

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS IN TERTIARY
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF
GHANA: THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES, TAMALE**

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JAMES DAYINI SA-AMBO

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EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA:
THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE**

BY

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**THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF
PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN INNOVATION COMMUNICATION**

APRIL, 2023



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original research work, except for citations and quotations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that no part of it has been previously and concurrently presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature Date

Sa-Ambo James Dayini

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Supervisor's Signature Date.....

Dr. Nashiru Sulemana



ABSTRACT

This study focused on the effectiveness of communication channels in tertiary educational institutions in the Northern Region of Ghana using the University for Development Studies in Tamale as a case study. A case study research design and mixed method approach was used to guide data collection and analysis. A sample size of 285 was used out of a target population of 1,077 staff based on Krejcie and Morgan's formula. Most of the respondents were young people aged between 26 and 45 years, most of whom were males, and many had an education to the levels of a master's and above. The majority of the respondents worked at the UDS for a period of 6 to 20 years. Also, the majority in UDS preferred using written communication channels, mostly done via memoranda, letters, and circulars, as they found them more reliable, consistent, convenient, and effective than the other modes. Websites, mobile /telephone calls, publications /newsletters, and meetings /seminars /training, which were always used, were also found very effective. However, the study showed that there is no one channel that UDS used as a panacea for achieving effective communication. Communication challenges were mainly barriers caused by bureaucracy, distance due to the multi-campus system of UDS, unclear messages, lack of feedback, unstable internet connectivity and delays in communication from management. The study recommends that UDS management adopt and use communication channels which are effective and operate in real time and space.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Mr. Edward Kpemka Sa-Ambo and Madam Lydia Ama Yenyinib Lambon-bil - Sa-Ambo, both of blessed memory for enrolling me in school.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The idea of communication is flexible, and various academics have used and defined it in different ways. The word "communication" has Latin roots. It derives from the verb "communicare," which meaning to make something common or to teach knowledge (Schramn, 1965). In light of this, communication is about making information meaningful to the actors engaged in the communication.

Modern corporations, industrial organizations, and institutions all depend on effective communication. Institutions can maintain productive relationships with the public through it. Communication is crucial in all facets of organizational or institutional life, as it is in all human endeavours (Miller, 2006).

Communication is a key component of any institution's effectiveness, hence developing communication skills is crucial because successful institutions depend on efficient communication. Okenimpkpe (2010) asserts that communication plays a significant role of management because an institution /organisation can only function with communication between levels, departments and employees. Fatimayin (2018) defined communication as the act of transferring information and





messages or exchange of thoughts from one place to another and from one person to another through the medium of speech, signals, signs, writing or behaviour. Making sure your message is understood, mandating the recipient to take the proper action, or perhaps influencing the recipient's thinking are all essential components of effective communication. Interpersonal skills, particularly the capacity to control one's emotions, motivations, and behaviour, can be developed through communication. The levels of communication, according to Ali and Haider (2012), include interpersonal (face-to-face) communication between individuals, group level of communication among teams, groups, and units. Communication can be formal or informal, verbal or non-verbal, written or spoken.

Positive interactions are the outcome of effective communication as a tool. This could be interpreted as people supporting and assisting one another in their efforts to fulfil tasks to accomplish institutional aims and objectives. However, poor communication causes employees to have low expectations for themselves, lack confidence in their abilities, and believe that they will fail no matter how hard they try, which lowers productivity.

Recognizing the crucial function internal communications plays as a crucial means for increasing information sharing across all directions of an institution—upward, downward, and horizontally—is the first step in effective communication (Kamanda, 2014).



According to Soola (1998), communication is essential to all facets of institutional functioning. Because of this, contemporary organizations/institutions spend much money on enhancing their internal communication systems.

Even while the value of communication in institutional life is acknowledged, many professions, institutions, and corporations still need to give it the respect it deserves. Perhaps there are misconceptions about communication that account for this. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the concept in light of institutional activity. According to Soola (1998), communication is a continuous, interactive, and iterative process that involves the transmission or exchange of thoughts, the imparting and sharing of knowledge, and the transmission and reception of ideas, data, facts, attitudes, and sentiments.

Effective communication is essential for managerial and institutional performance, according to Kreitner et al. (2002). Additionally, the foundation of management and leadership is efficient communication (Heller, 2002). According to Bovée and Thill (2013), good communication benefits institutions, enterprises, and organizations in a variety of ways, including by supplying factual information rather than hazy impressions and by presenting information in a clear and efficient way. The complexity of contemporary institutional activity undoubtedly leads to

strain, and when this occurs, the communication system put in place helps to lessen tension by facilitating effective information flow.

In the opinion of Goldhaber (1993) and Soola (1998), institutions must set up an effective communication system to handle environmental uncertainties. The difference between the information that is currently accessible and what is required is known as uncertainty. Institutions must have an effective and sufficient communication flow as they manage various complicated tasks. However, many institutions need a sufficient and effective flow of information both inside and outside the institution. Top-to-bottom communication is typical, with a brief formal explanation of actions, problems, and happenings.

We must remember that we are organizational/institutional beings who live and die in various organizational/institutional environments, as stated by Ajala (2001). Due in part to their outdated structures and inadequate information flow, several institutions are lacking in communication channels and mechanisms. Institutions that do not adopt effective information exchange techniques fall behind. This study was therefore driven by the need for good communication and the significance of effective communication channels in ensuring institutional performance and success. Indicators of collaboration, such as job satisfaction, job involvement, institutional identity, institutional commitment, employee empowerment, and staff



productivity, are promoted by effective communication flow in institutions (Eissenberg and Goodall, 2001).

In essence, all forms of communication require a call and a response through specific channels (Sanina et al., 2017). Williams (2019) asserts that the ways people communicate in institutions are communication channels. He continued by saying that it is important to think carefully about the channels that are used to carry out various jobs because choosing the wrong channel for a task or communication can have unfavourable consequences. Richer channels of engagement that promote interaction are required for complex communications to ensure clarity. Face-to-face contact, telephone and mobile communications, electronic communication, textual communication, etc., are all examples of communication channels.

Johnson (1996) states that a transmission system and the full process of transferring messages from the source to the recipient are both considered communication channels, and indicating that a communication channel selection plays an important role in achieving effective communication. Given this, Hargie et al. (2000) advise management to be aware of how effectively its communication channels are doing in order to preserve institutional success. They believe there should be some accountability for the institutional communication flow, which implies that if important information is not reaching its intended audience, a communication





channel obstruction must be removed. Nonetheless, institutions, including tertiary educational institutions (TEIs), need to pay more attention to the channels' applicability when conducting internal communications. For this reason, there is a need for the management of TEIs to identify and prioritize effective communication channels, given that different technical elements on different channels may add meaning or distort the message's intent.

The importance of effective communication as a key to institutional success and effectiveness must be considered (Newstron, 2011; Kamanda, 2014; Richards, 2019).

According to Richards (2019), effective communication is focused on meeting individual needs, conveying important information and providing positive and constructive feedback. To him, effective communication is vital to every institution and can help institutions in many ways, such as employee management, the establishment of clear expectations for employees, thereby improving their performance, the building of strong relationships leading to strong teamwork, which enables employees to work together to achieve institutional goals coupled with bringing about new ideas and innovations as well as providing employees with the knowledge, to feel at ease and efficiently resolve or handle conflict situations, an organization's structures and working environment are essential.



Effective communication is measured using indicators such as channel efficiency, reliability, speed, clarity and the cost associated with the communication. Efficiency is the quality of having a message conveyed swiftly in a way that enables the recipient to hear, understand, and apply it as intended. A channel's functionality, or the likelihood that communicative content, such as feedback or information, will be conveyed, is referred to as reliability. On the other side, speed relates to how quickly a communication might provide a result, suggesting either that information is given or a response is received. Clarity refers to the lack of confusion or free from the obscurity of messages when received, making messages or information easy to understand, while cost refers to how economical in terms of resources utilised in the cost of communication and the cost of using the communication channel(s) to achieve effective communication and effectiveness of a channel refer to the selection of the right channel, or combination of channels to deliver a message and the receiver understands it exactly as intended to solve a particular problem(s) and to increase institutional growth (Leonard *et al.*, 2011, Sanina *et al.*, 2017).

As social systems with information processing as their main purpose, tertiary educational institutions are susceptible to issues that affect other social systems. Following Stephen (2001), TEIs are intentionally coordinated social groups made

up of two or more people that work continuously toward a single goal or set of goals.

According to Calderon (2018), tertiary educational institutions normally provide post-secondary, tertiary, or specialised education leading to the award of academic degrees (certificates, diplomas, bachelors, masters, doctorates and post-doctorates). Geith (2012) and O' Banion (2010) indicate that the mission of the TEIs globally is primarily research, teaching and outreach.

The importance of tertiary educational institutions in society cannot be overemphasized. Institutions of higher learning have a crucial role in promoting development, growth, and eradicating poverty. Beyond the traditional teaching, research, and outreach responsibilities associated with them, tertiary educational institutions perform a number of other roles, however these roles vary depending on the nature and mission of each institution (World Bank Group, 2016).

Because tertiary education-based skills are crucial for the creation, transfer, and application of technology, TEIs play a significant role in the development of human capital and capacity building, which are prerequisites for economic success (Lucas 1988; Romer 1986, 1990 as cited by World Bank Group, 2016). Additionally, higher education institutions contribute significantly to the economies of the towns,



regions, and nations that they serve and are more receptive to the socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural requirements of the community (Marmolejo and Puukka, 2009, as cited by World Bank Group, 2016).

Additionally, tertiary educational institutions through their research, innovation and technology transfer capacity, through obtaining and directing public and private financing into applied research that results in the commercialization of goods, processes, and services, play a significant role in creating improved local, regional, and national competitiveness. Besides, TEIs with established or ambitious research orientations align their teaching and research activities with private sector organisations /institutions, particularly in fields involving technology, research, and medicine (Jessop, 2008 as cited in World Bank Group, 2016).

Additionally, tertiary institutions are an integral element of the social and cultural fabric of a country. As a result, they contribute significantly to nation-building by influencing civic virtues to create democratic and civilized societies. They also help to build strong nation states and deepen democracy by educating citizens to participate in the civil, political, social, cultural, and economic activities of a society in the midst of cultural diversity and pluralism (Välimaa and Hoffman, 2008 as cited in World Bank Group, 2016).





Institutional information is disseminated through both formal and informal communication channels, claims Cornelissen (2008). However, the formal internal communication channels in tertiary educational institutions in Ghana's Northern area will be the main emphasis of this study. An analysis of related literature revealed that internal communication is recognized as a crucial component in the successful performance of institutions like TEIs, which provided the impetus for examining the effectiveness of communication channels in TEIs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In institutions, employee contact is a crucial and important endeavour (Harris and Nelson, 2008). According to Harris and Nelson (2008), because of the importance and necessity of employee interaction, successful employee communication is the foundation for an institution's sustainability, and connections grow as a result of effective communication. McDonald and Hammer (2010) assert that communication is crucial among stakeholders in the tertiary educational setting. Stakeholders are people or groups that can be influenced by the institution's actions, according to McDonald and Hammer (2010). Staff and students are among the important stakeholders within tertiary educational settings; therefore, forging effective relationships among them is necessary to achieve institutional goals.



Direct communication between employees and management improves work relationships and institutional performance, according to earlier studies by Neves and Eisenberger (2012) and Tsai et al. (2009). As a result, effective internal communication is the cornerstone of any institution's success. In tertiary educational institutions, this is especially crucial because staff members are the ones who directly interact with various audience groups, particularly students, who are the main users of tertiary education services.

Also, studies by Luneburg (2010), show that effectiveness of communication channels is important in TEIs since every administrative task and activity involves some sort of direct or indirect communication, suggesting that each person's communication abilities have an impact on both their own effectiveness and the effectiveness of their organization. Whiles Mamul et al., (2013) also opine that one important feature of successful TEIs is appropriate channels of communication; In addition, successful academic success is the result of a combination of closely related channels of communication, not just a series of discrete processes that make up strong academic performance. However, according to Lutgen (2010), lack of efficient communication routes is one issue limiting institutional efficiency.

Even though scholarly articles exist on institutional communication in Northern Ghana (Alhassan and Abdulai, 2019; Abdulai *et al*, 2019), scholarly attention has

not been given to effectiveness of communication channels in tertiary educational institutions. This study, therefore, sought to fill this knowledge gap using a TEI; UDS, in the Northern region of Ghana.

1.3 Main Research Question

The main question of this study is how effective are communication channels in the University for Development Studies (UDS) as a tertiary educational institution in the Northern region of Ghana?

1.3.1 Specific Research Questions

The study addresses the following specific research questions:

- i) What communication channels are used in UDS in the Northern region of Ghana?
- ii) Which communication channels are preferred by Management and employees in UDS in the Northern region of Ghana?
- iii) What is the level of effectiveness of the communication channels used in UDS in the Northern region of Ghana?
- iv) What are the barriers facing the use of communication channels in UDS in the Northern region of Ghana?





1.4 Main Research Objective

This study's primary goal was to evaluate the efficiency of UDS's communication routes as a tertiary educational institution in the Northern region of Ghana. To do this, the following precise goals have been established:

1.4.1 Specific Research Objectives

- i) To analyse the prevailing communication channels used in UDS in the Northern region of Ghana.
- ii) To ascertain the communication channels preferred by Management and employees in UDS in the Northern region of Ghana.
- iii) To identify the communication channels that are more effective in UDS in the Northern region of Ghana.
- iv) To examine the barriers facing the use of communication channels in UDS in the Northern region of Ghana.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study would contribute to the knowledge base of effective communication channels' role in information flow in TEIs such as the UDS. The study will offer new knowledge to the extensive body of current academic knowledge in the field and can be utilized as a reference by other researchers in the future when additional research in the same field is to be done. The results of this study will aid UDS



management in comprehending the value of efficient communication channels and in recommending improvements to both current and future communication channels. The study would help TEIs and other organisations /institutions to understand barriers facing communication channels and find solutions to such barriers.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The University for Development Studies (UDS), Tamale's City, Nyankpala, and Tamale campuses were used for the study. Within the broader field of communication, the study was focused on the effectiveness of communication channels in TEIs such as the UDS in the Northern region of Ghana. It also sought to find out the perceptions of management and staff on communication flow in the UDS, examine the barriers management and staff faces in the communication flow process, and to formulate strategies to be used by management to deal with the barriers management and staff are faced with.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

There are five chapters in the study. Each chapter covers a number of pertinent topics. The backdrop of the study, the problem statement, the questions and objectives of the study, its significance, its scope, and its organization are all included in the first chapter, which is the introduction. The literature review that is

pertinent to the investigation is presented in Chapter two. The third chapter covers the study area and a profile of the study area. It also discussed the research methodology consisting of the research design, sources of data, the target audience, the sampling process, the data collection methodologies, the data collection tools, the data analysis methods, the reliability and validity, and the ethical issues. The research findings are presented and discussed in chapter four, and the summary of findings, conclusions, and suggestions are presented in chapter five.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on the effectiveness of communication channels in tertiary educational institutions. The purpose of the literature review is to provide theoretical and conceptual context to guide data collection, analysis and interpretation.

2.2 Concept of Communication in Tertiary Educational Institutions

The idea of communication is flexible, and various academics have used and defined it in different ways. The word "communication" has Latin roots. It derives from the verb "communicare," which meaning, to make something common or to teach knowledge (Schramm, 1965). In light of this, communication is about making information meaningful to the actors engaged in the communication. According to Soola (1998), communication is a continuous, interactive, and circular process that involves the transmission or exchange of thoughts, the dissemination and interchange of knowledge, and the transmission and reception of concepts, information, facts, attitudes, and feelings.





Creating and understanding messages that provoke a reaction is another definition of communication (Griffin et al, 2015). The implication of this definition is that, there is certainly a “relational process” between the various categories of employees within the tertiary educational institutions such as University for Development Studies (UDS), Tamale their relationship changes as they converse, and the manner in which they converse molds it. Additionally, the communicator (sender) must make a conscious effort to develop "messages" that may be "interpreted" by the receiver when UDS personnel communicate. Therefore, the sender must choose wisely regarding the message's content, format, and delivery in order to achieve effective communication. Last but not least, while UDS staff members communicate with one another, their messages ought to be able to "elicit responses" that are favourable.

According to Baldwin, Perry, and Moffitt (2004), communication is the process by which both purposeful and accidental signals convey meaning. This suggests that tolerance and understanding are necessary for communication. Iordache-Platis and Josan (2009) claim that the act of communicating is the process of transmitting information, ideas, and feelings (attitudes, opinions) from one individual to another, from one individual to a social group, and vice versa. Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2009) defined communication as a process of creating meaning between two or more people through the expression and interpretation of messages.

Therefore, communication is the process by which people communicate meaning with one another.

In connection with the principles of communication, James (2001) highlighted the principles of communication as follows: value addition. This implies that everyone of us should constantly reflect on the plan decision. For instance, the decisions that the communication itself will cause the recipient of the communication to make. What am I attempting to accomplish with this communication? is the fundamental question we should ask ourselves before communicating. As a result, communication encompasses more than simply keeping others informed or current. There should be an open-door policy because managing communication is crucial. A manager or team leader must actively take an interest in internal communication, such as the outcomes of some debates and policies, in addition to simply having an open-door policy.

Furthermore, communication is important in all facets of institutional actions, according to Soola (1998). Because of this, contemporary organizations spend a lot of money on enhancing their internal communication systems. Even while the value of communication in business and institutional life is acknowledged, Soola (1998) notes that many professions and institutions, including the UDS, have not yet given it the respect it deserves. Perhaps, the cause is the misconceptions surrounding the



concept of communication. Therefore, it seems sense to look at the idea in light of institutional activity.

Kreitner and Buelens (2002) expressed the opinion that successful communication is essential for managerial and institutional success. Additionally, the foundation of leadership and management is efficient communication (Heller, 2002). According to Bovee and Thill (2013), effective communication benefits institutions in a variety of ways, including by giving practical information, presenting information in a clear and concise manner, and giving facts rather than hazy impressions. Hannegan (2004) contends that effective communication enhances a company's reputation and credibility because employees are trusted sources by external stakeholders.

Any institution may operate better with efficient communication, so communication skills are becoming more and more crucial because successful institutions depend on effective communication. The secret to good communication is making sure that the message(s) is(are) understood, mandating the recipient to do the proper action, or somehow changing the recipient's way of thinking. Interpersonal skills, in particular the capacity to control one's emotions, motivations, and behaviour, can be developed through communication. Positive interactions are the outcome of effective communication as a tool. This is seen when individuals support and assist one another in completing duties in order to





accomplish institutional aims and objectives. However, poor communication causes employees to have low expectations for themselves, lack confidence in their abilities, and believe that they will fail no matter how hard they try, which lowers productivity.

The complexity of contemporary institutional activity undoubtedly leads to tension, which can be mitigated by effective information flow thanks to the communication system put in place. Institutions, in the opinion of Goldhaber (1993) and Soola (1998), must set up an effective communication system to handle environmental uncertainties. The difference between the information that is currently accessible and what is actually required is known as uncertainty. Institutions must have an effective and sufficient communication flow as they manage various complicated tasks. However, a lot of institutions lack a sufficient and effective flow of information both inside and outside the institution. Typically, top-to-bottom communication flows with a brief official justification of operations, problems, and events. Humans must remember that we are institutional beings that live and die in many institutional contexts, as stated by Ajala (2001). Some organizations lack communication channels and systems because of their outdated organizational design and inadequate communication flow. Institutions that do not adopt effective information exchange techniques fall behind. This researcher was driven by the need for optimal communication flow and the significance of effective



communication channels in ensuring institutional effectiveness. Indicators of collaboration, such as job satisfaction, job involvement, institutional identity, institutional commitment, employee empowerment, and staff productivity, are promoted by an institution's effective communication flow (Eissenberg and Goodall, 2001).

2.3 Institutional Communication

According to Amitai (1964) people are born in organisations /institutions, educated by organisations /institutions, and majority spend much of their lives working for organisations /institutions. Individuals band together for shared social, personal, political, or professional goals in order to accomplish something that cannot be done not together. Communication is a key component of organization. Institutions include more than just corporations, businesses engaged in manufacturing, the service sector, and for-profit enterprises. Institutions also include not for-profit businesses, educational institutions, government organizations, little-known enterprises, and social or charity organizations.

Institutions are intricate, dynamic beings that have their own personalities and cultures. Institutions can be viewed as networks of individuals that are constantly engaged in action and subject to change (Goldhaber, 1993; Redding, 1972). Institutions are social systems that rely on communication to manage uncertainty

and function to some extent efficiently (Thayer, 1968; Katz and Kahn, 1966). Institutions cannot function without communication, claims Newstron (2011).

The organizing process' essential function is communication (Weick 1979). A corporate, government agency, religious institution, social movement, or other institution is not excluded from the study of symbols, messages, media, interactions, relationships, networks, persuasive campaigns, or larger discourses within institutional communication as a field of study. Institutional communication is a thriving area of study from a global standpoint. According to Jones et al., it is impossible to review it comprehensively due to its range and diversity (2004). Institutional communication is the fourth-largest group inside (International Communication Association (ICA), 2005).

A variety of academic disciplines, including media and communication science, institutional psychology, sociology of institutions, linguistics, and business administration, have historically been included in institutional communication. Broadly speaking, institutional communication refers to interpersonal interactions that take place within an institution (Eisenberg and Goodall, 1997; Shockley-Zalabak, 2006). This sort of communication involves the actions of sending and receiving messages through several levels of authority, using various communication methods and channels, and conversing about numerous subjects





relevant to the group or organization that one belongs to. Institutional communication, as defined generally by the Organisational Communication Research Center (OCRC), refers to communications and interactions among staff members or other members of an institution. This includes: 1) the institution's official communication initiatives. That is, 1) group communications that take place within, among, and across work teams and units; 2) leader and supervisor verbal communications and behaviours; and 3) the intended results and services typically produced by communication professionals, such as newsletters, intranets, and prepared executive videos.

Institutional communication, according to Miller (2003), entails comprehending how institutional perspectives influence communication processes and how the symbolic nature of communication sets it apart from other types of institutional behaviour. The perspectives of Hargie and Dickson (2004) on how individuals assign meaning to messages, institutional communication, and how meanings of messages are corrupted or misrepresented when individuals change messages through both formal and informal channels are slightly different.

P. E. Lull and W. Charles Redding's work at the University of Purdue in the middle of the 20th century marked the beginning of institutional communication (Putnam and Cheney, 1985). In the past, people like Chester Barnard and Mary Parker Follett



laid the groundwork for institutional communication by recognizing the significance of communication in institutional activities. Institutional communication during the industrial era placed a strong emphasis on worker productivity, institutional structure, and overall institutional effectiveness. The key goals were to increase profitability and improve managerial effectiveness. Follett is frequently regarded to as the country's first management consultant (Stohl, 1995). She concentrated particularly on institutional staff participation, suitable media selection, and message complexity. Bernard (1938) argued that for an institution to be successful, people must be able to connect with one another, placing communication at the center of every institutional process.

How an institution shares information internally, according to Abdullah (2012), is a key factor in institutional communication. For institutions to operate efficiently, necessary information must be understood. Information is the fundamental building element of communication, and it should be correctly shared as part of internal communication procedures. Individuals and supervisors must comprehend how to distribute information within the institution for proper information dissemination (Abdullah, 2012).

Internal communication is crucial for institutional administration and success, according to current debate in the literature on institutional communication



(Argenti, 2009; Dolphin, 2005; Invernizzi, 2002; Kalla, 2005; Rapert et al., 2002; Robson and Tourish, 2005; Ruck and Welch, 2012; Vercic et al., 2012; Welch and Jackson, 2007; Yates, 2006). Although its significance is widely acknowledged, internal communication is still vying to be accepted as a separate academic study and research field (Vercic, Vercic and Sriramesh, 2012). Institutions are very concerned about bad internal communication because it makes the workplace inefficient (Workplace inefficiency is linked to communications, 2006).

2.4 Internal Communication in Tertiary Educational Institutions

The term 'internal communication' does not only involve operational communication; It includes both the strategic objectives of an institution and the sending, receiving, and managing of information. Internal communication is the institution's internal PR, and management uses it to build and preserve relationships of trust with the staff. It aids in educating staff members on the institution's mission, business concept, values, and public relations-related principles. By preventing and resolving conflicts, it also contributes to the development and reinforcement of a strong organizational identity and aids in maintaining employee relationships (Pohjanoksa, Kuokkanen and Raaska, 2007).

It's harder than it sounds to establish and maintain successful internal communication within a company. Employees must understand their



responsibilities in order to help the institution achieve its aims, thus managers must explain their objectives and goals to them. One must define internal communication in order to comprehend what is required to establish and guarantee successful effective internal communication inside an institution.

Christensen and Cheney (2001) described internal communication as employee relations, mission statements, and institutional development. According to this concept, there are three layers of internal communication: project management (institutional development), strategic (mission), and day-to-day management (employee interactions).

The emphasis of internal communication has shifted from disseminating information about individuals and events to institutional goals. It makes it easier for staff members of an organization to know what is expected of them (Smith and Mounter, 2005). Everywhere in a company there is constant internal communication, whether it be through written or spoken words, media, or both formal and informal channels. According to Kortetjärvi-Nurmi, Kuronen, and Ollikainen (2008), communication binds the institution's personnel and individual operations into a single unit. Therefore, good communication can be considered as the cornerstone of contemporary institutions as well as being a crucial component

of these recent institutional transformations (Grenier and Metes, 1992; D'Aprix 1996; Witherspoon 1997; von Krogh et al. 2000).

Communication can be understood as a transmission process through a channel (mode) that contains messages (content), the channel (mode), feedback (bidirectional communication), and communication consequences, according to communication theory (Krone, et al., 1987). Internal communication is a specific sub-discipline of communication that studies how individuals communicate in institutions and the characteristics of efficient communication systems/channels there, according to (Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier, 2002). Internal communication is defined by Goldhaber (1999) as the flow of communications within a network of autonomous interactions, despite the fact that there are many disparities between the two. According to writers like (Putnam, Philips and Chapman, 1996; Walton, 1985), the degree to which vertical and horizontal communication is slow, difficult, and limited vs fast, easy, and abundant can be understood as the level of communication.

- i. Internal communication takes place inside an intricate, open system that both influences and is affected by its surroundings.
- ii. Messages, their flow, purpose, direction, and media are all part of internal communication.



- iii. People, their attitudes, feelings, connections, and abilities are all part of internal communication.

There is evidence to support the claim that good internal communications improve the communication environment and relationships with audiences, as well as employee job satisfaction, morale, productivity, commitment, and learning. For instance, Boyett and Boyett (1998) discovered that employees' individual performance can be enhanced by increasing the quality, sufficiency, and timeliness of the information they get regarding the general public, the organization, or their own work. Additionally, (Smidts, Pruyn, and van Riel, 2001) observed that an effective internal communication environment and a favourable communication climate improve employees' identification with their organizations, which helps an organization succeed. Therefore, good communication encourages participation and fosters trust, both of which are essential components of powerful, enduring institutions (Grates, 2008).

As a result of the internal evaluation of individual decisions and actions and the reflecting role of communication, the development of regular internal communication flows enables middle and senior managers to make more informed judgments. Managers and staff can communicate more precise information that is actually related to local circumstances thanks to internal symmetrical information





flows and feedback (Shockley-Zalabak, 2009). While internal messaging makes sure that everyone in the organization is aware of its objectives, the creation of symmetrical internal communication channels gives everyone the chance to voice their opinions and be heard (Cornelissen, 2008; van Riel et al., 2009). Therefore, internal communication goes beyond simply communicating top management's strategic directives; rather, it offers institutional members' real small-scale decisions and actions a voice (Miles and Muuka, 2011).

2.5 Importance of Communication in Tertiary Educational Institutions

It is impossible to overstate the value of communication as the cornerstone of interpersonal relationships in tertiary educational institutions like the UDS (Nel 2012). According to Newstron (2011), since communication is so important for planning, organizing, leading, and controlling, it aids in the completion of basic management tasks. Communication has a crucial role in socializing, decision-making, problem-solving, and change management processes. It also assists people and organizations in coordinating efforts to attain goals (Kamanda, 2014).

Another benefit of communication in tertiary institutions is that it serves as the main means through which staff members establish working connections and learn about the institution's culture and values. One of an institution's most telling actions is communication (Harris and Nelson, 2008). Effective and harmonious relationships



between individuals and groups are essential to a system's functionality and longevity. Teams on campuses succeed in TEIs through sophisticated social communicative processes (Jones, Watson, Gardner and Gallois, 2004). According to Maughan (2001) and Newstron (2011), TEIs require an established, integrated, responsive, secure, and reliable communication and information systems infrastructure in order to operate effectively. De Beer (2014) fervently argues that in light of this, forms of intellectual capital like relationships, networks, competencies, and trust necessitate strong communication skills on the part of employees while the institution as a whole need to have suitable communication structures that encourage openness and dialogue.

Furthermore, communication promotes the expression of worries, feelings, and successes, which helps to inspire, boost confidence, and shape a group's character. Employees and work groups can establish rapport with the organization and connect themselves with its mission through communicating with one another (Koballa and Bradbury, 2009).

Since it involves the exchange of information between an institution and its internal and external publics, communication is typically regarded as a crucial component of an institution's internal operations. This information may be disseminated via numerous channels and may be dependent on a wide range of instruments and



procedures for communicating different messages to the recipient (Kamanda, 2014). As the communication revolution takes hold, the world is currently transitioning into an information technology-based environment. The educational system is evolving along with the development of new forms of communication. Eisler (2001) asserts that the explosive development of communications and information technology (IT) has produced fantastic chances for significant transformation in tertiary educational institutions.

2.6 Communication Channels in Tertiary Educational Institutions

In essence, all forms of communication require a call and a response through specific channels (Sanina et al., 2017). Institutions used to primarily rely on staff publication—a newsletter, newspaper, or magazine—that was published at predetermined intervals to disseminate information to all of the institution's employees. Until recently, institutional communications were limited to staff meetings, formal memoranda, one-on-one meetings with supervisors, and, less formally, the internal grapevine. As a result, institutional communications are now conducted through electronic mail (email), voice mail, teleconferencing, and internal websites (Kamanda, 2014).

As defined by Richmond and McCroskey (2009), as cited in Kamanda (2014), a communication channel transmits messages from one person to another. It can

include mediated systems like telephone conversations, internal letters or memoranda, in-person meetings, electronic mail, internal newsletters, and intranet.

According to Reinsch and Lewis (cited in Sanina et al., 2017), a communication channel is also the technical (or formal) side of the communication process that enables us to transmit messages and information from sender to receiver and vice versa. They also state that a communication channel contains all the mechanisms for the creation and acceptance of a message, including signs, language (including body language), codes, and technological devices. A communication channel, according to (Johnson, 1996, quoted in Sanina et al., 2017), is a transmission system or medium that includes the entire process of transferring messages from the source to the recipient.

Currently, tertiary educational institutions, including the UDS, hardly ever transmit communications over a solitary communication channel. For instance, research from studies like (Boczkowsky and Orlikowski 2004; Dennis, Fuller, and Valacich, 2008) demonstrates that institutional use of combinations of two or more communication channels is rather common and that these combinations can take place either sequentially or simultaneously (Monge and Kalman, 1996). However, Ramirez et al. (2008) and Ruppel and Burke (2014) demonstrate that numerous situations involve the use of various communication channels by institutions,





including the telephone, text messaging, e-mail, face-to-face communication, written communication, and Facebook, and that these situations are typically based on clear and certain preferences on levels of social competence, or the capacity to interact in ways that are appropriate and effective (Ruppel and Burke, 2014). However, it should be highlighted that an institution's capacity for using efficient communication channels, particularly when combined, depends on its level of social competency.

Given the foregoing, (Johnson, 1996 cited in Sanina et al., 2017) noted that choosing a communication channel is crucial to achieving effective communication, while (Pokumensah, 2011 cited in Kamanda, 2014) noted that choosing the most suitable channel can be challenging given the variety of available channels. However, according to (Miller, 2006), the fundamental premise is that it must foster understanding in a participative two-way conversation, regardless of the channel employed.

Due to this, (Baskin et al., 1997; quoted in Kamanda, 2014) advise that despite the variety of channels accessible for institutional communication, each channel's effectiveness and efficiency will depend on a variety of circumstances. The size of the institution is one of the elements to consider while selecting acceptable channels of communication. Large TEIs like UDS will have to take their size into account

and implement channels that meet staff communication demands. The message's goal as well as the institutions' communication systems or structures should also be considered.

2.7 Types of Communication in Tertiary Educational Institutions

Within institutions, there are primarily two modes of communication: formal and informal. You can utilize each of these methods of communication independently or in combination. The established chain of command or line of authority is followed in the formal communication, which follows the official channels accepted by management. According to Hamilton (2008), formal information flow can occur internally or externally and can move downhill, upward, horizontally, or laterally.

Downward communication is when official messages, such as job descriptions, justifications for why certain tasks should be performed, policies and procedures, employee performance reviews, and inspirational pleas, are sent from managers and supervisors to subordinates. Horizontal or lateral communication is when formal messages flow across departments between employees in the same position and is crucial for coordinating tasks with employees, solving problems, sharing information, and resolving conflicts. Upward communication is when formal messages flow from subordinates to supervisors and managers and involve reports





of employee work, achievements, and progress (Mounter, 2003). However, according to Richmond and McCroskey (2009), many subordinates frequently hide upward communication to make it more appropriate for superiors because of a combination of self-protection and a fear of being inspected.

When there are gaps in or obstacles to formal communication, the informal communication serves as an unofficial chain of command that flows in any way.

The formal communication flows of four channels were the focus of this study: face-to-face communication, written communication, telephone/cell phone communication, and computer-mediated communication (email and intranet), which is primarily employed in TEIs with UDS as an exception.

Face-to-face communication is the term used to describe spoken interactions between two or more people within an organization. While Tubbs and Moss (2003) define it as a multichannel experience, Berko (2007) defines it as a form of interpersonal communication that occurs between two or more people who build a communicative relationship. Meetings, interviews, conferences, seminars, workshops, and other events frequently involve face-to-face contact. Because there is typically a high level of participation and interaction between the sender and the receiver, it has a wealth of substance. Direct conversation with another person



allows for rapid understanding and feedback. While Begley (2004) maintains that face-to-face communication is still the most effective human communication that fosters interpersonal relationships, Frandsen and Johansen (2011) claim that face-to-face communication is the most efficient internal communication channel used in organizations and tertiary educational institutions, including UDS.

Human communication is not complete without written communication. Information is distributed within an institution by means of letters, memoranda, bulletins, procedures/policy manuals, notices, books, and other means. Written communication is the most significant means of communication between the institution and its personnel, students, and faculty, as well as between the students and the faculty, in tertiary educational institutions like UDS.

Voice cues in written communication are absent. As a result, it has a problem with interpretation or misinterpretation based on language, word meanings, and the arrangement of words and symbols. Given that this can have a significant impact on the interpretation or misreading of tone in writing, care should be made in how messages are produced utilizing words of language, word meanings, and the combination of words and symbols. According to Ober (2005), tone in writing refers to the author's perspective on the reader and the message's subject. This suggests that the tone of a written message affects the reader in the same way that one's voice influences the listener in everyday interactions. To avoid having their

message(s) misunderstood or lost in translation, administrators and managers should be aware of their writing's "tone."

Mobile /telephone /cell phone is one of the communication channels used in tertiary educational institutions such as the UDS. Mobile /telephone /cell phone communication is the use of a wireless device to send and receive messages through unbroken transmission signals. Mobile /telephone /cell phone devices include mobile phones, smart phones, line phones, mobile tablets and etcetera. Mobile /telephone /cell phone communication allows for messages to be sent and received quickly. It also allows for ambiguous messages to be explained instantly for clarity.

Computer-mediated communication is a type of institutional and human communication that uses a computer network and the internet to send and receive messages between staff members of an institution. Computer conferencing, email, online chat, database utilities, multimedia, and web-based settings are all examples of computer-mediated communication technology. The use of Computer-mediated channels to communicate is very convenient and saves time especially for institutions with many distributed structures such as the UDS. Email, for example, is a form of computer-mediated communication, but it lacks a personal touch and emotional expression.



2.8 Effectiveness of Communication Channels

The appropriate channel or channel combination must be chosen to handle specific communication issues and advance institutional development (Leonard et al., 2011). According to Westmyer et al. (1998, as cited in Sanina et al., 2017), the effectiveness of the communication channel refers to the accomplishment of the communication's objectives. This suggests that when a communication route enables the sender to communicate information and/or get responses from the recipient of that information, it is seen as effective. The efficiency of a communication channel is determined by its dependability, clarity, speed, and the maximum number of messages or pieces of information that can be distributed in a given length of time. It is also determined by the cost of communication (Sanina et al., 2017; Leitch and Davenport, 2002). According to Baskin *et al.* (1997, as cited in Kamanda, 2014) effectiveness of communication channels will depend on the institution's size, the purpose of the message(s)/ information and the communication structures of the institution. For that reason, large institutions, including UDS, have to choose communication channels that solve the communication needs of their large employees and channels that promote two-way communication. Employees must understand the hierarchical order of the institution and how it facilitates effective internal communication.

Among others, variables that determine the effectiveness of communication channels include; efficiency, reliability, clarity, cost of communication and speed





of communication (Iordache-Platis & Josan, 2009; Leitch & Davenport, 2002; Leonard *et al.*, 2011; Sanina *et al.*, 2017). According to Iordache-Platis and Josan (2009), efficiency is a variable that expresses an economic explanation and significance, and in tertiary educational institutions like the University for Development Studies, the concept of communication channel efficiency can be measured as either the maximization of communication effects in relation to efforts or, on the contrary, the minimization of efforts in the context of communication process efforts. According to Iordache-Platis and Jason (2009), the choice of a communication channel occurs in a real-time economy with a fundamental paradox between requirements and resources. If requirements are understood as effects and resources as efforts, then being efficient means: - satisfying bigger needs with the same resources; - satisfying bigger needs with fewer resources; - satisfying the same needs with fewer resources. The authors emphasized that any process in the modern economy assumes decisions, choices, and opportunity costs; therefore, an efficient process expresses efficient choices and lower opportunity costs; consequently, the choice of a communication process or communication channel may be and must be made in the context of efficient decisions. According to Sanina *et al.* (2017), dependability is a measure of the likelihood that a communication channel will work, i.e., the likelihood that feedback or information will be transmitted. It may be raised by selecting the most suitable channel or mix of channels (Westmyer *et al.*, 1998, as cited in Sanina *et al.*, 2017). The efficacy of

communication channels is a variable that may be measured. It relates to how quickly a communication is expected to produce a result, suggesting that a message or piece of information is sent or that a response is obtained. Time and space gauge communication speed (Sanina et al., 2017). According to Leitch and Davenport (2002), clarity is a recognized indicator of effective communication because it is frequently cited as a crucial component of institutional communication that emphasizes the development of shared meanings. When messages are received, clarity or absence of obscurity makes them clear and simple to understand.

2.9 Barriers to Communication

There are various obstacles to communication, and they can appear at any point throughout the exchange. Communication barriers may cause message(s) to be misinterpreted, resulting in confusion and misunderstanding. Overcoming these obstacles and communicating a message that is clear and succinct are necessary for effective communication. Communication barriers include among others, the following types: physical barriers, language barriers, social barriers, cultural barriers, unclear messages, stereotypes, inappropriate channel, lack of sensitivity to receiver, and etcetera.





2.9.1 Physical Barriers

The geographic distance between the transmitter and receiver acts as a physical roadblock to communication(s). Since more communication channels are accessible and less equipment is needed, communication is often simpler over shorter distances. Although contemporary technology frequently helps to lessen the effects of physical barriers, it is still important to understand the benefits and drawbacks of each communication channel in order to choose the best one for removing the barriers.

2.9.2 Language barriers

Issues with language and linguistic competence can often hamper communication. However, even when talking in the same language, a message's terminology may serve as a barrier if the recipient does not completely understand it (s). For instance, a recipient unfamiliar with the terminology may not understand messages containing a lot of jargon and abbreviations.

2.9.3 Social Barriers

A social communication barrier has to do with the social psychological concept of conformity, which is the process through which an employee starts to adopt the norms, attitudes, and behaviours of the larger group. In some circumstances, social

characteristics, including age, gender, socioeconomic level, and marital status, may operate as a communication barrier.

2.9.4 Cultural Barriers

The way people think, and act is defined by and influenced by culture. The established modes of communication can be understood as both shaping and being shaped by culture. Communication obstacles between cultures frequently form when members of one social group adopt norms, attitudes, or behaviours that differ from those of members of another group. Employees from different cultures will see these cultural variables as a barrier to communication since they result in variations in interest, expertise, value, and tradition.

2.9.5 Unclear messages

The foundation of effective communication is a concise message. Because the recipient might not be able to decipher the true meaning of the message, unclear messages in terms of meaning, syntax, and language may operate as a barrier to communication.

2.9.6 Stereotypes

Stereotypes are preconceived notions or generalizations about traits or qualities believed to be typical of a certain group (Funk and Wagnalls, 1996). Employees



that have stereotyped ideas will either not read the message completely or will read it all because they believe they already know everything. Stereotyping is a barrier to communication.

2.9.7 Inappropriate Channel

The recipient is better able to comprehend the nature and significance of a message with a variety of channels. The sender must be mindful of a number of factors, including the intricacy of the message and the effects of miscommunication, while selecting a communication route.

2.9.8 Lack of Sensitivity to Receiver

When a message is not tailored to its recipient, a communication barrier may develop. Recognizing the needs, status, subject knowledge, and linguistic abilities of the recipient aids the sender in crafting an effective message. Communication channels should be taken into consideration depending on the institution preference in order to achieve the communication objectives and goals. Communication takes place in institutions at all times. Therefore, for institutions to understand how effective their communication channels are, they need to carry out its communication channel assessment from time to time in order to note the weaknesses, if any, and correct them and as well maximise on their strengths. From



the various literature discussed above, it is evident that effective communication channels are indispensable in the success and survival of an institution.

2.10 Theoretical Framework

Based on ideas, a theoretical framework attempts to explain observable facts or events and why things are the way they are (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). This section sought to address the theoretical underpinnings applied to highlight the effectiveness of communication channels in tertiary educational institutions (TEIs) in the Northern region of Ghana, such as the UDS. General Systems Theory (GST) and Stakeholder's Theory were applied in this study.

Ludwig von Bertalanffy was the one who created the general systems theory (1968). By diagnosing issues within a framework of inputs (resources), transformation processes (internal operations or learning processes), outputs (results or outcomes), and feedback (monitoring and evaluation mechanisms), the general systems theory represents a method of problem-solving (Helliegral et al., 2012). An institution is a system composed of smaller systems that work together to form the larger institution. The general systems theory emphasizes the importance of conceptual abilities to comprehend how a system's subsystems interact and benefit the system as a whole (Lussier, 2008).





The general systems theory is based on the idea that efficient communication is the foundation of effective relationships. According to the notion, an institution is made up of components such as faculties, schools, departments, or units that interact with one another and their surroundings. It must engage in good internal communication for the elements to interact. The idea offers a link between institutional communication and relationship studies and the institutional study of institutions. The theory aids in comprehending the ideas of hierarchy, wholeness, openness, and feedback in the research's primary focus: communication.

According to the notion, rules must be followed in a hierarchy for a system to function successfully. From the top-ranking to the lowest-ranking individual in the organization, a hierarchy provides structure to the parts detailing the protocol.

All institutions, regardless of their product or service, require communication. Hierarchy is a significant factor in controlling communication flow. Gregory *et al.* (1999) in providing explanation on wholeness indicated that a system is comprised of a number of elements which are mutually interrelated. Wholeness implies collaboration whereby the complete is superior to the total of its elements or parts. In other words, the elements in an institution need to work together so that their effect work is different from that of their isolated actions summed up together. For example, members of a faculty /school, department can gather in a brainstorming



meeting, interact, emerge and produce varieties of ideas during the meeting which can lead to a collection of more possible ideas thus resulting in better performance of the department. The system's element of wholeness is important in signifying coordination in an institution which is facilitated by communication. Systems are made up of interconnected components that are constrained, have a borderline that can be seen through sight, sound, touch, or other senses, and that separates components from one another in their surroundings. This is systems openness, in Weiner's (2006) opinion. An open system engages with the environment on all levels; it takes in public concerns, transforms them into useful output, and then relays those outputs back to the public in a more useable manner.

On the other hand, a closed system functions as independent. It doesn't interact with the environment outside. Feedback, or a receiver providing a response or action back to the information sender, is the process of an action coming back. An institution looks for feedback to boost performance and evaluate its channels, methods, and systems for communication. All feedback process involves communication (Stephens *et al.*, 2005). Communication and information flow are essential for building relationships among an institution's staff. Financial audits, performance reviews, employee surveys, and other types of feedback are examples. The above-discussed systems theory principles are crucial for attaining effective communication. According to Peter (2008), institutions with more than one level



of management may experience communication issues, hence it is important that the institution's structure be clearly specified in the hierarchy feature. Similar to this, it is simple to identify the direction and routes of information flow through appropriate hierarchical structure. In order to fully comprehend communication efficiency in this study, the feedback component is essential. Understanding institutional components and how communication can be used to effectively ensure coordination and other institutional functions is made easier by systems theory.

Despite the relevance and applicability of the systems theory in this study, the theory has had its fair share of criticism. Feld (1978) cited in Mbatl (2017) indicated that with system theorists, societal claims were on beneficial in justifying power and prestige claims of elites. The concepts of systems in the twentieth century have been associated with control and totalisation. Hoos (1970) cited in Mbatl (2017) extensively criticized the systems approach, especially its function in management, planning, and government. Hoos (1970), mentioned in Mbatl (2017), thought that the human dimension, or actual individuals acting in ways that were not predicted by the system, was underrepresented in systems theory. Pickering (2008), added to the critique of systems theory by indicating that systems theory sidelined and marginalized by a modern world, puts itself in danger by creating a distinction between mind, body self and other. Despite this critique, the systems theory is

important in understanding how institutions work, particularly in communication more often than not follows systems hierarchical order.

Systems theory was used in this study to examine whether communication channels in TEIs such as the UDS in the northern region of Ghana promote good relationship with its employees. According to systems theory, communication should take place among all personnel at all different institutional levels as well as downward. Grunig and Hunt (1984), who are quoted by Kamanda (2014), advise communication that welcomes and considers feedback.

Freeman created the Stakeholder's theory in 1984 (Cornelissen, 2008). The concepts and values in administering an institution are addressed by stakeholder theory (Argenti, 2009). Additionally, it explains the traits and actions of the people that make up an institution's stakeholders as well as the relationships between them. Employees are one of an institution's primary stakeholder groups, according to stakeholder theory (Cornelissen, 2008).

Freeman defined stakeholders as people who can effect or have an impact on the achievement of the institution's goals, according to Cornelissen (2008). The stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of identifying and prioritizing internal stakeholders and efficient communication routes inside an institution. Depending on their specific objectives, institutions have several personnel groups. Employee





relations (day-to-day managers), mission statements (strategic managers), and institutional development are the categories used by Smidts et al. (2001) to classify internal stakeholders (project managers). Therefore, TEIs like the internal stakeholder groupings of the UDS with various stakes in the institution were identified using stakeholder theory. Stakeholder theory was also utilized to pinpoint efficient channels for TEIs, particularly the UDS, to communicate with one another. According to the stakeholder theory, the direction of information and communication flow amongst internal stakeholders is a crucial component of effective communication channels. The three communication flows in stakeholder communication are: one-way symmetrical communication, which involves an informational strategy of merely informing internal stakeholders of a particular event; two-way symmetrical communication, which involves an exchange of ideas and opinions between the institution and its internal stakeholders; and two-way asymmetrical communication flow, which uses persuasive strategy to change its internal stakeholder's attitude, behaviour and knowledge towards a particular event (Grunig et al., 2002). According to Cornelissen (2008), in order to reach the appropriate internal stakeholders, each of these strategies needs a unique set of communication channels. TEIs Management must find ways to encourage employee feedback in order to support efficient management of TEIs like the UDS in Ghana's northern regions. In order to understand the impact of effective information flow and institutional performance on communication channels, the researcher merged these two ideas in the study.

2.11 Conceptual Framework

To ensure effective communication channels (dependent variable) in tertiary educational institutions in the Northern region of Ghana such as the University for Development Studies, the study concentrated on four particular independent variables as shown in Figure 2.1.

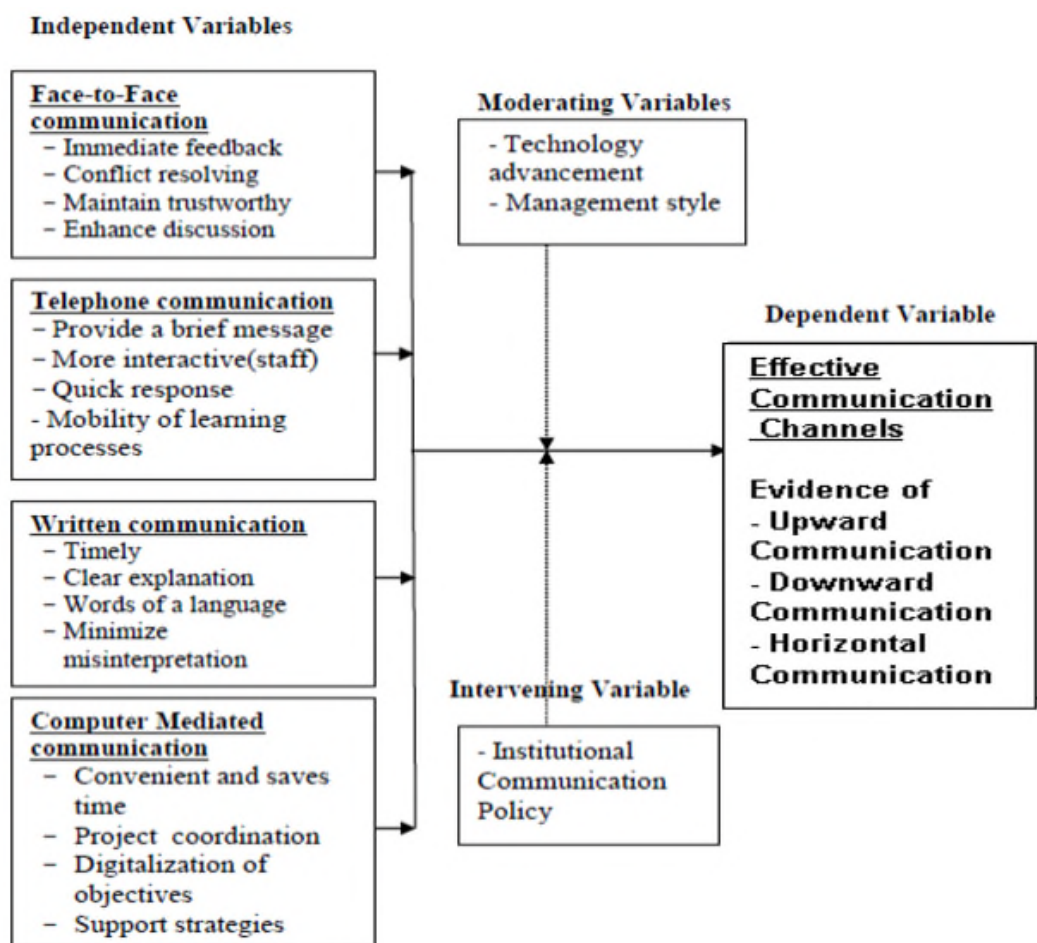


Figure 2.1 Variables of effective communication

Source: Kamanda (2014, p 44)





As shown in figure 2.1 above, the dependent variable in this study was the effective communication channels in UDS, a tertiary educational institution in Northern region of Ghana that were very complex. The effectiveness of communication within the UDS and with internal publics has a considerable impact on internal communication. The internal communication channels, on the other hand, such as face-to-face, mobile, telephone, and cell phone, written, and computer-mediated communication, were examined to ascertain how effective they are to allow the UDS to ensure that information is easily accessible and widely disseminated in the institution.

The publics, and in this case, the various categories of employees of the UDS rely on the information that the top Management gives them in order to form their opinions, attitudes and perceptions about their work and this is reflected in their performance and thus passed on to the users. The UDS as a tertiary educational institution have to ensure that communication flows effectively among its various categories of employees to avoid confusion. Also, all the communication barriers should be worked out in a manner that they do not interfere with the communication flow in the institution. However, an institution does not manage its communication only through the variables mentioned in figure 2.1 above. For this reason, technological advancements and Management style were considered as moderating variables while Institutional Communication Policy was taken as a key Intervening

variable to contribute to the effectiveness of communication in the UDS (Figure 2.1).



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research process is described in this chapter. It outlines the research methodology and design, the study setting, the intended audience, the sample size, sampling strategies, data collection tools, data analysis, research validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out at the City, Nyankpala, and Tamale campuses as well as the library of the University for Development Studies (UDS), which is situated in the Northern Ghanaian districts of Sagnarigu and Tolon.

3.3 Profile of the Study Area

The first public university in Ghana's northern region is called the University for Development Studies. To "mix the academic world with that of the community in order to enable positive interaction between the two for the overall development of Northern Ghana, in particular, and the country as a whole," it was formed by the Government of Ghana in May 1992 (PNDC Law 279, Section 279). (UDS, 1992).





The University for Development Studies was created as a result of new higher education paradigms that place a focus on the necessity of colleges taking a more active role in addressing societal issues, particularly in rural regions (Effah, 1998). The University has a pro-poor focus as a result of its mission and constituency. Its teaching, research, and outreach methodologies all reflect this. The emphasis on practical, research-based, and field-based training is specifically intended to contribute to poverty reduction in order to hasten national development. At its many campuses, the university offers both undergraduate and graduate programmes. The university also conducts research projects and community engagement initiatives aimed at fostering an environment favourable to sustained community development and economic expansion. The Third Trimester Field Practical Programme, which combines academic and community-based fieldwork, is what this is (TTFPP).

Beginning in 1993 with the Faculty of Agriculture at the Nyankpala Campus, the University had a modest and humble beginning with an initial intake of forty (40) students. As of the 2019/2020 academic year, the University has three (3) Campuses and eight (8) Schools, six (6) Faculties, three (3) Institutes, five (5) Directorates and six (6) Centres (including one Center of Excellence). The University operates a multi campus system with its Central Administration located in Tamale Campus which is the seat of the Vice-Chancellor (the Chief Executive) and the Registrar (the Chief Administrator) of the University.



The academic and administrative heads of the faculties, schools, institutes, centres are Deans, Directors and Faculty Officers. The staffing structure of the University consists of Senior Members (academic and non-academic), Senior Staff and Junior Staff. The staff strength was One thousand, six hundred and twenty-one (1,621) as at 2019/2020 academic year. The student population for the undergraduate and postgraduate levels stood at 19, 027 and 1,012 respectively for the 2019/2020 academic year (UDS, 2020).

3.4 Research Design

The plan or procedure utilized to find solutions to the research challenges is known as the research design. In essence, it is the investigation's framework and plan. Research design plays a significant role in any scientific research. It helps to carry out the research task scientifically and validly. According to Chandran (2004), a research design is a method used to achieve the research objectives through realistic facts that are obtained efficiently.

The case study research design and mixed method approach adopted in this study allowed for collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. According to Yin (2014), a case study is an empirical investigation that explores a phenomenon in depth and in its actual setting. According to Creswell and Plano Clarke (2018), a mixed methods case study design is a particular kind of mixed methods study in



which the data collection, analysis, and integration from both quantitative and qualitative sources are used to present comprehensive evidence for a problem for comparative analysis. According to Plano Clarke, Foote, and Walton (2018), both case study and mixed methods research provide a distinct methodological edge for researchers wishing to handle the complexity of research challenges. For this reason, case study research is a sort of descriptive research, as noted by Yin (2014) and Simons (2009). The goal of a case study research is to produce an in-depth understanding of a certain issue and to describe a phenomenon in its real-life context.

According to Yin (2009), case study research is a study that can be used to explain, describe, or investigate issues in real-world situations in which they arise. This implies that case study research helps to understand and explain causal relations and ways that allow for policy developments in a real-life context, while Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) Kasomo (2007) assert that survey research comprises any measuring processes that entail asking respondents questions and receiving objective data, and that survey research is a self-report study that necessitates the collection of measurable information from the sample.

The researcher conducted a survey of the management and several staff categories at the University for Development Studies since communication flow is based on



participation and experience (UDS), a tertiary educational institution (TEI) in the northern region of Ghana, on the effectiveness of communication channels. Although the researcher was able to identify the channels of communication available at the University for Development Studies using a quantitative approach (UDS), this could not sufficiently enable the researcher to clearly understand whether there is the effectiveness of communication channels in the UDS, considering that this cannot be observed directly. For this reason, for this study, data were also gathered using a qualitative approach since, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), qualitative research is the most effective way to understand human phenomena that can't be directly observed, like efficacy. According to Kuada (2012), this approach allows the respondents to bring up subjects and problems that the researcher may not have thought of but may be crucial to the investigation.

Additionally, using the qualitative approach would allow respondents to convey their thoughts and ideas in their own words. The combination of both methods was useful since both methods supplement each other. Thus, in addition to employing qualitative methods to collect data by offering in-depth explanations, the researcher also employed quantitative methods to collect data in numerical form needed to meet the predetermined objectives.



3.5 Sources of Data

The study's two main primary and secondary data sources were primary and secondary data sources. An interview guide and questionnaires were employed to collect primary data from the various groups of UDS employees where the researcher performed the study. This data provided current information on the topic under investigation and as a means to accomplish the study's objectives.

The internet, books, journals, articles, publications, thesis/dissertations, and other secondary sources were used to gather the data. The secondary data were relied on to understand what other authors, scholars and researchers have written and said about the topic under investigation. These aided the study process in finding answers to the research questions and eventually achieving the research objectives.

3.6 Target Population

According to Kasomo (2007), a population is a large collection of people with identifiable traits. The population is divided into the target and accessible populations, according to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). While the accessible population is the population that can be reached, the target population is the entire population to which the researcher wishes to generalize as the study's findings. A total of 1,077 employees of different categories; Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff from the campuses mentioned above formed the target population.

These statistics were obtained from the University for Development Studies (UDS) Human Resource-Planning Unit as of March 2020.

Table 3.1: Target Population Showing the Staff Categories by Campuses

Staff Categories by Campuses	Numbers
City Campus	
Senior Members	25
Senior Staff	20
Junior Staff	16
Library	
Senior Members	14
Senior Staff	17
Junior Staff	15
Nyankpala Campus	
Senior Members	172
Senior Staff	68
Junior Staff	98
Tamale Campus	
Senior Members	225
Senior Staff	169
Junior Staff	238
Total	1,077





3.7 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The methods and procedures used for sampling, the sampling process, and ultimately how the study's sample size was calculated from the target population are all covered in this chapter. There are also specifics on how the data was collected, processed, and analysed.

3.7.1 Sample Size

A sample is a more limited group drawn from the study's available population (Kothari, 2004; Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Kothari (2004) asserts that the sample for a study should be chosen so that the results drawn from it are comparable to those that would be discovered if the target population were to be investigated. Using the sample size determination table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the sample size for this study was calculated to be 285 respondents, or 26.5% of the total population, from the target population of 1,077.

3.7.2 Sampling Procedure

The method of listing all the population units from which the sample size will be chosen for a study is known as the sampling procedure (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). This approach is used to create a representative sample when the population is not a homogeneous group. Based on the personnel structure, employee classifications for the University for Development Studies were determined.

According to Table 3.1, the population was divided into strata that included senior members, senior staff, and junior staff from the various campuses stated above. In addition, the study used a purposive sample of 10 Key Informants comprising Campus Principals, Deputy Registrars, Deans, Directors and Faculty Officers for interviews. These persons were selected and interviewed to provide in-depth information about their strategic importance in information dissemination and reception in the UDS as a tertiary educational institution.

3.7.3 Sample Size Determination

Using the Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table to calculate sample size for a population of 1,077, it was determined that a sample size of 285 respondents—or 26.5% of the total population—was sufficient to accurately reflect a cross-section of the population. Based on this information, the researcher computed that there were 26.5% of the total population in each stratum, yielding a precise sample size of 285 respondents.



Table 3.2: Sample Size Determination

Staff Categories by Campuses	Target Population	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
City Campus			
Senior Members	25	7	2.5
Senior Staff	20	5	1.8
Junior Staff	16	4	1.4
Library			
Senior Members	14	3	1.05
Senior Staff	17	4	1.4
Junior Staff	15	4	1.4
Nyankpala Campus			
Senior Members	172	46	16.1
Senior Staff	68	18	6.3
Junior Staff	98	26	9.1
Tamale Campus			
Senior Members	225	60	21.05
Senior Staff	169	45	15.8
Junior Staff	238	63	22.1
Total	1,077	285	100





3.8 Data Collection Methods

Mixed method approach was used to collect relevant information from a selected sample. Key respondents were surveyed using a qualitative research methodology to get detailed and descriptive information. Using an interview guide, the data was gathered. Since the information gathered through this method is based on individual opinions and cannot be quantified, it was coded, thematically analyzed, and presented as a story. Consent was sought from the interviewees before conducting the interview.

The quantitative research method was used to generate numerical data and frequencies, therefore quantifying the problem and generalise the results from a larger sample population. Quantitative data was collected using the survey technique, which used questionnaires to get the required data. The questionnaires comprised both open ended and closed-ended questions.

3.9 Data Collection Instruments

To collect information from respondents, the researcher employed questionnaires and interview guides.



3.9.1 Interview Guides

To gather comprehensive information from the Key Informants who were specifically chosen in the UDS, an interview guide was created and used. The interview dates were to be regulated by the interview guide in order to maintain consistency throughout all interview sessions and to reduce the problems associated with Key Informants failing to respond. There was less interaction between the researcher and the Key Informants because the questions were standardized and the researcher read the same set of questions to them all. The researcher performed in-person interviews with the key informants, recording and then transcribing their comments. Face-to-face interview environments are crucial for comprehending the processes through which knowledge is created between the interviewee and the researcher, according to Elwood and Martin (2000).

3.9.2 Questionnaires

The researcher used questionnaires to collect primary data from the different categories of employees in UDS sampled for the study. The questionnaire comprised both open ended and closed ended questions based on the research objectives. The closed ended questions helped the researcher to save time and at the same time, they are in immediate usable form and thus facilitated easier analysis (see Saunders et al, 2003). The open-ended questions allowed the respondents to give in-depth feedback without being limited. The questionnaire was administered

physically by the researcher and field assistants to respondents who were randomly sampled.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

For the study, the researcher used continuous comparison data analysis methodologies. A model of the grounded theory is the data analysis method known as constant comparison. Constant comparison is the practice of keeping facts and conceptualization more closely connected to ensure that the relationship between concepts and categories is not lost (Bryman, 2004).

Data obtained was cleaned, coded and analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. This was done by comparing and contrasting the primary and secondary data sources. The compilation and analysis of quantitative data were done using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Data was presented using graphs as well as tables. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze every variable, and inferential statistics were used to evaluate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The interviews carried out were interpreted and analyzed qualitatively. Interview responses were coded and thematically analyzed by classifying major issues covered and recurrent themes. The data was also scrutinized to ensure accuracy and avoid ambiguity and was subjected to content analysis where the main themes emerging from the open-



ended questions and interview guides were identified, examined, interpreted, and later presented as a narrative. Determine the similarities or differences between responses from respondents was one of the key goals. The investigation of these topics was, therefore consistent with the study's overall objective

3.11 Reliability and Validity

The most crucial factor in any research is the quality and dependability of the data (Chulumanco, 2016). While Bourton and Mazerolle (2011) contend that reliability and validity are essential components of instrument development if researchers are to confidently report the results of the survey, Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle (2010) agree that reliability and validity are the two criteria used to assess the quality of all standardized quantitative measures.

3.11.1 Validity

Somekh and Cathy (2005) defined validity as the extent to which the sample of test items represents the content the test is intended to measure. A data collection tool's ability to measure what it is intended to measure is known as its validity (Kamanda, 2014). According to Creswell (2008), an instrument's validity is determined by whether results may be used to make inferences that are relevant and helpful. According to Kumar (2014), the logical connection between the study's questions and objectives determines if the instrument's objective of validity is legitimate. He





continues by saying that the instrument is legitimate once the link has been made. In this study, content validity was the main concern. Content validity ensures that all respondents comprehend the items on the questionnaire to prevent misunderstandings and offers a rational judgment as to whether the instrument covers what it is designed to cover. Therefore, the research supervisor and other research professionals assessed the instruments to verify content validity, ensuring that most of the questions had response possibilities that would guarantee that the responses produced were consistent with the research issues they are designed to measure. Utilizing the researched literature to create an interview guide and questionnaires assured content validity.

3.11.2 Reliability

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), reliability is the consistency with which a measuring tool produces particular results when the measured object has not changed. According to Creswell (2003), dependability responds to whether scores remain constant over time when the test is taken a second time. Kumar (2014) claims that an instrument is considered trustworthy if it is stable and consistent, ensuring its predictability and accuracy. Kumar (2014) says that an instrument's consistency and stability degree affects its reliability in practice. This implies that dependability tests the data collection tools to check if they will produce the same outcomes if utilized repeatedly. The interview guide and questions were evaluated

for reliability by the supervisor, and a pilot study was done before the final presentation of the surveys. This ensured that the questionnaire would yield the same findings when administered repeatedly under the same circumstances.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

According to Kasomo's definition from 2007, ethics is the area of philosophy that deals with how people behave and act as a moral code. Kothari (2004) asserts that ethical considerations must be considered when conducting research. It is for this reason that (Berg, 2001) observes that the nature of the study of social scientists makes them delve into people's social lives, including private individuals and for that matter, it is incumbent on them to protect themselves, colleagues, study population and the society at large.

The researcher in this study adhered to all ethical issues prescribed and observed in social science research. Consent was always sought from respondents before any data was taken. Issues of secrecy, anonymity, and confidentiality, among other ethics, were adhered to when presenting the study findings. Additionally, all publications, sources, research data, and other participants in this study have received the appropriate acknowledgement.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The research findings are presented and discussed in this chapter in accordance with the study's goals. The chapter includes respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, education level, working experiences or duration with the University for Development Studies (UDS), and how the respondents rated their performance as well as satisfaction with communication in UDS. The chapter also covered the following areas; response rate, internal communication channels available in UDS, perceived importance of communication channels in effective communication, communication channels used by UDS Management, perceived effectiveness of communication channels in UDS, level to which communication channels influence communication flow, coordination and knowledge sharing and effective communication in UDS, in addition to perceived performance of management in information dissemination to employees, communication channels preference in UDS, perceived barriers to communication in UDS, and where UDS' communication often breaks down.

4.2 Response Rate

The study sampled 285 respondents from the various staff categories from the





campuses of the University for Development Studies. Of the 285 respondents, 192 respondents completed the questionnaires satisfactorily representing a response rate of 67.37%, 65 (22.81%) of the questionnaires were incomplete, whilst 28 (9.82%) of the respondents did not return the questionnaires. Creswell (2012) asserts that a response of more than 50% of the sample size is deemed appropriate for analysis and suggestions. Therefore, the response rate of 67.37% was considered adequate for data analysis and recommendations.

4.3 Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics covered included gender, age, education level and number of years respondents worked in UDS. These fragmented variables of the population had distinct necessities concerning the study. This socio-demographic information was included to highlight the kind of people who were involved in the study and whether their characteristics are homogenous or varied. Creswell (2005) highlighted the need for socio-demographic characteristics especially when they are relevant to the analysis of the data collected. It was therefore imperative that the researcher investigate some socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents that were deemed relevant in the analysis of the data collected. The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 4.1.



The gender distribution was important in order to describe the total population as well as show all-inclusiveness in the responses given. It also helped the researcher to gain insight into the communication needs of the different genders. The study showed majority (67.2%) of the respondents were males whilst 32.8% were females (Table 4.1). Based on the findings, males constitute majority of the employees of UDS. Nonetheless, the female respondents were one-third (1/3); an indication that one-third (1/3) of the UDS employees are females. The findings also imply that communication in UDS affects both genders. Furthermore, the finding is an indication that UDS' recruitment policy is hinged on an equal opportunity principle; where everyone, male or female can be employed once suitably qualified. This finding is comparable to Kamanda's (2014) research on the impact of internal communication channels on the efficient management of university academic programs, in which she noted that the majority of Aga Khan University employees in Kenya were female, with a female population that made up one-third (1/3) of the total workforce.

Similarly, the age distribution was significant to this study. It was to give the researcher understanding on the communication needs of the respondents based on age; since one's age has a correlation with his/ her experience, competence and aptitude as indicated by Evans (2009), that the age of a person should be taken into consideration when using the various channels of communication, especially the use of the computer mediated communication channels because the comfort levels

of the different age bracket associated with its use differs; adding that younger people have ease and comfort in using electronic based communication channels. The study findings as shown in Table 4.1 revealed that most (50%) respondents were aged 36 to 45 years, with only 2.6% aged 56 years and above. Most of the study respondents as shown in the findings were between the ages of 26-55, and thus, perceived to have a clear understanding of the study problem. The findings show that respondents aged (26 to 45) constitute the majority (74.5%) of the employees of the University for Development Studies. These are young people who use the various channels of communication and for that matter, it would be important to recognize that they would prefer channels that deliver messages fast. This was supported by a Key Informant, City Campus, July, 2020 who stated “I prefer communication that is faster, accurate and easily accessible. I would prefer that emails were used in UDS for its communications and followed up with memoranda, letters and circulars.”



Table 4.1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	129	67.2
Female	63	32.8
Total	192	100
Age		
25 years and below	2	1
26 - 35 years	47	24.5
36 - 45 years	96	50
46 - 55 years	42	21.9
56 years and above	5	2.6
Total	192	100
Education Level		
Certificate	22	11.5
Diploma	30	15.6
Bachelors	55	28.6
Masters and Above	85	44.3
Total	192	100
Number of years worked in UDS		
5 years and below	42	21.9
6-10 years	72	38
11-20 years	67	35
21-30 years	11	6
Total	192	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020





A respondent's level of education was important for the study because it provided understanding on how educational qualification(s) of persons affected their way of receiving and processing information as well as their understanding of the concepts of perception, preference and choices of communication channels. The minimum qualification for employment into the various staff categories; Senior Member, Senior Staff and Junior Staff positions in UDS are master's degree, bachelor's degree and higher national diploma certificates respectively. The study findings showed majority (44.3%) of the respondents had Master's degrees and above whilst at least (28.6%) had Bachelor degrees (Table 4.1). This shows majority (72.9%) of the respondents were well educated and well equipped with the required knowledge and skills to provide accurate data for the study.

The researcher sought to know the period within which respondents had worked with the UDS. This was important in helping to ascertain whether the respondents had been with the UDS long enough to give accurate information for the study. It was also significant in assisting the researcher in finding valuable clues as to whether there was a connection between one's work experience and the effectiveness of communication channels. The study indicated that most (73%) of the respondents had worked with the UDS for 6 to 20 years (Table 4.1). The findings showed majority (73%) of the respondents had worked in UDS for up to 20 years; which was enough time to give reliable information for the study.

4.4 Performance Rating of the Respondents

With regards to performance rating, the study indicated that majority (59.4%) of the respondents rated their performance as good as presented in Figure 4.1.

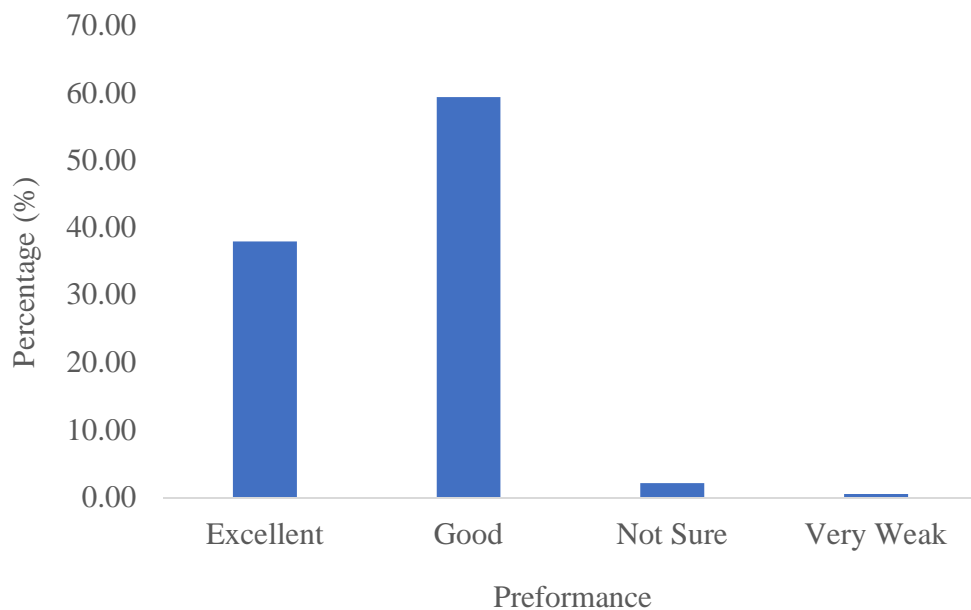


Figure 4.1: Performance rating

Source: Field Survey, 2020

On the question of satisfaction with communication in UDS, the findings showed that the majority (57.8%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied with communication in UDS, as shown in Table 4.2. In affirming their satisfaction with communication in UDS, a Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 said, “I am satisfied with UDS communication and so is Management because it is good



and helps staff to report cases of interest to superiors, allows for better understanding of issues as well as ensures free communication”. Another Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July, 2020 indicated that “UDS Management and staff are satisfied with its communication, it brings about clarity and understanding of messages and ensures positive feedback with no serious challenges”.

Table 4.2: Perceived level of satisfaction with communication in UDS

Communication Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Satisfied	13	6.8
Satisfied	111	57.8
Neutral	36	18.8
Dissatisfied	26	13.5
Very Dissatisfied	6	3.1
Total	192	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

4.5 Communication Channels Used in University for Development Studies

The researcher wanted to find out from the respondents, the existing communication channels in the University for Development Studies and how often they are used. The rationale for this was significant for ascertaining their effectiveness.



Table 4.3: Existing communication channels and frequency of usage at University for Development Studies

Communication Channel	Frequency of use (%) (n=192)					Total
	Always	Very often	Sometimes	Not often	Not at all	
Face to Face Communication	54.2	19.8	19.8	4.2	2.1	100
Written Communication	30.2	43.8	19.8	5.2	1%	100
Computer-Mediated Communication	16.7	24.5	27.6	14.6	16.7	100
Mobile/Telephone Communication	31.3	28.6	25.5	12	2.6	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

On existing communication channels in UDS and how they are often used, the study showed that most (93.8%) of the respondents stated they always, very often and sometimes used the face to face and written communication channels. As many as 68.8% of the respondents indicated they always, very often and sometimes used the computer-mediated communication channel. Most (85.4%) of the respondents indicated they always, very often and sometimes used the mobile /telephone communication channel (see Table 4.3). These findings imply that the face-to-face, written, computer-mediated and mobile/telephone channels are all used in communicating in UDS. Accordingly, the study discovered that UDS uses four official communication channels for its internal and external communications; as





in all cases, majority of the respondents affirmed they always, very often and sometimes used those communication channels to perform their duties. In addition, informal channels were as well used mainly through the grapevine. In corroborating the respondents, a Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 stated that “Management uses the written, face to face, computer-mediated and mobile /telephone channels to communicate with its employees and stakeholders” whilst another Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 said “the written, mobile /telephone and computer-mediated channels were used in UDS to communicate”. Further, a Key Informant, Tamale Campus, July 2020 indicated “the written, computer-mediated, and mobile /telephone communication channels were mostly used for communication while the face-to-face communication was usually used within departments, during meetings, durbars, workshops and seminars”. Consequently, the study revealed that UDS uses four official channels of internal communication. This finding is in line with findings by Boczkowsky and Orlikowski (2004), Dennis, Fuller and Valacich (2008) and Kamanda (2014) that indicated that combination of two or more communication channels is frequently used by institutions; including a tertiary educational institution (TEI) such as the UDS.



4.6 Perceived Importance of Communication Channels in Effective Communication

In order to ensure successful communication inside the UDS, the study aimed to learn how respondents felt about the significance of communication channels. Respondents were questioned about how crucial they believed communication channels to be for effective communication in the UDS. Table 4.4 provides the findings.

Table 4.4: Perceived importance of communication channels in effective communication

Communication Channel	Perceived level of importance (%) (n=192)					Total
	Critical	Important	Somewhat important	Slightly important	Not important	
Face to Face Communication	28.1	57.3	10.9	1.6	2.1	100
Written Communication	30.7	58.3	8.3	1	1.6	100
Computer-Mediated Communication	16.7	48.4	19.3	8.3	7.3	100
Mobile/Telephone Communication	22.9	49.0	15.6	9.4	3.1	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The study revealed that majority (85.4%) of the respondents found face-to-face communication as critical and important in ensuring effective communication in UDS. A respondent in the open-ended questions said “the face-to-face



communication channel was important because the nature of work in UDS, involving many cleaners /labourers made it the most convenient method of communication for getting undistorted information across". Others stated that "its suitability for personal contact, resolution of workplace conflicts as well as receipt of undistorted information" made it important in ensuring effective communication. Again, a respondent indicated that "the nature of my work made the face-to-face communication a must for cordiality in the performance of my daily duties". Also, a respondent said "giving of instructions in my job schedule is mostly done using the face-to-face communication channel for desired results", and others indicated "it was the easiest and most effective way of communicating where instant feedback is gotten and also very appropriate for informal communication". This implies that employees prefer to have personal experience in communication and this is what makes communication in an organisation effective. This finding is in line with (Mutula, 2002; Begley, 2004; Berko, 2007; Frandsen and Johansen, 2011) who indicated that the face-to-face communication channel continues to still be a chosen mode of communication as it provides feedback, build relations, expresses gratitude, dialogue, avert unrest, resolve conflict, and keeps employees informed about institutional changes despite the dawn of modern methods of communication.

Also, the findings showed that majority (89%) of the respondents perceived written communication as critical and important in ensuring effective communication in UDS. A respondent indicated, "Management always used the written



communication channel to communicate with employees; specifically, through memoranda, letters and circulars and it is very effective in UDS”. Another respondent also stated that “the written communication channel was the preferred channel by Management and very important”. Others stated that “it was reliable, appropriate for filing and documentation for retrieval for future reference for sensitive and vital information”, hence its importance in ensuring effective communication in UDS. This result contrasts with that of Kamanda (2014), who found that 13.10% of people still used paper communication, whereas the majority (90.48%) preferred to receive information through computer-mediated media of the internal communication channels offered at AKU-N. The institutional culture at AKU-N, where Email is the preferred method of official communication because computer-mediated platforms and internet access is omnipresent, coupled with the age of the respondents; most of whom are aged 26-40; a generation Evans, (2009) refer to as ‘digital natives’, that is; a generation born and raised with electronics and technologies surrounding them and who have exposure to digital devices as well as the environment of and corporate policy of AKU-N where written communication is hardly being used is attributed to the contradiction stated above.

Furthermore, the study revealed that as many as (65.1%) of the respondents found the computer mediated communication as critical and important in ensuring effective communication in UDS with only a few (7.3%) indicating it was not



important. In response to the open-ended questions, some respondents indicated that “the computer mediated communication channels were used by UDS’ Management as a method of official communication via email, intranet and websites; besides computers and internet access was the medium used for work in the University”. Other respondents stated that the computer mediated channels (email, intranet and websites) were important in ensuring effective communication in UDS because of “time savings, cost effectiveness, easier access and convenience when communicating official information to employees and students, especially, when they are out of campus”. Some further stated that the use of computer mediated channels (email, intranet and websites) was important “as the most appropriate and effective way of reaching employees faster to easily communicate directly with one another across time and space” as UDS operates a multi-campus system. This finding is in line with the view that is also buttressed by Adams and Galanes (2009) who indicated that computer-mediated communication help people to easily communicate directly with one another across time and space.

Moreover, the findings revealed that majority (71.9%) of respondents indicated they found mobile/telephone communication as important in ensuring effective communication in UDS (Table 4.4). Responding to the open-ended questions, some respondents indicated that “the use of mobile /telephone communication was a common practice within the UDS; whereby employees interact with co-workers to



exchange ideas, disseminate information or seek for clarification of messages to enable them perform their task efficiently”. A respondent stated “the multi-campus system of UDS involved situations of distance, if a conversation is brief and merits a phone call, because of convenience, time and cost saving, the mobile /telephone communication will be important in ensuring effective communication in the performance of our duties”. Others stated that “mobile /telephone communication was used for very urgent issues particularly when employees were off campus and there was necessity for clarification and for quick feedback”. One respondent also stated “I use mobile /telephone communication for pressing information as soon as I cannot reach a co-worker for face to face”. Another respondent indicated “... it is the quickest way to get fast replies”. This in fact, affirms RoAnne (2008) study that also revealed that the mobile /telephone communication is in certain circumstances the only method used to communicate with personnel who are often outside their workplaces.

Table 4.4 shows the perceived order of importance of communication channels on effective communication in UDS as the written, face to face, mobile /telephone and computer mediated communication channels.

4.7 Communication Channels used by UDS Management to Communicate with its Employees

The study sought to find out how UDS management often used the following communication channels with its employees and the results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Communication channels used by UDS management

Communication Channels	Communication channels (%) (n = 192)						Total
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Not Often	Not At All	Not Applicable	
Voice Mail	7.8	4.2	8.9	12	40.6	26.6	100
Email	23.4	24.5	29.7	8.9	11.5	2.1	100
Mobile/ Telephone Calls	26.6	19.8	28.6	17.2	5.2	2.6	100
SMS	7.8	9.9	17.7	21.4	28.6	14.6	100
WhatsApp	22.4	14.6	24.5	13.5	17.2	7.8	100
Intranet	12	7.8	20.8	19.3	30.7	9.4	100
Bulletins	7.8	3.6	13.5	24.5	33.9	16.7	100
Circulars	45.8	28.1	15.1	4.2	4.2	2.6	100
Memoranda	49	29.2	12	3.1	4.2	2.6	100
Faxes	4.7	1.6	7.8	11.5	42.2)	32.3	100
Reports	8.9	12	44.3	17.2	9.9	7.8	100
Minutes	15.1	20.3	34.9	17.2	6.8	5.7	100
Meetings/ Seminars/Training	10.4	16.7	45.3	18.2	5.7	3.6	100
Websites	15.6	15.6	25.5	14.6	17.2	11.5	100
Publications/ Newsletters	5.2	8.3	21.4	31.3	20.8	13	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The study showed that majority (77.6%) of the respondents indicated email was always used by UDS Management to communicate with its employees whilst 75%





of respondents also indicated mobile /telephone was always used by UDS Management to communicate with its employees and 61.5% of the respondents indicated that WhatsApp was always, often and sometimes used by UDS Management to communicate with its employees (Table 4.5).

The study further revealed 73.9% of the respondents indicated that circulars were always and often used by Management to communicate with its employees whilst majority (90.2%) indicated that memoranda were always used by Management to communicate with its employees and 65.2% of the respondents indicated that reports were sometimes, often and always used by Management to communicate with its employees (Table 4.5).

Moreover, the study revealed that 70.3% of the respondents indicated minutes were sometimes, often and always used by Management to communicate with its employees, 72.4% of the respondents indicated meetings /seminars /training were sometimes, often and always used by Management to communicate with its employees whilst 56.7% of the respondents indicated websites was sometimes, often and always used by Management to communicate with its employees (Table 4.5).

From the study findings, as presented in Table 4.5 above, email, mobile /telephone calls, circulars, memoranda coupled with WhatsApp, reports, meetings /training /seminars, minutes and website were the communication channels often used by UDS Management to communicate with its employees as indicated by majority of the respondents. Also, the findings revealed that 69.2% of the respondents indicated that voice mail and SMS communication were not used by UDS Management to communicate with its employees whilst 71.4% of the respondents indicated intranet, bulletins, faxes and publications /newsletter communication were not applicable in UDS.

4.8 Perceived Effectiveness of Communication Channels in UDS

The study sought to find out the perceptions of respondents on the effectiveness of communication channels in UDS. The results of their responses are presented in Table 4.6.

As shown in Table 4.6, at least 44.8% of the respondents indicated voice mail was very ineffective in UDS, many (48.4%) and more (55.7%) of the respondents indicated that email and mobile /telephone calls respectively were very effective in UDS (Table 4.6).



Table 4.6: Perceived effectiveness of communication channels in UDS

Perceived effectiveness of Communication channels (%) (n = 192)						
Communication Channels	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Neither Effective	Somewhat Ineffective	Very Ineffective	Total
Voice Mail	10.4	6.8	26	12	44.8	100
Email	48.4	32.8	8.9	5.2	4.7	100
Mobile/Telephone Calls	55.7	25	11.5	3.1	4.7	100
SMS	17.7	29.7	24	13	15.6	100
WhatsApp	30.7	34.9	16.7	6.2	11.5	100
Intranet	22.9	21.9	24	12	19.2	100
Bulletins	10.4	18.2	28.1	20.3	23	100
Circulars	59.9	28.1	5.7	4.2	2.1	100
Memoranda	69.8	23.4	3.6	1	2.1	100
Reports	25	47.9	15.6	4.7	6.8	100
Minutes	27.1	47.9	13.5	6.2	5.2	100
Meetings/ Seminars/ Training	28.1	44.3	15.1	7.3	5.2	100
Websites	19.8	34.9	20.8	10.4	14.1	100
Publications/ Newsletters	10.4	28.6	29.2	10.4	21.4	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020





Again, the study showed that most (59.9%) respondents stated circulars were very effective in UDS, majority (69.8%) of the respondents indicated memoranda /letters were very effective in UDS, many (47.9%) of the respondents indicated reports and minutes respectively were somewhat effective in UDS. Similarly, at least (44.3%) of the respondents indicated meetings /seminars /training were somewhat effective in UDS (Table 4.6).

The findings of the study as shown in Table 4.6, indicates that majority of the respondents perceived email, mobile/ telephone calls, circulars, memoranda/ letters, as very effective communication channels in UDS whilst reports, minutes, meetings /seminars /training were perceived as somewhat effective and voice mail as very ineffective communication channels in UDS. The finding is an indication that majority of UDS employees recognize that the use of the communication channels can ensure effective communication in UDS.

The Key Informants' responses on perceived effectiveness of communication channels in UDS are captured in the following statements: One Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 said "the channels are very effective because there is record of flow and tracking system to know who receives what and when". This means that communication is effective when the transmission process is uninterrupted, messages reaches the intended recipients, and in time. Another Key



Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 indicated “the channels are reliable, convenient and fast and guarantees immediate feedback and that is what describes channels as effective”. This shows that communication effectiveness is dependent on how messages are trusted, easily accessible, speedy and elicit responses. Further, a Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 stated that “the channels are effective; for they bring about clarity and understanding as well as ensures positive feedback with no challenges”. This implies that for communication to be effective, messages must be clear and perceivable, warrant a good response and be devoid of any hindrance.

4.9 Influence of Communication Channels on Communication Flow, Coordination and Knowledge Sharing and Effective Communication in UDS

To determine how communication channels influence communication flow, coordination and knowledge sharing as well as effective communication in UDS, the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements in relation to performance of their daily duties and the results are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Level to which communication channels influence communication flow, coordination and knowledge sharing and effective communication in UDS

Level of communication channels influence (%) (n = 192)						
Level of Information	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Most of the information I receive comes from my Supervisor/Head.	44.8	37	9.4	7.3	1.6	100
My ideas are normally passed on to Management.	8.9	31.3	31.8	16.1	12	100
Most of the information I receive on a daily basis come from my co-workers.	20.3	40.1	25	13	1.6	100
I feel comfortable sharing ideas directly with Management.	11.5	29.7	26	20.8	12	100
Most of the daily communication I receive comes in the form of 'directives' from Management.	27.6	39.6	21.4	9.4	2.1	100
I often share ideas with my supervisor/head.	28.1	46.9	17.2	4.2	3.6	100





I feel comfortable sharing ideas with my supervisor/head.	30.2	45.3	12.5	9.9	2.1	100
The lines of communication are 'open' all the way to top Management in UDS.	14.6	31.8	26	16.7	10.9	100
My supervisor/head gives me enough feedback about the way I perform my work so that I can improve.	21.4	38	18.8	14.1	7.8	100
In UDS, important information is a scarce resource.	13	34.9	24.5	22.4	5.2	100
In most situations, I receive the information I need to effectively perform my work.	11.5	47.9	22.4	12	6.2	100
My co-workers and I readily share important information that is critical to our success.	30.7	49	12.5	5.7	2.1	100
I receive a large amount of the information I need through formal channels.	17.7	43.2	21.9	14.1	3.1	100



Most of the information I need is received through informal channels.	10.9	35.4	31.3	18.8	3.6	100
Most of the information I receive from my supervisor/head is detailed and accurate.	27.1	49.5	17.2	5.2	1	100
Most of the information I receive from my co-workers is detailed and accurate.	13.5	41.1	32.8	9.9	2.6	100
A large amount of the information passed down from management is detailed and accurate.	21.4	47.9	22.4	5.7	2.6	100
The instructions that come from management are clear and consistent.	19.8	44.3	22.9	10.4	2.6	100
The information I receive from management is always reliable.	27.1	48.4	18.2	5.7	0.5	100
I usually get messages from management late.	13.5	31.8	32.8	14.1	7.8	100

I perform well because my supervisor/head shares information with me.	22.4	47.4	19.8	5.2	5.2	100
I am motivated because my supervisor/head involves me in decision making.	20.3	33.9	26	13.5	6.2	100
I experience healthier participation and good relationship with my supervisor/head.	24	43.8	19.8	7.3	5.2	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

On how communication channels influence communication flow in UDS, the study revealed that majority (81.8%) of the respondents agreed that most of the information they received came from their supervisors /heads whilst 60.4% of the respondents indicated they agreed most of the information they received on a daily basis came from their co-workers. Also, the findings revealed that 67.2% of the respondents agreed most of the daily communication they received came in the form of ‘directives’ from Management. Similarly, most (75%) respondents agreed they often shared ideas with their supervisors /heads just as most (75.5%) respondents also agreed they felt comfortable sharing ideas with their supervisors /heads and 59.4% of the respondents agreed their supervisors /heads gave them



enough feedback about the way they performed their work so that they could improve (Table 4.7).

As shown in Table 4.7, most (59.4%) of the respondents agreed that their supervisors /heads gave them enough feedback about the way they performed their work so that they could improve and this implies that there is effective downward communication in UDS as a result of communication channels influence. Also, majority (60.4%) of the respondents agreed that most of the information they received on a daily basis came from their co-workers and this indicates there is effective horizontal communication in UDS. Further, the findings showed that at least (40.2%) of the respondents agreed that their ideas were normally passed on to Management; an indication that there is effective upward communication in UDS. Based on the above, it can be concluded that the communication channels used in UDS influences communication flow in UDS.

In response to a question in the open-ended questions on suggestions that might better facilitate information flow in UDS, majority of the respondents suggested Management should adopt the use of the mobile/telephone and computer mediated communication channels which operate in real time to ease communication flow. A Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 also suggested “Management should progressively expand infrastructure on internet connectivity to ensure





reliability and efficiency as well as provide mobile /telephones to employees for official use to improve communication flow in UDS” whilst another Key Informant, City Campus, July 2020 suggested “Management should use social media /multiple platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook in order to improve communication flow in UDS”.

With regards to how communication channels influence coordination and knowledge sharing, the findings as shown in Table 4.7 revealed that more (59.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that in most situations, they received the information they need to effectively perform their work. Majority (79.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed they and their co-workers readily shared important information that was critical to their success, and as many as (60.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed they received a large amount of the information they needed through formal channels (Table 4.7). The above findings show that the communication channels used in UDS influences coordination and knowledge sharing.

Concerning communication channels’ influence on effective communication, the findings revealed that most (76.6%) respondents, at least agreed that most of the information they received from their supervisors /heads was detailed and accurate. More than half (54.6%) of the respondents, at least agreed that most of the



information they received from their co-workers was detailed and accurate. Similarly, more (69.3%) respondents, strongly agreed a large amount of the information passed down from Management was detailed and accurate with 64.1% of the respondents, strongly agreeing the instructions that came from Management were clear and consistent whilst majority (75.5%) of the respondents, indicated they strongly agreed the information they received from Management was always reliable. Further, the findings indicated that more (69.8%) of the respondents, strongly agreed they performed well because their supervisors /heads share information with them; with at least (54.2%) of the respondents, strongly agreeing they were motivated because their supervisors /heads involve them in decision making. As many as (67.8%) of the respondents, strongly agreed they experienced healthier participation and good relationship with their supervisors /heads (Table 4.7). The findings above imply that communication channels, when accurate, clear, consistent, convenient, reliable and timely influences effective communication. Also, the findings imply that availability of information, absence of bureaucracy, involvement in decision making, participation and good working relationship with co-workers and superiors influences effective communication. This finding is in line with Mutula, (2002) cited by Kamanda, (2014) who indicated that information flow in tertiary educational institutions is constant among top management, middle level administrators, lower-level employees and faculty members as this helps

prevent employee unrest and creates opportunities for effective management of institutions.



4.10 Perceived performance of management in information dissemination to employees

The general opinion of the respondents with regards to how Management was at disseminating information among its employees is shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Perceived performance of management in information dissemination to employees

Perceived level of performance (%) (n = 192)		
Dissemination of information	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below Average	8	4.2
Poor	24	12.5
Neutral	21	10.9
Fair	79	41.1
Good	60	31.3
Total	192	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The findings show that majority (41.1%) of the respondents perceived Management was fair at disseminating information among its employees whilst 31.3% perceived Management was good at disseminating information among its employees (Table 4.8). Based on the findings, majority (41.1%) of the respondents perceived Management's dissemination of information among its employees as fair.





The Key Informants' perception of Management's dissemination of information among its employees was noted as good as captured in the following interview responses in which a Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 stated "dissemination of information to employees by Management is good because there is record of flow" with another Key Informant, City Campus, July 2020 indicating that "Management dissemination of information to its staffs is good because feedback is usually guaranteed and information is always available for reference".

The respondents in the open-ended questions indicated that UDS' communication with its employees is not effective. For instance, a respondent said that "there are inconsistencies in UDS' communication due to superseding of memoranda /letters" with another respondent stated that "most messages usually lack clarity" whilst one respondent also indicated that "vital information from Management is most at times received late by employees". The above findings, however, contradicted that of the Key Informants as highlighted in the following, in which a Key Informant, Tamale Campus, July 2020 indicated "the University's communication with its employees is very effective. It allows the employees to comment on policy issues and to provide suggestions meant to improve the efficacy of existing rules and regulations," whilst another Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 stated, "UDS' communication with its employees is very effective as information is always available for reference and with the mobile /telephone channel, immediate feedback



is usually guaranteed” with yet another Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 stating that “UDS’ communication with its employees is very effective because it is reliable and convenient as well as brings about clarity and ensures positive feedback”. The perceived reasons given by the respondents and Key Informants why UDS’ communication with its employees is effective or not effective is summed up and presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Perceived reasons why UDS’ communication with its employees is effective or not effective.

Reasons why communication is effective	Reasons why communication is not effective
Reliability of messages/ information	Inconsistencies in messages/ information
Messages/ information are clear, perceivable and warrant a good response	Messages/ information lack clarity and meanings interpreted wrongly
Messages are easily accessible, speedy and elicit responses	Delay in receipt of information and late response of messages/ information
Messages/ information reaches intended recipients and in time	Too much official formality or bureaucracy affects quick information flow
Instantaneous feedback from recipients	Nonexistence of timely feedback
Messages are devoid of any hindrance	A long chain of authority (too many gatekeepers that interrupt flow of messages)

Source: Field Survey, 2020

4.11 Respondents' Preferred Channel of Communication

The researcher sought to find out from the respondents the communication channels they prefer to use in UDS and the results are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Communication channels preference in UDS

Preferred communication channels (%) (n = 192)					
Preferred channels	Most preferred	Preferred	Least preferred	Not preferred	Total
Written Communication	68.8	19.8	6.2	5.2	100
Computer-Mediated Communication	41.7	22.4	14.6	21.4	100
Face to Face Communication	44.3	29.2	10.9	15.6	100
Mobile/Telephone Communication	41.1	23.4	21.4	14.1	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The study revealed that majority (68.8%) of the respondents indicated that the written communication channel was most preferred channel in UDS (Table 4.10). Some of the respondents' preference for the written communication channel was that, "it was reliable, most appropriate for filing /documentation for future reference or retrieval for sensitive and important information". Other respondents stated that "the written communication channel was perceived as the most preferred choice of communication channel by Management; adding that the institutional culture in





UDS called for the use of that channel” hence, its preference. In corroboration, a Key Informant, Tamale Campus, July 2020 stated that, “I prefer the use of the written communication channel to be used to communicate in UDS; especially when writing internal memorandum or a position paper because internal memoranda allow the employees to comment on policy issues and to offer suggestions meant to improve the efficacy of existing rules and regulations”. The findings of this study contradict that of Frandsen and Johansen (2011) that revealed that the face-to-face communication channel is the most effective and preferred channel and Kamanda, (2014) who also discovered that the computer mediated communication channel is the most preferred and used channel. The contradiction is attributed to the acceptance and surge of the computer mediated communication channels AKU-N used to promote effective management of the University academic programs as well as the use of digital technologies for strategic planning, assessment, product evaluation and project coordination for which the employees could not conceive working without. Besides, AKU-N has extended regional and global network with offices and employees all over the world. Also, teaching, clinical consultations, workplace conflict resolution, instructions to cleaners/ labourers which are attributes of certain work environments and job descriptions require the use of sensory organs and personal contacts, thus; the use and preference of the face-to-face channel is inevitable.

Table 4.11: Communication channels preference in UDS.

Preferred communication channels (%) (n = 192)				
Communication channels	Most preferred	A little preferred	Not preferred	Total
Voice Mail	19.3	25.5	55.2	100
Email	67.2	28.1	4.7	100
Mobile/ Telephone Calls	60.4	30.2	9.4	100
SMS	35.4	37.5	27.1	100
WhatsApp	46.4	39.1	14.6	100
Intranet	36.5	38	25.5	100
Bulletins	21.4	38.5	40.1	100
Circulars	72.4	20.3	7.3	100
Memoranda / Letters	77.1	17.2	5.7	100
Reports	43.2	49	7.8	100
Minutes	43.2	47.4	9.4	100
Meetings/ Seminars/ Training	56.8	36.5	6.8	100
Websites	36.5	42.2	21.4	100
Publications/ Newsletters	27.1	43.8	29.2	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020





The study revealed that majority (77.1%) and (72.4%) of the respondents respectively indicated memoranda /letters and circulars were most preferred channels used in UDS because “they are reliable and easy for filing /documentation for future reference” whilst most (67.2%) of the respondents indicated email was most preferred channel used in UDS since “it was fast and cost-effective” and as many as (60.4%) of the respondents indicated mobile /telephone calls was most preferred as “it is fast and guarantees feedback”. More than half (56.8%) also indicated meetings /seminars /training were most preferred channels used in UDS for “it guarantees feedback” (Table 4.11). Based on the findings, memoranda /letters were the most (77.1%) preferred channels used in UDS, whilst SMS (37.5%), WhatsApp (39.1%), intranet, bulletins, reports, minutes, websites, publications /newsletters were a little preferred and voice mail (55.2%) was not preferred. However, the findings as presented in Table 4.11 above, also indicated respondents’ preference for the other channels; email (Computer-Mediated Communication), mobile /telephone calls (Mobile /Telephone Communication) and meetings /seminars /training (Face to Face Communication). This implies that a single communication channel cannot be used to solve the communication needs of an institution such as the UDS but an amalgamation of channels and this can be compared with findings by Boczkowsky and Orlikowski (2004), Dennis, Fuller and Valacich (2008) and Kamanda (2014) that indicated that combination of two or more communication channels is frequently used by institutions, of which UDS as

a TEI is no exception; thereby answering the research question - Which communication channels are preferred in UDS in the Northern region of Ghana?

4.12 Perceived Barriers to Communication in UDS

The study further sought to find out perceived barriers of communication in UDS by asking the respondents to rate their level of agreement with statements, indicate where they think communication often breaks down as well as the barriers they encounter in UDS. The results are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Perceived Barriers to Communication in UDS

Barriers	Perceived communication barriers (%) (n = 192)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
In order to share ideas/information with management, I must go through my supervisor/head.	52.6	31.3	7.3	5.7	3.1
Management often seems hesitant to communicate news about the institution to employees.	21.9	29.2	29.2	14.1	5.7
Most of the information I receive on a daily basis is passed through the 'grapevine'.	29.2	28.1	29.7	7.3	5.7
There are too many 'gatekeepers' in UDS that hinder the flow of important information.	28.1	31.3	20.8	13.5	6.3
Management appears committed to keeping the	19.8	29.2	31.3	12	7.8



channels of communication
'open'.

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The findings as shown in Table 4.12 revealed that majority (83.9%) of the respondents agreed that in order to share ideas /information with Management, they must go through their supervisors /heads as was stated by respondents; “there is too much formality or bureaucracy in UDS. Staffs most at times, must go through their heads to communicate to Management”. Also, as many as (51.1%) of the respondents agreed Management often seems hesitant to communicate news about the institution to employees as indicated by respondents, “there are usually delays in receipt of information from Management”. This was corroborated by a Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 who indicated that, “sometimes employees receive information on personal or University issues and scholarships with deadlines past”. The study further showed that most (59.4%) respondents agreed that there are too many ‘gatekeepers’ in UDS that hinder the flow of important information as was indicated by respondents that, “there is a long chain of authority in UDS which delays communication flow in the system” (Table 4.12). The above findings suggest that there was nonexistence of timely feedback, too much official formality or bureaucracy and delays in communication (barriers to communication); all of which were hindering effectiveness of communication in UDS.





The respondents mentioned bureaucracy, unclear messages, lack of feedback, delays in receipt of information from Management coupled with poor internet connectivity as some of the barriers they encountered in their communication in UDS. A Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 affirmed the claims of the respondents on the barriers in the following: “bureaucracy, distance, unstable internet connectivity and late response to memoranda by employees are some of the barriers encountered in communication in UDS”. These results are consistent with Mbatia's (2017) study, *An Analysis of Effectiveness of Employee Communication in Public Institutions in Nairobi: The Case of Teachers Service Commission*, which found that teachers and staff of the Teachers Service Commission secretariat agreed that in order to share ideas with top management, one had to do so through a manager, that top executives appear reluctant to inform lower level employees of organization news, and that communication delays.

On suggestions to improve communication in UDS, respondents suggested that “Management should adopt the use of the mobile /telephone and digital or computer mediated communication channels to communicate with its employees in addition to use of durbars, training, workshops and seminars” whilst a Key Informant, Nyankpala Campus, July 2020 suggested that “UDS Management should improve its internet infrastructure to help overcome the barriers to enhance effective communication”.



4.13 Where UDS Communication Breaks Down

The study sought to find out from the respondents where UDS communication breaks down and the results are presented in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Where UDS communication breaks down

Where communication breaks down	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Governing Council Level	19	9.9
Top Management Level	76	39.6
Middle Management Level	37	19.3
Lower Management Level	3	1.6
Not Sure	56	29.2
Other: Specify	1	0.5
Total	192	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

The findings revealed that most (58.9%) respondents indicated UDS' communication often breaks down at the Top and Middle Management levels respectively whilst at least (29.2%) of the respondents were not sure where it occurs (Table 4.13). Based on Table 4.13, respondents perceived communication in UDS to breakdown at both the Top and Middle Management levels.

Failure to communicate effectively leads to a breakdown in information flow and a lack of communication. Emily, (2018) observed that communication with mistakes due to miscommunication or insufficient information given, can result in messages/ information received perceived differently from what is intended or meanings being interpreted incorrectly, resulting in a lack of communication and thereby affecting effective communication. The writer further stated that employees performing the same task and not realizing, if certain vital tasks are not being completed either on time or to the desired standard due to hoarding of information or lack of updates to co-workers and or subordinates, there will be information inadequacy and that will affect effective communication and pointed out that a communication breakdown can have effects on institutions such as UDS including loss of morale, demotivation, disorganisation, embarrassment, gossip, high employee turnover or lack of retention.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study's findings, draws conclusions from them, and offers suggestions for improving communication channels at UDS, a tertiary educational institution, and for future research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Communication has been looked at in this study in relation to the effectiveness of communication channels in tertiary educational institutions in the Northern Region of Ghana, a case of the University for Development Studies (UDS). The study was set to achieve four specific objectives. The analysis of data was centred on these objectives.

Regarding the communication channels used in UDS, the study discovered that UDS used four communication channels for its internal and external communications in addition to informal channels used mainly through the grapevine. These four comprised the face to face, written, computer mediated and mobile /telephone communication channels.





On preference of communication channels in UDS, the study revealed that respondents preferred the written communication channel whilst the computer-mediated communication channel was the least preferred. Nonetheless, the study showed that there was no single communication channel that UDS used as a panacea for achieving effective communication. There was a preference for face-to-face and mobile /telephone communication channels.

On the question of which communication channels used in UDS were more effective, the study found that the written communication channel (circulars, memoranda /letters, reports and minutes) was perceived to be very effective. The computer-mediated communication channel (email, intranet, websites) was perceived to be neither ineffective nor effective. In contrast, the mobile /telephone communication channel (mobile /telephone calls, SMS, WhatsApp) was perceived to be somewhat effective, whilst the face-to-face communication channel (meetings /seminars /training) was perceived to be somewhat ineffective. These findings imply that UDS employees recognize that using communication channels could ensure effective communication in UDS.

Concerning barriers of communication in UDS, the study found out that employees must go through their supervisors /heads in order to share ideas /information with Management. The study also found out Management often seems hesitant to



communicate news about the institution to employees. Furthermore, the study revealed that too many ‘gatekeepers’ in UDS hinder the flow of important information. The study also noted bureaucracy, unclear messages, lack of feedback, delays in communication and poor /unstable internet connectivity as barriers in communication in UDS.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concluded that UDS used face-to-face, written, computer-mediated and mobile/telephone communication channels to disseminate information from Top Management to Middle and Lower-level employees and across its campuses, faculties /schools /directorates, departments /sections and units that were essential for it to function. The study also concluded that the communication channels were greatly appreciated owing to their continuous and satisfactory use by Management in addressing employee concerns, facilitating access to supervisors and accomplishing set institutional goals where most of the employees gave their consensus to the satisfaction of the channels.

On preference of communication channels in UDS, the study concluded that the written communication channel was most preferred whilst the computer-mediated communication channel was the least preferred. The study also concluded that UDS used no single communication channel for achieving effective communication.



The study concluded on the effectiveness of communication channels that some channels were more effective than others. For example, circulars, memoranda and letters were very effective. Email, intranet, and websites were neither ineffective nor effective, whereas mobile /telephone calls, SMS, and WhatsApp were somewhat effective, whilst meetings /seminars /training were somewhat ineffective. Faxes and voice mails were found very ineffective. The study also concluded that the effectiveness of communication channels was very important and significantly influenced effective communication in UDS.

The study concluded barriers of communication in UDS that there exist too many “gatekeepers” in UDS that hinder the flow of important information, Management seemed hesitant to communicate information to employees as well as bureaucracy, unclear messages, lack of feedback, delays in communication coupled with a hierarchical approach of sharing information as strongly agreed by respondents that they had to pass through their supervisors /heads to share ideas with top management. The study also concluded that there is poor /unstable internet connectivity and access in UDS.

5.4 Recommendations

On the basis of the research's findings and recommendations, the following suggestions were made.



1. The study recommends that UDS Management improves its internet infrastructure to boost internet connectivity and access to resolve the poor /unstable internet connectivity problem. This may help increase the use of the computer-mediated channels (emails, intranet, websites), which operates in real-time and space. It may also guarantee access and preference of the channel for communication, improve information flow and enhance effective communication. Also, the emergence of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic makes it even more imperative than ever for the UDS to expand its internet infrastructure to increase internet connectivity and access and to promote the use of the computer-mediated channel as modern technological modes of communication increase globally. However, for effective management, UDS should encourage employee engagements through participatory activities in order to improve relationships of the employees to perform their duties effectively which is important for effective management.
2. Concerning effectiveness of communication channels, the study recommends that UDS include mobile /telephone calls which are somewhat effective but always used as an institutionalised official communication channel in addition to the written communication channel. Management should procure mobile /telephones for the offices for official use by its

employees. This will ensure that clear and precise messages /information are received in time. Phone credit could also be purchased periodically for official use as its employees have access to mobile phones daily.

3. On the barriers to communication in UDS, the study recommends that UDS Management establish reliable and efficient communication structures to help decrease the delays in communication, bureaucracy, unclear messages, lack of feedback, grapevine and gatekeepers that slow down the flow of information that may or cause needless problems.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

- ✓ The researcher recommends a study on the computer-mediated communication channel in UDS as a tertiary educational institution. This would help UDS and other tertiary educational institutions to consider the outcomes and formulate strategies to improve preference for the computer-mediated channel. Besides, a study into the computer-mediated communication channel could set a platform for UDS and other tertiary educational institutions to remain relevant in the market they operate in and attract skilled employees who keep abreast of computer-mediated channels like social media.



- ✓ The researcher further recommends that a similar study be conducted in other institutions; public and private in Ghana to give a comparison and to increase knowledge on effectiveness of communication channels.



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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a Masters student at the University for Development Studies (UDS) Department of Agricultural Innovation Communication, Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Sciences undertaking a Master of Philosophy Degree in Innovation Communication. Currently, I am doing a thesis in partial fulfillment of the course as required by the University. My research topic is: **Effectiveness of Communication Channels in Tertiary Educational Institutions in the Northern Region of Ghana: The Case of the University for Development Studies (UDS), Tamale.**

I humbly request your time and cooperation in completing this questionnaire. Information collected from this questionnaire will be handled with high confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes by the researcher.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please, tick the appropriate option

1. Gender:

Male Female

2. Age:

25 and below 26 – 35 36 – 45 46 – 55 56 and above





3. Education level:

- Certificate Diploma Bachelors Masters and above

4. How long have you been working with UDS?

- 5 years and below 6 – 10 years 11 – 20 years 21 – 30 years 31years
and above

5. How would you rate your performance in UDS?

- Excellent Good Not sure Weak Very weak

6. Generally, how satisfied are you with communication in UDS?

- Very satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very
dissatisfied

SECTION B: EXISTING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

1. Please, rate how often the following channels of communication are used in UDS.

1. Always 2. Very often 3. Sometimes 4. Not often 5.
Not at all

S/n	Communication Channels	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Face-to-Face communication (Verbal)					
2.	Written communication					
3.	Computer-mediated communication (Electronic)					
4.	Mobile/Telephone communication					

2. Please, indicate how important the following channels of communication are in helping you effectively communicate in UDS.

1. Critical 2. Important 3. Somewhat important 4. Slightly important 5. Not important

S/n	Communication Channels	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Face-to-Face communication (Verbal)					
2.	Written communication					
3.	Computer-mediated communication (Electronic)					
4.	Mobile/Telephone communication					

3. Use the scale below and show how often Management uses the following channels to communicate with you.

1. Always 2. Often 3. Sometimes 4. Not often 5. Not at all 6. Not applicable

S/n	Communication Channels	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Voice Mail						
2.	Email						
3.	Mobile/Telephone Calls						
4.	SMS						
5.	WhatsApp						
6.	Intranet						
7.	Bulletins						
8.	Circulars						
9.	Memoranda						
10.	Faxes						
11.	Reports						
12.	Minutes						
13.	Meetings/Seminars/Training						
14.	Websites						
15.	Publications/Newsletters						

4. Use the following scale and show how effective the following channels of communication is in UDS.



1. Very effective 2. Somewhat effective 3. Neither ineffective nor effective
4. Somewhat ineffective 5. Very ineffective

S/n	Communication Channels	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Voice Mail					
2.	Email					
3.	Mobile/Telephone Calls					
4.	SMS					
5.	WhatsApp					
6.	Intranet					
7.	Bulletins					
8.	Circulars					
9.	Memoranda/Letters					
10.	Reports					
11.	Minutes					
12.	Meetings/Seminars/Training					
13.	Websites					
14.	Publications/Newsletters					

5. Please, indicate by rating your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree
5. Strongly disagree

S/n	Communication flow	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1.	Most of the information I receive comes from my Supervisor/Head.					
2.	My ideas are normally passed on to Management.					
3.	Most of the information I receive on a daily basis come from my co-workers.					
4.	I feel comfortable sharing ideas directly with Management.					
5.	Most of the daily communication I receive comes in the form of 'directives' from Management.					
6.	I often share ideas with my Supervisor/Head.					





7.	I feel comfortable sharing ideas with my Supervisor/Head.					
8.	The lines of communication are 'open' all the way to top Management in UDS.					
9.	My Supervisor/Head gives me enough feedback about the way I perform my work so that I can improve.					
Coordination/knowledge sharing						
1.	In UDS, important information is a scarce resource.					
2.	In most situations, I receive the information I need to effectively perform my work.					
3.	My co-workers and I readily share important information that is critical to our success.					
4.	I receive a large amount of the information I need through formal channels.					
5.	Most of the information I need is received through informal channels.					
Effective communication						
1.	Most of the information I receive from my Supervisor/Head is detailed and accurate.					
2.	Most of the information I receive from my co-workers is detailed and accurate.					
3.	A large amount of the information passed down from Management is detailed and accurate.					
4.	The instructions that come from Management are clear and consistent.					
5.	The information I receive from Management is always reliable.					
6.	I usually get messages from Management late.					
7.	I perform well because my Supervisor/Head shares information with me.					
8.	I am motivated because my Supervisor/Head involves me in decision making.					
9.	I experience healthier participation and good relationship with my Supervisor/Head.					

6. In your view, have I left out any existing channel that Management uses to communicate to staff? Please specify.....
.....

7. Generally, how do you think Management is at disseminating information among its employees?

- a) Below Average b) Poor c) Neutral d) Fair e) Good

8. In your observation, is UDS' communication with its employees effective? Why?
.....
.....

9. Do you have any suggestion(s) that might better facilitate information flow in UDS?.....
.....

SECTION C: COMMUNICATION CHANNEL PREFERENCE

1. Indicate the order in which you prefer the following channels of communication in the scale of 1 – most preferred to 4 – not preferred.

- a) Written communication channel []
- b) Computer-mediated communication (Electronic) channel []
- c) Face-to-Face communication (Verbal) channel []
- d) Mobile/Telephone communication channel []



2. Indicate your reasons for your preference in 2 above.

.....

.....

3. Use the following scale and indicate your preference for the channel of communication.

1. Most preferred 2. A little preferred 3. Not preferred

S/n	Communication Channels	1	2	3
1.	Voice Mail			
2.	Email			
3.	Mobile/Telephone Calls			
4.	SMS			
5.	WhatsApp			
6.	Intranet			
7.	Bulletins			
8.	Circulars			
9.	Memoranda/Letters			
10.	Reports			
11.	Minutes			
12.	Meetings/Seminars/Training			
13.	Websites			
14.	Publications/Newsletters			

4. Is there any other channel that you prefer that has been left out from the list above?

Specify.....

.....



5. Why do you prefer the channels that you have marked 1 in the table above?

.....

6. What are some of the weaknesses associated with the current channels of communication?.....

.....

7. Do you have any suggestion(s) to improve the choice of channels UDS uses to communicate with its employees? Please, write your suggestion(s).

.....

SECTION D. BARRIERS FACING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

1. Please, rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Neither disagree nor agree 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree

S/n.	Barriers to Effective Communication Channels	1	2	3	4	5
1.	In order to share ideas/information with Management I must go through my Supervisor/Head.					
2.	Management often seems hesitant to communicate news about the institution to employees.					
3.	Most of the information I receive on a daily basis is passed down through the 'grapevine'.					



4.	There are too many 'gatekeepers' in UDS that hinder the flow of important information.					
5.	Management appears committed to keeping the channels of communication 'open'.					



2. Where do you think communication from UDS often breaks down?

- a) Governing Council level
- b) Top Management level
- c) Middle Management level
- d) Lower Management level
- e) Not sure
- f) Other: specify _____

3. What are some of the barriers you encounter in your communication in UDS?

.....
.....

4. I would appreciate your thoughts on how UDS can most effectively communicate with its _____ employees.

.....
.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. What is your position?
2. How long have you held this position?
3. How long have you worked with UDS?
4. What are your roles in relation to communication in UDS?
5. How would you rate communication between Management and employees?
6. What form of communication is used between you and your subordinates? –
Upward, Downward, Lateral or Mixed?
7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the form of communication used in
6 above?
8. What channels does Management use to communicate with subordinates? Written
channel, Computer mediated channel, Face-to-face channel, Mobile/ Telephone
channel.
9. How effective do you think they are?
10. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the channels in 8 above?
11. How long does it take for information to reach the intended employees?
12. How do you send feedback to Management? And how does Management treat it?
13. What channels do you prefer to communicate with in UDS?
14. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the channels in 13 above?
15. What would you suggest to improve communication in UDS?
16. Do you think the employees receive information from Management in time?



17. Do you receive feedback from employees in time?
18. What barriers do you encounter when communicating with the employees?
19. What would you suggest to overcome the above barriers?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION

