185.14	0.000

Table 2 demonstrates a stronger relationship between strategic information use and decision quality, with $R = 0.701$. The R^2 value of 0.491 indicates that nearly 49.1% of the variance in the accuracy, effectiveness, and strategic alignment of bureaucratic decisions is attributable to strategic information practices. The regression model is statistically significant ($F = 185.14, p < 0.001$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_02). This result underscores that systematic acquisition, integration, and application of information substantially improve the quality of administrative outputs, enabling Local Government Councils to make decisions that are both evidence-based and aligned with organizational and community objectives.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide strong empirical evidence that strategic information use is a pivotal driver of administrative efficiency in Local Government Councils in Rivers State. The significant positive effect on decision speed confirms that councils that actively engage in data integration and information-seeking behavior can overcome traditional bureaucratic bottlenecks. This aligns with the work of Alikornwo et al. (2025), who demonstrated that process automation within digital transformation initiatives reduces hierarchical delays and accelerates administrative outputs. By ensuring that information flows are reliable, structured, and actionable, LGCs are able to transition from historically rigid and centralized systems toward more agile and responsive governance models, as previously highlighted by Idoko et al. (2025).

Similarly, the strong influence of strategic information use on decision quality confirms that access to comprehensive, accurate, and timely data significantly enhances the effectiveness and correctness of administrative decisions. This finding supports the conclusions of Obara and Adiele

(2025), who showed that a robust information culture enables administrators to make evidence-based choices that are aligned with organizational and community needs. In the context of Rivers State, this underscores the importance of addressing the longstanding “administrative credibility gap” by grounding policy decisions in verifiable information and analytical rigor (Eke & Adama, 2023). Moreover, the results emphasize the sociotechnical dimension of public administration, highlighting that technological infrastructure alone is insufficient. Improvements in decision quality are most pronounced when digital systems are complemented by skilled human resources capable of interpreting and applying data strategically (Alikornwo & Adiele, 2024).

These findings carry significant practical implications for local government administration. The historical underperformance of LGCs in delivering socioeconomic development can be traced to the underutilization of information as a strategic asset (Banigo et al., 2024). Institutionalizing practices such as systematic data integration, proactive information-seeking, and evidence-based reporting offers a pathway to reduce errors, minimize delays, and overcome the effects of workforce attrition and skill gaps (Aluko, 2006). By strategically leveraging information, local councils can transform bureaucratic decision-making from a purely procedural exercise into a dynamic process that promotes organizational learning, enhances responsiveness to community needs, and strengthens public trust (Citroen, 2011).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that strategic information use—encompassing data integration and proactive information-seeking behavior—is a fundamental requirement for the modernization of bureaucratic decision-making in Local Government Councils in Rivers State. The systematic application of information significantly enhances both the speed and the quality of administrative outputs, providing a vital tool for overcoming the systemic inefficiencies and transparency deficits that have historically undermined local governance. Without a deliberate institutional commitment to information as a strategic asset, LGCs will continue to struggle with decision-making delays and inaccuracies, thereby failing to fulfill their constitutional role in grassroots development. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Local Government Councils should invest in and maintain robust Information Management Systems (IMS) to facilitate the seamless integration of data across various administrative units, ensuring that decision-makers have real-time access to comprehensive information.
2. A conscious effort must be made to cultivate an organizational culture that values data integrity, transparency, and evidence-based policy-making. This involves training administrators to prioritize hard data over intuition or political expediency.
3. Continuous professional development and training programs should be implemented to improve the information literacy and technical skills of local government personnel, thereby addressing the current “administrative credibility gap.”

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