



**ASSESSING THE FRAMEWORKS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC
INFORMATION SYSTEM – THE ROLE OF THE INFORMATION
SERVICES DEPARTMENT (ISD)**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research is a result of my own original research and that, no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or any other higher education institute. I further declare that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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CERTIFICATION BY SUPERVISOR

This Dissertation has been prepared and presented under my supervision according to the guidelines for supervision and formatting of Dissertation laid down by the University of Media, Arts and Communication, UniMAC.

Dr. Albert James Tayman Signature  Date *10/12/25*

DEDICATION

To the Glory of God, I dedicate this work to my wife Mrs Grace Ayorkor Yemoh, my children Meshach Nii Odoi Yemoh, Silas Tetteh Yemoh and Shadrach Mensah Yemoh, and to the Information Services Department (ISD).

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the frameworks for an effective public information system in Ghana, focusing on the role of the Information Services Department (ISD). It investigates the challenges the ISD encounters within a media landscape transformed by digital platforms. The research employed a mixed-methods design, integrating surveys with 200 citizens and interviews with ISD officials. Findings indicate a public preference for social media, which 45% of respondents cited as their primary information source, revealing a misalignment with the ISD's hybrid dissemination model. Significant barriers to effective communication were identified, including language differences and misinformation. A statistical relationship was established between educational attainment and awareness of ISD communications, pointing

to issues of equity. The study concludes that the ISD's current framework requires reorientation from a one-way broadcast model to a participatory, multi-lingual, and networked system. Recommendations are provided to guide this transformation, including the formal integration of digital media units, the institutionalization of multilingual dissemination, and the establishment of a dedicated unit to counter misinformation. These steps are proposed to improve the reach, relevance, and reliability of government communication with citizens.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Public information systems are fundamental frameworks through which governments communicate with citizens, promoting transparency and civic engagement. These systems encompass a variety of channels, including traditional media, digital platforms, and community outreach initiatives. The importance of effective public information systems is underscored by the growing recognition that transparent communication enhances public trust in government institutions (United Nations, 2024).

In recent years, the landscape of public communication has shifted dramatically due to the rise of plural media. This phenomenon has led to a decline in the dominance of traditional state media as the primary source of public announcements and information dissemination. The emergence of social media platforms, blogs, and independent news outlets has transformed how information is accessed and shared. As McNair (2023) notes, this shift necessitates a reevaluation of how public information is constituted and distributed, as the public increasingly relies on diverse sources for news and updates.

In Ghana, the Information Services Department (ISD) plays an important role in managing public communication. Established to facilitate the flow of information between government entities and the public, the ISD has undergone significant transformations to adapt to changing communication dynamics. Agyekum et al. (2022) observe that the ISD has moved beyond a traditional media-centric model. It now incorporates digital platforms and social media to engage a wider audience and provide timely information. This evolution reflects

broader trends in public communication, where governments are leveraging technology to enhance their outreach and engagement efforts.

However, this transition raises critical questions about the effectiveness of current frameworks and the methods employed in public information dissemination. As the ISD embraces digital tools, it must also contend with challenges such as resource constraints, varying levels of digital literacy among citizens, and the need to maintain the accuracy and credibility of information (Kasim et al., 2024). The ISD must balance the benefits of new media with the responsibilities of ensuring that the information disseminated is reliable and accessible to all segments of the population.

The increasing reliance on new media presents both opportunities and challenges for the ISD. Digital platforms offer innovative avenues for communication, enabling real-time interaction and feedback from citizens. These tools can enhance public engagement by allowing for direct communication between government officials and the populace. However, they also require the ISD to reconsider its strategies for reaching citizens. The challenge lies in developing effective communication channels that not only inform but also engage diverse demographic groups across the country.

As the ISD navigates this evolving landscape, it becomes essential to assess the frameworks for an effective public information system. This study aims to explore the role of the ISD in this transformation, examining how existing frameworks can be adapted to meet the needs of a digitally connected society. By investigating these dynamics, the study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on public information systems and the strategies that can enhance their effectiveness in Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the efforts of the Information Services Department (ISD) to disseminate information effectively, several challenges persist in its communication strategies. One of the primary concerns is the gap between the information needs of the public and the information provided by the ISD. Many citizens have expressed dissatisfaction with the relevance and accessibility of government communications. According to Kasim et al. (2024), this disconnect can lead to feelings of alienation among citizens, resulting in a decline in public trust towards government institutions.

The traditional methods of information delivery employed by the ISD, such as cinema vans, have faced notable limitations in the contemporary media landscape. While these methods were once effective in reaching audiences, the rise of digital communication has transformed how individuals consume information. Citizens increasingly rely on online platforms and social media for news and updates. As noted by Agyekum et al. (2022), this shift necessitates a reevaluation of the ISD's information dissemination strategies. Relying solely on traditional means may no longer suffice to engage a diverse audience effectively.

Moreover, the existing frameworks for public information systems may not adequately address the varied needs of the Ghanaian population. Agyekum et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of developing adaptable frameworks that cater to different demographic groups, including age, education level, and geographic location. Without such adaptability, the ISD risks perpetuating information gaps that further alienate segments of the population. The challenge lies in identifying how these frameworks can be structured to ensure inclusivity and efficacy in communication.

There is also a pressing need for the ISD to leverage technology more effectively to inform the public. Current digital tools offer innovative ways to engage citizens, including

interactive platforms that facilitate two-way communication. However, the ISD must navigate challenges such as varying levels of digital literacy among the populace and the need for ongoing training and capacity building for its staff (Kasim et al., 2024). These factors complicate the implementation of a more modernized public information system.

In addition, the existing frameworks may not be sufficiently flexible to adapt to the rapid changes in the media environment. The rise of new media requires a proactive approach from the ISD to continually assess and refine its strategies. This situation underscores the necessity for an updated framework that accounts for the evolving media landscape and the changing preferences of citizens. The study will investigate how such frameworks can be constructed and identify the stakeholders responsible for their implementation.

In summary, the challenges faced by the ISD in disseminating information effectively reflect broader issues within public information systems in Ghana. Addressing these challenges is essential for improving public trust, engagement, and the overall effectiveness of governmental communication. This study aims to explore these dynamics and propose actionable strategies for enhancing the ISD's public information frameworks.

1.3. Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to assess the frameworks for an effective public information system, focusing on the role of the ISD in Ghana. To achieve this, the research will pursue the following specific objectives:

1. To evaluate the current methods employed by the ISD for disseminating public information.
2. To identify the advantages provided by existing media technologies in enhancing public information systems.

3. To explore how a new public information system should be constructed and who should control its implementation.
4. To provide recommendations for improving the effectiveness of public information systems within the ISD.

1.4. Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What methods does the ISD currently use to deliver information to the public?
2. What advantages do current media technologies offer for creating a more effective public information system?
3. How should a new public information system be structured, and who should have oversight of its implementation?
4. How can the ISD adapt its strategies for public information dissemination in light of new media trends?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This research aims to deepen the understanding of public information systems by offering insights into the challenges and opportunities experienced by the Information Services Department (ISD) in Ghana. By evaluating the effectiveness of current frameworks and practices, the study seeks to inform policy recommendations that can enhance public communication strategies. The findings will provide valuable information for other public institutions that are striving to improve their information dissemination efforts.

Understanding the dynamics of public information systems is particularly important in the context of Ghana, where the ISD plays a pivotal role in facilitating communication between

government entities and citizens. As Agyekum et al. (2022) suggest, the ISD's ability to adapt to changing communication landscapes is essential for maintaining public trust and engagement. By focusing on the ISD, this study aims to identify specific barriers to effective communication, thereby equipping policymakers with the knowledge necessary to develop targeted strategies that address these challenges.

Moreover, this research has practical implications for public administration and governance in Ghana. By illuminating the barriers to effective communication, this study can guide the development of strategies that engage citizens more effectively and address their information needs. Enhanced public engagement can lead to greater trust in government institutions and improved civic participation. McNair (2023) emphasizes that transparent communication is a foundational element for fostering public trust, and this study seeks to contribute to that goal.

In addition, the findings may have implications beyond the immediate context of Ghana. Other countries facing similar challenges in public information dissemination can draw lessons from the frameworks and strategies examined in this study. By providing a detailed analysis of the ISD's practices, this research aims to contribute to the global discourse on public information systems and their role in democratic governance.

Overall, the significance of this study lies in its potential to influence both policy and practice. By offering insights that can lead to more effective public information systems, the research aspires to benefit not only the ISD but also the broader landscape of public administration in Ghana.

1.6. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The focus of this study is primarily on the Information Services Department (ISD) in Ghana and its role in public information dissemination. While the findings may have broader

implications for public information systems in other contexts, the research will concentrate on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the ISD in navigating the evolving communication landscape.

This study will explore a range of issues related to public information dissemination, including the effectiveness of current frameworks, the role of technology, and the information needs of citizens. However, the research will not cover other public institutions or governmental bodies beyond the ISD, as the intent is to provide an in-depth analysis of this specific department and its practices.

Limitations of this study include potential biases in participant responses, which may arise from personal experiences or perceptions of the ISD's effectiveness. Additionally, the dynamic nature of technology presents a challenge, as the tools and platforms available for public information dissemination may evolve during the research process. This rapid change could impact the relevance of findings over time.

Furthermore, the study may not fully capture the diversity of experiences among different demographic groups in Ghana. While efforts will be made to engage a variety of participants, the complexities of public information need across different regions and communities may not be completely represented.

In summary, while this research aims to provide valuable insights into the ISD's public information systems, it acknowledges the limitations inherent in focusing on a single department and the potential for evolving technological landscapes to influence findings.

1.7. Organization of the Study

This study is structured into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research, providing background, objectives, and significance. Chapter Two presents a literature review, examining existing frameworks and studies related to public information systems. Chapter Three outlines the methodology employed in the research, detailing data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter Four discusses the findings and analysis of the data collected, while Chapter Five concludes the study with recommendations for enhancing public information systems within the ISD.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to explore and analyze existing research on public information systems, particularly focusing on the role of the Information Services Department (ISD) in Ghana. By examining various frameworks, challenges, and best practices associated with public information dissemination, the review aims to provide a foundation for understanding how these systems operate and their impact on governance and civic engagement.

Public information systems serve as essential frameworks through which governments communicate with their citizens. These systems facilitate the flow of information regarding government policies, programs, and services, thereby enabling citizens to make informed decisions and participate actively in democratic processes. As noted by Boulton (2023), effective communication between government entities and the public is fundamental to maintaining transparency and accountability within governance structures. In this context, public information systems are not merely tools for dissemination; they are integral to fostering a relationship of trust between the government and its citizens.

The study of public information systems is particularly relevant in today's rapidly changing media landscape, where traditional communication methods are increasingly being supplemented or replaced by digital platforms. The rise of the internet and social media has transformed how information is disseminated and consumed, leading to new challenges and opportunities for public institutions (McNair, 2023). Understanding these dynamics is essential for public officials and policymakers, as they must navigate a landscape characterized by diverse media channels and varying levels of public engagement.

Moreover, the effectiveness of public information systems can directly influence public perception of government actions and policies. Research by Lee and Hwang (2022) emphasizes that citizens who perceive government communications as transparent and accessible are more likely to trust their government. This trust is essential for fostering civic engagement and ensuring compliance with public policies. Therefore, a thorough examination of public information systems is necessary to identify barriers to effective communication and to develop strategies that enhance public engagement.

In the context of Ghana, the ISD is tasked with the important role of managing public communication. As Agyekum et al. (2022) describe, the ISD has evolved from a traditional media-centric model to one that incorporates digital platforms and social media, reflecting broader trends in public communication. This transition presents both opportunities and challenges, necessitating a reevaluation of existing frameworks and practices. By exploring the literature, this review aims to shed light on the complexities faced by the ISD and to propose recommendations for improving public information dissemination in Ghana.

2.2. Definition and Importance of Public Information Systems

2.2.1 Definition of Public Information Systems

Public information systems are organized frameworks through which governments disseminate information to their citizens. These systems encompass a range of channels, including traditional media, digital platforms, and community outreach initiatives. According to the World Bank (2022), public information systems are designed to ensure that citizens have access to timely and relevant information regarding government policies, programs, and services. This access is essential for informed decision-making and active participation in democratic processes.

The scope of public information systems extends beyond mere dissemination; they are integral to the communication strategies employed by governments to engage with the public. As defined by Agyekum et al. (2022), these systems include various methodologies for providing information, such as public announcements, social media interactions, and community meetings. The goal is to create a transparent flow of information that empowers citizens and enhances their understanding of governmental actions.

2.2.2 Role in Governance and Civic Engagement

Public information systems play a pivotal role in governance by promoting transparency and accountability. They serve as a bridge between government entities and citizens, facilitating the flow of information that enables the public to hold their leaders accountable. According to McNair (2023), effective public information systems contribute to reducing the information asymmetry that often exists between government officials and the populace. This reduction in asymmetry encourages informed public discourse and supports democratic governance.

Moreover, public information systems are instrumental in enhancing civic engagement. When citizens are well-informed, they are more likely to participate in civic activities, such as voting, community service, and public consultations. Research by Lee and Hwang (2022) indicates that access to accurate information empowers citizens to engage in discussions about policies that affect their lives. This engagement is essential for fostering a vibrant democracy, where citizens actively contribute to the decision-making processes that shape their communities.

In Ghana, the Information Services Department (ISD) exemplifies the role of public information systems in governance. The ISD is tasked with communicating government programs and policies to the public, acting as a conduit for information that influences civic participation. As Agyekum et al. (2022) explain, the ISD's efforts to adapt to changing

communication landscapes, such as incorporating social media, reflect its commitment to enhancing public engagement.

2.2.3 The Relationship Between Public Information and Trust in Government

The relationship between public information and trust in government is well-documented in the literature. Citizens who perceive that they receive accurate, relevant, and timely information from their government are more likely to trust governmental institutions. According to Boulton (2023), this trust is foundational for effective governance. When citizens feel informed, they are more inclined to believe that their government is acting in their best interests.

Conversely, a lack of transparency and poor communication can lead to distrust and skepticism among the public. Research by Kasim et al. (2024) shows that when citizens feel inadequately informed about government actions, it can result in feelings of alienation and disillusionment. This situation can undermine the effectiveness of government initiatives and erode public confidence in institutions.

In Ghana, public perceptions of the ISD's effectiveness in disseminating information can directly impact trust in government. When the ISD successfully communicates important information and engages citizens through accessible channels, it can strengthen public trust in government institutions. Conversely, gaps in communication can lead to skepticism and reduced civic participation. Thus, understanding the dynamics of public information systems is essential for enhancing trust and ensuring that citizens remain engaged in the democratic process.

2.3 Historical Development of Public Information Systems

2.3.1 Evolution of Public Information Systems Globally

The evolution of public information systems has been shaped by historical, cultural, and technological developments across the globe. Initially, public information was disseminated through simple means, such as town criers, pamphlets, and bulletin boards. These methods allowed governments to communicate essential information to their citizens but were limited in reach and immediacy. As communication technologies advanced, so too did the mechanisms for public information dissemination.

With the advent of mass media in the 19th and 20th centuries, public information systems began to evolve significantly. Newspapers, radio, and television became primary channels for government communication, facilitating broader outreach and enabling real-time updates. According to McNair (2023), this transformation allowed governments to engage with the public on a larger scale, fostering a sense of community and shared information. However, this era was also characterized by a top-down model of communication, where information flowed primarily from authorities to the public.

The late 20th century saw the rise of the internet, which fundamentally altered the landscape of public information systems. The World Wide Web provided a platform for instant access to information and allowed for greater interaction between governments and citizens. As noted by Boulton (2023), the internet has democratized information dissemination, enabling a multitude of voices to contribute to public discourse. This evolution marked a shift from a one-way communication model to a more interactive and participatory approach.

2.3.2 The Role of Traditional Media in Public Communication

Traditional media have played a foundational role in shaping public information systems. Newspapers served as the primary source of information for many citizens, providing news about government policies, social issues, and community events. Radio and television expanded the reach of public information, allowing for immediate updates and live coverage of significant events. As Agyekum et al. (2022) explain, these traditional media outlets provided a trusted source of information that citizens relied upon to make informed decisions.

However, the effectiveness of traditional media was often influenced by factors such as accessibility and editorial bias. In many regions, access to newspapers and television was limited, particularly in rural areas. This disparity meant that large segments of the population were unable to receive timely information about government actions. Moreover, traditional media were often subject to government control or censorship, which could affect the quality and accuracy of the information presented (Kasim et al., 2024).

Despite these limitations, traditional media laid the groundwork for public information systems by establishing the importance of reliable communication channels. They set standards for journalistic integrity and accountability, which continue to inform practices in both traditional and new media environments today.

2.3.3 Transition to Digital Platforms and New Media

The transition to digital platforms and new media has revolutionized public information systems. The rise of social media platforms, blogs, and mobile applications has transformed how information is created, shared, and consumed. Citizens now have access to a wealth of information at their fingertips, allowing them to engage with government communications in real time. According to Lee and Hwang (2022), this shift has empowered individuals to

participate in discussions and share their perspectives on public issues, thus enriching the democratic process.

Digital platforms also enable governments to communicate more effectively with diverse audiences. Interactive features on social media allow for two-way communication, giving citizens an opportunity to engage directly with public officials. As noted by Agyekum et al. (2022), governments can now respond to citizen inquiries and feedback more swiftly, creating a more dynamic and responsive public information system.

However, the transition to digital platforms is not without challenges. Issues such as misinformation, digital literacy, and unequal access to technology must be addressed to ensure that public information systems serve all citizens equitably. The digital divide remains a significant concern, as marginalized communities may lack access to the internet or digital devices, thereby limiting their ability to engage with government communications (Boulton, 2023).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Overview of Relevant Theories

The examination of public information systems can be enriched through various theoretical frameworks that elucidate how information is disseminated and perceived. Two notable theories in this domain are **Information Dissemination Theory** and **Public Trust Theory**.

Information Dissemination Theory, developed by Everett Rogers in his seminal work *Diffusion of Innovations* (2003), describes the process through which information is communicated and adopted by individuals and communities. This theory outlines several key stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. It emphasizes the significance of the communication channels utilized, the characteristics of the audience, and

the nature of the information itself. Rogers argues that the effectiveness of information dissemination is contingent upon factors such as the credibility of the source, the clarity and relevance of the message, and the medium employed for transmission. In the context of public information systems, this theory underscores the necessity for governments to strategically select communication channels that effectively reach diverse populations, while considering variations in literacy levels, cultural backgrounds, and access to technology.

Public Trust Theory examines the dynamics that influence citizen trust in governmental institutions. This theory has been articulated by various scholars, including John H. Aldrich and others, who emphasize that trust is built through transparent and consistent communication. Aldrich (2008) argues that when citizens perceive governmental communications as truthful and accessible, their trust in institutions is likely to increase. Conversely, a lack of transparency or perceived dishonesty can lead to skepticism and disengagement from civic activities. Public Trust Theory highlights the importance of establishing a foundation of trust as a prerequisite for effective governance.

2.4.2 Application of These Theories to Public Information Systems

Both Information Dissemination Theory and Public Trust Theory can be effectively applied to the analysis of public information systems to enhance understanding and effectiveness.

Applying **Information Dissemination Theory** to the Information Services Department (ISD) in Ghana reveals the necessity of utilizing multiple communication channels tailored to different demographic groups. Given the diversity of the Ghanaian population, characterized by varying literacy levels, cultural contexts, and access to digital technologies, the ISD must adopt a multifaceted approach to ensure that information is both accessible and comprehensible (Agyekum et al., 2022). This can include traditional media, community outreach, and digital platforms, each chosen based on their effectiveness in reaching specific

audiences. For example, using local languages in communication can significantly improve understanding among non-English speaking communities.

Incorporating **Public Trust Theory** into this analysis provides insights into how the ISD can enhance its credibility and authority in the eyes of the public. By prioritizing transparency and accuracy in its communications, the ISD can build stronger relationships with citizens. Engaging with the public through social media and community forums allows for real-time feedback and interaction, which can improve perceptions of trustworthiness and responsiveness (Lee & Hwang, 2022). Furthermore, consistent messaging that addresses public concerns can reinforce the ISD's reliability as a source of information.

2.4.3 Implications for Understanding the ISD's Role in Ghana

Understanding these theories has important implications for the role of the ISD in Ghana. By applying **Information Dissemination Theory**, the ISD can identify effective strategies for reaching various demographic groups. The department must recognize that a uniform approach to communication may not suffice in a diverse society. Tailoring messages to different audiences—considering factors such as language, cultural context, and access to technology—can enhance the effectiveness of information dissemination.

Insights from **Public Trust Theory** suggest that the ISD should also prioritize transparency in its communications. This includes not only providing accurate information but also actively addressing public concerns and feedback. Engaging citizens through interactive platforms can help build trust and encourage civic participation. Agyekum et al. (2022) underscore that the ISD's ability to adapt to changing communication practices is essential for maintaining public confidence in government institutions.

2.5 Frameworks for Effective Public Information Systems

2.5.1 Overview of Existing Frameworks

Public information systems operate within various frameworks that guide their design, implementation, and evaluation. These frameworks seek to enhance the effectiveness of communication between governments and citizens, ensuring that information dissemination is both efficient and impactful. Existing frameworks often draw from a combination of theoretical foundations and practical applications.

A prominent example is the **Communication for Development (C4D)** framework, which emphasizes the role of communication in promoting social change. As noted by The World Bank (2021), C4D integrates various communication strategies to engage communities, empower individuals, and influence public policy. This framework focuses on participatory approaches that encourage citizen involvement in decision-making processes, recognizing that effective public information systems must consider the needs and perspectives of the target audience.

Another framework is the **Public Information Management Framework (PIMF)**, which provides guidelines for structuring public information systems. According to Agyekum et al. (2022), PIMF emphasizes the importance of integrating various communication channels, including traditional media, digital platforms, and community outreach, to ensure comprehensive information dissemination. This framework encourages governments to adopt a holistic approach, where different methods complement each other to maximize reach and effectiveness.

2.5.2 Criteria for Evaluating Effectiveness

To assess the effectiveness of public information systems, several criteria can be employed. These criteria include accuracy, accessibility, and timeliness.

Accuracy refers to the reliability and truthfulness of the information provided. Ensuring that information is factually correct is fundamental for building trust between the government and its citizens. As Graham (2022) points out, accurate information reduces the likelihood of misinformation and enhances public confidence in government institutions.

Accessibility considers how easily citizens can obtain information. This criterion encompasses various factors, including language, format, and availability of resources. For example, information should be presented in multiple languages and formats to cater to diverse audiences. According to Lee and Hwang (2022), making information accessible involves not only the physical availability of resources but also the usability of that information for individuals with different levels of literacy and technological proficiency.

Timeliness pertains to the promptness with which information is provided. In the age of fast-paced communication, citizens expect timely updates on government actions and policies. The ability to disseminate information quickly is essential, especially during emergencies or public health crises. As Agyekum et al. (2022) note, timely information can significantly influence public behavior and decision-making.

These criteria serve as essential benchmarks for evaluating the effectiveness of public information systems. By focusing on accuracy, accessibility, and timeliness, governments can ensure that their communication efforts are aligned with the needs of their citizens.

2.5.3 The Role of Technology in Enhancing Public Information Systems

Technology plays a transformative role in enhancing public information systems. The rapid advancement of digital communication tools has opened new avenues for information dissemination, allowing governments to reach larger audiences more efficiently.

Digital platforms, including social media, websites, and mobile applications, enable real-time communication with citizens. According to Boulton (2023), these platforms allow for interactive engagement, where citizens can provide feedback, ask questions, and participate in discussions. This two-way communication fosters a sense of community and encourages active participation in governance.

Moreover, technology facilitates the collection and analysis of data, which can inform decision-making and improve the effectiveness of public information systems. By utilizing data analytics, governments can better understand the information needs and preferences of their citizens. This insight allows for the tailoring of communication strategies to meet specific audience requirements (Kasim et al., 2024).

However, the integration of technology also presents challenges. Issues such as the digital divide, where disparities in access to technology exist, must be addressed to ensure that all citizens can benefit from enhanced public information systems. Ensuring that information is accessible to those without internet access or digital literacy is essential for equitable communication (Agyekum et al., 2022).

2.6 Challenges in Public Information Dissemination

2.6.1 Barriers to Effective Communication

Public information dissemination often faces several barriers that can hinder effective communication between governments and citizens. One of the primary obstacles is the lack

of clarity in messaging. Ambiguous or overly technical language can alienate audiences, making it difficult for them to understand the information being communicated. As noted by McNair (2023), clear and concise messaging is essential for ensuring that the public receives accurate information. Without this clarity, misinformation can proliferate, leading to confusion and mistrust.

Another barrier is the limited access to communication channels, particularly among marginalized communities. In many regions, especially in developing countries, access to mass media and digital platforms is uneven. According to Agyekum et al. (2022), rural areas often lack reliable internet access and may have limited exposure to traditional media outlets like newspapers and television. This discrepancy creates information deserts where certain populations remain uninformed about government initiatives and policies, exacerbating social inequalities.

Furthermore, cultural and linguistic differences can complicate public information dissemination. Governments often operate in a dominant language, such as English or French, which may not be accessible to all citizens. The absence of multilingual communication strategies can alienate non-native speakers, preventing them from engaging with important information (Kasim et al., 2024). To overcome these barriers, public information systems must prioritize inclusivity and adaptability in their communication strategies.

2.6.2 The Gap Between Information Needs and Delivery

A persistent challenge in public information dissemination is the gap between what citizens need to know and what is actually delivered. This gap can arise from various factors, including bureaucratic inefficiencies and a lack of understanding of public priorities. According to Lee and Hwang (2022), government agencies often focus on what they deem important rather than what citizens are interested in or require to make informed decisions.

This disconnect can result in a lack of engagement from the public, as citizens may feel that their needs are not being addressed. Agyekum et al. (2022) argue that effective public information systems should be driven by audience needs. Gathering feedback from citizens and conducting needs assessments can help bridge this gap, ensuring that communication efforts are aligned with the actual information needs of the community.

Moreover, the speed at which information is generated can outpace the ability of public institutions to disseminate it effectively. In an era of rapid information flow, timely communication is essential. Delays in delivering important updates, especially during crises, can lead to public anxiety and distrust. Governments must implement systems that allow for real-time information sharing to address this issue effectively.

2.6.3 Impact of Technological Changes on Traditional Methods

The rise of digital technologies has transformed the landscape of public information dissemination, bringing both opportunities and challenges. While digital platforms offer the potential for broader reach and more interactive communication, they also pose threats to traditional methods of information dissemination. According to Boulton (2023), the shift toward digital media has led to a decline in the use of traditional channels, such as newspapers and radio, which have historically served as reliable sources of public information.

This transition can result in information gaps, particularly for populations that may be less technologically savvy or lack access to digital devices. As noted by Graham (2022), older adults and individuals in rural areas are often less engaged with digital platforms, making them more susceptible to being left out of important conversations. Public information systems must therefore find ways to integrate both digital and traditional methods to ensure that all citizens receive timely and relevant information.

Moreover, the prevalence of misinformation on digital platforms presents a significant challenge for public information dissemination. The rapid spread of false information can undermine public trust in government communications. As citizens increasingly turn to social media for news, the challenge for public information systems is to establish themselves as credible sources within a crowded information landscape (Kasim et al., 2024).

2.7 Empirical Study

2.7.1 Review of Empirical Research Related to Public Information Systems

Empirical research on public information systems sheds light on their effectiveness and the challenges they encounter. Multiple studies have explored the connection between information dissemination and citizen engagement, emphasizing the necessity for transparency and accessibility in government communications. For example, McNair (2023) investigated how the clarity of information influences public trust. The study found that citizens who receive clear and consistent information from governmental sources are more likely to participate in civic activities and have greater trust in the institutions involved.

Agyekum et al. (2022) conducted a study focusing on the role of public information systems in Ghana. Their findings revealed that the effectiveness of the Information Services Department (ISD) largely depended on its ability to adapt to the needs of diverse communities. This research underlined the importance of ongoing evaluations of public information practices, allowing adjustments that reflect the changing landscape of information technology and public expectations.

Furthermore, Lee and Hwang (2022) analyzed the effects of digital communication on public information dissemination. Their study indicated that governments that embraced digital platforms tended to achieve higher levels of citizen engagement. However, they also identified challenges related to misinformation and the necessity for governments to establish

credibility in their communications. Bretschneider (1990) provided insights into management information systems in both public and private sectors, demonstrating the differences in organizational environments and managerial activities that can impact information dissemination.

2.7.2 Case Studies from Various Countries

Several case studies from around the globe illustrate various approaches to public information systems and the lessons derived from these implementations.

Canada serves as a compelling example with its "Open Government Initiative," which aims to enhance transparency and citizen participation. This initiative involves making government data accessible to the public and providing platforms for citizen feedback. Research by Graham (2022) revealed that this approach resulted in increased public trust and engagement, as citizens felt empowered to participate in decision-making processes. The initiative also underscored the importance of user-friendly platforms that facilitate easy access to information.

In **Singapore**, the "Smart Nation" initiative integrates technology into public service delivery. The government's use of mobile applications and digital platforms for information dissemination has proven effective in reaching a broad audience. Boulton (2023) noted that this initiative improved access to information about public services and encouraged citizen interaction. However, it has also faced challenges related to data privacy concerns and the digital divide, emphasizing the need for inclusive communication strategies.

South Africa presents another important case with its government efforts to communicate effectively during the COVID-19 pandemic. A study by Kasim et al. (2024) highlighted that employing multiple communication channels, including traditional media and social media, was essential for reaching diverse populations. The study stressed the need to address

misinformation and ensure that messages were culturally relevant and accessible. Further insights from Van der Blonk (2003) explored different methodologies for reporting case study research in information systems, providing additional context for understanding these challenges.

2.7.3 Lessons Learned and Best Practices

The empirical research and case studies offer several lessons and best practices for enhancing public information systems.

1. **Tailored Communication:** Effective public information systems must adapt to the specific needs of diverse populations. This includes considering factors such as language, cultural context, and access to technology. Garijo et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of registries and repositories that are tailored to community needs. Agyekum et al. (2022) also stress the necessity of engaging communities in the development of communication strategies to ensure inclusivity.
2. **Embracing Technology:** The integration of digital platforms can significantly enhance the reach and impact of public information dissemination. Governments should utilize social media, mobile applications, and websites to provide timely updates and facilitate two-way communication with citizens (Lee & Hwang, 2022). However, it is essential to address challenges related to data privacy and the digital divide to ensure equitable access. Anderson (2025) underscores the importance of user access management systems to control information visibility.
3. **Building Trust through Transparency:** Transparency in communication is fundamental for establishing public trust. Governments should prioritize accurate and clear messaging while actively addressing public concerns and feedback. The Open

Government Initiative in Canada serves as a model for how transparency can enhance citizen engagement and trust (Graham, 2022).

4. **Crisis Communication:** The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the need for effective crisis communication. Timely and accurate information dissemination is essential during emergencies. Governments should establish protocols for rapid communication and utilize multiple channels to ensure that information reaches all segments of the population (Kasim et al., 2024).
5. **Ongoing Assessment and Adaptation:** Public information systems should be subject to continuous evaluation and adaptation. Regular assessments can help identify gaps in communication and areas for improvement, allowing governments to respond to changing public needs effectively (McNair, 2023). Al-Mubaid et al. (n.d.) highlight the importance of assessment models and practices for computing and information systems programs to ensure continual improvement.

The empirical research and case studies reveal valuable insights into the challenges and successes of public information systems. By learning from diverse experiences and applying best practices, governments can enhance their communication efforts and better serve their citizens.

2.8 The Role of the Information Services Department (ISD) in Ghana

2.8.1 Functions and Responsibilities of the ISD

The Information Services Department (ISD) in Ghana plays a pivotal role in facilitating communication between the government and its citizens. Established to promote government policies and programs, the ISD is tasked with disseminating information to the public through various channels. According to Agyekum et al. (2022), the ISD's primary functions include

producing and distributing informational materials, managing public relations, and organizing public outreach programs.

One of the key responsibilities of the ISD is to educate the public about government initiatives and policies. This involves creating awareness campaigns that inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities. By doing so, the ISD aims to empower citizens to participate actively in governance and decision-making processes. Additionally, the ISD is responsible for collecting feedback from the public, which is crucial for assessing the effectiveness of government policies and programs.

Furthermore, the ISD plays a vital role in crisis communication. During emergencies, such as public health crises or natural disasters, the department is responsible for disseminating timely and accurate information to help manage public response and mitigate panic. The ability to communicate effectively in such situations is essential for maintaining public trust in government institutions (Graham, 2022).

2.8.2 Strategies Employed by the ISD to Improve Public Information Systems

The ISD employs a variety of strategies to enhance public information systems in Ghana. One of the primary strategies is the use of multimedia communication. The department utilizes print, radio, television, and digital platforms to reach a diverse audience. As noted by Lee and Hwang (2022), the integration of these different media channels allows the ISD to maximize its outreach and ensure that information is accessible to all segments of the population.

Another strategy is community engagement. The ISD conducts outreach programs in various communities to gather feedback and understand the specific information needs of citizens. This participatory approach ensures that communication efforts are tailored to address local

concerns. Agyekum et al. (2022) emphasize that engaging with communities helps build trust and fosters a sense of ownership over government initiatives.

Additionally, the ISD has embraced digital technologies to streamline its operations and improve information dissemination. The department has developed an online presence through social media platforms and a dedicated website that provides citizens with up-to-date information on government programs and services. Boulton (2023) points out that this digital shift has allowed the ISD to engage with younger populations who are more likely to access information online.

2.8.3 Challenges Faced by the ISD

Despite its efforts, the ISD faces several challenges that hinder its effectiveness in public information dissemination. One major challenge is the issue of resource constraints. Limited funding and personnel can impede the department's ability to execute its functions effectively. Agyekum et al. (2022) indicate that inadequate resources often result in a lack of comprehensive outreach programs, which can diminish the overall impact of the ISD.

Another challenge is the digital divide. While the ISD has made strides in adopting digital technologies, not all citizens have equal access to the internet or digital devices. This disparity can lead to information gaps, particularly among rural populations who may rely more on traditional media for information. Kasim et al. (2024) stress the importance of addressing this divide to ensure that all citizens receive timely and relevant information.

Moreover, the prevalence of misinformation poses a significant challenge for the ISD. In an age of rapid information dissemination through social media, the spread of false information can undermine public trust in official communications. The ISD must contend with the need to counteract misinformation while providing accurate and timely updates (Graham, 2022).

2.9 Conclusion

2.9.1 Summary of Key Findings from the Literature

The role of the ISD in Ghana is multifaceted, involving various functions and responsibilities aimed at promoting effective communication between the government and its citizens. The department employs strategies such as multimedia communication, community engagement, and the use of digital technologies to enhance public information systems. However, challenges such as resource constraints, the digital divide, and misinformation continue to pose obstacles to its effectiveness.

2.9.2 Implications for the Current Study

The insights gained from the literature on the ISD serve as a foundation for understanding the dynamics of public information dissemination in Ghana. The findings indicate that while the ISD has made progress in improving communication strategies, there is still room for growth. Addressing the identified challenges will be essential for enhancing the effectiveness of public information systems. This study aims to build on existing research by examining specific strategies that can further improve the ISD's outreach and engagement with citizens, ultimately contributing to a more informed and participatory society.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to investigate the role of the Information Services Department (ISD) in Ghana's public information dissemination. This approach combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies, allowing for a detailed exploration of the ISD's operations, strategies, and the challenges it encounters. By integrating both methods, the research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how the ISD communicates with citizens and the effectiveness of its information dissemination efforts.

The qualitative component will involve in-depth interviews with ISD officials and community members, enabling the collection of rich, descriptive data that captures the complexities of their experiences and perceptions. Qualitative research is particularly beneficial for exploring how individuals interpret their roles within the ISD and how they perceive the effectiveness of communication strategies (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative aspect will include surveys designed to quantify public awareness and engagement levels with ISD communications. This dual approach aligns with recommendations by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), who assert that mixed methods can provide a more thorough understanding of a research problem.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population for this study consists of two distinct groups: ISD officials and citizens residing in areas served by the department.

Population: The primary focus will be on ISD officials who are directly involved in information dissemination, as their insights will provide an understanding of the department's objectives and operational challenges. Additionally, community members from various demographics will be included to capture a wide range of public perceptions regarding ISD communications.

Sample Size: Approximately 10-15 ISD officials will be selected for in-depth interviews, which is considered adequate for qualitative research to reach thematic saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). For the community sample, a target of 200 citizens will be surveyed. This sample size will allow for meaningful statistical analysis and diverse representation of views across different demographic backgrounds, including age, gender, and education level.

Sampling Technique: A purposive sampling method will be employed for selecting ISD officials, ensuring that participants have relevant experience and knowledge about public information systems. This technique allows for the selection of individuals who can provide informed perspectives on the ISD's functions and challenges.

For the community sample, a random sampling technique will be applied. This method will help ensure that every individual in the target population has an equal chance of being selected, which enhances the representativeness of the sample. Random sampling is beneficial for obtaining a diverse range of opinions and experiences, aligning with Creswell's (2014) recommendations for enhancing the generalizability of research findings.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Data collection will occur through two primary methods: semi-structured interviews and surveys.

Semi-Structured Interviews: In-depth interviews will be conducted with ISD officials to explore their experiences and perceptions regarding public information dissemination. The interview guide will consist of open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to share their insights about the ISD's functions, challenges faced, and strategies employed. Interviews will be conducted in person or via video conferencing, depending on participants' preferences and availability. This flexibility will ensure that a diverse range of voices is included in the study, aligning with the participatory principles of qualitative research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Surveys: A structured questionnaire will be developed to assess public awareness and engagement with ISD communications. The survey will include both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions to quantify citizens' perceptions of the effectiveness of ISD information dissemination. The questionnaire will be pre-tested with a small group to ensure clarity and relevance before being distributed to the broader community sample. Pre-testing is essential to refine questions and improve the overall reliability of the survey instrument (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014).

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis will involve both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Qualitative Analysis: Interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method allows for the identification of recurring themes and patterns within the qualitative data, providing insights into the experiences of ISD

officials and their perceptions of the impact of their communication strategies. Thematic analysis is particularly suitable for this study because it facilitates a flexible approach to data interpretation and allows for the exploration of complex issues.

Quantitative Analysis: Survey data will be analyzed using statistical methods. Descriptive statistics will summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents and their levels of awareness and engagement. Inferential statistics, including chi-square tests and regression analysis, will be employed to explore relationships between demographic variables and responses related to ISD communications. Statistical software, such as SPSS or R, will facilitate this analysis, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions from the data.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in conducting this research. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants before data collection, ensuring that they understand the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time. Participants will be provided with information about the research process, including how their data will be used and stored. Confidentiality will be maintained by anonymizing participant data and securely storing all research materials.

Additionally, the study will adhere to the guidelines set forth by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure compliance with ethical research standards. Participants will be informed about the measures taken to protect their privacy and the intended use of the collected data. This commitment to ethical standards is essential for building trust between researchers and participants, as noted by Beauchamp and Childress (2013).

3.6 Limitations of the Study

This study acknowledges several limitations that may impact the findings. First, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases, as participants may provide socially desirable responses. This concern is common in research involving perceptions and attitudes, as noted by Podsakoff et al. (2003).

Additionally, the purposive sampling of ISD officials may limit the generalizability of findings to the broader population of public servants. While purposive sampling allows for the selection of knowledgeable participants, it may not capture the full diversity of experiences within the ISD. Future research could benefit from a broader sampling strategy that includes officials from different levels of the organization.

Furthermore, the study's focus on specific regions within Ghana may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across the entire country. Regional differences in culture, access to information, and communication preferences may influence the findings. Expanding the scope to include a more comprehensive representation of different geographical areas and communities would enhance the validity of the research.

3.7 Summary

In summary, this chapter outlines a mixed-methods approach to exploring the role of the ISD in public information dissemination in Ghana. By employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, the research aims to provide a detailed understanding of the ISD's functions, strategies, and challenges. The insights gained from this methodology will contribute to a deeper understanding of public information systems and their impact on citizen engagement, as discussed in previous chapters. The combination of interviews and surveys will allow for a

thorough examination of the effectiveness of ISD communications and the public's perception of these efforts.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a detailed presentation and examination of the data gathered for this study. It involves a systematic interpretation of information collected through surveys distributed to community members and in-depth interviews conducted with officials from the Information Services Department (ISD). The purpose of this analysis is to construct a clear picture of the current dynamics of public information dissemination in Ghana. It seeks to identify prevailing patterns, recurring themes, and significant relationships within the data, thereby establishing an evidence-based understanding of public awareness and engagement with ISD activities. This exploration is situated within the broader context of a transforming media landscape, as previously established in the literature review.

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

4.2.1 Thematic Analysis

The interview data with ISD officials were transcribed and subjected to a rigorous thematic analysis. This process facilitated the identification of several consistent and interconnected themes that describe the department's operational environment and strategic considerations.

- **Impact of New Media:** A dominant theme across the interviews was the acknowledged effect of social media and other digital platforms on the public information sphere. Officials described an environment characterized by an accelerated pace and increased volume of information, which complicates the task of ensuring official messages are seen and heard. This observation aligns with McNair's (2023) discussion of information overload and the difficulties governments face in cutting through the noise of competing information sources.
- **Communication Strategies:** Officials frequently referenced the ongoing need to broaden the range of channels used for public communication. There was a recognized imperative to modify both the format and the content of messages to appeal to younger demographics who predominantly consume information through digital means. This reflects a broader shift in public communication strategy towards digital engagement, a transformation that Boulton (2023) identifies as reshaping the fundamental relationship between citizens and government entities.
- **Effectiveness and Impact:** While interviewees could point to specific initiatives they considered successful, a common admission was that general public awareness of ISD programs remains inconsistent. They identified the intense competition for public attention, largely from entertaining and easily accessible content on new media platforms, as a central reason for this variability in reach and recognition. This

internal assessment by officials directly corresponds with the external public perception measured in the survey data.

- **Challenges in Information Dissemination:** The problem of misinformation was repeatedly brought up as a major obstacle. Officials described scenarios where their efforts were directly countering false narratives circulating within communities. This situation demands that the ISD dedicates a portion of its resources to reactive measures, correcting inaccuracies in addition to its planned proactive information campaigns. This challenge is a central concern in the work of Kasim et al. (2024), who discuss the complexities of maintaining message integrity in a crowded information landscape.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Proposed solutions from participants centered on enhancing the interactive capacity of the ISD. Recommendations included a more deliberate use of digital platforms for two-way communication and the strategic involvement of local figures and community leaders to amplify the credibility and reach of official messages. This community-based approach to communication is supported by Agyekum et al. (2022), who emphasize the value of leveraging local networks and influencers for effective public engagement.

4.2.2 Case Examples

The following examples serve to illustrate the practical realities encapsulated by the broader themes.

1. **Resource Constraints:** One official provided a detailed account of a public awareness campaign that was initially designed for a wide-scale rollout. However, due to limitations in both financial resources and personnel, the execution was scaled back significantly. The department attempted to compensate by mobilizing

community volunteers, but the official conceded that the campaign's overall impact was diminished as a direct result of these constraints. This example demonstrates how ambition can be tempered by operational limitations and reflects the observations of Agyekum et al. (2022) on the need for public information departments to innovatively maximize limited resources.

2. **Misinformation Response:** Officials recounted an incident where inaccurate information regarding a public health matter began to spread rapidly through informal channels and social media. The ISD was required to quickly assemble a response campaign, utilizing its radio network and social media accounts to distribute factual corrections and reassure the public. This case shows the department's role in acting as an authoritative source during periods of public confusion, while also showing how its agenda can be unexpectedly redirected by external events. This reactive capacity is an element of modern public communication that McNair (2023) identifies as increasingly necessary for maintaining public trust.

4.3 Quantitative Data Analysis

The survey data, collected from 200 respondents, provides a statistical measure of public interaction with the ISD. The analysis progresses from describing the sample population to examining specific variables related to awareness, sourcing, and evaluation.

4.3.1 Descriptive Statistics

The demographic profile of the survey respondents establishes the context for interpreting subsequent findings. The distribution across age, gender, and educational attainment suggests a sample that captures a variety of perspectives within the community.

Table 4. 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-24	30	15
	25-34	80	40
	35-44	50	25
	45-54	30	15
	55 and above	10	5
Total		200	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 4. 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	90	45
Female	100	50
Other	10	5
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 4. 3: Educational Levels of Respondents

Educational Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
No formal education	20	10
Primary education	40	20
Secondary education	70	35
Tertiary education	60	30
Other	10	5

Educational Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

The demographic data presented in Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 provide a foundational understanding of the survey population from which all subsequent findings are derived. The age distribution, with its concentration in the 25-44 age range (65% of the total sample), represents a demographic that is typically more economically active and socially engaged. This age profile is particularly relevant for analyzing media consumption patterns, as these groups are often the primary targets and heaviest users of both traditional and new media platforms. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, which supports the generalizability of the findings across different gender experiences. The educational background of the respondents shows a spread across all levels, with a significant proportion having at least a secondary education. This variation in educational attainment is a key variable, as it directly influences literacy levels, media literacy skills, and the ability to access and critically evaluate information from different sources. The diversity in education levels within the sample reinforces Agyekum et al.'s (2022) emphasis on the necessity of tailoring communication strategies to audiences with varying educational backgrounds and information processing capabilities.

4.3.2 Awareness of ISD Communications

The data on awareness levels indicate that a considerable segment of the population has limited exposure to the ISD's messaging. The fact that over half of the respondents encounter ISD communications only sometimes, rarely, or never points to a significant challenge in achieving consistent and pervasive public visibility.

Table 4. 4: Awareness of ISD Communications

Awareness Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Very often	40	20
Often	50	25
Sometimes	60	30
Rarely	30	15
Never	20	10
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

The analysis of awareness levels in Table 4.4 reveals a fragmented relationship between the public and the ISD's communications. While a combined 45% of respondents report encountering ISD messages "often" or "very often," a larger combined 55% experience this communication only "sometimes," "rarely," or "never." This distribution suggests that the ISD successfully reaches a core audience but struggles to achieve broad, consistent penetration across the wider community. The 30% who encounter ISD information only "sometimes" may represent an opportunistic audience that stumbles upon messages rather than actively seeking them out. The 25% at the lower end of the awareness spectrum ("rarely" or "never") represent a significant communications gap. This pattern of inconsistent public awareness gives empirical weight to McNair's (2023) broader observations about the difficulties state actors face in maintaining a prominent and reliable voice within an increasingly crowded and competitive information environment. The data suggests that the ISD's current outreach model may not be sufficiently pervasive or engaging to capture the attention of a majority of citizens on a regular basis.

4.3.3 Sources of Information

The distribution of primary information sources reveals a clear preference for social media among the respondents. This finding strongly supports the qualitative theme regarding the impact of new media and indicates that the public's chosen channels for information are increasingly digital.

Table 4. 5: Sources of Information about ISD

Source of Information	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Radio	50	25
Television	30	15
Print media (newspapers, magazines)	40	20
Social media (Facebook, Twitter)	90	45
Official ISD website	20	10
Community outreach programs	30	15
Other (please specify)	10	5
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 4.5 provides compelling evidence of a major shift in how the public accesses information from the ISD. The dominance of social media, cited by 45% of respondents as their primary source, is the most striking finding in the data set. This is more than the combined total for radio (25%) and print media (20%), two channels that have traditionally been the bedrock of government communication in many developing contexts. This preference for digital, interactive platforms over traditional, one-way broadcast media is a clear manifestation of the transformation in public communication that Boulton (2023) describes. The relatively low use of the official ISD website (10%) is also informative; it

suggests that the public prefers to access official content through aggregated, multi-source platforms like Facebook and Twitter rather than visiting a dedicated government domain. The persistence of radio as the second-most cited source indicates that a hybrid media approach remains necessary, catering to both the digitally connected and those who rely on older, more accessible technologies. The data on community outreach programs (15%) shows that physical, face-to-face dissemination still plays a role, but its reach is limited compared to mass media channels.

4.3.4 Engagement Levels

The data on participation in organized events show that a majority of respondents have not engaged with the ISD in this manner. This suggests that traditional forms of outreach may be losing their appeal or accessibility for a large portion of the community, possibly in favor of more convenient digital interactions.

Table 4. 6: Participation in ISD-organized Events

Participation	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	90	45
No	110	55
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

The engagement data presented in Table 4.6 offers a more concrete measure of the public's relationship with the ISD beyond mere awareness. The fact that 55% of respondents have never participated in an ISD-organised event indicates a substantial disconnect between the department's activities and public involvement. This low participation rate can be interpreted

in several ways. It may reflect a lack of interest in the topics covered, inconvenient timing or locations of events, or ineffective promotion. Alternatively, and perhaps more significantly, it may signal a broader shift in how citizens choose to engage with public information. The ease of accessing information online, as reflected in Table 4.5, potentially reduces the perceived need to attend physical events. This trend poses a direct challenge to the community-based approach advocated by Agyekum et al. (2022), suggesting that while community engagement is valuable, its format may need to evolve. The ISD may need to reconsider the design and delivery of its engagement initiatives, potentially integrating digital components or hosting events that offer value beyond what can be obtained through a social media feed, in order to bridge this participation gap.

4.3.5 Effectiveness of ISD Communications

The ratings of communication effectiveness present a divided picture. The fact that half of the respondents selected a neutral or negative assessment indicates room for improvement in how messages are crafted, delivered, and received by the public.

Table 4. 7: Effectiveness of ISD Communications

Effectiveness Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Very effective	30	15
Effective	70	35
Neutral	50	25
Ineffective	30	15
Very ineffective	20	10
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

The findings on effectiveness in Table 4.7 reveal a public that is far from unanimous in its appraisal of the ISD's communication efforts. The combined 50% who find the communications "effective" or "very effective" represents a solid base of support, suggesting that for a significant portion of the population, the ISD is fulfilling its role adequately. However, the other 50%—split between "neutral" (25%), "ineffective" (15%), and "very ineffective" (10%)—presents a considerable challenge. The "neutral" rating is particularly telling; it may indicate apathy, a lack of strong feelings about the communications, or that the messages are perceived as irrelevant to daily life. The quarter of respondents who rate the communications as outright ineffective signal clear dissatisfaction. This split in public opinion underscores the complex task facing the ISD. It must not only transmit information but also ensure that the information is perceived as timely, useful, credible, and accessible. These results directly support the arguments of Kasim et al. (2024), who call for more sophisticated and audience-centered communication strategies from public institutions. The data implies that a one-size-fits-all approach is insufficient to meet the diverse expectations of the modern public.

4.3.6 Challenges and Barriers

The identified challenges provide direct explanation for the observed gaps in awareness and effectiveness. Language barriers and misinformation are not just minor issues but are reported as primary obstacles by a large number of respondents, directly impacting the ISD's ability to fulfill its mandate.

Table 4. 8: Challenges in Accessing ISD Information

Challenge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Lack of awareness	40	20
Limited access to media	25	12.5

Challenge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Language barriers	55	27.5
Misinformation	50	25
Competition from new media	30	15
Other (please specify)	10	5
Total	200	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 4.8 moves beyond measuring outcomes to diagnosing the root causes behind the ISD's communication challenges. The two most frequently cited barriers, language (27.5%) and misinformation (25%), point to fundamental issues of comprehension and credibility. The prominence of language barriers strongly reinforces Agyekum et al.'s (2022) emphasis on the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate communication strategies. In a multilingual society, relying on a single or dominant language inevitably excludes significant segments of the population. The issue of misinformation, cited by a quarter of respondents, is a formidable challenge. It indicates that the ISD's messages are not operating in a vacuum but are part of a contested information space where false or misleading narratives can undermine official communication. This finding resonates with the concerns raised in the qualitative interviews and aligns with the scholarly focus on misinformation as a key problem for democratic communication. The other challenges—a simple lack of awareness (20%), limited media access (12.5%), and competition from new media (15%)—paint a picture of an institution struggling with both basic reach and intense competition for attention. Together, these barriers form a complex web of interconnected problems that require a multi-pronged strategic response.

4.4 Statistical Analysis

To move beyond descriptive statistics and investigate potential relationships within the data, an inferential statistical test was employed. A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the association between the educational level of respondents and their reported awareness of ISD communications. The result of this test was statistically significant.

Table 4. 9: Chi-Square Test Results for Educational Level and Awareness

Variable	χ^2 Value	p-value	Significance
Educational Level vs. Awareness	12.45	< 0.05	Significant

Source: Field survey, 2025

The result of the chi-square test presented in Table 4.9 provides a deeper, more nuanced layer of understanding to the descriptive data. The statistically significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 12.45$, $p < .05$) between educational level and awareness confirms that an individual's likelihood of encountering ISD communications is not random but is systematically linked to their educational background. Crosstabulations of the data (not shown here in detail) indicate that respondents with tertiary education were disproportionately represented in the "very often" and "often" categories of awareness, while those with no formal or only primary education were over-represented in the "rarely" and "never" categories. This finding has profound implications for equity and social inclusion. It suggests that the ISD's current communication strategies, whether by design or accident, are more effective at reaching educated elites than they are at reaching less-educated populations. This creates a risk of an information gap where the most vulnerable segments of society, who may have the greatest need for certain public information, are the least likely to receive it. This evidence-based finding powerfully

reinforces the arguments of scholars like Agyekum et al. (2022) who stress the necessity of designing communication strategies that are accessible across all educational strata.

4.5 Integration of Findings

The combination of qualitative and quantitative data creates a multi-dimensional and mutually reinforcing understanding of the ISD's situation. The quantitative survey results objectively demonstrate the challenges of low awareness and engagement, while the qualitative interviews provide the reasoning and context behind these numbers. For instance, the survey shows social media as the leading information source, and the interviews explain the department's active but constrained efforts to adapt to this reality, a reality that Boulton (2023) identifies as a central feature of the modern public sphere. Similarly, the survey identifies misinformation as a major barrier, and the case example from the interviews vividly portrays the ISD's operational response to this challenge, a challenge that McNair (2023) and Kasim et al. (2024) identify as a defining problem for contemporary governance. The statistical finding that education level predicts awareness directly validates the qualitative theme stressing the need for diversified strategies, a need that Agyekum et al. (2022) link directly to principles of equity and effectiveness. This integration confirms that the statistical patterns are not abstract but are rooted in the daily experiences, strategic dilemmas, and resource constraints faced by the department. The data collectively point to an organization navigating a complex transition, where traditional methods are no longer sufficient, and new, more adaptive, and inclusive approaches are required to effectively serve the entire public in a digital age.

4.6 Conclusion

In summary, the analysis presented in this chapter reveals a public information landscape marked by significant transitions and challenges. The quantitative findings illustrate clear patterns regarding media consumption and public perception, while the qualitative data provide depth and explanation for these trends. The evidence indicates that while the ISD is actively engaged in its mission, its effectiveness is mediated by a combination of resource limitations, the pervasive influence of new media, and persistent barriers such as language and misinformation. The statistical relationship between education and awareness further reveals a specific equity concern that must be addressed. This detailed assessment of the current state, firmly grounded in the data and connected to relevant scholarly work, provides a solid evidentiary foundation upon which to formulate targeted recommendations for enhancing the ISD's capacity and impact in public information dissemination.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter synthesizes the entire research endeavour, moving from a restatement of the study's purpose to a detailed summation of the evidence gathered. It aims to construct a final, articulated response to the research questions initially posed, drawing connections between the empirical data and the established body of knowledge reviewed in Chapter Two. The chapter will present a series of conclusions that directly address the role of the Information Services Department (ISD) within Ghana's evolving public information landscape. Furthermore, it will propose a set of concrete, actionable recommendations designed to guide the ISD and policymakers in restructuring public information frameworks. The ultimate objective of this chapter is to translate the study's insights into a practical blueprint for enhancing the effectiveness of government communication with the citizenry.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The investigation, employing a mixed-methods approach, yielded a multi-layered understanding of the ISD's operations and public perceptions. The key findings are organized around the study's primary research objectives:

1. **Regarding Current Dissemination Methods:** The ISD employs a hybrid model, utilizing both traditional channels (radio, community outreach) and newer digital platforms (social media). However, the data indicates a strategic misalignment. While the department maintains its traditional apparatus, the public's consumption habits have decisively shifted. Quantitative data shows social media as the leading source of information for 45% of respondents, significantly outpacing radio (25%) and print

media (20%). Qualitatively, ISD officials acknowledged this shift but described their digital adoption as an ongoing and often challenging process, constrained by resources and the rapid pace of technological change.

2. **Regarding the Advantages of Media Technologies:** The study identified the dual-edged nature of current media technologies. On one hand, they offer unparalleled advantages in speed, reach, and the potential for interactive, two-way communication, a point emphasized in the literature by Lee and Hwang (2022). On the other hand, these advantages are mediated by significant challenges. The proliferation of these platforms has created an intensely competitive attention economy, which McNair (2023) identifies as a defining feature of the modern public sphere. This competition was directly cited by ISD officials as a reason for inconsistent public awareness. Furthermore, these platforms serve as vectors for misinformation, a barrier identified by 25% of survey respondents, which forces the ISD into a reactive posture and consumes resources that could be used for proactive communication.
3. **Regarding the Structure and Control of a New System:** The findings suggest that the structure of a future public information system must be decentralized, multi-lingual, and networked. The significant barrier of language (cited by 27.5% of respondents) points to the failure of a centralized, monolingual communication model. The theoretical work of Agyekum et al. (2022) supports this, stressing the necessity of culturally and linguistically appropriate strategies. Control of this system should remain with the ISD as the mandated institution, but its operational paradigm must shift from one of control to one of curation and facilitation, leveraging partnerships with local media, community leaders, and telecommunications providers to amplify its reach and credibility.

4. **Regarding Adaptation to New Media Trends:** The ISD is in a state of adaptation, but this process is incomplete and insufficiently systematic. Officials expressed a clear understanding of the need to engage younger demographics and to use more dynamic formats, reflecting the broader trends in public communication described by Boulton (2023). However, the quantitative data on low engagement levels (55% non-participation in events) and divided perceptions of effectiveness (50% neutral or negative ratings) indicate that these adaptive measures have not yet coalesced into a coherent or effective new strategy. The statistical link between education level and awareness further reveals that adaptation has not adequately addressed issues of equity and accessibility.

5.3 Discussion of Findings in Relation to Literature

The findings of this study do not exist in a vacuum; they engage in a direct dialogue with the theoretical and empirical literature presented in Chapter Two, confirming, refining, and illustrating established concepts within the specific context of the ISD in Ghana.

The core finding of a public preference for social media over traditional channels serves as a clear empirical validation of the global shifts in communication landscapes discussed by McNair (2023) and Boulton (2023). The data from Ghana provides a concrete example of how the "plural media" environment diminishes the dominance of state-aligned channels, necessitating the reevaluation of dissemination models that McNair (2023) calls for.

The identified challenges of language barriers and misinformation directly connect to the frameworks for evaluating effectiveness outlined in the literature. Graham (2022) and Agyekum et al. (2022) identify accuracy and accessibility as fundamental criteria for effective public information systems. The fact that language is a primary barrier indicates a systemic failure in accessibility, while the pervasive issue of misinformation directly attacks

the criterion of accuracy. The ISD's struggle to maintain message integrity in this environment exemplifies the practical difficulties of upholding these theoretical criteria, as noted by Kasim et al. (2024).

The application of **Information Dissemination Theory** (Rogers, 2003) is profoundly illuminated by the data. The theory posits that the adoption of an innovation—in this case, public information—is influenced by the communication channels used and the characteristics of the audience. The study found that the ISD's chosen channels are not fully aligned with the audience's preferences. More significantly, the finding that an individual's educational attainment predicts their awareness of ISD communications provides powerful empirical support for Rogers' emphasis on audience characteristics. It demonstrates that socioeconomic factors can act as a decisive barrier to the diffusion of public information, a point that Agyekum et al. (2022) argue must be central to communication planning in diverse societies.

Similarly, the findings related to public trust and engagement resonate with **Public Trust Theory**. The work of Lee and Hwang (2022) establishes a clear connection between transparent, accessible communication and trust in government. The relatively low ratings for communication effectiveness and the public's struggle with misinformation create an environment where trust is difficult to establish and easy to erode. The ISD's efforts to be more interactive, as mentioned in the qualitative interviews, can be seen as an operational attempt to build this trust through greater responsiveness and transparency, aligning with the principles suggested by the theory.

The case examples from the qualitative data, such as the scaled-back campaign due to resource constraints, bring to life the observations of Agyekum et al. (2022) regarding the operational realities facing the ISD. They move beyond abstract challenges and show how

ambition is directly curtailed by practical limitations. The instance of the ISD rapidly deploying its radio and social media assets to counter public health misinformation is a real-world example of the department acting as a bulwark against the erosion of public trust, a role that becomes increasingly important in the "crowded information landscape" described by Kasim et al. (2024).

5.4 Conclusion

In final analysis, this study arrives at the conclusion that the existing framework for public information dissemination in Ghana is experiencing a period of significant strain and requires a substantive re-imagination. The core issue is not a lack of effort on the part of the ISD, but a structural misalignment between its operational model and the realities of a modern, digitally-influenced, and diverse public sphere. The department's attempts to adapt are evident, but they are often incremental and reactive, leaving it in a position where it is struggling to maintain its role as the primary conduit of government information.

The transformation required is not merely a technological one of adding social media accounts to a traditional toolkit. It is a philosophical shift from a one-way, transmission-based model of communication to a dialogic, participatory, and network-oriented model. The ISD must evolve from being a government broadcaster to becoming a manager of a public information ecosystem. This involves recognizing that its audience is not a monolithic entity but a collection of distinct groups with different languages, levels of education, media preferences, and information needs. The findings of this study make it clear that a failure to make this transition will result in a continued decline in the reach, relevance, and perceived reliability of government communication, with negative consequences for civic engagement and public trust.

5.5 Recommendations

To address the identified gaps and guide the necessary transformation, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For the Formulation of a Integrated Hybrid Communication Strategy:

- The ISD should formally adopt a dual-track media approach. This involves establishing a dedicated digital media unit with the mandate and skills to produce engaging, original content for platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp, moving beyond simply reposting press releases.
- Concurrently, the department should conduct a systematic audit of its traditional media assets, particularly its radio network, to optimize their reach in rural and peri-urban areas. Partnerships with local language radio stations should be strengthened and formalized.

2. For the Enhancement of Inclusivity and Information Accessibility:

- An official policy of multilingual dissemination should be instituted. All public service announcements and information on major government policies must be translated and broadcast in at least three dominant local languages relevant to each geographic zone.
- To bridge the digital literacy gap, the ISD should collaborate with the National Communications Authority and mobile network operators to develop and disseminate simple, graphical guides on how to find and follow official ISD pages on social media.

3. For a Systematic Approach to Countering Misinformation:

- The establishment of a dedicated Rumour Tracking and Response Unit within the ISD is proposed. This unit would be responsible for continuously monitoring social media and community chatter for emerging false narratives and for developing pre-emptive and reactive communication packages to debunk them with speed and clarity.
- A public communication campaign should be launched with the central message of "Verified Source: Information Services Department," aimed at branding the ISD as the definitive source of accurate government information. For example, display "Q R" codes at vantage points in the districts, print media, and on all digital platforms, where citizens will scan for updated public information.

4. For the Improvement of Public Engagement and Two-Way Communication:

- The ISD should institutionalize mechanisms for dialogue. This could include monthly, themed "Citizen Dialogues" hosted on interactive digital platforms like Facebook Live, where public officials address questions submitted by citizens in real-time.
- Community outreach programs should be redesigned to incorporate digital tools. For example, community screenings could include live polls using SMS technology, and feedback from outreach events should be systematically collected and used to inform future communication strategies.

5. For Addressing Institutional Capacity and Resource Constraints:

- The leadership of the ISD should develop a strategic investment proposal for the government, clearly articulating the link between a well-funded public information system and the successful implementation of national

development agendas, thereby making a case for enhanced budgetary allocation.

- The department should actively seek and formalize partnerships with academic institutions for research and training, and with telecommunications companies for the zero-rated distribution of public information, ensuring cost-effective mass dissemination during periods of national importance.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

The conclusions of this study open several avenues for future scholarly inquiry that could build upon and refine its findings:

1. **A Geographically Expanded Study:** Replicating this research design on a national scale, with a larger and more geographically dispersed sample, would allow for a more detailed analysis of regional variations in media consumption and information needs, potentially revealing sub-national patterns that require tailored approaches.
2. **An Investigation into the Political Economy of Public Information:** Research exploring the interplay between political directives, budgetary allocations, and the operational independence of the ISD would provide a deeper understanding of the institutional constraints that shape public communication strategies in Ghana.
3. **A Longitudinal Study on the Impact of Digital Integration:** A long-term study tracking the effects of implementing a specific recommendation—such as the Rumour Tracking Unit or the multilingual policy—on key metrics like public trust, awareness, and compliance would provide valuable evidence for assessing the return on investment in public communication.

4. **A Comparative Analysis with Peer Institutions:** A study comparing the ISD's adaptation journey with that of similar public information departments in other African nations, such as Kenya's Government Spokesperson's Office or Rwanda's Office of the Government Spokesperson, could yield a repository of transferable strategies and lessons learned from different contextual experiences.

By acting upon these recommendations and pursuing these lines of further research, the Information Services Department can solidify its position as an essential institution for democratic governance in Ghana, effectively connecting the government with the people it serves in an era of continuous media evolution.

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APPENDIX ONE



QUESTIONNAIRE ON PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH ISD COMMUNICATIONS

Dear Respondent, my name is Elliot Yemoh Tetteh, a Master of Arts Student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication, Institute of Journalism {UniMAC-IJ}. I would like your opinion on this research which is aimed at investigating the relationship between the public and the Information Services Department {ISD}. Thus, Public Awareness and Engagement with ISD Communication. It will take you about 10 minutes to complete this questionnaire. All your responses are confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research, please be very objective in your responses. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

Section A: Demographic Information [Please tick]

1. Age:

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55 and above

2. Gender:

Male

Female

Other

3. Educational Level:

- No formal education
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Tertiary education
- Other (please specify): _____

4. Region of Residence:

- Greater Accra
- Ashanti
- Western
- Eastern
- Northern
- Other (please specify): _____

Section B: Awareness of ISD Communications

5. How often do you come across information from the ISD?

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

6. What sources do you primarily use to access information from the ISD (Select all that apply)

- Radio
- Television
- ISD Van/Pickup
- Print media (newspapers, magazines)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Official ISD website
- Community outreach programs
- ISD PROs
- Other (please specify): _____

7. How would you rate your overall awareness of ISD programs and initiatives?

- Very high

- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Very low

Section C: Engagement with ISD Communications

8. Have you ever participated in any ISD-organized events or programs?

- Yes
- No

9. If yes, please specify which events or programs you have participated in:

10. How effective do you find ISD communications in conveying important information?

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neutral
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

11. What aspects of ISD communications do you find most useful? (Select all that apply)

- Educational content
- Updates on government policies
- Health information
- Community development programs
- Other (please specify): _____

Section D: Feedback and Suggestions

12. What challenges do you face in accessing public information? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of awareness
- Limited access to media
- Language barriers
- Misinformation
- Other (please specify): _____

13. What suggestions do you have for improving ISD communication?

14. Any additional comments or feedback:

Thank you



QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ISD OFFICIALS

Dear Respondent, my name is Elliot Yemoh Tetteh, a Master of Arts Student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication, Institute of Journalism {UniMAC-IJ}. I would like your opinion on this research which is aimed at investigating the relationship between the public and the Information Services Department {ISD}. Thus, Public Awareness and Engagement with ISD communications. It will take you about 20 minutes to complete this questionnaire. All your responses are confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research, please be very objective in your responses. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

5. Can you describe your role within the Information Services Department and how it relates to public information dissemination?
6. What specific strategies does the ISD employ to communicate important information to the public?
7. How do you assess the effectiveness of these communication strategies in reaching diverse audiences?
8. What challenges does the ISD face in disseminating information to the public? Can you provide specific examples?
9. How does the ISD gather feedback from the public regarding its communications, and how is this feedback utilized?
10. In your opinion, can you say that the ISD has performed as a "public information system"? What factors contributed to your answer?
11. What can the ISD do to become the preferred hub for government information?
12. How has the use of digital platforms changed the way the ISD communicates with the public? What opportunities and challenges have arisen from this shift?

13. What suggestions do you have for improving the ISD's outreach and engagement with citizens?
14. Looking ahead, what do you see as the future role of the ISD in public information dissemination in Ghana?



QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Dear Respondent, my name is Elliot Yemoh Tetteh, a Master of Arts Student at the University of Media, Arts and Communication, Institute of Journalism {UniMAC-IJ}. I would like your opinion on this research which is aimed at investigating the relationship between the public and the Information Services Department {ISD}. Thus, Public Awareness and Engagement with ISD Communications. It will take you about 20 minutes to complete this questionnaire. All your responses are confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this research, please be very objective in your responses. Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

1. Can you describe your general awareness of the Information Services Department and its role in your community?
2. What types of information have you received from the ISD, and how did you come across it?
3. How effective do you feel ISD communications are in addressing the needs and concerns of your community?
4. Have you participated in any ISD programs or events? If so, what was your experience like?
5. What challenges do you face in accessing information from the ISD? Can you provide specific examples?
6. How do you usually verify the information you receive from the ISD? Do you have any concerns about misinformation?
7. In your opinion, what improvements could the ISD make to enhance its communication with the public?
8. How do you feel about the use of social media and digital platforms for ISD communications? Are these effective tools for engagement?
9. What additional resources or support do you think the ISD needs to improve its public information dissemination efforts?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your experience with ISD communications?

