

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION WINNEBA

**AN ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND
STAFF AT NAKPANDURI BUSINESS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

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**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND
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(COMMUNICATION SKILLS)**

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I NYUNMON KONLAN SIMON, hereby declare that this Dissertation is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another master of art degree in the University or elsewhere.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

Supervisor's Declaration

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

DR. CHRISTIANA HAMMOND

Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my Parents, my wife Charity and children; Prosper, Felix, Saviour and Angel, and my siblings.



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My profound gratitude goes to Almighty God for giving me the opportunity and life to withstand all the challenges throughout my program of study. Also, I thank my supervisor Dr. Christiana Hammond with whose efforts, I could not have come this far. Her constructive criticisms and guidance are mostly appreciated. I am grateful to all the authors without whose previous efforts my work would have never been successful. My special thanks go to my parents Mr. Nyunmon Konlan, my sisters, brothers, friends and more especially, the research participants. Without the moral and financial support of some people, life would have been very miserable for me during the period of my study, to such people, I can only say, God bless you.

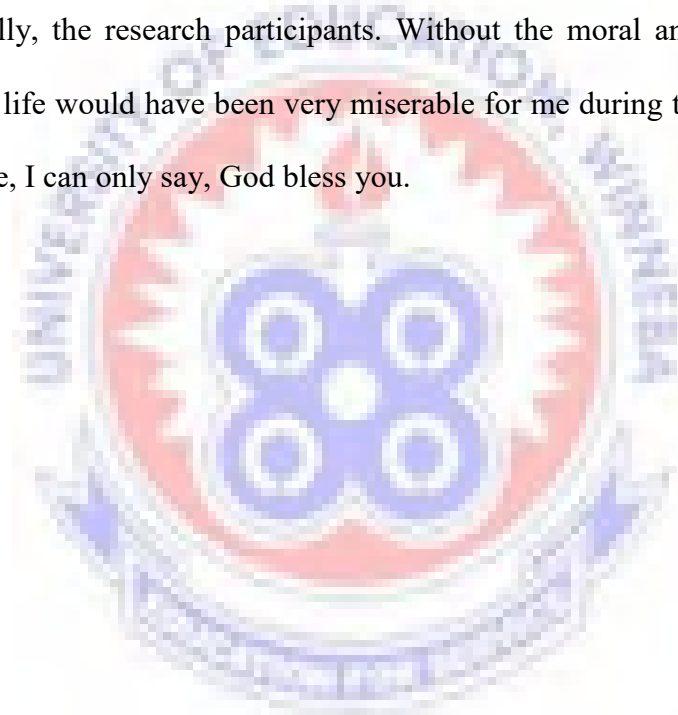


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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the types of communication in Nakpanduri Business Senior High schools. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to investigate the types of communication used by management and staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School; and to examine perspectives of staff and management of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School on the effectiveness of their internal communication. The study was qualitative approach and 15(fifteen) management and the staff from NABSHS were purposively interviewed, observed and Analyse Documents. Monge and Contractor's Theory of Communication Network was used to analysed the data for this study. The study revealed that the channels of communication in the school are; downward, upward, horizontal, diagonal and grapevine. However, the grapevine is the most preferred channel because it does not follow any formal structure or pattern. The study recommends that frequent staff meetings interspersed with durbars and seminars should be held to facilitate the free flow of information and to enhance communication between management and staff in the school.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

For an organization to be productive there should be cordiality, respect and recognition of the dignity and worth of both management and teaching staff. This could be achieved through effective communication (Anderson & Zbirenko, 2014). Effective staff management is a function of effective communication to achieve corporate goals. The realization of the goals of a secondary school as an educational organisation hinges on effective communication. Thus, a school manager or headmaster cannot direct, organize or coordinate and control their activities without effective communication (Ijaiya, 2000). Ijaiya therefore asserts that, Communication helps to build relationships and facilitates the achievement of goals.

Communication is the act of conveying meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs, symbols, and semiotic rules (Johnston, 2016). The steps inherent to all communication include the formation of communicative motivation or reason, message composition, and message encoding. It is therefore obvious that messages move from a sender to a receiver. Interpersonal communication helps to coordinate activities in every institution, without which every activity will ground to a halt.

The mandate of every educational institution is to ensure that its goals and aspirations are achieved and sustained. This is largely dependent on the effectiveness and efficiency of staff and management which is hinged on results-oriented communication. The results do not just come overnight but are tied to team efforts by the management and staff. A

high degree of workplace team effort is very important to enhancing organizational performance (Fry & Whitton, 2006). The person at the helm of affairs is usually the manager (Ekeland, 2005). The norm of communication processes between management and staff is downward, whereby, decisions are taken up and pushed down to subordinates, in the form of job instructions, procedures and practices, and performance feedback, (Cooley, 1992). For the attainment of organizational goals, there is the need for the collective efforts from both management and employees to achieve results (Ijaiya, 2000).

The flow of information is the lifeblood of every organization; be it business entity or educational institution (Ajzen, 1991). Communication is therefore important in every institution because it establishes a network of connections between people in the institution and its publics. Furthermore, (Agunga, 1997) states that, the history of development is ascribed to two factors: lack of participation and failure to use effective communication systems. In contrast, ineffective communication may cause functionless results such as stress, job dissatisfaction, low trust, decrease in organizational commitment and severance intention (Kembar, & Leung 2005).

The Goal of Leadership Communication in an Institution

Leadership communication aims to help staff to understand and commit to the attainment of goals such that, dialogue between management and staff, as well as mutual feedback are essential to growth. Effective internal communications are a prerequisite for external communications. They strengthen the feeling of satisfaction, success and trust towards management. In effect, every staff must be provided with adequate training and essential

information related to the goals of the institution. The staff in turn has a responsibility to search for relevant information and communicate that information to others, (Hartmann, 2000)

Students are an important target group of internal communications in every educational institution. Interactive learning environments and active institutional communication enhance studies and the general well-being of the students (Ekeland, 2005).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Meaningful communication informs and educates employees at all levels and motivates them to support the strategy of an organisation (Carly, 2002). Extant literature on communication between staff and management at the Senior High School and the tertiary levels in Ghana is inadequate although some efforts have been made. Opare (2011) studied the communication between management and staff of University of Education, Winneba. The objectives of the study were to identify the communication tools that dominated in UEW; unearth the obstacles of communication between Deans and Heads of Department as well as their subordinates, and to ascertain which communication tools were used in the upward and downward communication patterns. The findings of Opare (2011) recommended similar research is to be carried out in other Universities and Senior High schools in Ghana.

Also, Quaye (2017) studied communication strategies of selected civil society organisations in northern Ghana. The objectives of the study were to examine the nature of communication strategies in civil society organisations; understand the reasons for the

use of the identified communication strategies in the organisations; and to determine how the selected strategies meet the needs of the local community members. This study also recommended that, similar researches could be conducted in other organisations and institutions to ease the effectiveness of communication patterns

Ekeland (2005) also proposed a conceptual framework for the studying of communication in institutions that experienced change communication. Most Senior High Schools in Ghana are undergoing both structural and managerial changes and it is significant to note that, the key players (staff and management) who are at the implementation stage are required to understand better, the ways of communicating among themselves and to enable stakeholders achieve desire results (Johnston, 2016)

From the discussions this far, it is obvious that available literature on communication among staff and management in Senior High Schools in Ghana is inadequate. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by assessing the communication between staff and management of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School.

1.3 Research Objectives

These objectives were formulated to guide the study:

1. To investigate the types of communication used by management and staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School.
2. To examine perspectives of staff and management of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School on the effectiveness of the communication system used.

1.4 Research Question

1. What are the types of communication used by management and staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School?
2. What are the perspectives of the staff and management of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School on the effectiveness of the communication systems used?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to literature on appropriate communication mechanisms in the Senior High schools in Ghana by extending knowledge on the perspectives of both management and staff.

The study assists management to re-examine the structure of communication in Senior High schools, especially, Nakpanduri Business Senior High School and to modify existing communication structures on the bases of the findings of this study.

The findings enhance the communication network available for stakeholders within the school, such as, the Assistant Headmasters, Heads of Department, Subject-Teachers and Students.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study is limited to Nakpanduri Business Senior High School. Nakpanduri Business Senior High School (NABSHS) is one of the Senior High Schools in the Bunkpurugu-Nakpanduri District. The school has a student population of about one thousand, five hundred and staff strength of about eighty-eight (i.e. teaching and non-teaching).

However, the study deals with only the teaching staff and the management of the school. The management comprises the Headmaster, Assistant Headmasters Administration, Assistant Headmaster Academic, Assistant Headmaster Domestic Senior Housemasters, Bursar, Dining Hall Master and Heads of Departments . The teaching staff also comprises all the teachers in the school.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is organized in five chapters. Chapter one comprises the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and organization of the study.

Chapter two discusses the literature review and the theoretical framework for the study. Literature on the importance of communication in an institution n is discussed. Chapter three spells out the research methodology comprises the research approach, research design, study population, sampling methods, sampling size, source of data, data collection methods and ethical considerations. Chapter four is the presentation and findings of the study. The Chapter five discusses the summary of the main findings, recommendations, and conclusion

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the related literature per the objectives on investigating communication between management and staff at Nakpanduri Business Senior High School. The chapter also presents the theoretical framework underpinning the study and its relevance.

2.1 Organisational Communication

Communication as an indispensable aspect of administration involves the sharing of information between individuals to reach a common understanding for organizational success. Ekeland (2005) asserts that without effective communication in schools, teachers and students will not know their expected duties and may be forced to act in ways which may be counter-productive. However, with open communication, a unique school culture may develop with the interplay of the various managerial practices. It is through communication that attitudes, feelings, insights and facts are transmitted (Lin, 2008). Several definitions of organisational communication exists (Deetz, 1998) argues that one way to enlighten an understanding of organizational communication is to compare different approaches.

However, for the purposes of this study, I operationalised organisational communication as the sending and receiving of messages among interrelated individuals within a particular environment or setting to achieve individual and common goals. In this sense,

Organisational communication has become highly contextual and culturally dependent; where every form of communication is intended helps to 1) accomplish tasks relating to specific roles and responsibilities of sales, services, and production; 2) adjust to changes through individual and organisational creativity and adaptation; 3) complete tasks through the maintenance of policy, procedures, or regulations that support daily and continuous operations; 4) develop relationships where human messages are directed at people within the organisation-their attitudes, morale, satisfaction, and fulfillment and 5) coordinate, plan, and control the operations of the organisation through management (Shannon, 2012).

Organizations seek people who can follow and give instructions, accurately listen, provide useful feedback, get along with coworkers and customers, network, provide serviceable information, work well in teams, and creatively and critically solve problems and present ideas in an understandable manner. Developing organisational communication awareness and effectiveness is more than just having know-how or knowledge (Berger, 2008). Efficient organisational communication involves knowing how to create and exchange information, work with diverse groups or individuals, communicate in complicated and changing circumstances, as well as having the aptitude or motivation to communicate in appropriate manners.

Jung and Hecht (2008) identify three periods in the development of organisational communication. During the era of preparation (1900 to 1940) much of the groundwork was laid for the discipline where the primary focus was on public address, business writing, managerial communication, and persuasion.

The Era of Identification and Consolidation (1940-1970) saw the beginnings of business and industrial communication, with organisational relationships being recognized as an important element. The Era of Maturity and Innovation (1970-present), is characterized with empirical research accompanied by innovative efforts to develop concepts, theoretical premises, and philosophical critique (Deetz, 1998).

As with other specializations over the last century, organizational communication has evolved dramatically as form of dialogue between businesses and individuals (Fry & Vittucci 2005), Such that as communication evolves, research continues to develop, and organisational communication continues to redefine itself. More recently, emphasis has been on all levels of interactions in organisations where a great deal of research has focused on how interpersonal relationships are conducted within the framework of organisational hierarchies.

Modern organisational communication research has been summarized into eight major traditions: 1) Communication channels, 2) Communication climate, 3) Network analysis, 4) Superior-subordinate communication, 5) the information-processing perspective, 6) the rhetorical perspective, 7) the cultural perspective, and 8) the political perspective (Kim & De Stefano 2005) Since the 1980s, this has expanded to include work on institutional culture, power and conflict management, and institutional rhetoric.

From the on-going, it could be deduced that institutional communication is an area for management to pay critical attention to for the success of their institutions. Just like other elements of administrative processes, communication is by itself a process and has identifiable elements such as communicator, message, medium and the channel (Berger,

2008). Good Effective communication and participation within institutions is one of the prerequisites for effective relations in educational institutions. Communication in this sense refers to keeping others informed about what is happening, with regard to policies, programs, plans and problems of an institution (Leung, 2005). In addition, effective communication enables individuals to know their expected duties and to reduce the occurrence of misunderstanding, promote cordial relationship and improve interpersonal relations (Lin, 2008).

2.2 Organisational Structures and Communication

Johnston (2016) looked at organizational structures in terms of the connection between structure and communication. He described organisational communication structure as the relatively stable configuration of communication relationships between entities within an organisational context. Through structure, an individual realises a theme among communication relationships and these relationships entrench the individual in the organisation's social system. However, for this study, the working definition for organisational structure includes the intangible web of relationship between people, their shared purposes and the task they set for themselves in order to achieve these purposes. Cole (1995) added that, the prime purpose of every structure is to achieve an effective balance between the divisions of task and responsibilities on one hand, and the need to coordinate individuals' efforts and roles on the other hand. Ajzen (1991) also states that using a structure allows concerned patterns in relationships and duties within an organisation. These relationships include themes of integration (the way activities are coordinated); differentiation (the way task are divided); structure of the hierarchical

relationships (authority systems), and formalized policies, procedures and controls that guide the organization (administrative systems). (p.21). Shannon (2012) further notes that the relationship between the environment and the organisational structure is important because organisations are open systems which depend on the environment for support. Generally, more complex environments would then lead to greater differentiations with stable (mechanistic) structures to more adaptive (organic) structures. In essence, while the advantage is that organisations become more dynamic and flexible, the disadvantage is that the integration and coordination of activities would require more time and efforts. It is clear from the discussion so far that, the relationship between an organization and its environment is characterized by a two-way flow of information and positive employee behavior (e.g. satisfaction, performance, and turnover).

Schools are hierarchical organizations where the Board of the School is usually placed at the top of the hierarchy, followed by the Headmaster, and the Assistant Headmasters (i.e. Administration and Academic). The Assistant Headmaster-Administration is in charge of the administrative duties of the school and controls the non-teaching staff. The Assistant Headmaster-Academic is also in-charge of Heads of Departments, Form masters and the subject teachers.

Structurally, there are a series of superordinate-subordinate relationships within every school. Functionally, this hierarchy of relationships is the basis for allocating and integrating roles, personnel, and facilities to achieve the goals of every senior high school in Ghana. Organisational communication therefore, enables superiors and subordinates to act mutually in the direction of organisational goals in the hierarchy of authority.

In every institution, two essential elements are paramount: networks and channels. The networks can be one way, two-way or multi-way, and the communication channels are, upward, downward, horizontal, diagonal and grapevine (Ajzen, 1991).

Communication in educational institutions includes writing, interpersonal face to face, visual and electronic communication. Leung (2005) notes that communication serves to define a place and establishes an identity where different forms of communication are used to disseminate information including face-to-face presentations, handouts, textbooks, telephone, fax, audio, video, email and web sites.

2.3 Types of Communication in an Organisation

Communication in an organisation usually flows in vertical, horizontal or lateral directions and sometimes, through the grapevine. There is also the internal and external communication flow (Lussier, 1996). The following are the expected forms or channels of communication in an organisation or human institution.

2.3.1 Vertical Communication

This is the flow of information upward and downward in the chain of command in every institution. Vertical communication is recognized as the most official or formal form of communication. It is divided into two parts namely; downward and upward communication (Berger, 2008). Downwards communication occurs, when management makes decisions, plans and policies and communicates them down through the chain of command to subordinates. It involves the process where high level management instructs

people below them (Lussier, 1996). The hierarchical structures of institutions facilitate the downward flow of communication. For example, in the organogram of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School, The Board of the school instructs the Headmaster, who also gives instructions to his Assistant Headmasters, to instruct their subordinates in that order until it gets to the students at the bottom of the hierarchy. Upward communication on the other hand, is the process where employees send suggestions or messages to management. The hierarchical structure in institutions may not facilitate the upward flow of information appropriately as in the case of downward flow (Lussier, 1996). Such structures may lead to communication failure or miscommunication. Managers in many institutions expect employees to understand the full import of messages they send to them. However, the employees do not expect management to understand the full import of their messages because of the existence of power-play in such form of communication. Lussier (1996) further asserted that, status and power are not equal among participants in vertical communication and managers at the higher level; tend to wield more status and power for employees to follow their directives. To bring about certain leverage, some educational institutions use the open door policy and other techniques such as attitude surveys, suggestions systems, quality circles, and employees meetings to help facilitate communications in their institutions.

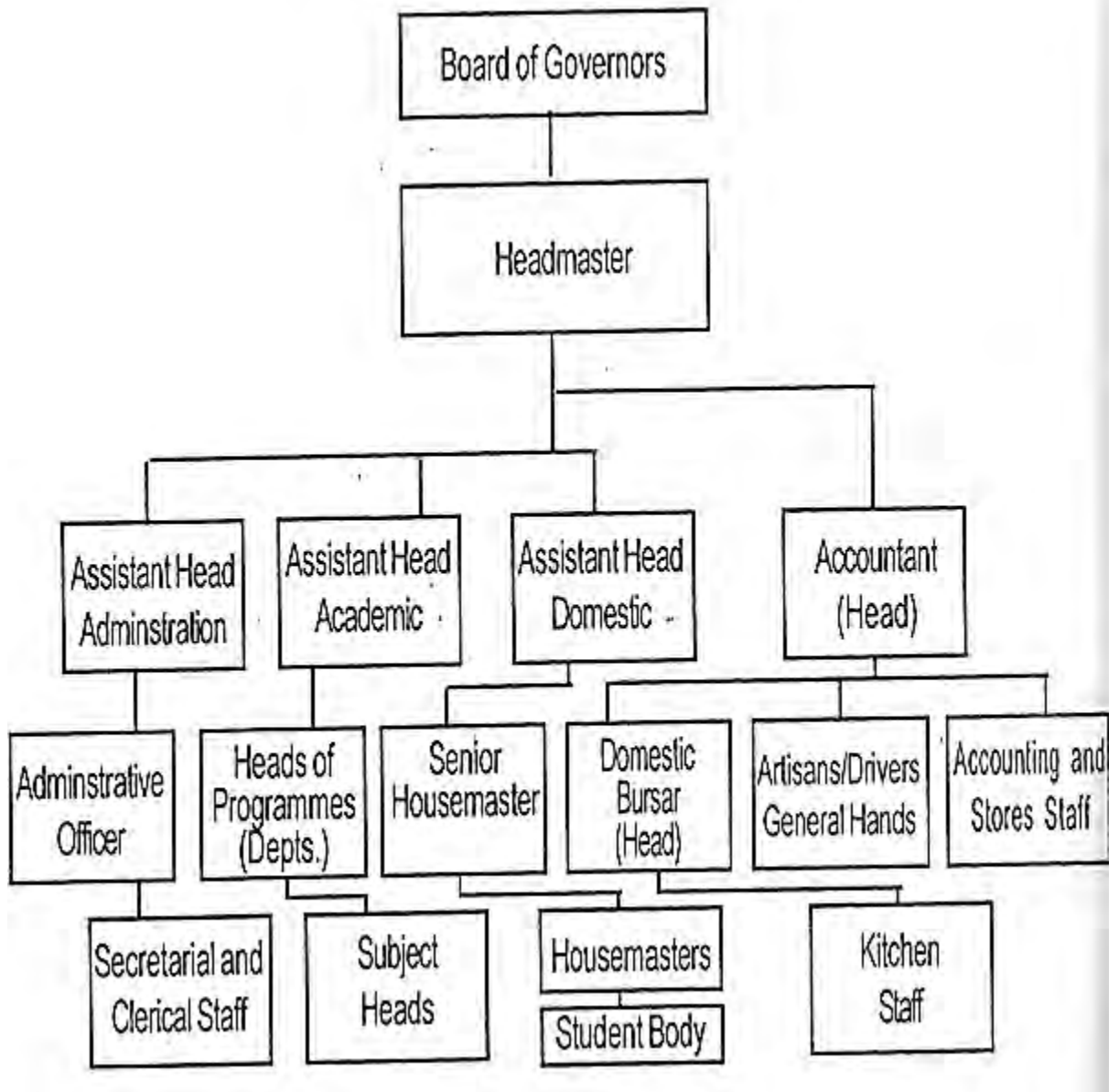
2.3.2 Horizontal Communication

Horizontal communication is where information is allowed to flow among colleagues and peer at the same level in an organization. Peer to peer communication is the exchange of information between peers within a Department or across Departments, formally and

informally (Leung, 2005). The main purpose of this type of exchange is for coordination where co-workers are expected to work together because of an ongoing assignment or a project, and are also expected to follow formal rules of engagements such as share information, escalate problems and show respect for one another (Leung, 2005). Figures1 shows the communication channels in Nakpanduri Senior High School.



Figure 1: Organogram of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School



Source: Administration of NABSHS-2018

2.3.3 Grapevine Communication

This is one of the informal forms of communication where messages flow throughout an institution without following any formal structures or set patterns. Luisser (1996) states that, the grapevine is a useful organisational reality that exists in every institution. The Grapevine is usually communicated through rumors which tend to spread out of fear of the unknown or lack of information flow. It spreads usually faster than any official form of information flow and occurs when management attempts to hide information from employees (Berger, 2008). It is often a check on management and a useful tool to test the implementation of policies (Leung, 2005).

2.3.4 Internal Communication

This form of communication takes place within an organization on corporate policies and developments affecting their interests that could lead to spread of misunderstandings, false rumors, and criticisms (Deetz, 1998). An effective internal communication is vital as a requirement for the success of an organization's overall communications. Internal communication is therefore very necessary in educational institutions because employees want to be treated well and not exploited. Employees want to have a sense of job satisfaction in maximizing profits or services. In a typical hierarchical organization such as a Senior High School in Ghana, with the management at the top of the pyramid, communication flows downwards in the form of directives, instructions and information. There could also be upward flow of information through suggestion schemes or some other form of feedback to management (Quaye, 2017). Fry and Vitucci, (2005), identify five different styles of internal communication as namely, instructional, informative,

consultative, involvement and participative. The instructional management communication style ensures that staff is given information to enable them to do their job.

Informative management communication is aimed at supporting employees to understand what they are doing and how it fits in within the rest of the organisation by keeping people informed about what management think they (staff) need to know. It is a downward communication which is very important for organisational growth. (Fry and Vitucci, 2005) added that the consultative communication is a more personal style which provides for interaction between management and staff in a two-way form of communication. With this, the staffs have the opportunity to be involved in discussions about their institution and work and can put forward their own views on issues of discussions. Finally, the involvement management communication process is the reverse of the flow of communication from the top. It is upwards flowing or bottom-up and it provides the staff the opportunity to share their expertise with their superiors in order for the institution to maximize the benefit of the staff's accumulated experience.

The participative management communication is a two-way symmetrical style that guarantees the views of both superiors (management) and staff (subordinate) by taking into accounts the need to participate in the decision making process of the institution.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Theory of Communication Network (TCN)

The Theory of Communication Network is propounded by Monge and Contractor (2002). The theory explains that networks are social structures created by the communication systems among individuals and groups. Littlejohn and Foss (2011), asserted that patterns of communication develop over time within an organisation and as individuals communicate with each other, links are created, which are prescribed by the organisational rules. Each link is then defined by its purpose or purposes, how much it is shared, and its functions within the organisation, Lin (2008). As members of an organisation communicate with one another, they fulfill various roles within the organisation. The Theory of Communication Network, therefore, provides the types of networks needed for effective organisational communication such as formal networks, emergent networks, personal networks, group network, authority or instrumental networks, friendship or affiliation networks, production networks, and innovation and information networks (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). However, this study would examine the elements of formal networks, emergent networks, personal networks and group networks. This theory is relevant for this study because, it could be used the formal and social structure of communication in an educational institution (Monge & Contractor, 2002).

Formal Networks

These are networks created by the structures of the organisation where staff of equal rank relates very well with one another. Thus, there is a healthy management-staff relationship for the collective attainment of organizational goals (Littlejohn & Foss 2005). For

example, the Assistant Headmasters of Nakpandduri Business Senior School relates very well with the Accountants, and the Domestic Bursar also relates well with all others in the lateral structure.

Emergent Networks

These are the information channels that are built not by the formal regulations of an institution but are emergent in social relations. Emergent networks are created mostly when workers engage in the following: put memos in inter-office envelopes, pick phone calls from other departmental offices greet people along walk ways, chat with other colleague workers, and builds friendship which goes a long way to create a network (Hartman et al 2000). For example, in Nakpanduri Business Senior School, the Accounts staff can pick phone calls of the Administrative office; teachers can also receive school fees on behalf of the Accounts clerk especially during the admissions.

Personal Network

This is the network that shows the connections between people within and outside an organisation. Every person has a unique set of connections with others in and outside an organisation relatively regarded as the stable pathways of communication. Such Individuals who communicate are virtually linked into groups that are in turn linked together into the overall network of the organization, (Contractor, 2002). For example,

the Assistant headmaster of NABSHS relates well with any of the subject-master or non-teaching staff of the school.

Group Network

Institutions typically consist of many smaller groups, which are not isolated because all members of the institution communicate with each other constituting a group. They are in essence, linked in such a way that the organisational communication becomes a collective effort (Littlejohn & Foss 2005). In Nakpanduri Business Senior High School, there are departments such as the Home Economics Department, General Art Department, Business Department. There are religious groups such as the Christians and Muslims. All of these groups are recognized in the school and members of these groups relate well with others to help the school achieve its desired vision and mission.

In summary, the Theory of Communication Network is relevant for this study because it shows how people are connected in an organization to enable effective communication. The elements of the theory of communication network thus, enable me to analyse the data on the channels of communication at NABSHS as a network of management and staff.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the research approach, research design, target population, sampling technique, sample size and data collection methods and instruments. The chapter also discusses the data collection processes, ethical issues and the trustworthiness of data.

3.1 Research Approach

Creswell (2008) suggests that, there are basically two main types of research approaches used in the field of social science research, namely, quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research emphasizes objective measurement and the statistical analysis of data collected through questionnaires and surveys or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques (Littlejohn, 2000). Greater concern in this approach is placed on sampling, validity and reliability with the main purpose of making generation of the findings. On the other hand, qualitative research is associated largely to society oriented approach and participant observations.

It involves exploration of social relations and describes reality as experienced by participants (Monge et al, 2002). This study employs the qualitative research approach because according to (Shannon, 2007) a choice of research method depends on the research problem being investigated. The choice of qualitative approach for this study was thus based on the problem (i.e. Assessment of communication between management

and staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School) being investigated. The approach enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the problem and to thorough investigative it (Saunders, 2009).

Additionally the qualitative approach was adopted not only for the purposes of triangulation but also to answer questions that are embedded in the objectives of the study. Denscombe (2003) have stated that because qualitative methods pay particular attention to studies in contexts, especially where cultural differences (ie.an institutional culture) play a major role, it allows subtleties and hidden nuances that are not sufficiently captured in other methodologies. In view of this, the qualitative approach enabled a critical assessment of the communication between management and staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School.

3.2 Research Design

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Creswell, 2009). Case studies rely on the same sort of covariate evidence utilized in non-case study research. Thus, the case study method understood as a particular way of defining cases, not a way of analyzing cases or a way of modeling causal relations (Saunders & Thornhill, 2009). The case study design was adopted for this study because it is in a real life contemporary context or settings and the choice of what is to be studied is bounded by time and place Yin (2009).

With this design, I explored a real life contemporary bounded system over time through a detailed in-depth data collection (Virginia & Clarke, 2013) and brought an understanding to the complex issues through previous research. Thus, I have been able to emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events and their relationships in assessing the communication between management and staff at Nakpanduri Business Senior High School

3.3 Participants of the Study

The population of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School is One Thousand, Six hundred (1,600) and it Comprised students, teaching and non-teaching staff. The teaching and non-teaching are Ninety-Five (95) and the students are One Thousand, Five Hundred and Five (1505) The participants were thus, sampled from management, and three Departments in the school: Home Economics Department, General Art Department and Business Department.

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The purposive sampling technique was used to select fifteen participants. This comprised five (5) management members and ten (10) members of staff. The management participants were the Headmaster, Assistant Headmasters for Administration, Assistant Headmaster for Academic, Senior Housemaster, and the School Accountant. The participants were also purposively selected to meet the demands of the study.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

This study triangulated the data collection process using semi-structured interviews, complete participant observation and Documents Analysis. This was to enable me have access to varied data and to enrich my findings

. The goal for all data collection is to capture quality evidence that allows analysis to lead to the formulation of convincing and credible answers to the questions that have been posed (Creswell 2013). Here, three instruments were used for this study, namely; interview, documents analysis and observation.

3.5.1 Interview

Interview also call qualitative interviewing is one of the most used methods in qualitative research data collection (Mason, 2002). It is often used because of its ability to allow the researcher to conduct exhaustive, flexible forms of interview. According to Seidman (1998), an interview in a qualitative research, is a conversation where questions are asked to elicit information. The interviewer could be a professional, paid researcher, sometimes trained, who poses questions to the interviewee, in an alternating series of usually brief questions and answers.

Magnusson and Marecek (2015) asserted that questions asked during interviews should make participant feels at ease while ensuring a smooth interview and moderating the entire process. They added that, research interviews are not ordinary conversations but focus-driven on the participants to provide the needed information. The study used interviews to solicit information from the participants. The justification for the use of the

interview is to achieve the objectives of the study using the relevant data. The open ended questions were carefully designed to answer the research questions as well as address the research objectives. The open ended interview guide thus, generated qualitative and opinion-related information to answer research questions one, which was targeted at gathering information on communication in the school between management and selected staff. The rationale for conducting the interviews was to avoid delays in filling and returning questionnaires by participants and also to have access to highly opinionated perspectives as data for the study. Some of the fifteen (15) participants were interviewed in a conversational manner within a period of 15 to 20 minutes. All the interviews were conducted at the staff common room and other in the offices of the participants. The data was then recorded and transcribed for patterns of themes to emerge.

3.5.2 Observation

This is one of the key tools that was used for collecting data in this qualitative research. Observation is the act of noting a phenomenon in the field through the use of the five senses of the observer, often with an instrument, and recording it for scientific purposes (Angrosino, 2007).

Observation is the technique used when data collected via other means may be inadequate in value or difficult to validate (Hancock, 1998). According to Merriam (2009), observations are conducted in the setting where the phenomenon under study is taking place and it serves as first-hand information of events occurring in their natural setting.

Creswell (2012) states that there are four types of observation in data collection; namely complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer. Complete participant is where the researcher is fully engaged with the people he or she is observing. This helps established greater rapport with the people being observed (Angrosino, 2007). This study therefore employed the complete participant observation because I am a member of staff of the Nakpanduri Business Senior High School and participates in staff meetings and other gatherings of the school. An observation guide was used to observe interactions, conversations and the behaviors of participants in the school. Data from the observation supplemented the interviews during meetings and durbars.

3.5.3 Documents Analysis

Documents are the paper trail left in the wake of historical events and processes. Documents in an organisation indicate what the organisation produces; how it certifies actions (eg. License or deed); how it categories events or people (e.g. membership lists); how it codifies procedure or policies (e.g. manuals); and in what ways it informs or instructs the membership (e.g. notice boards, newsletters and shareholders reports); explains past or future actions (e.g. memoranda); memorializes its own history or achievements (e.g. yearbooks); and track its own activities (e.g. minutes of meetings) (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p.117).

Some other ways of information dissemination in the school were letters, noticeboards and memos. The researcher observed the noticeboards of the school (staff and students),

and read some of the letters used as a medium of communication in the school. The researcher added this instrument to the study because he wanted to ascertain the effectiveness of the letters and the noticeboards as tools of communication in the school.

3.6 Data Analysis

The findings of this research were grouped, coded, analysed using the thematic approach. Thus, the data was also screened and coded into thematic areas for analysis with close reference to the objectives and the theoretical framework for this research.

3.6.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a method of identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a data set in relation to a research question (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This research therefore, identified patterns and coded them according to the themes identified, and interpreted it by seeking commonalties, relationship, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles (Saunders, 2009). Thematic analysis is tactical for reducing and handling large volume of data without losing the context; for getting close to or immersing oneself in the data; for organizing and summarizing; and for focusing on the interpretation (Berger, 2006).

3.7 Ethical consideration.

According to Creswell (2009) it is unethical to enter into an organization or social groups to collect data without permission from the “gate-keepers” of the organization..

Informed consent means that participants must base their voluntary participation in research upon understanding the risks and benefits involved (Baret, 2014).

Ethical issues considered in the study included observing protocol in the school before embarking on the data collection. The participants consent was sought to record interviews, they were also assured of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. Research (2018) states that, the principle of informed consent demands that the researcher should inform potential participants about the nature and purpose of the study and should obtain their permission to be part of the study and then be assured of confidentiality.

Thus, the researcher sought the consent of the participants before engaging them in the interview processes. The researcher went to the school and briefed the participants on the purpose of the study; how it will be carried out and their roles as participants This made the participants voluntarily participate in the study. Anonymity is where the researcher cannot associate a participant to a response. Bryman and Bell (2009). The Participants were therefore protected in this regard by not providing their names during the interview.

Confidentiality refers to a situation where the researcher has knowledge of a participant's responses but essentially promises not to do so publicly (Ruben & Babbie 2009). I ensured that the information provided by the participants was kept away from unauthorized individuals who had nothing to do with the study. As such, data collected from the participants were used solely for the purpose of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DICUSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This study is to assess the internal communication between management and staff of Napkanduri Business High School. The study further examines the perspectives of the staff and management of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School on the effectiveness of communication in the school. A sample size of fifteen (15) participants were purposively selected and interviewed. The researcher also used observation and Documents analysis to supplement the interviews in the study. The data was then coded and thematically analysed. The research questions that guided the study are as follows:

1. What are the types of communication used by management and staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School?
2. What are the perspectives of the staff and management of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School on the effectiveness of the communication used?

4.1 The Functions of Management in the School and Communication

To enable a better understanding of the types of communication in Nakpanduri Business Senior High School, it was expedient to explore the functions of management in the school, from the staff, as well as policy documents. The Head of the school, who is the chief executive, performs both administrative and academic roles. He is the chief executive who monitors the daily activities of the school. With regard to the functions of

management and communication, the participants provided the following to include the roles of the Headmaster

- i. Ensures the implementation of Ghana Education Service policies.
- ii. Delegates duties to Assistant headmasters or any other staff in the school.
- iii. Ensures that staff abides by the school's rules and regulations.
- iv. Attends and chairs all staff meetings.
- v. He is the spending officer of the school
- vi. He attends meetings organized by Ghana Education Service on regular bases

4.2 R. Q. 1 What are the types of communication used by management and staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School?

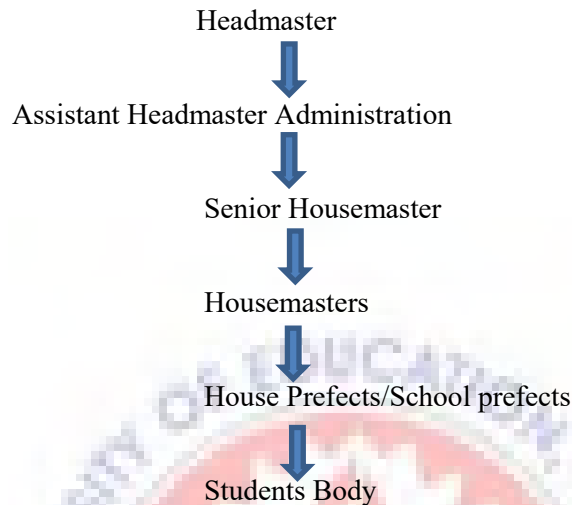
This research question sought to access data on the types of communication used by management and staff in Nakpanduri Business Senior High School. The data was obtained through interviews. It was realised that the school has the following types of communication; downwards, upwards, horizontal and grapevine. In the perspectives of Littlejohn and Foss (2005), the upward, downward and horizontal communication channels are formal structures that exist in every organization and should be duly followed for effective communication and successful attainment of institutional or organizational goals.

Downward Communication

Downward communication allows information flow from superiors to subordinates with ease. Through downward communication, the Headmaster communicated organisational goals, policies, procedures, orders, instructions, and decisions to subordinates in the school.

In the process of downward communication, messages from to Ghana Education Service and other stakeholders to the lower levels moved in the school through the chain of hierarchy. The downward communication was both written and oral. The written forms included manuals, handbook, notices, electronic news displays, among others. The face-to-face conversation, telephonic conversations, speeches, and meetings were the oral medium of downward communication which was gathered as data. For example, the Headmaster provided instructions to Assistant Headmaster-Administration and the Assistant Head transmits that instruction to the Senior Housemaster. The Senior Housemaster in turn sends the information to the Housemasters, and the Housemasters transmits it to the school prefects, and then to the Students' body in general. This support the literature that, downward communications occur when management makes decisions, plans and policies and communicates them down through the chain of the organization to the subordinates. It involves the process where high level management instructs those below them (Lussier, 1996).

Figure 1: Downward Flow of Communication in Nakpanduri Business Senior High School.



From Figure 1 above, however, the participants felt that management imposed decisions on them and this did not help in relationship building (ST6). Another participant held the view that the downward communication brought about a distortion of information because it was often rendered through several channels before getting to the final consumer of the message (ST2).

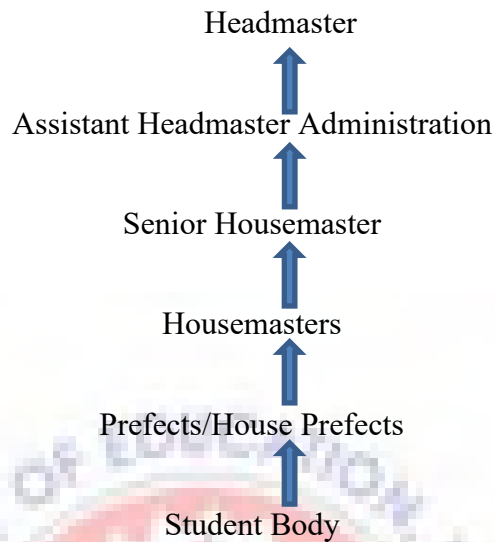
The study revealed that, the Head of the school usually communicated with the staff through their Heads of Departments using circulars, notices, letters, telephone calls, memoranda and meetings. Again, the Headmaster normally convened meetings with Heads of Department twice every term on administrative and academic issues that affected the school. These meetings were to offer the staff the opportunity to also channel their views to management. On management-staff communication at the Departmental level, the Heads of Departments cited interpersonal communication as the dominant medium of communication.

Furthermore, the study revealed that, in Nakpanduri Business Senior High School, management predominantly used the downward communication in disseminating information. The staff did not like this because it did not provide an opportunity for immediate feedback. This was also basically because information in this medium was always in the form of directives or instructions. The interviews also revealed that, there were a number of reasons why management preferred the downward communication. First, certain decisions from policy-makers and stakeholder could not be compromised and had to be sent as received. Another important reason from the findings was that, when certain issues needed strategic decisions, management did not need to consult staff but sends such information down as a directive as and when it is appropriate. The participants declared that, they see this form of communication as one-way and do not approve of it.

Upward Communication

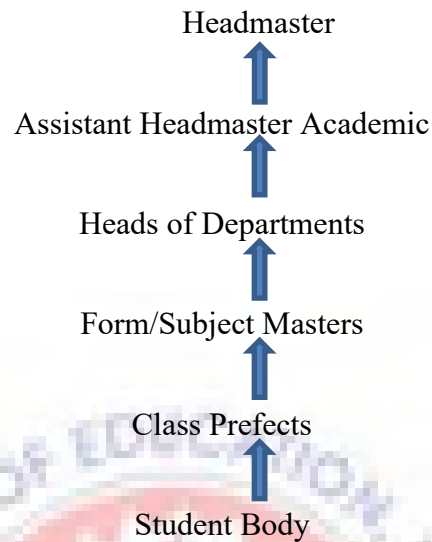
When information flows from subordinates to superiors, it is described as upward communication (Quaye, 2017). The purpose of upward communication is to send information to management from subordinates especially on grapevine. Through this form of communication, subordinates conveyed their opinions, suggestions and complaints among others, to management with ease. This helped the lower-level employees to initiate upward transmission of their messages to the upper-level management team also with ease. Thus, the upward communication in Nakpanduri Business Senior High School is rendered as:

Figure 2: Upward Flow of Information at Nakpanduri Business Senior High School.



From Figure 2 above, it could be seen that communication from the student body generally was channeled through the hierarchy of authority in the school. For instance, Figure 3 as indicated earlier presents the flow of information from students to management on academic purposes. This is in line with the group network theory which asserted that, Institutions typically consist of many smaller groups, which are not isolated because members communicate with each other in the group. They are in essence, linked in such a way that, the organisational communication is networked and duly effective (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005).

Figure 3: Upward Flow of Communication for Academic purposes



The study showed that the staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School largely, used the suggestion box in communicating to management. Management read all the suggestions in the box and accurately provided the needed feedback. Also, management responded to some of the suggestions at meetings and sometimes at morning assembly or on notice boards as a way of building effective communication systems and good interpersonal relationships in the school.

Horizontal Communication

Horizontal communication takes place between people at the parallel or same level, position, rank or statues of people (Murphy, 1996). Horizontal communication flows laterally within the school and it involves persons at the same level such as Heads of Departments and Form Masters/Mistresses. It normally involves coordinating

information and allows people on the same or similar rank to cooperate or collaborate effectively.

The information on horizontal communication gathered as data at Nakpanduri Business Senior High School is illustrated as:

Assistant Headmaster Administration → Assistant Headmaster Academic → Assistant Headmaster Domestic → Accountant (Head).

Grapevine Communication

A grapevine is a form of informal communication which arises out of co-existence of individuals who are social actors (Anderson & Zbirenko, 2014). Therefore, it is present in every human organisation. The grapevine does not follow any prescribed or predetermined rule and spreads information quickly. Through the grapevine, information flowed in different directions linking almost everyone in the school. It was observed to be governed by social and personal relationships rather than officially recognized rules and formalities. At the school, the grapevine operated both in internal and external informal channels comprised of opinions, suspicions, and rumors that generally did not move through the formal channels but still got disseminated.

By nature, the grapevine is regarded as a channel of horizontal communication. However, it did not follow any set of pattern in the school. It effectively operated horizontally, vertically and even diagonally (Jimoh, 2015). From the data, it was also gathered that, the grapevine was a natural and outgrowth of person-to-person informal

communication channels where information flowed without following any set of rules or regulations among management, staff and even students at Nakpanduri Business Senior High School. The personal network theory is related to the grapevine communication because the participants have connections in the school it enabled them to access every needed information.

It is worth noting that, the grapevine is the most preferred communications because most information came in the form of rumors from management. For example, information from students on mid-term holidays which may be unconfirmed by the school management could continue to spread among the students and eventually be considered a the approved information. Another vibrant way of using the grapevine which was gathered as data was on the transfer of staff. The participants indicated that more often, information on transfers got to the people involved through the grapevine long before official letters were communicated to them.

One participant had this to say;

As for me, every rumour in this school is the truth because I have been a victim of the vibrant nature of the grapevine in this school (ST4)

Another participant sadly added:

If even they are going to sack you, you just rely on the rumours and start packing your things because you would certainly go. Every rumour in this school is actually the truth in disguise (MG3)

The grapevine is also in line with the emergent network where the staff and students of the school communicate through phone-calls, departmental meetings, inter-office envelopes and in face-to-face gossips to disseminate information

Diagonal Communication

Diagonal communication refers to communication between management and staff located in different functional divisions in an institution (Wilson 1992). Although both the vertical and horizontal communication as seen from the data continued to be important, they did not adequately capture the communication needs of individuals at Nakpanduri Business Senior High School. The concept of diagonal communication duly captured the communication challenges associated with the school, such as matrix and project-based initiatives. For example, the Headmaster communicated directly to students and vice versa and an Assistant Headmaster could communicate to Heads of departments or subject masters without following the due processes.

4.3 R.Q2.What are the perspectives of the staff and management of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School on the effectiveness of the communication systems used?

The second research question sought to examine perspectives of management and staff on the effectiveness of the communication systems in the Nakpanduri Business Senior High School.

Coding of Responses

The analysis presented in this section is based on fifteen (15) in-depth interviews conducted from Monday, 05 November to Monday, 12, November 2018 in Nakpanduri Business senior high school. Five (5) participants were drawn from management and ten (10) participants from the staff. The management interviews took fifteen (15) minutes each and the staff interactions were done in ten (10) minutes individually. The themes of this analysis were generated from the patterns of responses. Alpha-numeric codes were used to represent respondents in order to fulfill the principle of protecting their personal identity and keeping them anonymous. The Alpha-numeric coding system was presented as Management – MG1-5 and ST1-10 for the Staff.

Below is the table for the codes and their responses

Table 1: Perspectives on the Effectiveness of the Communication Systems at Nakpanduri Senior High School

Themes/Responses
Imposition
Miscommunication and Misinformation
Disrespect for hierarchy of Communication
Most preferred channel
Access to Alternative modern media

Source interview data, (2018)

4.3.1 Imposition

From Table 1, it could be seen that imposition emerged as a theme from the data. The management was seen as forcing the staff to accept their decisions whether good or bad.

With this, the participants indicated that the downwards communication was a form of imposition and it did not allow them (staff) to offer or share their suggestions. The staff asserted that management should sparingly use downward communication because it ordered them around and did not give them the opportunity to share their experience on issues that affected performance in the school. Some participants argued that, communication in this sense was symmetrical and ineffective (ST4, ST2 and ST8). This argument is in line with the network theory on personal networks which states that, every individual has a unique set of connections which are relatively regarded as the stable pathways of communication (Monge & Contractor, 2002). The individuals are therefore linked into groups that are in turn linked together into the overall network of the institution (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005).

4.3.2 Miscommunication/Misinformation

Another theme that emerged from the data was miscommunication and misinformation. The data revealed that a significant portion of communication in the school occurred without recognition. Thus, sometimes through non-verbal cues, communication was often misconstrued or misrepresented. The data showed that the communication between management and staff was not fluid because, most of the people were neither approachable nor affable. This attitude enabled the growth of the grapevine as the

individuals often resorted to other avenues for information which more often, were untrue or a misinformation. A participant aptly stated:

If information is not made available to us what should we do? Whatever we have access to can be interpreted as the truth and we cannot be blamed (ST4).

Another participant buttressed this assertion and indicated that;

As for miscommunication in this school, I blame management. Sometime students even have access to information we do not have as staff. Why must we be misinformed by students when there are proper channels of communication? Yes, they are rumours but do not forget that in every rumour is an ion of truth (ST5).

4.3.3 Disregard for Hierarchy of Communication

The data indicated that the staff did not respect policy and disregarded some management decisions through a downward channel of communication. One of the participants who is in management position stated;

I think that staffs do not respect authority when they have to follow instructions that are sent to management by government or stakeholders where management are only to implement and not ask questions. As a staff I need explanations from management before I can accept that information. If go I to anybody like my Assistant headmaster, the Head of Department would say I have disobeyed the channel of communication (ST3).

From the excerpt above, it should be seen that the managements' actions are in line with Lussier's (1996) assertion that, the hierarchical structure in institutions may not facilitate the upward flow of information appropriately as in the case of downward communication

4.3.4 Most Preferred Channel of Communication.

Both the management and staff considered the grapevine as the most preferred channel of communication especially, to test policy implementation. A participant indicated;

We think that the grapevine is the best channel of communication in the school because information easily spreads through it to us, unlike the downward or upward communication where the formal channels of communication comes in to unduly delay and distortion information flow (MG3).

This finding in the study confirms the literature that the grapevine is able to spread information faster than the official forms of information flow especially when management wants to hide information from employees.

Another participant also stated that:

In this school, the academic calendar is drawn by the students. It is the students who know when they would go on mid-terms, and even on vacation, reopening among others. As teachers, we often have little information about these. The students date for those events will come as rumours but then end up to be the absolute truth. It is amazing how this happens. Trust me; it is what it is (ST2)

4.4 Access to Alternative Modern Forms of Communication

This was a document analysis instrument used to analyse data. The data also revealed that, both management and staff did not resort to alternative modern methods of information dissemination such as WhatsApp messages, Emails, Text messages. The data showed that the participants often used the traditional methods such as letters, memos and notice boards. Some participants declared that the traditional methods often delayed information dissemination and even got compromised. A participant confirmed their frustration and stated;

I think both management and staff should use Emails and WhatsApp messages to send information. Sometimes, important information unnecessarily delays because a letter is missing in transit or simply does not get to the expected recipient. The world is changing and we need to be tech-savvy too (ST2).

A participant asserted that, management's use of notices and letters to communicate delays the flow of information. The Staff also claimed that since they are in the same institution, modern communication channels such as phone-calls and "WhatsApp" messages were faster and should be used more often to facilitate management-staff communications, a participant indicated that management should operate an open-door policy where staff can have open access to their office to discuss issues affecting the students who are the major stakeholders.

Another participant also added:

Departmental meetings should be convened twice every term to educate staff on important management issues in the school; because, interpersonal communication is the most predominant way to quickly have access to feedback. Diagonal is the best and it should be encouraged to reduce instances of misinformation and mistrust among us (ST4).

In summary the data revealed other forms of communication dissemination which already existed in the school to include;

- i. Notice boards
- ii. Radios, and information centers
- iii. Students' report cards
- iv. Walk-inns or regular visits
- v. P T A meetings/School Board Meetings
- vi. Letters to parents/ guardians/staff
- vii. Phone calls

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study investigated the communication between management and staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School. The chapter thus, presents a summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study gathered from the data through interviews on types of communication available at Nakpanduri Business Senior High School. The types identified are, downwards, upwards, horizontal and grapevine communication. From the data, it was gathered that, although management was content with all these communications channels, they did not attach any importance to the use of the suggestion box as a means of communication because of its anonymous nature. The staff also indicated that, management's use of notice boards and letters often delayed the dissemination of information and as such, management should resort to the use of modern forms of communication to enable the timely dissemination of information.

Also, to facilitate management-staff communications, management indicated that, they operate an open-door policy where both students and staff have open access to them to discuss every issue and so information on the grapevine channel of communication, should be consumed with some caution.

5.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to assess the types of communication systems used between management and staff of Nakpanduri Business Senior High School. It was also to examine perspectives of both management and staff on the effectiveness of the internal communications systems available in the school.

Based on the findings, the study concludes that, the Head of the school who is the Chief Executive Officer, is in-charge of the day-to-day activities in the school and his functions include: to ensure the implementation of Ghana Education Service policies; to delegate duties to Assistant Headmasters or any other staff, and to ensure that both students and staff abide by the rules and regulations governing the school.

Additionally, the channels of communication identified at the Nakpanduri Business Senior High School were downward, upward, horizontal, diagonal and the grapevine. The study thus, concludes that management used the downward channel of communication to convey directives from policy makers and stakeholders although, the grapevine communication was the most vibrant and preferred channel of communication at Nakpanduri Business Senior High School.

The study also identified some challenges of communication to include distortion of information along the channels of communication; delays in information dissemination and resorting to only traditional forms of communication among others.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study some recommendations have been made. Firstly, there are delays in feedback in the communication process in the school, and management should consider the use of electronic means of communication such as WhatsApp platform, e-mails, short message services (SMS) and teleconferencing to facilitate both the downward and upward communication, especially, in an era of technological advancement.

Secondly, the Staff of the school encounters several challenges in communicating with management. It is proposed that, frequent staff meetings interspersed with durbars and seminars should be held to facilitate the free flow of information and to enhance academic performance in the school.

It is also recommended that, management should minimize the use of communication tools such as notice boards and memos and opt for the use of face to face communication especially, with the non-teaching staff who are often uncomfortable with these medium of information dissemination. This is as a result of the fact that majority of the non-teaching staff are illiterates and cannot access information disseminated through these medium.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

There were some challenges in this study especially, during the collection of data. For instance, some participants did not want to respond to some questions for fear of reprisal. The researcher had to make time to explain to them that the study was purely academic

and no information they would provide could be linked to them or their identity. The confidentiality of their status as well as identity was duly protected. Thus, in spite of all the challenges the researcher was able to protect the identity of the participant and the challenges did not in any way affect the findings of this study.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAFF

1. What is your designation in this department?
2. What is your educational background?

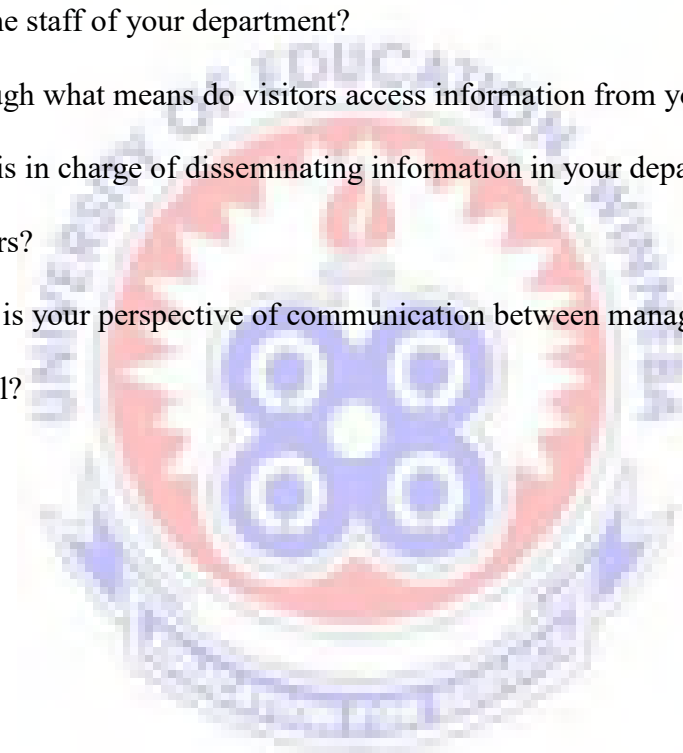
Degree, Postgraduate, Diploma, Polytechnic, Secondary, Others

3. Which age distribution do you fall in?
4. What communication tools do you use most in downward and upwards communication with management (Headmaster and Assistant Headmasters)?
5. Through what means can upward and downward communication be facilitated between you and management (Headmaster and Assistant Headmasters)?
6. What is your perspective of communication between management and staff in the school?

APPENDIX TWO

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

1. What are your main functions as head of department?
2. Through what means do you communicate with staff of your department?
3. Which channel of communication do you use most in communicating with them?
4. What mechanism have you put in place to facilitate communications between you and the staff of your department?
5. Through what means do visitors access information from your department?
6. Who is in charge of disseminating information in your department to staff and visitors?
7. What is your perspective of communication between management and staff in the school?



APPENDIX THREE

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MANAGEMENT

1. What are your main functions as the headmaster of the school?
2. Which channel of communication do you use most in communicating with staff?
3. Through what means do you communicate with the heads of departments in the school?
4. What problems do you encounter with communications between you and your staff?
5. What mechanism have you put in place to facilitate easy flow of communication between you and the staff in the school?
6. Through what means do visitors access information from your school?
7. Who is in charge of disseminating information in your department to staff and visitors?
8. Do you encounter any difficulty in your day to day dealings with your staff?
9. What is your perspective of communication between management and staff in the school?
10. Rate the effectiveness of internal communication in the school in terms of the following criteria
 - a. Very effective
 - b. Effective
 - c. Less effective
 - d. Ineffective
 - e. I don't know
11. Which of the communication tools identified is the most effective?
.....
12. In your perspective, which of the communication tools is the most dominant