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ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS IN GHANA: A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

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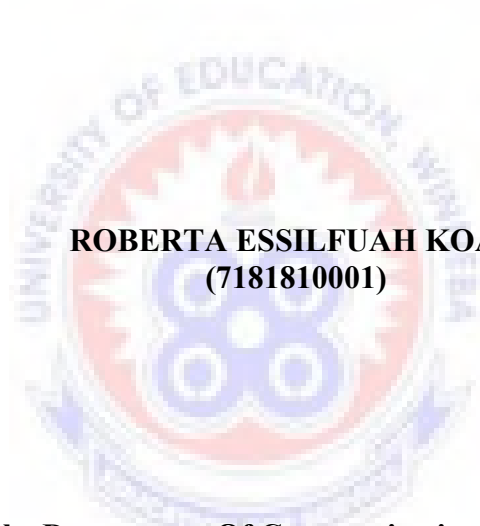
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FEBRUARY, 2021

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Roberta Essilfuah Koah, declare that this Thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: …………………………………

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION.

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **MR. KWESI AGGREY**

SIGNATURE: …………………………………

DATE: …………………………………………

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my staunchest supporter, friend and mentor Modestus. You are

a priceless part of my life and I'm grateful and honoured to have met you.

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I am grateful to the Almighty God who protected and granted me good health to pursue this programme.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the organisational communication of subvented organisations in Ghana focusing on the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). It specifically sought to identify the policy framework guiding NCCE's communication practices, the communication practices employed by NCCE and the ramifications implied in the communication structure of NCCE. The objectives of the study were to understand the communication practices of NCCE and how those communication practices influence the work of the Commission. The study was guided by the Media Richness Theory and Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication (1970). It employed a case study design within a qualitative research approach, with data sourced from semi-structured interviews and documents. The interview data came from purposively selected key NCCE staff of the departments of Corporate and Communication Affairs, Programmes, and Human Resource. Expert opinions were also sought through semi-structured interviews from academia and the Electoral Commission of Ghana. The documents analysed also involved communication-related productions of the Commission. The analysis discovered that, although communication is vitally important for the effective performance of NCCE's constitutionally and socially mandated civic education functions, the Commission operates without a codified and/or published communication policy. Yet such a document is necessary to regulate and assess its communication and educative functions. Instead, the Commission's communication thrives on established conventions and ad hoc measures as and when needed. The significant implication of the findings was that NCCE's communication could be haphazardly organised, making the Commission appear not serious and laidback with its communication. The study therefore suggested the need for the Commission to develop a proactive communication policy to serve as a road map for its civic education activities. Nevertheless, the study revealed that NCCE's internal and external communication practices appeared to reflect modern corporate communication trends. Though the study explored the communication structure of one public organisation, insights generated could illuminate broader organisational communication dynamics, especially in non-profit public organisations in Ghana.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of Study

The relevance of communication to the survival and impact of organisations or institutions in society is no longer debatable. According to Keyton (2014), communication is a process involving the transfer of information and common understanding from one individual to another. Communication provides a means by which individuals, groups and institutions reach and affect others and are affected as well. Therefore, issues to do with individual and institutional communication ought to be taken seriously because it engenders knowledge acquisition and sharing, empowerment, discernment and development.

The centrality of communication in the affairs of humans has attracted academic attention. Although Littlejohn and Foss (2011) have explained that it is difficult to offer a precise definition for ‗communication', several communication theorists (Del Bario, 2015; McQuail & Windhal, 2003; Ruben, Stewart & Householder, 1984; Tubbs & Moss, 1984; Wood, 2004) have attempted to define communication as a day-to-day interaction through which experiences, information and opinions are shared with one another. The Project Management Institute White Paper (2016) observes that impactful relationships are built and sustained between individuals when there is dialogue or a shared experience as Schramm (1956) puts it. It can be argued that communication can be a tool to influence social change among a group of people.

This study is about organisational communication in subvented organisations in Ghana, focusing on the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE). Specifically, the study explored the communication dynamics of NCCE in terms of

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the nature of its communication system, the internal communication and external communication practices as well as the role of communication in facilitating the work of the NCCE. At the end, the study aims to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of communication in subvented organisations in Ghana from the standpoint of the National Commission for Civic Education.

Subvented organisations can be described as government-funded establishments which are set up for specific purposes such as to produce and deliver goods and services on behalf of the government. Some examples of such organisations in Ghana are Social Welfare Department, Ghana Health Service, Ghana AIDS Commission, Ghana Police Service, National Commission for Civic Education, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice and Ghana Education Service. These institutions are usually established by legislation or executive powers and their function plays a crucial role in contributing to the civic and democratic life of the nation. Subvented organisations depending on its function can be placed in two categories, that is, profit oriented and non-profit-oriented. Subvented organisations with a profit motive like COCOBOD, Bank of Ghana, Agricultural Development Bank and Public Universities for example put in efforts to communicate a preferred image to their publics as opposed to other subvented organisations without a profit motive. Kumbhar (2013) observes that communication needs of profit-making organisations - since their central purpose is to make money- are different and unique from the communication needs of other organisations. For the purpose of this study however, the National Commission for Civic Education which is a non-profit oriented subvented organisation will be the perused to understand the communication of the second category of subvented organisations in Ghana.

NCCE is a constitutionally enshrined institution that is mandated to educate, sensitise and create awareness among Ghanaians on their civic rights and responsibilities as well as upholding the nation's democracy and constitutional rule. Chapter 19 of Ghana's 1992 Constitution (ACT 452) among others enjoins the institution to offer support to the development of a shared relationship and dialogue between the institution and their publics. The NCCE therefore occupies critical place in the governance structure of Ghana's democratic and governance system. And this study begins from the premise that communication is vital in the workings of NCCE.

Yet, it appears that very little research has been done on subvented organisations in Ghana and the National Commission for Civic Education on its engagements with the people. Thus, little information exists about the degree to which the Commission has been successful in carrying out its mostly communication-driven mandate. The few studies on it have focused on civic awareness and participation (Abudu & Fuseini, 2014; Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey, 2015; Boampong, 2017; Niworo, Gasu & Achanso, 2016) leaving out overarching questions about the effectiveness or otherwise of the institution's communication approaches. This information is relevant for an understanding of the extent to which the NCCE is reaching and helping the people, especially ordinary ones, with socio-political information to enhance political participation in the country.

One of the most important aspects of communication which is often not much highlighted is its purpose. The purpose for communication as cogently expressed by Padilla and Bigomong (2003) and Igoy and Saymo (2004), is to be discerning, gain knowledge, express opinions and to build relationships. NCCE's communication's purpose is to build a well-informed and responsible citizenry. Being conversant with the components of communication and how communicated messages are received and

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interpreted by people; how the messages are processed by the receivers to alter their perceptions as well as the appropriate communication tools and channels needed for specific messages (Wilcox et al., 2000. p, 164), can be a means to achieve the purpose of communication. In addition, being knowledgeable of the relationship between the factors, approaches, impacts and the effects of communication can help improve communication and correspondence skills in listening, writing and conversation (De Xian, 2020).

A point worth emphasising is that communication may succeed or fail. Communication may be said to succeed if the message is well received and understood by the intended receiver. Conversely, communication can be unsuccessful when the message fails to reach the intended receiver and achieve the intended purpose(s). It can be argued that, many projects planned and implemented by organisations have become of no use or ―white elephant projects‖ as a result of failed communication. A study conducted by the Project Management Institute (2013) states that nine out ten CEOs believe that communication is very essential for every project and that, poor communication contributes to project failure. In addition, APMG International (2017) observes that, although technical capability is key to the success of a delivery project, the majority of unsuccessful projects have not failed due to technical incompetence. They have failed due to miscommunication. For this reason, organisations need effective communication approaches for a successful functioning of the organisation. In the case of citizenship education for instance, communication is priceless and might contribute to the heightening of civic awareness and the stability of democracy for a general enrichment of lives among citizens when it is successful and vice versa when communication fails. In this light, it is important for

organisations to be strategic in their communication because they need to succeed in their communication.

According to Ahn (2012), for any policy to work, public institution communicators must bear in mind the characteristics (social status, literacy, social networks, environment, demographics Tench and Yeomans, 2006) of their audience to guide them in selecting suitable communication methods to yield feedback and the required understanding and participation of the audience. This is because audiences or publics may choose whether to accept or decline a message and also interpret the message as they desire depending on the kind of message and how it is presented. Croteau and Hoynes (2014) observe that, ―...people cannot be told what to think or how to behave in any direct way because people are not nearly stupid, gullible or easy to dominate as they are perceived to be" (p. 261)

Therefore, an underestimation of an audiences‗ characteristics can lead to unsuccessful communication. As a result, public institutions are to strive to obtain the essential data of their audiences before setting out to communicate with them and to receive feedback and participation (Akomeah, 2015).

The world in modern times has become more and more complex and organisations strive to capture the attention or support of various stakeholders including investors and donors, government officials, special interest group leaders, employees, customers and the general public (Hallahan et al, 2007). For instance, Ahn (2012) argues that ―our information and communication environment is changing, inducing individuals to adapt to new modes of communication" (p. 2). The advent of technological innovation, especially instant messaging and World Wide Web, has generally been referred to as a contributor to the significant changes in public communication. From the African perspective, Fosu and Ufuoma (2012) observe that,

Africa is now coming into contact with ―the digital revolution" which demands an alteration on how information is produced and accessed. Asante (1998) also observed how people in Africa have developed new ways of accessing and consuming information in line with communication opportunities brought by new information technological utilities and trends. Yet, while there has been a change in how people engage in public communication, Ahn (2012) observes that, public institutions and their mode of communication remain relatively unchanged, creating a mismatch.

It was therefore critical and a point of interest for this study to explore the organisational communication of such public institutions in Ghana. This is because an institution that does not apply appropriate communication approaches may end up alienating itself from its audience, which could produce undesired outcomes for the nation. Akomeah (2015) argues that public institutions whose duty is to communicate with all citizens are to adopt and apply suitable communication skills to reach their publics. That is to say, selecting and employing the appropriate set of communication skills can foster the realisation of the mission of a public institution and vice versa. As a matter of fact, missions which often have been unsuccessful have been caused by ineffective communication (Project Management institute White Paper, 2013).

1.1.1 Organisational communication and subvented organisations

This section discusses organisational communication, internal and external communication as well as the upward, downward, horizontal and informal flow of information in subvented organisations. Several opinions have been shared about organisational communication. Theaker (2004) opines that organisational communication is ―an instrument of management by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communication are harmonised as effectively and

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efficiently as possible so as to create a favourable basis for relationships with groups upon which the company is dependent". Also, Allen at al. (1996, p. 384) are of the view that, organisational communication is the process of ―sending and receiving messages that create and maintain a system of consciously coordinated activities". These opinions of what organisational communication is, suggests that communication is important for an organisation or a vital spark of an organisation as Rensburg (1996) puts it. To Ritter (2003), communication plays an important role in the understanding of the value of intangible organisational assets.

To Njomo (2013), organisational communication is a way through which individuals who have an interest in the happenings of an organisation connect internally and externally. In other words, organisational communication provides an opportunity for affiliated individuals of an organisation to be abreast with the communication activities and behaviours which takes place in an organisation. These definition goes to show that organisational communication is dynamic, complex, ongoing, functional and purposeful (Steinberg, 2007).

There are four types of organisational communication. These are interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup and public or mass communication (Dawkin, 2005; Hume, 2001). Interpersonal communication refers to communication between people which usually occurs face-to-face for example, communication between a field staff of NCCE and community members during a civic education exercise. Intragroup communication is the type of communication which occurs within a small group such as a department in an organisation. Communication which occurs in the intergroup communication category refers to the sharing of information between groups of people, for instance between the communication department and the research department of NCCE. Lastly, public or mass communication refers to communication

created for public consumption. This type of communication is often used for public education exercises by organisations with an educative function like NCCE for the reason that, public or mass communication relates to several people of varied background at once. Some examples of this communication are radio, television or newspaper advertisement.

Generally speaking, internal communication involves the communication activities and behaviours among members of an organisation. Hume (2015) observes that, internal communication encompasses all communication within an organisation. It includes communication channels within an organisation like newsletters, noticeboards, emails, memos and staff meeting as well as all interactions within an organisation that convey meaning. With the above assertion, it is undeniable that internal communication is required for the smooth running of an organisation.

Manning (1992) observes that internal communication is a vital tool for binding an organisation, enhancing employee morale, promoting transparency and reducing attrition. Also, Guffey et al. (2010) suggest that, organisation communication is used to issue and clarify procedures and policies, make improvements and changes, coordinate activities and to evaluate and reward personnel. In simple terms, internal communication contributes to an overall harmonious ambience in an organisation. As a matter of fact, Lewis (2007) advances that, well-informed employees are more satisfied, have an enriched connection with the organisation and therefore consciously work towards achieving the goal of the organisation.

The channels employed to transport information is a reflection of the internal communication structure of an organisation (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). This suggests that the internal communication structure of an organisation stems from the

structure of the organisation's strategy and the organisational culture (Chandler, 1962; van Riel, 1995). The communication structure must provide for communication in three distinct directions: downward, upward and horizontal (Lunenberg, 2010). These directions prescribe the outline within which communication is carried out in an organisation. Channels of communication in organisations can either be formal or informal. Upward and downward communication flows are generally in line with the formal procedures within an organisation. Formal communication channels such as the line communication takes the form of a downward or upward flow (Greenbaum et al., 1988; van Riel, 1995) whereas informal communication channels include interpersonal management communication and grapevine (van Riel 1995, van Riel & Fombrun, 2006).

Downward communication is the communication process where information is transmitted from higher to lower levels of an organisation. In most Ghanaian organisations, downward communication is used in transporting information to employees. In most cases, the topic of such information is messages on job instructions and job rationales, for example, describing the tasks and procedures connected to the rules and policies of the organisation, feedback, or explaining the ideology of the organisation (Nazarova, 2015). Canary (2011) identifies five general purposes of downward communication:

1. Implementation of goals, strategies and objectives
2. Job instructions and rationale
3. Procedures and practices
4. Performance feedback
5. Socialisation

Downward communication is used for directives, instructions and information to organisational members however, messages can be misconstrued (Tourish, 2010) therefore making communication unsuccessful.

As connoted by its name, upward communication refers to the communication that is transferred from staff members to management staff. Lunnenberg (2010 p.4) suggests that this type of communication is necessary to determine if staff members ―have understood information sent downwards". Also, upward communication is used to address grievances and disputes, performance report and financial and accounting information (Cananry, 2011). More importantly, ―with the practice of upward communication, the management of an organisation knows the feelings of employees about organisational policies, feelings toward their job, and working procedures" (Nazarova, 2015, p. 23).

A divergence from the upward and downward communication is the horizontal communication. Horizontal communication is the transmission of information by people on the same level within an organisation (Nazarova, 2015) for example interpersonal management interactions. Horizontal communication becomes instrumental with a greater sized and complex organisation. The purpose for this flow of communication is for coordination which enables departments to work with other departments without having to follow rigid up and down channels. (Lunenberg, 2010). Canary (2011) posits that horizontal communication falls within one of these categories: intrapersonal problem solving, interdepartmental coordination, staff advice to line departments.

Informal communication with a grapevine metaphor is acknowledged by organisational communication scholars as having a significant role in performance at the workplace. Daniels and Spiker (1994. p, 102) describe the concept of grapevine

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communication —as the concept of spreading information within an organisation when a person A gives a message to person B ant to C, and these two people send a message further to people D, E and F". Information spread through this means are usually information about other people in the organisation or happening in the organisation. Grapevine communication can be initiated by any member of the organisation as research has discovered that the information passed is usually accurate (Daniel & Spiker, 1994). Nazarova (2015) suggests that formal and informal communication are not be seen as separate but should be viewed as an intertwined network for the reason that, the combination of formal and informal communication is the reality within organisations.

As mentioned earlier, organisational communication concerns communications with both internal and external audiences. Having shed light on internal communication in the previous paragraphs, this section is focused on external communication. External communication refers to the communication directed to the outside and involves the communication of an organisation with its environment (Juris, 2004). In other words, external communication involves creating alliances with stakeholders and publics of an organisation. In the case of NCCE whose main function is to enlighten citizens of Ghana on their constitutional rights, privileges and responsibilities, its external communication is assumed to be directed to all Ghanaians as well as other stakeholders and collaborators including government agencies and institutions like CHRAJ, Electoral Commission, Ghana Police, media houses etc.

Stuart et al. (2007) observes that, creating and sustaining productive relationship with the external publics of an organisation is of considerable importance for the reason that this initiative contributes to the achievement of mutual beneficial goals for both the organisation and the publics.

1.1.2 Effective Organisational and Strategic Communication

As the world becomes more and more complex with time, organisations strive to capture the attention and support of various stakeholders including investors and donors, government officials, special interest group leaders, employees, customers and the general public. For this reason, strategic communication which is the ―purposeful use of communication by an organisation to fulfil its mission" (Hallahan et al, 2007, p. 3) is essential. According to Thorson (2013), strategic communication has to do with the concerns of the management body of an organisation about communicative activities geared towards achieving the organisation‗s mission.

The importance of effective communication for any organisation, whether with a profit or non-profit orientation, cannot be overemphasised. Kumbhar (2013) observes that the communication needs of profit-making organisations - since their central purpose is to make money- are different and unique from the communication needs of other organisations. It can be argued that, with profitability in mind, organisations like banks, hotels and telecommunication service providers, for instance, curate messages like discount sales, sale promotions, raffles, philanthropy, etc. to win their target audience over and for the target audience to patronise their services over their competitors. They may also actively and very openly engage in activities such as corporate social responsibilities to display to their publics their concern for the welfare of both the publics and their environment, which may often give them a favourable positioning and an added advantage over their competitors.

Similarly, not-for profit-oriented organisations also employ communications crafted to support the pursuit of their mission, which is often to render services for the betterment of individuals, society and the nation. Not-for profit-oriented organisation with particular focus on democratic institutions like the Ghana Police, Commission on

Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), Electoral Commission of Ghana, just to mention a few, unlike the other organisations mentioned above, do not monetised their services. Their mission is usually grounded in the service of humanity, to promote development, enhance democracy and inspire social change. For these reasons, their communication activities ought to be strategic and compelling to reach the targeted audiences, be accessed and imbibed for the needed reaction to be achieved.

This study is concerned with the second category. It is focused on NCCE, a public non-for-profit institution mandated to provide civic education about socio-political issues to inhabitants of the country, as discussed below.

1.1.3   Civic Education and Socio-Political Participation

Various views have been shared about civic education. Dahl (2002) posits that civic education is the type of education that fosters democratic attitudes, skills and knowledge to engage and work on important public issues and make democracy a way of life. To Dahl (2002) and Branson (1998), civic education is an important component of education that prepares citizens for life in the public realm and engages them in the analysis of major rules and regulations of society, governance, democracy, public and private institutions, vital social issues and enables them to find ways to resolve social problems with the requisite knowledge and skills. Also, Rietbergen-McCracken (2008. p, 1) is of the view that civic education can be broadly defined as providing information and learning experiences to equip and empower citizens to participate in democratic processes. In sum, it can be argued from the explanations above that civic education aims at producing a well-informed and

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responsible citizenry who are capable of developing themselves, their society and their nation as a whole.

This study is anchored on the institution expected to lead in civic education activities in Ghana and how it goes about achieving this objective. The NCCE is an important democratic institution in Ghana because of its crucial informative role in the governance structure of the country, a key consideration that motivated this study. Rietbergen-McCracken (2008 p, 1) asserts that the overall goal of civic education is to promote civic participation and support democratic and participatory governance. She also observes that:

> …the idea behind civic education is to promote the demand for good governance (i.e., an informed and engaged public), as a necessary complement to efforts to improve the practice of good governance. Civic education has been used to address a wide variety of political and governance issues (e.g., corruption, civic apathy or post-conflict reconciliation) as well as important social issues (e.g., domestic violence, drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS).

Similarly, Branson (1998) avers that each generation must be deliberately educated on democracy since ―each new generation is a new people that must acquire the knowledge, learn the skills, and develop the dispositions or traits of private and public character that undergird a constitutional democracy". In that vein, the changes in social institutions, political party systems and communication processes in these contemporary times are an important time for communication scholars to be concerned with. More importantly, understanding the role of communication in shaping political relations and in shaping the attitudes of citizens about politics, government and society itself is very crucial (Bennett, 2000), hence the focus of this study.

A significant body of literature has linked civic education to political participation among citizens (Browne, 2013; DelliCarpini & Keeter, 1996; Levine &

Lopez 2004; Verba et al., 1995). Political Participation has been defined by Huntington and Nelson (1976, p. 3) as an ―activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision-making". Lamprianou (2013) also denotes that political participation is the public involvement in decision making while Brady (2003) simply puts it as going to vote. Galston (2001) posits that, civic knowledge promotes the participation of political and civic issues and a general trust of public life.

Yet, while scholars have focused on civic education as a contributor to political participation, it is argued that civic education activities organised and implemented by NCCE may not be limited to inspiring political participation alone. ―Political' here implies staging protests, speaking freely, voting, influencing or getting more actively involved in democratic processes (Munroe, 2002). It is observed that the NCCE per its mandate prescribed by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and deducing from its annual reports (www.ncce.gh.org) engages citizens on social issues which have included paying of taxes, sensitisation of an outbreak of an epidemic, sanitation, fundamental human rights and freedoms, child labour, child marriages, environmental conservation, people with disabilities, communal labour, etc.

Thus, there is ample evidence pointing to the fact that the duty of NCCE goes beyond steering citizens to be active participants in political issues; the organisation also engages in social issues as well. Therefore, this study will focus on exploring the communication system of the NCCE in relation to the socio-political aspects of civic education and its link to socio-political participation among citizens. Hence, socio-political participation in this study has been operationalised as the level of citizens' legal involvement actively or passively in social and political issues.

1.1.4 An overview of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)

̶The advancement of major democracies across the globe has been as a result of constitutional and political education. Education primarily drives the growth of nations based on the training and most importantly the skills it offers to the citizenry of nations" (Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey, 2015. p, 631). In Ghana, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) has been mandated with this responsibility of providing constitutional and political education to the citizenry. This is because, the sovereignty of Ghana as provided in Article one, Clause one of the 1992 Constitution, belongs to the People of Ghana and for whose name and for whose welfare the powers of government are to be exercised in the manner and within the limits laid down in the Constitution. NCCE is an autonomous government institution which was created by Chapter 19, Article 231 and Act 452 of the Constitution with the mission ̶to promote and sustain democracy and inculcate in the Ghanaian citizenry the awareness of their rights and obligations through civic education". It was inaugurated in August, 1993.

The functions of NCCE as prescribed by Article 233 in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana shall be:

a. To create and sustain within the society the awareness of the principles and objectives of the Constitution as the fundamental law of the people of Ghana;

b. To educate and encourage the public to defend the Constitution at all times, against all forms of abuse and violation;

c. To formulate for the consideration of Government, from time to time, programmes at the national, regional and district levels aimed at realising the objectives of the Constitution;

d. To formulate, implement and oversee programmes intended to inculcate in the citizens of Ghana awareness of their civic responsibilities and an appreciation of their rights and obligations as free people; and

e. To assess for the information of Government, the limitations to the achievement of true democracy arising from the existing inequalities between different strata of the population and make recommendations for re-dressing these inequalities; and

f. To perform other functions that Parliament may prescribe.

Additional functions of the Commission include organising and undertaking programmes which focuses on citizens' participation in electoral processes, citizens' participation in community/ local development, women empowerment and participation in political development, the promotion and the protection of the rights of children, the vulnerable and the excluded in society. In addition to these, the NCCE also engages in sensitising citizens on issues on gender, HIV/AIDS, peace and conflict resolution, revenue generation and tax education as well as overall mobilisation for national development.

Owing to the expansive nature of their obligation as listed above, the NCCE encourages partnerships and collaborations with the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, Civil Society Organisations and other stakeholders to gain access to all citizens of Ghana and to help in shaping the democracy of Ghana. (www.ncce.gh.org)

Currently, NCCE has district, municipal, metropolitan and regional offices in all two hundred and seventy-five (275) constituencies of Ghana with a total number of 1,342 staff (NCCE, 2019). It is worth noting that at NCCE, all staff regardless of their position by appointment, also play the role as civic educators alongside their default

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positions. NCCE is managed by a Chairman, two Deputy Chairpersons and four Commission Members at the head office which in the greater Accra region. The head office is made up five main departments which supervises activities and programmes in all NCCE offices nationwide. These departments are: Programmes, Finance and Account, Human Resource and Administration, Communications and Corporate Affairs and Research (with a Gender and Equality desk). The two main departments responsible for the entire communication function of the institution - which is also the area of interest for this study - are the Programmes and the Communication and Corporate Affairs and Departments. While the Programmes department organises and carries out educational activities, the Communication and Corporate Affairs departments oversees the

1.2   Statement of the Problem

A significant body of literature exists providing various perspectives on organisational communication (Nobile, 2003). For example, many studies have investigated the connection between organisational communication and the realisation of organisational goals (Bambacas & Patrickson, 2008; Elving, 2005; Falkheimer, 2014; Hoogervost, van dan Flier & Koopman, 2004; Kelly, 2000), job satisfaction (Hooper, 2009; Koseoglu et al, 2010; Nobile, 2003; Nobile, 2007), and so on. Others have focused on internal communication and its dynamics (Cornelissen, 2008; Ruck, Welch & Menara, 2017; Vercic & Vokic, 2017) and external communication and its dynamics (Kopaneva, 2020; Lehtinen & Aaltonen, 2020; Suh, 2018), while a few have studied organisational communication generally in Ghana and its challenges (Abugre, 2012; Campion, 2018; Sakyi, 2010) as elaborated below.

Extant literature has established the connection between organisational communication and the realisation of organisational goals (Elving, 2005; Kelly, 2000). Many of such studies indicate that there is a correlative relationship between organisational communication and work output (Aggrey, 2015; Falkheimer, 2014; Nobile, 2007; Vercic & Vokic, 2017). Empirical evidence demonstrates that all organisations regardless of their purpose cannot exist without communication (Bantz, 1993; Smeltzer, Leonard & Hynes, 2002). Researchers, such as Theaker (2004) strongly assert that effective organisational communication could create a harmonious environment which fosters favourable relationships among individuals and groups that an organisation depends on.

Within the past few decades, studies have investigated the relationship between organisational communication and job satisfaction of employees (Kwateng, Osei & Abban, 2014; Nobile, 2003; Sualman, Razak, Hamzah & Darwis, 2019; Vermeir et al., 2018). These studies established that employees feel satisfied with their jobs when they are satisfied with communication in their organisation. Abugre (2012) investigated the link between managerial interaction with employees and its implications and found that ineffective managerial interaction increases the chances of employees leaving an organisation due to low levels of satisfaction. Additionally, Sakyi (2010) investigated a relationship between organisational communication and communication challenges and found that the direction of communication flow within an organisation has a significant impact on the success or otherwise of that organisation. The author specifically found that a top-down approach, which was chosen by the Management of the Ghana Health Service to train their workforce on a new health reform limited the level of comprehension among stakeholders and health workers.

Concerning internal and external communication, Manning (1992) and Gufey et. al (2009) posit that internal communication pumps life into organisations. To these authors, internal communication helps to shed light on organisational procedures and policies, facilitates improvements and changes, directs activities and appraises and rewards personnel. In addition to these benefits, internal communication boosts employee morale, supports transparency and reduces the chances of organisational collapse (Guffey et. al, 2009). External communication, on the other hand, is communication that leaves and comes into an organisation (Cheney, 2004). Oliver (2008) also opines that external communication is the exchange of information between an organisation and other organisations, groups or individuals outside an organisation's formal structure through channels such as face-to-face meetings, print or broadcast media and electronic communication technologies including internet.

While many of the above studies emanate from societies outside of Ghana, they also mostly focused on the implications of organisational communication on corporate development, the perspectives adopted (as indicated below) seems to ignore other important dimensions of organisational communication. For example, the capacity of communication to create inclusiveness and a sense of belonging within and outside of organisations, as well as within structures in society are largely unexplored, therefore creating a critical gap in the literature.

Concerning Ghana, studies have identified challenges with communication in organisations (Akomeah, 2015; Ansong, 2013; Sakyi, 2010). For instance, Ansong (2013), whose study explored the external communication of public institutions in Ghana from the perspective of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, concluded that interactivity and dialogue between the organisation and its publics is low. This was because of the organisation's excessive preference for using

mass media to reach its publics. Akomeah (2015) also investigated organisational communication from the standpoint of the Ghana Water Company Limited and identified that the organisation's communication approaches employed in reaching its publics were also ineffective. In addition, Sakyi's (2010) study identified that the implementation of health reforms in the Ghana health sector were ineffective as a result of a top-down communication approach employed by the management in the said sector.

What is more, studies in the field seems to have given little attention and insight to organisational communication in subvented organisations, especially the non-profit ones, such as National Commission for Civic Education, Social Welfare Department, Judicial Service, Ghana Health Service and the Commission on Human Right and Administrative Justice, among others. Yet, it is the considered view of this researcher that these are unique and key political and social institutions that should command research attention. Their uniqueness is centred on the premise that they are state-owned and ̶receive substantial recurrent funding from the public purse, and therefore makes them accountable to both the Government and the community" (Guide to Corporate Governance for Subvented Organisations, 2015, p. 4). They are legally and ethically mandated and/or obliged to provide programmes, goods and services that should provide welfare to inhabitants (Tench & Yeomans, 2006). Hence, Akomeah (2015) recommends that because of the significant role communication plays in an organisation, there is need for scholarly scrutiny of especially public organisations, hence the focus of this study.

The focus of this study is to investigate organisational communication of subvented organisations in Ghana through the lens of the National Commission for Civic Education, the state institution mandated to provide civic education to

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Ghanaians. According to Dahal (2002), civic education prepares citizens to engage in a democratic way of life and deal with other important public issues. In addition, Akplu (1986) asserts that, nation building will be exasperating and difficult without citizenship education. To Akplu, the political and economic consciousness of citizens must be stimulated in order to build a united and strong nation. Deducing from the assertions above, I argue that the contribution of civic education to nation building cannot be overlooked nor overemphasised.

Yet, organisational communication in subvented organisations in Ghana appears to be a partially explored area. For example, Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey (2015) have observed that very few researchers both in Ghana and abroad have conducted works on NCCE. The few available studies on the NCCE (Abudu & Fuseini, 2014; Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey, 2015; Boampong, 2017; Niworo, Gasu & Achanso, 2016) have mostly been quantitative and focused on topics relating to citizens' awareness of civic messages, citizens' political participation and the effects of civic education. The implication is that little research has been done specifically on the communication structure of the organisation. However, one study (Boampong, 2017), which ventured into the communications of NCCE, which is also the area of interest of this study, focused on exploring citizens' opinions on the communication approaches of NCCE. Although an important contribution towards an overall understanding of the communication of NCCE, Boampong's (2017) study was exogenous to the organisation and does not tackle crucial issues concerning the stated communications policy or strategy of the organisation, the ideas behind the strategy, the relevance and appropriateness of the strategy in today's world, among others. Yet, these issues are critically vital for an understanding of the effectiveness of the organisation, and thus are of prime concern to this current study. Boampong (2017) even recommended that

further studies on NCCE should explore NCCE communications practise from the within the organisation itself.

Consequently, this current qualitative study sought to investigate the communication system or approaches of NCCE and the implications thereof. Importantly, the survival and fruits of democracy in Ghana depends largely on how informed people are, which the basic function of NCCE is. Thus, it is vital to scrutinise the institution's communication strategies to inform the extent to which the Institution is employing rewarding communication methods in its educative function and other related matters. This would be achieved with data from participants from the NCCE and other experts in governance and academia. Based on the above problem statement, the following research objectives and questions emerged.

1.3   Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study involve:

1. To investigate the policy framework guiding NCCE's communication practices.

2. To examine the communication strategies employed by the organisation.

3. To investigate the consequences of NCCE's communication structure for its work.

1.4   Research questions

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What policy framework guides NCCE's communication practices?

2. What communication strategies are employed by NCCE?

3. What are the implications of NCCE's communication structure for its work?

1.5   Significance of the study

This interest of this study was to find out the organisational communication of subvented organisations in Ghana with a focus on NCCE's communication structure. Conducting this study would be beneficial to academia and other relevant stakeholders for a number of reasons. Primarily, the study will enlighten readers on NCCE as an institution, its mandate and communication approaches used in pursuing the achievement of its mandate. Again, the findings from this study will be informative to the management of NCCE and other relevant stakeholders about issues concerning its communication policy and how it affects the institution's mandate, to maximise their efforts in working towards achieving their mandate.

Lastly, according to Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey (2015), very little research exists on the National Commission for Civic Education. For that matter, this study will contribute to the available body of knowledge about the said institution and also provide a springboard for future studies.

1.6   Scope of Study

Akplu (1986) argued that, nation building will be exasperating and difficult without citizenship education. He added that, to ―build a united and strong nation", the political and economic consciousness of the population must be stimulated. This study's focus therefore was on the National Commission for Civic Education of Ghana, an independent institution mandated by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to provide civic education to Ghanaians. The primary focus of the study was on the institution's communication policy and their implication(s) with regards to their mandate.

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1.7   Organisation of the study

This study is made up of five chapters. The first chapter which is also the introductory chapter outlines the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, the delimitation of the research and a summary of the chapter.

The second chapter, which is the preceding chapter comprises the literature review and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The research methods and procedures through which data was collected for analysis are presented in chapter three. In this chapter, matters discussed were clustered under subtopics which are: research approach, research design, sample and sampling technique, data collection methods, data collection procedure and method of data analysis, ethical issues, trustworthiness and credibility.

The fourth chapter outlines the findings and discussions of the data collected. Data gathered from the study were discussed in themes and analysed using the theories discussed in chapter two of the study. The fifth chapter summarises the study and provides conclusions predominantly from the findings and makes recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

The previous chapter presented the background of the study, where among others, the statement of the problem, research questions and significance are established. This current chapter reviews relevant literature on organisational communication, strategic communication, subvented organisation and other issues germane to the topic under study, its objectives and data setting. The chapter also discusses the theories underpinning the study (Media Richness Theory, Barnlund's Transactional Model of Communication, 1970) in a structure that begins with the literature review after which a discussion of the theories follows.

This review aims to discuss relevant issues associated with the theory and practice of organisational communication focusing generally on subvented organisations and specifically, the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE).

2.1.1   Strategic communication and its role in organisational effectiveness

Extant literature supports the view that communicating strategically in a business entity plays a crucial role in the overall success of the organisation. Conrad and Poole (2015) observe that communication generally is a process through which people act together, create, sustain and manage meanings within a particular context all geared toward the achievement of organisational goals. Drawing from Conrad and Poole's observation then, an organisation cannot be profitably viable without efficient communication flows. In support of this, scholars such as Manning (2010) and Theaker (2004) have discussed the usefulness of organisational communication as leading to high productivity, commitment to work, job satisfaction and healthy

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relationships between the organisation and its publics. It is therefore becoming increasingly important for organisations to be deliberate and intentional in their communication endeavours (Argenti, Howell & Beck 2005; Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Vercic & Sriramesh, 2007). It can be argued that because effective strategies respond better to demanding situations, there is the need for organisations to be deliberate and strategic with their communication.

In like manner, Argenti et al., (2005) described strategic communications as communication aligned with a company's total strategy, to spotlight and strengthen its strategic positioning. Likewise, Hallahan et al. (2007) consider strategic communication to be ―the purposeful use of communication by an organisation to fulfil its mission (p. 3). To Hallahan et al. (2007), strategic communication considers the organisation as a social actor since its existence in society contributes to the creation of public culture. Deducing from the above authors' arguments, the researcher observes that whiles Hallahan et al. (2007) view strategic communication from a functionalist point of view, Argenti et al., (2005) see the success of an organisation to be dependent on merging strategic communication into the overall policy of the organisation. On the other hand, Grunig (2006) avers that strategic communication is motivated by the way an organisation decides to relate with its stakeholders. This seems to imply that an organisation strategises its communication based on organisational and situational factors towards its relationship with stakeholders. Indeed, these varying understanding of strategic communication provides an evidence that strategic communication concerns an organisation having a clear direction for its communication activities. In view of this, I argue that strategic communication is important especially for subvented organisations. This is because unlike profit-oriented organisations that are perceived to be driven by image-building

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and profit, subvented organisations are supposed to be driven by their mandate and ethical responsibility to their society. Hence, subvented organisations require strategic communication in the pursuance of their mandate.

In brief, organisational communication entails both internal and external aspects (Theaker, 2004). While internal communication involves the generation and exchanges of messages within the organisation (Hume, 2015), external communication is directed at an organisation's outside publics, stakeholders and collaborators (Juris, 2004). The subsequent discussion will focus on these two dimensions of organisational communication and their implications.

2.1.2 Internal organisational communication and the effective communication.

Stohl (1995) asserts that organisational communication is a collective process where individuals in an organisation interact, generate and interpret messages through a one-way or two-way process. Many studies have discussed organisational communication focusing on internal communication processes. Scholars, such as Ritter (2003), have established the important role communication plays in achieving organisational goals within the value chain of organisations. Thus, over the past years, the interest of researchers has been drawn to communication within organisations (Olivera, Melo & Gonclaves, 2016), with several studies examining internal organisational communication from different angles. Smith and Mounter (2008) discussed the value of internal communication for organisational success and profitability and found that effective internal communication with an organisation's workforce is an essential tool for a lasting organisational development. In line with the above, Lewis (2007) also found that ineffective internal communication can breed low productivity of the employees, employee dissatisfaction, employee turnover,

absenteeism, lack of understanding of the business strategy and lack of a common direction.

Dawkins (2005) however, establishes that communicating and sharing information with colleagues in an organisation is often disregarded as everyone focusses on getting work done and achieving the organisation's objectives. Yet, for organisations to achieve their intended purposes, Grunig (1992) observes that communication within such organisations must be deliberately designed, implemented and managed. In addition, Grunig (1992, p.186) maintains that an organisation may reap benefits if the following communication activities are employed:

1. Employees can make decisions themselves since they have the tools and knowledge to know the ―right" decisions in line with the organisation's goals.

2. Staff can identify with the goals, mission and procedures of the organisation, which can result in a sense of ―making a difference" and increase effort and efficiency.

3. Departments will share more resources and information resulting in less duplication of work.

4. Day-to-day conflicts can be reduced since a lot of conflict within an organisation is as a result of conflicting ideas on what is important to the organisation.

Even though Grunig's concept of the above-mentioned communication activities present an ideal scenario of organisational communication. In a real-life context however, these propositions may pan out differently.

Many studies including Ruck and Welch (2012); Men (2014); Welch (2011) and Vercic, Vercic and Sriramesh (2011) have supported the views on the relationship between effective internal communication and the wellbeing of that organisation. In

short, there is a myriad of benefits to be derived from strategic internal communication for an organisation. Welch's (2011) work, for example, investigated employees' perspective of internal communication through a qualitative method of inquiry and discovered that it would be risky for management of an organisation to disregard employees' ability to access operational information via the employees' preferred internal communication media. This is because employees are a multi-dimensional set of diverse internal stakeholders rather than a single entity.

There is, thus, a strong case for strategic communication in every organisation, whether profit-oriented or not. Employees are to be seen as multidimensional individuals with divergent adaptability for different communication media. Regarding employees a group of divergent individuals is relevant for this study since it appears that most state-owned institutions employ generic media such as circulars, rather than being strategic in their communication endeavours.

Vercic, Vercic, & Sriramesh (2011) provided an important perspective on the technical and managerial function of internal communication. The authors discovered that internal communication can pull together elements of human resource management, communication, and marketing for common benefits. Similarly, Quirke (2012) asserts that businesses can use internal communication to turn strategy to action such as to improve customer service, improve the quality of the business, innovate, and manage change more efficiently. However, both assertions did not differentiate the effectiveness of communication in privately controlled and publicly controlled organisations.

Moreover, other works like Men (2014) investigated how leadership influences internal public relations through preferred communication channels between leaders and employees. Men's (2014) study leaned towards organisations

that practised symmetrical internal communication, a position that seems to be shared by public relations scholars, Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002). These scholars are of the view that symmetric internal communication is among the most efficient communication for employee relations. The study found that the type of communication channels used by leaders tend to affect employee satisfaction with their jobs. Specifically, the study found that employees tend to experience satisfaction when leaders employ face-to-face communication which is in tandem with the Media Richness Theory which was adopted in the study.

The Media Richness Theory has relevance to this current study because, like Men's (2014) work, this study also attempts to discover effective communication procedures between an organisation and its publics. The theory would therefore be instrumental in guiding the assessment and evaluation of the communication system employed by NCCE and the implications thereof.

Also, with regards to preferred current communication channels, Men (2014) indicates that employees in modern times prefer to receive organisational information through emails, but with a lesser preference for brochures, policy manuals, newsletters and posters. Furthermore, considering the multifarious advantages of social media for connecting people in current times, building relationships and community, Men (2014) again discovered that social media was not properly incorporated into the internal communication system of many companies in times past. This was to be expected because advanced technologies might not have been pervasive the way they are today. Also, Meng and Berger (2018) undertook at a study similar to that of Men's (2014). Conversely, Meng and Berger (2018) study were focused on analysing how leadership performance in an organisation affects public relations professionals' overall job satisfaction. Meng and Berger's (2018) study

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validates that leadership activities in an organisation strongly impacts public relations professionals' work engagement, their trust in the organisation as well as their job satisfaction. In sum, these authors explained that organisational success is directly linked to organisational leadership activities. They consider that as a result of the mutual relationship between leadership activities and organisational success, organisational leaders need to establish quality organisational culture and strong leadership performances to garner professionals' work engagement.

From the African perspective, Njomo (2013) studied challenges of internal organisation communication using the Spier Resort Management in South Africa as a case study. Findings from this study were that the main reason for poor communication at Spier was the lack of strategic focus on internal communication management; that is, the organisation's internal communication was not planned, monitored, assessed and evaluated. This finding corresponds with Lewis's (2007) assertion that well-informed employees are more satisfied, have an enriched connection with the organisation and therefore work towards the organisation's success. The inverse to this results is poor or ineffective internal communication that could damage an organisation. The question, thus, remains whether internal communications in subvented institutions in Africa follow such precepts and what the ramifications thereof were. These are some of the issues this current study engages.

The above discussion generally demonstrates the importance of internal communication to the development of any organisation. Yet, the review appears to indicate that studies on internal communications have mostly focused on profit-making institutions with little attention on non-profit organisations, especially state-owned ones. This prompts the need for a scholarly interrogation on the latter since such non-profit organisations complement the profit-oriented ones in contemporary

societies. As such, knowledge about the internal communication dynamics of state-owned institutions should serve society well, and this is something that motivated this current study.

2.1.3   External organisational communication and the effective communication.

This study rests on external communication as it focuses on examining how an organisation (NCCE) interacts with the outside world in order to attain its organisational goals. Thus, despite the usefulness of internal communication to the success of state organisations as mentioned earlier, it is crucially important to review literature on external organisation communication. As Stuart, Sarow and Staurt (2007) noted, creating and sustaining productive relationship with the external publics of an organisation is of considerable importance as it could lead to the achievement of mutual beneficial goals for both the organisation and its publics.

External communication has received academic attention from different perspectives over the past decades (Jain, De Moya, & Molleda, 2014). Literature indicates that the aim of external communication is to reach out to external publics including shareholders, customers, or the general public through several channels like mass media, social media and newsletters (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011; Grunig & Grunig, 1992; Sandhu, 2009; Van Ruler & Vercic, 2005). These authors indicate, however, that external communication strategies are not rigid but flexible and constantly reformed to suit the institutional environment.

Many studies on external communication have investigated preferences for the use of certain communication channels by organisations and ambiguity contribution towards the achievement of organisational goals. White et al. (2010) investigated a project team's preferences for a particular type of information and choice of external

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channel. Findings pointed to an inclination for face-to-face communication as the most useful, more than electronic communication via email for external communication. Kelleher (2001) found that different preference for a particular communication channel is associated with different organisational roles, with leaders selecting email and face-to-face communication in order to dictate a sense of belonging to the organisational community (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 2013). Woodall (2006) avers that people's adaptability to a message is dependent on the communication channel employed.

Likewise, Ahmad (2016) conducted a study on external strategic communication management aimed at describing external communication channels that are effective in transmitting governmental messages to various targeted groups. The study aimed at describing and analysing the preference of external communication channels of participants in a Malay context to transmit governmental messages. With regards to the effectiveness of communication channels, 87% of respondents indicated face-to-face communication as the most effective channels of communication for transmitting information outside an organisation to publics. Less preferred external communication channels were newsletters and SMS. Discussions from these authors indicate that the application of a communication media is dependent on the target and purpose for which the communication is being initiated. This argument corresponds with this study's goal to investigate the characteristics of external communication of the organisation under study in relation to its targets. In addition, it is interesting to note that irrespective of the availability of computer mediated communication in the 21st century, the era in which these studies were conducted, face-to-face communication appears to be the most preferred channel of external communication in the reviewed works.

Furthermore, other researchers like Ristino (2007) have viewed external communication from Public Relations perspective of managing an organisation's image and identity. Such studies have discussed external communication in the context of corporate social responsibility. González-Rodríguez, Martín-Samper, Köseoglu and Okumus (2019) studied Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices, organisational culture, and firms' reputation and performance in hotels in Spain. Findings from the study indicated that hotels employing CSR practices had a good relationship with employees and customers, and that consequently reinforced the organisation's reputation. Public Relations research however often concentrate on the private sector, which implies that little Public Relations research attention is paid to non-profit organisations (Gelders, Bouckaert & Van Ruler, 2007; Liu & Horsley, 2007; Liu, & Levenshus, 2010).

Wonneberger and Jacobs (2016) also assessed relationship between mass media orientations of communication professionals in organisations and their external communication strategies. A point of interest for these researchers was the media orientations of communication professionals in various sectors and how such orientations influenced the organisation's external communication strategies. The study was conducted in the Netherlands among communication professionals working in public sector organisations, non-profit organisations and profit organisations. The overall findings of this study showed that preference for specific external communication strategies is linked to different forms of media orientations of the various organisations listed above. For example, organisations which had interest in receiving media attention were interested in adopting one-way and asymmetric styles of communication; profit-oriented organisations were interested in one-way communication; while public organisations preferred two-way communication. This

current study intends to discover whether the same purpose exists in the preference of communication styles among subvented organisations especially in the Ghanaian context.

Rybalko and Seltzer (2010) also explored how companies use popular social networking sites to engage stakeholders in dialogic communication. The study was conducted using Fortune 500 companies as a case study. Findings indicates that one of the key dialogic principles used by Fortune 500 companies was to keep people glued to the company's online platform by the company regularly updating the site with new postings. According to the study, this demonstrated the company's dedication to engage visitors and offer an avenue for dialogic communication to take place by adopting social networking to help create an interpersonal communication between company representatives and stakeholders.

Currently, the rise of new media presents new opportunities for organisations in relation to communication strategies (Wonneberger & Jacobs 2016). Generally, new media have become a widespread form of communication as they offer new options for people to interact and connect. As an illustration, Badea's (2014) study on social media and organisational communication acknowledges the great influence social media has on obtaining and sharing information about organisations. The author observes that social media is a significant tool in organising communication. This seems to suggest that organisations should consider employing social media in developing new approaches in organisational communication. Stephenson, Vaganay, Coon, Cameron and Hewit (2018) also investigated the role of Facebook and Twitter as organisational communication platforms in relation to flood events in Northern Ireland. The findings indicated that the organisational use of social media networks enabled flood-affected individuals to obtain and share credible information. The

findings also indicated that even though social media use helps in reaching organisational publics with credible information, organisations especially government institutions have not made use of their potential. Consequently, Stephenson et al., (2018) recommended that organisations particularly government organisations, with a community service function, should consider establishing a proactive social media presence to assist in sharing credible information with the organisation's publics, identify the needs of their publics and subsequently make use of data gathered for future projects. These assertions thus propose that new media could be considered as a strategic communication means to reach external publics. The relevance of this review to the current study would be to ascertain whether NCCE employs new media as a strategic communication channel and the corresponding implications. This way, the study would provide an understanding of the use of new media in subvented organisations in the Ghanaian context.

The discussion so far offers a varied perspective of external communication. Yet, the reviewed studies on external communication above revealed that most studies have examined external communication from the perspective of public relations, image and relationship building in profit making intentions. In effect, research on external organisational communication in non-profit organisations is limited in the literature. The same applies to works on external communication strategies that are implemented by non-profit state-owned institutions with the mandate to serve humanity. Additionally, the literature reviewed indicates sharply that works on external organisational communication have come largely from Western and Asian societies, with little to show from Africa and Ghana. This leaves a critical gap to be filled from the Ghanaian perspective. Hence my study will contribute to fill that gap.

2.1.4   Subvented Organisations

Since this study concerns a *subvented organisation*, it is important to provide an explanation of what subvented organisations are to enhance an understanding of the expression in the work. The word *subvented* appears to be alien to the English lexicon. A recent search in recently updated editions of dictionaries such as *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary* (2020) and the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2014) indicated that the word *subvent,* from which subvented is derived, does not exist. Even online searches, for example, in the Oxford Dictionaries Online (Oxford University Press, 2021) indicated that the two words, subvent and subvented, are not listed. However, it appears that the words are used and understood formally in governance circles to mean ‗support or assist with money‘ (Oxford University Press, 2021). According to the Oxford Learners‘ Dictionaries online, the word *subvention* means ‗an amount of money that is given by a government, etc., to help an organisation" (Oxford University Press, 2021). Indeed, Corporate Governance for Subvented Organisations (2015) which is a manual for corporate governance states that subvented organisation are institutions that ‗receive substantial recurrent funding from the public purse" (p. 4).

Thus, subvented organisations may be understood in this study as organisations whose operations are financially and logistically supported by the government of a country or state. Because of government‘s financial support to these organisations, subvented organisations are expected to be accountable to the Government and its citizens (Corporate Governance for Subvented Organisations, 2015). Subvented organisations differ in their structure, size, and purpose and thus vary in the amounts of funding they receive (Ibid). Literature (FINEP, 2006; Goh, 2011; Sustainable Development Network Programme, 2011) indicates that the

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purpose for government financial support vary from place to place. For instance, in Brazil, the purpose of subvention has been described as cost sharing in order to diminish innovation technological risks, and to widen the range of innovative activities in the realm of Brazilian enterprises (FINEP, 2006). Goh (2011) in his study on State carnivals in Singapore described subvention as an investment of state resources in supporting diverse institutions in society. In Malawi also, the purpose for establishing subvented organisations is for these organisations to produce and deliver goods and services on behalf of government in areas where the government cannot perform effectively and efficiently. (Sustainable Development Network Programme, 2011)

Drawing from the explanations thus far, regardless of the geographical differences, the concept of subvention generally implies providing and delivering goods and services on behalf of government for society through government's financial support. Therefore, subvented organisations in the Ghanaian context are organisations which are funded by the Government of Ghana through taxes (Dartey-Baah, Amponsah-Tawiah & Sekyere-Abankwa, 2011). Such organisations are collectively referred to as the *Public Sector* or state sector. The main objective of the Public Sector is to assist in the implementation of government policies and to perform other public service functions in the primary interest of the general public (Dartey-Baah, Amponsah-Tawiah & Sekyere-Abankwa, 2011, p. 62). As lucidly expressed in the previous chapter, the NCCE, by its mandate, activities and financial status, is a subvented organisation and subsequent analysis and discussion should be understood in that context.

2.1.5   Organisational Communication of Subvented Organisations in Ghana.

Literature search indicates a dearth of studies on the communication patterns of subvented organisations in Ghana. It appears that only a few studies are available on state institutions in Ghana. These are given a more extensive review in this section.

Kwateng, Osei, and Abban (2014) examined internal communication in public health institutions in Ghana and found a positive correlation between communication and employees' commitment to their jobs. The study also indicated that issues regarding monitoring and control mechanisms of organisational communication in public hospitals were very poor as they were either absent or ineffective. Again, findings from the study showed a high preference by staff for the use of downward vertical communication as they felt it was effective as opposed to upward vertical communication. This finding appears to correspond with a study conducted by Stohl (1995) about how communication patterns within organisations are influenced by hierarchical relationships. Conclusions from the study indicate that a high bureaucratic organisation is more inclined to employ a top-down chain of command which involves written forms of communication with little or no forms of personal interaction. The general conclusion of their study was that communication in public hospitals was ineffective and inefficient hence affecting the quality of services rendered by public hospitals.

In   like   manner,   Ansong   (2013)   studied   the   communication (patterns/processes) of public institutions with the Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Ghana, as a case study. The study discovered that CHRAJ did not have a communication policy guiding its communication activities, which implied that the institution lacked clear-cut communication strategies to control activities towards the achievement of the CHRAJ's mandate. A communication policy

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was therefore recommended to facilitate and guide activities for the attainment of the institution's goals. The study also found radio and television as the most used channels employed by the institution in its haphazard communication with its publics. Ansong (2013) thus recommended that CHRAJ should seriously consider running an up-to-date online presence since it provides features including instant feedback, face-to-face interactions and voice recordings.

Similarly, Akomeah (2015) studied communication between utility companies and their publics from the perspective of the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL). Using a qualitative method that collected data from interviews and focus groups discussions, the author found that even though GWCL claims to have regular interactions with its publics through varied communication channels, the publics and the Public Utility Regulatory Commission (PURC) do not trust that GWCL does that. The study found that GWCL's communication was either delayed or non-existent suggesting a poor communication behaviour on the part of the Ghana Water Company in reaching its publics and stakeholders. The study therefore recommended that management of GWCL should consider organising community/stakeholder fora where GWCL could engage in frequent face-to-face interactions with its stakeholders.

Akomeah (2015), Ansong (2013) and Kwateng, Osei and Abban's (2014) studies discussed above indicate that communication within subvented organisation in Ghana is generally poor. This should be a source of worry to scholars bearing in mind the important contributions subvented organisations render to society and humanity. While such conclusions may apply to the named organisations above, this current research will tell if the same trend of poor organisational communication applies with the NCCE also.

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Specific to the NCCE, some studies have shed light on the institution from various perspectives. Akplu (1986) and others have discussed the crucial role the institution plays in enhancing conformity to law, patriotism and informed decisions for national development. These authors see NCCE and its functions as critical to national development suggesting that without this institution, nation building will be exasperating and difficult.

In addition, a number of works have also suggested that people's exposure to civic education contributes to enhancement in their civic awareness and participation (Abudu & Fuseini, 2014; Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey, 2015; Niworo, Gasu, & Achanso, 2016). For instance, Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey's (2015) study, for example, found that the NCCE, regardless of the challenges it faces in executing its mandate to the expectation of citizens, contributed to citizens' peaceful participation in the 2012 general elections. Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey's (2015) study, which is similar to this current study, relied on diverse data including documentary sources, annual reports, periodical articles, government publications, archival documents, symposia collections, and published research reports as well as surveys. Likewise, Abudu and Fuseini (2016) investigated civic awareness and engagement in Ghana and found that citizenship education correlates with the level of civic awareness and citizens' engagement in civic activities. The study thus concluded that civic education increases knowledge in civic issues as well as in civic participation. Niworo, Gasu and Achanso (2016) also found in their study that higher levels of civic education by the NCCE of Ghana is positively related to political participation in the Sissala West District of the Upper East Region of Ghana regarding willingness to vote, join political party, engage in political debates, contest elections, participate in community service and demand accountability from duty bearers.

Boampong's (2017) work on NCCE, shifts the focus from issues of civic awareness and participation as seen in the aforementioned studies as she explores the external communication of NCCE. Boampong (2017) found a direct correlation between channels of communication mostly used by the institution to reach its publics and the publics' most preferred channels of communication, which are television and radio. The study also found that many of the respondents also preferred the Internet to be used to communicate with them. These findings are not surprising since the research location was Accra, an urban area. The findings could be interesting if the study was to have been conducted in rural area (where television and radio use might not have been popular) or a fairly varied demographic society.

The above review on NCCE has revealed significant gaps in research in the institution. It is realised that whilst much research attention has focused on topics relating to citizens' awareness of their civic statuses and roles and their relation to political participation, not much has been done on the communication system or approaches of NCCE and its implications on the institution's stakeholders/publics. For example, through extensive literature search in journals, books and other published and credible works in various university libraries, such as those of the University of Education, Winneba and the University of Ghana, Legon, in addition to searches on various internet sites such as Google, Google Scholar, Sage, Research Gate and Emerald for published and credible academic works on NCCE, there is no study on the internal communication of the institution. This, therefore makes the current study essential because it has a prime interest in discussing pertinent issues concerning the institutions overall communications policy or strategy, the ideas behind the strategy, and the relevance and appropriateness of the strategy in today's

world. This study therefore responds to Adu-Gyamfi and Yartey's (2015), call for more studies on NCCE.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This section sheds lights on the media richness theory and Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Communication Model which were employed to guide the data analysis of this study.

2.2.1 Media and Information Richness Theory

The media richness theory was developed in the mid-1980s by organisational scholars Daft and Lengel (and later with Trevino) and became popular along with the diffusion of electronic communication media (example, e-mail in 1990s) (Ishii, Lyons, & Carr, 2019, p. 124). The theory suggests that communication channels (medium) vary in their effectiveness to resolve ambiguity, negotiate various interpretations, and facilitate understanding. The theory is thus concerned with determining the most appropriate communication medium for dealing with uncertainty and equivocality (Daft & Lengel, 1984).

Daft and Lengel (1984, 1986) highlight the importance of the reduction of uncertainty and equivocality in a successful information processing in organisations. To these authors, uncertainty represents the lack of information which can be reduced by providing needed information, whereas equivocality represents confusion or a lack of understanding which cannot be reduced by an amount or quantity of information but by the richness or quality of information (Daft, Lengel & Trevino, 1987). According to Ishii, Lyons and Carr (2019), in a mediated situation such as using a communication technology like an email, uncertainty reduction would not pose a

challenge because technology can carry a large amount of information to reduce uncertainty. On the other hand, equivocality reduction will pose a challenge because of the absence of nonverbal cues inherent in mediated communication. The theory acknowledges the ‗richness' of a medium based on the presence of:

a. immediate feedback, that is, the immediacy of a response to an information being communicated;

b. multiple cues, that is, the ability of a medium to send multiple signals (physical presence, voice inflection, body gestures, words, et cetera simultaneously to a number of people when a message is being communicated;

c. language variety, that is, the use of language variety and symbols in a general communication; and

d. personal focus, that is, the focus of the media must be fixed on the recipient of the information as that would determine the richest media of communication to be applied in reaching them.

With these four criteria, the theory placed face-to-face as the richest medium, followed by telephone, written address document (example: memo, letter) and unaddressed document (example: flier, bulletin). In this regard, the higher a medium's propensity to offer immediate feedback, body cues or voice, natural language and audience focus, the richer it is. Thus, oral media which has the characteristic of conveying cues such as voice, tone, and body language is regarded as richer than written media.

Media richness theory was considered appropriate to this study because it aids in assessing the richness of the various communication channels employed by NCCE in reaching its publics, as well as the implications for organisational goals. The theory

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would therefore blend with Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication to serve as a guide to help interrogate the communication strategies employed by NCCE in reaching out to its audience; and also aid in assessing the effectiveness of the communications approaches.

2.2.2 Barnlund's (1970) transactional model of communication

Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication developed from earlier Transmission Models of communication (Berlo, 1960; Lasswell, 1948; Shannon and Weaver, 1949). The Barnlund's (1970) model adequately reflects human communication in its complexity, unlike the earlier one-dimensional models. This model portrays communication as a cyclical process of interdependent elements including sender and a receiver. The other elements of the model are the message, channel, feedback, interference (noise) and field of experience. The underlying principle of Barnlund's (1970) model is that interpersonal communication takes place when purposeful messages are exchanged in a reciprocal, circular manner. This seems to suggest that successful communication occurs when both sender and receiver comprising two individuals or an individual and a group, take turns to simultaneously send and/or receive a message as reflected in Fig. 1.1 below.

Barnlunds model, 1970

Barnlund, D. (1970): "A transactional model of communication"
I: K. K. Sereno & C. D. Mortensen (Eds.), *Foundations of
communication theory* (pp. 83–102). New York: Harper.

Fig. 1.1 The diagram below shows Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication and its elements.

The elements of Barnlund's (1970) communication model are detailed as follows: communicators are represented by the sender and a receiver, who exchange messages simultaneously through a channel in the communication process. The communication process itself is always prone to interference or noise at all the points of the cycle as implied by the waves in the model. The implication is that communication can easily fail, and failure may not always be at the point of the receiver. A unique representation of this model is that individuals are simultaneously engaging in sending and receiving messages. Reflecting this component in the context of this study, NCCE and its publics represent ―communicators" who are constantly engaged in sending and receiving messages concurrently through various channels.

To Barnlund (1970), communication must pass through a conduit filters that both the sender and receiver have, and these filters are entirely complex based on culture, geographical location, gender, et cetera. From this premise, Barnlund (1970) suggests that communicators must understand their audiences' worldview for

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communication to be successful. It is worth noting that regardless of the fact that Barnlund's (1970) model was propounded about three decades ago, its relevance is still appreciated in contemporary times, and scholars including Owens (2020) and Venu and Reddy (2016) have applied the model in their studies.

The application of Barnlund's (1970) transactional model of communication to organisational communication is suitable to this current research as it can be used to assess how communication systems of an organisation, influences the achievement of organisational goals. This model accounts for the weaknesses of the Shannon-Weaver model of communication which is recognised as the basic model of communication and is widely accepted in social sciences (Lederer & Missal, 2015). Yet, whilst Shannon and Weaver's (1948) transmission model of communication viewed communication as a linear process involving a sender sending a message through a channel to a receiver, Barnlund's (1970) transactional model of communication considers additional interdependent processes and components for a successful communication process including, the encoding and decoding process, the communicator, the message, the channel, feedback, the field of experience and noise.

Again, the relevance of Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication to this study lies in its reflection of contemporary human communication. In addition, it can be argued based on the models' main feature of presenting communication as a cyclical process, Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication can be related to practical situations in everyday human communication activities involving organisations. For this reason, Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication is deemed appropriate and adopted to guide this study's analysis.

2.3   Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed literature on organisational communication, strategic communication, subvented organisations and the National Commission for Civic Education. Literature was reviewed to provide an understanding of scholarly views on the areas listed above. From the review, we discover that organisational communication comes across as an essential tool which influences the realisation of organisational goals. The literature also indicates that new media is being suggested as a strategic means of reaching out to an organisation's publics especially in contemporary times. Above all, it is observed that most of the literature reviewed in this work were conducted in the West with very little focus on Africa and Ghana in particular. Also, many of the literature on organisational communication have focused on profit-making organisations, thus, creating a critical gap in scholarly attention on organisational communication in non-profit organisations. The study adopted the Media Richness Theory and Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication to analyse the data. The Media Richness Theory avers that channels (medium) matter in effective communication, while Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication also indicates the processes of modern effective interpersonal communication. The next Chapter presents the overall methodology adopted to help achieve the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the processes and methods used in collecting and analysing data for the study. In order to collect and analyse suitable data to effectively answer the research questions of the study, I adopted a qualitative methodology involving interviews and document analysis within a case study design. Details of the decisions, activities and the rationale for the specific method for an understanding of the subsequent analysis and findings in the next chapter are captured. In terms of outline, the chapter continues with the research approach and design, sampling issues, specific data collection activities, the analytical framework, ethical protocols and then ends with a conclusion that sums up and connects the chapter to the next one.

3.1   Research Approach

Creswell (2008) has proposed three approaches to academic research: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The qualitative approach, according to Creswell, is interpretive and underpinned by a desire to explore and understand the meaning of phenomena involving individuals or groups, while quantitative research is deductive and aims at testing objective theories by statistically presenting the relationship among variables (p. 4). Mixed methods, as a research approach, combines both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in an inquiry (Creswell, 2008, p. 4).

Because this study is concerned with exploring and understanding the communication system and practices of NCCE from the views and perspectives of key people connected to the institution, the qualitative approach is best suited for the

study. Yin (2011. p 7-8) lists the following as the characteristics of qualitative research:

1. Studying the meaning of people's lives, under real world conditions;

2. Representing the views and perspectives of the people in a study;

3. Covering the contextual conditions which people live;

4. Contributing insights into exiting or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behaviour; and

5. Striving to use multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone.

Within the qualitative tradition, opinions or views of people are important sources of data for the generation of knowledge. Consequently, I employed interviews as a data collection method within a case study design to gain a deep insight of the opinions and viewpoints of the participants in the study. In addition, NCCE's communication policy documents were also analysed to augment and make robust the data collection and analysis processes.

3.2   Research Design: A case study

MacMillan and Schumacher (2001) have suggested that a research design is a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s). Yin (2011) posits that a research design is a logical link of research questions, collected data and the strategies for data analysis in a way that will provide answers to the study's research questions. In other words, a research design is comparable to a road map which guides one through a research journey to a destination of results and conclusions.

In qualitative research, there are a number of research designs available to the researcher. They include narrative research, case study, ethnography, phenomenology and grounded theory studies (Creswell, 2008). In this study, a case study was chosen as the research design because attention was focused on an institution the National Commission for Civic Education and its communication system and activities. The idea was to find out how effective their communication system and activities are in relation to its constitutional mandate of providing information and education to Ghanaians.

A case study is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a programme, process, activities or one or more individuals (Stake, 1995). In addition, it is an investigation that probes an ongoing phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2009).

3.3   Sampling Strategy

According to Webster (2005), a sample can be defined as set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of an investigation. Simply put, a sample is a part of a population or universe (Tailor, 2005). Given the time and resources usually available to researchers, the possibility of collecting data from an entire population to answer research questions is often not possible, thus the need for a selection of a sample. Yin (2014) avers that samples in qualitative research, are likely to be chosen in a deliberate manner known as purposive sampling. For this sampling type, the researcher selects participants who by virtue of their knowledge and experience are well suited to contribute relevant information to the study. In addition to these, the participants are to be willing and available and coherently communicate their opinions and experiences (Bernard, 2002).

From the above reasons, the sample for this study was purposively selected. Three categories of participants were selected. The first and second categories were Management and general staff of NCCE personnel from Corporate and Communication Affairs Department, Human Resource Department and the Programmes Department. The third category consisted of an academic and an expert in issues of governance and organisational communication. It is worthy to note that in the effort to avoid bias and to make the study robust, a section of the participants was selected outside NCCE to seek divergent perspectives (Kuzel, 1992. p. 37-41).

Bearing these in mind, I purposively selected NCCE's Director for Communication and Corporate Affairs, two NCCE staff at the Communication and Corporate Affairs Department, the Director of Programmes, Director of Administration, the immediate past Dean of NCCE District Directors. In addition, a board member of the National Media Commission who is also the immediate past chairman of the Public Service Workers Union and a District Director of the Electoral Commission of Ghana together with an academic, researcher and expert in communication were selected.

3.4   Sample

Daymon and Holloway (2001) argue that qualitative researchers seek in-depth insight about a phenomenon in order to get rich, comprehensive and well-rounded descriptions, and as a result, small samples are normally used. Moser and Korstjens (2017) observe that in recruiting participants the best strategy is to select people who will share their reservoir of information. Boddy (2016) also mentions that the determination of sample size in qualitative research is based on its context and is to some extent dependent upon the scientific paradigm under which the study is being

investigated. From the arguments provided above and the kind of research this study is focused on (as explained earlier), eight (8) participants were selected as the sample size for the study. Concerning the issue of document for analysis, there was no need for sampling because I made use of all the policy documents on communication available.

3.4.1   Research participants / Sample

Details of the participants selected to provide data are contained in the table below.

Table 3.1:   Research participants and their details

NAME	AFFILIATION/ INSTITUTION	POSITION	JOB DESCRIPTION
Participant A	NCCE	Director of Programmes	To develop, implementing, monitoring and evaluating all NCCE outreach programmes and activities.
Participant B	NCCE	Director of Communication and Corporate Affairs	To direct and supervise communication activities of NCCE
Participant C	NCCE	Communication and Corporate Affairs staff	To develop concepts and strategies at the communication unit of the CCA
Participant D	NCCE	Communication and Corporate Affairs staff	To develop concepts and strategies at the communication unit of the CCA
Participant E	NCCE	Director of Administration	To supervise the day-to-day operation of NCCE
Participant F	NCCE	District Director (Rtd) / Immediate Past Dean of District Directors	To enhance staff and district directors' ability to deliver on their work schedules
Participant G	Electoral Commission of Ghana/ National Media Commission	District Director	To be generally responsible for the organisation of district elections.
Participant H	Ghana Institute of Journalism	Faculty member at Ghana Institute of Journalism and Senior Lecturer in communication and media studies	To teach and research in communication and media studies

3.5   Data Collection Method

Creswell (2009) suggests that data collection involves setting the boundaries for the study, and the ways through which information is being collected. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), the qualitative researcher usually counts on participating in the setting, observing directly, interviewing in depth and analysing documents and material culture as methods for gathering data. In this vein, I adopted semi-structured interviews to collect data and also included documents for analysis.

3.5.1   Interviews

Lambert and Louiselle (2007) also argue that interviews are used as a research strategy to collect information about participants' experiences, views and beliefs concerning a specific research question or phenomenon of interest. Also, Seale, Gobo, Giampietro, Gubrium and Silverman (2004) define an interview as a social encounter where participants work together in producing retrospective and prospective accounts or versions of their past or future actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts.

Interviews are often categorised into three parts: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Whereas structured interviews present predetermined questions and answers for respondents, semi-structured interviews give room for unanticipated issues to be raised and discussed. Unstructured interviews on the other hand involves participant-led discussions about topics or themes (p. 78).

For the purpose of this study, I selected the semi-structured interview because it supports a professional conversation (Kvale, 2007) between the researcher and the participant(s). Also, the wording of its questions is not rigid and allows different level of language to be used and clarification to be made by the interviewer (Berg, 2009).

As observed by Braun and Clarke (2013), an interview guide is key to a successful qualitative interview. For that matter, I designed three and used the interview guides to facilitate the interview session of the study. One interview guide for management staff of NCCE, another for supporting staff and the other for the unaffiliated participants.

3.5.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis has been defined by Bowen (2009) as an organised method for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet transmitted) material. Similar to other analytical procedures in qualitative research, document analysis involves the examination and interpretation of data to produce meaning, achieve understanding and build empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008 see also Rapley, 2007) as cited in Bowen (2009).

Daymon and Holloway (2001) assert that documents consist of (text) words and images that have been recorded without the intervention of a researcher. In a scientific study, documents come in an array of forms including ―advertisements; agendas, attendance registers, and minutes of meetings; manuals; background papers; and brochures; dairies and journals; event programs (i.e.., printed outlines); letters and memoranda; maps and charts; newspapers (clippings/art-ideas); press releases; program proposals, application forms, and summaries; radio and television program scripts; organisational or institutional reports; survey data and various public records.‖

Yin (2014) opines that the qualitative researcher is expected to work with multiple (at least two) sources of evidence to ―seek convergence and corroboration‖ through the use of different data sources and methods. Denzin (1970) validates the use of document analysis in combination with other qualitative research methods as a

means of triangulation - the combination of methodologies in study of the same phenomenon" (p. 291). The reason for this is to ensure confidence in the study's findings using two or more independent measures (Heale & Forbes, 2017). For these reasons I sourced data from documents including the 1992 Constitution, NCCE's website, NCCE's social media pages, and annual reports, as well as its programmes guides in addition to interviews to help address the research questions posed by the study.

3.5.3   Data collection procedure

This section is made up of two parts. The first part focuses on the procedures used to collect interview data, while the second part dwells on the procedures for accessing documents for analysis.

3.5.3.1 Data collection procedure: Interview data

The preparatory stages for the collection of interview data included getting an introductory letter from the Department of Communication and Media Studies, UEW to facilitate access to participants. Three interview guides were developed for three categories of participants as mentioned in the sampling strategy section. With the aid of three interview guides, I elicited data for the analysis. Some of the questions on the interview guide for the participants from NCCE included: How does NCCE communicate with its publics? Does NCCE have a policy/plan on communication? Explain. How important is communication to NCCE? (to internal staff, to external publics, etc.) How do you communicate with management? The third category of participants answered questions including: How important is communication to government agencies in relation to democracy and strong governance? How central is

NCCE to democracy and governance? To you, what is the place of communication in the work of NCCE? In your view, what is the relationship between communication and the civic education that NCCE is supposed to provide? Copies of the interview guides is attached at Appendix A, B and C.

The researcher went through the permission protocols where necessary and booked appointments with the participants. The interviews were undertaken in March 2020 and the interviews sessions were carried out in the respective offices of the participants involved. The interviews were recorded whilst the researcher took notes concurrently. The interview data acquired were stored on a memory stick and preserved by the researcher. The average duration of the interviews was forty-five minutes.

3.5.3.2 Data collection procedure: Document data

In addition to the interviews, the researcher also analysed documents for data. First and foremost, the researcher's introductory letter which was provided by the Department of Communication and Media Studies, UEW facilitated the ethical access to NCCE documents which were required for the study. The documents included NCCE's website, NCCE's social media pages, its annual reports and NCCE programme guides. The 1992 Constitution was also analysed.

NCCE's social media pages (YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook) and website were monitored over the duration of this study to keep the research abreast of NCCE online communication activities to provide a rich base of supplementary data (Daymon & Holloway, 2011) to the interview data.

3.6   Analytical framework – Thematic Analysis

Data analysis has been defined by Lindlof and Taylor (2002) as the process of labelling and breaking down raw data and putting them back together into patterns, themes, concepts and propositions. Thematic analysis is ―a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006 p.79). To these authors, thematic analysis provides a purely qualitative, detailed and nuanced account of data. Joffe and Yardley (2004) argue that thematic analysis provides the systematic element typical of content analysis as well as permitting the researcher to combine analysis of their meaning within their context.

From these assertions, this study adopted thematic analysis as its data analysis method to interpret and discuss the data and to answer the study's research questions. Direct quotations were also used to support the interpretations and discussions.

For the interview data, I started by preparing the data for analysis by transcribing them. This I did by immersing myself in the data by listening and re-listening to the tape recordings from the interview sessions to reveal the latent and manifest information in the data set. I further pored through the transcribed information to assign codes to the entire data set as ―codes provide a building block of analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2013 p. 207). Examples of the codes included ―face-to face", ―radio", ―brochure" etc. Afterwards, I developed themes from the data by reviewing the codes and the collated codes, reviewed the themes, defined and named them.

Concerning the document data, O'Leary (2014) proposes that the following be taken into consideration when analysing documents for a study.

1. Gather relevant texts.

2. Develop an organisation and management scheme.

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3. Make copies of the originals for annotation.

4. Assess authenticity of documents.

5. Explore document's agenda, biases.

6. Explore background information (e.g., tone, style, purpose).

7. Ask questions about document (e.g., who produced it? why? when? type of data?).

8. Explore content.

I therefore followed these prescribed guidelines in analysing copies of NCCE's letters, memos, fliers, programmes guide, posters and social media sites. To access these documents, I sought permission and was granted. The types of document, their quantity and titles will be documented after visiting the field. As a means of triangulation. Findings from these two analytical perspectives were triangulated to improve the rigor of the study and to answer the research questions.

3.7   Bracketing

Bracketing is used by researchers ―to mitigate the potential deleterious effect of unacknowledged preconception related to the research and thereby to increase the rigor of the project" (Tufford & Newman, 2010, p.81). And so, being a staff of the National Commission for Civic Education required that I bracket all preconceived notions I had about the Commission from infiltrating into my study and tainting the findings. This I did by keeping a ―reflexive journal" (Ahem, 1999). Tufford and Newman (2010) opined that a journal can enhance researchers' ability to maintain a reflexive stance in their study.

3.8   Ethical issues

Halai (2006) asserts that issues of ethics arise in all forms of professional practice. Therefore, I argue that every academic research must adhere to ethical principles. Braun and Clarke (2013) observe that ethics are to be seen as an integral aspect of the entire research activity. They provide a list of core requirement of an ethical study which was applied in this study accordingly. They involved obtaining informed consent and avoiding deception, maintaining confidentiality and privacy, ensuring participants' right to withdraw (without explanation or negative impact), not subjecting participants to (unnecessary) risks, and being honest and accurate in reporting research results. (p.63)

At the inception of the data collection stage of this study, I gave a briefing to all about the import and purpose of the research which they were to willingly partake in. They then had the opportunity to either accept or decline to participate in the interview. Participants who agreed to be interviewed had their informed consent sought and were asked to demonstrate that they willingly agreed to share information by signing a consent form. I assured the participants of confidentiality and anonymity in terms of their person and information that they provided. I also took steps to protect the data by storing it on a hard drive and keeping it under lock and key in a drawer.

3.9   Credibility

Daymon and Holloway (2011) propose that, for a document to be credible, it has to be free from error or distortion. Lincoln and Guba (2000) also suggests that one of the most fundamental issues which demonstrates the trustworthiness in a research work is ensuring its credibility. Researchers are required to probe by asking question

about the production of documents, why, when, for whom and in what context they were produced to be certain of the reliability of a document.

To do this, the study applied two out of Creswell (2014) validation strategies employed in testing the validity of a qualitative inquiry. To Creswell, qualitative researchers must employ at least two of the eight strategies of testing validity in their study. He proposed strategies including: triangulation, using member-checking to determine accuracy on the part of participants, using rich and thick descriptions, presenting negative case analysis, spending prolonged time at the research field, using peer debriefing, using external auditors and bracketing of biases. Accordingly, this study adopted the strategy of bracketing which ensured that the researcher's preconceptions did not seep into the study. In addition, the method of triangulation was employed to clear out biases thus contributing to the credibility of the study.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the study focused on the procedures the research adopted and the analytical framework. This study adopted a qualitative approach and relied on case study as its design to extract data from interview participants and communication policy documents of NCCE. It explains its sampling method and size while highlighting the justifications for such choices. Towards the end of the chapter, it deliberated on the method of data collection, choice of data analysis tool, ethical issues as well as the credibility of the study. The next chapter presents the analysis, findings and discussions.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0   Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses findings from the data collected through interviews and document analysis. The interview data were collected from eight (8) individuals from academia, governance institution and NCCE itself. Document data were sourced from the 1992 Constitution and the website of NCCE. The researcher also examined the organisation's (NCCE) social media pages, and annual reports, as well as its programme guide. The data collected from these sources helped the researcher to answer the study's research questions.

Specifically, the analysis aimed to find out NCCE's communication policy framework and (communication) practices and their implications for the Commission's work. The study sought to address the following specific research questions:

1.   What policy framework guides NCCE's communication practices?

2.   What communication practices are employed by NCCE?

3.   What are the implications of NCCE's communication structure for its work?

Before presenting details of the analysis and findings, I make haste to throw light on the centrality of communication to the education function of the Commission. This should provide a better understanding of the communication issues that would flow from, and contextualise, the overall data analysis, findings and conclusions.

4.1   Contextualising the Communication Functions of NCCE in the Analysis

The significance of this study could better be appreciated by understanding the role of communication in NCCE's education function. Communication is not only

central to education; it is also vital in any public learning process. According to Al-Shuaibi (2014), education implies providing meaningful and understandable information to people leading to knowledge that may empower the people to know and to live worthy lives. Thus, it may be argued that education cannot occur outside of language and communication. The effectiveness of education may also depend on the effectiveness of communication during the learning process. Consequently, it could be concluded that the civic education function of NCCE thrives on the Commission's communication.

The point has been made in Chapter One (Section 1.1) about the institutional and democratic function of the NCCE within the governance structure of Ghana. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana mandates the NCCE to provide civic understanding of the socio-political tenets, behaviours and responsibilities required for democracy to thrive in the Ghanaian society. This should position citizens to be well prepared in all spheres of life to involve themselves in the development of their society. It stands to reason that the extent to which the Commission has been successful in carrying out this mandate from 1993 when it began work would depend on the effectiveness or otherwise of its communication strategies and activities. For example, records relative to the Commission's functions since its establishment suggest that NCCE has collaborated with organisations including nongovernmental organisations, Ministry of Education, National Commission on Children, Federation of Women Lawyers, Ghana Police, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, religious bodies, among others in the course of its civic education works (National Commission for Civic Education, 1994). The Commission has also channelled a significant focus in engaging in public education activities to whip up people's peaceful participation in District Level Elections (National Commission for Civic Education, 2019) and

General Elections (National Commission for Civic Education, 2012). The argument remains that the success of these efforts depend on how effectively communication is planned and executed during the NCCE-led education activities. The subsequent analysis should throw light on these issues.

4.2   Data Analysis and Findings

The analysis and findings begin with the demographic information of participants before each of the research questions of the study is discussed. Both sets of data (document analysis and interview data) are blended in the discussion for each research question to produce a logical and coherent analysis and presentation.

4.2.1 Demographics

The details of the research participants purposively selected to provide data are contained in Table 1.0 in Chapter 3. The participants' mix of individual and collective backgrounds emphasise how germane the information they provided is to the research, thereby making a strong case for the credibility of the study's data and conclusions.

4.3   RQ1. What communication framework guides NCCE's communication practices?

This research question was to investigate the communication activities and practices employed by the organisation under study and the basis for such activities. A number of specific questions were used to elicit data to address this research question, and the information was analysed using two themes: *proactive communication framework* and *conventional communication framework.*

4.3.1 Proactive communication framework

Drawing from Camillo and Camillo (2016), the theme, *proactive communication framework,* in this analysis, refers to official and/or legal policy documents approved by the NCCE Management and Board of Directors to prescribe strategic communication activities and practices for the effective work of the institution. The data showed that the Commission did not have any formal communication policy document as operationalised above. This researcher's visit to the head office of the Commission and other regional and district offices showed that NCCE's communication activities were not guided by a proactive communication framework. It appears that since its inception in 1993, the Commission has not developed and used any such document. When asked if NCCE had a communication policy, a participant provided this information:

> *I don't think we do. I know we have a transport policy and an administrative policy but for communication we don't have. (Participant F)*

Participant E also added that:

> *...we don't have a documented communication policy that when you come, I can get you a copy.*

This is a remarkable finding because of the importance of strategically directed communication to the effectiveness of NCCE as an organisation involved in public education. Hargie (2016) and Markovic and Salamzadeh (2018) have stressed the importance of a strategically focused communication policy to the overall success of any organisation. Arguably, official communication policies of an organisation are critically relevant to the effectiveness of the communication practices of that organisation. Policies provide a uniform frame of reference for activities; they provide standardisation and a legal framework for responsibilities, modus operandi, reporting lines, sanctions for flouting directives, etcetera. Thus, the realisation that

there was no such a document at the NCCE has implications for the effectiveness of its educative mandate.

The finding that the Commission did not have a communication policy suggests that NCCE could potentially be failing in performing its communication-oriented education functions as it should. The result seems to provide a reason that affirm Boampong (2017) and Niworo, Gasu and Achanso's (2016) finding that the NCCE is challenged in its communication practices. Yet, Boampong (2017), Niworo, Gasu and Achanso's (2016) work proceeded from an audience perspective and did not focus on the Commission itself, such as the specific impact of a lack of a communication policy on NCCE. Other studies (Akomeah, 2015; Ansong, 2013) have indicated that some public institutions operate without communication policies. A study on the communication of the African Development Bank (ADB) revealed that the bank did not have a communication policy, for which reason the bank often experienced communication inefficiencies (African Development Bank, 2009). NCCE's situation in this regard appears to be similar to the ADB's case.

Reflecting on this finding in relation to Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model, it can be argued that the absence of a communication policy exposes the organisation to haphazard communication practices, which eventually could hinder the effectiveness of its communication especially regarding its public education activities. As argued by Ansong (2013), organisations that have clearly stated vision possess a standard roadmap that directs their entire communications informing present and future staff of their visions and goals. The vice versa could be the case for organisations without such a direction.

4.3.2   Conventional communication framework

The data showed that in the absence of a proactive communication framework, NCCE periodically creates conventional communication guides nationally and locally as and when necessary to guide its organisational communication activities. In other words, NCCE operates within a reactive communication framework. When asked what guides NCCE‘s communication, Participant F submitted that:

> *...we do engage with our stakeholders and often use concept notes and programme guides from the head office which spell out how to go about all our programmes as and when the need arises.*

Participant D also added:

> *The Regional Directors are in charge of the District offices and the District Directors are in charge at the District level. And the Directors communicate among themselves. So they use the programmes guide to draw the work plan and how to undertake programmes. Sometimes too we give them concept notes which will guide them to do the work. So we don't have a documented communication policy but in principle, this is how it works.*

From this finding, it can be surmised that in the absence of a codified policy, the Commission applied a conventional communication framework in the form of ‗concept notes‘ as and when an issue for communication crops up. While this may not be the best approach, it seems to be workable because it at least provides for some instructions for communication tasks, even if it is in an ad hoc manner.

4.4   RQ2. What are the communication strategies employed at NCCE?

This research question sought to find out the specific organisational communication practices of NCCE and the effectiveness of such activities in attaining the Commission‘s organisational goals. The data indicate that communication is instrumental in NCCE‘s work. In support, Participant D was emphatic that: *Without communication we can't work. Communication is what we do.* Bennett (2000) observed that communication influences political relations, shapes the citizens‘

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attitude towards politics, government, and society itself. Consequently, this research question sought to address the ways through which the organisation (NCCE) performs its day-to-day communication demands and the motive for the organisation's style of communication. Broad themes that emerged from the data included: ―Communication Office‖, ―Internal Communication Practices‖ with subsequent subthemes and ―External communication practices and channels of communication‖.

4.4.1   Communication office

Interview data indicated that NCCE has a department, Corporate and Communication Affairs (CCA) Department. This department is located at the Headquarters in Accra, and it oversees NCCE's internal and external communication activities. This section will therefore focus on discussing the role and activities of CCA to inform subsequent findings of the study.

Interview data has revealed that in practical terms, downward communication emanates first from top management. According to NCCE's 2018 annual report, the Commission is made up of a Chairman, two Deputy Chairmen and four other Commission Members. The seven-member Commission make up the governing body of NCCE. The Chairman and the Commission Members deliberate and conclude on major action points and activities for and on behalf of the organisation (National Commission for Civic Education, 2012). The data pointed out that decisions and other relevant information from top management are transmitted downwards to relevant units, departments, and offices through the CCA Department, which managed and transmitted all NCCE's communications. Consequently, the transmitted messages are translated into programmes or activities to steer the daily activities of the organisation.

Participant A vividly captured the process thus:

> *...if a decision is taken from the top, it'll have to come to the various departments below who will have to come up with their various programmes of implementing those decisions. Now, CCA becomes very important because whatever decision is taken up there, CCA will have to push it out there to the various departments, the various districts and even the communities. So whatever we do, whatever decision we take here, whatever we intend to do here with the publics, with the aim of educating them on their rights and responsibilities or whatever is going on will have to be CCA so we're like the pivot or the mouthpiece or the channel through which information flow from the Commission.*

The data indicate that CCA has been demarcated into units assigned specific duties concerning functions involving audio-visual, communication and media relations, and information technology. According to participant B:

> *The department is made up of different units. We have the Audio-Visual Unit, the Communication Unit and we have the IT Unit.*

From the data, these units in the CCA department work together to maintain the smooth flow of information in and out of the organisation. Participant B clarified that:

> *And we have the IT department. They handle the social media pages and the website. So whatever information we want to put out there, they do it. They also monitor our social media pages and our websites, they work hand in hand with the other units in the CCA who provide them with pictures, audios and write ups, and they put it on our social media and website.*

Based on the above discussions, the researcher realises the important communication-related role CCA plays at NCCE. It is therefore curious that only a few CCA staff had obtained a professional qualification in communication. To maintain the anonymity of persons mentioned in this study, pseudonyms have been given to the staff of the CCA Department.

> *So Adam has a degree from NAFTI, and then Paul has a degree in graphic designing, Joana has a Masters in Communication and Nick has a Masters in Development Studies (Participant B)*

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During the data collection exercise, the researcher found that there was only one CCA Department in the whole of NCCE, and this was located at NCCE national head office in Accra. Judging from explanations above about the important and sensitive role the CCA Department plays in the organisation, the researcher found it strikingly surprising that the organisation situates a CCA department only at the head office and none at the district and regional offices where staff engage directly with the grassroots citizens. To the researcher, what this arrangement implies is that decoding and execution of public education messages, which are transmitted downwards are left at the discretion of the staff in the district and regional offices, without the direct supervision and control of the CCA Department that is supposed to contain the communication experts of the Commission. Such a situation could lead to illusions in communication.

This brings to mind the observation by Shaw (2011) that having an illusion that a message has achieved its purpose is the greatest problem of communication. Also, linking this finding to the Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model (1970), it can be argued that the absence of a communication office and communication officer(s) at the regional and district offices presents a fertile ground for ‗noise‘ to occur, stifling the effectiveness of public education messages. This seems to reflect, Boampong's (2017) study that audiences have negative impression about NCCE's communication practices. This finding by Boampong (2017) could arguably relate to the absence of communication experts at the regional and district offices of the organisation.

4.4.2 Internal communication practices

According to van Riel and Fombrun (2007), the channels used to convey information in an organisation is a reflection of the internal communication structure

of that organisation. Communication structure here refers to the complex web of specific methods, directional flow and content (or messages) of communication. The data showed that NCCE uses vertical (downwards and upward) communication and horizontal communication.

The data indicated that NCCE employs diverse channels of official communication in line with its internal communication arrangement. The communication channels cut across both traditional and advanced technological means of communication including letters, memos, programmes guide, directive or instructional documents, emails, etcetera. According to Participant C:

> *We make use of our notice boards when we are having a programme and we want staff to know. Sometimes we use letters internally, circulars are used across the country that's with our regional and district staff and in the head office we use memos. So that's how information flows, letters, circulars, memos, phone calls and emails.*

Whilst the informal channels of communication employed by the Commission included WhatsApp.

> *One thing that is helping these days is the social media. So now there are these WhatsApp groups. (Participant B)*

These findings indicate that NCCE approves and employs various communication channels (*notice boards, circulars, internal memos, WhatsApp)* to transmit messages internally, which sits well within the Media Richness Theory. This is because not only does employing different media in transmitting messages to different categories of people increase understanding, but messages must also be transmitted through official or acceptable channel(s) prescribed by an organisation to make communication successful.

4.4.2.1 Downward communication

The data indicated that at NCCE, downward communication occurs with a mix of traditional and modern communication forms using letters, memos, phone calls and emails. The researcher however observes that the organisation's use of WhatsApp, which is an unofficial medium, to support its internal communication activities is unique. Hence, the subsequent lines will be predominantly focused on discussing and analysing NCCE's WhatsApp driven downward communication.

The interview data indicated that NCCE employs ICT or internet-driven communication applications like WhatsApp to assist the various Heads of Department and Directors to transmit instant messages to their respective staff. This internally organised system serves as a supporting tool for directing activities in the organisation. Participant G explained that:

> *Heads of Department, District Directors, Regional Directors, and all staff are all on WhatsApp groups for easy correspondence. The WhatsApp is exclusive to staff.*

The Data showed that all regional and district directors have been organised and placed on exclusive WhatsApp groups. These WhatsApp platforms are supervised by the upper management staff at the Head Office, as explained by Participant C:

> *We have WhatsApp line for Regional Directors and we have a WhatsApp line for District Directors. So the Director of CCA, she is on the WhatsApp line for the Regional Directors and her deputy is on the WhatsApp line for district directors. So if there's a campaign going on and we have to inform the directors, the Director CCA informs the regional directors and her deputy informs the district directors.*

Interestingly, even though WhatsApp had been acknowledged by participants as an informal means of communication, it was said to be frequently used to convey messages from management to general staff within the organisation. This was because

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WhatsApp facilitates quicker sending and receiving of information; for which reason it had become a reliable channel for communication. According to Participant A

WhatsApp, it's an internal kind of thing because we have various regions who have their staff on the platforms. All the Directors and management staff are also on the platform and, of course, talking about communication that also enhances the communication network because these days you may not have to write circular and post it to get it down to the people. If it's on WhatsApp, it immediately gets to them within seconds it gets to the regional directors and the regional directors put it on their regional platforms.

These findings bring to mind Canary's (2015) observation about the purposes of downward communication. According to the author, downward communication is meant to provide job instructions as well as to guide the implementation of organisational goals, strategies and objectives. This finding also dovetails into the tenet underpinning the Media Richness Theory which concerns the most appropriate communication medium (Daft & Lengel, 1984). The finding also confirms Men's (2014) study that employees in contemporary times prefer to receive organisational information electronically perhaps because of ease of use and quick access.

Due to the large number of NCCE staff across the country as indicated in Chapter One (Section 1.5), the researcher establishes that downward communication works well in keeping all staff informed and up to date with the activities of the organisation in an organised fashion.

4.4.2.2 Upward communication

Upward communication is also a regular feature of NCCE communication. The Data indicated that the practice of upward communication at NCCE is encouraged. It was realised that upward communication has been the official form through which the general staff have sought clarification from management staff. It has also been the directional flow that is used by general staff to inform management

about activities on the ground. In sum, upward communication makes communication complete within the organisation. This was rightly pointed out by Participant D:

> *Sometimes there are issues around those instructions and staff may veer off what the instructions says. So if you have issues at the District you can refer to the Regional Director. If it's issues at the Regional office you can refer to the National Office.*

This finding validates Lunnenberg's (2010, p.4) observation that upward communication is necessary to determine if staff members ―have understood information sent downwards".

Data showed that through the use of upward communication, management staff have received feedback from the general staff through programmes reports as well as personal and job-related concerns.

> *So when the various districts organise programs they write a report and forward it to us. (Participant C)*

Interview data also indicated that:

> *If you are at the district, you have a director there. So first of all you channel your grievances to the district director, who also channels it through the regional director and then it comes to us at the head office (Participant B).*

This finding also brings to mind Canary's (2011) assertion that upward communication can be used to address grievances and disputes. In addition, Nazarova (2015) observed that the management of an organisation can get to know the feelings of employees about organisational policies, their job, and working procedures through upward communication. The finding shows that similar to downward communication, the internally organised WhatsApp system has effectively enabled swift upward transmission of information as well. Though the WhatsApp channel is informal, the researcher realised that it played a key role in resolving ambiguities and misunderstandings in the Commission, especially around task instructions.

The study also discovered that upward communication occurred in a unique fashion where official information is passed through various levels of authority from the bottom to the top. Participant E pointed out that:

> *...we are very particular about our hierarchy by way of communication so if the District Director wants to seek clarification or send any information to the Head Office he/she doesn't send it directly to the Head Office. It has to be routed through a letter to the Regional Director and if a member of staff wants to speak to us as well and it's official, it has to go through the same procedure; your supervisor, or immediate supervisor and the next immediate.*

The motive for this structured practice, according to the data, is to make all staff, especially supervisors, aware of events happening around them. Participant E explained that:

> *The purpose of this is that everybody has to be in the known to know what goes on. Because if a person is working under a District Director in a district and the person wants to go on say study leave, if he/she writes directly to us and we respond directly to the person then it means the District Director the Regional Director, will be out of the picture and that is wrong.*

The researcher observes that NCCE's upward communication provides feedback to the organisation's downward transmitted messages. In that regard, the feedback component produced from the organisation's internal communication activities (downward and upward communication) reinforces the principle of Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model which recognises effective communication to have taken place when messages are exchanged in a reciprocal manner. Data also indicated that aside the use of vertical communication in conducting purposeful communication, horizontal communication has been beneficial to the organisation as well.

4.4.2.3 Horizontal communication

As indicated in the previous chapters, NCCE is a large organisation with offices across all regions in Ghana. The data showed that horizontal communication serves an important purpose in the flow of information within the organisation.

> *Internally, we have line directors in all our departments and the line directors share information and communicate amongst themselves at their level. They work hand in hand communicatively in order to achieve the Commission's mandate. (*Participant *A)*

Lunenberg (2015) posits that horizontal communication becomes instrumental with a big (in terms of size) and complex organisation. NCCE may be considered as a ―complex organisation‖ because of its approximately two hundred and sixteen (216) offices spread across Ghana. The researcher noticed that the purpose for NCCE's use of horizontal communication is for the various units, departments and offices within the organisation to neatly coordinate affairs whilst minimising and/or eliminating operational incongruities.

> *We have a WhatsApp line for District Directors. So if there's a campaign going on, we have to inform the Directors. We want everybody to be abreast of the same thing at the same time (Participant C)*

Canary (2011) observes that the purpose for horizontal communication could be for interpersonal problem solving, interdepartmental coordination and staff advice to departmental heads. The analysis suggests that the Commission could be benefiting from the findings of Canary (2011).

To conclude this section on internal communication, the analysis indicated that in terms of directional flow of information, the Commission actively engages in downward, upward, and horizontal communication as its official internal forms for transmitting and receiving messages. Nevertheless, it is realised that these internal communication practices reflect the communication practices applied in most

organisations. That is, in terms of the organisation's regard for hierarchy, direction of communication flow and the communication types including memos, letters, circulars, etcetera, NCCE's communication practices appear to follow trends expressed in the literature (see Canary, 2015).

Grapevine Communication

Aside from the formal internal forms of communication as discussed above, the data showed that grapevine communication is also prevalent at NCCE. From the data it was observed that even though grapevine communication was acknowledged by interview participants as an informal channel of transmitting information, it was encouraged in the organisation as a crucial means of communication. Participant E indicated that:

> *You can write without going through the formal channels. We do uncover a lot of wrongs through that channel (grapevine). And actually you know the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP), yes, NACAP also encourages that we create avenues where people can speak when some wrong doing are occurring. (Participant E)*

Grapevine communication was suggested to be a means of obtaining useful information within NCCE. This form of communication was presented as being important as it had assisted management to uncover some malfeasance in the organisation. Participant E commented that:

> *...we also have an informal communication channel and that is where we are looking at whistleblowing. Something is going wrong in the office and the perpetrator of that wrong is somebody's boss. How do you report because you'll be asking your boss to report himself to his supervisor? He will never do that. So we also have informal channels where we do get information from the District. (Participant E)*

The finding about the strategic use of grapevine in NCCE's communication is significant. Proceeding from the perspective of the Media Richness theory, this researcher is of the view that the use of grapevine communication at NCCE may be

analysed from two angles. From one angle, NCCE's dependence on grapevine to obtain important information appears to be controversial. This practice could suggest that, although considered unofficial, grapevine appears to be considered and applied at NCCE as official communication. The official communication practices within the organisation may not readily elicit upward information on wrongdoings. For fear of victimisation, perhaps staff, especially subordinate ones, may be unable to freely make official reports of happenings in the organisation and thus have to rely on stealthily transmitting their messages upwards. From another angle, the Media Richness theory posits that communication channels differ in their effectiveness in resolving ambiguity, negotiate various interpretations and facilitate understanding. Thus, it could be argued that the practice of grapevine communication could signify a new evolving trend in purposefully transmitting messages at NCCE and other organisations (Banerjee & Singh, 2015; Robinson & Thelen, 2018).

To sum up this section on NCCE's internal communication, the data indicated that the communication channels consisting of old and new media were used in NCCE's internal organisation. The internal communication directions identified in the data were downward, upward, horizontal and grapevine communication. Also channels, including circulars, memos, notice boards, letters, emails, phone calls and WhatsApp, were indicated to signify the internal communication practices of the organisation.

4.5 External Communication Practices and the Channels of Communication

The institutional mandate of the NCCE, as prescribed, inter alia, by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, makes external communication key in determining the success or otherwise of the Commission. It is the responsibility of NCCE to educate citizens

about their constitutional rights and obligations, as well as other socio-political issues to produce well informed and responsible Ghanaians. To achieve these objectives implies the Commission must engage stakeholders external to the institution. This makes the analyses in relation to external communication very vital to the overall analysis and findings of this study. Thus, the data collected to address the external communication aspect of RQ2 focused on communication practices and channels NCCE used in interacting with its publics. The data indicated that NCCE used various channels and practices in its external communication, which have been themed in this analysis as ‒direct community engagement", ‒media engagement" and ‒aesthetics". A discussion of these themes follows in the subsequent paragraphs.

4.5.1 Direct community engagement

In the context of this study, direct community engagement refers to the face-to-face activities that take place between the organisation and its publics during public education exercises. The data revealed that direct community engagement plays a very important role in communicating information related to the public education exercises of NCCE to targeted groups in communities. This approach is clarified by Participant A that:

> *...the face-to-face approach (interpersonal) at durbar, focus group discussion, in schools, churches. That one is very effective as I've already explained because of feedback and then they will be able to explain when they ask questions*

Direct community engagement also helps the organisation to reach Ghanaians who are in the remote parts of the country and do not have the opportunity of catching civic messages through mediated channels. Participant D indicated that:

> *...all those hamlets, communities, there's no way your social media can reach them. They don't even listen to radio. They are there minding their own business and they are okay with life that way. But*

they are Ghanaians. They also have to know what is going on. They have to know the message. They also have to be educated on their civic rights and responsibilities.

More importantly, the data suggest that the ability of direct community engagement to bring about better understanding and meaning with audiences for immediate feedback is a regular motive behind the Commission's operations. During direct community engagement, civic education officers move into the communities to exchange messages about civic responsibilities and other democratic issues with citizens in their convenient environment such as in town hall meetings and meetings with citizens in market places, churches and mosques, schools, among others.

This finding reinforces the tenet of the Media Richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986), which argues that the _richness' of a medium is based on the medium's ability to generate immediate feedback. The use of direct community engagements enables NCCE to receive immediate and useful feedback from the audience. This makes direct community engagement one of the most used channels in the organisation's external communication practices, as Participant C asserted:

And we use face to face approach, personal contact and that has over the years worked for us.

Data indicated that at NCCE, all staff are regarded as communicators, thereby making all staff civic educators by default. This was clearly expressed by Participant A:

...we have quite a sizeable number of staff who are not only from the programmes department who should be able to go out there and deliver.

This finding was disturbing to the researcher since it means that NCCE was not very keen on recruiting communication professionals to handle its communication and educative activities. The data also strongly showed problems with the background

of personnel employed by NCCE to advance its communication-driven agenda. Since NCCE's civic education activities are crucial to the stability of the socio-political atmosphere of Ghana, its practice of taking on first degree holders from any field raises serious questions about the quality of the organisation's education efforts. It appears problematic for this organisation with such a sensitive task to regard all staff, especially those without communication training, as public education officers.

Also, the data suggested that NCCE staff, who actively engaged in direct community engagement, were accorded insufficient training in communication related practices. Participant G opined that:

> *There've been times when we've been given handout, not very strict on communication per se. And on training on communication, once every blue moon, we have a training of such nature. (Participant G)*

The fact that the staff were provided handouts that may not focus on communication and that training happens irregularly as indicated in the above quote shows that NCCE has not been providing adequate opportunities for professional development of staff engaged in civic education.

Furthermore, the data indicated that some prominent staff in charge of NCCE's communication appear not to distinguish between having information and having the technical knowledge to communicate the information. Arguably, it is one thing having information and another thing having the technical competence in communicating the information effectively. For instance, Participant B stated that:

> *...so me if I go to certain communities and I can't express myself in the local language that the people understand and I have a driver who can speak the language and the people can identify with him, don't you think it'll be more effective when the driver has the requisite information about the topic that we want to tell the people and he tells them instead?*

This quote implies that the Participant did not realise that the driver may have the information but may lack the technical communicative competence to deliver the

information as a professional communicator would have done. Closely related to the above, is the realisation that NCCE did not consider a technical and/or professional qualification in communication as a key factor in employing people to do civic education. According to Participant B:

> *And also, communication is very effective when it is done in the local language and you shouldn't have a high degree in communication or speak proper English to do communication. The nature of the work we are doing, you don't really have to have that.*

This goes to show why the Commission has only one communication department stationed at the headquarters in Accra and may explain NCCE's communication challenges as discovered by Boampong (2017).

In terms of staff placement, data has shown that there are language barriers between the organisation and some of its publics. Interview data suggested that due a lack of adequate staff, the organisation had to post staff to areas where staff may not be able to speak the language of the indigenes. This was explicitly expressed by Participant E as follows:

> *We are recruiting 35 people and you need someone at Yooyo. The office is virtually depleted so sometimes we are forced to send people there who can't speak the language. We do have some circumstances that certain skills are needed somewhere and errrmm even at some places at that point you can't even get those people who can speak their languages. We have to make do with what we have*

Thus, literate indigenes are made to serve as translators to interpret civic messages during public education exercises, a potentially problematic situation since the NCCE staff cannot tell if the translators were sending the intended messages to the NCCE audiences as required. Participant B expressed it this way:

> *With the education which is on radio errrm with that the elite groups in those communities take it up. It's unfortunate that listeners and staff may not be able tell if what the elite groups are translating is the truth or not. (Participant D)*

This finding suggests that language barrier could be impeding the effectiveness of public education activities, especially with regards to its direct community engagement and the mediated communication practices of the offices affected. This finding also resonates with the aspect of the Barnlund's (1970) Model which indicates, among others, that language barrier (noise) can arise in the communication process causing a disruption in the flow of communication. The researcher thus observes that since communication requires reciprocity, any interruption in the communication process will influence the clarity and understanding of NCCE's public education messages and consequently, impede the attainment of organisational goals.

Bodgat (2011) avers that some functions of government communication include informing, advocating or persuading citizens and stakeholders regarding the implementation of policies and reforms and expected social behaviour. From the data, it was realised that the organisation understood that the ability to send civic messages for citizens to fully comprehend and act on (civic messages) requires more than just speaking or talking to citizens. Participant A declared that:

> *Our objective is to get the citizens to be well informed about the content and to put into practice what we have told them. We inform to convince, to persuade so that at the end of the day, we get them to accept and make use of what we've given them, it should be clear that they have understood and accepted what we've given them. That is at the back of whatever we are going to tell the public.*

Instead, interview participants noted that for more proactive civic education, civic messages should be transmitted or taught using suitable communication strategies. This would enable citizens to fully comprehend, appreciate and act on the civic messages, as noted by participant A:

> *As much as possible we want to have an interaction, an engagement so that even as we speak the person can look at you and your demeanour,*

the passion with which you speak about the issue will influence the person's attitude toward the subject. (Participant A)

Tench and Yeoman (2006) observe that apart from mass media channels, public institutions ought to execute their communication function using effective two-way communication tools and approaches such as debates, public hearing, community gatherings, and stakeholder consultations, among others that will produce the necessary public involvement. Data revealed that in carrying out this perspective, NCCE makes use of communication methods including civic education clubs, durbars, focus groups discussion, quizzes, drama and sketches during direct community engagements. However, data pointed out that certain specific communication methods were applied based on the demographics of the audience. Participant B indicated that:

> *…so, you know our publics vary. Our publics are all Ghanaians just that each segment we have to draft a message to suit them, so that they understand what we are doing. So, you know segmentation, targeting, positioning. So, each group has a different approach but it's the same message so that at the end of the day they will all be conscientised. So, we make use of durbar, focus group discussions in schools and churches, sketches, drama and quizzes. This way people can relate with the topic more clearly.*

This finding is consistent with Ahn's (2012) assertion that for any policy to work, public institution's communicators must consider the characteristics of their audience to guide them in choosing suitable communication methods to yield feedback and the required understanding and participation of the audience. This is because audiences or publics may choose whether to accept or decline a message and also interpret the message as they desire depending on the kind of message and how it is presented.

Speaking about the manner of presenting messages, the data also pointed out that direct community engagement allows a speaker to have a connection with the

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audience through the use of body language and non-verbal communication. Participant A attested to this that:

> *As much as possible we want to have an interaction, an engagement so that even as we speak the person can look at you and your demeanour the passion with which you speak about the issue will influence the person's attitude toward the subject.*

This finding reflects the Media Richness theory's tenet about the effectiveness of a medium or strategy that provides different communicative opportunities for participants. Thus, a medium that promotes multiple signals including physical presence, voice inflection, body gestures, words, etcetera simultaneously to a number of people when a message is being communicated (as could be the case during the direct community engagements) makes it effective and efficient.

4.5.2 Media engagement

The interview and document data have demonstrated that NCCE communicates with its publics through media engagements. In this study, media engagement refers to the mediated communication and channels that NCCE uses in its public education exercises to reach and influence its publics. They include radio, newspaper, television, community address system, open broadcast, and the Internet.

Media engagement was found to be a necessary avenue to reach a much larger audience, compared to direct community engagements. Direct community engagement can be limiting because only those present at the time of the direct community engagement get to benefit directly from the exercise. Although those who participate in the engagement may later share with others who did not attend, one cannot vouch for the accuracy of such re-transmitted messages. Nevertheless, media

engagements were discovered to be a key complement to community engagements in the NCCE's work. According to Participant B:

> ...even though we believe that direct communication gets us feedback there and then and the understanding clear for the people, mass transmission is also very useful. So, television, radio, social media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp) NCCE is there on all these platforms.

According to Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006), selecting a channel based on an understanding of its positive characteristics helps to produce desired results. Data showed that each mediated channel serves the organisation in specific ways to reach their target. For social media, it was discovered that the organisation was present and active on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. NCCE was also running an up-to-date website. These are managed by officers at the CCA.

> We also have a website and social media pages. However, these are only managed at the head office by CCA (Participant G)

The organisation used social media to consciously target various segments of the Ghanaian population. It is also to follow current technological communication trends as indicated in the following quotation:

> That's where the world is moving towards, so we also take advantage of that. Also the youth are mostly found there. Also the educated also get themselves there (Participant H)

In addition, social media was said to help NCCE to hear from their audience as expressed by Participant D:

> We get response from the comment section on our social media. Social media has helped a lot. There is always feedback, unless the person doesn't want to give feedback because the avenues are available for them to give feedback.

The researcher however observes that NCCE's social media activities appears to be disorganised with an insignificant impact. For instance, even though interview data showed that NCCE had taken the initiative of exploring opportunities that

modern day technology presents, document (data) collected from the organisation's social media pages, revealed that engagements on NCCE's social media pages were not as impressive as interview data showed it to be. For instance, the YouTube page had only 43 subscribers, with the highest viewed video receiving 38 views (Retrieved from *https://youtu.be/6Ven-0qybJ0)*. On Instagram also, posts were receiving one or two comments on the over 1001 posts presented. (Retrieved from *https://instagram.com/nccegh1?igshid=jqtlf7mgqw0a)*. The Twitter page was no better from the YouTube and Instagram with almost no engagement (Retrieved from *https://twitter.com/nccegh?s=09)*. Thus, it was not surprising that, Participant H, who was a communication expert, admonished the Commission to find creative ways to boost publics' engagements on its social media:

> *There are better opportunities; they just have to be creative. What they need do is to adapt the new technologies to their needs. It's not like you think, social media is there and it'll perform magic. The trick is you'll use social media in a way that helps. If you do a 'copy and paste' information and put it on your Facebook and you expect people to read well that's not going to happen because the information may be so dense. So, its's not just about social media but the thing is how do you engage people? These new media channels thrive on reciprocal relationships or interaction. So, the question is how do you do it in a way that engages the audience? I think that is really what they should be looking at. They have to take advantage of social media in a way that engages the audience.*

Despite social media's vast potential, interview and document data showed that it was not sufficient for the organisation to rely solely on social media to engage with its external publics. This was rightly expressed by Participant B that:

> *When we say education eh, education is not on social media. How many Ghanaians have access to internet? How many of them understand English? The illiterate are more than the literate that's the truth so how do you reach the majority? Even if 40% are literate, 60% are not, so how do you reach them?*

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Also Participant D added that:

> *…those hamlets. There's no way your social media can reach them.*

For this reason, NCCE adopts other media to interact with external publics including radio, open broadcast and newspapers. Gathering from the data, the purposes for using these media were because:

> *…radio helps with our jingles, the information centres in the communities, you know those cinema vans, those with the megaphones on them, and they are airing our jingles. We use print but as a formality. When I say as a formality, to reach corporate target to let them know and be informed that NCCE had a dialogue or a conference or a seminar (*Participant *C)*

Amongst the various mediated channels, data indicated that NCCE believes radio and television were the best channels to use. This was because of their wider coverage, mass accessibility and semblance to direct community engagement in terms of their interpersonal characteristics due to phone-in practices. Participant A pointed this out that:

> *…looking at our work, we have to influence attitude. We need to get the people to do the right thing. Normally what they see is much more influential, so television becomes a very effective channel to do that.*

Data indicated that NCCE's radio and television shows provided the opportunity for listeners to call into the shows to share their opinions and/or seek clarifications on the topics which were discussed, thereby, creating important opportunities for immediate feedback.

> *Well, apart from social media we use radio and television because there are some of the programs that when we go they allow phone in from listeners and viewers. (Participant C)*

More so,

> *We also have the mass approach. That's when we use the radio and the community radios. That one, some people have the opportunity of calling in to seek clarification and we're also getting feedback like the direct engagement. (Participant A)*

This finding is in sync with Barnlund's (1970) Transactional model, which suggests that interpersonal communication takes place when purposeful messages are exchanged in a reciprocal, circular manner. What this seems to imply in the case of NCCE is that successful communication occurs when both NCCE and its publics simultaneously send and/or receive civic messages, opinions and clarifications through television, radio and social media.

Data also showed that when NCCE sets out to engage in public education, its objective is to sensitise citizens in order to influence their behaviour to the benefit of themselves, their communities and the nation. Therefore the prevalence of community radios and community communication systems which have been described by Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey (2018, p.293) as ―horns over roof" have supported NCCE's public education exercises to reach a large number of citizens. In line with mass media trends in Africa and Ghana (Akpojivi & Fosu, 2020) most participants indicated that radio was more effective and a preferred channel for public education than the rest because:

> *...unlike television we have radios in all the areas and communities in Ghana. That's why I think that radio is the most effective in carrying out our messages. (Participant F)*

Participant F also indicated that:

> *Radio goes far. It has a wider listenership. Now because of this small radios the Chinese have produced with torch light and even on phones, when people are going to the farm, they can carry it and take it along. So it's really helping. That's why I say radio is the best because people can easily carry it everywhere. The radio has now become handy and people in the market, people going to work with the help of earpiece can listen to. So the radio has helped us (Participant F)*

The researcher observes that since there is no policy prescribing specific external communication channels to be used, the organisation has been free to choose

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communication channels which it deems appropriate to engage with its publics as and when necessary.

4.5.3   Aesthetics

The use of ‗æsthetics' was revealed in the data as an important tool for driving civic messages to various segments of NCCE's publics. The theme ‗æsthetics' in this study refers to productions designed to attract and facilitate communication among various audience. They include the abridged 1992 Constitution of Ghana, posters, billboards, wristbands, car stickers, footprint stickers, fliers, brochures, and etcetera. Previous discussions (as indicated in Chapter One, Section 1.1) have indicated the onerous task facing the NCCE in achieving its mandate. Thus, the organisation uses aesthetics as a complementary or auxiliary communication channel in transmitting civic messages. Participant C expressed this aptly thus:

> *So you know segmentation, targeting, positioning. So each group has a different approach but it's the same message so that at the end of the day they will all be sensitised. So we have a Graphic Designer who does animation here. So for schools we use animation. For children, we have to use visuals, catchy phrase*

Document data also indicated that:

> *…educational materials on key activities of the Commission as well as collaborative activities were developed and designed. They included posters, polo shirt stickers, pens, pull-up banners backdrops and annual reports (NCCE, 2018).*

NCCE's civic messages are based on the 1992 Constitution, the language and structure of which may be difficult or complicated for some people. As a result, the Commission deems it necessary to make the document easily accessible to Ghanaians. For this reason, abridged versions of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana are often shared

to students in Civic Education Clubs which have been created in schools, as explained by (Participant C):

> *We have the abridged version of the Constitution which we give to the civic education clubs in schools.*

Other aesthetics including posters were used to increase the visibility of civic messages during the Commission's campaigns. Participant C, for instance, stated that:

> *...we have posters and stuff. When the elections were coming up we did footprint stickers, we also did trotro stickers so that when passengers were taking the trotro they will see it. So the footprint stickers are in most intuitions, hospitals, clinics, most tertiary institutions.*

Pictorial illustrations were provided to simplify civic messages especially for children, as indicated by participant C:

> *So we have a Graphic Designer who does animation here. So for schools we use animation. For children, we have to use visuals, catchy phrase (Participant C).*

The above findings on aesthetics affirms the necessity of finding and applying suitable and varied communication media to inform and increase understanding as indicated by the Media Richness Theory.

In conclusion, the study confirmed that external communication plays a major aspect in the communication practices of NCCE. This is because, through the practice of external communication, the organisation is able to reach its external publics which somehow facilitates the execution of the organisation's legal mandate to some extent. The analysis has also shown that some of the Commission's external communication activities such as direct community engagement and media engagements could be facing some challenges that could undermine their effectiveness. Nevertheless, and although lacking a codified communication policy, NCCE adopts some standard

communication methods that could seem to work in helping the organisation to pursue its mandate.

4.6 RQ. 3 What are the implications of NCCE's communication structure for its work?

This research question sought to find out the implications of NCCE's internal and external communication practices to NCCE's work. Themes that assisted the researcher in exploring this research question included ―communication and civic education‖, ―NCCE's conventional communication framework‖ and ―NCCE's challenges‖. Further sub themes are introduced during the discussions to facilitate the conversation.

4.6.1 Communication and civic education

The preceding analysis has shown that communication is vital to the core functions of the NCCE, particularly its civic education agenda. The Commission appears to be aware of the indispensable role of communication in achieving its institutional objective of providing civic education to inhabitants of Ghana. According to Participant A, a management staff of the organisation:

> *The work of NCCE is basically to communicate. Getting the people to know their rights and responsibilities and then promoting democracy in general. So as a mandate of the NCCE the channel to do it is through communication so communication is very important to NCCE.*

The above acknowledgement that the Commission can achieve its institutional mandate through effective and strategic use of communication raises critical questions about the organisation's attitude to its communication structure. The researcher finds the realisation in this study that the Commission did not have an operational communication policy since its inception in 1993 curious and thought-provoking. The

explanation below that NCCE was working to develop a communication policy at the time of this research is arguably long overdue.

> *With the communication policy, we are trying to put one together. It'll capture our activities both our traditional way of face-to-face interaction. It'll cover our media, it'll cover our traditional media and online and other things, and it'll entail how staff communicate our activities. (Participant D)*

It suggests that NCCE has not taken its communication seriously even though its very success depends on it. Interestingly, studies such as Abudu and Fuseini (2014), Bawa (2011) and Boampong (2017) that have discovered the ineffectiveness of NCCE's work appears not to have connected NCCE's ineffectiveness to its communication system. This is a gap filled by this current study.

4.6.2 NCCE's conventional communication framework

This study has revealed that NCCE was not taking its communication activities seriously since it has not developed and applied any communication policy since its inception in 1993. The Commission could be unaware of the contribution a lack of a communication policy could be making to its challenges and ineffectiveness. It could be surmised that the Commission's apparent laidback attitude to its communication could be due to the belief that it had been performing its civic education, nonetheless. As the analysis has indicated, the organisation had evolved conventional communication practices, which it has been employing over the years. In the subsequent discussion, the researcher will focus on key issues underpinning some of the conventional communication practices of the organisation cutting across both internal and external communication practices.

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4.6.3 Internal mediated communication

The data have indicated that NCCE's internal communication practices reflect the expected practices, channels and types of communication of any contemporary organisation. However, the Commission's use of WhatsApp for communication among management and other line directors throughout the country is remarkable. According to *Participant A:*

> *WhatsApp, it's an internal kind of thing because we have various regions who have their staff on the platforms. All the Directors and management staff are also on the platform and, of course, talking about communication that also enhances the communication network because these days you may not have to write circulars and post it to and get it down to the people.*

The use of WhatsApp, which is informal, appears to be replacing some formal or official means of communication within the internal communication structure of the organisation. This finding projects the tenets of the Media Richness Theory of choosing the most appropriate communication channel for executing a task. It raises questions as to why WhatsApp would not be acknowledged as an official channel for internal communication within the organisation.

4.6.4 Direct community engagement

The analysis has shown that NCCE engages in a number of fora which have been described as direct community engagement. For instance, the organisation meets with some of its publics in churches, town halls and schools and interacts with them on civic responsibility issues and elicit immediate feedback, as indicated by two participants:

> *...we believe that direct communication gets us feedback there and then and the understanding clear for the people. (Participant A)*
> *...we adopt all forms of communication and we do face-to-face engagement so we go to the communities (Participant C)*

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Even though data presents direct community engagement as an important channel of meeting NCCE's publics face to face, the practice raises critical issues concerning what criteria NCCE uses in determining the right staff to interact with such publics. The practices imply that such staff should understand the language and culture of any particular community NCCE visits. These concerns have sprung up because data has indicated that the organisation lumps every staff, regardless of their role as drivers, accountants, administrators, etcetera, as civic educators.

> *...officers, no matter the offices they belong to also act as speakers to the schools and then others who might not have that confidence, we attached them to the external volunteers but in the absence of the external volunteers, you should be able to do something (Participant A)*

This realisation raises pertinent questions about the effectiveness of NCCE in its civic education function and the overall management of the Commission. First, it is impossible for NCCE to employ and place indigenes in all the offices of the country and in all communities in Ghana. Second, using staff who are not professional communicators, people who may not have been trained or who may not be good at public speaking, has implications for effective public communication in the education process; and third, having no Communication Department in the regions and districts implies that communication is taken for granted in the organisation. Indeed, the challenges posed by the above points in relation to the effectiveness of NCCE in the performance of its mandate is reflected in this admission by Participant D:

> *…sometimes we are forced to send people there who can't speak the language. We do have some circumstances that certain skills are needed somewhere and errrmm even at some places at that point you can't even get those people who can speak their languages. We have to make do with what we have.*

The last sentence of the above quote suggests logistical neglect on the part of government to NCCE and the frustration of the staff.

4.6.5   Media engagement

The analysis has shown that some of NCCE's communication practices involve appearing on radio and television programmes to educate the public. While earlier discussions on this issue have shown that media engagement presented a platform for NCCE to engage with a wide range of publics, the finding about the calibre of NCCE staff in the districts raises other questions. The questions are: What training does the organisation give to its representatives who undertake the radio and television engagement? What is the quality of that training if it even happens? In fact, Participant G indicated that:

> *Even though there are no intensive communication training, once a while staff go for training and also there are often in-service training undertaken which is also on communication (Participant G)*

The discussion above portends serious implications which cannot be handled in this current study because of its scope and focus.

4.6.6   NCCE's challenges

Interview data submitted that even though NCCE is tasked with educating Ghanaians on their civic duties and opportunities, there are other state institutions that are obliged to carry out duties similar to that of NCCE therefore creating an overlap. This was expressed by Participant D:

> *...we have such a broad mandate and we are working with institutions that also have the core mandate for certain functions. For example, EC (Electoral Commission) has an education component in their mandate, we also have that responsibility.*

Data however suggested that, despite NCCE's desire to work together with these organisations, such organisations may not be willing to give out their public education funds to support NCCE. Participant D stated that:

> *Here we are, you know our resource constraints but then will EC be ready to cede their education budget to us to do education? Will the*

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Health sector be ready to cede their education budget to NCCE to do education on corona virus? So all these things is a major challenge because people expect us to be able to deliver in all sectors which is not possible. It's impossible.

Without adequate funding for the onerous function of the Commission, it should not be too surprising that Abudu and Fuseini (2014), Bawa (2011) and Boampong (2017) Niworo, Gasu and Achanso (2016) have found NCCE not to be efficient in carrying out its functions.

In addition, expert opinion suggests that the impact of NCCE's civic education messages can be really felt in the country if the messages are supported by research in order to identify what its publics' civic needs are.

I think they should engage in more research to be able to identify the needs of people. (Participant H)

This finding dovetails into Borden's (2006) assertion that without properly determining audience's needs through research, most communication objectives will be unsuccessful because messages will not be received. In addition, as a suggestion to beef up NCCE's public education activities, Participant H, a communication expert, opined that:

You need people who are very dynamic who will engage in fundraising, proposal writing, grant writing and stuff to get more funding to do the work that they do, I just think that's one of the things that they need to do.

In conclusion, the discussions has shown that even though NCCE appears to feel confident in its communication structure, there are undesirable consequences for the organisation's orientation on communication which inadvertently can hinder the attainment of the organisation's goals. The discussions have also pointed out the unexploited opportunities (such as social media as discussed in Section 4. of this chapter) available to NCCE for the furtherance of its mandate.

4.7   Chapter summary

This chapter presented and discussed data collected from interviews and documents to address this study's research questions. The findings of this study were discussed guided by the Media Richness Theory and Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication as well as literature reviewed in Chapter Two of this study. The first research question which sought to probe the communication framework of NCCE revealed that NCCE's communication was not guided by any proactive communication policy. The Commission employed conventional and ad hoc communication practices, which have implications for assessment, consistency, and effectiveness. The second research question investigated the communication practices of NCCE and discovered that NCCE employs external and internal communication practices expected of a contemporary organisation. The major external practices relating to the constitutional mandate of the Commission were direct community engagement, media engagement and aesthetics. The third research question examined broader implications of some of the major findings flowing from research questions 1 and 2. Findings from the third research question demonstrated that the organisation's style of practicing communication raises critical questions about the effectiveness and management of the organisation which fall beyond the scope of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0   Introduction

This chapter concludes the research on organisational communication of subvented organisations in Ghana, focusing specifically on the communication activities and related matters of Ghana's National Commission for Civic Education. Regarding structure, the next sections first provide a summary of the study, emphasising major findings from the analysis, then conclude the whole study, present the study's limitations, and then end with recommendations for further research.

5.1   Summary of Key Findings

This study concerns the overall communication outfit of the NCCE and the broad implications of that structure. The study has situated communication as key to the efforts of NCCE to meet its constitutional mandate of providing civic education to inhabitants of Ghana. After a painstakingly undertaken literature review, the study has indicated the paucity of studies on subvented organisations in Ghana and specifically on NCCE's communications. Data was drawn through semi structured interviews of eight purposively sampled participants, as well as document analysis of NCCE's annual reports, social media pages, and website in addition to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The overall data analysis was guided by the Media Richness |Theory and Barnlund's (1970) Transactional Model of Communication to yield information that answers the study's research questions.

The study set out to address three research questions. The first question examined the policy framework which guides NCCE's communication. The second sought to investigate the communication practices employed at NCCE. And, the third

research question investigated the implications of NCCE's communication structure for its work. The key findings around these three questions are briefly presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

The study found that NCCE did not have an explicit and codified communication policy guiding its communication activities. This finding strongly suggests that NCCE could possibly be failing in performing its communication-oriented education functions as it should. This is because policies provide the framework in which things should happen effectively. Thus, minus a communication policy, there was no systematic goal-oriented approach to the Commission's communications. Neither was there criteria nor measuring yardsticks to assess the performance of the Commission. It is therefore not surprising that Boampong (2017) and Niworo, Gasu, & Achanso's (2016) have discovered that NCCE is challenged in its communication practices.

It was also discovered that in the absence of a legal communication policy, NCCE had evolved a conventional communication framework that mostly involved communication and operational directives from the Headquarters as and when the need arose, which appeared to be helping the organisation in its communication activities. The researcher observed that the Commission could be oblivious of the communication weakness that the absence of a communication policy could be causing the organisation since the organisation was relying on its conventional communication framework.

The study also discovered that NCCE had a Communication and Corporate Affairs (CCA) Department which was tasked to manage the internal and external communication of the organisation. It was also found that regardless of the important role the CCA played, NCCE had only one CCA department, which was stationed at

the head office in Accra, and with only a few staff of CCA having a professional background in communication. This finding raises serious questions as it implies that staff at the district offices who had direct contact with NCCE's publics were not directly supervised by CCA. This could possibly lead to communication inefficiencies. This finding further implies that NCCE had not realised the important correlation communication had to its work.

The study also revealed that NCCE's internal communication follows the usual patterns and trends in contemporary organisations in terms of directional flow of information (downward, upward, and horizontal) and channels including notice boards, letters, e-mails, WhatsApp, etcetera. With regards to the downwards communication, the study found that NCCE employed WhatsApp to supports its _formal' communication within the organisation.

The fulcrum of this study rests on NCCE's external communication because that is what connects the organisation to its Constitutional mandate of providing civic education to inhabitants of Ghana. The study found key NCCE's external communication to involve direct community engagement and media engagements, which played central roles in communicating NCCE's civic education messages to targeted groups in various communities.

For direct community engagement, it was discovered that NCCE employed durbars, debate, animation, town hall meetings, schools, etcetera in spreading its civic messages to specifically segmented audiences for whom appropriate topics are specifically couched to fit the diverse backgrounds and orientation of the publics. Direct community engagement was preferred by NCCE since it generated immediate feedback. This finding reinforced Daft & Lengel's (1986) argument that the _richness' of a medium is based on the medium's ability to generate immediate feedback

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The study discovered that NCCE employed mass communication channels including radio, newspaper, Internet and television to reach its varied publics. In addition, NCCE used community communication systems including radio, the dominant mass media outlet in Africa and Ghana (Akpojivi & Fosu, 2020) and ―horns over roofs" (Ofori-Birikorang and Aggrey, 2018, p.293) to reinforce its civic education messages. Furthermore, NCCE's social media presence in addition to its up-to-date website portrayed the communication being in tune with modern communication trends (Men, 2014). It was however discovered that even though NCCE had registered its presence on social media (YouTube, Twitter, Instagram), the Commission's social media activities in engaging in its online audience were not impressive as it appeared to be disorganised with insignificant impact. The Commission also designed productions including the abridged 1992 Constitution of Ghana, posters, billboards, wristbands, car stickers, footprint stickers, fliers, brochures, and etcetera to attract, facilitate and complement the Commission's external communication among its various audience.

The study also revealed other weaknesses that could undermine the Commission's communication effectiveness. For example, it was discovered that NCCE considered all its staff as civic educators. It was also discovered that the academic and professional backgrounds of personnel employed by NCCE to advance its communication-driven agenda was problematic since the Commission was not keen on recruiting communication professionals to undertake its civic education tasks. Additionally, it was found out that NCCE staff receive insufficient communication training. The study also found that some staff had encountered language barriers in carrying out their public education duties. All these findings arguably show that

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NCCE was bound to have communication inefficiencies, as discovered by Boampong (2017) and Noworo, Gasu & Achanso (2016).

5.2   Recommendations

From the findings and discussions of this study, I present the following recommendations: One of the major findings of this study was that NCCE's communication activities are not backed by any communication policy and that the organisation depended on a conventional communication framework of an ad hoc nature to guide its internal and external communication activities. It is therefore recommended that NCCE develop, codify, and implement a proactive communication policy to guide its communication activities. This would be in line with the African Development Bank's (2009) study, which found it practical for the ADB to develop and implement an explicit communication policy to realise its organisational goals.

The study also found that NCCE had only one Communication and Corporate Affairs (CCA) Department located at its head office in Accra. This finding implied that the CCA could be alienated from the activities of NCCE staff in the regional and district offices for effective communication work. Thus, it is recommended that NCCE provide for communication departments or at least a professionally trained communication officer in all its regional and district offices to help enrich the quality of civic education activities undertaken in the abovementioned offices.

The study also found that NCCE classified all staff as civic educators and that the Commission was not particularly enthused about recruiting communication professionals and providing training. Since this could impede the realisation of the organisation's communication goal, it is recommended that the Commission avoid lumping all staff together as civic educators. Instead, it could designate or recruit

communication professionals, and/or intensely train a section of its staff to undertake the Commission's public education exercises.

The study has discovered how the social media tool, WhatsApp, although an unofficial means of internal communication, has been integrated into the formal internal communication operations of the Commission. Consequently, it is recommended that WhatsApp be considered and categorised among the Commission's official and formal internal communication networks.

Finally, the study showed that NCCE was not sufficiently engaging its online audience. It is therefore recommended that the Commission find creative news ways to make its social media pages attractive and engaging to it set target.

5.3   Limitations of the Study

This study set out to investigate the organisational communication practices of subvented organisations in Ghana with a focus on the National Commission for Civic Education, Ghana. Even though the purpose of this study has been largely achieved, they are some limitations which are indicated below.

Firstly, literature on both subvented organisations and NCCE's communication were scarce. Whilst literature on subvented organisations in Ghana were non-existent, literature on NCCE was predominantly focused on the socio-political function of the organisation. In fact, Adu-Gyamfi & Yartey (2015) observed that limited research attention has been focused on NCCE and therefore called for a more research focus on the Commission. Thus, this study did not benefit from the availability of extensive literature that would have further enriched the study.

Secondly, the interview data used for this research was sourced from NCCE staff, whose number may not be representative enough, considering the size of the

staff in the whole country. Nonetheless, this limitation did not unduly undermine the findings since much of the information sought was specialised and could have been almost the same if more participants were spoken to and could possibly lead to information saturation. The important point is that the views of this study's participants assisted in addressing the study's research questions.

More so, although the findings of this research could provide an insight into the communication activities of other subvented organisations in Ghana, the findings cannot serve as an exact reflection of the communication practices of all subvented organisations in Ghana.

Lastly, data was not collected from NCCE's external audience to determine the effectiveness of the organisation's communication. Even though Boampong's (2017) study assessed NCCE's communication from the standpoint of NCCE's external publics, it is still too premature for an emphatic or conclusive statement about the effectiveness or otherwise of NCCE communication. Thus, recommendations have been made for further studies around this study's topic from different approaches and perspectives to help bring more clarity to the issues surrounding the topic under discussion.

5.4   Suggestions for further study

Based on the findings and discussions from this study, the following suggestions are being made to contribute knowledge and literature to the field. It is suggested that more studies be conducted on the effectiveness of NCCE's communication from its audiences' point of view towards a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which the organisation is effective. Such a study will also provide a way to correlate findings of NCCE's communication practices to its

audience's reception. The study could employ a quantitative method of enquiry in order to sample as many views as possible across the country in this regard. Studies can also investigate the impact of NCCE's civic education activities on its publics. These should lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the communication issues framing subvented institutions in Ghana and NCCE.

5.5   Conclusion

This study brings to a sharp focus NCCE and its communication structure and operations in relation to its constitutional mandate of providing civic education to inhabitants in Ghana. From the viewpoint of organisational communication, the study provides an insight into the connection between communication and education and how these concepts unify and position the Commission to effectively discharge its mandate as stipulated in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana (Chapter 19). The central argument of the study is that communication is key to any education endeavour for which reason, NCCE cannot adequately achieve its mandate without an effective communication system.

Yet, whilst the NCCE seems to be sure that it undertakes efficient communication practices to support its civic education function, the study has indicated a number of potential drawbacks to the Commission's effective communication operations. The lack of a communication policy; less emphasis on employing communication professionals in the Commission's CCA Department; the fact that every employee, even drivers, accountants, and secretaries perform as civic educators; the lack of adequate training for the civic educators; all point to serious potential hindrances to the Commission's communication. This also has implications

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for the overall effectiveness of the Commission regarding its civic education mandate as well as its contribution to the country's journey towards democratic consolidation.

Thus, the relevance of this study lies more with highlighting the NCCE and its communication-based democratic role for scrutiny. This would provide an idea of the possibilities of its contribution to the democratic wellbeing of Ghana. The fact that the study has discovered that NCCE may not be aware of whether its communication activities are achieving the desired results shows that the organisation has not being engaging in research to discover such facts. This study therefore makes a case for the organisation to collaborate with other organisations to find ways to strengthen the organisation's communication in order to advance its overall effectiveness in the Ghanaian socio-political context.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NCCE MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is ROBERTA ESSILFUAH KOAH. I am graduate student at the University of Education, Winneba, specifically from the Department of Communication and Media Studies. As part of the requirements for the course I am pursuing, I am conducting this research. Your participation in this research makes you a contributor to knowledge to the problem for this study which will be beneficial for the researcher, the study, you as a staff and the institution as a whole. The research is about the organisation's communication practices and the extent to which communication aids in the work of NCCE.

By virtue of your position as management staff of NCCE, you have been selected as a respondent in this research and I would humbly ask for your audience to engage in a short discussion with you. This study is purely for academic purposes, and I assure you that the information given will be used specifically for this purpose and is confidential.

Thank you.

Interview questions

Preamble

- I guess you have been working with NCCE for a long time: What can you say about working at NCCE? What have been the highs and lows of the job? How does it feel to be a management member of NCCE?

- How motivated are you to continue working with NCCE?

Questions to address research questions

- How important is communication to NCCE? (to internal staff? To outsiders, etc.)

- How does communication flow at the Commission?

- What opportunities are available for subordinate to communicate to/with management?

- Does NCCE have a communication department?
    - If yes, what does the communication department do?
    - If YES, What is the academic / professional background of the communication staff?
    - If NO, why does NCCE not have a communication department?
- Does NCCE have a policy/plan on communication?
- When you engage in communication, what are your objectives?
- Who are NCCE's publics?
- How does NCCE communicate with its publics, in terms of media use?

    a. Which media do you use for which publics?

    b. Which media do you prefer using most of the time and why?

    c. Do you use the Internet and social media?

- How do the publics you serve communicate back to you as an organisation?
- At what point in its operation does NCCE communicate with its publics?
- Concerning the work of NCCE, how do you relate communication to the civic education work?
- What communication approaches do you use in civic education? (Very key)
- Do you think NCCE's communication approaches have been effective? Why?

Concluding part

- Does NCCE encounter any challenge in communicating with its publics?

- Can you provide this study with responses relating to yourself please?

- Name.
- Position in the company
- Number of years worked in the current position
- Number of years worked in NCCE
- Educational background.
- Age

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NCCE GENERAL STAFF

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is ROBERTA ESSILFUAH KOAH. I am graduate student at the University of Education, Winneba, specifically from the Department of Communication and Media Studies. As part of the requirements for the course I am pursuing, I am conducting this research. Your participation in this research makes you a contributor to knowledge to the problem for this study which will be beneficial for the researcher, the study, you as a staff and the institution as a whole. The research is about the organisation's communication practices and the extent to which communication aids in the work of NCCE.

By virtue of your position as staff of NCCE, you have been selected as a respondent in this research and I would humbly ask for your audience to engage in a short discussion with you. This study is purely for academic purposes, and I assure you that the information given will be used specifically for this purpose and is confidential Thank you.

The interview questions

Preamble

- Tell me what you do at NCCE and for how long you have been working here.

- What have been some of the highs and lows of the job so far?

- How motivated are you to continue working with NCCE?

Questions to address research questions

- Do you know if NCCE has a communication policy?

- What can you say about your work and communication?

- How does the management of NCCE communicate with its staff/publics?

- How do you communicate with management?

- Who are NCCE's publics?

- How do you communicate with your (NCCE's) publics?

- Do you (NCCE) use the Internet and social media?

- How do the publics you serve communicate back to you as an organisation?

- When you engage in communication, what are your objectives?

- At what point in its operation does NCCE communicate with its publics?

- How successful is NCCE in educating people and why?

Concluding part

- Does NCCE encounter any challenge in communicating with its publics?

- Can you provide this study with responses relating to yourself please?

- Name.
- Position in the institution
- Number of years worked in the current position
- Number of years worked in NCCE
- Educational background.
- Age

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA STUDIES

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COMMUNICATION/GOVERNANCE EXPERTS

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is ROBERTA ESSILFUAH KOAH. I am graduate student at the University of Education, Winneba, specifically from the Department of Communication and Media Studies. As part of the requirements for the course I am pursuing, I am conducting a research titled: **ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS IN GHANA: A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CIVIC EDUCATION**

Your participation in this research makes you a contributor to knowledge to the problem for this study which will be beneficial for the researcher, the study, you as a staff and the institution as a whole. The research is about the organisation's communication practices and the extent to which communication aids in the work of NCCE.

By virtue of your position as an expert in communication/ governance, you have been selected as a respondent in this research and I would humbly ask for your audience to engage in a short discussion with you. This study is purely for academic purposes, and I assure you that the information given will be used specifically for this purpose and is confidential

Thank you.

Preamble

- Could you tell me what specifically you do as a profession and for how long?
- What can you say about inhabitants' general knowledge of civic issues in Ghana?
- Is there any relationship between communication and governance?

Questions to address research questions

- How important is communication to government agencies in relation to democracy and strong governance?
- How central is NCCE to democracy and governance?
- To you, what is the place of communication in the work of NCCE?
- In your view, what is the relationship between communication and the civic education that NCCE is supposed to provide?
- From a distance, how do you assess the communication practices of NCCE in relation to achieving its constitutional mandate?
- In your view, what should be the attributes of NCCE staff who provide civic education?
- What can you say about NCCE in terms of strengths and challenges of NCCE's communication generally?
- Any recommendations about how NCCE's communication practices can be made effective?

Concluding part

- You finale words about NCCE and other subvented organisations' communication with their publics generally?
- Can you provide this study with responses relating to yourself please?

- Name.

- Position in your organisation

- Number of years worked in the current position

- Number of years worked with academia/ governance expert

- Educational background.

- Age

THANK YOU.