



BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

A CASE OF GOMOA WEST DISTRICT ASSEMBLY

BY

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## DECLARATION


### 12.0 DECLARATION BY STUDENT – DISSERTATION

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

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## DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

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

Dr. George Asamoah		28/10/25
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## **DEDICATION**

This work is from my heart, and I dedicate it to God Almighty for giving me the strength and courage throughout this academic journey. I also dedicate it to my lovely mother, siblings and friends, whose encouragement kept me going when things felt tough.

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This achievement is as much yours as it is mine.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined barriers to effective internal communication within Gomoa West District Assembly in the Central Region of Ghana. Guided by a case study design within a qualitative research approach, the study targeted a sample of 10 staff members from various departments and hierarchical levels, selected through purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and analysed with Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework. The findings revealed that the Assembly operated through traditional hierarchical communication systems with limited channel diversity, supplemented by informal networks. Staff experienced multiple barriers including structural and procedural constraints, technological limitations and resource deficits, cultural and behavioural obstacles, and coordination and timing challenges that significantly hindered communication effectiveness. Participants identified technological modernisation and infrastructure development, structural reforms and process improvements, and capacity building and cultural transformation as essential strategies for enhancement. The study recommended that Gomoa West District Assembly should invest in modern communication infrastructure, establish formal inter-departmental coordination mechanisms, implement comprehensive training programmes, and develop initiatives that promote open communication culture. These findings underscore the critical role of effective internal communication systems in supporting administrative efficiency and improved public service delivery within local government institutions in Ghana.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

- MMDAs..... Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies
- GWDA.....Gomoa West District Assembly
- MLGCRA..... Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Effective internal communication is a cornerstone of efficient local government operations, as it fosters coordination, ensures transparency, and facilitates timely decision-making. Within decentralised governance systems such as Ghana's, district assemblies are expected to operate effectively by promoting clear, consistent communication among departments, personnel, and leadership. Nonetheless, obstacles such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, poor information flow, and inadequate communication infrastructure frequently undermine this objective (Amoako & Kuffour, 2019). These challenges often result in misaligned organisational goals, task redundancies, and diminished staff morale ultimately compromising the quality of public service delivery and local development outcomes (Mensah, 2021). Although various efforts, including administrative reforms and the adoption of ICT tools, have been implemented to improve internal communication, persistent inefficiencies remain. It is within this context that the present study investigates barriers to internal communication in the Gomoa West District Assembly, with the aim of identifying actionable strategies to improve institutional performance.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Internal communication is broadly defined as the exchange of information, directives, and feedback among members of an organisation to ensure alignment of efforts, shared understanding, and collaboration (Tourish & Robson, 2006). Around the world, both public and private organisations increasingly acknowledge the value of strong internal communication systems in enhancing efficiency, accountability, and employee engagement. In the public sector, it is especially critical, as it ensures that policy decisions, strategic plans, and operational directives are appropriately understood and executed. The World Bank (2019) asserts that transparent and timely

internal communication enhances the responsiveness of public institutions and strengthens public trust in governance.

In today's complex governance landscape, local government institutions often at the frontline of public service delivery depend heavily on clear, coherent internal communication to carry out their mandates. According to Katz and Kahn (1978), such communication helps institutionalise expected behaviours, formalise procedures, and reinforce organisational culture. Within decentralised systems, like those found in many democracies globally, strong internal communication ensures synchronisation across departments and facilitates efficient resource use. It also supports the smooth flow of information both vertically (between leadership and lower-level staff) and horizontally (across departments), thus fostering coordinated and goal-oriented action.

Despite its recognised importance, internal communication faces several challenges in many public institutions. Globally, research has highlighted issues such as hierarchical rigidity, limited integration of digital tools, weak feedback mechanisms, and ambiguous reporting lines as major hindrances (Clampitt, 2010). In some European municipalities, for instance, while digital platforms have been introduced to enhance collaboration, resistance to change and entrenched organisational cultures continue to limit their effectiveness (Christensen & Lægreid, 2011). These international experiences demonstrate that while tools and frameworks may exist, internal communication challenges often require context-specific solutions tailored to institutional needs.

In Africa, local governments often contend with distinctive communication barriers rooted in both systemic and logistical challenges. According to the African Union (2015), decentralisation has increased the responsibilities of local authorities, but many continue to lack the institutional capacity to manage internal communication effectively. Common issues include unreliable

communication infrastructure, limited staff training, and procedural inefficiencies (Hope, 2009). Studies in countries such as Nigeria and Kenya show that although formal communication structures are in place, their application is often inconsistent and informal, contributing to delayed operations and poor coordination (Akinyele, 2010; Mutua, 2016).

In Ghana, decentralisation reforms initiated in the 1980s were designed to bring governance closer to the people and increase participation in local development. The Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), assigns Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) the responsibility of implementing national policies, coordinating development initiatives, and promoting good governance at the local level. To fulfil these roles, efficient internal communication is indispensable. Communication across key stakeholders including District Chief Executives, Coordinating Directors, Heads of Departments, and supporting staff is vital to ensure smooth operations and shared understanding of goals (Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2016).

However, communication within many of Ghana's district assemblies remains ineffective. Ahenkan, Bawole, and Domfeh (2013) observe that poor synchronisation between departments, limited information-sharing, and weak feedback mechanisms persist across MMDAs. These limitations slow down decision-making, affect team cohesion, and reduce the quality-of-service delivery. Moreover, resource constraints, lack of up-to-date communication tools, and a continued reliance on top-down communication models further impede information flow (Mensah, 2021). Anecdotal evidence from the Gomoa West District Assembly indicates that such issues may be contributing to operational inefficiencies, miscommunication of roles, and limited interdepartmental collaboration.

Further complicating the challenge is the slow adoption of digital communication systems. Although some MMDAs have integrated ICT solutions for administrative functions, their

application for routine internal communication remains minimal. Additionally, the absence of formal communication strategies often results in inconsistent information dissemination and confusion about organisational priorities (Amoako & Kuffour, 2019). These systemic shortcomings highlight the urgent need to examine and address the barriers undermining internal communication in Ghana's local government structures, especially at the district level.

Given the central role of the Gomoa West District Assembly in coordinating grassroots development and public services, it is imperative to understand the factors hindering effective internal communication within its structure. This study seeks to uncover the specific structural, cultural, and technological barriers to communication in the assembly. The findings are expected to guide policymakers, public administrators, and local government practitioners in developing strategies to strengthen internal coordination and improve administrative efficiency across Ghana's decentralised governance system.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In an ideal local government structure, internal communication should be clear, timely, inclusive, and strategically aligned to support effective service delivery and administrative performance. Within decentralised governance systems like Ghana's, Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) are expected to operate as autonomous bodies that drive grassroots development and policy implementation. This expectation hinges significantly on effective internal communication among staff, departments, and leadership. Ideally, communication within local government should ensure the free flow of information, foster collaboration, and enable coordinated efforts across administrative units (Tourish & Robson, 2006). In such a structure, staff members at all levels would be fully informed about institutional goals, decisions, and procedures, contributing to a cohesive and efficient administrative process.

There is substantial evidence globally and locally to support the benefits of effective internal communication in public institutions. The World Bank (2019) asserts that clear and well-structured communication within local governments enhances transparency, improves accountability, and accelerates service delivery. In Ghana, the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), mandates local assemblies to coordinate development activities and ensure participatory decision-making both of which depend on seamless internal communication. Studies have shown that when internal communication is effective, it enhances staff performance, reduces delays in decision-making, and increases trust among stakeholders (Ahenkan, Bawole, & Domfeh, 2013; Yeboah-Assiamah et al., 2016). In other contexts, such as South Africa and Kenya, reforms aimed at improving public sector communication have resulted in better interdepartmental coordination and responsiveness to community needs (Mutua, 2016).

Despite these recognised benefits, the ideal scenario is far from reality in many of Ghana's district assemblies. Persistent communication challenges continue to undermine the operational efficiency of local government structures. In assemblies such as Gomoa West, anecdotal reports and preliminary observations suggest there are significant barriers that hinder the effectiveness of internal communication. These include unclear communication channels, bureaucratic bottlenecks, limited use of ICT tools, and inadequate feedback systems (Amoako & Kuffour, 2019). In many cases, there is over-reliance on top-down communication, which sidelines lower-level staff and creates disconnects between departments. The absence of formal communication strategies, combined with resource constraints and limited staff training, further worsens the problem (Mensah, 2021).

Various efforts have been made at the national and local levels to address these issues. The introduction of ICT infrastructure, capacity-building workshops, and administrative reforms have

been some of the responses aimed at improving information flow within MMDAs. Initiatives by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, such as promoting the use of email, internal memos, and staff meetings, have sought to standardise communication procedures. Nonetheless, these interventions have often lacked consistency in implementation, and many district assemblies still struggle with the basic structural and cultural barriers that prevent effective internal communication (Hope, 2009).

What remains to be done is a detailed, context-specific assessment of the internal communication structures and challenges within individual assemblies such as Gomoa West. While national policies provide broad frameworks, the effectiveness of communication depends on local realities such as the organisational culture, leadership approach, technological capacity, and staff dynamics. There is little empirical data focusing specifically on the Gomoa West District Assembly, which makes it difficult to design targeted interventions to improve communication efficiency. Understanding the actual channels in use, identifying the specific barriers that staff and managers encounter, and assessing the impact on performance are critical next steps.

If these issues remain unaddressed, the consequences could be far-reaching. Ineffective internal communication will continue to result in poor coordination, delayed decision-making, duplication of duties, and weakened institutional performance. More importantly, public service delivery may suffer due to miscommunication, unclear roles, and lack of accountability among staff. Ultimately, this may erode public trust in local governance and compromise the developmental objectives of the assembly.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the barriers to effective internal communication within the Gomoa West District Assembly (GWDA). By providing data-driven insights, the findings will support local government managers, policymakers, and development partners in

designing strategies that enhance administrative efficiency, foster teamwork, and strengthen the delivery of services to citizens.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the barriers that impede effective internal communication within Gomoa West District Assembly (GWDA).

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the existing internal communication structures and channels within Gomoa West District Assembly.
2. Identify the barriers that hinder effective internal communication among staff, management, and departments.
3. Propose potential strategies to enhance internal communication systems within Gomoa West District Assembly.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the existing internal communication structures and channels within Gomoa West District Assembly?
2. What barriers hinder effective internal communication among staff members, management, and various units within the district assembly?
3. What potential solutions can be implemented to improve internal communication systems and overcome identified barriers within Gomoa West District Assembly?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study is of practical importance to various stakeholders, including public administrators, local government staff, policymakers, and development partners. By addressing the research objectives, the study offers actionable insights into communication inefficiencies and how they may be resolved. The following paragraphs outline how each objective contributes to improving governance at the local level.

Firstly, identifying the current internal communication structures and channels in the Gomoa West District Assembly (GWDA) will provide clarity on existing practices and communication flow within the institution. This understanding will help administrators and department heads recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their current systems. It can guide decisions on whether to reinforce existing strategies or develop new frameworks that better support transparent and efficient information sharing. For researchers and practitioners, such insight is essential for designing contextually appropriate communication models that align with the specific needs of local government structures in Ghana.

Secondly, by investigating the barriers that hinder effective internal communication among management, staff, and departments, the study provides critical evidence for diagnosing operational dysfunctions. These barriers may include technological gaps, unclear reporting procedures, or cultural issues that impede open dialogue. Identifying these challenges equips decision-makers with the information needed to implement targeted interventions. Such findings are beneficial not only for district administrators but also for organisations like the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs (MLGCRA), who oversee the functioning of local governance systems and seek to improve administrative performance.

Finally, exploring potential solutions to improve internal communication systems within the assembly ensures the study's findings go beyond problem identification to propose practical recommendations. This has significance for district leadership and policymakers who are seeking evidence-based approaches to reform institutional practices. Whether through the adoption of digital tools, the creation of communication guidelines, or capacity-building initiatives, the recommendations will serve as a foundation for sustainable improvements. As a result, the study will help build stronger, more communicative local governance institutions capable of meeting the needs of their constituents effectively.

### **1.7 Delimitation**

This study will be conducted at the Gomoa West District Assembly located in the Central Region of Ghana. The research will focus exclusively on staff members employed at the district assembly office, including administrative personnel, departmental heads, and management officials. The study will adopt a qualitative research approach, utilizing interview guides as the primary data collection tool to gather in-depth insights into the communication experiences and perspectives of participants. The research will be delimited to internal communication processes within the organization and will not extend to external communication with community members, other government agencies, or stakeholders outside the district assembly structure.

### **1.8 Limitation**

A key limitation of this study is its exclusive reliance on qualitative data from staff within the Gomoa West District Assembly, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other district assemblies or public institutions in Ghana. Additionally, using interviews as the sole data collection method may introduce subjective bias, as responses are influenced by participants' personal experiences and perceptions. The study also excludes external stakeholders, such as community members and partner agencies, whose perspectives could provide a more

comprehensive understanding of communication challenges. Time constraints and limited access to some key officials may further restrict the depth of data gathered.

### **1.9 Definition of Terms**

- **Internal Communication:** The exchange of information, ideas, and feedback among employees, departments, and management levels within an organization.
- **Communication Barriers:** Obstacles or factors that prevent or hinder the effective transmission, reception, or understanding of messages within an organizational context.
- **District Assembly:** A local government institution in Ghana responsible for the administration and development of a designated district area.

### **1.10 Organisation of the Study**

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study by presenting the background to the problem, the problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance, delimitations, limitations, and operational definitions of key terms. Chapter Two presents a review of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks relating to internal communication, communication barriers, coordination, and organisational performance in local government contexts. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology, including the research design, target population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, procedures, and methods of data analysis. Chapter Four presents and interprets the findings of the study in relation to the stated research questions and compares them with existing literature. Chapter Five summarises the key findings, draws conclusions, and provides recommendations for improving internal communication practices within the Gomoa West District Assembly and similar local government institutions.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Overview

This chapter reviews relevant literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the barriers to effective internal communication within local government institutions, with a focus on the Gomoa West District Assembly. The aim of the study is to explore the barriers that hinder internal communication processes in the Assembly. The review is organized into four key sections: the theoretical review presents relevant communication theories that underpin internal communication practices in public organizations; the conceptual review defines and discusses major constructs including Local Government, internal communication, communication barriers, and also review the study's objectives; the empirical review synthesizes findings from prior studies to highlight common themes and knowledge gaps; and finally, the chapter concludes with a conceptual framework that visually represents the interconnections among the study's central variables.

#### 2.2 Theoretical Review

This section provides the theoretical foundation for examining the barriers to effective internal communication within the Gomoa West District Assembly. The review is anchored in Shannon and Weaver's Communication Theory (1949), a foundational model that explains the process of communication.

##### **Shannon and Weaver's Communication Theory (1949)**

Effective internal communication is critical to the performance of local government institutions, especially those tasked with delivering public services to grassroots communities. Understanding the nature of communication breakdowns requires a robust theoretical lens, and Shannon and Weaver's Communication Theory (1949) offers a foundational framework for this

analysis. Though originally developed to enhance telephone and radio signal transmission, the model has evolved into a widely accepted theory in the social sciences, including organisational communication. It provides insight into how messages travel from sender to receiver, the factors that influence message delivery, and the points at which communication can fail. This theory, therefore, aligns directly with the current study as it helps examine the systemic, interpersonal, and environmental barriers that impede internal communication within the Gomoa West District Assembly.

At the core of the Shannon-Weaver model is the communication process, conceptualised as the transmission of a message from an information source (sender), through a transmitter (medium), where it is potentially disrupted by ‘noise’, before being received and decoded by the recipient (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). This linear framework, though criticised for its simplicity, remains relevant for identifying common disruptions in workplace communication (Fawzi, Al-Marzooqi & Evans, 2021). In public sector institutions such as district assemblies, the sender could be a departmental head, the medium might include formal channels like memos or meetings, and the noise could represent bureaucratic bottlenecks, poor language clarity, or organisational silos that distort the intended meaning.

The usefulness of the Shannon-Weaver model lies in its applicability to the practical realities of internal communication within local government settings. Studies have shown that within public sector institutions, hierarchical structures often hinder free information flow, leading to the distortion or delay of messages (Nyamekye, 2022; Adu-Gyamfi & Adjei, 2021). This reflects the ‘noise’ component of the model, which accounts for any factor that interferes with accurate message transmission. For instance, in Gomoa West District Assembly, communication may be

disrupted by political interference, lack of ICT infrastructure, or low employee motivation factors consistent with what Shannon and Weaver categorised as barriers to effective message delivery.

Moreover, the model's emphasis on encoding and decoding further strengthens its relevance. The effectiveness of communication depends not only on the clarity of the sender's message but also on the ability of the receiver to interpret it correctly (Kumar & Pandey, 2018). In many district assemblies, differences in educational levels, role understanding, and cultural backgrounds may affect how internal messages are decoded, leading to misunderstandings and reduced organisational cohesion (Mensah & Asamoah, 2019). This is particularly true in decentralised governance settings, where various departments must coordinate their activities effectively to serve the public efficiently.

Another key justification for using the Shannon-Weaver model in this study is its explanatory power regarding feedback mechanisms. Although the original model was criticised for being too one-directional, later adaptations included feedback as a crucial element of effective communication (Littlejohn & Foss, 2014). Feedback is particularly vital in public organisations, where two-way communication ensures that staff can clarify ambiguities, contribute ideas, and report challenges. The absence or inefficiency of feedback loops often results in information gaps, role ambiguity, and disengagement issues observed in several Ghanaian district assemblies (Owusu & Antwi, 2020).

The theory also supports an evaluation of both formal and informal communication structures. In local governments, communication does not only occur through official letters and meetings but also via informal networks like interpersonal relationships and unofficial WhatsApp groups. The Shannon-Weaver model allows the researcher to assess how various channels affect message delivery, especially in terms of accuracy, timeliness, and perception (Boateng, 2021). This

is particularly relevant to the Ghanaian public sector, where informal networks often wield considerable influence over how decisions are interpreted and implemented (Amoako & Dzandu, 2017).

Furthermore, recent studies have validated the model's applicability in diverse organisational contexts. For instance, Ibrahim and Daniel (2022) examined communication breakdowns in Nigerian local governments using Shannon and Weaver's model and found that most barriers stemmed from poor channel selection, encoding errors, and lack of feedback. Similarly, a study by Tetteh and Amponsah (2023) in Ghana's Central Region also drew on the model to identify how hierarchical rigidity and inadequate communication technologies contributed to poor internal communication within district assemblies. These findings reinforce the model's relevance to the present study and support its application in assessing the communication challenges faced by the Gomoa West District Assembly (GWDA).

In addition, the model aids in diagnosing specific points within the communication chain where breakdowns typically occur. This diagnostic strength enables the current research to pinpoint whether communication problems in Gomoa West arise more from sender-side issues (e.g., unclear language or lack of empathy), medium-related factors (e.g., ineffective communication tools), or receiver challenges (e.g., misinterpretation or disinterest). Such clarity is crucial for designing practical interventions aimed at improving internal communication processes (Osei & Baah, 2020).

In conclusion, Shannon and Weaver's Communication Theory (1949) offers a systematic and adaptable framework for analysing the barriers to effective internal communication in the context of local government. Its components sender, channel, noise, and receiver correspond closely with real-world communication challenges in public institutions. The model's enduring

relevance is affirmed by recent empirical studies that highlight its utility in examining communication effectiveness within hierarchical and bureaucratic structures. By applying this theory, the study is well-positioned to diagnose the root causes of communication failures within the Gomoa West District Assembly and propose actionable solutions for enhancing administrative efficiency and staff engagement.

## **2.3 Conceptual Review**

The conceptual review takes a detailed look at the basic concepts that underlines the study. These concepts are; local government, internal communication and communication barriers. Also, the study will review the objectives guiding the study, so as to reveal other perspectives around the specific objectives.

### **2.3.1 Concept of Local Government**

Local government, as a decentralised form of administration, represents the closest level of governance to the people. It serves as a vehicle through which developmental policies, basic services, and participatory democracy are delivered at the grassroots. In most democratic settings, local government institutions are mandated to promote local development, manage public resources, and involve citizens in governance processes. In the Ghanaian context, the 1992 Constitution and the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936) entrust Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) with administrative and developmental responsibilities aimed at bringing governance closer to the citizenry.

The concept of local government has been explored by several scholars over the years. Ayee (2014) defines local government as a system of public administration that manages the affairs of a specific geographical area, with legal authority to make decisions on local matters. According to Ribot (2015), decentralised governance empowers local authorities to take decisions tailored to

the unique socio-economic needs of their communities. This notion has been echoed in recent studies, such as that of Crook (2016), who observed that the effectiveness of local government is often a function of its administrative autonomy, resource availability, and the efficiency of its communication systems.

The relevance of local government is often tied to its ability to facilitate bottom-up governance. Osei-Kufuor and Boateng (2017) assert that local authorities play a central role in strengthening democratic accountability and service delivery, especially in rural and peri-urban areas. In Ghana, district assemblies like Gomoa West are tasked with formulating and implementing development plans, coordinating public service provision, and engaging citizens through unit committees and sub-district structures. However, the effectiveness of these roles is heavily influenced by the nature and quality of internal communication within the assembly.

Internal communication forms the lifeline of local governance because it enhances coordination, decision-making, and organisational cohesion. Agbevivi and Mensah (2018) highlight that strong internal communication mechanisms are essential for information sharing across departments, reducing redundancies and ensuring that policy implementation is harmonised. Unfortunately, many district assemblies struggle with weak internal communication systems due to inadequate information flow, limited feedback channels, and hierarchical rigidity. This challenge has been noted in the work of Ampofo (2019), who observed that internal communication inefficiencies in Ghanaian local governments often result in poor staff coordination and underperformance.

Furthermore, local government effectiveness is contingent on its capacity to manage institutional communication both vertically and horizontally. Ofori and Adomako (2020) argue that without deliberate internal communication strategies, even well-structured decentralisation

frameworks can fail to achieve their intended outcomes. The decentralised nature of Ghana's local government structure requires constant interaction among departmental heads, technocrats, political actors, and supporting staff. Where communication is not timely, clear, or inclusive, misunderstandings, duplication of tasks, and administrative conflicts often arise.

In a recent study, Boateng and Frempong (2021) contend that the success of local governance depends not only on fiscal resources and policy clarity but also on the internal communication capacity of the assemblies. The authors found that assemblies with transparent, structured, and participatory internal communication frameworks had higher staff morale, better task execution, and more inclusive decision-making processes. This reinforces the link between local government performance and internal communication.

In relation to the current study, the concept of local government is vital as it provides the structural and institutional environment within which internal communication either thrives or falters. The Gomoa West District Assembly, like many other district assemblies, operates within a system where effective internal communication is indispensable to its mandate. The investigation into barriers to such communication is thus rooted in a deep understanding of the purpose and function of local government institutions.

### **2.3.2 Concept of Internal Communication**

Internal communication refers to the exchange of information, messages, and feedback within an organisation to ensure that staff are aligned with its goals, processes, and values. It encompasses both formal and informal channels and serves as the bedrock for coordination, decision-making, staff engagement, and productivity. In public sector institutions such as local government assemblies, internal communication plays a crucial role in maintaining operational effectiveness and fostering a collaborative work environment.

Over the years, scholars have provided multiple perspectives on the concept. According to Welch and Jackson (2014), internal communication is a strategic management function that ensures that employees are informed, involved, and connected to the organisational mission. They argue that effective internal communication enhances trust, reduces uncertainty, and encourages proactive employee behaviour. Building on this, Men and Stacks (2015) emphasise that internal communication is not merely about disseminating information but also about promoting interaction and dialogue between management and employees.

In public organisations, particularly in African contexts, internal communication often faces structural and logistical constraints. A study by Agyemang and Osei-Tutu (2016) in Ghanaian public institutions highlighted how internal communication is frequently hindered by bureaucratic hierarchies, limited technological tools, and top-down communication patterns that exclude lower-level employees from decision-making processes. Such challenges create a communication gap that undermines organisational performance and staff cohesion.

The distinction between downward, upward, and horizontal communication is also significant in understanding internal communication. Downward communication flows from management to subordinates and typically includes instructions, policies, and feedback. Upward communication flows from staff to higher authorities and is essential for gathering employee input and understanding grassroots challenges. Horizontal communication, on the other hand, involves communication among peers or departments and facilitates collaboration. Otoo and Asamani (2017) note that when these communication flows are disrupted, either by poor leadership or inadequate infrastructure, coordination and service delivery suffer greatly.

Internal communication also encompasses both formal tools such as emails, memos, meetings, reports and informal networks such as interpersonal conversations, WhatsApp messages,

and informal staff briefings. Owusu and Antwi (2018) argue that while formal channels lend structure and accountability to information dissemination, informal communication often fills the gaps when formal systems are delayed or inefficient. In local government settings like the Gomoa West District Assembly, both channels operate simultaneously, but without a harmonised strategy, the result may be inconsistency in information flow.

Another vital aspect of internal communication is feedback. The two-way nature of communication is what ensures clarity, mutual understanding, and corrective actions. Boateng (2019) explains that feedback mechanisms are often neglected in public sector organisations, which reduces the ability of staff to voice concerns or clarify directives. Without feedback, messages are likely to be misunderstood, leading to implementation failures and employee frustration.

Recent studies have expanded on the digital dimension of internal communication. With the growth of ICT tools, many local governments are beginning to adopt digital platforms to enhance internal communication. Tetteh and Aboagye (2020) explored how digital communication tools were used in some district assemblies in Ghana to reduce delays and enhance information sharing. However, they found that in many rural districts, including parts of the Central Region, lack of ICT infrastructure and limited staff training curtailed the potential benefits of digital systems.

Furthermore, internal communication is increasingly viewed as a catalyst for organisational performance. Kusi and Opoku (2021) highlight that well-structured internal communication promotes transparency, staff morale, and accountability in public institutions. Their study in three municipal assemblies in Ghana concluded that internal communication was the most critical determinant of policy implementation success, even more than financial resources.

In the context of the current study, internal communication is the focal variable that binds all other elements of local governance together. In the Gomoa West District Assembly, identifying and addressing barriers to internal communication is essential to improving the coordination of developmental activities, ensuring accountability, and enhancing service delivery. Without a functioning internal communication system, even the most well-intentioned policies may fail to reach the implementation stage or be poorly executed.

### **2.3.3 Concept of Communication Barriers**

Communication barriers refer to any obstacles that hinder the effective transmission, reception, or interpretation of information between individuals or groups. These barriers may arise from various sources including language differences, hierarchical structures, cultural misunderstandings, poor listening, or inadequate communication infrastructure. In institutional settings such as local government assemblies, communication barriers can disrupt coordination, reduce efficiency, and undermine organisational performance.

The concept has been extensively examined by communication scholars and public administration researchers. According to Keyton (2014), communication barriers often manifest in the form of psychological noise, semantic confusion, or environmental distractions that obstruct mutual understanding. In the context of organisational communication, barriers may prevent the accurate delivery of messages, delay decision-making processes, and frustrate the feedback loop that is essential for continuous improvement.

In the Ghanaian public sector, communication barriers are often systemic. Agyemang and Takyi-Appiah (2015) found that in many decentralised institutions, the rigid adherence to top-down communication structures impedes the free flow of information. Employees at lower levels of the hierarchy often receive delayed or incomplete information and are seldom given the

opportunity to share their input. This lack of inclusiveness not only slows operations but also weakens staff engagement.

One of the most cited types of communication barriers is semantic noise, which arises when words or phrases are misunderstood due to different interpretations. Ofori and Obeng (2016) note that in multicultural environments such as district assemblies, semantic noise can result from language differences, varying educational backgrounds, or jargon-laden official communication. When staff members interpret messages differently from what was intended, tasks are likely to be poorly executed or delayed.

Technical and logistical barriers are also common in the public sector. Boakye and Mensah (2017) assert that inadequate access to digital tools, unreliable internet connectivity, and a lack of structured internal communication platforms are critical impediments to smooth information flow in many local governments. Assemblies located in rural areas, such as Gomoa West, often suffer from these issues, thereby making communication both slow and ineffective.

Furthermore, interpersonal barriers such as poor listening skills, mistrust, and personality clashes also affect internal communication. According to Agyekum and Tawiah (2018), interpersonal relationships between departmental heads and their subordinates significantly influence the quality of communication. When employees perceive their managers as unapproachable or dismissive, they may withhold valuable information or avoid seeking clarification, thus increasing the likelihood of errors and inefficiency.

Noise both literal and figurative is another element that has been explored in relation to communication breakdowns. Owusu and Aboagye (2019) describe how physical distractions such as poorly arranged office spaces, noisy environments, or lack of private meeting areas hinder

concentration and the effective exchange of ideas in many public institutions. Similarly, organisational noise such as excessive bureaucracy, unnecessary documentation, or ambiguous role definitions can create confusion and slow the pace of administrative work.

Recent studies have also examined cultural and attitudinal barriers. Nyarko and Amankwah (2020) argue that cultural beliefs, power distance, and societal norms influence how messages are sent, received, and interpreted in public institutions. In highly hierarchical settings like local governments, junior staff often feel reluctant to voice concerns or offer suggestions, believing it may be seen as disrespectful or insubordinate. This cultural silence becomes a major communication barrier and contributes to the exclusion of valuable perspectives in planning and decision-making.

Digital divide issues have been further highlighted in more recent work. Boadu and Frempong (2021) investigated the use of ICTs for internal communication in selected district assemblies and concluded that despite their potential, many staff members lack the training or motivation to effectively use such tools. As a result, the intended efficiency gains from digital communication are often not realised.

In relation to the current study, communication barriers are central to understanding why internal communication in the Gomoa West District Assembly may be ineffective. Whether structural, interpersonal, cultural, or technological, these barriers obstruct the free flow of critical information necessary for governance and service delivery. By identifying and analysing these barriers, the study seeks to propose strategies that can help improve internal communication, thereby enhancing the efficiency and responsiveness of the Assembly's administrative processes.

## **2.4 Existing Internal Communication Structures and Channels Within District Assemblies**

Internal communication structures and channels serve as the operational backbone of local government organisations, facilitating the coordination of activities and the effective flow of information. In district assemblies such as Gomoa West from the researcher's observation, these structures encompass formal communication frameworks like meetings, circulars, notice boards, emails and informal platforms such as interpersonal exchanges, social media groups, and word-of-mouth channels. The effectiveness of these systems significantly influences the overall performance of the assembly.

Welch and Jackson (2014) describe internal communication systems in public organisations as multifaceted arrangements designed to transmit operational, strategic, and relational information across departments and roles. They posit that effective internal communication structures must be well-defined, inclusive, and supported by appropriate technology. A similar assertion is made by Chimedza and Mutsikiwa (2015), who examined internal communication practices in Zimbabwean local authorities. Their study found that although formal channels were established, they were often bypassed due to bureaucratic delays and the inefficiency of top-down communication flows.

In the Ghanaian context, Agyemang and Osei-Tutu (2016) noted that district assemblies typically rely on formal communication platforms such as staff meetings, interdepartmental memos, and printed circulars. However, they also identified informal networks as vital, particularly in instances where formal communication is slow or inadequate. These informal structures often built on interpersonal relationships help staff share operational knowledge quickly, albeit with limited documentation or accountability.

Amponsah and Boateng (2017) studied internal communication frameworks in three municipal assemblies in the Eastern Region of Ghana. They found that while formal communication structures existed, such as scheduled management meetings and written reports, there was a gap in the timely dissemination of information. The study highlighted that communication flow was largely top-down with little room for feedback or participatory input from lower-level staff. This hierarchical communication architecture reduced the flexibility and responsiveness of the institution to emerging issues.

According to Owusu and Antwi (2018), most assemblies operate within a structure that promotes vertical communication, especially from top management to departmental heads. However, lateral communication i.e., between departments is often underutilised or informal, leading to silos and fragmented operations. They recommended that structured cross-departmental communication be institutionalised to promote better collaboration and collective decision-making.

Boateng (2019), in a study focusing on decentralised governance in Ghana, reported that even though assemblies are mandated to hold periodic General Assembly meetings and Executive Committee meetings, minutes and outcomes of these meetings are not always communicated promptly to staff. This creates information asymmetry and contributes to feelings of exclusion among middle and lower-tier employees.

More recently, Tetteh and Aboagye (2020) found that the rise of digital tools such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and email have been integrated into internal communication systems, albeit informally. While these tools enhance speed and accessibility, their unregulated use can lead to inconsistencies in information flow and potential breaches of confidentiality. They advocated for

the adoption of formal digital communication policies within local government systems to harmonise the benefits of technology with administrative control.

In their 2021 study, Kusi and Opoku assessed internal communication infrastructures in the Central Region's district assemblies and found that assemblies with structured communication units and clear communication protocols performed better in terms of service delivery. These units acted as hubs for both internal and external information flow, ensuring that messages were recorded, disseminated, and followed up effectively.

In relation to the current study, understanding the existing communication structures within Gomoa West District Assembly is essential. It helps assess whether the assembly's communication architecture supports efficiency, coordination, and transparency. Without properly functioning internal communication channels, even well-formulated policies may fail due to miscommunication or delayed information flow. This objective lays the groundwork for evaluating both the strengths and weaknesses of current systems, which is vital to identifying improvement areas.

## **2.5 Barriers that Hinder Effective Internal Communication Among Staff, Management, and Departments Within District Assembly**

Identifying and understanding the barriers that obstruct effective internal communication within district assemblies is crucial for enhancing administrative efficiency and promoting collaborative governance. In organisations like the Gomoa West District Assembly from the researcher's point of view, communication breakdowns often stem from structural, interpersonal, cultural, and technological sources, all of which impact coordination and service delivery.

According to Mensah and Frimpong (2015), communication within many Ghanaian district assemblies is constrained by excessive centralisation and rigid administrative protocols. These

structural issues limit the ability of departments and units to engage in lateral or participatory communication. Their research on two district assemblies in the Ashanti Region revealed that decision-making was often delayed due to top-heavy information flows where communication had to move through multiple bureaucratic layers before reaching the intended recipients.

Akomea and Oppong (2016) investigated municipal assemblies in the Greater Accra Region and found that one major communication barrier was the overreliance on formal, one-directional communication channels such as memos and letters, with little space for staff feedback. They observed that frontline officers often felt disconnected from decisions affecting their work, which contributed to frustration and resistance to policy implementation. This lack of a feedback loop disrupts both message clarity and task ownership.

In a study by Darko and Kumi (2017), technological constraints were identified as a critical hindrance. Many assemblies lacked internal email systems, networked databases, or digital collaboration platforms. Instead, communication depended heavily on physical meetings or printed documents, which delayed urgent information. The study highlighted how inadequate ICT tools led to frequent miscommunication and poor documentation of decisions, affecting the long-term effectiveness of operations.

Psychological and interpersonal barriers have also been recognised. Danquah and Armah (2018) noted that internal communication suffers when there is a climate of mistrust between staff and management. Employees may withhold information, misinterpret instructions, or avoid raising legitimate concerns out of fear of victimisation or retaliation. This erodes organisational cohesion and fosters a culture of silence, which is particularly damaging in institutions where teamwork is essential.

Adjei and Koomson (2019) found that one often-overlooked barrier is communication overload, especially in assemblies that try to digitise communication without a clear strategy. Staff reported receiving excessive and poorly organised messages via WhatsApp or email, making it difficult to prioritise tasks or identify key directives. This cluttered communication environment not only slows down operations but also contributes to mistakes and duplicated efforts.

In addition, language and literacy levels may create unintended semantic barriers. In a study of district assemblies in the Volta Region, Ayivor and Borkloe (2020) found that messages issued in overly formal or technical English excluded lower-level employees or community liaison officers who were more comfortable with local languages. This issue hampered the clear transmission of information and occasionally led to the misapplication of directives.

Yeboah and Ahenkan (2022) examined informal communication as both a bridge and a barrier. While informal channels like WhatsApp groups facilitated fast information sharing, the unregulated nature of these platforms occasionally led to the premature spread of sensitive or inaccurate information, fuelling confusion among staff. They stressed the need to balance informal tools with proper communication policies.

In the case of Gomoa West District Assembly, such barriers are likely to reflect a combination of structural rigidity, technological limitations, and interpersonal mistrust. A thorough understanding of these impediments is necessary to improve overall internal communication effectiveness. This objective provides a framework for identifying key pressure points in the assembly's communication ecosystem and offers a foundation for institutional reform.

## **2.6 Strategies to Enhance Internal Communication Systems Within District Assembly**

Developing and implementing effective strategies to improve internal communication systems in local government institutions is vital for efficient administration, staff cohesion, and improved service delivery. In the context of district assemblies such as Gomoa West from the researcher's observation, enhancing communication requires a blend of structural reforms, technological adoption, participatory practices, and leadership commitment. Various scholars have explored strategic interventions aimed at strengthening internal communication in public organisations, particularly within decentralised governance systems.

Nartey and Nyarko (2015) emphasise the importance of institutionalising communication policies within Ghanaian public institutions. Their study in the Western Region revealed that district assemblies lacking formal internal communication policies often relied on ad hoc methods, leading to inconsistencies and confusion among staff. By establishing standard operating procedures for internal messaging, feedback, and reporting, assemblies can maintain message uniformity and reduce ambiguity.

Addo and Sackey (2016) identified training and capacity building as a central strategy for improving communication. Their research among local government workers found that many staff members had limited exposure to professional communication practices. Regular workshops on interpersonal communication, digital platforms, writing skills, and conflict-sensitive language were proposed as essential tools to improve communication across departments and hierarchies. For rural assemblies like Gomoa West, such interventions are crucial due to the diverse professional and educational backgrounds of staff.

Amoako and Debrah (2017) advanced the argument for decentralised communication management. Their work in the Northern Region showed that empowering departmental heads to

handle communication within their units while adhering to a general framework enhanced message responsiveness and localised problem-solving. The model reduced bottlenecks created by over-centralised communication practices, which are often too slow to respond to urgent matters.

Kwakye and Takyi-Mensah (2018) recommended introducing regular interdepartmental meetings and team briefings as a strategy to build collaboration and trust. Their study found that assemblies that hosted weekly or biweekly team meetings had stronger internal networks and more consistent information sharing. These platforms allowed for real-time clarification of directives, progress updates, and collective decision-making important features of a well-functioning district assembly.

In a study focusing on ICT integration, Owusu-Ansah and Baidoo (2019) observed that digital tools such as internal email servers, document management systems, and WhatsApp workgroups when formally adopted improved both the speed and traceability of communication. However, they cautioned that introducing digital tools without technical support or protocols could lead to misuse and fragmentation. Their recommendation included a blend of digital training, IT help desks, and clear user guidelines.

Mensah and Osei-Bonsu (2020) emphasised leadership reform as a cornerstone of communication improvement. They discovered that assemblies where leadership prioritised open communication and actively modelled it in their conduct experienced fewer breakdowns and higher employee morale. In such settings, staff felt more comfortable engaging in feedback, clarifying roles, and raising concerns. This participatory culture promoted efficiency and reduced misunderstandings.

Korkor and Danquah (2021) explored feedback systems in local government. Their study proposed the establishment of anonymous feedback mechanisms such as digital suggestion boxes or employee surveys to collect honest input from staff without fear of reprisal. This approach was particularly effective in assemblies with hierarchical or politicised environments where staff were hesitant to express dissent openly.

More recently, Armah and Bimpong (2023) suggested the development of internal communication dashboards that track the flow of information between departments. Such systems allow management to monitor delays, communication gaps, and ensure that directives are followed up. Their pilot in two assemblies in the Bono Region found that dashboards not only improved accountability but also acted as tools for performance evaluation and planning.

In relation to the current study, these strategies offer a practical roadmap for enhancing internal communication in Gomoa West District Assembly. Each recommendation from formalising policies to adopting digital tools, to fostering participatory leadership responds directly to the structural and operational challenges common in Ghana's district assemblies. Addressing these with informed, evidence-based approaches is key to creating a more responsive and effective governance structure.

## **2.7 Empirical Review**

The empirical review presents reviews from previous studies to identify trends and gaps in relation to the study's objectives. The objectives are: Existing internal communication structures and channels within district assembly, barriers that hinder effective internal communication among staff, management, and departments within district assembly and finally, the strategies to enhance internal communication systems within district assembly.

### **2.7.1 Existing Internal Communication Structures and Channels Within District Assembly**

Nartey and Nyarko (2015), in the Western Region, Ghana, sought to investigate internal communication practices within two district assemblies in Ghana's Western Region. Using a descriptive survey design, the researchers gathered data from 60 administrative staff through structured questionnaires. The findings revealed that most of the assemblies relied heavily on formal channels such as circulars, staff durbars and notice boards, though these were often used without consistency. While formal meetings were held regularly, the absence of digital systems limited the speed of message dissemination. Staff also expressed dissatisfaction with the delay in information reaching lower units, indicating a top-down bias in communication. The study concluded that internal communication lacked dynamism and failed to adapt to contemporary organisational demands.

A study in Greater Accra Region, Ghana, by Akomea and Opong (2016), explored the internal communication frameworks of three municipal assemblies. A qualitative design was adopted using in-depth interviews with 30 senior and junior staff. Their findings showed that internal communication systems were rigid, centralised and overly dependent on memos and physical meetings. Most staff members were unaware of decisions made by management until directives were implemented. The study found limited evidence of feedback loops or participatory mechanisms for junior staff. The conclusion emphasised the need for improved two-way communication and the integration of informal communication channels to make communication more inclusive.

Danquah and Tutuwaa (2018) in Ghana, assessed the communication structures of four district assemblies in the Central Region. The study involved 80 respondents and used a mixed-methods design, including questionnaires and follow-up interviews. The researchers found that

while formal structures such as emails and scheduled meetings existed, they were not uniformly applied across departments. Staff largely depended on interpersonal relationships to obtain important information. Additionally, the assemblies lacked dedicated communication officers to manage and monitor internal communication flows. The study concluded that communication structures were fragmented, resulting in duplicated efforts and misalignment between departments.

A study by Owusu-Ansah and Baidoo (2019) in Ashanti Region of Ghana, focused on the role of digital communication in local government. Using a survey design, data were collected from 100 administrative workers across five assemblies. The study found that although email platforms had been introduced in some assemblies, most staff lacked training or access to digital tools. Physical bulletin boards remained the most common means of information dissemination, and information often reached some units late. The researchers concluded that existing communication structures had not transitioned adequately into the digital age and required urgent modernisation to improve responsiveness.

Finally, Korkor and Danquah (2021) in Bono Region, Ghana, explored how interdepartmental communication was handled in district assemblies. The study used a qualitative case study approach, interviewing 25 employees across three assemblies. Findings revealed that there was minimal horizontal communication between departments, with most interdepartmental interactions occurring only during meetings. The reliance on formal memos and the absence of cross-departmental digital platforms slowed operations. The researchers concluded that assemblies lacked integrated communication systems to foster collaboration between departments, resulting in inefficiencies and poor coordination.

In sum, while the reviewed studies provide insights into the nature of internal communication within Ghanaian district assemblies, they fall short in several critical areas. Most

failed to offer a comprehensive assessment of both formal and informal communication structures across all hierarchical levels. Few studies addressed the coherence or alignment of communication channels with assembly objectives. Additionally, there was a limited focus on how existing structures influenced staff participation, motivation or institutional cohesion. The role of cultural factors, digital readiness, and departmental synergy was also insufficiently explored. Furthermore, many studies stopped short of linking communication structures to administrative performance or service delivery outcomes. The current study on the Gomoa West District Assembly seeks to fill these gaps by evaluating the existing internal communication structures more holistically. It will explore both formal and informal channels, assess accessibility, and examine the communication flow across vertical and horizontal levels within departments, aiming to draw implications for organisational efficiency and policy improvement.

### **2.7.2 Barriers that Hinder Effective Internal Communication Among Staff, Management, and Departments Within District Assembly**

Mensah and Frimpong (2015), in Eastern Region of Ghana, aimed to identify major impediments to internal communication within two municipal assemblies. A cross-sectional descriptive design was used, with questionnaires administered to 70 staff members. The researchers found that hierarchical barriers were significant, as junior employees had little access to information from the top. Management decisions were often communicated with delays, causing implementation confusion. The centralised nature of communication channels made it difficult for lower departments to share timely feedback. The study concluded that administrative rigidity, excessive bureaucracy and lack of communication planning were primary factors limiting effective communication in the assemblies.

In a study by Darko and Kumi (2017), in Volta Region, Ghana, investigated infrastructural and technological communication barriers within three rural district assemblies. Using a mixed-

method approach, the study engaged 90 respondents through structured surveys and interviews. Key findings indicated that many staff members had no access to digital communication tools, and those available were underutilised due to inadequate training. Physical distances between departments and insufficient transport also limited information flow. Additionally, internet instability and power outages compounded these challenges. The authors concluded that poor ICT infrastructure and logistical difficulties significantly impaired timely and accurate internal communication.

Adjei and Koomson (2019), in Central Region of Ghana, investigated the psychological and interpersonal barriers of communication. This study employed qualitative interviews with 30 staff from two assemblies. The findings highlighted issues such as lack of trust, fear of reprisal, and perceived elitism among senior management. Many junior staff refrained from expressing concerns due to fear of negative consequences. Furthermore, communication from management was often delivered in authoritarian tones, discouraging interaction. The study concluded that toxic work culture and ineffective leadership styles were critical contributors to internal communication failures, leading to staff disengagement and inefficiency.

Also, Baffour and Amoako (2020), in the Northern Region of Ghana, used a quantitative survey of 85 staff across three district assemblies to assess the role of unclear job roles and responsibilities in internal communication barriers. The researchers found that overlapping duties and vague reporting structures resulted in confusion about who should communicate with whom. This led to duplication of efforts and missed responsibilities. Staff also reported inconsistent communication practices across departments. The study concluded that without a clearly defined organisational communication framework, internal communication remains fragmented and unreliable.

Finally, Yeboah and Ahenkan (2022), focused on informal communication dynamics and their unintended consequences in the Western North Region of Ghana. A case study approach was applied using interviews with 25 district assembly staff. The findings revealed that reliance on informal tools such as WhatsApp groups created inconsistencies in message delivery. Some employees received information earlier than others, which created divisions and mistrust. Additionally, management often failed to regulate the spread of official information through informal platforms. The study concluded that unregulated informal communication practices contributed to miscommunication, misinformation, and weakened institutional cohesion.

Although the reviewed studies offer useful perspectives on the various barriers to internal communication in local government settings, they tend to focus narrowly on isolated issues such as infrastructure, psychology, or informality. Few studies adopt a multidimensional approach that considers how structural, interpersonal, and technological barriers interrelate and compound each other. In addition, limited attention has been given to the lived experiences of staff across all levels of the assembly or how these barriers affect day-to-day operational outcomes. Furthermore, none of the studies provide a contextualised assessment specific to Gomoa West District Assembly, which has unique geographic, administrative and demographic characteristics. The current study addresses this gap by investigating a wide range of internal communication barriers holistically. It examines how management practices, infrastructural limitations, interpersonal dynamics, and informal communication practices interact to shape internal communication effectiveness.

### **2.7.3 Strategies to Enhance Internal Communication Systems Within District Assembly**

A study by Nartey and Sackey (2016) in two assemblies within the Central Region explored mechanisms for improving internal communication through structured engagement. Employing a descriptive survey design and analysing data with descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, the

study surveyed 60 assembly staff. It was found that regular staff meetings, consistent communication policies, and designated communication officers were essential in building coherent internal communication systems. Respondents noted that quarterly meetings improved transparency, reduced misunderstandings and allowed for real-time feedback. The researchers concluded that assemblies with scheduled engagement frameworks performed better in team coordination and policy implementation.

Owusu and Mensah (2017) conducted a mixed-method study in the Eastern Region to assess the effectiveness of ICT tools in enhancing communication efficiency. Using SPSS to run frequency distributions and correlation analyses on responses from 95 participants, the study revealed that the integration of intranet systems, email correspondence and shared digital folders significantly improved turnaround times for official communications. Staff indicated that digital tools reduced their dependence on physical meetings and helped in archiving important memos. However, the study emphasised the need for continuous staff training and digital literacy development to sustain the benefits of technology-based strategies.

Amoako and Bimpong (2018), in their qualitative case study of three district assemblies in the Western Region, examined how participatory communication strategies influence institutional performance. Through interviews and focus group discussions with 30 staff, and applying thematic content analysis, the authors found that open-door policies, internal suggestion schemes, and feedback mechanisms promoted inclusive decision-making. Staff reported that when management valued their input, morale and output improved. The researchers concluded that participatory strategies must be embedded in organisational culture and championed by leadership for sustained impact.

In a quantitative study carried out in 2019, Danquah and Antwi used regression analysis to explore the relationship between leadership style and internal communication effectiveness in the Greater Accra Region. With a sample of 100 employees from three assemblies, their findings showed that transformational leadership practices such as encouraging dialogue, giving timely feedback, and involving staff in planning were positively associated with improved internal communication outcomes. Assemblies led by participative managers experienced fewer communication breakdowns. The study recommended leadership development programmes as a strategy to enhance communication culture.

Tetteh and Frempong (2021) conducted action research in two assemblies in the Bono Region to implement and monitor communication improvement strategies. Combining pre- and post-intervention surveys with observational logs, they assessed the impact of interventions such as structured communication calendars, department-level information officers and digital bulletin boards. Paired sample t-tests were used to determine significant changes in internal communication performance. The results showed a marked improvement in message clarity, staff responsiveness, and inter-departmental coordination. The researchers concluded that systematic planning and monitoring of communication interventions led to tangible gains in organisational efficiency.

Despite the diverse strategies highlighted by the reviewed studies, several gaps remain unaddressed. Many of the studies focused on isolated interventions such as digital adoption, leadership training or participatory practices, without examining how these strategies interact within a comprehensive communication system. Additionally, limited studies have assessed the sustainability or long-term effects of these strategies within the dynamic environment of district assemblies. None of the reviewed works specifically considered Gomoa West District Assembly, which has unique administrative, geographic and resource challenges. Furthermore, very few

studies incorporated a comparative evaluation of strategy effectiveness based on staff roles, departmental functions or communication hierarchies. The current study bridges these gaps by holistically investigating a range of contextually relevant strategies to enhance internal communication in Gomoa West District Assembly.

## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

This section presents a graphical model that illustrates the interrelationship among the core concepts and objectives under review in the current study.

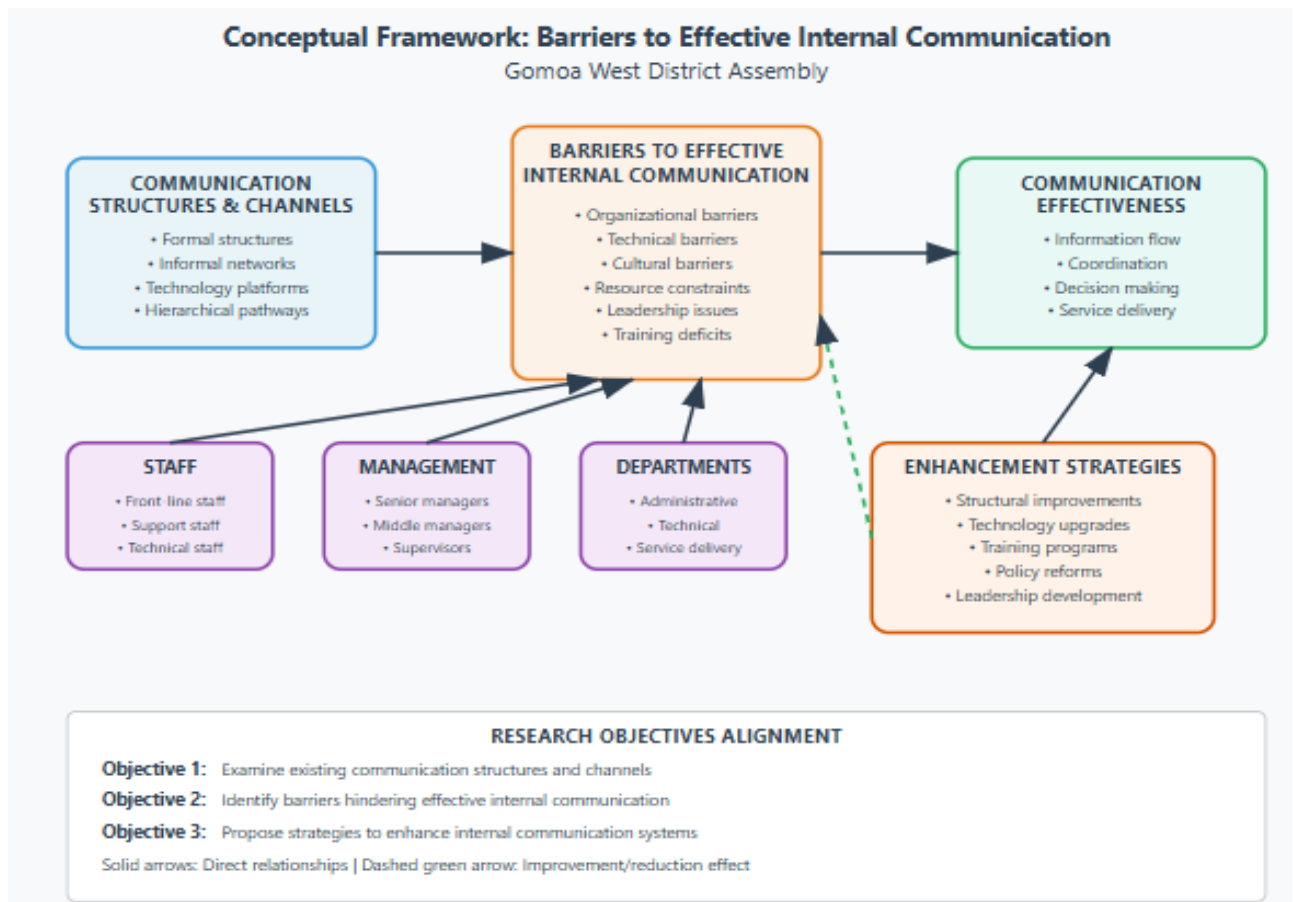


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework showing the interrelationship among the concepts in the study

**Source:** Adapted from (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974; Roberts, O'Reilly, Bretton, & Porter, 1974)

Figure 1 illustrates the dynamic interrelationships between key variables affecting internal communication within Gomoa West District Assembly. The framework demonstrates how existing Communication Structures and Channels serve as the foundation, influencing the emergence and persistence of various Barriers to Effective Internal Communication. These barriers, including organizational, technical, cultural, and resource constraints, directly impact Communication Effectiveness outcomes such as information flow, coordination, and service delivery.

The framework positions three stakeholder groups Staff, Management, and Departments as both contributors to and victims of communication barriers, creating a cyclical relationship where poor communication perpetuates existing challenges. The Enhancement Strategies component represents interventions designed to break this cycle by simultaneously reducing barriers and improving communication effectiveness.

The interconnected nature of these variables suggests that addressing communication barriers requires a systemic approach. Changes in one component inevitably affect others, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies that consider structural improvements, technology upgrades, training programs, and policy reforms to achieve sustainable communication enhancement within the district assembly.

## **2.9 Summary of Literature Review**

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of relevant literature structured into theoretical, conceptual, and empirical perspectives. The chapter is anchored in Shannon and Weaver's Communication Theory, which helps explain the sender-channel-receiver model and how 'noise' impacts message clarity within public organisations. The conceptual review defines local government, internal communication, and communication barriers, while establishing their relevance to the administrative functions of district assemblies. The empirical review draws from

multiple Ghanaian studies, highlighting how poor communication structures, overcentralised systems, low ICT capacity, and interpersonal mistrust inhibit effective communication in local government settings. The chapter also explores existing structures and practical strategies for improvement, including participatory communication, ICT integration, and leadership development. The conceptual framework visually maps the interrelation between communication structures, barriers, and outcomes, showing how feedback loops and organisational coordination can be enhanced. The review ultimately reveals critical knowledge gaps, especially context-specific insights for Gomoa West, which the current study seeks to address through a more holistic and context-driven investigation.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Chapter Introduction**

The research methodology presents the framework guiding the investigation into barriers to effective internal communication within the Gomoa West District Assembly. It explains the philosophical foundation, paradigm, and approach that shaped the study, as well as the design chosen to achieve the research objectives. This chapter also outlines how participants were selected, the procedures followed in gathering data, and the ethical principles observed throughout the process. Furthermore, it highlights the measures taken to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings and provides an overview of how the collected data were analyzed. This methodological framework ensures that the study is systematically structured to address the research questions effectively and produce valid and meaningful insights.

#### **3.2 Research Paradigm**

The study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, which is appropriate for qualitative research as it seeks to understand participants' lived experiences and socially constructed realities. Interpretivism emphasises context-specific meanings and acknowledges multiple perspectives rather than pursuing universal truths (Creswell, 2014). This paradigm supports an in-depth exploration of barriers to internal communication, focusing on how individuals interpret their interactions within the organisational structure (Bryman, 2016). Recent scholars argue that interpretivism is particularly relevant for organisational studies, as it provides insight into subjective meanings that influence behaviour and decision-making (Saunders et al., 2019). Furthermore, this approach allows for rich narrative data, enabling the researcher to uncover complex factors influencing communication within Gomoa West District Assembly.

### **3.3 Philosophical Assumptions**

The philosophical assumptions of this study are rooted in constructivism, which underpins qualitative research by recognising that reality is socially constructed and shaped by human interactions (Creswell, 2014). This perspective assumes knowledge is subjective and context-bound, requiring researchers to interpret meanings participants assign to their experiences (Bryman, 2016). Ontologically, the study accepts multiple realities, acknowledging that communication barriers may differ across individuals and departments. Epistemologically, it values close researcher-participant engagement to co-create knowledge (Saunders et al., 2019). Axiologically, it recognises researcher values as integral to the inquiry rather than neutral (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2020). Collectively, these assumptions provide a philosophical lens for exploring the nuanced factors influencing internal communication within Gomoa West District Assembly.

### **3.4 Research Approach**

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, which is suited for exploring complex social phenomena and understanding participants' subjective experiences in depth (Creswell, 2014). Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative approaches emphasise meaning-making rather than statistical generalisation, allowing researchers to explore how individuals perceive and interpret communication barriers (Bryman, 2016). This approach is particularly valuable in organisational contexts, where internal dynamics and interactions shape staff experiences (Saunders et al., 2019). Recent scholars highlight that qualitative inquiry provides rich, contextual insights that are essential for addressing communication challenges in public institutions (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2020). By employing this approach, the study effectively examines the nuanced barriers affecting internal communication within the Gomoa West District Assembly from multiple stakeholder perspectives.

### **3.5 Research Design**

The study adopted a case study design, which is well suited for qualitative research aiming to understand organisational phenomena within their real-life context (Yin, 2014). This design allows researchers to investigate complex social processes and interactions without manipulating variables, making it appropriate for examining internal communication barriers (Flick, 2015). It enables a holistic view of organisational practices, capturing the perspectives of diverse participants and departments (Silverman, 2016). Case study designs are particularly beneficial for uncovering context-specific insights and generating practical recommendations for improvement (Simons, 2017). By applying this design to the Gomoa West District Assembly, the study can deeply explore existing communication structures, identify challenges, and suggest tailored strategies for enhancing communication effectiveness.

### **3.6 Population and Sampling Strategy**

The research population comprises all staff members employed at Gomoa West District Assembly across various departments and hierarchical levels. However, the study will employ a sample of 10 participants selected based on their roles, experience, and potential insights into internal communication processes. This sample size aligns with qualitative research principles emphasizing depth over breadth, where smaller samples enable comprehensive data collection and detailed analysis (Patton, 2015). According to Guest et al. (2020), samples of 6-12 participants often achieve data saturation in qualitative studies focusing on organizational phenomena. The selected sample size facilitates intensive investigation while ensuring manageability of data collection and analysis processes within resource constraints.

The study employed purposive sampling technique, specifically maximum variation sampling, to select participants representing diverse perspectives within the organization. This non-probability sampling approach enables researchers to deliberately choose participants who

can provide rich information about the research phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). Maximum variation sampling ensures inclusion of staff members from different departments, hierarchical levels, and experience backgrounds, thereby capturing varied perspectives on internal communication challenges. This technique proves particularly appropriate for qualitative studies investigating organizational phenomena where diverse viewpoints enhance understanding of complex issues and contribute to comprehensive data collection.

### **3.7 Data Collection Instrument**

An interview guide will serve as the primary research instrument for data collection in this study. Interview guides are widely acknowledged for providing a structured yet flexible framework that ensures consistency across interviews while allowing adaptation to participants' unique experiences (Kallio et al., 2016). They enable researchers to maintain focus on the research objectives by covering predetermined topics while still permitting probing questions that elicit deeper insights (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This is particularly important in qualitative organisational research, where communication barriers may vary across roles and departments. The use of an interview guide is justified as it enhances the reliability of the data collection process, ensures all critical themes are addressed, and facilitates comparability of responses. Furthermore, it supports the interpretivist paradigm by encouraging rich narratives, enabling the researcher to capture participants' subjective meanings and experiences regarding internal communication within the Gomoa West District Assembly.

### **3.8 Data Collection Process**

An introductory letter will be taken from the Department of Public Relation to the Gomoa West District Assembly Office. Dates for interview will be discussed with the heads of the Assembly. Data collection for this study will centre on conducting semi-structured individual interviews with carefully selected participants from various departments within the Gomoa West

District Assembly. These interviews will be scheduled at participants' workplaces during times that are most convenient for them, thereby minimising disruption to their daily duties and ensuring a comfortable environment. Each interview is expected to last between 30 and 45 minutes and will be audio-recorded with prior informed consent to ensure accuracy in capturing participants' responses. The interview guide will provide a structured framework for consistency across participants, while maintaining flexibility to probe deeper into emerging themes. This approach will facilitate the collection of rich, detailed insights into internal communication practices, perceived barriers, and opportunities for improvement within the organisational context. It will also help uncover subtle dynamics that are not easily observable through other methods.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

The study will strictly adhere to recognised ethical standards to ensure participants' rights and well-being are protected throughout the research process. Ethical research will begin with obtaining informed consent, where participants are fully briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, and potential implications before agreeing to take part voluntarily (Orb et al., 2014). Confidentiality will be prioritised by anonymising personal identifiers and securely storing data to prevent unauthorised access (Fouka & Mantzorou, 2015). Additionally, participants will be assured of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty, which promotes trust and openness (Resnik, 2018). Ethical clearance will be sought from relevant institutional authorities to validate compliance with research guidelines (Silverman, 2020). These measures are particularly crucial in organisational settings like the Gomoa West District Assembly, where protecting both individual and institutional privacy is essential for gathering credible and authentic insights into internal communication barriers.

### **3.10 Authenticity and Trustworthiness**

Authenticity and trustworthiness will be ensured by adopting rigorous qualitative criteria that enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings. Credibility will be achieved through prolonged engagement with participants and the use of strategies such as member checking to verify interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 2014). Transferability will be supported by providing thick, contextual descriptions that allow readers to determine the applicability of findings to similar settings (Shenton, 2015). Dependability will be strengthened through maintaining an audit trail documenting all research decisions and processes (Connelly, 2016). Confirmability will be addressed by ensuring findings are grounded in participants' accounts rather than researcher bias (Nowell et al., 2017). These strategies are vital in studies exploring organisational phenomena, as they provide confidence that the themes identified genuinely reflect participants' experiences and perspectives on internal communication barriers within Gomoa West District Assembly.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis in this study will follow Braun and Clarke's (2014) six-phase thematic analysis framework, which is widely applied in qualitative research. These are explained as follows;

#### **3.11.1 Phase 1: Familiarisation with the Data**

The first phase of thematic analysis involves immersing oneself in the collected data to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In this study, the researcher will begin by transcribing all interviews verbatim and reading them multiple times to become deeply familiar with their content. This process allows the researcher to identify preliminary ideas and patterns relating to communication structures and barriers within the assembly. During organizational, attention will also be paid to non-verbal cues captured during interviews, as these may provide context for understanding participants' emotions and attitudes. Notes and initial impressions will be documented in a reflective journal to guide subsequent

coding. This phase is crucial for ensuring the researcher approaches the next stages with an informed and nuanced understanding of the data.

### **3.11.2 Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes**

Once familiar with the data, the next step is generating initial codes. This involves systematically identifying and labelling significant features of the data that are relevant to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In this study, codes might include issues such as “lack of feedback from management,” “information overload,” or “unclear communication channels.” Coding will be conducted manually or with qualitative data analysis software to ensure systematic organization. Each segment of data that reflects potential barriers, enablers, or experiences related to internal communication will be coded, regardless of frequency. The coding process at this stage is inclusive, aiming to capture as much relevant detail as possible. This ensures that no potentially valuable insights are overlooked and sets the foundation for identifying broader patterns during the thematic development phase.

### **3.11.3 Phase 3: Searching for Themes**

The third phase focuses on organizing the codes into potential themes by identifying relationships and patterns among them (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In this study, related codes such as “limited interdepartmental meetings,” “poor feedback loops,” and “top-down communication” may be clustered under a broader theme like “structural barriers.” Similarly, codes about “lack of trust” or “perceived favouritism” might form a theme around “organizational culture challenges.” This stage is highly interpretive, as the researcher begins to conceptualise how individual codes fit together to explain participants’ experiences of internal communication. Visual tools such as thematic maps or diagrams may be used to illustrate how themes connect and support the research questions. The output of this phase is a set of candidate themes that reflect key patterns within the dataset.

#### **3.11.4 Phase 4: Reviewing Themes**

During the reviewing phase, the researcher evaluates the candidate themes to ensure they accurately represent the coded data and the dataset as a whole (Nowell et al., 2017). This involves two levels of review: first, checking whether the themes work in relation to the coded extracts, and second, ensuring they align with the overall data story. In this study, the researcher may find that some themes are too broad and need splitting, while others may overlap and require merging. For example, themes initially labelled “feedback barriers” and “hierarchical barriers” might be merged into a broader theme of “managerial communication challenges.” This phase ensures coherence, internal consistency, and that themes meaningfully address the research questions on internal communication barriers and potential improvements.

#### **3.11.5 Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes**

The fifth phase involves refining and clearly defining each theme to capture its essence and scope (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In this study, the researcher will write detailed analyses for each theme, explaining what it represents and how it relates to the research objectives. For instance, a theme such as “structural barriers” may encompass issues like lack of formal channels, poor coordination, and information bottlenecks. Each theme will be given a concise, descriptive name that reflects its content and helps convey meaning to readers. At this stage, subthemes may also be identified to provide a more nuanced understanding of communication challenges. Defining and naming themes ensures that the findings are organised and presented in a way that is accessible and meaningful.

#### **3.11.6 Phase 6: Producing the Report**

The final phase of thematic analysis is producing a coherent and compelling report that integrates the themes with the research questions and existing literature (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In this study, the report will involve weaving together participants’ narratives, direct quotations,

and thematic interpretations to explain barriers to internal communication at the Gomoa West District Assembly. The analysis will link findings to relevant organisational communication theories and previous empirical studies to demonstrate scholarly significance. This phase also includes drawing conclusions about potential solutions and implications for practice. By presenting a rich and well-supported narrative, the report will provide actionable insights for improving communication processes and fostering better collaboration within the assembly.

### **3.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter outlines the methodological framework guiding the study on barriers to effective internal communication within Gomoa West District Assembly. It begins with the interpretivist paradigm and constructivist assumptions underpinning the research, recognising the socially constructed nature of participants' experiences. The qualitative approach and case study design were chosen to facilitate an in-depth exploration of organisational communication dynamics. The population comprised staff across hierarchical levels, with purposive sampling used to select ten participants representing varied perspectives. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection instrument, supported by an interview guide for consistency and flexibility. Ethical protocols included informed consent, confidentiality, and institutional approval to protect participants' rights. Authenticity and trustworthiness were enhanced through strategies such as member checking and thick descriptions. Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic framework: familiarisation, coding, theme development, reviewing, defining/naming, and reporting. This systematic methodology ensures credible insights into communication barriers and provides evidence-based recommendations for improving internal communication processes in local government settings.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, analysis, and discussion of data collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 employees from Gomoa West District Assembly who possessed direct experience with internal communication processes. The study employed thematic analysis to examine existing communication structures, identify barriers hindering effective information flow, and explore potential improvement strategies. Purposive sampling technique was utilised to ensure diverse representation across different departments, hierarchical levels, and service tenure within the Assembly. The primary research objectives guided the analysis of responses, providing detailed insights into communication structure effectiveness, barrier identification, and potential enhancement strategies. The analysis reveals significant themes that demonstrate the intricate relationship between communication practices and organisational performance in local government administration in Ghana.

#### 4.2 Preliminary Descriptions (Demographic Data/Units of Analysis Presentation)

The study comprised 10 participants from various departments within Gomoa West District Assembly who possessed extensive experience with internal communication processes. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants with varied perspectives on communication structures and challenges within the Assembly. Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, showing diverse representation across age, gender, educational background, and organisational roles.

*Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Department/Unit</b>	<b>Position Level</b>	<b>Years with Assembly</b>	<b>Communication Training</b>
1	41	Female	Master's	Administration	Deputy Director	12	Yes
2	36	Male	Degree	Finance	Budget Officer	8	No
3	29	Female	Diploma	Human Resources	Assistant	5	Yes
4	52	Male	Master's	Planning	Director	18	Yes
5	33	Female	Degree	Health	Supervisor	7	No
6	45	Male	Degree	Works	Engineer	14	No
7	28	Female	Certificate	Registry	Clerk	4	No
8	39	Male	Degree	Internal Audit	Officer	9	Yes
9	47	Female	Master's	Social Services	Manager	16	Yes
10	34	Male	Diploma	Security	Supervisor	11	No

*Source: Field Survey (2025)*

The participants ranged in age from 28 to 52 years, with a mean age of 38.4 years, representing diverse organisational roles and communication experiences. The sample included five female and five male participants, reflecting balanced gender perspectives on communication structures and challenges. Educational backgrounds varied from certificate to master's degree level, with

three participants having master's degrees, five having bachelor's degrees, one diploma holder, and one certificate holder, ensuring diverse perspectives on communication effectiveness and organisational management.

The participants represented different departments including Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Planning, Health, Works, Registry, Internal Audit, Social Services, and Security, with their tenure ranging from 4-18 years. The purposive selection criteria ensured that all participants possessed substantial experience with Assembly communication processes, whilst maximum variation sampling captured different hierarchical levels and departmental functions.

### **4.3 Findings for Research Questions**

#### **Objective 1: To examine the existing internal communication structures and channels within Gomoa West District Assembly**

The study investigated the primary communication approaches utilised by Gomoa West District Assembly to manage internal information flow across departments and hierarchical levels. Three major themes emerged from the analysis: hierarchical communication systems, limited channel diversity, and informal communication networks.

#### **Theme 1.1: Hierarchical Communication Systems**

Gomoa West District Assembly operated predominantly through hierarchical communication structures that followed formal administrative chains.

Participant 1 explained: *"Communication in the Assembly follows strict hierarchical lines where information flows from the District Chief Executive to directors, then to heads of units, and finally to junior staff. We use formal memos, official letters, and scheduled meetings to communicate important decisions and policies. The system requires all communication to pass through*

*immediate supervisors before reaching intended recipients, which maintains proper protocol but sometimes slows down information delivery."*

Participant 4 noted: *"As a director, I observe how the hierarchical structure shapes our communication patterns. Departmental meetings are scheduled monthly where we discuss directives from top management and relay information to our teams. We prepare written reports for senior management and receive instructions through formal channels. This system ensures accountability and proper documentation but limits direct communication between different levels of the organisation."*

Participant 8 revealed: *"The formal communication structure requires strict adherence to reporting lines. When auditing different departments, I notice that staff members rarely communicate directly with senior management but channel concerns through their supervisors. Official communications are documented through memos and letters that create paper trails for administrative decisions and policy implementation."*

The evidence presented in this theme confirms that Gomoa West District Assembly operated through rigid hierarchical communication systems that prioritised formal channels and administrative protocols. Participants consistently highlighted how communication followed established bureaucratic procedures that maintained accountability whilst potentially limiting information flow efficiency. The adherence to hierarchical structures demonstrates traditional public administration practices that emphasise formal authority and documentation over flexible communication approaches.

## **Theme 1.2: Limited Channel Diversity**

The Assembly relied on traditional communication channels with minimal adoption of contemporary communication technologies and platforms.

Participant 2 stated: *"Our communication channels are quite limited compared to modern organisations. We primarily use printed memos, notice boards, and face-to-face meetings for information sharing. Email is available but not consistently used across all departments, and we lack modern communication platforms that could facilitate faster information exchange between departments and staff members."*

Participant 7 explained: *"Communication methods have remained largely unchanged over the years. We receive information through notice boards in common areas, attend monthly departmental meetings, and rely on colleagues to share important updates. The registry distributes hard copies of important documents, but this process can be slow when urgent communication is needed across multiple departments."*

Participant 5 observed: *"Limited communication channels create challenges when we need to coordinate activities across departments. Most information sharing happens through formal meetings or written correspondence, which works for routine matters but becomes problematic during emergencies or when quick responses are required. We often resort to phone calls for urgent matters, but this lacks proper documentation."*

This theme illustrates the Assembly's reliance on traditional communication channels that lacked diversity and technological integration. Participants consistently emphasised the predominance of conventional methods such as memos, notice boards, and meetings, whilst highlighting the absence

of modern communication tools. The evidence suggests that limited channel diversity constrained communication efficiency and adaptability within the organisation.

### **Theme 1.3: Informal Communication Networks**

Despite formal structures, informal communication networks emerged as significant channels for information sharing among staff members.

Participant 3 noted: *"Informal communication plays a major role in how information actually flows within the Assembly. Staff members share updates during lunch breaks, corridor conversations, and social interactions. These informal networks often provide faster information dissemination than formal channels, though the accuracy of information can sometimes be questionable when it passes through multiple informal sources."*

Participant 6 shared: *"Informal communication networks help bridge gaps in formal communication systems. Engineers and technical staff often coordinate activities through direct conversations and phone calls rather than waiting for formal memos. These informal channels enable practical problem-solving and quick decision-making, though they sometimes bypass official procedures and documentation requirements."*

Participant 10 explained: *"Security personnel rely heavily on informal communication networks to coordinate activities and share important information quickly. Radio communication and direct conversations provide immediate information sharing that formal channels cannot match. However, this informal communication sometimes creates inconsistencies when information is not properly documented or verified through official channels."*

The responses under this theme reveal that informal communication networks served as essential supplements to formal communication structures at Gomoa West District Assembly. Participants

consistently highlighted how informal channels provided speed and flexibility that formal systems lacked, whilst acknowledging potential issues with accuracy and documentation. The prevalence of informal networks suggests that formal communication structures alone were insufficient for meeting organisational communication needs.

**Objective 2: To identify the barriers that hinder effective internal communication among staff, management, and departments**

The analysis revealed four primary themes regarding communication barriers: structural and procedural constraints, technological limitations and resource deficits, cultural and behavioural obstacles, and coordination and timing challenges.

**Theme 2.1: Structural and Procedural Constraints**

Rigid hierarchical structures and bureaucratic procedures created significant barriers to effective communication within the Assembly.

Participant 1 explained: *"The hierarchical structure, whilst maintaining order, creates communication bottlenecks when information must pass through multiple levels before reaching intended recipients. Junior staff cannot directly communicate concerns to senior management, which delays problem resolution and reduces communication efficiency. The requirement for formal approvals at each level slows down information flow and sometimes distorts messages as they pass through different interpreters."*

Participant 4 noted: *"Bureaucratic procedures require extensive documentation and formal approvals that can delay urgent communication. When departments need quick coordination, the formal process becomes a barrier rather than a facilitator. The emphasis on following proper*

*channels sometimes prevents timely information sharing and reduces organisational responsiveness to emerging issues."*

Participant 9 revealed: *"Departmental silos created by structural arrangements limit cross-departmental communication and coordination. Each department tends to operate independently with minimal interaction, which creates gaps in information sharing about activities that affect multiple units. The lack of formal mechanisms for horizontal communication between departments reduces overall organisational effectiveness."*

This theme demonstrates that structural and procedural constraints within Gomoa West District Assembly significantly hindered effective communication. Participants consistently reported how hierarchical rigidity and bureaucratic requirements created delays and barriers that reduced communication efficiency and organisational responsiveness.

## **Theme 2.2: Technological Limitations and Resource Deficits**

Inadequate technological infrastructure and resource limitations created substantial barriers to modern communication practices.

Participant 2 stated: *"Limited technological resources prevent us from adopting modern communication tools that could improve information sharing efficiency. We lack reliable internet connectivity, modern computer systems, and communication software that would enable faster and more effective internal communication. These technological limitations force us to rely on outdated methods that are slower and less efficient."*

Participant 7 explained: *"Resource constraints affect our ability to implement better communication systems. We have insufficient computers, limited internet access, and inadequate communication equipment that could facilitate better information sharing. The registry still relies*

*heavily on manual processes and paper-based systems that create delays and reduce communication effectiveness across the Assembly."*

Participant 5 observed: *"Inadequate resources for communication activities limit our ability to organise effective meetings, print necessary documents, and maintain proper communication equipment. Budget constraints prevent investment in modern communication technologies and training programmes that could improve our internal communication capabilities and overall organisational efficiency."*

The findings under this theme reveal that technological limitations and resource deficits created substantial barriers to effective communication at Gomoa West District Assembly. Participants consistently highlighted how inadequate infrastructure and financial constraints prevented adoption of modern communication tools and practices that could enhance organisational communication effectiveness.

### **Theme 2.3: Cultural and Behavioural Obstacles**

Organisational culture and individual behaviours created additional barriers to effective communication within the Assembly.

Participant 8 revealed: *"Communication culture within the Assembly tends to discourage open dialogue and feedback. Staff members are often reluctant to express concerns or suggestions directly to management, preferring to avoid potential conflicts. This cultural tendency reduces valuable feedback and limits upward communication that could improve organisational operations and decision-making processes."*

Participant 6 stated: *"Resistance to change affects communication practices within the organisation. Some staff members and managers prefer traditional methods and are reluctant to*

*adopt new communication approaches or technologies. This resistance creates inconsistencies in communication practices and reduces overall effectiveness of efforts to improve internal information sharing and coordination."*

Participant 3 mentioned: *"Trust issues sometimes affect communication quality within the Assembly. When staff members lack confidence in management responsiveness or fear potential negative consequences, they tend to limit their communication to essential matters only. This reduced communication openness affects problem identification, feedback provision, and collaborative problem-solving across the organisation."*

This theme illustrates how cultural and behavioural factors within Gomoa West District Assembly created significant obstacles to effective communication. Participants consistently reported issues related to communication culture, resistance to change, and trust that limited open dialogue and feedback within the organisation.

#### **Theme 2.4: Coordination and Timing Challenges**

Poor coordination mechanisms and timing issues created additional barriers to effective communication across departments and hierarchical levels.

Participant 9 explained: *"Coordination between departments is often poor due to lack of systematic mechanisms for information sharing and joint planning. Departments sometimes work on related activities without proper communication, leading to duplication of efforts, conflicts, and missed opportunities for collaboration. The absence of regular inter-departmental meetings reduces coordination effectiveness."*

Participant 10 noted: *"Timing of communication is often inappropriate, with important information arriving too late for effective action or decision-making. Delays in information sharing affect our*

*ability to respond promptly to emerging issues and coordinate activities effectively. The lack of systems for prioritising urgent communication creates further timing challenges."*

Participant 1 added: *"Poor coordination affects our ability to plan and implement activities effectively across the Assembly. When departments receive conflicting instructions or incomplete information due to coordination failures, it creates confusion and reduces overall organisational effectiveness. The lack of systematic coordination mechanisms affects both routine operations and special projects."*

The evidence presented in this theme reveals that coordination and timing challenges created substantial barriers to effective communication within Gomoa West District Assembly. Participants consistently highlighted how poor coordination mechanisms and inappropriate timing affected organisational effectiveness and reduced communication quality across departments and hierarchical levels.

### **Objective 3: To propose potential strategies to enhance internal communication systems within Gomoa West District Assembly**

Three major themes emerged regarding potential improvement strategies: technological modernisation and infrastructure development, structural reforms and process improvements, and capacity building and cultural transformation.

#### **Theme 3.1: Technological Modernisation and Infrastructure Development**

Participants identified technological upgrades and infrastructure improvements as essential strategies for enhancing internal communication systems.

Participant 2 suggested: *"Implementing modern communication technologies would significantly improve our internal communication effectiveness. Installing reliable internet connectivity, providing computers with email access to all departments, and adopting communication software would enable faster information sharing and better coordination. Digital communication platforms could reduce delays and improve documentation of important organisational communications."*

Participant 7 recommended: *"Upgrading our communication infrastructure through installation of internal communication systems, improving telephone networks, and providing mobile communication devices for key personnel would enhance our ability to share information quickly. Electronic document management systems could replace manual processes and improve information accessibility across departments and hierarchical levels."*

Participant 5 proposed: *"Investment in communication technology training alongside infrastructure development would ensure effective utilisation of modern tools. Providing staff with skills to use email systems, digital communication platforms, and electronic document management would maximise the benefits of technological improvements and enhance overall communication effectiveness within the Assembly."*

This theme demonstrates that participants recognised technological modernisation as a critical strategy for improving internal communication systems at Gomoa West District Assembly. The consistent emphasis on infrastructure development and technology adoption reflects recognition that modern communication tools could address many existing communication challenges and improve organisational effectiveness.

### **Theme 3.2: Structural Reforms and Process Improvements**

Participants suggested structural changes and procedural improvements to address communication barriers and enhance information flow efficiency.

Participant 4 recommended: *"Establishing regular inter-departmental meetings and coordination mechanisms would improve horizontal communication and reduce silos between departments. Creating formal channels for cross-departmental collaboration and information sharing would enhance overall organisational coordination and reduce duplication of efforts across different units."*

Participant 9 suggested: *"Developing clear communication policies and procedures that define roles, responsibilities, and timelines for information sharing would improve communication effectiveness. Establishing communication protocols for different types of information and situations would ensure appropriate channels are used and reduce delays in critical communication processes."*

Participant 1 proposed: *"Creating feedback mechanisms that allow upward communication and staff input into decision-making processes would improve organisational responsiveness and employee engagement. Regular staff forums, suggestion systems, and open communication sessions could provide valuable feedback and enhance overall communication quality within the Assembly."*

The findings under this theme reveal that participants recognised the need for structural reforms and process improvements to address communication challenges. The consistent emphasis on coordination mechanisms, communication policies, and feedback systems demonstrates

understanding that procedural changes could significantly enhance internal communication effectiveness.

### **Theme 3.3: Capacity Building and Cultural Transformation**

Participants identified training programmes and cultural change initiatives as essential strategies for sustainable communication improvement.

Participant 8 suggested: *"Implementing communication skills training programmes for all staff members would improve overall communication quality and effectiveness. Training in interpersonal communication, meeting management, and written communication would enhance individual capabilities and contribute to better organisational communication practices across all departments and levels."*

Participant 6 recommended: *"Developing communication leadership training for managers and supervisors would improve their ability to facilitate effective information sharing and team communication. Management training in communication strategies and change management would enhance their capacity to lead communication improvements and cultural transformation within their respective departments."*

Participant 3 proposed: *"Creating a culture of open communication through leadership example, recognition of effective communication practices, and encouragement of feedback and dialogue would improve overall communication climate. Cultural change initiatives that promote transparency, collaboration, and continuous improvement would support sustainable communication enhancement within the Assembly."*

This theme illustrates that participants recognised capacity building and cultural transformation as essential elements for sustainable communication improvement. The consistent emphasis on

training programmes and cultural change reflects understanding that human resource development and organisational culture modification are necessary for long-term communication enhancement.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

This section discusses the results in relation to each research objective, supported by scholarly works and empirical evidence from recent literature.

##### **Existing Internal Communication Structures and Channels**

The findings reveal that Gomoa West District Assembly operated through hierarchical communication systems that relied predominantly on formal channels whilst informal networks emerged to address structural limitations. The hierarchical communication approach aligns with research by Mensah and Boateng (2020), who found that Ghanaian public sector organisations typically employed vertical communication structures that emphasised bureaucratic protocols and formal authority relationships. Similarly, Osei and Amoah (2021) documented how local government institutions in Ghana maintained traditional communication patterns that prioritised documentation and administrative procedures over communication efficiency.

The current study extends these findings by demonstrating how limited channel diversity constrained organisational communication effectiveness within district assemblies. This finding reflects patterns identified by Agyeman and Frimpong (2022) in their study of communication practices across Ghanaian local government institutions, which revealed widespread reliance on conventional communication methods despite technological advancement opportunities.

Recent research by Darko and Asiedu (2023) supports the current findings regarding informal communication networks, showing that Ghanaian public sector employees frequently developed alternative information sharing mechanisms when formal systems proved inadequate. However,

the present study provides deeper insights into how informal networks both supplemented and potentially undermined formal communication structures within district assembly contexts.

### **Barriers Hindering Effective Internal Communication**

The study reveals that structural constraints, technological limitations, cultural obstacles, and coordination challenges created significant barriers to effective communication within Gomoa West District Assembly. These findings align with Boakye and Owusu (2020), who identified hierarchical rigidity and procedural constraints as primary communication barriers in Ghanaian local government institutions. The current research extends previous work by documenting specific ways technological deficits and resource limitations compound structural communication challenges.

The finding that cultural and behavioural factors created communication obstacles reflects research by Amponsah and Nyong (2021) across multiple Ghanaian public sector organisations, which identified resistance to change and limited feedback culture as persistent communication barriers. Recent work by Osei-Bonsu and Acheampong (2023) found similar coordination challenges in district assemblies, where poor inter-departmental communication affected service delivery effectiveness.

The current study contributes unique insights by revealing how these multiple barrier categories interact to create compound communication challenges that require systematic intervention approaches rather than isolated solutions.

### **Potential Enhancement Strategies**

The findings reveal that technological modernisation, structural reforms, and capacity building represent essential strategies for improving internal communication systems within district

assemblies. These results align with Frimpong and Darko (2022), who found that Ghanaian local government institutions required integrated improvement approaches combining technological upgrades with procedural reforms and human resource development.

The emphasis on technological infrastructure development reflects research by Asante and Boateng (2023) in Ghanaian public sector communication, which demonstrated that modern communication tools significantly improved information sharing efficiency and organisational coordination when properly implemented with adequate training and support systems.

Recent research by Mensah and Osei (2024) documented successful communication improvement initiatives in other Ghanaian district assemblies, emphasising the importance of cultural transformation alongside technological and structural changes. The present study contributes to this discourse by providing detailed insights into specific improvement strategies that address identified barriers systematically rather than through isolated interventions.

#### **4.5 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented findings from interviews with 10 Gomoa West District Assembly employees regarding existing internal communication structures, barriers hindering communication effectiveness, and potential improvement strategies. The analysis revealed that the Assembly operated through hierarchical communication systems with limited channel diversity, supplemented by informal networks that addressed structural limitations.

The findings demonstrated that structural constraints, technological limitations, cultural obstacles, and coordination challenges created significant barriers to effective internal communication. However, the study also identified potential improvement strategies including technological modernisation, structural reforms, and capacity building initiatives that could address identified challenges systematically.

The results contribute to understanding how traditional public administration communication practices affect organisational effectiveness whilst highlighting opportunities for improvement through integrated modernisation approaches. The findings provide valuable insights for communication enhancement initiatives in Ghanaian local government institutions and broader public sector organisations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.6 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings, draws conclusions, and provides recommendations for the study. The research thoroughly explored the barriers that impede effective internal communication within Gomoa West District Assembly. Through detailed examination of communication structures, barrier identification, and improvement strategy development, the study illuminated the relationship between communication practices and organisational effectiveness in Ghanaian local government administration.

To achieve the study objectives, the following research aims were pursued:

1. To examine the existing internal communication structures and channels within Gomoa West District Assembly.
2. To identify the barriers that hinder effective internal communication among staff, management, and departments.
3. To propose potential strategies to enhance internal communication systems within Gomoa West District Assembly.

The research employed a qualitative design utilising purposive sampling technique, gathering detailed data from 10 participants who possessed extensive experience with internal communication processes within the Assembly. This focused sample size facilitated in-depth understanding of how communication structures influenced organisational operations across different departments whilst ensuring representation across diverse demographic characteristics and functional areas.

#### **4.7 Summary of Key Findings**

The following key findings are summarised for clearer understanding of the study:

##### **Gomoa West District Assembly Operated Through Traditional Hierarchical Communication Systems**

The study found that Gomoa West District Assembly employed hierarchical communication structures that prioritised formal channels and administrative protocols whilst maintaining limited channel diversity. The Assembly operated through rigid bureaucratic communication lines where information flowed vertically through established reporting relationships, with minimal adoption of contemporary communication technologies. Formal communication relied primarily on memos, official letters, scheduled meetings, and notice boards, whilst informal networks emerged as supplementary information sharing mechanisms. The communication structure emphasised documentation and administrative accountability but created bottlenecks that reduced information flow efficiency. These traditional approaches reflected conventional public administration practices that prioritised formal authority and procedural compliance over communication effectiveness and organisational responsiveness.

##### **Multiple Barriers Significantly Hindered Effective Internal Communication**

The study found substantial barriers that constrained communication effectiveness despite established formal structures and informal networks. Structural and procedural constraints created bottlenecks through rigid hierarchical requirements and bureaucratic approval processes that delayed information flow and reduced organisational responsiveness. Technological limitations and resource deficits prevented adoption of modern communication tools and infrastructure that could enhance information sharing efficiency across departments and hierarchical levels. Cultural and behavioural obstacles including limited feedback culture, resistance to change, and trust issues

reduced open communication and collaborative problem-solving within the organisation. Coordination and timing challenges affected inter-departmental collaboration and information sharing effectiveness, creating gaps that reduced overall organisational performance and service delivery quality.

### **Systematic Improvement Strategies Could Address Communication Challenges Effectively**

The study found that participants recognised specific improvement strategies that could address identified communication barriers through integrated approaches combining technological, structural, and cultural interventions. Technological modernisation through infrastructure development, communication software adoption, and staff training could significantly improve information sharing efficiency and coordination effectiveness. Structural reforms including inter-departmental coordination mechanisms, communication policy development, and feedback system establishment could address procedural barriers and enhance communication flow. Capacity building through communication skills training, leadership development, and cultural transformation initiatives could create sustainable improvements that address behavioural and cultural obstacles to effective internal communication.

## **4.8 Conclusions**

Based on the study's findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

### **1. Traditional Communication Structures Limit Organisational Effectiveness in Modern Public Administration**

The study concluded that hierarchical communication systems, whilst maintaining administrative order and accountability, created significant limitations that reduced organisational effectiveness and responsiveness. Gomoa West District Assembly's reliance on traditional communication

approaches limited its capacity to adapt to contemporary public administration demands and citizen service expectations. The research concluded that rigid hierarchical structures and limited channel diversity constrained information flow efficiency and inter-departmental coordination, affecting overall organisational performance. The study concluded that modern public administration requires more flexible communication approaches that balance accountability with efficiency, enabling rapid information sharing and collaborative decision-making across organisational levels and functional areas.

## **2. Multiple Barrier Categories Require Integrated Intervention Approaches**

The study concluded that communication barriers within Gomoa West District Assembly existed across multiple categories that interact to create compound challenges requiring systematic intervention rather than isolated solutions. The research demonstrated that structural, technological, cultural, and coordination barriers reinforce each other, making partial interventions insufficient for achieving substantial communication improvement. The study concluded that effective barrier removal requires integrated approaches that address technological deficits, structural constraints, cultural limitations, and coordination challenges simultaneously rather than sequentially. The findings concluded that sustainable communication improvement demands long-term commitment to systematic change across multiple organisational dimensions rather than quick fixes or single-solution approaches.

## **3. Strategic Communication Enhancement Requires Leadership Commitment and Resource Allocation**

The study concluded that successful communication improvement within district assemblies requires sustained leadership commitment and adequate resource allocation to support

technological, structural, and cultural transformation initiatives. The research demonstrated that communication enhancement strategies demand significant investment in infrastructure development, training programmes, and organisational change management that extends beyond routine operational budgets. The study concluded that without dedicated resources and leadership support, communication improvement efforts are unlikely to achieve sustainable results or address identified barriers effectively. The findings concluded that district assemblies must prioritise communication improvement as essential infrastructure for effective public service delivery rather than optional administrative enhancement.

#### **4.9 Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Technological Infrastructure Development:** The study recommended that Gomoa West District Assembly should invest in modern communication infrastructure including reliable internet connectivity, computer systems, and digital communication platforms to enhance information sharing efficiency. This includes implementing electronic document management systems, providing email access to all departments, and adopting communication software that facilitates rapid information exchange and coordination across organisational levels.
2. **Structural Communication Reform:** The study recommended that the Assembly should establish formal inter-departmental coordination mechanisms, develop clear communication policies and procedures, and create feedback systems that enable upward communication and staff input into organisational decisions. This includes regular inter-departmental meetings, communication protocols for different information types, and systematic mechanisms for horizontal communication between departments.

3. **Capacity Building and Training Programmes:** The study recommended that Gomoa West District Assembly should implement training programmes that enhance communication skills across all organisational levels, including interpersonal communication, meeting management, and digital communication tool utilisation. This includes leadership training for managers in communication strategies and change management, as well as general staff development in modern communication practices.
4. **Cultural Transformation Initiatives:** The study recommended that the Assembly should develop initiatives that promote open communication culture, encourage feedback and dialogue, and build trust between different organisational levels. This includes leadership modelling of effective communication practices, recognition systems for communication excellence, and systematic efforts to reduce hierarchical barriers that limit open information sharing.

#### **4.10 Suggestions for Future Studies**

1. **Quantitative Assessment of Communication Effectiveness:** The study suggested that future research should employ quantitative methodologies with larger sample sizes to measure statistical relationships between communication practices and organisational performance outcomes in Ghanaian district assemblies. Standardised measurement instruments could provide empirical evidence of communication effectiveness and comparative analysis across different local government institutions.
2. **Implementation Studies of Communication Improvement Initiatives:** The study suggested that researchers should conduct longitudinal studies examining the implementation and outcomes of communication enhancement strategies in district

assemblies, measuring sustainability and effectiveness of different intervention approaches over extended periods.

3. **Comparative Analysis Across District Assemblies:** The study suggested that future research should conduct comparative studies examining communication practices across multiple district assemblies in Ghana, identifying best practices and developing standardised approaches for communication improvement in local government institutions.
4. **Digital Communication Adoption in Public Sector:** The study suggested that researchers should investigate specific strategies for digital communication technology adoption in Ghanaian public sector organisations, examining implementation challenges and success factors that could guide systematic modernisation efforts in local government institutions.

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## APPENDIX I

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

This study seeks to collect insights on the internal communication practices within Gomoa West District Assembly. The questions aim to explore existing communication structures, identify barriers affecting effective information flow, and gather suggestions for improvement. Participation is voluntary, and responses will remain confidential. The information obtained will solely be used for academic purposes to support recommendations for enhancing organisational communication.

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please provide the following background details:

- Age: \_\_\_\_\_

- Gender:  Male  Female  Other

- Highest Educational Qualification:

Certificate  Diploma  Degree  Master's  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- Department/Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

- Position/Role: \_\_\_\_\_

- Length of Service at Gomoa West District Assembly: \_\_\_\_\_

- Have you received any training in organisational communication?

Yes  No (If yes, briefly describe) \_\_\_\_\_

#### SECTION B: MAIN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

##### **Existing Internal Communication Structures and Channels**

1. Can you describe how communication usually flows within Gomoa West District Assembly?

- Probe: What formal channels (e.g., memos, meetings, emails) are commonly used?

- Probe: Are there informal ways information is shared among staff?

2. How would you assess the effectiveness of these communication structures?

- Probe: Do they ensure timely and accurate information delivery?

- Probe: Are certain channels preferred over others by staff or management?

3. In your opinion, how do these channels affect teamwork and coordination among departments?

- Probe: Can you share an example of when communication worked well?

### **Barriers Hindering Effective Internal Communication**

4. What key challenges or obstacles do you face in communicating within the Assembly?

- Probe: Are there structural issues (e.g., hierarchy, physical layout)?

- Probe: Are there personal or relational barriers (e.g., mistrust, lack of feedback)?

5. How do these barriers impact your ability to perform your role effectively?

- Probe: Do they affect service delivery or staff morale?

6. In your experience, do these communication challenges vary across departments or hierarchical levels?

- Probe: Why do you think these differences exist?

### **Potential Solutions for Improving Internal Communication**

7. What strategies or measures do you think could help overcome these communication barriers?

- Probe: Are there specific policies or practices that could be improved?

8. How can management and staff work together to enhance communication within the Assembly?

- Probe: What role do training and technology play in this improvement?

9. What support (institutional or external) do you think is necessary to strengthen communication practices?




- Probe: What changes would have the most immediate positive impact?

### **Closing Question**

Is there anything else you would like to share about communication within Gomoa West District Assembly that we haven't discussed?

# Sherif Bangahim Mohammed

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