

UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION (UniMAC-IJ)



**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CHANNELS FOR
GOVERNMENT INFORMATION DISSEMINATION BY THE INFORMATION
SERVICES DEPARTMENT OF GHANA.**

BY

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MASPRM 24003

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM,
UNIVERSITY OF MEDIA, ARTS AND COMMUNICATION (UniMAC), IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE AWARD OF MA IN STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS
MANAGEMENT**

NOVEMBER 2025

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Richard Akuffo Koranteng, do hereby declare that the work presented is the result of my own efforts, original research and findings and that no part of it has been presented for another degree or diploma in this university or elsewhere. All references to other people's work have been acknowledged. Therefore, I will be held responsible for any errors detected in this project work.

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation of this long essay was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of dissertations laid down by UniMAC-IJ.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, whose steady love, support, and encouragement have carried me throughout my academic journey. Thank you for giving me the confidence to learn, to question, and to explore the world with a curious and hopeful spirit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to God for the strength, grace, and encouragement that carried me through the challenges of completing this thesis. I also appreciate my family for their unfailing support and steady presence throughout my academic journey.

My sincere thanks go to Dr. Rebecca Baah-Ofori for the guidance, motivation, and thoughtful feedback that shaped this work and strengthened my growth. I am equally grateful to the participants, colleagues, and friends whose contributions and encouragement helped make this thesis possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
STUDENT'S DECLARATION.....	ii
SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	<u>vii</u> vi
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Overview of the Chapter	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	3
1.3 Research Objectives	5
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Scope of the Study	5
1.6 Significance of the Study	7
1.7 Organisation of the Study.....	9
1.8 Chapter Summary.....	10
CHAPTER TWO	11
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Conceptual Review.....	11
2.2.1 Government Communication Channels.....	11
2.2.2 Effectiveness of Communication Channels.....	13
2.2.3 Demographic Influences on Communication.....	15
2.3 Theoretical Framework.....	16
2.3.1 Media Richness Theory	16
2.3.2 Significance of the Theory to the Study.....	19
2.4 Empirical Review	20
2.4.1 Communication Channels Employed by the ISD.....	20
2.4.2 Reach and Impact Among Demographic Groups	23
2.4.3 Challenges and Limitations of Communication Channels	26
2.5 Chapter Summary.....	28
CHAPTER THREE.....	30
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	30

3.0 Overview of the Chapter	30
3.1 Research Approach.....	30
3.2 Research Design	32
3.3 Study Population	34
3.4 Sampling Technique.....	34
3.5 Data Collection Method	35
3.6 Data Analysis.....	36
3.7 Ethical Considerations.....	38
3.8 Limitations of the Methodology	39
3.9 Chapter Summary.....	40
CHAPTER FOUR.....	41
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	41
4.3 Research Question One: What Are the Current Channels Used by the ISD for Disseminating Government Information?	42
4.3.1 Integration of Traditional and Modern Media.....	42
4.3.2 Digital Media Adoption and Gaps	44
4.3.3 The Continuing Relevance of Community-Based Channels	46
4.4 Research Question Two: How Effective Are These Channels in Reaching and Engaging Different Segments of the Ghanaian Population?	47
4.4.2 Perceived Trust and Credibility of Channels	49
4.4.3 Contextual Influence on Communication Effectiveness	50
4.5 Research Question Three: What challenges are associated with each communication channel?	52
4.5.1 Resource and Logistical Constraints	52
4.5.2 Digital and Technological Limitations	54
4.5.3 Credibility, Language, and Accessibility Issues	55
4.6 Chapter Summary.....	<u>6157</u>
CHAPTER FIVE.....	<u>6258</u>
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	<u>6258</u>
5.1 Introduction.....	<u>6258</u>
5.2 Summary of Key Findings	<u>6258</u>
5.3 Conclusions.....	<u>6359</u>
5.4 Recommendations.....	<u>6460</u>
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research	<u>6662</u>
Reference	<u>6763</u>
Appendices	<u>7773</u>

ABSTRACT

This study comparatively analyse communication channels used by Ghana's Information Services Department (ISD) for government information dissemination. The study adopted qualitative research approach. Data was collected through semi structured interviews with ten ISD officials from various departments and regions. Data was analysed using the thematic data analysis technique. Findings suggest that the ISD operates a hybrid communication system integrating traditional methods such as cinema vans, community durbars, and radio broadcasts with emerging digital platforms including Facebook, WhatsApp, and institutional websites. Channel effectiveness varies significantly across demographic features. Younger, urban populations were found to engage more with digital media, while older and rural residents relied heavily on traditional, community based channels. The findings also reveal that trust in government institutions, message credibility, and perceived authenticity significantly shape audience engagement and influence the effectiveness of both traditional and digital channels. The study identified three major challenges constraining communication effectiveness. First, resource and logistical constraints including inadequate funding, outdated equipment, and poor infrastructure limit consistent outreach, particularly to rural areas. Second, digital limitations such as weak internet connectivity, insufficient staff capacity, and misinformation hinder online engagement. Third, issues of credibility, language diversity, and accessibility affect message reception, especially among low literacy populations. The research concludes that while the ISD's hybrid approach demonstrates adaptability, its impact is moderated by institutional capacity and contextual realities. The study recommends strengthening logistical and financial capacity, building digital competence, enhancing technological infrastructure, promoting localized communication, and institutionalizing monitoring frameworks to improve government citizen interaction in Ghana's evolving media landscape.

Keywords: Government communication, Information Services Department, communication channels, digital media, traditional media, public engagement, Ghana

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter introduces the entire study on A Comparative Analysis of the Effectiveness of Channels for Government Information Dissemination by the Information Services Department (ISD) of Ghana. It encompasses the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, scope, significance, organisation of the study, and a summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the Study

Effective communication between governments and citizens is a cornerstone of democratic governance. It plays a crucial role in promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusive participation in decision-making processes (United Nations, 2021). Governments around the world have increasingly recognised the importance of ensuring timely, accurate, and accessible communication to build public trust and foster civic engagement. In Ghana, the Information Services Department (ISD) under the Ministry of Information has been tasked with the responsibility of coordinating government communication and ensuring that citizens are well-informed about public policies, development programs, and national events (ISD, 2024).

Historically, the ISD has employed traditional methods of communication such as town criers, cinema vans, community durbars, and printed newsletters to disseminate information, especially in rural and peri-urban areas (Owusu-Amoah, 2023). These methods have been particularly effective in contexts with limited access to modern technology. However, the rapid expansion of digital infrastructure and the increasing penetration of mobile internet in Ghana

have necessitated a shift toward more technologically advanced channels. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2022), mobile phone penetration in the country has reached over 90%, and internet usage has steadily grown across urban and semi-urban populations, creating new opportunities for digital communication.

Responding to these developments, the ISD has initiated a number of reforms aimed at modernising its information dissemination practices. This includes the establishment of specialized divisions such as the Access to Information Division (ATID), created to facilitate the implementation of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2019 (Act 989), and the Public Relations Coordinating Division (PRCD), which aims to harmonize communication across government ministries and agencies (ISD, 2024; Ministry of Information, 2023). These changes reflect the department's recognition of the importance of digital transformation and the need to diversify communication strategies to remain effective in an evolving media landscape.

In parallel, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), and WhatsApp have emerged as important tools for real-time information sharing and two-way communication between government institutions and the public. The Ministry of Information, for instance, actively uses social media to debunk misinformation and provide updates on public health, education, and infrastructure (Ministry of Information, 2023). Despite the advantages, the shift to digital platforms also introduces new challenges. Issues such as unequal access to digital devices, low levels of digital literacy among older populations, and misinformation undermine the effectiveness of these modern channels (Internet Society Ghana Chapter, 2021; IIPGH, 2023).

Moreover, there remains a lack of comprehensive data on which communication channels are most effective across different socio-economic and geographic segments of the Ghanaian

population. Rural areas, for example, may still rely heavily on traditional channels due to limited internet access, while urban youth may engage more with social media. Without a comparative analysis, communication strategies risk being inefficient or exclusive, thereby weakening the government's ability to engage citizens meaningfully. This study, therefore, seeks to critically assess and compare the effectiveness of various information dissemination channels utilised by the ISD to inform more inclusive and evidence-based communication policies.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the Information Services Department (ISD) of Ghana's concerted efforts to modernise its communication strategies by integrating both traditional and digital channels, significant challenges persist in ensuring effective and inclusive dissemination of government information. The ISD has historically relied on traditional methods such as information vans and public announcements. In recent years, it has expanded its reach through digital platforms, including social media and online portals, to engage a broader audience. However, the effectiveness of these diverse communication channels in reaching and engaging all segments of the Ghanaian population remains inadequately assessed.

One of the primary challenges is the digital divide that exists between urban and rural areas. While urban centres like Accra and Kumasi have seen improvements in internet infrastructure and digital literacy, many rural communities continue to grapple with limited or non-existent internet connectivity and unreliable electricity supply. This disparity hampers the reach of digital communication channels in these areas, making traditional methods still vital for information dissemination.

Furthermore, digital literacy levels vary significantly across different demographics. A 2021 survey by the Ghana Statistical Service highlighted that a substantial portion of the population, especially in rural areas, lacks the necessary skills to engage effectively with digital platforms. This digital literacy gap is more pronounced among women and older citizens, who already face socio-economic challenges. Consequently, the reliance on digital platforms may inadvertently exclude these groups from accessing essential government information.

Trust in government sources also plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of information dissemination. The proliferation of misinformation and disinformation, particularly on social media platforms, has eroded public trust in official communications. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, misinformation spread rapidly through platforms like WhatsApp, leading to confusion and scepticism about government directives. This mistrust underscores the need for the ISD to evaluate and enhance the credibility and reliability of its communication channels.

Moreover, the lack of empirical evidence on the comparative effectiveness of the various communication channels employed by the ISD hinders the optimisation of communication strategies. Without a comprehensive understanding of which channels are most effective for different demographic groups and regions, the ISD cannot allocate resources efficiently or tailor its messages to meet the specific needs of its diverse audience.

Therefore, this study seeks to conduct a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of the communication channels used by the ISD. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each channel in reaching and engaging different segments of the population, the study aims to provide insights that will inform policy decisions and resource allocation. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance public engagement, ensure inclusive access to government information, and build trust in government communications.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to analyse and compare the effectiveness of different channels used by the ISD for government information dissemination. Specific objectives include:

1. To identify the various channels employed by the ISD for disseminating government information.
2. To assess the reach and impact of each communication channel among different demographic groups.
3. To evaluate the challenges and limitations associated with each channel.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the current channels used by the ISD for disseminating government information?
2. How effective are these channels in reaching and engaging different segments of the Ghanaian population?
3. What challenges are associated with each communication channel?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses specifically on the communication channels employed by the Information Services Department (ISD) of Ghana in disseminating government information to the public. It seeks to conduct a comparative analysis of the effectiveness of these channels, evaluating both traditional methods—such as information vans, community durbars, cinema shows, and town announcements—and modern, technology-driven platforms, including social media, official websites, online portals, and mobile-based communication tools.

The geographical scope of the study spans both urban and rural areas across Ghana's 16 administrative regions. Recognising that infrastructural and socio-economic conditions vary significantly between urban centres (such as Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi) and rural communities, the study deliberately includes perspectives from diverse locations to provide a nuanced understanding of how locality influences access to and effectiveness of various information channels. This inclusion is essential given that rural populations often have limited access to digital infrastructure, whereas urban populations may rely more heavily on online platforms (GSS, 2022; IIPGH, 2023).

Demographically, the study incorporates variables such as age, gender, education level, and digital literacy to explore how different population segments interact with the ISD's communication efforts. For instance, younger and more educated individuals may be more inclined to access information via digital channels such as Twitter (now X), Facebook, and government websites, while older individuals and those with limited formal education may depend more on traditional outreach methods (Internet Society Ghana, 2021). The research aims to identify patterns in information consumption and highlight gaps in accessibility or effectiveness.

The temporal scope of the study focuses on the period from 2019 to 2024. This timeframe aligns with the ISD's recent digital transformation efforts and the implementation of new structures such as the Access to Information Division and the Public Relations Coordinating Division. It also includes critical events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the need for timely and credible information dissemination was heightened, and thus provides a relevant context for evaluating the resilience and adaptability of various communication channels (Ministry of Information, 2023; NCDC, 2022).

Importantly, while the study assesses the effectiveness of communication channels, it does not examine the broader institutional capacity of the ISD, budgetary allocations, or internal administrative processes in detail. Instead, it focuses on public-facing communication strategies and citizen experiences with accessing government information. The insights gained from this analysis are intended to inform policy recommendations aimed at improving communication practices, especially in the context of digital inclusion, civic engagement, and participatory governance.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is of considerable significance to a wide range of stakeholders, including policymakers, public communication practitioners, academic researchers, and the general public. Its contributions lie in the empirical evaluation of government communication channels in Ghana, offering both theoretical and practical implications for improving state-citizen interaction in the context of democratic governance.

First and foremost, the research holds substantial value for policymakers. In an era characterised by rapid digital transformation and growing demands for transparency, governments must adopt evidence-based approaches to communication. By assessing the effectiveness of both traditional and digital communication channels employed by the Information Services Department (ISD), this study provides actionable insights that can inform the development and refinement of national communication strategies. For instance, policy decisions regarding investments in digital infrastructure or community engagement programs can be better aligned with the real needs of diverse demographic groups (United Nations, 2021). This ensures that government information not only reaches its intended audiences but does so in ways that promote trust, inclusivity, and civic engagement.

For the ISD itself, the findings from this research can be instrumental in guiding the optimisation of its operations. As the central body responsible for government information dissemination, the ISD must continuously evaluate the relevance and efficiency of its outreach mechanisms. Given the growing complexity of the information ecosystem, with competing narratives, rising misinformation, and digital inequality, understanding which communication channels are most effective is vital for improving operational efficiency and resource allocation (ISD, 2024). The study thus equips the department with a framework to prioritise communication efforts based on empirical evidence, which is particularly crucial in an environment of limited public sector resources.

From an academic standpoint, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on public sector communication in the digital age. Although existing scholarship has examined the role of social media, e-governance, and traditional media in public administration, there remains a dearth of localised studies that interrogate the comparative effectiveness of these channels within the Global South, and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (Boateng & Asiedu-Akrofi, 2023). This study bridges that gap by offering context-specific insights from Ghana, thereby enriching theoretical understandings of how digital and traditional communication co-exist and interact in hybrid information environments. Furthermore, it lays the groundwork for future comparative studies across regions or government agencies, supporting cross-contextual learning.

Lastly, the study bears significant implications for the general public. Effective communication between the government and citizens is essential for fostering an informed and active citizenry. When citizens receive timely, accurate, and accessible information, they are better positioned to participate in public discourse, comply with regulations, and hold public officials accountable. Enhanced communication strategies based on the findings of this study can

contribute to greater civic inclusion, particularly for marginalised populations who often face barriers to accessing official information due to digital illiteracy, geographic isolation, or socio-economic disadvantage (Internet Society Ghana, 2021). Thus, the study aligns with the broader goals of participatory governance and democratic accountability.

This research is not merely an academic exercise but a practical tool for institutional reform, civic empowerment, and policy innovation. By identifying the strengths and limitations of different communication channels, the study offers stakeholders a path toward more equitable, efficient, and trustworthy government communication in Ghana.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

This study is organised into six interconnected chapters, each designed to systematically address the research objectives and provide a coherent analysis of the effectiveness of government communication channels in Ghana. Chapter One introduces the study, presenting the background, problem statement, research objectives, questions, scope, and significance, thereby establishing the foundation for the inquiry. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of relevant literature, critically examining existing research on traditional and digital communication strategies employed by governments, with a focus on their impact and effectiveness. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, detailing the design, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and methods of data analysis that guide the empirical investigation. Chapter Four presents and analyses the findings of the study, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate how different demographic groups engage with various ISD communication platforms. Chapter Five discusses these findings concerning the broader literature, identifying consistencies, divergences, and emerging patterns. Finally, Chapter Six concludes the study by summarising key insights and offering practical

recommendations for policymakers and practitioners aimed at enhancing the efficiency and inclusiveness of government information dissemination in Ghana.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the rationale and framework for the study, highlighting the importance of effective government communication and the need to assess the comparative effectiveness of various dissemination channels employed by the ISD. The subsequent chapters will delve deeper into the literature, methodology, findings, and implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Effective communication between governments and citizens is pivotal for transparent governance, public engagement, and the successful implementation of policies. In Ghana, the Information Services Department (ISD) employs a range of communication channels, from traditional methods like information vans and public announcements to modern platforms such as social media and online portals. This chapter reviews existing literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of these communication strategies, their theoretical underpinnings, and empirical findings related to their effectiveness.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Government Communication Channels

Government communication channels refer to the diverse mechanisms used by state institutions to transmit official information to citizens (Diegtiar et al., 2022). These include both traditional and digital media, each with specific advantages and limitations depending on context and audience. Traditional communication channels, such as public address systems, radio, television, newspapers, and community durbars, have long served as the cornerstone of government communication in Ghana (Kankam & Attuh, 2022). These methods are particularly prevalent in rural areas where digital infrastructure is limited or unreliable. The use of information vans and public information centres by the Information Services Department (ISD) exemplifies Ghana's reliance on these grassroots-oriented tools to reach populations with limited access to digital technology (Hanson, 2023).

In recent years, however, digital and online platforms have increasingly complemented traditional communication methods (Albadri, 2023). These include government websites, social media accounts, and SMS-based messaging systems. Social media, in particular, has emerged as a prominent tool in public communication due to its cost-effectiveness, interactivity, and ability to rapidly disseminate information (Mahama, 2020; Tetteh & Kankam, 2024). As noted by Bannor et al. (2017), digital platforms offer broader reach among urban, educated, and younger audiences, especially when used strategically for health promotion and policy communication. Nevertheless, this digital shift does not render traditional media obsolete; instead, it requires integration into a hybrid communication model that considers Ghana's demographic and infrastructural diversity (Bedu-Addo, 2022).

The deployment of different channels by the ISD is often informed by several contextual variables (Sarku et al., 2021). Crucial among them is the target audience. For instance, the ISD continues to use radio broadcasts and community announcements to reach older adults and residents of peri-urban and rural regions who may not be literate or digitally inclined (Akueteh et al., 2024). Meanwhile, social media and online portals are increasingly targeted at the urban youth and middle-class populations, who tend to have smartphones and internet access. This segmentation of audiences by communication preference reflects a nuanced understanding of information needs and access constraints across Ghana's sociocultural spectrum.

Moreover, the nature of the message and the urgency of its delivery significantly influence the selection of communication channels. During public health emergencies, for example, rapid and wide dissemination of credible information becomes crucial. Zhang, Shan, and Ye (2022) demonstrate that in such contexts, governments often employ both digital and traditional channels simultaneously to maximise reach and impact. This aligns with findings by Huang, Yan, and Liang (2023), who highlight that effective information dissemination during crises is

not only about speed but also about aligning communication platforms with public trust and accessibility.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain. According to Idris (2018), government use of social media in countries like Indonesia and Ghana often risks becoming a one-way dissemination tool rather than fostering genuine interaction. Similarly, Mahama (2020) identifies gaps in digital infrastructure, institutional capacity, and content coordination as significant barriers to the full optimisation of social media for public policy communication. These insights reinforce the need for a balanced, inclusive, and adaptable communication framework that recognises the strengths and limitations of each channel.

2.2.2 Effectiveness of Communication Channels

The effectiveness of communication channels hinges on their ability to reach diverse audiences, convey messages clearly, and encourage comprehension and engagement (Kabanda et al., 2025). Communication scholars argue that the choice of channel can significantly shape the reception and interpretation of information (Sanina et al., 2017). In the context of government communication, particularly in developing countries such as Ghana, the heterogeneity of the population in terms of education, geography, and technological access necessitates a strategic deployment of multiple channels (Osei-Kojo, 2016). Channels that offer high immediacy and visibility, such as radio and community information centres (CICs), are often favoured for their capacity to reach rural and semi-literate populations (Akueteh et al., 2024).

Social media platforms are increasingly recognised for their speed, interactivity, and cost-effectiveness in government communication. According to Mahama (2020), social media has become a preferred tool for Ghana's Information Services Department (ISD), particularly for reaching youth and urban dwellers who are digitally active. Tetteh and Kankam (2024) further

argue that the dialogic nature of platforms like Facebook and Twitter facilitates real-time feedback and policy engagement. However, their reliance on internet connectivity and digital literacy limits their reach among certain demographics, particularly in under-resourced communities, thereby reducing the overall effectiveness of nationwide campaigns.

Traditional channels such as radio, television, and print media retain considerable importance due to their accessibility and established trust. Kankam and Attuh (2022) highlight the role of community radio as a critical instrument in disseminating developmental information to young people in rural Ghana. Similarly, the study by Acheampong et al. (2022) found that face-to-face interactions and official public announcements remain particularly effective in delivering regulatory and procedural information, especially among older and less digitally engaged populations. These channels benefit from familiarity and linguistic customisation, often being delivered in local languages, which enhances clarity and relatability.

Despite these strengths, communication channels also face operational and contextual constraints. Sanina et al. (2017) emphasise that message clarity, cultural appropriateness, and feedback loops are equally essential to channel effectiveness, regardless of the medium. Where feedback mechanisms are weak or absent, particularly in one-way communication modes like flyers or posters, misinformation and disengagement may result. Moreover, Zhang et al. (2022) found that channel effectiveness varies based on audience information habits and the credibility attributed to the source. Therefore, an integrative approach that combines multiple channels and emphasises user-centred design is more likely to yield successful communication outcomes across Ghana's diverse socio-economic landscape.

2.2.3 Demographic Influences on Communication

Demographic characteristics play a critical role in shaping how citizens receive, interpret, and act upon government communication. Factors such as age, gender, education level, and technological literacy determine access and responsiveness to various communication channels. For example, younger populations are more likely to engage with digital platforms like social media, while older adults tend to prefer traditional channels such as radio and television (Tetteh & Kankam, 2024; Zhang et al., 2022). Education levels further mediate this access; individuals with higher educational attainment are generally more comfortable using digital tools to obtain and assess public information (Sanina et al., 2017).

Geographic location is another influential demographic variable. Urban residents typically benefit from greater access to digital infrastructure, including internet connectivity and mobile network coverage, which enhances their ability to interact with e-government services and social media channels (Acheampong et al., 2022; Mahama, 2020). Conversely, rural populations often face infrastructural deficits that limit their reliance on digital communication. For these groups, radio, community information centres, and town hall meetings remain the primary sources of official information (Akueteh et al., 2024; Kankam & Attuh, 2022). Such disparities highlight the importance of context-sensitive strategies in government communication planning.

Socioeconomic status also influences the modes and effectiveness of information dissemination. Lower-income individuals may have limited access to smartphones, internet services, or broadcast media, thus reducing their exposure to timely government messages (Zhang et al., 2022). This has significant implications for public policy messaging, particularly during emergencies when timely and accurate information is crucial. According to Osei-Kojo (2016), disparities in service quality and responsiveness often correlate with economic

inequities, underlining the need for inclusive communication models that account for the needs of disadvantaged groups.

Tailoring communication strategies to reflect these demographic insights can significantly enhance the inclusiveness and efficiency of government outreach. As Mahama (2020) observed, understanding how different social groups engage with various media platforms can guide the selection of communication channels that maximise reach and impact. For instance, the Information Services Department (ISD) in Ghana has employed a hybrid communication model, combining traditional outreach with digital campaigns, to accommodate the diversity in its target audiences (Akueteh et al., 2024). This adaptive approach supports the broader objective of equitable information access and civic participation.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Media Richness Theory (MRT), which provides a conceptual basis for analysing how communication channels vary in their capacity to effectively convey information. The theory is particularly relevant to understanding the communication strategies of the Information Services Department (ISD) and evaluating their suitability concerning message content, audience characteristics, and communication objectives. The framework allows for a critical assessment of how media choice impacts public engagement, message clarity, and the overall effectiveness of government information dissemination.

2.3.1 Media Richness Theory

Media Richness Theory (MRT) was developed by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel in 1986 as part of their effort to explain how organisations can improve communication effectiveness by matching media to the complexity of the message being conveyed. The theory emerged from organisational information processing theory, which argues that effective

communication is central to reducing uncertainty and ambiguity in organisational settings (Daft & Lengel, 1986). MRT seeks to identify which types of communication media are best suited to different kinds of messages, particularly in contexts where information clarity and accuracy are critical.

A central assumption of Media Richness Theory is that media vary in their ability to transmit rich information. Richness, in this context, refers to the medium's capacity to facilitate shared understanding. According to Daft and Lengel (1986), four key criteria determine media richness: (1) the ability to provide immediate feedback, (2) the capacity to transmit multiple cues such as body language and tone of voice, (3) the use of natural language, and (4) the degree of personal focus the medium allows. Face-to-face communication, for example, is considered the richest form because it meets all four criteria. It enables real-time interaction, non-verbal cue exchange, personalised conversation, and natural expression.

Another core assumption of MRT is that effective communication depends on matching the richness of the medium with the equivocality or ambiguity of the message. High-equivocality tasks—those that involve uncertainty, complexity, or potential for misinterpretation—require rich media to enable clarification and immediate feedback. For example, strategic discussions, negotiations, or public health campaigns involving nuanced or sensitive information are best conducted through richer channels, such as in-person meetings or live broadcasts. In contrast, routine and unambiguous information, such as weather updates or tax filing reminders, can be efficiently conveyed through leaner media such as emails, flyers, or SMS (Trevino, Lengel, & Daft, 1987).

This matching process has practical implications for government communication efforts, including those of the Information Services Department (ISD). If the ISD selects communication channels without regard to the complexity of the information or the media

preferences of the audience, the result may be misunderstanding, reduced engagement, or information fatigue. MRT thus serves as a diagnostic tool, enabling the ISD to evaluate whether its use of digital media, public address systems, community outreach, and print publications aligns with the nature of the messages being disseminated and the informational needs of different audience groups.

Despite its relevance, Media Richness Theory has been subject to several criticisms. One major critique is its overly deterministic and hierarchical classification of media, which assumes that richer media are inherently superior for complex tasks (Markus, 1994). Critics argue that media selection is not only based on message equivocality but also influenced by social, organisational, and contextual factors. For instance, individuals may prefer leaner media due to privacy concerns, accessibility issues, or institutional norms, even when dealing with complex information. Furthermore, the rise of new media technologies challenges MRT's original media hierarchy. Digital platforms such as social media or interactive web portals can now incorporate feedback, multimedia elements, and personalisation features traditionally associated with richer media, blurring the lines between richness categories (Dennis & Kinney, 1998).

Nonetheless, MRT remains a foundational theory in communication studies and continues to offer a useful framework for evaluating the appropriateness of media choices in different contexts. Its relevance is particularly pronounced in public sector communication, where institutions must deliver diverse messages across varying media landscapes to a heterogeneous population.

2.3.2 Significance of the Theory to the Study

Media Richness Theory (MRT) provides a valuable analytical lens for evaluating the strategic use of communication channels by the Information Services Department (ISD). In the context of this study, the theory enables a systematic examination of whether ISD's media choices align with the complexity and urgency of the messages they disseminate. Government communication efforts often span routine announcements, policy education, and crisis response. MRT helps determine whether appropriate media are used to match the communicative demands of each scenario. For instance, more nuanced messages related to public health or civic engagement may require media that allow for dialogue and clarification, while announcements about event schedules may not.

This theoretical framework also enhances the study's ability to interrogate the effectiveness of ISD's communication from both institutional and audience standpoints. By applying MRT, the research explores not only the internal decision-making processes that inform media selection but also the external outcomes reflected in how citizens receive and interpret information. Public campaigns whether focused on voter education, economic reforms, or emergency alerts—must be comprehensible and engaging. MRT aids in identifying whether shortcomings in message reception stem from the inherent limitations of the media used rather than from message content alone.

Furthermore, the theory supports the evaluation of audience perceptions and behaviours concerning ISD communication. Public trust, message clarity, and accessibility are central to effective communication in democratic contexts. MRT facilitates the interpretation of survey responses from public participants who may report that certain messages are unclear or inaccessible. In such instances, the theory helps assess whether those reactions are a function of poor media-channel alignment. This insight is especially valuable in contexts where

audiences differ in media literacy, access to technology, or linguistic preference, all of which can affect how they engage with government information.

In addition, MRT has practical utility for understanding the ISD's gradual shift toward digital communication platforms. As traditional forms of dissemination like community noticeboards and loudspeaker announcements give way to websites and social media, the richness of these newer platforms must be critically assessed. MRT provides criteria—such as immediacy of feedback and multiplicity of cues—that can be applied to evaluate whether digital media fulfil the functions of richer traditional media. This is particularly important as governments attempt to modernise their communication infrastructures while maintaining inclusivity and effectiveness. In this way, MRT enhances the explanatory power of the study by linking the organisational logic behind media selection to actual outcomes in public understanding and response.

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 Communication Channels Employed by the ISD

Several studies have examined the communication channels employed by government agencies in Ghana to disseminate information, emphasising the integration of both traditional and digital media (Sokey et al., 2018; Mahama, 2020). Mahama (2020) conducted a qualitative case study that focused specifically on the Information Services Department's (ISD) use of social media technologies for policy communication. The study utilised in-depth interviews with communication officers and content analysis of social media platforms to evaluate the effectiveness of these channels in engaging the public. Findings indicated that while social media facilitated timely dissemination and interactive engagement, its reach was limited by factors such as low digital literacy among certain segments of the population. In contrast,

Hanson (2023) offered a descriptive analysis of the ISD's broader communication strategy, which encompasses print, radio, television, and digital platforms. Employing a mixed-methods approach—combining surveys and document analysis. Hanson (2023) concluded that traditional media continue to be more effective in reaching rural and older audiences, whereas digital platforms are better suited to engaging younger, urban populations. Collectively, these studies underscore the complementary roles of traditional and digital media in the ISD's communication strategy, reflecting an ongoing effort to balance legacy channels with emerging technologies.

In a related study, Akueteh et al. (2024) examined the role of Community Information Centres (CICs) as mass communication tools in Ghana—an avenue indirectly connected to the ISD's efforts to reach grassroots audiences. Employing a quantitative survey design with a representative sample drawn from both urban and rural communities, the study found that CICs were particularly vital in areas with limited internet access, enabling the dissemination of government information through face-to-face interactions and localised media. This contrasts with the findings of Bannor et al. (2017), who investigated the use of social media for health communication in Ghana using a mixed-methods approach that combined surveys and interviews. Their study revealed that while social media effectively delivered health messages to urban, educated youth, its reach in rural areas was constrained by infrastructural limitations. Whereas Akueteh et al. (2024) emphasised the enduring importance of physical, community-based communication channels, Bannor et al. (2017) highlighted the expanding, but uneven role of digital media. Together, these findings point to the need for the ISD to adopt a hybrid communication strategy that aligns with the demographic and infrastructural realities of its diverse audiences.

In the same vein, comparative insights are offered by Tetteh and Kankam (2024), who examined the role of social media in enhancing youth engagement and information dissemination in Ghana. Drawing on qualitative interviews with young social media users, their study found that platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp foster active interaction but also expose users to risks like misinformation. Their findings align with those of Sanina et al. (2017), who explored communication effectiveness across government and business sectors in Eastern Europe. Using a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and content analysis, Sanina et al. (2017) demonstrated that while digital channels enable rapid dissemination, their impact is mediated by factors such as credibility and audience trust, attributes often more strongly associated with traditional media. Both studies underscore the significance of trust and perceived credibility in shaping the effectiveness of communication channels. However, there remains a gap in understanding how public institutions like the ISD in Ghana strategically navigate these dynamics across platforms to ensure authoritative and inclusive communication. This study is, therefore, necessary to investigate how the ISD balances channel credibility with digital innovation in engaging a diverse public.

Bartels, Koria, and Andriano (2016) conducted a comparative analysis of national innovation systems in Ghana and Kenya, with particular attention to the communication strategies used for disseminating government policies and innovations. Through cross-national case studies and qualitative interviews, they found that the Ghanaian government predominantly relies on traditional media and face-to-face interactions facilitated by local officials. While this approach ensures broad reach, especially in rural areas, it limits the speed and interactivity of communication. In contrast, Zhang, Malviya, and Tandoc (2022) investigated the dissemination of scientific information in Southeast Asia using surveys and interviews. Their study revealed the growing dominance of digital media among younger, urban populations, but also highlighted persistent information disparities in rural regions. Both studies employed

qualitative and mixed methods grounded in communication and innovation diffusion frameworks, offering comparative insights into regional communication practices. However, they stop short of analysing how public institutions like the ISD in Ghana strategically integrate these channels to manage audience diversity and infrastructural constraints. This gap underscores the need for a focused examination of the ISD's media strategy, particularly how it negotiates the trade-offs between reach, speed, and inclusivity in a rapidly evolving communication landscape.

2.4.2 Reach and Impact Among Demographic Groups

Tetteh and Kankam (2024) conducted a qualitative study in Tema, Ghana, exploring how youth aged 15–25 engage with social media as a tool for information dissemination. Using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation, they found that platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook are the preferred channels among urban youth. These platforms enhance self-expression and accessibility but were also noted to contribute to a decline in face-to-face communication competencies. In a related study, Akueteh et al. (2024) examined the role of Community Information Centres (CICs) in the La-Nkwantanang Madina Municipality. Employing a mixed-methods design that combined surveys and interviews with 153 participants, their findings revealed that CICs play a crucial role in disseminating information related to health, education, and community events, particularly serving women and the elderly in peri-urban and rural areas. Both studies underscore the value of aligning communication strategies with the demographic and socio-spatial characteristics of target audiences. However, neither study addresses how national public communication institutions like the ISD coordinate or integrate these varied platforms into a unified strategy. This gap points to the need for further research on how the ISD navigates communication across divergent demographic groups, balancing digital innovation with inclusivity and institutional coherence.

Similarly, Harding et al. (2020) evaluated the Breastfeed4Ghana social media campaign, which aimed to promote optimal breastfeeding practices among Ghanaian mothers. Using a mixed-methods approach that combined surveys and focus group discussions, the study found that while the campaign was generally well-received and considered socially acceptable, it had a limited impact on improving breastfeeding knowledge among the target audience. In contrast, Bannor et al. (2017) explored the broader effectiveness of social media for health communication in Ghana through a mixed-methods design involving surveys and interviews. Their findings indicated that both the public and health professionals perceive social media as a valuable tool for disseminating health-related information. These studies collectively suggest that although social media can extend the reach of public health campaigns to diverse demographic groups, the effectiveness of such campaigns depends heavily on content design, audience targeting, and message delivery strategies. However, limited attention has been paid to how state institutions like the ISD can optimise social media use for broader public communication beyond health-specific messaging. This study is, therefore, necessary to examine how the ISD designs, implements and evaluates digital communication strategies to ensure relevance, reach, and measurable public engagement.

Li et al. (2025) investigated how narrative structures and personal language styles influence audience engagement in science communication on social media. Using a content analysis of online posts combined with audience response data, the study found that readers are more responsive to relatable examples and informal, personal language. However, the effectiveness of these techniques varied significantly across demographic groups, suggesting that communication strategies must be tailored to audience characteristics. Similarly, Hom et al. (2022) examined how energy scientists and the public in Southeast Asia engage with information dissemination. Drawing on survey data and qualitative interviews, their study emphasised the need to align communication practices with audience preferences and cultural

contexts to improve public understanding and trust. Both studies highlight the importance of audience-centred communication strategies in enhancing engagement and credibility. Nonetheless, existing research has paid limited attention to how public institutions, such as Ghana's Information Services Department (ISD), incorporate such adaptive techniques across diverse audience segments. This study is therefore needed to explore how the ISD can leverage narrative strategies and culturally responsive messaging to strengthen its communication effectiveness across platforms.

Sanina et al. (2017) and Zhang et al. (2022) offer comparative insights into the effectiveness of communication channels across different regional contexts. Sanina et al. (2017) employed surveys and media content analysis in Ukraine, Latvia, and Lithuania to examine audience preferences and trust in various communication platforms. Their findings indicated that while digital platforms are widely used among younger, urban populations, traditional media continue to command greater trust and influence among older and rural audiences. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2022) investigated science communication in Southeast Asia through survey methods, identifying a persistent digital divide whereby urban, educated individuals had greater access to and engagement with scientific content than rural populations. Both studies underscore the importance of demographic and spatial considerations in communication strategy design. However, they do not examine how state institutions manage these dynamics in practice, particularly in contexts such as Ghana, where digital infrastructure and media trust are unevenly distributed. This study is therefore necessary to explore how Ghana's Information Services Department (ISD) balances digital innovation with equitable access and audience trust in its communication strategies.

2.4.3 Challenges and Limitations of Communication Channels

Odoom et al. (2024) and Ajayi (2024) both examine communication challenges within Ghana's decentralised governance framework, though from different analytical perspectives. Odoom et al. (2024) employed a quantitative survey in the Central Region to investigate participatory communication in the delivery of development services. Their findings revealed that participatory approaches were inconsistently implemented due to a shortage of trained communicators, weak institutional frameworks, inadequate resource allocation, and low levels of community engagement. Ajayi (2024), focusing on the broader dynamics of local government decentralisation, also identified communication barriers rooted in limited institutional capacity and insufficient training of local government officials. Using a qualitative case study approach, Ajayi further highlighted chronic funding deficits, poor coordination between national and local actors, and a lack of technical expertise as structural impediments to effective information sharing. Together, these studies point to both operational and institutional challenges that hinder transparent, bottom-up communication in Ghana's decentralised governance system. However, they do not explore how central communication bodies such as the Information Services Department (ISD) engage with or support local structures to address these deficits. This study is therefore needed to examine the ISD's role in bridging communication gaps within decentralised governance, particularly in fostering inclusive and coordinated public information dissemination.

Agyepong (2021) and Kwofie et al. (2019) investigate communication challenges in project implementation within the Ghanaian context, though from different institutional perspectives. Agyepong (2021) conducted a qualitative study in the Shama District, revealing that inadequate communication between project contractors and district assemblies led to stakeholder dissatisfaction and delays in project execution. The study highlighted gaps in coordination and

feedback mechanisms within local government structures. In a comparative study, Kwofie et al. (2019) employed survey methods in Ghana and South Africa to assess communication issues in public-private partnership (PPP) projects. Their findings indicated that problems such as untimely information flow and message distortions significantly affected project efficiency and outcomes. While Agyepong emphasises intra-governmental communication at the local level, Kwofie et al. expand the scope to include multi-sector partnerships, illustrating that communication failures are a cross-cutting issue in development initiatives. Despite their contributions, both studies pay limited attention to the strategic communication functions of national agencies such as the Information Services Department (ISD) in facilitating information flow and public engagement in project implementation. This gap underscores the need to examine how the ISD supports communication in government-led development projects, especially in bridging the disconnect between stakeholders at various administrative levels.

Appiah et al. (2020) and Anarfi (2021) examine communication barriers in different facets of public-sector engagement in Ghana and beyond. Appiah et al. (2020), through a comparative case study of Ghana and Uganda, investigated environmental health communication using interviews and media analysis. Their study identified key challenges such as limited media coverage, low public awareness, and a lack of trust between scientists and the public, which collectively hindered effective public engagement. In contrast, Anarfi (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study on World Bank-financed projects in Ghana, revealing that internal communication within projectized organisations was constrained by unclear objectives, cultural misunderstandings, and inconsistent messaging. While Appiah et al. (2020) focus on external communication and public trust in science-based initiatives, Anarfi (2021) highlights internal organisational barriers that compromise project coordination and stakeholder alignment. Both studies underscore the importance of clear, inclusive communication strategies tailored to context and audience. However, neither examines how national communication

bodies like the Information Services Department (ISD) can bridge gaps between technical institutions, project implementers, and the public. This study is, therefore, necessary to investigate the ISD's role in facilitating coherent, inclusive, and trusted communication across development and policy sectors.

Boakyewa (2017) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2012) report assess communication effectiveness within Ghana's public institutions, highlighting systemic challenges in message delivery and audience engagement. Boakyewa (2017), through a qualitative case study of the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE), found that although a range of communication channels was employed, there was a persistent mismatch between the media platforms used by the institution and those preferred by target audiences. This disconnect hindered the effectiveness of civic education campaigns. Similarly, the IMF (2012) report on Ghana's national communication strategy identified implementation challenges, including limited awareness and coordination among public sector institutions, as well as the absence of robust legal and policy frameworks to guide media engagement. While Boakyewa focuses on operational inefficiencies within a specific institution, the IMF report provides a broader institutional and policy-level analysis. Both sources underscore the need for coherent, audience-aligned communication strategies supported by enabling legal and institutional structures. However, they do not explore the specific operational role of the Information Services Department (ISD) in overcoming these systemic barriers. This study is therefore warranted to examine how the ISD navigates institutional constraints to improve communication effectiveness and public sector outreach.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the conceptual and theoretical frameworks underpinning government communication strategies, with a focus on the ISD's use of various channels in Ghana. It has

highlighted the significance of understanding demographic influences on communication preferences and the necessity of a multi-faceted approach to effectively reach diverse audiences. The subsequent chapters will delve into the methodology employed in this study and present empirical findings on the effectiveness of the ISD's communication channels.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview of the Chapter

This chapter provides an overview of the methodological design adopted to investigate the effectiveness of the communication channels employed by Ghana's Information Services Department (ISD). It gives the research approach, design, population, sampling process, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, ethical concerns, and methodological constraints. The aim is to present an orderly and systematic description of how the qualitative study was conceptualised and conducted. This chapter aims to ensure transparency, rigour, and alignment with the research objectives, grounded in qualitative traditions of inquiry.

3.1 Research Approach

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, appropriate for understanding complex organisational practices and meanings within real-world contexts (Lim, 2025). The qualitative paradigm provides a space for contextual and interpretive inquiry into how communication strategy is developed, applied, and interpreted in the ISD. It prefers breadth to depth and seeks to shed light on how institutional actors see and make sense of communication processes in their working life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The method is not intended to generate statistically generalisable outcomes but increased awareness of practice, experience, and context that influence institutional dynamics in communication.

The qualitative paradigm is also based on a constructivist epistemology, which views reality as socially constructed and interpreted by looking at the views of directly involved people (Creswell, 2013). Communication here is not viewed as a linear process of information

exchange but institutionally and socially situated practice shaped by organisational purposes, resource limitation, and audience response. Through in-depth interviews with ISD bureaucrats, the research aims to comprehend how meanings are constructed on communication strategies, how decision-making practices are used to use some channels rather than others, and how institutional players assess their efficacies. Such thick description offers context-laden accounts that are the hallmark of qualitative research.

Finally, this qualitative approach is best suited to study issues that are under-studied or need thick description. Whereas government communication in Ghana has been researched using policy- or results-focused agendas, relatively less attention has been given to the institutional narratives, rationale, and problems faced at the field level. A qualitative study provides the instrument to reveal such behind-the-scenes efforts and ask questions on how ISD officers view their role, evaluate the efficacy of their practices, and adjust their practices to internal or external pressure. The focus on meaning-making and situated knowledge suggests that qualitative research is particularly suited to this type of organisational research (Patton, 2015).

The approach also accommodates the exploratory nature of the research, which will raise questions instead of closing them down. The research permits participants to talk in terms that they can contain through semi-structured interviews that are conducive to elaboration, reflection, and clarification. This enables the construction of themes that perhaps were not foreseeable by the researcher but are necessary for a balanced understanding of institutional communication. This is a qualitative research indicator and enables theory to be constructed inductively from the data (Charmaz, 2014). The qualitative approach also offers flexibility in facilitating the iterative strategy of the study, where data collection and analysis are mixed together to sharpen early findings.

Finally, using a qualitative paradigm also captures the contextual sensitivity of the research. The ISD is context-dependent in its political, technological, and social context underlying its communication. This involves more than quantifying outputs or audience response; it involves a grounded description of organisational practice by individuals who are employees of the organisation. By giving primacy to insider accounts, the research acknowledges institutional memory, professional judgement, and adaptive tactics as qualities most central to the operation of public communication systems. This methodology, therefore, provides a closer examination of the ISD's attempt at communication as both reflective and constitutive of broader institutional realities.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a single-case study design, focusing on the Information Services Department (ISD) as the unit of analysis. Case study research best applies when the aim is to develop a rich insight into a bounded system or institution in its naturalistic setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the context of this research, the ISD represents a significant location for the examination of institutional communication strategy in a public sector setting. As the state institution responsible for issuing government information across Ghana, the ISD presents a unique lens with which to examine the intersection of state communications, public outreach, and administrative policy-making.

The choice of case study design is also justified by research questions, which are exploratory and expressed in the form of "how" and "why" questions. In the view of Yin (2018), the case study approach works best when the researcher is seeking to understand complex social phenomena, particularly where the edges of the phenomenon and its context are not delineable. This is true for the ISD, where the communication strategy is embedded heavily within political, administrative, and socio-cultural structures. By focusing on the ISD for intense

analysis, this study aims to uncover how institutional actors conceptualise communication, how strategy is interpreted, and what challenges or adaptations come about in practice.

The study will be designed as exploratory and descriptive. As an exploratory case study, it strives to generate new understanding of a fairly untapped area, namely, the internal communication practices of a Ghanaian government information agency. As a descriptive case study, it attempts to document and explain institutional traditions, organisational structures, and communication impacts concerning contextual idiosyncrasies (Ridder, 2017). This dual focus allows the research not only to generate new questions for research but also to provide grounded evidence of current practice, which can be used to inform policy and institutional reform.

To augment the richness of the empirical evidence, the research employs a number of sources of data. The key method is semi-structured interviews with ISD officials, allowing a deep understanding of insider perspectives. These are supplemented with internal reports, policy documents, and formal publications where necessary, to provide contextual history and to triangulate data. Integration of the data sources reinforces the research's validity and adheres to the practice of methodological triangulation, a case study research strength (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010; Yin, 2018).

The use of a single case does not diminish the analytical value of the research. In comparison, qualitative case studies are capable of producing transferable instead of statistically generalisable results (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Cleland et al., 2021). ISD is a location of key case, an institution whose experience may inform public sector communications more broadly, institutional capacity, and digital transformation within government. The case study approach provides a detailed, empirically grounded understanding of how communication is both a technical process and a strategic tool within a public bureaucracy.

3.3 Study Population

The study population comprises officials from the Information Services Department (ISD) who are directly engaged in the planning, coordination, and implementation of government communication strategies. These individuals were purposively selected because of their professional roles and expertise in media management, public engagement, and institutional communication. Their inclusion aligns with the single-case study design, which prioritises an in-depth, context-sensitive understanding of institutional practices. Focusing exclusively on ISD personnel allows for the collection of rich qualitative data that reflects internal decision-making processes, strategic priorities, and the institutional logic guiding the selection and use of communication channels.

To enhance the diversity of insights within the study, efforts were made to include officials from various divisions within the ISD, such as regional outreach, digital media operations, public education, and central administration. This cross-sectional representation ensures that the research captures multiple perspectives on the department's communication work, including those from both strategic and operational levels. By incorporating views from different units and hierarchical positions, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of how communication is conceptualised and practised within the ISD's institutional framework. This diversity supports the analytical depth required for interpreting organisational dynamics in public sector communication.

3.4 Sampling Technique

This study utilised a purposive sampling technique to select officials within the Information Services Department (ISD) who were most capable of offering rich, detailed, and relevant data on the department's communication practices. Purposive sampling, a widely accepted non-

probability approach in qualitative research, enables the selection of participants based on their expertise, role, and relevance to the study objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). In this context, participants were chosen because of their direct involvement in media planning, public engagement, digital outreach, and information dissemination. The selection process also took into account the participants' availability and willingness to engage in the research, ensuring both ethical considerations and practical feasibility.

A total of ten ISD officials were recruited for in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This sample size is consistent with methodological guidance in qualitative research, where a smaller number of carefully selected participants can yield sufficient data for identifying patterns and achieving thematic saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The sample included a mix of senior personnel involved in strategic communication planning and middle-level staff responsible for implementation and operational coordination. This range of perspectives allowed the study to capture insights that span both decision-making and field-level execution, thus offering a well-rounded understanding of how communication is designed and enacted within the ISD. The sampling strategy ensured that institutional knowledge and experiential insights were maximised while maintaining analytical depth.

3.5 Data Collection Method

The main data collection technique employed in this study was semi-structured face-to-face interviews with purposively selected officials of the Information Services Department (ISD). Semi-structured interviews are particularly suitable for qualitative research because they offer a balance between guided questioning and conversational flexibility. This allows the researcher to explore specific research themes while remaining responsive to new insights that may emerge during the discussion (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The interview guide was designed around several thematic areas, including communication goals, criteria for media selection,

public engagement strategies, internal feedback systems, and the challenges and opportunities involved in executing communication mandates. The guided structure ensured coherence across interviews while allowing participants the freedom to elaborate on issues most relevant to their roles and experiences.

Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was conducted in a private and comfortable setting to encourage openness and detailed responses. With informed consent, the interviews were audio-recorded to preserve the integrity and accuracy of the data. The recordings were transcribed verbatim shortly after each session, enabling detailed analysis and retention of contextual nuance. Beyond the interviews, the study incorporated the review of relevant institutional documents, including internal strategy briefs, campaign materials, progress reports, and archived memos. These documents provided contextual background, supplemented verbal data, and enabled the triangulation of findings across different sources. The use of multiple data sources enhanced the validity and credibility of the research findings by allowing the cross-verification of key themes and institutional claims (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018).

3.6 Data Analysis

The analysis of the qualitative data followed the thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which is widely regarded for its methodological rigour and adaptability to various types of qualitative inquiry. This process began with familiarisation, which involved reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data. This step was essential for immersing the researcher in the content and identifying preliminary patterns or recurrent ideas. During this phase, initial notes were made to capture early impressions and observations relevant to the research questions.

Following familiarisation, the next stage involved generating initial codes. This required systematically identifying and labelling segments of the text that corresponded to specific ideas, issues, or actions mentioned by the participants. The coding process was done manually to ensure direct engagement with the data. Codes were developed inductively, based on the data itself rather than predetermined theoretical constructs. This inductive approach allowed the study to remain grounded in participants' experiences and perspectives, enhancing the authenticity and depth of the analysis (Nowell et al., 2017).

Once a comprehensive set of codes had been established, the analysis progressed to the identification and construction of themes. Codes that shared conceptual similarity or addressed similar phenomena were grouped to form broader thematic categories. These themes captured significant aspects of the communication strategies, institutional priorities, and perceived effectiveness within the ISD. Particular care was taken to identify both convergent and divergent viewpoints among participants, which provided a nuanced picture of institutional communication practices. For instance, while some respondents emphasised the efficiency of digital outreach, others pointed to the limitations in rural or underserved contexts.

In the subsequent stages of reviewing and refining themes, the researcher examined whether the themes coherently reflected the coded data and the broader dataset. This involved checking for consistency within themes and ensuring that each theme was distinct and analytically useful. Interpretive memos were kept throughout the process to document analytic decisions, reflections, and insights. These memos supported reflexivity and served as an audit trail to enhance the transparency and reliability of the findings. The final step involved writing the analysis, integrating direct quotations from participants to illustrate key points and preserve the richness of the qualitative data.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research refers to the moral principles and standards that guide researchers to conduct studies responsibly and with integrity, ensuring the rights, dignity, and well-being of participants are protected at all stages. In qualitative research, ethical considerations are particularly important because the process often involves personal interactions, detailed narratives, and the disclosure of sensitive information. Ethical research practice requires transparency, voluntary participation, and measures to protect the identity and interests of respondents (Tracy, 2020; Wiles, 2013).

In this study, ethical approval was sought and obtained from the relevant institutional review board before any fieldwork commenced. This approval process required a comprehensive proposal outlining the research objectives, sampling procedures, data collection methods, and risk mitigation strategies. Ethical review ensured that the study met the minimum standards of informed consent, participant safety, and responsible data management. Only after receiving formal clearance was the researcher permitted to engage with participants.

Before data collection, all participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, their expected role, and how their data would be used. Written informed consent was obtained from each participant, affirming their voluntary agreement to participate. Participants were also informed of their right to decline to answer any question or to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any penalty or disadvantage. This process ensured that participation was based on a clear understanding and upheld the principle of autonomy, which is central to ethical research conduct (Bryman, 2016).

To maintain confidentiality and protect the identities of respondents, all audio recordings were stored on encrypted, password-protected devices accessible only to the researcher. During

transcription, personal identifiers such as names, job titles, and locations were either removed or replaced with pseudonyms. Final transcripts and analysis documents were anonymised, and all data were retained solely for academic purposes. These procedures align with the best ethical practices and international standards for qualitative social research (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). The ethical safeguards adopted in this study helped to build trust with participants and ensured that the research was conducted with integrity and respect for human dignity.

3.8 Limitations of the Methodology

The methodological design of this study, while appropriate for its objectives, is subject to several inherent limitations that must be acknowledged to contextualise the findings. First, the research was confined to a single institution, the Information Services Department (ISD), which limits the generalisability of the results. Although the ISD serves as a critical case for understanding public sector communication, its unique organisational structure, historical mandate, and operational dynamics may not fully represent the communication strategies or institutional conditions of other government departments or agencies. As Yin (2018) notes, case studies provide depth rather than breadth, and generalisability is often analytic rather than statistical.

Second, the small sample size, a common feature of qualitative inquiry, restricted the number of viewpoints that could be explored. While purposive sampling allowed for the selection of information-rich participants with relevant experience, the study was limited to ten interviews. This raises the possibility that some perspectives, particularly from lower-tier or regionally based staff, may have been underrepresented. According to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), thematic saturation can be achieved with relatively few interviews, but this does not eliminate concerns over the breadth of perspectives in complex institutional settings.

A third limitation concerns the use of self-reported data gathered through interviews. Participants may have been influenced by social desirability bias, leading them to portray departmental practices, outcomes, or intentions in a more favourable light. This is particularly likely in studies involving public officials, where institutional loyalty or caution about revealing internal challenges may influence responses (Miller and Glassner, 2016). Although the study attempted to mitigate this limitation through document analysis and methodological triangulation, the potential for biased representation cannot be entirely discounted.

Despite these limitations, the methodological framework adopted in the study was rigorous, transparent, and ethically grounded. The use of triangulated data sources, including semi-structured interviews and internal documents, enhanced the reliability and validity of the findings. Moreover, the case study design provided a structured and context-sensitive means of examining the complexities of public sector communication. As Stake (1995) argues, the value of a case study lies in its ability to generate insight and deepen understanding within a defined context, even when broader generalisation is constrained. Therefore, the study's conclusions remain analytically useful for both academic and policy discussions on institutional communication in public administration.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the research methodology adopted for the study, highlighting the qualitative approach and the case study design. It outlined the sampling strategy, data collection methods, analytical procedures, and ethical considerations. The use of in-depth interviews with ISD officials and document analysis facilitated a contextual and nuanced investigation into the department's communication practices. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings generated from the fieldwork.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the qualitative data collected from ten participants drawn from various departments and regions of the Information Services Department (ISD) of Ghana. The analysis focuses on exploring the effectiveness of the channels employed by the ISD in disseminating government information, assessing the extent of their reach among diverse demographic groups, and identifying the challenges encountered in the communication process. Thematic data analysis technique was employed in analysing the data.

4.2 Overview of Respondents' Profile

This study drew on interviews with ten information officers and communication practitioners who work with or alongside the Information Services Department (ISD) across Ghana. The sample comprises staff from national, regional and district levels and reflects a mix of professional roles (e.g., senior information officers, district information officers, public education officers and PR staff). Table 4.2 summarises the respondents' profile showing role, primary duty location/region, gender, age, highest education, and years of professional experience.

Table 4.2: Respondents' Profile (n = 10)

Respondent (Role & Primary Location)	Gender	Age (Years)	Highest Education	Years of Experience
Senior Information Officer	Male	51	Tertiary	12
ISD Official / Regional Coordinator — Greater Accra	Male	50	Tertiary	15
PR & Journalist / ISD Official — (Central/National)	Male	54	Tertiary	20

Assistant Information Officer — Koforidua (Eastern Region)	Female	44	Bachelor's	7
ISD Official / District Assembly (Asene-Manso-Akroso, Eastern)	Male	48	MBA	10
Senior Information Officer — Eastern Region (regional office)	Female	42	Tertiary	10
Deputy Director, Public Relations — National Headquarters	Male	45	Master's	18
Senior Technical Officer — Central Region (media/technical)	Male	47	Tertiary	11
District Information Officer — Volta Region	Female	38	Tertiary	8
Public Education Officer — Upper East Region	Female	35	Tertiary	6

4.3 Research Question One: What Are the Current Channels Used by the ISD for Disseminating Government Information?

This research question aimed to identify and analyze the range of communication channels utilized by the Information Services Department (ISD) of Ghana in disseminating government information to citizens. Through thematic analysis, three major themes emerged: (1) *Integration of traditional and modern media*, (2) *Digital media adoption and gaps*, and (3) *The continuing relevance of community-based channels*. These themes collectively highlight the ISD's evolving communication landscape, shaped by both technological advancement and the enduring influence of cultural communication norms.

4.3.1 Integration of Traditional and Modern Media

Findings from the study revealed a strong consensus among participants that the ISD currently adopts a hybrid communication approach, integrating both traditional and modern media channels to maximize reach. Participants emphasized that while traditional media such as cinema vans, community durbars, radio, and print materials remain foundational to ISD's communication strategy, these are now being complemented by digital tools such as social media and online portals. Participant 1 explained, *"We use a blend of cinema vans, radio, print,*

and now social media. Each of these reaches a different segment of the population.” This statement underscores the Department’s recognition of the need to diversify communication methods to cater to varied audiences across Ghana’s urban and rural divides.

Participant 2 highlighted that, *“Community durbars and radio are still crucial because people trust those channels more than online platforms.”* This suggests that despite technological advancement, traditional media still hold significant credibility among the citizenry especially within rural and peri-urban settings.

Participant 3 further elaborated that, *“Our cinema vans and durbars allow us to interact directly with people, while Facebook and WhatsApp are helping us reach the youth.”* This reinforces the notion that ISD’s communication strategy is not a simple substitution of old methods with new ones, but a deliberate integration of both to optimize impact.

Participant 4 added, *“We often combine radio announcements with social media posts so that the same message circulates both online and offline.”* This reflects an evolving operational model where different media platforms are used synergistically to reinforce government messaging.

The integration of these channels demonstrates the ISD’s pragmatic adaptation to Ghana’s diverse communication environment, where disparities in digital access, literacy, and cultural norms necessitate a multi-channel strategy. This approach enables the Department to maintain its presence in rural communities while extending its influence among digitally connected populations.

This finding aligns with Nwobodo (2024), who observed that traditional communication platforms remain indispensable in rural African contexts because of their accessibility and cultural familiarity. Similarly, Hyland-Wood et al. (2021) argues that hybrid communication

models enhance both reach and credibility when government institutions aim to engage diverse audiences. However, while Hyland-Wood et al. (2021) emphasizes the seamless integration of digital and traditional systems, the present findings reveal that the ISD's hybrid model is still in transition constrained by limited digital capacity and resource gaps.

The evidence suggests that the ISD's dual-channel strategy provides both continuity and innovation, positioning the Department to gradually modernize its communication infrastructure while preserving the trusted, community-based methods that form its institutional identity.

4.3.2 Digital Media Adoption and Gaps

The second theme that emerged from the analysis highlights the gradual but uneven adoption of digital media within the ISD's communication framework. Although participants acknowledged that digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and institutional websites are increasingly being used, their utilization remains limited and inconsistent across regions. The findings reveal that while the ISD recognizes the transformative potential of digital tools, structural and technical barriers continue to hinder full integration.

Participant 5 noted that, *"ISD is currently not making good use of social media or websites."* This reflects an institutional awareness of underutilization, suggesting that digital adoption is more aspirational than fully operational. Similarly, Participant 6 explained that, *"We have started using WhatsApp and Facebook, especially for youth engagement, but we still rely more on radio and durbars because not everyone is online."* This observation points to an emerging digital presence that coexists with older communication systems, particularly due to unequal access to internet connectivity and digital literacy gaps.

In addition, Participant 7 emphasized that, “*The use of digital tools is often limited by the lack of smart devices and poor internet access, especially in some district offices.*” This comment illustrates the infrastructural and technological constraints that impede consistent use of online communication channels.

The findings therefore indicate a digital divide within ISD operations both at the institutional and community levels. While some regional offices are experimenting with digital outreach, others remain constrained by resource shortages, inadequate training, and infrastructural limitations. This uneven development echoes the observations of Agbeko et al. (2021), who found that in many Ghanaian public institutions, digital transformation is hindered by inconsistent infrastructure and limited staff capacity.

Furthermore, Khumalo (2022) argues that while digital platforms expand citizen engagement opportunities, their success depends on deliberate investment in technology and personnel development—conditions that mirror the concerns expressed by ISD officials in this study. In contrast, Barabanov and Usacheva (2024) suggests that the growing digital enthusiasm among citizens offers government agencies an opportunity to accelerate online communication, a view partially supported by these findings, which show the ISD’s gradual but cautious shift towards digital engagement.

This theme reveals that while the ISD has recognized the importance of digital communication and begun integrating it into its dissemination strategy, the process remains fragmented and constrained by limited capacity. Thus, the potential of digital media as a transformative tool for government communication in Ghana is evident but yet to be fully realized.

4.3.3 The Continuing Relevance of Community-Based Channels

The third theme emphasizes the enduring importance of community-based communication channels in ISD's information dissemination efforts. Despite the gradual digital shift, participants overwhelmingly highlighted that community engagement mechanisms such as cinema vans, community information centres, durbars, and market outreach, remain the most trusted and relatable sources of government communication. These platforms not only ensure direct interaction with citizens but also foster credibility and cultural connection.

Participant 4 observed that, *“Publicity campaigning by ISD staff using vans and community information centres is still the most effective. Community dwellers uphold these sources as authentic because they believe the information truly comes from government.”* This perspective reinforces the deep trust citizens place in localized and face-to-face communication, a trust that digital channels have yet to fully replicate.

Similarly, Participant 6 highlighted that, *“Community durbars are powerful because they allow people to ask questions and express concerns in their own languages. It helps build trust and understanding.”* This underscores how interpersonal interaction and the use of local dialects enhance message clarity and citizen engagement.

In addition, Participant 5 noted that, *“Community channels are trusted because citizens feel emotionally attached to them. There's some level of ownership and credibility.”* This comment points to the social embeddedness of these communication platforms; they resonate not only as information sources but also as community institutions that facilitate participation and collective dialogue.

The continuing relevance of these traditional, community-based approaches aligns with Boadu & Ile (2024), who argues that in Ghana and similar African contexts, interpersonal and

community-level communication retains significant influence due to cultural values of orality and trust. Similarly, Debbarma and Chinnadurai, (2023) found that local information centres and community durbars promote inclusivity, particularly among populations with limited literacy or internet access.

In contrast, Elebiju (2024) contends that overreliance on traditional community channels risks excluding younger, digitally active citizens. However, the findings of this study suggest that rather than creating exclusion, community-based channels remain an essential complement to digital communication, especially in rural and peri-urban settings where digital access remains uneven.

This theme demonstrates that while modernization is reshaping government communication, the ISD's community-based channels continue to serve as the backbone of citizen engagement, providing authenticity, cultural connection, and inclusivity that newer digital platforms have yet to fully achieve.

4.4 Research Question Two: How Effective Are These Channels in Reaching and Engaging Different Segments of the Ghanaian Population?

This research question sought to assess the effectiveness and inclusivity of the various communication channels used by the Information Services Department (ISD) in engaging citizens across different demographic groups. The analysis generated three key themes: *(1) Audience segmentation and responsiveness, (2) Perceived trust and credibility of channels, and (3) Contextual influence on communication effectiveness.*

4.4.1 Audience Segmentation and Responsiveness

Participants emphasized that the effectiveness of each communication channel depends largely on the audience's age, geographical location, and educational background. The findings revealed that while urban and youthful audiences tend to be more responsive to digital platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and WhatsApp, rural dwellers and older populations continue to rely heavily on traditional means of communication such as radio broadcasts, community durbars, and cinema vans.

Participant 1 explained that, *“From what we observe, the youth rush for information on social media because it is fast and interactive, but the older generation still prefer radio and face-to-face engagements. When we go to the rural areas, most people do not even have smartphones, so they rely on what they hear from our vans or through local announcements.”*

Similarly, Participant 2 highlighted that, *“Urban residents are more exposed to online platforms, so when we post updates on Facebook or WhatsApp, we get quick feedback and engagement. However, in the rural districts, the ISD vans and community information centres are the real channels that work because they are accessible and people there trust them more.”*

In addition, Participant 3 pointed out that, *“Our strategy must always consider the audience. For example, a campaign on sanitation may trend quickly in the cities when shared digitally, but in the smaller towns, it only gets attention when we organize community meetings or use local radio in the local language. The response rate depends on how close the channel feels to the people.”*

These insights underscore the ISD's nuanced understanding of audience segmentation in communication planning. By adapting its channels to suit different demographic contexts, the Department enhances both reach and engagement. This observation is consistent with Rogers'

(2003) Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which explains that different social groups adopt new technologies at varying rates. It also corroborates Ayisi et al. (2024), who found that media choice in Ghana is closely linked to levels of digital access, education, and literacy.

4.4.2 Perceived Trust and Credibility of Channels

Another dominant theme that emerged from the interviews was the perceived trust and credibility of the communication channels used by the ISD. Participants generally agreed that credibility significantly influences how citizens receive and respond to government information. Traditional media such as radio and community engagements were perceived as more trustworthy, particularly among rural and older audiences, whereas digital channels were sometimes met with skepticism due to misinformation and the lack of direct interpersonal interaction.

Participant 4 noted that, *“People tend to believe what they hear from our cinema vans or during community meetings more than what they see online. In some communities, once the ISD van makes an announcement, everyone takes it seriously because they know it’s from the government.”*

Similarly, Participant 5 emphasized that, *“Radio has remained the most credible source of information for many Ghanaians. When an issue is discussed on local radio, it carries weight. But when the same thing appears on social media, people usually question whether it’s true or not. So, credibility is still tied to traditional forms of communication.”*

In addition, Participant 6 highlighted that, *“Social media helps us reach many people quickly, but the problem is that not everyone believes what they read online. There are too many fake accounts and misinformation. That’s why, even when we post updates, we follow up with radio or durbars to reinforce the message.”*

These reflections indicate that trust remains a key determinant of communication effectiveness within the ISD's outreach framework. While digital platforms enhance speed and reach, their credibility deficit limits full public confidence, especially among less digitally literate audiences. This finding supports Li et al. (2022), who noted that credibility and perceived authenticity remain crucial factors in determining how government messages are interpreted by citizens. Similarly, Saawuan et al. (2023) argues that traditional media retain higher public confidence in many parts of Africa because they are embedded in community life and allow for two-way interpersonal validation.

The ISD's continued reliance on trusted traditional media underscores its awareness that effective communication is not only about accessibility but also about building and maintaining credibility across all segments of society.

4.4.3 Contextual Influence on Communication Effectiveness

The final theme under this research question highlights how contextual factors such as geographical location, cultural diversity, literacy levels, and resource availability shape the effectiveness of ISD's communication channels. Participants emphasized that communication strategies must be adapted to fit local realities, as a "one-size-fits-all" approach often fails to achieve meaningful engagement.

Participant 7 observed that, *"The effectiveness of any channel depends on the setting. In urban areas, people have smartphones and can easily access updates through Facebook or WhatsApp, but in remote communities, those options don't work. There, we rely more on radio announcements or the cinema van to reach them."*

Similarly, Participant 8 added, *"Sometimes, even when we have good content, the challenge is timing and context. If we announce something during a farming season when most people are*

in the field, they won't hear it. That's why we always plan around local calendars and use opinion leaders to spread messages."

In addition, Participant 9 remarked, *"Language plays a big role. When messages are in English, people don't always understand, especially in rural districts. Translating messages into Twi, Ewe, or Ga makes a big difference. People listen more when you speak their language."*

These insights underscore that communication effectiveness within the ISD framework is deeply context-dependent, influenced by environmental, linguistic, and socio-economic factors. The ability to tailor messages to specific audiences enhances comprehension and trust, while generic or centrally produced content often fails to resonate at the community level.

This finding echoes Madkur (2025), who argues that participatory and context-sensitive communication strategies are essential in development communication, particularly in multilingual and multicultural societies. Similarly, Aririguzoh (2022) emphasizes the need for communication practitioners to ground their methods in local realities, ensuring that messages are culturally appropriate and accessible.

The ISD's experience illustrates that effective government communication requires localization adapting messages, timing, and delivery methods to fit community contexts. This contextual sensitivity not only improves message reception but also strengthens citizens' connection to government initiatives.

4.5 Research Question Three: What challenges are associated with each communication channel?

This research question sought to explore the constraints and limitations encountered by the Information Services Department (ISD) in disseminating government information across different media platforms. Thematic analysis revealed three major themes: *(1) Resource and logistical constraints, (2) Digital and technological limitations, and (3) Issues of credibility, language, and audience accessibility.* These themes collectively reflect how institutional capacity, infrastructural disparities, and socio-cultural factors shape the ISD's communication effectiveness across Ghana's diverse regions.

4.5.1 Resource and Logistical Constraints

A dominant concern among participants was the persistent shortage of financial, technical, and human resources required to sustain the ISD's communication operations. Participants consistently highlighted that traditional channels particularly cinema vans, community durbars, and face-to-face outreach are resource-intensive, requiring significant investment in vehicles, fuel, maintenance, and personnel. Unfortunately, these needs are frequently unmet, resulting in operational delays and uneven dissemination across regions.

Participant 1 explained, *“Most of our vans are old and constantly break down. We lack fuel, maintenance support, and sometimes even the manpower to operate them. This limits how far we can reach, especially in remote districts.”* This comment illustrates how outdated equipment and inadequate budgetary allocations reduce the ISD's mobility and presence in rural communities where information dissemination is most critical.

Similarly, Participant 4 noted, *“Even when we have good information materials, distribution becomes a challenge because of poor roads and lack of funds for mobility. Some communities*

go months without a visit from the ISD team.” This observation reflects the infrastructural disparities that characterize rural Ghana, where poor road networks and geographical isolation hinder consistent communication efforts.

In addition, Participant 6 emphasized, *“Our outreach work requires planning and collaboration, but sometimes we can’t execute campaigns fully due to limited logistics. We often depend on local assemblies or media houses for support.”* This dependency underscores the problem of institutional fragmentation within local governance structures. At the same time, it shows how resource constraints create opportunities for inter-agency collaboration to become a necessity rather than a choice.

The cumulative insights from these participants reveal that logistical challenges severely undermine the consistency and reach of government communication, particularly in underserved areas. Without adequate funding and infrastructure, the ISD’s operations are often reactive rather than proactive, reducing its ability to engage citizens in real-time policy dialogue.

These findings mirror the observations of Ali et al. (2025), who noted that communication departments in developing countries often face operational setbacks due to chronic funding shortages and lack of institutional autonomy. Similarly, Brigas et al. (2025) argue that the sustainability of traditional communication models such as radio broadcasts and community campaigns depends heavily on logistical reinforcement and continuous government support. The ISD’s experience thus reflects a broader pattern across many African public information systems, where resource inadequacy constrains the ability to achieve effective, equitable communication outreach.

Resource and logistical limitations remain one of the most pressing barriers to ISD's effectiveness. The findings highlight the urgent need for increased budgetary allocation, equipment modernization, and infrastructural improvement, particularly for rural outreach operations. Without addressing these gaps, the department's role as a bridge between government and citizens risks being weakened by the very operational structures meant to sustain it.

4.5.2 Digital and Technological Limitations

While the ISD's shift toward digital engagement represents a major step toward modernization, participants noted that technological and infrastructural challenges continue to constrain its effectiveness. These limitations primarily include inadequate internet connectivity, limited digital literacy among staff, and the persistent threat of misinformation. Such barriers weaken the institution's ability to sustain consistent, credible, and engaging online communication with the public.

Participant 3 observed that, *"Even though we've started using social media, not all officers are trained in managing digital content. Sometimes, our posts don't get the engagement we expect because they're not optimized or consistent."* This indicates that the agency's digital transition, while commendable, is hindered by insufficient training and content management skills among communication personnel. Without a systematic approach to digital communication, online engagement remains inconsistent and less impactful.

Similarly, Participant 8 remarked that *"Internet access is a big problem in some parts of the country. You can't rely on Facebook or WhatsApp when connectivity is unstable or data is expensive for users."* This highlights the infrastructural disparities that affect the reach and reliability of digital communication efforts, particularly in rural or underserved regions. In such

contexts, the digital divide not only limits the flow of information but also reinforces inequalities in public access to government communication.

In addition, Participant 10 emphasized the challenge of misinformation, stating that *“Another issue is misinformation. Once a false story spreads online, it’s hard to control. People tend to believe social media more than official statements, especially when we respond late.”* This underscores the speed and virality of online misinformation, which often outpaces official communication responses. The participant’s observation suggests that without proactive digital monitoring and timely engagement, the ISD risks losing credibility and public trust in the digital sphere.

These insights reinforce the argument by Phippen et al. (2021) that misinformation and low digital literacy can significantly undermine institutional credibility in online communication. They also align with Purnamasari et al. (2025), who contend that effective digital communication in the public sector must be accompanied by capacity building, infrastructure investment, and robust content management systems. Thus, while the ISD’s adoption of digital tools is a step in the right direction, addressing these structural and technological limitations remains essential to achieving meaningful and sustained digital engagement.

4.5.3 Credibility, Language, and Accessibility Issues

Another key theme relates to challenges of credibility and inclusivity, particularly in reaching low-literacy audiences and maintaining trust across media platforms. Participants emphasized that linguistic diversity, perceived political bias, and infrastructural inequalities all contribute to how citizens interpret and respond to government messages. In many cases, the perceived lack of neutrality or the use of overly technical or English-only communication reduces the resonance of messages with local audiences.

Participant 2 stated, “*Sometimes people don’t believe the messages we share because they think government information is propaganda. We have to work harder to build trust, especially during political seasons. Even when the information is accurate, people are skeptical because they assume it favors the government of the day.*” This highlights the deep-seated issue of perceived partisanship that can undermine institutional credibility, particularly in politically charged contexts.

Similarly, Participant 7 explained, “*Language barriers make communication difficult. When we use English, many rural people don’t understand. We always have to translate into local dialects, but even that takes time and resources. Some messages lose their meaning in translation, and sometimes, we don’t have qualified translators readily available.*” This comment underscores how linguistic diversity, though a cultural asset, poses a practical challenge for real-time and equitable information dissemination.

In addition, Participant 5 added, “*Some communities have limited access to radio signals or no electricity, so even if we produce good content, they don’t get it. That’s why we combine oral announcements with local engagement, like using community information centers, durbars, or town criers to spread the word.*” This shows how infrastructural constraints intersect with accessibility and inclusivity, forcing communicators to adapt creatively to reach underserved populations.

These challenges resonate with Lebenya et al. (2024), who emphasized that participatory communication and language localization are essential for message credibility in development contexts. Similarly, Panjaitan et al. (2023) observed that the absence of consistent feedback mechanisms and localized messaging reduces the perceived authenticity of government communication. Furthermore, Brobbey and Narh, (2024) note that when citizens perceive

communication as distant, politicized, or linguistically inaccessible, engagement declines significantly.

The ISD's experience underscores that effective dissemination is not merely about message transmission but about ensuring clarity, cultural relevance, and trustworthiness across diverse audiences. Addressing issues of credibility and accessibility therefore requires deliberate efforts to strengthen community participation, diversify language use, and promote transparency in communication delivery.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the major findings of the study thematically in relation to the research objectives. The discussion is situated within existing empirical literature and the Media Richness Theory that underpins the study. The key themes discussed include the communication channels used by the ISD, the effectiveness of these channels across demographic groups, and the challenges associated with each channel.

4.6.1 Communication Channels Used by the ISD

Findings from this study revealed that the Information Services Department operates a hybrid communication system that integrates traditional community based channels such as cinema vans, community durbars, radio broadcasts, and information centres with emerging digital platforms including Facebook, WhatsApp, and institutional websites. This confirms earlier studies which observed that government communication in Ghana continues to rely heavily on traditional media while gradually incorporating digital tools (Mahama, 2020; Hanson, 2023; Akueteh et al., 2024).

The continued relevance of community durbars and cinema vans aligns with the arguments of Kankam and Attuh (2022), who found that community radio and face to face engagement remain dominant sources of public information in rural Ghana due to trust, accessibility, and cultural embeddedness. Similarly, the findings agree with Nwobodo (2024), who observed that traditional communication platforms remain indispensable in rural African contexts where internet penetration and digital literacy remain uneven.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings strongly support the Media Richness Theory proposed by Daft and Lengel (1986). The preference for community durbars and face to face engagement reflects the richness of these media in terms of immediate feedback, use of natural language, and multiple cues. The ISD's reliance on such rich media for public education, policy clarification, and sensitive national issues aligns with the theory's assertion that rich media are best suited for complex and ambiguous messages.

4.6.2 Effectiveness of Communication Channels Across Demographic Groups

The study further established that the effectiveness of ISD communication channels varies significantly across age, location, and digital access. Younger and urban populations were found to engage more actively with digital platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook, while older and rural populations relied predominantly on radio, community durbars, and cinema vans. This finding is consistent with previous studies which show that youth and educated urban populations are more inclined towards digital platforms, while rural and older populations depend more on traditional media (Tetteh and Kankam, 2024; Sanina et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2022).

The findings also support the work of Mahama (2020) who observed that Ghana's social media driven government communication largely targets youth and urban residents, while rural

audiences remain marginal in digital engagement. Similarly, Akueteh et al. (2024) demonstrated that community information centres play a critical role in serving women, the elderly, and peri urban communities who have limited digital access.

The Media Richness Theory again provides strong explanatory support for these findings. According to the theory, audiences select media based on their ability to reduce uncertainty and enable understanding (Daft and Lengel, 1986). Older and rural populations prefer richer media that allow physical interaction and immediate clarification, such as durbars and cinema vans. Younger audiences, who possess higher digital literacy, are comfortable with leaner but faster media such as social media platforms. This confirms that media effectiveness is not universal but audience contingent, as predicted by the theory.

4.6.3 Challenges Associated with Communication Channels

The study identified three major categories of challenges limiting ISD communication effectiveness: resource and logistical constraints, digital and technological limitations, and credibility, language, and accessibility issues. These challenges are well supported in the literature. For instance, Odoom et al. (2024) and Ajayi (2024) both identify limited funding, inadequate staffing, and weak institutional support as persistent obstacles to effective public communication in Ghana's decentralised governance system.

The digital challenges identified in this study, including poor internet connectivity, lack of staff capacity, and misinformation, are consistent with the findings of Agbeko et al. (2021) and Khumalo (2022), who argue that digital transformation in public institutions across Africa is constrained by weak infrastructure and insufficient technical skills. The spread of misinformation through platforms such as WhatsApp during national crises further echoes the

concerns raised by Internet Society Ghana (2021) regarding the fragile digital information ecosystem in Ghana.

Language barriers and low literacy levels also emerged as critical obstacles, particularly in rural settings. This supports the findings of Debbarma and Chinnadurai (2023), who observed that communication strategies that fail to accommodate local languages and literacy variations exclude significant portions of the population. From the perspective of Media Richness Theory, these challenges indicate a mismatch between media choice and audience capability. When lean digital media are used for audiences with low digital literacy and low reading proficiency, message distortion and disengagement become likely outcomes.

4.6.4 Theoretical Implications of the Findings

Overall, the findings of this study strongly support the Media Richness Theory as a valid framework for understanding government communication in the Ghanaian context. The ISD's continued reliance on rich media such as face to face durbars, cinema vans, and radio for complex public information aligns with the theory's central proposition that rich media are more effective for ambiguous and sensitive communication (Daft and Lengel, 1986; Trevino, Lengel, and Daft, 1987).

However, the findings also reveal limitations in the theory when applied to modern digital environments. While MRT classifies digital platforms as relatively lean, social media in practice now allows visual cues, interactivity, and feedback, which partially elevates its richness. This aligns with the critique of Markus (1994) and Dennis and Kinney (1998), who argue that media richness is socially constructed and evolves with technology and user competence. The ISD's struggle to fully exploit the interactive potential of digital media

suggests that institutional capacity, not just media characteristics, shapes communication outcomes.

4.7 Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter examined the findings from interviews with Information Services Department (ISD) officers based on three key research questions. It revealed that the ISD employs a hybrid communication system that combines traditional channels such as radio, cinema vans, and durbars with digital platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp to reach diverse audiences. The effectiveness of these channels varies across demographic lines, with younger, urban audiences engaging more with digital media, while older and rural populations rely on interpersonal and community-based communication. Despite these efforts, the Department faces several challenges, including inadequate resources, limited digital capacity, connectivity issues, and difficulties related to credibility, language, and accessibility. While the ISD has made progress in modernizing its communication strategies, its impact is hindered by structural and technological constraints, underscoring the need for stronger institutional support, digital capacity building, and participatory engagement approaches.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study's major findings, the conclusions drawn from the analysis, and practical recommendations for enhancing the communication effectiveness of the Information Services Department (ISD) of Ghana. The discussion builds on the insights presented in Chapter Four and reflects on how the study's objectives were addressed. Specifically, the study aimed to (1) identify the communication channels used by the ISD to disseminate government information, (2) assess the effectiveness of these channels in engaging different segments of the Ghanaian population, and (3) examine the challenges associated with the use of these communication channels.

5.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study revealed that the ISD operates within a dynamic communication environment where traditional approaches continue to coexist with emerging digital practices. The major findings are summarized as follows:

First, the ISD employs a hybrid communication system that integrates both traditional and modern media channels. Traditional tools such as radio, cinema vans, community durbars, and face-to-face engagements remain central to its outreach operations, particularly in rural areas. At the same time, digital platforms especially Facebook, WhatsApp, and official government websites are being adopted to reach urban and youth audiences. This blended approach enhances coverage and diversity of engagement, although inconsistencies in digital integration and resource disparities persist across regions.

Second, the effectiveness of communication channels depends largely on demographic and contextual factors such as age, location, education, and literacy levels. The youth and urban dwellers tend to be more responsive to digital and interactive platforms, while older citizens and rural residents rely heavily on interpersonal and community-based media. The study also established that citizens' level of trust and the perceived credibility of information strongly influence their engagement. Channels perceived as transparent, consistent, and participatory tend to be more effective in sustaining public interest and responsiveness.

Third, the ISD faces significant operational and contextual challenges that hinder its overall communication efficiency. These include inadequate funding, logistical shortfalls, and limited human resources, which affect traditional outreach programs. On the digital front, issues such as weak internet connectivity, limited technical competence among staff, and the spread of misinformation undermine online engagement. Furthermore, linguistic diversity, message credibility, and limited accessibility among low-literacy groups pose additional barriers to inclusive communication. Collectively, these challenges constrain the Department's ability to fully implement its mandate of effective government-citizen communication.

5.3 Conclusions

The findings underscore that the ISD plays a pivotal role in promoting government visibility and ensuring that citizens are informed about national policies and programs. However, the Department's impact is moderated by both institutional capacity and contextual realities that shape its communication environment.

The study concludes that while the ISD's hybrid communication strategy demonstrates innovation and adaptability, its success depends on sustained investment in infrastructure,

logistics, and human resource development. Without addressing these foundational challenges, efforts to modernize communication will remain fragmented and uneven.

Furthermore, the study concludes that effective communication transcends message transmission; it requires building trust, ensuring linguistic inclusivity, and fostering two-way engagement. For government communication to be credible, citizens must feel heard and represented in the process. Thus, strengthening participatory mechanisms is essential for reinforcing trust and legitimacy in public information dissemination.

Overall, the ISD's experience reflects a transitional communication landscape in Ghana—where modernization must balance with cultural and social realities. Institutional reforms, digital literacy enhancement, and continuous stakeholder engagement are therefore crucial to sustaining the Department's role as the government's foremost public information conduit.

5.4 Recommendations

Drawing from the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the ISD's communication efficiency and inclusivity:

1. Strengthen Logistical and Financial Capacity: The government should allocate adequate and sustainable funding to support ISD's operational logistics, including the maintenance and replacement of cinema vans, provision of fuel, and the facilitation of regular community outreach. A dedicated communication budget would enable consistent engagement across regions and ensure long-term program continuity.

2. Build Digital Competence and Content Management Skills: The ISD should implement regular capacity-building initiatives focused on digital communication, social media management, and content creation. Training in online engagement analytics, media monitoring,

and misinformation management will enhance the Department's ability to manage digital platforms effectively.

3. Enhance Technological Infrastructure and Connectivity: Partnerships with the Ministry of Communications and Digitalisation and the National Information Technology Agency (NITA) should be pursued to improve internet connectivity at district and regional ISD offices. Improved connectivity will enable timely dissemination of information and enhance the Department's digital responsiveness.

4. Promote Localized and Participatory Communication: The ISD should intensify community-level engagement through participatory approaches such as town hall meetings, focus group discussions, and culturally sensitive campaigns. Translating government information into major local languages and incorporating traditional communicators can enhance message comprehension and acceptance, particularly in low-literacy areas.

5. Strengthen Partnerships with Media and Civil Society: Collaborating with community radio stations, local journalists, and civil society organizations will expand ISD's reach and enhance credibility. Joint awareness campaigns and feedback platforms can also help bridge information gaps and combat misinformation more effectively.

6. Institutionalize Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms: A robust monitoring and evaluation framework should be established to assess the effectiveness of ISD's communication activities. Regular performance reviews will promote accountability, facilitate learning, and inform strategic improvements in both traditional and digital communication initiatives.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies could adopt a mixed-methods approach to explore both institutional and public perspectives on the ISD's communication effectiveness. Comparative studies involving other state information agencies across West Africa could provide broader insights into best practices for government communication. Additionally, future research could investigate the role of emerging technologies such as mobile applications and artificial intelligence—in enhancing citizen engagement in public communication.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.0: Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A Comparative Analysis of the Effectiveness of Channels for Government Information

Dissemination by the ISD of Ghana

Section A: Background and Demographics

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself, such as your age, gender, educational background, and where you live or work?
2. What is your role or relationship with government information (e.g., citizen, ISD official, community leader, media practitioner)?
3. How often do you seek or receive government information, and through what means?

Section B: To identify the various channels employed by the ISD for disseminating government information.

4. What channels does the ISD currently use to disseminate government information?
5. How would you describe the role of traditional channels (e.g., cinema vans, durbars, radio, print media) in current ISD communication efforts?
6. In your experience, how are digital platforms such as social media or websites being used by the ISD?
7. Which channels do you think citizens rely on the most for receiving government information, and why?

Section C: To assess the reach and impact of each communication channel among different demographic groups.

8. How would you describe the reach of radio, television, digital media, print, and community channels across different regions in Ghana?
9. Which demographic groups (e.g., age, gender, education, rural vs urban) are most responsive to particular channels?
10. Can you share examples where a particular channel had a significant impact on citizen awareness or behaviour?
11. In your view, which channels are most trusted by citizens, and why?

Section D: To evaluate the challenges and limitations associated with each channel.

12. What are the main challenges the ISD faces when using traditional channels to disseminate information?
13. What difficulties have you observed in the use of digital or online platforms?
14. How do issues such as language, literacy, or infrastructure affect the effectiveness of ISD communication?
15. What challenges exist in ensuring consistency and credibility across different channels?
16. In your opinion, what could be improved to make ISD's communication channels more effective and inclusive?

Section E: Closing

17. From your perspective, what lessons has the ISD learned about citizen communication in recent years?
18. Is there anything else you would like to share about the effectiveness of communication channels in reaching and engaging citizens?

Appendix 2.0: Codes and Themes

CODES AND THEMES

CODES	THEMES
Cinema vans and durbars still central Radio and print maintain relevance Digital tools complement traditional media Face-to-face communication builds trust	Integration of Traditional and Modern Media
Growing use of Facebook and WhatsApp Limited staff capacity in digital content Uneven internet connectivity Weak digital strategy at district level	Digital Media Adoption and Gaps
ISD vans and community information centers Grassroots outreach and market campaigns Local trust in community-based messaging Accessibility for low-literacy audiences	Continuing Relevance of Community-Based Channels
Youth drawn to social media Older adults prefer radio and durbars Urban vs. rural differences in media use Education level influences media preference	Audience Segmentation and Responsiveness
Radio and community platforms most trusted Digital media viewed with skepticism Transparency and consistency affect credibility Official voice of ISD enhances legitimacy	Perceived Trust and Credibility of Channels
Cultural context affects message uptake Local language translation improves understanding Infrastructure shapes outreach scope Community engagement increases participation	Contextual Influence on Communication Effectiveness
Limited funding and logistics Old cinema vans and poor roads Inadequate manpower Delayed campaign implementation	Resource and Logistical Constraints
Poor internet connectivity Low digital literacy among ISD staff Misinformation and fake news Limited digital infrastructure	Digital and Technological Limitations
Language diversity and illiteracy Public skepticism toward government messages Limited access in remote areas Need for participatory feedback mechanisms	Credibility, Language, and Accessibility Issues