

AKENTEN APPIAH-MENKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT, KUMASI

A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION LINK BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND NON-
MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEES WITHIN THE KUMASI TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
(KsTU)

BERTHA NYAWOUR

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**A Dissertation in the Department of Educational Leadership, Faculty of Education
and Communication Sciences, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial
Development, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for award of the Master of
Arts (Educational Leadership) degree**

AUGUST, 2023

DECLARATION

STUDENT’S DECLARATION

I, BERTHA NYAWOUR, declare that this dissertation, 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 that it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:

SUPERVISOR’S DECLARATION

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

NAME: DR. SAMUEL ADU GYAMFI

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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DEDICATION

To my husband, Solomon Prabeng and my children, Ama Sarpong Prabeng, Osei-Asante Prabeng and Mark Asamoah Prabeng.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the internal communication mechanisms used between management and employees in the Kumasi Technical University (KsTU). The objective of the study were to identify the internal communication mechanisms at the Kumasi Technical University; to find out the communication tools used in the daily activities between management and non-management staff of the University; to find out the communication challenges encountered by the Technical University and to identify communication functions of management within the Technical University. Descriptive survey design was used for the study. The targeted population was all Senior high school headmasters and teachers. Questionnaires were used to gather data for the study. Data were analyzed with simple descriptive statistics such as tables, percentages and frequencies. The study found out that management in educational institutions, as defined in this study; perform both administrative and academic functions. Findings also showed that a higher number of employees appreciate the need for Employee Relations Units in educational institutions. The study recommended that Management should nurture a team environment whereby the leaders consider themselves as team members, not act as someone who manages the members. When managers take an active part in the daily activities and

maintain an avid interest in what goes on during the day employees are more inclined to relate to their bosses.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Information serves as the life blood of every organization, be it a business entity or an educational institution. Without information, the organization may struggle in making plans or making decisions. Information is an important ammunition that can transform the structures and processes of any institution. The only way by which information is transmitted for the smooth running of every institution is communication.

Communication as defined by González et al González, Bishop-Hurley, Henry, and Charmley (2014), is one of those everyday activities that is intertwined with all of human life so completely that we sometimes overlook its pervasiveness, importance and complexity. Communication is the flow of information from management to employees and vice versa, hence the need for effective communication. Effective Communication in an organisation can be used as a tool to foster a cordial relationship between management and employees and eliminate a sense of suspicion and fear of employees as to what is going on in the organisation.

Effective communications ensure that employees fully understand their company, its values and purpose and what is expected of them to achieve the company goals. Managers who often fail to communicate with their employees could lead to low productivity, dwindling morale, and high employee turnover. On the other hand, employees who feel a connection to their manager are often highly productive and engaged in their work (Goldhaber, 2016). Communication enhances greater understanding of the dynamics of the working relationship between managers and the employees which helps both parties

to appreciate where their goals are congruent and where they differ. This mutual understanding will result in a more productive and positive working relationship.

Managers should also be evidently persuading employees to engage fully with their roles. Team work is enhanced when both employees and management are able to come to a consensus through communication, the goals the organization needs to achieve in order for them to work towards it. If employees are informed of changes taking place within the business, this ensures that they are fully integrated and valued in the organization. Employees working in an environment based on open communications will be more likely to feel confident and comfortable to be proactive and suggest ideas and opinions.

In essence, effective communication offers extensive benefits to both the employer and the employee. The employees of an institution need to get an understanding of the policies and issues that emanate from the management and also management needs to be informed about the feelings and reactions of staff to their managerial decisions and policies (Dominick, 2013).

Communication can be verbal or non-verbal. Employee relations is about communication as well as getting people to appreciate varying viewpoints and opinions. The public of an institution is the different groups of people whose activities can impact positively or negatively on the institution. The public may be internal or external, the internal refers to those who work in the institution (employees and management) whereas the external are those who are outside the institution. The internal public are the people who manage the day-to-day activities of the institution and their welfare should be of utmost concern to management. They are indispensable to the institution since they mirror the image of the institution wherever they happen to be.

Employee relations facilitate downward and upward communication. It uses persuasive communication and assist management in the formulation and implementation of policies. Jefkins (2015) notes that every business and for that matter every institution needs good public relations, thus, effective communication emanating from the effective use of various communication tools as well as interpersonal communications without which the organisation would be bereft of cordiality and effectiveness among people in institutions.

Drucker (2016), a renowned management consultant, is also of the view that to be understood, one has to make oneself be understood. Communication is a two-way process, where one party sends information and requires a corresponding response else there will be a serious gap in the process. This communication gap gives rise to a lot of disagreements between management and employees. The gap comprises delays of information, and typographical errors in letters, among others. The Kumasi Technical University is no exception with the apparent complexities involved in disseminating information. The two variables (that is, communication and Employee Relations) play a very important role in the day-to-day affairs of the Faculties in Kumasi Technical University, namely; the Faculty of Applied Science and Technology, Faculty of Built and National Environment, Faculty of Creative Arts and Technology, Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Engineering and Technology and Faculty of Business.

Maintaining good relationships between the management and employees of such large Faculties depend on how effective the communication mechanisms and tools are put to work. Another prerequisite for good management–employee relationship is the Employee Relations Officer’s skillful use of the communications mechanisms available to

him/her to communicate in both crisis and normal situations to promote a good image for the faculties and the departments under them.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Motley (2016), every organization depends on communication to achieve its goals and objectives. Communication among members of an organization enables staff to appreciate the policies and programs that the organization pursues. The Kumasi Technical University similarly depends on communication to meet its daily objectives too. The various divisions, units, faculties, departments and offices need an effective means of communication to facilitate understanding between the Deans and the Heads of Department (Management) and staff in the various departments. This is because these sections have various units and centres under their care. My personal experience as a staff of the University shows a lack of information for use by students.

Again, there appears to be no designated officer or staff from whom fresh students could access information for their day-to-day activities as well as research needs. The Faculty Officers at the Dean's Offices, the Administrators at the various departments and the University Public Relations Office seemed to be performing the same functions when it comes to information dissemination. One wonders about the extent of communication effectiveness in the departments and faculties, and whether there is a need for decentralization, Employee Relations outfits in the faculties and departments/centres under them to co-ordinate the communication activities in the University.

1.3 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to examine communication link between management and non-management employees within Kumasi Technical University.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The following specific objective were employed:

1. to identify the internal communication mechanisms at the Kumasi Technical University
2. to find out the communication tools used in the daily activities between management and non-management staff of the University
3. to find out the communication challenges encountered by the Technical University
4. to identify communication functions of management within the Technical University

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions are used to lens the study:

1. What are the internal communication mechanisms in Kumasi Technical University?
2. What are the communication tools used in the daily activities between Management and non-management staff of the Kumasi Technical University?
3. What are the communication challenges encountered at the Kumasi Technical University?

4. What are the functions of communication between management and non-management staff?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is to establish appropriate communication tools and communication mechanisms for use at the Kumasi Technical University. The study again will help management reconsider the communications structure of Kumasi Technical University. This will help them to either modify the existing communications structure or build an entirely new communication structure for the University.

It is hoped that the findings and recommendations of this research will serve as a benchmark with which other departments, faculties, schools, and institutes would formulate their communications policies and programs in the University. The study will also help in appreciating the Administrator's role in the communication process and his/her relevance to the various units and divisions of universities and other educational institutions and also serve as a source of reference for future studies.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study covers Kumasi Technical University. Kumasi Technical University is one of Ghana's technical universities. It is known for its entrepreneurial character and the training of critical manpower needs of the industry. Areas of excellence range from social sciences to engineering and the sciences.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One deals with the general introduction which comprises of the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two focuses on reviewing related literature that provides a conceptual explanation for the study. Issues covered include the importance of communication in organizations and educational institutions, the types of communication tools, mechanisms available in management-employee relations and the significance of Public Relations Units in educational institutions. Chapter three focuses on the research methodology. It deals with the research methods that the researcher used in conducting the study. Areas considered were the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures. Chapter four covers analysis and discussion of results based on the research questions. Chapter five captures the summary of the findings, conclusions drawn, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on reviewing related literature that provides a conceptual explanation for the study. It deals with identifying scholarly work in the area. The literature reviewed was done to know the importance of communication in organizations and educational institutions, to discuss organizational communications, the types of communication tools, and mechanisms available in management-employee relations.

2.2 History of Kumasi Technical University

Kumasi Technical University was established in 1954 as Kumasi Technical Institute (K. T. I.) to offer craft courses. In 1963, the Institute was converted to a non-tertiary Polytechnic status under the Ghana Education Service to start offering, in addition, technician diplomas and sub-professional courses.

The Polytechnic Law, 1992 (PNDC L.321) elevated the Polytechnic to a tertiary institution to provide high-calibre skilled manpower with reference to manufacturing, commerce, science and technology to act as a catalyst for technological development. As a Polytechnic it was one of the most famous, elegant and vibrant Polytechnics in Ghana.

The Technical University Act 2016, (Act 922) converted Kumasi Polytechnic to the present Kumasi Technical University with the aim of providing higher education in engineering, applied arts, science technology-based disciplines, technical and vocational training.

It is a spectacularly beautiful institution, which is located at the heart of the Garden City of West Africa, the capital city of the Ashanti Region of Ghana (Kumasi). It has within the period of its existence become an important center for training students not only for Ghana but also for other African countries.

2.3 Communication in Organizations and Institutions

Managers and researchers have long agreed that communication processes are a major factor in organizational success (Roberts & O'Reilly, 2013; Snyder & Morris, 2017). According to Stan Le Roy (2013), communication is important in an organization since it establishes a network of connections not only between the people but also between the positions they occupy. Odugbesan (2016), for example, defines organizational communications as “the compounded interpersonal communication process across an organization”. Koontz (2014) defines organizational communication as the transfer of information from the sender to the receiver with the information being understood by the receiver. Onuoha (2011) agrees, calling it “the process of transmitting meanings, ideas and information from sender to receiver.” (p.35.)

Additionally, Hybels and Weaver (2012) define communication as “any process in which people share information, ideas and feelings, and that it involves not only the spoken and written word but also body language, personal mannerism and style ” anything that adds meaning to a message. The study of organizational communication involves the intersection of two complex concepts, “organization” and “communication”.

It is important for management to understand the values of its members before it communicating with them. In communicating with subordinates at different levels,

management must use messages to manage meaning at many levels simultaneously since messages are created to meet multiple goals and designed to achieve several levels of meaning (Snyder & Morris, 2017).

Contributing to this, Goldhaber (2016) defines organizational communication as “the process of creating and exchanging messages within a network of interdependent relationships to cope with environmental uncertainty” (p. 67). Richmond and McCroskey (2017) on the other hand described it as ‘the process by which individuals stimulate meaning in the minds of other individuals, by means of verbal and nonverbal messages in the context of a formal organization’. Pace and Faules (2014) also suggest that it is ‘the display and interpretation of messages among communication units who are part of a particular organization.

Communication in organizations is very important because it performs the essential functions of enabling two or more individuals to maintain simultaneous orientations toward each other and toward the objectives of the external environment. Odugbesan and Goldhaber (2016) both make similar statements about interdependent individuals at different levels who must be managed well with different messages to enhance performance of every organization. “Consider the number of accomplishments that a simple message can achieve. It can get across a denotation, it can fulfill an intention; it can elicit a response; it can save face; it can achieve compliance; it can build identification and division; or it can accomplish a plan or a goal” (Mahes & Munbodh, 2015).

Management Communicate with many subordinates at a time, messages used in the communication must be used to address an issue at a time else it loses its meaning or value. The importance of communication in organizations is further reinforced by Rogers (1994),

who gave four main reasons. Among these reasons are communication is the lifeblood of every organization. It pervades all activities in the organization, it represents an important tool through which individuals understand their role and integrate into organisational sub-units. Finally, it provides means of making and executing decisions, obtaining feedback, and correcting organisational objectives and procedures as the situation demands. Management must therefore, have a clear understanding of the functions of communication as well as the role it plays in decision making in the organization or institutions. The external and internal environment must also be well understood before communication can be affected in organizations. This is very true in educational institutions such as the Kumasi Technical University. However, the primary barrier to effective organizational communication is its members' failure to understand the communication's functions.

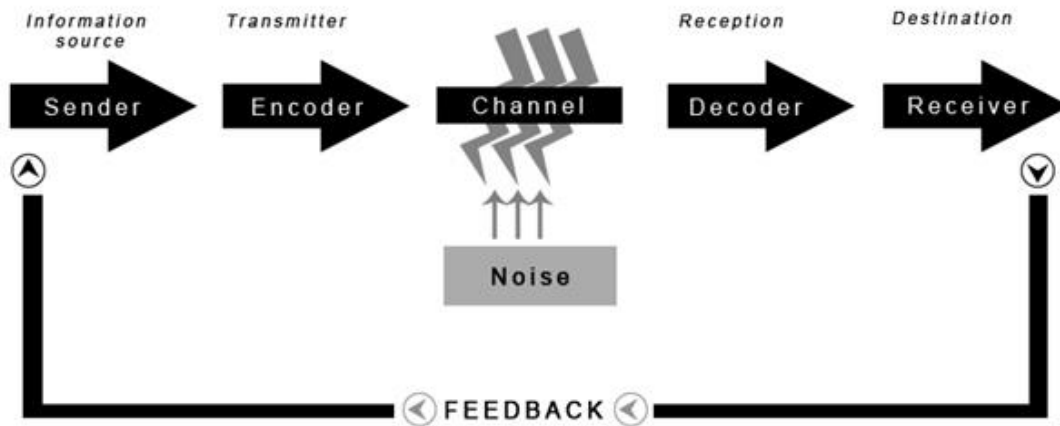
2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks for this study are the Shannon and Weaver's communication model and Network Theory. These are briefly expounded below.

2.5 Shannon and Weaver's Communication Model

According to Shannon and Weaver's model, a message begins at an information source, which is relayed through a transmitter, and then sent via a signal to the receiver. But before it reaches the receiver, the message sometimes goes through noise, sources of interference. Finally, the receiver must convey the message to its destination.

Figure 2.1: A diagram illustrating Shannon and Weaver’s communication model.



Source: CommunicationTheory.org, (2016)

Suppose you have an idea in your head, an information source that you want to tell someone about. You must first move the idea from your brain to your mouth, the transmitter. Since you cannot actually share your gray matter, you must select words for your transmitter to use. Once you speak, your voice (signal) is carried through the air toward the listener’s ear (receiver). Along the way, your signal is joined by a myriad of other sounds and distractions (noises). The receiver then takes everything it receives and tries to maximize the message and minimizes the noise. Finally, the receiver conveys its message to the other person’s mind (destination) (Mahes & Munbodh, 2015).

Shannon and Weaver’s model clearly demonstrates why even the simplest communications can be misunderstood. Transmitting a signal across additional media only adds to the complexity of the communication and increases the chances of distortion. It becomes easier to understand why other people just can’t grasp what we already know. This study dwells much on the model used in the sender-receiver relationship as is applicable in management and non-management communications. Shannon and Weaver’s

communication model confirms the fact that communication permeates every aspect of human endeavour, be it educational, industrial, or governmental institutions.

Though the Shannon and Weavers communications model depicts everyday life situations, there are many obstacles that do not promote successful communication of messages. These obstacles include noise, different fields of experience, value judgments on the credibility of the message, mismatch between the medium chosen and the message, language problems especially when the sender and receiver are not native speakers of the same language, selectivity on the part of the receiver, status differences, time constraints, and information overload. The sender and receiver can communicate effectively if they share a common field of experience. The different fields of experience explain why management and employees may have different perceptions of the same message.

As shown in the above, there are obstacles in communication and it means differences in class, position or academic height affect communication very much in educational institutions. In extreme cases, the sender and receiver may never meet or never know anything about each other. Communication in this sense becomes downward only and little or no upward communication may occur.

Where there is upward communication, filtering i.e. distortion of information to project a more favourable image by de-emphasizing the negative and emphasizing the positive may occur. The model presupposes that if the message is communicated through an inappropriate medium, its import and urgency would be affected. Telephones, memos, letters, and interpersonal communication must therefore be used at the appropriate time.

2.5.1 Network Theory

Networks are social structures created by communication among individuals and groups. Mahes & Munbodh (2015) and Weick (2017) note that patterns of communication develop over time within an organization or institution. As people communicate with others, links are created; these are lines of communication within an organization. Some of these are prescribed by organizational or institutional rules, such as the hierarchy of the institution or organization. A link can be defined by its purpose or purposes, how much it is shared, and its functions within the organization (Weick, 2017). As members of an organization communicate with one another, they fulfill various roles within the organization or institution. The network theory talks about many types of networks but for the purpose of this study, four of the types were looked at because they enhance organizational communication. They are formal networks, emergent networks, personal networks and group networks.

2.5.2 Formal Networks

These are networks created by the structure of the organization. On this network you find staff of equal rank relating very well. For example, Deans will relate very well with other Deans of other faculties in the university because they mostly meet at management meetings. But deans and research assistants will not relate well because they might hardly know themselves (Mahes & Munbodh, 2015)

2.5.3 Emergent Networks

These are the information channels that are built, not by the formal regulations of the organization or institution. Emergent networks are created mostly when workers

engage in the following; putting memos in inter-office envelopes, and pick up phone calls from other departmental offices, among others. When staff members greet people along the walkways and chat with other colleague workers in the senior common rooms of the universities, a form of friendship is developed which goes a long way to create a network (Mahes & Munbodh, 2015).

2.5.4 Personal Networks

A personal network is the connections one has with many others with whom he/she communicates within an organization. Every person has a unique set of connections with others in the organization. These are relatively stable pathways of communication among individuals. Individuals who communicate together are linked into groups that are in turn linked together into the overall network of the organization or institution (Mahes & Munbodh, 2015).

2.5.6 Group Networks

Organizations typically consist of many smaller groups, but these groups are not isolated. Since their members communicate with others outside the group, they are linked in such a way that organizational communication is felt (Mahes & Munbodh, 2015). In the Kumasi Technical University, for example, there are departments, faculties, religious groups and professional bodies. These are recognized groups on the University campus and they relate in one way or the other to help the university achieve its desired vision and mission.

The single conceptual framework that underpins this study is organizational communication. As noted by Bass (2013), communication is important in an organization since it establishes a network of connections not only between the people but also between the positions they occupy. The concept “network” stated by Bass (2013) is also mentioned by Mahes and Munbodh (2015) as social structures created by communication among individuals and groups. So, among all human interactions, whether at the individual or group levels, communications is a central pillar.

In enhancing communication among groups or individuals in an organizational or educational environment a mediator is needed (Mahes & Munbodh, 2015). The mediator in the person of the public relations practitioner transmits information from management to employees and vice versa as well as communicate to the external public of the organization or institution. This practice (public relations) is very well defined by Harlow (2009) in one of his 472 definitions of public relations as “the distinctive management function which helps establishes and maintains mutual lines of communication, acceptance and co-operation between an organization and its public” (p. 78.). These definitions by Harlow (2009), Bass (2013) and Mahes and Munbodh (2015) show that communication permeates every human and organizational activity and as such this study on management – employee communications seeks to explore the internal communication mechanisms that are currently used in the Kumasi Technical University and how well it is helping the technical university in its day to day communications.

2.6 Types of Communication in Organizations

Communication in an organization or institution usually flows in a vertical, horizontal or lateral way (formal communication). It may also pass through the grapevine, which flows in all directions in the institutions (the informal communication) and it comes in a form of gossiping from subordinates. There is also internal and external communication in every institution (Odugbesan, 2016). The following are the various forms of communication that take place within an organization.

2.6.1 Horizontal Communication (Formal)

This is the flow of information between colleagues and peers. Peer-to-peer communication is the exchange of information that flows between the same people within the department or across departments, formally and informally. The main purpose of this type of communication is coordination. In formal communication, co-workers are expected to work together because of an ongoing assignment or a project, and they are expected to follow formal rules of engagement. They are expected to share information, escalate problems, show respect for each other, support each other, and in general, be nice to each other (Odugbesan, 2016).

2.6.2 Vertical Communication (Formal)

This is the flow of information both upward and downward chain of command in every institution/organization. It is recognized as the most official or formal form of communication. Vertical communication is divided into two parts namely; downward and upward communications.

Downward communication is used mainly to communicate messages from the more powerful to the less powerful, is perhaps the most common form of communication in organizations. Such communication involves instructions, budget approvals or non-approvals, policy statements, variations in standard operating procedures and notification of other changes, general announcements, briefings, and expression of goals, objectives and mission statements. These messages may be transmitted via memos, email, notices and other individual-to-group or individual-to-individual channels; or they may be conveyed indirectly, passed on by others in the hierarchy. During the transfer, the original message may be edited, augmented, reduced, explained or distorted (Odugbesan, 2016).

Similarly, (Odugbesan, 2016) also says downward communication occurs for example, when management makes decisions, plans and policies, and communicated down the chain of the organizational or institutional command to the subordinates. It is the process of high-level management telling those below them what to do. The hierarchical structures of institutions facilitate the downward flow of communication so it generally occurs easily and successfully.

At times, however, management may shut off the flow of communications on certain subjects. Upward communication is the process where employees send messages to the management. The hierarchical structure in institutions, both educational and business, seems not to facilitate upward flow of information as in the case of the downward flow (Odugbesan, 2016). Such structures may lead to communication failure in most organizations, especially, upward communications since there may not be any mechanisms put in place to facilitate upward communication. Managers in many institutions expect their employees to understand the full import of the messages they send to their employees

but the employees do not expect management to understand the full import of their messages because there seems not to be a formalized upward communications structure in many institutions.

Odugbesan (2016) asserts that, status and power are not equal among participants in vertical communication. Managers at higher levels tend to wield more status and power in their organizations such that when they talk, employees at lower levels tend to listen and follow their directives. Management in many institutions oftentimes view themselves as powerful and as such regard listening to their employees and following their advice as signs of weakness. When management is willing to listen, employees will contribute ideas to help the organization develop.

2.6.3 Grapevine Communication (Informal Communication)

Grapevine communication is a form of informal communication by which people communicate with each other without any formal line of communication. It is called Grapevine because like that of a grape vine it is impossible to find the origin of information which results in the spread of rumours. Grapevine is the informal communications vehicle through which messages flow throughout an organization or institution. “The grapevine is a useful organizational reality that will always exist in any institution. It should be considered as a communication vehicle as the company newsletter or the employee meetings” (Odugbesan, 2016, p.143).

Some people are of the view that it is an inaccurate way of doing things while others think it is accurate. Grapevine is usually affected by rumours and the rumours tend to spread out of fear of the unknown. Grapevine spreads usually faster than official

information and they usually start when management tries to hide things from the employees. When the grapevine is fed with proper information, incorrect rumours are usually corrected (Odugbesan, 2016).

2.6.4 External Communication

This refers to the type of communication between the institution and its external public. Since the external public is usually large and dispersed, the channels of communication are very complicated and disjointed; in reaching to them, professionals are used. It is therefore, the responsibility of the public relations practitioner to maintain a positive image of his organization or institution by developing the appropriate strategies of reaching out to the external public of his organization or institution (Harrison 2015).

External communication is the exchange of messages and information between an individual and a group or an organization and other organizations, outside the formal communication structure (Argyris, 2011). This type of communication is targeted at facilitating cooperation within groups and individuals like investors, suppliers, and shareholders.

2.6.5 Internal Communication

This is any form of communication that takes place within the institution. Karip (2011) says that, failure to inform employees about corporate policy and development affecting their interests leads to misunderstandings, false rumours, and criticisms. If not informed about such matters, employees make their own assumptions, which may be false,

or they listen to outside sources which may provide inaccurate information. The only remedy is that management should be willing to share information with employees.

Harrison (2015) also noted that, although the practice of internal public relations is sometimes seen as rather routine in comparison to dealing with external audiences, good internal communications are 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 again want to have a sense of job satisfaction or a chance to get better or easier jobs in future while management also wants to achieve its objectives of maximum results or returns. Information flows around organizations whether or not they try to control it. In a typical hierarchical organization such as the Kumasi Technical University, with the management at the top of the pyramid, communication flows downwards in the form of instructions and information and there may be upward flows through suggestion schemes or some other form of feedback to management. Each working group has its own communication system, people who work in the same office communicate among themselves. Groups communicate with groups both at the same level and across the hierarchy (Weick 2017). A good internal communication can

- i. Provide people with the information they need to do their jobs effectively
- ii. Make sure they know about anything that concerns them
- iii. Provide people with clear standards and expectations for their work
- iv. Give people feedback on their own performance
- v. Provide them emotional support for difficult work
- vi. Suggest new ideas about both their work and their lives

vii. Allow them to take the pulse of the organization and understand its overall situation

viii. Help them maintain a shared vision and a sense of ownership in the organization.

In many ways, internal communication is the glue that holds an organization together.

2.7 Management Styles in Educational Institutions

Smythe, Doward and Karip (2012) identify five different styles of internal communication as follows: instructional, informative, consultative, involvement and participative. These are briefly explained below.

2.7.1 Instructional

This style ensures that staff is given the information to do their job only. It is one-way and the information flows from superior to the subordinates.

2.7.2 Informative

This style aims at helping staff to understand what they are doing and how it fits in with the rest of the organization by keeping people informed about what management thinks they need to know. It is also one way downwards.

2.7.3 Consultative

This is a more personal style that provides for interaction between management and non-management staff and is thus a two-way form of communication. Staffs have the opportunity to be involved in discussions about the institution and their work and to put forward their own views on issues or discussions.

2.7.4 Involvement

This two-way communication process is the first of the five styles to reverse the flow of communication. It is upward-flowing or bottom-up. Involvement gives the subordinate staff the chance to share their expertise with their superiors so that the institution can maximize the benefit of the staff's accumulated experience.

2.7.5 Participative

This two-way symmetrical style guarantees that the views of both superiors and subordinates are taken into account because they are required to participate in the decision-making process of the institution.

2.8 Related Studies in Organizational Communication

Alessandra (2010) wrote a research paper on promoting active communication behaviours through internal communication. The purpose of this paper was to propose a definition of internal communication based on intangible resources rather than organizational boundaries. The qualitative approach was used to review the resource-based theory of the company, the constructivist theory of communication and the situational theory of the public. It then proposed a resource model (RM) of internal communication based on interactive processes aimed at creating two catalytic resources for organizing, namely knowledge and allegiance. The field research explored whether this model captures the concept of internal communication prevailing in business, by conducting interviews with ten internal communication managers. The findings of the paper showed that companies in the study displayed a strong awareness of how intangible resources such as

knowledge and employee attitudes contribute to the company's success. Consequently, the study sought to promote active communication behaviours among employees. The resource model depicts many characteristics of the way managers currently perceive internal communication. The result showed that the qualitative approach to research was used in the study, and as such did not give the findings universal validity. The findings of the study implied that the main function of internal communication departments is no longer to transmit messages but to promote active communication behaviours at all organizational levels.

Much as Alessandria Mazzei's paper is quite relevant to internal communication, his paper "promoting active communication behaviours through internal communication" measured only intangible resources using qualitative approach to research. However, my study (management – employee communication in the Kumasi Technical University) will look at the communication tools and internal communication mechanism used in the Kumasi Technical University.

2.9 Challenges to Effective Communication

Communicating can be more of a challenge than you think, when you realize the many things that can stand in the way of effective communication. These include filtering, selective perception, information overload, emotional disconnects, lack of source familiarity or credibility, workplace gossip, semantics, gender differences, differences in meaning between Sender and Receiver, and biased language. .

According to Gonzalez (2004), filtering is the distortion or withholding of information to manage a person's reactions. An example of filtering in the University is

when a lecturer keeps his student's poor performance from his HOD, fearing that the bad news will cost his job. Filtering prevents members of an organization from getting a complete picture of the way things are. To maximize your chances of sending and receiving effective communications, it's helpful to deliver a Message in multiple ways and to seek information from multiple sources. In this way, the effect of any one person's filtering the Message will be diminished. Also, filtering can lead to miscommunications in business (Alessandra, 2010). Each listener translates the message into his or her own words, creating his or her own version of what was said.

Selective perception refers to filtering what we see and hear to suit our own needs Mahes and Munbodh (2015). This process is often unconscious. Small things can command our attention when we're visiting a new place, a new city or a new company. Over time, however, we begin to make assumptions about the way things are on the basis of our past experience. Often, much of this process is unconscious. 'We simply are bombarded with too much stimuli every day to pay equal attention to everything so we pick and choose according to our own needs.'(Pope, 2008). The world puts us into a lot of disequilibrium and our stability or balance is restored through selective perception. It is used to evaluate communication when two selective perceptions collide, misunderstandings occur but selective perception provides us with the stimuli to resolve these encumbrances during the course of our daily interactions.

Schick et al. (1990) explains information overload as occurring when the information processing demands on an individual's time to perform interactions and internal calculations exceed the supply or capacity of time available for such processing.. Messages reach us in countless ways every day including TV, newspapers, and magazines

as well as wanted and unwanted regular mail, e-mail and faxes. This state of imbalance is known as information overload. Experts note that information overload is “a symptom of the high-tech age, which is too much information for one human being to absorb in an expanding world of people and technology’ (Dawley et al 2003).

Lack of source familiarity or credibility can derail communications, especially if the Sender lacks credibility or is untrustworthy. Receivers may be suspicious if the sender has communicated erroneous information in the past, or has created false emergencies. Workplace gossip, also known as the grapevine, is a lifeline for many employees seeking information about their company (Kurland et al 2000). Researchers agree that the grapevine is an inevitable part of organizational life. Research by Crampton (1998) found out that 70% of all organizational communication occurs at the grapevine level. Employees trust their peers as a source of messages but the grapevine’s informal structure can be a barrier to effective communication from the managerial point of view. Its grassroots structure gives it greater credibility in the minds of employees than information delivered through official channels, even when that information is false.

Semantics is the study of meaning in communication (Wright, 2008). Words can mean different things to different people, or they might not mean anything to another person. Companies often have their own acronyms and buzzwords (called business jargon) that are clear to them but impenetrable to outsiders. Every profession, trade, and organization has its own specialized terms (Wright (2008,). At first glance, jargon seems like a quicker way to send an effective communication, the way text message abbreviations can send common messages in a shorter, yet understandable way. But that is not always how things happen. Jargon can be an obstacle to effective communication, causing listeners

to tune out or fostering ill-feeling between partners in a conversation. When jargon rules the day, communication sometimes can get obscured.

Gender differences in communication have been documented by a number of experts, including linguistics professor Tannen (1991). Generally speaking, women like to ask questions before starting a project, while men tend to “jump right in.” A male manager who’s unaware of how many women communicate their readiness to work may misperceive a ready employee as not ready. “It is important to promote the best possible communication between men and women in the workplace,” (Norton, 2008, p.56). “As we move between the male and female cultures, we sometimes have to change by learning how to speak the language of the other gender to gain the best results from the situation. Clearly, successful organizations of the future are going to have leaders and team members who understand, respect and apply the rules of gender culture appropriately.” (Norton, 2008, p. 58). Being aware of these gender differences can be the first step in learning to work with them, as opposed to around them.

Biased language can offend or stereotype others on the basis of their personal or group affiliation. Language that belittles or stereotypes a person poisons the communication process. Language that insults an individual or group based on age, ethnicity, sexual preference, or political beliefs violates public and private standards of decency, ranging from civil rights to corporate regulations. Many companies offer new employees written guides on standards of speech and conduct. These guides, augmented by common sense and courtesy, are solid starting points for effective, respectful workplace communication to promote appropriate workplace speech (Alessandra, 2010).

Listening takes practice, skill, and concentration. A good manager needs to listen at least as much as he needs to talk (Iacocca et al, 1984). A sender may strive to deliver a message clearly but the receiver's ability to listen effectively is equally vital to effective communication. The average worker spends 55% of her workdays listening. Managers listen up to 70% each day. But listening does not lead to understanding in every case. Poor listening is a factor in low employee morale and increased turnover because employees do not feel their managers listen to their needs, suggestions, or complaints (Alessandra, 2010). The consequences of poor listening are lower employee productivity, missed sales, unhappy customers, and billions of dollars of increased cost and lost profits (Alessandra, 2010). However, research shows that listening skills are related to promotions (Sypher, 1989). Clearly, successful career in management behooves on a manager to learn to be a good listener. Former Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca lamented, "I only wish I could find an institute that teaches people how to listen (Iacocca et al, 1984).

Different words mean different things to different people of varied ages, education, and cultural background are all factors that influence how a person interprets words (Axtell, 1998). The less we consider our audience, the greater our chances of miscommunication will be. Eliminating jargon is one way of ensuring that our words will convey real world concepts to others. Speaking to our audience, as opposed to about ourselves, is another. Nonverbal messages can also have different meanings.

2.10 Functions of Communication

The functions of communication in an organization are to inform, persuade, and motivate (Lombardo,). Employees need to have effective organization communication in

order to achieve excellent job performance. According to the Management Study Guide website, communication involves a mutual exchange of understanding and is the essence of the basic functions of business management, which include staffing, directing, planning, organizing and controlling. Communication is necessary to effectively function, both inside an organization and when dealing with the outside world. Business communication can be both oral and written in nature (Joseph, 2016). Communication fulfills three main functions within an organization: transmitting information, coordinating effort, and sharing emotions and feelings. All these functions are vital to a successful organization. Transmitting information is vital to an organization's ability to function. Coordinating effort within the organization helps people work toward the same goals. Sharing emotions and feelings bonds teams and unites people in times of celebration and crisis. Effective communication helps people grasp issues, build rapport with coworkers, and achieve consensus.

According to Joseph (2016), communication is used to disseminate information within organizations. The idea of informing within an organization is to provide data and information so that employees can effectively complete their job. Information ensures that an employee is aware of the rules and procedures of an organization. It also eliminates job uncertainty for workers when they are fully informed.

Another essential function of information is the element of persuasion. Persuasion as an element of communication plan is the ability to change the attitude or behavior of employees, vendors, clients, *et cetera*. The three parts of persuasion are source credibility, emotional appeal, and social and ego needs (Lombardo, 2016). In general, persuasion works best in an organizational environment when the source of the information is a trusted

figure. Emotional appeal is when emotions or arguments are used to persuade others instead of facts or logic. Organizations can use emotional appeals when delivering bad news. Social and ego needs also have to be met in order for persuasion to work as a communication tool in an organization. Social needs are employees' need to belong or feel accepted, while ego needs are employees' self-esteem and pride.

According to Lombardo (2016), managers use communication to motivate workers to achieve peak performance. By clarifying the expectations of employees and providing incentives for meeting or exceeding expectations, communication can help companies reach specific objectives. Communication helps the company reach its overall goals. A company uses communication as a way to maintain control over employees and their work environment. Written human resources policies and procedures dictate how employees are permitted to act in the workplace. Job descriptions outline the parameters of an employee's job functions. Performance reviews control whether an employee receives a raise or attains a promotion (González-de-Olano, et, al., 2016).

Communication allows employees to interact with each other. An employee who works at the business department communicates with a colleague who works with the science department during general staff meeting, workshops and conferences organized by the university. Communication is essential for employees who work together on a project or during the training process. Employees may interact socially both at work and outside the workplace.

Information is dispersed throughout an organization through written or verbal communication. A human resources representative or business owner may send out a memo explaining a change in the company's salary structure. A business meeting may be

used as a way to communicate a new office procedure. A webinar allows a company to conduct a meeting over the Internet with employees or customers who cannot attend in person. Communication allows employees, managers and business owners to give and receive feedback on changes that are being considered or have already been implemented. For example, if a small business owner is considering the purchase of a new computer system, he may first consult with his employees to determine what features the system should include and what help they may need in learning the system (Joseph, 2016).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research procedure adopted for data collection. The chapter also discusses scope of the study, the research design, research approach, the population of the study and sample size chosen for the study, sampling technique, data collection strategies, pretesting of the interview guide and data analysis. The ethical consideration issues were also discussed and finally, the operational definitions of concepts used in the study were discussed.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher used a descriptive survey design which aims to solicit the views and opinions of respondents. A descriptive research design involves observing and describing the behaviours of a subject without influencing it in any way (Gay, & Airasian, 2013). One of the pros of this design is that it has the ability to provide a group of respondents who possess the highest characteristics the probability to reflect the target population. It also observes the respondents in the natural and unchanged environment. It is limited in its methodology of relying on standardization which compels the respondents to a situation of take it or leave it. Thus, the responses may be exhaustive enough especially when it has to do with close-ended questions. Also, the researcher's questions are bias and do not reflect the actual opinions of the target population.

3.3 Research Approach

The researcher used questionnaires with a quantitative approach for the study. The questionnaires comprise open-ended questions and close-ended questions. The closed-ended questions allowed respondents to choose from a number of responses which were exhaustive whereas the open-ended questions allowed respondents to be able to express their opinions. The respondents were purposively selected to respond to the research questions. The simple random sampling technique was used for the employees who were to respond to questionnaires. A simulation on how to respond to the questions was conducted for respondents to enable them to respond appropriately to the questions posed in the questionnaire.

3.4 Population of Study and Sample Size

The population of the study was nine hundred and seventy-nine (979) employees of the Kumasi Technical University. This includes the entire staff of the seven faculties of the Kumasi Technical University, namely Faculty of Applied Science and Technology (68 employees), Faculty of Built and Natural Environment (42 employees), Faculty of Creative Arts and Technology (56 employees), Faculty of Health Sciences (36 employees), Faculty of Engineering and Technology (56 employees) and Faculty of Business (78 employees).

However, the researcher concentrated on only employees from five departments, one department from each of the five faculties, which are Mathematical Sciences, Liberal Studies, Mechanical Engineering, Entrepreneurship and Finance and Marketing. These five departments were selected because they were one of the few departments that were first

founded under the faculties. In addition, the study concentrated on all senior members and junior staff from the office of the deans. In all the total population of the study was 162 employees.

A sample size of fifty (50) employees was chosen from the population of one hundred and sixty employees (162). The simple random sampling method was used to determine the number of employees to be chosen from each department. The number of employees in each department was captured in a list of one to fifty (1-50). The 3rd, 18th, 33rd and 49th numbers were chosen for the study. Thus, the number of employees in each department was determined by the number of respondents that were chosen. The graphic representation of the number of employees and the sample size is shown in table 1 below:

Table 1: Number of employees and sample size chosen for the study

Faculties/Office	Departments Chosen	No. of Employees	Sample Chosen
Faculty of Applied Science and Technology	Mathematical Science	32	10
Faculty of Built and Natural Environment	Building Technology	18	5
Faculty of Creative Arts and Technology	Fashion	24	7
Faculty of Engineering and Technology	Civil Engineering	33	10
Faculty of Business	Marketing	25	8
Office of the Deans		30	10
Total		162	50

Source: KSTU Planning Unit, (2022)

3.5 Sampling Technique

In order to get the actual respondents for each department, a list of the employees for each department was taken and their names were written on pieces of paper and

numbered one to fifty (1-50). The number of respondents to be taken from a particular department was then randomly picked from the list using the simple random sampling technique. This method was repeated for all the departments. Then three Deans of the Faculties and five heads of departments were purposively selected for the study.

3.6 Data Collection Strategies

Questionnaires were used in collecting the data. The questionnaires comprised both open-ended and close-ended items. In addition to this open ended and closed ended items which was used to elicit data. The respondents were made aware that the research is for academic purposes only and that the responses were just to aid her in her academic work. This enable the researcher to establish a good rapport with the respondents who were selected for the study. The respondents were given ample time to respond to the questionnaires. Subsequent to that, the researcher was able to retrieve the questionnaires from the respondents upon successful completion.

3.6.1 Pretesting of Questionnaires

The questionnaires were piloted where two (2) respondents were selected from the five faculties which were chosen for the study. The responses that came from the pilot testing indicated that staff saw their Heads of Departments as their co-workers. Some male staff indicated that they could not have any relationship with their Head of Department because she was a lady. These responses from the staff made me introduce open ended questions to guide respondents in their provision of answers to certain questions.

3.7 Data Analysis

Analysis of all available quantitative answers was carried out using Statistical product and service solution (SPSS), version 20 and excel 2016. Data gathered were open to descriptive. The investigator employed descriptive statistics because it gave a detailed description, presentation, and summarization of data sets to properly describe the various features of the data gathered. In effect, descriptive statistics described numerical data while inferential statistics enabled the researcher to analyze data and draw conclusions. Again, it is user-friendly and uses a chart like pie and bar charts which allowed the investigator to conveniently present various dimensions of data (Laudon & Laudon, 2012). The responses were directly analyzed without the use of codes.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

The researcher sought permission from the respondents who were giving the questionnaires for this study. Objectivity versus subjectivity was another important consideration in the entire research. The researcher also assured the respondents of the confidential nature of their responses. In addition, the researcher was careful with the wording of questions in order to avoid ambiguity and ensure clarity in order to elicit the appropriate responses from respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This study had the objective of finding out the internal communication mechanisms facilitating management and non-management relationship in the Kumasi Technical University. A population of one hundred and sixty-two (162) employees was used in the study and using the simple random sampling method, a sample size of 50 respondents was chosen for the study. Their responses were analyzed using descriptive analysis and presented in tables. Out of the 50 respondents considered for the study, 45 of the respondents representing 90% filled and returned the questionnaire distributed to them. As a result, the findings are based on these numbers.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

To be able to describe and report on the background information of the respondents, data were collected on the background of the respondents. This section presents an analysis of the data on the demography of respondents. Respondents were made up of 65.8% males and 34.2% females.

From table 4.1, Out of the total respondents, 65.8 % were males and females represented (34.2%). This indicates that males were more involved in the study at KsTU; therefore, there is a need to educate the females to be more involved in relevant studies which will in turn be beneficial to them.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentages (%)
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	30	66.7
Female	15	33.3
Total	45	100
<u>Age Range</u>		
18 – 25	8	10.2
26 – 35	24	31.8
36 – 45	31	39.8
46 – 55	9	11.4
56 – 65	5	6.8
66+	0	0
Total	45	100
<u>Level of Education</u>		
Postgraduate	11	24
Degree	17	38
Higher National Diploma	6	14
Diploma	2	4
Secondary	5	10
Other	5	10
Total	45	100
<u>Designation of Employees</u>		
Lecturers	7	15.0
Teaching Assistants	2	5.0
Senior Researchers Fellows	2	5.0
Research Assistants	8	18.0
Administrative Officer	9	24.0
Secretary	2	5.0
Clerk	5	11.0
Drivers	2	5.0
Administrative staff	6	12.3
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4.1 shows the age of the respondents, respondents who were aged below 45 years were the majority as the data presented in Table 4.1. From the distribution, as shown in table 4.1, it indicates that employees at KsTU between the ages of 18 and 45 ought to be given orientation to enhance their communication skills and performance since they are the ones who constitute the majority of the employees.

Table 4.1 above shows that, respondents with postgraduate education were 24% while those with secondary education constituted 10%. The 'other' categories, which include people with Middle School Leaving Certificates, Royal Society of Arts (RSA), and other technical and vocational qualifications also, had 10% of the respondents. Thus, over three-quarters of the respondents have had tertiary education. Further analysis revealed that about a third of the respondents (38%) have had their education up to the first degree level while 19% were post-graduates. Table 4.1 above shows the educational level of subjects.

Based on this data, it is encouraging to know that most of the employees have degree qualifications. However, quite a number do not have high level skills and therefore need to be offered some training to enable them to settle into their jobs and perform creditably.

With the employees, most of the respondents were Senior Members and Senior Staff (27% and 38% respectively) while the Junior Staff constituted 35.2%. With regard to the positions employee hold in their departments/centers, a quarter of the respondents (24.0%) were administrative officers, followed by research assistants and lecturers with 18.0% and 14.9% respectively. The clerks and administrative staff constituted 12.0% and 11.0% respectively while the rest of the respondents were teaching assistants, secretaries, librarians and senior research fellows who had a response rate below 10% in each case.

4.3 Research Question 1: *The Internal Communication Mechanism in the Kumasi Technical University*

Table 4.2: The Internal Communication Mechanism in KsTU

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
Communication through social network structures	24.4	20.0	17.8	22.2	15.6
Formalized structures created by the University	55.6	4.4	15.6	8.9	15.6
Personal relationships that have been built among staff	20.0	44.4	20.0	8.9	6.7
Communication among various group networks	8.9	35.6	11.1	15.6	28.9
Emergent information channels which have been built	31.1	11.1	22.2	15.6	20.0

Less than half (44.4%) of the respondents agreed to the statement “Communication through social network structures” while 37.8% disagreed and the rest (17.8%) remained neutral. This implies that communication has evolved in the 21st century since the proliferation of technology. The over-reliance on traditional or formalized means of communication is changing or being abated in terms of its usage. The use of social media such as facebook, whatsapp, twitter, viber, tango, linkedin, tik tok, Instagram et cetera tends to disseminate information faster and to a wider coverage irrespective of the number of people involved within just the click of a button. This prevents delays, cuts back on call and very efficient means of conveying emergency meetings within the shortest possible time among the various departments in the university.

On the statement, “Formalized structures created by the University”, twenty-four percent (24.4%) of the respondents did not affirm the statement while more than half (60.0%) did affirm the statement, as well as the remaining (15.6%) were also not certain in their response. The findings indicate that formalized structures is still the most widely used medium of internal communication mechanism used in the university. Whenever, one has

some concerns to channel to management in the university, it has to go through the formalized procedures which has been provided by the university in order for these concerns to be addressed by the appropriate body. These formalized structures maintains decorum and the dissemination of unsubstantiated information which is mostly churned out through grapevine information.

More than half (64.4%) of the respondents agreed to the statement “Personal relationships that have been built among staff” slightly over fifteen percent (15.6%) disagreed to the statement as well as others neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement while the remaining 20% were neutral. The findings indicated that management and non-management communications have instituted an informal open-door policy where employees have free and open access to walk to their offices to discuss issues that affect them by virtue of their personal relationships. This lends credence to the fact that though work is at the heart of every organization, personal relationships are built overtime and these relationships foster communication among management and non-management staff.

The statement “Communication among various group networks” responses were both close to fifty percent and thus agreed (42.2%) and disagreed (35.6%) with the others (11.1%) of the respondents remaining neutral. Information is disseminated among the various departments, faculties and colleges within the university, these groups serves as a medium of communication for the university. They do pass on information from management to staff and the larger stakeholders of the university, the students and vice versa. Students and staff can also channel their grievances through their departments to management. This medium is quite powerful when it comes to the TEWU in the university if they raise concerns that do not get resolved within the shortest possible time get agitated

and feel they have been ignored by management and resort to embarking on a strike or sometimes partial strike (they go to work but they do not work)

Over forty percent (44.4%) of the respondents on the statement “Emergent information channels which have been built” both agreed and disagreed to the statement respectively while the others (11.1%) remained neutral. Communication has been enhanced in many institutions not excluding KsTU, emergent networks have been built overtime through the use of memos, putting calls through, letters, intercoms and radio messages to disseminate information in institutions. The study revealed that the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Registrars, Deans, Heads of Department and other section heads communicate to the employees through emergent networks in the use of circulars, notices, letters, telephone calls, memoranda and meetings.

4.4 Research Question 2: Identify the most widely medium of communication tools use on a daily basis between management and non-management staff of the technical university

Most administrators gave various suggestions through which upward communications with the management could be facilitated. Table 4.5 below shows the responses of the subjects.

Table 4.3: Means to facilitate Upward Communication with the Management

Means suggested	Frequency	Percentage
Frequent meetings with employees	29	64
Frequent durbars	4	9.4
Suggestion schemes	4	9.4
Telephone hotlines	4	9.1
Walking the Job	1	3.0
Faculty newsletters	1	3.0
Memoranda and circulars	1	2.1
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey (2023)

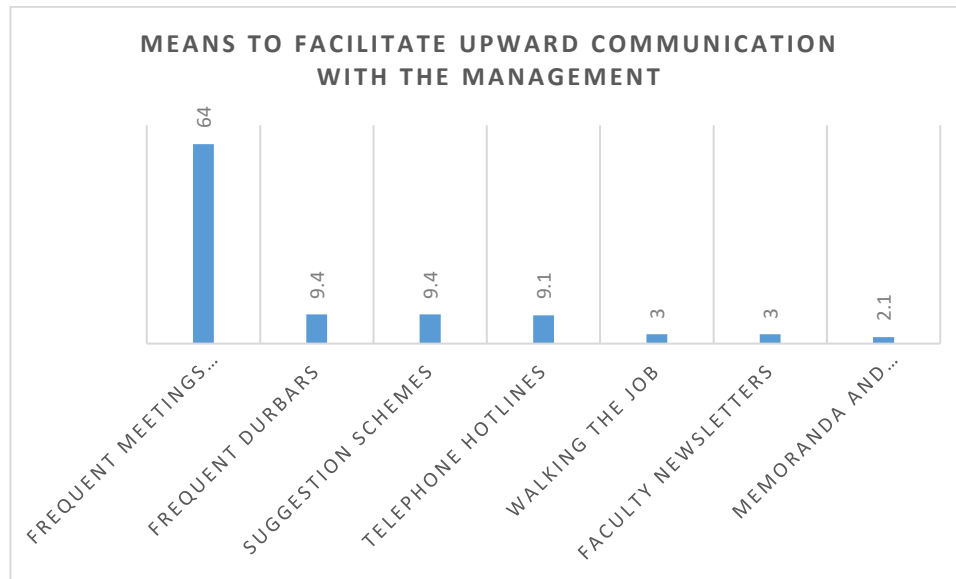


Figure 4.1: Means to facilitate Upward Communication with the Management

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Over three-quarters (64%) of the respondents suggested frequent and regular meetings as the remedy for bridging the gap between the Dean and employees. This was followed by frequent durbars and suggestion schemes, (9.4%) each. The establishment of

telephone hotlines (9.1%) ‘Management by walking about’, newsletters, circulars and memoranda took 8.1% of the respondents. This indicates that the use of frequent meetings was a preferred means for employees to communicate with management. The meetings enable the members of the faculty to express themselves and pass their message across to the management and also enable them to get the appropriate feedback.

4.4.1 Communication between management and non-management

It must be noted that three levels of communication are seen in this research, that is Employees-Deans, Employees-Heads of Departments/Centres and employees and heads of divisions who are all part of management; in a nutshell communication between management and non-management employee. The staff were asked some specific questions at the departmental level concerning the tool of communication used in upward communications between employees and their Heads of Department. Table 4.4 below shows the distribution.

Table 4.4: Channel Used Most in Communication with Heads of Department

Channel Used	Frequency	Percentage
Letters	9	20.4
General Office	3	6.8
Meetings	16	35.2
Colleagues	2	4.5
Memoranda	5	10.2
Telephone calls	3	7
Your Association	2	4.5
Other	5	11.4
Total	45	100

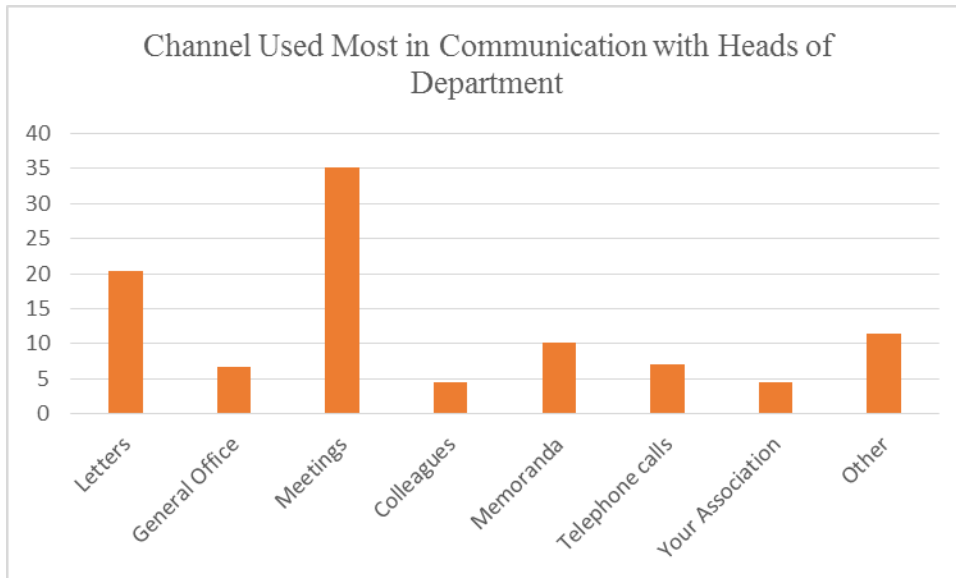


Figure 4.2: Channel Used Most in Communication with Heads of Departments

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The findings showed that a little over a quarter (35.2%) of the staff use meetings most as a communication tool in relating to their Heads of department. This is followed by letters (20.4%), and other – mostly interpersonal communications (11.4%), telephone calls (7%) and memoranda (10.2%). The rest, that is, the general offices, colleagues, telephone calls, and departmental associations, attracted less than 7% of each of the respondents.

Almost all the respondents (75.5%) were of the view that their choice of medium is the best way of communicating with their heads of Departments and Centres while 12.5% said that was not the best. On how often meetings were organized, most of the respondents (73.9%) said they were organized on a quarterly basis, 6.8% said they were convened on an annual basis, while 5.7% said they were done on a monthly basis. About 13.6% said meetings were organized occasionally. Table 4.7 below shows the responses.

Table 4.5: Frequency of Meetings

Frequency of meetings	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly	3	5.7
Quarterly	33	73.9
Annually	3	6.8
Occasionally	11	13.6
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey (2023)

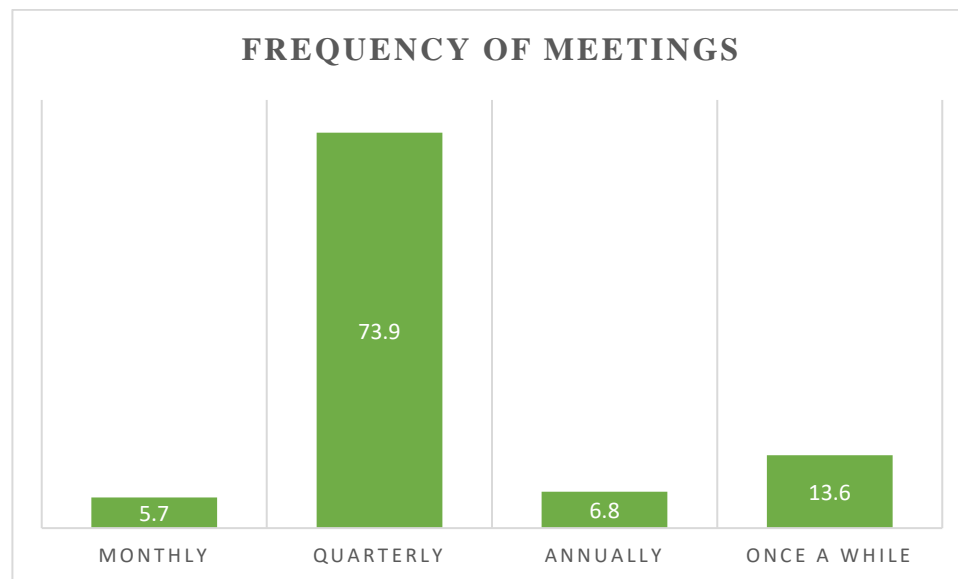


Figure 4.3: Frequency of Meetings

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Thus, while at the Faculty level meetings are usually convened once in a semester, most meetings are convened frequently at the departmental level. A comparative analysis revealed that most employees communicate with their Dean's through their Heads of Department (Table 4.5 shows this, 38.0%).

It can get across a denotation, it can fulfill an intention; it can elicit a response; it can save face; it can achieve compliance; it can build identification and division; or it can accomplish a plan or a goal” (Mahes & Munbodh, 2015).

However, in communicating with their Heads of Department/Centers, the tools mostly used are meetings 35.2% (as shown in Table 4.4), letters and interpersonal communication. This shows that there is a remarkable difference in the tools of communications frequently used at both downward and upward levels of communication. This indicates that the use of frequent meetings was a preferred means for employees to communicate with management. Frequent management and non-management meetings are also held at the departmental levels than at the Faculty level.

Since the department deal directly with the students, it means that certain targets and decisions have to be made which will require more meetings to discuss how to achieve those targets; hence the need for frequent meeting to update members with progress report. This is in support of Mahes and Munbodh (2015) who says that communication can achieve compliance or accomplish a plan or a goal.

4.5 Research Question 3:

Communication Challenges Encountered by the Technical University

Communication tools that are used most in Upward Communication with Deans/Heads of department and Management

Table 4.6: Communication Challenges Encountered by the Technical University

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
Overload of information	60.0	20.0	-	20.0	-
Over-reliance on grapevine sources of information	17.8	46.7	2.2	13.3	20.0
The use of words and jargons which cannot be decoded by receivers	22.2	40.0	4.4	11.1	22.2
Filtering of information and selective perception	6.7	53.3	11.1	2.2	26.7
Differences in meaning between sender and receiver of information	31.1	24.4	17.8	6.7	20.0
The use of biased language between management and non-management staff	22.2	33.3	20.0	4.4	15.6
Gender differences affect communication	8.9	35.6	11.1	15.6	28.9
Poor listening and active listening	40.0	6.7	4.4	11.1	37.8

Source: Field Survey (2023)

On the statement, “Overload of information”, over two-thirds (80.0%) of the respondents affirmed the statement while the remaining twenty (20.0%) percent (53.3%) did not affirm the statement. This means that during communication when information is overloaded, the information processing demands on an individual’s time to perform interactions and internal calculations exceed the supply or capacity of time available for such processing. (Schick et al, 1990). This state of imbalance is worsened by “a symptom of the high-tech age, which is too much information for one human being to absorb in an expanding world of people and technology’ (Dawley et al., 2003). This comes from all sources including TV, newspapers, and magazines as well as wanted and unwanted regular mail, e-mail and faxes.

Close to two-thirds (64.4%) of the respondents agreed to the statement that “Over-reliance on grapevine sources of information” but (33.3%) percent disagreed to the statement and 2.2% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The findings of the study revealed that researchers agree that grapevine is an inevitable part of organizational life. Employees trust their peers as a source of Messages, but the grapevine’s informal structure can be a barrier to effective communication from the managerial point of view. Its grassroots structure gives it greater credibility in the minds of employees than

information delivered through official channels, even when that information is false. This agrees with Crampton (1998) found out that 70% of all organizational communication occurs at the grapevine level.

The statement “The use of words and jargons which cannot be decoded by receivers” more than fifty percent (62.2%) whereas (33.3%) disagreed with less than five percent (4.4%) of the respondents remained neutral. This means that words can mean different things to different people, or they might not mean anything to another person. Every profession, trade, and organization has its own specialized terms (Wright, 2008). Most jargon consists of unfamiliar terms, abstract words, nonexistent words, acronyms, and abbreviations can be an obstacle to effective communication, causing listeners to tune out or fostering ill-feeling in a conversation. When jargon rules the day, the passing on of information can get obscured.

More than half (60.0%) of the respondents agreed to the statement “Filtering of information and selective perception” but 28.9%) disagreed with the statement as well as 11.1% neither agreed or disagreed to the statement. The findings indicate that each listener translates information into his or her own words, creating his or her own version of what was said or at best paraphrasing which can lead to miscommunications in business (Alessandra, 2010). The world puts us into a lot of disequilibrium and our stability or balance is restored through selective perception as noted ‘We are simply bombarded with too many stimuli every day to pay equal attention to everything so we pick and choose according to our own needs (Pope, 2008).

Over fifty percent (55.6%) of the respondents on the statement “Differences in meaning between sender and receiver of information” agreed but 26.7% disagreed to statement while the others (17.8%) remained neutral. The interpretation of the statistical data collected from the field can be explained as different words mean different things to different people. The differences in our audience in terms of age, education, and cultural background are all factors that influence how a person interprets words. The less we consider our audience, the greater our chances of miscommunication will be. Eliminating jargon is one way of ensuring that our words will convey real-world concepts to others. Speaking to our audience, as opposed to about ourselves, is another.

Less than one-third (20.0%) of the respondents “The use of biased language between management and non-management staff” remained neutral in their response to the statement, while the percentage for agreed and disagreed responses were 35.6% and 28.9% respectively. The findings connote that biased language belittles or stereotypes a person which poisons the communication process. The language that insults an individual or group based on age, ethnicity, sexual preference, or political beliefs violates public and private standards of decency, ranging from civil rights to corporate regulations. The Technical University should make an effort to create a neutral set of terms to refer to heritage and preferences and offer employees written guides on standards of speech and conduct. These guides, augmented by common sense and courtesy, are solid starting points for effective respectful workplace communication for appropriate workplace speech.

In the statement “Gender differences affect communication”, slightly above half of the respondents (57.8%) agreed while 31.1% disagreed and the others (11.1%) remained neutral. This means that sometimes we have to change how they speak the language of the

other gender to avoid misunderstandings during communication. Clearly, successful organizations of the future are going to have leaders and team members who understand, respect and apply the rules of gender culture appropriately.” (Norton, 20080. Being aware of these gender differences can be the first step in learning to work with them, as opposed to around them. In essence, men tend to focus more on competition, data, and orders in their communications, while women tend to focus more on cooperation, intuition, and requests. Both styles can be effective in the right situations, but understanding the differences is the step in avoiding misunderstandings based on them.

More than half (62.0%) of the respondents consented to the statement “Poor listening and active listening” but 26.7% refuted the statement while others in the percentile of 4.4% neither consented nor refuted the statement. This means that poor listening is a factor in low employee morale and increased turnover because employees do not feel their managers listen to their needs, suggestions, or complaints.” (Alessandr, 2010). This means that managers of the Technical University who hope to be successful in their managerial career ought to learn how to be a good listener of information. Former Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca lamented, “I only wish I could find an institute that teaches people how to listen. After all, a good manager needs to listen at least as much as he needs to talk.” (Novak et al, 1984).

4.6 Research Question 4: To Identify communication functions of management within the Technical University.

Table 4.7: The Functions of Communication in the Technical University

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
	%	%	%	%	%
It disseminate information among staff.	31.1	26.7	11.1	11.1	20.0
Management use it as a persuasive tool for staff to accept policies	37.8	24.4	11.1	15.6	11.1
Communication acts as a means to control the behaviour of staff	8.9	37.8	13.3	15.6	24.4
Communications fosters interaction among staff of the University	6.7	46.7	13.3	20.0	13.3
Communication serves as a means of articulating the goals and objectives of the organization to staff in order to improve performance	24.4	28.9	6.7	17.8	22.2
It provides information to staff about changes in the Technical University	31.1	17.8	4.4	26.7	20.0
Communications aids in providing feedback to staff	26.7	24.4	20.0	11.1	15.6

The statement “It disseminates information among staff”, slightly above half of the respondents (57.8%) agreed while 31.1 disagreed and the others (11.1%) remained neutral. communication is used to disseminate information within organizations. This implies that institutions use communication to disseminate information within their organization. The idea of informing staff within the University provides data and information so that employees can effectively complete their job, and ensures that an employee is aware of the rules and procedures of an organization. It also eliminates job uncertainty for workers when they are fully informed.

More than half (62.0%) of the respondents consented to the statement “Management uses it as a persuasive tool for staff to accept policies” but 26.7% refuted the statement while others in the percentile of 11.1 neither consented nor refuted the statement. Communication is at the heart of every policy prior to its implementation. Irrespective of how promising a policy might be, failure to effectively communicate it to your staff stands a better chance of it failing than succeeding (Armstrong, 1999). Persuasion as a communication tool works best when the source is a trusted figure in an organization.

Close to fifty percent (46.7%) agreed with the statement that “Communication acts as a means to control the behaviour of the staff” while forty percent (40.0%) disagreed to the statement. 13.3% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. A company uses communication as a way to maintain control over employees and their work environment. Written human resources policies and procedures dictate how employees are permitted to act in the workplace. Job descriptions outline the parameters of an employee's job functions. Performance reviews control whether an employee receives a raise or attains a promotion.

On the statement “Communications fosters interaction among staff of the University”, a little over fifty percent (53.3%) of the respondent agreed to the statement while thirty-three (33.3%) disagreed with the statement and 13.3% remained neutral. The findings allude to the fact that communication is essential for employees who work together in the university. This interaction might be of the essence when staff who are put on a project already know themselves and can help build a stronger working relationship. This communication among employees helps them interact socially both at work and outside the workplace.

On the statement, “Communication serves as a means of articulating goals and objectives of the organization to staff in order to improve performance”, forty percent (40.0%) of the respondents did not affirm the statement while Fifty-three percent (53.3%) did affirm the statement. The remaining (6.7%) were not certain in their response. The findings revealed that managers use communication to motivate workers to achieve peak performance. By clarifying the expectations of employees and providing incentives for

meeting or exceeding expectations, communication can help institutions reach their specific objectives and overall goals.

The statement “It provides information to staff about changes in the University” responses were both close to fifty percent thus agreed (48.9%) and disagreed (46.7%) with less than five percent (4.4%) of the respondents remaining neutral. This means information in an organization may be sent out in the form of a memo from the human resources department in the university explaining a change in the company's health plan, promotions, appraisal, recruitment and selection procedures, *et cetera* as a way to communicate and update staff on new procedures.

More than half (51.1%) of the respondents agreed with the statement “Communications aids in providing feedback to staff” over close to thirty percent (26.7%) disagreed with the statement as well as others neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement. The interpretation of the findings means communication allows for employees, managers and business owners to give and receive feedback on changes that are being considered or have already been implemented.

4.7 Recommendations to Improve Communication

Investigations were made to derive some recommendations to improve communication between Management and Non-Management Employees. From the views of respondents with regards to recommendations, most of the members of the faculty were of the view that the employee relations units were of much importance because it serves as a link between them and the management; enabling them to send their grievances and concern to management and also receive necessary directions from management as well.

The respondents' views about a public relations outfit to facilitate communication between management and non-management staff also gained some huge acceptance from the respondents. A little above two-thirds (76.1%) of the staff said they wanted a public relations outfit while 23.9% dissented to the importance of PR outfit acting as a liaison between management and non-management staff of the university.

The respondents were asked about the functions they think Employee Relations should perform in educational institutions. Table 4.8 below shows the functions that respondents suggested Employee Relations should perform in educational institutions.

The Table 4.8 indicates that 10 respondents comprising 22.0% said the outfit was necessary to project the image of the institution. However, 6 respondents comprising 13.0% thought employee relations outfits in educational institutions should communicate the institution's policies and objectives to the institution's public; while 6 respondents comprising 13% each of the respondents thought Employee Relations outfits should disseminate information on the institution and solicit for funds for educational institutions.

Table 4.8: Recommendation to Improve Communication between Management and Non-Management Employees

Functions	Frequency	Percentage
Communicate Institution's policies and objectives to public	6	13.0
Disseminate information on Institution	6	13.0
Solicit for funds	2	4.5
Project image of Institution	10	22.0
Take complaints from employees	2	5.1
Link management to employees	13	29
Bridge gap between Institutions and public	2	5.5
Other	4	9.3
Total	45	100

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The functions of Employee Relations as a link between management and employees, bridging the gap between institution and public, and taking complaints from employees constituted 22.0%, 5.5% and 5.1% of respondents respectively. Three respondents comprising 9.3% did not give any answer to the question. The above distribution shows that respondents have an appreciable knowledge of the roles employee relations units play in educational institutions.

This supports Rogers (1994), who gave four main reasons for communication as

- i. Communication is the lifeblood of every organisation;
- ii. It pervades all activities in the organisation;
- iii. It represents an important tool through which individuals understand their role and integrate into organisational sub-units.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to find out the internal communication mechanisms used between management and employees in the Kumasi Technical University (KsTU). The study was also meant to identify the types of communication tools that are used most in downward and upward communication in the Technical University as well as to identify the necessary measures to be enforced to enhance or improve communication between employees and management. The alternate objective is to improve organisational performance through effective communication

5.2 Summary of Major Findings

It came out that management in educational institutions, as defined in this study; perform both administrative and academic functions. Findings also showed that a higher number of employees appreciate the need for Employee Relations Units in educational institutions. However, staffs in the departments were of the view that it should not be decentralised while those in the centres thought it should be decentralised so that information can readily be assessable. In the area of internal communication, the study showed that there is a gap between employees and management, especially in their communication with their Deans. Most employee-management communication is done through meetings both at the Faculty and Departmental levels.

However, meetings between the employees and their Heads of Department are more frequent (mostly on quarterly basis) than it is between employees and their Deans (at least once a semester). Therefore, employees are to some extent, alienated from their Deans. This shows that downward communication is not facilitated and so staff may not be aware of what transpires at the management level. There is frequent communication between staff and their Heads of Department since they relate with them both at the interpersonal level and also through meetings. The most frequent communication tool staff used in communicating with their deans was through their heads of departments, while meetings were the frequent communication tool staff used in communicating with the heads of departments.

Management outlined delays in feedback as the major problem they face in communicating with staff. They said these delays in feedback affected organisational policies in the various units. The difference in status and academic qualification between staff and management was also a factor hindering management and non-management communications in the University. This is because the use of certain expressions was not easily understood by staff. Downward communication was therefore much more used than upward communication.

Lateral communication seemed not to be much used since very few staff used colleagues as the main source of information. The study discovered that suggestion schemes were non-existent in the various offices and this had resulted in a communication gap. Regular meetings and interpersonal communication were the tools most staff suggested as the means to enhance management – employee communications. It was also revealed that the open-door policy of the deans, walking the job (Management by walking

about,), meetings, interpersonal communications and durbars (organised once a while) are the only mechanisms which management use to facilitate downward and upward communications in the Faculties.

There were some parallels and contrasts in the responses that are worth nothing. For example, the Heads of Department cited meetings as the tools they used in downward communications. This was confirmed in the study when a little over a quarter of the employees said they used meetings in communicating with their heads of department. The Deans were of the view that employee relations units were necessary and must be established to promote the image of the faculties and the University a large and to enhance management – employee communication. Only one-third of the respondents sided with the Deans on this issue.

5.3 Recommendations

Following from the findings and subsequent discussions above, the following recommendations are made:

Management should nurture a team environment whereby the leaders consider themselves as team members, not act as someone who manages the members. When managers take an active part in the daily activities and maintain an avid interest in what goes on during the day employees are more inclined to relate to their bosses. This makes the employees feel more comfortable approaching the boss.

Since information circulation in the University seems to be done by three different offices (Departmental Administrators, Faculty Officers and the University Relations Office). It has led to the slow dissemination and feedback retrieval of information. The

University Relations Office should be more up-and-doing in the performance of its functions so that employees will feel its impact in the Faculties as well as the entire University. This can be achieved when it engages in publications of newsletters, journals as well as the exercise of their employee Relations functions at all levels in the university.

Based on delays in feedback in the communication process at the Faculties and departments as shown in (Table 4.4 p. 47) management must consider using electronic means of communication such as e-mails, facsimiles, electronic bulletin boards, short messaging services (SMS) and teleconferencing to facilitate downward and upward communications in the Faculties in the wake of this technological age. When such mechanisms of communications are put in place, employees will then have confidence in management and information flow will not be a problem in the Faculties.

Employees in the study realising the problems they encounter in communicating with management suggested that, the annual divisional meetings should be interspersed with frequent meetings, durbars (especially at the Faculty level) and conferences in the departmental/centre levels to facilitate management and non-management communications in the Faculties. This according to the employees will enhance upward communication between management and employees.

Channels used by employees in communicating with management, did not enhance upward and daily communication between the employees and management. For this reason, an efficient internal mail and suggestion system must also be put in place to facilitate management and non-management communications. Employees need to be educated on the other functions of employee relations office than their perceived notion on

what it should do. In this way, the two-way asymmetric and symmetric models of employee relations will be facilitated in the University.

Distributing a daily or weekly memo about projects, announcements and deadlines keeps employees and managers on the same page about what's happening in the office. A memo can reiterate key elements of staff meetings, provide notice about upcoming vacation days, business events and important timelines that need to be met. Finally, a similar study could be carried out in the other campuses of the University or those of other universities to find out their result so that a comparison could be made.

5.4 Suggestions of further Research

The study had a number of limitations. Data collection was delayed because some lecturers had tight schedules, such as attending conferences or marking scripts. Some departmental heads and lecturers refused to be interviewed because they were conducting interviews for new applicants to the University. The researcher had limited time in conducting this study, such as conducting interviews and coding of the responses from staff. There were few logistical constraints like power outages which greatly affected the researcher during the coding and analyses of the findings of the study. This limitation notwithstanding, the study was carried out successfully with a response rate of 90%. Future researchers in this area should take these shortcomings into consideration and prepare adequately for them.

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APPENDIX 1

AKENTEN APPIAH-MENKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT, KUMASI SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESPONDENTS

Dear Respondents,

I am an MA Educational Leadership final year student of the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development, Kumasi. I am writing a dissertation on the topic “A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND NON-MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEES WITHIN THE KUMASI TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY”. I would be very grateful if you could give me your opinion on the subjects listed below. I assure you of the confidentiality of any information provided.

Section A: Demographic Details

1. Gender: Male Female
2. What is your highest educational background?
Postgraduate Degree Polytechnic Diploma
Secondary Other
3. What is your designation in this department?
Lecturers Teaching Assistants Senior Researchers Fellows
Research Assistants Administrative Officer Secretary Clerk
Drivers Administrative staff
4. Which age distribution do you fall in?
18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 65+

5. Are you a head of Department?

Yes [] No []

If yes, what are your main functions

.....

.....

Section B: The Internal Communication Mechanism in the Kumasi Technical University

6. Are you a head of Department?

If yes, what mechanism have you put in place to facilitate easy flow of communication between you and the employees in the faculty?

.....

.....

If no, please tick [√] in the appropriate space provided below

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
I have free and open access to the head of department office to discuss issues that affects me.					
He/she convene meetings on frequent basis to educate staff of the department on issues bothering the Faculty.					
The HOD bridges the communications gap between management and non-management staff of the department.					
Faculty meeting convene by HOD Provides a common platform for management and non-management Staff to dialogue.					

Section C: Identify the Most Widely Medium of Communication Tools Use on A Daily Bases between Management and Non-Management Staff of the Technical University

7. What communication tools is mostly use between management (Deans and Head of department) and non-management staff on a daily basis?

Circulars [] Notices [] Letters [] Telephone [] Calls []
Memoranda [] Meetings []

8. What medium of communication do you think is the best to facilitate communication between management (Deans and Head of department) and non-management staff?

Frequent meetings with employees [] Frequent durbars []
Suggestion schemes [] Telephone hotlines [] Walking in [] Faculty newsletters []
Memoranda and circulars []

9. Which channel of communication do you frequently use in communicating with management?

Head of Departments [] Letters [] Dean's Office [] Meetings []
Colleagues [] Memoranda [] Telephone Calls [] Your Association []
Other Please Specify _____

10. Frequency of meetings between management and non-management?

Monthly [] Quarterly [] Annually [] Once a while []

Section D: Communication Challenges Encountered by the University

11. What Challenges hinder communication between management (Deans and Head of department) and non-management staff?

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
The University does not employ open door policy for discussion.					
The university creates an unfriendly and strict working environment					
Delays in feedback of information between management non-management staff					
The University uses manual circulation of letters					
Inefficiency of the mediating officers (Administrators) handling communication in the departments.					
Non-integration of information communication technology to enhance communication.					
People in charge of disseminating information from the faculty to employees and visitors					
The use of departmental assistant to disseminate information					

Section E: What are the communication functions of management within the University

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
I think my head of department performed both administrative and academic functions.					
My head of department moderate meetings					
My departmental head explain policies and plans to departmental staff members.					
Conduct the issues relating to promotion of lecturers and other employees					
My departmental head acts liaison between my department and the main administration of the University.					
My head of department plays a supervisory of over the procurement of research and other academic grants for the Faculty					
Ensures the distribution of the academic facility user fees for the Faculty					
The head of department is the academic leader in the Department/Centres,					
He/she is responsible for allocating supervisors to students when they are undertaking their project work.					

Section E: Recommendation to Improve Communication between Management and Non-Management Employees

12. The essence of a decentralized Employee Relations Units in the Faculties as well as the departments/centres is

Very important [] Important [] Somehow important [] Not important []

13. There should be a public relations outfit in your office to facilitate communication between management and non-management staff

Very important [] Important [] Somehow important [] Not important []

14. Which of these do you agree on to be the functions that suggested Employee Relations should perform in educational institutions?

Communicate Institution's policies and objectives to public []

Disseminate information on Institution []

Solicit for funds []

Project image of Institution []

Take complaints from employees []

Link management to employees []

Bridge gap between Institutions and public []

Others (please specify) _____